

ROMAN CRUCIFIXIONS

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DOFANTASY



FIRST CENTURY A.D.

The Romans did not invent crucifixion. The Persians, Phoenicians, Greeks and Carthaginians had all used it long before the Romans adopted it from them. But the Romans embraced it, perfected it, and developed it into a science. In a world where cruelty, torture and death were common, where blood and death were part of their entertainment, and where those condemned to death could be burned, impaled, or boiled in oil, among other slow and agonizing punishments, the cross was universally known as the very worst punishment of all.

What made crucifixion the most feared of all punishments?

First of all there was its unbearable agony, so intense that when we speak today of pain as being “excruciating”, we are literally comparing it to the pain of crucifixion. Beyond that, however, was the length of time a condemned person suffered before finally succumbing to death. Victims often lived three to five days on the cross, some as much as a week. A strong person might be able to endure being burned alive with some dignity, but no one could endure the seemingly endless agony of the cross without breaking and begging for mercy.

But the worst aspect of all to the victims was the utter crushing humiliation of being displayed completely naked in their suffering as they hung before the crowds of onlookers and passers-by. The Romans made no distinction as to the sex of those they crucified, nailing women to the cross as readily as men.

THE PERSECUTIONS OF THE CHRISTIANS

By the first century AD crucifixion had long been commonplace. With the rise of a deviant Jewish sect known as Christians, there were new enemies of Rome who would suffer the slow death of the cross. In the picture to the left, we see a group of Christian women standing before the Emperor Domitian.

“So you refuse to worship me because you follow this Jesus? Then it is only right that you follow him to the cross. *Pone crucem servo!* March them through the streets naked and see that they get a good flogging before you nail them to the cross! But don’t overdo the whipping; I want the people to see them suffering for days as an example of the price to be paid for defying the Emperor of Rome!”

As the women are stripped and their arms stretched out on the patibuli they will carry, they draw strength from their faith. But the humiliation and slow torture to come will wring screams and moans from each of them as they hang naked and struggling on their crosses before the jeering crowds through the long days and nights to come.



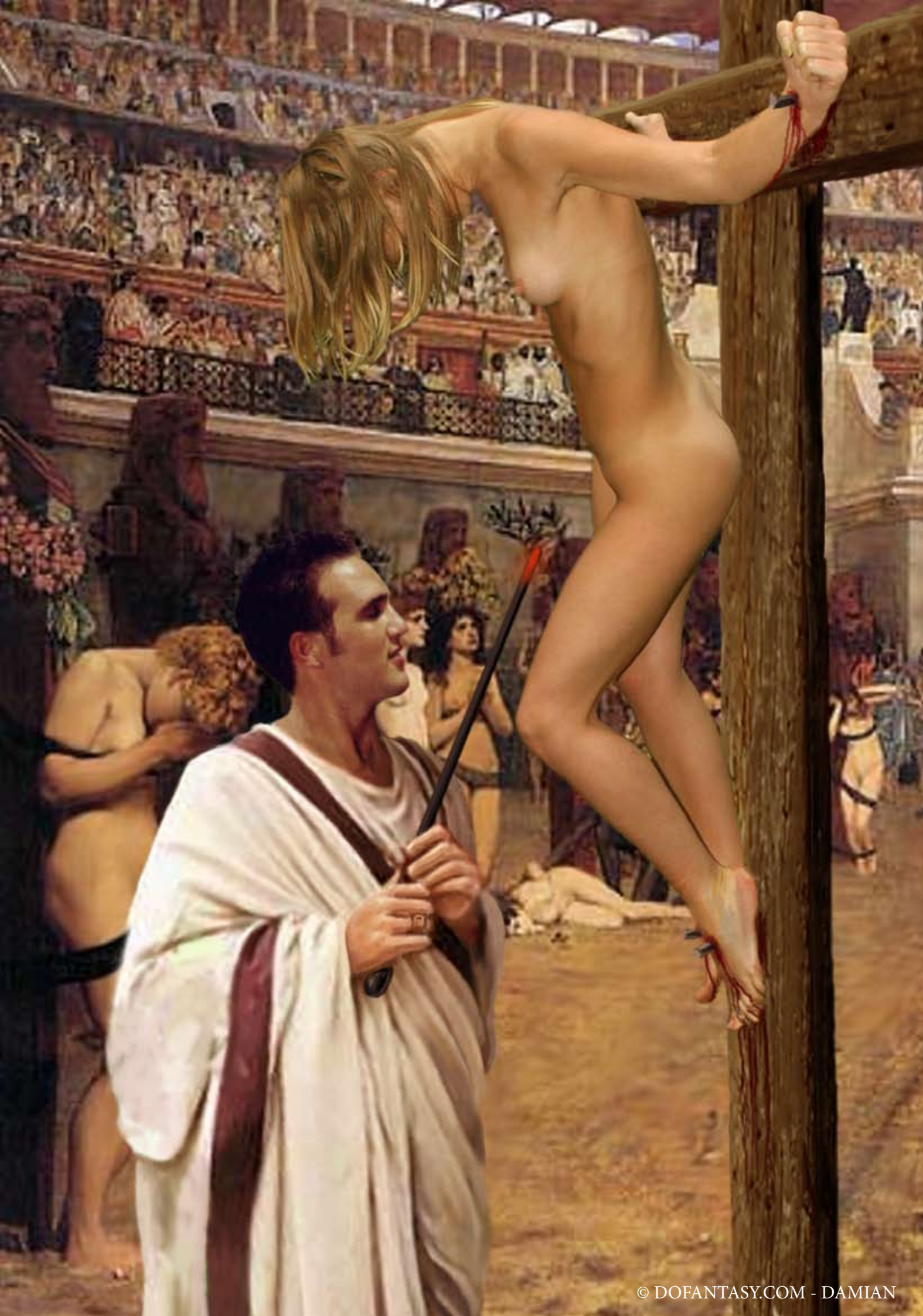
IN THE ARENA

In 84 AD, the mass execution of Christian girls was a special treat for Roman crowds in the Flavian Amphitheater, later known as the Colosseum. Confused and frightened, these women were herded into the arena and stripped naked amid the cheers of the crowd.

Now they watch in horror as their execution proceeds, each awaiting her turn to be crucified on the tower of death. When the last one is hoisted up to writhe in agony, the tower will be moved to different positions around the arena while the day's other events go on, giving the crowd an opportunity to enjoy their struggles close-up. When the sun sets, the tower will be rolled to the center of the arena where it will be burned as the final event, slowly roasting the victims alive.

Aurelia, the girl being crucified in this picture, was ashamed because she was glad that the executioners took the others first, giving her a few more precious minutes. Even so, her terror grew as she watched what would be done to her. And now her turn has come. She does not struggle as they tie her wrists to the patibulum; that will come when they hoist her up and her feet leave the ground.

"Pull these ropes tight, Marcus, they have to hold for twelve hours and I don't want any of these girls working herself loose during the show!"



UP CLOSE AND PERSONAL

The Senator Marcus Claudius Rufus in his purple-bordered toga praetexta checks the executioner's handiwork. The crucified girl is Antonia, one of his slaves who was discovered among the followers of the illegal Christian sect. He is not satisfied with her punishment and intends to add more of his own.

"You cost me money and *dignitas*, Antonia, and I will have my revenge on you for that. Now, I just want you to look at this hot iron and think about what it will feel like when I press it into your flesh. Where do you think I should put this?"

"N-no, please domine, don't!"

"No suggestions? Then this is what we'll do: We'll make it a game, just the two of us. As long as you can keep yourself raised on your feet, I won't burn you. But when you can't hold yourself up any longer and you slip down to hang by your wrists, and your legs are spread wide for me, I'll know that you are ready for a taste of the hot irons. I'll start with that tight pink asshole of yours; don't worry, I'll be gentle and do this slowly!"

"No, to begin with I'll only touch the tip of this hot iron to the edge of your asshole for two heartbeats – mine, not yours, those would be too quick, I think! And I do so want you to have time to savor the agony of your own asshole burning.

"Then I'll pick a new spot, maybe just the edge of your *cunnus*, or the soft pink insides of your inner lips, or the hood of your clitoris, or a nipple. I think we'll save your clitoris for last; I know how it thrills you when I touch you there!

"Yes, your clitoris! I want you to have time to think, each time I burn you, how much worse the pain will be when I start on your clitoris. How sensitive was it to a lover's tongue? Maybe I'll stretch it out with tongs, first, or – yes! – I'll have the surgeon use his razor to slice its hood and expose its full length before we play with it

"Oh, and I won't plunge this hot iron into your asshole or *cunnus* until I've thoroughly used you up. But we'll have plenty of time for all that!

"So now you understand the rules of our game, Antonia? When you lower yourself, I'll know that you're ready to play, and when you raise yourself I'll know you want to rest for a moment. You can only

escape the hot iron by holding yourself up on these nails in your feet for as long as you can."

"Oh God, no! Please domine, not that! Can't it be enough that they nailed me to this cross to die?"

"Good! I'm glad we understand each other! Oh, I see that your thighs are quivering and you're beginning to slip downward. You'll be ready to play soon, and I just need to step over to the brazier and get another heated iron – this one has cooled too much during our little talk. Maybe one of the smaller ones would be better; there are all sizes here to better fit the places where I'll put them!"

A few moments later, Antonia's piercing scream, the first of many, caught the attention of the crowd. Alerted to this new entertainment, they cheered excitedly each time her naked body jerked and twisted in response to another touch of the burning iron. Once they understood what was being done, they cheered Antonia on as she struggled desperately to keep herself raised on the cross, trying to avoid the burning agony that waited below when her legs failed her.

When Rufus walked away, her naked, tortured body still lived and would continue to do so for hours, but her mind had retreated into a hiding place of its own from which it dared not return.

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BRUTAL SPECTACLES FOR THE MASSES

A mass crucifixion of followers of a deviant Jewish sect known as Christianity forms part of the day's entertainment in the late first-century Flavian Amphitheater. In a society accustomed to torture and death, the cross was looked upon as the worst of all deaths – slow, agonizing and humiliating in the extreme. However, many Christians sought a

martyr's death, believing that the more hideous their suffering, the greater their reward in heaven.

In the foreground of the picture, Fulvia writhes in agony on her cross, naked and bleeding before the frenzied crowd who revel in her desperate struggles.

Along with the others she refused to recant her beliefs and worship the Emperor Domitian, give the sacrifices and libations. United in faith they resolved to face the worst that the Empire could do, willing to sacrifice the body for the glory to come. With visions of that glory, hand in hand they willingly stepped out onto the sand of the arena, blinking in the bright sunshine.

Then the soldiers roughly separated them and dragged each to the post and crossbeam that awaited him or her.

Alone without the others, before the thousands of jeering spectators, she found that she was terrified. When they began to rip off her clothing, she whimpered and fought in vain to hang onto the shreds of cloth. To the crowd, it appeared that she was trying to hold onto the last vestige of modesty. But Fulvia knew the ritual of crucifixion, and her mind screamed *when I'm naked they will nail me to the cross*.

And then she was naked, and the calloused hands of the soldiers gripped her soft flesh and forced her down onto the waiting timber. A grinning soldier straddled her, pinning her arms against the crossbeam while leaving her legs free to flail about. She felt the point of a wrought-iron nail pressed hard against her wrist and heard the thud of the hammer an instant before the pain registered. Her screams of pain were lost in the deafening cheers of the crowd as blow after blow of the hammer drove the spike through her wrist and deeper into the wood, so securely that she could never pull it out. There was very little blood.

With one wrist nailed to the crossbeam, Fulvia's struggles as they nailed her other wrist were much

weaker. When the soldiers stood up, she lay panting and moaning on the sand. Taking hold of the ends of the crossbeam, two of the soldiers pulled it the few feet to the upright post. Fulvia screamed and fought in vain to get her legs under her as they dragged her by her nailed wrists.

For a brief moment, Fulvia sat moaning with her back against the post, uncaring of the spectacle she presented to the crowd with her legs splayed wide and straight out in front of her. Then she felt the crossbeam shift as the soldiers knelt and moved their hands underneath it. She knew that they would lift it up to hang her on the cross, but the fact that this was imminent filled her with panic. The coming hours of torture were forgotten in her desperate

need to save herself from the agony of the next few moments. She scrambled to pull her feet up close to her buttocks so that she could stand up as they lifted her higher.

And then the soldiers began to lift, and Fulvia was screaming and begging them to stop as they pulled her up and the nails jerked and twisted in the wounds in her wrists. She managed to get her feet underneath her, supporting her body on quivering legs until for an instant she was able to stand. As the soldiers continued to lift, she stretched to stand on her tiptoes until even that was impossible and she was hanging by the nails in her wrists. Her legs flailed as her feet left the ground for the last time and, seeking any purchase available, found only the face of the timber behind her. Her attempts to press her feet against its vertical surface only served to push her hips forward or twist her body from side to side.

Fulvia's eyes were closed and her head thrown back in a scream as the mortise in the back of the crossbeam reached its matching mortise near the top of the post and slid back and down to lock in place.

Her body was jarred backwards and she felt the rough wood scrape against her bare buttocks as her feet slipped off of the post. She dangled by



her nailed wrists, swaying to and fro slightly as the cheers of the spectators and the tormented screams of her friends faded and she fainted. Her chin fell forward to rest on her chest, her legs twitched aimlessly and then her body sagged and went limp and motionless as her muscles relaxed.

A burning stab of pain in her right foot greeted her return to consciousness. She instinctively tried to pull her foot away from the source of the pain, but found that something held it. As full awareness returned, Fulvia found herself looking downward where one soldier gripped her left leg, pulling it out to the side of the cross. Several inches of an iron spike protruded from the top of her right foot where it had been placed against the timber, but no one held her right leg. The executioner drew his hammer back for another blow, and as Fulvia tried to jerk her foot away, she found that it was already too late for that.

The executioner finished driving the spike into her right foot and moved to nail her left. Fulvia watched in fascinated horror as the soldier pinned her left foot against the timber next to her bleeding right foot. As the executioner placed the point of a nail against it, she raised her head and fixed her eyes on the bright sky above the top of the huge amphitheater. She screamed and closed her eyes, arching her back as the nail pierced her foot, then sagged down again, grunting through gritted teeth as each successive blow drove the cold iron deeper, its rough surface rasping between bones.

And so we see Fulvia, one of many who decorate crosses in the arena for the amusement of Rome's citizens. As she struggles and writhes, naked and sweating before the crowd, the glory she envisioned seems very far off, lost in the reality of each moment's agony as her life drains away drop by drop over many hours. Dying on the cross as a martyr does not

lessen its pain nor speed the coming of death. There is also the continuing horror of the screams of others around her as the soldiers torture them on their crosses. There are whips, scourges, knives, pincers, hot irons and glowing red-hot nails, all of whose use is limited only by the soldiers' imaginations. Fulvia is terrified of what else they might do to her, a young girl naked and vulnerable on the cross. But she carries a burden of guilt because she cannot help but be thankful that as long as their attentions are on others, they will leave her alone. She prays for death to take her quickly, but she knows that there is still plenty of time for them to find her... And now Fulvia sees the soldier with his burning brand approaching, and she knows where it will go. Desperately, she pushes herself high on her nailed feet, straining muscles quivering partly with the effort and partly from the paralyzing terror of anticipation. She leans forward, pressing her buttocks against the timber and squeezing her thighs together in a panicked effort to shield her soft, sensitive *cunus* from the brutal torture.

