

# AUDIO BOOK SUPPLEMENT

## *Twilight Empress: A Novel of Imperial Rome*

### The Theodosian Women Book One

#### Contents

- 3. Praise for *Twilight Empress*
- 4. Copyrights
- 5. Dedication/Epigram
- 6. Genealogy
- 7. Note on Titles and Place Names
- 8. Characters
- 10. Author's Note
- 15. Glossary
- 19. Acknowledgments
- 20. About the Author
- 21. Other books by Faith L. Justice

## PRAISE FOR

### *Twilight Empress: A Novel of Imperial Rome*

#### *(The Theodosian Women Book One)*

"An addictive, fun, fast read...The author does a fine job of delicately underlining the limits of female governance during the period, creating sympathy for the heroine, whose only option is to rule through men."-[Kirkus Reviews](#)

"...this is 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 (I'm looking at you, Anne Boleyn!)"-[Historical Novel Society](#)

"...a fast-paced historical novel that is filled with romance, political and courtly intrigue, and drama that will keep you turning the pages..."-[History from a Woman's Perspective](#)

"A fascinating novel...The pacing in this book is excellent! I could not put it down."-[The Roaming Librarian](#)

"It's been a long time since I stayed up late to finish a book...I just couldn't stop reading and had this intense need to know how it all would end."-[Bookfever](#)

"...an excellent novel. [*Twilight Empress*] is well researched and written with twisted plot developments and great characters."-[Story Circle Reviews](#)

"There was enough action so there was no dull moment...I can't wait to read the next one."-[Bookramblings](#)

"A thrilling and enjoyable read...I couldn't get enough!...Justice weaves her words like tapestry, revealing the story and events of Placidia's life bit by glorious bit until a full and rich image of this great woman is revealed."-[Mystic Reads Book Blog](#)

"I absolutely loved this book!...The author's writing is superb, and she did a wonderful job of bringing Placida to life for her readers."-[Pursuing Stacie](#)

"*Twilight Empress* is an utterly captivating read...I'm excited to read more by this author."-[So Many Books So Little Time](#)

"This is truly a sumptuous treat for bookworms and historical fiction lovers...I would recommend this to a friend. 100%!"-[Clarissa Reads It All](#)

"A promising start to a new series!"-[A Bookish Affair](#)

# **Twilight Empress: A Novel of Imperial Rome**

*(Theodosian Women Book One)*

*Print Copyright © 2017 Faith L. Justice*

*Audio production Copyright © 2018 Faith L. Justice*

*Audio narration by Kathleen France*

*2018*

*Raggedy Moon Books*

*Brooklyn, New York, USA*

*raggedymoonbooks.com*

*Cover design by Jennifer Quinlan*

*historicaleditorial.com*

*Library of Congress Control Number: 2016931966*

*Hardback ISBN: 978-0917053221*

*Trade Paperback: ISBN: 978-0692460511*

*EPUB eBook ISBN: 978-1370214716*

*AudioBook: B0876HVDGM*

*All rights reserved. This book or any portion thereof may not be reproduced or used in any manner whatsoever without the express written permission of the author and publisher except for brief quotations for use in reviews.*

*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 Gordon Rothman,  
without whom I couldn't write about love.*

