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**Fantastic antiquities  
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ancient worlds in  
(post-)modern novels**



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## ‘Fanfiction’ and the Canon in Elodie Harper’s *The Wolf Den* Trilogy

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**Abstract** This article examines how the idea of ‘fanfiction’ can help scholars of the ancient world create accessible and informative ways of introducing non-expert audiences to the ancient world, and show how Harper’s *The Wolf Den* trilogy is a good example. Harper uses a mix of material evidence and quotations from canonical texts to recreate the lives of ordinary Romans. The immersion in the ancient world created by this combination of material and literary evidence challenges the idea that the ancient world is exactly as represented by canonical literature. For example, Amara must alter her behavior many times to fit into the expectations of the upper class man she is acting as courtesan for as well as Pliny, who rents her for a week. In addition, rather than depicting Amara meekly accepting her fate, Harper shows how she and her fellow she-wolves strive to break the cycle of oppression.

**Keywords** Fanfiction, ordinary Romans, historical fiction, Roman literature, material culture

## INTRODUCTION

In 2021, British author Elodie Harper released a historical fiction novel titled *The Wolf Den*. The book follows Amara, a Greek woman, the daughter of a doctor, who was sold into slavery when her family hit on hard times. When the novel begins, Amara has been purchased by Felix, the owner of Pompeii's *lupanar*, the brothel. Over the course of the book, Amara plots to try and change her status by finding a wealthy patron, while also finding friendship and support from her fellow she-wolves and other enslaved individuals. In the second book in the novel, *The House with the Golden Door* (2022), Amara navigates the life of a personal concubine while still striving to move higher up in Roman society. In the final book of the trilogy, *The Temple of Fortuna* (2023), Amara has relocated to Rome where she is engaged to an Imperial freedman, negotiating with members of the imperial household while worrying about her family back in Pompeii. She returns to Pompeii to check in with her family before getting married, just in time for Vesuvius to erupt.<sup>1</sup>

During interviews for the release of *The Wolf Den*, Harper spoke about wanting to explore the varied experiences women would have in the ancient world,<sup>2</sup> while also realizing that they would not have had feminism or ideas of emancipation.<sup>3</sup> This premise has been popular not only with classicists, but also general readers, as reviews on websites such as Goodreads and Reddit reveal. On Goodreads, Milas notes that "Harper's novel is a rich, fully grounded, and deeply engrossing retelling that gives a voice to precisely the sort of women who have

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1 A note on editions: I personally own the UK hardcovers of *The Wolf Den* and *The House with the Golden Door*, and the US paperback version of *The Temple of Fortuna*. Given the different printing locations, quotes will follow the convention of the location where they were printed.

2 "So I wanted to try and – although the book is primarily about Amara, the central protagonist, and it's really almost like an adventure story of her journey to get out of the brothel to find her freedom – I wanted to reflect some of the different experiences that women were likely to have and the different reactions, the different ways that we all try to survive" Albert (2021). All podcast quotes are transcribed by myself, so I apologize for any errors.

3 "I think you know one of the balancing acts in writing ancient world fiction from the point of view of characters whose perspectives we don't have so much of is that you want to be true to that world, to the sort of psychological constraints that they would have faced so they wouldn't have had feminism they wouldn't have had you know notions of emancipation" Armstrong (2023).

never been allowed to speak for themselves before and whose stories have been left to languish on the sidelines of the history we prefer to remember.”<sup>4</sup> Reddit user *plastertoed* notes that “I absolutely loved the setting being ancient Pompeii before the eruption. It drew me in as a reader because we knew a cataclysmic eruption was coming, but we didn't know how it would impact each individual character.”<sup>5</sup> Goodreads user *Jessica* states that “the best thing this book has going for it is its candidness. this does not shy away from the blunt, violent, explicit living conditions of a brothel slave. i think it would have done a disservice to the story and characters had it been sugarcoated. but in the midst of that brutal honesty, this is also a story about friendship and sisterhood, rising after hardships, the value of humanity and self-worth, and the price of freedom,” while another reviewer, *Margaret M.*, states that “The vivid descriptions of Pompeii conjured up the images of an era with so much mystery, mystic, and history, with its ancient walls and cobbled streets creating the perfect ambiance for a book of this nature.”<sup>6</sup> As this short survey of reviews makes clear, the combination of evocative writing and images drawn from real life make these books a compelling read.

While I am a fan of the books as fiction, for this article I am exploring them as a scholar of ancient Rome. Specifically, given the huge influx of mythological retellings with a feminist twist that have hit bookshelves in the US and UK over the past few years, I want to explore how fictional novels impart knowledge about the ancient world. Specifically, I am interested in how historical ‘fanfiction’ can challenge or enhance the narratives put forth by canonical literature. For the purposes of this exploration, Harper's *The Wolf Den* trilogy is a perfect test case. First of all, it is historical fiction, based on a real location, rather than mythology, like most other recent books set in the ancient world. Second, as I will discuss later, I believe that it can be categorized as ‘fanfiction’ of the ancient world. And third, it combines literary quotations and reference with material culture to immerse the audience in ancient Pompeii. By focalizing the ancient world through the viewpoint of an enslaved prostitute (*Amara*), Harper challenges the ‘common discourse’ put forward by the ‘storyworld’ found in canonical Latin texts.

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4 Milas (2022).

5 [https://www.reddit.com/r/books/comments/18cmovk/comment/kcdpbam/?utm\\_source=share&utm\\_medium=web3x&utm\\_name=web3xcss&utm\\_term=1&utm\\_content=share\\_button](https://www.reddit.com/r/books/comments/18cmovk/comment/kcdpbam/?utm_source=share&utm_medium=web3x&utm_name=web3xcss&utm_term=1&utm_content=share_button)

6 [https://www.goodreads.com/book/show/56563852-the-wolf-den?from\\_search=true&from\\_srp=true&qid=LCd6bpD4k8&rank=1](https://www.goodreads.com/book/show/56563852-the-wolf-den?from_search=true&from_srp=true&qid=LCd6bpD4k8&rank=1)

I will begin by examining how the idea of 'fanfiction' can help scholars of the ancient world create accessible and informative ways of introducing non-expert audiences to the ancient world, and show how Harper's books are a good example. Harper uses a mix of material evidence and quotations from canonical texts to recreate the lives of "ordinary Romans."<sup>7</sup> The immersion in the ancient world created by this combination of material and literary evidence challenges the idea that the ancient world is exactly as represented by canonical literature. For example, Amara must alter her behavior many times to fit into the expectations of the upper class man she is acting as courtesan for as well as Pliny, who rents her for a week. In addition, rather than depicting Amara meekly accepting her fate, Harper shows how she and her fellow she-wolves strive to break the cycle of oppression.

