



0. THE PAPAL STATES FALL - Story Preface

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Karl Benzinger created this illustration (circa 1850) of Rome's Colosseum and the surrounding area. It depicts how this part of the "Eternal City" appeared at the time of Pope Pius IX. Image online via Wikimedia Commons. Click on the image for a better view.

By 1861, most of Italy was unified, although the church still held Rome and the lands surrounding it.

The capital city, at the time, was Florence. Victor Emanuel II was crowned king of the united country.

However, the Italians wanted Rome—the "Eternal City"—to be their capital. Not until 1870, twelve years after Edgardo's capture, was it really possible to believe the papal town of Rome could become the capital of unified Italy.

In that year, Napoleon III made some disastrous mistakes and was deposed as emperor of France. When Napoleon fell, his troops withdrew from Rome. French troops, who had maintained control in the Papal States, were thrown out by the Italians. Papal power and canon law in most of Italy, including Rome, were nearing their end.

Pope Pius IX would not give-up church territory without a fight. Without his French troops, however, the pontiff had little chance to prevail.

Rome fell. Secular authorities would now control the city.

Although Victor Emanuel II did not send his troops into the Vatican, it was clear that the days of widespread papal authority and the rule of church law were over. Ultimately, the church was left with just the Vatican state.

See [Alignments to State and Common Core standards for this story online at:](#)

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicAlignment/THE-PAPAL-STATES-FALL-Kidnapping-of-Edgardo-Mortara>

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