

WHEREVER I MAY ROME

Directions: Read the introduction to your students. Allow the students to vote on which direction to take the story using the choices below each selection.

You are a young person from the glorious city of Rome. You climb up the concrete stairway to your family's small apartment. You are rather tired from a long day of school, plus a hard day's labor, working on the tall aqueducts. Even though you are young, your family has allowed you to work, in order to help pay the high cost of living in this opulent city. As you ascend the steps, you smell bread baking in the clay oven. Your mouth is watering. You see your mother's smiling face peering through the window. "Dinner's ready!", she calls down to you. You enter the little apartment. Your father is seated at the table. He too is weary from a long day of work. Your father is a soldier in the imperial army. Fortunately, there is a time of peace called the Pax Romana, and your father is not needed in battle. As a military family, your family belongs to the "more humble" class. You are not considered to be as important as the "elite" class, but you are definitely not as lowly as the slaves. Your little sister looks at you and laughs. "You're dirty! Don't touch me!". You roll your eyes and sit at the humble dinner table. "Your hands are filthy.", your father says. "Go down one floor and use the water pipe to rinse them off.". "Do I have to?", you argue. "I feel so tired.". "Of course.", he says calmly. "You're a Roman, not a barbarian.". You grudgingly stomp down the steps to the next floor. A water pipe protrudes from the concrete walls. You wash your hands and return to dinner. After a full meal, you are ready for bed. You pull your blanket over your head and quickly fall asleep. That night you dream that Mercury, the god of messengers, comes to you and tells you that the gods have chosen you for a great adventure. But the dawning sun soon pours through the windows of your small apartment, and dreams of glory fade. Your mother awakens you with a start! "Hurry, you're late for school!".

Do you?

A Run straight to school

B Eat breakfast first

A) You jump out of bed, sprint down the steps, and bound onto the paved street below. Your heart races, thinking of your classmates sitting there, and the school master . . . You try not to think, just run. Soon you reach the outer door of the school. You hear your classmates reciting phrases in Latin, and you know for sure that class has begun. You know what happens to students who are late for class. The master makes an example of them! You quietly slip inside the room, as the school master's back is turned. As you sit down, the students finish their recitation, and silence follows. You can only hear the sound of your own heavy breathing. Your friend Flavius glances in your direction, mouthing the words, "You're dead!". Sweat pours down your forehead as you wait for the school master to notice that you've arrived late. He finishes scrawling some Roman numerals on a slate, and turns around. Your eyes meet his, and you feel your heart sink. "Now . . .", he says slowly. "we will practice your rhetoric.". You are amazed! He had to have noticed that you came in late. Why didn't he call you to the front for the beating you deserve? Several students are called to the front of the classroom to recite

speeches they had written a day earlier. Rhetoric always made you nervous. You've never really liked speaking in front of many people. The hours pass and the school master dismisses class for the day. You see Flavius standing outside the school talking to another student.

Do you?

C Talk to Flavius

D Go straight to the aqueduct to start work

B) You decide that since you will be late to class anyway, you might as well grab some breakfast and not be hungry. "You had better be on your way.", your mother scolds. "You're going to get a beating from the school master." You stuff a chunk of grainy bread down your throat and head out the door. You stroll down the paved street toward the school house. "There's no sense in running.", you think to yourself. "I'm going to be late anyway." You hear the students reciting phrases in Latin, then silence. You hear the school master speaking. As you enter the room, everyone stops and looks at you. You feel your face turning a bright red. The school master stops speaking, and your eyes meet. "You know the rules. You need to be in your seat before the school chime rings.", he says sternly. He pulls out a long switch and snaps it against his hand. "Approach.", he says, annoyed that the lesson has now been interrupted. He whacks the switch against your back with an awful sound. You cringe with every blow. You see your friend Flavius, in the back row, wince as well. You choke back the tears and take your seat. "Now, where were we?", the school master asks. Flavius looks over at you and whispers, "Are you all right?". You nod slowly. However, the day soon passes and the school master dismisses the class. You see Flavius outside talking to another student.