As the soldier comes toward her, her terrified screams become hysterical. The soldier waits patiently while she exhausts herself and sinks down helplessly, the muscles in her legs locked in agonizing spasms. Hanging by her wrists, legs splayed widely, Fulvia is completely exposed to the soldier's attentions. She can only watch in fascinated horror as his burning brand comes closer. Its flame scorches her pubic hair as its tip disappears from her view between her legs. Her hysterical screams change to a long, agonized shriek as the tip of the brand finds the

opening of Fulvia's vagina, sizzling as it touches the pink flesh. Her back arches as the soldier rocks the brand from side to side to spread her open, then pushes it deep inside of her. As the soldier walks away, leaving the burning brand where he thrust it, Fulvia struggles desperately to dislodge it. But all her efforts serve to do is to fan the flames that burn brightly between her legs.







SPECIAL TREATMENT

The Romans perfected a variety of whips that a flagellator could use to torture his victims. These ranged from canes, rods and knotted leather whips designed to inflict superficial cuts and bruises all the way to scourges that could crush and rip flesh, often maiming or killing the victim.

Aurelia, a Christian girl who has been crucified in the arena, screams as she is tortured by a flagellator. She desperately pushed herself as high as she could on her cross to avoid the whip, but doing so left the front of her cleft exposed and vulnerable. Much to the entertainment of the crowd, the flagellator takes advantage of this to



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FLAGELLATION

Another flagellator uses his single-tailed whip on two naked Christian girls who hang nailed to their crosses in the arena. Pompeia, the girl on the right, stretches herself upward, groaning in agony.



Flavia, the girl on the left, hangs by her wrists with her legs exhausted and in agonizing spasms from her struggles. Despite her resolve to die as a martyr, the searing strokes of the whip on her naked body, already wracked by the relentless torture of the cross, have driven her past her breaking point. Helpless to escape the stinging lash, she screams abuse at her torturer, who remains unmoved and continues enthusiastically with his job.



concentrate the strokes of his cane where the searing blows will hurt the naked girl the worst – directly on her sensitive, unprotected clitoris.





THE AGONY

Marcia screamed in agony when the executioner drove nails through her wrists into the heavy crossbeam. But that pain was nothing compared to what she experiences now as all of her weight hangs by the nails in her wrists. She throws her head back and screams, feet flailing with no further thought of modesty, all of that blotted out by the pain that fills her mind.

Meanwhile, the executioner waits with his hammer and nails, ready to nail her feet to the cross when his helpers finish hoisting the crossbeam into place.

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INTO THE NIGHT

Auxiliaries from one of the southern German tribes prepare to torture three naked girls who have been crucified as followers of the illegal Christian sect. Auxiliaries fought with the Roman legions but often kept their own armor and weapons, and provided variety for the arena. Eriulf, in the foreground, draws back to deliver another stroke of the whip to Terentia, who grimaces in pain and arches her back from the first stinging blow between her legs.

Gadaric, in the background, examines Porcia as he decides how he will employ the burning brand he carries.

“Eirulf, I remember this one’s tight little *künt* from last night! But I think this bush of hair she has hides it too much.”

“Ja, I think she’s ready for something hot between her legs! Maybe you should give her a taste of your torch, Gadaric, to get her ready for my whip after it has kissed this one’s lips a few times! This girl is blushing from its last kiss. Or maybe her face is only red from screaming so much.”



“Ja, Eirulf, with so much hair the crowd can’t see our artistry! Look, this one is begging me for something – it must be the torch, that’s all I have for her!”

“She makes a lot of noise! Maybe you’re shaving her too close? You know, I love how much a girl’s nipples with the dark pink around them look like targets!”

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THE NUBIANS

Livia, a former harlot who left her calling to follow the Christian sect, hung by her nailed wrists, her naked body covered in a sheen of sweat as she writhed in agony on her cross before the thousands of spectators in the Flavian Amphitheater. *I’ve been naked in front of so many men! Why is this so humiliating?* Just then her body jerked in response to a sudden spasm that wrung a ragged moan from her throat. *It’s humiliating because I’m naked and they’re not, and won’t be. My torture and death is only an afternoon’s entertainment for them.*

She knew that her torture had only begun, and when she saw the two naked black Nubian slaves approaching, she knew that it was about to get much worse. Livia recognized them from times she had been to the arena as a spectator; Vectis and Canalis, The Crowbar and The Water Pipe, both of them Latin slang words for penis. It didn’t take much imagination to understand how they got those names; their male members were enormous and were always displayed when they were working in the arena. Sometimes Vectis and Canalis used them for raping, but often they just added to the show while the two Nubians were busy torturing young girls in other ways.

There would be no raping today. Livia watched as they each stooped and pulled something from the fire that blazed nearby.



She saw with horror that Vectis carried a flaming brand and Canalis a glowing hot iron as they walked toward her. *They are going to burn me with those*, she thought. Suddenly she felt even more naked and exposed than she had before. Now as we see Livia, she strains against the nails in her wrists and feet to escape the burning brand that sizzles against her anus. Hanging by her wrists, her head twisted from one to the other as the two Nubians separated to stand one in front and one behind her. Her attention was focused on Canalis for a moment and was unaware of what Vectis was doing behind her until the scorching pain sent her shooting upward, arching her back in a vain effort to escape it. To the onlookers, it looked as if she were riding the tip of the brand as the Nubian effortlessly pushed her up.

The jolt of pain from the nails is horrific as she struggles and twists her wounded wrists and feet around their rough, square shanks, and fresh blood dribbles down her arms and trickles down the timber below her feet. In the midst of her agony, she is terrified in anticipation of where the glowing hot iron held by Canalis, the Nubian in front of her, will go.

But that will come later. In a coordinated movement Vectis withdraws the brand behind while Canalis uses the tip of his iron in front to find her lower lips, causing her to jerk backwards against the cross. He does not quite touch the moist pink skin there, skillfully using the iron to scorch without destroying yet. There is a stench as the rough pubic hair crinkles and sings.

The further aggravation of her wounds, combined with the searing torture between her legs is too much, the cheers of the crowd fade, and she slumps downward to hang by her wrists, unconscious.

But her respite is brief, and as soon as the Nubians detect her return to consciousness, their game begins again.





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BURNT ALIVE

Crucifixion provided an erotic display of the naked victims as they struggled on their crosses, but the victims died so slowly that the Romans found it necessary to hasten their deaths to make way for other entertainment.

Crucified victims could be tortured in many ways to weaken them more quickly, with their nudity inviting special attentions to their private parts. Sometimes their legs were broken and they were allowed to slowly strangle to death, sometimes wild animals were released to tear them apart, and often, as depicted here, death came over a slow, roasting fire.

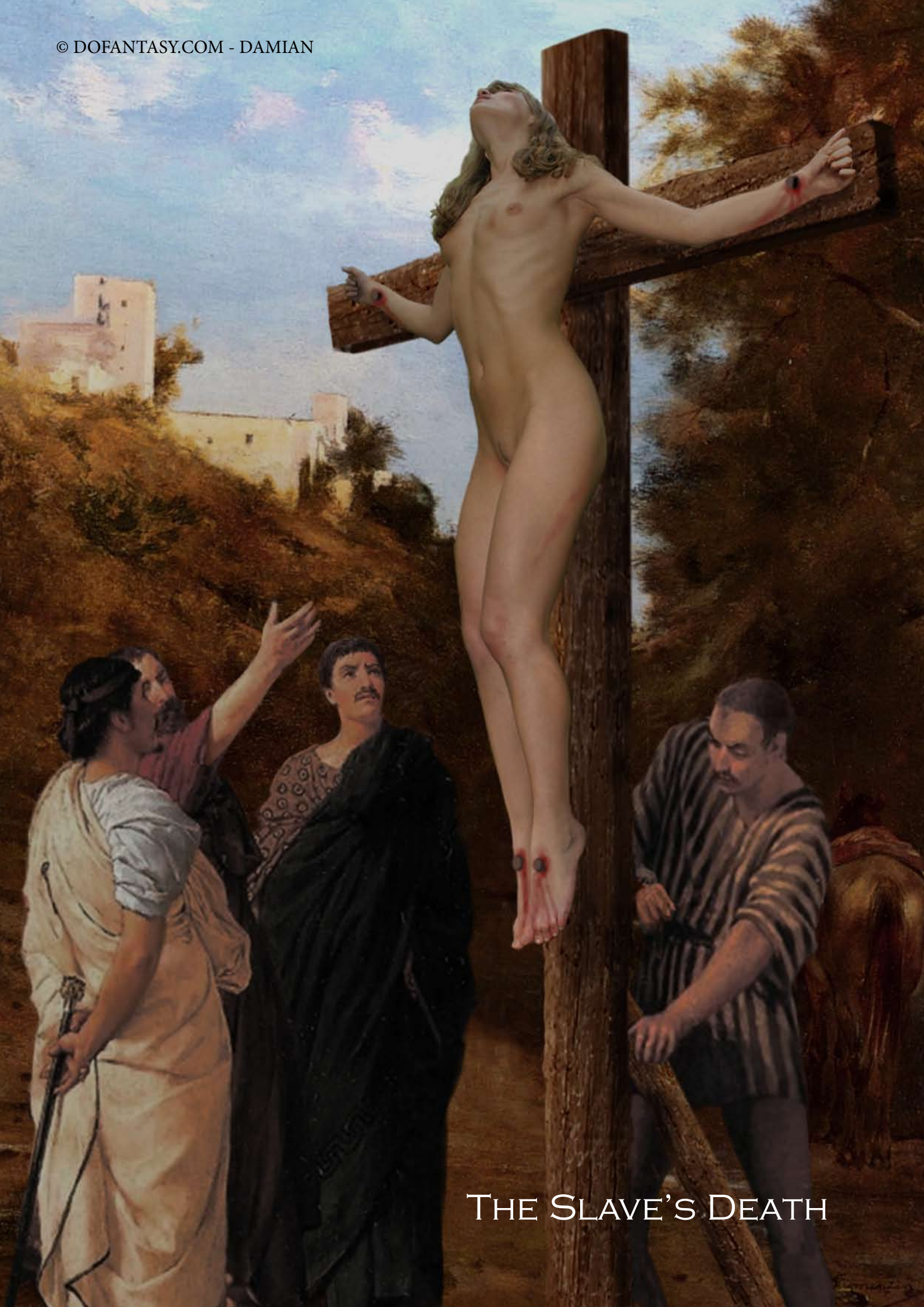
Tullia stretches herself upward and throws her head back, screaming in agony as the flames begin searing her nailed feet. Verina watches her in fascinated horror even as a soldier sets his torch to the wood that has been prepared beneath her own feet.

LEFT

Vistilia, a Gallic slave condemned as a follower of the Christian sect struggles on her cross as the heat from the flames below scorches her feet and legs. The fire will never be large enough to burn her to death; instead of being consumed, she will roast slowly, in terrible agony.

Since the flames will not rise up to her, her only chance to shorten her agony is to lower herself down into the fire, and resist her frantic urge to raise herself as the flames sear her naked body and blister her sensitive private parts. And this is the entertainment for the Roman crowd:

They will watch and place bets on whether she can force herself to endure the searing flames long enough for the heat and smoke to overcome her, or panic and push herself upward away from the flames, only to suffer an even longer, lingering death.



THE SLAVE'S DEATH

The slowest, most agonizing and humiliating of deaths was originally reserved only for the lowest of the low: slaves and those who rebelled against the authority of Rome. Even after its use was extended to encompass almost any criminal who was not a Roman citizen, and a few who were, it was commonly known as “the slave's death” or “the slave's punishment”. The words of a Roman magistrate condemning a person to the cross - slave or not - were “*pone crucem servo*”: “place the cross on the slave”.

Every Roman slave lived with the specter of the cross, knowing that crucifixion could be her punishment if she committed any crime, was rebellious, displeased her master in some way, or sometimes even did nothing at all. And there was no safety in numbers; the Romans on occasion crucified hundreds or thousands of slaves at a time.

Drusilla, a young Gaulish slave has been crucified near Neapolis under the orders of her master, Lucius Vaetinius Corvinus.

“She was a prime bit of *cunnus*, but she won't be whoring herself out any more behind my back. If it was just that, I could have sold her, but the tantrum she threw! Shouting and throwing things. Now I have no choice, the other slaves have to be shown what the punishment is for disobedience.”

“Gods, what a waste! I'd have paid a fair price for a tumble with that one, Corvinus!”

“You would have had to stand in line, Dardanus! She was sitting on a gold mine! Speaking of sitting, Antonius, when you get through bracing up that cross, go cut a stout piece of forked limb and sharpen it into a pointed *cornu* for her to rest her tight little ass on. Mount it up there between her legs where she can get to it when she gets desperate enough!”

“Good idea, Corvinus, that will give her something hard to fill her hungry *cunnus* with! It will remind her why she's on the cross, and she'll be a week dying if Antonius waters her often enough.”



A COLD DAY

We usually think of crucified victims suffering under the burning sun, but that was not always the case. Naked victims hung on their crosses in all kinds of weather, and perhaps those like Eulalia, shown here, were luckier than others. For the first few hours on the cross, she did not notice the cold at all as her continuous struggles warmed her and the agony of the nails far overshadowed any thoughts of that.

However, as her exhaustion increased, she began to shiver uncontrollably, and that made the torture of the nails even worse. It was only towards nightfall that her shivering stopped and the cold seeping into her body made her agony seem to fade. When she could no longer breathe, it was as if it was happening to someone else, and try as she might, she couldn't make herself care. And then her cold body grew even colder in the darkness.



FOR ALL TO SEE

Nudity was a part of the punishment of crucifixion according to Roman practice. Sometimes the condemned was stripped of her clothes immediately upon being sentenced, as all of her property was forfeit to the state, right down to the clothes she was wearing at the time. Sometimes the condemned was allowed to wear a loincloth on her way to her execution.

Either way, she was then forced to march naked or nearly naked through the streets, carrying her patibulum to the place of execution. For the Romans, who were nothing if not practical, this contributed to their goal of humiliating the victim while at the same time it advertised her execution and drew the crowd to watch. Usually the final preparation for crucifixion was stripping the victim of her loincloth, if she was wearing one. This was the signal to everyone, including the victim, that the crucifixion ritual had been set in motion and the brutal process of nailing the naked victim to her cross and raising her was about to begin.

The situation in Julia's case, shown here, was a rare instance. Although she knew that crucifixion meant utter humiliation she held onto some hope that she would be allowed to suffer the agony of the cross with some dignity after all. The executioner had not had her dress removed before he nailed her wrists and feet to the cross.

But that was not to be. As she hung there in growing agony, the magistrate who passed her death sentence upon her approached the cross. He pulled his toga back to bare his arms, and then roughly tore her dress down the front, exposing her breasts. In no hurry, he ripped the fabric where it fastened across her shoulders let it fall down around her nailed feet.

