

AUDIO BOOK SUPPLEMENT

Dawn Empress: A Novel of Imperial Rome

The Theodosian Women Book Two

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PRAISE FOR
Dawn Empress: A Novel of Imperial Rome
(The Theodosian Women Book Two)

“A gripping tale of a royal sister’s fraught political machinations...Justice chronicles, with a skillful blend of historical rigor and dramatic action, the extraordinary efforts of Pulcheria to outmaneuver her adversaries and defend Theodosius. The prose is razor sharp, and the tale is as impressively unsentimental as it is genuinely moving.” — [Kirkus Reviews](#)

“Justice has penned another outstanding novel, the second in her Theodosian Women series...The role of the Christian church and its relationship with other religions in shaping the empire is narrated in a fluid, non-textbook style. This novel is a useful addition into the insights and workings of the Eastern Roman Empire. Highly recommended.” — [Historical Novels Review](#); *Editors’ Choice (Issue #94, November 2020)*

“A deftly written and impressively entertaining historical novel in which the author pays due attention to detail while ably crafting memorable characters and riveting plot twists and turns. “Dawn Empress” is the second title in author Faith Justice’s remarkable ‘Theodosian Women’ trilogy...especially recommended for community library Historical Fiction collections.” — [Midwest Book Reviews](#)

“The historical setting is gorgeously written... The prose is beautiful, sprinkled with vivid descriptions. Justice brings to life historical characters and a history that I have not read about much. There is intrigue, stabbings-in-the-back, and betrayal, but at the heart of the story is a powerful woman who stands tall, determined to protect her younger brother from scheming enemies. I loved the cinematic writing and focused scenes... *Dawn Empress: A Novel of Imperial Rome* is fast-paced and engaging, one of those novels that will keep fans of historical novels reading through the night.” — [Readers’ Favorite](#) (5-stars)

“History abounds with accomplished women whose stories have undeservedly been forgotten. Aelia Pulcheria Augusta is among them...Justice gathers up the known facts about Pulcheria and offers a well-rounded, human portrait of this accomplished woman...It’s a recommended read for historical fiction old-timers who enjoyed the works of Gillian Bradshaw, and for anyone seeking out fresh subjects in historical fiction about world rulers or influential women.” — Sarah Johnson of [Reading the Past](#)

“Kudos to Justice for a well-written novel about a complex topic. For anyone who enjoys history...*Dawn Empress* is an engaging addition to the “books to read” list...[Her] beautiful, poignant description of the new Emperor on his wedding night was both tender and touching. I don’t think I’ve ever read a better bedroom scene.” — [Story Circle Network](#)

Dawn Empress: A Novel of Imperial Rome

(Theodosian Women Book Two)

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Audio production Copyright © 2021 Faith L. Justice

Audio narration by Kathleen Li

2020

Raggedy Moon Books

Brooklyn, New York, USA

raggedymoonbooks.com

Cover design by Jennifer Quinlan

historicaleditorial.com

Library of Congress Control Number: 2019914538

Hardback ISBN: 978-0917053238

Trade Paperback: ISBN: 978-0917053146

EPUB eBook ISBN: 978-0917053177

AudioBook ISBN: 978-0917053252

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This is a work of fiction. Names, characters, places, and incidents are either the product of the author's imagination or are used fictitiously.

Dedication

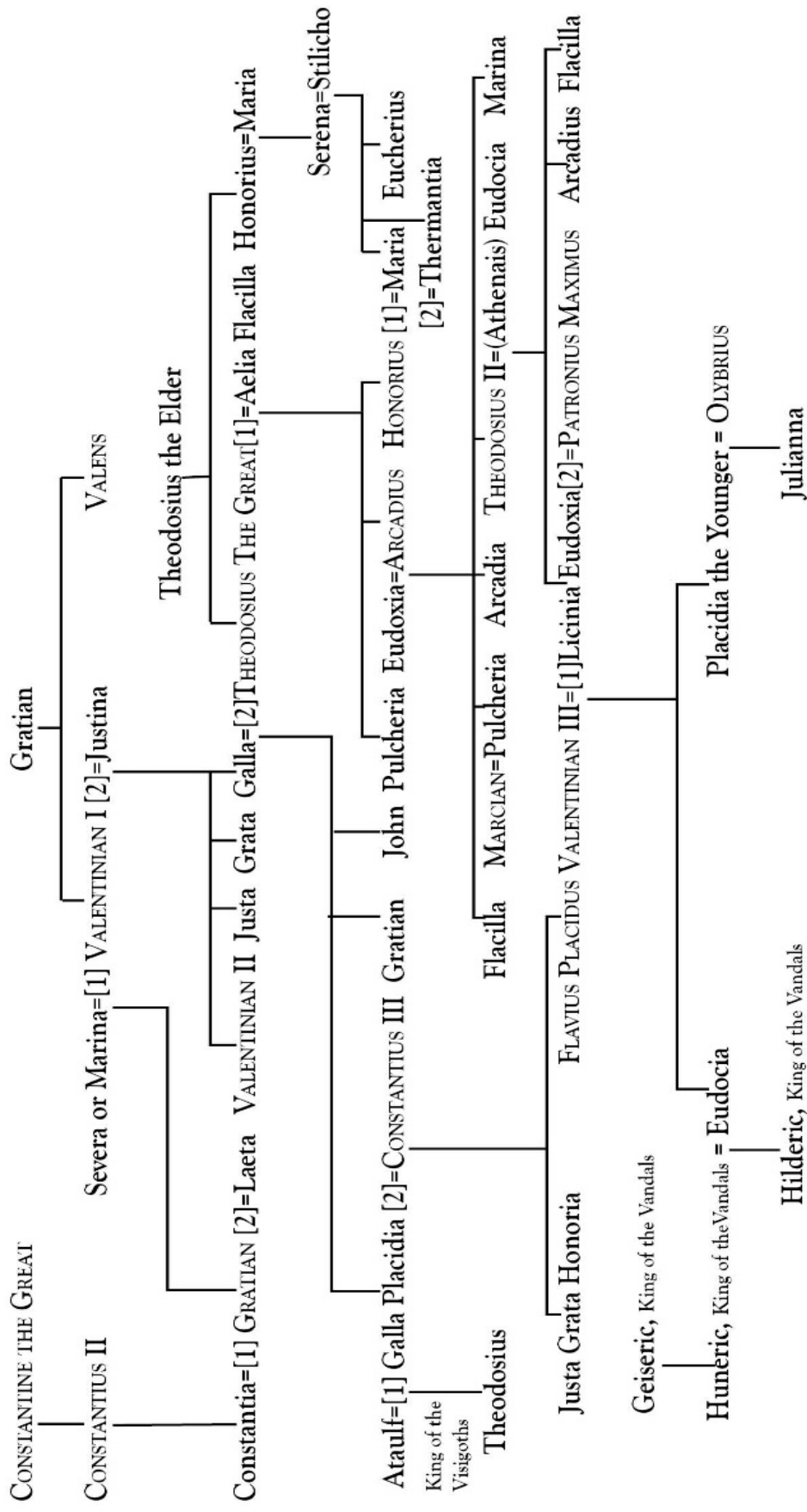
*To my sweet, fierce daughter, Hannah Justice Rothman,
who made me a novelist.*

