



Summary of Antony and Cleopatra

Source: <http://www.novelguide.com/antonyandcleopatra/novelsummary.html>

Act 1, Scene 1: The scene opens with two men at Queen Cleopatra of Egypt's court. The men are discussing Antony, one of the three leaders of Rome, and his doting love for the queen. They think he is making a fool of himself. Together, Antony and Cleopatra enter and he declares his love for her. A messenger comes upon them, but Antony sends him away because he does not want to leave the queen. She urges him to hear the message because it might be from his wife, Fulvia, or one of the other ruling lords, Caesar. Antony is still reluctant, however, even after her gentle prodding. Declaring he cares only for her, he dismisses the messenger and they go. The men stay and discuss the fact that Antony cares so little for the words of Caesar.

Act 1, Scene 2: Members of Cleopatra's court are mingling together and having their fortunes told when the Queen enters looking for Antony. She finds him and sends everyone away to leave him alone with his messenger. The messenger tells him that his wife and brother were forced out of Italy by Caesar, and that he has been ignoring his duties to them because he has been so long with Cleopatra. The messenger exits but another one enters saying that a third is there to see him. The third tells him that his wife has died, and gives him a letter before leaving. Antony decides that he should leave Cleopatra and get back to the duties he has been neglecting. There are issues that his wife left unsettled, and more importantly, the third of the leaders of Rome, Pompey, has become a threat to Caesar. Antony must return, although he wishes to stay with his love.

Act 1, Scene 3: Cleopatra hears that Antony is leaving her and feels betrayed. When she speaks to him, she accuses him of lying. She thinks that he is going

back to his wife until he tells her that his wife is dead. She tells him to go, and he agrees promising to come back to her soon, although she is still angry with him.

Act 1, Scene 4: Back in Rome, Caesar has a meeting with Lepidus, another Roman leader. After Caesar reads a letter, they discuss the behavior of Antony with Cleopatra in Rome. Caesar is angry and does not approve. Two messengers come; one telling him news of the rising power of Pompey, the other telling him that two pirates, Menas and Menecrates, are attacking his shores. He is upset and wishes the return of Antony who is in charge of the military.

Act 1, Scene 5: Cleopatra is consumed with thoughts of Antony while he is away and discusses them with her servants, Charmain and Mardian, who is a eunuch. Alexas, a messenger from Antony arrives, with a message and pearl from Antony. Cleopatra loves it and vows to write Antony everyday he is away.

Act 2, Scene 1: Pompey has a meeting with the pirates and they discuss the fact that Antony is in Egypt with Cleopatra. Lepidus and Caesar have teamed up and have an army marching, but it does not concern them much. When they learn however, that Antony is on his way to Rome to join Caesar, they decide they must prepare.

Act 2, Scene 2: Antony and Caesar meet with some of their officials surrounding them. Caesar is angry with Antony for his wife and brother's actions. He is also angry because Antony did not come to his aide when he wanted him there. To solve the problem, Agrippa comes up with the plan to have the newly widowed Antony married to Caesar's sister Octavia. The men agree to the plan that will cement their relationship and make them brothers, and leave to have the two betrothed meet. Some of their lords however stay behind, and they discuss the fact that though he may marry Octavia, Antony's heart will never leave Cleopatra.

Act 2, Scene 3: Octavia and Antony meet and Antony swears that he will live as she would have him live. Octavia exits with her brother, and Antony speaks with

a fortuneteller who tells him that he should keep his distance from Caesar even though they have newly made peace with each other. Antony, at first disagrees, but he realizes that he cannot stay away from Cleopatra, and must return to Egypt.

Act 2, Scene 4: Lepidus leaves to begin the battle with Pompey and wants Caesar and Antony to join him soon.

Act 2, Scene 5: Cleopatra decides to play pool with her eunuch, and as they are doing so, a messenger from Rome arrives. She is excited, and anxious to hear the news. At the look on the messenger's face, she thinks that Antony has been killed. The messenger however tells her that he has married Octavia and she becomes extremely angry. She begins beating the messenger and then pulls a knife on him. He runs away, but Charmian calms her down, and brings him back. She questions him again, and again he tells her that Antony has married. He leaves and she grieves and sends out spies to find out what Octavia looks like.

