

**National
Theatre**

Antony & Cleopatra

Learning Guide

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About

This learning guide supports the National Theatre's production of **Antony & Cleopatra**, directed by **Simon Godwin**, which opened on **18 September 2018** at the **National Theatre**.

Our packs are designed to support viewing the recording on the **National Theatre Collection**. This pack provides links to the UK school curriculum and other productions in the Collection. It also has a plot synopsis with timecodes to allow you to jump to specific sections of the play.

Here you'll find all the information you need to enable you to study the production and write about it in detail. This includes notes about all the key elements from performance style to design. You'll also find pointers for further research.

Background Information

Recording Date – 6 December, 2018

Location – Olivier Theatre, National Theatre

Age Recommendation – 12+

Cast:

Octavius Caesar	Tunji Kasim
Agrippa.....	Katy Stephens
Cleopatra	Sophie Okonedo
Antony	Ralph Fiennes
Eros	Fisayo Akinade
Charmain.....	Gloria Obianyo
Iras.....	Georgia Landers
Soothsayer	Hiba Elchikhe
Enobarbus	Tim McMullan
Proculeius.....	Ben Wiggins
Sicyon Official.....	Shazia Nicholls
Lepidus.....	Nicholas Le Prevost
Thidias.....	Sam Woolf
Pompey.....	Sargon Yelda
Menas.....	Gerald Gyimah
Varrius.....	Waleed Hammad
Euphronius.....	Nick Sampson

Octavia..... Hannah Morrish
Canidius..... Alan Turkington
Scarus Alexander Cobb
Ventidius Henry Everett

Creative Team:

Director Simon Godwin
Set Designer..... Hildegard Bechtler
Costume Designer Evie Gurney
Lighting Designer Tim Lutkin
Music..... Michael Bruce
Movement Directors..... Jonathan Goddard, Shelley Maxwell
Sound Designer..... Christopher Shutt
Video Designer..... Luke Halls
Fight Director Kev McCurdy

Teaching Information

This production is particularly suitable for:

- English Literature students who are studying the play as part of an A Level course
- Anyone with an interest in Shakespeare
- Anyone who is studying the work of director Simon Godwin.

In particular you might like to explore:

- The setting of the play in a “heightened present, where technology exists and news travels fast.”
- The portrayal of the central characters by Ralph Fiennes and Sophie Okonedo
- This production alongside some of Simon Godwin’s other Shakespeare productions including *Twelfth Night*, *Romeo and Juliet* and *Much Ado About Nothing* (all of which are available on the NT Collection).



Production Notes

The following notes have been compiled to help guide you through the significant design and performance aspects as you watch the production, or to remind you of them after you have watched it. You may also want to make your own notes and form your own opinions on the effectiveness of these aspects as you explore the production.

Contextual Information:

- It is thought that Shakespeare wrote *Antony and Cleopatra* in approximately 1606.
- The character of Agrippa in this production is female: this is a change from the original text.
- The modern transposition of the play to a 'heightened present' reminds us of the continued fragility of political alliances across the world.



Production Notes

Key Design Elements: Set

- The play is performed in the Olivier Theatre and significant use is made of the drum revolve. This means that set can be moved by a 180° turn of the revolve *and* have other parts of the set ascend from beneath the stage. This means that there is little need for a lot of automation to disrupt the transitions between scenes.
- The large stage space allows for the use of split-stage blocking at points, where two scenes are taking place simultaneously.
- The play begins and ends at the same monument, which is represented by a flight of steps, with a stone-like appearance – a doorway and several walls.
- Cleopatra's palace has a pool (with water) that dominates the middle of the stage – it has three slightly raised walkways across it. It is tiled in blue. There are two curved couches upstage right of the pool, and the back wall is tiled. The patterns and textiles all suggest luxury, and the palm pattern on the couches suggest the Egyptian influence. There is also a low round stool in grey-blue/black downstage left of the pool.
- Caesar's palace includes a room with a solid marble- appearance wall which has several inset doors. There is a large screen which shows images of weather maps and radar. This is flown in from above the stage. There are four white plinths on which various sculptures are placed. One of them looks like a shield – it reminds us of Caesar's military ambitions. There is a laptop placed on a desk which is upstage left, which also has a desk light on it and a leather chair behind it. It is a very masculine space.
- Pompey's warship is represented by three trap doors down stage, from which people emerged. There is an image projected on to the cyclorama of waves, to enhance the naval appearance.
- A private dining room at Caesar's palace has the cream marble wall which is then dominated by a black marble-effect artwork in the centre of it. There is also a long metal table, stage right, on which is a tray of glasses and carafes for