Epigram

“The Byzantines did not call themselves Byzantines, but Romaioi--Romans.”
Robert Browning, *The Byzantine Empire*

Theodosian Genealogy

Emperors shown in SMALL CAPS.



Note on Imperial Titles and Place Names

Imperial Roman titles evolved over time. The title AUGUSTUS (Latin for “majestic”, “the increaser”, or “venerable”) is the equivalent of the modern “Emperor,” and was conferred on the first emperor, Octavian (great-nephew and adopted son of Julius Caesar), by the senate in 27 BC. Every emperor after held the title of Augustus, which always followed the family name. The first emperor conferred the title AUGUSTA on his wife, Livia, in his will. Other imperial wives (but not all) earned this supreme title. By the fifth century, sisters and daughters also could be elevated to this status, but only by a sitting Augustus. I use Emperor/Empress and Augustus/Augusta interchangeably throughout the text.

Octavian took his adoptive father’s name, Gaius Julius Caesar, but later dropped the Gaius Julius. CAESAR became the imperial family name and was passed on by adoption. When the Julio-Claudian line died out, subsequent emperors took the name as a sign of status on their accession, adoption, or nomination as heir apparent. By the fifth century, it was the title given to any official heir to the Augustus (it’s also the root of the modern titles Kaiser and Czar.)

Children of imperial families were usually given the title NOBILISSIMUS/NOBILISSIMA (“Most Noble”—boy/girl). This is the closest equivalent to the modern Prince/Princess, though not an exact match. The title was usually conferred some years after birth, in anticipation that the child would take on higher office (Caesar or Augustus for a boy, Augusta for a girl). I generally use the modern title Princess instead of Nobilissima throughout the text.

There is no direct Roman equivalent for the title Regent—someone who legally rules during the absence, incapacity, or minority of a country’s monarch. In Imperial Rome, an underage Augustus is still ruler in his own name. He must sign all laws and declarations for them to be legal. In reality, adults stepped into the role and administered the empire for minors. Placidia Augusta filled that role for her son Valentinian Augustus III (*Twilight Empress*). Anthemius does that for Theodosius II in *Dawn Empress*. The legal Roman term for that person is *tutela* meaning “guardian” or “tutor” for an adult (usually a man) who handled the affairs of someone (usually women and children) who would ordinarily be under the legal protection and control of the *pater familias* (male head of the family), but who were legally emancipated. I chose to use the more familiar term Regent throughout this book.

With one exception (Constantinople for modern Istanbul), I chose to use the modern names of cities and the anglicized rather than Latin names of provinces.

Characters

(fictional in italics)

EASTERN ROME

The Imperial Family: Constantinople Court

Flavius Arcadius Augustus married to Aelia Eudoxia Augusta

Their Daughters:

Aelia Pulcheria Augusta

Arcadia

Marina

Their Son:

Flavius Theodosius Augustus II married to Aelia Eudocia (Athenais) Augusta

Daughters:

Licina Eudoxia Augusta (married to Valentinian Augustus below)

Flacilla

Imperial Servants:

Nana/Elpida, nurse

Antiochus, Chief Eunuch and head of household for Arcadius

Father Marcus, priest assigned to the nursery, and tutor to Pulcheria

Chrysaphius, Chief Eunuch and head of household for Theodosius II

Nobles and Government Officials

Anthemius “The Great”, Patrician and Praetorian Prefect of the East

Isidorus, son of Anthemius, and Praetorian Prefect of the City of Constantinople

Flavius Anthemius Isidorus Theophilus, son of Isidorus and grandson of Anthemius

Paulinus, Theodosius’ childhood companion, best friend, and Master of Offices

Placitus, Theodosius’ childhood companion

Aurelian, former trusted advisor to Eudoxia Augusta, Patrician to Theodosius II

Olympiodorus of Thebes, pagan poet, diplomat, and historian

Leontius of Antioch, Athenais’ father, pagan philosopher and chair of rhetoric at Athens

