

SPARKS

IN 45, HEROD AGRIPPA DIED, AND THE EMPEROR CLAUDIUS BROUGHT JUDAEA BACK UNDER DIRECT IMPERIAL CONTROL. ROMAN SOLDIERS RETURNED—LIKE THIS ONE, WHO "MOONED" THE CROWD ONE PASSOVER.



IN ROME, PAUL AND THE CHRISTIANS AGITATED THE JEWISH COMMUNITY AND AGGRAVATED THE ROMAN AUTHORITIES...

SINNERS! REPENT!!
YOU ARE SINNERS, YOU KNOW... EVERY FILTHY, IMPURE ONE OF YOU...

SIT DOWN! YOU **SIT DOWN!**

AND THERE'S NO HOPE FOR YOU... OR AT LEAST THERE WASN'T, UNTIL NOW...

PORK EATER!



IN JERUSALEM, THE "MOONING" LED TO PROTEST, THEN SLAUGHTER.



IN ROME, THE AGITATORS PROVOKED THE EMPEROR CLAUDIUS TO EXPEL THE JEWS FROM THE CITY.

NOW LOOK WHAT YOU'VE DONE!?

WELL... IF YOU'D ALL JUST **CONVERTED**, THIS MIGHT NEVER HAVE HAPPENED...



IN 54, A BAD MUSHROOM FELLED CLAUDIUS, AND ROME HAD A NEW EMPEROR: THE YOUNG, DISSOLUTE NERO—AND HIS MOTHER AGRIPPINA.

STRAIGHTEN YOUR WREATH!

SIT UP!



AS USUAL ROMAN LUXURY MEANT PROVINCIAL POVERTY! IN JUDAEA, HIGH TAXES CREATED UNREST, ARRESTS, AND EXECUTIONS.

CATCH 'EM AND KILL 'EM SLOWLY— THAT'S THE ROMAN WAY...



IN ROME, NERO PUT ON A GOOD SHOW. HE GAVE PUBLIC PERFORMANCES, AND NOT JUST ON GUITAR. A HUGE AUDIENCE WITNESSED HIS MARRIAGE TO HIS SLAVE DORYPHORUS, WITH NERO IN THE ROLE OF THE BRIDE...

IF YOU CAN'T DO IT IN PUBLIC, YOU SHOULDN'T DO IT AT ALL!

BY THE WAY, WHERE'S YOUR MOM?

OH, WE HAVEN'T SEEN HER FOR A WHILE, POOR WOMAN!



HE ALSO MURDERED HIS OWN MOTHER...

IN JUDAEA, ROME STRIPPED WHOLE CITIES OF WEALTH... PEOPLE TOOK TO THE HILLS... THE GOVERNOR ARRESTED REBEL RINGLEADERS—AND THEN LET THEM BUY THEIR WAY OUT OF JAIL...

THESE ROMANS ARE CRAZY!

..12, ...13... Y'ALL BE GOOD NOW!



IN 64, FIRE RAVAGED MOST OF ROME...



NERO OPENED HIS ESTATE TO THE HOMELESS AND WONDERED WHICH SUBVERSIVES HAD STARTED THE FIRE.

FOR THE NEXT FEW NIGHTS, NERO MADE HUMAN TORCHES OF THE CHRISTIANS, AND CHRISTIANITY WAS OUTLAWED.

SIRE, THE SECT OF THE CHRISTIANS SEEMED AWFULLY PLEASED!!

OOO... THAT IS TOO NASTY!



A PROPHECY FULFILLED

IN 66, A PARTY OF RADICALS, OR ZEALOTS, SEIZED THE JERUSALEM TEMPLE, SURROUNDED THE ROMAN GARRISON, AND, AFTER PROMISING SAFE PASSAGE TO THE ROMANS IF THEY DISARMED, SLAUGHTERED THEM TO A MAN...



