

MARINI

# THE EAGLES OF ROME

BOOK

II



Europe  
COMICS





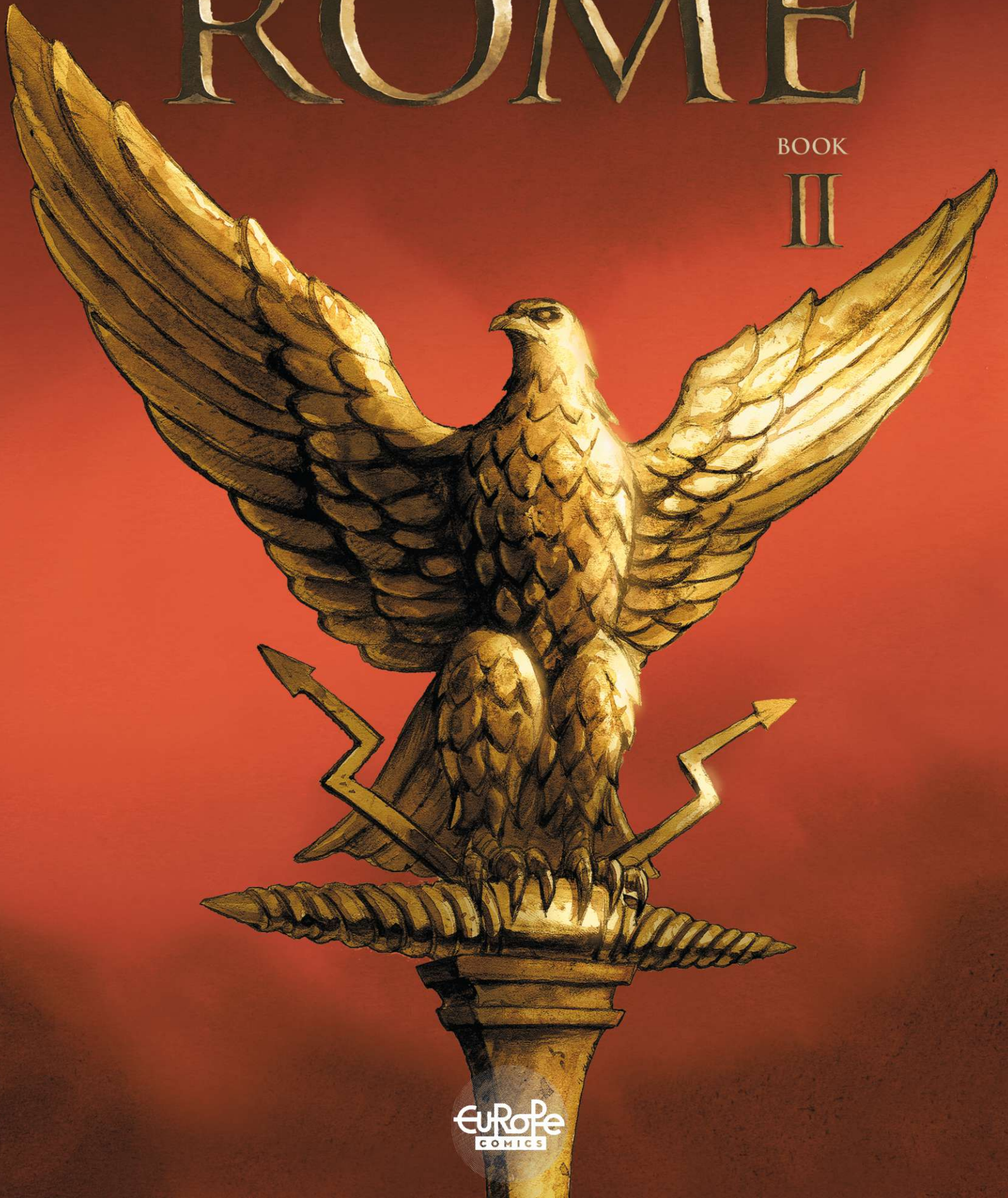


MARINI

THE EAGLES OF  
ROME

BOOK

II





FOLLOWING A SAVAGE BATTLE,  
ERMANAMER, THE SON OF PRINCE SIGMAR, IS DELIVERED  
TO THE ROMANS AS A HOSTAGE. EMPEROR AUGUSTUS ENTRUSTS HIM  
TO HIS LOYAL TITUS VALERIUS FALCO, WHO HAS A SON OF  
THE SAME AGE, MARCUS.

THE TWO YOUNG MEN UNDERGO STRICT ROMAN TRAINING,  
DISHED UP WITH RUTHLESS DISCIPLINE. AS THEY FACE ONE CHALLENGE  
AFTER ANOTHER, FRIENDSHIP COMES TO REPLACE RELENTLESS HATRED.  
BUT WHAT WILL HAPPEN TO BROTHERS IN ARMS AND SPIRIT WHEN  
LOVE FOR A WOMAN INTERFERES?





ROMA  
762 AB URBE  
CONDITA (9 AD)







AUXILIARY COHORT PREFECT MARCUS VALERIUS FALCO?

I TRUST YOU'RE NOT LOOKING TO QUARREL, CENTURION. YOU'VE CAUGHT ME UNARMED.

LIAR...

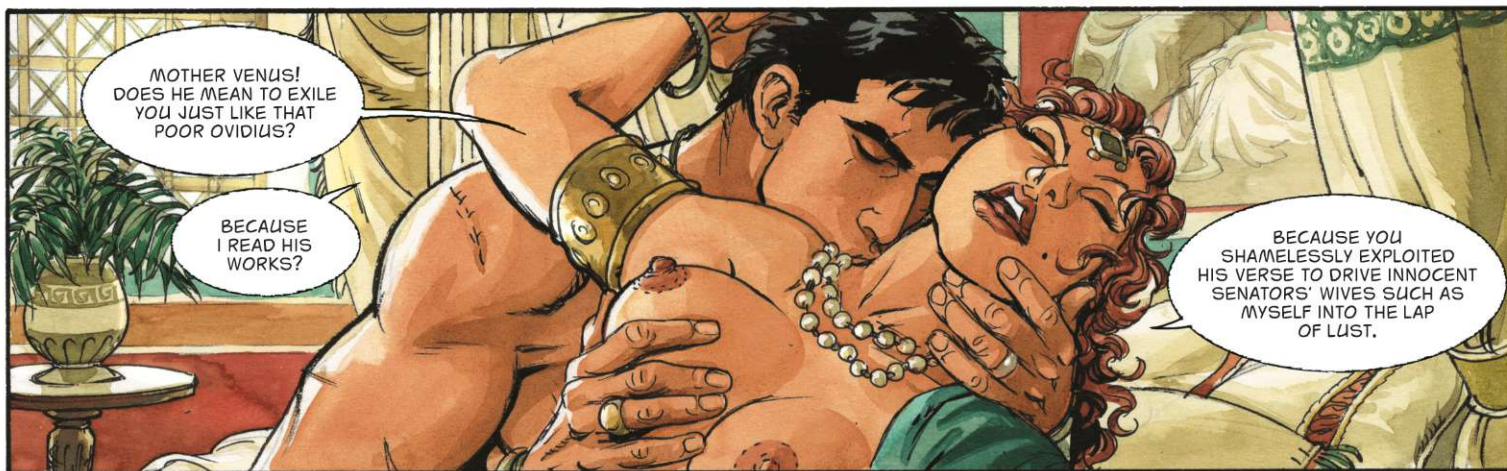


AUGUSTUS HIMSELF WILL BE WAITING FOR YOU AT THE HORA NONA ON PALATINE HILL. BE ON TIME!



DAMN PRAETORIANS! HOW DID THEY FIND ME SO FAST? I JUST GOT BACK.

WHAT DOES THE PRINCEPS WANT WITH YOU?



MOTHER VENUS! DOES HE MEAN TO EXILE YOU JUST LIKE THAT POOR OVIDIUS?

BECAUSE I READ HIS WORKS?

BECAUSE YOU SHAMELESSLY EXPLOITED HIS VERSE TO DRIVE INNOCENT SENATORS' WIVES SUCH AS MYSELF INTO THE LAP OF LUST.



LUST IS THE MOST ENJOYABLE WEAKNESS THAT A WOMAN LIKE YOURSELF MUST GIVE IN TO, EVEN MORE SO SINCE THEY PASSED THE LEX JULIA AGAINST ADULTERY.

HMMM... TELL ME, IS IT TRUE ABOUT ME AND JULIA, THE AUGUSTUS' GRAND-DAUGHTER?



A REAL DEVIANT... JUST LIKE HER MOTHER.

WHAT A HORRIBLE MAN YOU ARE. NOW I UNDERSTAND WHY AUGUSTUS IS INTERESTED IN YOU. MMM...

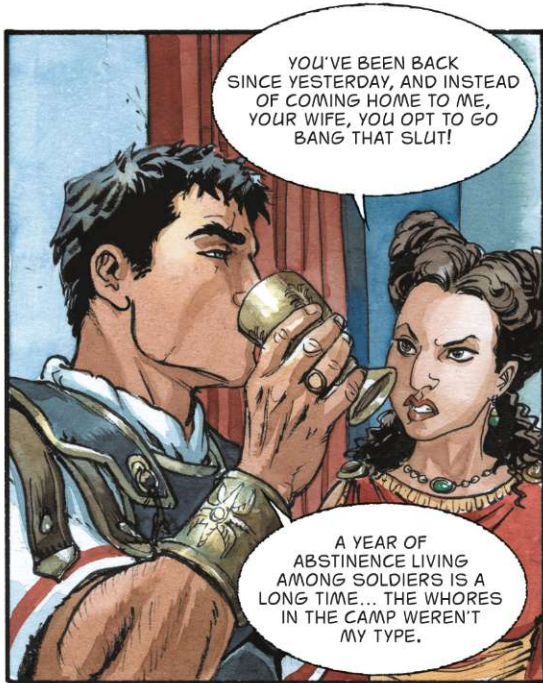


IF HE BANISHES ME TO THE SAME ISLAND AS JULIA, THERE'D BE NOTHING STOPPING YOU FROM COMING WITH US. AT LEAST IT WOULDN'T BE BORING.

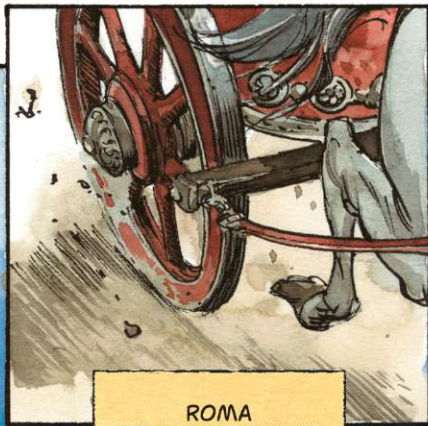












ROMA  
757 AB URBE CONDITA  
(4 BC)



FASTER,  
YOU DAMN SLOWPOKE!  
I WAGED MY WHOLE PAY  
ON YOU, SHIT!

I TOLD YOU  
GREEN WASN'T YOUR  
COLOR AND THAT YOU'D  
BE BETTER OFF BETTING  
ON THE REDS!





IF YOU'RE SUCH AN EXPERT ON THE ISSUE, THEN WHY AREN'T YOU BETTING, HUH?

I FORGOT TO MAKE SACRIFICES TO FORTUNA AND CONSUS.



WHY DON'T YOU JUST ADMIT YOU DON'T HAVE ANY BALLS, INSTEAD?



NO, NOOO!

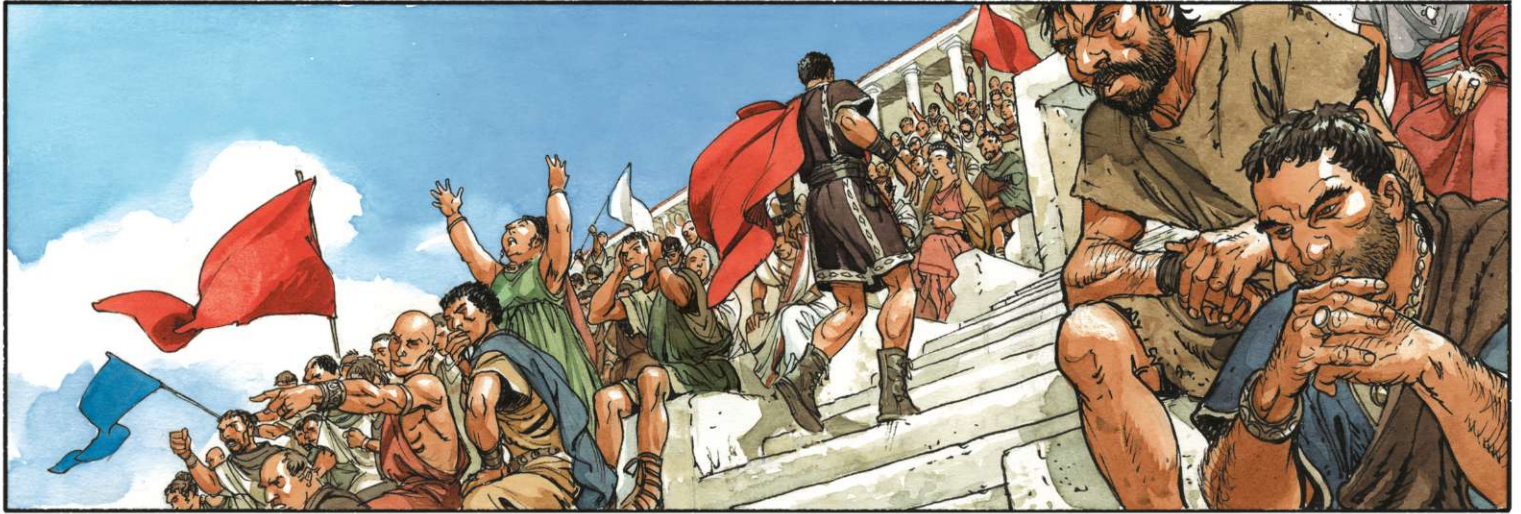
THAT AMATEUR IS STILL MOVING! MAY DONAR'S HAMMER SMASH HIM ON THE SPOT!



EXCUSE ME FOR A MOMENT.

YES, GET OUT OF HERE! YOU'RE BACK LUCK.





SORRY I'M LATE, MY DEAR. I HOPE I DIDN'T MISS THE SHOW.

?!



"MY DEAR?" PRISCILLA, WHO IS THIS INSOLENT MAN?

IS THIS GUY BOTHERING YOU... PRISCILLA?

HE LOOKS LOST. SHOULD I SHOW HIM THE WAY OUT?



ENOUGH! I WANT YOUR NAME AND RANK!

MARCUS VALERIUS FALCO, DEVOTED SERVANT TO ROME'S MOST BEAUTIFUL WOMAN.



DO YOU NOT KNOW TO WHOM YOU SPEAK, YOU MISERABLE WRETCH?

NO, BUT I KNOW YOU'RE DYING TO TELL US.



I AM LUCIUS AELIUS SEIANUS, SON OF STRABO, PREFECT OF THE PRAETORIAN COHORTS!

YOU HAVE JUST SIGNED YOUR DEATH WARRANT.



YOU WILL REGRET THIS AFFRONT! PRISCILLA, WE'LL TALK AGAIN!

THAT'S RIGHT, GO FETCH US A DRINK. IT'S REALLY HOT HERE!





THAT WASN'T VERY SMART OF YOU. YOU'VE MADE A DANGEROUS ENEMY FOR YOURSELF.

I'LL THANK HIM FOR INTRODUCING US WHEN I GET THE CHANCE.



AND WHAT IF YOUR PRESENCE IS A NUISANCE TO ME?

YOU DIDN'T LOOK TOO HAPPY BEFORE I SHOWED UP.



AH! IMPERTINENT AND PRESUMPTUOUS. TWO QUALITIES THAT WOMEN FIND DISPLEASING.

IGNORANCE OF THE RACES IS ANOTHER QUALITY OF MINE.

YOU SEEM TO KNOW WHAT YOU'RE DOING. TELL ME, WHO SHOULD I BET ON?

MAYBE I'LL BE LUCKIER IN GAMBLING THAN IN LOVE?



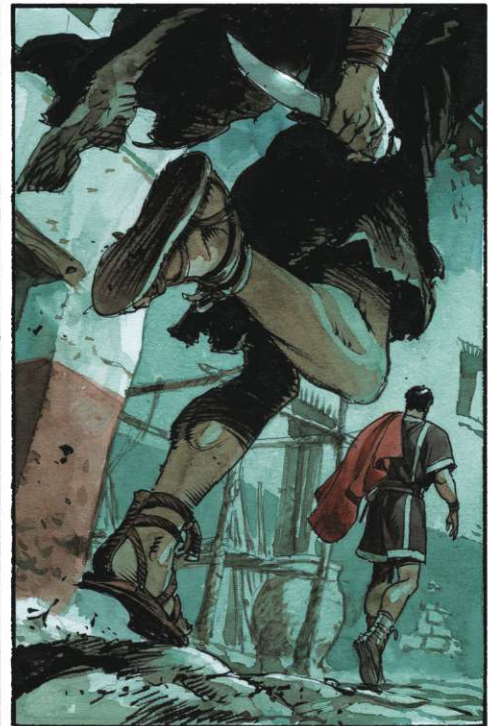
WHERE HAVE YOU BEEN? YOU HAVE TO BET ON THE REDS, OF COURSE, THAT'S OBVIOUS! GALBIUS IS GOING TO WIN!



















ARGH!



NICE BRAWL. SORRY FOR NOT HELPING OUT SOONER, BUT I COULDN'T DECIDE WHOSE HEAD TO SMASH IN.

AR... ARMINIUS



I'VE BEEN LOOKING FOR YOU FOR TWO HOURS, YOU IDIOT!

THOSE... THOSE LOW-LIVES WANTED TO KILL ME!



YOU KNOW, YOU HAVE A REAL KNACK FOR PISSING PEOPLE OFF.

LET'S SPLIT. I DON'T FEEL EXPLAINING THIS MESS TO THE VIGILES.



UNTIL NEXT TIME... MARCUS VALERIUS FALCO...



MARCUS VALERIUS FALCO... YOU'RE MAKING EVERYTHING MORE COMPLICATED...



12



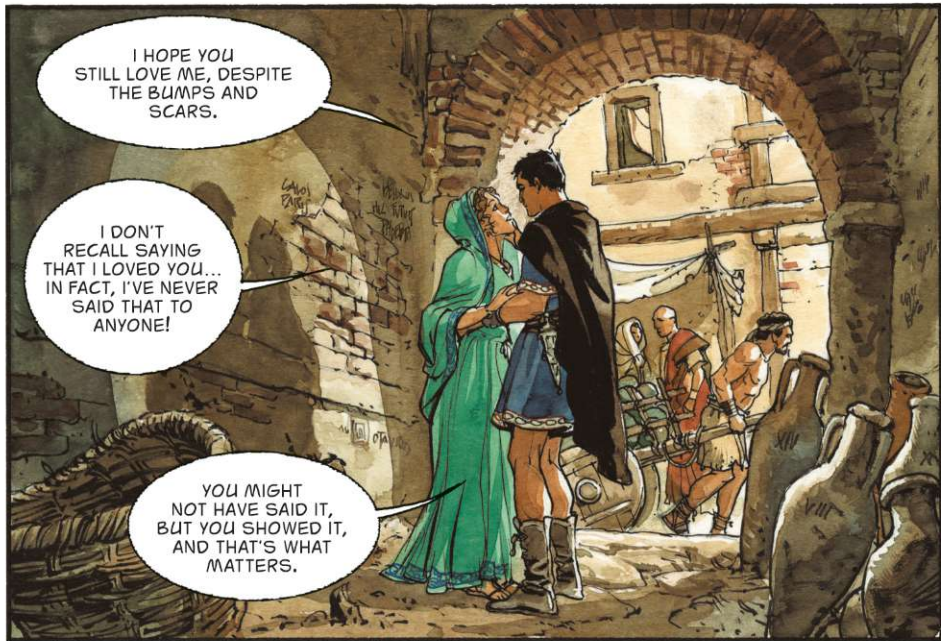


MARCUS, YOUR FACE! WHAT HAPPENED TO YOU?

IT'S NOTHING. KISS ME...



NOT HERE. COME.



