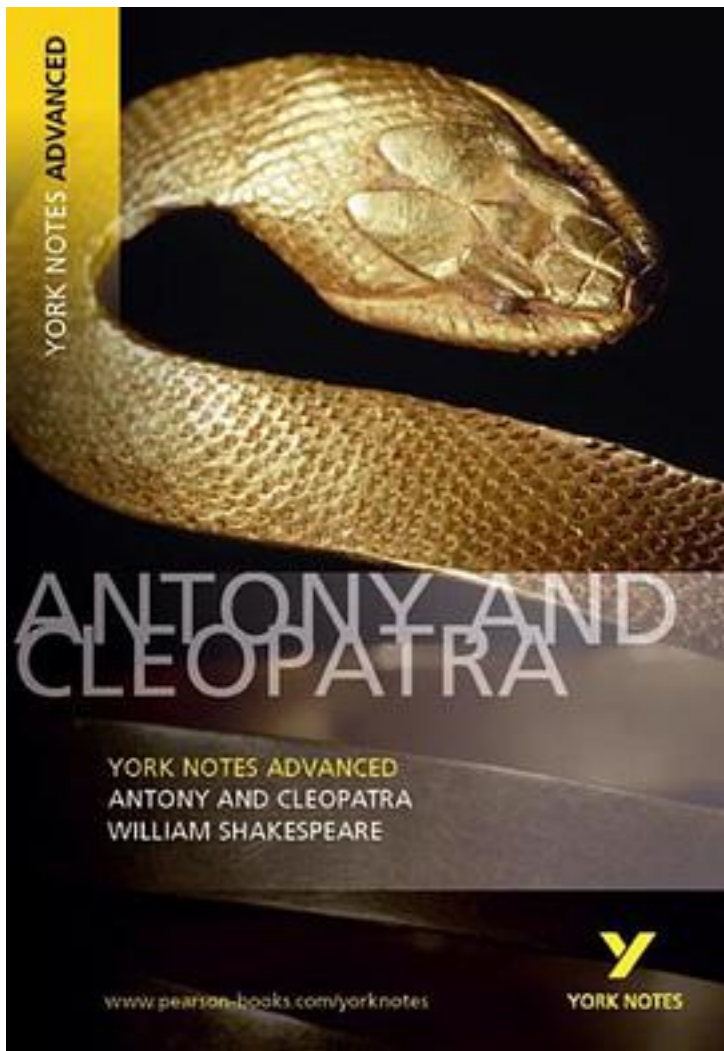


# "Antony and Cleopatra"



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著者:Hall, Joan Lord

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In Antony and Cleopatra, Shakespeare dramatizes the classical love story of the Roman general and the Egyptian queen, their fatal romance, and the power struggle that leads to the triumph of Octavius Caesar. While the play has much to offer, it is also one of Shakespeare's least accessible tragedies. It can baffle readers with its difuseness and multiple perspectives, or intimidate directors eager to do justice to its huge canvass without overwhelming the audience. This reference provides a thorough overview of the play, its background, and its critical and dramatic legacy. The early chapters examine the original text of Antony and Cleopatra and the play's contexts and sources. In particular, the book considers how Shakespeare's dramatic presentation of a powerful female ruler might reflect political attitudes in Renaissance England, and how he drew from North's Plutarch. The volume then analyzes the dramatic structure of the play--its settings, patterns of language, genre, and characters. Later chapters explore the tragedy's major themes and critical reception and discuss its performance history. A bibliographical essay then reviews the most important general works for further reading.

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