Do you?

C Go talk to Flavius

D Go straight to the aqueduct

C) "Boy, the gods must love you!", he says half-laughing. "This is Justus.", says Flavius pointing to the boy standing next to you. Justus gives you a little nod. He seems as if he thinks he's a little too cool to be standing there talking with you and Flavius. "So, what are we going to do today?", Justus asks. He looks at Flavius, then at you, and begins to grin. "I have an idea.", he says finally. "Let's sneak into the Circus Maximus to watch the chariot races!". You feel a knot in your stomach and nervously glance at Flavius. You know that you shouldn't do something like that. "Why can't we just pay at the gate like every other Roman citizen does?", you ask. "Are you stupid? Its too expensive to do that!", Justus says condescendingly. You also know that you have to go to work soon at the aqueduct.

Do you?

E Go with Flavius and Justus to the Circus Maximus

D Go straight to the aqueduct

D) You decide that it would be wise to go straight to the aqueduct, rather than risk being late again. You walk the several miles to the steps that lead up the steep slope to the high aqueduct. You feel your ears crackle as you ascend the steep steps to the top of the bridge-like structure. Your foreman is already at the top, barking orders to construction workers chiseling stone and brick. Your job seems easy, but it sometimes gets lonely. Since you are young, your job is to walk along the entire length of the bridge-like aqueduct and make sure that nothing blocks the flow of fresh clean water from the hillsides to the city below. You carry a shovel over your shoulder and head out on your long journey across the long structure. Its good for you that you're not afraid of heights otherwise this would be a difficult job indeed. Suddenly, you notice a dark mass in the water below your feet. "What could it be?", you wonder aloud. Just as your eyes adjust to the sun's glare reflecting off the water, you hear a scream coming from further down the aqueduct!

Do you?

F Run further along the aqueduct to discover the source of the screaming

G Jump into the water to find out what the dark mass in the water is

E) You are extremely nervous. This is obviously something that you shouldn't be doing, but you've always wanted to see the chariot races in the Circus Maximus. You think about the crowds, the cheering, the races! What could be more exciting? Justus leads the way with Flavius and you following close behind. You approach the enormous racing arena, with the thunder of hooves and cheers of adoring fans filling the air. Justus suddenly stops and turns to face you. "Follow me. Don't say a word.", he says with a sneer. He grabs three cloaks off of a passing cart, and throws one to Flavius, and one to you. He places the cloak over his left shoulder and motions to you to do the same. The three of you approach a small, unguarded entrance to the Circus Maximus. Justus ducks down to pass through the tiny opening. Once you enter, you are enshrouded in darkness. "Shhh.", say Justus. After walking for some time in the inky blackness, you notice a dim torchlight up ahead. Justus, however, directs you to follow him down another dark tunnel.

Do you?

H Follow Justus down the tunnel

I Walk towards the torchlight

F) You run towards the scream! What could be happening? The screams grow louder and more frantic as you approach. As you near the commotion, your heart stops! An enormous bear has made its way along the aqueduct and is now attacking one of the Roman workers.

Do you?

J Defend the worker with your shovel

K Run for help

G) You decide to jump into the chilly water to find out what that dark mass really is. After all, you don't want anything to block the flow of fresh water to the city below. You set your shovel on the concrete side and slip off your leather sandals. The water feels cold as you slide into the flow of the aqueduct, but in time you realize that it actually feels good in the heat of the afternoon sun. You are near enough to the mass now to be able to touch it. You reach into the cloudy water toward the dark mass. It feels like matted fur, and rather solid. You submerge into the flow to have a better look at this mysterious mass. As you open your eyes underwater, you see a horrifying site! A large ugly face is staring into your eyes with blank stare of death! You quickly raise your head above the surface of the water, coughing and sputtering. As you come to your senses, you realize that what you've just seen is a dead deer. The deer floats to the surface and you realize that its belly has been ripped open. Its insides are now on the outside! What would have done this to a deer? You back up into the concrete side trying to catch your breath. Suddenly you feel your arm resting on something furry! Glancing up, you see an enormous bear looming over you! You panic, now understanding what killed this deer. The bear sensing your panic, leaps upon you, driving your head underwater. Water is the best conductor of sound. The last sound you hear is the gnawing of teeth on bone as you sink below the surface.