Asclepiodotus, Athenais’ maternal uncle, Praetorian Prefect of the East

Doria, wife of Asclepiodotus

Valerius, Athenais’ brother, Prefect of Illyricum

Gesius, Athenais’ brother, Prefect of Illyricum

Candidian, Count and imperial envoy to Ephesus

Cyrus of Panopolis, Pretorian Prefect of the East

Constantinus, Pretorian Prefect of the East

Military:

General Lucius, Master of Soldiers
General Plinta, Master of Soldiers in the Emperor's Presence, Consul
General Ardaburius, Master of Soldiers in the Emperor's Presence
General Aspar, Master of Soldiers in the Emperor's Presence
Tribune Marcian, later General

The Church of Constantinople:

Archbishop Atticus (406-425)
Archbishop Sissinius (426-427)
Archbishop Nestorius (428-431)
Bishop Proclus (434-446)
Basil, envoy from Proclus to Pulcheria
Archbishop Flavian (446-449)
Archbishop Anatolius (449-458)
Dalmatius, Archimandrite
Eutyches, Archimandrite

Other Church officials/Holy Persons:

Passarion of Jerusalem
Bishop Cyril of Alexandria (412-444)
Archdeacon Paul of Alexandria
Bishop Memnon of Ephesus
Melania the Younger
Geilar, Arian priest and envoy from King Gaeseric of the Vandals
Bishop Dioscorus of Alexandria (444-454)
Bishop Juvenal of Jerusalem (422-458)
Pope Leo I "The Great" of Rome (440-461)

WESTERN ROME

Imperial Family: Ravenna Court

Flavius Honorius Augustus (co-ruler with Arcadius and Theodosius II)
Galla Placidia Augusta (half-sister to Honorius and Arcadius) married to Flavius Constantius
Augustus III

Their children:

Justa Grata Honoria Augusta
Flavius Placidius Valentinian Augustus III married to Licinia Eudoxia Augusta (above)

Their daughters:

Eudocia
Placidia "The Younger"

Author's Note

I fell in love with the Theodosian women—Pulcheria, Athenais, and Placidia—many years ago, when writing my first book, *Selene of Alexandria*, which featured a fictional student of the historical Hypatia, Lady Philosopher of Alexandria. Researching the life and times of Hypatia, I kept running across these great women who ruled the failing Western Roman Empire and set the stage for the rise of the Byzantine Empire in the East.

And it wasn't just the dry fact of their power; they each had compelling human stories. Pulcheria outwitted the Constantinople court worthies to claim sole regency over her brother and the Empire at the tender age of fifteen. Athenais, the beautiful but impoverished daughter of a pagan Athenian scholar, captured the heart of a Most Christian Emperor. Placidia, held hostage for five years by the Goths, married their king for love. Why hadn't I heard of these women before?

I originally planned a single book, telling their intertwining stories, but soon found I had far too much material. Each woman deserved her own story. This is the second in a set of three books about the Theodosian women. *Twilight Empress* (Book One), about Placidia, came out in 2017. I hope to finish the book on Athenais in the next couple of years.

Throughout the series I attempt to stay close to known historical facts. Dates for wars, births, deaths, Church convocations, etc. are generally known. Quoted letters and sermons are shortened and the language somewhat modernized, but they come from primary sources. However, the fifth century was a notoriously chaotic time, as the Roman Empire reeled under repeated attacks by barbarians and failed leadership over the course of several decades. Primary sources are scant, lean heavily toward Church documents rather than secular historians, and are sometimes contradictory. Primary historians discussed Theodosius II's paternity settling on a mysterious "Count John" as their favorite candidate for baby daddy. Did Arcadius Augustus know or believe his wife unfaithful? Was she? We have no way of knowing. Modern scholars occasionally interpret the primary sources differently. Where there is disagreement, I chose the interpretation that best suited my story.

Most of the fun personal incidents used to color this story are attested to and accepted by most people as true. Pulcheria most likely tricked Theodosius into selling his wife to her as a slave. The army probably discovered three protective silver statues at the Hunnish border and demanded their return. Honoria did send a ring to Attila the Hun and ask for his "protection."

But did King Gaeseric of the Vandals tell Marcian he would be Emperor? Did the Virgin Mary save young Theodosius from assassination and protect the walls of Constantinople prior to Attila's invasion? Those stories, along with "the Golden Apple of Discord" that brought about Athenais' downfall, are likely apocryphal. Where the Virgin Mary appeared, I created less miraculous source material for the story, substituting Pulcheria for the Virgin Mary in a way that the legend could grow from the facts. There is no historical basis for that substitution—just artistic license.

I left the “Golden Apple of Discord” pretty much as told, because it tickled me. Most historians consider the story apocryphal because variations exist in several histories about other people. There was even one in which Theodosius presented the apple to Pulcheria and she sent it to her lover Marcian, whom she would shortly marry and raise to be Emperor. That version shows up as one of the “vicious rumors and graffiti” Pulcheria fought against after her marriage to Marcian.

A popular story—sometimes repeated as history—is a sweet romance telling how Athenais met Theodosius. Supposedly, when her father died, he left his money to his sons and told the beautiful Athenais her face would be her fortune. She sued her brothers for her share of the inheritance taking her complaint to the imperial court, where Pulcheria heard her argue so eloquently she thought the girl a fit consort for her brother. Pulcheria introduced Athenais to Theodosius; they fell in love and married shortly after. Given the politics of the times and the animosity between the two women, most historians believe this story is a fable circulated for the masses. This is another case where I took literary license to fill in the unknown with a more likely political motivation and outcome. How close I came to truth is unknowable.

