

HAMLET WITH EXTRA CHEESE

Full-Length Comedy
by
Michael Fountain



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ACT I

ANTONY AND CLEOPATRA

(much abused by Michael Fountain)

At Rise: Enter CLEOPATRA, fanned by CHARMAIN and IRIS and followed by PTOLEMY.

CLEOPATRA: Dear Diary: another boring day as the Queen of Egypt.

PTOLEMY: Whatcha doin', huh? Whatcha doin'?

CLEOPATRA: Bathed in ass's milk; had pearls dissolved in vinegar for lunch; assassinated little brother... ***(stabs PTOLEMY and HE staggers off dying)*** P.S. - that Roman general, Julius Caesar, is so cute!

CAESAR: ***(enters)*** I came, I saw, I conquered. What's next on the agenda? Hm, subdue the Gauls... check. Hunt down pirates... check. Oh, hi, Cleo...

CLEOPATRA: He knows my name!

CAESAR: Redesign the calendar... check. Have decided to name the seventh month after myself... Julilicious? No... September, October, Caesarborer... that's it! April, May, June, Caesarborer...

CLEOPATRA: Dear Diary: same old same old.

PTOLEMY: ***(staggers back, only wounded)*** Whatcha doin', huh? Whatcha doin'?

CLEOPATRA: Up and down the Nile on my barge; was worshipped as a goddess - AGAIN; assassinated little brother... ***(poisons PTOLEMY and HE staggers off dying)*** P.S. I can't wait to hook up with Julius C! The way he slaughters thousands and combs his hair to cover that little bald spot, is so cute!

CAESAR: Okay... cross the Rubicon... check. Help crush slave rebellion... check. Conquer Egypt... check.

CLEOPATRA: Dear Diary: They won't let me in to see Julius! Have decided to smuggle myself in, rolled up in a carpet.

(CHARMAIN and IRIS wrap CLEOPATRA in a carpet and deliver her to CAESAR)

CAESAR: What this? Do not open until Christmas? But that won't be invented for another fifty years! ***(unrolls carpet)***

CLEOPATRA: Surprise!

CAESAR: I'll say! I was expecting Claudette Colbert or Liz Taylor.

CLEOPATRA: Ah, Caesar, together we shall -

PTOLEMY: ***(still not dead, moving between them)*** Whatcha doin', huh? Whatcha doin'?

(CLEOPATRA hands PTOLEMY a prop bomb; CAESAR lights the fuse, PTOLEMY skips offstage; a pause, then an explosion and a cloud of confetti.)

CLEOPATRA: Together we shall rule the world.

CAESAR: Sounds great! Oh, wait, let me check my planner... hmm, I have business in Rome right up through the Ides of March... what's April look like to you?

CLEOPATRA: ***(sighs)*** April is the cruelest month...

CAESAR: Tell me about it. So, can I... call you later?

CLEOPATRA: Of course you can, you most powerful man in the world, you. ***(exits)***

SOOTHSAYER: ***(enters)*** Caesar! Beware the Ides of March!

CAESAR: Beware the Ides of March? And who are you?

SOOTHSAYER: I'm a soothsayer. Silence! I shall say the sooth!

CAESAR: So get on with it then.

SOOTHSAYER: Look, buddy, I've had it up to here with your attitude. I only have one line, and I'm going to milk it for everything it's got. Some of us don't get to play "Master of the Roman World." Some of us don't get to play "Cootchicoo with the Queen of the Nile." Some of us just have to play the Soothsayer.

CAESAR: So say it then

SOOTHSAYER: ***(dramatically)*** Cae-sarrrr! Bewarrrre... ***(rolls his eyes at CAESAR, making him wait for it)*** The llllides... of March!

(CHORUS applauds. SOOTHSAYER bows and exits.)

CAESAR: Ides, ides... what is that, the fifteenth?

(Enter ANTONY and BRUTUS, followed by the ROMAN MOB carrying placards saying “Hail Caesar!”, “Make Julius Emperor Now”, etc.)

ANTONY and BRUTUS: **(together)** Hail, Caesar!

CASSIUS: **(a beat too late)** Uh, Hail.

CAESAR: What news, Marc Antony? What news, my noble Brutus?

ANTONY: The Roman mob is tired of this crazy republican mess. They just want their bread and circuses. They want to abolish the Republic and make you the Emperor.

MOB: Hooray for Julius Caesar, Down with the Senate, Who needs a Republic? etc.

CAESAR: Aw, shucks. For little old me? Really, you shouldn't have...

BRUTUS: The Roman Senate is very angry with you. The senators are accusing you of trying to make yourself a dictator.

(Enter SENATORS to stand by CASSIUS and BRUTUS.)

CAESAR: Stupid senators - always trying to spoil my fun! Who's the skinny one, there?

ANTONY: That is Cassius, my lord.

CAESAR: Yon Cassius has a lean and hungry look. He thinks too much; such men are dangerous.

BRUTUS: Aren't you afraid of going to the Senate? I mean, it is the Ides of March...

CAESAR: Cowards die many times before their death; the valiant never taste of death but once.

CASSIUS: Then taste this, you tyrant!

(CASSIUS and SENATORS attack and stab CAESAR.)

CAESAR: **(on his knees)** Well at least I can always count on you, Brutus. Hand me a bandaid and some Neosporin, would you? Maybe some aspirin...

BRUTUS: Gee, I don't know... I kind of think the Senators have a point. **(stabs CAESAR)**

CAESAR: *Et tu, Brute?* Then fall, Caesar! **(dies)**

CASSIUS: The tyrant is dead! Hooray for our side!

