

0. Gladiator - Story Preface

1. MARCUS AURELIUS
2. LEGACY OF MARCUS AURELIUS
3. COMMODUS - IN CHARGE
4. THE ROMAN GAMES
5. COMMODUS IN THE ARENA
6. THUMBS DOWN FOR COMMODUS



A bronze Roman gladiator's helmet from the first century. Maintained at the British Museum, Room 69: Greek and Roman life.

*Hail, Caesar,
Those about to die
Salute thee*

(Or, in Latin,
the language of the day):
*Ave Imperator,
morituri te salutant*

Suetonius
Historian of Ancient Rome

Usually "those about to die" in the Roman Colosseum were condemned prisoners, professional gladiators, Christians, or animals. The spectacle of the "games" was often bloody, a tradition started in Rome by its earlier conquerors, the Etruscans.

But not until the reign of Commodus (180-192 AD) did Roman citizens witness wholesale slaughter by a Caesar himself, dressed as a gladiator and acting like a madman. Who was this Emperor, this Caesar, who thought of himself as a god?

See [Alignments to State and Common Core standards for this story online at:](http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicAlignment/Gladiator)

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See [Learning Tasks for this story online at:](http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicActivities/Gladiator)

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Media Stream



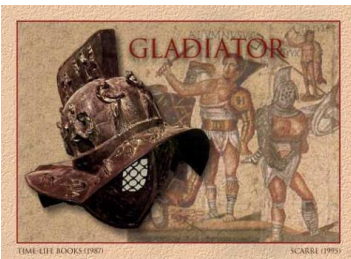
Colosseum - An Ancient Landmark in Modern Rome

Photo by Foeke Noppert. Image online, courtesy Wikimedia Commons.

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Gladiators and Their Protective Gear

Image online, courtesy Time-Life Books.

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Ancient Illustration - Gladiators Fighting Animals

Image online, courtesy the romans-latin.net website.

PD

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Fallen Gladiator - After Battle

Image online, courtesy [Vroma](http://vroma) (a virtual place to study the Roman Classics).

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Commodus - Bust of the Roman Emperor

Image, described above, online courtesy MK&G (a German-language museum website).

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Gladiator

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