



Emperor: The Gates of Rome

By Conn Iggulden

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Rarely, if ever, does a new writer dazzle us with such a vivid imagination and storytelling, flawlessly capturing the essence of a land, a people, a legend. Conn Iggulden is just such a writer, bringing to vivid life one of the most fascinating eras in human history. In a true masterpiece of historical fiction, Iggulden takes us on a breathtaking journey through ancient Rome, sweeping us into a realm of tyrants and slaves, of dark intrigues and seething passions. What emerges is both a grand romantic tale of coming-of-age in the Roman Empire and a vibrant portrait of the early years of a man who would become the most powerful ruler on earth: Julius Caesar.

On the lush Italian peninsula, a new empire is taking shape. At its heart is the city of Rome, a place of glory and decadence, beauty and bloodshed. Against this vivid backdrop, two boys are growing to manhood, dreaming of battles, fame, and glory in service of the mightiest empire the world has ever known. One is the son of a senator, a boy of privilege and ambition to whom much has been given and from whom much is expected. The other is a bastard child, a boy of strength and cunning, whose love for his adoptive family—and his adoptive brother—will be the most powerful force in his life.

As young Gaius and Marcus are trained in the art of combat—under the tutelage of one of Rome’s most fearsome gladiators—Rome itself is being rocked by the art of treachery and ambition, caught in a tug-of-war as two rival generals, Marius and Sulla, push the empire toward civil war. For Marcus, a bloody campaign in Greece will become a young soldier’s proving ground. For Gaius, the equally deadly infighting of the Roman Senate will be the battlefield where he hones his courage and skill. And for both, the love of an extraordinary slave girl will be an honor each will covet but only one will win.

The two friends are forced to walk different paths, and by the time they meet again everything will have changed. Both will have known love, loss, and violence. And the land where they were once innocent will be thrust into the grip of bitter conflict—a conflict that will set Roman against Roman...and put their friendship to the ultimate test.

Brilliantly interweaving history and adventure, Conn Iggulden conjures a stunning array of contrasts—from the bloody stench of a battlefield to the

opulence of the greatest city in history, from the tenderness of a lover to the treachery of an assassin. Superbly rendered, grippingly told, **Emperor, The Gates of Rome** is a work of vaulting imagination from a powerful new voice in historical fiction.

From the Hardcover edition.

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

If the Roman Empire had taken as long to rise and fall as this novel takes to discover a main character and a plot, most of the world would still be wearing togas today. The story, such as it is, revolves around two boys: Gaius, the broody son of a wealthy senator, and Marcus, a prostitute's mischievous child who is reared as Gaius's brother and trained with him in the arts of war. Before the two boys reach majority, they are thrust into adulthood by the untimely death of Gaius's father and take up residence in Rome with Gaius's uncle Marius, a powerful consul who is vying with Sulla for control of the Republic. When Marcus is 14, he joins the Fourth Macedonian Legion to earn his fortune; Gaius remains by his uncle's side. Iggulden lingers long over boyhood pranks, trying the reader's patience; the pace picks up only halfway through the novel. Frequent fight scenes, ranging from individual combat to full scale battles, liven the mix somewhat, but the cartoon-like ability of the characters to bounce back after a few stitches weakens the effect. Though Iggulden has a solid grounding in Roman military history, anachronisms in speech and attitude ("Cabela took him outside and gave him a hiding") roll underfoot and trip up authenticity. A major twist toward the end reveals the protagonists to be two of Roman history's best-known figures, but readers with some knowledge of the period will have guessed their identities already. This is ultimately little more than a protracted introduction to a bigger story, which Iggulden will surely go on to tell.

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From Library Journal

English writer Iggulden's first novel is the story of two young boys—Gaius and Marcus, raised as brothers though one is illegitimate—as they grow to adulthood in Rome two millennia ago. At that time, the republic was beginning to fall apart, a collapse that would result in the civil wars that brought the emperors to power. It was a time of turmoil, chaos, revolutions, casual violence, and savage brutality, and Iggulden's descriptions of the culture and environment are vivid. Although covering a period unknown to most lay readers, *Emperor* is a surprisingly fast and often exciting read. Iggulden admits to taking some liberties with history, and his masking the identities of Gaius and Marcus is unnecessary and distracting. While the real identity of Marcus (Et tu, Brute?) may be a puzzle, readers with a fair knowledge of Roman history will quickly identify Gaius (think of the Ides of March). Also, the roles of historical warlords Marius and Sulla are not well clarified. Still, this entertaining historical novel will appeal to fans of Steven Pressfield and Michael Curtis Ford. For larger collections. [Previewed in Prepub Alert, LJ 9/1/02; also, look for Colleen McCullough's *The October Horse: A Novel About Caesar and Cleopatra*, which will be released by S. & S. in November.—Ed.]—Robert Conroy, Warren, M.

--Robert Conroy, Warren, MI

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From [Booklist](#)

Iggulden's debut casts authentically detailed light on the early years of the great Roman general and statesman Julius Caesar. Most of what people know about Caesar revolves around his brilliant work to extend the borders of the Roman republic and his horrible death by stabbing in the Roman senate. This novel, however, accords us an expansive look at Caesar as a young boy. Born into a patrician family, Caesar was catapulted into managing the family estate at an early age, when his father was killed during a slave revolt. The author focuses on Caesar's training for battle—a typical endeavor for his age and ilk. At the same time, he absorbed the fundamentals of the intricacies of Roman politics, into which, by virtue of being the nephew of the powerful consul Marius, Caesar was bound to become involved. The story ends with Caesar's departure from Rome for a stint in the army in the provinces. *Brad Hooper*

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Stephanie Cromwell:

This Emperor: The Gates of Rome book is not ordinary book, you have after that it the world is in your hands. The benefit you have by reading this book will be information inside this guide incredible fresh, you will get data which is getting deeper you read a lot of information you will get. That Emperor: The Gates of Rome without we understand teach the one who looking at it become critical in pondering and analyzing. Don't be worry Emperor: The Gates of Rome can bring once you are and not make your carrier space or bookshelves' grow to be full because you can have it within your lovely laptop even telephone. This Emperor: The Gates of Rome having excellent arrangement in word along with layout, so you will not sense uninterested in reading.

Nancy Sena:

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Laura Thompson:

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Pamela Guarino:

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