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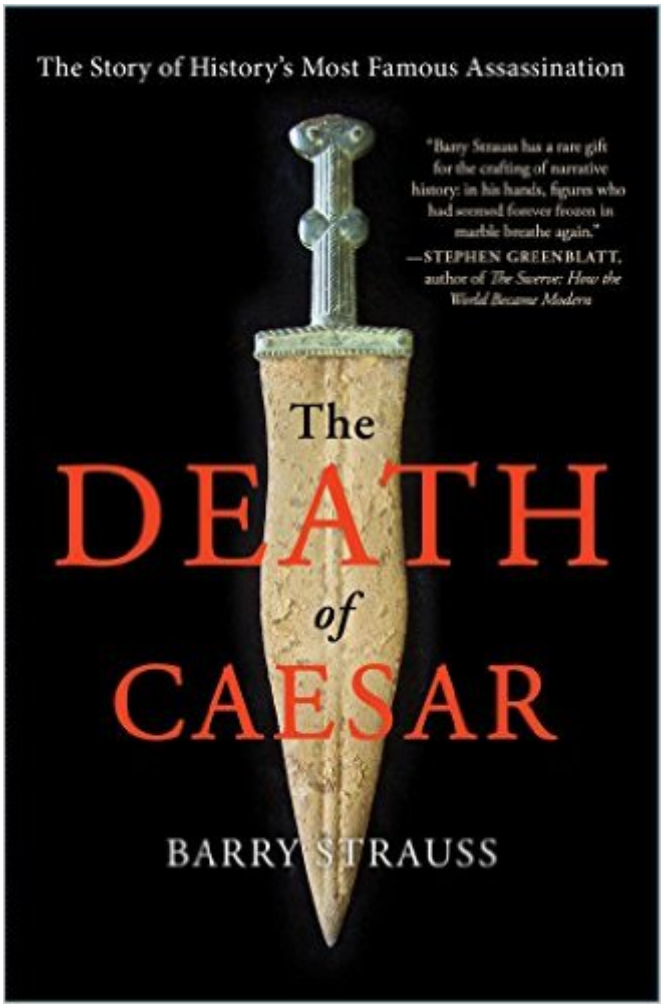
The Death Of Caesar: The Story Of History's Most Famous Assassination



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Synopsis

In this story of the most famous assassination in history, â œthe last bloody day of the [Roman] Republic has never been painted so brilliantlyâ • (The Wall Street Journal).Julius Caesar was stabbed to death in the Roman Senate on March 15, 44 BCâ ”the Ides of March according to the Roman calendar. He was, says author Barry Strauss, the last casualty of one civil war and the first casualty of the next civil war, which would end the Roman Republic and inaugurate the Roman Empire. â œThe Death of Caesar provides a fresh look at a well-trodden event, with superb storytelling sure to inspire aweâ • (The Philadelphia Inquirer). Why was Caesar killed? For political reasons, mainly. The conspirators wanted to return Rome to the days when the Senate ruled, but Caesar hoped to pass along his new powers to his family, especially Octavian. The principal plotters were Brutus, Cassius (both former allies of Pompey), and Decimus. The last was a leading general and close friend of Caesarâ ™s who felt betrayed by the great man: He was the mole in Caesarâ ™s camp. But after the assassination everything went wrong. The killers left the body in the Senate and Caesarâ ™s allies held a public funeral. Mark Antony made a brilliant speechâ ”not â œFriends, Romans, Countrymenâ • as Shakespeare had it, but something inflammatory that caused a riot. The conspirators fled Rome. Brutus and Cassius raised an army in Greece but Antony and Octavian defeated them. An original, new perspective on an event that seems well known, The Death of Caesar is â œone of the most riveting hour-by-hour accounts of Caesarâ ™s final day I have read....An absolutely marvelous readâ • (The Times, London).

Book Information

Paperback: 352 pages

Publisher: Simon & Schuster; Reprint edition (March 22, 2016)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 1451668813

ISBN-13: 978-1451668810

Product Dimensions: 5.5 x 0.8 x 8.4 inches

Shipping Weight: 10.6 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.3 out of 5 starsÂ Â See all reviewsÂ (139 customer reviews)

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Customer Reviews

This book begins seven months before the Ides of March, in 45 BC, with Caesar planning to enter Rome in triumph to declare the end of the Civil War. Three men were beside him at that time: Decimus Junius Brutus Albinius, Mark Antony and his seventeen year old grand nephew, Octavian. As the author points out, within seven months, one of these men would betray him. Although, obviously, we know which man would be the betrayer, the author manages to build a great sense of tension about these events, considering they happened so long ago. Whether you know a lot about the history of this period, or area complete novice, you will be able to follow the events and characters easily.The author gives clear portraits of all the main characters. The handsome, athletic and self-assured Mark Antony, the wealthy Decimus â " a military hero and, as the author wryly puts it, â œon the rise,â • and the young Octavian. Octavian is the only one of the group who is not of pure Roman nobility, his father being of a slightly lower status. Yet, despite his rather frail health and his youth, it is obvious that Caesar saw something special about this ambitious, intelligent and rather ruthless young man.Back in Rome, we are introduced to the conspirators and, also, to the reasons why they deemed it necessary to assassinate Caesar. At this point, Caesar has been proclaimed Dictator for Ten Years. However, with the Civil War over, Romeâ ™s senators are ready to take back power. There are fears he wants to be named â ˆDictator in Perpetuityâ ™ and make himself a virtual king. Cleopatra is also housed just outside the city and there are concerns she wishes to have her son recognised as Caesarâ ™s child.

Gaius Julius Caesar was assassinated on March 15, 44 BCE by a group of Roman senators. This is arguably the famous assassination in history and a true historical crossroad. I am writing this review very near the 2059th anniversary of Caesarâ ™s murderâ |after all of this time does Professor Barry Strauss have anything to add that we donâ ™t already know?The answer is a definite yes. Straussâ ™ â œDeath of Caesarâ • provides a fast-moving, very written account of WHAT happened on the Ides of March and the MOTIVATIONS of the key actors. By bringing together all of the sources and rethinking the logic behind the murder, the author creates a very lively account of the events. His conclusions make for a very readable account of the conspiracy and its key actors.One thing that I really appreciate about the book is that is quite focused. The collapse of the Roman republic (from around of 100 to 27 BCE) is one of the best-documented ancient periods and it is very easy to get lost in the details of the civil wars, political machinations, and personalities of the time. For example, instead of going into great detail about the Sulla dictatorship (around 82 BCE) and how it affected Caesar, he gives the reader the bare minimum. Thus the story flows quickly and without interruption. The reader does not get lost in details or confuse the key

actors.The book also raises many questions and unearths details. For example, did anybody in the crowded Senate House try to defend Caesar? How much did Cicero and Mark Anthony know about assassination before hand? Was the assassination a last minute affair or carefully planned? And so on.

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