

MARINI

THE EAGLES OF ROME

BOOK

I



Europe
COMICS

ORIGINS
DEC-IMP.

MARINI

THE EAGLES OF
ROME

BOOK
I



GERMANIA
745 AB URBE CONDITA
(9 BC)

AFTER HAVING GLORIOUSLY ANNEXED THE ALPS
REGION WITH HIS BROTHER TIBERIUS,
DRUSUS WAS SENT TO GERMANIA.

HIS FATHER-IN-LAW, THE EMPEROR AUGUSTUS, HAD GIVEN HIM A DIFFICULT TASK:
TO DEFEAT THE BARBARIAN TRIBES AND EXPLORE THEIR UNKNOWN TERRITORIES,
ABOUT WHICH THE MOST HORRIBLE LEGENDS CIRCULATED IN ROME.

THREE YEARS OF FIERCE CAMPAIGNS FOLLOWED,
UNTIL THE DAY THE SICAMBRI, THE TENCTERI, THE USIPETES,
AND THE CHERUSCI WERE DEFEATED BY DRUSUS'S LEGIONS.







THERE!
I SEE MY FATHER!
WITH SEGETES AND
UNCLE INGOMAR!

YES, THEY BRAVELY FOUGHT
AGAINST THE LEGIONS AND NOW THEY
COME FORWARD WITH THEIR HEADS HELD HIGH.
THEY MAKE IT CLEAR THAT WE WILL
NEVER BE SUBJECTS OF ROME.

WHY ARE THOSE
CHILDREN FOLLOWING THEM?
WHAT ARE MY BROTHER FLAVUS
AND SEGIMUND, THE SON OF
SEGETES, DOING
WITH THEM?



THEY ARE
HOSTAGES, ERMANAMER.
ALL OF THEM CHILDREN OF
PRINCES. THEY SERVE AS
INSURANCE FOR THE ALLIANCE.
THE ROMANS WILL TAKE
THEM WITH THEM
TO ROME.



ROME...



GODDAMNED ROMANS!
THEY CLEARED THE BATTLEFIELD
OF ALL THEIR DEAD TO
HUMILIATE US.



AND OUR GODS
MOCK US. THEY LET SOL
DRIVE HER CHARIOT ACROSS
THE HEAVENS ON THIS
DAY OF SHAME.

QUIET, INGOMAR!
DO NOT ANGER THE GODS
EVEN MORE.



EXCELLENT IDEA,
TAKING OUR DEAD AWAY
BEFORE DAWN, FALCO. YOUR MEN
DID A REMARKABLE JOB.

THANK YOU,
GENERAL. I AM SURE
THE EFFORT MADE
AN IMPACT ON THE
BARBARIANS.



AVE DRUSUS. PER OUR AGREEMENT, I AM ENTRUSTING THESE YOUNG PRINCES TO YOU. ALL OF THEM COME FROM THE MOST NOBLE FAMILIES.

I HOPE THEY WILL BE TREATED WITH THE RESPECT DUE THEIR RANKS.

YOU HAVE MY WORD, SIGMAR. LET US FORGET THE CONFLICTS OF THE PAST. WE ARE ALLIES FROM NOW ON.



LET US BE CLEAR. WE CHERUSCI WILL NOT KISS YOUR ROMAN ASSES, LIKE THOSE WORTHLESS GAULS ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE RHENUS. WE WOULD RATHER DIE.

INGOMAR!



HA HA HA! I CAN ASSURE YOU, INGOMAR, THAT NO ROMAN WILL SEEK TO COZY UP TO A GIANT SUCH AS YOURSELF.



TO SHOW YOU MY RESPECT AND TRUST, I LEAVE YOU YOUR WEAPONS. AND I WILL ASK YOU FOR MEN, WHO WILL FIGHT ALONGSIDE MY LEGIONNAIRES. HENCEFORTH, YOUR ENEMIES WILL ALSO BE THE ENEMIES OF ROME.



FOLLOW ME, GREAT DUKES OF GERMANIA. LET ME OFFER YOU MY FINEST WINE, WHILE YOUR WARRIORS CARE FOR THEIR FALLEN BROTHERS WHO FOUGHT SO BRAVELY.

WITH THE HELP OF THE CHERUSCI, DRUSUS REACHED THE RIVER ALBIS. THERE, A BARBARIAN SOOTHSAYER PREDICTED HIS DEATH, AND DRUSUS, BEING SUPERSTITIOUS, DECIDED TO RETREAT. THE PROPHECY SOON CAME TO PASS. DRUSUS DIED FOLLOWING AN UNFORTUNATE FALL FROM HIS HORSE. THE SENATE BESTOWED ON HIM THE SOBRIQUET "GERMANICUS," WHICH WAS PASSED ON TO HIS HEIRS. BUT DESPITE THE SUCCESSIVE CAMPAIGNS OF HIS BROTHER TIBERIUS AND THE TIRELESS EFFORTS TO DEFEAT THE GERMANIC PEOPLES, GERMANIA REMAINED A GIANT HORNET'S NEST.



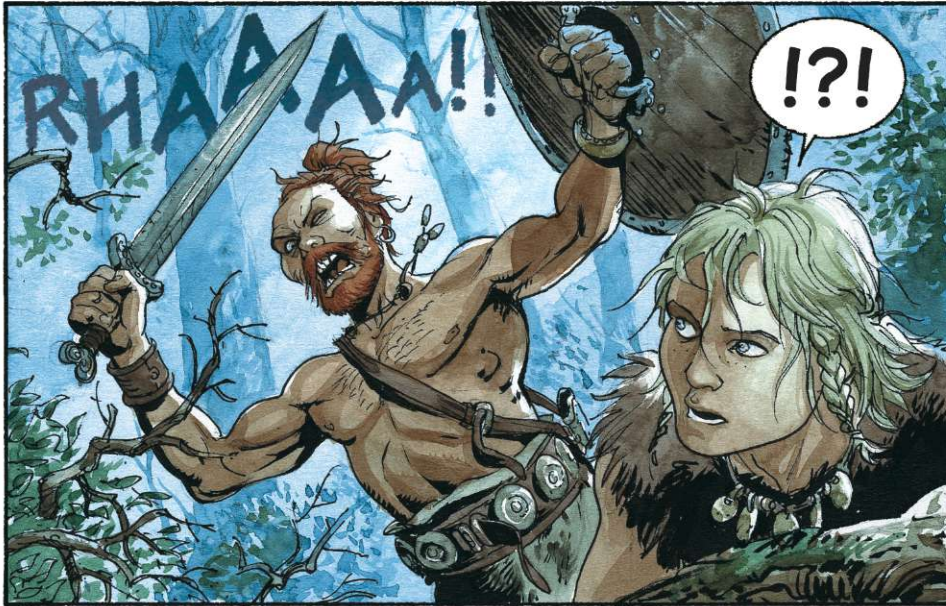


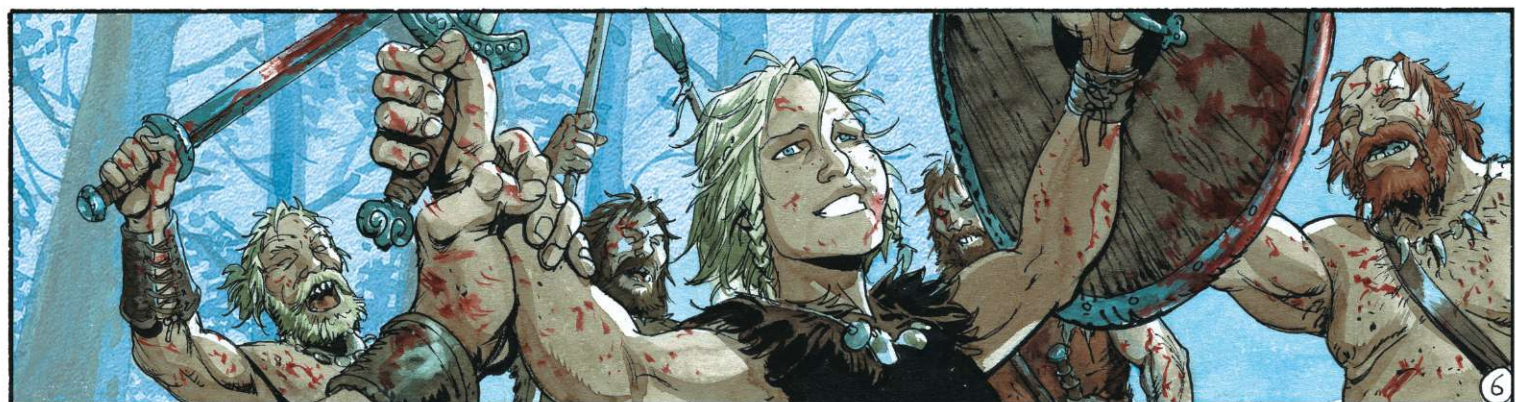
LET'S SEND
THOSE GODDAMNED SUEBI
BACK TO THEIR ROTTING LANDS
AND THEIR FAT WOMEN!



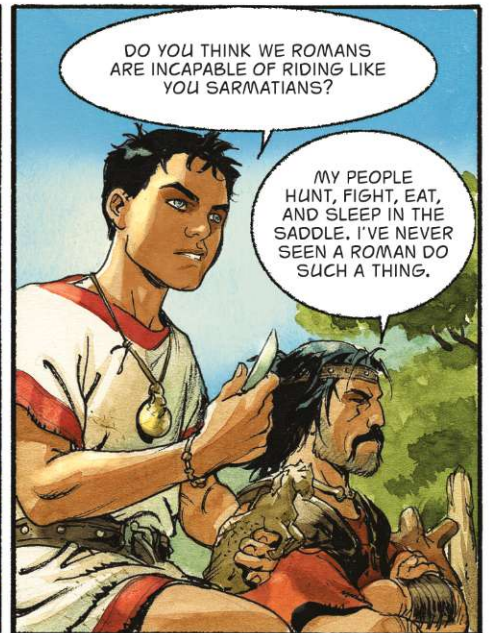
GERMANIA
745 AB URBE CONDITA
(1 BC)

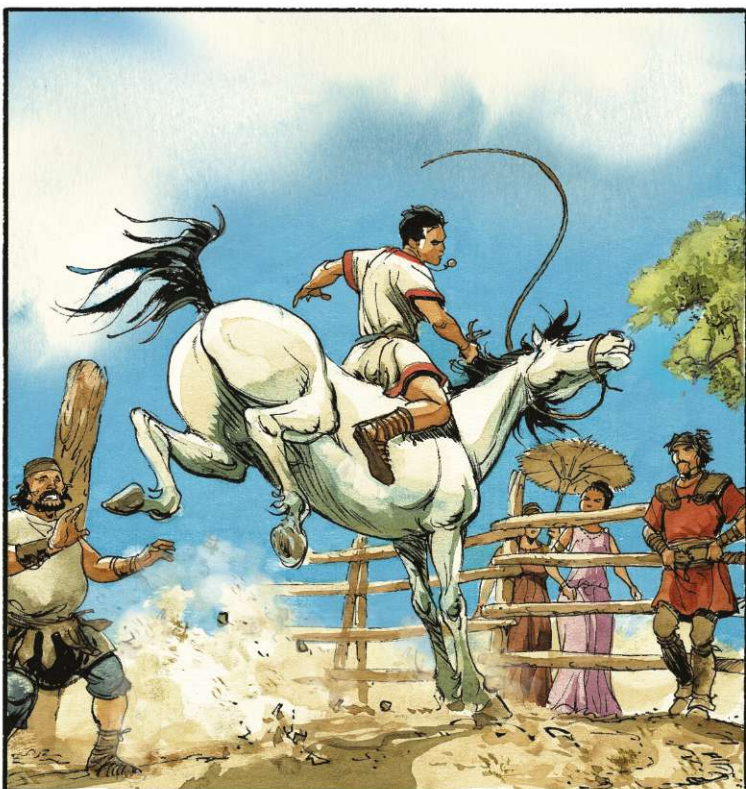
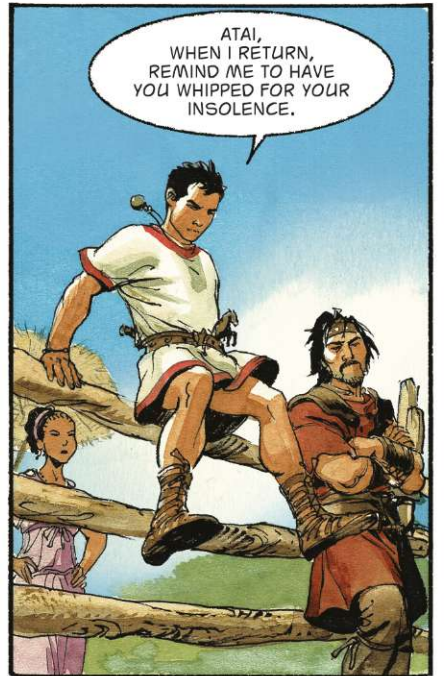


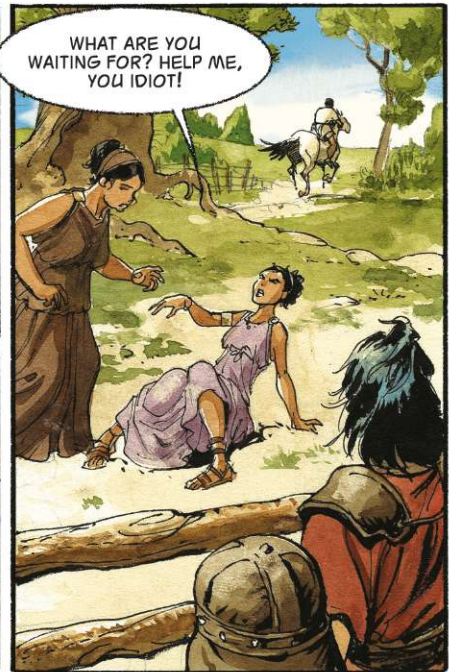
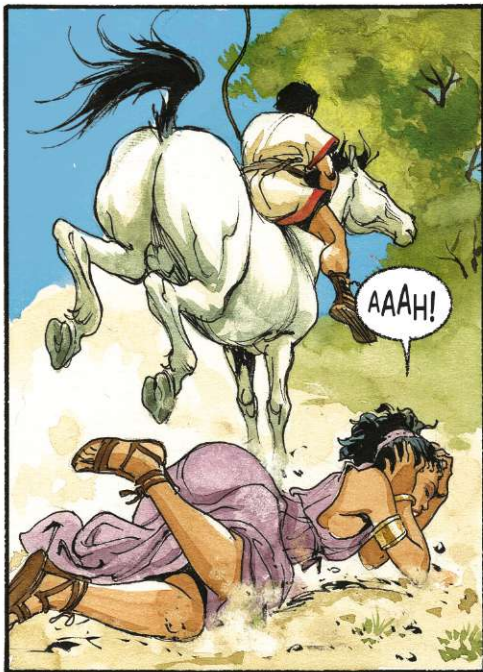




ITALIA
VILLA FALCO, COLLI ALBANI
753 AB URBE CONDITA
(1 BC)







ROMA
753 AB URBE CONDITA
(1 BC)



IMPERIAL PALACE
ON PALATINE HILL.





HOW IS YOUR LEG?

ACCORDING TO THE MEDICUS, THE ROXOLANI ARROW DID MORE HARM THAN EXPECTED.

THE VINE STOCK, WHICH I USED TO TRAIN MY SOLDIERS, HAS ANOTHER USE NOW.



AND HOW IS YOUR WIFE?

ALBINA.

...ALBINA?

I AM SORRY, TITUS VALERIUS. THOSE COWARDLY ROXOLANI KNOW THEY CAN'T MATCH OUR LEGIONS IN HAND-TO-HAND COMBAT, BUT THEIR BOWS ARE UNFORTUNATELY VERY EFFICIENT.



MY WIFE HAS TURNED INTO A TRUE ROMAN.

I AM PLEASSED TO HEAR IT. I HAVE ALWAYS APPRECIATED YOUR SACRIFICE.



THOUGH YOU CAN HARDLY CALL IT A SACRIFICE, WHEN YOU THINK OF THE INCREDIBLE BEAUTY OF ALBINA. SO RARE FOR A GERMANIC PRINCESS.

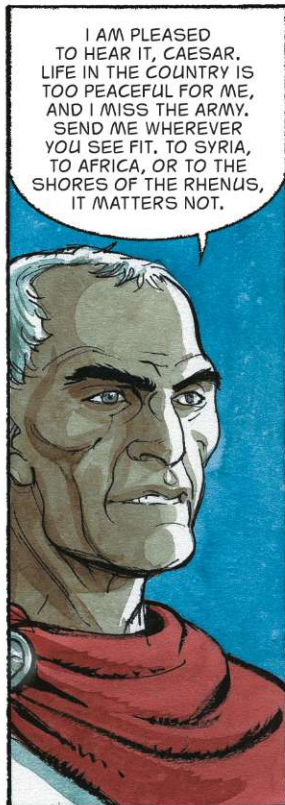
YOUR UNION HAS STRENGTHENED OUR ALLIANCE WITH THE TRIBES EAST OF THE RHENUS.



I DID IT FOR ROME... AND YOU HAVE GIVEN ME AMPLE REWARD.

YES. YOU HAVE ALWAYS BEEN LOYAL AND ONE OF MY BEST OFFICERS.

LET US GET TO THE PURPOSE OF THIS MEETING. YOUR EXPERIENCE AS AN INSTRUCTOR IS STILL IN DEMAND.

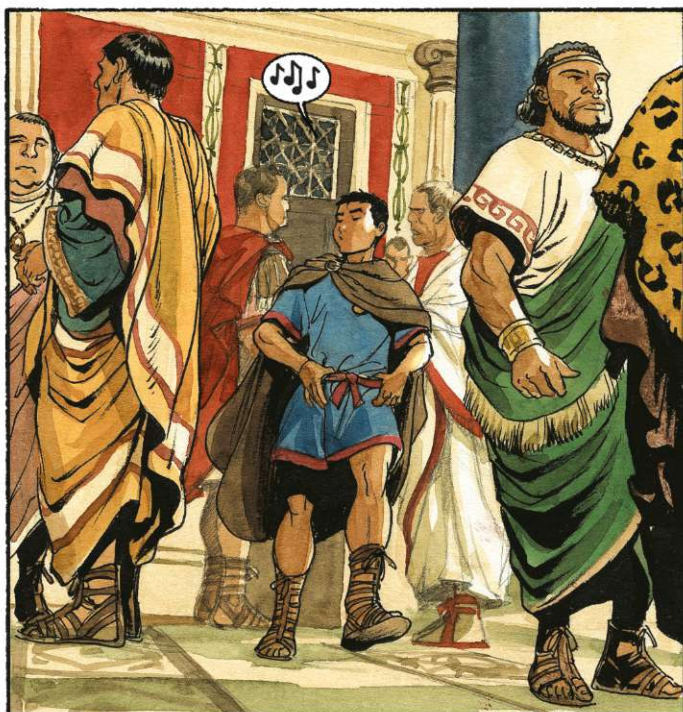


I AM PLEASSED TO HEAR IT, CAESAR. LIFE IN THE COUNTRY IS TOO PEACEFUL FOR ME, AND I MISS THE ARMY. SEND ME WHEREVER YOU SEE FIT. TO SYRIA, TO AFRICA, OR TO THE SHORES OF THE RHENUS, IT MATTERS NOT.



