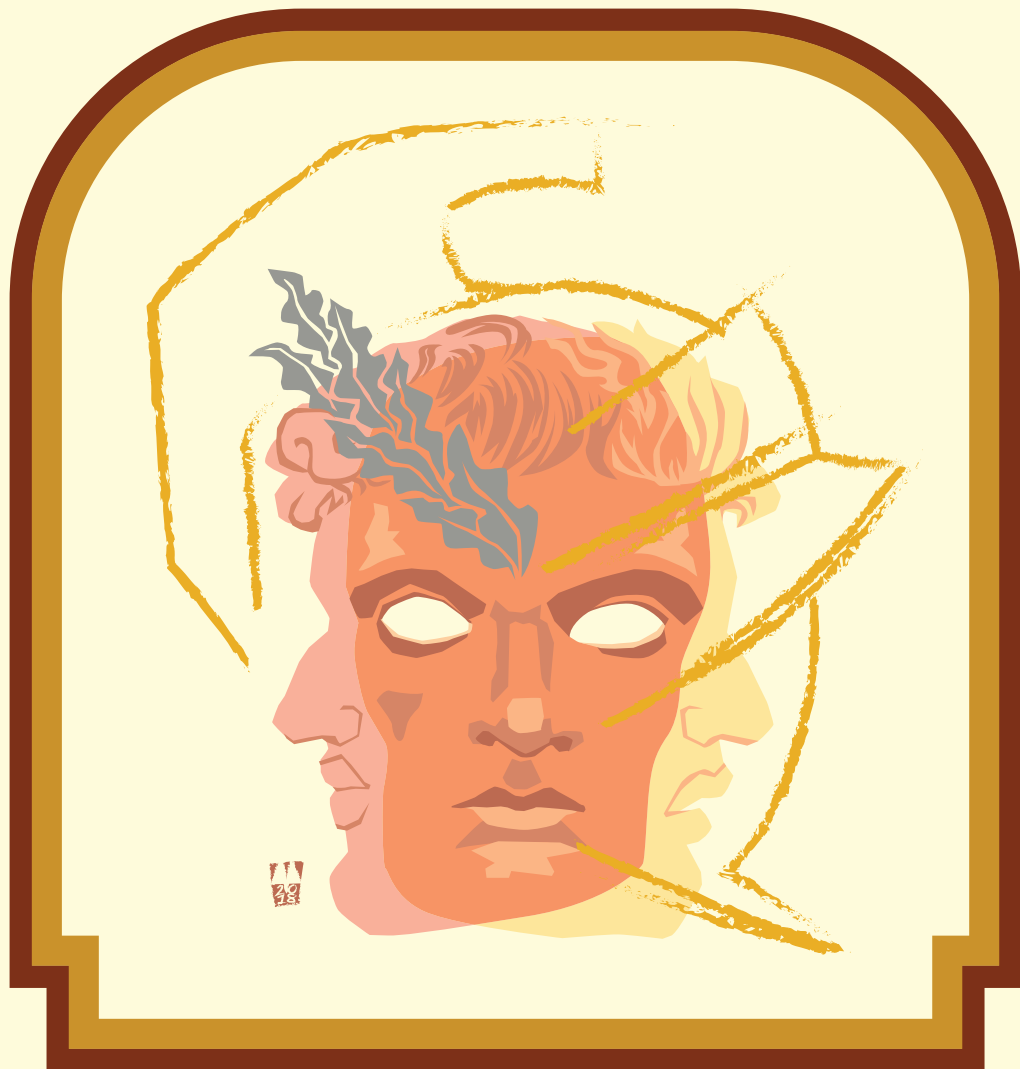


CHOOSE YOUR FATE WITH THIS GUIDE TO *ROME: CITY AND EMPIRE*.
YOUR DESTINY AWAITS!

FORTUNE AND GLORY



Please return this book at the exhibition exit.

A Warning!

This book is very different from others you may have read. It will take you through *Rome: City and Empire* on a journey to a variety of places and periods in Roman history. You will travel through time as you encounter famous people, extraordinary events, and the many dangers of ancient Rome. You, and you alone, are in charge of what happens in this story.

Do not read this book straight through from the first page to the last. Instead, start at the introduction, and read until you come to your first set of choices. Decide what you want to do, and then go to the object depicted with your choice. Once you are at the object, turn to the page listed with it, and see what happens.

HINT: Some of the objects are small, and some are big. Use your eyes, and look closely and carefully.

As you move through the exhibition as directed, watch how the objects within the exhibition become part of the story. They might even offer up some clues!

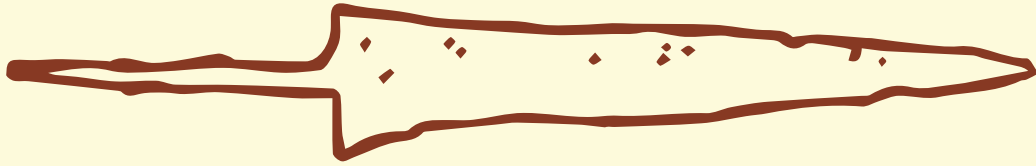
But, beware: your choices will have consequences, and you must use all your talents and knowledge when making decisions. The wrong one could end in disaster—even death. But don't despair! At any time, you can go back and make another choice, alter the path of your story, and change its result.



It is another glorious day in Rome, the capital city of the empire. Like most Romans, you wake early to the sound of the bustling city beyond the walls of your home. Going to the window, you look out across the seven hills covered with great monuments, sprawling palaces, and numerous temples. You never tire of this wondrous place, which is the home of the emperor and the largest metropolitan city for thousands of miles. Although you don't come from a wealthy family of senators, you are a citizen of the empire and enjoy many privileges.

