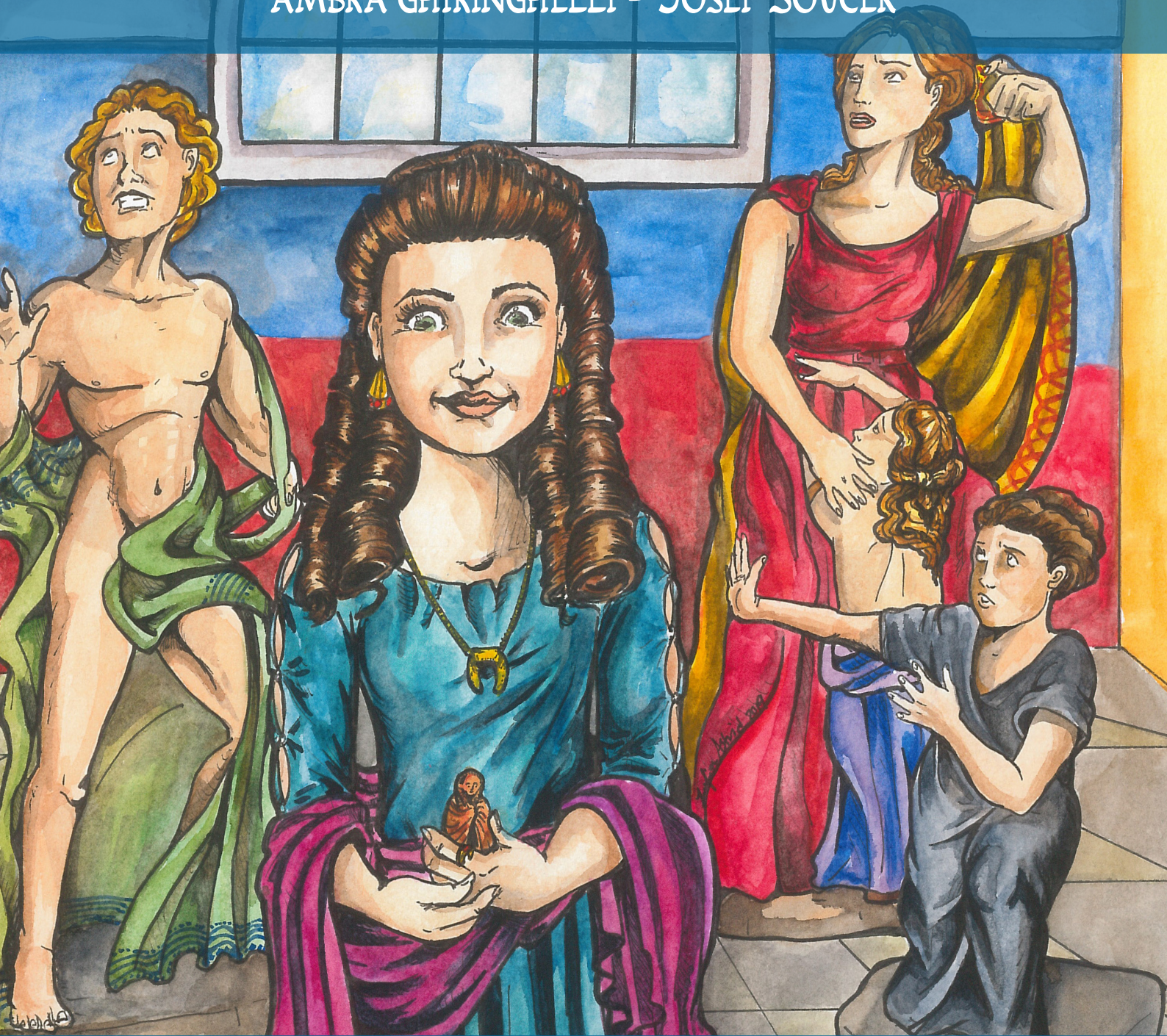
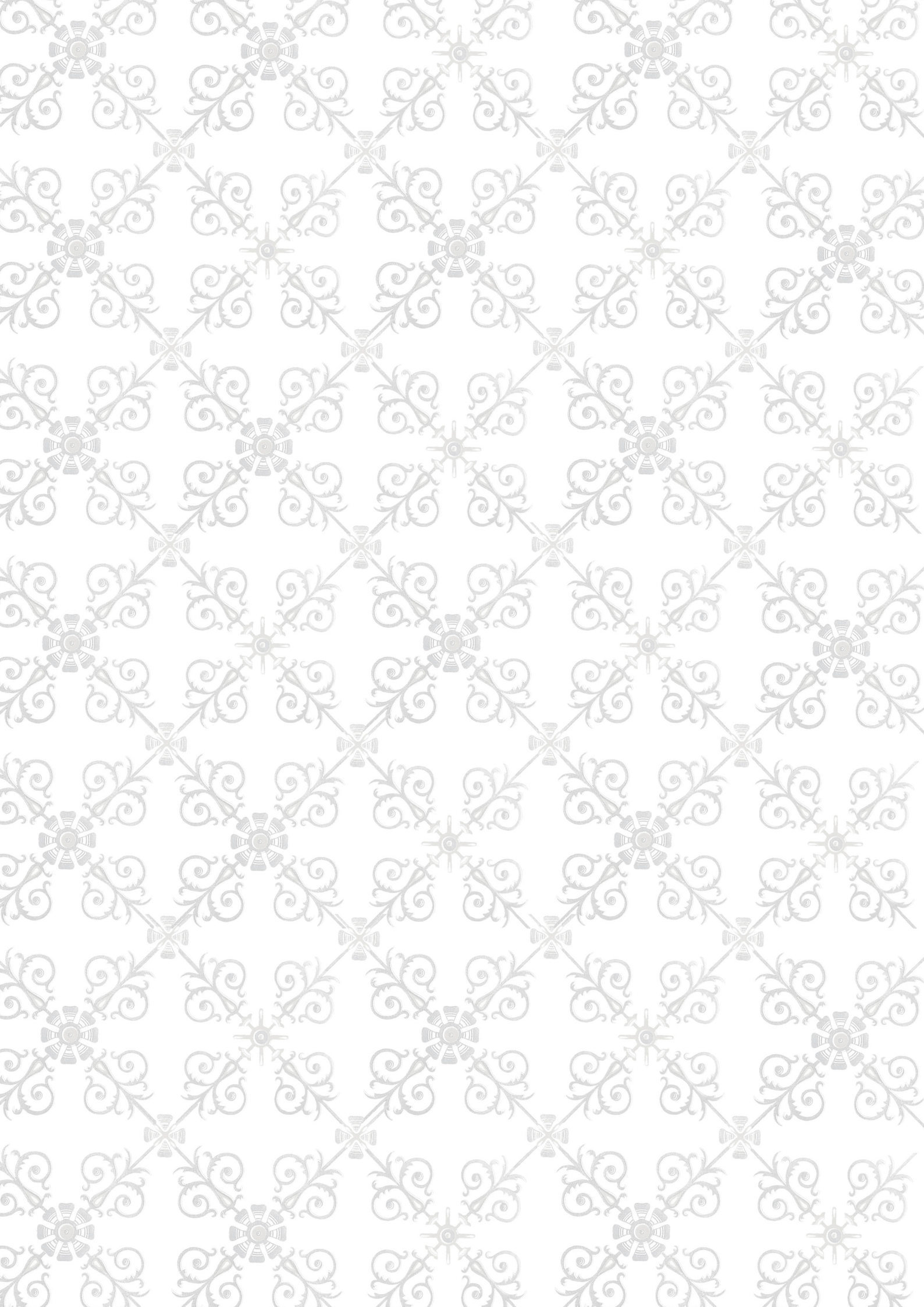