I MUST DISAPPOINT YOU, MY DEAR TITUS VALERIUS. IT IS NOT ABOUT TRAINING LEGIONNAIRES.

AH...

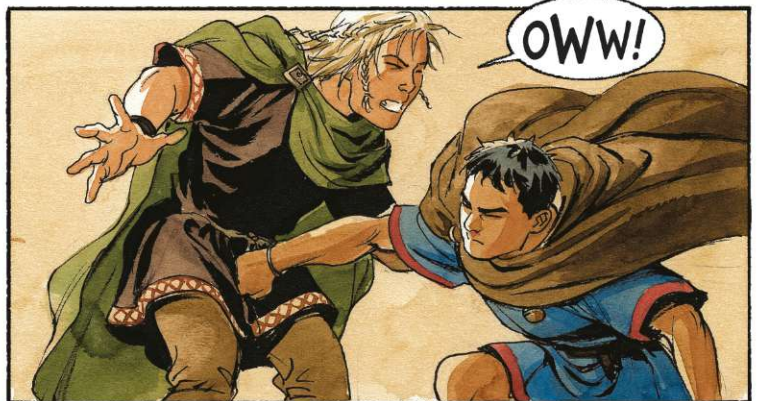


HEY?!



APOLOGIZE IMMEDIATELY, SLAVE, OR YOU'RE GOING TO GET A THRASHING!

GET YOUR HANDS OFF ME, ASSHOLE!





MARCUS?!

YOUR SON, TITUS VALERIUS?

I SEE THEY HAVE ALREADY MET.

THAT...THAT SAVAGE WANTED TO KILL ME...TO THROW ME OFF THE BALCONY!

...NOT HIGH ENOUGH FOR THIS ASS-HOLE...



TITUS VALERIUS, MEET ERMANAMER, SON OF THE CHERUSCI PRINCE SIGMAR, OUR ALLY. HE HAS BEEN SENT HERE AS A HOSTAGE.

I WAS RIGHT, HE IS A DAMN SLAVE!



THE LOYALTY OF OUR CHERUSCI FRIENDS HAS BEEN SHOWN MANY TIMES OVER THE PAST YEARS. THUS I WILL SHOW MY GRATITUDE BY GIVING YOU ROMAN CITIZENSHIP.



HENCEFORTH, YOU SHALL BE CALLED GAIVS JULIUS ARMIIVS.



YOU SHALL RECEIVE A ROMAN EDUCATION. AND IF YOU PROVE YOURSELF WORTHY, YOU SHALL ASCEND TO THE EQUESTRIAN RANK.

TITUS VALERIUS FALCO WILL BE YOUR TRAINER...

WHAT? NO, THAT ISN'T P-



SMACK

SHUT UP!



I SEE YOU HAVE NOT YET BEGUN EDUCATING YOUR SON.

PLEASE FORGIVE HIS BEHAVIOR, CAESAR. THIS WILL NOT HAPPEN AGAIN.



MAKE A REAL ROMAN OUT OF ARMIIVS...AND TEACH YOUR SON GOOD MANNERS.

I PROMISE, CHIEF.



DO NOT FORGET YOU ARE HERE FOR THE GOOD OF YOUR PEOPLE, ARMINIUS. I AM OFFERING YOU A TREMENDOUS PRIVILEGE.

FAREWELL, RACES...

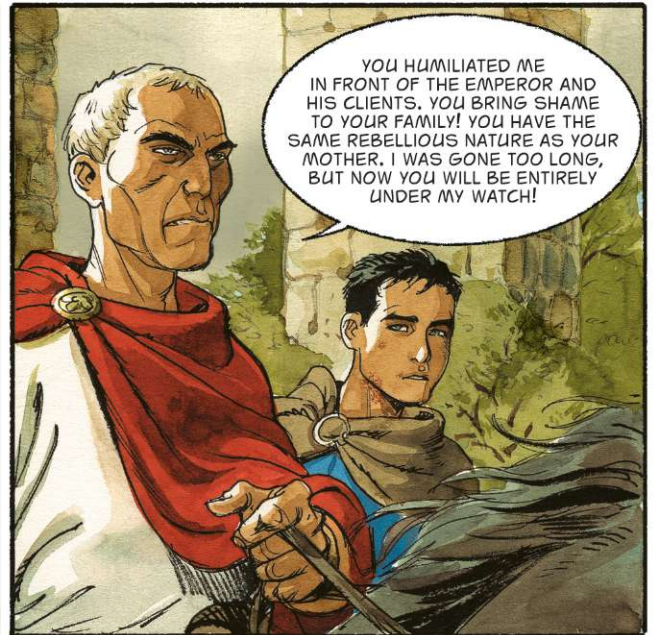


"I FORGIVE YOU YOUR IDIOTIC BEHAVIOR, BUT YOUR ADOLESCENCE ENDS TODAY. FROM NOW ON YOU ARE MEN, AND THUS YOU WILL BE TREATED WITH THE NECESSARY HARSHNESS."



FATHER? YOU HAVEN'T SPOKEN SINCE WE LEFT THE PALACE.

IF IT'S BECAUSE OF THE FIGHT WITH THAT SAVAGE, I...



YOU HUMILIATED ME IN FRONT OF THE EMPEROR AND HIS CLIENTS. YOU BRING SHAME TO YOUR FAMILY! YOU HAVE THE SAME REBELLIOUS NATURE AS YOUR MOTHER. I WAS GONE TOO LONG, BUT NOW YOU WILL BE ENTIRELY UNDER MY WATCH!



YOU WILL NEVER AGAIN PUT ME IN SUCH AN EMBARRASSING SITUATION!

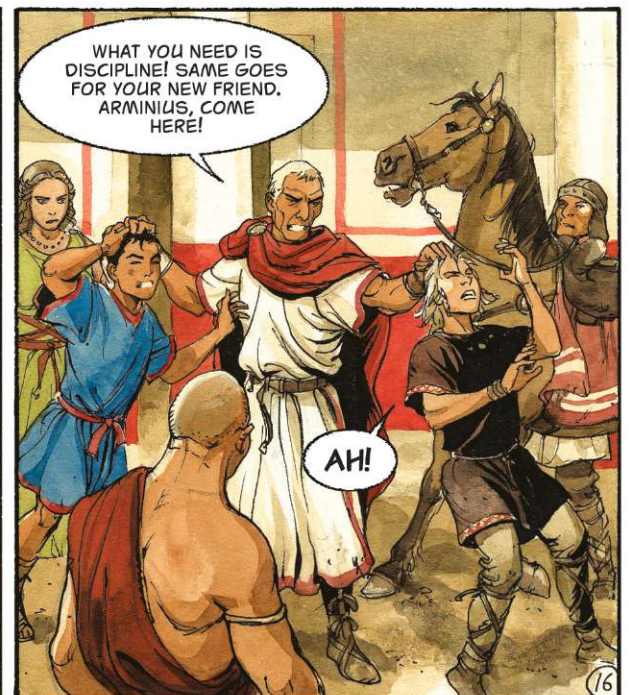
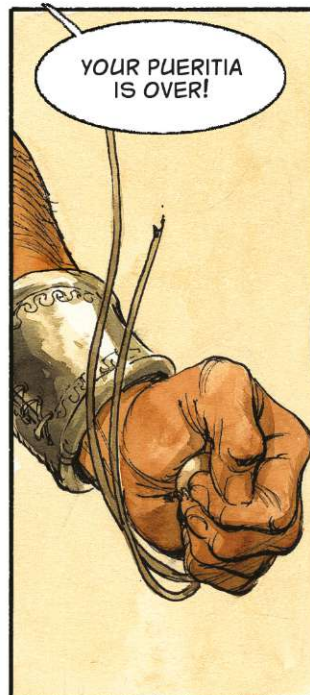
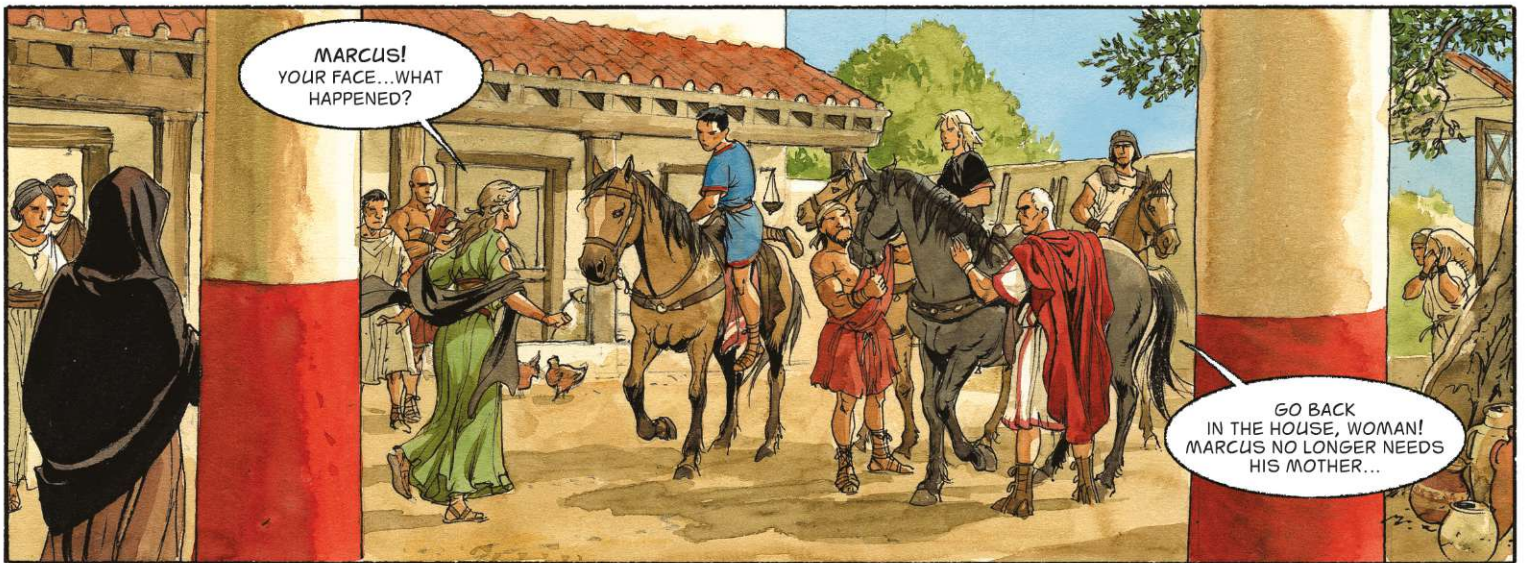
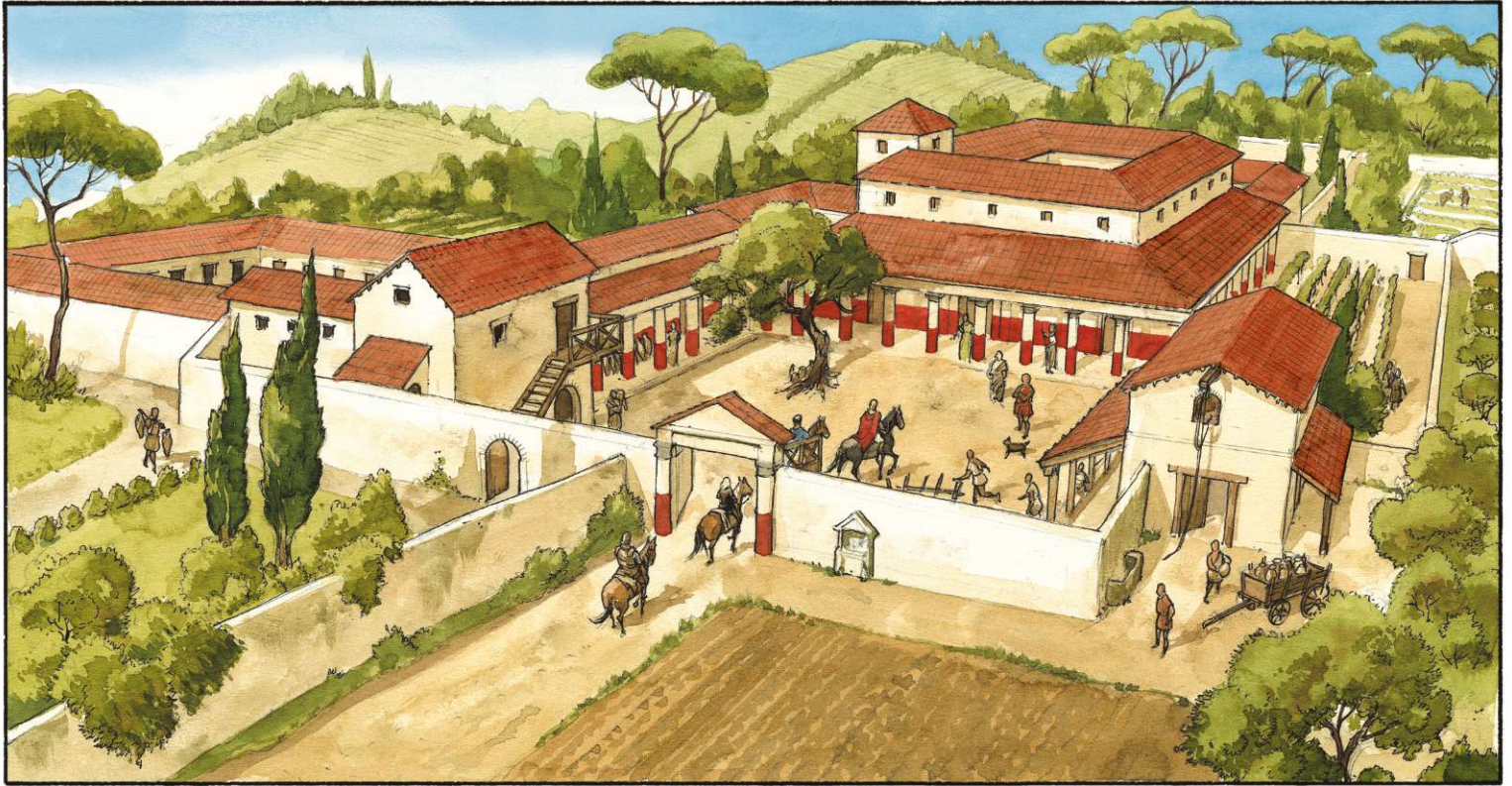
YES, FATHER...

GET OUT OF MY SIGHT!



IT MUST BE PAINFUL TO RIDE IN SUCH A STATE, HUH?

GO SCREW YOUR-UMPH-SELF!





LISTEN TO ME, "PRINCESS" -- YOU MIGHT THINK YOU ARE PROTECTED BY ROMAN CITIZENSHIP, BUT FOR ME YOU ARE JUST A HOSTAGE.

I DON'T AGREE WITH THE EMPEROR, GIVING THIS OPPORTUNITY TO AN IDIOT LIKE YOU, BUT I OBEY HIS WISHES.



THAT IS WHAT YOU WILL LEARN WITH ME. TO OBEY WITHOUT THINKING. DON'T FORGET, I CAN PUNISH YOU AS I SEE FIT, EXCEPT FOR KILLING YOU...

... AND BELIEVE ME, THERE ARE PUNISHMENTS WORSE THAN DEATH. UNDERSTOOD, RECRUIT?

YE--YES!



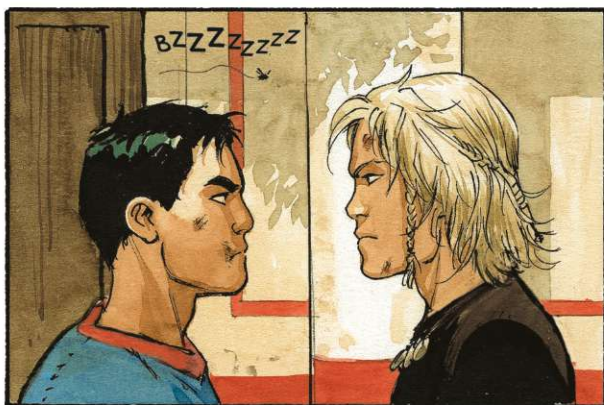
BUT BEING THE PATER FAMILIAE OVER YOU, I HAVE THE RIGHT OF LIFE OR DEATH. DO NOT TEMPT ME, SON.

YES, D-DOMINUS!



YOU WILL STAY LIKE THIS UNTIL FURTHER ORDER.

IF ONE OF YOU MOVES, YOU WILL SHARE TEN STROKES OF THE CANE.



BZZZZZZZZ



WHAT IS THAT STUPID SMILE?

NORMAL FOR A PIGLET LIKE YOU TO ATTRACT THEM.



MMMPF!!

WHACK!



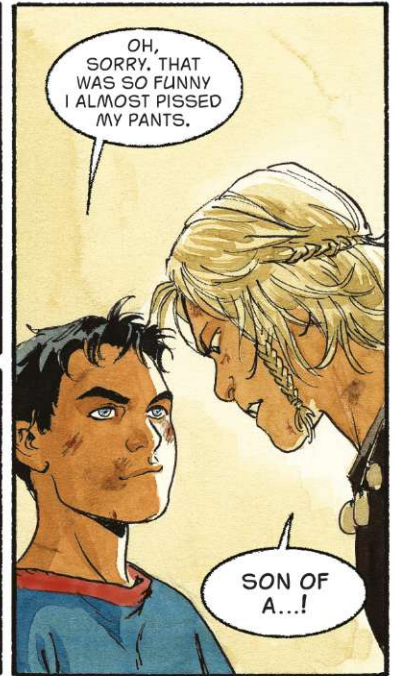
OOH!
REALLY SMART OF YOU.
I WON'T BE ABLE TO SIT
DOWN FOR AGES.

QUIT
YOUR SNIVELING.
IF YOU'D RATHER, NEXT
TIME I'LL JUST KILL YOU.
THAT WAY YOU WON'T
FEEL THE BLOWS.



I'VE BEATEN UP
STRONGER AND
SMARTER GUYS THAN
YOU! YOU'RE JUST
A LOUDMOUTH!

SPEAKING
OF WHICH, YOUR FACE
MAKES ME THINK OF
THE STATE OF
MY ASS!



OH,
SORRY, THAT
WAS SO FUNNY
I ALMOST PISSED
MY PANTS.

SON OF
A...!



AHWW!



THEY'VE BEEN
OUTSIDE IN THE COLD
FOR HOURS, WITH NO
FOOD. HAVEN'T THEY
BEEN PUNISHED
ENOUGH?

THEY LACK
RESPECT AND
DISCIPLINE, ALBINIA.
I WILL CHANGE
THAT.



MARCUS IS
JUST A DREAMER WITH
A HEAD FULL OF BULLSHIT.
HE SPENDS HIS TIME IN THE
WOODS JUST LIKE AN ANIMAL.
I AM TOO OLD; HE CAN'T FEEL
MY BLOWS ANYMORE. IT'S
ABOUT TIME YOU TOOK
CARE OF THAT RASCAL,
SON!