Now as he tears away the last covering she had, she is acutely aware of her nakedness as she feels the breeze that cools the moistness between her legs and hardens her nipples against her will. She is displayed utterly naked before the jeering crowd, an object of entertainment for them as she struggles under the slow torture of crucifixion. She turns her face away so that she cannot see her shame reflected in their eyes, but she cannot shut out their voices.

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THE MASTERS REVENGE

Galeria was dumbfounded when her master discovered her plans to poison him. In retrospect, she should have known that the other slaves would never take the chance of being executed along with her if she succeeded and the crime was found out. She was too young to remember what happened to the 400 slaves of Pedanius Secundus, all crucified because one of them murdered his master. But for the older slaves who had witnessed that mass crucifixion, it was an image that they would never forget.

That was yesterday, and after a sleepless night locked in an ergastulum, chained to the wall so that she couldn't take her own life and escape her punishment, she was taken at sunrise and turned over to the *Triumvir Capitaes* for execution. No trial was required; she was a slave, and the word of her master was sufficient to condemn her to the cross. She was turned over to the *Carnifex Servorum* to be crucified.

Within less than a half-hour Galeria was stripped to her loincloth and carrying one of the patibuli that were always stored and ready for use, on her way to be crucified. It was unbelievable, surreal; she couldn't grasp that this was really happening to her. But the rough timber scraped against her shoulder as she walked, and if she was too slow, the sting of the whip on her naked back or thighs hurried her along. She realized that the metallic sound she heard was the clanking of the nails against the executioner's hammer as he walked.

She struggled briefly, with all her might, when they tore her loincloth away and began forcing her down to lie on the patibulum to be nailed. The shock of the first nail piercing her wrist made her body writhe and strain against the soldiers who pinned her down, and the second one was no easier to take. But that was nothing compared to the agony she experienced when they dragged her by the wrists and hoisted her up on the cross before nailing her feet.



And now, after six hours of endless struggling and unrelieved agony, Galeria's spirit is trapped in her tortured body and her greatest desire is the escape of death.

"P-please," she croaks from her throat made hoarse by her agonized screams and groans, "please have mercy, your spear..."

But the legionary only laughs at her. "You'll hang on that cross for three or four more days before you die, slave. Besides, we don't get that many girls to crucify and we want you to entertain us for some time yet."

THE THREE WITCHES

In the Roman world, omens, auguries, spells and curses were regarded seriously, spirits guarded the crossroads and shades walked the moonless nights. So when Pliny the Younger, governor of Bithynia under the Emperor Trajan, had three young women brought before him to be judged for having conjured a curse against the person of the governor, he took it very seriously indeed.

Antonia, Helena and Ursula protested loudly that what the witnesses had seen was only a game, all done in jest.

But the witnesses' testimony was damning, none of the three were Roman citizens, and Pliny's judgment was swift: Crucifixion, sentence to be carried out immediately.

The girls stood in shocked silence as the soldiers immediately moved in around them and began methodically removing their clothing and jewelry, all of which was forfeit to the government of Rome.

As the soldiers unwound her strophium and her

soft breasts fell free, Helena was the first to whimper.

"No, please...", which triggered a sudden rush of panicked pleading from the other two, all of which was ignored by soldiers impervious to the pleading of condemned prisoners.

The soldiers continued stripping them, prying Antonia's hands from her loincloth; one of the soldiers pinned her arms behind her while another unwound it and pulled it from between her legs.

Ursula gave no resistance at all, still dazed and unable to believe the reality of their situation. When they were naked, bare of jewelry and even the pins that had held their long hair in place, the soldiers shackled their wrists in front of them and they were led out.

In some other parts of the Empire, the soldiers might have been instructed to leave the girls' loincloths on until they were at the execution site, but the citizens of Nikomedia, the Bithynian capitol, were perhaps even more casual about nudity than the Romans. There would be no loincloths for these three who, having entered the world naked and with nothing, would now leave it the same condition.

Decius Cestius Carinus, the centurion, had already requisitioned the materials for the execution: three patibuli, which now were on the shoulders of each of the three girls, twelve nine-inch spikes and a heavy hammer to drive them. There were three short wooden sediles, triangular in cross-section with the sharp edge up, wooden wedges for mounting them and an auger in case they needed a new hole in which to place them on the stipes, plus a quantity of rope. The stipes were already set at the execution site, a

grassy spot next to the busy road on the west side of town, less than a half-mile away; a journey of a quarter-hour even with these loaded, unwilling travelers. Antonia's yelp as one of the soldiers applied a sharp stroke of the whip to her bare backside signaled them to begin moving.

The news about the execution traveled quickly through the town and a crowd gathered to see the

procession as they passed, many joining in behind the soldiers and the naked girls with their wide eyes like terrified sheep, bearing the instruments of their own agonizing deaths. From time to time there were sobs from the girls, or heart-rending screams from a family member or friend who could only watch impotently, unable to hinder Roman justice any more than they could slow the progress of the sun across the sky.

The hobnailed sandals of the marching soldiers clattered loudly on the stone pavement in contrast to the soft padding of the girls' bare feet as the procession left Nikomedia through its western gate. They were close to their destination. The girls, having lived their whole lives there, knew exactly where they were and their terror turned to panic.

Ursula went down on her knees, refusing to go farther and sobbing loudly. She shrieked as a soldier laid his whip across her bare back again and again, raising long red welts. But Ursula had seen crucifixions before, and she knew that no whipping could be as bad as being nailed to a cross. The others also collapsed to their knees; their only hope was that someone would save them, Pliny would have a change of heart, some miracle had to happen if only they could buy just a little time!

But the soldiers, having performed many crucifixions, were familiar with this kind of behavior from the criminals they executed. They would not shorten their time on the cross by beating them senseless. Carinus ordered his legionaries to get the girls up and carry them if necessary for the last hundred paces or so to the place of execution.

And so within minutes they had reached what was, for the girls, their final destination. The soldiers distributed the patibuli in front of three of the weathered, blood-stained stipes that stood waiting for use and removed the girls' shackles. Antonia asked for a drink of water and was refused. They all stared in horror as the soldier carrying the heavy leather bag with its clanking iron nails set it and his hammer down next to the patibulum on the right. It was time for their cru-

cifixions to begin.

Helena felt a soldier grab her by the upper arm and began to beg, "No! Please, we're not witches, it was just a game, no..." Another soldier took her other arm and together they pulled and carried her the few steps to the waiting patibulum. As they turned her around and began forcing her down, she continued begging them, "Please, take one of the others first, not me! It was Antonia's idea! Oh gods, I didn't do anything! Antonia, tell them! Don't let them crucify me!"

But then they had Helena on the ground, wrists pinned to the timber, and the soldier pressed the point of a wrought-iron spike into her right wrist. He brought his hammer down hard with a practiced swing, transfixing her wrist to the timber.

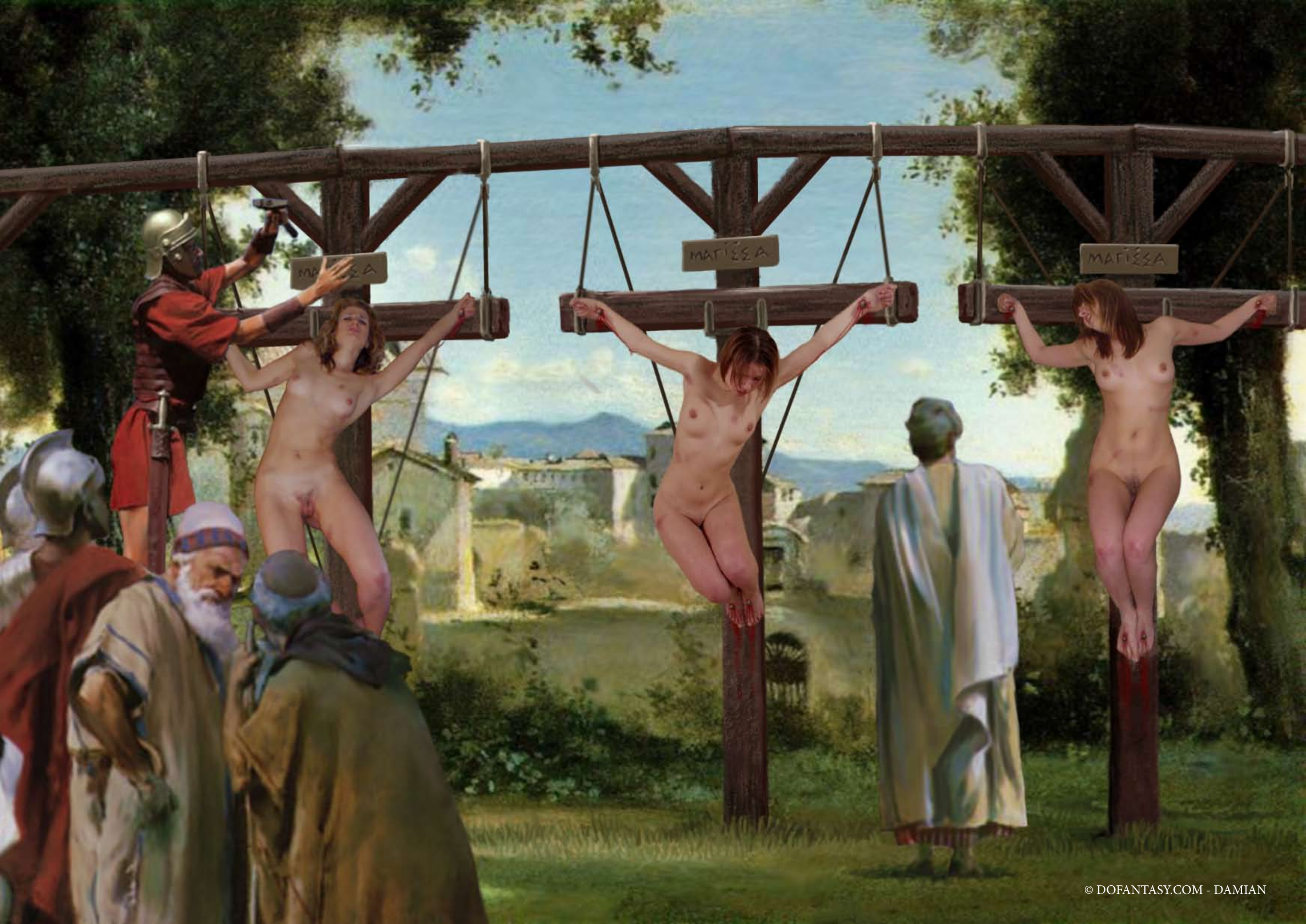
The nail seemed enormous in comparison with her tiny wrist. With one hammer blow, the possibility of a last-minute miracle to save her from the cross was gone.

Antonia and Ursula watched in horror as Helena's wrists were nailed to the patibulum. Her naked body twisted and writhed as the nails were driven in, rough iron grating against bone, each hammer blow punctuated by an agonized scream. There was not much blood as the nails effectively plugged the wounds in her wrists. Whatever modesty she might have had was lost in the agony and horror she felt as her body was joined to the cold iron and unyielding timber of the cross.

The place of execution at Nikomedia was unique in that the always-practical Pliny himself had planned and engineered it as a facility for crucifixion rather than simply a site where crosses could be placed. The row of a half-dozen stipes, or permanent upright posts, were joined by horizontal beams across their tops that formed a solid framework. Iron fittings mounted on the beams provided a place for hoisting ropes to lift the patibuli along with their victims and set them in iron brackets provided to support them.

Pliny had designed Nikomedia's place of execu-





tion in anticipation of its regular use as a solid, efficient machine of torture and death. He had sited it beside the busy road that carried traffic to and from Byzantium for maximum exposure. A thoughtful observer might notice that the grass at the base of each of the crosses was a much darker green, taller and thicker than elsewhere, and realize that it was all that was left of the many victims who had met justice there.

Once again the desperate piercing screams of pain resumed as the soldiers dragged the naked girl by her nailed wrists as they positioned the patibulum against the base of the stipes and laid it on the ground again, quickly slipping loops of the hoisting ropes over each end of the timber and cinching them tightly. Helena was still flat on the ground, chest heaving, but her arms were stretched above her head. She pulled her feet up close to her bottom, lifted her lower body and tried to push herself carefully upward in an effort to relieve the throbbing agony of the nails. Already conquered by pain, she was oblivious to the show this provided the onlookers. Her naked body was covered in a sheen of sweat.

Looking straight up at the stipes above her, Helena stared at the old nail holes and dried blood where others had been crucified on it. Her eyes darted between the two soldiers who stood to either side and behind the stipes grasping the ropes that would lift her up. As she watched, she saw them pull the two hoisting ropes taut and felt the patibulum begin to rise. Helena moaned in anticipation. They were about to hang her on the cross. In a moment, all of her weight would be hanging by the nails in her wounded wrists. She scrambled once again to get her feet up close to her bottom in a frantic effort to support her weight and avoid, at least for the next few seconds, the agony that would likely go on for days.

The pain as they hoisted her up was brutal. There was no pause, no chance to catch her breath and no mercy. Once the soldiers began pulling on the ropes, they continued until Helena's writhing, naked body hung by the nails in her wrists, feet dancing on empty air, searching for purchase on the stipes and finding none. The patibulum dropped into its iron

brackets with a "thunk" and the soldiers quickly tied off their ropes behind the stipes.

Most executioners nailed the victim's feet to the stipes immediately, but Carinus used a different procedure. Rather than wrestle her feet into place and nail them, he would simply let Helena hang and struggle until she was exhausted, unable to resist, and the pain in her wrists so intense that she might grasp at having her feet nailed as the only possibility for relief. Carinus had another motive; the girl's wild struggling added to the drama, and crucifixion was meant to entertain the crowd so that they would be attentive as justice was exacted. He ordered his men to bring one of the other girls, silent now as they stared in fascinated horror at the spectacle of their friend writhing on her cross.

When the soldiers gripped Antonia's arms and began dragging her toward her cross, she moaned in terror but did not beg. Just as they were about to force her down on the ground, her terrified eyes fastened on Carinus and she appealed to him, sobbing, "Wait! P-please, sir, c-could you just let me pee first? P-please sir, I-I'll be quick. It's all I ask, I don't want to, to lose control..."

The soldiers hesitated, but Carinus' reply was quick and decisive. "No, you may not. And if you piss on any of us when the nails go in, I can promise you that we will make you regret that. You are about to die the worst of deaths as Roman law requires, but I can make it even worse than that." Carinus hated anything that disrupted the continuity of his crucifixions, and he had heard all kinds of last-second pleas like this. Justice should be as harsh and unyielding as the timber of the cross.

In a moment, Antonia was being nailed to her patibulum and her powerful screams joined with the weaker moans of the still-writhing Helena, whose feet had not yet been nailed and who was now bathed in sweat and laboring to breathe. The onlookers watched avidly as Antonia was hoisted up onto her cross, writhing, screaming in agony, and with her feet flailing in search of support to relieve the awful torture in her wrists. Some noted how

Helena's chin dropped to rest on her chest as she fainted and hung motionless.