THE END

H) You decide that it would be safer to follow Justus. After all, he seems to know where he is going. Soon the three of you emerge into the sunlit interior of the Circus Maximus. What a sight! Chariot teams colored red, blue, green, and white race around an elliptical track, each competing for the prize. Wild and unruly fans wave banners with the color of the team they support. In the center of the race track stand large statues of the patron gods of racing, Neptune, Castor, and Pollux. The chariots drivers try to knock each other off the track and into the concrete walls. Some chariots carry two to three men each. As the race nears its completion, the cheering intensifies. The green team is in the lead with the red team close behind! What a race! The fans of the red team shout, "Red! Red! Red!", as the red team pulls ahead. In the end, the red team is declared the winner and flowers are thrown from the stands upon the victors. The riders each bow before the three gods and exit the stadium. Wow! "We Romans sure know how to entertain ourselves!", you say to Flavius. Just then, two sword wielding soldiers approach the

three of you. "Excuse me. I think you forgot to pay.", says the taller soldier. Justus begins to blush. "Come with us.", they say as they grab you by the arm. It's a good thing Roman citizens have certain legal rights, because you're going to need all of them!

THE END

D) You head toward the torchlight. Being in darkness this long has made you a little nervous. Soon you hear voices echoing through the dimly lit corridor. As you draw nearer, you see a group of men standing tall and straight. You approach them slowly. A short man walks toward you with a relieved look on his face. "You must be my second.", he declares. "I . . . I don't know what you're . . . sure.", you stammer. "Well hurry up! We're almost ready.", he shouts. He grabs your dingy cloak, throwing it against the wall. "Here.", he says. "Try this cloak.". He places a green cloak over your shoulder, exactly like the one he is wearing. The other men talk quietly, each dressed in either red, white, or blue. The short man who gave you the green cloak leans closer to you, saying, "We're going to be great!". "These other bums don't have a chance!". You laugh, pretending to know what he is talking about. Suddenly, the brilliant light of day pours into the darkened room. All the men move out into the light. You follow close behind, and stand next to the man in green. You must be in the center of the Circus Maximus! A crowd, numbering in the thousands cheers wildly as you move toward the colored chariots. "What have I gotten myself into?", you cry aloud as the short man pulls you onto the green chariot. Each rider bows quickly before large statues of the gods in the center of the race track. The horses nay and snort, as they prepare to run like the wind. Your stomach twists and turns as you wait for the start of the race.

Do you?

L Run for your life

M Hold on!

J) Take your chances! (*Flip a coin. If the selected student calls the toss correctly, read WIN. If not, then LOSE*)

JWIN

JLOSE

JWIN) You run toward the bear with your shovel raised up high! The enraged animal is just about to pounce on the frightened worker. Whammm! You bring the shovel down with full force on the bear's skull! The bear turns tail and runs away down the length of the aqueduct. The Roman worker turns to you and gives you a hug. "You saved my life! Jupiter be praised!", he cries. As the two of you walk slowly back toward the rest

of the work crew, you carefully watch your back. Wow! Being a hero isn't easy! Maybe someday you will be the next Hercules.