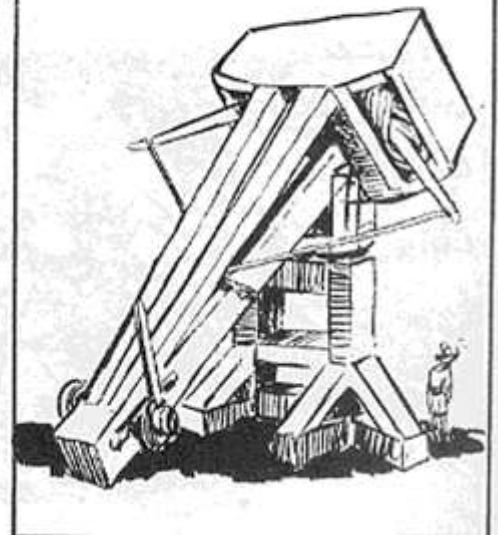
ANOTHER ROMAN ARMY SOON APPEARED... THEY PUSHED HALFWAY INTO THE CITY AND THEN GOT SPOOKED...



THE ROMANS FLED, AND THE JEWS PURSUED.



IN THIS WAY, THE REBELS GOT THEIR HANDS ON THE ROMAN HEAVY ARTILLERY.



ACROSS THE COUNTRY, ARMED BANDS SEIZED HEROD'S FORTS, LIKE THE MASSIVE MASADA... IN JERUSALEM, THE REBELS ORGANIZED A MILITARY GOVERNMENT FOR THE NATION.



TO LEAD GALILEE THEY CHOSE A 29-YEAR-OLD PRIEST NAMED JOSEPHUS, WHO, BY HIS OWN ACCOUNT, NEVER BELIEVED THEY COULD WIN IN THE FIRST PLACE.



COMBINING FORCE AND TRICKERY, JOSEPHUS BROUGHT GALILEE UNDER HIS CONTROL.



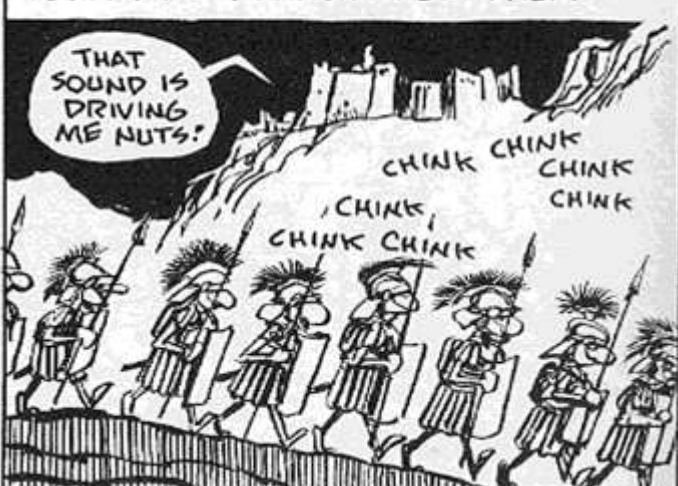
NERO (THEN ON A CONCERT TOUR OF GREECE) APPOINTED VESPASIAN, HERO OF BRITAIN, TO PUT DOWN THE REVOLT. VESPASIAN, WITH HIS SON TITUS, MARCHED AN ARMY FROM SYRIA STRAIGHT TOWARD GALILEE.