water. Downstage are two blue circular chairs with gold legs. These are a contemporary design and suggest wealth and status.

- A section of Pompey's war ship emerges from the drum revolve. It is a grey metallic colour, and its emergence suggests submarine, military vessels. Inside the war ship, the atmosphere is a lot less formal, with green plastic drinks crates and various metal chairs suggesting one of the social spaces where the men are drinking.
- The bedroom that Antony and Octavia share includes a bed with gold and bronze- coloured textiles on it. It takes up the stage right area, and a split stage technique is used to introduced when we see Agrippa and Caesar talking in Act 3 scene 3.



Production Notes

Key Design Elements: Costume

- Cleopatra's costume design is deliberately influenced by high fashion. She is a powerful woman, who is used to being observed. Her costumes have an elongated A line silhouette. They are made from rich textures and some have an appearance of being embroidered. Ancient Egyptian art is an influence on her dresses, with patterns and shapes being seen in research done by the costume designer. The fabrics tend to be champagne or gold in colour. The designer wanted the colours of the fabrics to complement the actor's skin tones, adding a "golden glow". The shape of Cleopatra's costumes makes her seem imposing. They often have a cloak which streams behind her as she walks meaning her movement through space is unmissable. Her costumes are noticeably different to all of the other costumes in style, fit and fabric.
- Cleopatra's first dress is champagne silk, ankle length with a long A line skirt. It is ruched across the bust. Her dress at the beginning of act 4, is the same colour, but has a cape-like piece over the top. The shoulders of this additional layer are structured, which suggests a slightly more military-style: the stage directions here suggest that she is "dressed for military service". There is a gold pattern in the lining of the cloak with a similar palm pattern to that seen on the couches at the beginning of the play.
- Notice Cleopatra's cloak at the end of Act 4, which appears to be embroidered with images of insects. You can find out more about this in the Research section of this learning guide.
- At the end of the play, Cleopatra wears a crown of seven rings – this represents the seven planets and orbits.
- Caesar begins and ends the play in his black military uniform, and the aiguillettes (gold cords on his jacket) suggest his high rank. His uniform includes white dress gloves and white cap. His costume also includes a black polo neck with a dark suit, and a pocket square in his breast pocket. He wears loafers.

- Agrippa begins the play in a black military uniform of pencil skirt and black jacket, black tights and black heeled shoes. Later she wears a fitted navy dress with two large brass buttons on the shoulder.
- Marc Antony first wears wide tie waist wrap trousers in white linen. He wears an open rusty-brown pattern shirt with two strings of beads on leather. When he first leaves Cleopatra he wears a cream linen suit with an open-neck white shirt. This changes to a grey suit when he meets Caesar in act two. He wears a light blue shirt and grey suit. Note that Enobarbus' clothing often matches the colour combinations worn by Caesar, until he defects.
- Iras wears a belted knee-length patterned dress, with dark court shoes. Another costume for Iras includes a navy all in one trouser suit with a large floral print on the trousers.
- Charmian wears a blue and white long-sleeved blouse, with brown trousers that have a paper-bag waist. She wears small hoop earrings and dark court shoes. Later her costume includes a black and burgundy blouse white trousers and brown slingback shoes. In act two, Charmian wears a brown-gold shirt dress, which is knee length. Her dresses often complement the colour scheme chosen for Cleopatra.
- Lepidus first appears in a grey military uniform with white shirt and black tie.
- Enobarbus makes his first entrance wearing cream trousers and a similar patterned shirt to that worn by Antony, he wears brown moccasin shoes. Later the costume changes to a light blue shirt, and a light tan suit, and a grey tie.
- Many of the male characters also wear khaki battle fatigues once the conflicts commence. In Act 4, Charmian and Iras' costumes reflect this, with their costumes being khaki in colour (a shirt dress for Charmian, a white blouse and khaki skirt for Iras)
- Eros' costume includes a cream 3-piece suit, with a white shirt and burgundy tie that has a narrow white diagonal stripe in it.
- Octavia's first costume is a very light blue-grey belted dress with a wide neckline. There is an overlap detail on the short sleeves. She wears a low court shoe with a low narrow heel. Her costumes are much more restrained than those worn by Cleopatra. When she visits Caesar, Octavia wears light blue trousers and a white high-necked, long-sleeved blouse. This once again contrasts sharply with
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the costumes worn by Cleopatra who reveals a lot more of her body and inhabits much more space with the clothes that she wears.