THE END

JLOSE) You run at the bear, swinging your shovel wildly! "Get away! Go!", you shout at the crazed animal. The bear swipes at the scared worker with his huge paw. The worker loses his balance and falls from the aqueduct. Aaaahhhhhh! You realize that his fate is sealed, unless he can fly like Cupid. The bear turns toward you with a look of fierce hunger upon his snarling face. You swing your shovel at the bear's head, but lose your balance! You feel yourself topple over the high edge of the aqueduct! As you fall, you scream out to the gods for help! Aaaahhhhhh! Crash! You land on the back of a cart, in a pile of wheat. "What? Where am I?", you wonder aloud. You look around, unable to believe your good fortune. You realize that you are on the back of a moving cart, pulled by two mules. Peering over the side of the cart, you see the Roman worker. Arrrrggghhh! You feel sick, seeing the bloody mess that was once a person. He was not as fortunate as you.

Do you?

N Hide in the pile of wheat and continue riding in the cart

O Jump out of the cart

K) You run for help! You know that you can't possibly protect someone from a bear by yourself. Running along the aqueduct, you shout and scream for help. Several workers run to your aid. "What's the matter?", they ask. "Bear! . . . Bear!", you point back toward the far end of the bridge-like structure. You can barely catch your breath. The workers run toward the end of the aqueduct to save the worker from the bear. You sit down to rest and drink some water. You see the workers walking back from the scene of the bear attack. They look down at the ground as they walk. "What happened?", you question. The workers shake their heads. "It was awful.", they moan. "There wasn't much left. We can only hope that he descended quickly to Elysium, the underworld." You begin to wish that you would have helped sooner.

THE END

L) You jump out of the chariot and onto the race track! There's no way you were going actually race in the Circus Maximus. It's just too dangerous. Riders often fall out of the chariots and get trampled under merciless hooves. Too late! Just as you hop out of the chariot, the signal is given to start the race. A chariot slams into your back with force. You see stars and feel numb. The last sight you ever see is a charging steed rearing up on its hind legs!

THE END

M) You hold on for your life! The signal is given to start the race and your chariot takes off like a shooting star! Your heart pounds as riders try to drive rival charioteers off the track and into the walls. Whips crack and hooves thunder like the bolts of Jupiter. Your partner hands you the whip and shouts out orders for you to get the horses moving faster. "We're falling behind!", he exclaims. You merely try to keep from falling off the platform as the chariot makes a turn. You see the red team approaching quickly from the right. Seeing that you are not using the whip, your partner grabs it out of your hands. "I'll show you how to use a whip!", he says harshly. With that he snaps the whip at the red team's horses. One horse veers sharply to the left, causing the others to misstep. One of the red team charioteers is thrown off his platform. You look back with horror when you see him crushed under the heavy chariot wheels of the white team. "That's how you do it!", your partner laughs. As he turns around to face the track again, he fails to see the outstretched arm of the blue team captain. Smack! His blood splatters over your green cloak. He collapses and falls off the chariot! Who is controlling your chariot? You grab the reins, trying to regain control of the valiant animals pulling the ride. You are terrified, but you manage to stay calm. You decide that if you are going to race, you might as well go for the win! You snap the reins, urging the stallions to pick up the pace. Your horses strain and stride, passing the white team, then the blue team. You near the end, heart pounding, sweat pouring off your forehead. The crowd goes wild! You've won! As the steeds slow to a trot, the crowd showers you with flowers and grains of wheat. A toga-clad official places a laurel wreath upon your head, symbolizing victory. What a day you've had!

THE END

N) You see a scruffy-looking man holding the reins of the two mules. He, by some good fortune, hasn't noticed that you fell into his cart. You duck down again, into the coarse