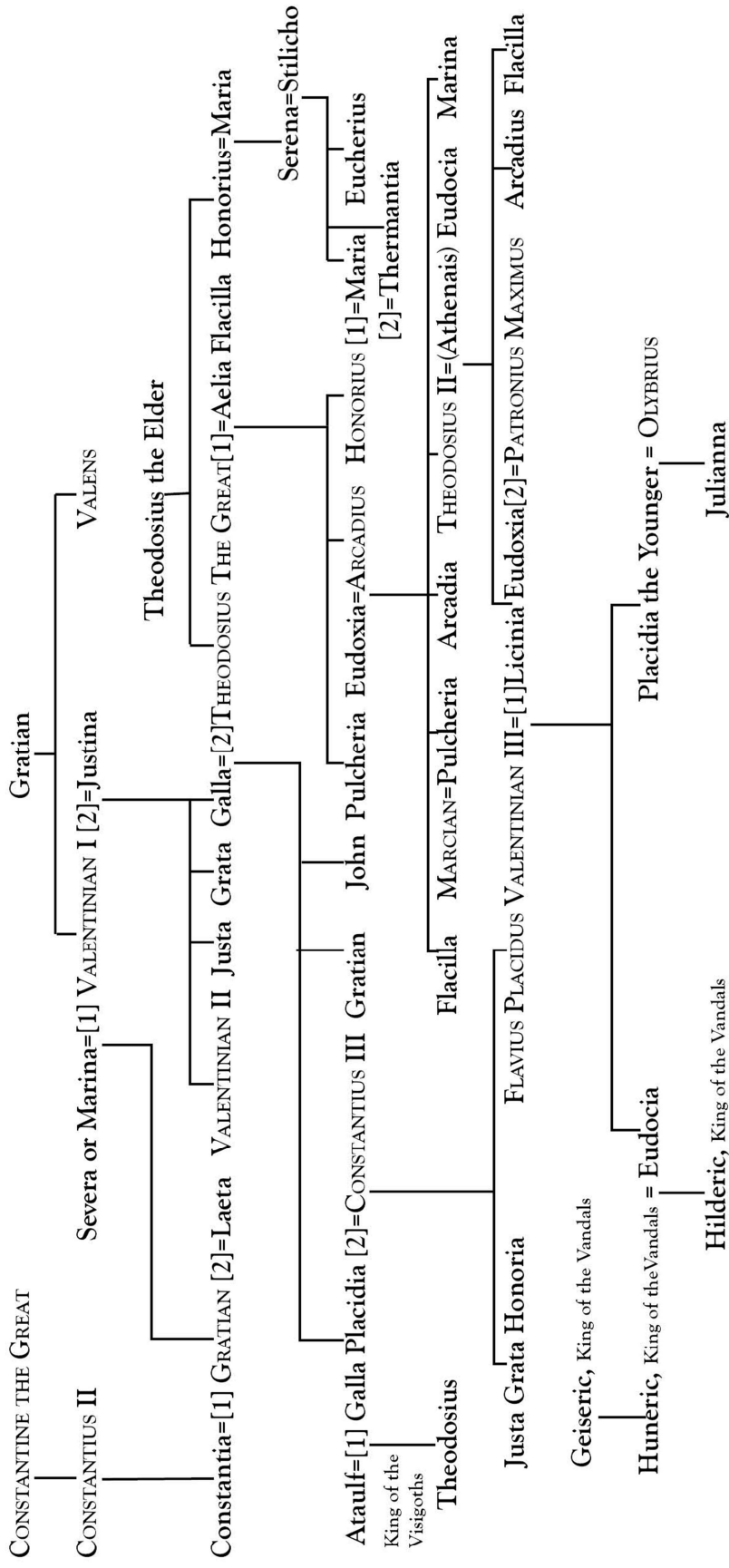
## **Epigram**

*"The decline of Rome was the natural and inevitable effect of immoderate greatness."*

Edward Gibbon  
*The Decline and Fall of the Roman 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

In order of appearance;  
alternate spellings in parentheses, fictional in *italics*.

**Galla Placidia Augusta**—half-sister to the Roman Emperor in the West, half-aunt to Roman Emperor in the East

*Paulus*—maimed Vandal soldier who served in Stilicho's household, then Placidia's

**Ataulf** (Athaulf, Adolphus)—Brother-in-law and successor to King Alaric of the Goths

**Alaric**—King of the Goths

**Gaatha**—Alaric's wife and Ataulf's sister

**Valia** (Vallia, Wallia)—Gothic noble

*Machaon*—Greek physician

**Flavius Constantius**—General, advisor to Emperor Honorius

**Flavius Honorius Augustus**—Roman Emperor in the West and half-brother to Placidia

*Lucilla*—Placidia's personal servant

**Priscus Attalus**—Prefect of Rome, Gothic choice for emperor

**Bishop Sigesar**—personal Arian bishop to Alaric and Ataulf

**Sergeric** (Singeric, Sigeric)—Goth chieftain, Sarus' brother

**Vada**—Ataulf's oldest daughter

**Lilla**—Ataulf's middle daughter

**Maltha**—Ataulf's youngest daughter

**Ediulf**—Ataulf's fourth child and son

**Dardanus**—Praetorian Prefect of Gaul

**Sarus**—former Gothic General in Roman army

**Sigisvult**—Gothic warrior in Placidia's service, Roman General

*Thecla*—midwife and Machaon's sister

*Nikarete*—midwife and Thecla's daughter

**Justa Grata Honoria**—daughter to Placidia and Constantius

**Flavius Placidus Valentinian**—son to Placidia and Constantius

**Castinus**—Roman General, advisor to Honorius

**Felix**—Roman General in the West, Patrician

**Padusa** (Spadusa)—Felix's wife

**Theodoric I** (Theoderic)—King of the Goths

**Flavius Theodosius Augustus II**—Emperor in the East, nephew to Placidia

**Aelia Pulcheria Augusta**—Theodosius' older sister and chief advisor, niece to Placidia

**Aelia Eudocia Augusta** called **Athenais**—Theodosius' wife

**Licinia Eudoxia Augusta**—Theodosius' and Athenais' daughter

**Leontius**—curator, Placidia's business and legal advisor

*Angelus*—shepherd and "Angel of the Marshes"