I'VE ALWAYS
SAID THERE WAS TOO
MUCH BARBARIAN BLOOD
IN HIS VEINS.

SHUT UP,
LUCILLA, OR YOU CAN KEEP
THEM COMPANY! AND
ENOUGH WITH THE
NOISE!



Y—
YOUR FATHER
IS CRAZY! IS HE
TRYING TO KILL US,
OR WHAT...?

AHH...I'M NOT
SURPRISED.
HE—HE WAS HOPING
THE EMPEROR WOULD
GIVE HIM COMMAND
OF A LEGION...

...INSTEAD,
HE HAS TO
WATCH OVER A BIG
BARBARIAN
BABY...



WHAT'S
THAT N—
NOISE?

MY STOMACH.
I HAVEN'T EATEN SINCE
NOON YESTERDAY.



I HAD
CHICKEN LAST NIGHT.
NO COMMENT ON RO—
ROMAN COOKING...

SHU—SHUT
YOUR FACE!

WOULD YOU
LOVEBIRDS
LIKE A LITTLE
SERENADE?

PLEASE, LUCILLA.
WE'VE ALREADY
BEEN PUNISHED
ENOUGH.

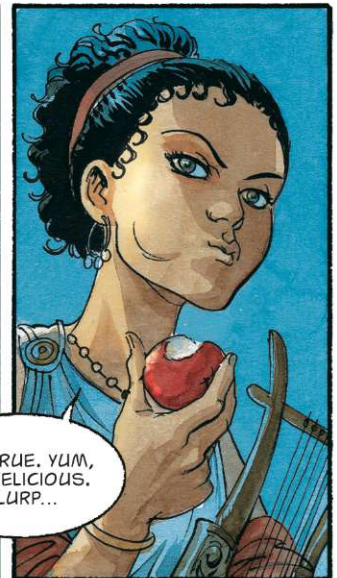


YOU'RE
NOT GOING TO
INTRODUCE ME TO
YOUR NEW GIRL—
FRIEND?

ARMINIUS
THE BARBARIAN...
MY STEPSISTER,
LUCILLA THE
SNAKE!

NO THANKS.
IT COULD BE
POISONED.

I WORRY ABOUT YOUR
HEALTH, MY LITTLE RAT.
WANT A BITE?

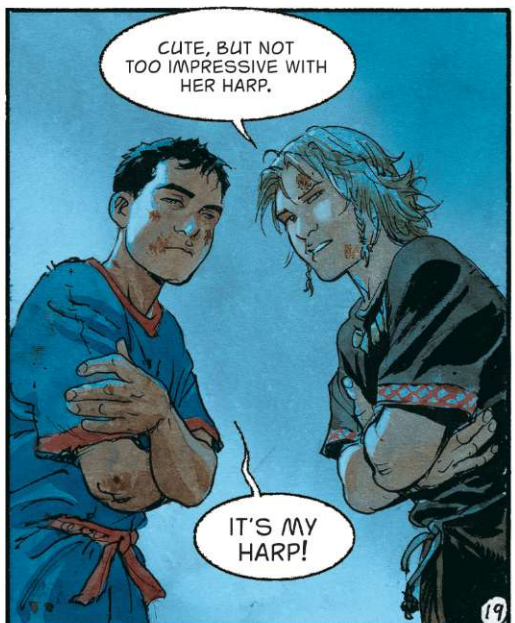


NOT TRUE. YUM,
IT'S DELICIOUS.
SLURP...



PPFF, I'M FULL.
GOOD NIGHT, GUYS.
I'M GOING TO
LIE DOWN.

MAYBE TOMORROW
VOLCANUS WILL ALSO LET
ME USE HIS STICK?
HAHAHAHA!



CUTE, BUT NOT
TOO IMPRESSIVE WITH
HER HARP.

IT'S MY
HARP!



I...I CAN'T HOLD YOU UP ANYMORE...

I...CAN'T STAND YOU...ANYMORE...



HOW MUCH MORE TIME?

UNTIL SUNDOWN. THEN, LET THEM EAT AND SLEEP. TOMORROW YOU WILL START THE TRAINING.

AND DON'T FORGET TO BURN HIS TOYS!



I GLADLY VOLUNTEERED TO HELP.

BITCH! I'M GOING TO.!



MEH, ONLY LITTLE GIRLS PLAY WITH DOLLS.



I'VE TRAINED THOUSANDS OF RECRUITS. I MADE THEM SWALLOW DUST AND SPIT OUT BLOOD.

BUT THEY ALL ENDED UP LOVING ME, BECAUSE I MADE THEM INTO LEGIONNAIRES...

...THE BEST SOLDIERS IN THE WORLD!

BELIEVE ME. YOU, TOO, WILL END UP LOVING ME! VOLCANUS!



SMACK!

WHACK!

AAH!

OOW!



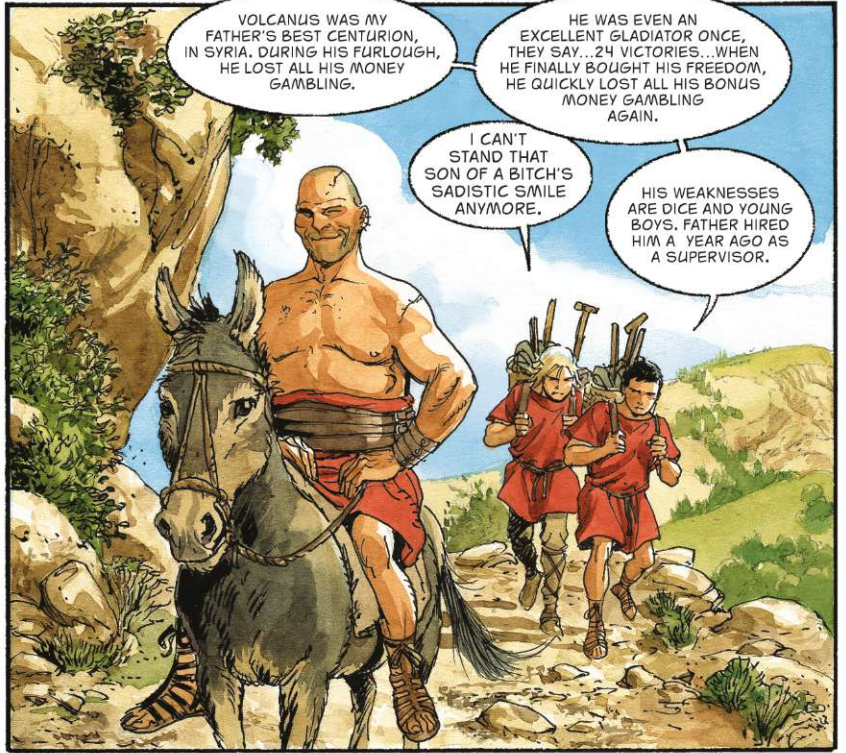
Y-YES, DOMINUS.

OKAY, LET'S START THE TRAINING.



HEY, VOLCANUS, YOU'VE MADE US WALK LIKE MULES FOR WEEKS! WHEN DO WE GET TO FINALLY HANDLE WEAPONS?

WHEN YOU'RE STRONG ENOUGH.

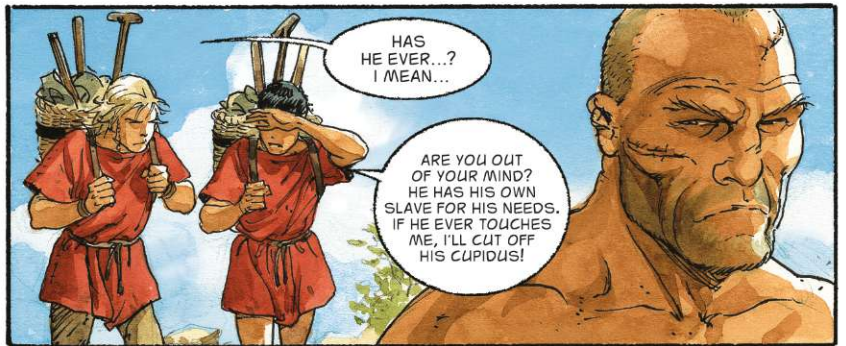


VOLCANUS WAS MY FATHER'S BEST CENTURION, IN SYRIA. DURING HIS FURLOUGH, HE LOST ALL HIS MONEY GAMBLING.

HE WAS EVEN AN EXCELLENT GLADIATOR ONCE, THEY SAY... 24 VICTORIES... WHEN HE FINALLY BOUGHT HIS FREEDOM, HE QUICKLY LOST ALL HIS BONUS MONEY GAMBLING AGAIN.

I CAN'T STAND THAT SON OF A BITCH'S SADISTIC SMILE ANYMORE.

HIS WEAKNESSES ARE DICE AND YOUNG BOYS. FATHER HIRED HIM A YEAR AGO AS A SUPERVISOR.



HAS HE EVER...? I MEAN...

ARE YOU OUT OF YOUR MIND? HE HAS HIS OWN SLAVE FOR HIS NEEDS. IF HE EVER TOUCHES ME, I'LL CUT OFF HIS CUPIDUS!



JUST OUT OF CURIOSITY, BARBARIAN, WHO TAUGHT YOU OUR CIVILIZED LANGUAGE?

HE WAS THE SON OF A SENATOR. A PRISONER IN THE WARS AGAINST DRUSUS. FATHER INSISTED THAT HE TEACH ME LATIN.

LIAR! A TRUE ROMAN WOULD NEVER ACCEPT BEING THE SLAVE OF A BARBARIAN. HE WOULD RATHER DIE!



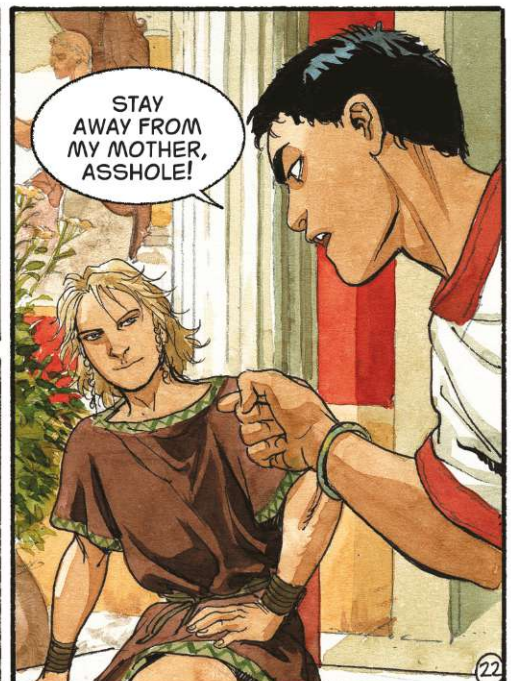
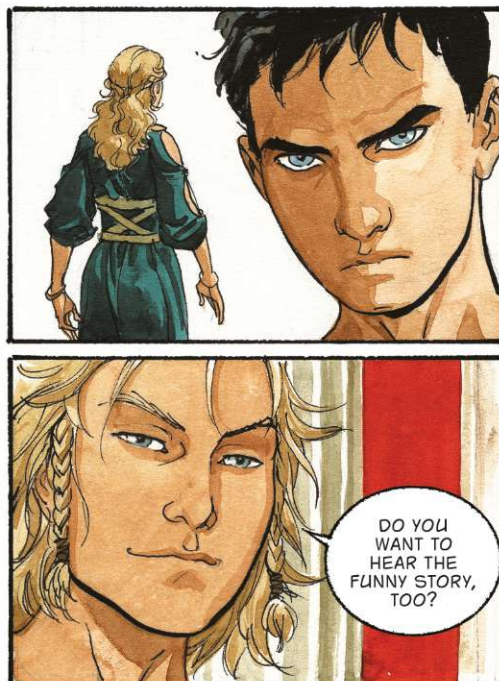
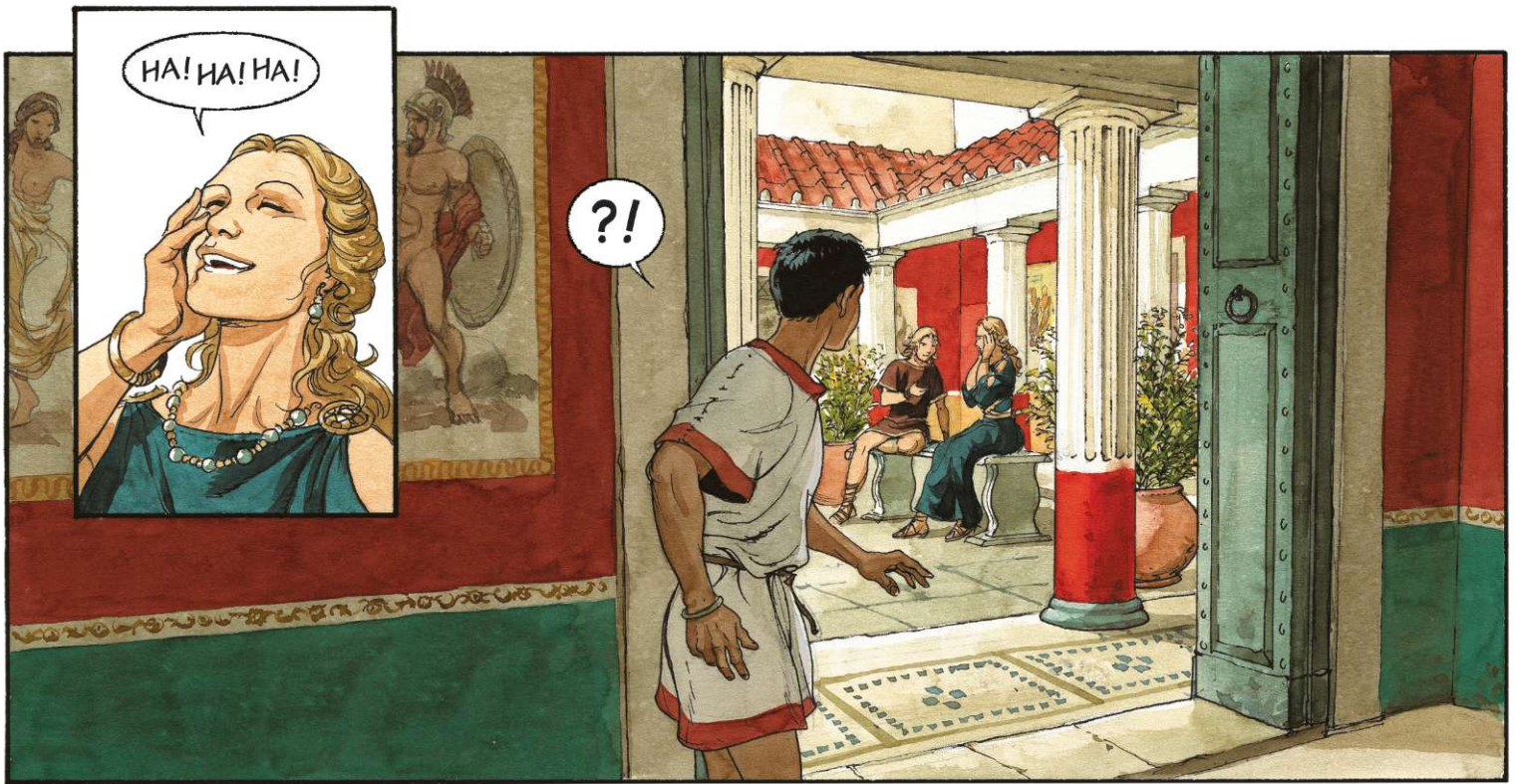
FATHER BROKE ALL HIS TEETH, AND THAT HELPED CONVINCE HIM. BUT IT DIDN'T MAKE THE LESSONS ANY EASIER.

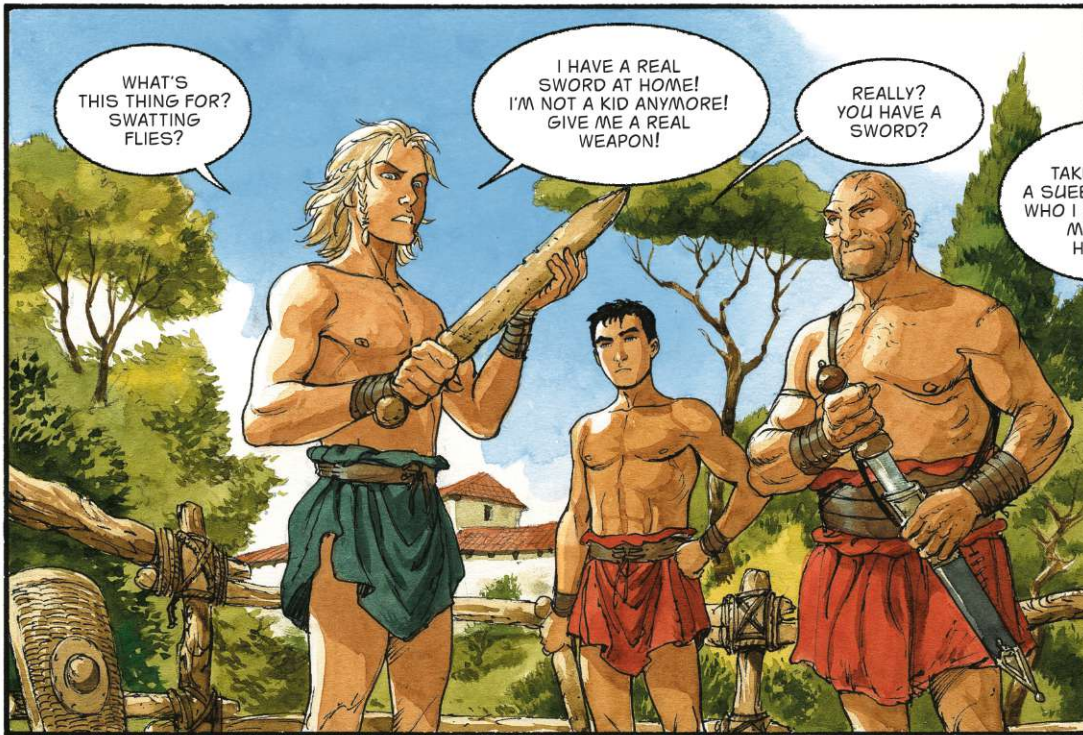


WHEW. THANK GOODNESS WE'RE ALMOST THERE... I CAN'T FEEL MY FEET ANYMORE.

SEEMS YOU STILL HAVE ENOUGH ENERGY TO CHAT. WE'LL TAKE A LITTLE DETOUR OF FIVE "MILIA PASSUUM" AT RUNNING SPEED. GO!

OH, SHIT!