I HOPE YOU STILL LOVE ME, DESPITE THE BUMPS AND SCARS.

I DON'T RECALL SAYING THAT I LOVED YOU... IN FACT, I'VE NEVER SAID THAT TO ANYONE!

YOU MIGHT NOT HAVE SAID IT, BUT YOU SHOWED IT, AND THAT'S WHAT MATTERS.



DREAMER.

MY GRANDMOTHER USED TO CALL ME THAT.

A WISE WOMAN.

I COULDN'T STAND HER.



I LIKE THAT MELODY... IT'S SAD.

I COMPOSED IT FOR MY MOTHER. I CALLED IT "AUTUMN KISS."





DON'T I LOOK RIDICULOUS LIKE THIS?

NOT TO ME, MY APOLLO...

WHAT'S WRONG, PRISCILLA? IS SOMETHING TROUBLING YOU?



NOTHING... I... I HAVE TO TALK TO YOU.

WAIT, I HAVE A PRESENT FOR YOU, TOO.



OH... IT'S...

FOR OUR ENGAGEMENT.

WHAT?

THIS IS OUR FIFTH DATE. IT'S TIME FOR ME TO ASK YOUR FATHER FOR YOUR HAND.



BUT THAT'S IMPOSSIBLE. IT'S... IT'S ALREADY BEEN PROMISED...

WHAT? TO THAT EARTH-WORM FROM THE OTHER DAY?

NO, HIS NAME IS QUINTUS AEMILIUS LEPIDUS. SEIANUS IS HIS FRIEND. HE WAS SUPPOSED TO KEEP ME COMPANY WHILE LEPIDUS WAS AWAY.

AND NOW THAT LEPIDUS IS BACK FROM EXILE, I... OH MY GODS, WHAT HAVE I DONE?



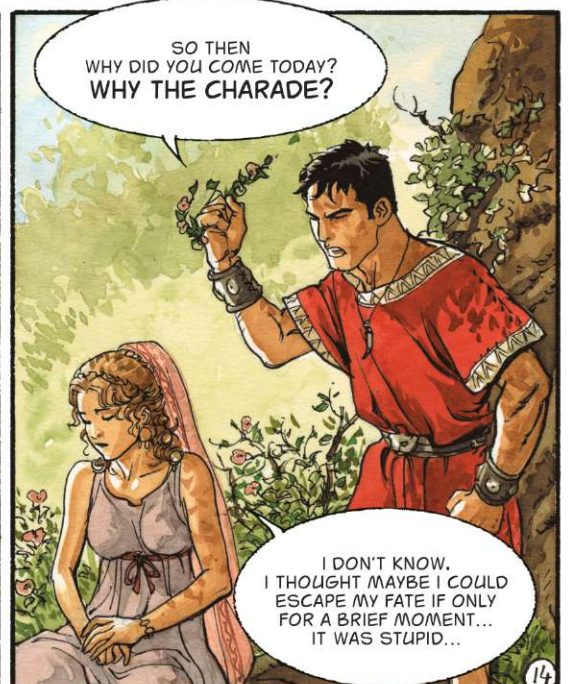
I COULD TALK TO THIS LEPIDUS PERSON, DISCOURAGE HIM FROM—

YOU DON'T UNDERSTAND... MY FATHER DECIDED ON THIS UNION A LONG TIME AGO.



DO YOU LOVE HIM?

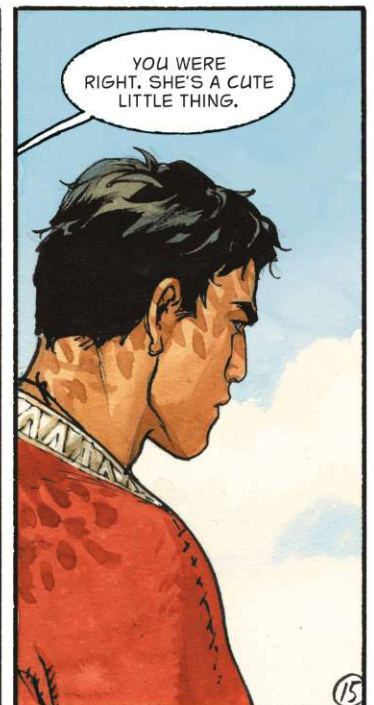
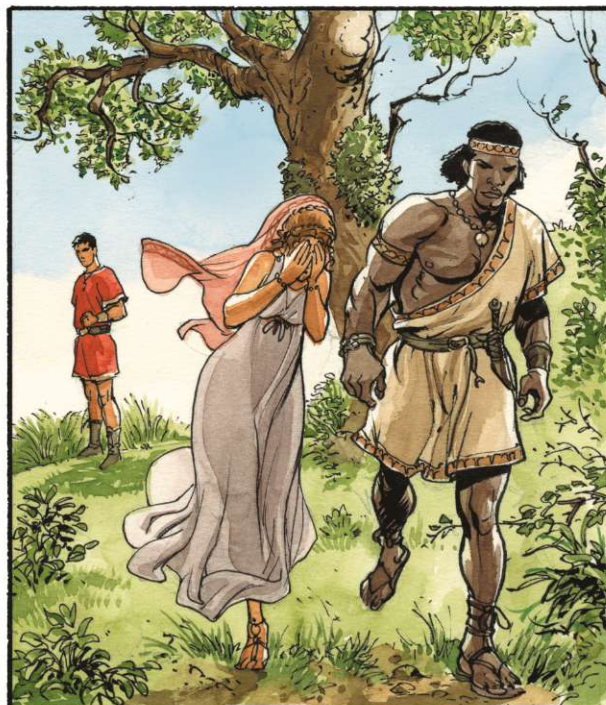
A ROMAN WOMAN IS NOT REQUIRED TO LOVE HER HUSBAND.



SO THEN WHY DID YOU COME TODAY? WHY THE CHARADE?

I DON'T KNOW. I THOUGHT MAYBE I COULD ESCAPE MY FATE IF ONLY FOR A BRIEF MOMENT... IT WAS STUPID...









YOU'RE FOLLOWING ME NOW?

AFTER THAT INCIDENT THE OTHER DAY, SOMEONE'S GOTTA WATCH OVER YOUR ASS.

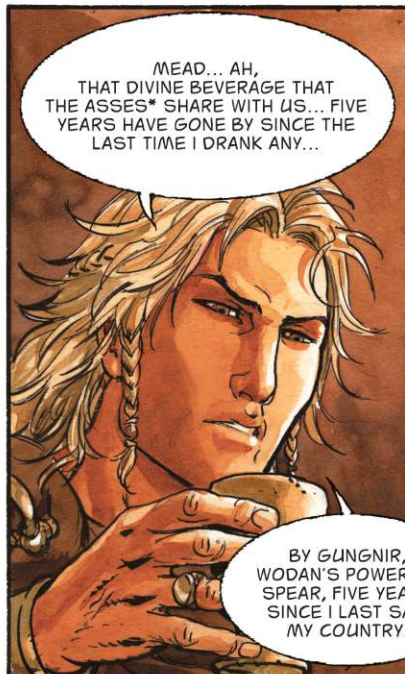


GO FUCK YOURSELF.



DRINK, TOMORROW YOU'LL HAVE FORGOTTEN ALL ABOUT HER.

YOUR WINE CAN'T COMPETE WITH OUR MEAD, BUT IT'S GOOD MEDICINE FOR A BROKEN HEART.



MEAD... AH, THAT DIVINE BEVERAGE THAT THE ASSES\* SHARE WITH US... FIVE YEARS HAVE GONE BY SINCE THE LAST TIME I DRANK ANY...

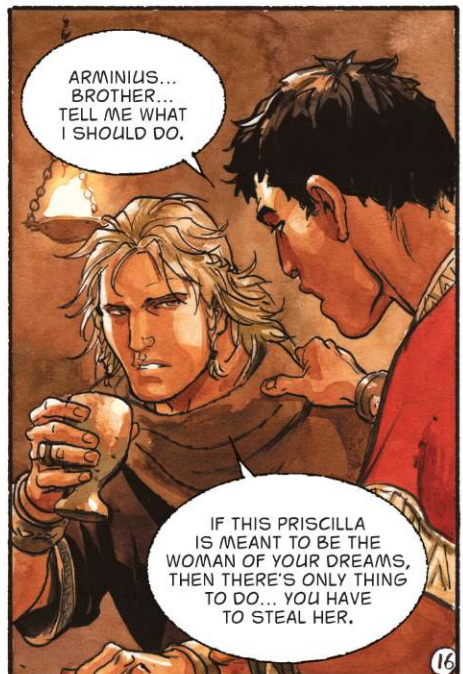
BY GUNGNIR, WODAN'S POWERFUL SPEAR, FIVE YEARS SINCE I LAST SAW MY COUNTRY!



THE DAY STARTED OFF SO WELL...

THE HEN YOU SACRIFICED TO THAT VENUS BITCH CLEARLY WASN'T TO HER LIKING.

IT WAS A FUCKING DOVE! AND THAT FUCKING SHOPKEEPER ASSURED ME IT CAME FROM THE IMPERIAL AVIARY! I PAID MORE FOR IT THAN FOR THAT FUCKING FIBULA! SHIT!



ARMINIUS... BROTHER... TELL ME WHAT I SHOULD DO.

IF THIS PRISCILLA IS MEANT TO BE THE WOMAN OF YOUR DREAMS, THEN THERE'S ONLY THING TO DO... YOU HAVE TO STEAL HER.

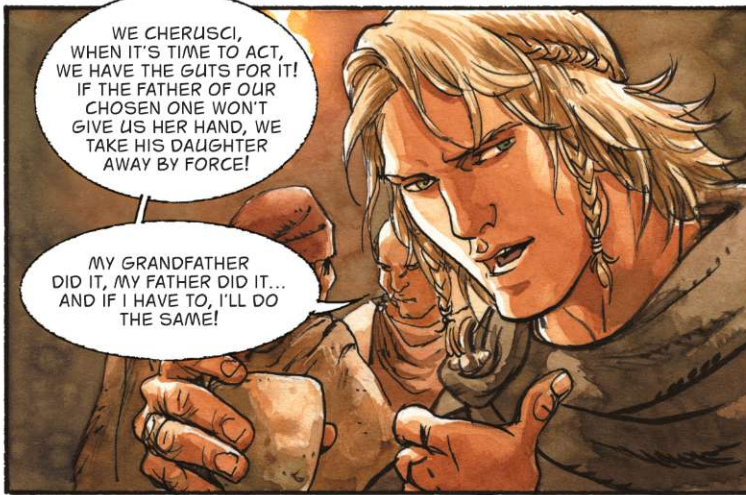
\*AN ANCIENT ROMAN CURRENCY





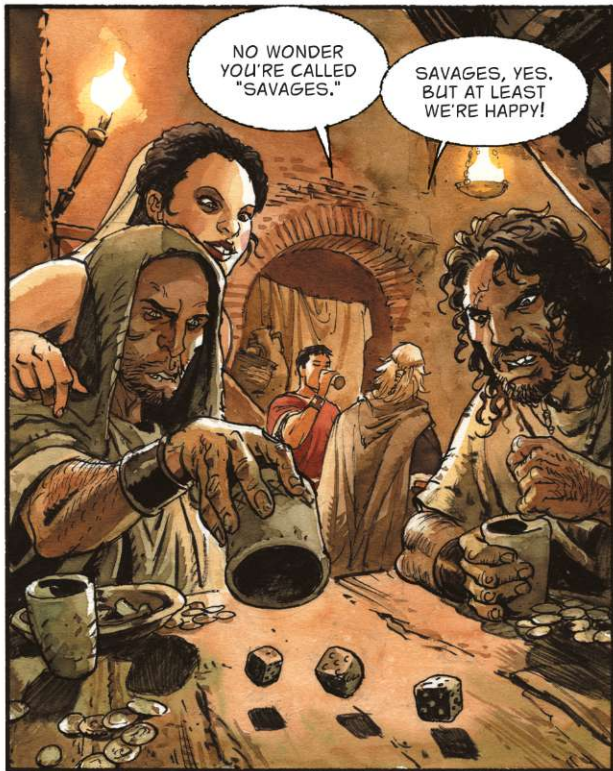
IS THAT SOME KIND OF JOKE? EVEN IF SHE AGREED TO IT, I DOUBT WE'D GET VERY FAR.

AND IF THEY FIND US, IT WOULD MEAN CERTAIN DEATH FOR BOTH OF US.



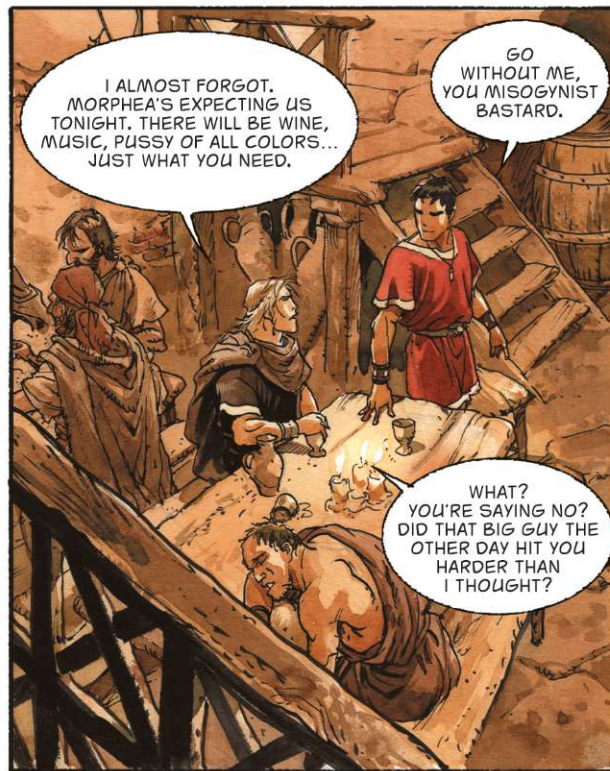
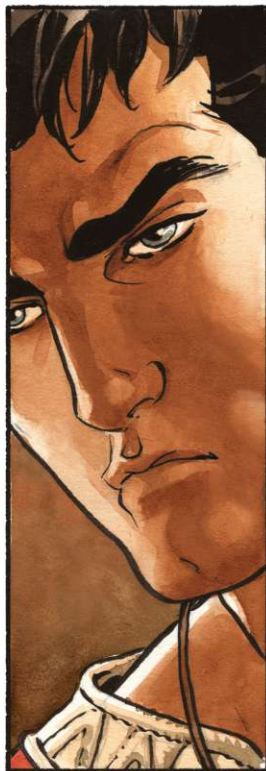
WE CHERUSCI, WHEN IT'S TIME TO ACT, WE HAVE THE GUTS FOR IT! IF THE FATHER OF OUR CHOSEN ONE WON'T GIVE US HER HAND, WE TAKE HIS DAUGHTER AWAY BY FORCE!

MY GRANDFATHER DID IT, MY FATHER DID IT... AND IF I HAVE TO, I'LL DO THE SAME!



NO WONDER YOU'RE CALLED "SAVAGES."

SAVAGES, YES, BUT AT LEAST WE'RE HAPPY!



I ALMOST FORGOT. MORPHEA'S EXPECTING US TONIGHT. THERE WILL BE WINE, MUSIC, PUSSY OF ALL COLORS... JUST WHAT YOU NEED.

GO WITHOUT ME, YOU MISOGYNIST BASTARD.

WHAT? YOU'RE SAYING NO? DID THAT BIG GUY THE OTHER DAY HIT YOU HARDER THAN I THOUGHT?



MAYBE YOU'RE RIGHT... I NEED TO SPEAK WITH HER FATHER...

HUH? DON'T GO. IT'S MY TREAT!



AAAAAAHHH! GAME ON, FATHER-IN-LAW!





I'M PLEASED SO SEE YOU BACK AMONG US, QUINTUS AEMILIUS. WE HAVE IMPORTANT MATTERS TO DISCUSS. YOUR MARRIAGE TO MY DAUGHTER FIRST AND FOREMOST.

AFTER TWELVE MONTHS IN EXILE, I'M ANXIOUS TO SEE PRISCILLA AGAIN, HONORABLE PRISCUS.



YOUR FUTURE WIFE IS IN EXCELLENT HEALTH AND GLAD THAT YOU'RE BACK.

SHE'LL JOIN US SHORTLY. SHE'S MAKING HERSELF BEAUTIFUL. WOMEN TAKE THAT KIND OF THING VERY SERIOUSLY.

I'M ANXIOUS FOR US TO DISCUSS OUR PLANS, AS WELL.



NOT HERE AND NOT NOW... THE PRINCEPS HAS ONLY JUST PARDED YOU. YOU MUST BE ON YOUR GUARD, QUINTUS AEMILIUS.

YOUR FATHER ALSO LACKED PATIENCE. HIS CARELESSNESS ENDED UP BETRAYING HIM... AND AUGUSTUS HAD HIM EXECUTED. I DON'T WANT THE SAME KIND OF FATE FOR THE SON OF MY BEST FRIEND.



YOU ARE RIGHT, GAIVS AURELIUS. FORGIVE ME. I TOAST TO YOUR HEALTH.



DOMINA... LEPIDUS HAS ARRIVED. HE WAITS FOR YOU IN THE PERISTYLUM.

LEAVE ME... I DON'T WANT TO SEE ANYONE!

BUT YOUR FATHER...



I DON'T CARE. TELL HIM I HAVE A FEVER AND THAT I CAN'T BE SEEN BY QUINTUS IN SUCH A STATE.





WHAT?

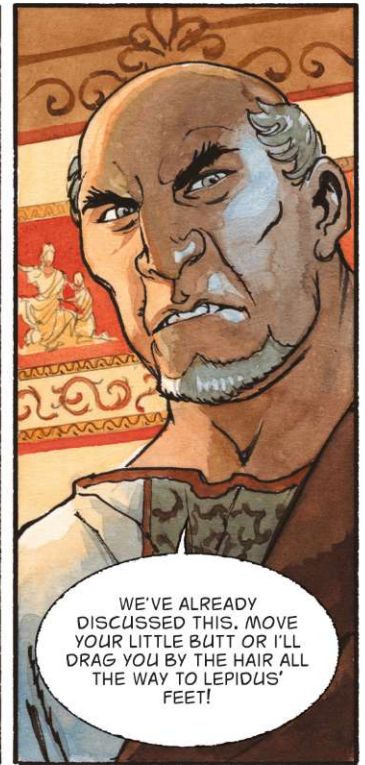


QUINTUS, EXCUSE ME FOR A MOMENT.

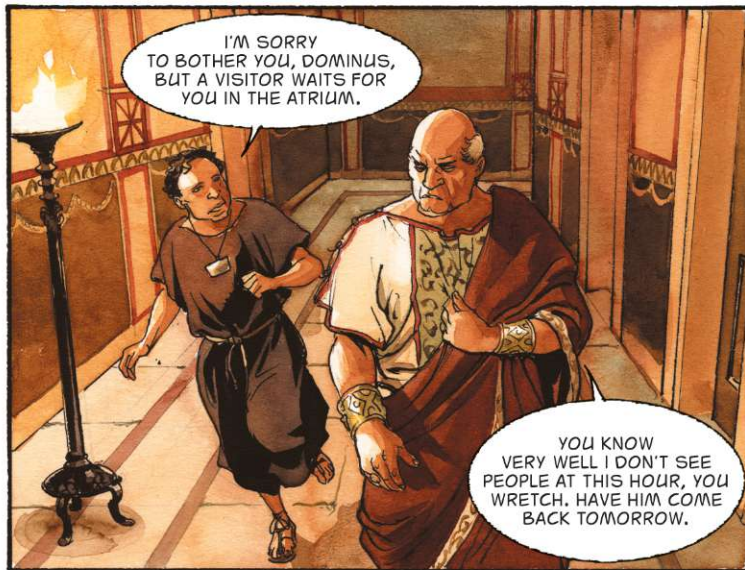


GET DRESSED IMMEDIATELY!

PLEASE, FATHER... I DON'T WANT TO MARRY HIM.