ZOFIA GUERTIN
AMBRA GHIRINGHELLI - JOSEF SOUCEK

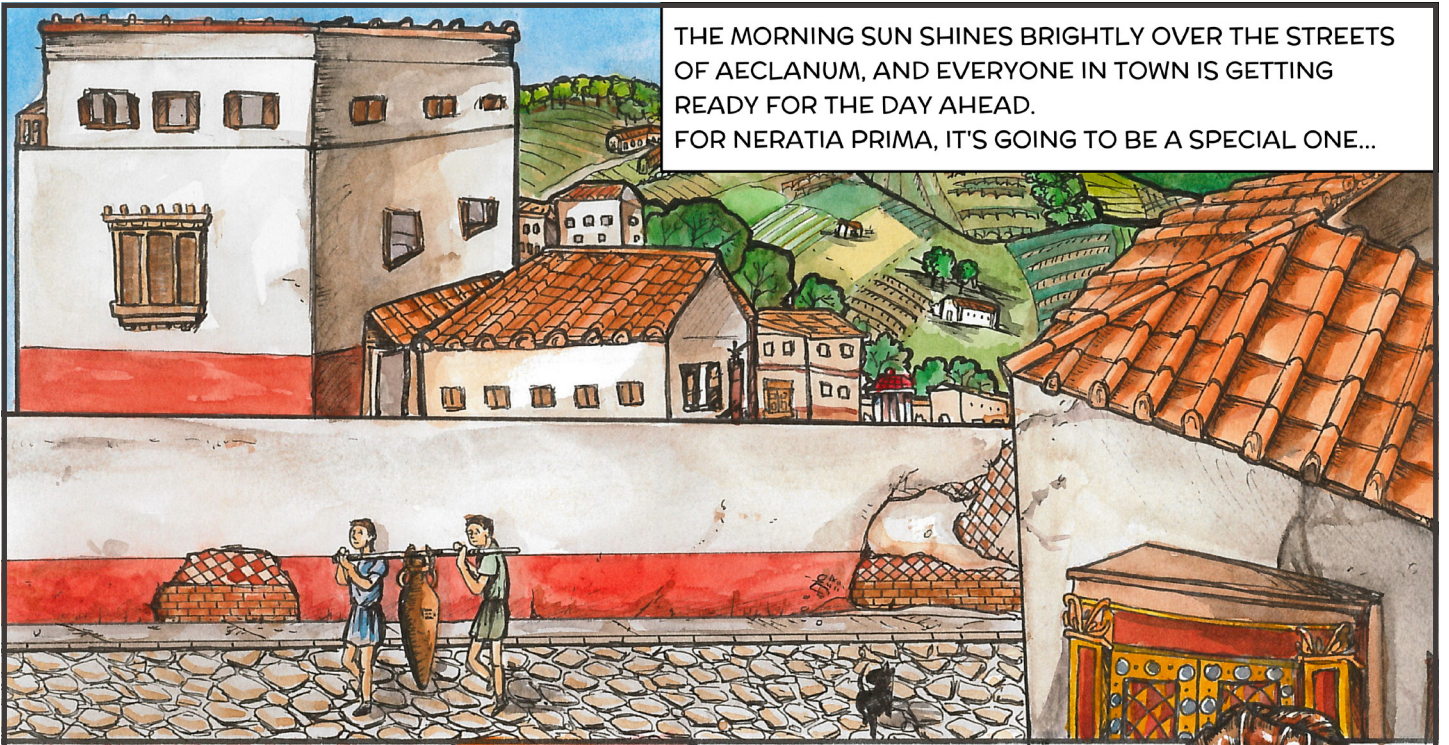


VITA ROMANA

THE BATHS AT AECLANUM



THE MORNING SUN SHINES BRIGHTLY OVER THE STREETS OF AECLANUM, AND EVERYONE IN TOWN IS GETTING READY FOR THE DAY AHEAD. FOR NERATIA PRIMA, IT'S GOING TO BE A SPECIAL ONE...



PRIMA! PRIMA!
COME PLAY WITH ME!



I CAN'T, SECUNDA. MOTHER SAID I
HAVE TO GO WITH HER TODAY,
BUT I'M SURE SCYLAX WILL
KEEP YOU GOOD COMPANY.



I WONDER WHERE WE
ARE OFF TO TODAY...

A YOUNG SLAVE BOY OFFERS
NERATIA A CUP OF WINE.

YOUR WINE,
DOMINA.

FATHER MUST BE BACK FROM HIS
BUSINESS TRIP TO BENEVENTUM...
I'M SURE HE WILL HAVE BEEN
SUCCESSFUL IN ARRANGING
THE NEW TRADING PARTNER
FOR HIS WINE .

YOU'RE READY!
EXCELLENT!

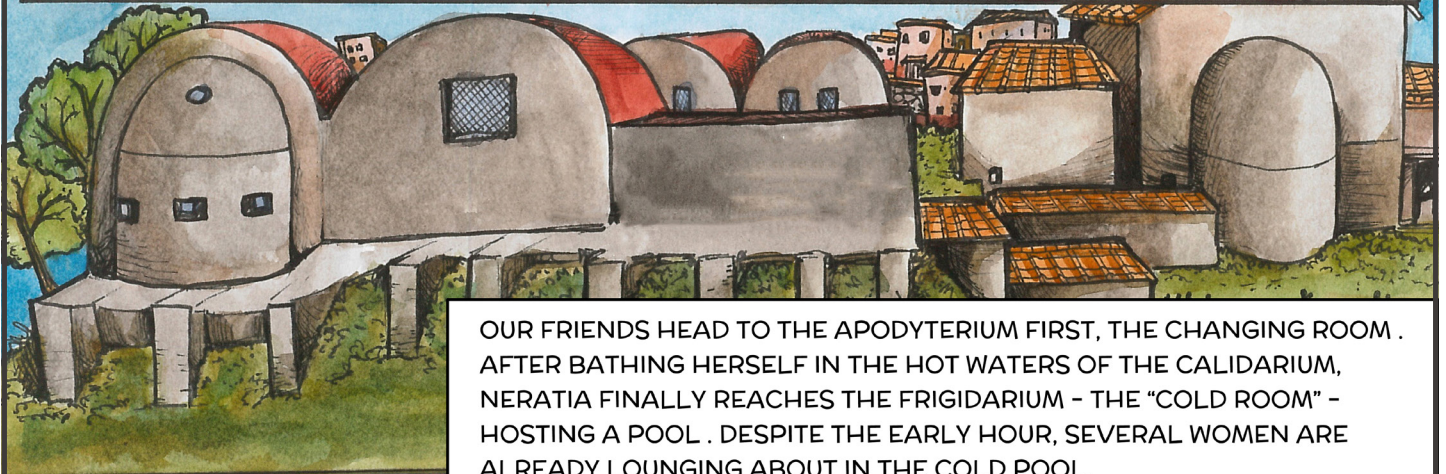
TODAY, WE ARE GOING TO THE BATHS
FIRST THING IN THE MORNING. IT IS A VERY
IMPORTANT DAY, AND IT DOES NOT DO TO
HONOUR THE GODS LOOKING UNTIDY.



NERATIA AND HER MOTHER MAKE THEIR WAY ACROSS THE BUSY STREETS TO THE PUBLIC BATHS, FOLLOWED BY THE TRUSTED SLAVE, MYRTIS, A FEW STEPS BEHIND.