As you dress and prepare to leave your home, you think about how you will spend your day. There are so many things happening within the city that it's difficult to know where to go. You've heard rumors of wars being waged on the northern frontier of the empire, so you could visit your friend Atilius, a soldier, to learn more. But your father mentioned the other day that his merchant friend was sailing to an exciting new land to seek out its riches. You could go to the merchant's home and ask him if he needs help. You also remember that an important ritual is happening at a nearby temple, so perhaps you should go and watch.

If you visit Atilius, go to this object, and then turn the page.



If you visit the merchant, go to this object, and then turn to page 30.



If you go to the temple, go to this object, and then turn to page 50.





Your friend Atilius serves in a legionary cohort attached to the Praetorian Guard. You decide to visit him at the military training grounds, passing the towering Colosseum on your way. You can hear the roar of the crowd within the amphitheater as you walk by. As you enter the walled courtyard of the garrison, you spot Atilius sparring with another soldier, their iron *pugiones* clanging together as they fight. Atilius stops when he sees you, smiling as he says, “It’s been a long time! I haven’t seen you since I was last in Rome over six months ago. What have you been doing?”

“Studying, mostly,” you answer with a laugh. “My father wants me to learn philosophy, Greek, and rhetoric to help me in my career here in Rome.”

“But that sounds so boring!” Atilius exclaims. “Our legion will be heading back north. You’re nineteen, strong, and a citizen—more than old enough to sign up with the army. Why not join us and see what’s beyond the city walls?”

“I’m not sure,” you say, hesitating. “The northerners are supposed to be deadly fighters.”

“They are, and life at the frontier can be dangerous,” Atilius agrees. “But what is the point of living if you can’t have adventures?”

If you decide to join the army and go to the frontier, go to this object, and then turn the page.



If you have doubts about heading to the frontier, go to this object, and then turn to page 10.



"You're right, Atilius," you say. "It's foolish to stay here when there are battles to be fought within the empire. I'll sign on with the army. Who knows? If I'm able to fight bravely, I may even gain the attention of the emperor himself."

Life in the army is completely different from anything else that you've known before. As a soldier, you're not only responsible for learning how to fight with a sword and tending to your iron and bronze armor, but you must also improve your stamina by going on long marches in full armor, which can weigh over eighty pounds.

The time arrives to travel to Britannia and the frontier. You leave Rome with the legion, marching in formation as the citizens of the great city look on with pride. The air grows colder as you journey hundreds of miles north, the chill cutting through your armor and linen clothing. After you cross the narrow sea between Gaul and Britannia, you arrive at the Roman encampment. While there are rumors of trouble with locals, life settles into a routine of patrolling, building roads, and keeping order.

One day, as you return from patrol, the centurion who commands your legion shouts out your name. When you walk over to him, he says, "I need a soldier to accept a special mission for me. Carry this message to the leaders of the tribe near here."

Fear courses through you as you accept the scroll; you've never met a barbarian before and have no idea how they will receive you or if they will even speak your language.

Go to this object, and then turn to page 12.



Go to this object, and then turn to page 50.



“I’m not sure, Atilius,” you say with a shake of your head. “Life in the army could be for me, but I’m not going to risk my neck for fortune and glory unless I’m sure it’s the right decision to make. I think I’ll head to the temple and make a sacrifice to Jupiter—perhaps the gods can point me toward my destiny.”

With that, you leave the garrison and head toward the temple.



As you saddle your horse and prepare to ride out to the local tribe, you notice a woman standing near the gates, watching you. She has long unkempt hair and wears a colorful cloak around her shoulders; she's clearly a local and not a Roman.



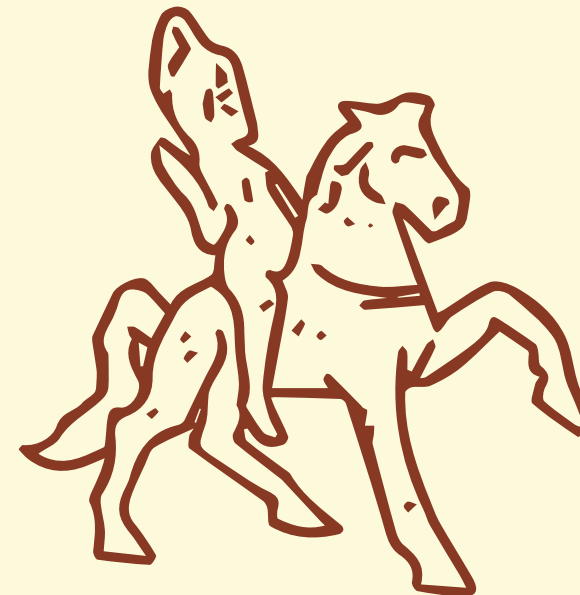
Realizing that she has your attention, she moves forward, saying in accented Latin, "I heard you talking with the centurion, and I know that you're heading to see my tribe. If you pay me, I'll guide you there safely."

You consider for a moment. You don't have much money to spare, but you are not familiar with this region or the people beyond the walls of the garrison. Also, you know that there has been some trouble between the Romans and their leader. Perhaps a guide would be helpful, though there is a sly look in the woman's eyes that makes you uneasy.

If you hire the woman as your guide, go to this object, and then turn the page.



If you refuse her offer and instead ask a fellow soldier to join you, go to this object, and then turn to page 16.



"I would welcome having you as a guide," you say. "I don't have much money, but I brought a silver cup with me from Rome. I'll give it to you if you help me."

She smiles and nods, tucking the cup into her bag and saying, "My name is Anwen. You're lucky to have someone who knows the way. It's dangerous for Romans outside of your walls."

Motioning for you to follow her, Anwen walks out of the gate. Pulling your cloak a little tighter around yourself against the bitter wind, you urge your horse after her, grateful to have someone who knows the way. Your gratitude only grows as you travel, for the path isn't along the orderly, paved Roman roads, but rather across rocky hills and through a dense forest. Anwen seems to know exactly where she's going, however, and soon you can see plumes of smoke above the treetops.