- Pompey wears a black military uniform.
- Proculeius wears a black jacket and trousers, a grey high neck shirt underneath the jacket, with black loafers.
- Euphronius' costume consists of a beige trench coat, under which is a grey suit, white shirt, and black bow tie.
- The soothsayer wears all black.



Production Notes

Key Design Elements: Lighting

- Very high angle lighting is used from the two upstage corners, and another bank of lights is placed centrally in the rig. Lights are also placed at lower positions either side of the stage and these can be seen at various intervals whilst watching the recording.
- A sense of heat in the Egyptian scenes is often suggested by very warm yellow lighting from high angle lanterns stage right, which suggest the position of the sun. This is modified by some blue hues to suggest daylight in combination with the yellow lighting from one corner of the stage.
- Notice the use of three square areas of light which are inhabited by Antony, Pompey and Caesar.
- Pale yellow tones are often used on the interior scenes to suggest artificially created lights.
- When the soothsayer enters in act 4 scene 7, blue lighting from the front angles makes her seem haunted and other-worldly.
- Projections of smoke are imposed on to the floor as the land battle takes place in act 4 scene 9. A number of moving walls are lit with projections, and red & purple lighting suggests that a night sky is lit up by fires. This lighting combination is mainly created by the high angle lighting at the upstage centre part of the lighting rig.
- Blue spotlights are used in Act 4 scene 12 when Antony and Caesar are both on stage, inhabiting different sides of the stage.
- There are very few blackouts in this production. Instead, cross fades are used, and some projection to make the transition between time and location as smooth and quick as possible.

Production Notes

Key Design Elements: Sound

- Recorded sound effects include that of crickets, suggesting a hot location (Egypt) and a night-time setting.
- The production has a score which includes string music, and music which is reminiscent of the Egyptian setting. During transitions the music often becomes quite military-influenced, with the use of brass instruments and drums (often snared, which have particularly military associations). Other instruments include an electric guitar and a snare drum.
- Military recorded sound effects are used from act two onwards, including radio communication and static, and the sound of helicopters and fighter jets.



Production Notes

Key Design Elements: Wigs, Hair and Make-Up

- Agrippa's hair is in a bun, befitting her military position.
- Cleopatra's hair is dressed naturally. She wears a light gold shimmer on her eyelids.
- Octavia wears her hair in simple ½ up, ½ down style. She is not as glamorous in her appearance as Cleopatra. Her style is much simpler and modest.
- The soothsayer wears dark eyeshadow around her eyes to offer a slightly haunted look.
- There are numerous bloody whip marks on Thidius' back in Act 4 after Antony has him whipped.



Production Notes

Performance Style

- As with all Shakespeare plays, there are long sections of blank verse. Extended monologues and duologues demand a varied use of vocal skill in order to engage and sustain the audience's attention.
- The delivery of many of the speeches are slightly heightened. The actors have radio microphones. The Olivier auditorium seats over 1000 people and the physical and vocal delivery of each role needs to be clear and crisp, regardless of where the audience are sitting in the auditorium.