**John** (Johannes)—*primicerius notariorum* and usurper  
**Flavius Aetius**—Roman General in the West, Patrician  
**Ardaburius**—General (of infantry) in the East, Alan by birth  
**Aspar**—General (of cavalry) in the East, Ardaburius' son  
**Helion**—Master of Offices in the East  
**Count Boniface**—Roman General, Count of Africa  
**Pelagia**—Boniface's wife, an Arian Gothic noble woman  
**Maximinus**—Arian Bishop to Sigisvult's army  
**Ruga** (Regila)—King of the Huns  
**Bleda**—Ruga's nephew and co-heir with Attila  
**Attila**—succeeded Ruga as King of the Huns  
**Gaiseric** (Genseric, Gizericus)—King of the Vandals  
**Huneric**—Gaiseric's son  
**Amaltha**—Huneric's Gothic wife and daughter of King Theodoric  
**Eugenius**—Honorius's chamberlain  
**Bassus Herculanus**—Roman Senator and Honorius's fiancé

## AUTHOR'S NOTE

I FELL IN LOVE WITH THE THEODOSIAN WOMEN: Placidia, Pulcheria, and Athenais many years ago when I was writing my first book *Selene of Alexandria* which featured a fictional student of the historical Hypatia, Lady Philosopher of Alexandria. As I researched the life and times of Hypatia, I kept running across these great women who ruled the failing Western 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. Placidia was held hostage for five years by the Goths and married their king for love. Pulcheria outwitted the Constantinople court worthies and claimed sole regency over her brother and the Empire at the tender age of fifteen. Athenais, a beautiful, but poor daughter of a pagan Athenian scholar captured the heart of a Most Christian Emperor. Why hadn't I heard of these women before?

I originally planned a single book with each telling their intertwining stories, but soon found I had way too much material. Each woman deserved her own story, so this is the first in a set of three books about the Theodosian women. *Dawn Empress* about Pulcheria is out in all formats and the book on Athenais is on its way.

Throughout the series I attempt to stay as close to known historical facts as I can. However, the fifth century is a notoriously chaotic time as Western Rome disintegrated under repeated attacks by barbarians and failed leadership over the course of several decades. In many cases records were destroyed, damaged, or altered to reflect better on the ruling parties. Primary sources are scant and sometimes contradictory, so modern scholars occasionally interpret them differently. Where there is disagreement, I chose the interpretation that best suited my story.

Many of the incidents used to color the story are attested to such as Honorius' love for his birds and his reaction to being told "Rome is taken" by thinking the speaker referred to a favorite pet. Placidia's bloodless coup in taking the "invulnerable" Ravenna was ascribed to an "angel of the Lord" who led her troops through the swamps. I came up with my own less divine intervention and if you want to read Angelus' origin story check out "Angel of the Marshes" as a free download on my [website](#). Honoria really did send Attila the Hun a ring and ask for his help in freeing her from a proposed marriage.

In others places I took literary license to fill in the unknown. We have a couple of extant letters from Placidia to her nephew Theodosius II late in their lives concerning religious matters, but nothing that indicates her personality or those of other characters. That's where the author's imagination takes over. I tried to create real motives for historical actions. How close I came to truth is unknowable.

Placidia is not always treated kindly by older scholars from less enlightened times. Gibbon in his *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* felt she "corrupted the noble Constantius" leading him to avarice he hadn't shown before their marriage and forcing her brother to give her honors he was reluctant to bestow. Others felt she deliberately stifled her son to keep her hands on the reins of power. Some, comparing her political skills and piety to Pulcheria's, felt Placidia a pale

imitation of her religious niece. Those that count General Aetius a hero and savior, fault her for their feud and his assassination at the hands of her son (after her death!). Aetius' death and Valentinian's assassination two years later, opened the gates for invading barbarians and "The Fall."

Modern scholars such as Stewart Irvin Oost in *Galla Placidia Augusta: a Biographical Essay* take a more nuanced view of her life. He concludes his work by saying: "Galla Placidia was proud, a thoroughgoing Roman; she loved power—this last hardly a sin unless we are to condemn all politicians. She managed fairly well to play a role in politics and government despite the disadvantages of her sex. She was a chaste wife, devoted mother to her children...and unlike her half-brothers Arcadius and Honorius, she was a worthy child of the most Christian and Roman Emperor Theodosius the Great." There is no doubt that as empress in the twilight years of Western Rome, Placidia's decisions and actions set the stage for the development of early medieval Europe.

Every story has more than one side. I doubt Placidia was either the sinner of Gibbon's tale or the saint of Oost's. She was a complicated, powerful woman—subject to the beliefs and prejudices of her times and position. I tried to tell my version of Placidia's life while staying close to the facts and giving her very human motivations. Placidia's love of, and marriage to, the Gothic King Ataulf is a matter of record. There were even some primary sources that said the match was prophesied in the Bible. They did have a son named Theodosius who died shortly after birth and was buried in Barcelona. In an elaborate ceremony, late in her life, Placidia reinterred his body in the family mausoleum in Rome. After Ataulf's death, she *was* captured and paraded as a slave in a brutal twelve-mile march. We know Sergeric was overthrown after only seven days and Valia took the kingship. The rest is from my imagination, including Placidia's bloody revenge on Sergeric.

