

# I AM A WEALTHY LADY

My name is Tullia Domitilla and I am one of the richest women in all of Rome.

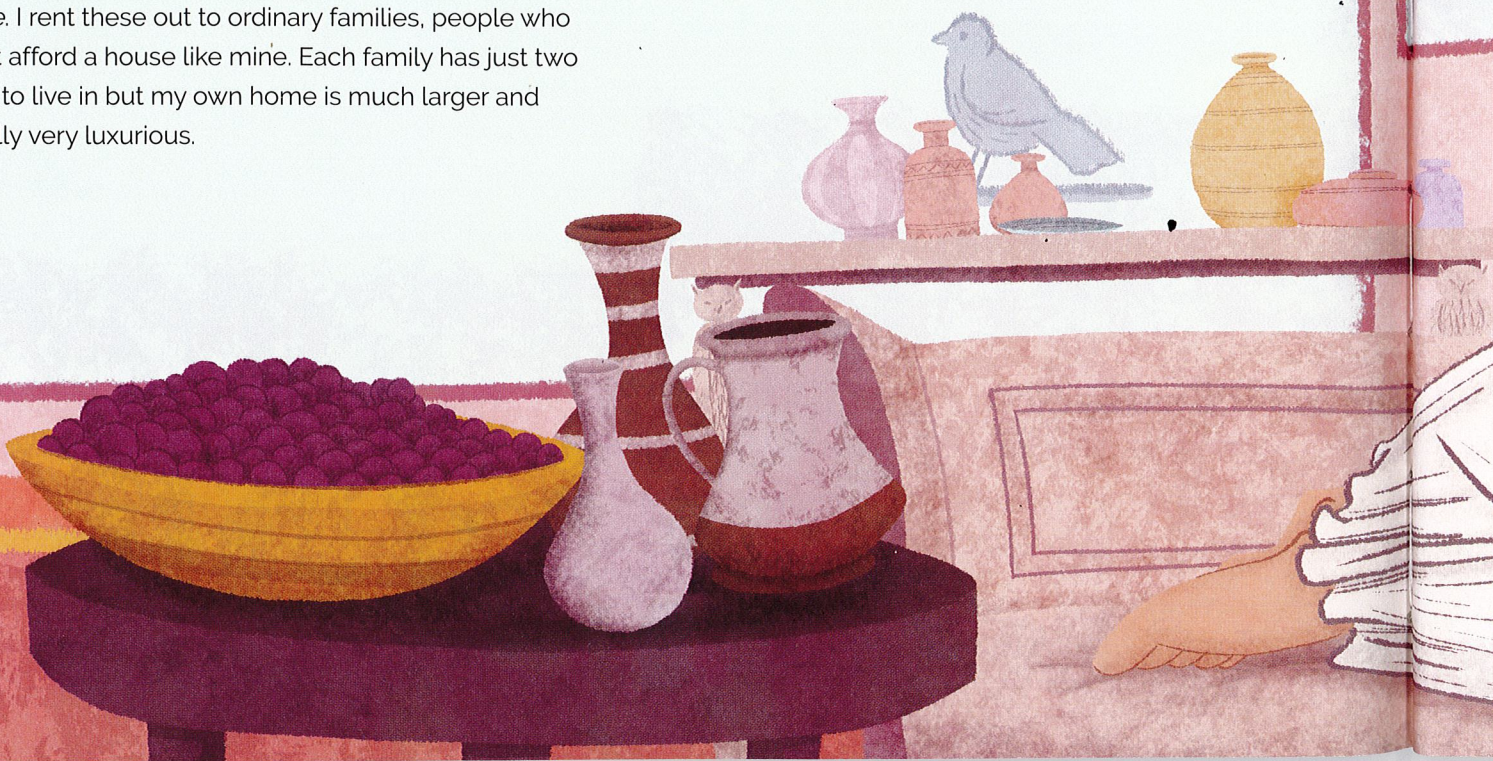
**M**any years ago, my great-great-grandfather was emperor. So you can tell our family has been rich for a long time. Like all other Roman women, I cannot vote or stand for election, but my wealth gives me more power than most women have in our society. Many of Rome's most important politicians are my friends, for example, and several have asked for my advice or followed my suggestions.

These men know that I am not just rich but also a good businesswoman. I don't like to be idle, and I own many properties in Rome as well as vast estates in the countryside. My slaves mostly grow grapes to make wine and olives for the oil which Romans burn in their lamps. Both of these crops fetch high prices and I use the profits to buy more land and more buildings in and around the city.

Most of these buildings are tall blocks of flats called *insulae*. I rent these out to ordinary families, people who cannot afford a house like mine. Each family has just two rooms to live in but my own home is much larger and naturally very luxurious.

My beautiful house has central heating. Each winter, three slaves are kept busy minding the fires which drive hot smoke under the floor to warm the rooms. These rooms contain elegant furniture and sculptures, and outside there is a spacious courtyard with a covered veranda where I can sit with friends and relax.

I have my own private bath too, which is a very unusual feature for a house. Even so, I still visit the public bath house at least once a week. Most Romans do this as it is an excellent place to meet people and to do business. It is also the best way to hear the political news of the day, which I always find interesting, and to learn what else is happening throughout the empire.



# I AM A PRIESTESS

My name is Flavia Leptis and all year you will find me at the great Temple of Diana.

**M**y family came across the sea from North Africa many years ago. Our father made his fortune working near a city called Capua in southern Italy. He employed hundreds of slaves making bricks, tiles and clay pots. When my father died, I sold the factory and moved to the city. Most of the money was spent building a new temple to the goddess Diana with a large public fountain in the courtyard outside.

For as long as anyone can remember, most of the important jobs in the Roman Empire have been given to men. It is the same in Capua. Women from the most powerful families are not allowed to become politicians or even to vote in elections. However, religion plays a large part in Roman lives so priestesses like me can become important members of society.

In my case it helps that Diana is one of the highest-ranking of the gods. We Romans worship dozens of different gods and goddesses, but they are not all equal. Diana's status makes me more important than many other priests and priestesses. Also my knowledge of bricks and tiles ensured that my temple was larger and more impressive than any others in Capua.

As a priestess I perform religious rituals inside the temple. We have many festivals throughout the year where every ritual must be carefully performed. Romans believe that the success of our city and of the empire depends on the goodwill of many different gods. We would lose their support if we ignore the rituals or if priests perform them badly. If that happens we would perish.