Act 2, Scene 6: Antony, Caesar, and their man Enobarbus have a meeting with Pompey and the pirates before they go to battle. Caesar sent him terms for surrender, and Pompey accepts the terms. Antony thanks him for the treatment he gave his mother when she fled Italy during the skirmish between his brother and Caesar. The men go off to feast but Enobarbus stays and talks with the pirate, Menas. Enobarbus tells him about Antony marrying Caesar's sister but says that he thinks the marriage will not cement their relationship, but push them apart.

Act 2, Scene 7: Pompey throws a feast for the Roman leaders on his boats. While everyone drinks, Menas tells Pompey he can make him the king of the world. Pompey asks how, and Menas states that he could kill all of the leaders while they are on the boat. Pompey refuses because it would offend his honor, and the men have to remove Lepidus from the boat because he becomes so drunk.

Act 3, Scene 1: Ventidius has won a victory for Antony and a procession is made in his honor. Silius asks where Antony is and Ventidius says he is on his way to Athens.

Act 3, Scene 2: Enobarbus and Agrippa tell each other news of the Roman leaders. They begin to argue about whom Lepidus loves more, Antony or Caesar. The two men enter with Octavia and Lepidus. Because Antony and Octavia are travelling to Athens, Caesar and Octavia say farewell to each other, although Octavia seems nervous about going.

Act 3, Scene 3: The messenger comes back to Cleopatra giving her descriptions of Octavia. Cleopatra is pleased because she feels Octavia is no threat to her love with Antony. She also feels remorse that she beat the messenger the last time he came to her, so she decides she likes him and keeps him in her services. She leaves to write some letters, but tells her maids she has one more question to ask the messenger.

Act 3, Scene 4: Caesar is raising an army again against Pompey, and in doing so makes Antony look bad. Antony explains this to Octavia and that he has to do something to rebut it. Octavia understands but tells him that she would like to try to mend the rift between her husband and her brother. Antony agrees to let her go to Rome and try to do so.

Act 3, Scene 5: Enobarbus learns that Caesar has thrown Lepidus in jail for traitorous letters he wrote to Pompey before the war. Antony is preparing his navy to go to Italy.

Act 3, Scene 6: Caesar and Agrippa share news that Antony has gone to Cleopatra in Egypt and ascended the throne with her. Octavia enters and Caesar is delighted to see her though he had no advance warning of her coming. He is outraged at Antony's public adultery against her, but realizes that his sister does not know her husband went to Egypt. He informs her but pledges to take care of her, and is honored she is home with him.

Act 3, Scene 7: Enobarbus and Cleopatra argue whether or not Cleopatra should be present at the war because of what it might take away from Antony having her there. Antony discusses with his men whether to wage war with Caesar by land or by sea. Antony decides to do it by sea, and have a land war to fall back on. A messenger comes bringing news that Caesar has taken Tomyris, and Antony is outraged.

Act 3, Scene 8: Caesar tells his lieutenant, Taurus, not to provoke a battle by land.

Act 3, Scene 9: Antony positions his men in the field.

Act 3, Scene 10: A sea battle commences with Cleopatra and Antony's ships against Caesar. The battle is even when Cleopatra turns and leaves the fight. Much to his officers' horror, Antony follows her. His officers decide to leave him and go to fight for Caesar because of the action. Enobarbus, however, continues on the side of Antony, though he thinks it is probably a bad idea.

Act 3, Scene 11: Antony is ashamed of himself at the way he behaved in the battle and dismisses his attendants. Cleopatra goes to him and he tells her that it is her fault he followed her and that he would follow her anywhere. She begs his forgiveness and he forgives her easily.

Act 3, Scene 12: Antony's messenger reaches Caesar and asks that Antony be allowed to live in Egypt. If this cannot be granted to him, he asks that he be allowed to live as a free man in Athens. Cleopatra, for herself, asks that her heirs be allowed to gain the crown of Egypt, which is now at Caesar's mercy. To the messenger Caesar replies that he will not honor any of Antony's requests, and will only honor Cleopatra's if she turns Antony over to him, or kills him herself. The messenger leaves and Caesar stays and talks with Thidias. He tells the man to seduce Cleopatra away from Antony, and observe how Antony is taking his defeat.

Act 3, Scene 13: Cleopatra has a conference with Enobarbus and asks him if it was her fault that they lost. He says that it was only Antony's fault for following her when she fled. The messenger from Caesar returns and tells the news. Antony, angry, begins to prepare to go to war. Thidias enters, and sends messages from Caesar to Cleopatra. She receives them and as Thidias goes to kiss her hand, Antony enters and becomes outraged. He calls the servants and has Thidias whipped. He accuses Cleopatra of conspiring against him, but then quickly recants. In his anger he again turns into his warlike self, and prepares to face Caesar again.

