

**EPAMINONDA AND CLEOPATRA** Once upon a time there was a boy who was very, very poor. That meant that he had no toy box full of toys and no refrigerator packed with food. But this boy did have one thing. He had a pretty name that was important. He had been named after a great Greek general, who had lived in ancient Greece. His name was Epaminonda. What Epaminonda liked to do more than anything else in the world was to visit his neighbor. Now you'll find out why. Epaminonda's neighbor was a girl who was also very poor. But like him, she also had a pretty name that was important. Epaminonda's neighbor was named after an Egyptian queen. Her name was Cleopatra. Epaminonda was in love with Cleopatra. In fact, he was madly in love with her; he loved her more than anything in the world. But since he was very shy, he didn't have the courage to tell her. In order to see her more often, Epaminonda asked to do errands that would take him near her house. That would give him an excuse to see Cleopatra's curly hair and sparkling eyes. One day, Epaminonda had to bring a piece of sponge cake to Cleopatra's house. He had heard that to keep from dropping things, you had to hold them very tightly. So that's what he did. To be sure not to drop the cake along the way, Epaminonda held on to it with all his might. But when he got to Cleopatra's house, Epaminonda had a sad surprise. He had held on so tightly to the sponge cake that he had squeezed it into a handful of crumbs. Poor Epaminonda was so embarrassed. Cleopatra saw this and said to him gently: "The next time you bring me sponge cake, wrap it up and put it in your hat. That way it won't crumble to pieces." A few days later, Epaminonda had to take some butter to Cleopatra's house. Remembering her advice, Epaminonda wrapped up the butter and put it in his hat. And you can imagine what happened. By the time Epaminonda reached Cleopatra's house, the butter had melted from the heat. Epaminonda was dripping in butter and, of course, he was mortified. Then Cleopatra said to him: "The next time you bring me butter, dip it in the stream a few times along the way. That will keep it from melting." The next week Epaminonda was given another errand. He had to take something to Cleopatra—a puppy! Epaminonda took the puppy and what do you think he did? Exactly what Cleopatra had told him to do just a few days before. He walked along the stream and dunked the puppy in it. Not once, but two, three and four times! When he got to Cleopatra's house, the puppy was half dazed and couldn't bark or say a thing. And he was in such a sorry state that Cleopatra said to Epaminonda as kindly as she could: "Look, Epaminonda, don't take this the wrong way, but you know what? Don't ever deliver anything to me again because every time you do you ruin it." When Epaminonda heard Cleopatra's words he was devastated. He would never see Cleopatra again. Epaminonda couldn't imagine anything worse than that and he was very sad. When he was so sad that he couldn't possibly be sadder, Epaminonda asked himself, "Why? Why should I resign myself to never seeing her again if I love her more than anything in the world?" For the first time in his life, Epaminonda decided not to do as he was told. No sir! And even though it was hard for him because he was a very obedient boy and it wasn't easy to change, Epaminonda decided to go back to Cleopatra's house. This time with a beautiful flower, the most beautiful one he could find. When Epaminonda got to Cleopatra's house, he said to her: "I know you told me not to come back, but I can't do as you say. Do you know why? Because I'm in love with you. And if you like, when we grow up, we can get married." And what do you think Cleopatra said? She said yes because she had also been in love with him for some time. So when they grew up, Epaminonda and Cleopatra got married. We don't know if they were rich or poor, but what we can be sure of is that they named their children after very important people. Script: Eulàlia Carrillo



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