AQUILA PERPETUA

The Eagle That Does Not Fall

Volume One: Mare Nostrum, World Unknown

For every man who ever watched an empire rise in the dark of a private room, and understood exactly what it cost, and chose to build one anyway.

> *Invariably, all nations crumble, fall, and are forgotten. And in their final death throes, they often drag others down with them.*
>
> — *The Histories of Empire, Volume VI, by Tyrus of Helia (recovered from Blessed Isles salvage, approximate date unknown)*

> *Only in the crucible of strife does God burn away the impurities to reveal the essence of a person — an inner core that might otherwise have remained hidden for an entire life.*
>
> — *Rhaedri Brison, attributed*

PROLOGUE: THE MATHEMATICS OF DYING

The man who would become Gaius Aurelius Varro spent the last eleven minutes of his first life calculating his own probability of survival.

It was not despair. It was professional habit, the same impulse that had made him good at his job for thirty-two years — the compulsion to model the system, assign distributions to outcomes, and accept the median result without flinching. His body was failing. The distribution was narrow and pointed in one direction. The median result was unambiguous.

He was sixty-one years old. His name was David Aurelius — the middle name was his mother's small classical joke, a surname she'd given him like a wink across two thousand years of history. He had spent his career in the machinery of international diplomacy, in the clean conference rooms and carpeted anteriors of organizations that mattered only slightly less than they believed they did. He had been good at reading systems. Better at reading people. Best of all at understanding that the two were, in the end, the same thing.

He lay in a hospital bed in Geneva. The window showed a gray afternoon. Someone had placed yellow flowers in a vase on the windowsill, which he thought was a kind and slightly absurd thing to do, as the flowers would outlive him by a week and then die too.

His specific grief — the quiet, surgical grief that had attended him through the last decade of his career — was not about dying. He had reconciled himself to dying with the same actuarial equanimity he brought to everything. His grief was about legibility. About understanding a system so completely that you could trace every fault line in it, name every structural weakness, predict every cascade failure — and discovering that being right, in diplomacy, was not sufficient. That the world could be measured, mapped, modeled, and still lost.

He thought, in those last eleven minutes, about Runeterra.

It was a strange thing to think about at the threshold of death. Most people, he supposed, thought about family, about regret, about the faces of people they loved. He thought about some of those things too. But underneath the human inventory ran a persistent, low-frequency current: the lore he had spent twenty years reading in the evenings, the political geography of a fictional world whose internal logic he had found cleaner, and more honest, than the one he'd spent his career navigating. He knew the shape of Noxian expansionism. He understood the Piltovan technological advantage and its social costs. He had thought, more than once, that the Shadow Isles were the most precise metaphor for systemic institutional failure he had ever encountered — the way the corruption spread from a single catastrophic decision, through every connected structure, until the original form was unrecognizable.

He knew, in the technical sense, what was wrong with every faction on Runeterra and what, theoretically, could be done about it.

He had never expected to find out if he was right.

The last eleven minutes ended.

The gray Geneva afternoon dissolved.

He came back to consciousness with the smell of salt water, torch smoke, and cedar oil, and with the specific, deep-tissue ache of a body that had been running since before dawn.

The first thing he registered was the sound of an eagle standard.

Not a metaphorical eagle. The real thing — bronze cast, mounted on a polished shaft, carried by a soldier who stood at parade rest outside a pair of doors that were themselves carved with more eagles. The standard caught the morning wind from somewhere he couldn't see, and the fabric beneath it snapped with the crisp authority of something that had never doubted its right to be where it was.

He lay still for exactly four seconds, processing.

The ceiling above him was coffered stone, painted in warm ochre and deep red. The air smelled of wax and cold stone and, distantly, of the sea. His body was wrong — too young, the joints clean of the arthritis that had narrated his last

decade, the muscles carrying a strange, coiled energy that felt borrowed. He could feel the memories layered beneath his own, like a second text written in a different hand on the same page: this was a room he had slept in every night for nineteen years; those were his father's eagle standards; the ache in his left shoulder was from yesterday's swordsmanship drill, which he had pushed too far because the instructor's praise had annoyed him more than his corrections.

The Great Sage said, quietly: *Cross-reference complete. You are Gaius Aurelius Varro. Heir apparent. Nineteen years of age. Physical condition: excellent. Situation: stable.*

He already knew this. The knowledge sat behind his eyes like a second library.

He was in Rome.

Not the Rome he had lectured about in seminars, the Rome of ruins and museum marble and undergraduate argument. The Rome that had not fallen — that had been moved, entire and alive, to a world whose name it didn't yet know and whose contents would, within ten years, arrive at its shores.

He lay in the quiet of the imperial apartments and let the grief of his old life settle into the new body's bones like sediment finding the floor of a new river. It would be there. He would not pretend otherwise. Sixty-one years of a life, well lived in technical terms, privately hollow in a way that he had never quite solved — it was not nothing, and he would not treat it as nothing.

But there was work to do.

He rose, dressed himself in the clothes laid out by servants who had not yet been summoned, and went to find the archive of the Temple of Jupiter Optimus Maximus, because someone had to read those augural texts with the right set of eyes, and he was apparently the only person in two worlds equipped to do it.

PART ONE: THE WEIGHT OF WHAT YOU KNOW

Chapter One: The Cedar Case

The archive did not smell like the centers of power Gaius remembered from his first life.

It didn't smell of floor wax or the faint ozone of printer warmth or the specific expensive neutrality of air-conditioned conference rooms where the fate of regions was argued over mineral water and biscuits. It smelled of ancient dust, cedar oil, and the cold metallic tang of deep stone. The Temple of Jupiter Optimus Maximus sat at the crown of the Capitoline Hill, and its archive extended downward into the rock of the hill itself — a catacomb of careful preservation, each shelf sealed with wax, each case labeled in the careful hand of pontiffs who had been dead for generations.

Gaius sat on the floor. His bare heels pressed against the grit of the paving stones. This was a deliberate choice — the chair at the archive table was too formal for the kind of reading he needed to do, and he had found, in his first life, that the body's relationship to a text mattered. You read differently when you were comfortable. The floor kept him honest.

In his lap sat a cedar case, its ivory inlay yellowed with age, its hinges of dark iron worn smooth by two centuries of handling. Inside were the augural texts. Seventeen lines of Latin so dense with theological metaphor that three generations of Rome's best pontiffs had produced nineteen separate commentaries, all of which disagreed on the fundamental question of what, specifically, the gods were communicating.