Carinus also noted this, but saw that her abdomen still pulsated beneath her distended rib cage. She was in no danger of asphyxiation, only fainted from the pain. "This one is ready to have her feet nailed," he said to his men, nodding toward Helena. "Wait until she wakes up in a minute or two. Better not to surprise her and have her kick. Let her see what you're doing."

Helena awoke and did not struggle when the soldiers placed the soles of her feet flat against the stipes, side by side. She groaned and her body jerked as the first nail entered her, and moaned through gritted teeth as it was driven home into the timber beneath. She arched her back as the second nail was driven in, groaning again because she no longer had the breath to scream. And then Helena was crucified.

Antonia continued to struggle as the soldiers came for the horrified Ursula. She collapsed to her knees, and the soldiers had to drag her all the way to her cross. When they turned her around to face the crowd, with her back to her cross, she sought out Carinus and appealed to him as Antonio had done.

"S-sir, p-please, I, c-can I ask one thing?"

"No, you cannot piss either. Crucify her!"

"N-no sir, it's not that..."

"What, then? Make it quick!"

Ursula sobbed. How hard it was to ask for something that so terrified you when the alternative was even more terrifying! "S-sir, p-please, when my wrists are... nailed and you... you hoist me up on the cross... p-please... oh gods!"

"What?" Carinus asked impatiently.

"P-please don't... let me hang like H-Helena and Antonia. Please nail my feet... nail my feet to the cross quickly!"

Carinus stared at the girl and saw desperation in her eyes. For a moment he was dumbfounded. Then he answered her.

"I will grant your request on one condition. When you've been hoisted up and you're hanging there, I will tell you to ready yourself to have your feet nailed. You will pull your feet up so your heels are

just below your ass, soles flat against the stipes, side by side. No one will hold your legs. Then you will ask me to nail one of your feet – you choose which one. "As soon as you do that, I'll direct Crispus to nail one of your feet to the cross. If you kick or move either of your feet, then you'll hang just like these other two witches until you're compliant. If you succeed in keeping still until Crispus finishes, then you may ask me to nail your other foot. I'll have Crispus do that and we'll be done crucifying you. Agreed?"

"Y-yes, I agree."

"Good. We'll see. Crucify her!"

And so Ursula endured having her wrists nailed and being hoisted up onto her cross. The agony of being suspended by nothing but her nailed wrists was blinding, but when Carinus told her to ready herself, she did manage to pull her feet up, all the way until her heels were pressed against her bare buttocks, just to be sure. She looked at Carinus, but the words wouldn't come. *How do you bring yourself to ask someone to drive a nail through your foot?*

She was on the edge of panic, shaking with fear. One foot slipped down the cross, then she gritted her teeth, pulled her foot back up next to the other one, looked down at Carinus and sobbed the words through gritted teeth, "S-sir, p-please... Oh gods! P-please nail m-my right foot to... to the cross!" Then she fixed her eyes on a point above the trees across the busy roadway, waiting, her heart pounding.

"Slide your feet downward a little."

Ursula looked down through tears at Crispus with his hammer and nails. "Slide your feet down. You have them jammed up against your ass. You'll be sitting on your heels, can't have that!"

She let her feet slide down some, braced herself, and looked away again. Her wrists and shoulders screamed with pain. *Concentrate. Be still no matter what.*

Ursula screamed as the nail tore through her right foot. Somehow she kept her legs locked in place while Crispus hammered the nail home, but she had to fight to remain conscious. She realized that the hammering had stopped. *Hurry. Do it now, before the shock wears off. Before the pain gets even worse.*

Ursula, unable to focus her eyes through tears of



pain, looked down at the shapes of people, sparkles of light in the dark edges of her vision, forced the words out. “Please, sir, n-nail my foot. Please, hurry I can’t h-hold on oh gods it hurts it hurts please hurry...”

Ursula felt the point of the nail against the top of her left foot. It took all of her will to keep still, fighting the stabbing muscle spasms that prodded her to move, made her groan helplessly. She forced herself not to look down. *If I see the hammer coming, I’ll jerk my foot away.* Her mind rebelled against holding her foot under the nail’s point even though the alternative was worse.

The space of a few heartbeats seemed like an eternity before Crispus delivered the first hammer blow, which drove the nail between the bones of her foot and into the timber, forcing a ragged shriek of agony from her throat. *Don’t look no don’t look!* Two more blows and it no longer mattered. The nail was already deep in the timber and could not be pulled loose. Ursula risked looking down, had to see. Crispus swung his hammer again, delivered a blow that vibrated the cross, made her breasts quiver as she looked down between them at her bloody feet. She watched, groaning with each of the four additional blows he delivered to drive the nail in until its head was against the top of her foot, solidly locked into the heavy timber. *Iron nails through my body. I’m part of the cross now. And I’m dying just a little every moment.*

Despite the searing pain when the nail entered her foot, she was relieved that she had avoided the horror she had seen the other two girls endure, what Antonia still endured. But the pain in her feet was growing, throbbing. She needed to push herself up on her nailed feet to relieve the horrible pain in her wrists, shoulders, chest. Although she might have avoided some of the torture that the other two experienced on being crucified, she had no less agony to look forward to as she suffered on her cross.

During the time the soldiers were focused on Ursula, Antonia took the opportunity to relieve herself, terrified that she would lose control of her bladder at the wrong time and draw even more punishment from the soldiers. By the time they finished with Ursula, Antonia’s breathing was shallow and difficult. Exhausted from struggling, she did not resist as the soldiers positioned her feet and nailed them to the cross. With that, all three girls now hang naked and crucified, displayed for the entertainment of the crowd and passers-by on the busy road, who stop to watch them for a time and then move on. We

see the three girls in the picture as a soldier nails the titulus above Ursula’s head with the single Greek word “Magissa” – witch. Antonia is in the center, and Helena is to her left.

Helena, the first to be raised on her cross, had struggled to push herself up on her bloody feet from whence she shouted abuse at Antonia for instigating the situation that has gotten them all crucified. Antonia cursed Helena and told her that they would have never been caught if it hadn’t been for her stupidity, so this was all her fault. This delighted the crowd and some of them pretended to take Antonia’s or Helena’s side, shouting abuse at one or the other: “Yes Antonia, some friend you are!” or “Stupid Helena! Got everyone crucified!” Some of the onlookers also jeered at them and asked them, since they were such great witches, why they didn’t work a spell to get themselves down from their crosses?

Now Helena’s exhausted legs are failing her and she slips down once again, grimacing in agony as her leg muscles go into spasm. Antonia’s head is bowed in utter humiliation. Ursula is lost in her own struggle in search of some relief from the agonizing pain.

The soldiers have not yet installed the sediles that will provide the girls their only respite from the intense pain in their wrists and feet. But the short, sharp-edged wooden seats are not intended as a mercy; they will exact their own price in pain as the girls, desperate for some relief, must sacrifice the tender area between their legs to the bruising pressure as the narrow edge presses deep into their soft flesh under their weight. At the same time, they will slow the exhaustion of the victims, extending the time that they suffer before dying.

The torment of crucifixion is all about choices, surrendering one part of the body to torture in order to get temporary relief in another. Set high enough that the victim must raise herself to sit on it, the sedile projects only about six inches from the face of the cross, making it a precarious seat. Relaxing too much means that the victim inevitably slips off.

For Ursula, Helena and Antonia, the long, slow journey in agony is just beginning. It will only become more excruciating as they hang on display during the long hours and days to come. And the three young, naked girls, completely exposed and helpless, can only anticipate more tortures from the fertile imaginations of their tormentors to add to their suffering.

NEXT PAGE

THE CONTRACTOR

Roman masters had the power of life and death over their slaves. Punishment of slaves was often carried out by other slaves in the household, under the supervision of the master, as we saw earlier in the case of Drusilla. Roman citizens could also turn over a slave who had actually committed a crime to the *Triumvir Capitaes*, a magistrate similar to a modern police chief, and *Carnifex Servorum* or executioner for slaves (carnifex literally means “meat maker”) as in the case of Galeria whom we also saw earlier.

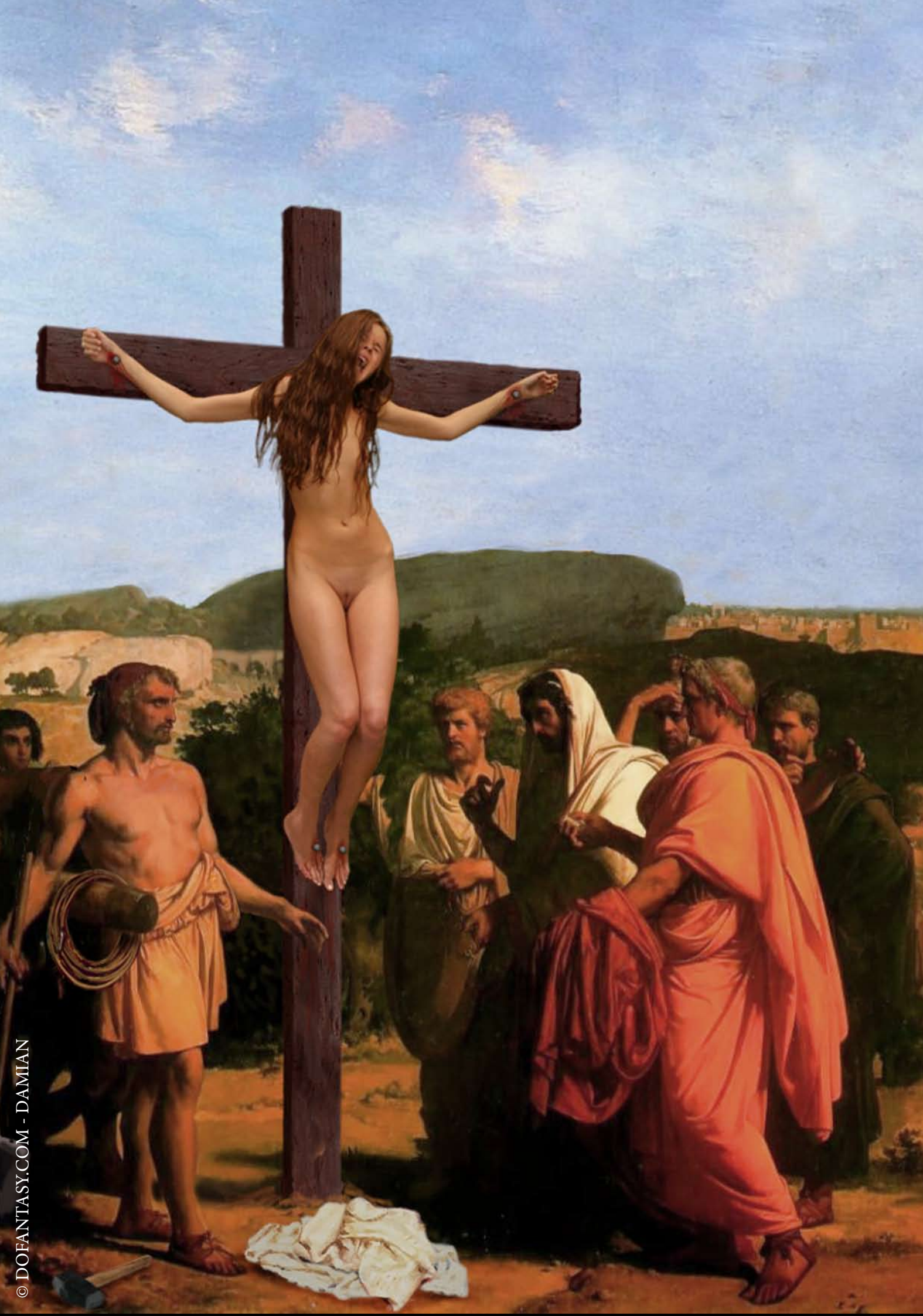
Yet another option were the contractors who could be commissioned to perform any kind of punishment required. An inscription found at Puteoli (modern Pozzuoli) gives the regulations such contractors were to follow:

“If anyone wishes to have a slave -male or female- punished privately, he who wishes to have the punishment inflicted shall do so as follows. If he wants to put the slave on the cross or fork, the contractor must supply the posts, chains, ropes for floggers, and the floggers themselves. ... The magistrate shall give orders for such punishments as he exacts in his public capacity, and when orders are given (the contractor) is to be ready to exact the punishment. He is to set up crosses and supply without charge nails, pitch, wax, tapers, and anything else that is necessary for this in order to deal with the condemned”

...(The Roman World: A Sourcebook, David Cherry, editor, Blackwell Publishers 2001, pp. 26-27; text translation from J. F. Gardiner and T. Wiedemann, The Roman Household: A Sourcebook, London 1991, pp. 24-26)

Arria fights the agony in her feet, shifting her hips a little to take the weight off of her right leg in response to the stabbing pain of a muscle spasm.

The searing pain of concentrating all of her weight on the bloody iron spike in her left foot wrenches a piercing scream of anguish from her throat which is heeded not at all by the men who stand around



the base of her cross discussing her fate. Her only alternative is to allow herself to sag downward on her exhausted legs and hang by her throbbing wrists again. Even now she feels her bare, sweaty bottom slip against the rough timber.

Her bare bottom. Despite her desperate struggle against the pain, she cannot escape the continual reminders of her of her own humiliating nakedness, which is a part of her punishment. Yesterday the firm, rounded cheeks of her naked bottom were being cupped and squeezed by the powerful hands of her lover as she thrilled to the feel of his throbbing hardness plumbing her depths again and again, both abandoned to their passion, delighting in each others' bodies.

Today, she presses the straining cheeks of her naked bottom against the hard, unyielding timber of her cross, lost in an exhausting struggle against unrelenting agony. Her nudity and helplessness in the midst of this busy public place near Neapolis where fully-clothed people walk freely below her calls the attention of all to the fact that she has been singled out for punishment; that she no longer possesses anything, neither clothing nor even her own body, which now belongs to the executioner.

The heat of the Campanian summer sun on her bare skin and the breeze from the Bay of Neapolis that cools the sheen of sweat that covers her remind her continually of her nakedness. And particularly, when exhaustion forces her to hang by her wrists and her legs are splayed in an obscene squatting position, there is the unaccustomed feel of the air moving between her thighs. It slips between the moist pink lips of her open cleft, stirring tiny wisps of her pubic hair and reminding her how completely nude and exposed she is. Exposed not only to the sun and breeze, but to the eyes of anyone passing by who cares to look. Because the humiliating fact is that anything the breeze can explore, their ravenous eyes can freely devour as well. What truly terrifies her as she struggles helplessly in response to the relentless pain is the knowledge that the most sensitive places of her naked body will be repeatedly violated not only by the eyes of the crowd, but by the implements of the merciless torturer.

Her secret crime is exposed to all as well. Arria was the concubine of Placus Norbanus Hirpinus, who we see in the foreground of this picture, to the right of the cross on which she hangs crucified. "Was" is the operative word, because the condemned are considered dead already. Under the

laws of the Roman Republic, a man was entitled to execute his adulterous wife; a concubine had even less legal rights, especially one who was not a Roman citizen.