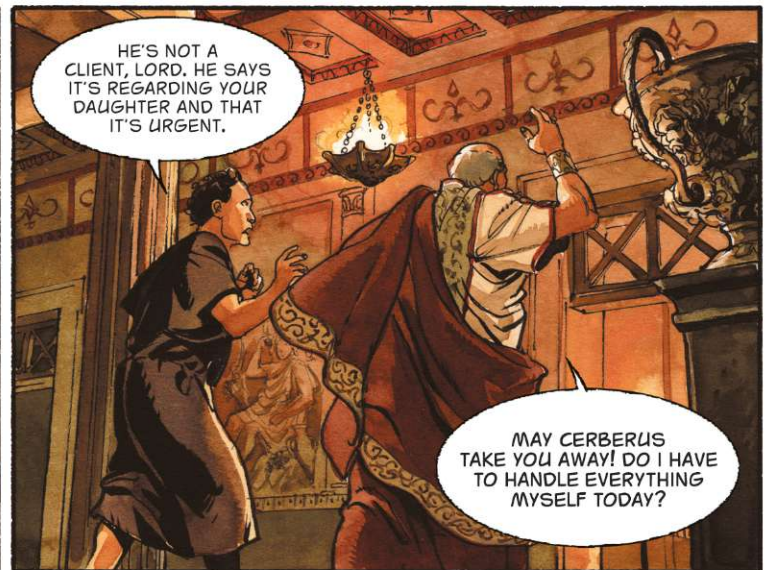


WE'VE ALREADY DISCUSSED THIS. MOVE YOUR LITTLE BUTT OR I'LL DRAG YOU BY THE HAIR ALL THE WAY TO LEPIDUS' FEET!



I'M SORRY TO BOTHER YOU, DOMINUS, BUT A VISITOR WAITS FOR YOU IN THE ATRIUM.

YOU KNOW VERY WELL I DON'T SEE PEOPLE AT THIS HOUR, YOU WRETCH. HAVE HIM COME BACK TOMORROW.



HE'S NOT A CLIENT, LORD. HE SAYS IT'S REGARDING YOUR DAUGHTER AND THAT IT'S URGENT.

MAY CERBERUS TAKE YOU AWAY! DO I HAVE TO HANDLE EVERYTHING MYSELF TODAY?



MAY JUPITER STRIKE YOU ON THE SPOT! WHO ARE YOU TO DARE DISTURB ME AT SUCH AN HOUR?



S... SALVE, GAIUS AURELIUS PRISCUS. MY NAME IS MARCUS VALERIUS FALCO. I MUST SPEAK WITH YOU OF AN URGENT MATTER THAT CONCERNS YOUR DAUGHTER.





I LOVE YOUR DAUGHTER AND I WISH... TO MARRY HER.

SPEAK.



WHAT?

IS THIS SOME KIND OF JOKE?



MARCUS! WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE?

PRISCILLA!

YOU KNOW THIS HALF-WIT?



SHE'S MAGNIFICENT, ISN'T SHE? YOU MUST BE LEPIDUS... SORRY, BUT YOU'LL HAVE TO FIND YOUR BLISS ELSEWHERE, PRISCILLA DOESN'T LOVE YOU.

PRISCILLA, I DEMAND AN EXPLANATION!



GO TO YOUR ROOM!

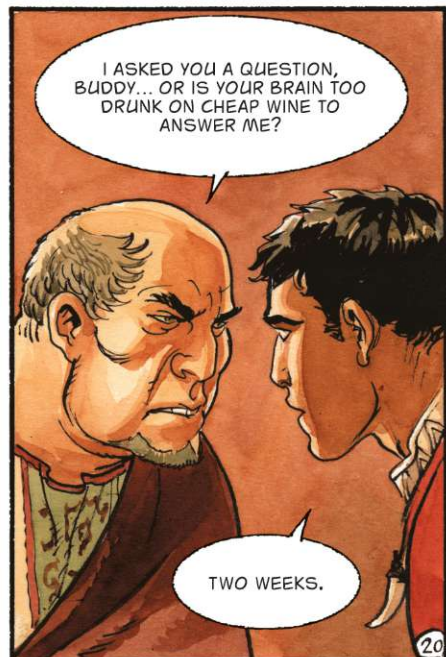
FATHER, LET ME EXPLAIN...

NOW!



DON'T HURT HIM, FATHER... HE'S JUST A DUMB BOY.

LET'S HAVE IT OUT. HOW LONG HAS THIS LIAISON BEEN GOING ON?



I ASKED YOU A QUESTION, BUDDY... OR IS YOUR BRAIN TOO DRUNK ON CHEAP WINE TO ANSWER ME?

TWO WEEKS.





DID YOU TOUCH HER?

I... I HAVEN'T HAD THAT PLEASURE YET, LORD... I SWEAR ON ALL THAT IS SACRED TO ME.



THIS INSOLENCE CANNOT BE TOLERATED!

OKAY, I BELIEVE YOU, YOU SEEM STUPID BUT SINCERE. I'LL FORGIVE YOU YOUR IMPERTINENCE THIS ONE TIME.

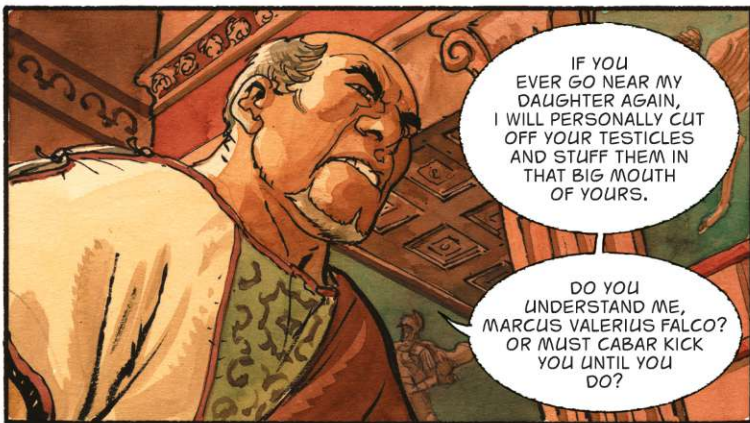
OUR FIRST LOVE ALWAYS MAKES US CRAZY. I KNOW WHAT I'M TALKING ABOUT.



YOU'RE LETTING THAT DOG GO? LET ME TEACH HIM A LESSON! I—

CALM DOWN, QUINTUS AEMILIUS. THIS IS MY HOUSE AND IT IS STILL MY DAUGHTER WE'RE TALKING ABOUT.

NOW LISTEN TO ME CAREFULLY, YOUNG MAN, BECAUSE I WON'T SAY IT AGAIN.



IF YOU EVER GO NEAR MY DAUGHTER AGAIN, I WILL PERSONALLY CUT OFF YOUR TESTICLES AND STUFF THEM IN THAT BIG MOUTH OF YOURS.

DO YOU UNDERSTAND ME, MARCUS VALERIUS FALCO? OR MUST CABAR KICK YOU UNTIL YOU DO?



DOES THIS MEAN YOU'RE REJECTING MY REQUEST?



OUT!

CABAR, THROW THIS MORON OUT BEFORE I STRANGLE HIM WITH MY BARE HANDS!

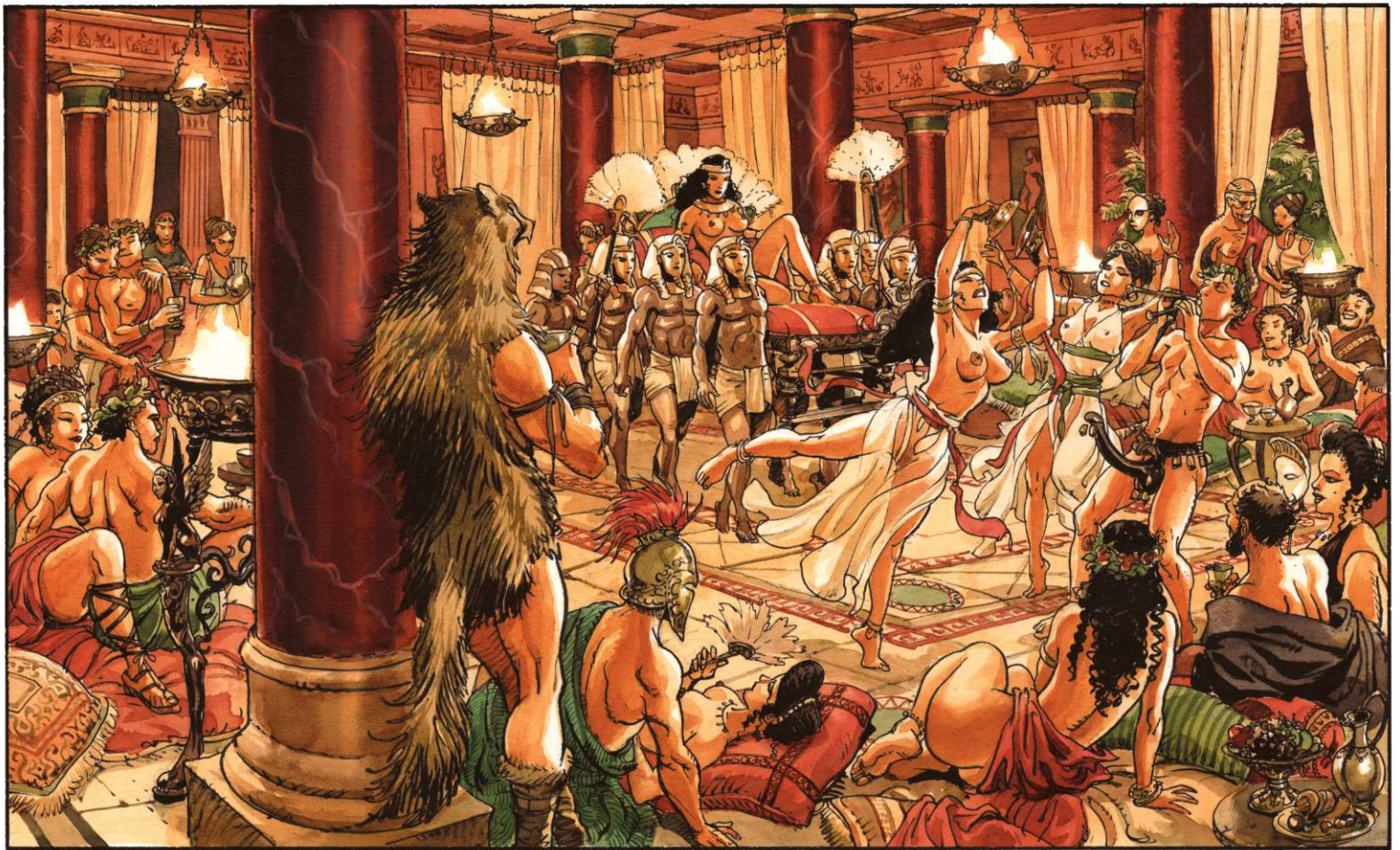


AHH!

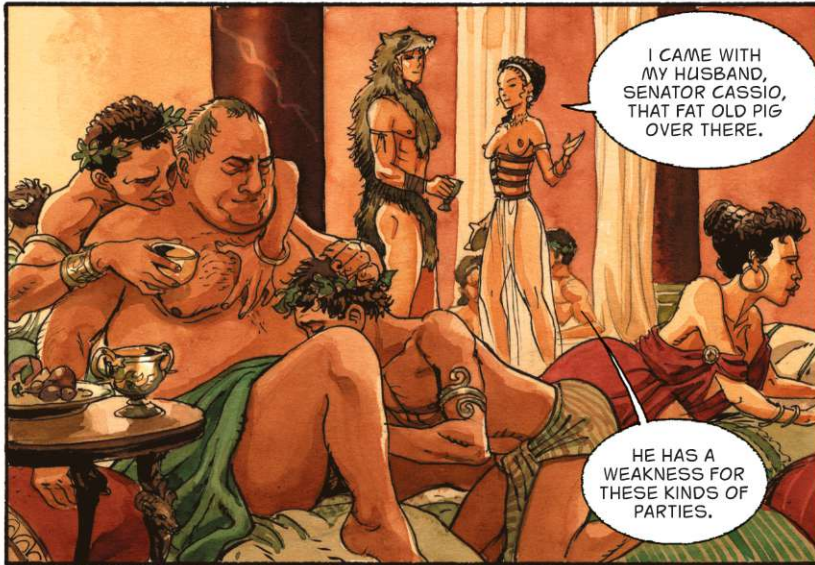


SHIT.



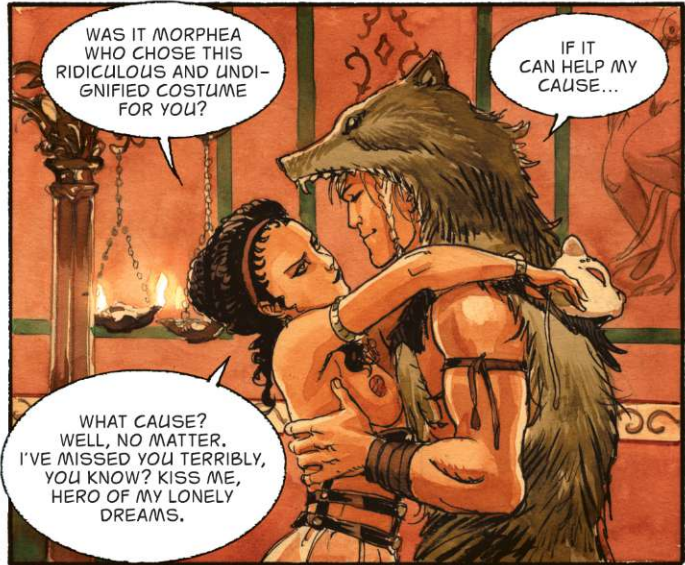






I CAME WITH MY HUSBAND, SENATOR CASSIO, THAT FAT OLD PIG OVER THERE.

HE HAS A WEAKNESS FOR THESE KINDS OF PARTIES.



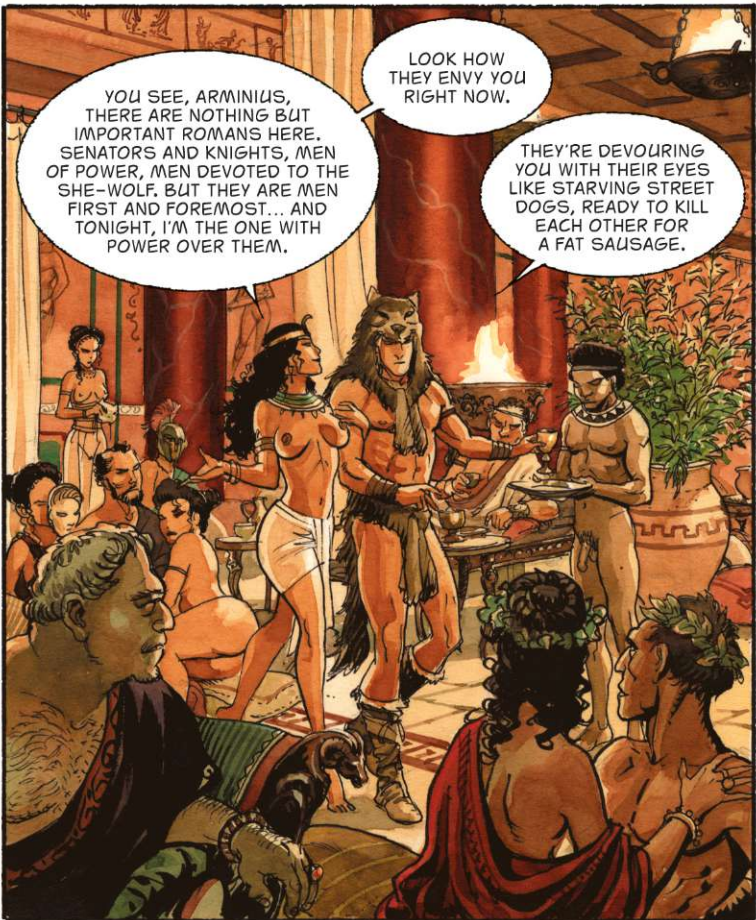
WAS IT MORPHEA WHO CHOSE THIS RIDICULOUS AND UNDIGNIFIED COSTUME FOR YOU?

IF IT CAN HELP MY CAUSE...

WHAT CAUSE? WELL, NO MATTER. I'VE MISSED YOU TERRIBLY, YOU KNOW? KISS ME, HERO OF MY LONELY DREAMS.



ARMINIUS! I SEE YOU'VE BEEN KEEPING BUSY WHILE WAITING FOR ME!



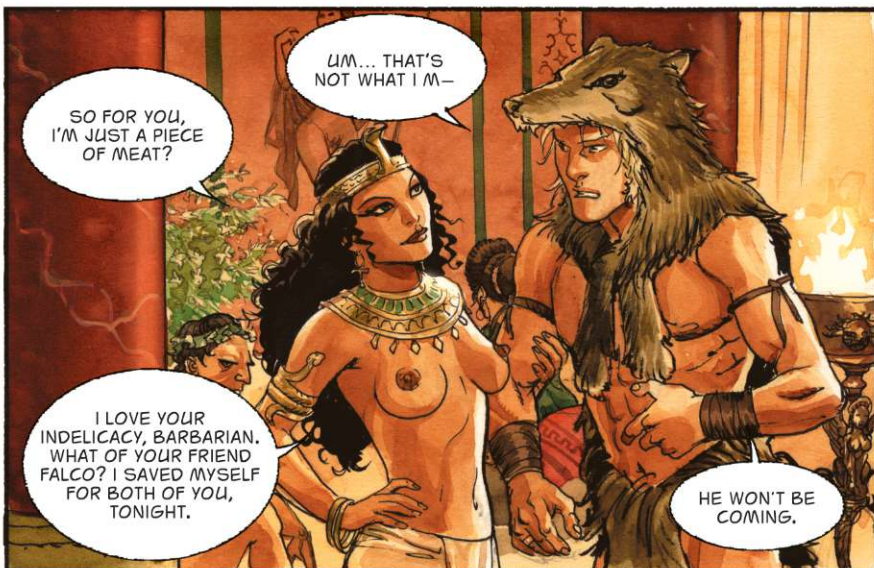
YOU SEE, ARMINIUS, THERE ARE NOTHING BUT IMPORTANT ROMANS HERE. SENATORS AND KNIGHTS, MEN OF POWER, MEN DEVOTED TO THE SHE-WOLF. BUT THEY ARE MEN FIRST AND FOREMOST... AND TONIGHT, I'M THE ONE WITH POWER OVER THEM.

LOOK HOW THEY ENVY YOU RIGHT NOW.

THEY'RE DEVOURING YOU WITH THEIR EYES LIKE STARVING STREET DOGS, READY TO KILL EACH OTHER FOR A FAT SAUSAGE.



SORRY, LUCILLA CASSIA, BUT THIS BEAUTIFUL ANIMAL IS ALL MINE, TONIGHT.



SO FOR YOU, I'M JUST A PIECE OF MEAT?

UM... THAT'S NOT WHAT I M-

I LOVE YOUR INDELICACY, BARBARIAN. WHAT OF YOUR FRIEND FALCO? I SAVED MYSELF FOR BOTH OF YOU, TONIGHT.

HE WON'T BE COMING.

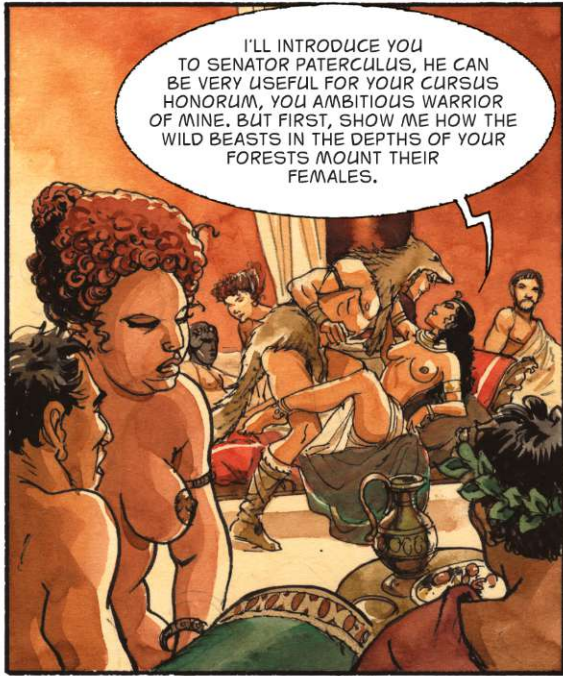


NOBODY HAS EVER DARED TURN DOWN ONE OF MY INVITATIONS. WHAT'S HIS EXCUSE?