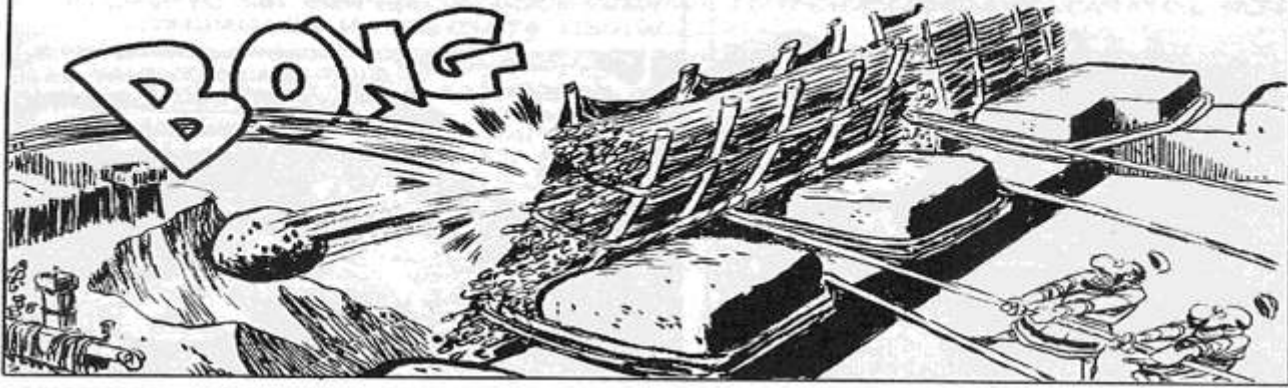
JOSEPHUS' BATTLE LINES BROKE AT THE MERE SIGHT OF THE ROMAN FORMATIONS.



THEY FLED TO THE CLIFF-HANGING VILLAGE OF JOTAPATA, WHERE VESPASIAN SURROUNDED THEM.



JOSEPHUS RESISTED THE ROMAN ASSAULT IN EVERY WAY POSSIBLE...



EVENTUALLY, THE ROMANS BROKE DOWN THE WALL AND LOWERED A GANGWAY.



JOSEPHUS' ORDERS: "STOP YOUR EARS WHEN THEY MAKE THEIR BATTLE CRY, AND GET UNDER YOUR SHIELDS WHEN THEIR ARROWS FLY..."



THIS WAS A SECRET HIDING PLACE FOR JOTAPATA'S LEADERS.



SOMEONE TIPPED OFF THE ROMANS, WHO MADE JOSEPHUS AN OFFER, WHICH STARTED AN ARGUMENT.



JOSEPHUS MADE A SUGGESTION.

OH... RIGHT... COUGH... DEATH BEFORE DISHONOR... I FORGOT... BUT LET'S BE SYSTEMATIC... WE'LL DRAW LOTS IN TURN... IN EVERY ROUND, THE LOSER DIES... AND THE LAST ONE ALIVE COMMITS SUICIDE... HOW ABOUT IT?



ONE BY ONE, THEY KILLED EACH OTHER.



HISTORIANS ARE FAIRLY SURE THAT JOSEPHUS "COOKED" THE LOTTERY SOMEHOW—BECAUSE WHEN IT WAS OVER HE WAS ONE OF TWO LEFT ALIVE...

WHAT SAY WE STOP THIS FOOLISHNESS?



THEY BOTH SURRENDERED, AND JOSEPHUS, AT LEAST, WAS MARCHED OFF.

