

# ENEMIES AT HOME

*Also by Lindsey Davis*

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Lindsey Davis

  
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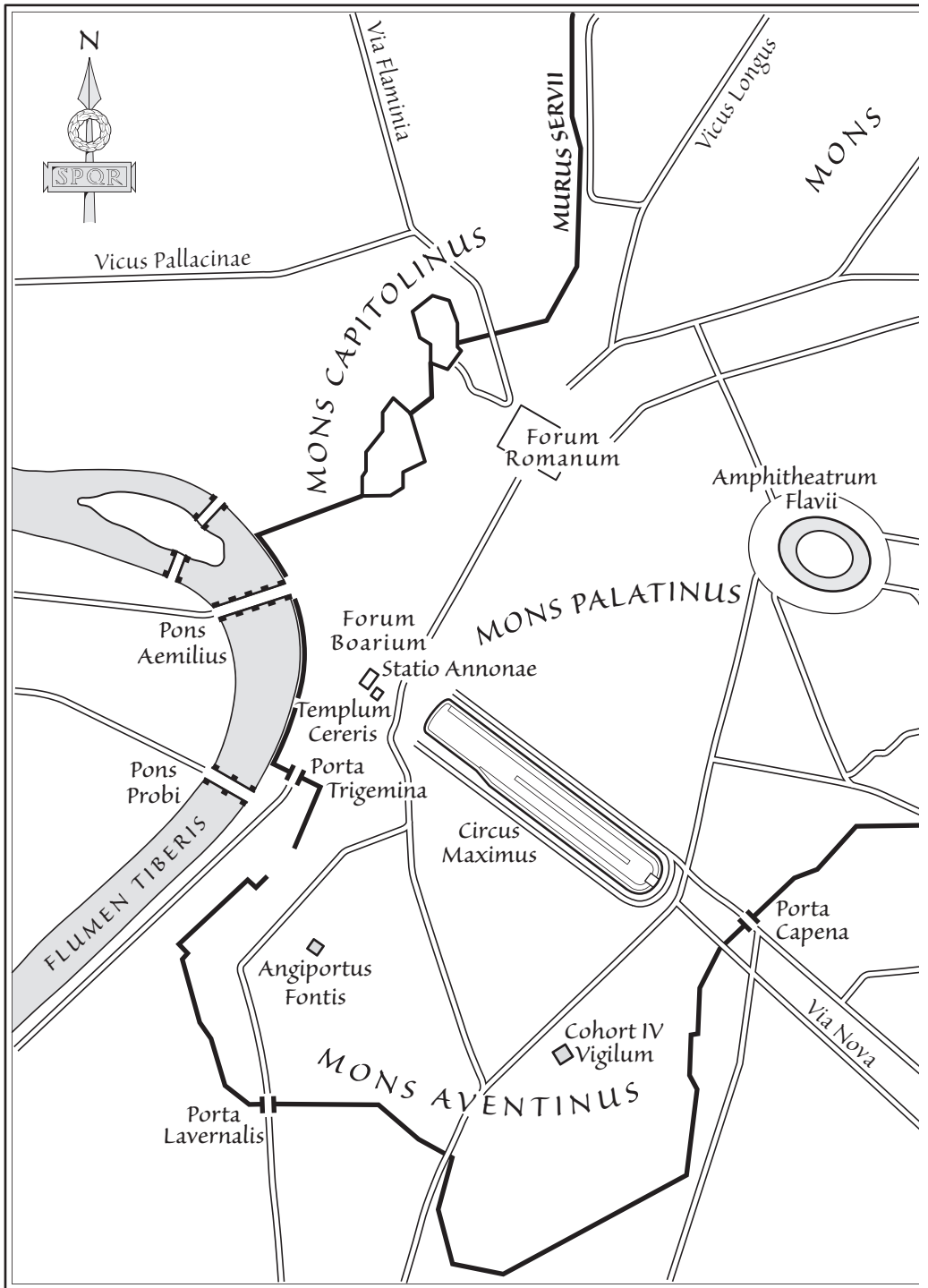