Act 4, Scene 1: Anthony sends Caesar a challenge for hand-to-hand combat. Caesar laughs at him, and prepares for their final battle.

Act 4, Scene 2: Antony is disappointed at Caesar's refusal to fight him in hand to hand combat, and prepares with a large supper, for the battle ahead. He praises the servants and asks them to serve him one last time.

Act 4, Scene 3: Antony's soldiers prepare to go to bed the night before the battle, but hear a strange music, which they interpret as the god Hercules leaving Antony.

Act 4, Scene 4: Eros and Cleopatra help Antony into his armor the next morning. Soldiers come to take him to battle, and he kisses Cleopatra farewell.

Act 4, Scene 5: When he reaches the field, his soldiers tell him that Enobarbus has fled to Caesar's camp. He gives instructions to Eros to take his belongings and treasure that he left to his lost friend.

Act 4, Scene 6: Caesar states that he wants Antony taken alive. After Enobarbus sees him and his acts of cruelty, he starts to doubt his decision to leave Antony. When he receives the treasure Antony has sent to him, he is sure of it and wishes to die.

Act 4, Scene 7: Antony and his men rejoice in a victory even though Antony is wounded.

Act 4, Scene 8: The men celebrate their victory and Antony gives speeches. Cleopatra comes and Antony declares they should have a parade through Alexandria.

Act 4, Scene 9: Enobarbus is traveling and when he comes upon watchmen he gives them speeches of remorse about his desertion of Antony. He dies.

Act 4, Scene 10: The next day the battle is to take place at sea, and Antony finds a perch from which he can watch it.

Act 4, Scene 11: Caesar tells his land forces not to attack unless they are attacked because his army is better fighting at sea.

Act 4, Scene 12: Antony's ships desert him and side with Caesar. Antony thinks that Cleopatra betrayed him and is certain all is lost. Cleopatra enters only to have him fly into a rage against her. She leaves, and he is extremely disheartened and vows to kill her for her betrayal.

Act 4, Scene 13: Cleopatra, afraid for her life, flees to her monument sending messengers saying she has killed herself. She wants them to tell Antony she died with his name on her lips, and she awaits news on how he receives her death.

Act 4, Scene 14: Antony tells Eros of his grief when Mardian enters and tells him of Cleopatra's suicide. Antony is devastated and wishes for his own death. After gathering his thoughts, he orders his servant Eros to kill him. Eros refuses, and when Antony thinks he is going to strike the fatal blow, Eros turns the knife and kills himself. Antony, learning from Cleopatra and Eros, tries to kill himself. He does not strike true however and lives. His guards come, and though he begs them to kill him, they won't. A servant from Cleopatra comes and tells him that

she leaves. He then wants to see her, and bleeding, has his guards carry him to her monument.

Act 4, Scene 15: The guards bring Antony to Cleopatra and they kiss and talk before he dies.

Act 5, Scene 1: Caesar and his court receive the news of Antony's suicide with great sadness. A messenger from Egypt tells that Cleopatra wishes to know how to prepare herself since she has been defeated. Caesar sends his dignitaries back to her saying that she need not fear. However, Caesar plans to make a spectacle of her in Rome.

Act 5, Scene 2: One of Caesar's minions enters and reassures Cleopatra that she will be met by Caesar with kindness. She vows to be thankful to him if he keeps his word. While he is speaking his words of assurance, soldiers enter and seize her. Cleopatra tries to kill herself but the knife she uses is snatched from her. Dollabella, another of Caesar's men takes charge of her, and she tells him of Antony and all his good attributes. She asks then what Caesar means to do with her, and he says that he will lead her in triumph through Rome tied to the back of his chariot. Caesar comes and threatens her not to kill herself because he would do harm to her children. Cleopatra then hands over a list of her belongings, but when her treasurer is brought forth, he states that many very valuable things are missing. Caesar leaves her with words of kindness, but after he goes, she gives instructions to her maids. Dollabella returns and tells her more of Caesar's intent. She thanks him and he leaves. Her servants come and she gives them directions telling them to bring her finest clothes and her crown. A man from the country enters bringing her figs and asps. She dons her best clothes and crown, and places asps on her. She dies after killing one of her maids with a kiss. Her other maid, after she made sure her mistress was dead also lets the serpent bite her. Caesar enters and learns of her death and declares she should be buried beside Antony.