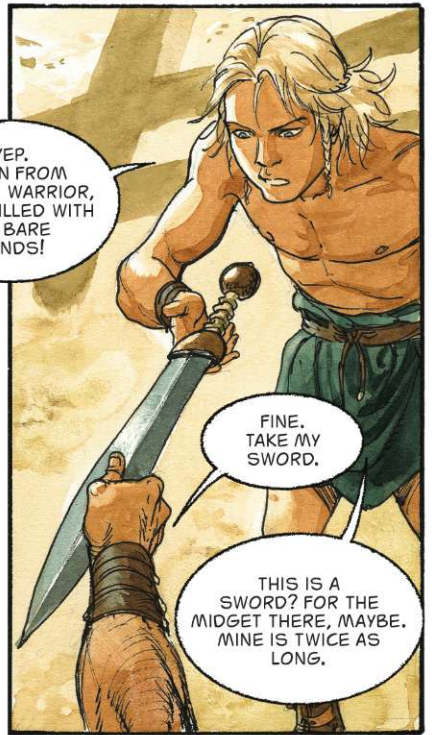


WHAT'S THIS THING FOR? SWATTING FLIES?

I HAVE A REAL SWORD AT HOME! I'M NOT A KID ANYMORE! GIVE ME A REAL WEAPON!

REALLY? YOU HAVE A SWORD?

YEP. TAKEN FROM A SUEBI WARRIOR, WHO I KILLED WITH MY BARE HANDS!

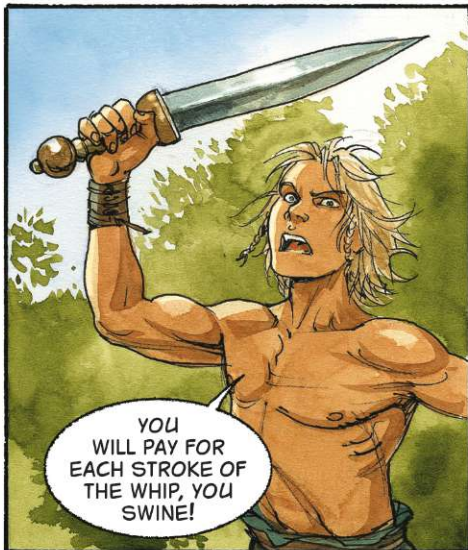


FINE. TAKE MY SWORD.

THIS IS A SWORD? FOR THE MIDGET THERE, MAYBE. MINE IS TWICE AS LONG.



SHOW US WHAT YOU CAN DO, GREAT WARRIOR...



YOU WILL PAY FOR EACH STROKE OF THE WHIP, YOU SWINE!

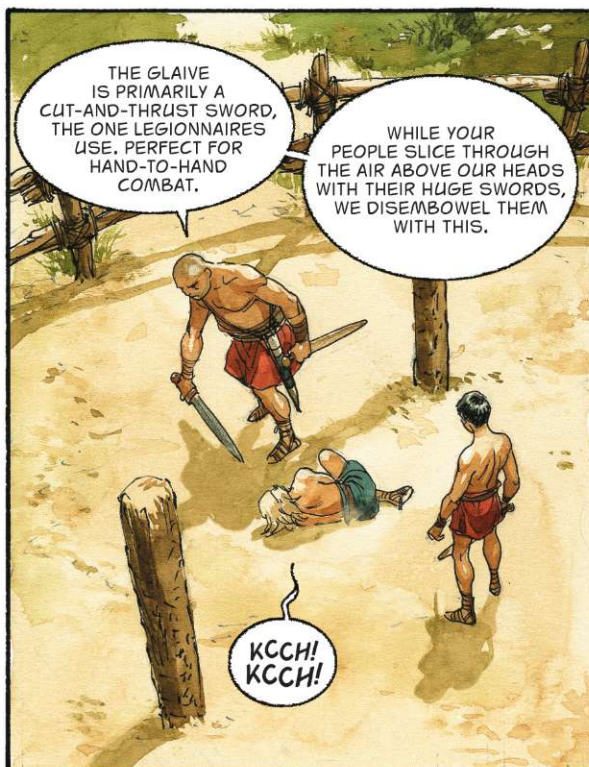


I WILL WIPE THAT STUPID GRIN OFF YOUR FACE FOR GOOD! RHAAAAAAAA!

!!



AOW!



THE GLAIVE IS PRIMARILY A CUT-AND-THRUST SWORD, THE ONE LEGIONNAIRES USE. PERFECT FOR HAND-TO-HAND COMBAT.

WHILE YOUR PEOPLE SLICE THROUGH THE AIR ABOVE OUR HEADS WITH THEIR HUGE SWORDS, WE DISEMBOWEL THEM WITH THIS.

KCCH! KCCH!



THE ENTIRE WORLD WAS CONQUERED WITH THIS WEAPON.

YOUR TURN NOW. WHICH ONE DO YOU CHOOSE?

UM... THE WOODEN ONE SEEMS FINE FOR STARTERS...



"UNDER THE AUSPICES OF ROMULUS, ILLUSTRIOUS ROME WILL EQUATE HER EMPIRE TO THE UNIVERSE AND HER WORTH TO OLYMPUS, AND ALONE SHE WILL SURROUND HER SEVEN HILLS WITH A WALL, A CITY RICH IN HEROES: SHE IS LIKE THE MOTHER OF BEREYCYNTE, WHO..."

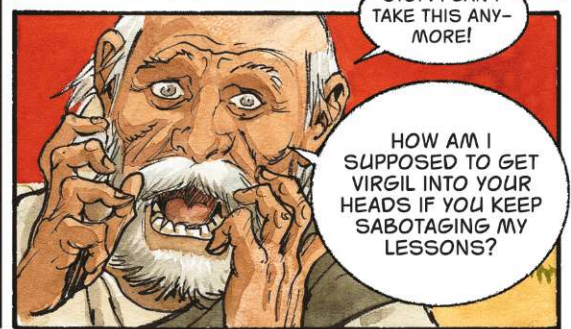
...OF BEAR-SAINTE..."

QUIT COPYING FROM ME, YOU ILLITERATE IDIOT!



ILLITERWHAT? SAY THAT AGAIN, SON OF A...!

STOP! I CAN'T TAKE THIS ANYMORE!



HOW AM I SUPPOSED TO GET VIRGIL INTO YOUR HEADS IF YOU KEEP SABOTAGING MY LESSONS?



STOP HITTING LIKE SICKLY GIRLS! FASTER, FASTER, ARMINIUS!



WAR IS AN ART.

JULIUS CAESAR MASTERED THIS ART TO PERFECTION.



HE WAS A GREAT STRATEGIST, SLY AND MERCILESS! HE WAS OFTEN ABLE TO THWART HIS ENEMIES, EVEN WHEN HIS MEN WERE OUTNUMBERED. HIS LEGIONNAIRES WERE DISCIPLINED AND DEVOTED TO THEIR GENERAL TO THE DEATH.

BUT MOSTLY, HE NEVER LOST SIGHT OF...

SUPPLIES FOR HIS TROOPS?



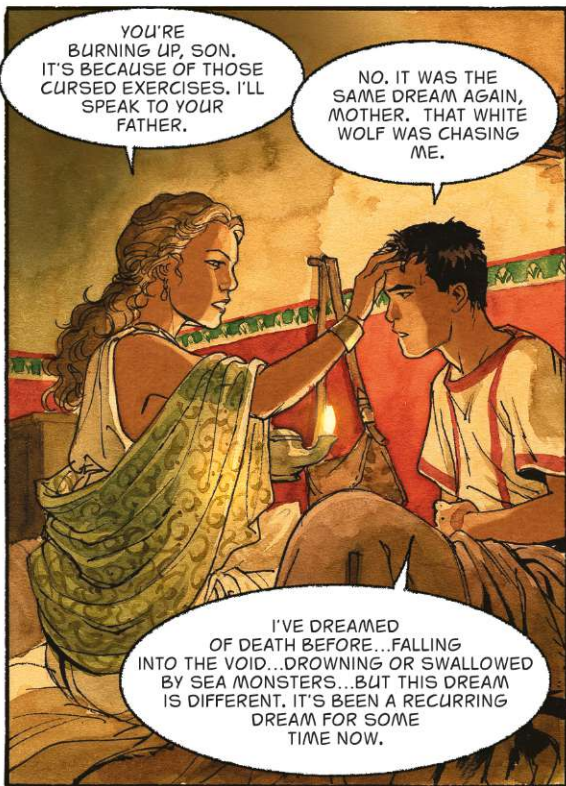
EXACTLY, ARMINIUS. A SOLDIER ON AN EMPTY STOMACH CANNOT FIGHT FOR LONG. MARCUS, YOU COULD LEARN SOME THINGS FROM YOUR FRIEND.





AAAAHHH!

CALM DOWN, MARCUS. IT WAS JUST A DUMB NIGHTMARE.



YOU'RE BURNING UP, SON. IT'S BECAUSE OF THOSE CURSED EXERCISES. I'LL SPEAK TO YOUR FATHER.

NO. IT WAS THE SAME DREAM AGAIN, MOTHER. THAT WHITE WOLF WAS CHASING ME.

I'VE DREAMED OF DEATH BEFORE... FALLING INTO THE VOID... DROWNING OR SWALLOWED BY SEA MONSTERS... BUT THIS DREAM IS DIFFERENT. IT'S BEEN A RECURRING DREAM FOR SOME TIME NOW.



MY MOTHER WAS PSYCHIC, AS YOU KNOW. PERHAPS YOU'VE INHERITED THE SAME GIFT...?

YOU THINK I HAD A VISION? BUT WHAT DOES IT MEAN?

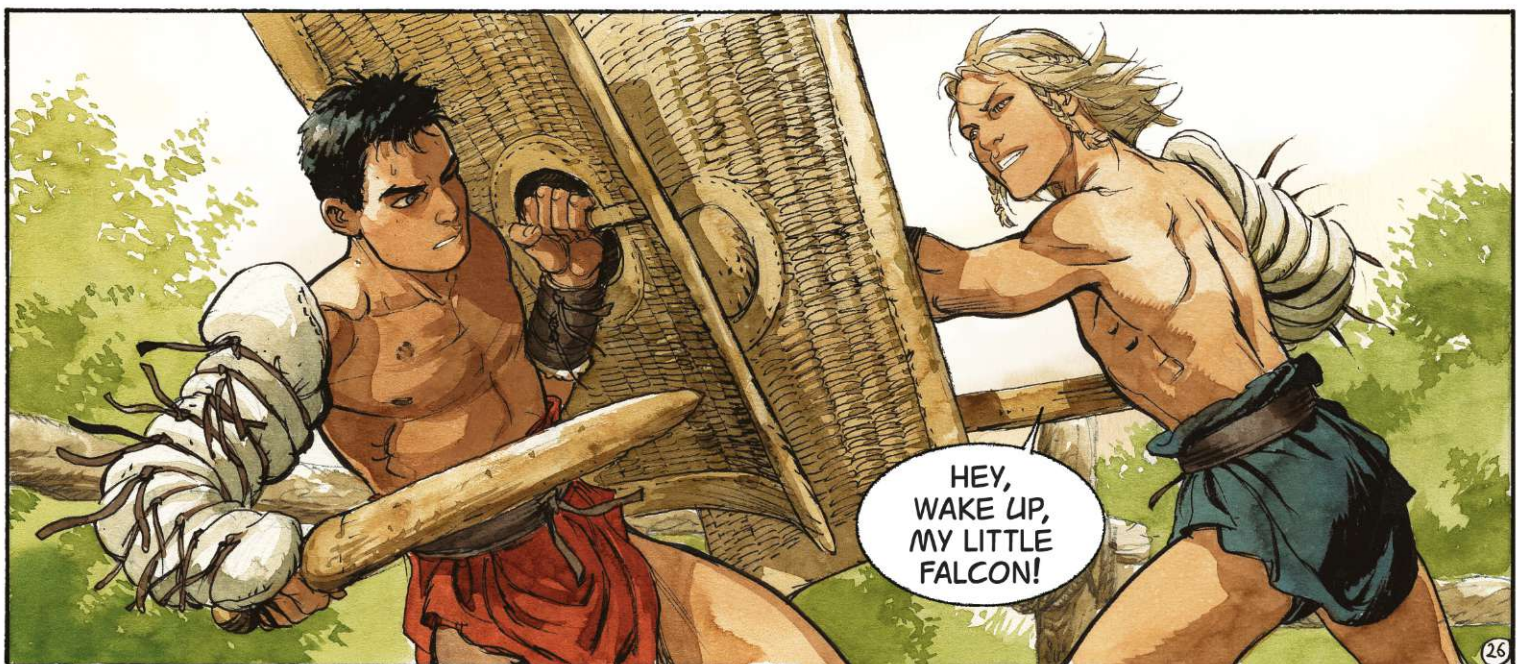


I DON'T KNOW... DON'T BE AFRAID. MAYBE THE GODS ARE SPEAKING TO YOU... TRY TO UNDERSTAND THEM.

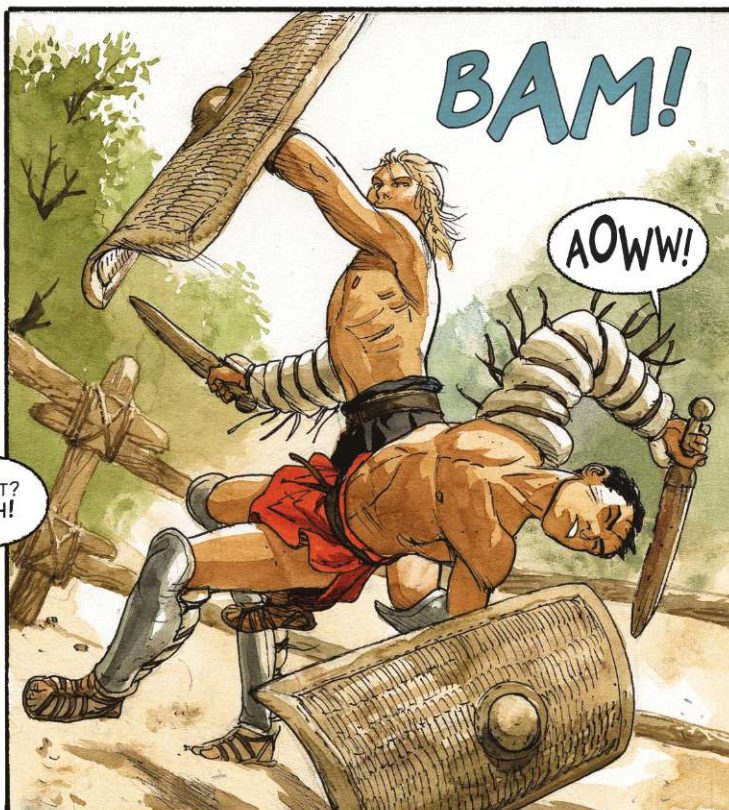
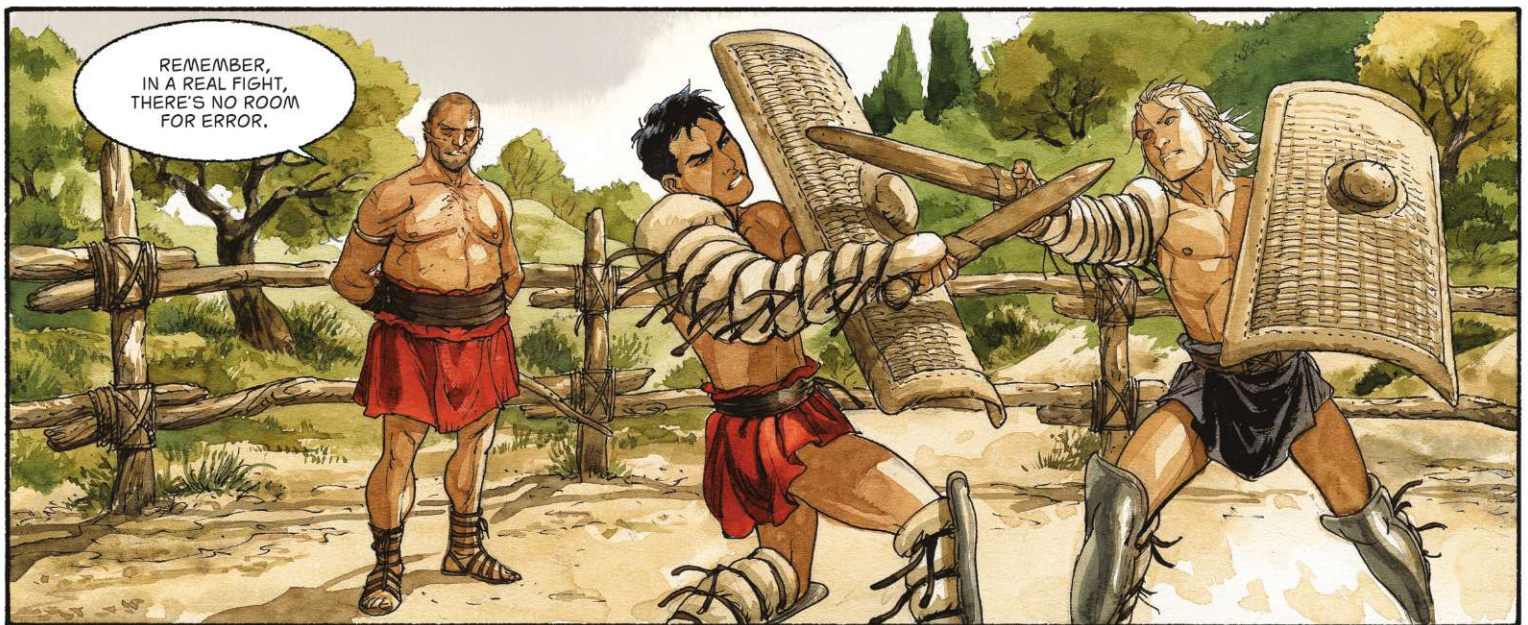
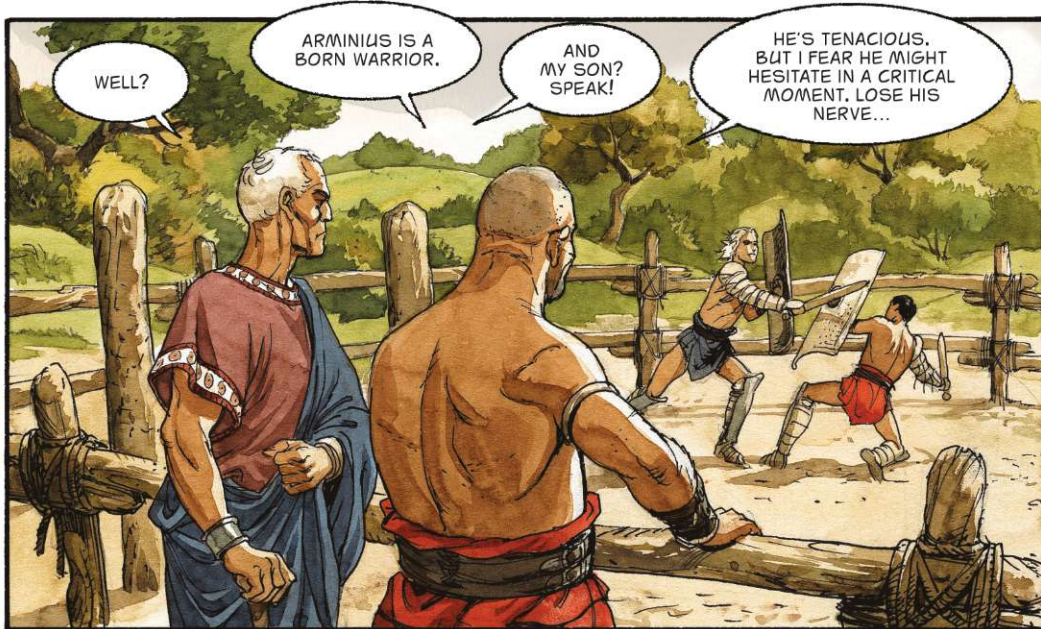


GOOD NIGHT, MY LITTLE FALCON.