Because I covered nearly fifty years in the book, I necessarily limited the number of historical characters. Anthemius and his son Isidorus stand in for a multitude of courtiers of the “Hellene” faction in the ever-changing world of politics. Likewise, General Ardaburius and his son General Aspar represent the military. They were both at all the battles where I placed them and earned all the honors I gave them but their personal and political relationships with the imperial family are unknown.

My biggest challenge was simplifying the early Church battles over doctrine. What was to become the Catholic Church (and later the Eastern Orthodox Church in Byzantium) was in its infancy but gaining enormous political power. Six different bishops served as Patriarch in Constantinople during Placidia’s political life with hundreds of others in sees across the Eastern empire. Philosophical differences over the meaning of a single word from much copied/translated early gospels sprouted into internecine warfare, resulting in accusations of heresy, ecumenical trials, excommunications, and frequently violence and riots among the faithful. I sympathized with a ruler’s impatience with such turmoil and the need to impose their will on the Church to have peace in the land. Both Constantine the Great and Pulcheria Augusta influenced the early direction of Christianity in profound ways. But those struggles don’t always make for fun reading, so please forgive me for losing the nuance in very complicated religious controversies.

History has generally treated Pulcheria more kindly than her Aunt Placidia (*Twilight Empress*), who ruled in the failing West. Contemporary writers (mostly churchmen) admired Pulcheria’s asceticism and good works. They considered Pulcheria an excellent role model of a Christian woman and ruler and found Placidia’s more conventional secular rule less satisfactory. They particularly lauded Pulcheria for her efforts to enforce orthodoxy and rout out heresies at the Councils of Ephesus and Chalcedon. Aelia Pulcheria Augusta is recognized as a saint by both the Catholic and Eastern Orthodox Churches.

It's the novelist's job to create interesting characters that would plausibly do the things that history says they did. I wanted to go beyond the halo awarded Pulcheria. Even saints have flaws and make mistakes. Her religiosity—considered extreme in our modern world, where religious fanaticism is usually feared—makes it difficult for some people to sympathize with Pulcheria. After much study, I saw a fierce and brilliant woman, scarred by a lonely, frightening childhood, who used the levers of power available to her in a time when women—even imperial women—had little power over their lives. Pulcheria secured her brother's reign, insured her own and her sister's independence, and cared for her people with her own sweat and riches. She put her stamp on the early Christian Church, influencing its direction more than any other woman (and most men) for centuries before and after. Her fusion of government and Church signaled the dawn of the Byzantine Empire, which continued for a thousand years after the “fall” of Western Rome.

I hope I have helped humanize Aelia Pulcheria Augusta, a fascinating woman, empress, and saint.

Faith L. Justice
Brooklyn, NY
March 2010

P.S. I would love to hear from you about your reactions to the story and characters. You can write me at faith@faithljustice.com. Tell me what you liked, what you loved, even what you hated. Although my daughter had to drag me into the social media scene, you can find me on [Twitter](#) (@faithljustice) and [Facebook](#). I'm also on Instagram, but my account is pathetic.

Finally, I need to ask a favor. I'd love a review of *Dawn Empress*. Loved it, hated it—please give me your feedback at your favorite book review sharing site. No need for a literary critique—just a couple of sentences on what you liked/didn't like and why. Reviews can be tough to come by these days and having them (or not) can make or break a book. So, I hope you share your opinion with others.

Thank you for reading/listening to *Dawn Empress*.

Glossary

adventus—originally a ceremony in which an emperor was formally welcomed into a city either during a progress or after a military campaign; adapted as a ceremony to formally welcome religious relics such as saint's bones to a new city/resting place.

agentes in rebus—imperial spy and messenger network controlled by the Master of Offices.

Alans—an Iranian nomadic pastoral people. When the Huns invaded their ancestral lands, north of the Black Sea, many of the Alans migrated westwards, along with various Germanic tribes. They settled in the Iberian Peninsula and helped the Vandals invade North Africa in AD 428.

Amores—Ovid's first completed book of poetry. Written in elegiac couplets (first used by the Greeks for funeral epigrams), it set the standard for erotic poetry. First published in 16 BC.

Arian Heresy—a nontrinitarian Christian sect that believed Jesus Christ to be the Son of God, created by God the Father, distinct from the Father and therefore subordinate to the Father; named after Arius (c. AD 250–336), a Christian presbyter in Alexandria, Egypt. Many of the barbarian tribes were converted to Christianity by Arian missionaries under the Arian Emperors Constantius II (337–361) and Valens (364–378). The Council of Nicaea of 325 declared Arius a heretic, but he was exonerated, then denounced again at the Ecumenical First Council of Constantinople of 381.

archimandrite—a title of honor, with no connection to any actual monastery, bestowed on clergy as a mark of respect or gratitude for service to the Church.

bigae—two-horse chariots.

casula—a priest's large poncho-like garment covering ordinary clothing at mass; developed from the ordinary Roman attire of a farmer, who wore the large poncho as protection from the elements; associated with Christians starting in the 3rd century.

comes rerum privatarum—person who administered the estates and managed the private revenues of the emperor; similar to minister of the Privy Purse in later monarchies.

comes sacrarum largitionum—head of the office that collected taxes and duties, supervised the mints and other imperial workshops and paid out salaries and donatives to civil servants and troops.

consistory—the anglicized form of *sacrum consistorium* (sacred assembly), a council of the closest advisors of the Roman emperors from the time of Constantine the Great; also, the room where the council meets.

constitution—formal law or commandment signed and approved by the Roman Emperor.

diadem—"band" or "fillet"; originally, in Greece, an embroidered white silk ribbon, ending in a knot and two fringed strips often draped over the shoulders, that surrounded the head of the king to denote his authority; later made of precious metals and decorated with gems. Evolved into the modern crown.