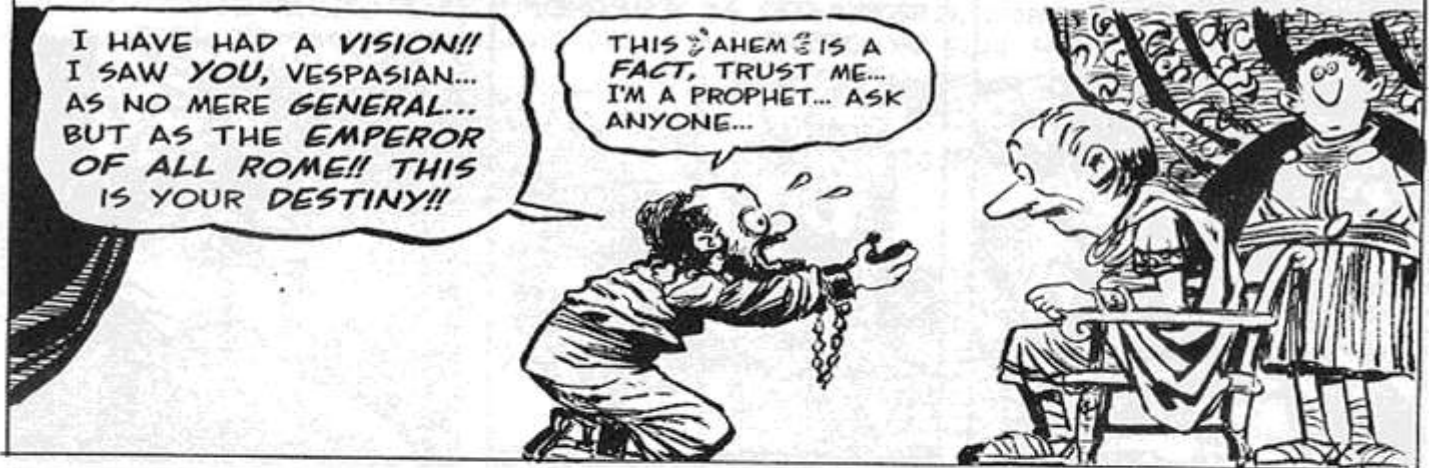
JOSEPH, YOU TRAITOR! AAAAASH!



IN VESPASIAN'S TENT, JOSEPHUS ASKED TO BE ALONE WITH THE GENERAL, AND THEN PUT ON HIS MOST AMAZING PERFORMANCE YET...

I HAVE HAD A VISION!! I SAW YOU, VESPASIAN... AS NO MERE GENERAL... BUT AS THE EMPEROR OF ALL ROME!! THIS IS YOUR DESTINY!!

THIS ^YAHEM IS A FACT. TRUST ME... I'M A PROPHET... ASK ANYONE...



VESPASIAN HAD GOOD REASON TO PONDER THIS PROPHECY...

BY THE WAY, I ALSO SEE MY CHAINS COMING OFF SOON!



IN GAUL, THE LEGIONS OF VINDEIX HAD DECLARED WAR ON NERO... THEY DECLARED GALBA, A SPANISH GOVERNOR, AS THEIR EMPEROR.

HAIL!!



IN ROME, NERO'S DEFENSE PREPARATIONS WENT SLOWLY.

STAGE EQUIPMENT? CURTAINS? LUTES? MASKS?



AT LAST, ALL ROME TURNED AGAINST NERO, AND HE FLED WITH A FEW FRIENDS.



YOU DON'T THINK THEY'D LET ME STAY ON AS, SAY, GOVERNOR OF EGYPT? NO, SIRE...

THEY TUNNELED THEIR WAY INTO A COUNTRY VILLA.



WHAT A TACKY WAY TO GO...

AND THERE, IN THE SLAVE QUARTERS, NERO CLUMSILY STABBED HIMSELF IN THE THROAT.



MISSED! UGH! MISSED AGAIN! SOMEBODY GIVE ME A HAND...

GALBA, IT'S SAID, WAS TERRIBLY EXCITED BY THE NEWS OF THE SUICIDE.



KISS ME, DARLING!!

HAIL, GALBA!

BUT BY JANUARY, 69, HE WAS MURDERED AND REPLACED AS EMPEROR BY OTHO.



HAIL, OTHO!

IN APRIL, OTHO FELL TO VITELLIUS AND HIS LEGIONS.



HAIL, UM, VITELLIUS!

69 WAS THE YEAR OF THREE EMPERORS—SO WHY NOT FOUR? VESPASIAN'S OFFICERS NOW SALUTED HIM WITH ALL THE HIGH TITLES!



I HAD A VISION!

HAIL, VESPASIAN IMPERATOR!

