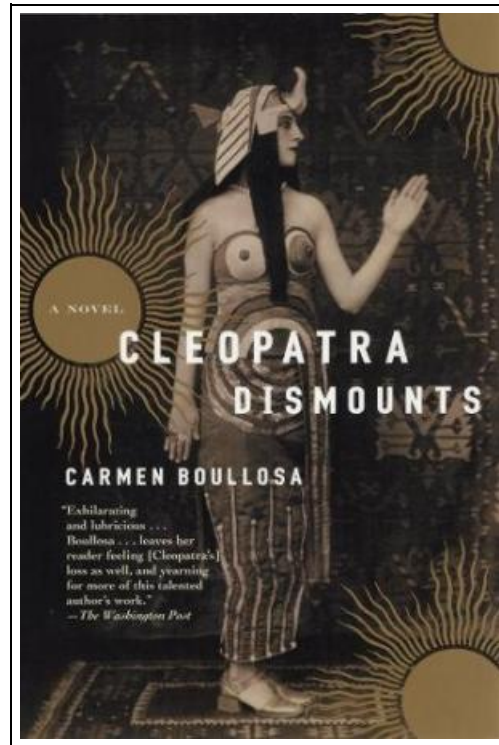


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Grove Press / Atlantic Monthly Press, United States, 2004. Paperback. Condition: New. Reprint. Language: English. Brand new Book. Carmen Boullosa's *Cleopatra Dismounts* tells three versions of the life of Cleopatra. In the first sequence, Marc Antony had just disemboweled himself, knowing they had lost the war against Octavian and believing that Cleopatra was dead. Hugging his corpse, Cleopatra castigates Octavian and history for its betrayal of her, recalling variously how she had herself delivered to Caesar in a roll of carpet, and bore his child (Caesarion); the twins and third child she bore to Marc Antony; the bitterness of the recent military defeat. At this point Diomedes, variously described as an informer and her official chronicler, intercedes, admitting that this version of the story is not true to the brilliant, accomplished woman who was the true Cleopatra really was. Telling of how he betrayed Cleopatra, by altering the histories of her reign and allowing Caesar and others to destroy or change her scrolls, he begins again with the story of Cleopatra's flight from Pompey (the Roman leader who was placed in charge of Cleopatra and her brothers and sisters after Ptolemy Auletes, her father and ruler of Egypt, died). The girl queen (Cleopatra inherited the throne as a teenager) sneaks with several faithful servants out of the palace into a wagon, accompanied by a group of brightly costumed gladiators, on her way to Ascalon. She and her supporters carve the words "Queen of Kings" (Cleopatra's motto in real history) into the boards of the wagon in which she is traveling, and leave it behind when they reach Rome. When they are beset by pirates, Cleopatra stages an elaborate show using some costumes the young gladiator Apollodorus, who has become part of her retinue, helped her buy. She convinces the pirates...

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