Domina (feminine), ***Dominus*** (masculine)—formal title for mistress and master of the household.

fibula (singular) ***fibulae*** (plural)—an ornamental clasp designed to hold clothing together; usually made of silver or gold, sometimes bronze or some other material; used by Greeks, Romans, and Celts.

forum (singular), ***fora*** (plural)—a rectangular plaza surrounded by important government buildings at the center of the city; the site of triumphal processions and elections; the venue for public speeches, criminal trials, and gladiatorial matches; the nucleus of commercial affairs.

garum—a fermented fish sauce used as a condiment in the cuisines of ancient Greece, Rome, Carthage and, later, Byzantium.

Gaul—a region of Western Europe inhabited by Celtic tribes, encompassing present day France, Luxembourg, Belgium, most of Switzerland, parts of Northern Italy, as well as those parts of the Netherlands and Germany on the west bank of the Rhine; Rome divided it into three parts: Gallia Celtica, Belgica and Aquitania.

Hagia Sophia, Church of—the second church on that site, next to the imperial palace; ordered by Theodosius II, who inaugurated it in 415; a basilica with a wooden roof, built by architect Rufinus; a fire burned it to the ground in 532.

hippodrome—an arena for chariot races and other entertainment; the U-shaped Hippodrome of Constantine was about 450 m (1,476 ft) long and 130 m (427 ft) wide; its stands could hold 100,000 spectators.

Goths—an early Germanic people, possibly originating in southern Sweden; they are mentioned by Roman authors as living in northern Poland in the 1st century AD; in later centuries they expanded towards the Black Sea, where they replaced the Sarmatians as the dominant power on the Pontic Steppe and launched a series of expeditions against the Roman Empire.

Hebdomon—a seaside retreat outside Constantinople where Emperors built palaces and two churches; Emperors were acclaimed by the army on the Field of Mars there; the imperial court came often to attend military parades and welcome the emperor returning from campaigns.

Huns—a nomadic group of people who lived in Eastern Europe, the Caucasus, and Central Asia between the 1st and 7th centuries AD; may have stimulated the Great Migration, a contributing factor in the collapse of the Western Roman Empire; they formed a unified empire under Attila the Hun, who died in 453; their empire broke up the following year.

imperium—“power to command”; a man with *imperium*, in principle, had absolute authority to apply the law within the scope of his magistracy; he could be vetoed or overruled by a colleague with equal power (e.g. a fellow consul) or by one whose *imperium* outranked his.

kithara—eight stringed instrument of the lyre family; ***kitharode***—kithara player.

latrones (a.k.a. *ludus latruncularum*, *latrunculin*)—“the game of brigands”, a two-player strategy board game played throughout the Roman Empire resembling chess or draughts, generally accepted to be a game of military tactics.

magister militum—"Master of the Soldiers"; a top-level military command used in the late Roman Empire, referring to a senior military officer, equivalent to a modern war theatre commander.

magister utriusque militia—"Master of both branches of the soldiery"; the highest rank a general can achieve.

Mary *Theotokos*—Mary, Mother of God.

nobilissima puella, nobilissimus puer—"Most Noble Girl/Boy"; title conferred on imperial children by a sitting Augustus, before given a higher title.

paludamentum—the purple military cloak used only by Emperors and Empresses, who were often portrayed wearing it in their statues and on their coinage; originally a cloak or cape fastened at one shoulder, worn by military commanders.

parabalans—"persons who risk their lives as nurses"; members of a brotherhood who, in early Christianity, voluntarily undertook care of the sick and burial of the dead, knowing they too could die; generally drawn from the lower strata of society, they also functioned as attendants to local bishops; sometimes used by them as bodyguards and in violent clashes with their opponents.

***pater familias* (singular) *patres familias* (plural)**—"father of the family" or the "owner of the family estate"; traditionally the oldest living male in a family; he held legal rights over family property, and varying levels of authority over his dependents: wife, children, certain other relatives through blood or adoption, clients, freedmen, and slaves. In theory, he held powers of life and death over every member of his extended family, but in practice, this right was limited by law.

Patrician—a personal title which conferred on the person to whom it was granted a very high rank and certain privileges; it was given, without regard to persons, to such men as had for a long time distinguish themselves by good and faithful services to the empire or the emperor.

porphyry—from Ancient Greek, means "purple," the color of royalty; "imperial porphyry" was a deep purple igneous rock.

praetorian prefect—the chief minister of territories (city, province, etc.), equivalent to mayors in cities and governors in provinces.

quadriga—four-horse chariot.

sarcophagus—a box-like funeral receptacle for a corpse, most carved in stone, and usually displayed above ground, though it may also be buried.

scholae—an elite troop of soldiers in the Roman army created by Emperor Constantine the Great to provide personal protection of the Emperor and his immediate family.

***siliqua* (singular) *siliquae* (plural)** is the modern name given to small, thin, Roman silver coins produced in the 4th century A.D. and later. The term is one of convenience, as no name for these coins is indicated by contemporary sources. When the coins were in circulation, the Latin word *siliqua* was a unit of weight defined by one late Roman writer as one twenty-fourth of the weight of a Roman *solidus*.