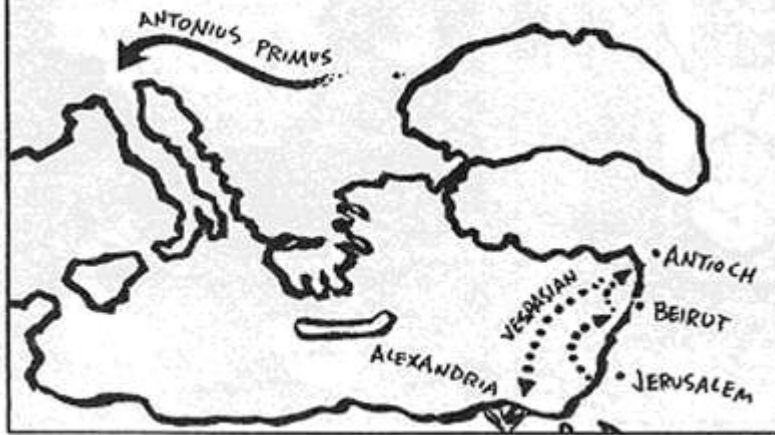
PRINCE!

TRIBUNES OF THE PEOPLE!

CONSUL!

PARASITE AND THUG!

VESPASIAN LEFT JUDAEA TO WOO THE EASTERN LEGIONS AND CUT OFF ROME'S GRAIN SUPPLY FROM EGYPT, WHILE HIS ALLY ANTONIUS PRIMUS HEADED FOR ITALY.

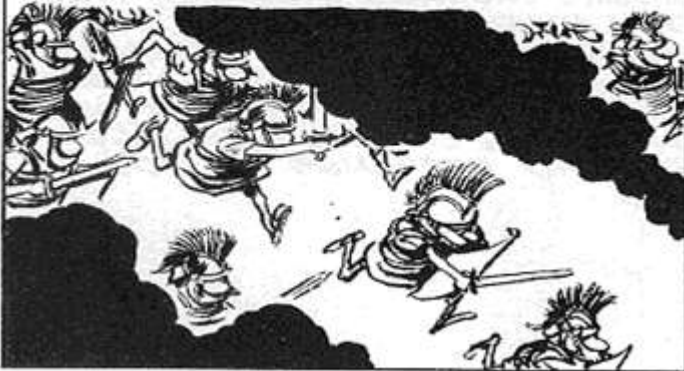


VESPASIAN'S FRIENDS OVERWHELMED VITELLIUS'S DEFENSES.



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BACK IN ROME, VITELLIUS'S TROOPS MINDLESSLY TORCHED THE CITY, DESTROYING ANCIENT TEMPLES AND A FEW OF VESPASIAN'S RELATIVES.



AT LAST, VITELLIUS WAS KILLED, AND ALL ROME HAILED VESPASIAN EMPEROR IN ABSENTIA (HIS SON DOMITIAN STOOD IN FOR HIM.)