Gaius read the lines.

Behind his eyes, the analytical architecture he had always called the Great Sage began its work. It was not magic, or it was not only magic — it was the accumulated habit of a mind trained in actuarial modeling, economic systems analysis, and the pattern recognition of thirty-two years spent parsing treaty language for what it meant beneath what it said. The gods had spoken in the idiom of Roman religious expression, which was itself a specialized dialect of legalistic Latin, in which every word carried five centuries of precedent meaning. A diplomat who understood both the surface language and the layers beneath it could read through the metaphor to the structure underneath.

Cross-reference complete. The internal voice was his own, stripped of register. *The augural language is consistent with a bounded temporal covenant. Three parallel constructions use the idiom of the caduceus of Hermes — in Roman context, Mercury as messenger-god, specifically Mercury as intermediary of contracts with time-limited obligations. The phrase rendered as 'until the waters calm' in the standard scholarly translations carries a double meaning in early imperial augural usage: both literal oceanic conditions and the metaphorical concept of 'until the conditions of preparation are satisfied.' These are not the same thing. Current confidence interval on the temporal covenant reading: seventy-one percent.*

Gaius read the texts again. He did not hurry. In his experience, hurrying through ambiguous language was how catastrophic misreadings happened, and a catastrophic misreading of these particular texts would be the most consequential intellectual error in recorded history.

He read them a third time.

Then he closed the cedar case and sat with the weight of the conclusion for several minutes, listening to the distant, specific silence of a city built on seven hills that had never fallen.

The storm barrier around the Roman Enclave was thinning.

The covenant was time-limited. The gods had promised protection sufficient

for Rome to prepare itself — not permanent protection, but preparation. The three parallel constructions in the augural texts were not ambiguous once you understood the idiom. They were a countdown, expressed in the theological vocabulary of a culture that experienced time as seasonal and cyclical rather than linear, which was why every previous commentator had misread them. None of the pontiffs had been actuaries. None of them had thought to model the problem as a bounded probability distribution.

He estimated, running the numbers across several interpretive frameworks and discarding the outliers, that Rome had between eight and twelve years. Central estimate: ten.

He picked up the cedar case and returned it carefully to its shelf.

The click of the wood against stone was very small in the silence of the archive. It sounded, he thought, like the first tick of a clock.

Recommendation, the Great Sage said. *Immediate expansion of the Ostia naval shipyards is required. If Noxian warships possess even ten percent of the combat profile described in secondary source materials, current Roman trireme design represents an approximately ninety-four percent probability of tactical failure upon first contact. Secondary recommendation: before any military infrastructure adjustment, conduct a comprehensive census of what Rome does and does not know about Runeterra. Confirm the information gap before designing a response to it.*

He already knew this. He was already thinking it.

That was the strange doubled quality of being himself in this body — the old diplomat and the young prince occupied the same cognitive space without friction, like two rivers that had found the same channel. The boy's memories told him where things were, who the senators were, what the political fault lines of the current court looked like. The old man's training told him what to do with that information.

He walked out of the archive into the morning light of the Capitoline Hill, and looked east toward the sea, which was blue and ordinary and currently the only thing between Rome and a world it was not ready for.

Ten years.

He had ten years to prepare sixty million people for the most significant first contact event in any world's history, without telling any of them — in terms they would believe — what was coming. Without triggering political instability. Without creating a technology dependency that would make Rome stronger in the short term and fundamentally weaker in the long term. Without starting a war.

He stood there for a moment, the sea wind moving through his hair, and felt the sixty-one years of his first life settle into the nineteen-year-old bones of his second one like ballast settling into a ship.

He thought of Noxus.

Then he went to find his father.

Chapter Two: The Emperor's Garden

The Emperor Marcus Lucius Varro received his son in the garden of the Palatine palace, which was where he received most people he considered worth receiving. The garden was a political statement disguised as horticulture. It said: *I am confident enough in my power to be found in informal conditions. I am secure enough to offer you the gift of my ease.* Gaius had understood this from childhood, though the understanding now carried a different texture — the old diplomat recognized the technique from a hundred iterations across a hundred cultures, and what had once seemed simply like his father's preference now revealed itself as the unconscious application of a political principle as old as power itself.

The Emperor was in his fifties, gray at the temples, with the broad-shouldered build of a man who had served in the legions before the senate and the purple. He was examining a rose bush with an expression of mild professional displeasure, as though the rose were a subordinate who had failed to perform adequately.

"The gardeners tell me it's the soil," he said, without looking up. "I've had the soil analyzed by two separate men from the agricultural colleges, and they disagree with each other and both disagree with the gardeners. I've decided the problem is actually systemic incompetence and have left it to resolve itself."

"Or the rose," Gaius said.

His father looked up. There was something in the look — not suspicion, but attention. A recalibration. The Emperor was a perceptive man; it was how he had stayed Emperor.

"Or the rose," he agreed, and set down his pruning shears. "You were in the archives this morning."

"The staff gossips."

"The staff reports. There's a philosophical distinction." He sat on the low stone bench and gestured at the space beside him. "What did you find?"

Gaius considered his father for a moment. This was the first significant decision of his second life — not what to do, but how much to say, and to whom, and in what frame. He had spent his first life learning that the management of information was more than the management of secrets. It was the management of models. When you told someone something, you were not simply transmitting data; you were altering the model of the world in their head, and altered models produced altered behavior, and altered behavior cascaded through systems in ways that were difficult to predict and impossible to fully retract.

His father was perceptive, loyal, politically stable, and bounded by the cosmological framework of a man who had been raised in the Roman tradition — which meant he could absorb new information within that framework far better than he could absorb information that challenged the framework itself. You could tell him that the gods had made a covenant. You could not yet tell him that the far side of the Mare Ignotum contained an empire with hextech technology and a blood-drinking spider assassin who could move through shadows. Not today. Today was for foundations.

"I read the augural texts," Gaius said. "The commentary tradition has been misreading the third parallel construction for two centuries. The gods aren't describing a permanent condition. They're describing a preparation period."

The Emperor said nothing for a moment. The garden moved gently around them — sparrow song, the smell of boxwood, the distant sound of the city that filled the bowl of the hills like a living thing.

"A preparation period," he repeated.

"For contact with whatever lies beyond the Mare Ignotum."