### *The Wolf Den as Fanfiction*

My argument in this chapter is based on the idea that Harper's trilogy is fanfiction of ancient Rome. To define fanfiction, I use Thomas' 2011 article "What is Fanfiction and Why are People Saying Such Nice Things About It?". In the introduction to this article, Thomas defines fanfiction as "fan-created narratives [that] often take the pre-existing storyworld in a new, sometimes bizarre direction."<sup>8</sup> Similarly, Floegel has noted that fanfiction creates "information worlds that challenge common discourse."<sup>9</sup> Later in her article, Thomas adds that these narratives are often "a transgressive force, offering a voice for marginalized groups and revealing the subversive potential of seemingly safe or familiar storyworlds."<sup>10</sup> If we break this definition into its components, and compare it to what Harper has to say about her trilogy, it becomes clear that it is an accurate term to describe the books.

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7 Knapp (2013), 3. Harper, as per Armstrong (2021), has noted that this book was one of the secondary sources she used to inform her depiction of non-elite lives in Pompeii, along with Beard (2009).

8 Thomas (2011), 1.

9 Floegel (2020), 785.

10 Thomas (2011), 7.

The first component is that fanfiction is a “fan-created narrative.” While Harper is familiar with ancient Rome through her studies, she notes in interviews that she studied both English and Classics at university,<sup>11</sup> but does not have the Latin skills anymore to read Latin texts. While I do not personally think knowledge of Latin is required to be considered a classicist, what this indicates is that Harper did not intend to be a Classicist for her career. And the biography at the back of her books confirms this, noting that “she is currently a reporter at ITV News, and before that worked as a producer for Channel 4 News.”<sup>12</sup> Thus, it is appropriate to call Harper a ‘fan’ of the ancient world.

Harper is also working within a “pre-established storyworld.” Ancient Rome (and Greece) have been the setting for many historical fiction novels. However, Harper takes it a step further and infuses her work with references to the Roman (and Greek) canon. Each of the chapters is introduced by an epigraph drawn from the ancient world. Across the three books of the trilogy, there are 120 epigraphs, and of these, 84 (or 70%) are quotations from canonical works, while the remaining 36 (or 30%) are inscriptions or graffiti.<sup>13</sup> A table of the quotes used for these epigraphs can be found at the end of this article (Appendix, Table 1). Harper also notes in interviews that she was inspired by a few canonical works as well, including the ‘*cena Trimalchionis*’ of Petronius’ *Satyricon*, Ovid’s *Ars Amatoria*, Terence’s comedies, and Martial’s epigrams.<sup>14</sup> Later I will examine

11 Albert (2021) and Armstrong (2023).

12 Harper (2021, 2022, 2023) back inside flap.

13 Included among “Literary Quotations” is one instance where a law digest is quoted.

14 “But really the actual original text, so Ovid’s ‘Art of love’ which is kind of – you know its very funny but it’s also a bit of a pickup artist manual as well, you know it’s a very deeply cynical attitude to love, it’s the sort of thing you might get of men are from Mars and women are from Venus type cliché of sexual relations but obviously there must be something in there in terms of how to manipulate people so I used that because obviously for Amara what she’s trying to do is find a patron who will have enough attachment for her that she can get out of where she is and also there’s a book called “The Satyricon” by Petronius which is set in that part of the world if not Pompeii, you know around there, and I sort of deliberately riffed on some of his set pieces like Trimalchio’s feast. But again that’s sort of making fun of this awful nouveau riche guy, Trimalchio, I mean it’s a brilliantly funny piece of writing but I wanted to think okay well, what if it’s not the freedmen who’s the butt of the joke? What if it’s the people laughing at him because he’s the freedman? How would Amara see that going into that environment as an entertainer, as an enslaved entertainer seeing how the guests are kind of laughing at the host up their sleeves. And I called him Zoilus and that’s also borrowed from a Latin text because Martial makes fun of a similar – a kind of stock Roman joke to

how Harper plays with the canon using these texts, but for now it is sufficient to say that Harper had a clear, canonical 'storyworld' in which she was working.

Thomas notes that fanfiction takes this storyworld in 'a new, sometimes bizarre direction,' and Floegel argues that it 'challenges common discourse.' As most scholars of the ancient world are aware, female perspectives in literature are rare. Harper cites this gap in information as an impetus for writing from Amara's perspective:

because the perspectives that were given on the ancient world are so kind of relentlessly male and generally you know elite so it is life seen through one very specific perspective and there were other perspectives and we get sort of fragments of them in graffiti or you know the odd letter or you know in some literature you know you get these kind of snippets and you can often read between the lines and imagine what it might have felt like from the other side.<sup>15</sup>

Thus, in choosing to write from the perspective of an enslaved prostitute in Pompeii's brothel in a way that is informed by canonical literature, Harper is taking the established 'storyworld' of ancient Rome, that is what is established in canonical literature, and taking it in a new direction while also challenging the discourse those texts created. This also speaks to the final category Thomas lists as qualifying fanfiction, that it has the ability to be 'transgressive' and give voice to marginalized identities. Thus, by taking the canon in a new direction through the eyes of a marginalized identity, Harper creates fanfiction of the ancient world that is transgressive in its depiction of that world.

### **Canon vs. (Fan)Fiction in *The Wolf Den***

Now that I have established that *The Wolf Den* trilogy can be defined as fanfiction of ancient Rome, I want to explore how Harper uses her narrative to question the canon and show that the immersion in the ancient world created by

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mock the freedmen and I had him sort of as a ridiculous but very insecure character, so pretty much every chapter is steeped one way or another in the sort of textual background of that period" Albert (2021). Cf. Armstrong 2023.

<sup>15</sup> Armstrong (2023).



her combination of material and literary evidence challenges the idea that the ancient world is exactly as represented by canonical literature. I will do so by first exploring some of the material remains that Harper has incorporated into her novels, and then by comparing scenes inspired by the canonical literature Harper cited as inspiration (Petronius' *Satyricon*, Ovid's *Ars Amatoria*, Martial's epigrams, and Terence's comedies) to how they are used in the text.