I felt most sorry for Constantius, a competent general, able negotiator, and honorable man. Historians agree that he was witty at parties and generous to his friends. His tragic flaw? He loved a woman who didn't love him back. Every source said that Placidia resisted the marriage, although she did give him two children. Supposedly, he hated being an Augustus because of the rigid rules and restrictions forced on him by court protocol. He had a premonition that he would live only seven months after he became Augustus. I hope Placidia did appreciate his good points—even if belatedly.

Both Honorius and Valentinian III were disparaged by older historians for being weak emperors. Many felt the former suffered from many physical ailments as well as mental deficits and the latter suffered from being deliberately stunted by his mother. Both are being re-evaluated by modern historians, especially Honorius, who is now credited with a level of native cunning which allowed him to successfully navigate the treacherous waters of his court for decades. It's unlikely he consummated either of his marriages and the rumors of his incestuous feelings for Placidia might have stemmed from feeling "safe" with her—he wouldn't be expected to act on any sexual feelings, so he could more freely express affection.

Valentinian is faulted primarily for not being up to the (probably) impossible task of saving the Empire. Also Aetius had significant influence over events during Valentinian's later years, so

he must also share some of the blame. The fact that Valentinian killed his most successful general—up close with a knife—indicates there was personal animosity between the two. Valentinian may have felt he left his mother’s shadow only to enter Aetius’. Or not. That’s the fun part of writing fiction; the author gets to choose.

I combined some characters to keep the numbers manageable. Ataulf had six children (I felt four were enough to keep track of) from a previous marriage. We don’t know their names, ages, or sex. They were “torn from a venerable bishop’s arms” and killed by Sergeric’s forces along with Ataulf’s brother, his designated heir. I dropped the unnamed brother and used the historical Valia as a confidant to Ataulf for continuity’s sake. Likewise, the fictional Lucilla and historical Attalus fill in for several attested servants and confidants over Placidia’s long life. Placidia’s younger nieces in the Constantinople court don’t appear, but will have much bigger roles in Pulcheria’s story. It is unknown whether Placidia traveled to Constantinople for her son’s wedding. She most likely stayed in Ravenna to administer the Empire, but I wanted her to have a last meeting with her Eastern relatives and a glimpse of what her “retirement” might be like if she followed Pulcheria’s path.

Placidia did intervene to save her daughter’s life after Honoria’s affair with her chamberlain and her treasonous offer to Attila the Hun. Scholars disagree about Honoria’s age at the time of her affair and nothing is said about the fate of the child (some dispute whether there was a pregnancy). Several believe Honoria was a teenager and Placidia shuffled her off to Pulcheria’s less than tender mercies in the Eastern court. When she finally became fed up several years later, Honoria wrote her infamous letter to Attila, and Theodosius sent her back to her brother who arranged a hasty marriage.

J. D. Bury, in a footnote in *History of the Later Roman Empire*, disputes the earlier date as a misunderstanding of a primary source and inconsistent with other evidence. He dates the affair to 449, believes Honoria stayed in Ravenna, and takes no stand on the pregnancy. Valentinian gave in to his mother’s pleas to spare Honoria after the Attila debacle—at least temporarily—but we don’t know under what circumstances. Honoria might have died in prison shortly after Placidia’s death or been hastily married to Bassus Herculaneus. In any case Valentinian stripped her of her title of Augusta and she disappears from the historical record. I used the unknown fate of the child and Honoria’s lack of a verified death date to knit up several loose ends in my Epilog.

Speaking of the Epilog, my apologies to the city of Ravenna for placing Placidia’s final resting place in Rome. Logically that is the most likely place. We know that Honorius, Constantius, and—most compelling of all—her first child with Ataulf—were buried in a mausoleum on Vatican Hill adjacent to the old St. Peter’s Basilica. The structure was turned into a church in the eighth century and demolished when the present St. Peter’s was started in 1506. Placidia died in Rome and it is unlikely she would have preferred to be buried in Ravenna away from her family.

So how to account for “Placidia’s Mausoleum,” a jewel-like fifth century building in Ravenna currently containing three empty sarcophagi? I visited the place and it is truly beautiful. So lovely, I borrowed the mosaics and decorations for the lost Roman mausoleum. Some historians believe the building was commissioned by her son Valentinian III in honor of Saint

Lawrence, a favorite of his. Placidia might have commissioned it for her own tomb and changed her mind. It's more likely that the current title comes from the Renaissance when Ravenna touted its collection of fifth century churches and mosaics as a tourist destination and possibly upgraded the building from chapel to royal tomb to attract more visitors.