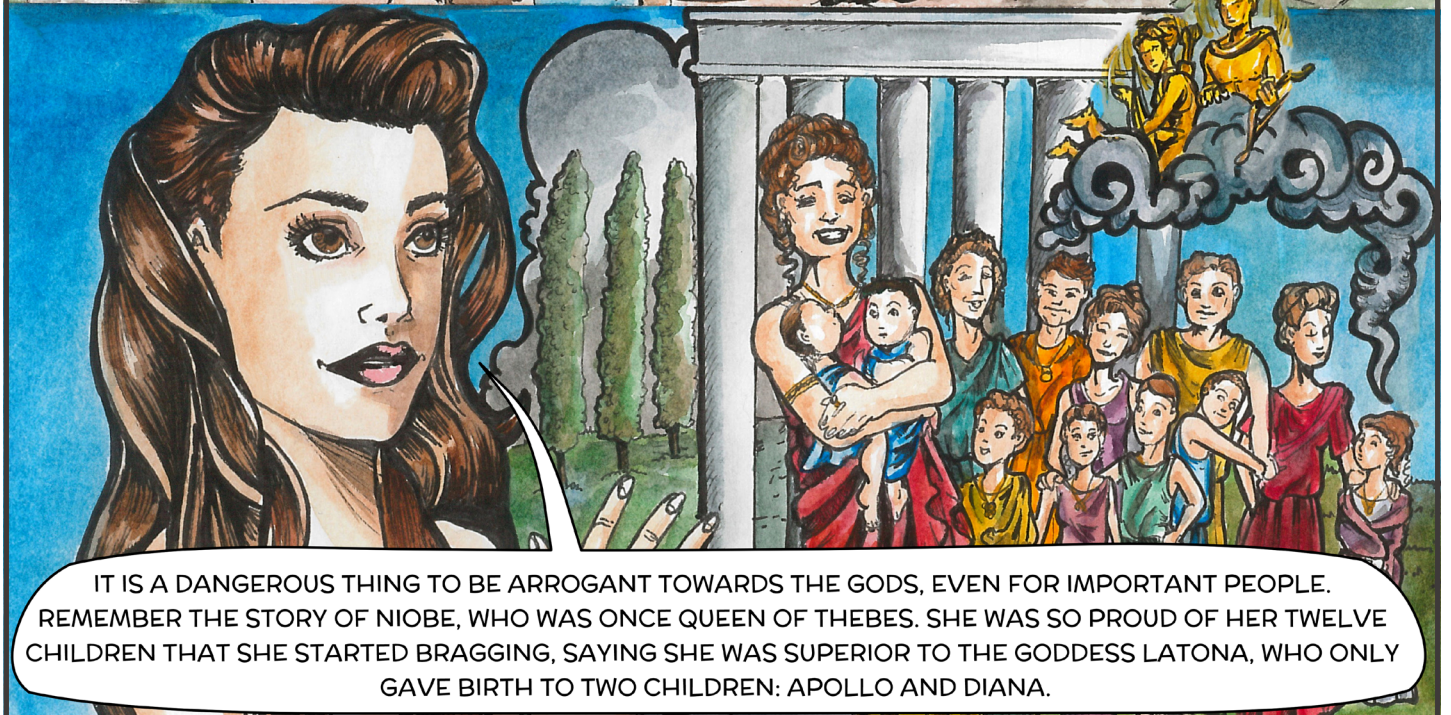
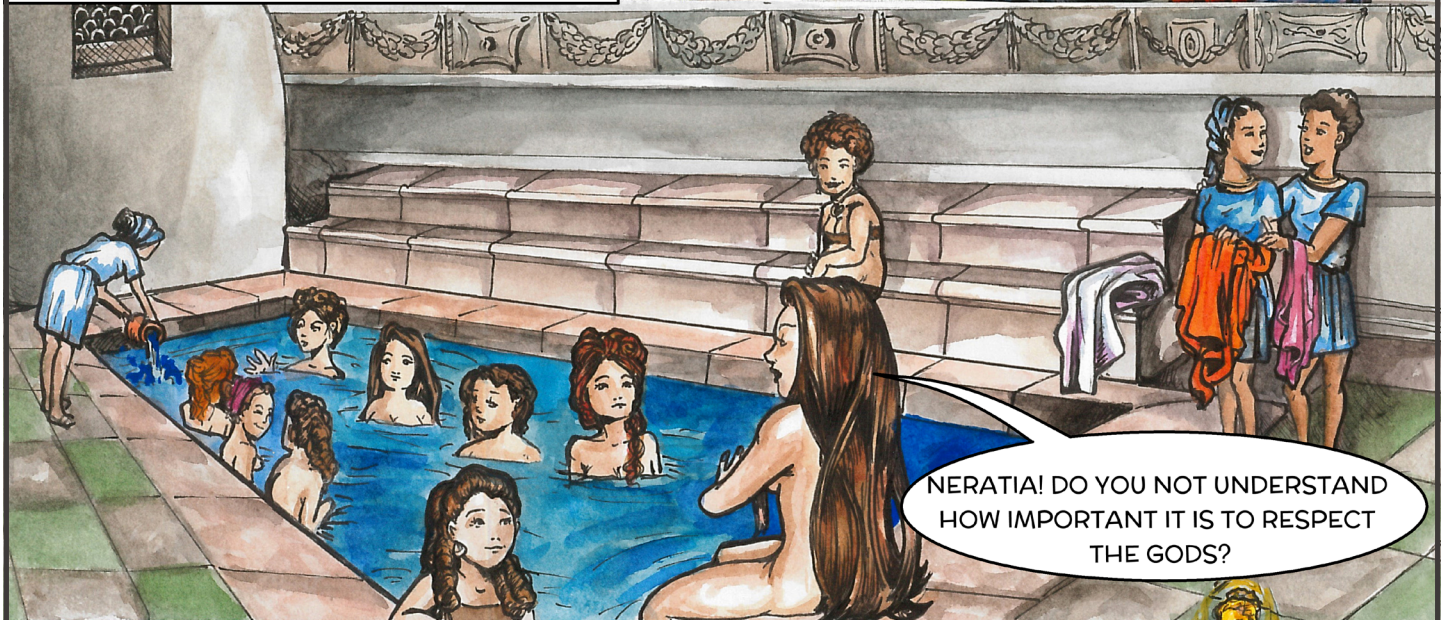
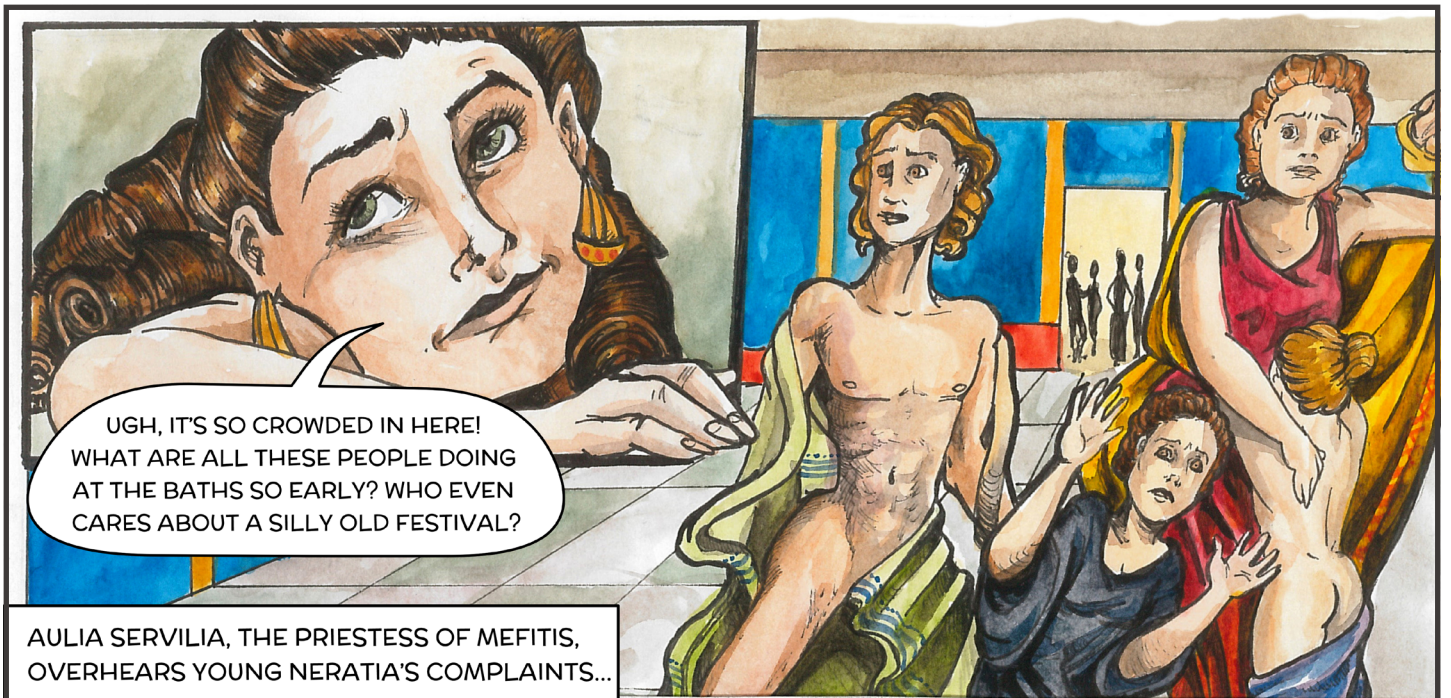


THE TOWN IS BUZZING WITH EXCITEMENT FOR THE START OF THE LUDI AUGUSTALES (THE FESTIVAL AND GAMES FOR THE DIVINE AUGUSTUS) WHICH WILL LAST FOR THE NEXT SEVERAL DAYS.