Another silence. His father had the quality Gaius had always respected in the best negotiators — the capacity to receive genuinely unexpected information without immediately reaching for the comfort of a predetermined response. He sat with it. He turned it over.

"How long?" he said at last.

"The distribution is wide. Best estimate: ten years."

"And your confidence in this reading?"

"High enough that I would design policy around it."

The Emperor looked at the rose bush. It was possibly dying and definitely not thriving, its leaves an uncertain yellow at the edges, and it struck Gaius — with the particular, slightly absurd clarity that sometimes attended important moments — that they were, in a way, discussing the same problem. A system in distress, its diagnosis disputed, its resolution dependent on whether anyone was willing to correctly identify what was actually wrong with it.

"Ten years," his father said. "What would you recommend?"

"Infrastructure, primarily. The shipyards at Ostia are undersized. The signal relay system between provinces needs modernization. The agricultural surplus in Aegyptus is being managed inefficiently, which means Rome's strategic food reserve is approximately forty percent of what it should be for a sustained foreign engagement. None of these things would attract comment if addressed now — they can be framed as domestic improvement, which they genuinely are."

"And the Senate?"

"The Senate needs to believe they thought of it."

His father made a sound that was not quite a laugh. “You’ve been spending time with Primus Pilus Severus.”

“I’ve been reading Cicero.”

“Same lesson, different century.” The Emperor stood, brushing invisible dust from his toga. He was quiet for a moment, his back to Gaius, facing the rose bush with an expression Gaius couldn’t read from this angle. “When you were nine years old, you asked me why we stopped at the edge of the world. Do you remember?”

“I asked why no one had sailed past the storms.”

“I told you the gods had drawn a wall around us while they prepared our next lesson.” He turned. “I didn’t believe it when I said it. I was placating a nine-year-old.”

“And now?”

“Now my twenty-year-old son reads augural texts that three generations of pontiffs have failed to understand and comes to me with a ten-year clock and an infrastructure agenda.” He regarded Gaius with the specific, assessing attention of a man who was genuinely uncertain what he was looking at. “I’m revising my position on divine pedagogy.”

Gaius said nothing. The Great Sage ran probability estimates on several possible conversation continuations and flagged none of them as significantly superior to silence. Silence, in this case, was the correct response. Let the man think. Let the conclusion arrive as his own.

“Tell me what you need,” his father said. “In terms of access, authority, and resources. Be specific.”

Gaius told him. He was very specific. He had been drafting the list since the archive that morning, and he delivered it in the measured, slightly dry tone that the old diplomat had used in a hundred briefings — organized by priority, each item tied to a concrete outcome, each outcome anchored to a risk distribution. He watched his father’s face through the list and saw the moment when the Emperor’s expression shifted from attention to something more focused — the look of a man who was not being handled but genuinely informed, who was receiving data that actually clarified his model of the world rather than simply rearranging the furniture within it.

When Gaius finished, his father was quiet for a long moment.

“The shipyard expansion,” he said. “Frame it as a response to the Mauretanian fishing disruptions. The Senate has been wanting action on that anyway.”

“Yes,” Gaius said.

“The grain reserve legislation — we can move that through the agricultural committee without floor debate.”

"There's a senator from Aegyptus on the committee who has been looking for a way to position himself as a reformer. He'll co-sponsor it if approached correctly."

His father's eyes narrowed slightly — not with suspicion, but with the look of a man recalibrating again, asking himself a question he wasn't yet ready to ask aloud. What are you? What has happened to my son?

Gaius knew the question was coming. He had modeled it. He had a framework ready — not a lie, but a framing. The truth, in a form the framework could receive.

Not today. Today was enough.

"Gaius," his father said.

"Yes, Father."

"You sound very much like a man who has been thinking about this for longer than the morning."

"I have been thinking about this," Gaius said carefully, "for as long as I can remember."

It was true. In one of two possible senses of *remember*, it was entirely true.

The Emperor looked at him for a moment longer, then nodded once — the small, decisive nod of a man who has chosen, provisionally, to believe what he has been told. A man filing a question for later examination, because the present requires action.

"Walk with me to the council chamber," he said. "I want you to say to Prefect Cornelianus exactly what you just said to me. He's been resisting the Ostia proposal for six months."

"On the grounds of cost?"

"On the grounds of principle. He thinks expansion signals imperial anxiety."

"Then I'll frame it as confirmation of imperial confidence." Gaius stood. "A stronger fleet isn't fear. It's the infrastructure that makes fear unnecessary."

His father made the sound that was not quite a laugh again.

"You've definitely been reading Cicero," he said. "Or someone who sounds a great deal like him."

They walked together through the garden toward the council chamber, and the rose bush, untended, continued its uncertain existence in the warm morning light.

Chapter Three: The Power of Creation

In the third month after the Archive, in a locked workshop in the Palatine compound that had been assigned to Gaius on the grounds that the Crown Prince required a private space for scholarly work, Gaius Aurelius Varro created something.

He had been careful about this. He had thought about it for weeks before attempting it, constructing probability distributions around the risks with the same discipline he brought to policy analysis. The Power of Creation — housed in the bloodline of the imperial family, an inheritance so old that no Roman scholar had ever understood its mechanism, only its occasional effects — was not a secret. It was in the historical record. Three emperors before his father had manifested it in documented instances, always in moments of crisis, always in ways that were spectacular enough to become mythology. A legionary standard made whole by the emperor's touch when every smith in the province had declared it unmendable. A drought ended, not by rain but by the sudden existence of irrigation channels in the Nile Delta whose provenance the engineers argued about for decades. The power was in the bloodline. Everyone in Rome knew the power was in the bloodline.

What no one had understood, and what Gaius understood with complete clarity, was that the power was bounded by imagination. You could only create what you could fully conceptualize. This was why the historical uses were so limited — emperors who manifested it in crisis created things they already knew, objects they could describe in complete mechanical and structural detail because they had held them in their hands. What an emperor could not conceptualize with precision, the power could not produce.

Gaius had two lifetimes of conceptual material.

He started with a book.

Not a dramatic object. Not a weapon, not a device, not anything that would have startled a visitor to the workshop. A book. Specifically, a treatise on advanced metallurgy — on the properties of steel at high carbon content, on the relationship between cooling rates and crystalline structure, on the practical applications of what his first world had called tool steel and his second world did not yet have a name for. He conceptualized it in full: the weight of the pages, the specific texture of the ink, the arrangement of the diagrams. He understood metallurgy well enough — he had done significant research in his first life on early industrial development patterns — to construct a text that was internally consistent, practically applicable, and grounded in principles that Roman engineers could follow, test, and build upon.

