

Antony and Cleopatra abbreviated

Act 5, Scene 2

Honor

Situation: Taking poisonous asps from the basket of “pretty worms of the Nile,” Iras, Charmian and Cleopatra let the snakes bite them. The three of them die quickly. Caesar offers a touching tribute.

DOLABELLA: O sir, that you did fear is done.

CAESAR: She leveled at our purposes and, being royal, took her own way. The manner of their deaths? I do not see them bleed.

FIRST GUARD: A simple countryman that brought her figs. This was his basket.

CAESAR: Poisoned, then.

FIRST GUARD: O Caesar, this Charmian lived but now; she stood and spake. Tremblingly she stood, and on the sudden dropped.

Caesar to Dolabella

If she had swallowed poison, swelling 'twould
Appear, but she looks like sleep, as she would
Catch another Antony in her strong
Toil of grace. Most probable she has died,
This being as asp's trail, for she has long
Pursued conclusions of easy ways tied
To death, her physician tells me. She shall
Be buried by Antony we allow,
For no grave upon the earth will exceed
A pair so famous. Events as these sought
Strike those that make them. Now, accept this deed,
And then our army on to Rome. What brought
Them to be lamented as a story
Is no less in pity than his glory.