References to places and material finds that are easily accessible either in museums or the site of Pompeii itself are scattered throughout the novels. When speaking about how she got inspired to write Pompeii, Harper notes that

I went to the site and then I went to the museum in Naples which has got a lot of the treasures and kind of got a real sense from that of the objects and then finally I went to the site to sort of piece it all together and you know that really was just invaluable I mean you cannot even from all the books which are amazing just the sense of what it's like to walk around those streets you know you can see the counters the sunken bowls where people would have got served their stew there's the bars there's these incredible house um and so even houses that I've invented in the book are based on real places um apart from the Lupanar and one or two other kind of places like the baths.<sup>16</sup>

Harper's descriptions of Pompeii are so evocative that Kate Armstrong, the host of "The Exploress" podcast, has stated that "The setting in the book is really its own character, it's so visceral, it's so detailed I mean, as I said before, reading the book really felt like I was there in ancient Pompeii and seeing the sights and smelling the smells."<sup>17</sup> Reading *The Wolf Den* for the first time, the ways in which it evokes Pompeii were immediately obvious. For example, in the first chapter the women of the Lupanar are attempting to gain new clients at the Marine Baths, and after they are kicked out, the narrative follows them as they re-enter the city. Amara notes that "...they force their way through the crush of people, heading up the hill to the Forum Gate"<sup>18</sup> and that they pass "under the high archway, into the dark, echoing tunnel, the road growing steeper and the crush more

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<sup>16</sup> Armstrong (2021).

<sup>17</sup> Armstrong (2021)

<sup>18</sup> Harper (2021), 8.



**Figure 1** Marine Baths and Marine Gate (Adam Harangozó via Wikimedia Commons, reprinted under the Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike 4.0 International license)

intense.”<sup>19</sup> Readers familiar with Pompeii will immediately recognize not only the hill to reach the city from the Marine baths but also the tunnel you have to use to access the city which is often crowded with people.

However, because much of the narrative takes place in the brothel, Harper spends a lot of time immersing the audience in the building. Here is the first introduction to the building: “...the looming bulk of the brothel doesn’t give her any sense of homecoming. There’s no hot drink waiting, just Felix and his anger. They huddle outside the building, pressed single file against the wall, keeping dry under the overhanging balcony.”<sup>20</sup> Without going into lavish detail, Harper has already set the atmosphere for the brothel while also giving an accurate description of how it looks from the outside.

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<sup>19</sup> Harper (2021), 9.

<sup>20</sup> Harper (2021), 11.



**Figure 2** Tunnel to enter Pompeii from Marine Gate (Nersi Elahi via Wikimedia Commons, reprinted under the Creative Commons Attribution 3.0 Unported license)

Later, Amara describes the inside:

The five women set about extinguishing most of the oil lamps to save fuel and limit the smoke. The constant smelly fug indoors means the paintings Felix recently paid for – endless sex scenes emblazoned round the top of the walls – are already smeared with soot. The picture above Amara's cell, of a woman being taken from behind, has a new grimy shadow across the bed. She bends down to put out the terracotta lamp burning beneath it. Like every other light in the brothel, it is modelled in the shape of a penis, flames flickering from the tip. One or two even have a small clay man attached, brandishing an enormous fiery erection. Felix finds it amusing, says the lamps get the customers in the mood. Amara hates them. As if they don't have enough cocks to put up with.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> Harper (2021), 20.



**Figure 3** The Brothel of Pompeii from Outside (Alicia Matz)



**Figure 4** Woman being taken from behind wall painting from brothel (Alicia Matz)



**Figure 5** Priapic Lamps from Pompeii in the Naples Archaeological Museum (Alicia Matz)

Within this description are two specific references to images and material remains actually found at Pompeii: there really is an image of a woman being taken from behind over the door of one of the cells in the brothel as well as lamps of men/satyrs with giant erections.

Later, Amara also mentions the painting above Victoria's, another brothel slave, door: "the painting of two lovers above the door shows the woman on top, a gift from Felix to his hardest working whore."<sup>22</sup> In reality, the first door to the left of the entrance of the brothel does have an image of a woman on top.

Through the inclusion of real material evidence like this in the narrative of her novels, Harper immerses the audience in Pompeii. In addition, she establishes that the brothel is a place that is inimical to the women who inhabit it.<sup>23</sup>

But images and material remains are not the only way in which Harper immerses the audience in Pompeii – written texts play a huge role as well. As mentioned previously, each chapter begins with an epigraph drawn from either a literary work or graffiti and inscriptions found in and around Pompeii. There are also many references to graffiti in the text of the novel. After a particularly hard night in the brothel, the women are enjoying a moment of camaraderie:

'I think we should write him a message on the wall,' Victoria says. 'In case he ever comes back.' She bends down and hands a shard of pottery to Amara. 'What shall we say? I know! *Thrust SLOWLY*.'...Amara scratches the motto on the wall. They all sit looking at it when she's finished, smirking with satisfaction.<sup>24</sup>

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22 Harper (2021), 36.

23 Harper has been very clear in interviews that she did not want to depict the brothel as a happy place, but rather highlight its oppressive aspects. Talking with the podcast "Let's Talk About Myths, Baby," Harper has said "it's really a powerful place, it's impossible not to have quite a visceral reaction to it I think because there are these 5 tiny cells, there's the corridor, there are the paintings, it's still quite an oppressive space even today but also a really intriguing one" and notes her intentions with the depiction of the brothel: "If you go into the brothel today it's quite a sort of carnival atmosphere, you know people are laughing, naughty paintings on the wall, you know we all do it there's nothing particularly wrong with it but it's still quite objectifying even today. You know it's like, let's have a laugh at the brothel. I wanted the women to be laughing back in a way together, the way people do when they face hardship" Albert (2021).

