

|||||

## CHARACTER LIST

|||||

### EGYPT

#### The Royal Family

**Cleopatra VIII Selene** – The only daughter of Cleopatra VII and Marcus Antonius; twin to Alexandros Helios

**Cleopatra VII** – The last queen of Egypt. Came to the throne at seventeen; allied with Julius Caesar in the War of Alexandria after siblings tried to overthrow her; married the Roman general Marcus Antonius.

**Marcus Antonius** – Roman general and politician. Was once married to Octavia, whom he divorced to marry Cleopatra VII. Father of Cleopatra Selene, Alexandros Helios, and Ptolemy Philadelphos, as well as two daughters by Octavia, Antonia-the-Elder and Antonia-the-Younger.

**Caesarion** (Ptolemy XV Caesar) – Son of Cleopatra VII and Julius Caesar

**Alexandros Helios** – Twin brother of Cleopatra Selene

**Ptolemy XVI Philadelphos**, or Ptolly – The youngest son of Cleopatra VII and Marcus Antonius

#### In Alexandria

**Zosima\*** – Nurse to Cleopatra Selene

**Nafre\*** – Nurse to Ptolly

**Iotape** – An Armenian princess brought to Egypt as a child and betrothed to Alexandros

**Katep\*** – Cleopatra Selene's royal eunuch and guard

**Euphronius** – Tutor to the royal children

**Charmion** – Queen Cleopatra's lady, companion, and handmaiden

**Iras** — Another lady and handmaiden to Queen Cleopatra

**Euginia\*** — Cleopatra Selene's friend

**Olympus** — A Greek *iatros*, or healer

**Cornelius Dolabella** — A Roman soldier left to guard Queen Cleopatra during Octavianus's occupation of Alexandria

**Yoseph ben Zakkai\*** — A rabbi in Alexandria

**Amunet\*** — Priestess of Isis at Pharos

**Ma'ani-Djehuti\*** — Priest of Serapis

**Sebi, Tanafriti, Hekate\*** — Cats of the royal household

### Gods

**Isis** — The Great Goddess, Cleopatra's patron goddess

**Osiris** — Lord of the Dead

**Anubis** — The jackal-headed god of the mummification process and the afterlife

**Horus** — The falcon-headed god of the sun, war, and protection

**Amut the Destroyer** — A monstrous demon with the head of a crocodile, the belly of a lion, and the legs of a hippo. He eats the hearts of those who didn't live by the rules of *ma'at*, preventing them from entering the afterworld.

**Bastet** — The cat-headed goddess of protection, especially of women, children, and domestic cats

### ROME

#### The House of Caesar

**Octavianus** — Nephew of Julius Caesar, who adopted Octavianus as his successor. Later called Augustus, the first emperor of Rome. Father of Julia.

**Livia Drusilla** – Second wife of Octavianus; mother to Tiberius and Drusus by her first husband

**Julia** – Daughter and only child of Octavianus by his first wife

**Octavia** – Octavianus's sister. Married first to Gaius Claudius Marcellus, then for political reasons to Marcus Antonius, who divorced her to wed Cleopatra VII. Mother of Marcellus, Marcella-the-Elder, and Marcella-the-Younger by her first husband, and Antonia-the-Elder and Antonia-the-Younger by Marcus Antonius.

**Marcellus** – Son of Octavia and her first husband

**Tiberius** – Livia's elder son from her first marriage

**Drusus** – Livia's younger son from her first marriage

**Marcella-the-Elder** and **Marcella-the-Younger** – Daughters of Octavia and her first husband

**Antonia-the-Elder** and **Antonia-the-Younger** – Daughters of Octavia and Marcus Antonius

### **Other Romans**

**Juba II** – Born a prince of the African kingdom of Numidia. Captured by Julius Caesar in infancy and raised in Octavia's household.

**Marcus Agrippa** – A friend and general of Octavianus

**Ben Harabim\*** – A young Jewish man in Rome

**Placus Munius Corbulo the Elder\*** – A Roman statesman with a reputation for marriages that end under suspicious circumstances