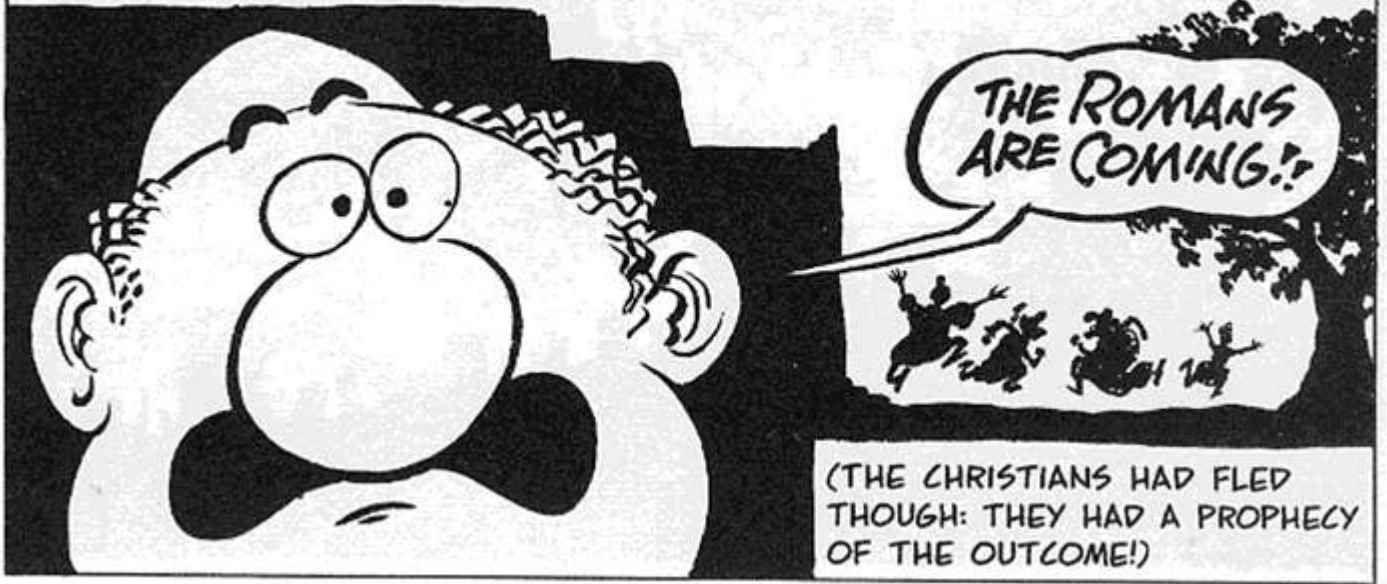
IN THE EAST, VESPASIAN CELEBRATED BY HAVING JOSEPHUS'S CHAINS STRUCK OFF!!!



IN THE SPRING, VESPASIAN SAILED FOR ROME, SENDING TITUS, WITH JOSEPHUS, BACK TO JERUSALEM TO FINISH IT OFF.



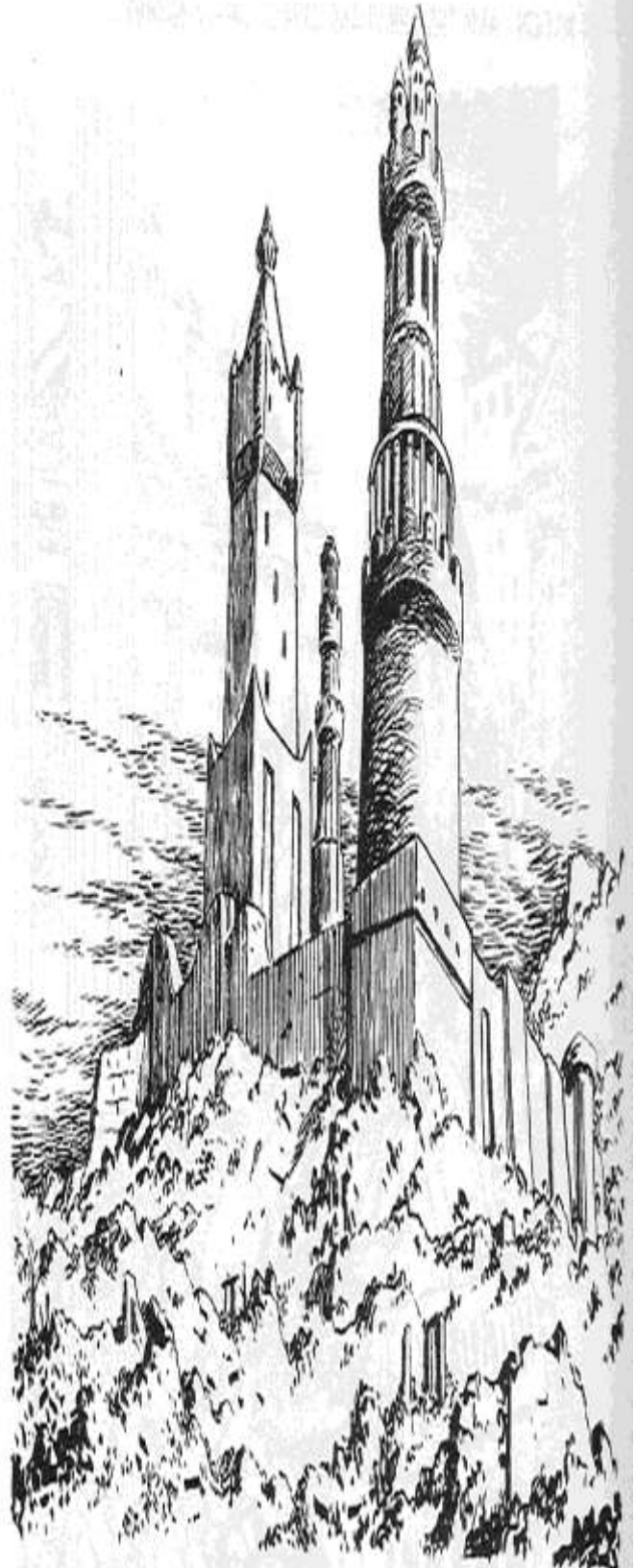
THEY ARRIVED DURING THE PASSOVER FESTIVAL, AS GARDENS BLOOMED AND VISITORS THROGGED TO THE CITY...



