



Empire's End: A Roman Story

Books Reviewed:

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~~Not a Choice:~~

off

Media type:

Book

BfK Rating:

4

Camilla enjoys a privileged childhood in Leptis Magna, one of the great cities in the Roman province of Libya. Her father is a respected philosopher a boyhood friend of the Emperor Septimus Severus, the first African Emperor of Rome. When summoned to rejoin his friend in Rome he is delighted ? Camilla is old enough to contract an advantageous marriage. Camilla is less sure ? but their arrival in Rome sees the family faced with a very different future ? they must accompany their Emperor to the distant northern province of Britannia. What does the future hold?

This is an addition to the **Voices** series which aims to bring history alive through the immediate voice of their protagonists. Here Leila Rashid conjures life in the Roman Empire in the 2nd century AD. We are not in the militaristic world of the legions, marching victoriously over the conquered nations. Here we see what it was like to be a girl ? albeit a girl who has enjoyed education and has been encouraged to think and to question within the social mores. Yes, she does accept slavery, it is the norm ? but Rashid also allows her to experience doubt ? and a level of understanding. We are also introduced to the turbulent background to the Roman world. The world is not as stable as we like to imagine and the provinces ? Britain for one - are very far from the centre and vulnerable. Camilla tells her story as memories for her son as Rashid imagines what might be the background to archaeological finds that reveal that even then Britain was a diverse society. The language is neutral ? contemporary without jarring; the history introduced subtly through dialogue and personal observation. There are few heroics, just an immersive experience of the past.

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