Agnieszka Maciejewska, "Entry on: Cleopatra and Her Asp by Philip Reeve, Margaret Simpson", peer-reviewed by Elżbieta Olechowska and Lisa Maurice. Our Mythical Childhood Survey (Warsaw: University of Warsaw, 2018). Link: http://omc.obta.al.uw.edu.pl/myth-survey/item/254. Entry version as of November 21, 2026.

Philip Reeve , Margaret Simpson

## Cleopatra and Her Asp

*United Kingdom (1999)*

TAGS: Alexander Helios Caesar Caesarion Charmion (Cleopatra's Handmaid) Cleopatra Selene II Cleopatra VII Egypt Iras (Handmaid) Mark Antony Octavian Roman History Rome






*We are still trying to obtain permission for posting the original cover.*

| General information | |
|---|---|
| *Title of the work* | Cleopatra and Her Asp |
| *Country of the First Edition* | United Kingdom |
| *Country/countries of popularity* | UK |
| *Original Language* | English |
| *First Edition Date* | 1999 |
| *First Edition Details* | Margaret Simpson, *Cleopatra and Her Asp.* Ill. Philip Reeve, Dead Famous (Series). London: Scholastic, 1999, 192 pp. |
| *ISBN* | 8323701229 |
| *Genre* | Alternative histories (Fiction), Fiction, Fictional autobiography, Humor, Illustrated works |
| *Target Audience* | Crossover |
| *Author of the Entry* | Agnieszka Maciejewska, University of Warsaw, agnieszka.maciejewska@student.uw.edu.pl |
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## Creators



Retrieved from Wikipedia, public domain (accessed: December 30, 2021).

**Philip Reeve , b. 1966**
**(Author, Illustrator)**

Philip Reeve was born on 28 February 1966 in Brighton. He studied illustration at Cambridgeshire College of Arts and Technology as well as at Brighton Polytechnic (now the University of Brighton). In his early professional life, he was occupied with writing comedy sketches and various no-budget theatre shows. He is an author and illustrator ofchildren's books. Due to lack of free time, he could no more work on film or theatre like he used to and turned to writing. As a result, he published his first novel entitled *Mortal Engines* (2001), currently being adapted for the screen by Peter Jackson. His other notable works are *Here Lies Arthur*, an alternative depiction of the Arthurian legend; the *Larklight* series in a steampunk setting; sequels to *Mortal Engines*, the *Fever Crumb* trilogy. In recent years Philip Reeve has been collaborating with Sarah McIntyre on illustrated books, the first of the series being *Oliver and the Seawigs.* Lives on Dartmoor with his family; loves writing, drawing, acting and history. Reeve has produced illustrations for many books including those in the Horrible Histories and Dead Famous series.

Sources:

Profile at the Wikipedia (accessed: June 25, 2018).

Profile at the www.mbalit.co.uk (accessed: February 10, 2017).

An interview about his books for children, is available on his publisher's site (accessed: September 20, 2018)

Another interview, on the occasion of the release of *Railhead* (accessed September 20, 2018)

He answers questions about his writing preferences and process (accessed Semtember 20, 2018)

The Author's Official Website



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The Author's Blog

Bio prepared by Agnieszka Maciejewska, University of Warsaw, agnieszka.maciejewska@student.uw.edu.pl and Joanna Bieńkowska, University of Warsaw, joanna.bienkowska@student.uw.edu.pl



**Margaret Simpson (Author)**

Margaret Simpson writes for children and young adults. She was educated in Liverpool (Merchant Taylors' Girls' School) and at Cambridge (Newnham College). She started writing books after she gave birth to her three children. She wrote the *Dead Famous* (e.g. *Cleopatra and Her Asp)*, *Horribly Famous* (*Elizabeth I and Her Horrible Temper*, *Mary Queen of Scots and Her Hopeless Husbands*), *Twisted Tales* (*Arthurian Legends*, *Irish Legends* etc.) and other such series. She also works for television and radio.

Sources:

Profile at the goodreads.com (accessed: June 28, 2018).

Profile at the clubs-kids.scholastic.co.uk (accessed: June 28, 2018).

Bio prepared by Agnieszka Maciejewska, University od Warsaw, agnieszka.maciejewska@student.uw.edu.pl



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## Additional information

| | |
|---|---|
| Summary | In this book, Cleopatra's biography takes an unusual form, a fictional diary of the Queen that uses elements of comic books. The playful form reflects its target audience of children and teenagers. It includes an introduction about the Ptolemaic dynasty and the situation in ancient Egypt at the beginning of Cleopatra's reign. All the events in the book are in chronological order - we learn what happens from the moment Cleopatra becomes Queen until her death. The author uses diary entries to tell the readers about the Queen's duties and problems she faced during different stages of her life. Many cultural notes (in the comic book form) describe important historical events, daily life, ancient technology, socio-economic problems in Egypt, religion, and even some beauty advice. The author provides a lot of historical and cultural context. The reader learns how Cleopatra was perceived during her lifetime and how she is seen and judged in modern times. There are quotes by ancient authors, Plutarch, Horace and Vergil, and much later by writers such as Shakespeare. There are also some instances of modern pop culture embracing the legend of Cleopatra. |
| Analysis | This is a book for children that depicts Cleopatra's life and legend in an accessible way. It contains both the ancient and modern reception of Cleopatra. It describes many important historical events and characters connected to her. The use of the diary as a literary device introduces a more personal and approachable tone. Illustrations help the reader understand and imagine the life of the Queen. There is a lot of background related to ancient Greek, Roman and Egyptian cultures. |
| Classical, Mythological, Traditional Motifs, Characters, and Concepts | Alexander Helios Caesar Caesarion Charmion (Cleopatra's Handmaid) Cleopatra Selene II Cleopatra VII Egypt Iras (Handmaid) Mark Antony Octavian Roman History Rome |
| Other Motifs, Figures, and Concepts Relevant | Adolescence Historical figures Knowledge Learning |



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