24 Harper (2021), 37.



**Figure 6** Woman on top wall painting from brothel (Alicia Matz)

There is an actual graffito that reads *lente impelle* ('thrust slowly,' CIL IV 794)<sup>25</sup> found in Pompeii, though found in a small room in what is either a house or a *caupona*. In addition, in the same scene, the women discuss a client who they call Mr. GarlicFarticus. This is a reference to an actual graffito found in the brothel, which reads *Scordopordonicus hic binii fuit quiim volvit* ('Scordopordonicus [GarlicFarticus] fucked well here whomever he wanted,' CIL IV 2188). It is clear that Amara and the women of the brothel view graffiti as an act of resistance, a sentiment that is made clear later in the book. Amara, after reading the familiar graffiti around her, contemplates the words internally:

Another message catches her eye, its letters large and jagged. *I FUCKED*. She stares at it. The words look like an act of physical aggression, a reminder of her own powerlessness. She opens her father's bag, searching for the broken stylus she once picked up in the street. It has already come in useful. She used it to draw a bird in her own cell the other day, a small act of defiance against the endless fucking and sucking that hems her in. She walks over to the message, starts to gouge into the

<sup>25</sup> All translations are my own unless otherwise noted.

stone, her hand shaking with anger. A man's profile takes shape, the letters of the boast becoming his forehead, transforming his own words in to a slave brand.<sup>26</sup>

Pompeii is famous for its graffiti, among other things, and by casting graffiti as an act of defiance, Harper shows how the non-elite members of society may have made their marks on the world. In addition, many names of characters associated with the brothel were drawn from graffiti found in the brothel: Felix, the owner of the brothel who used to be an enslaved male prostitute in the brothel, is named from a graffito that reads *Felix bene futuis* ('Felix you fuck well,' CIL IV 2176); Paris, the son of a former prostitute and current male prostitute in the brothel, comes from a graffito that says *calos Paris* ('beautiful/good job Paris,' CIL IV 2179); and Victoria, a trash heap baby who became a brothel slave, is named from a graffito that says *victrix Victoria va* ('goodbye, victorious Victoria,' CIL IV 2212).<sup>27</sup>

Harper was also inspired by Roman literature, and tried to only use texts that would have been available at the time. Harper has noted that "pretty much every chapter is steeped one way or another in the sort of textual background of that period."<sup>28</sup> There are many scenes where the textual background is immediately obvious. Pliny the Elder makes an appearance, and rents Amara for a week. Each of the chapters where he is featured are introduced by a quote from *Natural History*.<sup>29</sup> In the third installment, Amara witnesses the funeral procession of Vespasian and each chapter here has an epigraph from historiography, especially Suetonius and Cassius Dio.<sup>30</sup> The entirety of Amara's escape from Pompeii during the eruption is accompanied by epigraphs from Pliny the Younger's account

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26 Harper (2021), 91.

27 Cf. Harper: "I wanted to reflect some of the different experiences that women were likely to have and the different reactions, the different ways that we all try to survive, really; so one particular character, Victoria, who's based actually on the graffiti in the brothel. So there was a Victoria who refers to herself as 'Victoria the Conqueress,' you know she – trying to think of the right word – but she's finding a way to glorify herself in an environment where a lot of the graffiti is like "I fuck loads of women here' type stuff, and she's taking some control over it in the way that she refers to herself as a conqueress" Albert (2021).

28 Albert (2021).

29 Harper (2021), 224–61.

30 Harper (2023), 36–64.



of his uncle's experiences and attempted rescue mission.<sup>31</sup> In these instances, there is nothing to really subvert, as the canonical text in question is being used to provide information.

However, there are many texts that Harper uses to subvert the canonical texts that she quotes. As previously mentioned, Harper has stated that the *cena Trimalchionis* of Petronius' *Satyricon*, as well as the epigrams of Martial, which Harper has cited as inspiration for the freedman Zoilus' dinner that Amara attends as a (rented) companion to an invited guest.<sup>32</sup> In addition, Amara's prospective wealthy patron, Rufus, is obsessed with Roman theater, and takes Amara to see a production of Terence's *The Eunuch*. The chapters where this viewing and the aftermath are introduced by epigraphs from *The Eunuch*. When watching the show, Amara "finds herself laughing at this world where the slaves are cleverer than their masters, and the men love women to distraction. She remembers Rufus telling her he admired the theatre for telling the truth – can he really think the world is like this?"<sup>33</sup> And yet, even though she knows that the play does not depict the reality, especially for a brothel slave, Amara knows she can use it to manipulate Rufus so that he will continue to want to see her and possibly become a patron that could free her: "She thinks of Thais, of the illusion of power she wielded. Rufus believes that is what life is really like. He has all the power, and she has none, but he does not know this. And she cannot let him realize. She turns to him in anger. 'You presume too much.' They stare at one another in mutual astonishment. The words seem to come from someone else. It is a part Amara is playing, yet somehow, she just found her own voice."<sup>34</sup> By

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31 Harper (2023), 203–66.

32 "there's a book called "The Satyricon" by Petronius which is set in that part of the world if not Pompeii, you know around there, and I sort of deliberately riffed on some of his set pieces like Trimalchio's feast. But again that's sort of making fun of this awful nouveau riche guy, Trimalchio, I mean it's a brilliantly funny piece of writing but I wanted to think okay well, what if its not the freedmen who's the butt of the joke? What if it's the people laughing at him because he's the freedman? How would Amara see that going into that environment as an entertainer, as an enslaved entertainer seeing how the guests are kind of laughing at the host up their sleeves. And I called him Zoilus and that's also borrowed from a Latin text because Martial makes fun of a similar – a kind of stock Roman joke to mock the freedmen and I had him sort of as a ridiculous but very insecure character" Albert (2021).

33 Harper (2021), 271.

34 Harper (2021), 274.

using the play to play into Rufus' expectations, Amara is able to gain power in her relationship.

However, the most important text to the understanding of *The Wolf Den*, as per Harper, is Ovid's *Ars Amatoria*. In discussions about the sources she used when writing the books, Harper states:

But really the actual original text, so Ovid's *Art of Love*, which is kind of – you know it's very funny but it's also a bit of a pickup artist manual as well, you know it's a very deeply cynical attitude to love, it's the sort of thing you might get of men are from Mars and women are from Venus type cliché of sexual relations but obviously there must be something in there in terms of how to manipulate people so I used that because obviously for Amara what she's trying to do is find a patron who will have enough attachment for her that she can get out of where she is.<sup>35</sup>

With Ovid specifically, then, Harper intentionally uses her novels to challenge the narrative set forth by the canon, in this case, Ovid's *Ars Amatoria*. Harper only uses the actual text of this three book work as epigraphs twice: a quote from book 2 is used to introduce chapter 8 of *The Wolf Den*, and a quote from book 3 is used to introduce chapter 9. Unlike other texts, which are heavily quoted or referenced, the *Ars* is more subtly interwoven into the books. For the sake of brevity, I will only examine references to book 3 of the *Ars Amatoria* in Harper's text, since books 1 and 2 are aimed at men trying to win women, while book 3 is aimed at women trying to keep or attract a man – that situation is clearly more fitting to Amara's situation.

