

What impression do you get of Cicero?

Cicero is speaking in order to explain what he has done, to get approval for it, and to get approval for future actions needed.

Basically in this speech Cicero shows that he is pleased that Catilina has left Rome as a result of his actions, and he is now making plans for the future. He makes himself seem determined and energetic on behalf of Rome.

Therefore he wants the people of Rome to be grateful to him and also to support him in what he has done and what he is going to do. He is keen to show that he is in control.

However there are some inconsistencies in what he says.

(Did he force Catilina out, and did he want to go?)

a) He is proud that his words caused Catilina to leave Rome. But he also says at the start that the other senators were totally hostile towards Catilina on that day. He wants Catilina to appear obviously guilty of actions against Rome. And he says that he was unhappy to leave. Elsewhere he says that Catilina was likely to leave anyway, because Cicero wants to avoid being criticised for forcing Catilina out of the city without official support.

(Will Romans be in danger?)

b) Later he says that he hopes that no one in Rome will suffer injury or death as he takes further measures against Catilina - as if few people will support him. But he does in effect warn some people that they are likely to suffer if they persist in supporting Catilina and opposing him. He wants to reduce the number of people who might support Catilina.

(Is Catilina dangerous?)

c) Cicero wants his audience to believe that Catilina is dangerous because of his plans and because of the kind of people he has on his side. Therefore he talks about his supporters having been put in charge of different, named areas of Italy. But he later gives the impression that under Cicero's leadership Rome will be able to defeat Catilina easily. For example he claims that he has the support of all the towns of Italy, while Catilina's "army" is made up of a homeless rabble.