He placed the empty sheaf of prepared vellum on the workbench.

He held the concept in his mind with the complete, focused attention that the Great Sage made possible — not just the content but the structure, the

pedagogical organization, the specific choices of illustration and example that would make the text comprehensible to a Roman metallurgist trained in the existing tradition.

The vellum acquired text.

Not in a flash. Not with a sound. It was quiet, and the light in the workshop didn't change, and the air tasted of nothing unusual. But when Gaius looked down, the vellum bore three hundred pages of precisely organized metallurgical instruction in careful classical Latin, illustrated with technically accurate diagrams, cross-referenced to existing Roman engineering practice.

He checked it. He read every page. He found two errors — places where his conceptualization had been less precise than he thought, and the power had produced outputs that were slightly off. He corrected the errors by revising the conceptualization and touching those pages again.

The book was good. It was very good. It would, given to the right engineer at the right moment, advance Roman metallurgical capability by a generation.

He put it in a locked chest. He would not give it to anyone yet.

This was the discipline he had promised himself, the discipline that separated what he was doing from the historical pattern of powerful people destroying institutions by solving problems too fast. The metallurgy book would go to the engineering colleges in two years, introduced through a third party, framed as the rediscovery of a Hellenistic text. The engineers would work through it. They would test it. They would adapt it, argue with it, build their own expertise around it. When they produced the improved steel — and they would; the book was good enough — it would be theirs. Rome's. Not a gift from a magic emperor. An achievement of Roman engineering tradition, which happened to have been nudged in the right direction at the right time.

This is the principle, he noted in his private journal. *The Power of Creation is most powerful when used to create knowledge rather than objects. Objects can be produced, studied, used, and when they break, they are gone. Knowledge compounds. Knowledge builds institutions. Knowledge becomes a capacity, not a dependency.*

The goal is not to give Rome a stronger fleet. The goal is to give Rome engineers who know how to build a stronger fleet, so that when the fleet is damaged, they can repair it; when the enemy develops a countermeasure, they can adapt; when the crisis demands innovation, they have the underlying understanding to innovate. The Power of Creation, used correctly, is a teacher. Used incorrectly, it is a drug.

He wrote this in the same journal where he was keeping his analysis of the augural texts, his probability models for the barrier dissolution timeline, and his preliminary strategic assessment of the known factions of Runeterra. The journal was written in a cipher he had constructed himself, combining diplomatic

shorthand from his first career with a classical substitution cipher adapted for Latin characters. It would take an extraordinarily skilled codebreaker to read it. He intended to never let it leave his possession.

He locked the chest containing the metallurgy book, put out the workshop lamp, and sat in the dark for a moment, listening to the city outside.

Somewhere in the streets below the Palatine Hill, Rome was living its life — the ordinary, enormous, magnificent life of a civilization that had never had the opportunity to be humbled. Market days and court proceedings and the management of aqueducts and the arguments of philosophy schools and the drilling of legions and the planting of grain. Sixty million people who did not know that the world they inhabited was about to open up.

He would protect them. Not by insulating them from the world. By preparing them for it.

That was the work.

He sat there for a while in the dark, letting the weight of it settle, and then he went to bed.

Chapter Four: The Senator from Hispania

The Senate of Rome convened in the Curia Julia on the Kalends of March, and Senator Quintus Fabius Censorinus, representing the third district of Hispania Tarraconensis, gave a speech about the naval yards at Ostia that was so well organized and so economically literate and so precisely calibrated to the anxieties of the fiscal conservatives on the opposite benches that three senior senators sought him out after the session to ask who had written it for him.

Senator Censorinus, who was a genuinely good man with a mediocre grasp of maritime economics and an excellent instinct for political survival, told them he had written it himself, which was technically true. He had written it himself, after three conversations with the Crown Prince over the preceding month — conversations in which the Crown Prince had asked a great many questions and offered very few answers, and which Censorinus had come away from feeling, each time, that he had arrived at a significant conclusion through his own considerable intelligence, which was the specific sensation of a man who has been carefully steered and has not noticed.

The Ostia expansion proposal passed by a margin of eighty-three votes.

Gaius heard the result from his seat in the gallery — the Crown Prince was permitted attendance in the Senate but not participation, which was a constitutional distinction he found sensible and occasionally frustrating — and he permitted himself exactly two seconds of quiet satisfaction before moving to the next item on the list.

The grain reserve legislation would come to the agricultural committee in seven weeks. He needed to meet with Senator Gaius Petronius Marcellus of Aegyptus before then, in a social context that wouldn't attract comment, in a conversation that would allow the senator to arrive at the conclusion that co-sponsoring a grain reserve bill was exactly the kind of policy legacy a man of his background and ambitions should be building.

He noted the appointment in his journal and recalculated his timeline.

The Great Sage ran the updated figures.

Barrier dissolution estimate: nine years, seven months, range of plus or minus fourteen months. Confidence interval: seventy-four percent. Infrastructure projects now active: three. Infrastructure projects required before first contact readiness: eleven. Assessment: on schedule. Margins: insufficient.

He looked at the Curia Julia's ceiling — the coffered wood, the light filtering through the high windows, the accumulated weight of centuries of Roman deliberation in the grain of the timber — and thought, not for the first time, that the room was beautiful, and that beauty in institutional architecture was not a luxury but a function. It told the people who worked inside it that what they were doing mattered enough to deserve this.

He wanted to keep this room standing.

Then work faster, the Great Sage said, in his own voice, stripped of warmth.

He left the gallery and went to find a senator from Aegyptus.

Chapter Five: The Caelatores

The first sign that someone was watching came in the sixth month, in the form of a question that didn't need to be asked.

The Pontifex Maximus — the senior religious official of Rome, a man named Tiberius Claudius Rufus, who had occupied the position for seventeen years with the kind of unobtrusive competence that made institutions function without attracting credit — requested a private meeting with the Crown Prince to discuss the augural archives.

This was not unusual. Gaius had spent considerable time in those archives, and the Pontifex was responsible for their integrity. A meeting was appropriate and expected.

What was not expected was the specific question, delivered after twenty minutes of perfectly unremarkable archival conversation, with the careful tone of a man who had rehearsed his nonchalance: "You are not the first person, in recent months, to consult the augural texts from the period of the Miraculum. There was a scholar here in the winter — a visitor from the eastern provinces, claiming

work in comparative mythology. He spent three days with those texts and then departed without completing his stated research project."