Solidus (singular) ***solidi*** (plural)—a gold coin introduced by Emperor Diocletian in 301 as a replacement for the aureus; entered widespread circulation under Constantine I after 312

spatha—a type of straight long sword, measuring between 0.75 and 1 m (29.5 and 39.4 in), with a handle length between 18 and 20 cm (7.1 and 7.9 in), in use in the Roman Empire during the 1st to 6th centuries AD.

spina—a row of obelisks, statues and art decorating the middle of the hippodrome, around which charioteers raced.

stola—a long, pleated dress, worn over a tunic, generally sleeveless, fastened by clasps at the shoulder called fibulae, usually made of fabrics like silk, linen or wool, worn as a symbol representing a Roman woman's marital status.

stylite—a type of Christian ascetic who lived on pillars, preaching, fasting and praying; they believed mortification of their bodies would help ensure salvation of their souls.

tisane—herbal teas; beverages made from the infusion or decoction of herbs, spices, or other plant material in hot water.

Vandals—an East Germanic tribe, or group of tribes, believed to have migrated from southern Scandinavia to the area between the lower Oder and Vistula rivers during the 2nd century BC. They were pushed westwards by the Huns, crossing the Rhine into Gaul along with other tribes in AD 406. In 409, the Vandals crossed the Pyrenees into the Iberian Peninsula. In 429, under King Gaiseric, the Vandals entered North Africa. By 439 they had established a kingdom which included the Roman province of Africa as well as Sicily, Corsica, Sardinia, Malta and the Balearic Islands. They fended off several Roman attempts to recapture the African province and sacked the city of Rome in 455.

vigiles—or ***vigiles urbani*** ("watchmen of the city") were the firefighters and police of Roman cities; usually made up of freemen and paid by the city.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

It has been my pleasure to write this story and bring these characters and this time to life. Among the many people who helped and encouraged me, I want to particularly thank my beta readers for providing insightful feedback: Loretta Goldberg, Gordon Linzner, Roy Post, Mary Ann Trail, Susan Wands, Hanson Wong, and Lisa Yarde. They spent a significant amount of time and effort to make this a better book, and I can't thank them enough for their help. Special and loving thanks go to my husband Gordon for supporting me in countless professional and personal ways, and to my daughter Hannah, who grew up sharing me with my writing career and showing no sibling rivalry whatsoever.

No historical fiction acknowledgement would be complete without thanks to the many librarians and collections that tirelessly answer questions and find obscure documents. My special thanks go to the New York City Public Library—a world class institution. I consulted dozens of books and hundreds of articles but relied most heavily on the research of Kenneth G. Holum from his *Theodosian Empresses: Women and Imperial Dominion in Late Antiquity* and Ada B. Teetgen's *The Life and Times of Empress Pulcheria AD 399 to AD 452*. A bibliography of the most useful works can be found on my website (faithjustice.com).

Although I tried to get it right, no one is perfect. If the gentle reader should find errors in the book, please know they are my own and not those of my sources.

Again, thanks to all who helped make this book possible, with special thanks to those of you who read it and share it in the future.

About the Author

Faith L. Justice writes award-winning fiction and articles in Brooklyn, New York. Her work appears in such publications as *Salon.com*, *Writer's Digest*, and *The Copperfield Review*. She is Chair of the New York City Chapter of the Historical Novel Society and an Associate Editor for *Space and Time Magazine*. Her previous novels, collections of short stories, and non-fiction are available online at all the usual places or through your local bookstore. For fun, Faith likes to dig in the dirt—both her garden and various archaeological sites. Sample her work, check out her blog, or ask her a question at her website. She loves to hear from readers and usually has a free giveaway available.

Connect with Faith online:

Website/Blog: <https://faithljustice.com>

Twitter: <https://twitter.com/faithljustice>

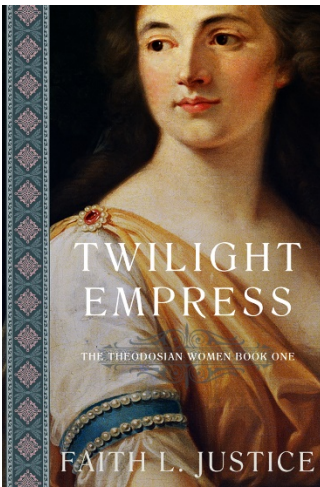
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Twilight Empress: A Novel of Imperial Rome

(Theodosian Women #1)



Twilight Empress tells the little-known story of a remarkable woman: Placidia, sister to one of the last Roman Emperors. As Gothic Queen then Roman Empress, Placidia does the unthinkable: she holds together the failing Western Roman Empire. A life of ambition, power, and intrigue she doesn't seek, but can't refuse; her actions shape the face of Western Europe for centuries. A passionate woman as well as an empress, Placidia suffers love, loss, and betrayal. Can her intelligence, tenacity, and ambition help her survive and triumph over scheming generals, rebellious children, and Attila the Hun?