Production Notes

Key Moments

- Antony is informed of Fulvia's death in the section which begins 00.09.54 and ends 00.20.59. This section also shows an extended interaction between Cleopatra and Antony.
- Caesar's monologue at the end of Act 1 scene 3 takes place from 00.24.43 – 00.26.30
- The suggestion that Antony marries Octavia is made in the section which begins 00.39.10. In this section, Enobarbus also makes a speech describing Cleopatra. The section ends at the end of Act 2 scene 1 which is at 00.46.35.
- Eros tells Cleopatra about Antony's marriage to Octavia in the section that begins at 00.52.47 and ends 00.57.50. Notice that there are comic moments in this extract, too, which require excellent comic timing.
- Act 2 scene 5 begins at 01.06.13 and ends at 01.14.41
- The interaction between Antony and Cleopatra in Act 2 scene 5 takes place between 01.52.56 and 01.56.17. This also includes Enobarbus' aside at the end of the scene.
- Act 4 scene 7 takes place in the palace war room and begins at 01.57.20 . It is a short scene, and we see Antony thanking members of the household. This scene is lit dimly, suggesting less optimism than previously.
- Antony learns of Enobarbus' defection from 02.03.30 and the scene ends at 02.05.25. Watch this and then watch Enobarbus' speech which begins "I am along the villain of the earth" which begins at 02.06.43. Enobarbus's death takes place between 02.12.36 an 02.14.20.
- Antony's despair towards the end of Act 4 is seen from 02.15.45. This includes the use of a projection in which a building seems to crumble. Cleopatra's 'embroidered' black cloak is visible in this scene. Antony's body is taken away at 02.30.30.

- Cleopatra's refuge on the monument, and the subsequent handling of Antony's body begins at 02.31.31. Notice how the lighting creates a golden glow around the monument. The set is trucked downstage during the scene so that we can return to the opening image of the play, when Cleopatra lies downstage centre after being bitten by an asp. The scene ends at 02.37.37.
- The final scene in which Cleopatra dies (Act 5 scene 3) begins at 02.41.35 and ends at 03.02.28. This is fantastic extract to watch in terms of characterisation, set and lighting design and the quick paced entrances and exits which heighten the dramatic tension even further.



Plot Synopsis with Timecodes

Act 1

Prologue: 00:01:30

A war-torn landscape. A ruined monument. The bodies of Cleopatra, Iras and Charmian lie among the rubble.

We discover a group of Roman Soldiers. They survey the scene. The leader of the group removes his helmet and mask.

Caesar and Agrippa stand watching over the body of Cleopatra, amongst the rubble of a fallen tomb, surrounded by soldiers. They introduce the scene and tell the tale of the most famous lovers in the world, and how they came to this terrible fate.

Scene 1 00:03:40

As the music grows Antony enters, lifting Cleopatra back into life.

Antony and Cleopatra have spent the long, hot summer together in Alexandria. Cleopatra is the Queen of Egypt, Antony, a powerful general and one third of the triumvirate leadership of the Roman empire. They ignore their duties in the lustful company of each other. Urgent messages sent from Caesar in Rome are ignored by Antony.

Scene 2: 00:07:20

A royal banquet occurs offstage. Cleopatra's faithful maids, Charmian and Iras, call upon a Soothsayer to tell their fortune, who tells them that they shall outlive those that they serve (Cleopatra). Cleopatra enters, and asks them to summon Antony. They run off while Antony gathers news of Caesar's rule over Rome, and how ignoring his duties

in Rome while with Cleopatra has had grave effect, including the death of his wife, Fulvia, who died after revolting against Caesar. He knows that he must return to Rome, on Caesar's request, and quickly. Cleopatra feigns sickness and anger at the news that Antony must leave, in a powerful move to get him to stay with her in Egypt. He frustratedly rebukes her and reminds her of his duties in Rome. Antony departs, reminding her that she will remain in his heart, and he in hers.

Scene 3: 00:22:31

Caesar, on reports of Antony having too living too luxuriously and ignoring his duties in Alexandria, is furious. Meanwhile, reports of the popular rebel leader Pompey are growing. Pompey has also been spotted with Menas, the infamous pirate and his crew, and have joined forces with Pompey in the Italian sea.