Finally, you come to the edge of the forest and find yourself looking out at a village of rounded huts with thatched roofs. There are many people within the village, all with long hair and colorful cloaks. Your hand tightens around the hilt of your dagger; even though the people of Britannia respect Roman rule, you will still be vastly outnumbered if things go wrong.

Ahead of you, Anwen looks back and smiles, saying, "Come on. Our leader is this way."

If you summon your courage and follow her, go to this object, and then turn to page 18.



If you turn your horse around and ride back to the garrison, go to this object, and then turn to page 20.



"Thank you for the offer, but I'm a soldier of Rome, and I trust only my comrades," you say. Spotting a soldier walking past with his horse, you say, "Cassius, will you accompany me on this mission?"

"Of course," he answers, mounting his stallion. "I heard that you were headed to Caledonia. I speak a little of the language and may be able to help you."

As the woman glares after the two of you, you and Cassius ride out of the garrison gates into the wilderness.

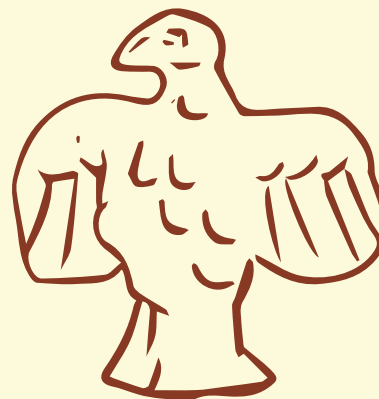
The journey is much longer than you anticipated, taking you through uninhabited lands and freezing rain. Finally, you arrive in Caledonia, in the far north of Britannia. After finding the right tribe, you ride into a village to meet with their chief. The tall red-haired man looks over the scroll and begins speaking to Cassius, who translates: "He agrees to make peace with the Roman forces, provided that we don't try to invade their lands. He also said to beware of the Iceni to the south; they may be plotting against you."

Looking to Cassius, you ask, "What should we do? We could try to ride back and warn the garrison of the threat, but if they strike now, we may be cut off from safety."



Cassius frowns. He suggests, "There's a port nearby. We could try sailing around the island to get there faster."

If you try to ride back, go to this object, and then turn to page 26.



If you try to sail back, go to this object, and then turn to page 24.



With the centurion's orders in mind, you dismount and lead your horse into the village. Anwen points to a large tent, saying, "Go inside and you'll be able to deliver your message."

You duck under the thick animal skin that serves as the door, but just as your eyes adjust to the darkness and smoke, someone grabs you from behind; your sword is torn away and your hands bound behind your back. No matter how much you struggle, you can't break free of the warriors holding you in place.

A tall woman looks at you, her eyes fierce as she demands in Latin, "Why are you here, Roman?"

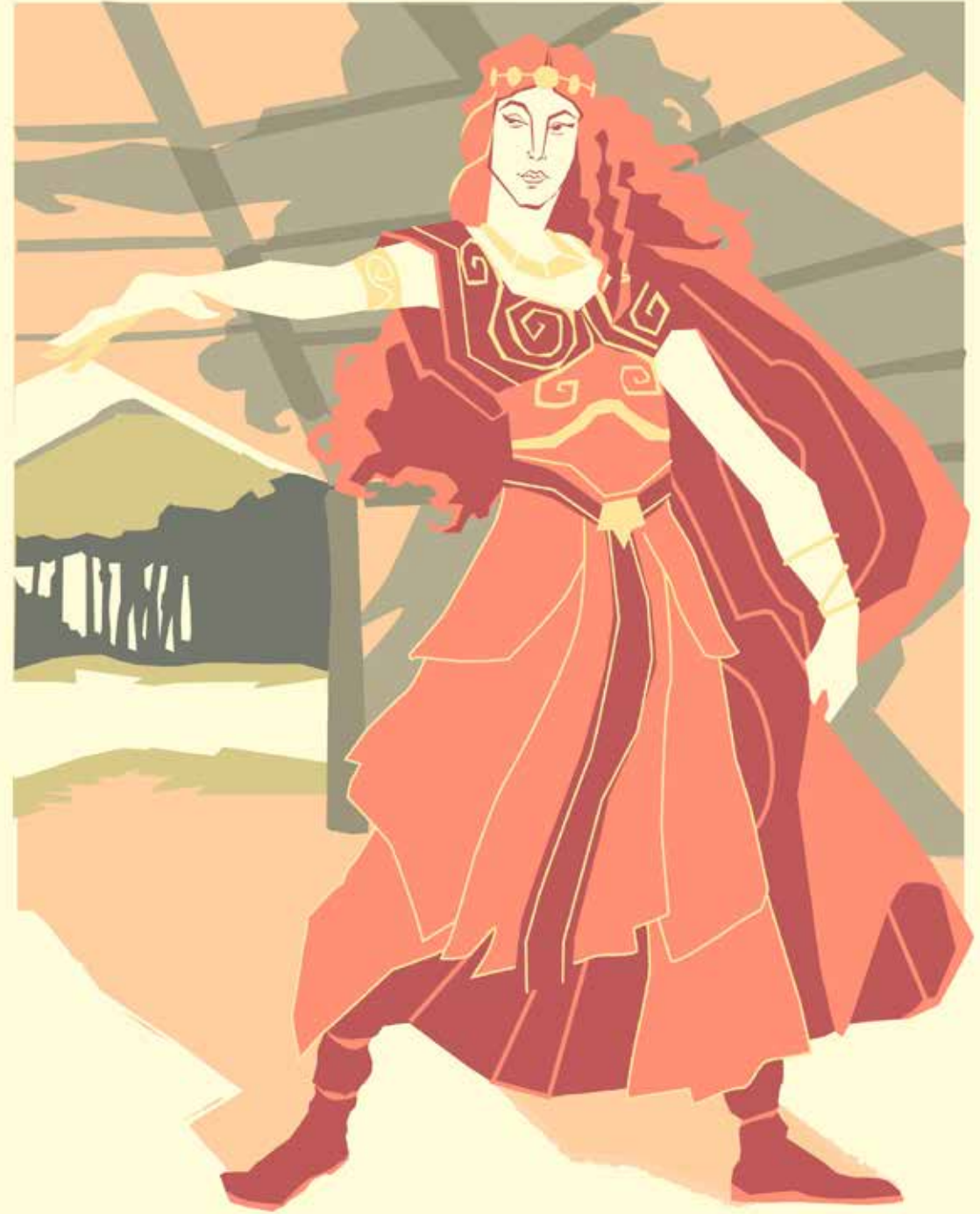
"Please," you gasp, "I'm only here to deliver a message!"