PFFF... MAMA'S BOY...



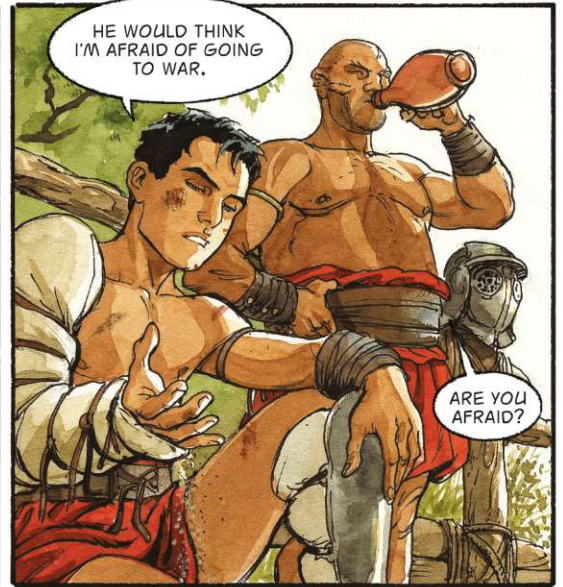
HEY, WAKE UP, MY LITTLE FALCON!





VOLCANUS,
YOU'VE FOUGHT AT MY FATHER'S SIDE.
DID HE EVER HESITATE ON A
BATTLEFIELD?

YOU
SHOULD ASK
HIM.



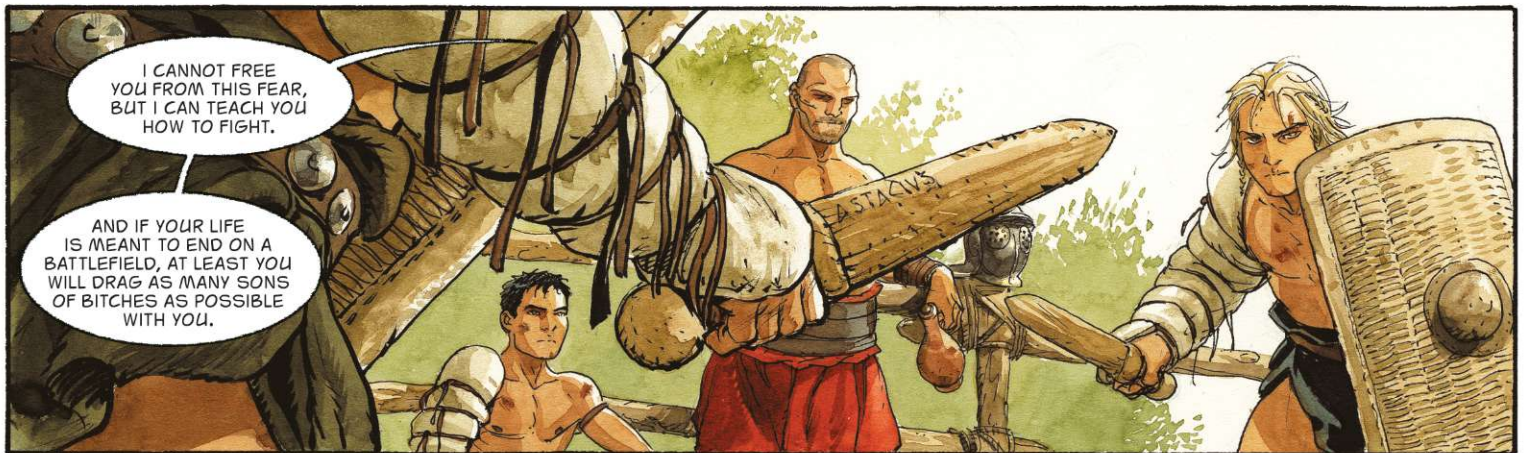
HE WOULD THINK
I'M AFRAID OF GOING
TO WAR.

ARE YOU
AFRAID?



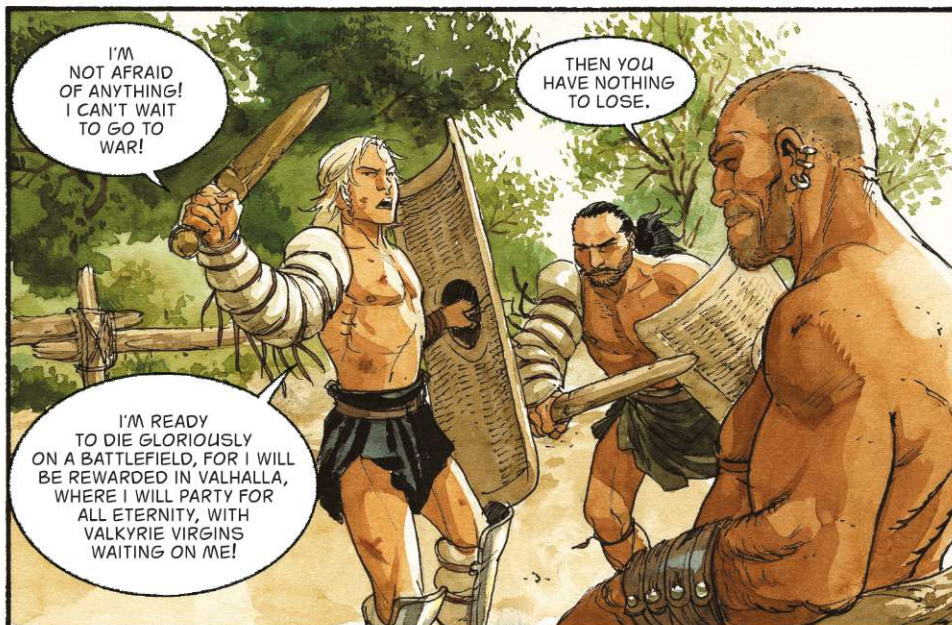
NO! I...
A ROMAN IS AFRAID
OF NOTHING! AND ME...
I DON'T KNOW.

BELIEVE ME,
EVERY MAN IS AFRAID
OF CROSSING THE RIVER
STYX BEFORE HIS TIME,
WHETHER HE BE A ROMAN,
A BARBARIAN,
OR A SLAVE.



I CANNOT FREE
YOU FROM THIS FEAR,
BUT I CAN TEACH YOU
HOW TO FIGHT.

AND IF YOUR LIFE
IS MEANT TO END ON A
BATTLEFIELD, AT LEAST YOU
WILL DRAG AS MANY SONS
OF BITCHES AS POSSIBLE
WITH YOU.



I'M
NOT AFRAID
OF ANYTHING!
I CAN'T WAIT
TO GO TO
WAR!

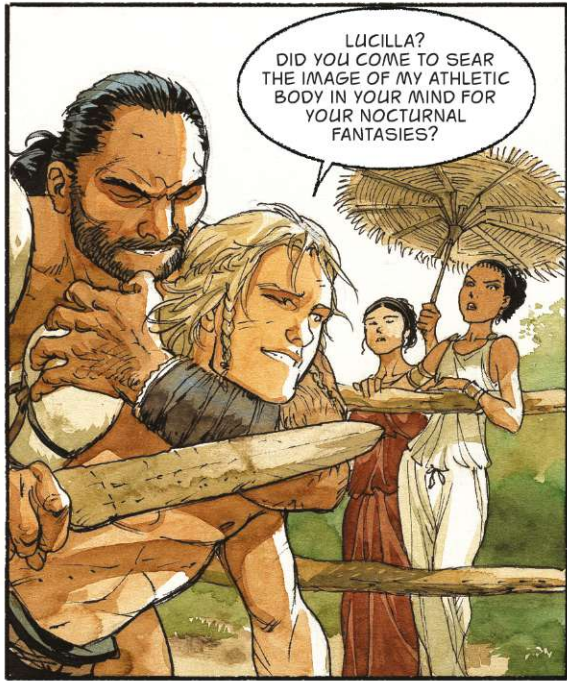
THEN YOU
HAVE NOTHING
TO LOSE.

I'M READY
TO DIE GLORIOUSLY
ON A BATTLEFIELD, FOR I WILL
BE REWARDED IN VALHALLA,
WHERE I WILL PARTY FOR
ALL ETERNITY, WITH
VALKYRIE VIRGINS
WAITING ON ME!



BAM!

AOWW!



LUCILLA?
DID YOU COME TO SEAR
THE IMAGE OF MY ATHLETIC
BODY IN YOUR MIND FOR
YOUR NOCTURNAL
FANTASIES?



HOW
DARE YOU?
I-I HATE YOU
BOTH!



YOU'RE
JUST LITTLE
PRICKS PLAYING
GLADIATORS.
PFFF!



SUCH CONTROL!
YOU HAVE TO TEACH ME
TO HANDLE A BOW LIKE
THAT, ATAI.

MEH...
IT'S JUST A HARE.
MY COUSIN KILLED A
BEAR WITH THIS
BARE HANDS.







MY FRIEND AND NAMESAKE...

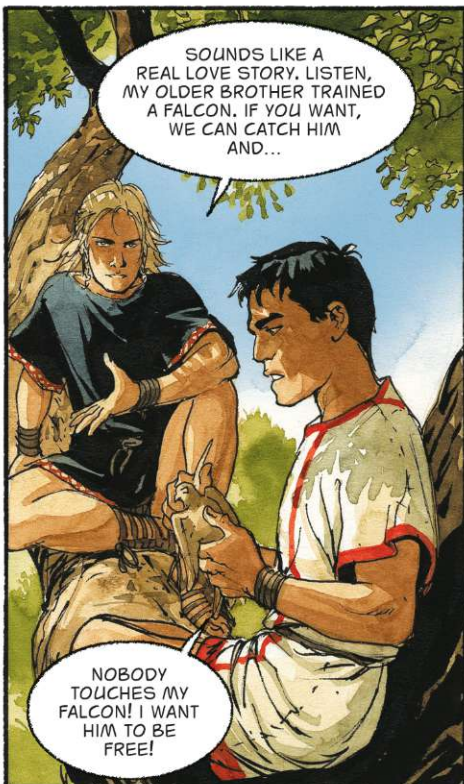
HE CIRCLES HIS PREY UNTIL IT FEELS SAFE, THEN HE STRIKES, WITH THE SPEED OF LIGHTNING.



I'VE SCULPTED HIM MANY TIMES, BUT I CAN'T REALLY CAPTURE HIS TRAITS, THAT LIGHTNESS...



SOMETIMES HE POSES FOR ME. I THINK HE LIKES ME.



SOUNDS LIKE A REAL LOVE STORY. LISTEN, MY OLDER BROTHER TRAINED A FALCON. IF YOU WANT, WE CAN CATCH HIM AND...

NOBODY TOUCHES MY FALCON! I WANT HIM TO BE FREE!



WHAT?



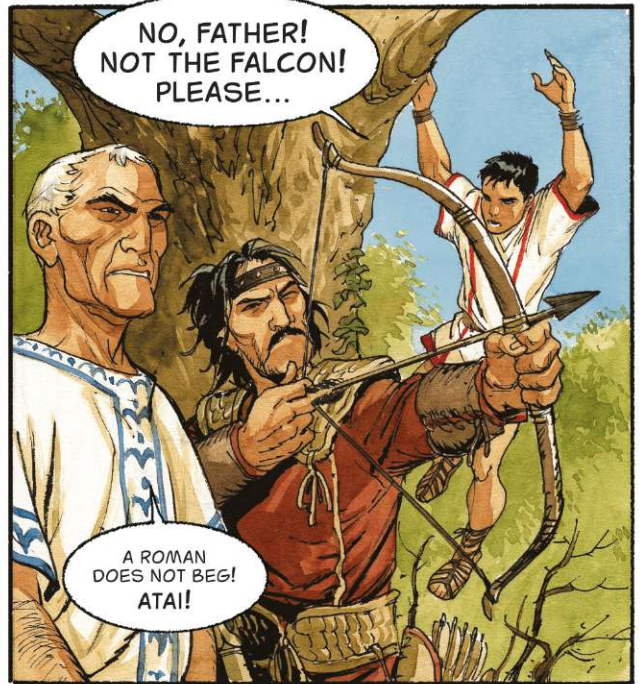
NOTHING. I WAS THINKING OF MY FAMILY, MY FRIENDS. I'D LIKE TO KNOW WHAT THEY'RE DOING. I'D LIKE TO HAVE WINGS, TOO...TO BE FREE AND FLY TOWARD THE NORTHERN LANDS...

YOU ARE FREE, ARMINIUS. YOU ARE A ROMAN.



ATAI, STRIKE DOWN THAT DAMN BIRD!

!?



NO, FATHER! NOT THE FALCON! PLEASE...

A ROMAN DOES NOT BEG! ATAI!



NO!



EEEK!

STOC!



FORGIVE ME, MY LORD. MY AIM IS BETTER WHEN I'M ON A HORSE.

YOU WILL PAY FOR THIS, YOU SARMATIAN SCUM!



DOMINUS! THREE SLAVES FLED FROM THE FIELDS, KILLING A GUARD.



WE SHOULD HAVE TAKEN HORSES...IF THEY CATCH US, WE'LL END UP ON THE CROSS!

SHOULDN'T HAVE KILLED THE GUARD...

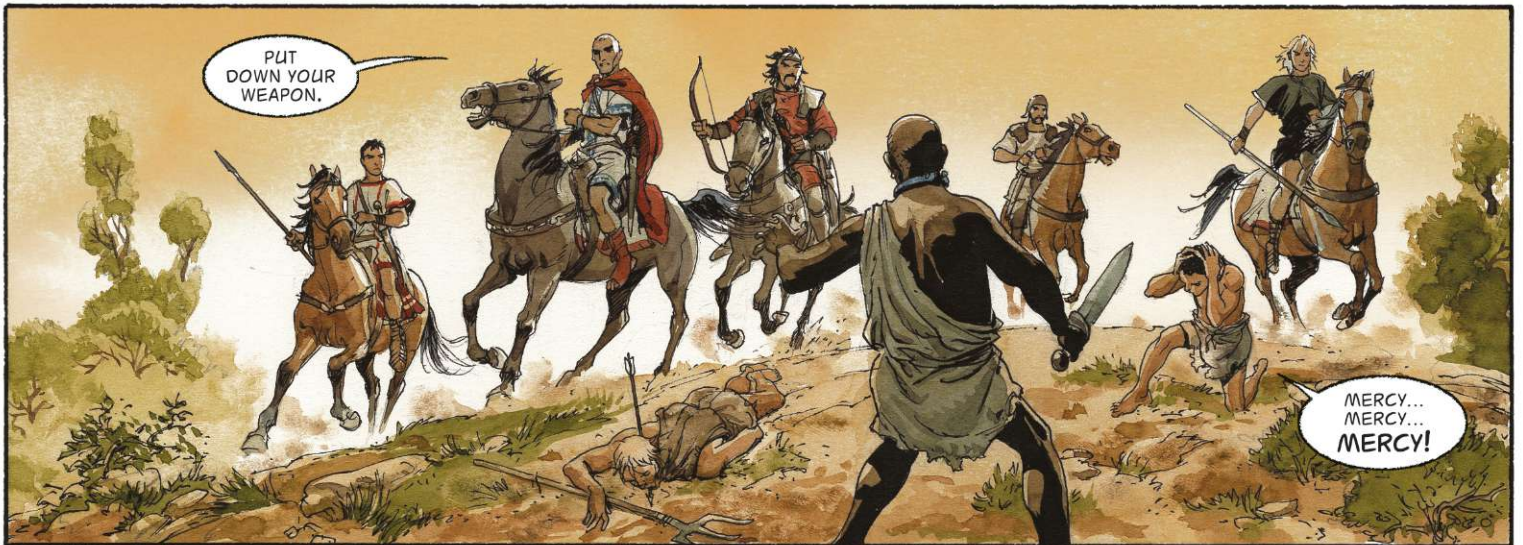


THE RIVER...THE EDGE OF FALCO'S PROPERTY...

WE'LL BE FREE IF WE JUST CROSS OVER TO THE OTHER SIDE.



I CAN'T SWIM— ARGH!



PUT DOWN YOUR WEAPON.

MERCY... MERCY... MERCY!



YOU KILLED ONE OF MY MEN AND RAN AWAY. THERE IS NO PARDON FOR THAT.

YOU WILL BE EXECUTED ON THE SPOT. TO DISCOURAGE THOSE WHO WOULD FOLLOW SUIT, YOUR HEADS WILL BE HUNG IN FRONT OF THE SLAVE QUARTERS.

AND YOUR BODIES WILL BE DEVoured BY MY DOGS.

NO... AHH!



MARCUS, GET DOWN AND TAKE OUT YOUR SWORD!

WHAT?!

DO AS I SAY!



KILL THEM!

I RECOGNIZE YOUNG TIRO. WE PLAYED TOGETHER AS CHILDREN. DON'T ASK ME TO DO THIS.



BY ALL THE DEMONS IN HELL! THEY KILLED A GUARD! SLIT THEIR THROATS! THAT'S AN ORDER, SON!



I. I CAN'T, FATHER...

...WHAT HONOR IS THERE IN KILLING AN UNARMED SLAVE?



I CAN DO IT FOR HIM, IF...

MIND YOUR OWN BUSINESS, ARMINIUS!



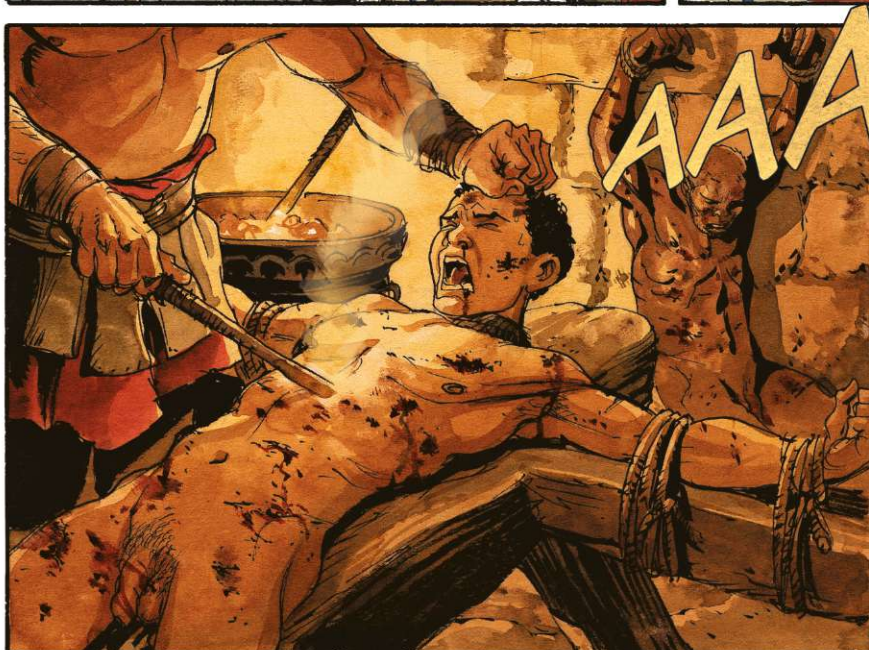
FINE, YOU WANT ME TO SHOW CLEMENCY TO MURDERERS? SO BE IT.



