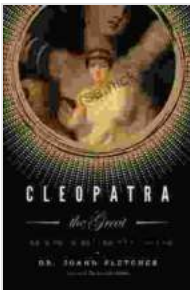


# Cleopatra the Great: The Woman Behind the Legend

Cleopatra VII, the last pharaoh of Egypt, was a woman of remarkable intelligence, beauty, and charisma. She ruled Egypt for nearly 30 years, during which time she defied Roman authority, expanded her kingdom, and became one of the most famous women in history.



## Cleopatra the Great: The Woman Behind the Legend

by Joann Fletcher

★★★★☆ 4.2 out of 5

Language : English

File size : 2677 KB

Text-to-Speech : Enabled

Screen Reader : Supported

Enhanced typesetting: Enabled

Word Wise : Enabled

Print length : 477 pages



## Early Life and Education

Cleopatra was born in 69 BC in Alexandria, Egypt. She was the daughter of Ptolemy XII Auletes, a weak and unpopular pharaoh. Cleopatra's mother, Cleopatra V Tryphaena, died when Cleopatra was young, and her father remarried his sister, Cleopatra VI Tryphaena. Cleopatra's stepmother was a cruel and ambitious woman who tried to have Cleopatra killed.

Cleopatra was a brilliant and ambitious young woman. She was educated in the Greek and Egyptian classics, and she spoke several languages

fluently. She was also a skilled musician and dancer. Cleopatra's education and intelligence would serve her well throughout her life.

## **Rise to Power**

In 51 BC, Ptolemy XII Auletes died, and Cleopatra and her younger brother, Ptolemy XIII, became joint rulers of Egypt. Cleopatra was 18 years old at the time, and Ptolemy XIII was 10. Cleopatra quickly asserted her authority over her brother, and she soon became the sole ruler of Egypt.

Cleopatra's reign was marked by a series of challenges. Egypt was facing economic problems, and there was widespread discontent among the population. Cleopatra also had to deal with the threat of Roman invasion. In 48 BC, Julius Caesar arrived in Egypt with his army. Cleopatra saw Caesar as an opportunity to strengthen her position, and she allied herself with him.



Cleopatra and Caesar became lovers, and they had a son together named Caesarion. Cleopatra used her relationship with Caesar to gain political and economic advantages for Egypt. She also persuaded Caesar to help her defeat her brother, Ptolemy XIII, who had challenged her rule.

### **Reign as Pharaoh**

After Caesar's assassination in 44 BC, Cleopatra allied herself with Mark Antony, one of Caesar's generals. Antony and Cleopatra became lovers, and they had three children together. Cleopatra and Antony ruled Egypt together for several years, and they expanded their kingdom to include parts of Syria, Palestine, and Cyprus.



However, Cleopatra's relationship with Antony eventually led to her downfall. In 31 BC, Octavian, Caesar's adopted son, declared war on Antony and Cleopatra. Antony and Cleopatra were defeated at the Battle of Actium, and they both committed suicide. Cleopatra was 39 years old at the time of her death.

## **Legacy**

Cleopatra the Great is one of the most famous women in history. She was a brilliant and ambitious ruler who defied Roman authority and expanded her kingdom. Cleopatra was also a patron of the arts and sciences, and she was a skilled musician and dancer. Her beauty and charisma have been legendary for centuries.

However, Cleopatra's legacy is also complex. She was a ruthless and ambitious ruler, and she was willing to use any means necessary to achieve her goals. She was also a master of propaganda, and she carefully crafted her public image. As a result, it is difficult to separate fact from fiction when it comes to Cleopatra.

## **Separating Fact from Fiction**

There are many myths and legends surrounding Cleopatra. Some of these myths are based on historical fact, while others are pure fiction. Here are a few of the most common myths about Cleopatra, and the truth behind them:

- **Myth: Cleopatra was Egyptian.**

Truth: Cleopatra was actually Greek. Her family was descended from

Alexander the Great, and she was the first of her dynasty to be born in Egypt.

- **Myth: Cleopatra was beautiful.**

Truth: There is no definitive evidence to support this claim. Cleopatra was probably not as beautiful as she is often portrayed in popular culture. However, she was undoubtedly intelligent and charismatic.

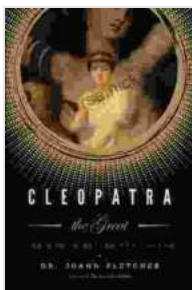
- **Myth: Cleopatra seduced Julius Caesar and Mark Antony.**

Truth: While it is true that Cleopatra had relationships with both Caesar and Antony, there is no evidence to suggest that she used seduction to gain their favor. She was a skilled diplomat and negotiator, and she was able to use her intelligence and charm to her advantage.

- **Myth: Cleopatra committed suicide by letting an asp bite her.**

Truth: The exact cause of Cleopatra's death is unknown. However, it is likely that she died of poisoning. She may have taken her own life, or she may have been poisoned by Octavian.

Cleopatra the Great was a complex and fascinating woman. She was a brilliant ruler, a skilled diplomat, and a patron of the arts and sciences. She was also a ruthless and ambitious woman, and she was willing to use any means necessary to achieve her goals. Cleopatra's legacy is still debated today, but there is no doubt that she was one of the most famous and influential women in history.



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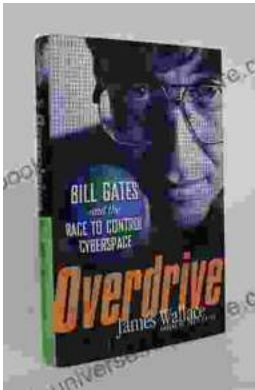
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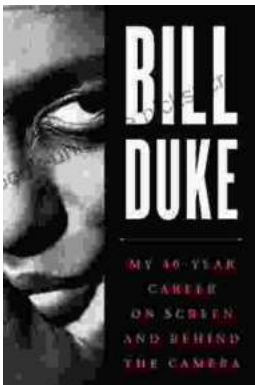
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