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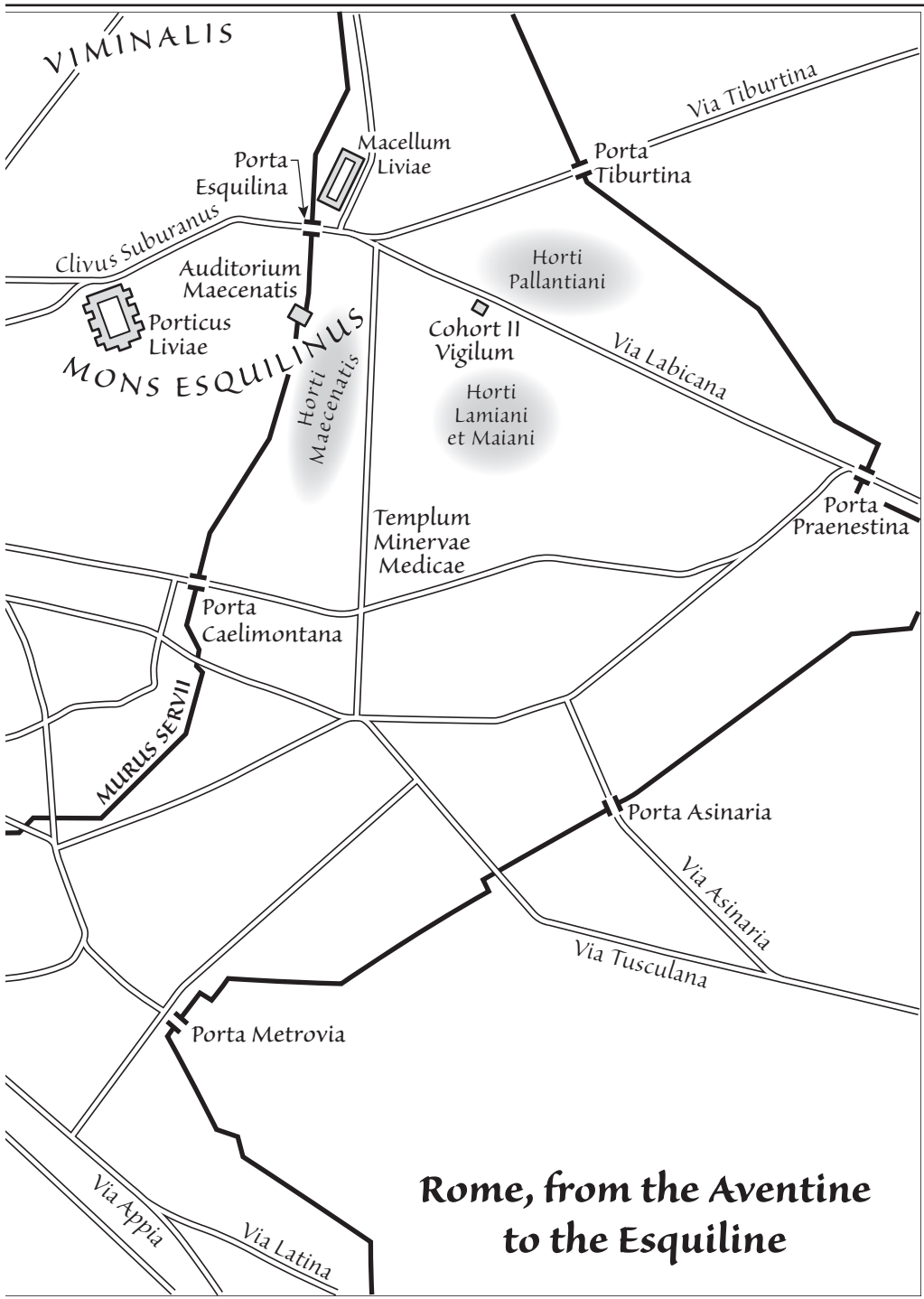
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## THE CAST