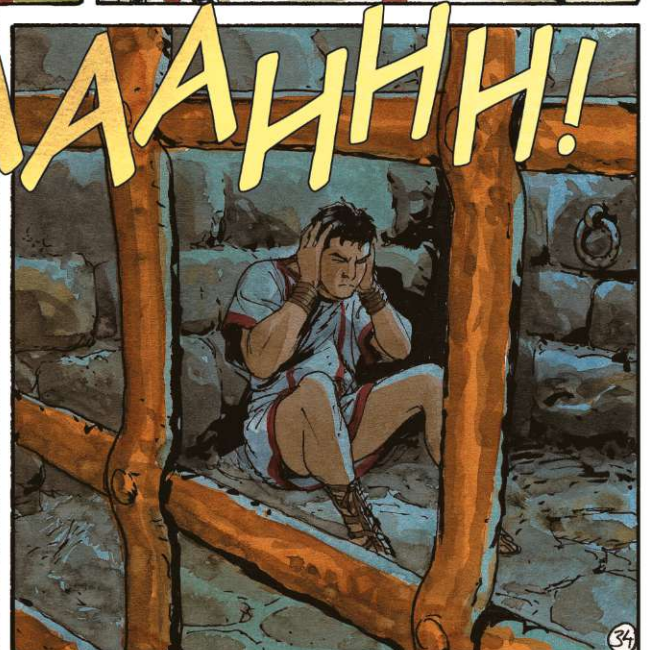
GUARDS, TAKE THEM TO THE ERGASTULUM AND TORTURE THEM. MAKE THE PLEASURE LAST SEVERAL DAYS!

NOOO!
KILL US RIGHT AWAY! MERCY!

AND SAVE THE CELL NEXT DOOR FOR MY SON!



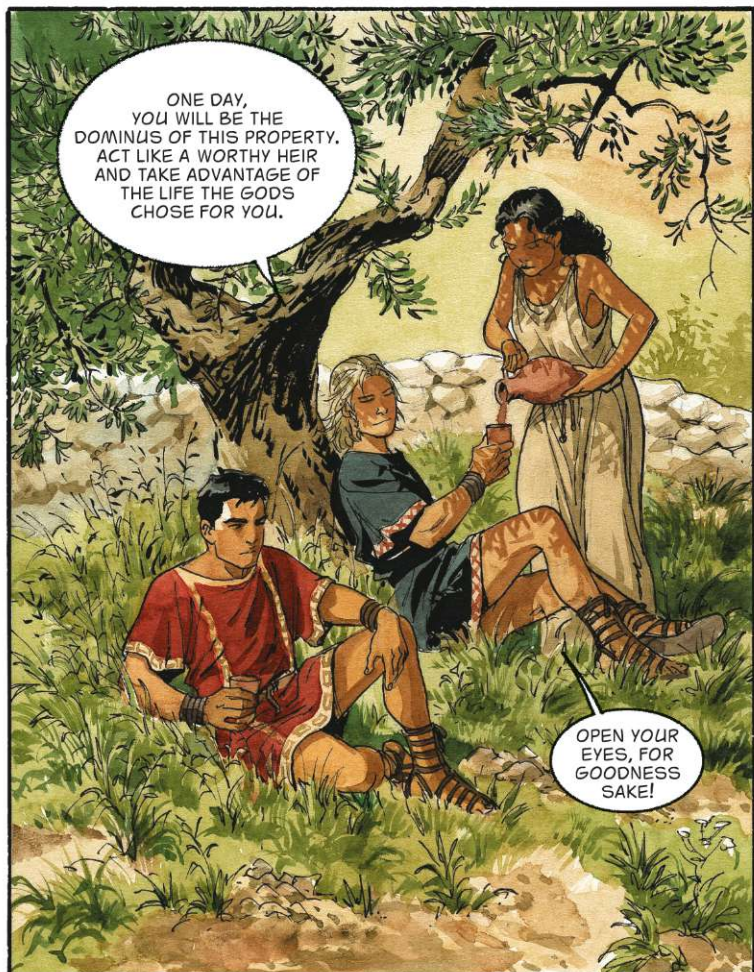
AAAAAHHH!





TWO MONTHS HAVE PASSED, AND I CAN STILL HEAR THEIR SCREAMS.

YOU NEED TO CLEAR YOUR MIND, MAN.



ONE DAY, YOU WILL BE THE DOMINUS OF THIS PROPERTY. ACT LIKE A WORTHY HEIR AND TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THE LIFE THE GODS CHOSE FOR YOU.

OPEN YOUR EYES, FOR GOODNESS SAKE!

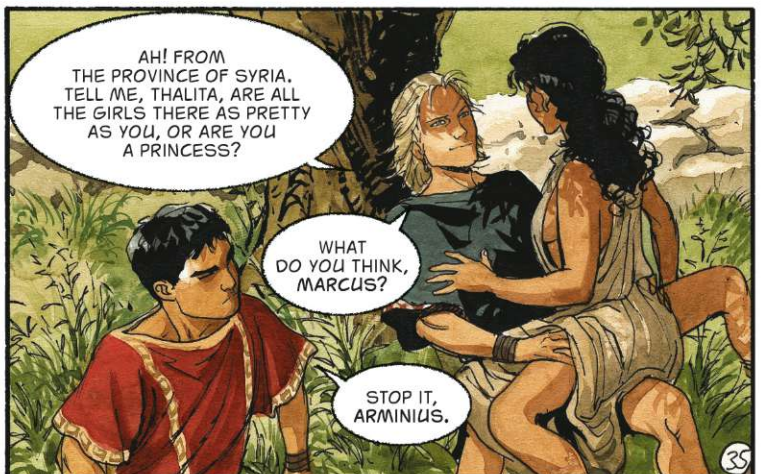


YOU THERE, FOR EXAMPLE. WHAT'S YOUR NAME?

I'M THALITA, LORD.

AND WHERE ARE YOU FROM, THALITA?

FROM PALMYRA...



AH! FROM THE PROVINCE OF SYRIA. TELL ME, THALITA, ARE ALL THE GIRLS THERE AS PRETTY AS YOU, OR ARE YOU A PRINCESS?

WHAT DO YOU THINK, MARCUS?

STOP IT, ARMINIUS.



I DON'T THINK SHE HAS ANYTHING AGAINST A LITTLE FONDLING, RIGHT, THALITA?



IF MY FATHER CATCHES US, WE'RE DONE FOR!

JUST THE OPPOSITE. HE WOULD BE PROUD OF YOU FOR ONCE. AND NOW, QUIET. I NEED TO CONCENTRATE...

HMMM...



AAAHHH!



MY BROTHER HERE HAS NEVER KISSED A GIRL ON THE LIPS. DON'T YOU FIND THAT TRAGIC?

YOU COULD ETCH YOURSELF IN HIS MEMORY FOREVER.

WHAT? NO...



LET ME, LORD.



OH...!... HMMM...

SHE REALLY IS A PRINCESS, HUH, MARCUS?



AHHH...BAS-TARDS...BAS-TARDS...!



THANK YOU FOR SAVING THE FALCON THE OTHER DAY.

I'M SORRY FOR THE WHIPPING YOU HAD TO TAKE AFTERWARD.

I CAN BARELY FEEL IT.

ME, TOO... EITHER VOLCANUS IS GETTING OLD, OR HE'S GOT A SOFT SPOT FOR ME.



THERE! LOOKS LIKE THE DOGS TRACKED SOME GAME!



WAF!

ARRF!

WAF!

WAIT!



ROAAAR!

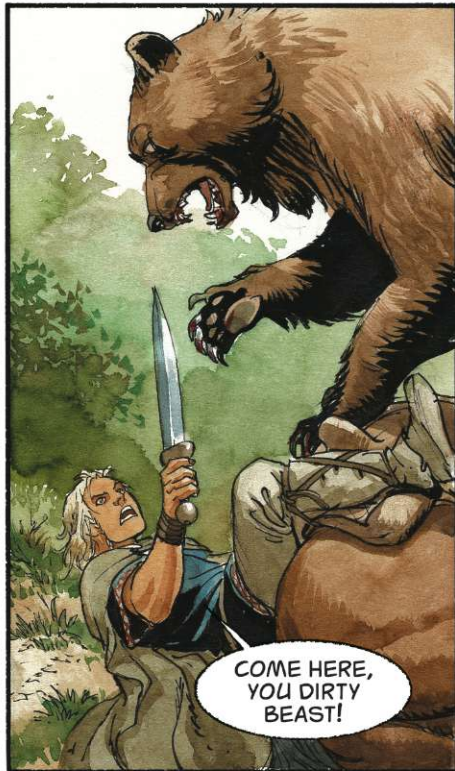
WHAT IS IT?



GROAARR!

TROUBLE!







HE'S WAKING UP.

YOU PUT ME AT A DISADVANTAGE BY SAVING MY LIFE, YOU DAMN MAMMA'S BOY!

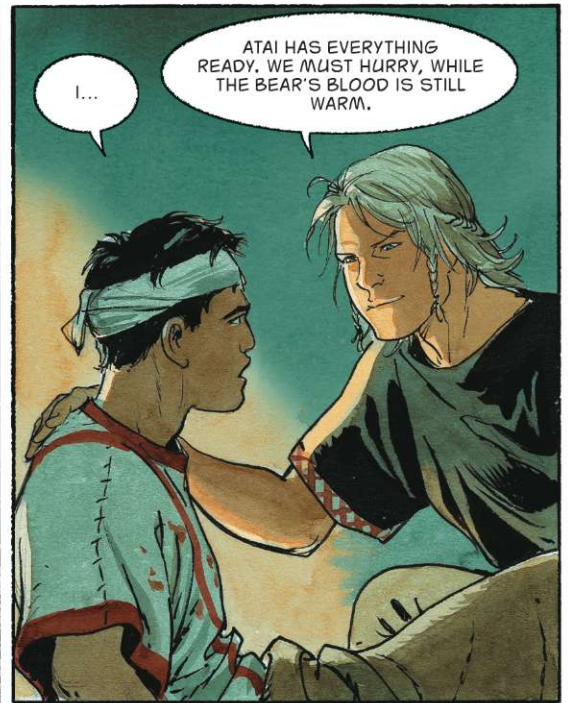
OH... I REGRET IT ALREADY...



I-I THOUGHT I COULD SAVE THE HORSE.

YOU WERE VERY BRAVE, LORD.

WE WILL CELEBRATE THIS MOMENT AND BECOME BROTHERS WITH THE BLOOD OF THE BEAR.



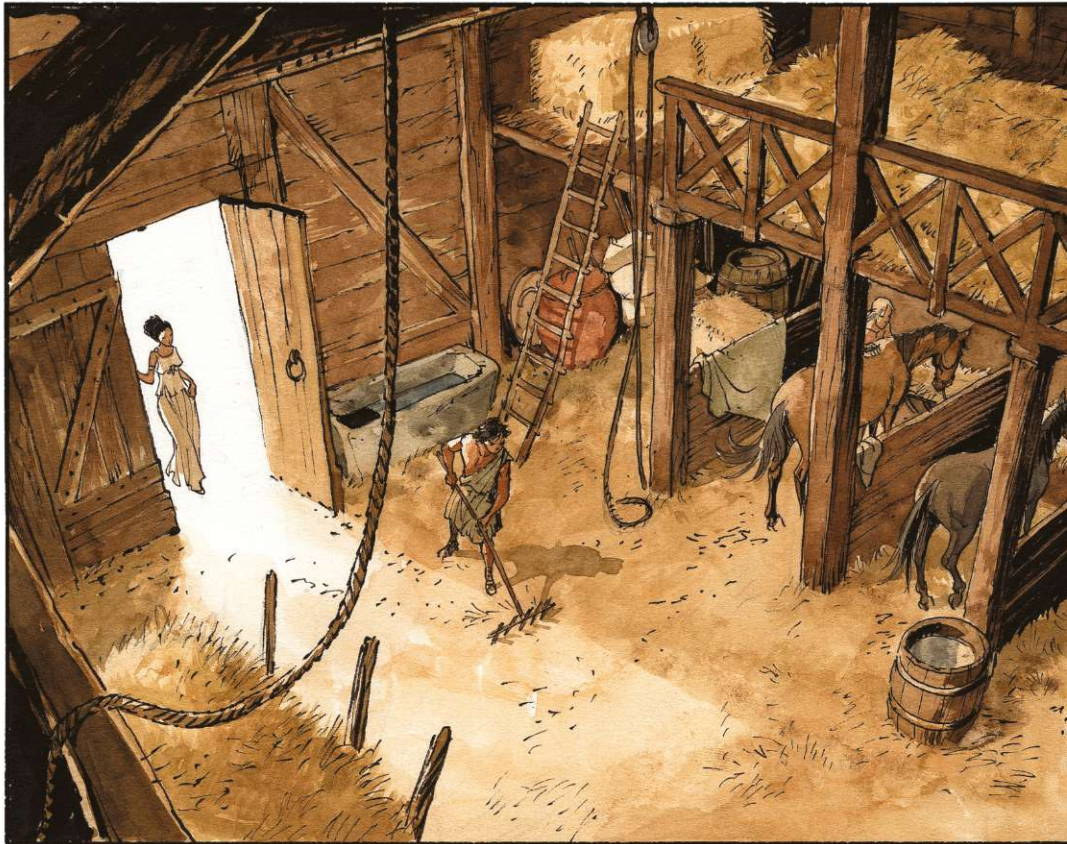
I...

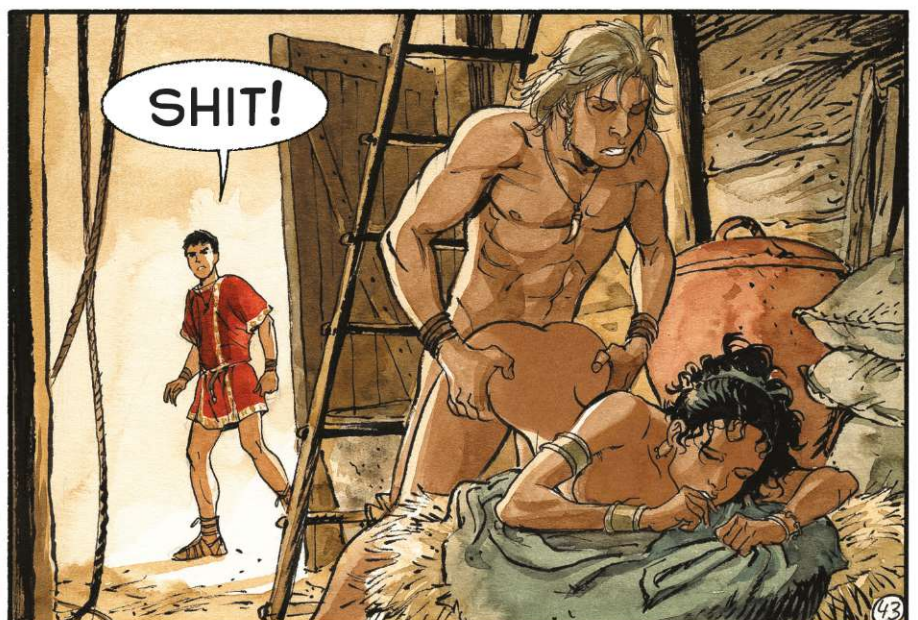
ATAI HAS EVERYTHING READY. WE MUST HURRY, WHILE THE BEAR'S BLOOD IS STILL WARM.



MAY THE STRENGTH AND THE COURAGE OF THE BEAR BE WITH YOU AND UNITE YOU ALWAYS.





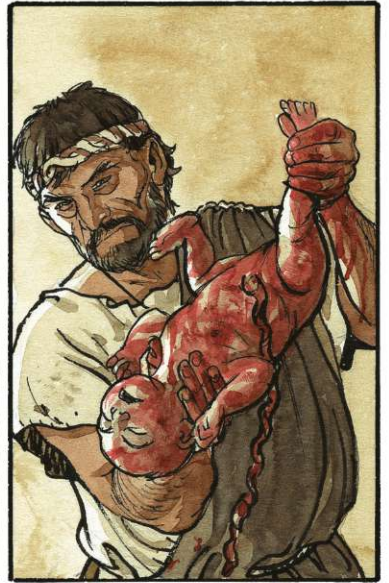




AAAHH!



NNNGG...



NOTHING WE CAN DO...THE BABY IS DEAD, AND SHE'S LOSING TOO MUCH BLOOD.

DON'T LOOK AWAY! I WANT THIS NIGHTMARE TO SERVE AS A LESSON FOR YOU!



MEH! AFTER ALL, IT WAS JUST A SLAVE...A-



SMACK!



H-HOW DARE YOU? YOU'RE NOT MY MOTHER!



CURSES ON YOU!



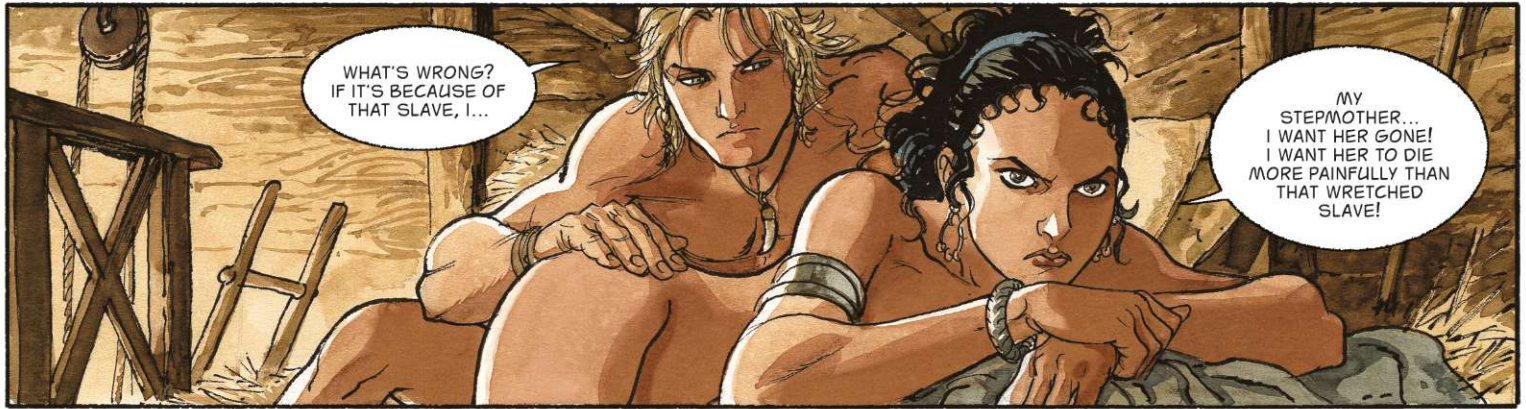
MOTHER, WAIT...



TODAY WE LOST A VALUABLE SLAVE THANKS TO YOUR SHENANIGANS.