There is no fury worse than that of a betrayed lover; Hirpinus not only wanted Arria executed, he wanted to make of her a public example, salvaging the loss she dealt to his *dignitas* with the display of her shame and suffering. The longer and more cruel the display, and the more people who saw it, the better. He needed the services of someone experienced in meting out punishment.

Everyone in the Campania knew the reputation of Quintus Mamilius Torquatus. He was the best at what he did, which happened to match exactly with what Hirpinus needed. Torquatus is standing on the left side of the picture, still holding the shovel he has been using to fill in the hole at the base of Arria's cross as he discusses the details of her punishment with Hirpinus.

"Yes, I have the titulus here, worded in Latin and Greek. The text says 'Arria adultress - concubine of Placus Norbanus Hirpinus'. The letters are chiseled into the wood so they will be readable long after the paint fades. Her example will go on long after the crows pick her bones clean." Torquatus possessed a powerful deep voice with which he could effortlessly make himself heard through the screams and moans of his victims. Hirpinus, on the other hand, had to repeat himself or wait until one of Arria's screaming fits subsided to resume speaking.

"Good. I want this cross to be her only monument when her bones are scattered. Even those who never met her will know that she was an adulteress and that..." Hirpinus paused during another of Arria's agonized screams. "...I exacted a just payment from her for her crime. Now, to business. You said you had some further details to settle?"

"Yes," Torquatus boomed. "You may wish to choose the type of sedile she will have. I have four types here, three of them wood and one of iron. The wooden ones are a plain narrow-edged one, a saw-toothed one and a *cornu* with a horn that will penetrate her ass or *cunnus*. The iron one is just a big square headless spike. One edge goes up for her to rest on. Nice solid look to it but not necessary for a lightweight girl like her. Wooden ones are just as good. You want her to last a long time then the sedile is important."

"A very long time, Torquatus! You've earned a reputation for that. What's your recommendation? You're the expert!"

"The *cornu* would be best. She plugs that horn up her ass and she won't slip off when she's exhausted. Painful, as you can imagine, having to stretch her *podex* over the horn, but makes them last a long time in my experience. And she's got another choice for where to put it when her *podex* wears out! It's more interesting for the crowd to watch, and more humiliating for her, too, than one of the other sediles."

"Good! How long do you think she might last?"

"I can certainly get three days out of her if we keep her watered. She's strong, no extra weight on her, so she might make four or five days but you know that time after three days costs extra."

"I'll pay you double your fee if you make her live four days, triple for five. Every day longer you can make her suffer I'll multiply your fee accordingly. I'm a wealthy man and I'll gladly pay to see this whore suffer for a week on the cross!"

"Done! And you realize that there's an extra charge for this tall *crux sublimis* we had to build? You know that normally we just use a short *crux humilis* like the ones that are already planted here and re-use them over and over. Since you want this one to be used only for Arria here, you have to buy it outright."

"Money well spent! She never looked better stretched out on my bed than she does stretched out on that cross!"

Just then a glob of spittle spattered in the dust between Hirpinus and Torquatus. Arria, who could clearly hear the conversation about her was striking back in one of the only two ways she had left to her.

"We should give her a little distance, gentlemen," Torquatus chuckled. "Crucifixion victims will spit on you and piss on you too, given the chance, although the men have a longer range!"

The men moved away, watching warily in case she launched another soggy missile their way. Arria slipped down the last few inches to hang by the nails in her wrists. The crowd that had gathered to drink in the sight of this naked red-haired beauty, displayed on her tall cross as she struggled in agonizing pain, laughed at her as she screamed abuse at

Hirpinus. Here was one who would entertain them for some days!

RIGHT

"JUSTICE"

It all started with the excited shouts of the guards that brought the centurion running and woke everyone in the house. The General, Lucius Statius Murcus was dead, stabbed to death in his office and left lying on the marble floor in a pool of blood. Both the centurion and one of the tribunes had met with Murcus earlier and left him still at work in his office.

Sextus Pompeius arrived quickly, almost too quickly, at Murcus' villa in Syracuse. And with amazing speed, he got to the bottom of the matter and identified two of Murcus' slaves as the murderers even though no one could imagine why or how they accomplished the deed. There was no trial, no evidence presented. Pompeius ordered all of the slaves in Murcus' house to be crucified immediately.

Sulpicia was among the two dozen frightened slaves whom the soldiers herded together, not knowing why or what was about to be done with them. It was not until they were driven out through the villa's gate and saw the hastily-built crosses laid out on the hillside and soldiers building more that they understood with horror what their fate was to be and began to wail and beg for their lives.

Then they were hauling Sulpicia, wide-eyed with terror, away from the group toward a tall cross that was prepared for her. The soldiers tore open her simple tunic as they dragged her by the arms, exposing soft breasts that jiggled in response to her struggling. When they reached the base of the cross, they turned her around with her back facing it and pulled the remains of her tunic off of her. She wore nothing underneath, having simply thrown on the tunic quickly in her rush to see what the commotion was earlier.

What followed seemed to happen very quickly. The soldiers lifted the naked girl between them and carried her the few feet back along the length of the cross to its crossbeam, dropping her there on the



timber. One of them was quickly astride her body to hold her down while pinning her left wrist to the crossbeam. Another restrained her right arm against the timber as well. The executioner was kneeling there waiting with his hammer and nails, and as soon as her wrist was pinned, he fitted the point of a wrought-iron spike against it and brought down his hammer. Sulpicia's screams of terror changed to piercing screams of anguish as the hammer fell again and again.

When they had nailed both her wrists to the crossbeam, the soldiers began raising her cross. Sulpicia watched the world tilt around her and felt her naked back begin to slide down the timber as it became more vertical. She was helpless to avoid the jarring agony that was coming when they dropped her cross into its hole. She pulled her feet up and planted her soles flat against the timber, hoping to get enough purchase to lessen the pain at least. And then she screamed, feeling herself falling as the upright post tipped over the edge of the hole and slid downward.

The impact when it struck the bottom of the hole was worse than anything she could have imagined. Its force jolted the air from her lungs, cutting off her scream suddenly. It wrenched and twisted her wounded wrists around the square nails as it jerked her arms taut. Her breasts continued their downward motion as her body stopped, rebounding and bouncing several times before coming to rest. Carried by its momentum, the cross tilted forward and came to rest with the naked girl hanging like a grotesque marionette, writhing in space, suspended only by the nails in her wrists.

The only sound for several seconds was the creaking of the crossbeam against its upright as Sulpicia's nude body swung slowly back and forth on the nails, her face a mask of agony. Then she found the breath to scream again, and continued to do so, a series of tortured screams punctuated only by brief silences when she drew in the breath she needed in order to scream again. Her body writhed and twisted, then grew still and relaxed as she fainted.

The soldiers began filling in the hole at the base of the cross, at the same time adjusting it so that it stood more nearly vertical. Sulpicia returned to screaming consciousness while they were doing this, but eventually her screams became weaker. By the time the soldiers took hold of her legs and placed the soles of her feet against the cross in preparation for nailing them, she could only moan in agony.

She watched in horror as the first blow of the exe-

cutioner's hammer drove a spike through her right foot and into the cross, screaming as the nail entered her, groaning with each successive blow of the hammer. She did not watch as he nailed her left foot, but her body stiffened and she groaned in pain.

By this time there was a cacophony of screams and moans around her as her fellow slaves, male and female, young and old, were being crucified as well. The one question that continued to haunt each of them through their days of agony was, who killed Murcus?

That answer would not be known for some time, but eventually the truth did come out. Sextus Pompeius had bribed the tribune and centurion to kill Murcus, and then he had sacrificed the lives of all of these innocent slaves on the cross to cover his crime.

And so we see Sulpicia, naked and struggling in unbearable agony as she slowly dies on the cross through no fault of her own whatever. Tetricus, one of the soldiers assigned to guard the condemned while they die, taunts Sulpicia with one of the implements of torture with which he plans to make her intimately acquainted shortly. Perhaps he is asking her where she would prefer that he put it - she has two choices, neither of them good.

RIGHT

Lucilla may be one of the luckier slaves that ended her life on a Roman cross, as her suffering was measured in hours rather than days. The first time she tried to escape from her master in Picenum, she was stripped naked and flogged in the forum, near the slave market. This time her master instructed the *fugitivarii* that she was to be crucified wherever they caught her.

She was not hard to track as she headed north, just as she had the first time, hoping to lose herself among her mother's people, the Helvetii. But the slave hunters caught her, took their pleasure with her and then nailed her to a cross to die. Naked and shivering in the cold winter wind, she knows that she will not see another sunrise.

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THE SLAVE MARKET

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HUMILIATION

One punishment that was applied only to slaves and only by their masters was “A Taste of the Cross”. Every slave lived with the specter of the cross, a threat that was always there and could be invoked for any reason - or no reason at all.

Sometimes disobedient, lazy or otherwise defiant slaves could find themselves in the position of Alypia, as shown in this picture. Tied naked to a cross in the slave market, she is getting a taste of what will happen to her if she does not mend her ways quickly.

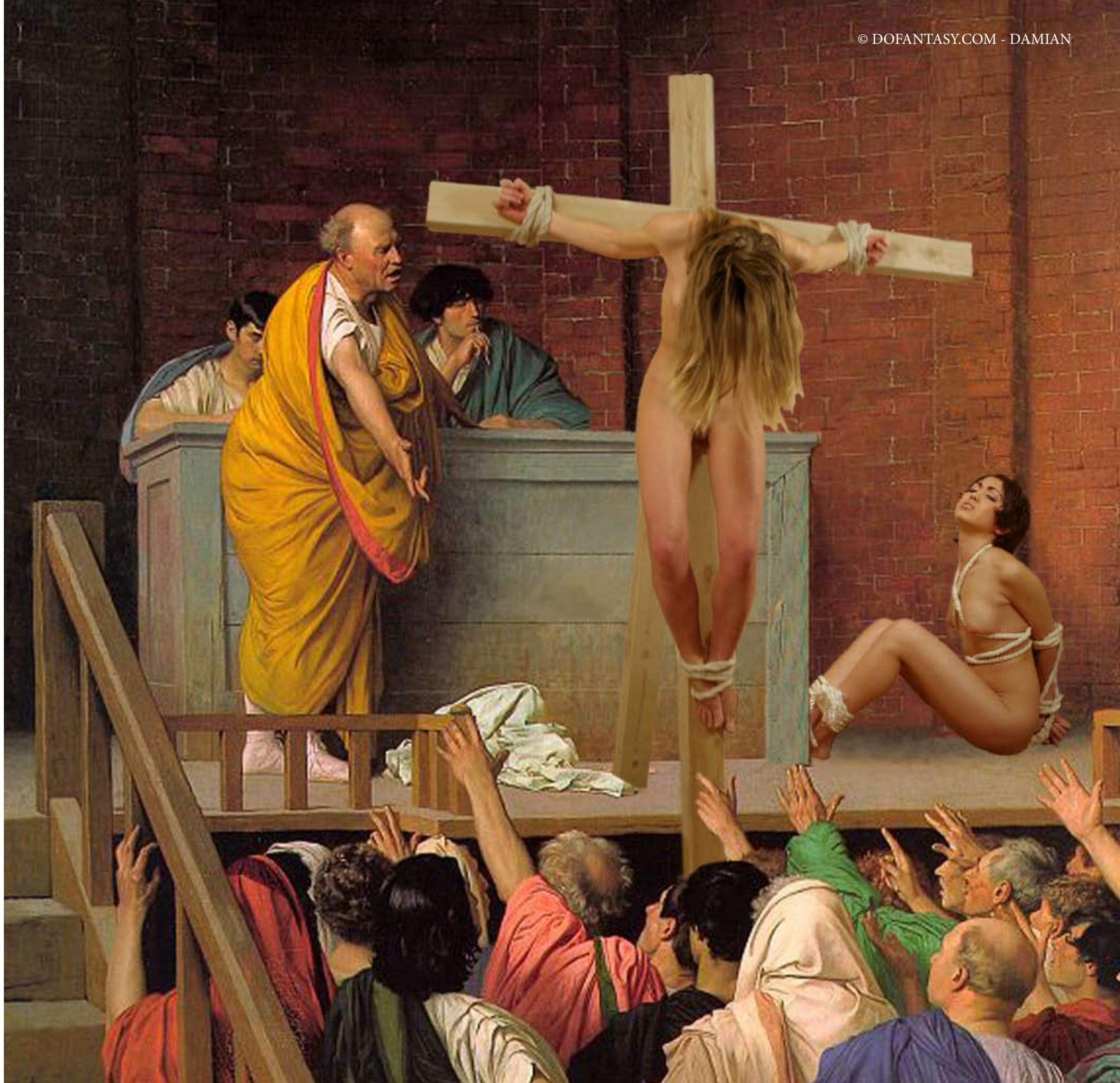
For now, she experiences the shame of being displayed helpless and naked on a cross in a public place for two days while the passers-by look, touch, pinch her nipples and fondle her sex at will. Her humiliation is intense as the two men in front of her discuss the size of her breasts, shape of her nipples, etc. And yet she knows how much more humiliating and agonizing it will be if her master is displeased one more time and sends her to be crucified.

