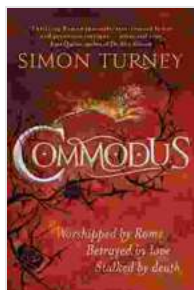


Commodus: The Damned Emperor



Commodus: The Damned Emperors Book 2 by Simon Turney

★★★★☆ 4.4 out of 5

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Commodus, the Roman Emperor from 180 to 192 AD, was known throughout history for his cruelty, tyranny, and his obsession with gladiatorial combat. His reign was marked by widespread oppression, bloodshed, and debauchery, leading to his eventual assassination at the age of 31. This article explores the life and reign of Commodus, examining

the events that shaped his character, his rise to power, and his ultimate downfall.

Early Life and Rise to Power

Born Lucius Aelius Aurelius Commodus on August 31, 161 AD, Commodus was the son of Emperor Marcus Aurelius and his wife Faustina the Younger. From a young age, he displayed signs of both brilliance and instability. He was a skilled athlete, orator, and poet, earning the admiration of many. However, he also exhibited a violent temper, sadistic tendencies, and a thirst for power.

In 176 AD, Commodus became co-emperor with his father. Marcus Aurelius had hoped that his son would moderate his behavior and learn the responsibilities of ruling. However, Commodus proved to be a cruel and incapable ruler. He neglected his duties, indulged in lavish excesses, and surrounded himself with flatterers and sycophants.

Reign of Terror

Upon the death of Marcus Aurelius in 180 AD, Commodus assumed sole power. He quickly dispensed with those who had supported his father, replacing them with loyalists who enabled his tyranny. The Roman Empire entered a period of darkness and despair.

Commodus's first act as emperor was to execute his co-consul, Salvius Julianus, a prominent senator who had criticized him. This sent a chilling message to the Roman elite, silencing any potential opposition. The Senate was reduced to a mere rubber stamp for Commodus's will, as he enacted laws that favored his own interests and dispensed justice with brutality.

Corruption and extortion flourished under Commodus's rule. Loyalists and informers prospered, while honest citizens were persecuted. The Praetorian Guard, the elite guard of the emperor, became a tool of oppression, terrorizing the population.

Commodus's obsession with gladiatorial combat reached its peak during his reign. He frequently appeared in the arena, fighting and killing opponents for the amusement of the crowd. He even adopted the title "Hercules Romanus," identifying himself with the mythical hero known for his strength and brutality.

The End of Commodus

The excesses and tyranny of Commodus eventually turned even his closest allies against him. A conspiracy was formed, led by his chamberlain Eclectus, his mistress Marcia, and the Praetorian Prefect Laetus. On December 31, 192 AD, Commodus was strangled in his bath by Narcissus, a wrestler.

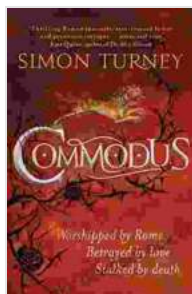
The death of Commodus was met with relief and jubilation by the Roman people. The Senate declared him a public enemy and wiped his name from official records. The empire entered a period of turmoil and instability, as Commodus's death left a power vacuum that would take years to fill.

Legacy

Commodus's legacy as Roman Emperor is one of infamy and disgrace. He is remembered as a cruel, debauched, and tyrannical ruler who brought chaos and darkness to the empire. His reign is a cautionary tale about the dangers of unchecked power and the importance of strong institutions to hold rulers accountable.

The reign of Commodus has been the subject of fascination and speculation for centuries. Historians and scholars continue to debate the causes of his behavior, the extent of his tyranny, and the impact of his rule on the Roman Empire.

Commodus, the Damned Emperor, was a complex and enigmatic figure who left an indelible mark on Roman history. His cruelty, tyranny, and obsession with gladiatorial combat made him one of the most notorious rulers in Western history. His reign was a time of darkness and despair, but it also brought about important changes that would shape the future of the Roman Empire.



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