She takes the scroll and reads it quickly before laughing harshly. "So your centurion thinks that the Iceni will forgive the outrage his soldiers committed when they flogged me and hurt my daughters? If you Romans want my lands, you will have to fight for them." Going to a nearby votive plaque, she says in a low voice, "To the goddess Senuna, I, Boudica, swear that I will bring death and destruction down on the Romans who threaten my rule."

The name is what makes you realize who this woman is; the wife of the former Iceni king, whose lands were seized in the name of the emperor. As she turned back to you, she says coldly, "You will just be the first of the many Romans we kill. Die honorably, Roman soldier."

One of her men steps forward, drawing his sword. You plead for your life, but no one seems to care. As the dagger is raised above your neck, you wish that you'd never strayed so far from Rome.

THE END ◆ FINIS





As Anwen turns back toward the village, you wheel your horse around and gallop away from the village. As the barbarians shout after you, you glance back to see some of them aiming sharp iron javelins at you! Kicking your horse into an even faster run, you hear the weapons flying through the air and hitting the ground near you. Finally, the sounds die away, and you feel a surge of relief to know that you've escaped.

When you reach the Roman encampment, you jump off your spent horse and run into the centurion's tent, saluting as you gasp, "Sir, the barbarians tried to kill me when I went near their village. I have a feeling that they're planning an attack—"

"You were ordered to deliver a simple message, soldier," the centurion says angrily. "And we have lived peacefully with the locals for many

years. This city doesn't even have fortifications. Report for patrol, since that's all you're good for."

As you leave, you have the sinking sensation that the centurion will be proven wrong. You want to leave and get far away from Britannia, but you know that if you desert the legion, the punishment will be death.

There is no choice but to stay and do your duty, no matter the consequences.

Go to this object, and then turn the page.





You silently pray to Claudius for help. But as the doors begin to give way to the onslaught, you realize that it will be too little, too late . . .

THE END ◆ FINIS

“Attack! We’re under attack!”

You sit up in bed, looking around in confusion for a moment. You then grab your sword and helmet and rush out to defend the city.

As you fight the hordes of Britons in the streets, you are surrounded by burning buildings. You find yourself being pushed back, and when the centurion gives the order to retreat, you race to the Temple of Claudius, the sacred place dedicated to the emperor who first conquered Britannia.

You run inside with the surviving soldiers, barring the massive doors and huddling together within the cool, empty temple. You can hear the barbarians pounding at the doors.

Sailing back, while dangerous, leaves less chance of you getting caught behind enemy lines. You and Cassius head east to the port, where you pay for passage on a small ship. The ship is loaded with supplies, including valuable terracotta amphoras filled with olive oil, and sets sail into the rough seas that surround Britannia. Luckily, the crew knows these waters well, and soon the ship is traveling up the wide river that will lead you to the city of Londinium.

But as you draw nearer to the city, you can see plumes of smoke arising from the settlement. You realize with horror that you've arrived too late to give warning, and the Iceni have attacked and are burning the city. You see Roman citizens fleeing the city to the riverbank and realize that you're not too late to help them. Pulling into the shallower waters as ash fills the air, you toss out lines of rope and begin pulling men, women, and children onto the boat.

Within minutes, you've rescued as many people as possible, and the sailors ready the ship to set sail again. Cassius looks out at the burning city and says in wonder, "You've saved so many lives today. When we get back to Rome, you'll be hailed as a hero."

Filled with thoughts of bringing honor to your family, you turn to the ship's captain and order, "Set sail for Gaul—we are all going home!"

THE END ◆ FINIS



After choosing to ride back south, you and Cassius push your tired horses hard for many days, covering miles of countryside.

Finally, you see many distant figures. At their front is a soldier carrying the legion's *aquila*, a standard topped by a bronze eagle. You ride closer to the soldier, calling out, "What legion is this?"

"The forces of Gaius Suetonius Paulinus, the governor of Britannia!" the soldier says. "The Iceni have attacked several of our settlements, but we are riding to face them. Come with us—we will need all the help we can get."

You and Cassius join the ranks, led by the stern-faced governor. Your heart is hammering in your chest as you ride toward your first battle.

After several days of searching, Roman scouts find the enemy army within a narrow gorge. The Iceni shout war cries and bang their shields; even though you're frightened, you draw your sword as the governor shouts, "Ignore the racket made by these savages! We've beaten them before, and when they see our weapons and feel our spirit, they'll crack. Stand together, and you'll have everything!"

Summoning your courage, you urge your horse toward the Iceni army, your sword held at the ready. Behind you, Roman soldiers throw javelins, distracting the Iceni spearmen as you and the other soldiers rush at them. The battle is chaos around you, but you fight with all your might. Then, hearing a scream, you turn to see that an Iceni warrior has pulled Cassius from his horse. Without hesitation, you leap off your mount and rush to your friend, killing the warrior with one stroke of your sword. As you pull Cassius to his feet, you realize that the battle is over—the Romans are victorious!

Go to this object, and then turn the page.