“A fun, fast...addictive read, as Justice chooses her key moments wisely, weaving a decades-long narrative about Placidia's layered life as she rises to eventual leadership.” — ***Kirkus Reviews***

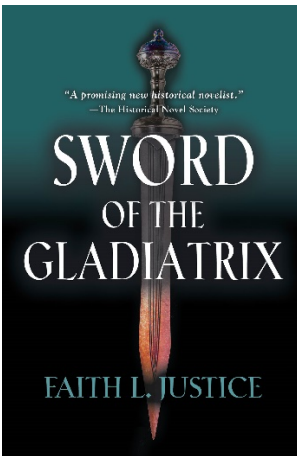
“Solid historical fiction, with full marks for a little-used time period and setting. It totally gets extra points for giving us a female lead character who's not written about to death.” — ***Historical Novels Review***

“A fast-paced historical novel that is filled with romance, political and courtly intrigue, and drama that it will keep you turning the pages. I can't wait to read the next book about Empress Pulcheria.” — ***History from a Woman's Perspective***

“Well researched and written with twisted plot developments and great characters... An excellent novel...” — ***Story Circle Book Reviews***

Sword of the Gladiatrix

(*Gladiatrix* #1)



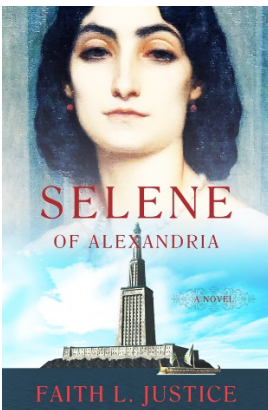
An action-packed romance that exposes the brutal underside of Imperial Rome, *Sword of the Gladiatrix* brings to life unforgettable characters and exotic settings. From the far edges of the Empire, two women come to battle on the hot sands of the arena in Nero's Rome: Afra, scout and beast master to the Queen of Kush; and Cinnia, warrior-bard and companion to Queen Boudica of the British Iceni. Enslaved, forced to fight for their lives and the Romans' pleasure; they seek to replace lost friendship, love, and family in each other's arms. But the Roman arena offers only two futures: the Gate of Life for the victors or the Gate of Death for the losers.

“By the exciting close of the novel, readers will care very much about both these women – fans of Roman historical fiction should not miss this title.” — *Historical Novels Review*

“An amazing and totally original and unique novel. Such a strong range of female characters are depicted, courageous, brave, cunning, deadly, deceitful; a complete gambit of credible and totally believable women.” — *Inked Rainbow Reads*

“I was gripped by Faith's great writing style—and hardly put it down until I reached the end. The two heroines are memorable and original. Highly recommended.” — *Writing Desk*

Selene of Alexandria



This story of ambition, love, and political intrigue brings to life colorful characters and an exotic time and place. In AD 412 Alexandria, against the backdrop of a city torn by religious and political strife, Selene struggles to achieve her dream of becoming a physician—an unlikely goal for an upper class Christian girl. Hypatia, the famed Lady Philosopher of Alexandria and the Augustal Prefect Orestes offer their patronage and protection. But will it be enough to save Selene from murderous riots, the machinations of a charismatic Bishop and—most dangerous of all—her own impulsive nature?

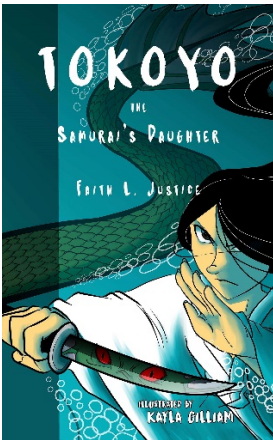
“Readers will be captivated. Fans of Gillian Bradshaw's classic *The Beacon at Alexandria* may especially enjoy Selene and find a promising new historical novelist who shares the same gift for wonderfully researched, vividly evoked, good old-fashioned storytelling.” — *Historical Novels Reviews*

“*Selene of Alexandria* is pure fiction magic...I couldn’t put this book down... [It] made me laugh and cry, hope and despair.” — ***Story Circle Book Reviews***

“This book is outstanding, not just for a first novel, but for any novel. Once you’ve read it, I’m sure you’ll join me in waiting impatiently to read Justice’s next project!” — ***Lacuna: Journal of Historical Fiction***

Tokoyo, the Samurai’s Daughter

(Adventurous Girls #1)



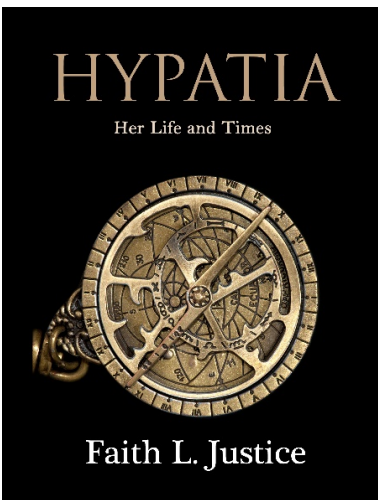
Most noble-born girls of Tokoyo’s age learn to sing, paint, and write poetry. Not Tokoyo. She’s an adventurous girl, the daughter of a samurai in fourteenth century Japan. Her father trains her in the martial arts. When he is away, she escapes to the sea where she works with the Ama—a society of women and girls who dive in the deep waters for food and treasure. But disaster strikes her family. Can Tokoyo save her father using the lessons she learned and the skills she mastered to overcome corrupt officials, her own doubts, and a nasty sea demon? (Middle grade, illustrated fiction)

“*Tokoyo, The Samurai’s Daughter* is a dramatic, adventurous story reflecting the legends and tales of Japan in medieval times. Thoroughly enjoyable and highly recommended!” — ***Historical Novels Review, Issue #82***

Purchase Rating: ADVISABLE. “The story of Tokoyo illustrates several Japanese ancient traditions, including samurai honor, ancestor worship, and mythology. I love that such a short story can still reveal the beauty of a different culture. Following Tokoyo’s quest to save her father teaches readers of honor, love, and sacrifice. Furthermore, the illustrator, Kayla Gilliam, does a fantastic job.” — ***Kiss the Book: Reviews for School Librarians***

“...an intriguing story featuring a strong female as the central character. Set in 14th Century Japan, the book reads as a combination of historical fiction and fantasy adventure. The chapters are suspenseful and this short chapter book should appeal to “tween age” boys and girls alike. Kayla Gilliam’s black and white illustrations enhance the book perfectly.” — ***Multicultural Children’s Book Day***

[Hypatia: Her Life and Times](#)



Who was Hypatia of Alexandria?