OUR FRIENDS HEAD TO THE APODYTERIUM FIRST, THE CHANGING ROOM . AFTER BATHING HERSELF IN THE HOT WATERS OF THE CALIDARIUM, NERATIA FINALLY REACHES THE FRIGIDARIUM - THE "COLD ROOM" - HOSTING A POOL . DESPITE THE EARLY HOUR, SEVERAL WOMEN ARE ALREADY LOUNGING ABOUT IN THE COLD POOL.

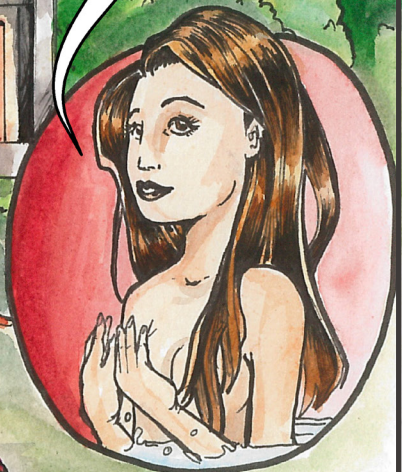




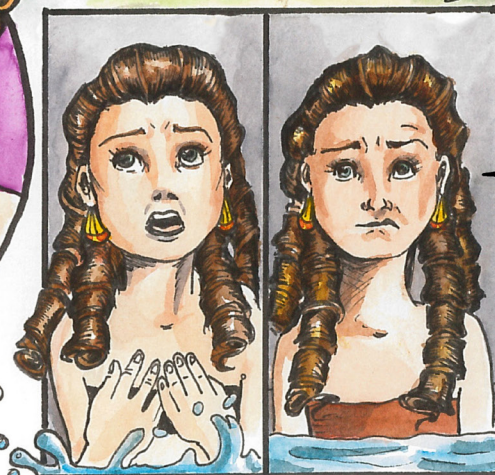


AS A PUNISHMENT FOR NIOBE'S PRIDE AND ARROGANCE, AND FOR HER DISRESPECT TOWARDS LATONA, APOLLO AND DIANA TOOK UP THEIR BOWS AND ARROWS. APOLLO KILLED NIOBE'S SIX SONS, AND DIANA KILLED HER SIX DAUGHTERS.

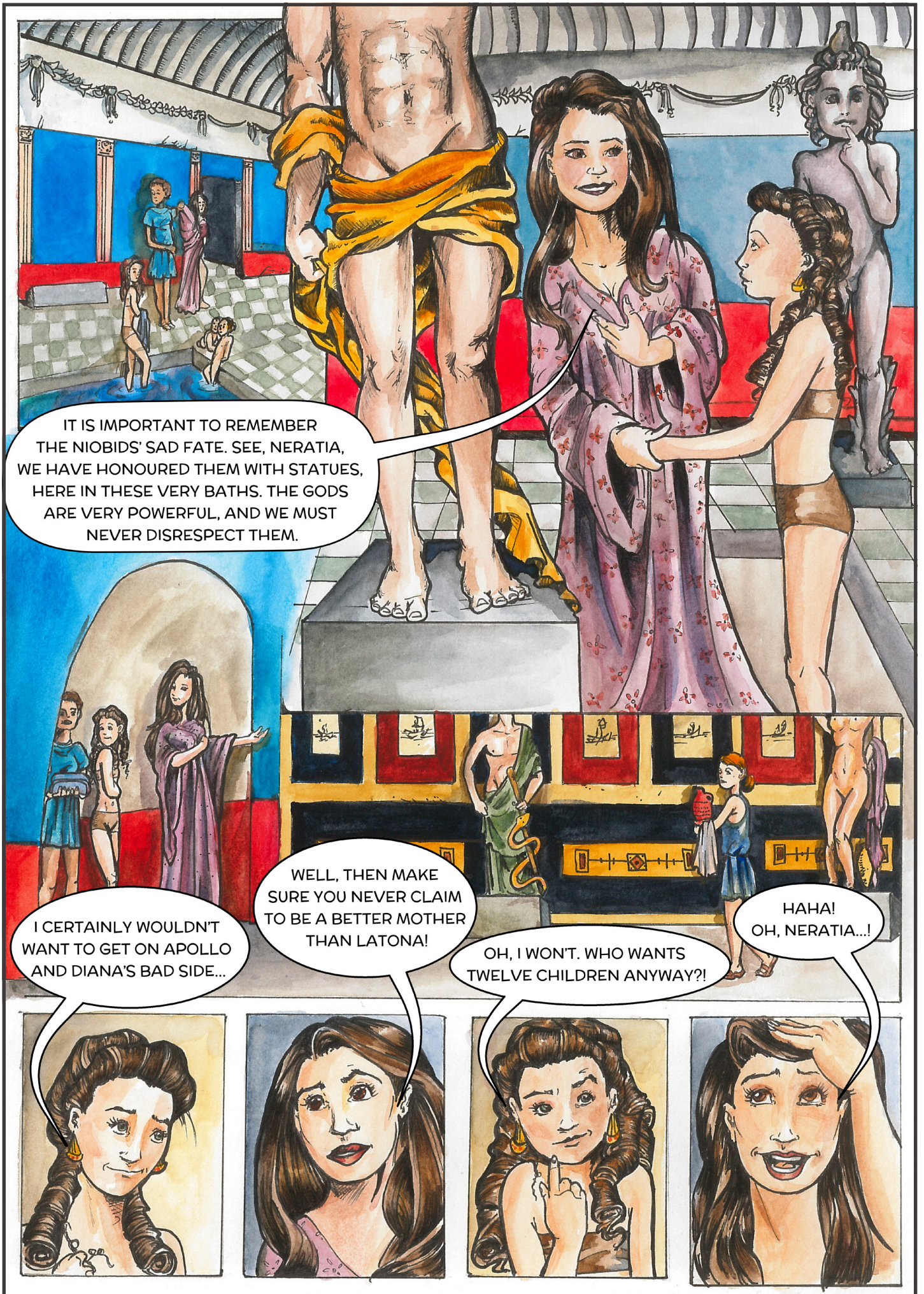
NIOBE HERSELF WAS TURNED INTO A ROCK, ON THE PEAKS OF MOUNT SIPYLUS.



BUT EVEN NOW THAT SHE IS MADE OF STONE, SHE STILL WEEPS FOR HER LOST CHILDREN, THE TWELVE NIOBIDS.



...
I HAD NO IDEA THE GODS
COULD BE SO VINDICTIVE...



IT IS IMPORTANT TO REMEMBER THE NIOBIDS' SAD FATE. SEE, NERATIA, WE HAVE HONoured THEM WITH STATUES, HERE IN THESE VERY BATHS. THE GODS ARE VERY POWERFUL, AND WE MUST NEVER DISRESPECT THEM.