THE ARROW OF AMOR HAS STRUCK HIM STRAIGHT THROUGH THE HEART.

THAT'S NOT GOOD ENOUGH. HE WILL PAY FOR THIS INSULT.

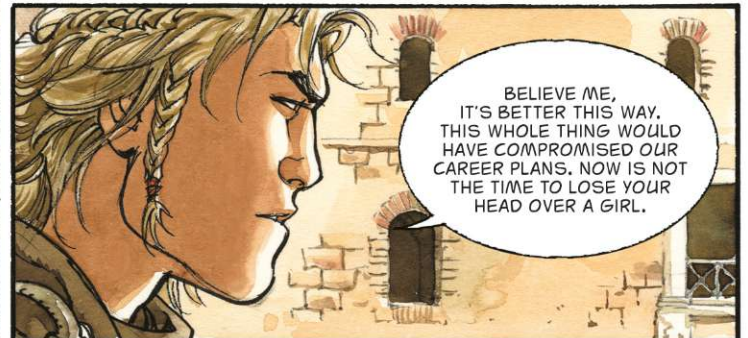
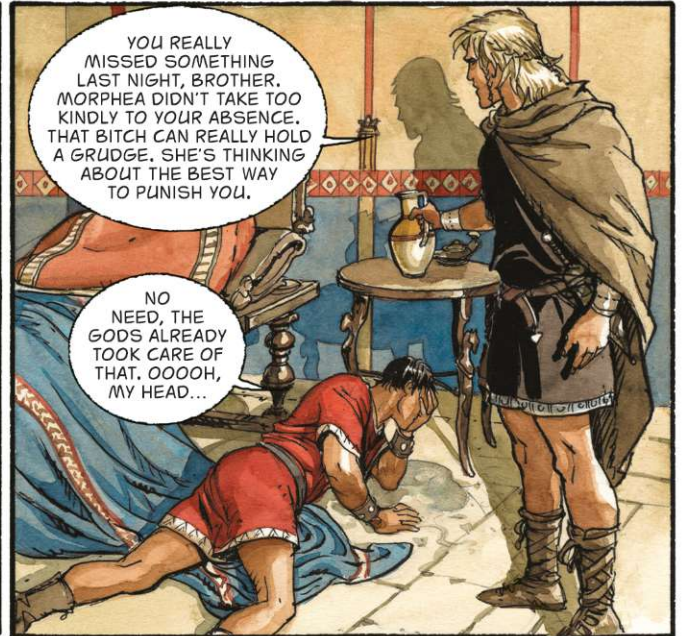




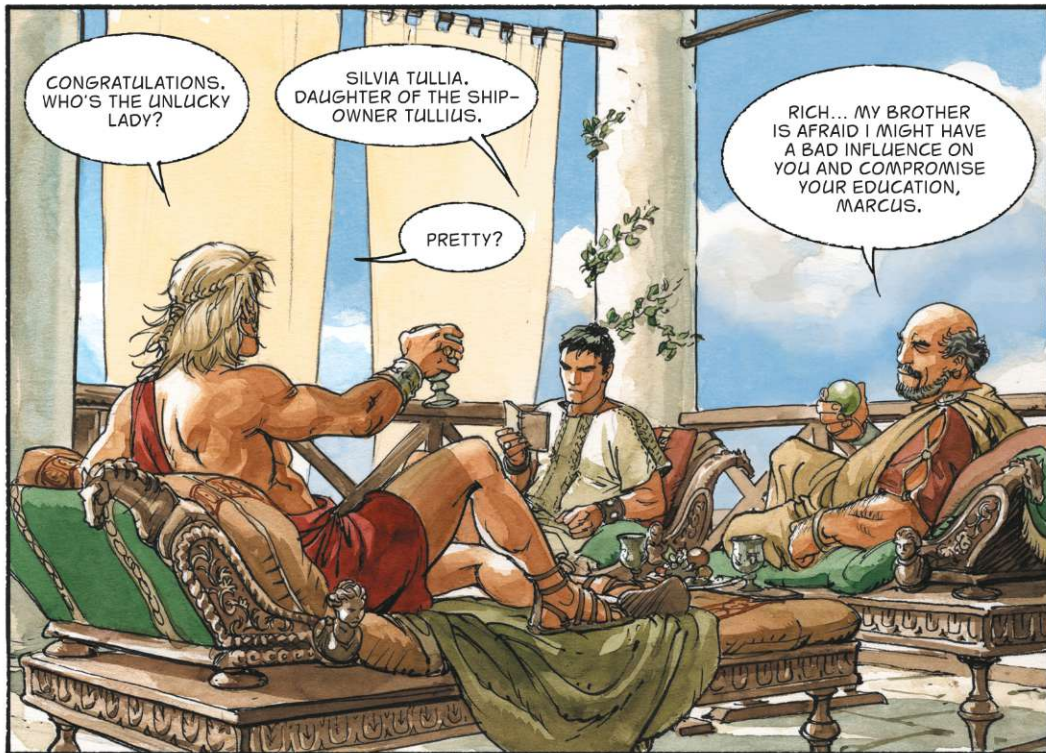












CONGRATULATIONS, WHO'S THE UNLUCKY LADY?

SILVIA TULLIA, DAUGHTER OF THE SHIP-OWNER TULLIUS.

PRETTY?

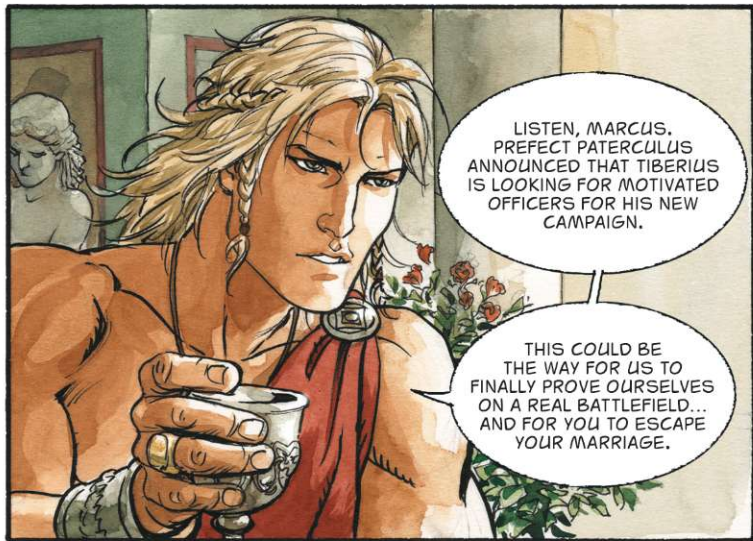
RICH... MY BROTHER IS AFRAID I MIGHT HAVE A BAD INFLUENCE ON YOU AND COMPROMISE YOUR EDUCATION, MARCUS.



INSTEAD, I BELIEVE THAT YOUNG ROMANS SUCH AS YOURSELVES WILL FIGHT EVEN HARDER FOR ROME IF YOU'VE HAD THE CHANCE TO ENJOY SOME OF HER PLEASURES...

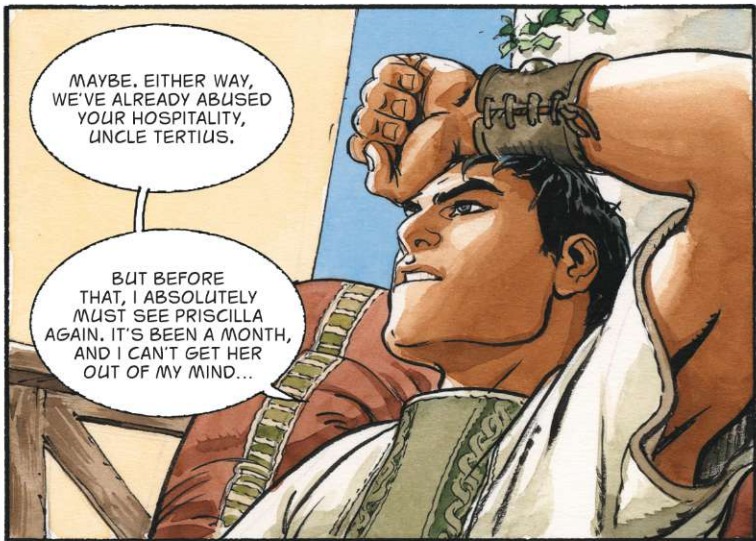
SO, NEPHEW, WHEN IS THIS MARRIAGE TAKING PLACE?

THE CALENDS OF SEPTEMBER.



LISTEN, MARCUS. PREFECT PATERCULUS ANNOUNCED THAT TIBERIUS IS LOOKING FOR MOTIVATED OFFICERS FOR HIS NEW CAMPAIGN.

THIS COULD BE THE WAY FOR US TO FINALLY PROVE OURSELVES ON A REAL BATTLEFIELD... AND FOR YOU TO ESCAPE YOUR MARRIAGE.



MAYBE. EITHER WAY, WE'VE ALREADY ABUSED YOUR HOSPITALITY, UNCLE TERTIUS.

BUT BEFORE THAT, I ABSOLUTELY MUST SEE PRISCILLA AGAIN. IT'S BEEN A MONTH, AND I CAN'T GET HER OUT OF MY MIND...



I... I'M RISKING SEVERE PUNISHMENT...

HERE ARE FIVE SESTERTIUM. ALL I ASK IS THAT YOU GIVE HER A MESSAGE.



SHE NO LONGER LIVES HERE. HER MARRIAGE TO LEPIDUS ALREADY TOOK PLACE.





GAIUS JULIUS ARMANIUS...



...ACCORDING TO MY FRIEND PREFECT PATERCULUS HERE, YOU HAVE BECOME AN EXCELLENT SOLDIER.



AS YOU HAVE HEARD, THINGS ARE SHAKING UP AGAIN IN YOUR HOME COUNTRY. FORTUNATELY, YOUR FATHER AND SEGESTES DID NOT GET INVOLVED IN THE UPRISING.



AT THE MOMENT I NEED CAPABLE AND BRAVE MEN ON WHOM I CAN COUNT... TO RESTORE PEACE IN GERMANIA.

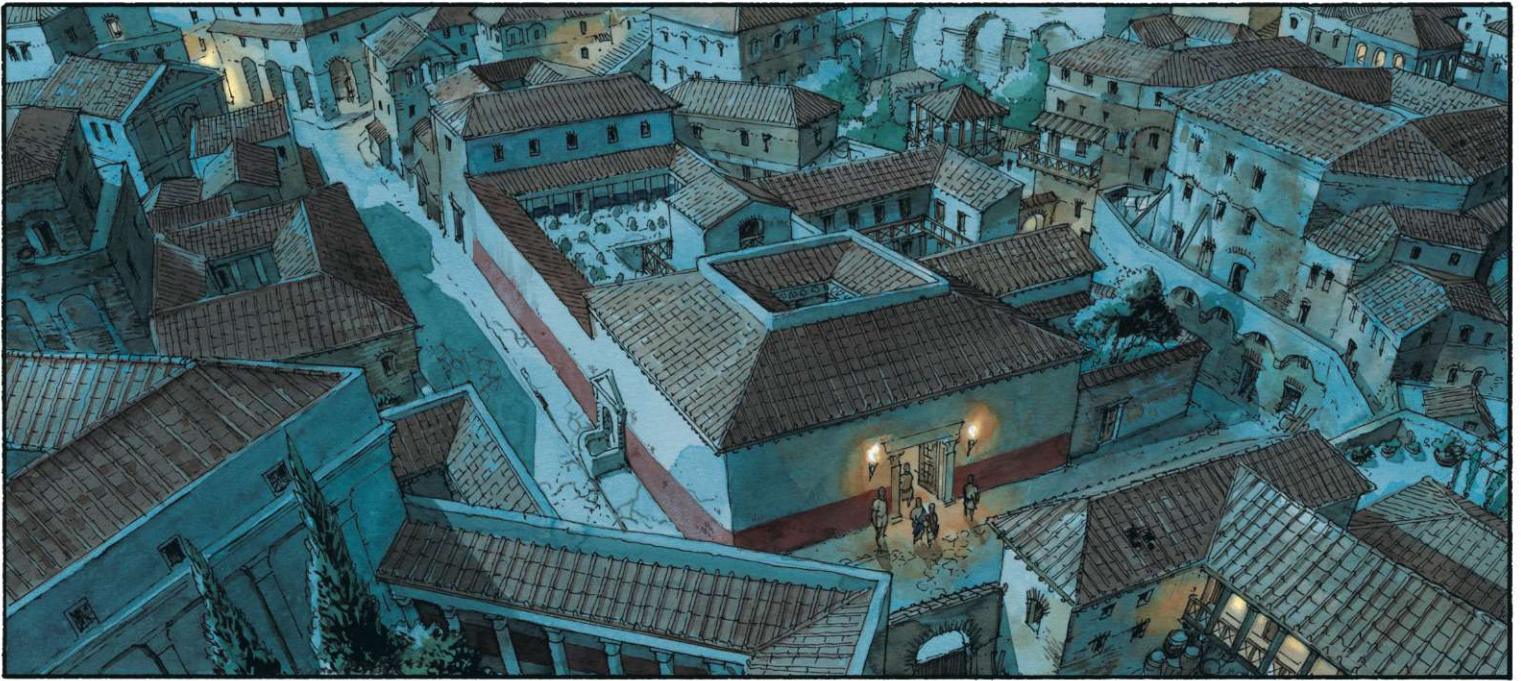


YOU WILL BE ONE OF MY REPRESENTATIVES. I WILL GIVE YOU THE COMMAND OF AUXILIARY TROOPS THAT YOU WILL SELECT FROM AMONG YOUR PEOPLE.



MY DEEPEST THANKS, GENERAL. I AM HONORED BY YOUR TRUST IN ME. I WILL NOT DISAPPOINT YOU.

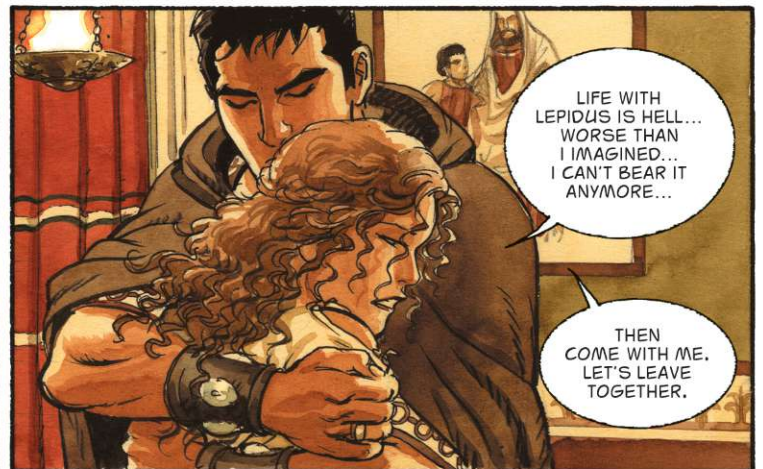
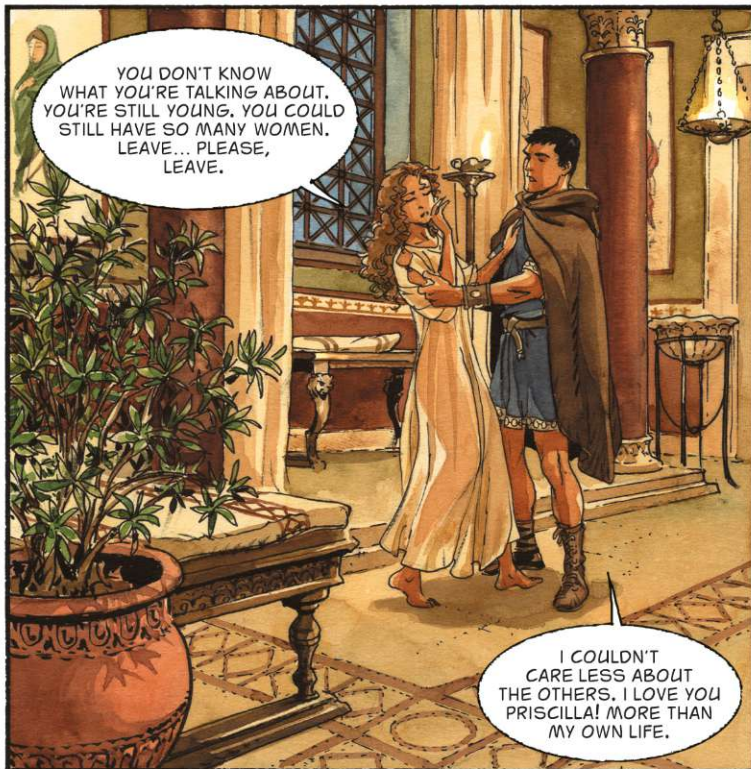
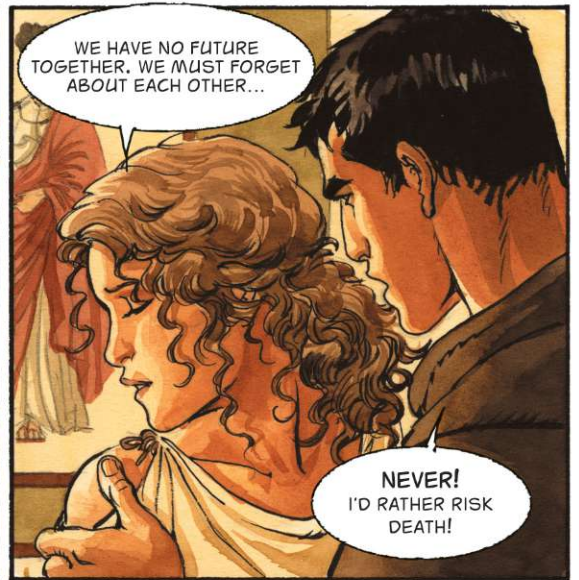
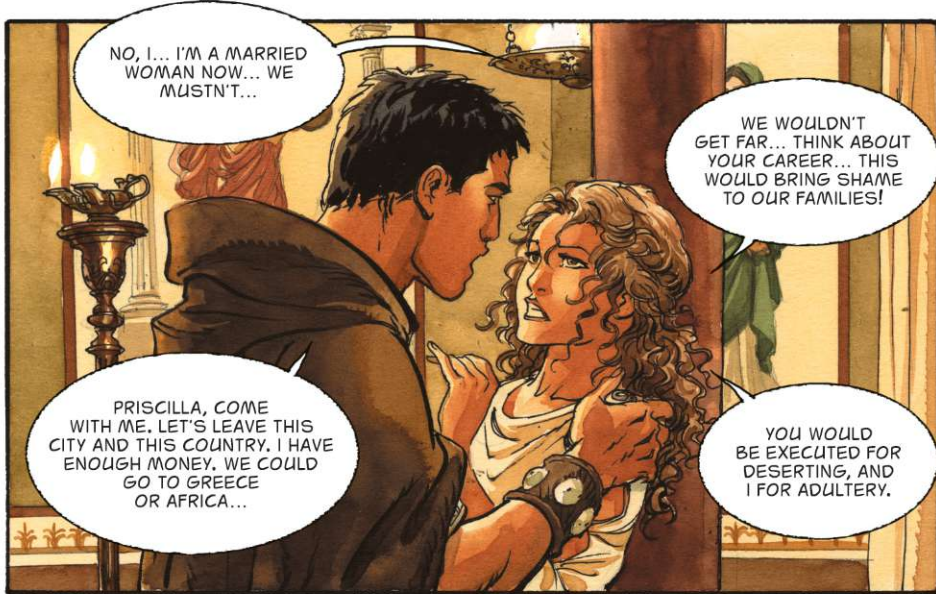