Scene 4: 00:27:50

Pompey, at sea with Menas, is overjoyed at his rise in popularity, and revels that the power of the triumvirate is weakening without Antony, who he believes to be revelling in Egypt.

A messenger arrives and relays that Antony is expected to arrive any moment back in Rome to take up his responsibilities again and protect Rome from Pompey.

Scene 5: 00:29:50

Meanwhile in Alexandria, Cleopatra dreams of Antony. Antony sends her gifts to pass the time and maintain her affection. Cleopatra writes him daily love notes to remind him of his Queen.

ACT 2

Scene 1: 00:34:12

Antony returns to Rome and is confronted by Caesar for neglected his duties to him and promises as a leader. The pair quarrel. To cement his allegiance with Caesar and to the triumvirate, Antony, now a widower, agrees to marry Caesar's sister, Octavia.

Antony's friend and confidant, Enobarbus details to Agrippa the incredible luxuries and god-like lifestyle afforded to them in Alexandria by Cleopatra, and how she wooed Antony. Cleopatra shall never let Antony out of her grip.

Scene 2: 00:48:00

Antony and Octavia are married, though Antony warns her that for his role and for his office, they will often be separated. He bids her and Caesar goodnight.

Alone with Eros, as a trusted confidant, Eros speaks of how next to Caesar, Antony pales in comparison. Caesar bids him goodnight and soliloquises how Eros is right, and decides to return to Egypt, for this is where his pleasure lies.

Scene 3: 00:50:54

Back in Alexandria, Cleopatra parties and drinks in Antony's absence. Eros arrives and delivers the news that Antony and Octavia are now married. Cleopatra flies into a rage and threatens Eros' life, for she does not believe him. He confirms that it is true.

She bid that Eros brings her reports of Octavia.

CLEOPATRA

Go to the fellow, good Iras, bid him
Report the feature of Octavia, her years,
Her inclination; let him not leave out
The colour of her hair. Bring me word quickly.

Scene 4: 00:59:40

Aboard Pompey's warship. The triumvirate visit Pompey, Menas, in their military dressings, to negotiate a peace bargain to avoid a civil war against Pompey's forces. Antony offers a peace bargain, and Pompey accepts. Pompey welcomes them aboard for a feast in celebration.

Enobarbus reveals to Menas that Antony and Octavia are married, though divulges that this political union will unravel between Caesar and Antony, when Antony inevitably returns to Egypt and leaves Octavia alone in Rome.

Scene 5: 01:07:33

Aboard Pompey's warship, in the hull, the men drink and celebrate to the successful peace negotiations. Menas pulls Pompey aside, in this scenario, for Pompey to be ruler of the world, he has the perfect opportunity for Menas to kill all three men in one go while at sea.

Pompey rebukes him for telling him his plans, for now he is conscious of it, that makes Pompey the villain. He forbids Menas from killing them and returns to the party.

Lepidus, as the eldest of the triumvirate leaders, is particularly drunk. Antony sings a drinking song, though Antony refuses to partake in the singing and dancing, reminiscent of the partying in Egypt. Antony abruptly stops the partying and bid the men leave, to spare any further embarrassment.

Scene 6: 01:16:00

The next day. Pompey and his ship have departed. Agrippa and Enobarbus discuss Lepidus' torn affection for both Antony and Caesar.

Enter Antony, Octavia and Caesar. Antony and Octavia are due to leave for Athens, though Octavia does not want to leave her brother, weeps quietly. Caesar reminds her that he will be thinking of her and bids them safe passage.

Scene 7: 01:19:30

Back in Alexandria, Eros reports back to Cleopatra that Octavia pales in comparison to her, Cleopatra is particularly pleased by these reports. Cleopatra prepares to write to Antony and asks Charmian to bring Antony to her. All is well again.

ACT 3

Scene 1 01:22:38

Straight away we move into the sounds of conflict, with the sound of military planes flying overhead. On his way back from Egypt, Eros meets with Enobarbus, who reveals that in Antony's absence, Caesar and Lepidus had made war upon Pompey, and killed him. Caesar, having used Lepidus to fight against Pompey, claims treason against Lepidus. The triumvirate is finished.