**Cornelius Gallus** – The Roman officer left in charge of Egypt

**Isetnofret\*** – Priestess of Isis at Capua

*\* Fictional characters*



# THE FACTS WITHIN THE FICTION



## THE GENERAL HISTORY:

- The last queen of Egypt, Cleopatra VII, did indeed have four children: Ptolemy Caesar, known as Caesarion (Little Caesar), with Julius Caesar; and, with Marcus Antonius (Mark Antony), twins Alexandros Helios and Cleopatra Selene, and Ptolemy Philadelphos.
- Her eldest, Caesarion, was hunted down and murdered by Octavianus's men around the time of Cleopatra's death in 30 BCE. Although Plutarch claims he died after her suicide, other sources (Cassius Dio) are not as clear. In this novel, I placed Caesarion's death before hers. We don't know what prompted Cleopatra to commit suicide on that particular day, at that particular time — why not earlier, for example, right after Antonius's death? Creatively, it seemed plausible to me that the shock and grief of losing her firstborn would have served as the last straw, a sort of catalyst toward her final act.
- Although not included in the story in order to simplify the character list, Antonius's eldest son by a former Roman wife — Antyllus — was also murdered (beheaded) in Alexandria during the Roman invasion. Cleopatra's surviving children — Cleopatra Selene, Alexandros Helios, and Ptolemy Philadelphos — were taken to Rome and reared in Octavianus's compound.
- In this story, Cleopatra's children fear for their lives while under the guardianship of Octavianus. As paterfamilias, he had full legal control of all women and children under his guardianship. The paterfamilias could beat, sell into slavery, or even kill his charges without legal consequence. (To do so was looked down upon, of course, but one could still legally get away with it.)
- In 29 BCE, the children of Antonius and Cleopatra were marched in Octavianus's Triumph over Egypt. Most scholars believe the boys died sometime after the Triumph, for the two brothers are never mentioned in the ancient sources again.
- It was common practice for Roman emperors to rear the sons of foreign allies before sending them out to rule in their name. Juba was Octavianus's first appointed "client-king." The irony? The client-king model was exactly what Antonius was advocating in his alliance with Cleopatra. One scholar says, "Antony hoped to create a more stable political organization for [the East] than his predecessors had established by imposing direct Roman rule" (Jones, *Cleopatra*).

## ABOUT CLEOPATRA VII, SELENE'S MOTHER

- Cleopatra VII became queen of Egypt at seventeen. At twenty, she was pushed out of Alexandria by her co-ruler/younger brother, whose handlers wanted power all to themselves. She then raised an army to fight for her crown. When Julius Caesar arrived in Egypt, she hid herself in a rug or bedroll to meet with him, outwitting her preteen brother and his handlers, and used her eventual alliance with Caesar to regain her throne.
- Plutarch reports that she spoke many languages, so that she could speak without interpreters to diplomats from Arabia, Judea, Nubia, Parthia, Syria, Medea, and many others. He also says she was the only one in her line of Ptolemaic rulers to learn Egyptian, the native tongue of her people. With such a facility for language, it is likely that she encouraged her children to speak multiple tongues.
- According to Plutarch, Cleopatra's beauty was "not incomparable," but the force of her personality, intelligence, and charm was undeniably powerful. He also says she had "a thousand ways to flatter," as well as a melodious voice.
- Cleopatra signed all her royal decrees with the Greek word *genestho*, which means, "make it so." A papyrus believed to have been signed by Cleopatra exists in the Ägyptisches Museum und Papyrussammlung in Berlin. In the document, she authorizes a tax break to the Roman who would later be in charge of some of Antonius's land forces during Actium.
- The Roman historian Cassius Dio says that Octavianus promised Cleopatra her kingdom, but only if she killed Antonius for him first. She, of course, did no such thing. Plutarch says Octavianus used "threats about the fate of her children" in negotiating with Cleopatra and that he used these threats like "a general uses siege engines" in battle.
- According to Plutarch, Cleopatra killed herself after tricking Octavianus and pretending she was going to Antonius's tomb to pray.
- Most modern scholars now acknowledge that Octavianus masterminded a thorough smear campaign against Cleopatra in order to create an excuse to declare war on Antonius. By almost all accounts – including histories recorded by early Arabs who learned to read hieroglyphic centuries before Westerners – Cleopatra was revered as an intelligent, serious, devoted ruler of her country. Contrary to the Western penchant for sexualizing Cleopatra, Arab historians described her as "chaste." After all, she had only two relationships her whole life – one with Julius Caesar and one with Marcus Antonius – both with the intention of preserving Egypt's independence.