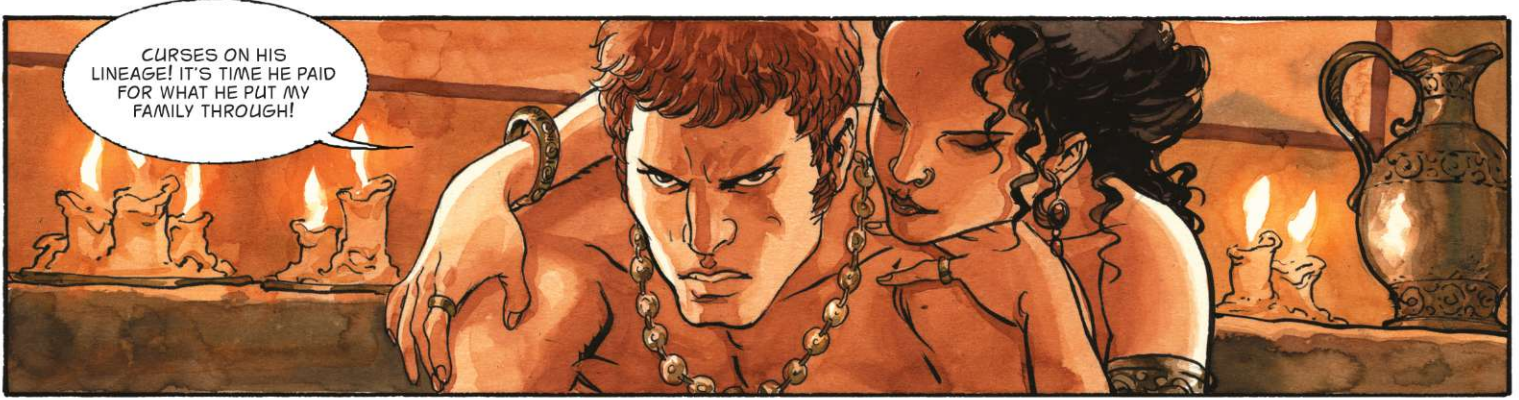




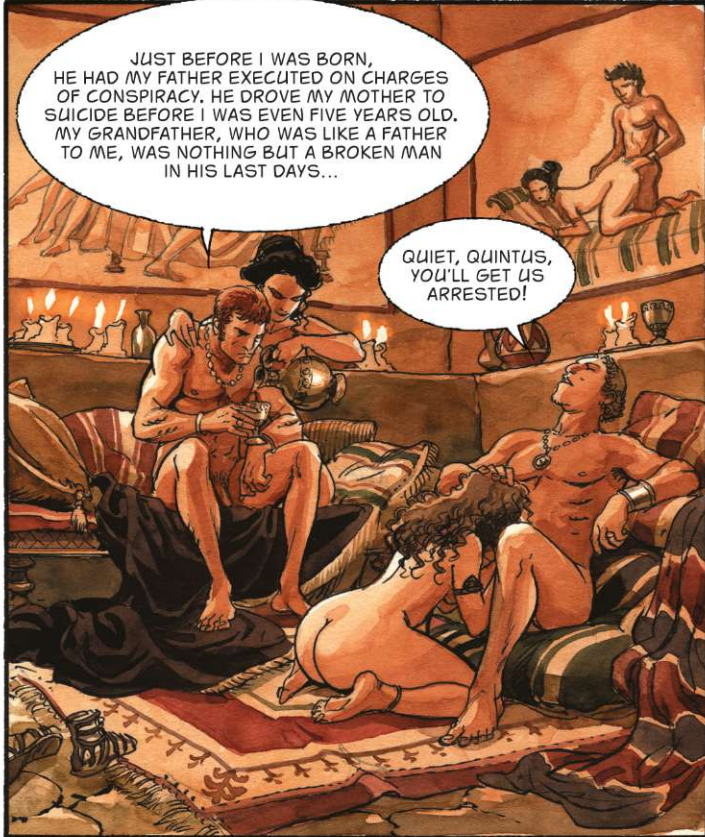








CURSES ON HIS LINEAGE! IT'S TIME HE PAID FOR WHAT HE PUT MY FAMILY THROUGH!



JUST BEFORE I WAS BORN, HE HAD MY FATHER EXECUTED ON CHARGES OF CONSPIRACY. HE DROVE MY MOTHER TO SUICIDE BEFORE I WAS EVEN FIVE YEARS OLD. MY GRANDFATHER, WHO WAS LIKE A FATHER TO ME, WAS NOTHING BUT A BROKEN MAN IN HIS LAST DAYS...

QUIET, QUINTUS, YOU'LL GET US ARRESTED!



MY GRANDFATHER MARCUS AEMILIUS LEPIDUS, ONE OF THE GREATEST GENERALS ROME HAS EVER KNOWN... ELECTED CONSUL, PONTIFEX MAXIMUS AND TRIUMVIR... OCTAVIUS, THE "SAVIOR OF THE REPUBLIC," RELIEVED HIM OF HIS DUTIES AND EVEN ACCUSED HIM OF COMPLICITY WITH POMPEIUS! AND ALL THAT FOR THE SOLE REASON THAT HIS INFLUENCE WAS GROWING!

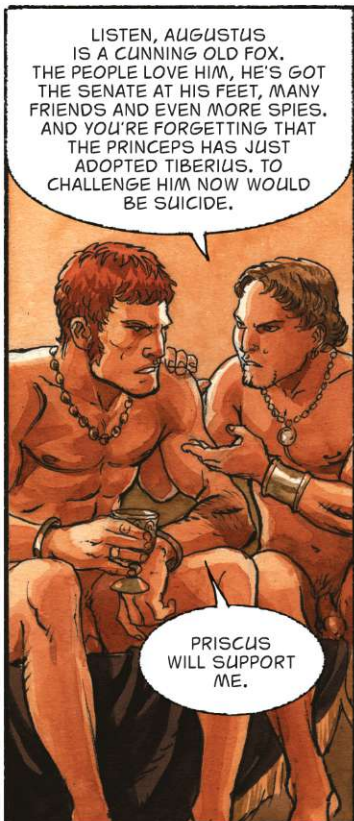


AUGUSTUS WAS AFRAID OF HIM, THAT'S THE TRUTH! MY GRANDFATHER DIED IN TOTAL ANONYMITY, LIKE AN OLD SICK DOG.

LEAVE US.



EVER SINCE THEN, MY FAMILY HAS BEEN STEEPED IN SHAME... I HATE HIM MORE THAN ANYTHING ELSE IN THE WORLD... THE GODS HAVE FAVORED HIM FOR TOO LONG! MY FATHER DIDN'T GET THE CHANCE TO GET BACK AT HIM, BUT I WILL! THE BLOOD OF POMPEIUS AND SULLA FLOWS THROUGH MY VEINS! I—



LISTEN, AUGUSTUS IS A CUNNING OLD FOX. THE PEOPLE LOVE HIM, HE'S GOT THE SENATE AT HIS FEET, MANY FRIENDS AND EVEN MORE SPIES. AND YOU'RE FORGETTING THAT THE PRINCEPS HAS JUST ADOPTED TIBERIUS. TO CHALLENGE HIM NOW WOULD BE SUICIDE.

PRISCUS WILL SUPPORT ME.

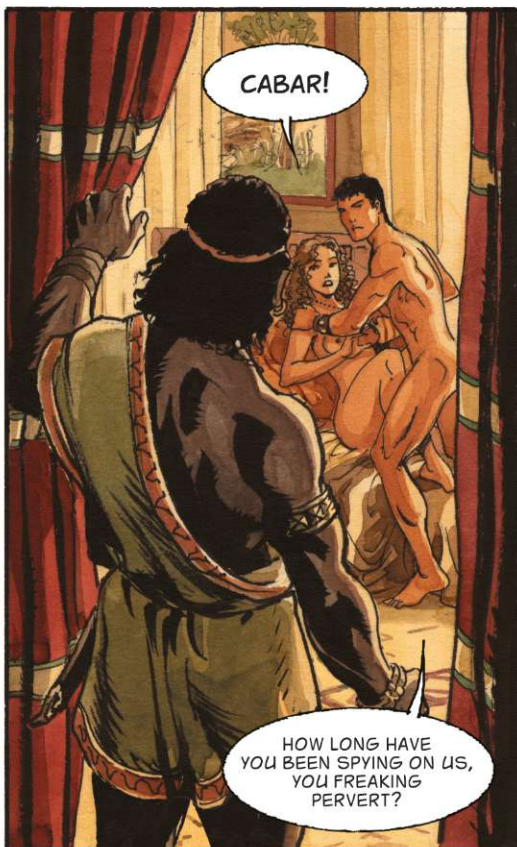
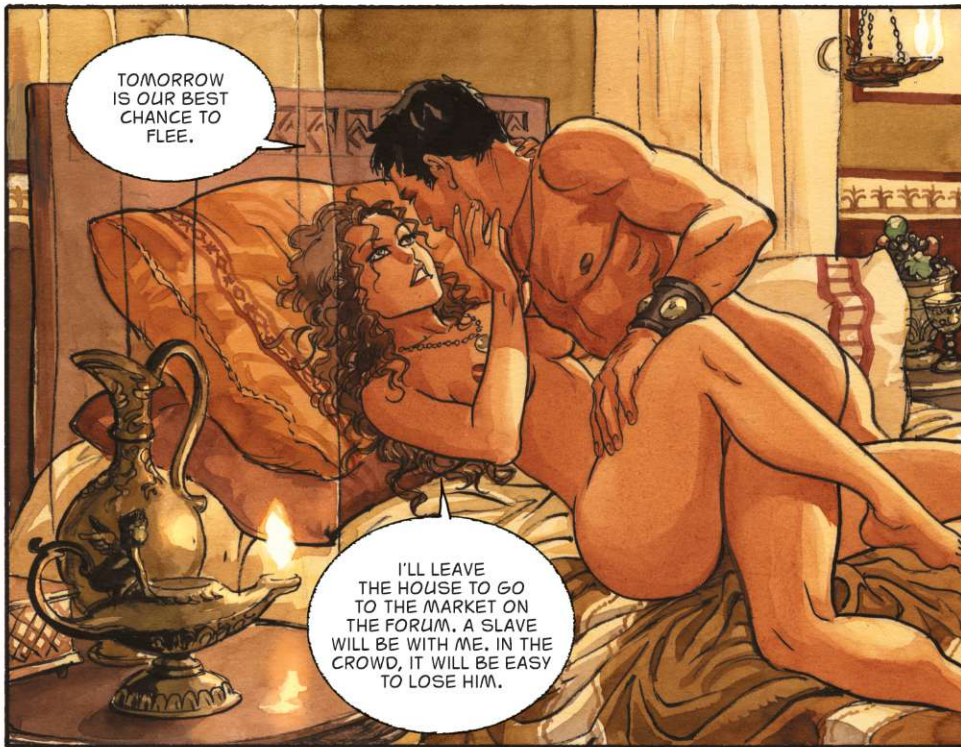
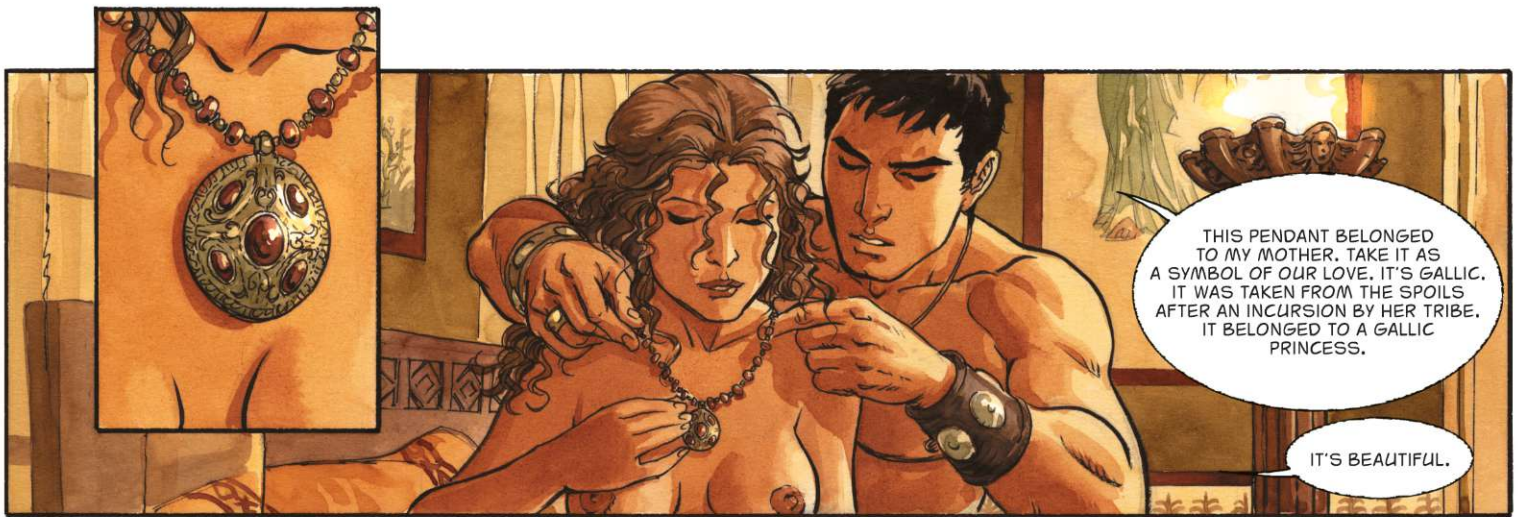


YES, PRISCUS IS VERY POWERFUL. BUT YOU NEED ADDITIONAL ALLIANCES. I WAS THINKING OF THE CONSUL AND LEGATE VARUS. HE'S THE MOST POWERFUL MAN IN ROME AFTER AUGUSTUS AND TIBERIUS. I'VE HEARD THERE'S A COLD FRONT BETWEEN HIM AND AUGUSTUS AT THE MOMENT... TRY TO MEET HIM. A CONSPIRACY LIKE THIS HAS TO BE PLANNED VERY CAREFULLY...



YOU'RE RIGHT. I LET MYSELF GET CARRIED AWAY BY THE WINE. AND MY WIFE IS DRIVING ME CRAZY AS WELL. I SOMETIMES GET THE IMPRESSION SHE HASN'T FORGOTTEN THAT SON OF A BITCH, THAT FALCO... IF SHE WEREN'T THE DAUGHTER OF PRISCUS, I WOULD HAVE ALREADY BEATEN HER TO DEATH!









THERE YOU ARE, FINALLY.



I HAVE GOOD NEWS. LISTEN TO THIS. TIBERIUS IS PLANNING A BIG CAMPAIGN, AND HE NEEDS MOTIVATED AND TALENTED YOUNG MEN.

GUESS WHO HE THOUGHT OF?



HE ELECTED ME PREFECT OF AN AUXILIARY UNIT!

CONGRATULATIONS.



AND DO YOU KNOW WHAT I SAID TO HIM?

NOT WITHOUT MY FRIEND FALCO!

I TOLD HIM YOU WERE WORTHLESS AS AN OFFICER BUT THAT THE UNIFORM WAS VERY FETCHING ON YOU, WHICH WOULD BE ENOUGH TO IMPRESS A FEW BARBARIAN GIRLS.

IT'S ALL SETTLED. IN A WEEK, WE'LL FINALLY BE OFF TO WAR.



ARMINIUS, I WON'T BE COMING WITH YOU.

WHAT?



I THOUGHT ABOUT WHAT YOU SAID. I'M GOING TO FOLLOW YOUR ADVICE.

I'M GOING TO TAKE HER AWAY.





IS THIS A JOKE?

"YOU HAVE TO STEAL HER." THOSE WERE YOUR WORDS.



BUT WE WERE BOTH HAMMERED!

I'VE GIVEN IT A LOT OF THOUGHT. FOR THE FIRST TIME IN MY LIFE, I KNOW WHAT I WANT. I'M SORRY, FRIEND, BUT I DON'T HAVE THE SAME AMBITIONS AS YOU.



HERE, THIS IS FOR YOU. A SORT OF FAREWELL GIFT. THE GERMANI MERCHANT WHO SOLD IT TO ME SAID IT'S THE BEST YOU'LL FIND IN ALL OF ROME.

SO WE WON'T BE SEEING EACH OTHER AGAIN.

NOT IN THE NEAR FUTURE, AT ANY RATE.



I PERSONALLY RECOMMENDED YOU TO TIBERIUS. DO YOU KNOW WHAT THAT MEANS?



I KNOW, AND I'M VERY GRATE—

YOU DON'T UNDERSTAND A THING!



YOU'RE GIVING UP YOUR CAREER, YOUR LIFE, BECAUSE OF THAT LITTLE SLUT?



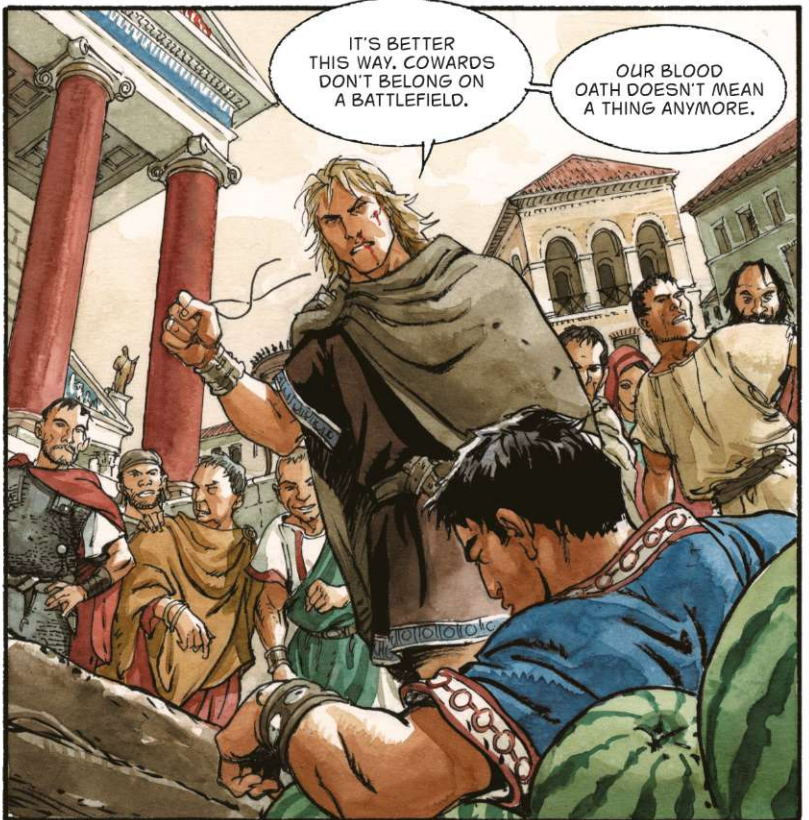
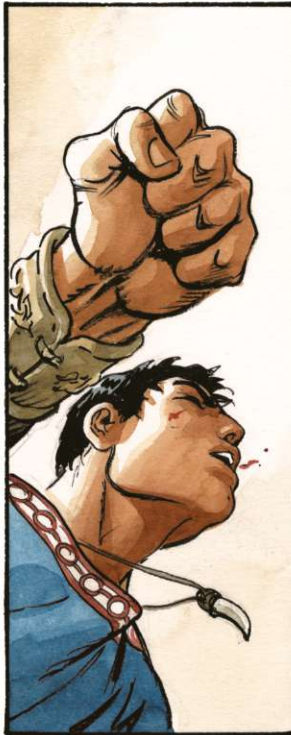
DO NOT TALK ABOUT PRISCILLA LIKE THAT!

OR ELSE? TAKE A GOOD LOOK AT YOURSELF! YOU'RE NOTHING MORE THAN A PATHETIC BUFFOON, BEWITCHED BY HER DAMN SNATCH.

