

Antony and Cleopatra abbreviated

Act 3, Scene 1

Insight

Situation: Ventidius and Silius are two officers in Antony's army that defeats the Parthians. The Parthians are a people who sometime earlier had defeated Roman forces. Sometime ago the Parthians had killed Marcus Crassus, an original member of the first Roman triumvirate that had included Pompey the Great and Julius Caesar.

VENTIDIUS: Pleased Fortune does of Marcus Crassus' death make me revenger. Bear the king's son's body before our army.

SILIUS: Noble Ventidius, spur through Media, Mesopotamia, and the shelters whither they routed fly. So thy grand captain, Antony, shall set thee on triumphant chariots and put garlands on thy head.

Ventidius to Silius

**O, Silius, I have done enough. Note,
Subordinates dare ne'er appear to gloat.
For learn this: 'tis better to leave undone
Than by our deed acquire fame when him we
Serve is gone. Caesar and Antony won
More through their officers than person. He
Who is a lieutenant accumulates
Quick renown soon loses favor. He baits
Himself who does more to do good, but in
The doing offends his captain; soldiers'
Performances perish once the captain
Is displeased. He who does the more confers
Successes i' th' wars to the captain,
And then may become his captain's captain.**

SILIUS: Thou wilt write to Antony?

VENTIDIUS: I'll humbly signify what in his name we have effected.