Scene 2 01:23:18

Antony and Octavia, some months into their marriage. They debate Caesar's actions, and how Caesar has spoken against Antony. Octavia defends her brother and tells him not to believe everything he has heard.

Antony threatens war against Caesar and sends Octavia as messenger to send news to her brother of these threats.

Scene 3: 01:26:00

Caesar's office. Agrippa repeats to Caesar the reports of Antony's accusations against him, which Caesar denies or ignores. Octavia enters alone. Caesar is furious that she has been sent, unaccompanied back to Rome with no protection.

Agrippa and Caesar reveal that Antony has publicly been enthroned with Cleopatra, and made her queen and ruler over lower Syria, Cypress and Lydia, and as he has sent her away, he has returned to Egypt at Cleopatra's will. Octavia weeps.

Meanwhile, Antony returns to Cleopatra's embrace.

INTERVAL.

ACT 4

Scene 1: 01:31:50

Cleopatra and Antony prepare for war against Caesar. Enobarbus and Candidus warn Antony that his forces and resources do not match those that Antony has, yet Antony and Cleopatra are confident that they will win the battle by sea.

Scene 2: 01:36:10

Caesar and Antony's forces do battle at sea. The battle commences.

Scene 3: 01:37:00

Enobarbus and Scarus re-enter the war room, defeated. They recount how mid-way during the battle, Cleopatra and her ships flee the battle, and Antony commanded his ships do the same, following Cleopatra. Many soldiers have died and are furious with the disgraced Antony.

Antony laments his regretful actions, informed by his love for Cleopatra. He dismisses his men and offers them free pardon to join Caesar's forces.

Cleopatra enters, and her faithful maids take her to comfort Antony. He begs his pardon for fleeing the scene, which reluctantly, he does.

Scene 4: 01:44:15

Antony sends a messenger to Caesar. He reduces his claim to live freely in Egypt, but instead asks to be able to live quietly alone in Athens. A plea which Caesar ignores.

Instead, Caesar proposes a peace treaty with Cleopatra, on the condition that she drives Antony out of Egypt, or kill him.

Scene 5: 01:46:20

Caesar's proposal is received at Cleopatra's palace. Cleopatra seeks Enobarbus' private counsel, in which he blames Antony solely for the lost battle at sea, for he did not need to have followed Cleopatra's exit.

Antony mocks Caesar's youth, and instead, proposes that he and Caesar go sword to sword, one on one, to settle the battle. Antony exits with the messenger to write his response.

Enter Thidius, with message from Caesar, and attempts to woo Cleopatra and persuade her to lay herself at Caesar's care. He kisses her hand and begins to kiss up her arm, when Antony re-enters. Seeing this, Antony flies into a rage, and calls upon his soldiers to have Thidius whipped. Antony sends Thidius back to Caesar whipped and bloodied.

Antony's rage reignites the passion of both Antony and Cleopatra, and Antony vows to fight Caesar again, and win.

Scene 6: 01:58:50

Caesar receives Antony's challenge, and the whipped Thidias. Caesar vows to fight a final battle with Antony tomorrow, and now has an increased army with those who have crossed the line and turned against him. He pities Antony.

Scene 7: 01:59: 55

Antony declares that he will fight to the death in tomorrow's battle. He gathers his few remaining staff, and he attempts to rouse them one final time, with knowledge that he will likely not survive, driving his staff to tears.

Cleopatra's faithful maids, and the Soothsayer note that tomorrow will be the day that will determine fate. Hercules, the god of strength and heroes, has left Antony's side. Antony sends to him all his treasures that he left behind in his desertion.

Scene 8: 02:04:00

Early the next morning. Antony prepares and dresses in his armour, ready for battle. Cleopatra helps him dress, and he bids her adieu. Enobarbus, Antony's most trusted friend, has fled in the night, leaving all his belongings, to join Caesar.

Scene 9: 02:08:00

At Caesar's war room, Caesar, Agrippa and Enobarbus prepare for war. Enobarbus admits his deep shame and heartbreak for deserting his dear friend, Antony. He vows that he will not fight, but rather find some ditch to die in, befitting his treachery.