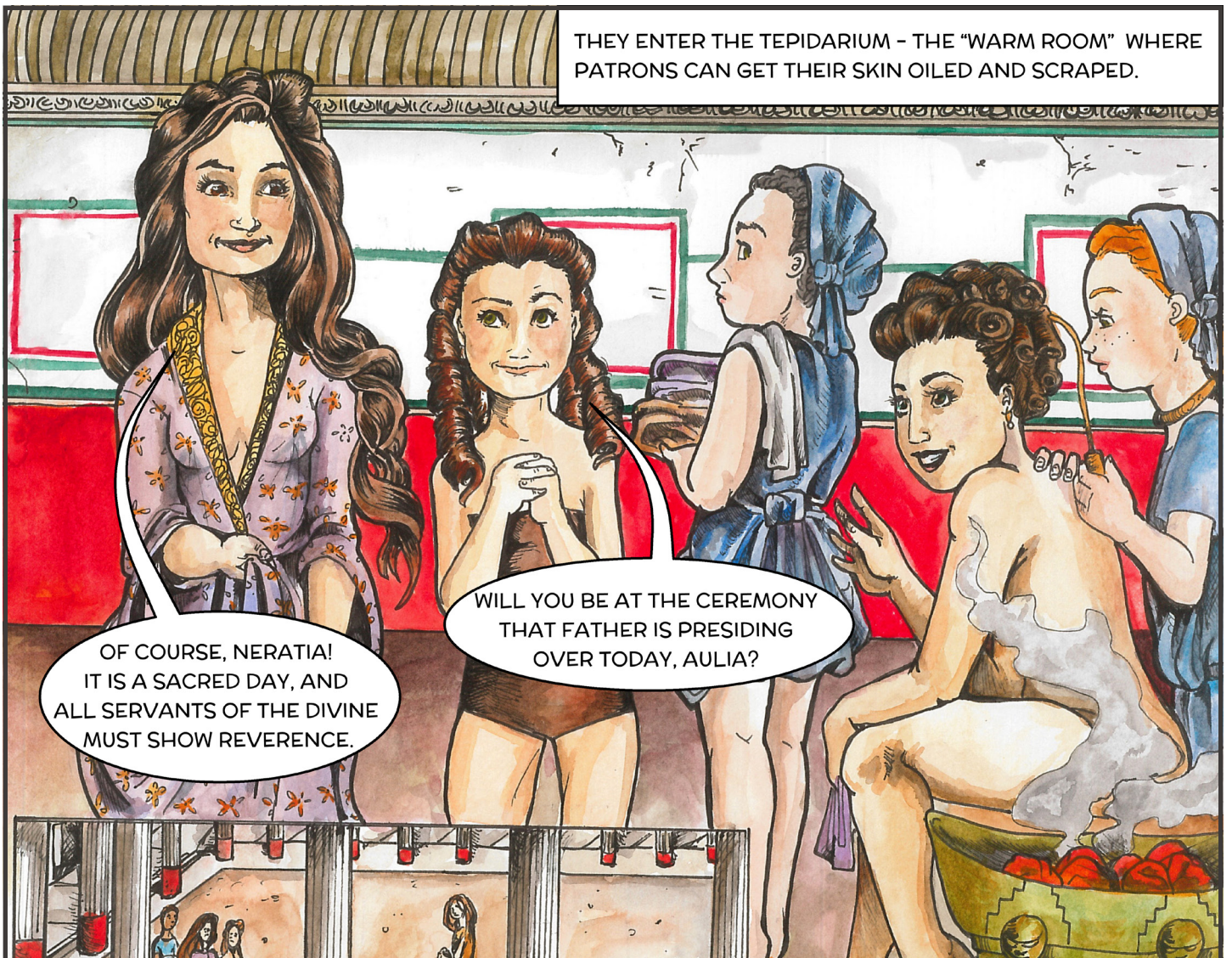
I CERTAINLY WOULDN'T WANT TO GET ON APOLLO AND DIANA'S BAD SIDE...

WELL, THEN MAKE SURE YOU NEVER CLAIM TO BE A BETTER MOTHER THAN LATONA!

OH, I WON'T. WHO WANTS TWELVE CHILDREN ANYWAY?!

HAHA! OH, NERATIA...!

THEY ENTER THE TEPIDIARIUM - THE "WARM ROOM" WHERE PATRONS CAN GET THEIR SKIN OILED AND SCRAPPED.

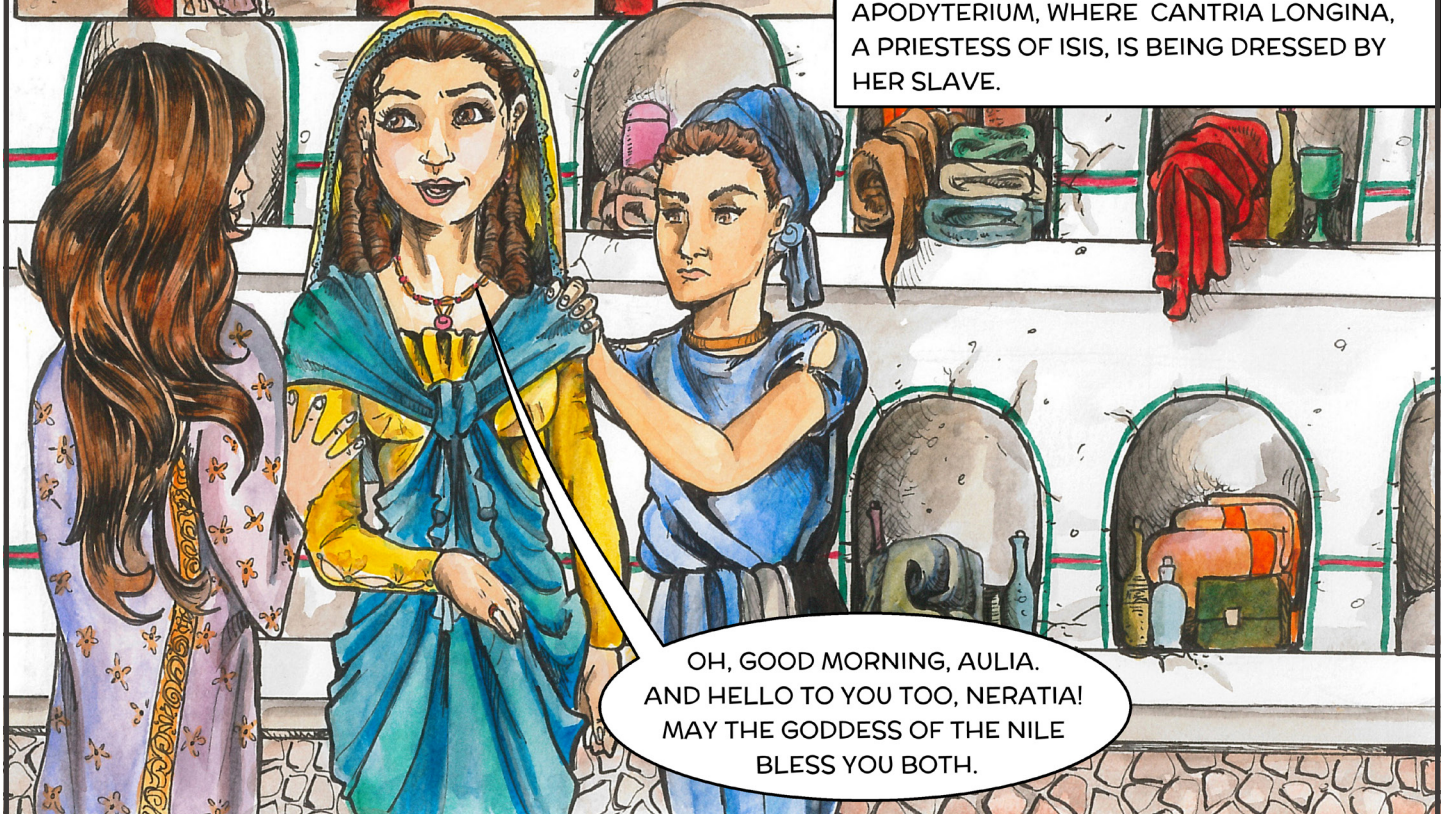


OF COURSE, NERATIA!
IT IS A SACRED DAY, AND
ALL SERVANTS OF THE DIVINE
MUST SHOW REVERENCE.

