

# REAL SCIENCE ADVENTURES



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CLEVINGER • McCLAREN • MURPHY



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## THE NICODEMUS JOB PART 2

1095CE. Princes of Europe gather their armies to help the Byzantine Empire reclaim Anatolia from the Seljuk Turks. It is the eve of the First Crusade. Our heroes — a disgraced officer of the law, an ex-assassin, an orphan, a thief, and a scribe — don't know about any of that. And they have no idea the fate of Constantinople itself rests in their hands.

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CONSTANTINOPLE, 1095 CE

THERE *MIGHT* BE A BLIND SPOT WHERE A PAIR OF GUARDS COULD BE WAYLAID.

BUT IT TAKES *TIME* TO REMOVE ARMOR AND *MORE TIME* TO PUT IT ON.

GOTTA BE A GAP IN THEIR PATROL.

WE EXPLOIT IT *JUST RIGHT* AND I *MIGHT* HAVE TIME TO PICK A LOCK.

BUT THERE'S NO TELLING *WHERE* THAT PUTS US *INSIDE*.

OR *HOW* WE'LL GET OUT AGAIN WITH THE BOOKS.

GETTING IN AND OUT IS THE *EASY* PART.

WE MUST *ALSO* STEAL *SPECIFIC* BOOKS OUT OF AN INVENTORY OF *HUNDREDS* OF *THOUSANDS*.

THE IMPERIAL LIBRARY IS A MAZE IN A VAULT IN A *FORTRESS* SURROUNDED BY *SOLDIERS*.

WE COULD OVERCOME ANY *TWO* OF THOSE.

TWO IF WE *HAD* TO.

THREE IF WE GOT *LUCKY*.

BUT ALL *FOUR*? IT'S IMPOSSIBLE.





DO YOU ALL AGREE?



WELL, YES.



THERE, THAT'S SETTLED.

ISKANDER, WE NEED TO KNOW MORE ABOUT THOSE BOOKS.

PALATINA, YOU -



I'M SORRY.

DID WE NOT JUST AGREE IT WAS HOPELESS?



NO, WE AGREED IT WAS IMPOSSIBLE. THAT'S DIFFERENT. IMPOSSIBLE DOESN'T MEAN IT CAN'T BE DONE.

AIN'T THAT EXACTLY WHAT IT MEANS?





I ADMIT THEIR SAFEGUARDS ARE IMPRESSIVE. THEY HAVE TO BE. THEY'RE GUARDING AGAINST EVERY POSSIBLE INTRUSION.

ALL WE HAVE TO DO IS FIND ONE IMPOSSIBLE PLAN THAT WORKS.

HOW?



I DON'T HAVE THE FIRST IDEA. SO LET'S FIND SOME.

ISKANDER, THOSE BOOKS. EVERYTHING YOU CAN GET ON THEM.



PALATINA. WE KNOW WE CAN'T BREAK IN, BUT LET'S FIND OUT EXACTLY WHY.

REMEMBER, YOU'RE JUST THERE TO SCOUT IT OUT. DON'T GET CAUGHT.



SOFANA. GET INSIDE POSING AS A NUN. A SMALL SECT, FOREIGN. YOU'RE ON A PILGRIMAGE TO VIEW HOLY TEXTS OR SOMETHING.

SPEAK LIMITED LATIN AND NO GREEK. LET'S SEE HOW FAR THEY'LL GO TO HELP SOMEONE.



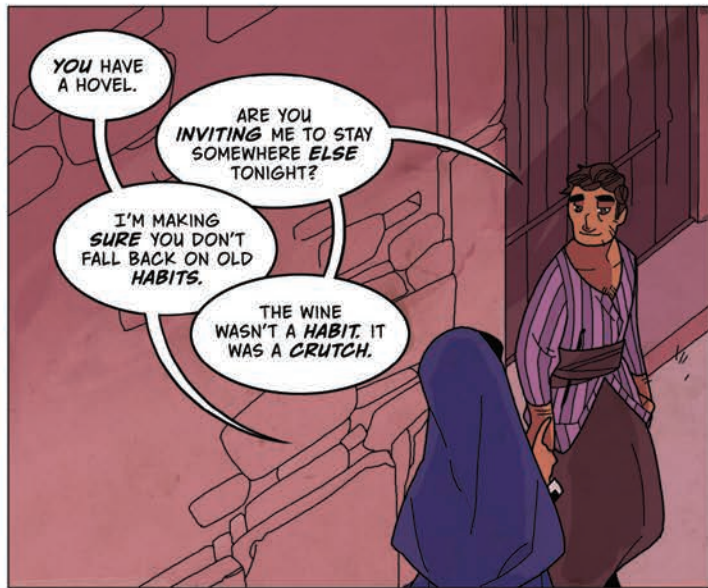
EMIR. WATCH THE GUARDS. LEARN THEIR ROUTINES AND THEIR RESPONSES.

SEE WHO'S DISCIPLINED AND WHO'S SLEEPWALKING.



AND I'LL SEE IF ANYONE OUT THERE STILL REMEMBERS ME.







LATER THAT NIGHT...

IF IT ISN'T  
MY OLD FRIEND,  
TERAZIN BERIKOS.

HOLD.

NICOLAS?  
NICOLAS FARDAS.

WHAT BRINGS A  
DISGRACE SUCH AS  
YOURSELF OUT OF THE  
WINE BOTTLE AND THE  
GUTTER YOU FOUND  
IT IN?

I BRING A  
MESSAGE.

LAWS CAN BE  
CORRUPTED.

JUSTICE  
CANNOT.

ARE YOU  
FINISHED?

I WON'T  
DETAIN YOU.

BUT THE  
IMPERIAL GUARD  
WILL.