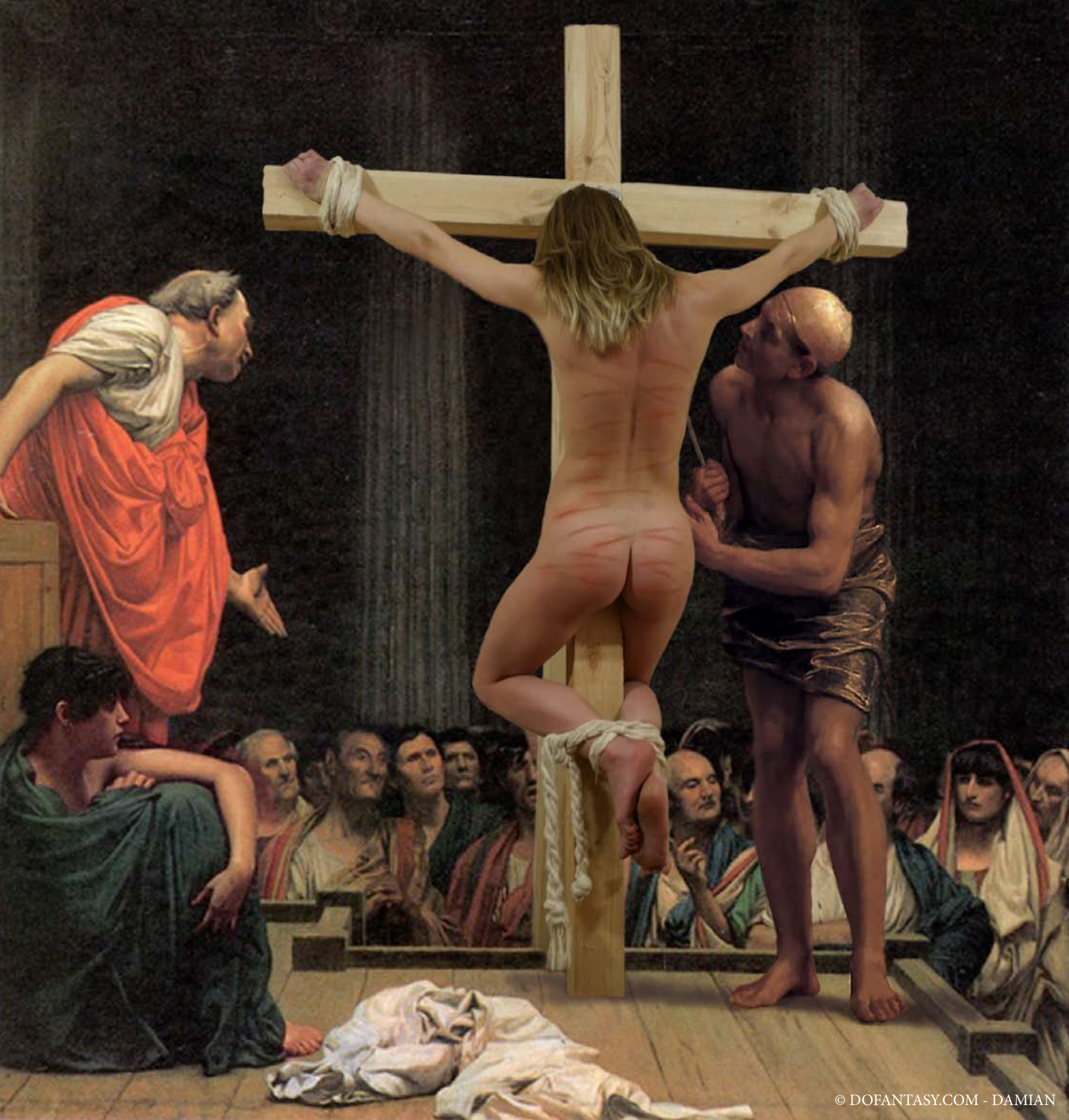
RIGHT

This is Porcia's last chance. As a defiant, disobedient slave, she hangs on a cross in the slave market with her life in the balance as the auctioneer calls for bids.

If no one meets the minimum bid her master has set, she will be taken down, a patibulum placed on her shoulders, and she will be taken away to the place of execution to be crucified.

Porcia knows what is coming. The bids are not high enough, and her only hope to avoid the agonizing torture and humiliation of crucifixion is if she can overcome the shame of her naked display here on this cross in order to plead with the bidders to buy her, promise to be good, promise whatever they want if any of them will only save her.





In later times the cross was a symbol of Christianity, but in ancient Rome it was a symbol of the worst kind of death and humiliation. Thus, for a person to be stretched out in a cruciform position for punishment was an additional humiliation and one that allowed a slave to imagine how it might feel if she were to have to endure this ultimate punishment.

So it is that Fabia receives a public whipping while tied naked to a cross before a crowd of spectators who all enjoy the entertainment of her torture and humiliation. Meanwhile, Aelia, another slave, witnesses what is being done to Fabia. She waits her turn as she cowers and pulls the cloak tighter that covers her nakedness, fearing the moment when they will pull it away and stretch her out on the cross before the jeering crowd for her flogging.



THE SPOILS OF WAR

PREVIOUS PAGE

THE CONQUEST OF GAUL

Between 57 - 52 BC the Roman army under the generalship of Gaius Julius Caesar conquered all of the Gallic tribes within what is now modern-day France. In the process, well over a million Gauls were killed and many more enslaved.

In the Spring of 52 BC, the Romans besieged the Bituriges city of Avaricum, considered by the Gauls to be impregnable. Vercingetorix and his armies had instituted a “scorched earth” policy, leaving the Romans without any sources of food for many miles around.

The Roman legions were forced to erect monumental earthworks and siege towers, spending months under miserable conditions of hard labor and little food, harried all the while by the Vercingetorix at their flanks.

When Avaricum finally fell, the Romans wreaked a mighty vengeance on its inhabitants, mercilessly killing more than 40,000 old men, women and children who remained in the city.

Only after they grew tired of raping her did they drag Sulis, along with the other young, pretty girls whom they wanted to display, through the smoke and bodies and blood-soaked streets to the city walls.

The insides of her thighs were crusted with dried semen from the soldiers who had violated her, some from in front and some from behind, and her tender vagina and anus made it painful to walk.

O Taranis! Please let them just kill us rather than sell us to the slave traders, she prayed.

But the gods are fickle, and sometimes their answer to prayer is not precisely that for which we asked. Sulis heard the moans of agony before she saw the others crucified already on the walls of the city and knew what her fate would be.

The Romans call us cruel because we send human offerings to our gods by burning them alive in wicker cages, but nothing we have ever done compares

with the brutality of a Roman cross.

Being crucified was like being raped again; there was the feel of the soldiers' calloused hands and hard muscular arms against her naked skin, the smell of sweat, smoke and leather as they forced her down, pinning her arms to the timber crossbeam. She screamed and her naked body writhed as another soldier drove iron spikes through her wrists and into the wood. Then there was a jerk, and she was being dragged by her wrists, scrambling to get her feet under her and save her wrists if only for a moment as the soldiers began hoisting her up.

Sulis screams in agony as the Roman soldiers and their auxiliaries heave on the ropes, raising her up to be crucified at the gate of Avaricum among the other hundreds of naked victims who sweat and struggle there already, almost all of which are women. The pull and twist in her wounded wrists and her shoulders feel as if they are being pulled out of their sockets as she hangs, legs flailing uselessly. The Romans will allow her to struggle until she is exhausted before nailing her feet.

Hundreds of vanquished Gauls, nailed to these makeshift crosses, struggle in a vain search for any relief from the pain. Their suffering will be drawn out for days on end as they struggle to relieve their stretched, cramping muscles and endure the constant fight for breath, their lives slowly wrung out of them until the release of death comes.

In the Gauls' beliefs, death is merely a transition from this world to the next, not something to fear. But the Romans have turned that into a horror by imprisoning their very souls in their tortured, agonized bodies with no hope of escape until the last drop of their strength runs out.

NEXT PAGE

PUBLIC TORTURE

Titus Labienus had a well-deserved reputation for cruelty despite the fact that he was a military genius who would eventually sorely test Julius Caesar during the Roman Civil War. But in 54 BC he was one of Caesar's legates in Gaul, in command of a fortified camp on the Mosa River in Gallica Belgica, and thousands of Gauls under the command of the king of the Treviri, Indutiomarus, were massing for an attack that could obliterate the Roman camp.

Labienus' strategy was to pre-empt the Gauls' attack, but his plan required an element of surprise. He suspected that there were Gallic spies among the local women - some four hundred of them - who worked inside the camp; unable to identify the culprits, he had all of them taken at once and killed.

Maia was in shock. One moment she was laughing along with some of the young legionaries for whom she cooked every day. Then there was the sound of a horn she barely noted, a shouted order from a centurion that must have been coordinated with every centurion in the camp, and suddenly the laughter stopped and her world changed.

The soldiers seized every woman within the palisades, including her, and began roughly herding them all toward the central square. There they were crowded together, whimpering in fear, and made to sit on the muddy ground as guards took their places around them.

Maia could smell the fear among them; strong, like the smell of the green rot that eats bronze. Everyone knew what Titus Labienus was capable of doing - death or worse. A few of them did not have to wait long to find out.

The women had begun to calm down a bit when a dozen soldiers marched up, led by a centurion. He looked across the sea of women's faces, pointed to one, then another and another. Legionaries rushed to seize the ones he selected, dragging them into a wailing group of six or so. The soldiers marched their terrified prisoners away, into a walled assembly area where Labienus customarily addressed his

officers and men.

Not a word was whispered among the hundreds of women seated on the ground and there was scarcely a breath as all strained to hear anything that would give them a sign as to what fate awaited them. Presently, after what seemed like an eternity, the silence was broken by a shrill, piercing scream of utter agony. Some of the women began to sob and some buried their faces in their hands as more tortured screams and pleas for mercy followed.

The sounds of torture seemed to go on for hours, although the shadows indicated that not a quarter of the day had passed by the time the last weak gurgles of pain ceased from within the walled enclosure.

And then there was a murmur of fear from the huddled crowd of women as the distinctive rattle of weapons on armor told them that the legionaries were returning for another group of them. All of the women strained to keep their heads down, to not meet the searching eyes of the centurion.

Maia's eyelids were clenched shut, head down, trying to make herself as small as possible, paralyzed with terror. She did not risk a look even as she heard two of the legionaries pushing their way through the crowd, each of the women they touched moaning in fear.

Don't look. They will take someone else, not me. Not me, please not me! But then Maia felt their calloused hands seize her shoulders and they were hauling her to her feet. Like the others she moaned in terror as they dragged her to join the cowering group of women they had collected for torture.

The soldiers pushed and shoved Maia and the others along towards the entrance to the enclosure, and then they were inside.

Maia registered the stink of burned meat, scorched hair, blood, and then she saw the naked, limp bodies of the girls they had taken before, sightless eyes staring, carelessly piled in a corner as if they had been used up and discarded. She felt her knees give way and collapse, and then two of the soldiers were dragging her by her arms.

When they reached their destination, the soldiers pulled her once again to her feet and began stripping her of her clothes. Shaking with terror, she could not resist, even when they pulled away her loincloth and left her standing naked before the crowd of Roman



officers who lounged about as if waiting for a show to begin. As indeed they were, and Maia was a part of the show. She lost her balance and fell, screaming as the soldiers pulled her backward, dragging her onto the cross that awaited her.

In a moment, they had Maia's wrists nailed to the crossbeam, and just as quickly they were lifting the cross and Maia along with it. She moaned as she felt her naked buttocks sliding along the rough wood, tried to clasp the timber with the sides of her feet, completely helpless. She screamed again as the cross tipped over into its hole and slid suddenly downward, but her scream was cut off suddenly by the jolt of it hitting the bottom of the hole, jerking her arms taut. The pain in her wounded wrists and shoulders was agonizing.

As the soldiers trapped her flailing legs by looping rope around her ankles, her eyes focused on a face near the front of the crowd; Titus Labienus, lounging on his seat which was covered by his blood-red cloak. He held a cup in his left hand, his eyes were half-closed, and there was a calm smile of ecstasy on his face. Labienus rarely had such an opportunity to satisfy his sadistic desires, and he had never had so many beautiful girls to torture. His smile widened, listening to Maia's piercing screams as a soldier drove nails through her feet. Maia hung helplessly on her cross as the torturer prepared to begin his work on her.

Now we see Maia in the foreground of this picture, screaming in agony as her torturer applies the red-hot iron to her naked skin and once again asks her the names of the spies, an answer she does not have. But the questions are only a pretext. Titus Labienus sits on his red cloak with his cup of wine in hand in the right side of the picture, a smile of satisfaction on his face as he enjoys the sight of these naked, sweating, Gallic women struggling on their crosses, dancing frantically to the direction of their torturers. Their desperate screams are like the songs of the Sirens, enchanting and captivating him. His manhood has been almost painfully erect for hours.

I'll need a girl for my bed tonight, he thought, young, firm and pretty. I'll promise her life, then tomorrow, after the battle, I'll crucify the captured rebels and all these wenches along with them. All of them, including her.

The next few days promised to be very exciting indeed.

SETTING AN EXAMPLE

Those condemned to crucifixion in the distant Roman provinces were often hung on makeshift crosses constructed of whatever wood was at hand. Following a siege, there was always plenty of timber available from siege towers and fortifications that were of no further use. In Gaul, there was always timber at hand for a makeshift cross such as the one on which this victim struggles.

Briga was captured by the Romans as she danced with other druid priestesses in the grove near their village. They were executed summarily and crucified next to a road in order to display them as an example of Roman justice to any rebellious Gauls who saw them.

Now she desperately fights to avoid the hooked iron sedile between her legs, the point of which has already slipped into her vagina. The way the soldiers have nailed her feet, it will be impossible for her to protect her exposed genitalia from its torture. But as painful and humiliating as it is, it will support her body's weight and prolong her suffering longer than otherwise.





Roman soldiers impale a crucified female druid on a sharpened wooden spike between her legs.

"Let her down slowly, Lucius!"

"What was that? I couldn't hear you over her screaming! I think you're squeezing her tit too hard."

NEXT PAGE

CEASAR'S PLEASURE

Julius Caesar promised Vercingetorix amnesty for the Gauls within Alesia in return for his surrender. But his amnesty did not extend to the druids, whom Caesar both hated and feared for their mystical powers.

In this picture, we see Julius Caesar and his soldiers being entertained with the torture of Rosmerta, a Gallic druid who was taken captive at the fall of Alesia.

Despite her beliefs, in which death is simply a passage to the Other World, she was terrified at the prospect of dying on a Roman cross.

Nothing gave her the strength to deal with the humiliation as the Roman soldiers stripped her of her druidic robes and paraded her and the others around naked in front of their laughing, jeering troops. Then they nailed all of the others to crosses as she watched in horror, listening to their screams, seeing their writhing bodies struggling in agony.

Every condemned person holds on to a hope for a last-minute reprieve, no matter how unlikely that might be. When they did not crucify her there and led her away instead, she briefly thought that the Romans would enslave her instead, and despite her revulsion at spending the rest of her life in slavery, she found that her horror of crucifixion was much worse.

Then they brought her before Caesar and his officers, all still exulting in their victory. And there was another cross lying before them, waiting. And there was a burly executioner with his hammer and nails in hand, waiting. Waiting for her.

She felt all of their eyes on her, taking in the sight of her naked body, heard the sudden hush of anticipation, and then heard herself moan as the soldiers seized her arms and dragged her the last few steps to the cross. Her cross. And then all thought was lost in the struggling, writhing agony as they hammered the iron spikes through her wrists, raised her cross, and drove more nails through her bare feet.

Not in her darkest nightmares could she have imagined the screaming pain that radiated from her wrists, her feet, the muscle spasms that twisted her body, the strain in her shoulders that threatened to tear her arms from their sockets.

Even through the haze of agony that clouded her mind, consciousness of her nudity before all of these men - her enemies - filtered through and added a burden of utter humiliation to her torture. The feel of the breeze between her legs told her how exposed she must be. In the faces of Caesar and the others she saw expressions that told her that they were enjoying the sight of her suffering.

Caesar smiled, watching the nameless Gallic witch scream and writhe on her cross under the attentions of the torturers and their heated irons. *How many such have I seen*, he thought. *Over a million of these barbarians dead. I've made the fortune I need to further my career on the sale of these people into slavery.*

Another piercing scream drew him out of his reverie to watch the beautiful, naked blonde-haired girl twist and writhe on her cross. *Some things I will not write about in my accounts of this war.*

Caesar settled back in his chair, took another sip of the watered wine he so rarely drank, and watched contentedly as Rosmerta's torture continued.





LEFT

Damona was captured along with other women by the Romans near one of the Gallic towns Vercingetorix burned to deny them food. The other women were sold to the slave traders, but Damona was wearing her druid robes, and the Romans especially hated and feared the magic of the druids, and so she was reserved for crucifixion.