WILL YOU BE AT THE CEREMONY
THAT FATHER IS PRESIDING
OVER TODAY, AULIA?



PASSING THROUGH THE PORTICO, NERATIA
AND AULIA FIND THEMSELVES BACK IN THE
APODYTERIUM, WHERE CANTRIA LONGINA,
A PRIESTESS OF ISIS, IS BEING DRESSED BY
HER SLAVE.



OH, GOOD MORNING, AULIA.
AND HELLO TO YOU TOO, NERATIA!
MAY THE GODDESS OF THE NILE
BLESS YOU BOTH.

THE TWO PRIESTESSES START DISCUSSING THE COMING DAY'S FESTIVAL AND ITS RITUALS, AND NERATIA'S MOTHER COMES TO SPEAK WITH HER DAUGHTER.



NERATIA, HERE YOU ARE!
ARE YOU ALL FRESHENED
UP AND READY TO GO?

YES MOTHER,
I AM READY
TO GO!



OH, I FEEL
SO RELAXED!



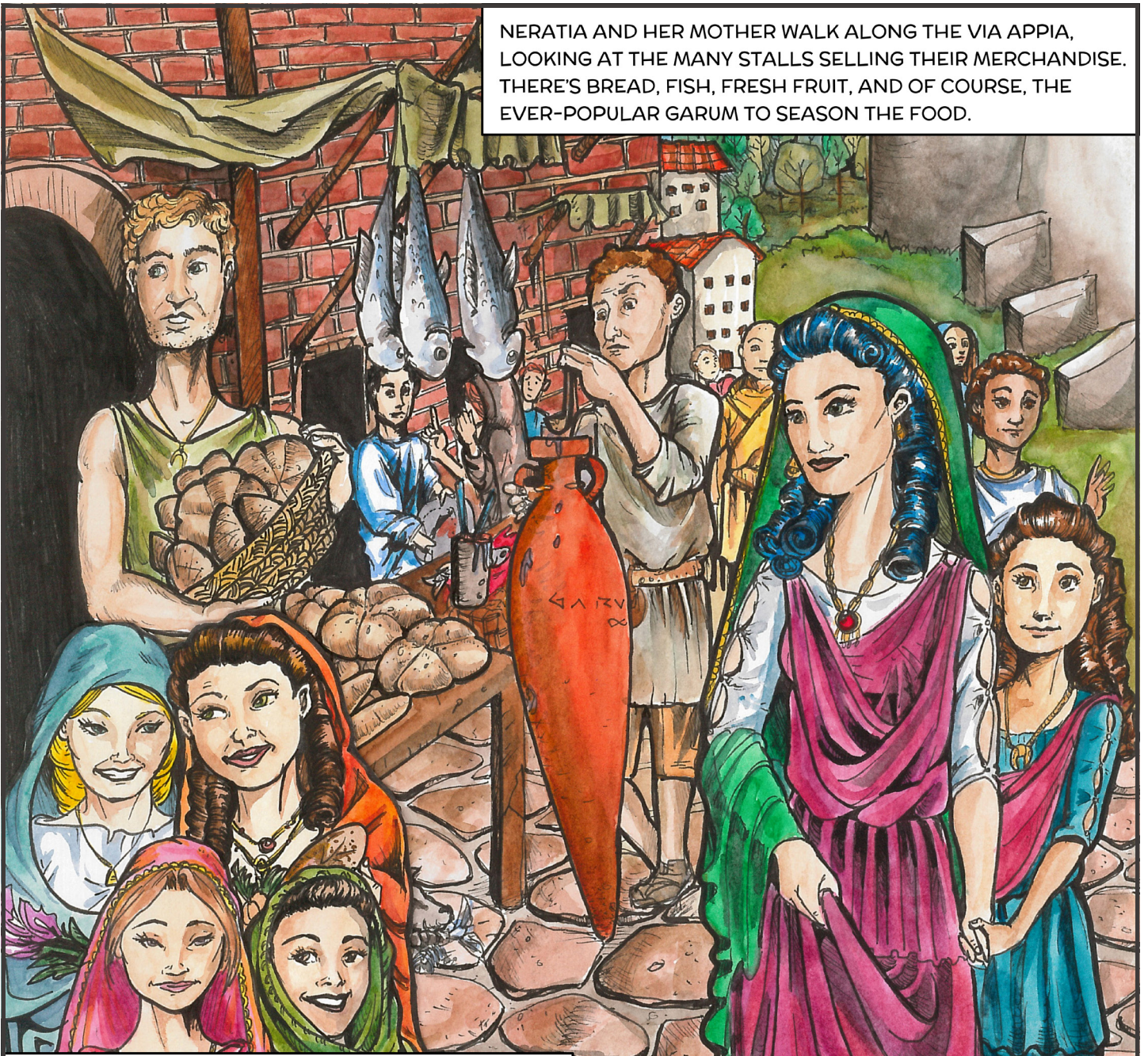
ME TOO!
NOTHING LIKE A
MORNING AT THE
BATHS TO WAKE
UP THE SENSES...

AS THE DAY GOES ON, MORE AND MORE
PEOPLE FILL THE STREETS OF AECLANUM.



THE BATH COMPLEX OF AECLANUM IS RIGHT ALONG THE VIA APPIA, NEXT TO
SHOPS OF ALL TYPES OF GOODS BROUGHT FROM AROUND THE ROMAN EMPIRE.

NERATIA AND HER MOTHER WALK ALONG THE VIA APPIA, LOOKING AT THE MANY STALLS SELLING THEIR MERCHANDISE. THERE'S BREAD, FISH, FRESH FRUIT, AND OF COURSE, THE EVER-POPULAR GARUM TO SEASON THE FOOD.



AT ONE END OF THE FORUM, CAIUS AND HIS FATHER, THE POTTER, ARE SELLING THEIR WARES. NERATIA AND HER MOTHER WALK OVER TO GREET THEM.

SALVE, NERATIA! LOOK! FATHER HAS MADE THESE VOTIVES SPECIALLY FOR TODAY'S FESTIVAL. YOU CAN BUY ONE, AS A GIFT TO THE GODS!