The weird tale of people looking at the seated embalmed body of Placidia from a crack in the sarcophagus also originates from this time period. Supposedly, some boys set the body on fire with a lit taper and it disappeared into a pile of ash—which accounts for the empty coffin in the tomb. Obviously apocryphal, but too wonderful to ignore, I incorporated the tales in my story, but moved them to the more likely mausoleum.

Of the major historical characters, Sigisvult is the one I most fictionalized. The titles he earned are attested to. He is cited for negotiating with Boniface in Africa and fortifying the Italian coast against the threatened Vandal invasion, but otherwise little is known of him. Ralph W. Mathisen in “Sigisvult the Patrician, Maximinus the Arian, and Political Stratagems in the Western Roman Empire c. 425-50” says:

*“Sigisvult was a Visigoth who had attracted Placidia’s attention in the past...Sigisvult’s career suggests that when it came to finding solutions to political and military problems in the late Roman west, barbarians could do more than just fight...Throughout his career, therefore, Sigisvult was an important player in Galla Placidia’s delicate balancing act of matching one general against another. In the game of odd-man-out, first Felix and then Boniface were eliminated. But Sigisvult survived and apparently prospered. In the end only Sigisvult and Aetius remained. What became of Sigisvult is unknown. In 446 he still held the office of Master of Soldiers...To speculate, he may have been forced into retirement in late 450, after the death of his imperial patroness.”*

Or he could have rescued his beloved queen’s errant daughter and died with his fellow Goths fighting the Huns at the Battle of the Catalaunian Plains in 451.

I obviously have a lot of affection for Sigisvult and Placidia. I hope they really did provide some comfort to one another during their long relationship. Since we don’t know what happened to Sigisvult, I gave him a warrior’s death; my tribute to someone who seemed to be an honorable man in a difficult time. We also don’t know the cause of Placidia’s death, so I gave her time to make amends. Oost says:

*“At Rome on 27 November AD 450, Galla Placidia Augusta fell asleep in Our Lord Jesus Christ...Perhaps only after the interval of forty days was she herself buried in the Mausoleum by Saint Peter’s. We may be sure that in the presence of her imperial son as well as of the assembled dignitaries of the Roman state and church her interment was celebrated with the full solemnities of holy religion, commending her body to the earth and her soul to God. Thus like David she slept with her fathers.”*

I hope you enjoyed *Twilight Empress*. I would love to hear from you about your reactions to the story and characters. You can write me at [faith@faithljustice.com](mailto:faith@faithljustice.com) or visit me on the web at [faithljustice.com](http://faithljustice.com) and leave a comment on my blog. Tell me what you liked, what you loved, even what you hated. I have tons of additional material at my website, plus information about my latest books. Although my daughter had to drag me into the social media scene, you can also find me on [Twitter](https://twitter.com/faithljustice) (@faithljustice) and [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/faithljustice).

Finally, I need to ask a favor. I'd love a review of *Twilight 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.

Faith L. Justice  
Brooklyn, NY  
April 2017

**Thank you for reading/listening to *Twilight Empress***

## GLOSSARY

***ad Laureta***—"by the Laurel groves" imperial palace built by Valentinian III in Ravenna.

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

**Alamanni**—a group of Germanic tribes settled in Alsace and nearby areas during the fourth century. Some joined the Gothic migration/invasion during the early fifth century.

**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 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.

**Aquileia**—an ancient Roman city in Italy, at the head of the Adriatic about 10 kilometers (6 mi) from the sea on the modern river Natisone. At the end of the 4th Century, Ausonius placed Aquileia as ninth among the great cities of the world. It held an imperial palace and was an important religious seat. Attila destroyed the city in 452, but it remains in a much reduced state.

**Arian Heresy**—a non-trinitarian 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. 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 again denounced at the Ecumenical First Council of Constantinople of 381.

***Bagaudae***—probably means "fighters"; impoverished local free peasants, brigands, runaway slaves, and deserters from the legions, who were trying to resist the ruthless labor exploitation, punitive laws, and levies of the late Roman period.

***bucellarii***—private army of the great generals of the 5th Century and later (related to the German *comitatus*).

**Burgundians**—most likely of Scandinavian origin, the Burgundians were part of a large group of Germanic and Vandal tribes that lived in the area of modern Poland and migrated west under pressure from the Huns. In 411, the Burgundian king Gundahar set up a puppet emperor, Jovinus, in cooperation with Goar, king of the Alans. General Aetius brought Burgundian raids to an end in 436, when he called in Hun mercenaries who overwhelmed the Rhineland kingdom in 437.

***caldarium***—a hot and steamy room heated by a hypocaust, an underfloor heating system; the hottest room in the regular sequence of Roman bathing rooms.