Months later, back in Rome, you stand dressed in your finest clothes before the emperor, an audience of senators and your fellow soldiers looking on. The governor places a circlet of oak leaves on your head, saying, "I present you with the Civic Crown in recognition of your bravery in saving the life of Citizen Cassius during battle. Wear it with pride, for it brings great honor to you and your family."

As you turn to look at the crowd, they cheer loudly for you. Filled with pride for the army and the empire that you serve, you realize that, against all odds, you have found fortune and glory at long last.

THE END ◆ FINIS



You've always been interested in the provinces of the empire and the riches that could be gained from trading, so you decide to visit your father's friend, Faustus, a prosperous trader whose ships sail throughout the Mediterranean. The city streets are full of people, and you weave through the crowd until at last you reach his home, which is crowded with people wanting to do business with him. One of his household slaves instructs you to wait in the elegantly painted atrium. You're admiring a wall

painting of Apollo when Faustus enters, exclaiming, "I'm so pleased that you chose today to visit me! I've just made several new trading contacts, and I'll need capable help if we are to make our fortune. Would you be interested in working with me?"

"That does sound exciting," you say. "But what about the dangers? I've heard tales of piracy on the seas and rebellions in the provinces."

"I'd risk a thousand dangers if it meant making my fortune," Faustus says with enthusiasm. "You won't regret it; trust me!"

If you decide to become a merchant, go to this object, and then turn the page.



If you're still unsure about visiting the provinces, go to this object, and then turn to page 34.





"That might be just the adventure I've been looking for," you say eagerly. "When do we set sail?"

The next month is spent in preparation for the journey. The ship is loaded with goods from Rome and other Italian cities, all of which will be sold once you reach the provinces. Since you are now a merchant, you buy a costly silver statue of Mercury, the patron god of merchants and commerce, to pray to during your journey.

Finally, the day to leave arrives, and you and Faustus board the ship with your crew and set sail into the Mediterranean.

"Now we need to decide where to head first," Faustus explains. "I have contacts in Syria, to the east, and in Egypt, to the south. There are dangers in both provinces, but the potential wealth we'll acquire makes the risk worthwhile. Which province interests you most?"

If you head east to Syria, go to this object, and then turn to page 36.



If you head south to Egypt, go to this object, and then turn to page 42.

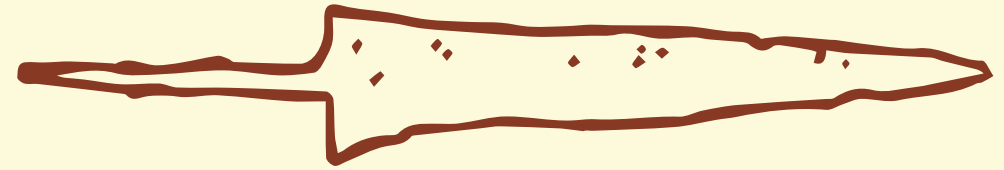


"I'm not sure," you admit to Faustus. "I'll need to think about it before I make a decision. I think I'll go visit my friend while I think. He's in the Roman army and recently returned from the northern frontier."

"Of course," Faustus says kindly. "Talk to your friend and consider my offer. But don't take too long to decide!"

After thanking him, you leave the merchant's house and head back into the city.

Go to this object, and then turn to page 6.



Syria, the richest province in the empire, is dazzling. In Palmyra, you begin to exchange the goods you brought from Rome for gold and silver. You plan to spend the money on gemstones, incense, and spices to take back to Rome.

One day, a priest approaches you with a worried look and says, "I saw you in one of my dreams. I foresee tragedy befalling you should you stay here."

You wish that you could simply dismiss the priest's words, but omen dreams aren't to be taken lightly. On the other hand, you don't want to leave Palmyra while there's more money to be made.

If you decide to risk staying in Palmyra, go to this object, and then turn the page.



If you decide to head north to Antioch, go to this object, and then turn to page 40.



Deciding to ignore the priest's warning, you wander around the bustling city to take your mind off your worries, eventually stopping at a local tavern where the wine is cheap and served in drinking horns that encourage you to imbibe quickly. When a group at a nearby table invites you to join their game of dice, you happily go over to cast your luck.

The time seems to slip away, until you can do little but laugh with your new friends and drain your drinking horn as fast as it's filled, taking pride in your ability to empty it without spilling your wine. As the night wears on, your head begins to spin until the world fades into blackness . . .

You wake with a pounding head and an aching back, shocked to discover that you're lying in a filthy gutter on a street far from the tavern. As you slowly get to your feet, you realize that your coin purse is missing. You've been robbed, and every bit of gold you've made during your journey is now gone!

"If only I'd listened to the priest's warning," you miserably say to yourself.

THE END ◆ FINIS



There's no sense in tempting fate, so you decide to leave Palmyra and head north to Antioch, a large city near the coast. When you arrive in the city, you visit many of the city's sites, and you also find out more about the people within it. To your surprise, you discover that there are many people in Antioch who follow a strange new religion called Christianity. At first, you're shocked by its teachings. It's dangerous to be a Christian, and many of the people in Antioch came there after fleeing persecution in other parts of the empire. But the more you learn, the less you want to focus on your work and the more you want to tell others about your newfound faith.

The two most important Christian teachers you meet, Peter and Paul, encourage you to stay in Antioch and help them educate more Romans about what they believe.

Despite the danger, you care too much about your friends to even think about leaving. After sending word to your family, to let them know that you will stay in Antioch, you sell your belongings and settle into a small house.

"Perhaps I didn't find fortune and glory," you tell yourself. "But I think I found what I was meant to do."

THE END  FINIS



The stories and objects from Egypt have always fascinated you, so you set sail for the fabled land of the pharaohs. When you arrive at your destination, Antinopolis, you're amazed to find a city that combines Egyptian style with Roman architecture

like triumphal arches and hippodromes. Because Egypt was long ruled by the Greek Ptolemaic dynasty, many of the people speak Greek; you're grateful that you mastered the language in Rome!