MOB: Hooray for our side! Hooray for Cassius and Brutus!

ANTONY: Friends, Romans, Countrymen! Lend me your ears! Did you know that if elected, Caesar promised you bread, circuses, and a big tax cut to be paid for later?

MOB: A tax cut? Oh, goodie, etc.

ANTONY: It's those tax and spend liberals in the Senate that have murdered your hero, Julius Caesar! If you elect me, I promise to carry on the legacy of Julius Caesar! I want to be the Education Emperor!

MOB: Grr.... hooray for Antony! Death to Brutus and Cassius!

CASSIUS: Curse you, Antony! I knew we should have gotten a recount! **(kills himself with his own sword)**

BRUTUS: So much for campaign finance reform. This really isn't working out the way I planned. Hold this for a second, will you? **(runs onto his own sword and kills himself)**

ANTONY: Well, here I am, master of the Roman world.

CLEOPATRA: **(enters, running into ANTONY'S arms)** And here you are, Master of the Roman World.

ANTONY: Peel me another grape, would you, dear?

CLEOPATRA: Of course, my angel.

OCTAVIAN: **(enters)** Aren't you forgetting someone?

CLEOPATRA: Who? Who did we forget? **(looks around)** Did we forget about anyone?

OCTAVIAN: You forgot about me, Octavian, nephew to Julius Caesar, later to be known as Caesar Augustus!

ANTONY: Oh, that pencil-necked geek.

OCTAVIAN: I'm the pencil necked geek who's been taking care of business, while you've been spending your time playing footsie with Miss Congeniality, here. Remember all those staff meetings that you couldn't be bothered to attend? Remember those homework assignments you never bothered to hand in? Remember, Mister "I'm too cool to stay in school?"

ANTONY: **(yawns, takes another drink of wine)** Yeah, so?

OCTAVIAN: Well, now the chickens have come home to roost. While you've been hanging out with this Egyptian cupcake, I've been doing all the hard work of keeping the Roman Empire running. And I've decided to make some changes in top management.

ANTONY: **(still lounging)** Whatever...

CLEOPATRA: Talk to the hand, 'cause the goddess ain't listening.

OCTAVIAN: By the way, Marc Antony, did you remember to tell Cleopatra that you're still married to my sister?

(ANTONY does a spit take.)

CLEOPATRA: What? You're married?

ANTONY: Cleo, let me explain...

CLEOPATRA: Explain this, you rat! I'm taking my navy and going home. **(exits)**

OCTAVIAN: Surrender, Antony! Your pharonic floozy has ratted you out! Give up now and I'll go easy on you before I feed you to the lions.

ANTONY: Oh this false soul of Egypt! Well, Cleopatra may have run out on me, but I can still whip you, Octavian! I still have my army behind me - ready, boys?

(ROMAN MOB, carrying swords and spears, have tiptoed away from ANTONY and gather behind OCTAVIAN.)

ROMAN MOB: Right behind you, chief!

OCTAVIAN: You're yesterday's news, Marc Antony. You have kissed away kingdoms and provinces. The Roman lions are too good for you - I think the Egyptians might enjoy feeding you to the sacred crocodile.

ANTONY: Betrayed by a pretty face! Scribe!

(SCRIBE enters and crosses back and forth for the following exchange between ANTONY and CLEOPATRA.)

ANTONY: Take a message to Cleopatra: Dear Cleo: Roses are red, the Nile is blue; Please come back to me, or I'm crocodile poo.

CLEOPATRA: **(reads the message, addresses SCRIBE)** Tell him I dropped dead, and I hope he does too. Tell him my dying words were "Antony, most noble Antony." And then come back and tell me how he takes the news.

ANTONY: **(reads her answer)** Cleopatra dead? All is lost! **(takes out his sword and stabs himself)**

CLEOPATRA: Well, how did he take it?

SCRIBE: **(beat)** Not well.

ANTONY: What, still not dead? I can't do anything right!

CLEOPATRA: **(goes to him)** Oh, sweetie, you know you're always your own worst critic.

ANTONY: I lived like the prince of the world, and now - **(dies)**

OCTAVIAN: All right, Cleopatra, we know you're in there - come out with your hands up! You're coming with me back to Rome, where you have a starring role in my victory parade.

CLEOPATRA: *Moi*, Cleopatra, Queen of the Nile, in a supporting role? I'd rather die first! **(to IRIS and CHARMAIN)** Fetch me the you-know-what. Give me my robe. Give me my crown. I have immortal longings in me.

CHARMAIN: Your majesty, here is the royal snake handler with the royal you-know-what.

CROCODILE HUNTER: **(with thick Australian accent, carrying a basket and rubber snake)** Crikey! This 'ere's the deadly Egyptian asp! Isn't 'e beautiful? This little buggah's so venomous, you don't even have to be in the same room with 'im. 'E could just bite your footprints while you were out of town for the weekend, and you'd be stone dead by Labor Day!

IRIS: I forgot to warn you that the royal snake handler IS a royal pain in the you-know-what.

CROCODILE HUNTER: 'Oo! Didja see how he's wrigglin'? What I'm doing right now is REALLY irritating him, and the fascinating thing about the Egyptian asp is that he only bites when someone REALLY gets on his nerves...like this! And shouts in a loud voice... like this! Let's see what happens if I poke at him, like this—oh, buggah! **(drops dead)**

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