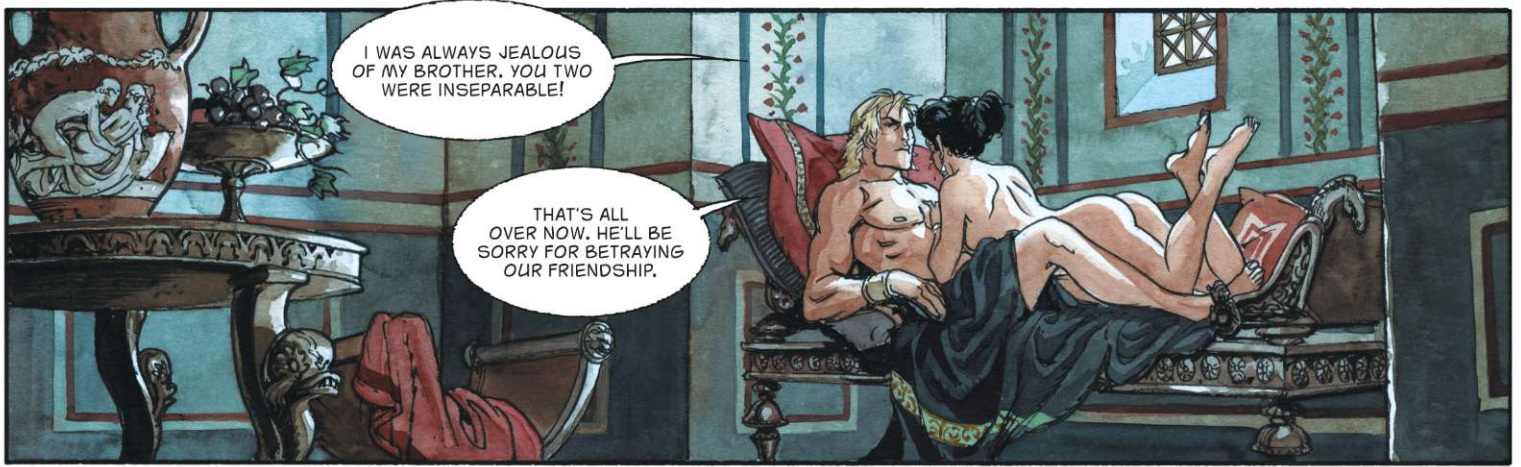


I WARNED YOU!



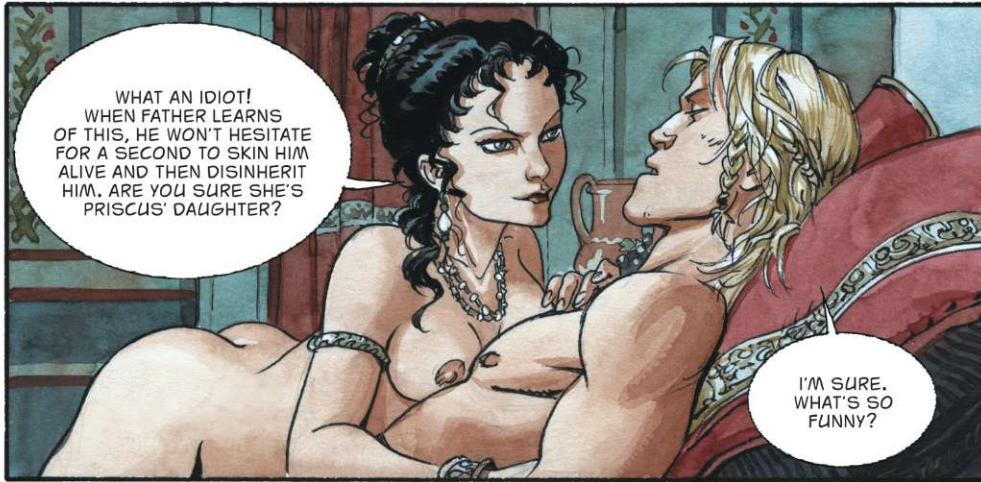






I WAS ALWAYS JEALOUS OF MY BROTHER. YOU TWO WERE INSEPARABLE!

THAT'S ALL OVER NOW. HE'LL BE SORRY FOR BETRAYING OUR FRIENDSHIP.



WHAT AN IDIOT! WHEN FATHER LEARNS OF THIS, HE WON'T HESITATE FOR A SECOND TO SKIN HIM ALIVE AND THEN DISINHERIT HIM. ARE YOU SURE SHE'S PRISCUS' DAUGHTER?

I'M SURE. WHAT'S SO FUNNY?



THERE'S SOMETHING YOU AND MARCUS DON'T KNOW ABOUT HER...



WHAT CAN I DO FOR YOU AT SUCH A LATE HOUR, MY DEAR?



PERHAPS I'M THE ONE THAT CAN BE OF SERVICE TO YOU, MORPHEA. I TRUST YOU WON'T FORGET IT. I HAVE INFORMATION OF THE UTMOST IMPORTANCE FOR YOU.

SPEAK, LUCILLA. I'M TIRED.



IT CONCERNS MY GOOD FOR NOTHING BROTHER...



...AND YOUR DAUGHTER PRISCILLA.





SHE'S NOT COMING.



YOU?!



WHAT'S GOING ON? WHERE'S—



WACK!

AAAH!



PUT HIM IN THE LITTER.



LET ME OUT! PLEASE, MY LARES, TAKE PITY ON ME... HELP ME!

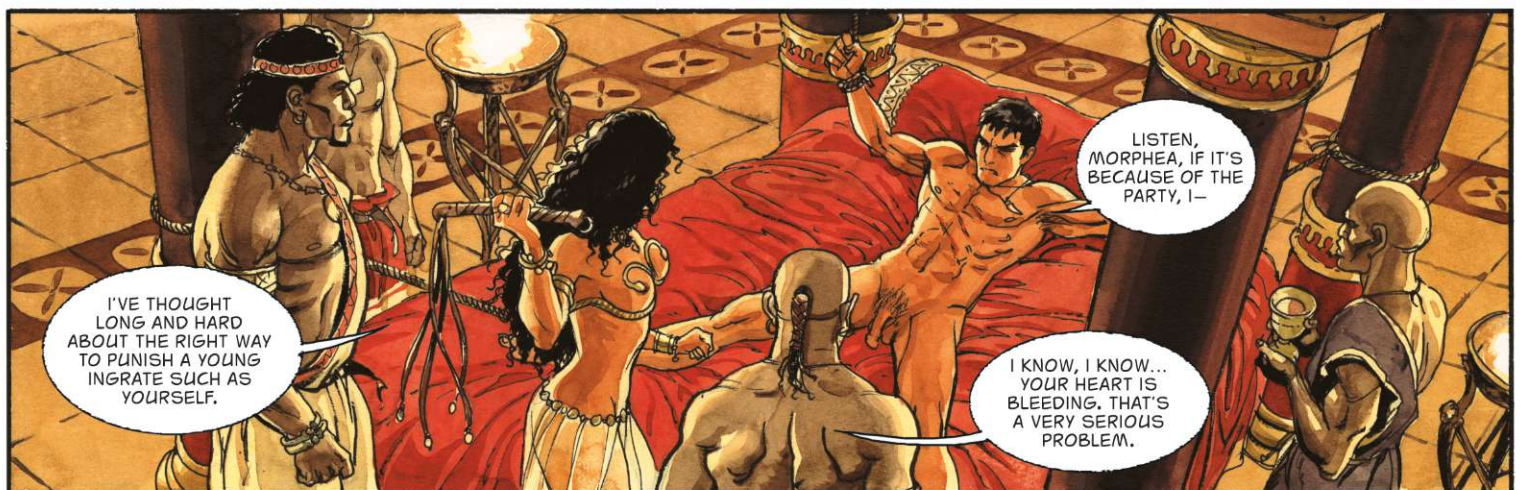
OH, MARCUS, MARCUS...

BOM! BOM!



WHAT THE—









DON'T WORRY, IT'S HARMLESS. LET'S JUST SAY THAT INSTEAD OF POISON, IT'S MORE OF A MIRACLE LOVE POTION... THIS ISN'T THE FIRST TIME I'VE USED IT.

IN A FEW SECONDS, YOUR BODY AND MIND WILL BE ENTIRELY UNDER MY CONTROL.



NO, MORPHEA... STOP!



REALLY? YOUR ORGAN SEEMS TO BE SAYING THE OPPOSITE... MMM...

BRING HER.



I LOVE YOU, MORPHEA... REPEAT IT! I LOVE YOU, MORPHEA.



M... MORPHEA...



LET ME GO! I DEMAND AN EXPLANATION! I'LL TELL MY FATHER! YOU WILL BE PUNISHED SEVERELY! I—



MORPHEA... I LOVE YOU...

MARCUS?! WHAT—



WHAT'S WRONG, SWEETIE? DID YOU HAVE A BAD DREAM?





H... HOW COULD YOU DO THIS TO ME? MAY YOU BOTH BE DAMNED!



P... PRISCILLA, I...



Y... YOU'RE HER MOTHER? BUT... THAT'S HORRIBLE! WHY DID YOU PUT ON THIS... THIS SPECTACLE?



PRECISELY BECAUSE I'M HER MOTHER. YOUR AFFAIR THREATENS MY PLANS FOR HER.

SHE'LL... SHE'LL HATE YOU FOR THIS.

SHE'S HATED ME FOR A LONG TIME, BUT I LOVE HER, MORE THAN ANYTHING. SHE'S MY ONLY CHILD AND I MUST PROTECT HER.



IT WAS THE ONLY WAY TO MAKE HER COME TO HER SENSES.

GET HIM OUT OF HERE AND CALL LEPIDUS!



YOU FUCKING GORGON!

OW!



MAKE HIM DISAPPEAR. I NEVER WANT TO SEE HIM AGAIN.

WITH PLEASURE, DOMINUS.



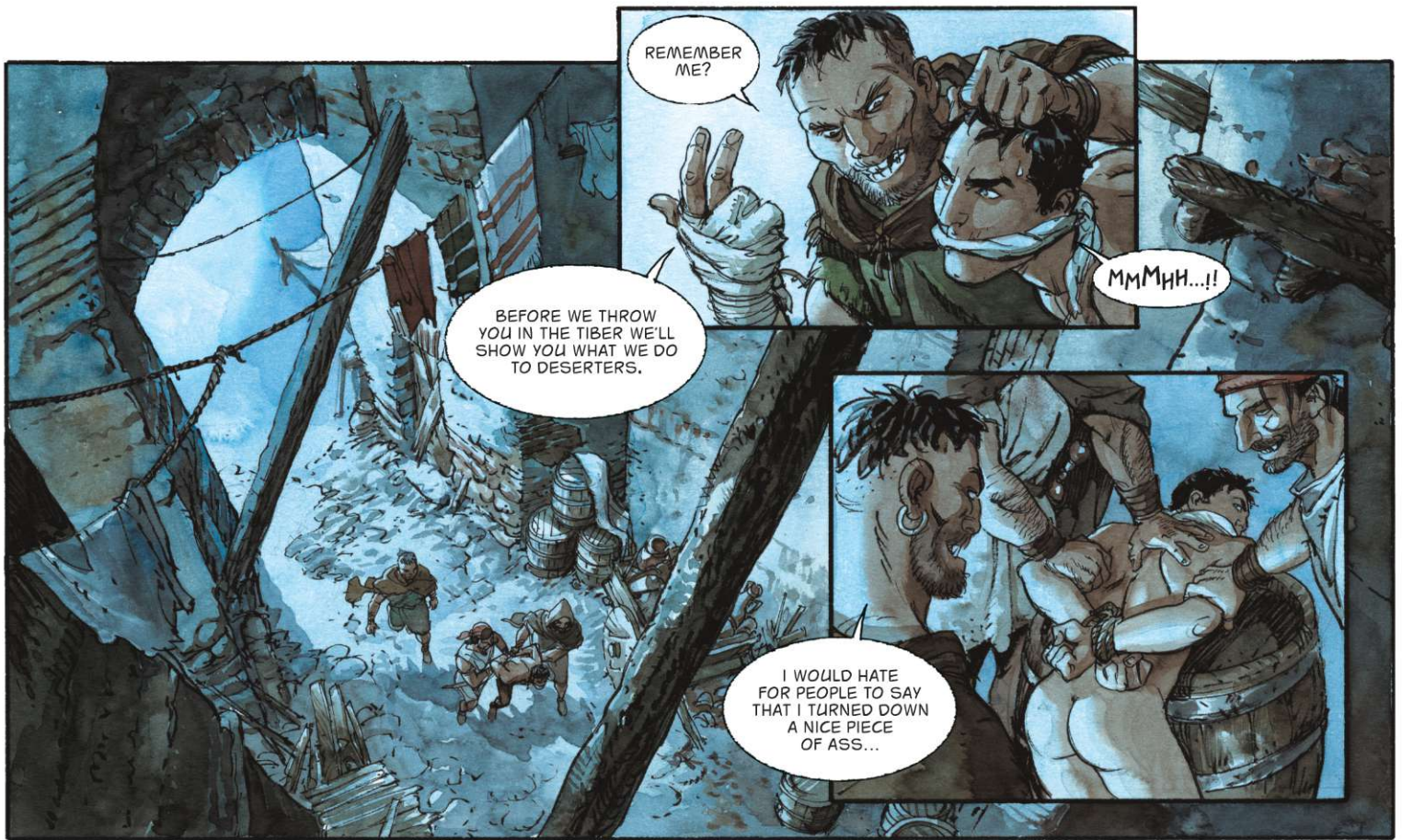
I WOULD HAVE LIKED TO TAKE CARE OF THAT DOG MYSELF.



DON'T BE TOO HARSH WITH YOUR WIFE, AND PROMISE ME TO WAIT A LITTLE WHILE MORE BEFORE MAKING ME A GRANDMOTHER.

NOW COME. THAT DOG PUT ME IN HEAT.











TIBERIUS WAS VICTORIOUS AGAINST THE CANNINEFATES, THE ATTUARI AND THE BRUCTERI. THE CHERUSCI AND THE CHAUCI WERE ONCE AGAIN UNDER THE PROTECTION OF THE EMPIRE. HE REACHED THE ALBIS WITH HIS TROOPS AND PREVAILED EVEN OVER THE LOMBARDS, A PEOPLE EVEN MORE WAR-LIKE THAN THE GERMANI. AS HE HAD DONE 10 YEARS EARLIER, HE BROUGHT NEARLY ALL OF GERMANIA TO ITS KNEE. ONLY THE MARCOMANNI REMAINED TO BE CONQUERED.



THEIR KING, MAROBODUUS, HAD BUILT AN ARMY OF 70,000 SOLDIERS, TRAINED IN THE ROMAN TRADITION. TIBERIUS KNEW THAT MAROBODUUS WAS AN ENEMY OF ROME TO BE TAKEN SERIOUSLY. SO THE ROMAN GENERAL DECIDED TO TEACH HIM A LESSON AND ENTERED INTO MARCOMANNI TERRITORY WITH HIS LEGIONS, WHEN SUDDENLY THE PROVINCE OF ILLYRICUM TOOK TO ARMS, WHICH MEANT GRAVE AND IMMINENT DANGER FOR ROME.



THE REBEL ARMY COUNTED NEARLY 200,000 SOLDIERS AND 9,000 CAVALRYMEN. MANY OF THEM HAD SERVED IN ROMAN LEGIONS. NEVER HAD ANOTHER PEOPLE EXECUTED ITS WAR PLANS IN SO SHORT A TIME. ALL THE ROMAN CITIZENS, MERCHANTS AND SOLDIERS STATIONED IN THE REGION WERE MASSACRED. SOON, THE ENTIRE PROVINCE WAS ABLAZE. TIBERIUS INTERRUPTED HIS CAMPAIGN AGAINST MAROBODUUS AND RUSHED TO ILLYRICUM.



IN THE SENATE, AUGUSTUS WARNED THE ROMANS. THE ENEMY COULD CONCEIVABLY SHOW UP AT THE GATES OF ROME WITHIN TEN DAYS IF THE NECESSARY PRECAUTIONS WEREN'T TAKEN IMMEDIATELY. THIS CAUSED A STIR THROUGHOUT THE ROMAN POPULATION, AND ACROSS THE EMPIRE RECRUITMENT INITIATIVES WERE CARRIED OUT. VETERANS, FREED SLAVES AND DELINQUENTS WERE CALLED TO SERVE UNDER THE BANNERS. TIBERIUS WENT TO WAR WITH THE LARGEST ARMY EVER ASSEMBLED SINCE THE CIVIL WAR, AGAINST AN ENEMY THAT OUTNUMBERED THEM. A LONG ARDUOUS WAR FOLLOWED, RAISING SIGNIFICANT MILITARY AND FINANCIAL CHALLENGES FOR ROME.



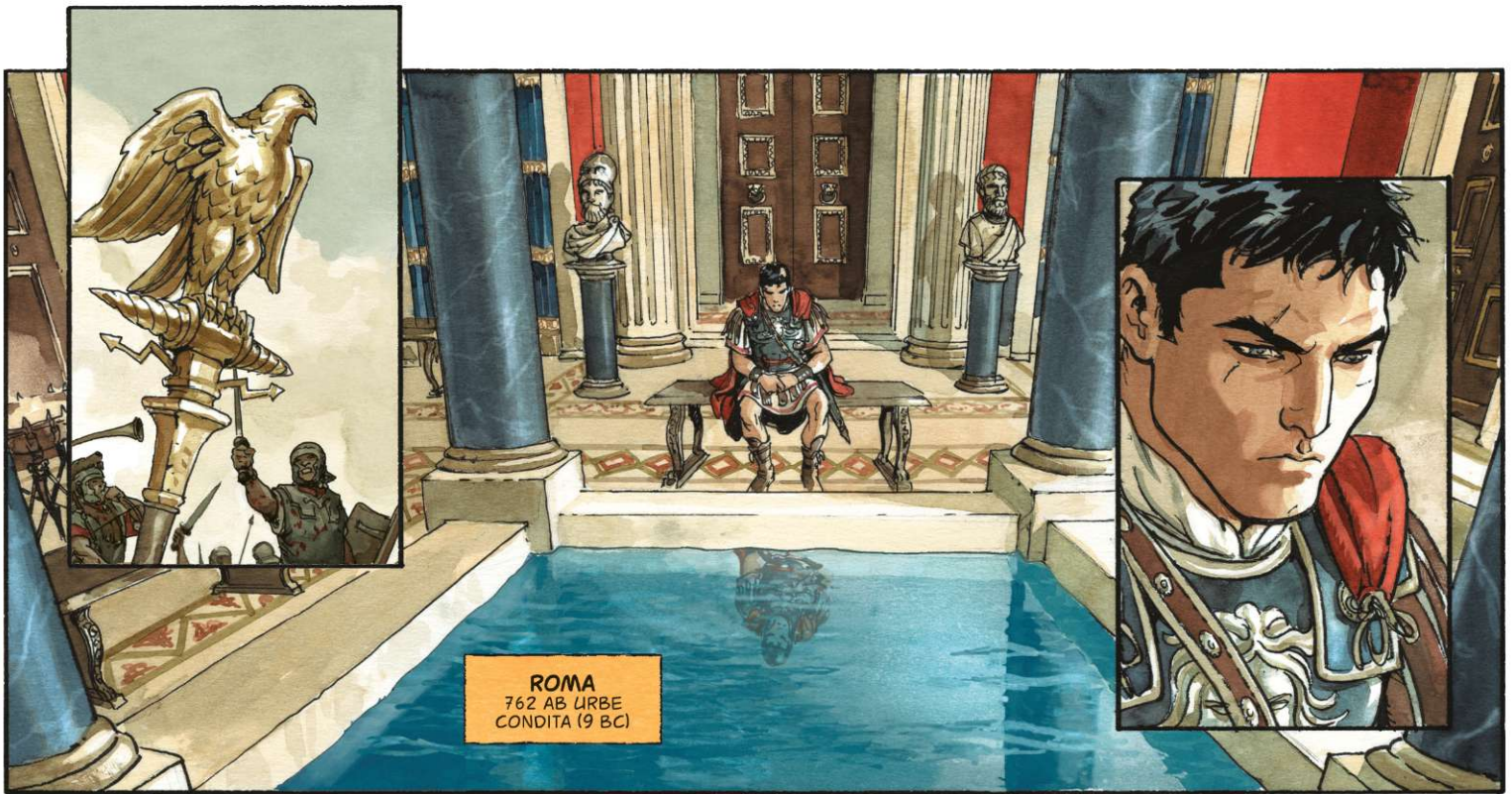












ROMA  
762 AB URBE  
CONDITA (9 BC)



MARCUS VALERIUS FALCO. STILL ALIVE...

DO I KNOW YOU?

A BEAUTIFUL SUNNY DAY AT THE CIRCUS MAXIMUS. FIVE YEARS AGO?



AH, YES... YOU WERE SUPPOSED TO COME BACK WITH REFRESHMENTS... SILVANUS, ISN'T IT?

SEIANUS!

