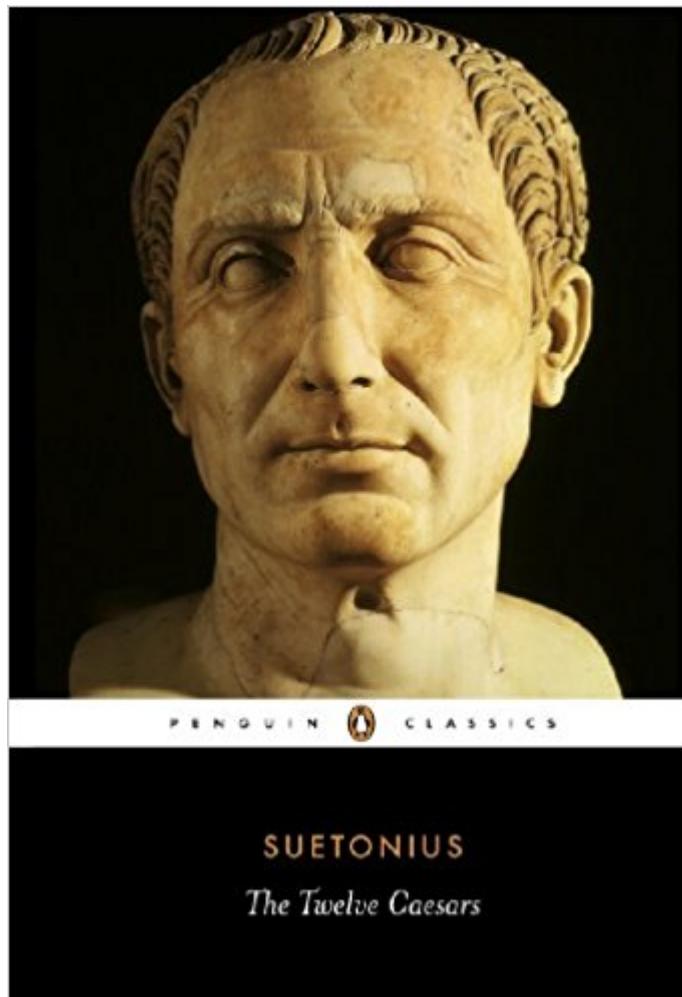


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# The Twelve Caesars



## Synopsis

An essential primary source on Roman history and a fascinating achievement of scholarship covering a critical period in the Empire. As private secretary to the Emperor Hadrian, the scholar Suetonius had access to the imperial archives and used them (along with eyewitness accounts) to produce one of the most colourful biographical works in history. The Twelve Caesars chronicles the public careers and private lives of the men who wielded absolute power over Rome, from the foundation of the empire under Julius Caesar and Augustus, to the decline into depravity and civil war under Nero and the recovery that came with his successors. A masterpiece of observation, anecdote and detailed physical description, *The Twelve Caesars* presents us with a gallery of vividly drawn and all too human individuals. James B. Rives has sensitively updated Robert Graves's now classic translation, reinstating Latin terms and updating vocabulary while retaining the liveliness of the original. This edition contains a new chronology, further reading, glossaries, maps, notes and an introduction discussing Suetonius' life and works. For more than seventy years, Penguin has been the leading publisher of classic literature in the English-speaking world. With more than 1,700 titles, Penguin Classics represents a global bookshelf of the best works throughout history and across genres and disciplines. Readers trust the series to provide authoritative texts enhanced by introductions and notes by distinguished scholars and contemporary authors, as well as up-to-date translations by award-winning translators.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Gaius Suetonius Tranquillus was probably born in AD69—the famous "year of the four

Emperors." From the letters of Suetonius' close friend Pliny the Younger we learn that he practiced briefly at the bar, avoided political life, and became chief secretary to the Emperor Hadrian (AD117-38). Suetonius seems to have lived to a good age and probably died around the year AD140. James Rives teaches in the area of Classical Studies at Stanford University. He is currently serving as Review Editor for *Phoenix*, Journal of the Classical Association of Canada.

