



THE ROMANS

8. THE SLAVE AND THE ARCHITECT

JULIA: These ruins are where a Roman settlement once stood nearly two thousand years ago. It's the home of Commodus Maximus, a Roman architect, and his slave, Josephus.

Life as a slave in ancient Rome was usually very hard. They worked in mines and on farms, and many worked in houses where they cleaned and served food. Compared to other slaves, Josephus here has a slightly easier time of it. He helps to run his master's household and is allowed to spend his master's money on the things they need. He also receives a peculium, which is a payment he saves and can be used to buy his in freedom in the future...and talking of his master...

COMMODUS: Josephus! I have good news!

JOSEPHUS: Yes, master?

COMMODUS: I got the new architect's job!

JOSEPHUS: Wow!

COMMODUS: Guess what I'll be designing?

JOSEPHUS: Aqueducts?

COMMODUS: No...

JOSEPHUS: That new wall in Caledonia?

COMMODUS: No...

JOSEPHUS: Oh, no, it's not more roads is it?

COMMODUS: No, it's a step up from roads!

JOSEPHUS: What is it?

COMMODUS: It's...a bathhouse!

JOSEPHUS: Oooh, nice!

COMMODUS: Look, here are the plans. There's an apodyterium to get changed in; a gymnasium for exercise; then a caldarium where it'll be hot; and a laconicum where it'll be steamy.



JOSEPHUS: Oh wow, that'll be sooo relaxing!

COMMODUS: Then you can go to the tepidarium which will be cooler, but still nice and warm; and finally have a plunge in the cold waters of the frigidarium to cool off.

JOSEPHUS: Sounds AMAZING! Er...will slaves be allowed?

COMMODUS: Of course! We'll need people to watch out so the clothes don't get stolen and for keeping the boilers going.

JOSEPHUS: I mean to bathe?

COMMODUS: No, I'm afraid not. I'm just designing the baths, I'm not writing the rules. Anyway, they wouldn't let just anyone in!

JOSEPHUS: But I'm a slave.

COMMODUS: And a good one you are too! Do you know how much it costs to buy a slave that can read and write?

JULIA: The cost of a slave was sometimes twice what a soldier would earn in a year and slaves with special skills - like reading and writing - cost much more.

COMMODUS: Anyway, you're lucky to be working here! Next time you go out, just look at how many slaves are worse off than you! Some end up in horrible places!

JOSEPHUS: It doesn't matter where you are, if you're not free, you're in a horrible place. Rome wouldn't run without its slaves.

COMMODUS: You're starting to talk like that rebel Spartacus.

JOSEPHUS: He did have a point.

COMMODUS: He had several thousand points! Spears, swords, sharp sticks! He nearly ruined the Roman republic!

JULIA: Spartacus was a famous slave who raised an army and rebelled against the Romans.

JOSEPHUS: He was a Roman soldier before he was a slave.

COMMODUS: He deserted the army! That's how he ended up as a slave!

JOSEPHUS: There are lots of ways you can end up as a slave. I was just in the wrong place at the wrong time.



COMMODUS: Look, we've already agreed, in a couple of years, you'll have enough money saved to buy your freedom. Anyway, why all this talk about freedom right now?

JOSEPHUS: I've met someone...we want to marry. As we both know, slaves can't.

COMMODUS: Oh, so that's the reason! Well then, there's more to look forward to in two years' time then, isn't there!

JOSEPHUS: Yes...erm...you don't think maybe we could make it a little sooner? I just thought I could buy some land, maybe start a family...

COMMODUS: Oh no, I couldn't possibly let you go at this crucial time, Josephus, you're just so useful!

JOSEPHUS: Yes master. All in good time.