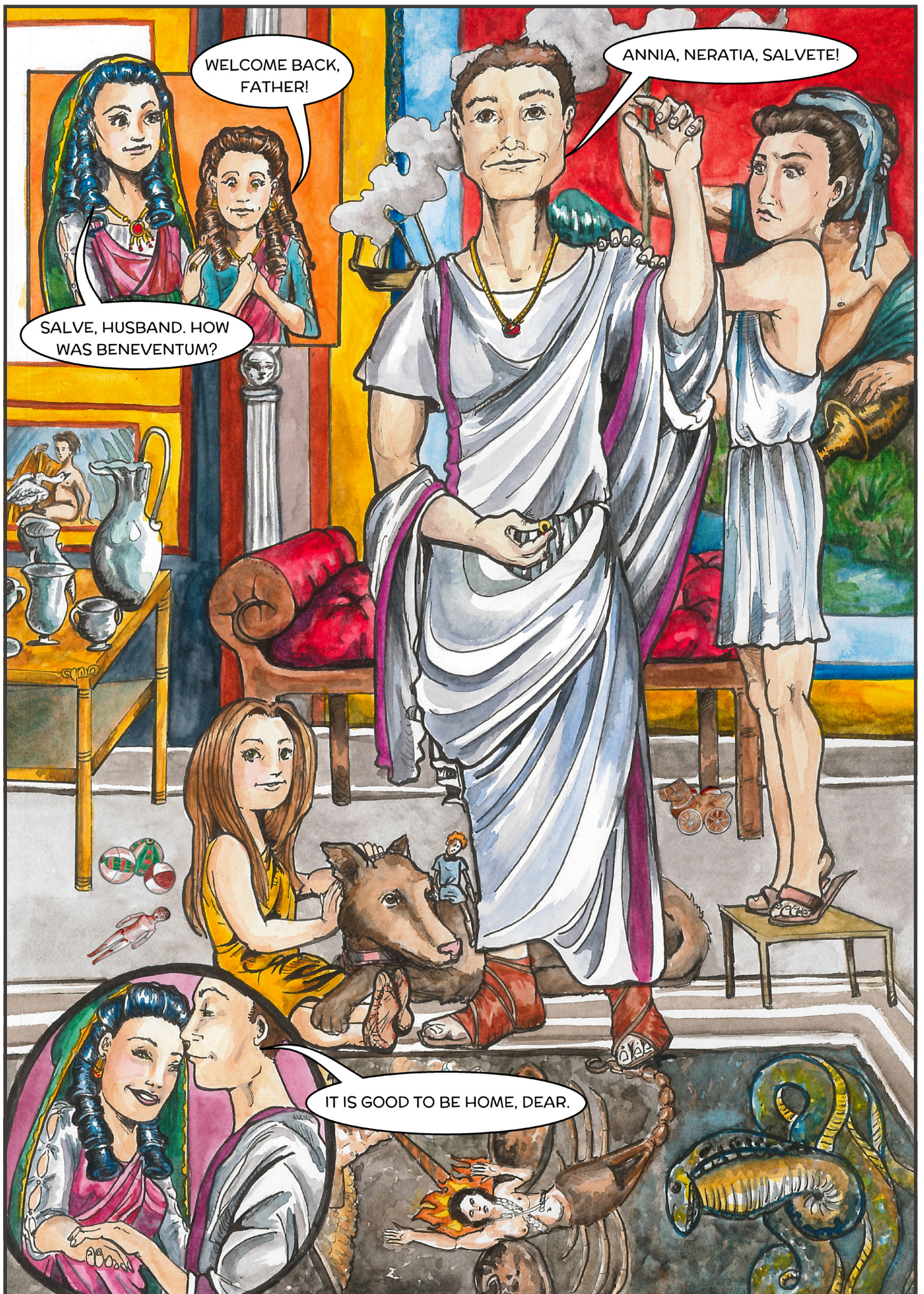
SALVE, CAIUS!





NERATIA, HER MOTHER, AND MYRTIS WALK BACK TO THEIR DOMUS. AS THEY APPROACH THE DOOR, THEY CAN SEE THE LINE OF HER FATHER'S CLIENTS WAITING EAGERLY TO RECEIVE THEIR SPORTULA. NERATIA IS EAGER TOO, BECAUSE WHENEVER HER FATHER COMES BACK FROM A BUSINESS TRIP, HE ALWAYS BRINGS HER A SMALL TOKEN.







AH, PRIMA! COME HERE,
I HAVE A PRESENT FOR YOU
FROM BENEVENTUM. A COLLEAGUE
OF MINE BROUGHT THIS
RING ALL THE WAY FROM
ALEXANDRIA FOR YOU!

THANK YOU FATHER!
IT IS VERY BEAUTIFUL.

I AM PLEASED YOU LIKE IT, PRIMA.
NOW WE MUST BE OFF!

THE FAMILY EXITS THE HOUSE
IN A SOLEMN PROCESSION.

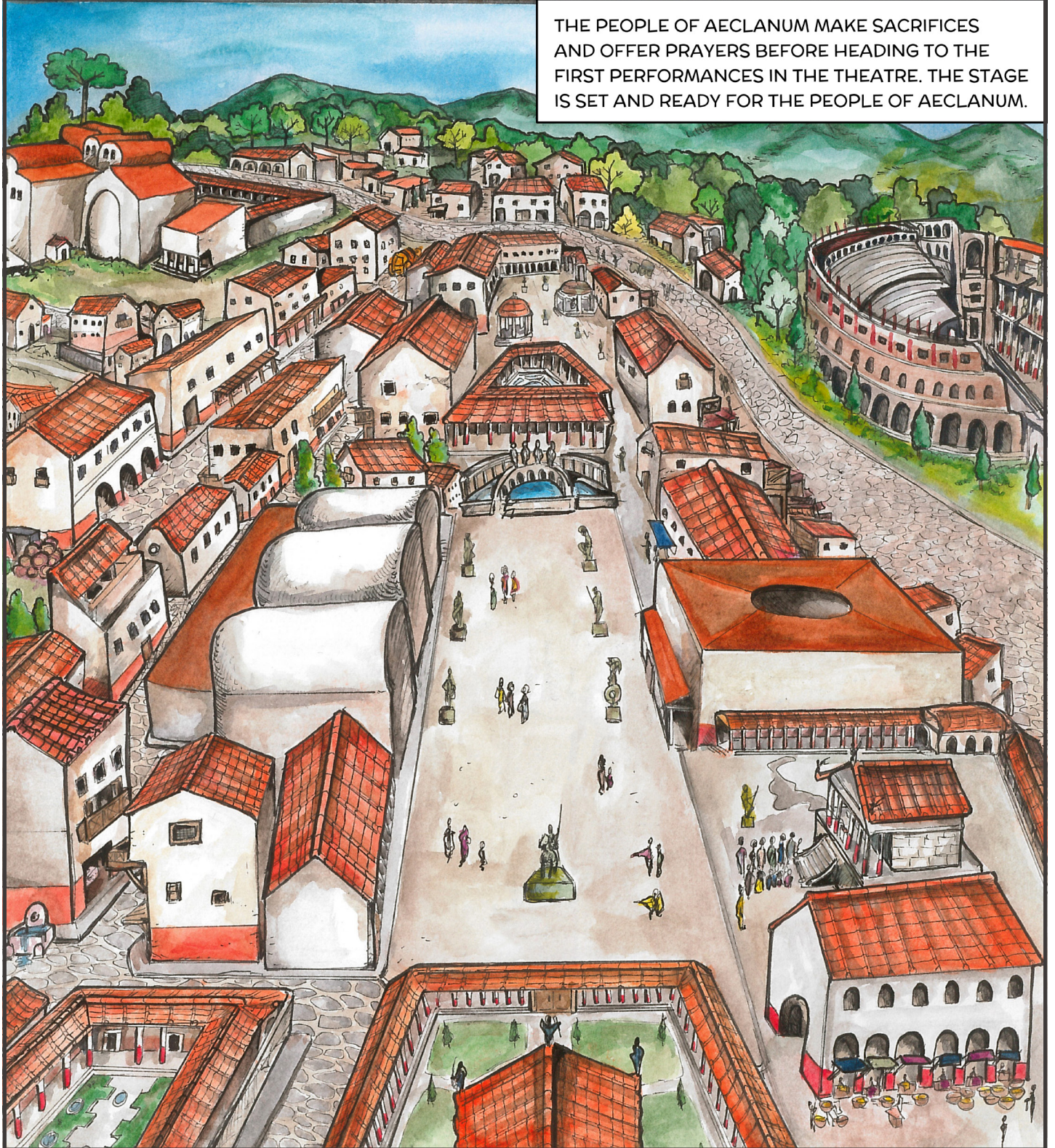
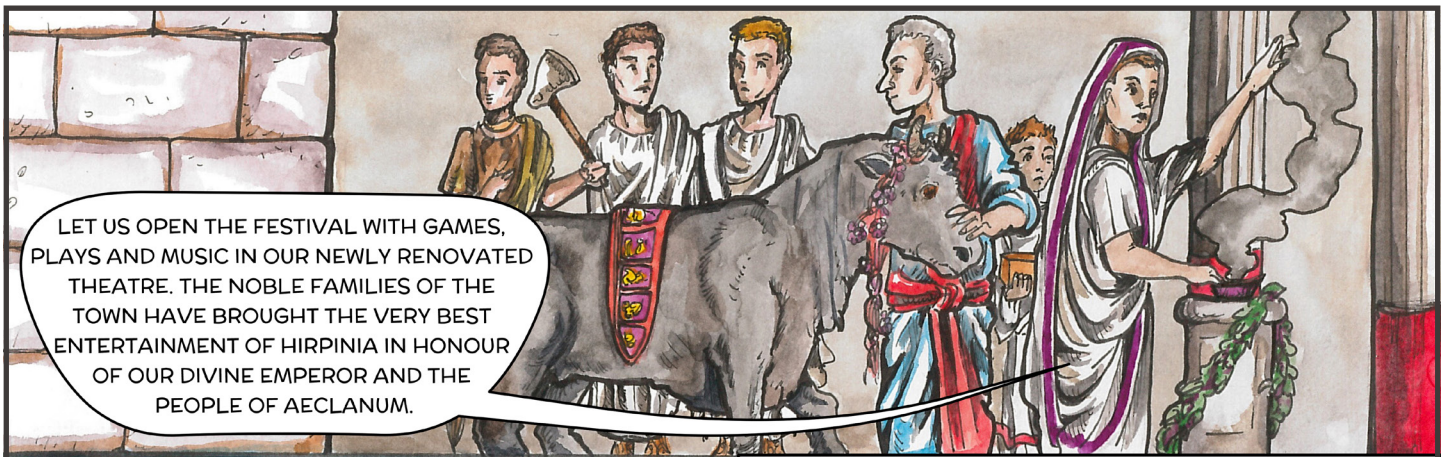


THE CROWD MOVES THROUGH
THE FORUM, TOWARDS A TEMPLE.

