

An analysis of the
foreshadowing of
cleopatra's betrayal in
antony and
cleopatra,...



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Cleopatra's betrayal is not unexpected at all if one closely reads the text in Antony and Cleopatra. There is ample foreshadowing of Cleopatra's corrupted morals and sense of self. Antony's infatuation with Cleopatra leads him to overlook her behavior and forgive her almost instantly. His love is ultimately blinding and had Antony been more aware and focused with his brain rather than his heart, he would have understood what Cleopatra is truly like. What struck me as interesting were all of the little instances that warn of Cleopatra's future betrayal that could easily be brushed over not only by Antony, but also by readers.

Cleopatra's behavior is brought to light when Enobarbus and Antony are speaking to each other in Act I, Scene II. The way Enobarbus speaks of Cleopatra implies that he had been close to her once before. As narrated, "Alack, sir, no, her passions are made of // nothing but the finest part of pure love // We cannot call her wins and waters sighs and tears; they are // greater storms and tempests than almanacs can // report. This cannot be cunning in her; if it be, she // makes a shower of rain as well as Jove." (Act I, Scene II). Enobarbus paints Cleopatra to be this dramatic picture of a woman that he recognizes and wants Antony to acknowledge. Regardless of her "tempestuous" personality, she is also suggested to be gentler when she is associated with "showers of rain". In effect, Enobarbus recognizes both Cleopatra's harshness along with her ability to seduce and show affection. If one reads closely, one can also notice that Enobarbus speaks of Antony's woman as though she was once his as well. Antony doesn't seem to catch on to this or think of Enobarbus possibly having sexual encounters with Cleopatra. However, if the two did have prior relationships together, this

foreshadows her disloyalty. Antony's heart lies directly with Cleopatra and we see this as he refuses to listen to Enobarbus.

As one can see, the foreshadowing of Cleopatra's betrayal links the simple words of Shakespeare's texts to the bigger consequences that Antony faces. Whether it is through Cleopatra's behavior or her actions, with the help of inference and close reading, one can see the direction the play was headed towards from its opening pages. With the speech that Enobarbus provides, we gain insight on what other characters besides Antony think of Cleopatra and their own unique ways of describing her, eventually becoming embodied in her actions.