



“Pompeii” by Robert Harris

reviewed by Steve Reilly

This is one of the best novels I’ve read for some time. I really enjoyed this book. All the main characters were interesting, and Robert Harris brought them to life. The descriptions weren’t particularly poetic – I didn’t actually mark any – but they were workmanlike and did the job. No flowery stuff, but his words transported me to those times and places.

I really like historically based fiction and many of the characters were actually people who lived at the time and were interesting people (Pliny for instance). Great stuff! I think this book would make a great movie; particularly given the CGI we can utilize these days.

As you know, I start with a 9 and then deduct points. I got all the way to Page 307 before I thought about deducting a point. This goes to credibility with respect to the survival of one of the central characters. Putting that aside, I got to the end of “Pompeii” and found no other reason to deduct points but then I thought, Well, it isn’t Shakespeare so maybe an 8. But then I thought, come on you meanie, you really enjoyed it, give it a 9.

There was irony, based on reader knowledge. There is mention several times of ‘getting back to the safety of Pompeii’. The prophecy of the sibyl really relates to tourists in our times which is almost in the nature of an inside joke.

Steve Reilly