The battle in Alexandria commences. Antony's army wages war. Caesar's troupes retreat, for Antony's army are more forceful than they expected.

Scene 10: 02:11:30

Antony, with a wounded Scarus and Eros at his side, emerge from the battle victorious. He takes them to Cleopatra. He explains to Cleopatra how they won, though Caesar is younger, Antony has the smarts and experience. He thanks his soldiers for their bravery and sends them home to their wives and children. He celebrates with Cleopatra.

Scene 11: 02:15:00

Enobarbus repents in his shame for deserting Antony. He dies of shame, crying Antony's name. His body is carried to the court by his fellow soldiers.

Scene 12: 02:16:50

Both Caesar and Antony watch the battle by sea while on land. Caesar's strength lies in his fleet at sea.

The third battle commences. Antony's fleet is defeated.

Scene 13. 02:18:15

Antony believes that Cleopatra has betrayed him, as his Egyptian soldiers so readily gave up the battle, believing that she has sold him to Caesar.

He rages at her, believing that his death may have prevented the death of many, should these wars have been in vain.

Cleopatra calls her women to her and describes how Antony has gone mad with his accusations. Charmian devises a plan for Cleopatra to go to the monument and send message to Antony that she has killed herself, which shall bring him to her.

Antony reveals to Eros that Cleopatra has falsely betrayed him to Caesar, and calls upon Eros to kill themselves, for they have been robbed of their honour.

Charmian enters, and tells Antony that Cleopatra has killed herself, with her final breaths, called out his name.

Antony is heartbroken and weeps for Cleopatra's pardon, for living without Cleopatra is torture. He states that he will join her in the afterlife. He begs Eros to kill him, before Caesar publicly and dishonourably kills him. Eros weeps. He insists Antony turns around as to not look at him while he strikes with his sword. With one swift movement, Eros kills himself instead, escaping the sorrow of Antony's death.

Antony attempts suicide but fails, leaving himself badly wounded. He begs other soldiers to strike him dead, but they will not.

Iris enters, with word from Cleopatra that she is not dead and is at the monument waiting for him. His bids his solders, as one final command, to carry him to Cleopatra.

ACT 5

Scene 1 02:33:00

Cleopatra repents her actions, and vows to never leave the monument. The dying Antony is carried by his soldiers to her, where she begs his forgiveness. He is raised up to the top of the monument to be with her. With his dying wish, he advises Cleopatra to trust the word of Proculeius, and to cast herself upon Caesar's mercy. He dies in her arms. She weeps, for without Antony, for there is nothing remarkable left in her world.

She asks her faithful maids to help her bury Antony in the brave and noble Roman fashion, and then to assist her to take her own life, so that she joins Antony in the afterlife.

Scene 2: 02:40

Caesar stands in the rubble at his camp. He commands Agrippa go to Caesar and bid him to yield to Caesar. Scarus enters, holding Antony's bloodied sword, and reveals that Antony is dead, having killed himself by his own hand, with this very bloodied sword.

Caesar laments Antony's death, his brother, his competitor and friend and companion in Rome, and as one of two remaining triumvirs, this is the "ending of half the world."

Charmian enters with a message to Caesar from Cleopatra, asking what he intends with the Queen. He vows that he will be gentle with her, and will purpose her no shame. He sends Proculeius to prevent Cleopatra from taking her own life, which would bring great public shame upon Caesar as ruler.

Scene 3: 02:44:05

Proculieus arrives at the monument and reassures Cleopatra that Caesar means her no harm. He bids his soldiers guard Cleopatra, where she draws a dagger to kill herself. He seizes and disarms her. She calls upon death to take her and will do anything to die rather than be publicly humiliated, her body strung up in chains in Rome.

Enter Octavia, where she and Cleopatra meet for the first time. Cleopatra does not recognise her. She reveals her dream for Antony as her Emperor and their life together. Octavia tells her that Antony means her no harm.