Scholarship on this book of the *Ars* is varied, and usually focuses on the intended audience. Gibson has shown on multiple occasions that the intended audience for the text is confused between *matrona* and *meretrix*.<sup>36</sup> James has argued that it is "...uncertain how likely it is that there are enough *puellae* who are new to their profession, and thus somewhat naïve, to make the poem's eroto-didaxis even minimally necessary, even in the unrealistic poetic world of Ovidian elegy."<sup>37</sup> Zuckerberg has argued that

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35 Albert (2021); Cf. Armstrong (2021).

36 Gibson (1998, 2003, 2006, 2007).

37 James (2008), 156.

If women are the enemy when it comes to seduction, then the first two books of the *Ars* would seem to be more damaging than the third. After all, a woman reading the first two books might learn to recognize and avoid men's seduction techniques, while a woman using the advice in the third book is clearly a willing participant in the game. Furthermore, the first two books of the *Ars* would seem to give advice to the real enemy – that is, the other men who might end up as competition for a target's attention.<sup>38</sup>

Meanwhile, Sharrock has shown that “very little happens in *Ars* 3, because there is very little for the primary character to do, except to adorn herself and wait.”<sup>39</sup> What this brief review of literature shows is that the main thrust of this canonical text is not really to arm women against men pursuing them, as Ovid claims, but to make them more susceptible and willing to give in.

Harper turns this expectation on its head in *The Wolf Den*. In fact, Amara does many actions that seem to be inspired by *Ars* 3, and yet, rather than making her susceptible to men or a ‘pawn’ in their game, she instead uses them to advance her own status. For example, Ovid suggests that women be educated not only in poetry but also the lyre in order to win and keep a man:

Res est blanda canor: discant cantare puellae  
 (pro facie multis vox sua lena fuit)  
 Et modo marmoreis referant audita theatris,  
 Et modo Niliacis carmina lusa modis;  
 Nec plectrum dextra, citharam tenuisse sinistra  
 Nesciat arbitrio femina docta meo.  
 ...  
 Disce etiam duplici genialia nabila palma  
 Verrere: conveniunt dulcibus iocis.  
 Sit tibi Callimachi, sit Coi nota poetae,  
 Sit quoque vinosi Teia Musa senis:  
 Nota sit et Sappho (quid enim lascivious illa?)  
 Cuive pater vafri luditur arte Getae.

<sup>38</sup> Zuckerberg (2018), 137. Cf. Myerowitz 1985.

<sup>39</sup> Sharrock (2006), 37. Cf. Downing (1990) who has argued that Ovid's *praeceptor* is an anti-Pygmalion, who uses his hatred of women to turn real women into living statues rather than withdrawing to an artificial woman.

Et teneri possis carmen legisse Properti  
Sive aliquid Galli sive, Tibulle, tuum  
Dictaque Varroni fulvis insignia villis  
Vellera germanae, Phrixe, querenda tuae  
Et profugum Aenean, altae primorida Romae,  
Quo nullum Latio clarius extat opus.<sup>40</sup>

Singing is an alluring thing: let girls learn to sing  
(her voice was the procuress for many instead of her face)  
And sometimes repeat what you heard in the marble theaters  
And sometimes songs played in the Nilotic mode;  
Nor should a woman taught by my advice not know how  
To hold the plectrum in her right hand, the lyre in her left.  
...  
Learn also to strike the jovial Phoenician lyre with each  
Palm: these are fitting for sweet games.  
Let the poetry of Callimachus, of the Coan poet,  
And also the Teian muse of the boozy old man be known  
Let Sappho also be known (for what is more provocative than her?)  
And whose father was tricked by the crafty Geta's skill.  
And may you be able to have read the song of delicate Propertius  
Or that of Gallus or yours, Tibullus,  
And the fleece marked by golden hairs spoken of by Varro  
Which must be mourned by your sister, Phrixe  
And refugee Aeneas, the origins of high Rome,  
Than which no other more famous work exists in Latium.  
(*Ars* 31–320, 327–38)

Amara seems to have this statement in mind many times throughout the text. First of all, she was not born enslaved, but rather was a freeborn Greek woman who was sold into slavery after her family hit on hard times. As a freeborn Greek woman, she would have been trained in the lyre, and knows that this skill could be beneficial, not only to her but also her owner:

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<sup>40</sup> Brunelle (2015).

'Why did you buy me?' she asks. 'I was sold as a concubine. I'm educated, play the lyre. I know that cost you more. If you didn't want all those skills for yourself, then why? What sort of investment am I if I grind out the rest of my days in the cells downstairs?... I could make you a lot more money than that, if you let me.'<sup>41</sup>

Amara, who is desperate to move beyond the brothel, knows that she can gain a wealthy patron by utilizing the skills she already has. Even though Felix dismisses her by saying "*Porna eis*. You are a common whore. Even if you do play the lyre,"<sup>42</sup> Amara proves him wrong through her lyre and singing skills. She learns that her singing, especially when accompanied by her fellow she-wolf Dido, is especially popular one night at dinner at the local bar.<sup>43</sup> Later, at the Vinalia, she is asked to sing and play the lyre in public, and one of the songs she chooses to sing is Sappho, one of Ovid's suggested reads.<sup>44</sup> This event leads to her being rented to attend parties as entertainment, which leads to her introduction to Pliny, which eventually leads not only to her introduction to Rufus, who will eventually become her patron, but also to her manumission. Thus, rather than using the canon to become a statue that is pursued, Amara instead uses it to gain her freedom.