HARD TO FORGET THE LAST FOUR LETTERS OF YOUR NAME...



I SEE YOU HAVEN'T LOST YOUR DAZZLING WIT. EVEN THOUGH I HEAR YOU'RE STILL OVERWHELMED WITH GRIEF OVER PRISCILLA...



ARE YOU INSANE? DO YOU REALLY WANT TO HIT A PRAETORIAN OFFICER?

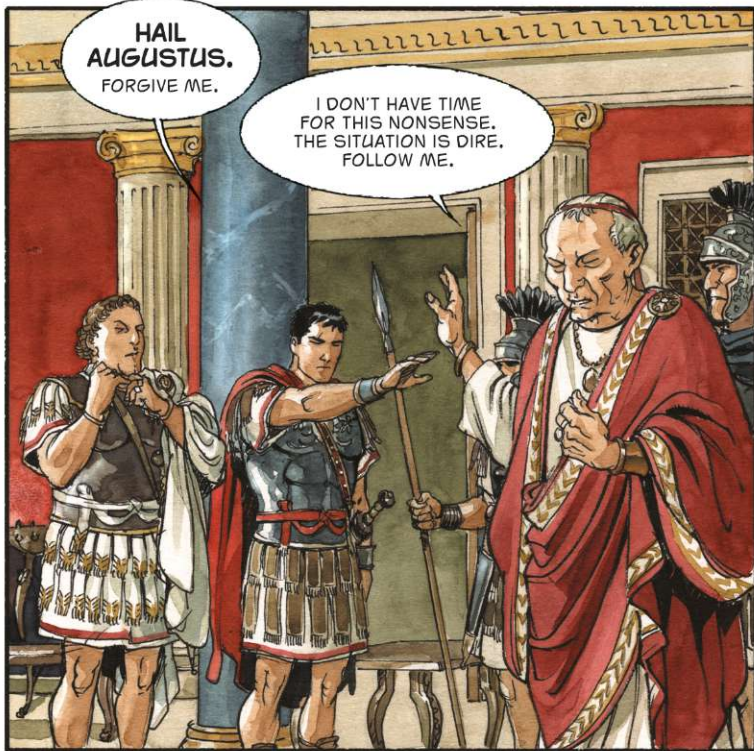
LET'S SEE IF IT HELPS ME GET OVER MY GRIEF.



MARCUS VALERIUS FALCO! DO I HAVE TO INTERVENE EVERY SINGLE TIME TO KEEP YOU FROM DOING SOMETHING CRAZY?

LET GO OF HIM IMMEDIATELY OR I WILL PERSONALLY THROW YOU OFF THE TARPEIAN ROCK!





HAIL AUGUSTUS. FORGIVE ME.

I DON'T HAVE TIME FOR THIS NONSENSE. THE SITUATION IS DIRE. FOLLOW ME.



PROBLEMS, SON?

NOTHING I CAN'T HANDLE ON MY OWN, FATHER.

WHATEVER YOUR SQUABBLE IS, LEAVE FALCO ALONE. AT LEAST FOR NOW. WE NEED HIS SERVICES.



PATIENCE IS ONE OF MY VIRTUES, FATHER.



THE AIR IS BETTER OUT HERE, NO ENEMY EARS.

THIS IS STRABO, PREFECT OF MY PRAETORIANS AND FATHER OF SEIANUS.

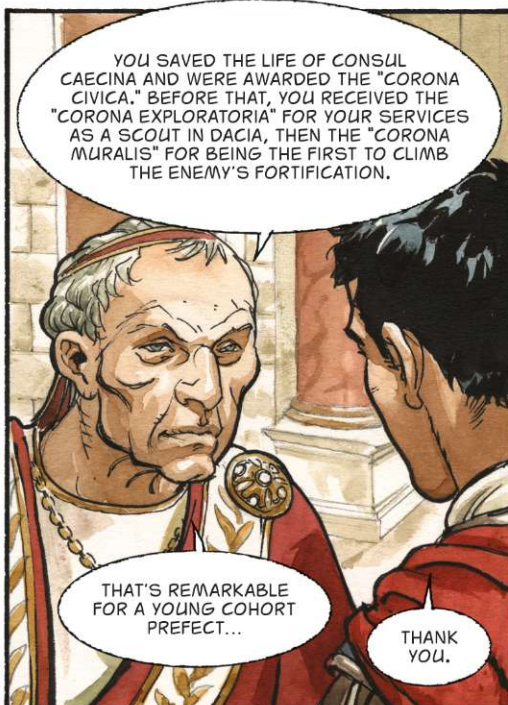
HAIL PRAEFECTUS.



I'M TOLD YOU FOUGHT BRAVELY ON MOUNT CLAUDIUS. EVEN WHEN THE REINFORCEMENTS FROM THRACE FLED AND MANY OF OUR OFFICERS DIED IN BATTLE.

OUR SOLDIERS DESERVE ALL THE PRAISE.

DON'T BE SO MODEST, FALCO.



YOU SAVED THE LIFE OF CONSUL CAECINA AND WERE AWARDED THE "CORONA CIVICA." BEFORE THAT, YOU RECEIVED THE "CORONA EXPLORATORIA" FOR YOUR SERVICES AS A SCOUT IN DACIA, THEN THE "CORONA MURALIS" FOR BEING THE FIRST TO CLIMB THE ENEMY'S FORTIFICATION.

THAT'S REMARKABLE FOR A YOUNG COHORT PREFECT...

THANK YOU.



...AND ALSO EXTREMELY STUPID.

I BEG YOUR PARDON?





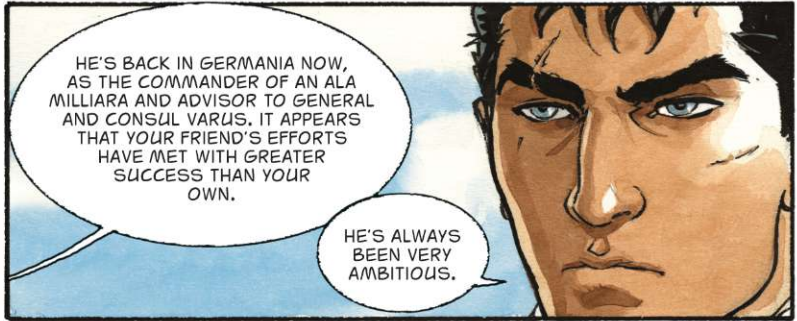
THINK ABOUT IT, FALCO! WHAT WOULD HAPPEN TO THE EMPIRE IF ALL THE OFFICERS SACRIFICED THEMSELVES FOR THEIR MEN?

BUT LET'S GET DOWN TO BUSINESS, STRABO.



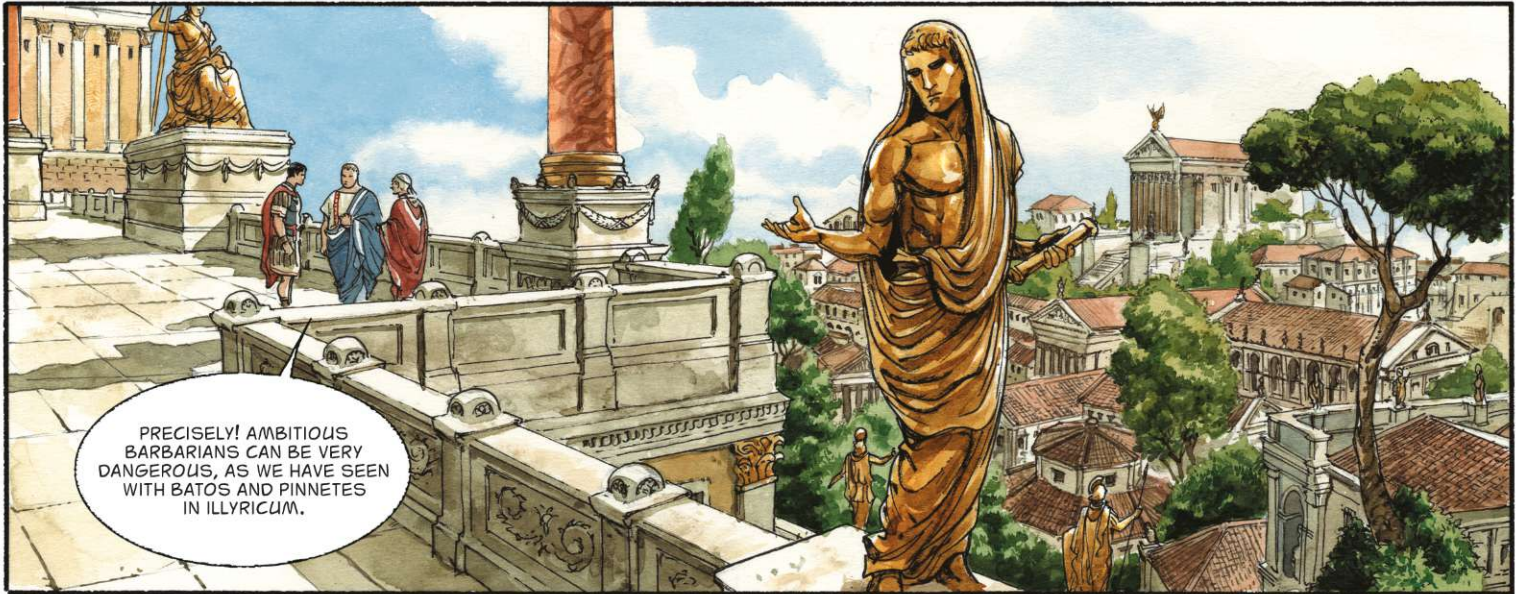
ANY NEWS FROM YOUR FRIEND ARMIANIUS?

ARMIANIUS? I HAVEN'T SEEN HIM IN FIVE YEARS. I HEARD HE TOO FOUGHT IN ILLYRICUM, BUT OUR PATHS NEVER CROSSED OVER THERE.



HE'S BACK IN GERMANIA NOW, AS THE COMMANDER OF AN ALA MILLIARIA AND ADVISOR TO GENERAL AND CONSUL VARUS. IT APPEARS THAT YOUR FRIEND'S EFFORTS HAVE MET WITH GREATER SUCCESS THAN YOUR OWN.

HE'S ALWAYS BEEN VERY AMBITIOUS.

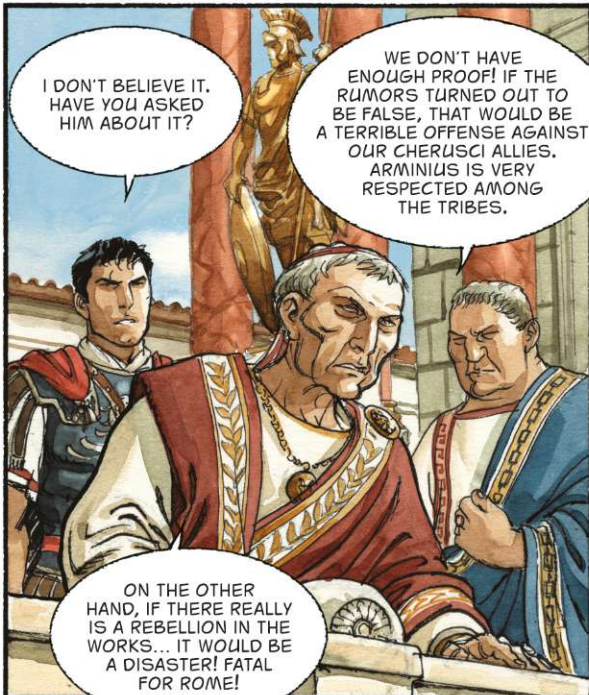


PRECISELY! AMBITIOUS BARBARIANS CAN BE VERY DANGEROUS, AS WE HAVE SEEN WITH BATOS AND PINNETES IN ILLYRICUM.



ARMIANIUS IS A ROMAN OF THE EQUESTRIAN CLASS. HE WOULDN'T DARE DEFEY ROME.

PERHAPS. BUT THERE IS RUMOR OF ANOTHER UPRISING AMONG THE TRIBES BEING PLANNED... AND OF ARMIANIUS BEING PART OF IT.



I DON'T BELIEVE IT. HAVE YOU ASKED HIM ABOUT IT?

ON THE OTHER HAND, IF THERE REALLY IS A REBELLION IN THE WORKS... IT WOULD BE A DISASTER! FATAL FOR ROME!

WE DON'T HAVE ENOUGH PROOF! IF THE RUMORS TURNED OUT TO BE FALSE, THAT WOULD BE A TERRIBLE OFFENSE AGAINST OUR CHERUSCI ALLIES. ARMIANIUS IS VERY RESPECTED AMONG THE TRIBES.



WE CAN'T AFFORD ANOTHER BIG WAR AT THE MOMENT. NOT FINANCIALLY, NOT MILITARILY.

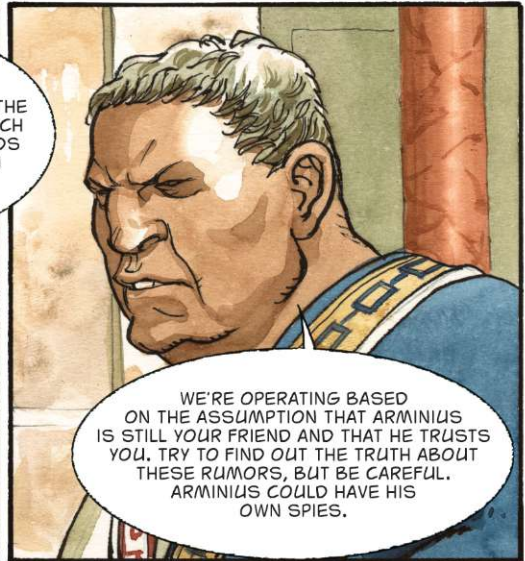




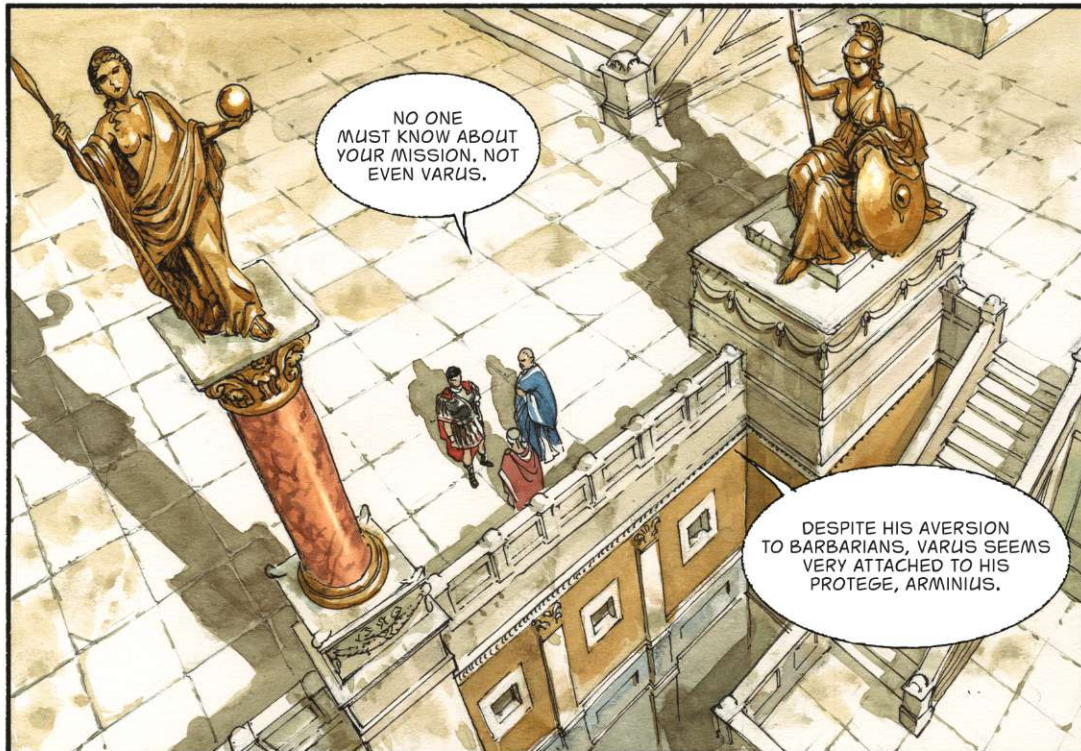
WHICH IS WHY I'M SENDING YOU TO GERMANIA. YOU'LL LEAVE TOMORROW.

YOUR DEVOTION IS HONORABLE, BUT THE WAR WON'T LAST MUCH LONGER. ROME NEEDS YOUR SERVICES IN GERMANIA.

BUT THE WAR'S NOT OVER. MY MEN AWAIT MY RETURN.



WE'RE OPERATING BASED ON THE ASSUMPTION THAT ARMINIUS IS STILL YOUR FRIEND AND THAT HE TRUSTS YOU. TRY TO FIND OUT THE TRUTH ABOUT THESE RUMORS, BUT BE CAREFUL. ARMINIUS COULD HAVE HIS OWN SPIES.



NO ONE MUST KNOW ABOUT YOUR MISSION, NOT EVEN VARUS.

DESPITE HIS AVERSION TO BARBARIANS, VARUS SEEMS VERY ATTACHED TO HIS PROTEGE, ARMINIUS.



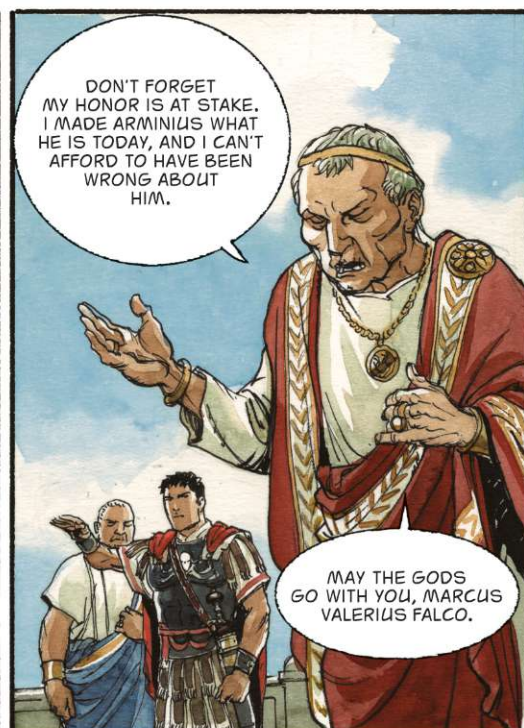
SO I HAVE TO SPY ON MY FRIEND... BETRAY HIM?!



DO YOU HAVE A PROBLEM WITH THAT, SOLDIER?

N... NO. I AM FIRST AND FOREMOST AT THE SERVICE OF ROME!

GOOD, SON. I'M COUNTING ON YOU.



DON'T FORGET MY HONOR IS AT STAKE. I MADE ARMINIUS WHAT HE IS TODAY, AND I CAN'T AFFORD TO HAVE BEEN WRONG ABOUT HIM.

MAY THE GODS GO WITH YOU, MARCUS VALERIUS FALCO.



OH, I FORGOT... IF ARMINIUS DOES TURN OUT TO BE A TRAITOR...



...BRING ME HIS HEAD.





I'VE ALREADY HAD YOUR THINGS BROUGHT TO THE PORT OF OSTIA. AND THE CHARIOT IS READY TO TAKE YOU AS WELL, DOMINUS.

THANK YOU, HORTENSIVS. I KNOW HOW BADLY YOU WANT TO MAKE SURE I DON'T MISS THE BIREME TO MASSILIA.



WHEN SILVIA TULLIA WAKES UP, TELL HER THAT... TELL HER...



...JUST TELL HER WHATEVER YOU WANT!



MARCUS VALERIUS FALCO.



CABAR?! SO NICE TO SEE YOU AGAIN.



SORRY, BUT I'M ARMED THIS TIME!

MY MISTRESS WISHES TO SPEAK WITH YOU.

WHICH ONE, YOU TREACHEROUS DOG?



CABAR ONLY HAS ONE MISTRESS. ME!





**MORPHEA!**  
PRAISE FORTUNA. I'LL TAKE CARE OF YOU JUST AS SOON AS I'M DONE WITH HIM.

MARCUS, I MUST SPEAK WITH YOU. IT'S ABOUT YOUR MISSION.



WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT, YOU DAMN SHREW?