I'M DISAPPOINTED IN YOU, MARCUS.



WHAT'S WRONG? IF IT'S BECAUSE OF THAT SLAVE, I...

MY STEPMOTHER... I WANT HER GONE! I WANT HER TO DIE MORE PAINFULLY THAN THAT WRETCHED SLAVE!



ALL THIS WILL BE YOURS ONE DAY, MARCUS.

LUCRINUS, MY ADMINISTRATOR, IS GETTING OLD. I AM GOING TO FREE PHIDIAS. HE'LL TAKE HIS PLACE.

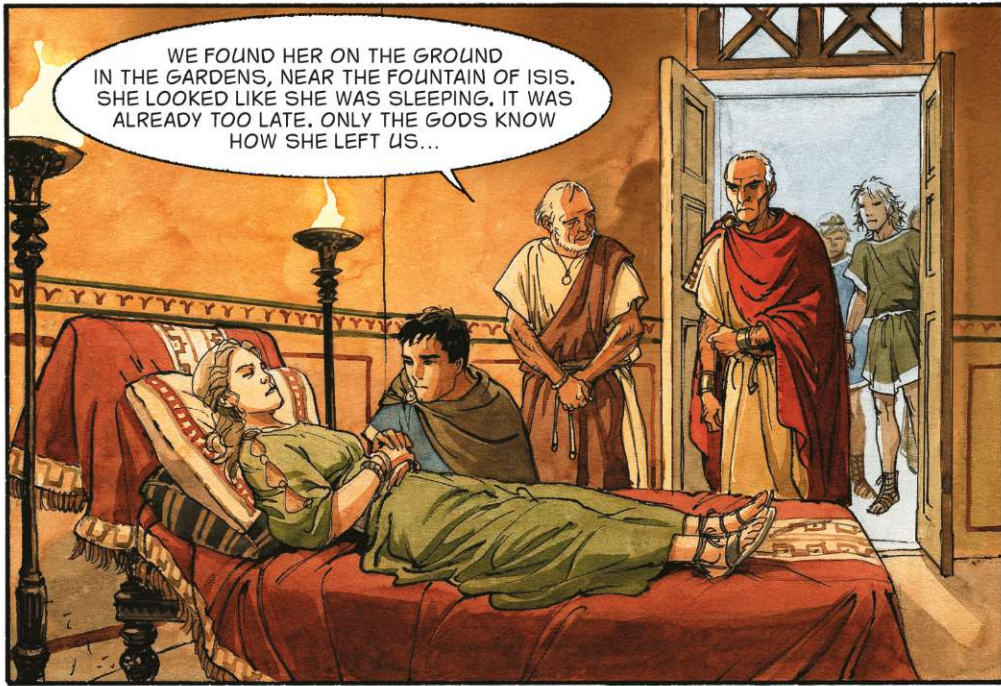


NOTHING TO SAY?

I DON'T TRUST HIM, FATHER.



DOMINUS! A TERRIBLE TRAGEDY HAS STRUCK YOUR WIFE. COME QUICKLY!



WE FOUND HER ON THE GROUND IN THE GARDENS, NEAR THE FOUNTAIN OF ISIS. SHE LOOKED LIKE SHE WAS SLEEPING. IT WAS ALREADY TOO LATE. ONLY THE GODS KNOW HOW SHE LEFT US...



PREPARE THE FUNERAL.



O PROSERPINA, QUEEN OF THE UNDERWORLD, THANK YOU FOR FREEING US FROM THAT HORRIBLE BARBARIAN...

...EVEN THOUGH I WISH SHE HAD SUFFERED MORE.



FOR HAVING HEARD MY PRAYERS, I SACRIFICE ONE LOCK OF MY HAIR AND A FEW DROPS OF MY BLOOD TO YOU.



VALERIA ALBIN

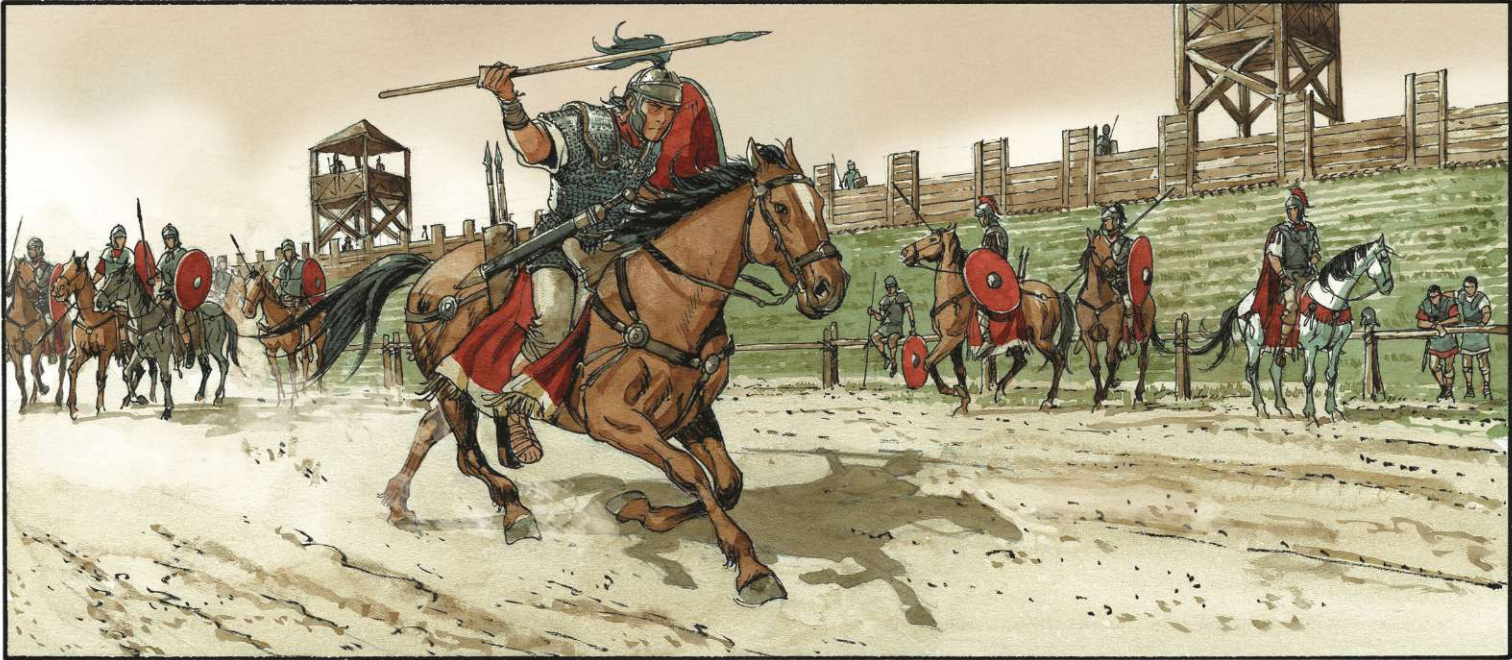


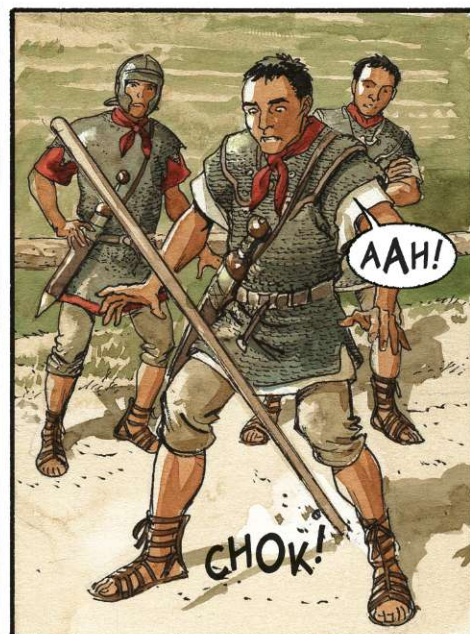
LET'S GO, MARCUS...IT'S A LONG ROAD.

COMING...

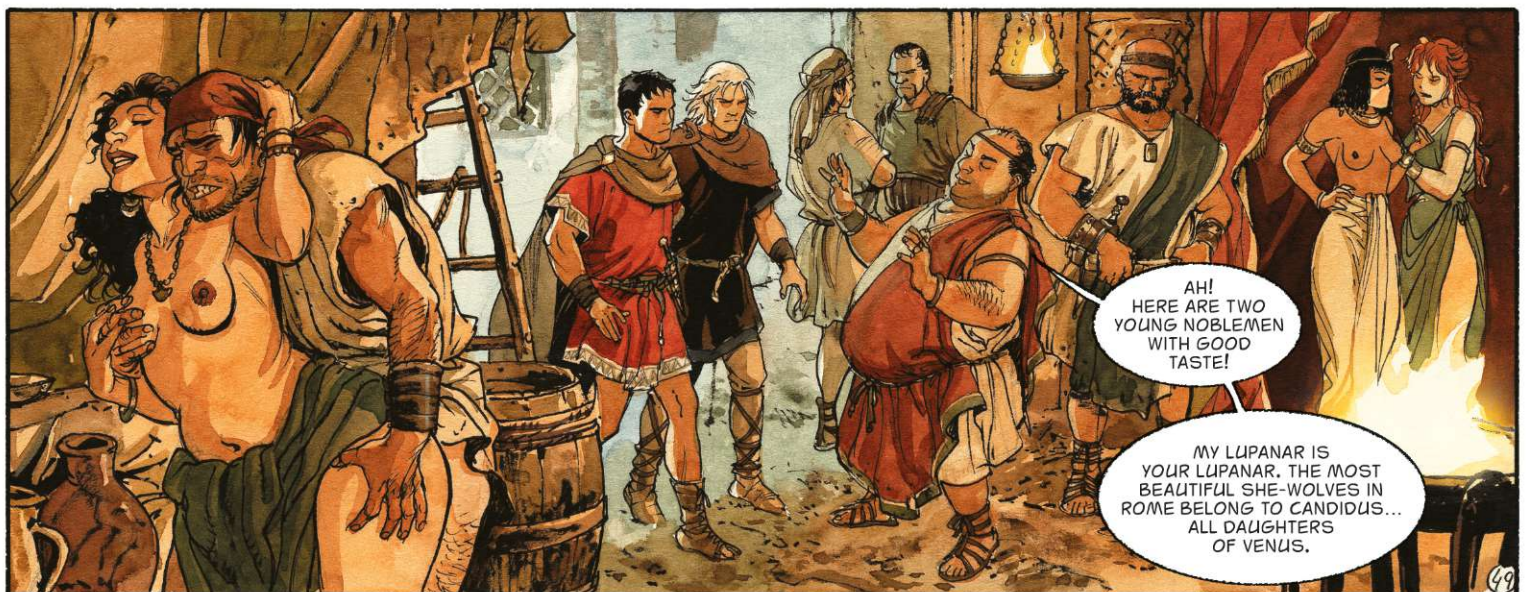
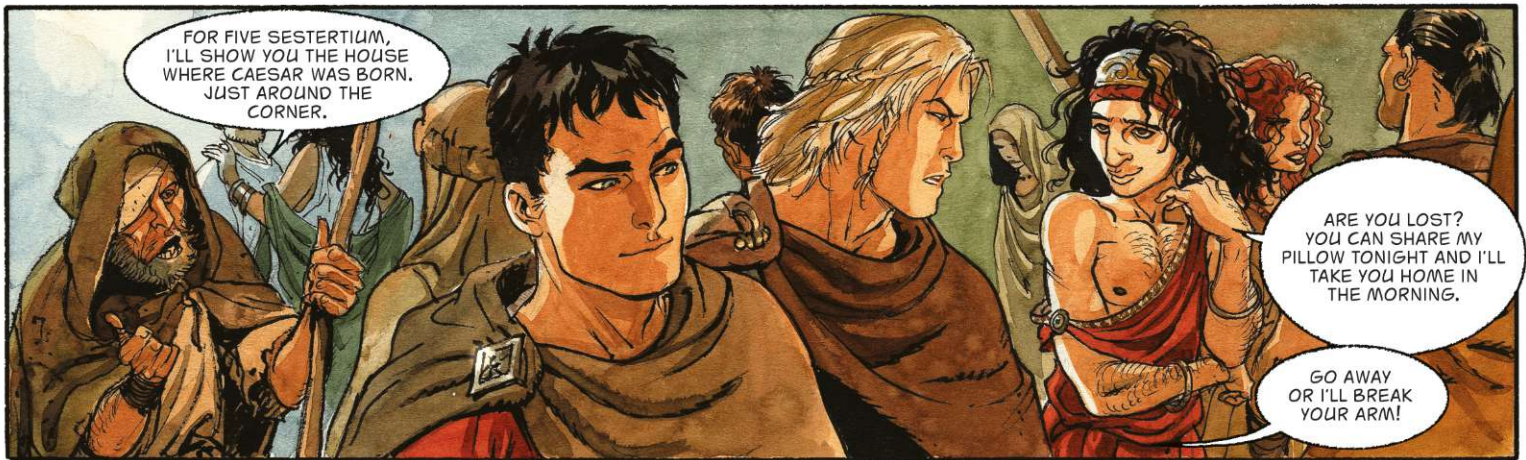


GALLIA CISALPINA
MILITARY CAMP IN AQUILEIA
756 AB URBE CONDITA
(3 AD)





ROMA
757 AB URBE CONDITA
(4 AD)





MEET CLEOPATRA, A DISTANT RELATIVE OF THE QUEEN OF EGYPT. WOULD YOU LIKE TO LIFT HER VEIL?

GISMARA, FROM THE GREAT NORTH. HER ASS IS AS WHITE AS SNOW, BUT HOT AS LAVA.

THE MERCHANDISE HAS ALL BEEN PERSONALLY TESTED BY ME, OF COURSE!

EURYDICE. ONCE SHE WRAPS HER LEGS AROUND YOU, THERE IS NO ESCAPE...

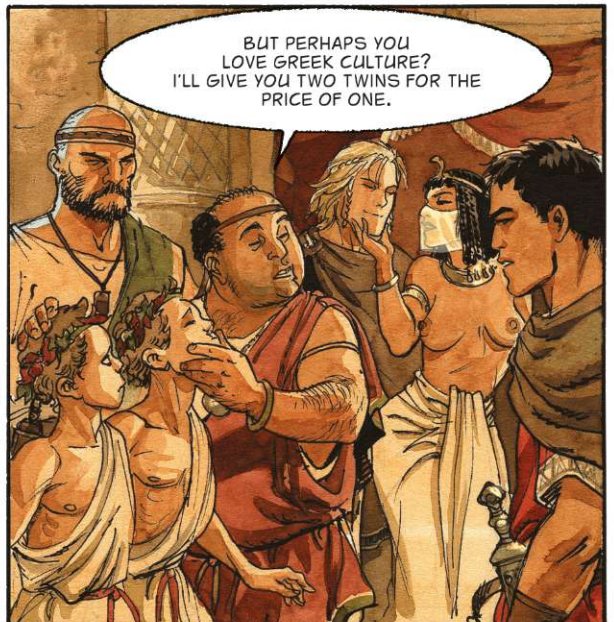


OR DO YOU PREFER A REAL ROMAN MATRON? HERE'S MY WIFE, CALPURNIA. SHE'S NEVER LEFT THE NEIGHBORHOOD.

NO, THANKS.



YOU'RE RIGHT, SHE COOKS BETTER THAN SHE SCREWS... AND BETWEEN US, HER COOKING IS CRAP AS WELL.



BUT PERHAPS YOU LOVE GREEK CULTURE? I'LL GIVE YOU TWO TWINS FOR THE PRICE OF ONE.



AND THAT ONE, WHO IS SHE? YOUR MOTHER OR YOUR GRANDMOTHER?

YOU LIKE HER? I'LL GIVE YOU A SPECIAL PRICE. SHE LOST ALL HER TEETH, BUT THAT CAN BE AN ADVANTAGE.



YOU ARE REALLY SICK.

WHAT, WHAT? COMPETITION IS FIERCE. MY FLEXIBILITY IS WHAT HELPS ME SURVIVE!

MOVE YOUR APOLLONIAN BODY, AND SHOW ME THESE VIGOROUS YOUNG MEN YOU'RE TRYING TO HIDE FROM MY GAZE, MY ADORABLE CANDIDUS.



GREETINGS, O DIVINE MORPHEA. TO WHAT DO I OWE THE PLEASURE OF A VISIT FROM ROME'S MOST BEAUTIFUL WHORE?

WON'T YOU INTRODUCE ME TO YOUR FRIENDS?



MY NAME IS GAIUS JULIUS ARMINIUS, AND THIS IS MARCUS VALERIUS FALCO. AND WE'D LIKE TO STRESS THAT WE ARE NOT FRIENDS OF THIS CREEP...

...BUT THERE'S NOTHING KEEPING US FROM BECOMING YOURS, O MYSTERIOUS NYMPH.

HEY, WAIT A MINUTE...!

COME CLOSER, YOUNG NOBLEMEN.



HAIL, MARCUS VALERIUS, I'M MORPHEA.



PLEA- PLEASURE...

I CAN SHOW YOU THE MOST SECRET PLACES OF ROME. WOULD YOU LIKE THAT?



THAT WOULD BE FANTASTIC. WHAT IS YOUR PRICE, SUBLIME MORPHEA?

EIGHT AS. THE USUAL PRICE FOR AN UNUSUAL WOMAN.



MY REAL PRICE IS NOT MEASURED IN MONEY. FOLLOW ME. I WILL SHOW YOU.

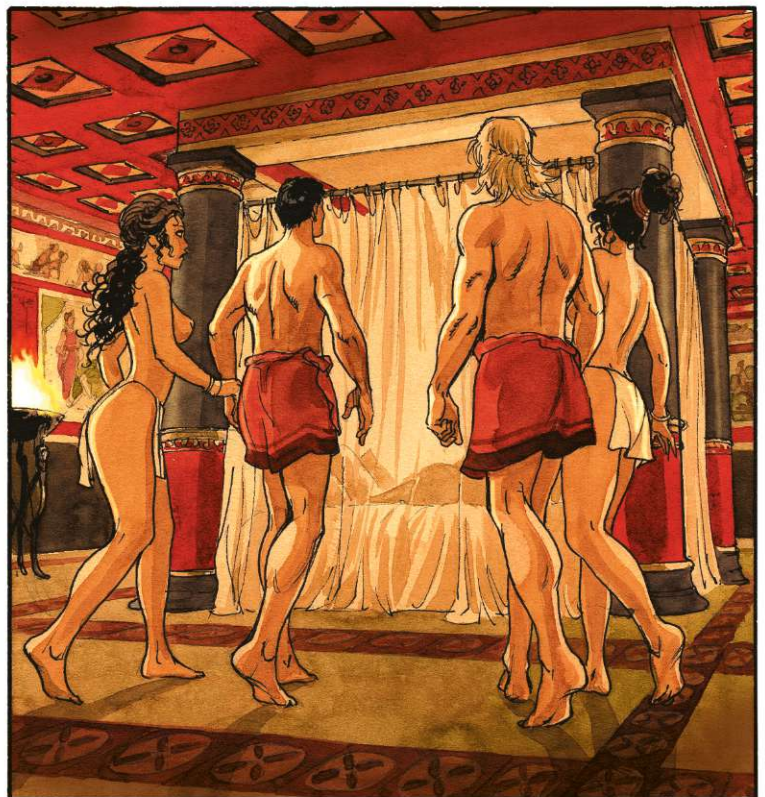


THANKS A LOT, MORPHEA, FOR RUINING MY DEAL ONCE AGAIN.