## OCTAVIANUS AND MARCUS ANTONIUS

- In 44 BCE, Julius Caesar posthumously adopted his nephew, Octavianus, in his will and named him heir. Many thought Marcus Antonius should have been named Caesar's successor, thus creating the hostility between the two men.
- Octavianus was only eighteen at the time of Caesar's death. He immediately took on Caesar's name, but most historians refer to him as Octavian or Octavianus to avoid confusion. I used Octavianus to help differentiate him from his sister, Octavia.
- Antonius called Cleopatra to him in Antioch in 41 BCE and later returned to Egypt with her. In 40 BCE, while she was pregnant with the twins, he left her in Alexandria and went to Rome to marry Octavia and cement a peace treaty with Octavianus. He reunited with Cleopatra four years later and formally divorced Octavia in 32 BCE, which Octavianus used as an excuse to declare war on Cleopatra.
- Antonius did indeed bring little Iotape to Alexandros Helios for betrothal after a victory in modern-day Armenia. After conquering Egypt, Octavianus sent Iotape back to her homeland, and she was eventually married off to King Mithridates of Commagene.
- Antonius killed himself, according to Plutarch, in the manner described in this novel. I used creative license to insert Cleopatra Selene into the scene.
- Octavianus was renamed Augustus (the Revered One) in 27 BCE. Soon after, he renamed the month in which he defeated Antonius and Cleopatra (*Sextilis*) after himself (August). He died in 14 CE, when he was seventy-six years old — some say by the hand of his own wife, Livia, who may have served him poisoned figs. She lived until 29 CE.
- Cornelius Gallus — with whom I had Cleopatra Selene plan a coup — was indeed a low-ranking officer left in charge of Egypt by Octavianus. He did try to grab more power and prestige for himself and was later reported to have committed suicide after angering Octavianus.

## JUBA

- Juba, according to ancient sources, was — like Cleopatra Selene — a prince of a defeated country (Numidia). He was the only surviving member of his conquered family. He was carried in Julius Caesar's Triumph as a baby, and because of his extreme youth, Plutarch says he was "the happiest captive ever captured." Most scholars agree that Juba likely grew up in the household of Octavia after Julius Caesar died.
- Juba's homeland, Numidia, became a Roman province in 46 BCE when Julius Caesar defeated his father's army. In this novel, I have Octavianus send Juba to rule in Numidia first, only to discover the Roman governor in Numidia gives armed resistance

to the switch-over, which is why Octavianus moved him to Mauretania. There is no evidence it happened this way (but, of course, there's no evidence it *didn't* either!). Either way, Numidia continued to be ruled by a Roman governor, while Juba took over the kingdom of Mauretania. As a result, Juba is known to history as the king of Mauretania even though he started out as a prince of Numidia.

- One scholar writes, "It is possible that Juba was not the name given to [him] by his parents" (Roller, *The World of Juba II and Kleopatra Selene*). I used creative license to make Juba mean *king* in Punic. Punic is an extinct Semitic language.
- Juba wrote almost all his books in Greek. His topics included Roman archaeology, Latin, painting, history, and the great Carthaginian explorer, Hanno, as well as works on Arabia and Assyria. Once in Mauretania, Juba turned his intellectual focus to geography. He sent expeditions around the coast of Africa and wrote about one of his major discoveries: the Canary Islands. Plutarch wrote that Juba "became the most learned of all kings." He was also called *Rex Literatissimus*, which means "most literary king."
- After Cleopatra Selene's death in 6 CE, Juba ruled alongside their son Ptolemy until his own death nearly twenty years later. In 40 CE, the emperor Caligula killed Ptolemy in a fit of jealousy because Caligula thought Ptolemy's cloak was nicer than his own. Ptolemy of Mauretania, grandson of Cleopatra VII, was almost forty at the time of his death.

## JULIA, AGRIPPA, AND TIBERIUS

- In 25 BCE, Agrippa came back to Rome from Spain to oversee the marriage of Marcellus and Julia, even though Julia was only fourteen. No one knows exactly why or what the urgency was, though some have conjectured that Octavianus's illness in Spain spurred him to solidify the line of succession. Marcellus died in 23 BCE from an unknown illness.
- After Marcellus's death, Octavianus forced his daughter, Julia, to marry Agrippa, who was older than Octavianus himself, for the sake of preserving succession. Years later, he made Julia divorce Agrippa and marry Tiberius in order to secure Tiberius as heir, even though Tiberius was her stepbrother.
- Octavianus later exiled Julia — his own daughter — for having numerous sexual affairs. The one that most horrified him was the passionate affair she carried on with another one of Antonius's sons not mentioned in this novel (again to reduce confusion and streamline the many characters in this story) — Iullus Antonius, who was also brought up in Octavia's compound.
- Tiberius, Livia's eldest son, ruled Rome as Octavianus's successor — the second emperor of Rome — until his death in 37 CE.