



# Imperium: A Novel of Ancient Rome

By Robert Harris

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## Imperium: A Novel of Ancient Rome By Robert Harris

From the bestselling author of *Fatherland* and *Pompeii*, comes the first novel of a trilogy about the struggle for power in ancient Rome.

In his “most accomplished work to date” (*Los Angeles Times*), master of historical fiction Robert Harris lures readers back in time to the compelling life of Roman Senator Marcus Cicero. The re-creation of a vanished biography written by his household slave and righthand man, Tiro, *Imperium* follows Cicero’s extraordinary struggle to attain supreme power in Rome.

On a cold November morning, Tiro opens the door to find a terrified, bedraggled stranger begging for help. Once a Sicilian aristocrat, the man was robbed by the corrupt Roman governor, Verres, who is now trying to convict him under false pretenses and sentence him to a violent death. The man claims that only the great senator Marcus Cicero, one of Rome’s most ambitious lawyers and spellbinding orators, can bring him justice in a crooked society manipulated by the villainous governor. But for Cicero, it is a chance to prove himself worthy of absolute power. What follows is one of the most gripping courtroom dramas in history, and the beginning of a quest for political glory by a man who fought his way to the top using only his voice—defeating the most daunting figures in Roman history.

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## Imperium: A Novel of Ancient Rome By Robert Harris Bibliography

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## Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

Bestselling British author Harris (*Pompeii*; *Enigma*) returns to ancient Rome for this entertaining and enlightening novel of Marcus Cicero's rise to power. Narrated by a household slave named Tiro, who actually served as Cicero's "confidential secretary" for 36 years, this fictional biography follows the statesman and orator from his early career as an outsider—a "new man" from the provinces—to his election to the consulship, Rome's highest office, in 64 B.C. Loathed by the aristocrats, Cicero lived by his wits in a tireless quest for imperium—the ultimate power of life and death—and achieves "his life's ambition" after uncovering a plot by Marcus Crassus and Julius Caesar to rig the elections and seize control of the government. Harris's description of Rome's labyrinthine, and sometimes deadly, political scene is fascinating and instructive. The action is relentless, and readers will be disappointed when Harris leaves Cicero at the moment of his greatest triumph. Given Cicero's stormy consulship, his continuing opposition to Julius Caesar and his own assassination, readers can only hope a sequel is in the works. Until then, this serves as a superb first act. *350,000 announced first printing; 10-city author tour. (Sept.)*

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From School Library Journal

Adult/High School—The tumultuous history of Rome from 79 to 64 B.C. comes alive in this fictional biography of Marcus Tullius Cicero, the politician and superb orator who rose to the empire's highest office after starting as an outsider from the provinces. His first legal case drew him into a long battle with powerful Gaius Verres, the dangerously corrupt governor of Sicily. Cicero displayed his wit and talent for oration and strategy to triumph over Verres and other opponents in high-profile cases. Harris has written a fast-paced tale, the first part of a trilogy. He examines the full spectrum of Roman society, including its dark side of corruption, class divisions, betrayal, and cruelty. Cicero, who sought imperium, or ultimate power of the state, is portrayed as a sympathetic figure whose allegiance was to the idea of Republic. The author paints a vivid picture of everyday life, and the courtroom dramas are, at times, riveting. Readers will recognize other famous Romans who pop up in the story, including Julius Caesar and Pompey. They may also recognize the timelessness of the pursuit of power.—*Susanne Bardelson, Kitsap Regional Library, WA*

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From [Bookmarks Magazine](#)

Quoting extensively from the extant works of Cicero, Robert Harris makes much of his most famous political battles (sometimes drawing awkward parallels to present-day events) and his search for a sufficiently wealthy and well-placed wife. Tiro is a good choice of narrator: in addition to his historical qualifications, he has reason to ask questions that help explain the plot. Except for the *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, which expressed an utter lack of excitement over a slow plot, critics generally agreed that *Imperium* is a compelling portrayal of a man and a place 2,000 years gone, made relevant and interesting for modern-day readers.

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## Users Review

From reader reviews:

**Kenisha Perkins:**

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