straws of wheat. What should you do now? If you run from the cart, the man is sure to think that you are a thief, trying to steal his goods. Staying put definitely sounds like the best plan. The mules continue down the rough roads, causing the cart to shake and shimmy. Your civilization was famous for its construction of roads. Roads like this one allowed trade and travel to increase. You even have an old saying, "All roads lead to Rome!". These roads also allowed the Roman Empire to conquer vast lands and move troops quickly to the battlegrounds. The cart must be nearing the city, for you hear the steady chatter of voices and the sounds business. Peering out of the wheat, you notice huge public buildings, supported by immense columns. Temples to Neptune, Jupiter, Vesta, and other gods and goddesses decorate urban Rome. Your city was built on seven hills, high up, so that it is difficult to attack. You suddenly become aware that your clothes are tattered and torn from the fall and the scuffle with the bear. As the cart passes a laundry man's house, you reach out quickly and snatch a white cloak. As you carefully wrap the new toga, you notice that this material is very expensive, only the upper class would wear something this nice. Once you've tied the toga tight, you hop quietly out of the cart with the driver none the wiser. A group of wealthy nobles walk toward the public baths.

Do you?

P Follow the nobles

Q Go another way

- O) You jump quickly out of the moving cart. As you land, you twist your ankle. "Oooooowwww!", you shout. The driver of the cart turns around with a startled look on his face. "Thief! Thief! Stop him! He tried to steal my grain!", he yells at the top of his lungs. You panic and hobble away, in great pain! Two Roman soldiers hear the man shouting and run after you. "Stop in the name of Caesar!", the older one screams. You stagger to a standstill. The younger soldier draws his sword, saying, "Lets kill this little thief right now!". Your eyes grow wide with fear. "No.", the older soldier says calmly. "This young one is a Roman citizen. All citizens deserve a trial under our law. We must uphold the law.". The younger soldier sheathes his sword with a look of disappointment. As the two soldiers escort you to the jail to await your trial, you are suddenly grateful for Roman law, and the chance to tell your side of the story.

THE END

P) You decide to follow the nobles. One of the nobles looks back at you. His eyes are drawn to your toga. He then whispers, "I hear that these baths are the best in the empire." Incredible! This noble must believe that you too are a person of wealth, just because of the classy white toga you now wear! You nod and smile. You have never been in a public bath house before. The nobles enter a large pillared building. "What kind of water do you like?", asks another noble. You are a little confused by his question. "I like clean water.", you declare. The nobles laugh. "I like this little one.", says the first noble. 'Quite a sense of humor!'. "I think I'll take a hot bath first then go to the frigidarium for a cold dip.", says a short bald noble. You see huge pools filled with the wealthy people of Rome. You decide that if you are going for a swim, you're going to do it right! You run, tuck your knees up to your chest and splash into the water! "Yaaahhhhhooooohhhooooiiii!", you gasp as you come up again. The water is freezing! Two fully dressed nobles along the side of the bath are now soaking wet and angry because of your little stunt. The first noble you met swims up to you. "A group of us are going to the Colosseum after our dip.", he says, spitting water from his mouth. "You are welcome to come.". Another noble swims along side the two of you. "We're going to a feast after our bath.", he says. "Why don't you come with us.".

Do you?

R Go to the Colosseum

S Go to the feast

Q) You decide to go another way. As you walk through the crowded streets of Rome, you realize that you don't know exactly where you are. Beautiful buildings dominate the scene, merchants, soldiers, and peasants move busily about this mighty capital city. You see muscular statues of various Roman gods and goddesses. While you are looking behind you, you run smack into something solid! You turn quickly around, holding your poor head. A Roman soldier in a flowing red cape turns around to see who just ran into him. "Hey!", he yells. "What was that all about?". You look into his helmeted face and feel an intense feeling of fear. "I'm sorry sir.", you stammer. "I didn't see you.". "That's all right.", he says removing his helmet. As he does, you realize why it's all right. It's your father! "Dad! What a day I've had!", you say as you suddenly feel the exhaustion. "Come on.", he says smiling. "Let's go home and you can tell me all about it.".