***comitatus***—group of warriors which a successful German war chief gathered about himself.

***curator***—business and legal advisor.

**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.

**dropsy**—an abnormal accumulation of fluid beneath the skin and in the cavities of the body which causes severe pain, heart and liver failure.

**epithalamia**—traditional Roman wedding song.

**fibula** (singular) **fibulae** (plural)—an ornamental clasp designed to hold clothing together; usually made of silver or gold but 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.

**Frigidus, Battle of**—fought in 394, between Eastern Emperor Theodosius I and Western ruler Eugenius. Theodosius' win made him the last sole Roman emperor until the collapse of the Western Roman Empire.

**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 the parts of the Netherlands and Germany on the west bank of the Rhine. Rome divided it into three parts: Gallia Celtica, Belgica and Aquitania.

**Greuthungi**—a Gothic people from the Black Sea steppes with close contacts with the Thervingi, another Gothic people from west of the river Dnestr.

**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.

**Hebdomon**—a seaside retreat outside Constantinople where Emperors built palaces and two churches. Several Emperors (including Valens, Arcadius, Honorius, and Theodosius II) were acclaimed by the army on the Field of Mars there. The imperial court came often to attend military parades, to welcome the emperor coming back from campaign, and to pray in the large church of St. John Baptist the Forerunner.

**Hippolyte**—Amazon Queen. Daughter of Otrera and Ares, God of War. Her name means, “Of the Stomping Horse.”

**Huns**—a nomadic group of people who lived in Eastern Europe, the Caucasus, and Central Asia between the 1st Century and the 7th Century; 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 next 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.

**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.

**mole**—a massive structure usually of stone, used as a pier, breakwater, or causeway between places separated by water, but, unlike a true pier, water cannot freely flow underneath it.

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

**Noricum**—a province of the Roman Empire that included most of modern Austria and part of Slovenia.

**Narbonne**—Roman port city established in Gaul in 118 BC, located on the Via Domitia connecting Italy to Spain; its rosemary-flower honey was famous among Romans.

***nymphaeum*** (singular) ***nymphaea*** (plural)—originally Greek grottos dedicated to worship of water nymphs; Romans extended the name to private and public fountains; also applied to the fountains in the atrium of a Christian basilica.

***palla***—outermost rectangular woman’s mantle/shawl worn over the shoulders and hair; could be as complicated as a toga or as slight as a scarf.

***paludamentum***—originally a cloak or cape fastened at one shoulder, worn by military commanders. After Augustus, it was restricted to the Emperors, who as supreme commanders of the Roman army, were often portrayed wearing it in their statues and on their coinage.

***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.

**Porticus Placidiana**—a 200 meter colonnade along the right bank of the Fossa Traiana, to the south of the Claudian basin; built about 425 in honor of Placidia, the mother of Emperor Valentinian III.

**Portus**—Rome’s primary sea port, built by Emperor Claudius to handle large merchant ships including the grain fleet.

***primicerius notariorum***—first on the list of the corps of notaries.

**Rimini and the Battle of**—the Roman colony of Ariminum, founded in 268 BC at the terminus of the Via Flaminia, which ended in the Arch of Augustus (erected 27 BC), connected central Italy and northern Italy by the Via Aemilia and the Via Popilia that extended northwards; opened up trade by sea and river. Later, Placidia built the church of San Stefano there. The Battle of Rimini (also known as the Battle of Ravenna) was fought in 432 between General Aetius and General Boniface. Boniface won, but was gravely injured and died shortly after.

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

**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; remained essentially unaltered in weight, dimensions and purity until the 10th Century.

**stola**—long, pleated dress, worn over a *tunica interior*, 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.

**Suevi**—a large group of related peoples who occupied more than half of Germania, and were divided into a number of distinct tribes under distinct names. At one time, classical ethnography had applied the name "Suevi" to so many Germanic tribes that it appeared as though in the first centuries AD. this native name would replace the foreign name "Germans". In 259/60, a group appears to have been the main element in the formation of a new tribal alliance known as the Alamanni east of the Rhine and south of the Main; they later joined the Vandals and Alans invading Gaul and Spain.

**Tervingi**—a Gothic people of the Danubian plains west of the Dnestr River. They remained in western Scythia until 376, when the Huns invaded their lands and one of their leaders, Fritigern, appealed to the Roman emperor Valens to be allowed to settle with his people on the south bank of the Danube. Valens permitted this. However, a famine broke out and Rome was unwilling to supply them with the food or land they were promised; open revolt led to six years of plundering and destruction throughout the Balkans. During the Battle of Adrianople in 378 the Tervingi slaughtered the Roman forces and killed the Emperor Valens, shocking the Roman world and eventually forcing the Romans to negotiate with and settle the Tervingi on Roman land.