Damona stretches herself upward and screams in anguish as the Romans, not content with allowing her to die on the cross, continue torturing her with glowing red-hot irons applied to her naked body. She knows that eventually the torturer will direct his attentions between her legs, but for now he selects places along the insides of her thighs, or her abdomen, always a little closer to his final target.

NEXT PAGE

Caesar's soldiers were unable to track Ambiorix through the forests of the Arduennes after he led an ambush and revolt that resulted in the massacre of more than 7,000 of them, but they caught his mistress, Sirona. Thinking to learn the whereabouts of Ambiorix, they tortured her mercilessly, then crucified her.

"She's been on the cross for about three hours now, gave us a nice fight and screamed like a demon when we nailed her up," the legionary said.

"We have time, you hear that Sirona?" The tribune asked. "That agony you feel right now in your wrists and feet, the trouble breathing, that will only get worse and worse. You will die, but I can make sure you live for a week like that. Sooner or later you'll beg for one of us to put a spear through your heart. You can have it now if you tell us what we want to know, or I can come back tomorrow and ask you again."

The longer I can hold on, the farther away Ambiorix will be, Sirona thinks. Teutates, please give me the strength to fight...

Sirona's naked, sweating body strained and writhed in her agony. Despite her pain, she could not escape the humiliation of her nudity before all these Roman soldiers. Nor could she suppress the terror she felt, knowing that her private places were exposed to whatever tortures they could imagine, and the Romans were very inventive...





THE JUDEAN REBELLION

The Jews launched a revolt against Roman authority in 66 AD, and their initial success encouraged them to continue a war that would go on for four years. The Romans under Vespasian crucified thousands of Jewish rebels, but his son Titus crucified even more. Josephus wrote that at one point the Romans were nailing 500 Jews per day on crosses, so many that wood for crosses grew scarce as did space to put them all. The pictures that follow represent scenes of those rebels, suffering and dying on their crosses under the burning Judean sun.

LEFT

Rebecca was captured during a failed attack on a Roman garrison near Caesarea. She actually had nothing to do with the attack and was only on her way to the well, but since she is Jewish and was close by, the Romans seized her along with the others. She protested her innocence right up to the point where they had stripped her naked and were preparing to drive the first nail.

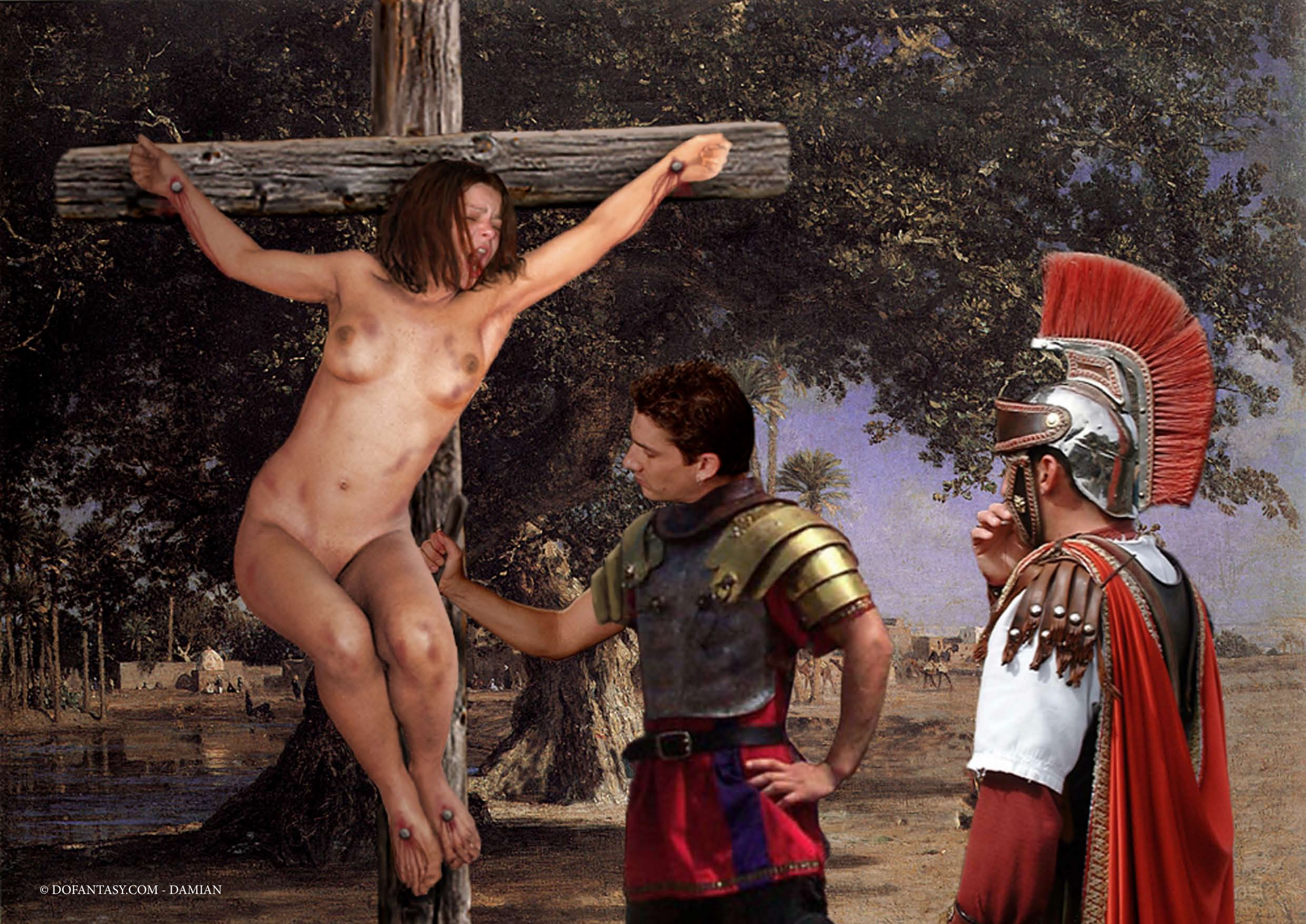
Now Rebecca strains to stretch herself upward in an effort to relieve the throbbing pain in her wrists and shoulders at the expense of searing agony in her nailed feet. Despite all of her agony, the very worst part of what the Romans are doing to her is the shame of her nudity, for while the Romans see it as humiliating, in her culture it is unthinkable, the most shameful thing of all for a Jewish woman to be exposed to the eyes of everyone, not only Jews but gentiles as well.

Worst of all, with her feet nailed flat against the round post that forms the upright of her cross, geometry works to spread her legs every time she relaxes. She knows that it is only a matter of time until exhaustion will take away her ability to press them together as she does now and she will have to resign herself to even further humiliation.

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Unable to capture Yehohannan the Jewish rebel, the Romans took his sister Sarah for interrogation. When she gave them no information as to his plans and whereabouts, they stripped her naked and nailed her to a cross, knowing that her brother would hear of her fate eventually and could be forced out to either try to save her or end her torture by a merciful death.

Now in this picture we see Sarah, naked and sweating, straining to escape the hooked torture implement which the Roman soldier next to her seeks to slip into her anus. Every movement sends shooting pains through her wounded wrists and feet as she presses and twists against the nails that fix her to the cross. No longer expecting rescue, she only hopes for the mercy of a spear or sword to release her from her suffering.





LEFT

In a gesture of insult to Jewish beliefs, Miriam has been crucified in the street next to Solomon's Temple. She was discovered harboring four of the Jewish rebels in her house, all of whom were killed in the fight that ensued. There was no trial, only the order of a centurion: Crucify the rebel.

Now the Jews who pass on their way to the temple cannot avoid seeing Miriam's shame. Some stop to watch her agonized struggle on the cross, but many see and avert their eyes, hurrying past to avoid looking on the humiliation and torture of one of their own women.

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Gessius Florus, the corrupt Roman governor of Judea in 64-66 AD was even worse than his predecessors in his excesses and theft, which finally precipitated the events that led to the First Jewish War in 66 AD. Here we see him relaxing under a canopy outside the walls of the temple to Caesar Augustus in Caesarea, while Roman soldiers carry out the sentences of two Jewish women he has condemned to be crucified for aiding the Jewish rebels.

Esther stretches herself upward on her nailed feet, screaming in agony as she searches for breath. Naomi, kneeling, watches in horror as the soldiers come to crucify her.





LEFT

A Roman soldier checks the work of the execution crew and wonders at the smooth, hairless *cunnus* of this Jewish girl. Adara, captured in a raid on one of the Jewish rebel camps, was immediately crucified along with the others.

That was yesterday. After spending a day and a night naked and struggling in agony, she is near exhaustion, her spirit broken, stretching upward in search of breath. The Roman ignores her hoarse pleas for mercy, for his sword or dagger to end her suffering. After two years of war in Judea and hundreds of crucifixions, he is no longer moved at all by the tortured pleadings of these dying rebels.

NEXT PAGE

The Romans loved variety in their executions. Deborah and Hannah were captured as they returned from taking food to Jewish rebels hiding in the hills near Hebron. Summary executions followed, with the two girls crucified near the road outside the city walls as an example to all. But for these two, dying would be even slower and more agonizing than for most who endured the cross. After some discussion among themselves, the soldiers devised a special torture.

At the place of execution, the crosses lay on the bare, rocky ground ready to receive their victims. The soldiers quickly stripped the girls of their clothes, each of them cowering and trying to hide her nakedness with one arm across her breasts and a hand over her genitals. The executioner motioned to the guards to bring Deborah first. Hannah could only watch in fascination.

The guards pushed Deborah roughly to the ground, dragging her by her arms onto her cross. She did not beg or plead; only moaned as they roped her arms tightly to the patibulum but did not nail her wrists as was customary. When the executioner was satisfied that she could not work her arms loose, he gave the signal to raise the cross.

Deborah screamed in pain as the cross dropped into its hole and her shoulders were nearly pulled out of joint. Her legs flailed, searching for some support

but finding none. The two soldiers who had raised her cross moved to stand beside her, each of them seizing one of her legs at the thigh and spreading them out to the side while pushing up, lifting her body until her shoulders were even with the cross-beam. Her sex was spread wide in this position, pink inner lips, vagina and anus all clearly visible under her bush of blonde pubic hair. Deborah turned her face to the side and closed her eyes in utter humiliation at being displayed this way.

Hannah saw the soldier behind the cross as he slid the big wooden stake through the hole in the upright, and gasped in horror, thinking their intention was to impale the girl on it. But the stake slid forward between Deborah's legs so that its point projected forward with an upward angle. The upper side of the stake had been shaped into a sharp edge; the girl moaned in fear as the rough wood brushed against her sex, squirmed in an effort to avoid it.

Deborah moaned again as she saw the soldier on her right reach a hand between her legs and felt his rough fingers fumbling with her genitalia. Hannah watched as the soldier separated Deborah's pink inner lips and spread them open, holding them outspread as the two soldiers lowered the girl down and fitted the hard edge of the stake into her cleft, then lowering her down until all of her weight rested on it. The upward angle of the stake meant that it pressed directly on her pubic bone.

Deborah screamed in pain and struggled to pull herself up with her arms, but only succeeded in settling the rough wooden edge deeper in her cleft. The soldiers hurriedly pulled her legs down, roped her ankles together, then tied them to the cross so that she could not use them to lift herself. She continued squirming and pulling against the ropes that bound her wrists and ankles in a futile effort to relieve the growing agony between her legs.

Hannah saw the soldiers turn toward her and moaned in horror.

Now we see the two girls bound to their crosses, helpless to relieve the torture of the sharp-edged stakes that press deeply between the soft lips of their genitalia. The Romans will allow them to remain this way for two days in agony under the burning Judean sun. Then they will nail their wrists and feet to the crosses, remove the stakes that both torture and support them, and allow them to struggle in even worse agony until they eventually breathe their last.



CAUGHT!

The Roman ambush was a complete surprise. One moment the band of Jewish rebels was laughing, joking and sharing the food that Jessica brought. The next moment they were fighting for their lives. But the Romans had the advantage and the battle was over quickly. The lucky ones died fighting, among them Jessica's betrothed, Yeshua. The unlucky ones, the eleven survivors who were taken captive, had nothing to look forward to but slow death on a Roman cross.

Jessica realized that she had seen the Roman commander before, back in Beth-horon near the well.

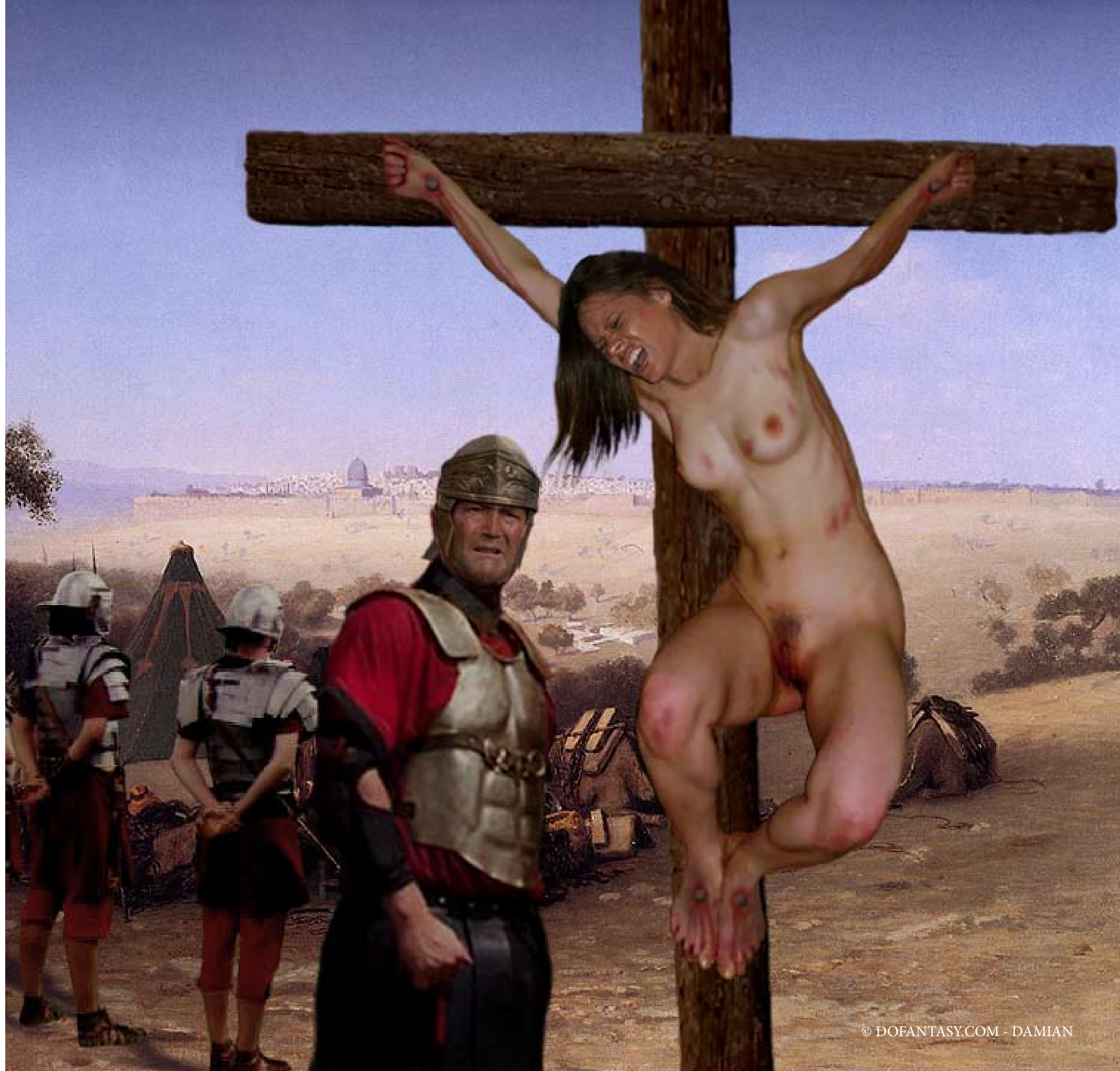
They tracked me here, she thought, miserable with the knowledge that she was careless, that there had to have been something she could have done to throw them off the trail, to lead them elsewhere. I got them all killed. I deserve to be crucified.

