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*Ruth Downie*

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**Ruth Downie : Vita Brevis: A Crime Novel of the Roman Empire** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Vita Brevis: A Crime Novel of the Roman Empire:

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. All Roads Lead to Rome By Deborah Itr'squo;s always a pleasure to spend time with Ruso and Tilla. Downier'squo;s portrayal of their relationship seems very honest to me. I enjoyed Tillar'squo;s attempt to be a good Roman wife just as I enjoyed Ruso'squo;s gradually increasing attachment to their adopted baby daughter. In particular I liked the scene where Ruso explains his feelings to a potential adoptive father:ldquo;Itr'squo;s like any other sort of parenting, I suppose. Although not having tried the other sort, I don't really know. Sometimes, it'squo;s exhausting. Most of the time, it'squo;smdash;well, I can't imagine being without her now.rdquo; He suspected there was a silly grin on his face as he added, ldquo;She had another tooth come through this morning. And Itr'squo;m almost sure she said Pa.rdquo;One of my favorite moments was when the followers of Christos, who were having a service in the apartment above Ruso and Tillar'squo;s, arrive in time to frighten away some thugs. Another favorite moment is when Tilla and two accomplices attempt to rescue Ruso by setting fire to a door. Finally, I enjoyed the scene where watching Tilla curse someone in her native tongue, Ruso speculates that if ldquo;the followers of Christos ever decided to expand into Britannia, they were going to find it an interesting challenge.rdquo;0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Suggestions for Ruth Downie By Bruce Waugh I very much enjoyed the change of scenery. I was getting tired of dreary England. The description of the neighborhood, the occupations, the housing, the slaves and the political organization were interestingly woven into the story with memorable characters. I would have liked to have seen Tilla run into Hadrian or the Empress. Downie is very strong when she shows the fish out of water Tilla outsmarting the 'sophisticated' Romans. What were the weaknesses? The mystery wasn't as good as in prior episodes, and I could have done with less of the baby-related story. I hope, if Ruso and Tilla head elsewhere, that it is someplace new (Paris, Alexandria?) although more of Rome would be fine. So, no more England, please. And I'd love to see more of Tilla's resourcefulness, especially with Hadrian....and perhaps Antinous.....to increase the 'historical' part of 'historical fiction.'0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Oops a barrel containing a dead body is found on the doorstep. By ARGRuso and Tilla are in Rome and struggling. Ruso left the army on the promise of a job in the capital by his commanding officer except there isn't one. As we open his patron is wooing a real estate upstart's daughter. The man's doctor has gone missing so Ruso is given his job and home. Oops a barrel containing a dead body is found on the doorstep. They try to ignore it but it is making the barbarian wife even less popular in the neighborhood. Then the big poobah needs an anti poison medicine

which Ruso can't make - so with full consent makes a poppy concoction that will look the same to fool any would be killers for a while. When he ends up dead after falling in the street and getting a nasty head wound, Ruso works with Metellus to find the culprit at least for a while. I wasn't too far ahead in solving this mystery, but the missing doctor bit I did have figured out.

Ruso and Tilla's excitement at arriving in Rome with their new baby daughter is soon dulled by their discovery that the grand facades of polished marble mask an underworld of corrupt landlords and vermin-infested tenements. There are also far too many doctors-some skilled-but others positively dangerous. Ruso thinks that he has been offered a reputable medical practice only to find that his predecessor Doctor Kleitos has fled, leaving a dead man in a barrel on the doorstep and the warning, "Be careful who you trust." Distracted by the body and his efforts to help a friend win the hand of a rich young heiress, Ruso makes a grave mistake, causing him to question both his competence and his integrity. With Ruso's reputation under threat, he and Tilla must protect their small family from Doctor Kleitos's debt collectors and find allies in their new home while they track down the vanished doctor and find out the truth about the heiress's dead father-Ruso's patient-and the unfortunate man in the barrel.

"A time-travel trip to the ancient world is especially engaging in the company of narrator Simon Vance and author Ruth Downie." ---AudioFileAbout the AuthorRuth Downie is the author of the New York Times bestseller *Medicus*, as well as *Terra Incognita*, *Persona Non Grata*, *Caveat Emptor*, *Semper Fidelis*, and *Tabula Rasa*. She is married with two sons and lives in Devon, England. Visit her at [ruthdownie.com](http://ruthdownie.com). Simon Vance, a former BBC Radio presenter and newsreader, is a full-time actor who has appeared on both stage and television. He has recorded over eight hundred audiobooks and has earned five coveted Audie Awards, and he has won fifty-seven Earphones Awards from AudioFile magazine, which has named him a Golden Voice.

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