You head to an area of textile production, admiring a well-crafted pair of sandals. Nearby, some people are animatedly talking, and you overhear one say, "Have you heard that the Antinoeia games will be starting again soon? Emperor's orders: there will be all sorts of competitions—everything from poetry contests to chariot races! The winners could be granted citizenship, money, or even a lifetime of living expenses covered by the government!"

You listen with excitement; while you don't need citizenship, the thought of winning riches and honors is very appealing. But the competitions will be dangerous, especially the chariot races. Will the risk be worth it?

If you decide to participate in the games, go to this object, and then turn the page.



If you decide not to participate, go to this object, and then turn to page 48.



Realizing that this could be your chance to do something truly memorable, you decide to participate in the games. You were always good at chariot racing growing up, so you enter your name in the competition and start training.

Chariot racing is incredibly popular across the Roman Empire, and many professionals come to Antinoupolis to try their luck. These particular games honor Antinous, a man who was loved by the emperor and recently drowned in the Nile. Because of the lavish prizes and prestige, the games attract thousands of spectators.

Finally, the day of your race arrives. Dressed in the special clothing worn by charioteers, you drive your chariot into the magnificent hippodrome, an open-air stadium, riding around the racetrack while the audience cheers. You can even see a few of your friends waving flags in the color of your tunic! The other charioteers all look experienced and confident, but you are eager to show off your own skills.

You line up with the charioteers at the gates at one end of the hippodrome, tying the horse reins around your waist and waiting for the signal to begin.

Go to this object, and then turn the page.





At the signal, your horses burst out of the gate along with the other chariot teams, galloping around the sandy hippodrome. The dust and noise make it difficult to see, and the noise of the spectators rises to a roar as the charioteers rush by.

You urge your horses onward, shouting for them to go faster as you try to keep your chariot from crashing into the other teams. At the end of the first lap, you're lagging behind, but when several teams crash, you surge ahead. By the end of the second lap, you're in third place, and as you round the corner for the final lap, your horses pull ahead of the lead chariot. You cross the finish line in first place!

The spectators cheer as you slow your exhausted horses and wave at the crowd. The officials pull you toward the victor's podium, congratulating you as they place a golden diadem on your head.

"Well done, citizen!" an official says. "You've beaten some incredible charioteers—have you given any thought to becoming a professional?"

"I think I will now," you say, smiling up at the crowd and basking in the glory of your victory.

THE END ◆ FINIS

Even though the prizes offered in the games sound appealing, you decide to see more of the city and focus on your trading. You spend a great deal of time with other merchants, meeting people who have traveled to and from other areas of the Middle and Far East.

One merchant shows you silk acquired in Afghanistan. As you examine the fabric, he says, "Beautiful, isn't it? But when we were there, it seemed as if many were sick. We traded our wares quickly and came back here."

His words trouble you, but you still buy some of his goods before returning to your ship.

That evening, however, you start to feel unwell. You begin to burn with fever, and your skin breaks out in painful boils. Faustus calls in a doctor who prescribes drinking a hyssop and garlic potion and praying to the gods, but none of it seems to help. You hear of other people taking sick across the empire, and as you grow weaker and weaker, you fear that you will be one of the first victims of this terrible plague.

When Faustus brings in an artist to draw the portrait that will adorn your mummy, you realize that this truly is the end for you.

THE END  FINIS



You decide to head into the city to visit the Temple of the Divine Claudius, a large building dedicated to an emperor who passed away and is now honored as a god. The temple is next to the Colosseum, and you listen to the cheers of the crowd as you pass by. Within the temple walls are beautiful well-tended gardens where many people often come to walk and converse with one another. Today there are more people than usual, for there is an important ritual taking place in the area outside the temple entrance. A priest in a white toga sacrifices a bull and then examines the entrails to divine the will of the gods. The priest looks concerned, and many in the crowd begin to whisper that the god may be displeased.

Worried, you move away from the sacrifice to a quieter area of the gardens. As you walk near a secluded corner, you see a man and a woman speaking softly to each other. You recognize them as the emperor's mistress, Marcia, and Laetus, a commander of the powerful Praetorian Guard.

"Emperor Commodus has been growing more paranoid and dangerous than ever," Marcia murmurs. "We must act and kill him now, for the good of the empire."

"I agree, but we will need help," Laetus says. Suddenly he looks up and notices you, saying, "I know you, citizen. You are a member of a respected and wise family—will you help us with this task?"

If you agree, go to this object, and then turn the page.



If you refuse, go to this object, and then turn to page 58.

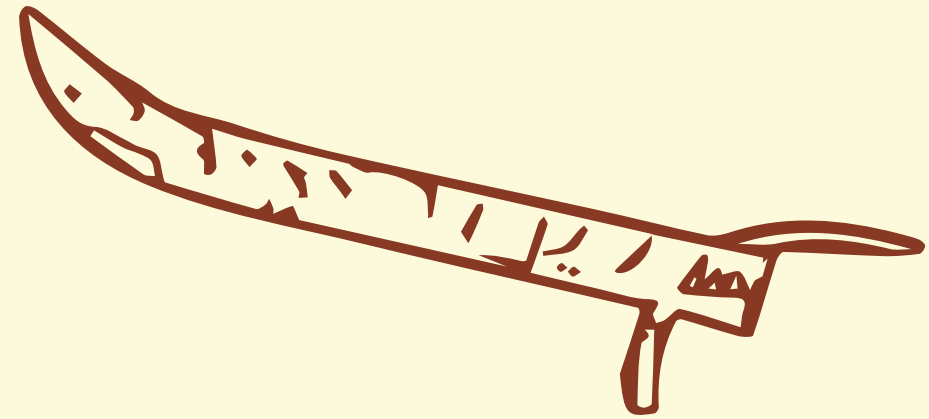


"Absolutely," you say. "Tell me more about your plans."

