



Roman About The Colosseum

Visiting the Colosseum in Rome had been one of my dreams for over a year. We'd learned about Ancient Rome in Year 3, and I'd fallen in love with the idea of it. I could imagine all of those spectators shouting down at me, urging me to defeat a lion or vicious gladiator. I didn't care about the prize money or how dangerous it would be. I liked to dream about the glory and the honour.

Now, we were finally going. Mum and Dad had packed me and my brother Jed into the car and whisked us away to the airport as soon as half-term had started. We had no idea where we were going, so when we landed at Leonardo da Vinci Airport, it was a big surprise.

I didn't even need to ask them if we could visit the Colosseum. They'd already booked us tickets for the day after we arrived. Today. We are going today! They've organised a guided tour, and I can't wait.

We get ready quickly. Jed's a year older than me, but he's still really excited to see it all. He loves the Romans as well. We eat our hotel breakfast so quickly that Mum jokes we aren't even swallowing. "Slow down, Claudia," she says, laughing at me. "Our tour isn't for another hour, so there's no point in rushing."

Our hotel is really close to the Colosseum, so it doesn't take us long to get there. Mum and Dad insist on stopping to look in shops along the way, which drives me insane. There will be plenty of time for that afterwards!

When we finally drag them out of yet another tourist shop, it's time to go in. We make our way to the information office, and they take us to a side door for our tour. Apparently, they have a special event today where you can dress up as a gladiator and take photos in the arena itself. I'm bouncing off the walls at the thought!

A lovely lady joins us and introduces herself as Claudia. I laugh and tell her that's my name, so she lets me borrow her name tag as a joke. She takes Jed and me through to a room filled with armour and costumes, where we quickly get changed into something more suitable for fierce gladiators. Claudia tells us that she'll take our parents out into the arena so that they can get photos of us coming out of the tunnel.

I've never seen Jed smile as much as he is while we wait for our cue. Nothing happens for a while, but I can hear the sound of thousands of people stamping their feet and cheering. "Good speakers!" Jed says, looking around for them.

I know that the floor of the Colosseum is missing now, so I'm not sure what to expect when we walk out of the tunnel. Nobody calls for us, but I'm too excited to wait, so we both sprint along the sand and burst out into the hot sunshine.

For a second, we're blinded by the light, but the roar of the crowd drags us back to reality. The floor of the arena is there in front of us, covered in sand and dark red blood. A gladiator is being dragged away in the distance, and tens of thousands of people are chanting and cheering at us.

While we stand there gawping, an old man steps up to us and thrusts real, heavy swords into our hands. Jed and I look at each other in panic just as we hear a roar on the other side of the Colosseum. As we watch, a trapdoor rises up and an enormous lion steps onto the sand.

SUMMARISE FOCUS

1. Why were Claudia and her brother not at school?
2. What did the tour guide do when she learned what Claudia's name was?
3. How the arena different to what they expected?
4. Who is the last person they see before they see the lion?

VIPERS QUESTIONS

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| I | Why was Claudia feeling frustrated on the walk to the Colosseum? |
| R | What was Claudia's brother's name? |
| V | Find and copy a word that tells the reader that Claudia was staring around with no idea what was going on. |
| R | What was about to attack them? |
| P | What do you think has happened? What in the text supports this idea? |