**triclinium**—a formal dining room in a Roman building used for entertaining guests; could hold multiple couches arranged in a hollow 'U' shape; each couch was wide enough to accommodate three diners who reclined on their left side on cushions while household slaves served and others entertained guests with music, song, or dance.

**tunica interior**—woman's tunic (usually with sleeves) worn under a *stola*, frequently longer, so the layers of fabric showed.

**tutela**—"guardianship" or "tutelage", mainly for people such as minors and women who ordinarily in Roman society would be under the legal protection and control of the *pater familias*, but who were legally emancipated.

**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 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.

## 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 the members of my writers' group *Circles in the Hair*. For over twenty-five years, they have been there for me; reading drafts of my stories and novels, providing insightful feedback, and encouraging my dreams. Special and loving thanks go to my husband Gordon Rothman for supporting me in countless ways, including producing the audio version of this book; 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 Research Library—a world class institution. I consulted dozens of books and hundreds of articles, but relied most heavily on the research of Stewart Irvin Oost from his *Galla Placidia Augusta: A Biographical Essay* and Kenneth G. Holum from his *Theodosian Empresses: Women and Imperial Dominion in Late Antiquity*. A bibliography of the most useful works can be found on my website ([faithljustice.com](http://faithljustice.com)).

Although I tried to get it right, no one is perfect. If the reader should find some 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.

## 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>

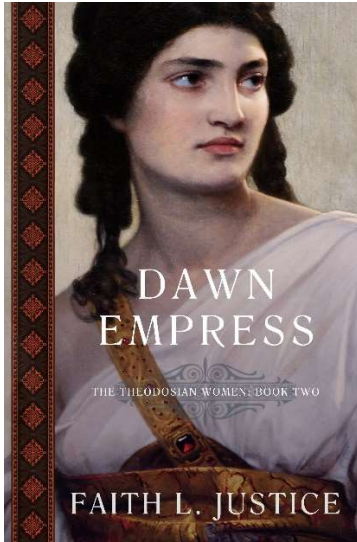
Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/faithljusticeauthor/>

**Discover these additional books by Faith L. Justice.**

**Available in print, eBooks, and audio in all the usual marketplaces or ask for them at your local library.**

### **Dawn Empress: A Novel of Imperial Rome**

*(Theodosian Women #2)*



**As Rome reels under barbarian assaults, a young girl must step up.**

After the Emperor's unexpected death, ambitious men eye the Eastern Roman throne occupied by seven-year-old Theodosius II. His older sister Pulcheria faces a stark choice: she must find allies and take control of the Eastern court or doom the imperial children to a life of obscurity—or worse! Beloved by the people and respected by the Church, Pulcheria forges her own path to power. Can her piety and steely will protect her brother from military assassins, heretic bishops, scheming eunuchs and—most insidious of all—a beautiful, intelligent bride? Or will she lose all in the trying?

*Dawn Empress* tells Pulcheria's little-known and remarkable story. Her accomplishments rival those of Elizabeth I and Catherine the Great as she sets the stage for the dawn of the Byzantine Empire.

“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](#)

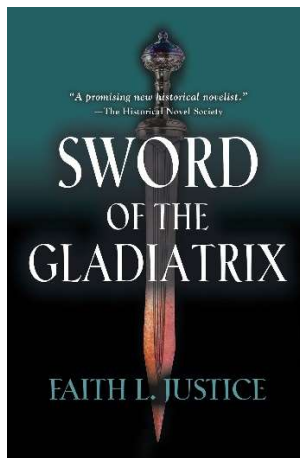
“Justice has penned another outstanding novel, the second in her Theodosian Women series...The role of the Christian church and its relationship with other religions in shaping the empire is narrated in a fluid, non-textbook style. This novel is a useful addition into the insights and workings of the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

“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... I loved the cinematic writing and focused scenes. The plot points are strong and I enjoyed how the author captured the crisis that feeds the storyline. *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](#)

## Sword of the Gladiatrix

(*Gladiatrix* #1)



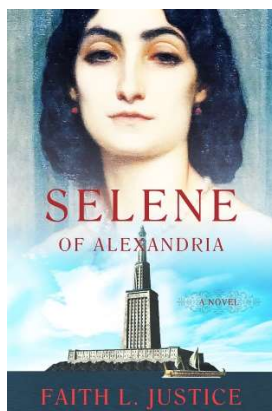
An action-packed romance that exposes the brutal underside of Imperial Rome, *Sword of the Gladiatrix* brings to life unforgettable characters and exotic settings. From the far edges of the Empire, two women come to battle on the hot sands of the arena in Nero's Rome: Afra, scout and beast master to 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?

