

IT'S A FACT!

Real-Life
Reads

The Life of a

GLADIATOR



by Ruth Owen

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GLADIATOR

by Ruth Owen

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Ruby Tuesday Books



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A Deadly Sport


In Roman times, cheering crowds packed large stadiums to watch their favorite sport.

In the **arena**, pairs of super fit, highly skilled contestants went head to head. A contest might last for 30 minutes, or it might all be over in 60 seconds. For the winner, there were prizes and the cheers of adoring fans. For the loser, it might mean a final journey through the “gate of the dead.”

The word “gladiator” means
“a man of the sword.”

It comes from the word
gladius, which is the **Latin**
word for “sword.”





It was brutal. It was bloody.
And the ancient Romans
couldn't get enough.

This was history's most deadly
sport—the gladiator games.

Gladiator Games

Ancient Rome was a **civilization** that existed in present-day Italy.

Its citizens loved to watch gladiators. The first fights between Roman gladiators took place at funerals. The fights were a way to honor the dead.

A Map of the Roman Empire in the Year 180



The powerful Roman army invaded parts of Europe, the Middle East, and North Africa. All these conquered lands (shown in orange on the map) became part of the **Roman Empire**.

In time, the **emperor** and other important Romans began to organize gladiator games. Roman leaders wanted to be popular with the people they ruled. So they arranged exciting and bloody events that rich and poor Romans could enjoy. Gladiator games were held in stadiums called **amphitheaters**.

In the year 107, Emperor Trajan organized gladiator games in Rome. They lasted for 123 days. More than 5,000 pairs of gladiators fought each other at this event.

The Romans built amphitheaters across the Roman Empire. This is the ruin of an amphitheater in Tunisia in North Africa. It was built 1,800 years ago.



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Read More

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Phillips, Dee. *Gladiator: The Story of a Fighter (Yesterday's Voices)*. Costa Mesa, CA: Saddleback Educational Publishing (2014).

Learn More Online

To learn more about gladiators, go to
www.rubytuesdaybooks.com/gladiator

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Two heavily armed fighters face each other in the Colosseum of ancient Rome. They are about to take part in the deadliest sport the world has ever known. Only one man will leave the arena alive. This is the brutal world of the Roman gladiator.

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