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Upper Intermediate Student’s Book

Life

Queen of Egypt

**00.01–01.15** She has a reputation for beauty, power, controversy and, ultimately, tragedy.

In 69 BC, Cleopatra was born into Egypt’s Ptolemaic dynasty; a dynasty in decline and under the protection of Rome.

At the age of 18, she became queen, and ruled Egypt with her younger brother, Ptolemy the 13th. But the royal couple did not have a good relationship and Cleopatra was soon forced from power. But losing did not suit Cleopatra and she waited for a chance to prove her capabilities.

That opportunity came when Julius Caesar, the winner in Rome’s recent civil war, arrived in Alexandria, Egypt, in pursuit of a rival Roman general.

According to legend, Cleopatra managed to get herself into Caesar’s court rolled up inside a rug.

Caesar was completely charmed. He defeated Cleopatra’s rivals and helped her seize the throne.

Shortly after, she gave birth to a boy, Caesarion, whom she claimed was Caesar’s son.

**01.16–01.34** Egypt was a very rich country and Cleopatra was fiercely determined to keep it independent of Rome. Her relationship with Caesar kept the Romans from taking direct control of Egypt. But after Caesar’s murder, her position, and the future of her country, became uncertain.

**01.36–02.02** Searching for people who could help her among Rome’s new leaders, she was overjoyed when Mark Antony, one of Caesar’s potential successors, sent for her.

Like Caesar before him, Mark Antony was charmed by the elegant Egyptian queen ... and her riches.

Together they ruled Alexandria, an arrangement that made Cleopatra a fully independent ruler.

**02.05–02.30** Cleopatra and Antony shared a hunger for power. They eventually married and became the power couple of the eastern Mediterranean.

Antony tried to help her acquire some Roman lands. And he declared Cleopatra’s son Caesarion to be the son and true successor to Julius Caesar.

**02.32–03.03** That insulted and infuriated Mark Antony’s Roman rival, Octavian, who went to war against them.

Antony and Cleopatra were quickly beaten at the Battle of Actium in 31 BC.

Legend tells us that Cleopatra spread numerous false rumours of her death.

His mind distorted by grief, Antony killed himself. But word came she was still alive, and Antony’s followers carried him to Cleopatra where he died in her arms.

**03.05–03.25** After 22 years as queen, Cleopatra was fighting a losing battle. She tried unsuccessfully to make peace with Octavian. Utterly unable to bear the pain of losing to the Romans, she took hold of a poisonous snake and let it kill her with its bite.

**03.26–03.48** With her death, the Ptolemaic dynasty was finished, and Egypt fell firmly into Roman hands.

Although her ambitions were never realised, Cleopatra lives on in history through her personal story of love and tragedy

Life