And so it was, when the soldiers began to strip her of her clothes, Jessica did not resist. The others struggled right up to the last when the soldiers pinned them down and nailed their wrists to the crossbeams; no matter how brave they might have been, all were terrified of the death of the cross.

But Jessica did not fight when the Romans pushed her down to lie on the cross. Instead, she sat down on the timber and lay back, allowing them to position her arms as they willed. She turned her head and looked away as the executioner placed the point of an iron nail against her wrist and brought his hammer down. Her naked body jerked and she groaned with each blow of the hammer, but she did not struggle.

Jessica writhed in agony when they raised her cross and screamed when they dropped it into its hole, leaving her hanging by her wrists. But then she pulled her feet up close to her buttocks, placing the soles flat against the upright, offering them to the Romans for nailing. *Get it over with. I deserve this. I deserve to be tortured for my stupidity. Yahweh, Please accept the suffering of my body to atone for their deaths.* She screamed when the nails entered her feet, but the tears in her eyes were tears of grief and guilt, not of pain.

In the picture, we see Jessica suffering on her cross, legs splayed obscenely to display her private parts, groaning in agony yet accepting her humiliation and





torture as being no less than what she deserves.

The Roman commander has seen many emotions in those he has crucified, including anger, defiance, terror, and even resignation. But he has never seen a victim who was as cooperative as this one.

He looks back uncertainly at this strange woman as he prepares to make guard assignments to his men who await him.

LEFT

Shifrah leans forward, hanging against the nails in her wrists in order to press her naked buttocks back against the rough, cracked timber of the cross in an effort to gain some purchase and avoid slipping lower as the exhausted muscles of her legs begin to fail her. She lets out each breath as a long, ragged groan of agony as the throbbing pain in her feet grows worse with each passing moment. She feels her buttocks slip downward a few inches against the wood, grits her teeth and catches herself once again. *How did they find out about me? There were only a few of us, no one else knew, we swore an oath never to tell...*

Torture is a powerful tool in the skilled hands of one who knows how to use it to extract information. The key is not so much the pain, but finding the one thing the victim fears the most, the thing that instills terror, that he will do anything, say anything to escape.

For the rebel Lemech, it had been when the Roman torturer had driven a nail through one of his testicles and was preparing to do the same to the other one that he began to babble and plead. In the end, he told them the names of all the others in his group. Among those names was Shifrah, daughter of Ephraim, a wealthy merchant of Hebron. When

they judged that Lemech had told all, they rewarded him by hammering a nail through his other testicle anyway.

The Roman soldiers had come before dawn, crashing into the house without warning. Shifrah's brother was killed outright when he tried to fight; he was the lucky one. Her father, mother and two sisters were taken along with her. Their screams greeted the rising sun as they were nailed to crosses beside the road that leads to Jerusalem.

Arius, the Roman legionary assigned to the detail guarding the crucified rebels, studies Shifrah's straining buttocks appreciatively. *Yes, very nice, and what a waste! But this expensive night dress of hers will trade well for a tumble with a bit of Jewish cunnus tonight.*



During the latter part of the Jewish War, the Roman general Titus crucified Jews at the rate of 500 per day in an effort to crush the rebels' spirit. By the end of the rebellion, practically every family in Judea had lost some of its members to the fighting, and there was no one who did not know someone who had died in agony on a Roman cross.

Judith's brother Ephraim died nailed to a cross outside of Jerusalem, one among hundreds of naked, moaning Jews under the Judean sun. Her father died in a futile attack on a train of Roman supply wagons. It was obvious to everyone that the Romans were too powerful, but for many Jews it was the overwhelming power of Rome that spurred them on.

Their rabbis told them, when Yahweh delivers a miracle, there can remain no doubt that it was the force of God, not of man, that has accomplished the feat. Perhaps He was only waiting for the moment when they were at their lowest to send them a miracle like the ones that delivered their fathers from Egypt, or destroyed the walls of Jericho. The miracle could come at any instant.

Judith, was one among the hundreds of Jewish rebel supporters crucified by the Romans this day. Like the other Jewish women, the humiliation of her nudity was almost as unbearable as the pain of her suffering. It was even worse before the crowd of gentiles who drank in the sight of her sweating, naked body as she struggled desperately, laughing at her agony and enjoying the way she squirmed and twisted in response to the sudden cramps that knotted her muscles.

Please God, send your victory now and save me, no, save all of us, from this cross, oh God it hurts and I'm naked and everyone stares at me, oh please make it stop, save me or let me die quickly, please please make it stop... But the time for a miracle was not yet.

And then Judith became conscious of a different kind of torment: The tenacious desert flies that buzzed around her face and body in search of moisture had discovered the moist places between her legs. The torment of their crawling and tickling made her press her thighs together in a futile effort to keep them away, to stop the feathery touch of their tiny feet and buzzing wings in her open cleft, between her pink inner lips, around her exposed anus and vagina.

As Judith looked downward, her hardening nipples and swelling clitoris were visible evidence that her body was betraying her. She squeezed her thighs tighter and clenched the cheeks of her buttocks in an effort to quell the insistent tingling and the deep, building pressure. She had seen many women crucified and heard their moans of anguish grow more desperate, then change into groans of pleasure, pelvises thrust forward and undulating obscenely as they were carried away on the waves of their orgasms.

Judith moaned through clenched teeth, her whole body tense, feeling the tingling between her legs approach the critical point, the spark that ignites a raging fire that will not be stopped until it burns out on its own. *Oh God, I can't stop it and they will all see me oh please no not that not that no no no...!*

Judith threw her head back and screamed. The explosion of her orgasm was intense, and for a few moments it blocked out all other sensation. The pain of the nails, her cramping muscles, all faded into the background as her body released in spasms so powerful that she was unaware of the way her abdomen undulated, her moans of pleasure, nor the appreciative jeers of the onlookers.

Now we see Judith as the throbbing pleasure between her legs subsides to be replaced by the throbbing agony in her wrists and feet. She keeps her eyes lowered, burning with shame and humiliation in the knowledge that the crowd has seen her helpless in the throes of this most intimate passion. She feels the wetness on the insides of her thighs and knows that they must see that, too.

In addition to her shame, Judith bears a burden of guilt. *Oh God, please let it happen again...*

NEXT PAGE

THE FURY OF THE MOB

The last and most savage persecution of the Christians took place during the reign of the Emperor Diocletian, between 303 – 311 AD. Arrian was the governor of the province of Aegyptus and pursued this mission with dedication.

One of the professed Christians whom Arrian had arrested was a certain Asclas of Antinoe. According to the story that comes down to us, after imprisoning Asclas, he found that he was somehow restrained from crossing the Nile. Asclas informed him that unless he acknowledged Christ, and in writing, he would never be allowed to cross the river.

Arrian was as superstitious as any Roman. He dutifully wrote out the acknowledgment that was demanded, then found that he was indeed freely able to cross the Nile. When he arrived safely on the other bank, he sent an order to have Asclas tortured and killed. No matter what the truth might have been, the fact is that Asclas was tortured and was eventually drowned in the Nile.

But events did not end there. The people of Antinoe, frightened by what they perceived as powerful magic, immediately rose up and rooted out the Christians among them; as these Christians were followers of a prophet who had been crucified, it was only right that they should die on the cross as well. Thus, more than forty Christian men and women died on the cross, lynched by the mobs of Antinoe without any trial or evidence. The Romans were not concerned by this; after all, their mission was to wipe out this criminal sect.

Still, events did not end there. Because the Christians were considered to be a criminal Jewish

sect, the mob made no distinction between Christians and Jews, lynching any Jews they happened to find as well. Once the killing frenzy began, it was not easily stopped.

Tamara and Rachel were drawing water at the well when the mob caught them. They had lived all of their lives in Antinoe and had no reason to be concerned, even when the Christians were being dragged away, beaten and crucified. When the men shouted, “Here are two more of them! Get them!” they were terrified but tried to tell them that no, they were Jewish, not Christian. The men began roughly tearing the two girls’ clothes off as they dragged them away. Tamara saw two Roman soldiers lounging against a wall as they passed, appealed to them for help but was ignored.

By the time they reached the wide street near the Temple of Isis, both of the girls were already naked, sobbing and terrified. Their soft breasts bounced with every step. Each of them shrank from the rough hands that pinched their pink nipples, squeezed their buttocks, and explored between their legs. There was hardly a pause as the wild-eyed men, shouting and laughing, dragged them to the crosses they had already prepared for any unfortunate victims they might find.

Rachel found herself naked, lying on the ground with strong hands pressing her wrists painfully against the crossbeam. She struggled and pleaded with them, trying to tell them that no, she was not a Christian, please stop, all the while feeling her humiliation at being naked, her vulnerability to these men who would surely rape her. But then there was the sharp pain of a nail pressed hard against her right wrist, followed by the clang of a big hammer striking it. The actual pain of the nail piercing her wrist followed a heartbeat later.

Rachel’s pleading and sobbing was immediately replaced by frantic screams as the man with the hammer finished driving the nail, then moved to her other wrist. Ten paces away, Tamara was experiencing the same thing. In a moment, the men lifted the crosses up, their human burdens dangling by their impaled wrists, and dropped them into the holes where they had pulled up paving stones and dug into the sandy ground beneath.

In a few more moments, they had driven nails through each of the girls’ feet as well. Rachel and Tamara were crucified, each of them knowing with certainty that their lives were over. No one could rescue them now. There would be nothing but

hours and days of torture as they slowly died on the cross.

And so we see them now, two beautiful red-haired Jewish girls naked and struggling for the entertainment of the mob in Antinoe. The Roman authorities are nowhere to be seen, glad to let the mindless fear and anger of the crowd do their work for them. With their blood lust aroused, the mob continues to torture the two girls; a man whips Rachel with a cane as she hangs by her nailed wrists, helpless. Tamara stretches herself upward on her cross, enduring the searing pain of the nails in her feet for a few moments of respite from the throbbing agony in her tortured wrists.





PAYBACK

Susannah was a trusted servant in the tribune Lucius Tullius Carbo's house in Caesarea when the Jewish War broke out in 66 AD. The poison she mixed into his wine dealt the tribune a slow and painful death, but what Susannah is experiencing will be much slower and more intensely agonizing, not to speak of the humiliation she experiences as she is displayed naked for all to see.

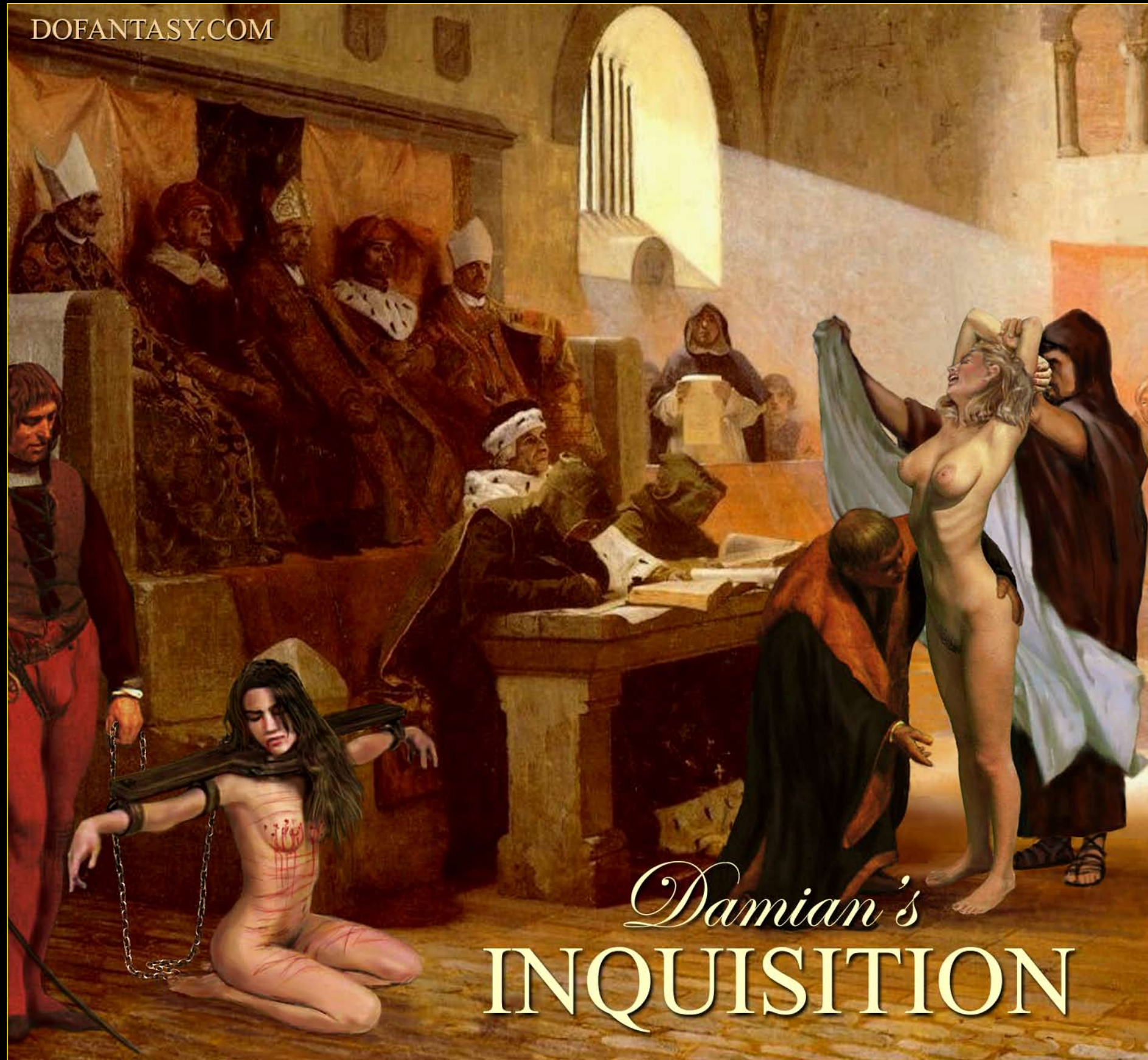
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