



# Emperor: The Gates of Rome: A Novel of Julius Caesar

By Conn Iggulden

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**Emperor: The Gates of Rome: A Novel of Julius Caesar** By Conn Iggulden

**From the author of the bestselling *The Dangerous Book for Boys***

*Sweeping us into a realm of tyrants and slaves, of dark intrigues and seething passions, Conn Iggulden brings us a magnificent novel of ancient Rome—and of the early years of a man who would become the most powerful ruler on earth.*

In a city of grandeur and decadence, beauty and bloodshed, two boys, best friends, dream of glory in service of the mightiest empire the world has ever known. One is the son of a senator. The other is a bastard child. As young Gaius and Marcus grow to manhood, they are trained in the art of combat—under the tutelage of one of Rome's most fearsome gladiators. 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. But as Rome is thrust into the grip of bitter conflict, as every Roman prepares to take sides in the coming battle, Gaius and Marcus's friendship will be put to the ultimate test....

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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*  
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## **Users Review**

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