Enter Caesar, and Cleopatra bows to him, as her master and lord. Cleopatra weeps, though he tells her that if she applies herself to Caesar's intentions, then he will be kind, but if she tries to fight against him as Antony did, then he shall destroy her and her children. He spares her and bids her adieu.

With her maids, Cleopatra swears that she shall not become Caesar's Egyptian puppet in Rome. Cleopatra bids her women bring her best clothes, so that she be dressed as a Queen.

Passing Proculeius who stands as guard, the Soothsayer enters with a basket of figs for the Queen. Inside, as requested by the Queen, a poisonous asp whose venom is fatal. The women dress Cleopatra in her crown and robe, for her final moments. She thanks her kind and faithful maids and kisses them farewell. Iras dies by Cleopatra's kiss.

Cleopatra lifts the snake to her breast, and with one fateful bite, the venom kills her. Charmian follows dutifully, and the snake bites her. As she dies, she adjusts Cleopatra's crown, ready to meet Antony in death.

Enter Caesar, Agrippa and Proculieus, who are too late, and spot the bite marks on Cleopatras breast. Caesar declares that Cleopatra shall be buried next to Antony. His

armies shall attend their funeral before departing. Never will a grave contain a pair so famous throughout the world.

END.

Suggestions for Further Activity

- Watch this video of Evie Gurney talking about the costume design for Cleopatra <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yDmATXNAfz8> . After you have watched this video, choose another character from the play and make suggestions for how you would design for them. Alternatively, research your own favourite designers and influences and design a different set of costumes for Cleopatra, based on your interpretation of the play.
- The British Library has an article about the Roman influence on Shakespeare plays, which you can find here: <https://www.bl.uk/shakespeare/articles/what-the-romans-did-for-shakespeare-rome-and-roman-values-in-shakespeares-plays>
- The Shakespeare Birthplace Trust has a helpful summary of each act in the play, which can be found here: <https://www.shakespeare.org.uk/explore-shakespeare/shakespedia/shakespeares-plays/antony-and-cleopatra/>
- The National Theatre staged *Antony and Cleopatra* in 1998, with Helen Mirren and Alan Rickman in the title roles. Harriet Walter and Patrick Stewart appeared at the Royal Shakespeare Company (RSC) in the play in 2006 and Frances de la Tour and Alan Bates played the couple in 1999. Helen Mirren and Michael Gambon played the roles for the RSC in 1982. With a partner, consider who you would cast in the title roles, and why. Research the couples listed here and consider why that casting may be considered successful and appealing to audiences. Who would you cast in the supporting roles, and why?

Find out More

Watch

Cleopatra: Dressing a Queen

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yDmATXNAfz8>

Antony and Cleopatra: Simon Godwin, Hildegard Bechtler and Michael Bruce in conversation

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=O6sDooMnC-s>

Performing Shakespeare with Abigail Rokison-Woodall and Simon Russell-Beale

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JdmFNzyR27s&list=PLJgBmjHpqgs7citDojiasj-nMABL_DXku&index=8

Shakespeare at the NT: Writer for Today

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3lnDNluJno0&t=1s>

Shakespeare at the NT: The 21st Century

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gxgiayklr-0>

Explore

The National Theatre's Google Arts and Culture exhibitions, including this one on Shakespeare at the National Theatre

<https://artsandculture.google.com/story/WQVxxgh-hh8A8A>

Learning Hub

You can find more resources for schools and teachers on the National Theatre's Learning Hub. Search by key stage, subject, theatrical style or practitioner and discover an ever-growing library of short films, learning guides and digital exhibitions.

Find out more: <https://www.nationaltheatre.org.uk/learn-explore/schools/teacher-resources/>

National Theatre Archive

More materials relating to the production including the costume bible, poster, prompt scripts, programme, stage management reports and more are held at the National Theatre Archive, which is free to visit.

Find out more: <https://www.nationaltheatre.org.uk/archive>

We hope that you have enjoyed watching and studying **Antony and Cleopatra**. Don't forget that there are many more fantastic productions to explore as part of the NT Collection. We hope that watching

this recorded production has made you feel inspired to see and make live theatre. [Why not find out what's happening at your local theatre and how you can get involved?](#)

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Thank you