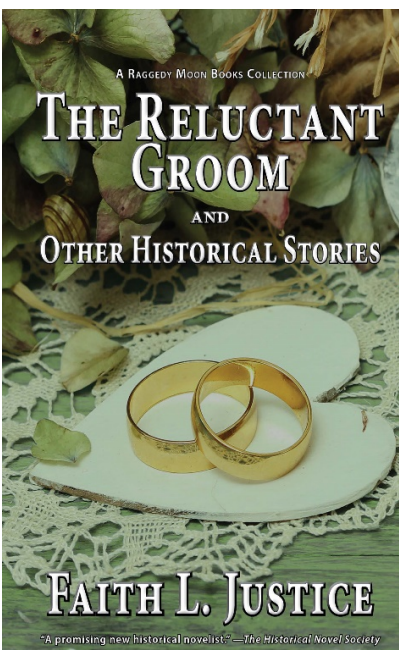
A brilliant young mathematician murdered by a religious mob? An aging academic eliminated by a rival political party? A sorceress who enthralled the Prefect of Alexandria through satanic wiles? Did she discover the earth circled the sun a thousand years before Copernicus or was she merely a gifted geometry teacher? Discover the answers to these questions and more in this collection of essays on Hypatia's life and times.

(Available in trade paperback, epub, and Kindle only.)

[The Reluctant Groom And Other Historical Stories](#)

(Raggedy Moon Collection #3)

[Featured in "5 Engrossing Short Story Collections Written by Women"](#)

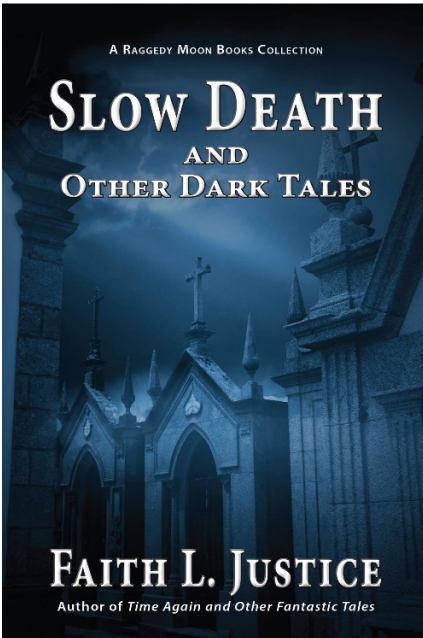


Dive into this collection of historical shorts by an award-winning author. You'll find stories of heroism, love, and adventure such as a panicked bachelor faced with an arranged marriage, a man battling a blizzard to get home for his child's birth, a Viking shield maiden exploring a New World, and a young boy torn between love for his ailing grandmother and duty to an empress. Whether set in imperial Rome, colonial America, or the ancient African Kingdom of Kush, these stories bring to life men and women struggling to survive and thrive—the eternal human condition.

"I was immediately engrossed and wish I could read more ... The periods are terribly alive, the storytelling wonderful...one has short glimpses of these people and [for] years after, remember them with great fondness!" —Stephanie Cowell, author of *Claude and Camille: A Novel of Monet*

Slow Death and Other Dark Tales

(Raggedy Moon Collection #2)

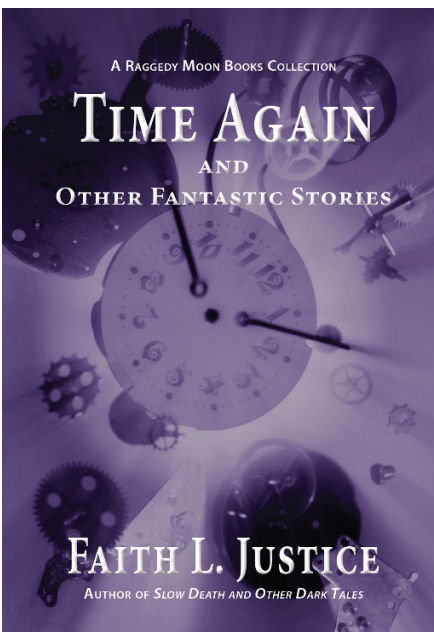


Looking for sparkly vampires or heroic werewolves?

Sorry, you won't find them here. Humans—and the occasional ghost—intent on murder, revenge, and righting wrongs take center stage in these tales. Meet a grieving mother witnessing a death-row execution, a wronged bureaucrat condemned to a future drug rehabilitation center, an Alzheimer's patient trapped in his own deteriorating mind, a ghost on a mission of justice, and more in this collection of the author's best dark fiction.

Time Again and Other Fantastic Stories

(Raggedy Moon Collection #1)



What would you do with an extra hour of life?

Kiss your sweetheart? Eat ice cream? Graffiti your workplace? Find out how one man uses his bonus hour in the award-winning story "Time Again." Then check out how a young woman deals with a transforming experience, business consultant Alice overhauls Wonderland, a fierce mother takes on the devil who wants to marry her daughter, and more in this collection of the authors best fantasy stories.

Contains a bonus interview with acclaimed fantasy author Ursula K. Le Guin.

