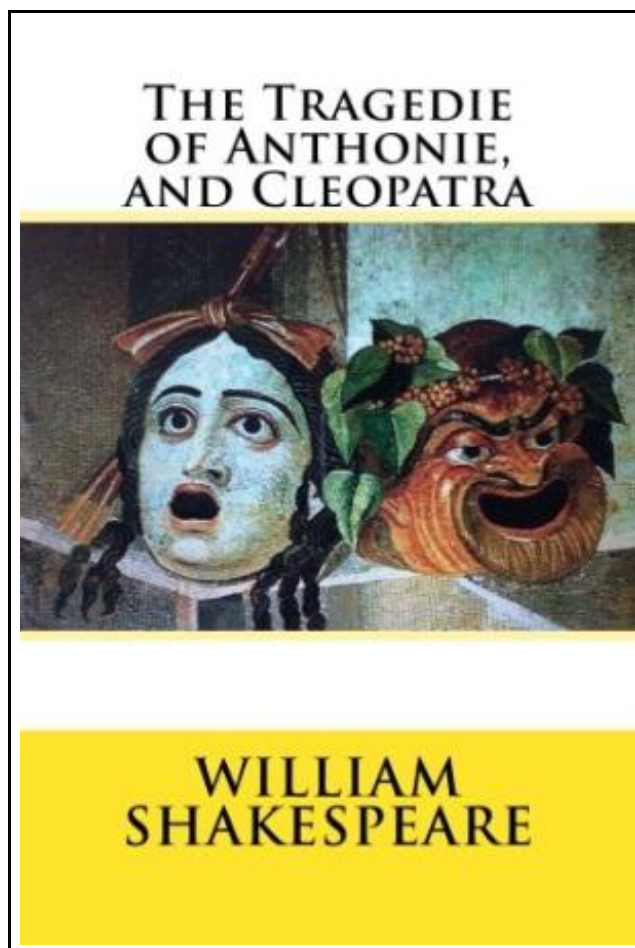


The Tragedie of Anthonie, and Cleopatra



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THE TRAGEDIE OF ANTHONIE, AND CLEOPATRA



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Createspace, United States, 2014. Paperback. Book Condition: New. 229 x 152 mm. Language: English . Brand New Book ***** Print on Demand *****.In May 1608 Edward Blount entered in the Stationers Registers, by the authority of Sir George Buc, the licenser of plays, a booke called Anthony and Cleopatra. No copy of this date is known, and once again the company probably hindered the publication. The play was first printed in the folio of 1623. The source of the tragedy is the life of Antonius in North s Plutarch. Shakespeare closely followed the historical narrative, and assimilated not merely its temper, but, in the first three acts, much of its phraseology. A few short scenes are original, but there is no detail in such a passage, for example, as Enobarbus s gorgeous description of the pageant of Cleopatra s voyage up the Cydnus to meet Antony (II. ii. 194 seq.), which is not to be matched in Plutarch. In the fourth and fifth acts Shakespeare s method changes and he expands his material with magnificent freedom. The whole theme is in his hands instinct with a dramatic grandeur which lifts into sublimity even Cleopatra s moral worthlessness and Antony s criminal infatuation. The terse and caustic comments which Antony s level-headed friend Enobarbus, in the role of chorus, passes on the action accentuate its significance. Into the smallest as into the greatest personages Shakespeare breathed all his vitalising fire. The happy valiancy of the style, too-to use Coleridge s admirable phrase-sets the tragedy very near the zenith of Shakespeare s achievement, and while differentiating it from Macbeth, Othello, and Lear, renders it a very formidable rival.



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