Ovid also suggests that women should aim to keep a lover once they have snagged one by pretending that there is some sort of rival for their love:

Ponite iam gladius hebetes, pugnetur acutis;  
 Nec dubito, telis quin petar ipse meis.  
 Dum cadit in laqueos, captus quoque nuper, amator  
 Solum se thalamus speret habere tuos;  
 Postmodo rivalem partitaeque foedra lecti  
 Sentiat: has artes tolle, senescet amor.  
 Tum bene fortis equus reserato carcere currit,  
 Cum, quos praetereat, quoseque sequatur, habet.

<sup>41</sup> Harper (2021), 50.

<sup>42</sup> Harper (2021), 52.

<sup>43</sup> Harper (2021), 69–72.

<sup>44</sup> Harper (2021), 130–4.

Quamlibet extinctos iniuria suscitāt ignes:  
En ego, confiteor, non nisi laesus amo.<sup>45</sup>

Now put aside the dull swords, fight with sharp ones;  
No doubt I myself am sought by my own weapons.  
While a lover, also recently captured, falls into the traps  
He hopes that he alone has your bedchamber;  
Later let him be aware of a rival and the divided pacts  
Of the bed: take these skills, love grows old.  
It is then that the brave horse runs from the opened stall  
When he has those whom he passes and whom he follows.  
Injury rekindles an extinguished love however it pleases:  
Even I, I confess, do not love unless injured.  
(Ars. 589–98)

Amara, as an enslaved prostitute, does not have the ability to choose who she sleeps with. She uses this fact to manipulate Rufus, as she not only casts Felix, her owner, as a harsh master who has all control of her, as a rival:

Amara knows she cannot tell him she is ashamed of the squalor; she must invent a more poetic reason to stay away [from the brothel.] 'My master is unbelievably cruel,' she replies. 'If he thought there was a chance I might be happy with you, even for an hour, he would never let me see you again.' 'Really?' Rufus looks alarmed. Amara glances at him sidelong, as if too shy to be direct. 'If he thought I might care for anyone, he would punish me dreadfully.' Even as she says it, she can imagine Felix laughing. As if he would care about *anything* other than the money.<sup>46</sup>

By casting Felix as a rival, not of her affections but as someone who might keep her from Rufus, Amara uses Ovid to ensure that Rufus will remain dedicated to her.

Finally, one of Ovid's last pieces of advice is to make the man believe that you love him, even if you really do not:

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45 Brunelle (2015).

46 Harper (2021), 272.

Efficite (et facile est) ut nos credamus amari:  
 Prona venit cupidis in sua vota fides.  
 Spectet amabilius iuvenem et suspiret ab imo  
 Femina, tam sero cur veniatque reget;  
 Accedant lacrimae, dolor et de paelice fictus,  
 Et laniet digitis illius ora suis.  
 Iamdudum persuasus erit; miserebitur ultro  
 Et dicet 'cura carpitur ista mei.'  
 Praecipue si cultus erit speculoque placebit,  
 Posse suo tangi credet amore deas<sup>47</sup>.

Make it happen (it is easy) that we believe that we are loved:  
 Faith comes easily for their own wishes of love.  
 Let the woman look lovingly at the young man and sigh  
 From deep within, so late that he comes and asks;  
 Let tears be added, and grief invented from a mistress,  
 And let her rip his face with her fingers.  
 Already now he'll be persuaded; he'll show affection on his own  
 And will say "she is seized with care for me."  
 Especially if he will be cultured and pleasing to the mirror,  
 Let him believe that the gods can be touched with his love.  
 (*Ars* 673–82)

Amara mixes this advice with her earlier manipulation of Rufus using his love of the theater:

'What about all these plays that mean so much to you? What about love?' her voice is scathing. I have enough clients,' she lies. 'I thought you were different; I thought you wanted something else.' The anger is starting to take on a momentum beyond Rufus, and she knows she has to stop. She takes a breath, turning her face aside, as if to hide emotion. 'I thought you might *care* for me.' She falls silent, waiting to see if he will accept the role she is offering.<sup>48</sup>

<sup>47</sup> Brunelle (2015).

<sup>48</sup> Harper (2021), 275.

Even though this is very early in their relationship, Amara uses the idea that she might love him in order to manipulate him, just as Ovid suggests. In addition, even though it is to control her anger, her deep breath, turning away, and question whether Rufus actually cares about her is almost exactly how Ovid suggests a woman should use emotions. She also emphasizes greatly the harm she faces nightly with clients in the brothel, providing even more rivals for Rufus to be jealous of. But Amara is not doing this to make herself complicit in the game of love, but rather to ensure her escape from the brothel:

She thinks of Rufus, feels a sense of elation shot through with anxiety at the memory of his kiss goodbye. The tender way he tucked the jasmine back behind her ear before she left, his wholehearted acceptance of the part she offered him. She could almost love him for the gift he has given her: granting her the illusion of being a person and not a slave. But she knows it is an illusion, and the fantasy they have created together is fragile. It would be so easy to care for him, to forget how little she really has. Now begins the painstaking journey of discovering how he might help her escape. It's not a journey on which she can afford to have feelings.<sup>49</sup>

With these words, Amara reveals her true intentions with Rufus. Although Harper never indicates that Amara has read the *Ars Amatoria*, she is deft at using the skills Ovid suggests manipulating her way into freedom. Thus, rather than 'adorning herself and waiting,' as both Myerowitz and Sharrock have suggested is the end goal of *Ars* 3, Amara subverts the canon by using the skills of the *Ars* for her own benefit.

I do not want to reveal too many spoilers, because I earnestly believe that anyone interested in Pompeii, feminist interpretation of the ancient world, and just good fiction should read the whole series. But because the thesis of this article is that Harper uses the canon to subvert the canon with Amara's narrative, I do want to provide a few details that show her manipulation of Rufus along Ovid's advice works. Although Rufus hesitates to buy her and free her outright, Amara convinces him that is the only way they can truly have a loving relationship. When his father will not pay for her freedom, he turns to Pliny, and by the end of *The Wolf Den*, Amara is freed and set up in a house to be Rufus' personal concubine. Throughout the next book, *The House with the Golden Door*, Amara processes a devastating personal loss while also trying to ensure Rufus stays in-

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<sup>49</sup> Harper (2021), 278.