QUIT THE ACT. I HAVE MY SOURCES.



WHAT HAS SHE GOT TO DO WITH THIS?

AH... NO! WAIT!

L... LEPIDUS HAS BEEN TRIBUNE UNDER VARUS FOR A YEAR. PRISCILLA INSISTED ON FOLLOWING HIM.



LET ME GUESS. IS STRABO ONE OF YOUR LOVERS? OR IS IT HIS SON, INSTEAD? PROBABLY BOTH OF THEM, KNOWING YOU.

I DON'T CARE ABOUT YOUR MISSION. WHAT I CARE ABOUT IS PRISCILLA!



PRISCILLA IS IN GERMANIA?

YES. MY DAUGHTER, THE ONLY THING I TRULY CARE ABOUT... IN THE MIDST OF LEGIONNAIRES AND ALL THOSE SAVAGES! IT'S UNBEARABLE! I BEGGED HER TO STAY IN ROME, BUT SHE WOULDN'T LISTEN TO ME.



SHE MUST REALLY HATE YOU IF SHE PREFERS THE DANGERS IN THE NORTH.

ALL OF THAT IS ALREADY BAD ENOUGH, BUT IF IT'S TRUE THAT THOSE BARBARIANS ARE GETTING READY FOR WAR, THEN—



THERE WON'T BE ANY WAR.



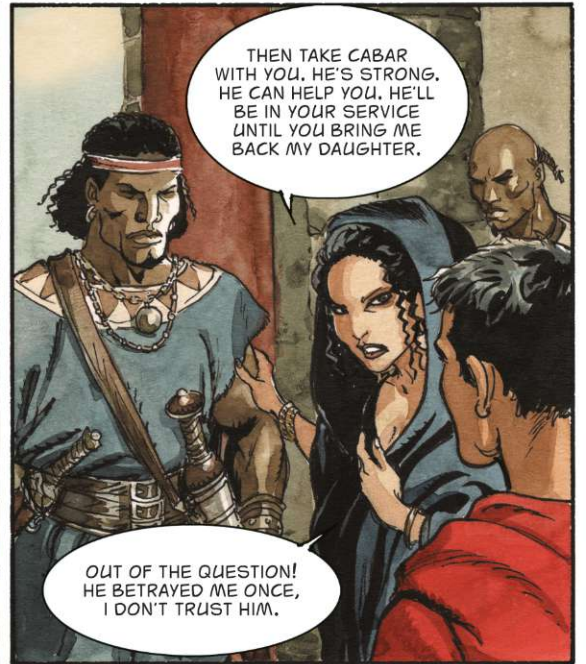


WHEN YOU SEE HER, TRY TO TALK HER INTO COMING HOME. GIVE HER THIS LETTER. SHE MUST RECOVER HER SENSES. ASK OF ME WHAT YOU WILL, BUT BRING ME BACK MY DAUGHTER!



HERE ARE 200 AUREI. WHEN SHE'S BACK, I'LL GIVE YOU MORE.

YOU'LL NEVER BE ABLE TO GIVE ME WHAT I WANT, MORPHEA. BUT DON'T WORRY, IF PRISCILLA'S IN DANGER, I'LL PROTECT HER.



THEN TAKE CABAR WITH YOU. HE'S STRONG. HE CAN HELP YOU. HE'LL BE IN YOUR SERVICE UNTIL YOU BRING ME BACK MY DAUGHTER.

OUT OF THE QUESTION! HE BETRAYED ME ONCE, I DON'T TRUST HIM.



CABAR ONLY CONFIRMED TO ME WHAT YOUR SISTER AND ARMINIUS HAD ALREADY TOLD ME.



CABAR, TAKE THE MONEY AND FOLLOW ME.

THANK YOU, MARCUS.

MAY PLUTO STRIKE YOU DOWN!



CHANGE OF PROGRAM. YOU CAN GET IT BACK AT THE PORT OF OSTIA.

WHAT? BUT I'M THE DRIVER...

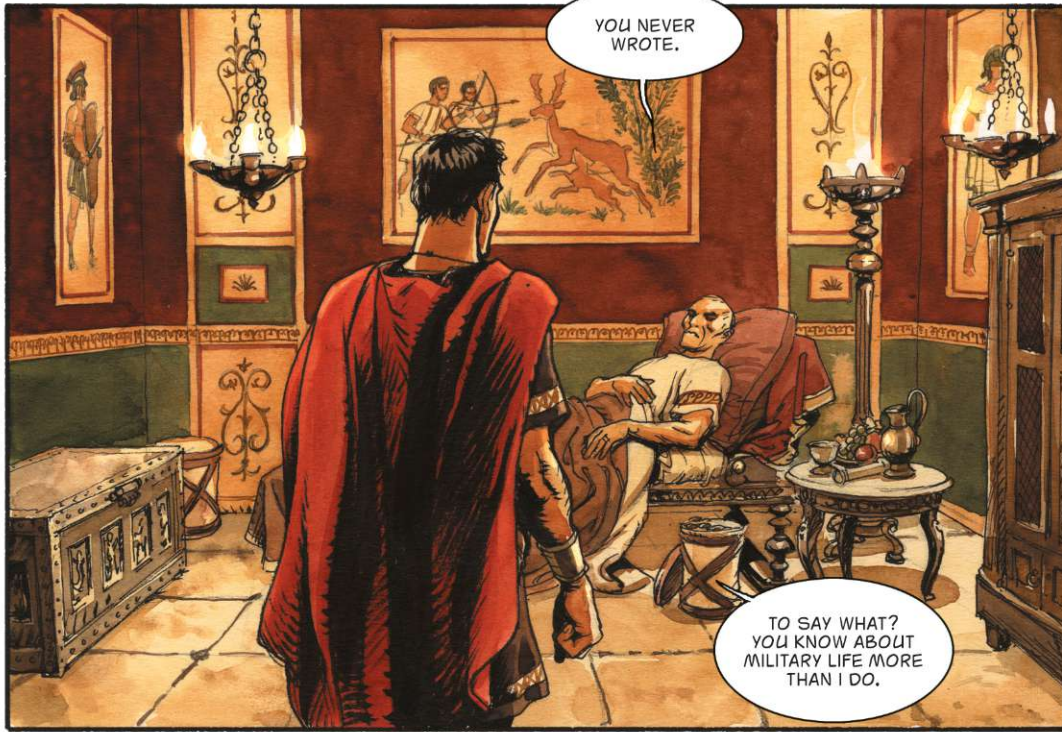


WAIT! HEY! WHERE IN OSTIA?









YOU NEVER WROTE.

TO SAY WHAT? YOU KNOW ABOUT MILITARY LIFE MORE THAN I DO.



COME CLOSER... YOU'VE FINALLY BECOME A MAN. I'VE HEARD OF YOUR ACCOMPLISHMENTS. I'M PROUD OF YOU. YOU FINALLY REALIZED THAT SCRIBBLING AND WRITING BAD VERSE WERE USELESS, CHILDISH PASTIMES THAT ONLY SERVE TO FILL UP THE SICK MINDS OF EFFEMINATE DREAMERS.



LIKE THAT MISERABLE OVIDIUS, WHO TRADED IN HIS GLADIUS SWORD FOR A STYLUS AND WHO NOW ROTS AWAY IN EXILE, AS WELL HE SHOULD. HOW DO YOU EXPECT TO CONQUER NEW PROVINCES AND DEFEND THE EMPIRE WITH A DAMN STYLUS?



CAESAR WAS STABBED TO DEATH 27 TIMES WITH A STYLUS. SO IT IS POSSIBLE, ACTUALLY, IT JUST TAKES A BIT MORE TIME.



I'VE NEVER CARED FOR YOUR SENSE OF HUMOR. SO THEY'RE SHIPPING YOU OFF TO GERMANIA? WHAT FOOLISH THING DID YOU DO THIS TIME?

NOTHING. I WANT TO SEE THE LAND OF MY ANCESTORS WITH MY OWN EYES.

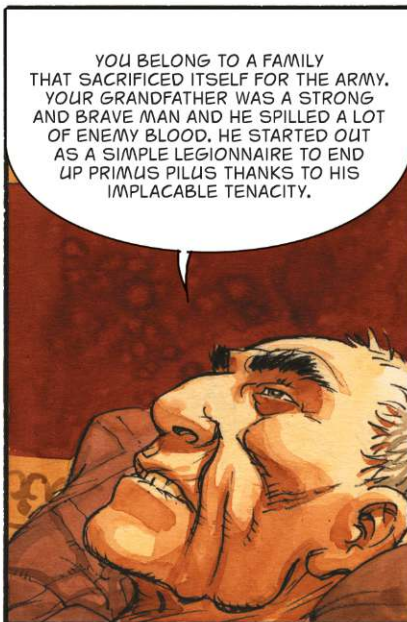


**YOUR ANCESTORS ARE ROMANS! THE LITTLE BIT OF GERMANIC BLOOD THAT FLOWS THROUGH YOUR VEINS IS NOTHING!**

**YOU ARE A ROMAN, NOTHING ELSE!**



COUGH... BUT WE MUSTN'T QUARREL... COUGH! COUGH! NOT NOW. THAT CHEST OVER THERE. OPEN IT.



YOU BELONG TO A FAMILY THAT SACRIFICED ITSELF FOR THE ARMY. YOUR GRANDFATHER WAS A STRONG AND BRAVE MAN AND HE SPILLED A LOT OF ENEMY BLOOD. HE STARTED OUT AS A SIMPLE LEGIONNAIRE TO END UP PRIMUS PILUS THANKS TO HIS IMPLACABLE TENACITY.



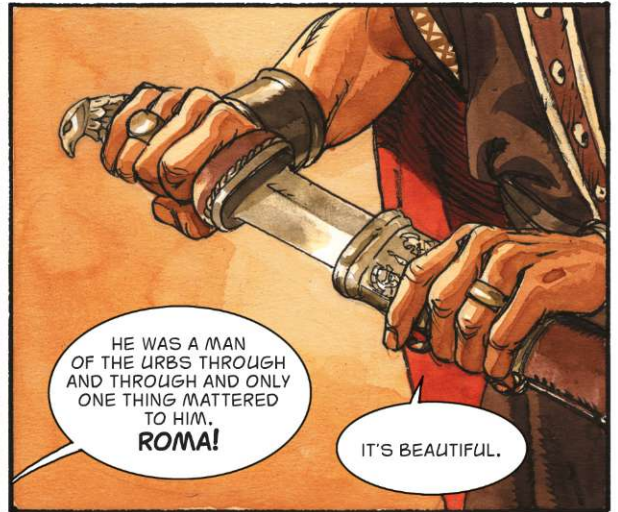
VERY FEW ROMANS ACHIEVE SUCH A CAREER. HE FOUGHT UNDER MARCUS ANTONIUS AGAINST OCTAVIUS— THAT PACKAGE INSIDE, OPEN IT—





BUT WHEN MARCUS ANTONIUS LEFT ROME FOR AN ALLIANCE WITH THAT SNAKE CLEOPATRA, MY FATHER JOINED OCTAVIUS'S SIDE.

A GLADIUS SWORD...



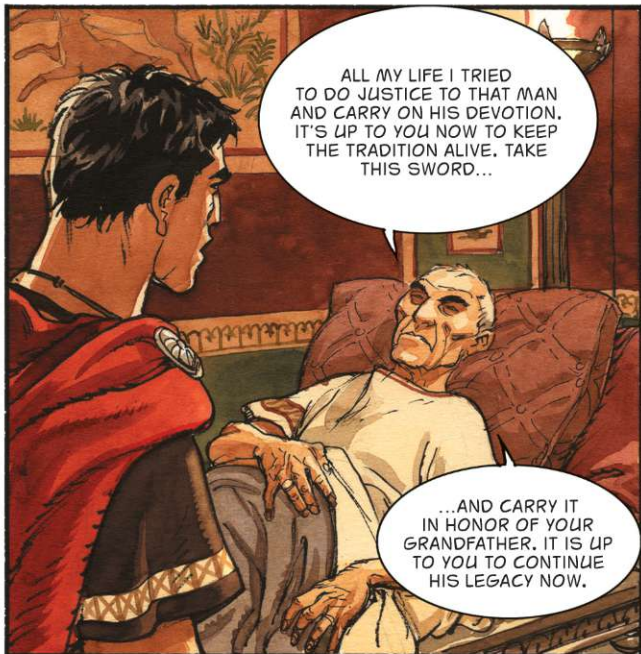
HE WAS A MAN OF THE URBS THROUGH AND THROUGH AND ONLY ONE THING MATTERED TO HIM, ROMA!

IT'S BEAUTIFUL.



IT'S ONE-OF-A-KIND. THE HILT IS MADE OF IVORY AND EBONY WOOD. THE BLADE IS MADE OF THE STRONGEST AND MOST PRECIOUS METALS. IT WAS FORGED BY THE MASTER HANDS OF GAULS.

YOUR GRANDFATHER WAS DEVOTED TO THE URBS UNTO DEATH. AUGUSTUS WAS SO APPRECIATIVE OF THAT THAT HE ENNOBLED HIM AND GAVE HIM THIS SWORD AND THE ANULLUS AUREUS.



ALL MY LIFE I TRIED TO DO JUSTICE TO THAT MAN AND CARRY ON HIS DEVOTION. IT'S UP TO YOU NOW TO KEEP THE TRADITION ALIVE. TAKE THIS SWORD...

...AND CARRY IT IN HONOR OF YOUR GRANDFATHER. IT IS UP TO YOU TO CONTINUE HIS LEGACY NOW.



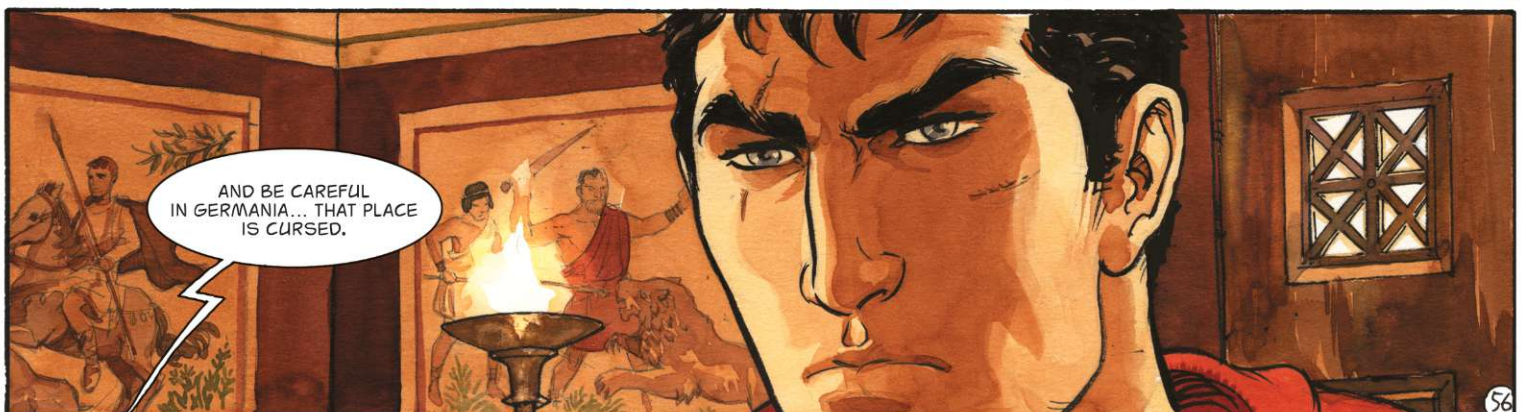
I... I THOUGHT THAT-

PROMISE ME YOU WILL NEVER AGAIN BRING SHAME UPON OUR FAMILY.

I PROMISE YOU, FATHER. I THANK YOU FOR THIS GIFT.



TAKE GOOD CARE OF THIS SWORD. DON'T FORGET, SWORDS ARE LIKE WOMEN. FOR THEM TO REMAIN YOUNG AND DEVOTED, YOU MUST LUBRICATE ON A REGULAR BASIS. WHEN YOU GET BACK, YOU OWE ME A GRANDSON.



AND BE CAREFUL IN GERMANIA... THAT PLACE IS CURSED.



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Graphic Design: Enrico Marini and Philippe Ravon

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Translation: D. Eberhardt  
Lettering: Calix ltd  
Original title: Les Aigles de Rome, Livre II  
Originally published in French by DARGAUD BENELUX (DARGAUD-LOMBARD S.A.) in 2009  
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# GLOSSARY

**ATRIUM** - the main room of the family house, open to family members, guests, clients, and visitors.

**BIREME** - warship from Ancient Rome featuring two rows of oarsmen on either side.

**CALENDS** - the first day of each month in the Roman calendar. When the calendar followed a lunar cycle this was also the day of the new moon.

**CERBERUS** - the three-headed dog who guards the gates of Hell (Roman and Greek mythology).

**CLOACA MAXIMA** - the great sewage system that serviced the Forum Romanum and emptied out into the Tiber.

**CONSUL** - Rome's highest public office. Under the Roman Republic, two men were elected Consul each year and held full powers over the Senate and the Roman people. Under the Empire, the office lost its powers.

**CURSUS HONORUM** - the "course of offices" was the sequence of various public office positions that Roman politicians were to hold. A career began with administrative or judicial functions and included military service. Under the Principat, a rich and ambitious Roman could become legion tribune, quaestor, aedile, tribune of the plebs, legion legate or even consul at the end of his career.

**GORGONS** - malevolent mythological creatures of Greek legend. They were represented as young women, often with wings and fangs; their hair was made of snakes.

**HORA NONA** - ninth hour of the day, corresponding to three o'clock in the afternoon.

**HORATIUS COCLES** - a hero from Roman mythology. In 507 BC, he stood alone to face the Etruscan army and defend the Sublicius bridge, which gave access to the city of Rome.

**JUPITER** - the father of the gods (Roman mythology). His symbols are the eagle and thunderbolt.

**LATIFUNDIUM** - a large farming estate in Ancient Rome.

**MEAD** - or hydromel. This fermented beverage, made from water and honey, was the drink of choice of the Germani and their gods.

**PERISTYLUM** - rectangular courtyard surrounded by columns inside a building.

**PONTIFEX MAXIMUS** - the highest title in Roman religion, bestowed upon the head of the College of Pontiffs.

**PRAETORIAN GUARD** - a unit of elite soldiers initially recruited in Italy during the Roman Republic to protect officers generally. Under the Empire, they made up the Emperor's special guard.

**PRIMUS PILUM** - the highest ranking and most experienced centurion in the Roman Legion. He belonged to the first centuria of the first maniple of the Legion's first cohort. He was the first to launch his spear in battle, thus giving the signal to other soldiers to start firing.

**PRINCEPS SENATUS** - the first member of the Senate in terms of precedence under the Roman Republic. He was allowed to speak first in the Senate and was listened to by all. Even though this title did not come with supreme power for the one who held it, it bestowed tremendous prestige upon him. After the fall of the Republic, the title was given to the Emperor.

**PUBLIUS OVIDIUS NASO** - Latin poet in the equestrian class. He became famous for his collections of poetry entitled *The Loves*, *the Heroines*, *The Art of Love* and *The Cure for Love*. *Metamorphoses* was his first major work, a poem of 12,000 dactylic hexameters divided into fifteen books that told the tales of Greek and Roman mythology. Augustus banished him to the shores of the Black Sea, probably because of his immoral works.

**TARPEIAN ROCK** - a rocky cliff located on the southwestern face of the Capitoline Hill that was used for capital punishment: criminals were thrown off the top until the end of the Republic.

**STYLUS** - small cylindrical instrument made out of bone or iron that was used for writing, by engraving characters onto a wax tablet. According to some, Caesar was stabbed to death with a stylus and not a dagger: the senators conspiring against him would have had an easier time concealing a stylus under their toga.

**URBS** - means "the city." The term was used in Ancient Rome to refer to "the city of all cities," Rome.

**VENUS** - goddess of love and beauty (Roman mythology), the equivalent of the Greek goddess Aphrodite.

**VESTA** - virgin goddess of the home and symbol of fidelity (Roman mythology). In the temple of Vesta, the sacred flame was guarded and kept alive by vestals, young virgins chosen among the great Roman families. Their service lasted thirty years. Those who violated their vows of chastity were put to death and sometimes walled up.







