

All for Love by John Dryden

F/F UA, Kn, BS, S&S

CLEOPATRA

Were she the sister of the thunderer Jove,
And bore her brother's lightning in her eyes,
Thus would I face my rival.

[Meets OCTAVIA with VENTIDIUS. OCTAVIA bears up to her. Their Trains come up on either side.]

OCTAVIA

I need not ask if you are Cleopatra;
Your haughty carriage--

CLEOPATRA

Shows I am a queen:
Nor need I ask you, who you are.

OCTAVIA

A Roman:
A name, that makes and can unmake a queen.

CLEOPATRA

Your lord, the man who serves me, is a Roman.

OCTAVIA

He was a Roman, till he lost that name,
To be a slave in Egypt; but I come
To free him thence.

CLEOPATRA

Peace, peace, my lover's Juno.
When he grew weary of that household clog,
He chose my easier bonds.

OCTAVIA

I wonder not
Your bonds are easy: you have long been practised
In that lascivious art: He's not the first
For whom you spread your snares: Let Caesar witness.

CLEOPATRA

I loved not Caesar; 'twas but gratitude
I paid his love: The worst your malice can,
Is but to say the greatest of mankind
Has been my slave. The next, but far above him
In my esteem, is he whom law calls yours,
But whom his love made mine.

OCTAVIA

I would view nearer.

[Coming up close to her.]

That face, which has so long usurped my right,
To find the inevitable charms, that catch
Mankind so sure, that ruined my dear lord.

CLEOPATRA

Oh, you do well to search; for had you known
But half these charms, you had not lost his heart.

OCTAVIA

Far be their knowledge from a Roman lady,
Far from a modest wife! Shame of our sex,
Dost thou not blush to own those black endearments,
That make sin pleasing?

CLEOPATRA

You may blush, who want them.
If bounteous nature, if indulgent Heaven
Have given me charms to please the bravest man,
Should I not thank them? Should I be ashamed,
And not be proud? I am, that he has loved me;
And, when I love not him, Heaven change this face
For one like that.

OCTAVIA

Thou lov'st him not so well.

CLEOPATRA

I love him better, and deserve him more.

OCTAVIA

You do not; cannot: You have been his ruin.
Who made him cheap at Rome, but Cleopatra?
Who made him scorned abroad, but Cleopatra?
At Actium, who betrayed him? Cleopatra.
Who made his children orphans, and poor me
A wretched widow? only Cleopatra.

CLEOPATRA

Yet she, who loves him best, is Cleopatra.
If you have suffered, I have suffered more.
You bear the specious title of a wife,

To gild your cause, and draw the pitying world
To favour it: the world condemns poor me.
For I have lost my honour, lost my fame,
And stained the glory of my royal house,
And all to bear the branded name of mistress.
There wants but life, and that too I would lose
For him I love.

OCTAVIA

Be't so, then; take thy wish