TODAY WE HONOUR THE GODS
OF AECLANUM, WHO GIVE US
SUCCESS AND BOUNTY. THROUGH OUR
IMPERATOR CAESAR PUBLIUS AELIUS
TRAIANUS HADRIANUS AUGUSTUS,
WE WILL RECEIVE COLONIA
STATUS THIS YEAR.

TODAY WE CELEBRATE THE
ESTEEMED POSITION OF OUR
COMMUNITY THROUGH
HIS BENEVOLENCE.

IT IS WITH GRATITUDE WE ACKNOWLEDGE THE
HARD WORK AND FINANCIAL CONTRIBUTION OF
THE NOBLE FAMILIES OF AECLANUM THROUGH
WHOSE EFFORTS WE HAVE MAINTAINED AND
IMPROVED OUR CONNECTION TO THE BEATING
HEART OF THE EMPIRE, THROUGH THE VIA APPIA.



Acknowledgements

Creating Vita Aeclano was the end result of a three-year Public Archaeology engagement project, which began with the University of Edinburgh and Apolline Project excavations at Aeclanum and has now moved globally. We wanted to create something that was current and interesting to local and broader audiences, which brought together comics and archaeology.

This project would not have been possible without the support of the community of Mirabella Eclano. Particular gratitude is due to the councilwoman Raffaella Rita D'Ambrosio, for her ongoing work in promoting the excavation and the value and benefit of Public Archaeology to her constituents and colleagues.

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I would like to thank the volunteer collaborators on Vita Aeclano for their work in creating this graphic novella. My thanks to Ambra Ghiringhelli (PhD candidate at the University of Edinburgh) for providing the voices to the images and to Josef Souček (curator at the National Museum in Prague) for editing with me and translating my drawings into logical, elegantly formatted final pages.

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☞ Zofia Guertin is a PhD candidate at the University of St. Andrews, where she studies the inclusion of Egyptian cults within Roman urban environments. She is the current project manager and public archaeology coordinator at Aeclanum. As a lifelong graphic novel enthusiast, she developed and illustrated Vita Aeclano.

Partner Acknowledgments

We owe a huge debt of gratitude to the various partners who have worked with the University of Edinburgh and Apolline Project team at Aeclanum and whose financial support has made this work possible. The School of History, Classics and Archaeology at the University of Edinburgh provided key initial funds for the launch of the Public Archaeology campaign at Aeclanum, as well as funding many of the specialists on the project. Further funding for the excavations was received from the Roman Society and Roman Research Trust, a Munro Research Grant, and the Challenge Investment Fund of the University of Edinburgh.

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I would like to dedicate Vita Aeclano to my partner Chris. Your enthusiasm and loving support made all of this possible.



Apolline Project



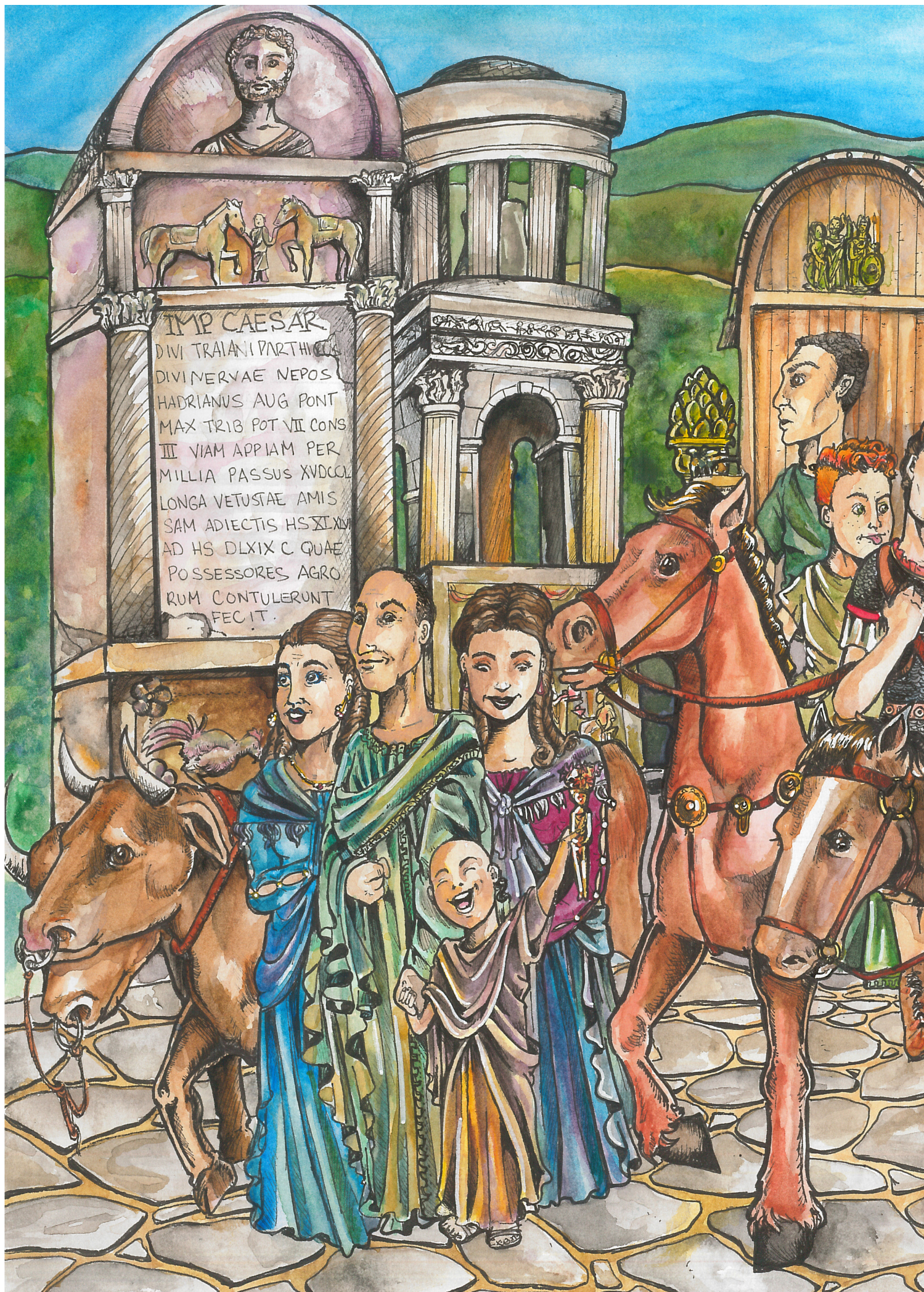
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SALVETE AMICI!

THANK YOU FOR JOINING NERATIA ON THIS ADVENTURE! CHECK OUT OUR WEBSITE ARCHAEOKIDS.COM FOR OTHER LEARNING MATERIALS: WORKSHEETS, TEACHING TOOLS, AND FUTURE ADVENTURES IN THE ROMAN WORLD!