"The emperor has become very dangerous," Marcia says. "We are both members of his court, and we have seen how cruel and paranoid he can be. He killed his sister, wife, and several senators, and now he's saying that he is the demigod Hercules himself."

"Such a man cannot remain in power," Laetus says. "We are planning to poison him, but we could use your help. Come, we will go to the palace and tell you more."

Go to this object, and then turn the page.



Marcia and Laetus lead you through the city to the Palatine Hill, the place where the imperial family and court reside, in vast palatial complexes. You've never been anywhere quite this grand, and find yourself in awe of the towering marble buildings with lavish, frescoed walls. But there is no time to stop and stare; you have a duty to fulfill.

The three of you hide in a small room near the emperor's bathroom, where he is busy cleaning himself by scraping his oiled skin with a *strigil*. You place the poison in a goblet of wine, which Marcia carries to Emperor Commodus.

"Good work, citizen," Laetus says. "Now you must get yourself far from here; there will be chaos once the court discovers that the emperor has been murdered."

With a nod, you hurry back out the way you came, hearing the distant shouts of guards. You run through the halls as fast as you can, but quickly lose your way.

Suddenly, an unfamiliar man steps out of a corridor, saying, "I know a way out of the palace and can give you a place to hide! Come with me!"

If you trust the stranger and go with him, go to this object, and then turn to page 60.



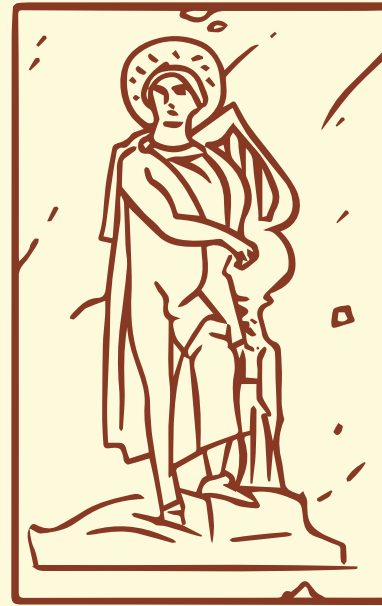
If you try to escape on your own, go to this object, and then turn to page 62.



“Absolutely not!” you declare. “Treason is punishable by death!”

With that, you run from the temple gardens, not stopping until you reach the large statue of Fortuna in one of the city squares. As you stop to catch your breath, you realize that you may need to go farther away to be safe. Perhaps you should go to the merchant’s home and see if he’s planning any trips to the provinces. With people plotting against the emperor, it might be wise to leave Rome for a while.

Go to this object, and then turn to page 30.



With little other option, you follow the stranger out of the palace. He leads you back down the hill, into a dark, walled building. As the gate closes and locks behind you, you realize that you are in a *ludus*—a gladiatorial school.

The man turns to face you, saying, “Laetus asked me to kill you to protect their conspiracy, but it doesn’t seem right to not give you a fighting chance. I run this *ludus* and will let you train as a fighter. Although many gladiators die fighting, the lucky ones achieve great wealth and fame. What do you say?”

If you accept the offer and train as a gladiator, go to this object, and then turn to page 65.



If you refuse the offer, go to this object, and then turn to page 66.





Though you try to escape, you are quickly apprehended by the palace guards. You are dragged to a lower level of the palace and shoved into a darkened room. It takes your eyes a moment to adjust, and when they do, you are shocked to see that you are in a room full of many powerful senators and magistrates.

One of them steps forward, carrying the fasces, a symbol of his power to pass judgment. He says, "You have committed a grievous crime in plotting against the emperor. Your co-conspirators have already admitted their crimes."

"What I did was for the good of Rome," you say. "The emperor was dangerous and out of control."

After a moment, the magistrate says, "What you say is true. It was for the best that Commodus was killed. But you still cannot be permitted to stay within this city."

Go to this object, and then turn to page 68.





"I don't really have a choice," you admit. "If Laetus is trying to kill me, I can't just go back home. I might as well try to survive here."

Training starts the next morning. After a hearty meal of oats, barley, and beans, you begin learning how to fight alongside your fellow gladiators while wielding a practice sword. The retired gladiators who train you also teach you how to face death with dignity and bravery. Training is brutal, but you know that the games will be worse. At night, locked in your tiny cell, you wonder what will happen when you finally enter the arena.

One night, you are told that you have been selected to fight in a day of games at the Colosseum. There is a lavish banquet for you and all the other gladiators who will fight, and you try to enjoy what may be your last meal as much as possible.

The next day, you are loaded onto a cart and driven through the streets to reach the Colosseum. The streets are filled with excited people, and you try not to let your nerves show on your face.

You are taken to the preparation chambers below the arena and given a sharp *gladius* (sword) and armor. Finally, the moment arrives, and you walk up a long ramp into the light as the fifty-thousand-strong crowd cheers.

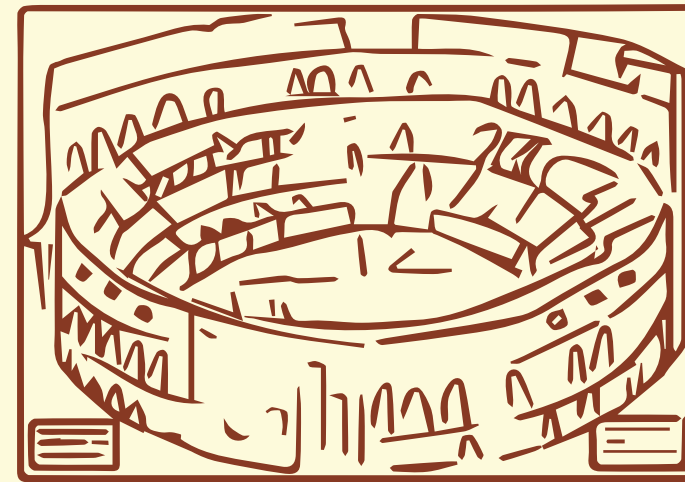
Go to this object, and then turn to page 70.