terested in her, as she knows the loss of a patron could have devastating effects on a newly freed woman. When Rufus begins to lose interest, she decides the best way to try and hold him would be to get pregnant. However, when that proves difficult with Rufus himself, she turns to his personal slave, Philos, with whom she starts an actual romantic affair. She gets pregnant, and tells Rufus the baby is his. However, that is not enough to hold him when his father arranges a political marriage and insists he must drop his concubine. At the end of *The House with the Golden Door*, Amara is living in an apartment rented from Julia Felix with her baby girl, Rufina, and the personal slave who has been entrusted to Amara to help raise Rufus' daughter. Julia Felix knows that Amara will need a new patron soon, and introduces her to Demetrius, an Imperial freedperson. The end of the book sees her sailing to Rome with Demetrius, leaving her family and true love behind. *The Temple of Fortuna* begins with Amara in Rome, who has befriended an imperial concubine in order to spy on the imperial family for Demetrius and Pliny. When the imperial concubine is murdered and Amara witnesses it, it is decided for her own safety she should retreat to Pompeii until she can marry Demetrius. She does so, and happens to arrive in Pompeii just before the volcano erupts. She, Philos, and Rufina escape, join Pliny for a while, and then make their way to Puteoli. After the eruption has started, they return to Pompeii to try and recover a chest of money and jewels Amara has been collecting as dowry for Rufina, to learn that it would be impossible to reach. Instead, they pretend to be freed members of Julia Felix' household, and end up living happily in Naples. This brief summary, which does not do justice to the incredibly intricate interweaving plotlines Harper has created, shows that Harper is successful in her attempt to subvert the canon – whereas canonical texts would expect her to accept her fate, Amara manages to escape slavery and live free, as she wanted.

### Student Reactions to *The Wolf Den*

Not only does *The Wolf Den* trilogy challenge the canon in very interesting ways, as we just discovered, but I also posit that it can be a useful teaching tool for introducing marginalized perspectives into the Roman civilization classroom. In the fall of 2023, I taught a course for the Writing Program at Boston University titled “‘Invisible’ Identities in Ancient Greece and Rome.” The course was split into three modules: module 1, where we read canonical literature by women (Sappho and Sulpicia specifically) as well as male perspectives on women

(Juvenal's *Satire 6*, Vergil's *Aeneid* Book 4, and other selections from Lefkowitz and Fant's *Women's Life in Greece and Rome: A Sourcebook*); module 2, where we read Hunink's *Oh Happy Place!: Pompeii in 1000 Graffiti* and compared it to the literature; and module 3, where we read fictional accounts of Pompeii from the female perspective, including the first six chapters of *The Wolf Den*. Modules 1 and 2 ended with an 'academic' paper, and module 3 ended with a short story writing assignment.

As a part of the transition between Module 2 and 3, we talked about genre and what it means, as well as read Thomas' article as well as reception theory. Then, I asked students to complete a "genre reflection," which asked students to reflect on "the similarities and difference between academic writing on this topic and non-academic writing" and gave them the following guiding questions: Which genre speaks to you more? What you prefer about academic writing? What you would change about academic writing? What you prefer about fictional narratives? What you would change about fictional narratives? If you rewrote one of your previous essays as a different genre, what would you do differently? What would stay the same?

Of the eighteen students enrolled in the class, six have given me permission to share insights from their genre reflection in order to see how reading (fan)fiction affected their understanding of ancient Rome. One noted that "fictional writing can bring life to these historical contexts. Rather than looking at a brothel as just a structure, it is turned into a story, with depth behind it. Bringing life to inanimate objects enables readers to experience what life might have been like. They can live vicariously through the eyes of the fictional characters, and connect more to their stories. The storytelling allows for a deeper understanding of non-elite Romans [sic] and their human condition. However, this type of writing is not entirely accurate. Sometimes it is more about the compelling story than it is about the historical context. Although it is more entertaining to read, it is not a good source when trying to learn about these historical times." Another notes that "Fictional narratives also allow me to use information in a way that academic writing doesn't. I can bend information rather than state facts and interpret their meaning." Another student expressed joy at being able to recognize names and places from the historical sources in Harper's fiction:

Fictional narratives are not only more interesting to read, but more accessible and understandable. The academic writing that we read would take me 15–20 minutes to read about 10–15 pages. I read the first 64 pages of *The Wolf Den* in about 40 minutes. The work was so much more enthralling and I found that the plot-based read-

ing had me on the edge of my seat to see what would happen next. This was a really entertaining way to learn about non-elite Roman women working as enslaved prostitutes. The characters had depths and background stories and I was still able to learn something about the time period. Of course, fictional writing is not as accurate as straightforward academic analyses of Pompeiian graffiti like we read about in *The Brothel of Pompeii*. That type of writing employs more historically accurate research and findings than historical fiction writing does. That said, I recognized some of the characters' names in *The Wolf Den* from various graffiti and other works (i.e. Victoria, Dido, Paris).

Another student highlighted the impact that fictional narratives can have on increasing interest in studying the ancient world: "Given the choice between academic writing and historical fictional narratives, I would much rather read the latter any day of the week. This is simply because historical fiction is made to be entertaining, and it tends to succeed in that pursuit. Of course, sometimes this can lead to the author taking more artistic liberties in order to make a more interesting story to the common reader, which in turn decreases the overall historical accuracy of the work. Despite this, this genre is a good introduction to a casual audience, and could spark interests and encourage further research of the topic within. This further research could lead to people gaining an interest, pursuing a career, and then exposing more material to more audiences, leading to a cycle of growing awareness." Building on statements by other students, one student notes that reading fictional narratives makes them excited to read more: "I prefer that fictional narratives are more imaginative and that they create a story that may be inspired from something already existing so it may relate to something I already know. They also sometimes exaggerate a story and make it really unrealistic so it's more fun to read. Especially the ones that are supposed to be historical fan fiction." Finally, another noted that fictional narratives help them connect to the setting in ways that academic arguments cannot: "what I like about non-academic writing is that it is easier for me to relate myself to a story than it is to relate myself to a thesis. Non-academic writing helps me to place myself into the time period in order for me to get a better understanding of it. I just think fictional narratives need to be more clear about what is literal, and they shouldn't focus so much on describing things. They should focus more on character interactions and action."