LET GO OF ME, YOU FAT PIG!

CAUTION, MY YOUNG FRIENDS! THEY SAY SHE IS A THESSALIAN WITCH, ABLE TO TURN INTO A DANAIDE!

HE MAY HAVE A POINT. I'M FEELING A LITTLE BEWITCHED ALREADY.



*AN ANCIENT ROMAN CURRENCY



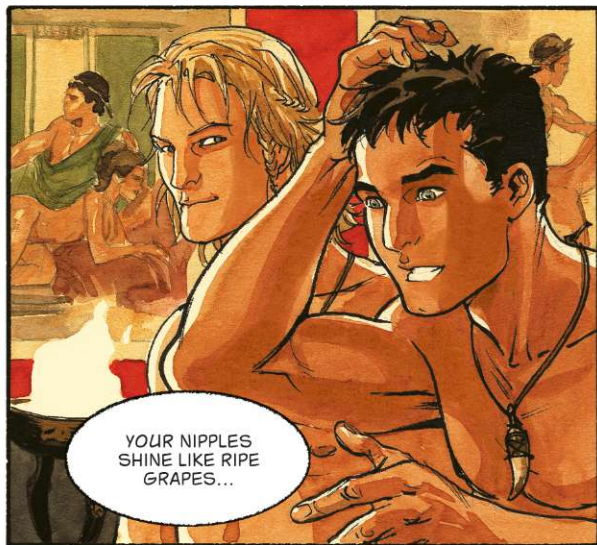
AND NOW,
COME.



BY FORTUNA
AND CUPIDO! NEVER
HAVE I SEEN A WOMAN
AS BEAUTIFUL AND
DESIRABLE AS YOU.



I CAN BELIEVE IT.
YOU'RE STILL VERY
YOUNG.

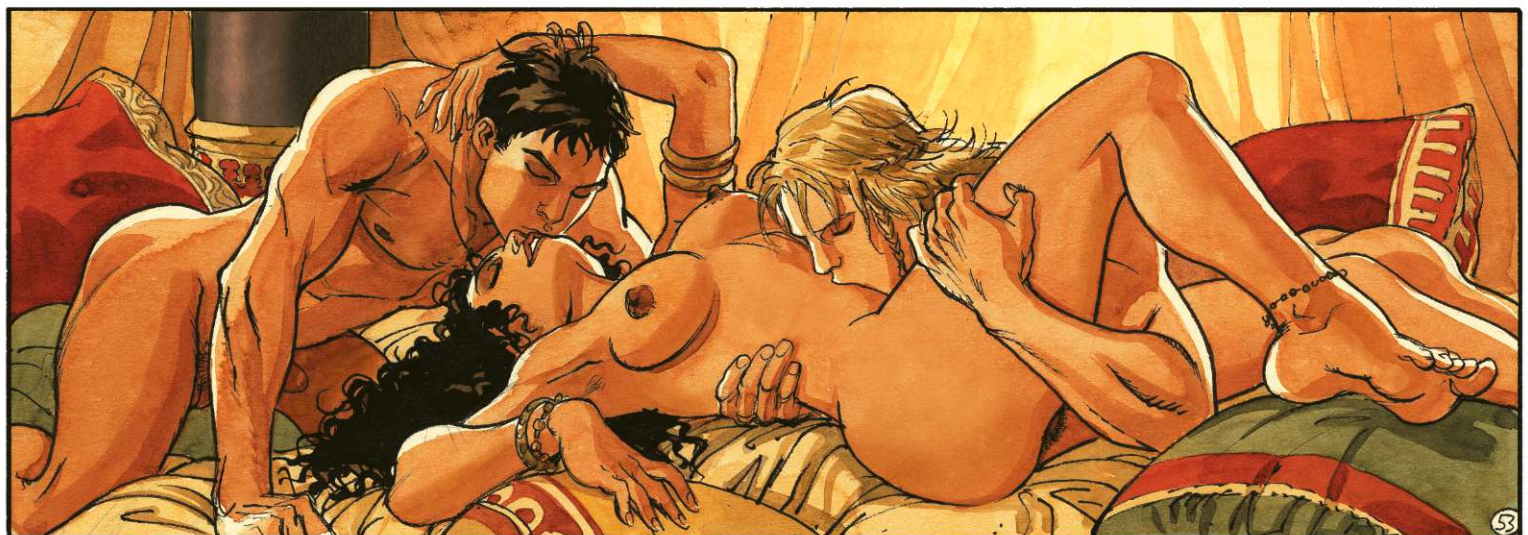


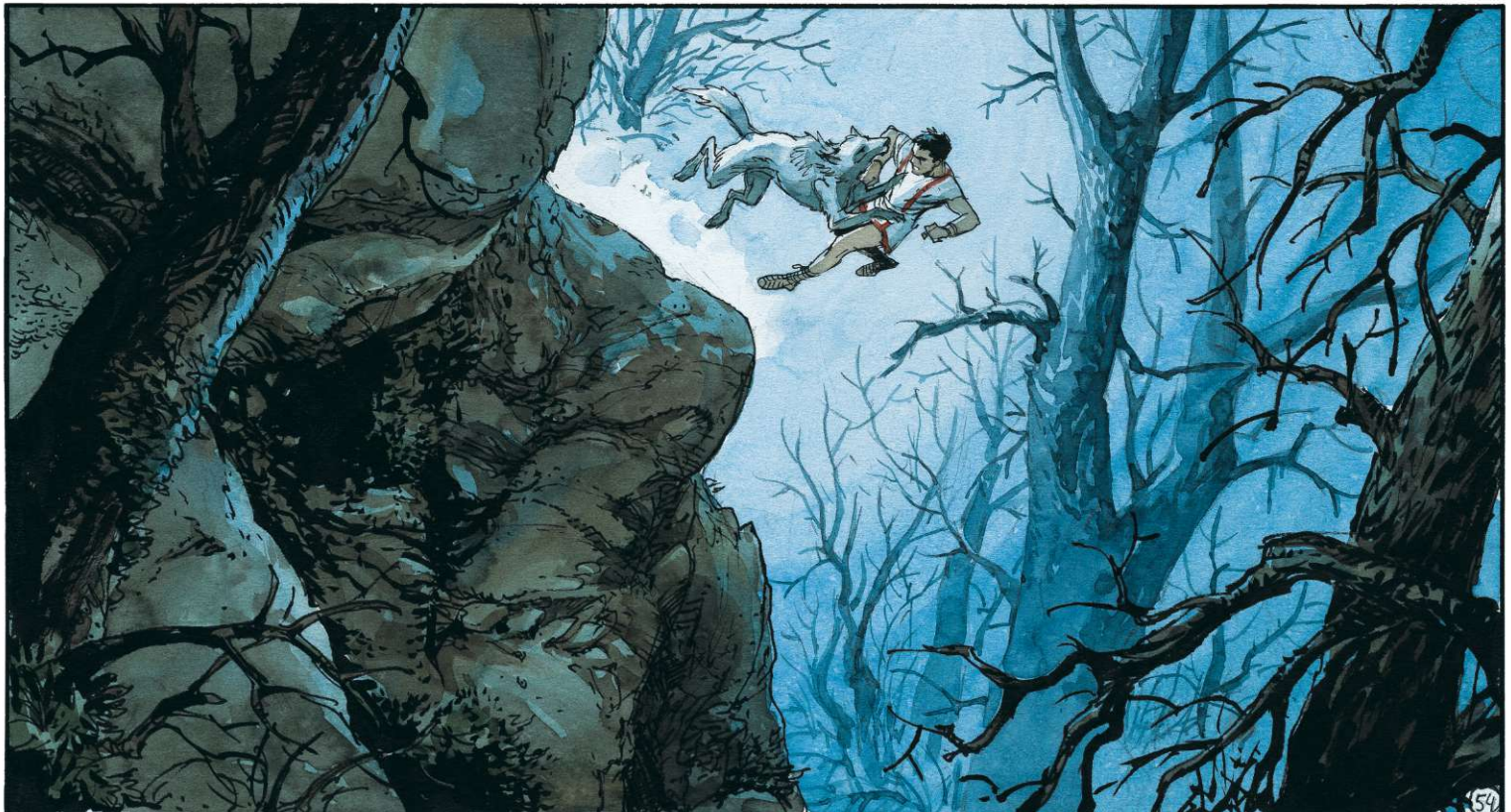
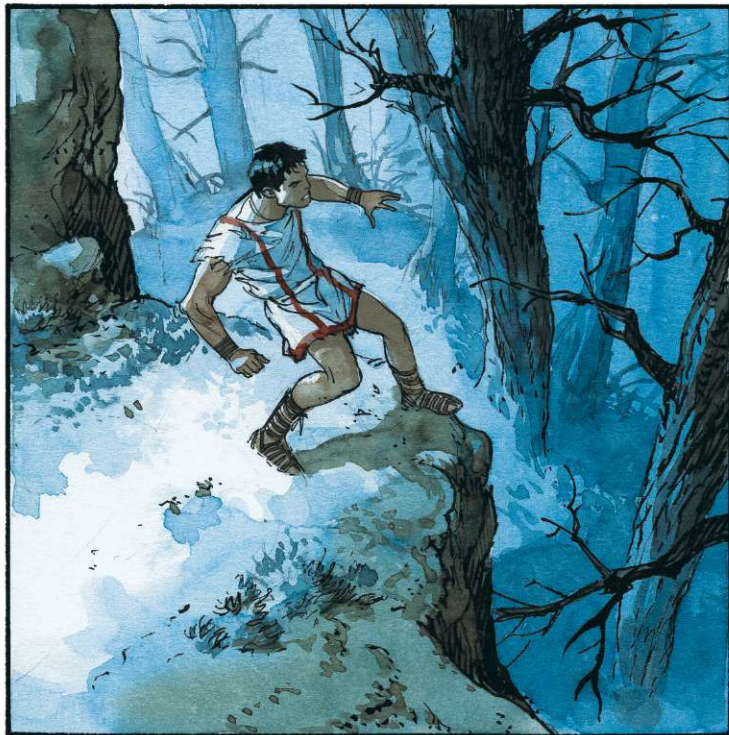
YOUR NIPPLES
SHINE LIKE RIPE
GRAPES...

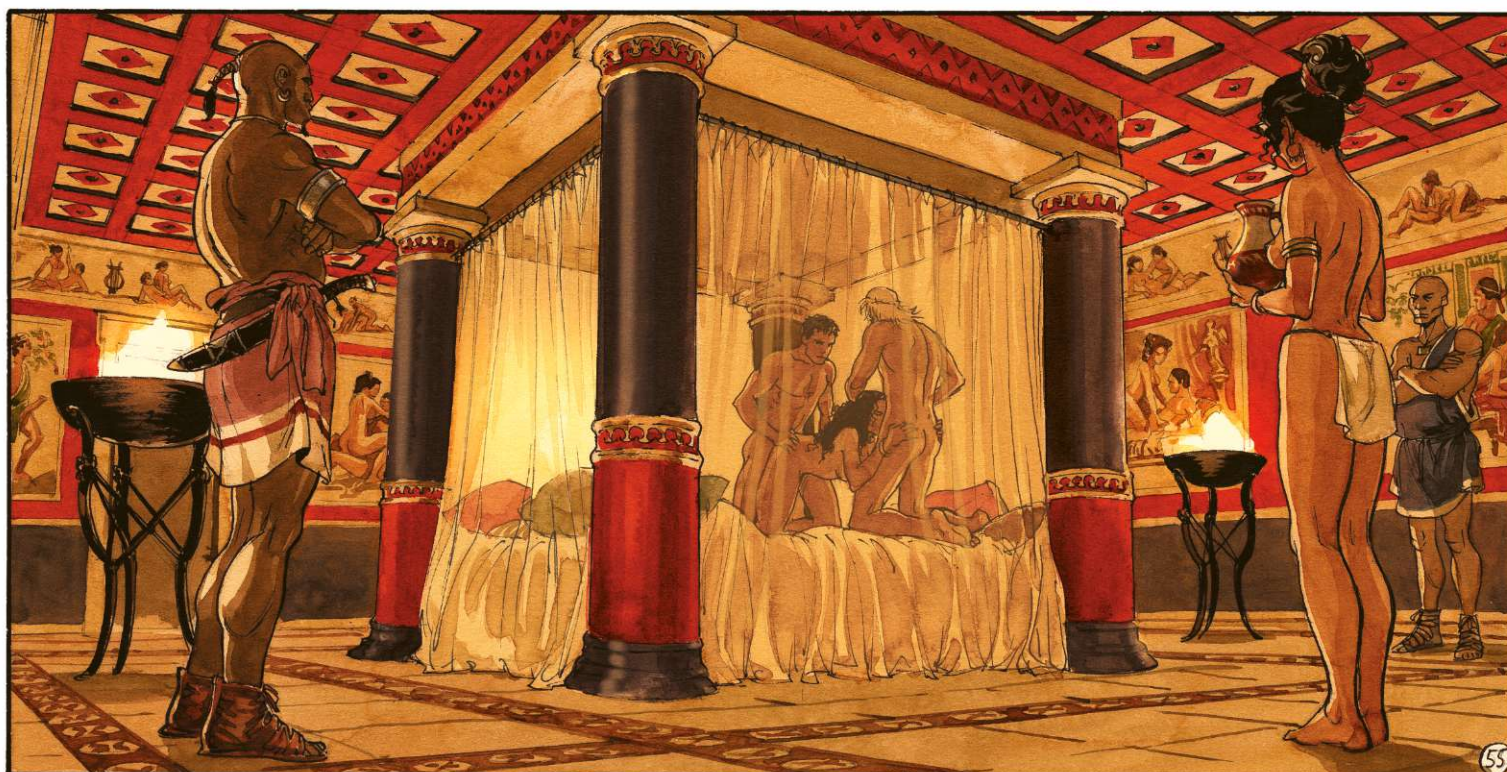


THEN WHAT ARE
YOU WAITING FOR?
COME AND PICK
THEM, MY LITTLE
POET.

AND YOU,
ARMINIUS,
I AM SURE YOU
WILL FIND A FRUIT
TO YOUR LIKING
AS WELL.







GERMANIA
753 AB URBE CONDITA
(1 BC)



WHAT DO THE RUNES TELL YOU, WISE FRAJA?

WODAN WILL SUBJECT HIM TO A TEST.

IF YOUR SON PASSES THE TEST, HE WILL BECOME OUR PEOPLE'S GREATEST WARRIOR. HE WILL UNITE THE TRIBES ALL BY HIMSELF.

UNITE THE TRIBES?! NO ONE HAS EVER MANAGED IT BEFORE! THAT WOULD BE FANTASTIC! WHAT ELSE DO YOU SEE?



I SEE BLOOD... A LOT OF BLOOD... YOU WILL BE A GREAT GOD OF WAR, ERMANAMER. YOU WILL RULE OVER OUR PEOPLE AND YOUR ENEMIES. ON A WHITE HORSE, YOU WILL EMERGE FROM THE DEPTHS OF OUR BLACK FORESTS...



...AND YOU WILL DRIVE THE ROMANS FROM OUR LAND FOREVER.

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GLOSSARY

BARBARIAN – word used by the Greeks to designate peoples not belonging to Greek civilization (*barbaros*). Originally, *barbaros* had no negative connotation.

BULLA – a pendant made of leather or metal containing an amulet that Roman children of free birth carried for protection against evil spirits; the boys until adulthood and the taking of the *toga virilis*, the girls until marriage.

CENTURION – a Roman officer who commanded a *century* (approx. 80 legionnaires) in the Roman legion. The vine stock was his mark of dignity.

ROMAN CITIZENSHIP – a right reserved to free men registered with the tribes of the city of Rome and its territories. Roman citizenship came with the right to vote and mandatory military service, the right to wear the *toga*, and the possibility of entering the equestrian or senatorial ranks.

CUPIDO – or Amor, the god of love. The equivalent of Eros in Greek mythology.

DANAIDES – the fifty daughters of Danaus, king of Libya, who, on their father's order, had to all kill their husbands during their wedding night with a pin concealed in their hair. All obeyed but one, Hypermnestra. Cast into the Underworld, they were sentenced to fill a jar with a hole in it for the rest of eternity. This is the origin of the expression "danaide barrel," referring to a useless and unending chore (Greek mythology).

DOMINUS – lord. The *domus* is the roman family house; the *domina* is the lady of the house.

ERGASTULUM – an underground prison.

SLAVES – the Romans considered slavery vile. Slaves were pieces of property that one owned; they had no rights. Yet they had the possibility of being emancipated through the master's final will or in exchange for a considerable amount of money.

FORTUNA – the goddess of fortune and chance.

LEGION – the basic unit of the Roman army, numbering 50 *centuries*, or 5,000 to 6,000 soldiers.

LUPANAR – house of ill repute offering the services of prostitutes (*lupus = wolf*). Prostitutes were called "she-wolves."

MILA PASSUUM – one thousand steps (4,862 feet, 2.34 inches).

ROMAN CURRENCY – 1 Sestertius (brass) equaled 4 As (copper); 1 Denarius (silver) equaled 16 As; 1 Aureus (gold) equaled 100 Sestertius.

OLYMPUS – the domain of the gods in Greek mythology.

PATER FAMILIAE – the head of the household. He had absolute power over his children, his wife, and his slaves.

PROSERPINA – the queen of the Underworld and the wife of Pluto, the god of the Underworld. The equivalent of Persephone (Greek mythology).

PUERITIA – the period of childhood that starts at age 7 and ends with *pubertas* (puberty).

EQUESTRIAN RANK – Roman horsemen (*equites*), chosen by their educators, were the most honorable and the wealthiest citizens (having at least 400,000 sesterces). They were recognized by the narrow stripe of purple sewn on their tunics (*angusticlave*) and the golden ring they wore.

RUNES – letters in the alphabet used by the ancient peoples of Germanic tongue for religious services. Runes carry intrinsic meaning, and the word *rune* means "secret" or "mystery."

SARMATIANS – or Sauromatians, a group of nomadic peoples from the Eurasian steppes (Iranian origins).

SOL – goddess of the sun (Germanic mythology). Equivalent of Sol, the god of the Sun and of Light in Roman mythology.

STYX – river that separated the earthly realm from the Underworld. Charon ferried the souls of the dead on his boat across to the other shore.

TULLIANUM – the most ancient prison in Rome, built in 700 BC at the foot of Capitoline Hill. Jugurtha and Vercingetorix were imprisoned there.

VALKYRIES – virgin warriors in the service of Wodan. Since they could fly, they brought the souls of heroes who died in battle to Valhalla.

VIRGIL – Roman poet and writer, author of the *Aeneis*, the national epic poem (12 books).

WODAN – or Odin, the king of the gods (Germanic mythology), residing in his palace, Valhalla.