THE END

R) You have always wanted to go to the Colosseum! You and the other nobles dry off and head out into the streets of Rome, toward the Colosseum. As you enter the Colosseum, the guards nod their approval. Since everyone thinks you are a noble, you are allowed to sit near the arena floor. How exciting! The noise of the crowd echoes through the entire stadium. However, nothing could have prepared you for the entrance of the Emperor! Caesar struts into the Colosseum and the crowd goes wild. "Hail Caesar! Hail Caesar! Hail Caesar!", they shout. He waves at the citizens of Rome, then takes his seat. The crowd grows quiet with anticipation. When the gladiators are hoisted up from their catacombs below, the crowd cheers and whistles. The two armor clad men strike at each other with swords, steel nets, and three pronged tridents. Another pair of gladiators enter the arena and prepare to do battle. Some of the things you see in the Colosseum shock and disturb you. You see one gladiator at the mercy of another. As the wounded gladiator looks up to the Emperor for mercy, the Emperor in turn looks at the crowd. Unfortunately for this man, the crowd believes that he has not fought well. They give the thumbs down sign, shouting "Cut his throat!". Caesar looks pensive for a moment as he makes his decision. Wanting to please the crowd, he shows the thumbs down sign. The victorious gladiator draws his dagger quickly across the neck of the defeated with a spurt of blood. However, later on, Caesar allows another gladiator to live, since he fought well. Yes in the mighty Roman Empire, doing your duty had its rewards. What an event!

THE END

S) You are rather hungry, come to think of it. A feast sounds wonderful! You and the other nobles dry off and put on white togas to prepare for the feast. After a leisurely stroll down a paved Roman street, you arrive at the beautiful house of a wealthy noble. A delicious smell drifts from the large pillared abode. As you enter the house, slaves guide you to a long cushioned chair, almost a couch. You've never sat in anything so comfortable. Ahhhhhh. This is the life! Slaves bring bunches of grapes for you to munch on before the main course. They even feed you grapes by hand! Next comes a tray of stuffed duck, broiled to perfection. The duck is surrounded by boiled eggs, cheese, and vegetables. Mmmmmm. Such good food! There are so many selections to choose from. The other nobles roll and stretch on the soft couches, and chat about the politics and social concerns of Rome. You are completely full! However, that doesn't stop the slaves from bringing more food. One of the nobles motions to you. You get up from the soft couch and meander toward him. "Are you stuffed yet?", asks the noble. "Yes! Just like the duck.", you reply with a satisfied grin. You have never eaten this well before in your life! "Lets go to the vomitorium.", says another noble. "Yes.", says the first noble. "I'm ready.". You follow the men to a small room adjoining the leisure room. This room is sparsely decorated, none of the fancy statues that the initial room contained. In the middle of the room is a hole, leading to the sewer system below. All of a sudden, a short stout noble sticks his fingers down his throat and makes himself gag!

After a second try, he succeeds in vomiting down into the hole! Aaarrggghhh! You try not to lose your dinner yourself. Just then, another noble throws up his dinner! This time, some of the warm vomit splashes up onto your leg! You feel sick and begin throwing up on the floor. "I'm sorry. . . . I IHuuurrrhhhh!" You throw up again. "Don't be sorry.", says a taller noble. "You're supposed to vomit!". "Why?", you ask, wiping your mouth. "So we can eat again!", he replies with a grin. "There's so much food. It would be a shame to waste it.". You think to yourself that your civilization has become rather spoiled. Some people in the world are starving to death, and the elite of Rome vomit so they can eat more! Now that's a real shame!

THE END

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DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

After reading the story, discuss the following questions with your student:

1. What made transportation easier throughout the Roman Empire? How have we overcome transportation problems today?
2. Describe two popular forms of Roman entertainment. Why has violent entertainment been popular throughout history? Can this cause problems?
3. Compare and contrast the lives of average Romans, and the wealthy Roman upper-class. Do these differences exist today?
4. How did the Romans transport water to their cities, towns, and homes? How have we solved similar problems today?
5. In the Colosseum, when deciding issues of life and death, why do you think the Roman emperor often sided with the crowd? Is it easier to make a decision that is popular? Have you ever had to make a decision that was unpopular because it was the right thing to do?