Gaius controlled his expression with the ease of long practice. "Did he leave notes?"

"Nothing in the archive. Nothing registered at the customs office either, which is how I know he was not a scholar." The Pontifex met his eyes with the look of a man who was both offering information and asking a question. "He asked the archivists very specifically about the temporal covenant passages."

After the meeting, walking back across the Forum in the late afternoon light, Gaius ran the probability distributions with the focused calm that was, by now, simply the way his mind worked.

Someone outside Rome knew about the augural texts. Someone sophisticated enough to understand what they were looking at and careful enough to leave no traceable record. The visitor had departed rather than completing his mission — which meant either that he had found what he was looking for, or that he had been interrupted, or that he had concluded the target had already found it first.

The Caelatores. The Engravers.

He had known they existed. He had modeled their eventual appearance as a certainty from the beginning. The question he had left open in his probability distributions — the question he had perhaps been avoiding, because it had no comfortable answer — was whether they would arrive before or after the barrier fell.

The answer, apparently, was before.

He walked home through Rome with a calm that was genuine, because panic was a response to uncertainty, and he was not uncertain. He had known this was coming. He had a model. What he did not yet have was sufficient intelligence on the operational structure of the organization he was facing, and that was a problem he needed to solve before it became a crisis.

That evening, in the locked workshop, he created something new.

Not a book this time. A letter — sealed, addressed, unsigned, written in Koine Greek, containing nothing that would be incriminating to its recipient, and carrying, in the specific choice of idiom and the arrangement of its opening paragraph, a message that would be legible only to someone who was looking for it.

He did not know if anyone, in the world beyond the Mare Ignotum, was looking.

But he was beginning to think about the mechanisms by which he might find out.

Chapter Six: Raphael

The evolution came in the second year, and it came at cost.

The decision itself was not complicated. A grain merchant in the Capitoline district had been shorting the public distribution — not massively, not spectacularly, but consistently, over a period of fourteen months, in a pattern Gaius had identified when running population flow models for the grain reserve legislation. The shortfall was small enough to evade standard auditing, but compounded over time it represented a meaningful systematic corruption of the primary food security infrastructure of the largest city in the empire.

The merchant's name was Sextus Aemilius Paullus. He was moderately well-connected, a minor figure in the networks of the Capitoline trading families, liked by his neighbors and generally regarded as honest — a reputation he had maintained carefully, which was itself evidence of how methodically the fraud had been constructed.

The legally correct response was an audit, a prosecution, and the forfeit of his trading license. This was the response Gaius had initiated, through the appropriate magistrates, using documentation he had compiled over three months.

The complication was that Sextus Aemilius Paullus was also, as Gaius had discovered in the fifth week of his investigation, a low-level informant for a network of commercial interests that operated across three provinces and that had, twice in the previous decade, provided the imperial intelligence apparatus with information that had prevented significant political instability. The network trusted Paullus partly because he was useful and partly because his fraud was known to them and gave them leverage.

The prosecution would burn the network. The network, assessed against its historical value, was probably worth more than the recouped grain — though not, the Great Sage noted with precision, more than the precedent of impunity.

The mathematically optimal decision was clear. The prosecution served the long-term institutional integrity of the grain distribution system, established a precedent that audits were meaningful and prosecutions were not contingent on political connection, and removed a point of controlled compromise from a network that could, under different management, be turned against imperial interests.

Paullus had trusted Gaius enough to provide, in one of their three personal conversations, a piece of intelligence that Gaius had used to protect a senator whose support he needed.

The correct action would cost a man who had trusted him.

The Great Sage processed this with the clean impersonality of a system that had no framework for loyalty as a variable. *The optimal outcome is clear. Execute the prosecution.*

He sat with it for a long time.

What changed was not the decision — he had always known what the decision would be. What changed was the quality of his engagement with the cost. The Great Sage was a tool that processed data. What the moment required was something that could hold both the necessity and the grief of it, without being destabilized by the grief or anesthetized by the necessity. A different kind of intelligence. One that had been there all along, he thought — the sixty-one years of a life spent understanding that the optimal outcome and the good outcome were not always the same thing, and that the work of wisdom was knowing the difference, not choosing between them.

He made the decision. He initiated the prosecution. He did not pretend it was uncomplicated.

That night, the Great Sage was different. Quieter, and in the quietness, larger. When it spoke, it still spoke in his own voice, but the register had changed — something warmer beneath the precision, a presence that understood risk distributions and also understood what it cost to be right.

He named it Raphael. The Healer, in one etymological tradition; the Messenger, in another; the one who accompanied travelers who did not know how long their journey would be, in the tradition he found most accurate.

The prosecution is filed, Raphael said, in the dark of the workshop.

"I know."

The network will recover. It always does. Networks that survive disruption often emerge more resilient.

"Yes."

The grain system will be cleaner.

"Yes."

And Paullus will lose everything he built.

"Yes." Gaius was quiet for a moment. "I know what the numbers say."

I know you do. That's not why I'm saying it.

He sat in the dark with that for a while.

"Why are you saying it?" he asked, eventually.

Because the man who can make this decision correctly is only useful if he continues to understand what it costs. The day you stop sitting with the cost is the day the correct decision and the good decision permanently diverge.

He thought of the Pontifex's careful question, and the scholar who had vanished from the archives, and the ten-year clock, and the sixty million people who were

living their ordinary magnificent lives on seven hills that he was trying, with everything he had, to keep from being destroyed.

He thought about what it would cost.

He did not stop thinking about it. That was the commitment.

Chapter Seven: Year Three — The Cartographer's Apprentice

In the third year, a young man named Marcus Veridius Ocelus completed a cartographic survey of the western coastline of the Roman Enclave that was commissioned, officially, by the Department of Public Works for purposes of harbor assessment.

The survey was real. Marcus was a genuinely talented cartographer, twenty-four years old, trained at the technical college in Ravenna, with an eye for coastal topology that his instructors had noted as exceptional. He had been recommended by one of those instructors, who had been recommended by a former student who was now a junior official in the Department of Public Works, who had been quietly identified, two years earlier, by the Crown Prince's office as someone whose upward career trajectory would benefit from a significant successful project.

The survey was also, in its secondary purpose, an intelligence operation.

