



The Twelve Caesars: The Dramatic Lives of the Emperors of Rome

Matthew Dennison

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An unforgettable depiction of the Roman empire at the height of its power and reach, and an elegantly sensational retelling of the lives and times of the twelve Caesars

One of the them was a military genius, one murdered his mother and fiddled while Rome burned, another earned the nickname "sphincter artist". Six of their number were assassinated, two committed suicide—and five of them were elevated to the status of gods. They have come down to posterity as the "twelve Caesars"—Julius Caesar, Augustus, Tiberius, Caligula, Claudius, Nero, Galba, Otho, Vitellius, Vespasian, Titus, and Domitian. Under their rule, from 49 BC to AD 96, Rome was transformed from a republic to an empire, whose model of regal autocracy would survive in the West for more than a thousand years.

Matthew Dennison offers a beautifully crafted sequence of colorful biographies of each emperor, triumphantly evoking the luxury, license, brutality, and sophistication of imperial Rome at its zenith. But as well as vividly recreating the lives, loves, and vices of this motley group of despots, psychopaths and perverts, he paints a portrait of an era of political and social revolution, of the bloody overthrow of a proud, five-hundred-year-old political system and its replacement by a dictatorship which, against all the odds, succeeded more convincingly than oligarchic democracy in governing a vast international landmass.

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