I read Suetonius "The Twelve Caesars" in college and I decided to reread it. It is just as good as I remembered it. It provides us a glimpse into the past of Ancient Rome and the rulers who led one of the greatest empires in the world.

I have been a lover of history since junior high school. I recently became interested in ancient history after reading the book by Robert Graves, "I, Claudius." Since then I've been fascinated by all the historical events from the ancient world that seem to parallel our society today. In "The Twelve Caesars" by Suetonius, the author--a contemporary of that time period--gives a detailed account of the first twelve caesars of the Roman Empire. The histories are not just some vague attempts that depict all the major achievements of these men and the positive impacts they had on history, but rather, the book exposes all the details of their lives both good and bad and to what effect it had on the empire. In want for a better comparison I would have to say that it's a cross between The Washington Post and The National Enquirer. The book includes a glossary of terms of phrases and events common to that time period that the average reader might not know about. I would highly recommend this book to anyone interested in ancient history or in history in general.

The book was in new condition, delivered only days after purchase. The book is an amazing historical biography of the first twelve men who ruled the Roman empire, and portrays them honestly, without heroic blinders- their strengths and weaknesses. There is little question that they all lived in a very 'brutal' period in human history, and the politics of the time sure was deadly, both within, and outside, of families. This book would definitely appeal to history buffs, as well as anyone interested in the tiny city-state that became the greatest empire the world has ever known. Great read!

For its age, and considering the precarious time of its writing, the author shares some pretty remarkable anecdotes in The Twelve Caesars. Suetonius was regarded as a gossip, his stories are gloriously sensationalist - and for that reason, this may be the most entertaining, but least

trustworthy ancient book you'll ever read. Suetonius covers Caesar, Augustus, Tiberius, Caligula, Claudius, Nero, Galba, Otho, Vitellius, Vespasian, Titus, and Domitian. His biographies on Augustus and Nero, both required reading for my upper-level Flavian Rome class, are particularly good - Suetonius depicts a young Octavian being thoroughly humiliated by the elder Marc Antony, and it is in Suetonius that we read of Augustus crying "Give me back my legions!" Augustus' misdeeds, however, pale in comparison to his successors. Nero's "biography" for example, is a catalog of depravities, not a chronological account. Penguin Classics are awesome. Bright paper, easy-to-read print. Well bound.

I wanted to learn more about the Caesars of Rome and this book makes the grade.

This is basically a gossip sheet from ancient Rome... the strengths and weaknesses of each Caesar. Not dry at all. Translation and commentary didn't get in the way of the story telling. The author is obviously a little biased which rulers he was sympathetic to, but that's interesting too. Enjoyed the perspective on what were considered virtues back then in that culture. Minus one star for the Kindle edition, this really needs an index and a linked table of contents. At least, I don't get those features reading on my smart phone using the Kindle app, not sure if they're available if reading on a real Kindle.

TWELVE CAESARS was drawn from the work of Suetonius (70 to 130), a Roman historian who lived and wrote during the Imperial era. Suetonius' writings about the Caesars are adapted to English by Robert Graves, the preeminent British author and mythographer who so well understood ancient times and antiquity. Suetonius included scandalous stories about the Caesars which greatly enliven the histories -- I learned much about classical times and my understanding has been broadened. I thoroughly enjoyed.....well written. TWELVE CAESARS is the only surviving work by Suetonius and "is the most fascinating and richest of all Latin histories."

Very insightful book. I find Roman history exceptionally enticing and alluring to read. From Julius Caesar's idiosyncrasies, to Nero's repulsive actions- this book gives me a wonderful perspective of the Roman days. The biggest criticism of this book is Suetonius' style. I find the topical application is a little too shallow to deal with. The concept adopted here is not definitive of a biographical style of literature. Still, the style has its place if one is not into delving into the lives of these Roman leaders too deeply. Overall, quality book from an obvious genius.

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