### *Friends and Acquaintances*

Flavia Albia	escaping a holiday, on the case
Aulus Camillus Aelianus	a legal adviser, her uncle
Quintus Camillus Justinus	ditto, more raffish and popular
Claudia Rufina	still his wife, against all odds
Hosidia Meline	Aelianus' first ex, Claudia's crony
Helena Justina	a force to be reckoned with
Tiberius Manlius Faustus	a plebeian aedile, with a problem
Laia Gratiana	another ex-wife, just a problem to herself
Apollonius	a very old waiter

### *The Dead and their Associates*

Valerius Aviola	a happy bridegroom (dead)
Mucia Lucilia	his lucky bride (dead also)
Polycarpus	their loyal freedman and steward
Graecina	his wife, a home-maker
Sextus Simplicius	Aviola's friend and executor
Hermes	Mucia's guardian and executor
Galla Simplicia	a single mother, a legacy-hunter
Valerius, Valeria and Simplicia	the children she brought up single-handed
Fauna and Lusius	neighbours who saw something
Secundus and Myrinus	neighbours who heard nothing

### *Crime and Punishment*

Titianus	diligent investigator of the Second Cohort
Juventus	anonymous, on special duties, do not ask
Unnamed	their cohort tribune, disposition unknown



Cassius Scaurus	caring tribune of the Fourth Cohort
Fundanus	on contract for torture and burials
Old Rabirius	a shadowy capo
Young Roscius	a coming threat
Gallo	fixer and trusty, do not trust him
A prisoner	a dead man

***Slaves, various***

Dromo, Gratus, Libycus, Amethystus, Diomedes, Daphnus, Phaedrus, Nicostratus (not for long), Chrysodorus, Melander, Amaranta, Olympe, Myla (and a baby), Gratus, Onesimus (off the scene), Cosmus

***Pets***

Puff	a spoiled lapdog, a bad girl
Panther	itching for trouble, a good boy



ROME, the Esquiline Hill:

June AD89



# I

**E**ven before I started, I knew I should say no. There are rules for private informers accepting a new case. Never take on clients who cannot pay you. Never do favours for friends. Don't work with relatives. Think carefully about legal work. If, like me, you are a woman, keep clear of men you find attractive.

The Aviola inquiry broke every one of those rules, not least because the clients had no money, yet I took it on. Will I never learn?

One warm, starry June night in the city of Rome, burglars invaded a ground-floor apartment on the Esquiline Hill. A large quantity of fine domestic silverware was taken, which people assumed was the primary target. The middle-aged couple who rented the fashionable suite had married only recently, which made what happened to them more poignant. After the robbers left, their bodies were found on the marital bed, amid signs of violent struggle. Both had been strangled.

The dead couple were wealthy enough to merit an investigation, a privilege that was generally thought too good for the poor, though it was normally available to victims who had left behind influential friends, as was the case here. Enquiries were first assigned to a vigiles officer, Titianus of the Second Cohort. In fairness, Titianus was no more inept

than most vigiles. He knew that two plus two made four – unless he happened to be preoccupied with watching a good cockfight, when he might inadvertently say five. But he had a decent record of arresting pickpockets in the Market of Livia. For about two hours he even thought that trying to solve a double murder was exciting. Then reality set in.

Titianus found it impossible to identify the thief or thieves. After asking around a bit, he turned his attention to the household, declaring that this must be an inside job. Inevitably his gaze fell on the owners' freedmen and slaves. The freedmen were mature, articulate and well organised; that was how they had managed to gain their liberty and how they now bamboozled Titianus. The slaves were more vulnerable: younger and naive, or else older and plain dim. Nobody ever said any of them had threatened their master and mistress, but to a law officer in Rome any culprits were better than none and with slaves no real proof was necessary. They could be accused, tortured, prosecuted and executed on simple probability. Titianus put on a clean tunic to look good, then went and announced to his cohort tribune that he had the answer. The slaves did it.

The slaves got wind of their plight. They knew the notorious Roman law when a head of household was murdered at home. By instinct the authorities went after the wife, but that was no use if she was dead too. So unless the dead man had another obvious enemy, his slaves fell under suspicion. Whether guilty or not, they were put to death. All of them.

The good thing about such systematic capital punishment, occurring in public of course, was that it helped make other slaves, of whom there were hundreds of thousands in Rome, more well behaved. The proportion of masters to slaves was

very small so nobody wanted this big slave population to get the idea of staging a rebellion. In our city it had been decided not to dress slaves in any distinguishing way, because then they might realise the power of their own numbers.

Many owners lived in constant fear of slaves turning against them. You cannot batter loyalty into a sullen, captive foreigner and neither can you even guarantee that kindly treatment will gain their gratitude. In Rome, executing slaves who betrayed their masters was extremely popular therefore. At least it was among the slave-owning classes.

Terrified, and with good reason, some of the accused slaves bolted from the elegant Esquiline house and took refuge a distance away at the Temple of Ceres. By tradition, this monument on the Aventine Hill offered a haven for refugees. They could claim sanctuary, be kept safe and even hope to be fed.

In theory, the authorities fostered the great temple's famous role as a focus of liberty and protector of the desperate. However, nobody wants to take fine ideals too far.

In a swift, panic-stricken meeting just after dawn, the issue of how to get rid of the fugitives was handed to a magistrate whose duties gave him close connections to the temple. His name was Manlius Faustus, one of that year's plebeian aediles, and I knew him. I liked his methods. He always stayed calm.

Charged with solving the problem, Faustus solemnly agreed with the Temple of Ceres authorities that it was important to take the correct action. This situation could easily turn ugly. They wanted to avoid censure. The public were shouting for a solution, preferably bloody. The *Daily Gazette* had already asked for a quotable comment and was about to feature the

story in its scandal section; publication would fire lurid Forum gossip. The unseen eye of the emperor was probably on the Temple. Faustus had been handed a rather hot platter here.

As this dutiful man tried to come up with ideas, he walked to a bar called the Stargazer. There, while he pondered the meagre choice for breakfast, he ran into me.