**Julius Caesar**

The following is a narrative about Julius Caesar, and some of the events that defined his life. Let’s start when Sulla defeated Marius in the civil war. When Sulla became dictator of Rome, he rounded up and killed all of his political enemies. Why would he do that? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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A young Julius Caesar was safe. While Sulla was in charge, he made life pretty tough Caesar, but through these tough times, he learned valuable skills he would use later in life.

When Caesar was about 25 years old, he was kidnapped by pirates, and held for ransom. When he found out how little the pirates were asking, he ridiculed them, and told them that once he was freed, he would return to kill them. He did just that.

When Sulla died, Caesar returned to Rome. There were two powerful supporters of Sulla waiting in the wings. They were Marcus Licinius Crassus, the richest man in Rome, and Gnaeus Pompeius, or Pompey, who was a very successful military general. Caesar would bring the military might of Pompey together with the money of Crassus, and form Rome’s first Triumvirate, or alliance of the three main popular politicians. Pompey and Crassus would become consuls, while Caesar would become governor of Roman Gaul. While there, Caesar would take it upon himself to conquer the rest of Gaul, or modern France, killing more than one million Gauls.

One of the more famous Gauls was Vercingetorix. Caesar chased Vercingetorix to a stronghold at Alesia. Here, the Romans built a wall around the fortress, laying siege to the Gauls. Vercingetorix released the women and children because they were short on food, hoping Caesar would let them go. They remained trapped between Caesar’s walls and the Gaelic fort, and starved to death. Eventually relief forces were coming to rescue Vercingetorix, but Caesar got word of this, and built another wall around his men. When the Gauls arrived, Caesar fought them on both sides, and won, despite being outnumbered four to one. Vercingetorix surrendered, and the battle was over.

Caesar’s   
Army

Vercingetorix and the Gaul’s in Alesia

The Gaul’s

Caesar was getting tired of putting down rebellions in Gaul. Look up the Siege of Uxellodunum, to find out what Caesar did put fear into the Gauls, so that they would stop their rebellions. Write it here. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Elsewhere, Crassus died while at war in Mesopotamia, in attempt to win military fame like Pompey and Caesar. This left Pompey alone in Rome with the Senate, and they convinced him that Caesar was becoming too powerful. They requested that Caesar resign his post, and return to Rome. He declined, so the Senate declared him an enemy of Rome. When Marc Antony, Caesar’s right hand man and tribune of the people tried to veto the motion, attempts were made on his life so that he could not do so. He survived, but was unable to use his veto. When Caesar found out about this, he rallied his troops and brought them to the Rubicon River, where the law states that he was to disband his army, and come to Rome unarmed. Knowing what they did to Marc Antony, he decided to bring his army to Rome. Pompey, knowing they did not have a large enough army to defend Rome, vacated the city along with other senators, and built an army large enough to fight Caesar.

The two finally met up in Thessaly, Northern Greece. Caesar, although outnumbered, defeated Pompey soundly. Two prominent senators, Cicero and Brutus, surrendered. Although they opposed Caesar, he forgave his enemies, and even promoted them. Why do you think he handled this different from the way Sulla treated his enemies? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_  
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Pompey fled to Egypt, where the young pharaoh Ptolemy had his head cut off. When Caesar went to Egypt to find him, the young boy gave the head to Caesar as a gift. Caesar was disgusted. He chose to support the young boy’s older sister, Cleopatra. Ptolemy was soon killed, and Cleopatra became the Queen of Egypt. She was smart, and some say beautiful, something that did not go unnoticed by the much older Caesar. It is believed he had a child with her, and even brought them back to Rome for a short time. She eventually went back to Egypt to rule as Queen.

Back in Rome, Julius Caesar took over as sole ruler of Rome, and dictator for life. He had the support of senators such as Cicero and Brutus, whom had previously forgiven. While in charge, Caesar granted full Roman citizenship to all Italians. It was in his many reforms and projects that it showed that Caesar was not merely a conqueror and destroyer. He was a builder, a visionary statesman. He established order, begun measures to reduce congestion in Rome, draining large tracts of marshy lands, revised the tax laws of Asia and Sicily, resettled many Romans in new homes in the Roman provinces and reformed the calendar, which, with one slight adjustment, is the one in use today.

In February of 44 BC, at the festival of the Lupercalia, Mark Antony offered Caesar the crown as king of Rome. He rejected the offer dramatically, but with obvious reluctance. The idea of a king still remained intolerable to the Romans. Many senators though suspected it only a matter of time until Caesar should accept such an offer, or that he simply would choose to rule as dictator forever as a quasi-king of Rome. With the appointment of new senators by Caesar, the senate was becoming more and more an instrument of Caesar's will. A conspiracy was formed by a group which included senators of the highest influence, some of them even Caesar's personal friends. The organizers of the plot were Cassius and Brutus, two of the men forgiven by Caesar years earlier, after they fought against him. Caesar never took precautions for his personal safety. At a meeting of the senate on the Ides of March (15th March) 44 BC, they gathered around him and stabbed him to death.

Over the next few years, Rome would go about a great change. This is the transition from Republic to Empire. The power of the Senate was on the decline, and the rule of the emperor was coming. Some good, some bad, and some just plain crazy. The Roman Empire period will last for 500 years.