



# Quicklet on Stacy Schiff's Cleopatra: A Life (CliffNotes-like Book Summary)

*Paul Kraly, Paula Kalamaras*

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## ABOUT THE BOOK

We all know about Cleopatra VII, her seductive ways, her wanton affairs with two of the mightiest men of Rome and her demise by an asp bite. We picture her as Elizabeth Taylor in the 1960's eponymous flop and think of Mark Antony as Richard Burton. We know all about her. Or do we?

According to biographer Stacy Schiff, we do not even know what Cleopatra looked like. We've seen some coins and sculptures purporting to be Cleopatra. We do know that she ruled in Egypt for 22 tumultuous years, trying to keep her kingdom from being absorbed by the rapacious, provincial Romans. She had a child by Julius Ceasar and three more children by Mark Antony. But who was this remarkable last Pharaoh of Egypt?

## MEET THE AUTHOR

Paul Kraly and Paula Kalamaras are award-winning, professional screenwriters, novelists, literary agents, freelance writers & researchers. They have over 25 years experience writing just about anything for anybody. They are owned by their three cats Grimalkin, Mystery and Karma.

## EXCERPT FROM THE BOOK

From the age of eighteen, until her death twenty-two years later at thirty-nine, Cleopatra VII Philopator was the acknowledged ruler of Egypt. For several years, she was exiled within her country by her brother Ptolemy XIII's advisers and forced to raise her own army. Cleopatra was more than up to the challenge and at age 21, smuggled herself (either in a bag or a rug, depending on which historian you read) into the palace where Julius Caesar was living and presented herself to him. This audacious act typified how Cleopatra reigned and attempted to keep her kingdom as an ally of Rome, rather than a province.

When you strip away all the Roman propagandizing and vilifying of this powerful woman, you find that Cleopatra was a savvy, intelligent, highly educated ruler with a clear vision of the practical politics of her day. Since histories are written by the victors, and ultimately the Romans conquered Egypt, they were given free reign to belittle everything about her accomplishments. Sadly, this is the picture, thanks to Plutach, Dio, Appian and others, who worked for the conquerors, is the one that has come down signifying that she was the wickedest woman in the world.

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#### **Allen Grimm:**

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