

From Claudius to his daughter, Lucilla, written from Sicilia in the province of Italia, in the reign of the Emperor Titus, 81 AD.

I am right now in a beautiful place that you would absolutely love! I wish you were here! But this is surely not a vacation; I have lots of work to do with the Roman military. I haven't talked with you in so long! We have a lot to catch up on, there has been a lot going on in the government in the past few years!

The emperor, Vespasian and his son, Titus, took over Jerusalem. He sent the military, which I am in, to do this. It was horrible. The great temple of Jerusalem was demolished. It is the most holy and respected place there is, in the minds of the Jewish I have felt so bad doing these things to such innocent people, but I had to if I wanted to keep my job. Who knows, if I had of gone against Titus' plans, I might have been decapitated! Well, I guess, it really isn't that bad, because the people of Jerusalem are so strange, with that silly religion and all.

Speaking of religion, Titus is a very, very cruel man when it comes to this. You will never in your right mind be able to imagine the terrible things that he does to the Jewish. It is incredible atrocious ways that he treats them. I am very happy that I am not Jewish. You should be, too. Honey, never forget, as you sit in your house with good health and good fortune, that you are very lucky. You could be suffering, in pain and hunger right now, but you're not. Always be thankful.

Vespasian died in 79 AD. Titus was his eldest son. Of course, you know what that means. If you haven't already heard, Titus became the new Emperor of Rome. No one around here likes him. I hear rumors that Titus will become the new Nero.

That Titus, after all of his evil, another tragedy came about. A volcano, called Mount Vesuvius erupted. I have heard many different stories about this tragedy, but I'll tell you the one that is most believable. The volcano erupted, and bubbling hot lava, ashes and smoke buried the towns of Pompeii, Herculaneum, Stabiae and Oplontis. The sky was completely black, and the towns were destroyed. Many, many people were killed, but there were some people who managed to escape with their lives before they were melted in the lava. That would be very painful, I get chills just thinking about it. After the unpredictable incident, Titus went to the scene, and declared a state of emergency. This is what surprised me most, Titus set up a relief fund, can you believe it, mean old Titus sets up a *relief fund!* According to the grapevine, the fund was all around assistance, for those who survived and needed to rebuild, and the land of people who died with no heirs went to the fund. Some people even say that the volcano disaster was a punishment to Titus for annihilating the Great Temple of Jerusalem. I wouldn't be surprised if that was true!

It seems that Titus is an Emperor of disasters. In Rome, a fire raged for three whole days and nights, also causing much destruction and devastation. And just like the volcano disaster, Titus provided a relief fund! Isn't that strange?

Now this one, you might have heard about, because it might have happened in your town! A remarkably horrid case of plague came over the people of the Roman Empire. It spread quickly, and Titus was there, he provided medical support, and he even made exceptional sacrifices to many of the Gods. I am very glad that you and your mother stayed healthy during this time of disease sickness. There is apparently still some cases of it around, don't catch it!

Probably the most recent news I have for you is that Titus just opened the Colosseum in Rome. I guess its official name is "Flavian Amphitheatre". It is a very large building with many seats. The rumors around here have it that it has shows in it with gladiators fighting vicious animals. Maybe when I come home from Sicilia, I can take you and your mother into Rome to see one of these shows. Would you like that?

Titus has also had a few coins struck with his face on the obverse side. On the reverse is a deity. It is of Neptune, the God of the Sea. It is very strange for an Emperor like Titus to put Neptune on the same coin as him. Neptune is a very powerful God, who controls the Oceans, which are very big and powerful. Maybe he is trying to tell the people that he is completely in control, has tons of power, and there is nothing we can do about it.

I wouldn't have been surprised to see Cupid on the back of one of his coins, with all the marriages he's been in. Really, first there was Arrecina Tertulla, then Marcia Furnilla. Then there was that affair with the Jewish princess, Berinice. She was Jewish and he expected them to get along after what he had done to Jerusalem!?! Titus also a harp player and singer, what a sucker for love and attention!

Anyway, all this talk about love is making me miss your mother. I am very unlike Titus, once I met your mother, I would never ever want to marry another woman. How is your mother making out? Are the profits from the fabric that the two of you are selling enough to keep you going? I hope so.

Oh, I also wanted to know if you received the package that I sent to you with a young messenger. It included 25 sestertius, which you should know is equal to 100 asses. That was almost all of what I earned in six months' time. I only kept enough for myself to buy food. I didn't tell the messenger what was in the package, because I was afraid that he might steal it. I trust that it was quite a help to you and your mother. I am very sorry that I didn't send a letter with that package, but when I just got my payment, which I wanted to send to you right away, we had a mission to go on, so I didn't have time to write a letter. Say hi to your mom for me!

With all of Cupid's love, your Father, Claudius