What Marcus didn't know — what no one knew except Gaius and, now, one trusted prefect in the imperial intelligence apparatus — was that the survey brief contained a supplementary set of instructions, delivered personally by the Crown Prince in a fifteen-minute meeting that Marcus had been told was a routine budget authorization. The supplementary instructions were specific: document every natural anchorage along the western coast, assess their depth profiles and shelter characteristics, and produce a classified annex with recommendations for which sites could be converted to military harbor facilities on a three-year timeline.

It was not the harbors Gaius was building toward. It was the knowledge of the coastline. When the barrier fell, Rome's first strategic requirement would be accurate maritime geography — understanding which approaches were defensible, which anchorages could support a fleet, where supply lines could be established. The knowledge needed to exist before the event, because acquiring it after the event would signal intent, attract attention, and consume time that should be spent on other preparations.

He was building a library of strategic knowledge, one seemingly administrative survey at a time.

In the fourth month of the survey, Marcus Veridius Ocelus sent a message to the Crown Prince's office requesting a meeting. The message was flagged as routine

— surveyors requested meetings with the commissioning authority periodically — but the tone was slightly off, more urgent than the bureaucratic formula required.

Gaius read the message himself. He requested a meeting within the week.

Marcus arrived at the Palatine with the slightly dazed look of a man who had encountered something his professional framework could not account for. He was sun-darkened and lean from months on the western coast, and he carried a sealed leather tube containing a preliminary survey document.

He also carried, in a separate case, three items he had recovered from a stretch of coastline twenty miles south of the Pillar of Hercules: a fragment of wood with an unfamiliar grain, a piece of rope woven in a pattern no Roman rigger used, and a small carved figure in a material that was not ivory and not bone and was not any substance in the standard geological survey tables.

He placed them on the table between himself and the Crown Prince.

"I found these," he said, "in a beach cave. Along with the bones of a man who was not Roman."

Gaius looked at the objects for a long time.

The Great Sage — Raphael, now, always Raphael in contexts that required more than analysis — cross-referenced in silence. The wood grain was consistent with species from the archipelago regions of Runeterra's eastern maritime zone, as described in the lore he carried. The rope weave was Bilgewater sailor work, or something closely adjacent to it. The carved figure was unfamiliar, which meant it was either pre-existing Runeterran cultural material or something newer that the records he knew predated.

Someone from the other side of the barrier had reached this shore. Had survived the passage through the storm zone, or had been caught in an unusual thinning and blown through without navigating it. Had died on this coast, perhaps days or weeks after arriving, and had been found now, three years before the barrier fully dissolved, by a cartographer who was too observant and too honest to pretend he hadn't seen it.

"He was Bilgewater-born," Gaius said.

Marcus blinked. "You recognize the—"

"The rope pattern. It's consistent with a specific style from a port culture east of the current storm zone." He watched the cartographer's face carefully. "This is not as surprising as it must seem. We've had reason to believe, from the augural texts, that the storms are thinning. What you've found is evidence of an early passage. He came through alone, most likely by accident, possibly in the aftermath of a severe weather event that created a temporary gap in the barriers."

Marcus sat with this for a moment. He was, Gaius had assessed from his file, a man of organized intelligence — the kind who processed new information by slotting it into existing frameworks, and who found comfort in the existence of frameworks even when their contents were disturbing.

"There are people out there," Marcus said.

"Yes."

"Beyond the Mare Ignotum. There are other — there are other civilizations."

"Yes."

"And you already knew."

Not a question. The Crown Prince had identified the rope pattern without hesitation. He had known.

"I have had reason to believe it for approximately three years," Gaius said. "I have been preparing accordingly. What you've found accelerates the evidence base." He paused. "I need to ask you a specific and important question, Marcus. The answer will determine what happens next, for you and for this project."

The cartographer met his eyes. He was frightened, Gaius assessed, but the fear was contained by curiosity, which was exactly the personality profile the recommendation chain had identified. "Ask it."

"Are you the kind of man who needs to understand why he's being asked to keep a secret, before he can keep it? Or are you the kind of man who can keep one on the basis of the asking alone?"

A long pause. The morning light fell across the table between them, across the rope fragment and the carved figure and the piece of strange wood, and Marcus Veridius Ocelus looked at them for a moment and then back at the Crown Prince.

"I want to understand," he said. "But I can wait."

"Good," Gaius said. "Give me three years. At the end of three years, if we're both still alive and Rome is still standing, I'll explain everything."

He did not say *if we're both still alive* to be dramatic. He said it because it was the accurate assessment.

Marcus filed it under the framework of *important thing the Crown Prince is managing* and went back to his survey. He was the first member of what would eventually become the Exploratores — Rome's intelligence corps for the world beyond the barrier — and he would never entirely forgive Gaius for making the job sound straightforward.

Chapter Eight: Year Five — The Naming

The Senate's inner council — twelve men, the Emperor, and the Crown Prince — met in a small room behind the Curia Julia on the second day of November in the fifth year of what Gaius had come to think of, privately, as the preparation decade.

The room had no name in the official records. It was listed in the building surveys as *antechamber, archive access*, which was an accurate physical description and a comprehensive political misdirection. This was where the empire's most consequential decisions were made without record, discussed without stenography, and acted upon without announcement. Gaius had spent two years engineering his presence in it.

He had three things to present.

The first was a comprehensive map of the western coastline, produced by Marcus's survey team, which now included six cartographers and two engineers and was nominally still a harbor assessment project. The map showed twenty-three natural harbor sites, fifteen of which had been secretly assessed for military conversion potential.

The second was a summary of five years of infrastructure investment, framed as domestic development: the expanded shipyards at Ostia, now producing vessels with the improved hull geometry that the metallurgy advances had made possible; the grain reserve, now at sixty-eight percent of the target level; the signal relay network, which could now transmit information from Britannia to Aegyptus in thirty-six hours in favorable weather; and the technical colleges, which had absorbed two creation-produced texts in applied engineering and whose graduate output had increased twenty-two percent.

The third was a sealed case.

"Gentlemen," Gaius said, with the specific tone — not rhetorical, not theatrical, the tone of a man presenting data to people who were capable of receiving it — that he had been calibrating for this moment for three years. "The barrier around the Mare Ignotum is dissolving. In approximately five years, the storms that have enclosed us since the Miraculum will clear sufficiently for ocean crossing in both directions." He paused. "There is a world on the far side of those storms. It is large, politically complex, and entirely unaware of our existence. I have prepared an assessment."