(THE CHRISTIANS HAD FLED THOUGH: THEY HAD A PROPHECY OF THE OUTCOME!)

IN HIS HISTORY, JOSEPHUS DEVOTES NEARLY 100 PAGES TO THE FIVE-MONTH SIEGE OF JERUSALEM... HE DESCRIBES THE CROWDS TRAPPED IN THE CITY... THE SURROUNDING HILLS STRIPPED OF TREES FOR THE ROMAN CAMP... ROMAN MOVEMENTS OUTSIDE... CIVIL WAR INSIDE... SORTIES AND AMBUSHES... HIS OWN PLEAS FOR A JEWISH SURRENDER... JERUSALEM'S SHORTAGE OF FOOD... THEN STARVATION... A MOTHER EATING HER OWN CHILD... ESCAPING JEWS SLIT OPEN BY SOLDIERS LOOKING FOR SWALLOWED GOLD... 115,000 CORPSES COUNTED BY THE CORONER'S OFFICE... THE ROMAN ASSAULT... THE ATTACK ON THE TEMPLE... A ROMAN SOLDIER'S HOBNAIL BOOTS SLIPPING ON THE POLISHED STONES... THE TEMPLE IN FLAMES... THE CITIZENS MASSACRED... BUT I'M GOING TO SKIP IT—HOW MANY GORY DRAWINGS DO YOU WANT IN ONE BOOK?

IN AUGUST 70, THE TEMPLE FELL... IN SEPTEMBER, TITUS ORDERED THE CITY'S COMPLETE DEMOLITION, EXCEPT FOR HEROD'S TOWERS AND PART OF THE WALL, TOKENS OF JERUSALEM'S FORMER GLORY...



TENS OF THOUSANDS OF PRISONERS WENT OFF IN CAGES...



TO BE SOLD AS SLAVES, OR TO FIGHT TO THE DEATH IN THE "GAMES" HELD FOR TITUS' AMUSEMENT.



A FEW HUNDRED ZEALOTS STILL HELD OUT AT MASADA. THE ROMANS BUILT A HUGE EARTHEN RAMP UP THE FORT...



...ONLY TO FIND THAT THE ZEALOTS HAD COMMITTED MASS SUICIDE RATHER THAN SURRENDER.



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TITUS REJOINED HIS FATHER VESPASIAN IN ROME FOR A TRIUMPHAL PARADE, IN WHICH REBEL LEADERS, CHAINED TO MODELS OF THEIR TOWNS, ROLLED OFF TO EXECUTION... JOSEPHUS JOINED VESPASIAN'S HOUSEHOLD AND WROTE A HISTORY OF THE REVOLT... ROME HAD ENDURED... THE JEWS HAD LOST THEIR NATION... AND THE CHRISTIANS CARRIED ON—IN SECRET...

