



Rubicon: The Triumph and Tragedy of the Roman Republic

Tom Holland

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The Roman Republic was the most remarkable state in history. What began as a small community of peasants camped among marshes and hills ended up ruling the known world. "Rubicon" paints a vivid portrait of the Republic at the climax of its greatness - the same greatness which would herald the catastrophe of its fall. This was the century of Julius Caesar, the gambler whose addiction to glory led him to the banks of the Rubicon, and beyond; of Cicero, whose defence of freedom would make him a byword for eloquence; of Spartacus, the slave who dared to challenge a superpower; of Cleopatra, the queen who did the same. Tom Holland brings to life this strange and unsettling civilization, with its extremes of ambition and self-sacrifice, bloodshed and desire. Yet alien as it was, the Republic still holds up a mirror to us. Its citizens were obsessed by celebrity chefs, all-night dancing and exotic pets; they fought elections in law courts and were addicted to spin; they toppled foreign tyrants in the name of self-defence. Two thousand years may have passed, but we remain the Romans' heirs.

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