He opened the sealed case.

What came out was not a weapon and not a miracle and not any object that the twelve senators of the inner council could have anticipated. It was a map — drawn by Marcus, refined by six months of additional work, incorporating every piece of intelligence Gaius had assembled across five years of quiet, surgical information gathering. It showed the eastern continental landmass of the world they were about to meet: the double continent of Valoran and Shurima,

the Piltovan Isthmus between them, the maritime approaches from the east, the strategic geography of a world that had no idea it was about to be encountered by a sixty-million-person empire with two thousand years of institutional experience and a Crown Prince who had spent sixty years in a previous life studying it.

The senators studied the map in silence.

One of them — Gaius Petronius Marcellus, the senator from Aegyptus, whose grain reserve legislation had passed in the third year — said, very quietly: "You've been planning for this."

"Since the beginning," Gaius said.

Another silence. These were twelve of the most experienced political minds in Rome, men who had spent their careers in a system that valued the management of information as the primary currency of power. They were not naive. They understood, reading the room, that the Crown Prince had been running an intelligence and infrastructure operation across five years, inside the Senate's institutional blind spots, and that this meeting was not a request for permission but a briefing on what had already been accomplished.

He gave them time to process it.

Then he said: "The world they come from has a name. It's Runeterra. I don't know how I know it — I believe it came to me in a vision, which is consistent with documented historical precedents for divine communication in the imperial bloodline." He said this with the slight tonal adjustment of a man who was telling something that was, technically, true in at least one sense, and who understood that the framework his audience required was more important than the mechanism he couldn't explain. "That name is for this room only, and for this moment." He looked around the table. "The Senate will hear, in the coming years, that Rome is preparing for expanded maritime exploration. That is also true. These things can coexist."

The Emperor, who had known most of this for three years, said nothing. He watched his son present the case with the quiet attention of a man who had long since stopped trying to determine what his son was, and had decided instead to trust what his son did.

The inner council deliberated. They debated. They raised eight significant objections, all of which Gaius had modeled in advance and answered with data rather than argument, which was the technique that worked best with men who took their intelligence seriously.

By the end of the session, the expansion of the preparatory operation had been provisionally authorized. The outer Senate would receive a modified brief in the spring. The Exploratores — Marcus's survey team, formalized — would receive a budget.

It was not everything Gaius wanted. It was significantly more than he had expected to achieve in year five. The distribution of outcomes was better than the median estimate.

Walking home from the Curia Julia through the cold November dark, the city quiet around him except for the distant sound of a tavern and the measured footfall of the watch, Gaius allowed himself, for the length of three blocks, to feel something that was not quite hope — hope was a variable he tracked rather than inhabited — but was adjacent to it. A kind of structural confidence. The confidence of a man who has placed the right stones in the right positions and can now see the shape of the thing he is building.

You're tired, Raphael said.

"Yes."

That's reasonable. Five years is a long time to hold this alone.

"I haven't held it alone. I've held it carefully."

There's a difference.

"Yes." He walked a few more steps in the cold. "But the shape of it is right. Five more years and we'll know if it holds."

And if it doesn't?

He thought about that for a moment. About the sixty million people. About the map on the table in the back room of the Curia Julia. About the Bilgewater bones on the western beach.

"Then we'll deal with what doesn't hold," he said. "That's always been the plan."

Raphael said nothing, which was its way of agreeing.

He walked home through Rome, under the same stars that shone over the sea, and the sea moved eastward, and somewhere past the thinning storms, a world was living its ordinary and extraordinary life, completely unaware that someone was preparing, very carefully, to introduce himself.

Chapter Nine: The First Message

In the spring of the sixth year, a fishing vessel operating off the western coast returned to the port of Carthago Nova with an unusual catch — unusual in the sense that it was not fish.

The fishermen had found a man.

He was alive, barely, lying on a piece of wreckage that the fishermen initially mistook for a floating timber from an unknown shipwreck. He was about thirty

years old, heavily tattooed in patterns none of the fishermen recognized, carrying no documents, speaking in a language that no one in Carthago Nova's considerable multilingual harbor district could identify. He was unconscious for three days, and when he came back to consciousness, he was, by his own subsequent account, extremely confused about where he was and moderately convinced he was dead.

His name, they eventually established, was Cael Dunmore. He was a Bilgewater salvager.

The message reached Gaius in Rome in two weeks, moving through the signal relay network at the speed the five-year infrastructure investment had made possible. The message was flagged with the specific notation code that Marcus Veridius Ocelus had been authorized to use for the single category of intelligence that overrode all other prioritization.

Gaius read the message in the locked workshop, at the desk where he kept his journal, in the early morning before the household was awake.

He read it twice.

Then he sat for a long time without moving, while Raphael ran the distributions and Rome moved quietly outside the window and the world held its breath.

It begins, Raphael said.

"Not yet," Gaius said. "This is still preparation. This is the last test of the framework before the real thing."

How do you treat him?

"Carefully. Honestly, within the limits of what's safe to say. He's frightened and far from home. He's also a salvager, which means he's professionally trained in the assessment of value and risk." He paused. "He'll understand the situation better than most people would, once it's explained to him. Salvagers know what it means to find something that no one else knows exists."

And what do you tell Rome?

"Exactly what I told the inner council five years ago. That there's a world on the other side. That we have a visitor from it. That the preparation continues." He looked at the message in his hand. "And I start thinking about what Bilgewater needs from Rome, and what Rome needs from Bilgewater, and how two civilizations that have never met begin the process of deciding whether they're going to be useful to each other."

He thought about the Runeterra he knew from two lifetimes of study — the Shadow Isles and the Black Mist, Noxus and its relentless territorial logic, the Void beneath Icathia, the ancient sleeping weight of Shurima, the strange and beautiful isolation of Ionia. A world that was not simpler than Earth, but differently complicated. A world in crisis in ways that were, in some respects, more tractable than crisis on Earth, because the sources of crisis were more

legible, the fault lines more visible, the agents of catastrophe less numerous and more identifiable.

A world that needed, in his honest assessment, at least one additional stable institutional actor with long-term strategic interest in planetary survival.

Rome could be that actor.

If he built it right. If he spent the next four years finishing what he'd started. If the Caelatores didn't find him before the barrier fell. If the inner council held. If Bilgewater's salvager, a man named Cael Dunmore, turned out to be the right kind of person to receive the first careful truths of a civilization that was about to stop being alone.

