



Dangerous Days in the Roman Empire

Terry Deary

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The author of children's series *Horrible Histories* presents the first book in his new offbeat popular history series for adults—Bill Bryson meets *Blackadder*

With his trademark crisp, wry writing style and dark sense of humor, Terry Deary begins with the Roman Empire, in the first in a new series offering concise, informative histories that delve into myths and traditions surrounding its subjects and attempts to extract cohesion—and possibly even some truth. The Romans have long been held up as one of the first "civilized" societies, and yet in fact they were capable of immense cruelty. Not only that, but they made the killing of humans into a sport. The spoiled emperors were the perpetrators (and sometimes the victims) of some imaginative murders. This book includes some of the violent ways to visit the Elysian Fields (i.e. death), including by animal attack in the Coliseum; by being thrown from the Tarpeian Rock—the fate of 370 deserters in 214 AD alone (could also occur if the emperor didn't like your poetry); by volcanic eruption from Vesuvius; by kicking (Nero's fatal quarrel with the Empress Poppea); or from poison mushrooms (Claudius). Not to mention great fires, torturous tarring, flogging to death, boiling lead (the invention of "kind" Emperor Constantine), or being skinned alive by invading barbarians. This book looks at the backstory leading up to the victims' deaths, and in doing so gives the general reader a concise history of a frequently misunderstood era.

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