"I refuse!" you say, outraged. "Fighting in public will make me an *infamis*—I'll lose my rights as a citizen and be socially disgraced. I'd rather you just killed me."

"Oh, I won't kill you now," the man says with a cruel smile. "I think I'll turn you over to the officials and let you see what happens to Romans who commit treason against the emperor. Come on; let's not keep them waiting."

Go to this object, and then turn to page 72.



The Senate exiles you from the Roman Empire, stripping you of your rights as a citizen. You are taken from the city at dawn, given a horse, and ordered to leave and never come back.

As you stand on the hill looking down at the city of your birth, you can't help but feel sorrowful about leaving it. Turning back to the road in front of you, you remember hearing of the wealth and power in the neighboring Parthian Empire. While you don't know much about it, perhaps the Parthians would welcome you.

You mount your horse and begin heading east, hoping that fortune and glory still await.

THE END  FINIS

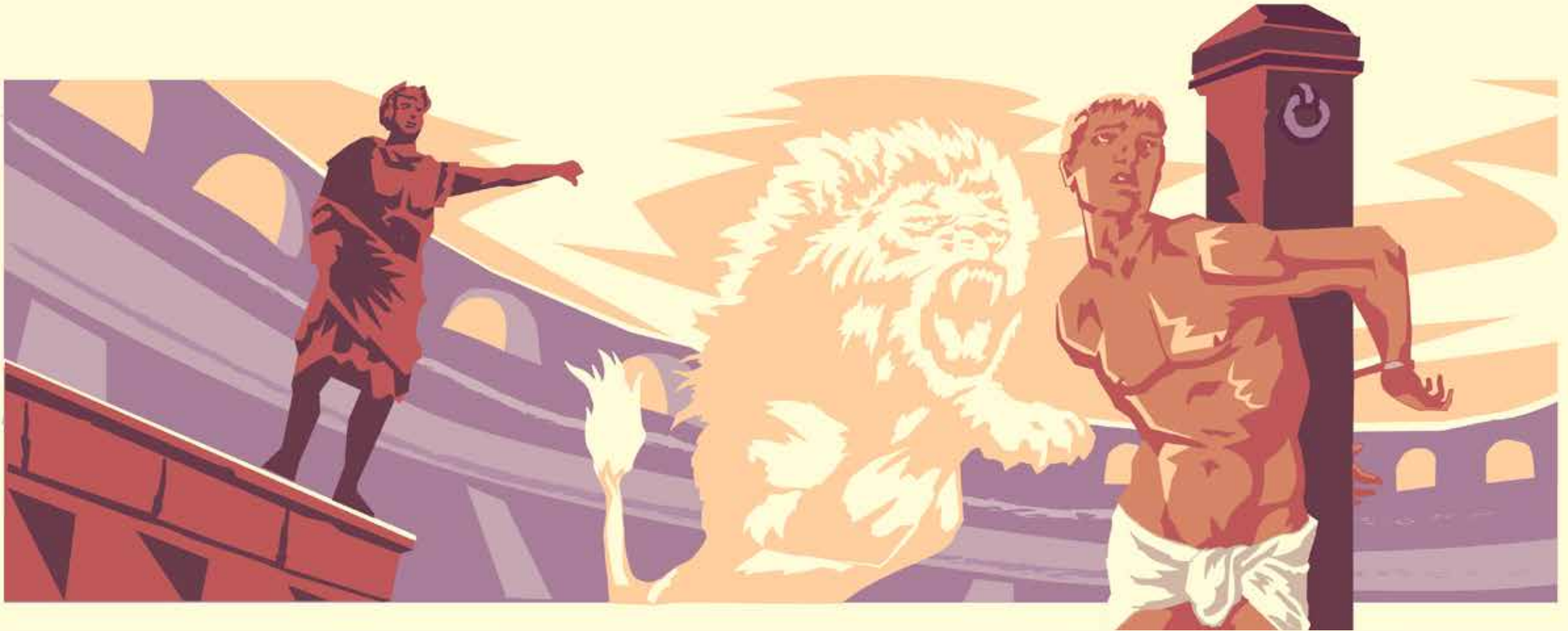
Your opponent stands waiting for you in the arena, clad in similar armor and holding a *gladius*. He rushes at you, and for several minutes you hear nothing but the clash of sword against sword. While your opponent is skilled, you've been training hard, and you've learned how to defend yourself. When you wound him in the shoulder, the crowd cheers in excitement.

Your opponent stumbles, and you kick him in the chest, sending him to the ground. Looking to the crowd, you listen as they chant for you to kill him. You turn to the game official, who signals with his thumb that the decision is "death." With a stab of your sword, you kill your opponent.

As the crowd cheers, you are crowned with laurels for your bravery. As you wave at the crowd, you realize that, if you can just survive a few more matches, you may be on your way to winning your discharge ticket, along with wealth and fame.

THE END ◆ FINIS





The man hands you over to the Praetorian Guard, who throw you into a dark, dank cell.

Several weeks later, you are shoved into a cart and driven through the streets. Though you can hear the jeers and shouts of the people outside, you can't see where you are going. Finally, the cart comes to a stop, and you are dragged up a ramp and into the blinding light. As you look around in confusion, you realize that you are in the arena of the Colosseum. The people of Rome fill the stands, and the new emperor sits in his box looking down at you.

You are tied to a pole in the center of the arena, your heart pounding as you wait to learn your fate. Then you hear a growl and turn to see a hungry-eyed lion stalking toward you.

To your horror, you realize that you've been sentenced to *damnatio ad bestias*—death by wild beast!

THE END ◆ FINIS

ROME

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