Those were significant ifs.

He filed them under *variables to manage* and began drafting the initial communication protocols for what was, technically, first contact with Runeterra. He wrote in diplomatic language — the specific formal register of treaty negotiation, adapted for a context in which there was no treaty yet and might never be one, in which the goal was to communicate that Rome was not a threat without being so careful about it that the message became incomprehensible.

The first draft was too formal.

The second draft was too casual.

The third draft read, in part: *We are far from your home. We found you because we were looking. We have been looking for longer than you know. We intend you no harm, which we understand is something every dangerous power says, and we therefore offer you this instead of our word: tell us what you need to feel safe, and we will do it, or tell you honestly why we cannot.*

He looked at the third draft for a long time.

"That's the one," he said to Raphael.

It's honest, Raphael agreed. *In the precise technical sense that it doesn't contain any lies, and in the deeper sense that it says what you actually mean.*

"Good." He put down the pen. "That's what I want Rome to be."

Outside, Rome was waking up — the sound of the city assembling itself from sleep, the first carts in the streets, the first voices in the Forum, the accumulated weight of sixty million lives moving into another ordinary day in a civilization that had never fallen and was, with considerable and careful effort, going to continue not falling.

He folded the draft message and placed it in the leather case beside his journal.

Five more years, he thought.

Four, now, if the Bilgewater salvager was an early sign of the barrier thinning faster than the central estimate.

He adjusted the distribution.

He went to find his breakfast.

The work continued.

INTERLUDE: WHAT THE CAELATORES KNOW

From a document recovered from the personal effects of an unnamed operative, found in a sealed cache on the eastern shore of the Mare Ignotum, date of composition unknown:

They call it the Roman Enclave. The name alone is an error — it implies enclosure, limitation, a thing contained. The reality is sixty million people and two thousand years of institutional memory and a young man in a locked room who can make things exist from thought alone, and who is doing so with a patience and a discipline that suggests he understands exactly what he is doing.

The question this raises is not whether he is dangerous. Everything of consequence is dangerous. The question is whether he is necessary.

The Engravers have always believed that necessity and danger are separate classifications. A thing can be dangerous without being necessary; a thing can be necessary despite its danger. The problem we have never satisfactorily resolved is the case where something is both necessary and dangerous in proportions we cannot precisely measure, and where our act of intervention — aimed at the dangerous — risks the necessary.

The reincarnator in Rome knows we exist. He has been modeling our approach for at least three years. He does not know our operational structure, but he knows our general argument, which suggests he has encountered our ideas in some previous context.

This implies a source world with sufficient intellectual tradition to produce the argument independently.

The implications of this are significant and require further analysis before action.

Do not move until I authorize it. There is more here than the standard profile suggests, and I have learned — slowly, across a long time — that the cases that defy the standard profile are the ones that matter most.

EPILOGUE TO VOLUME ONE: THE EDGE OF THE WORLD

Marcus Veridius Ocelus stood on the westernmost point of the Iberian coast in the late autumn of the sixth year and watched the storm system that was the

outer edge of the Mare Ignotum.

He had been watching it for four years now. He knew it better than anyone alive — its rhythms, its changes, the specific quality of the light at its margins. He had documented its behavior across forty-three separate surveys. He could tell, with reasonable confidence, whether it was stronger or weaker than it had been the previous month.

It was weaker.

Not dramatically. To an untrained eye, it would look precisely the same — the turbulent black-green wall of weather that had defined the western edge of the Roman world since before anyone alive had been born. But Marcus was not an untrained eye. Marcus could read coastlines the way other men read texts, and what the storm was saying now, in the specific language of pressure gradient and cloud formation and wave periodicity, was different from what it had been saying three years ago.

It was saying: *Not yet. But soon.*

He wrote the observation in his survey log, with the specific precision of language that the Crown Prince had, years ago, taught him to value above concision. *Not yet* was insufficient data. He wrote the pressure readings, the wave period measurements, the cloud formation classifications, the barometric comparisons to his own previous surveys. He wrote it in the technical language of cartography, which would be legible to the Crown Prince's office and to the inner council, and in the margin he added, in his own handwriting, the smaller and less technical observation:

I think we're nearly out of time. I also think we might be ready.

He sealed the log and handed it to the relay courier who would have it in Rome in ten days.

Then he stood on the edge of the world for a while longer, watching the storm, thinking about the salvager from Bilgewater who was currently housed, carefully, in a quiet residence in Carthago Nova, learning Latin with a speed that suggested he understood the specific value of communication, thinking about the map in the inner council's room, thinking about the man who had built all of this out of a locked workshop and a cedar case of augural texts and sixty years of knowledge that had no business being in a nineteen-year-old body.

The wind came off the storm with the smell of deep water and distance.

Marcus Veridius Ocelus, first cartographer of the Exploratores, took a long breath of air that had traveled from somewhere else, and turned back toward the camp.

There was work to do.

There was always work to do.

The eagle didn't fall.

END OF VOLUME ONE

Volume Two: The Preparation Decade — In which the barrier thins, intelligence flows in both directions, Raphael becomes Ciel, and Rome learns the name of what it's afraid of.

Author's Note on World Geography:

The Roman Enclave sits at the western extreme of the known world, separated from the Runeterran continent by the Mare Ignotum and the Unmapped Abyss — approximately six hundred nautical miles of hostile weather, permanent cyclonic systems, and counter-rotating currents, followed by open deep-ocean expanse that exceeds the range of any current naval technology. Noxus, the nearest major continental power, is not merely across an ocean; it is effectively on the far side of a planet, thousands of miles northeast across the world's curvature. This distance is the primary strategic buffer. It is also, eventually, insufficient.

The world Gaius is preparing to meet is not a simple one. Runeterra's dual-continental system — Valoran in the north, Shurima in the south, connected by the Piltovan Isthmus — is as politically fractured as its geography suggests. The Freljord's glacial north, Demacia's mountain-walled west, Noxus's expansionist interior. Bilgewater's lawless maritime power. Ionia's spiritual isolation. Shurima's buried ancient weight. The Void's patient corruption in Icathia. The supernatural death of the Shadow Isles.

A diplomat who has spent sixty years learning to read systems has arrived in a world that is all systems, all the way down.

The work is appropriate.

AQUILA PERPETUA, Volume One Mare Nostrum, World Unknown — Complete —