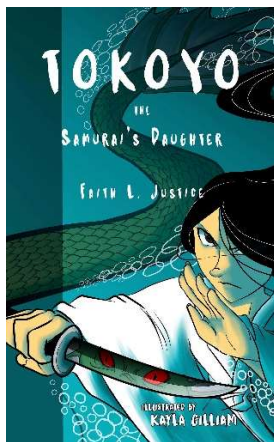
“Readers will be captivated. Fans of Gillian Bradshaw's classic *The Beacon at Alexandria* may especially enjoy Selene and find a promising new historical novelist who shares the same gift for wonderfully researched, vividly evoked, good old-fashioned storytelling.” — *Historical Novels Review*

“*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)

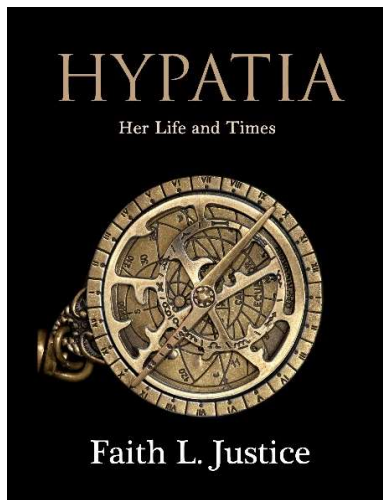
“*Tokoyo, The Samurai’s Daughter* is a dramatic, adventurous story reflecting the legends and tales of Japan in medieval times. Thoroughly enjoyable and highly recommended!” — ***Historical Novels Review, Issue #82***

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 books 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?**

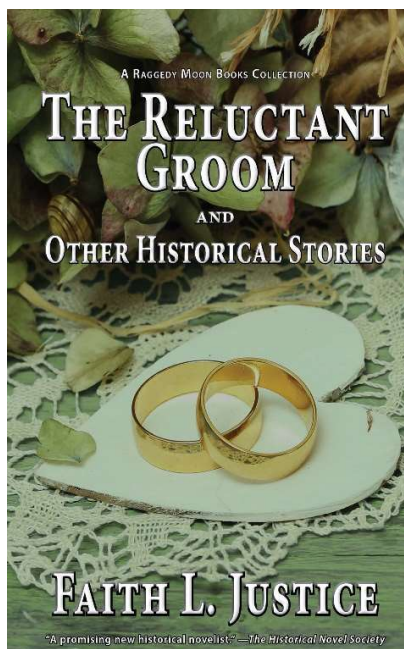
A brilliant young mathematician murdered by a religious mob? An aging academic eliminated by a rival political party? A sorceress who enthralled the Prefect of Alexandria through satanic wiles? Did she discover the earth circled the sun a thousand years before Copernicus or was she merely a gifted geometry 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"](#)



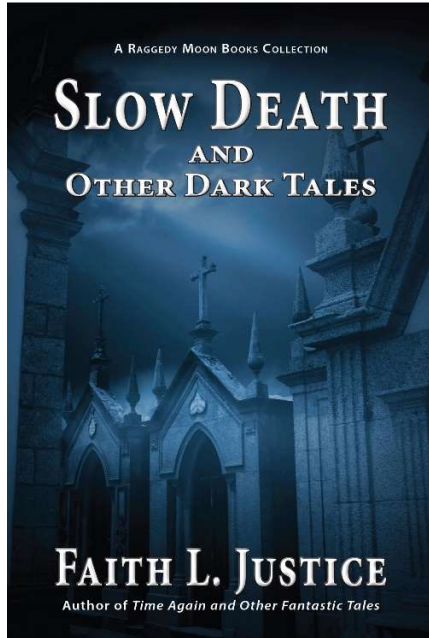
Dive into this collection of historical shorts by an award-winning author. You'll find stories of heroism, love, and adventure such as a panicked bachelor faced with an arranged marriage, a man battling a blizzard to get home for his child's birth, a Viking shield maiden exploring a New World, and a 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)*

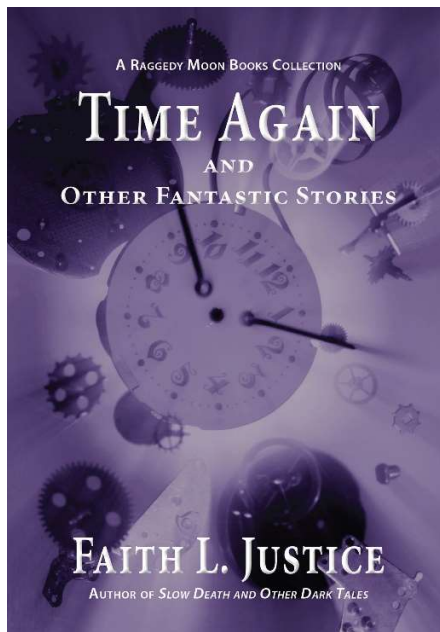


### **Looking for sparkly vampires or heroic werewolves?**

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.