What all these anecdotes show is that reading (fan)fiction along with historical sources can humanize marginalized groups from the ancient world in ways that a textbook or elite male source cannot. If given the proper background in

canonical literature and Roman society, students can easily separate fact from fiction. In addition, they highlight that fictional accounts have a way of garnering interest in the ancient world that academic scholarship does not. The remarks from these students, to me, suggest that rather than being written off as less factual and therefore less 'accurate,' historical fiction narratives from the ancient world should be included in civilization courses, if possible. By incorporating (fan)fictional narratives alongside canonical works, scholars of the ancient world can introduce accessible and informative ways of familiarizing non-expert audiences to the ancient world.

## CONCLUSION

To conclude, Harper's *The Wolf Den* trilogy presents a narrative set in ancient Pompeii that can be considered 'fanfiction': it is written by a person knowledgeable about the ancient world in the way that a fan is knowledgeable about their fandoms, it deviates from the established 'storyworld' of canonical literature, and does so in a way that is not only subversive but also highlights marginalized identities that the canonical texts often omit. Through comparison of passages from *The Wolf Den* to the ancient literature that seems to have inspired them, I hope to have shown that by focalizing the ancient world through the viewpoint of an enslaved prostitute, Harper challenges the 'common discourse' put forward by the 'storyworld' found in canonical Latin texts. Through student anecdotes, I also hope to have made a convincing argument for the incorporation of (fan)fictional readings in the Classics classroom. Students find them more engaging than scholarship, and if given proper background information can easily separate fact from fiction. In this way, we can possibly create more interest in the ancient world and maybe get a few new majors.

**APPENDIX: EPIGRAPHS FROM *THE WOLF DEN TRILOGY*,  
COLOR CODED BY TYPE OF SOURCE (ALICIA MATZ)**

Book	Ch.	Epigraph	Type
<i>The Wolf Den</i>	1	“Baths, wine and sex make fate come faster” ~Roman maxim (epitaph from Ostia? <a href="https://www.antiquitatem.com/en/baths-wine-sex-hedonism-carmina/">https://www.antiquitatem.com/en/baths-wine-sex-hedonism-carmina/</a> )	Inscription/ Graffito
<i>The Wolf Den</i>	2	“She reeks of the soot of the brothel!” ~Seneca, Declamations 1.2	Literary quotation
<i>The Wolf Den</i>	3	“All other animals derive satisfaction from having mated; man gets almost none” ~Pliny the Elder, Natural History	Literary quotation
<i>The Wolf Den</i>	4	“Take one who through long years would slave for you; take one who'd love with purest loyalty” ~Ovid, Amores 1.3	Literary quotation
<i>The Wolf Den</i>	5	“Grab your slave girl whenever you want: it's your right to use her” ~Pompeii Graffiti	Inscription/ Graffito
<i>The Wolf Den</i>	6	“If anyone wants a fuck, he should look for Attice; she costs 16 asses” ~Graffiti near Pompeii's Marine Gate	Inscription/ Graffito
<i>The Wolf Den</i>	7	“The whole place rang with their theatrical laughter, while we were still wondering why this sudden change of mood and looking now at each other, now at the woman” ~Petronius, The Satyricon: 'Quartilla's Brothel'	Literary quotation
<i>The Wolf Den</i>	8	“This truly is a Golden Age; for gold High place is purchased; love is bought and sold” ~Ovid, The Art of Love II	Literary quotation
<i>The Wolf Den</i>	9	„Tomorrow I'll start living,' you say, Postumus: always tomorrow. Tell me, that 'tomorrow,' Postumus, when's it coming? How far off is that tomorrow?” ~Martial, Epigrams 5.58	Literary quotation
<i>The Wolf Den</i>	10	Sextus, you say their passion for you sets the pretty girls on fire – you who have the face of a man swimming underwater” ~Martial, Epigrams 2.87	Literary quotation

'Fanfiction' and the Canon in Elodie Harper's *The Wolf Den* Trilogy

Book	Ch.	Epigraph	Type
<i>The Wolf Den</i>	11	"Do you regard yourself as chaste just because you are an unwilling whore?" ~Seneca, <i>Declamations</i> 1.2	Literary quotation
<i>The Wolf Den</i>	12	"Celebrate the power of Venus, girls of the street; Venus is appropriate for the earnings of women who promise a lot. With an offering of incense ask for beauty and popular favour, ask for seductiveness and words that are fit for fun. And give your mistress pleasing mint along with her own myrtle, and bonds of reed covered with well arranged roses" ~Ovid, <i>Fasti</i> IV	Literary quotation
<i>The Wolf Den</i>	13	"Learn singing, fare ones. Song's a thing of grace; Voice off's a better procuress than face" ~Ovid, <i>The Art of Love</i> III	Literary quotation
<i>The Wolf Den</i>	14	"It was more like a musical comedy than a respectable dinner party" ~Petronius, <i>The Satyricon</i> : 'Trimalchio's Feast'	Literary quotation
<i>The Wolf Den</i>	15	"He who lies down with dogs will wake up with fleas" ~Traditional, attributed to Seneca	Literary quotation
<i>The Wolf Den</i>	16	"I pawned earrings with Faustilla for 2 denarii. She has deduced an ass a month in interest" ~Pompeiiian Graffiti	Inscription/ Graffito
<i>The Wolf Den</i>	17	"Trickles of acacia pomade ran down his sweaty forehead and there was so much powder in the wrinkles on his cheeks he looked like a peeling wall in a thunderstorm" ~Petronius, <i>The Satyricon</i>	Literary quotation
<i>The Wolf Den</i>	18	"I hate and I love. How is this possible? Perhaps you ask. I don't know. But I feel it, and I am tortured" ~Catullus, <i>Poem</i> 85	Literary quotation
<i>The Wolf Den</i>	19	"I like not joy bestowed in duty's fee, I'll have no woman dutiful to me" ~Ovid, <i>The Art of Love</i> II	Literary quotation
<i>The Wolf Den</i>	20	"All the girls fancy Celadus the Thracian gladiator!" ~Pompeiiian Graffiti	Inscription/ Graffito

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Book	Ch.	Epigraph	Type
<i>The Wolf Den</i>	21	"For assuredly to live is to be awake" ~Pliny the Elder, Natural History	Literary quotation
<i>The Wolf Den</i>	22	"I pursue my research in odd hours, that is at night – just in case you think I pack up work then!"~Pliny the Elder, Natural History	Literary quotation
<i>The Wolf Den</i>	23	"No other part of the body supplies more evidence of the state of mind. This is the same with all animals, but especially with man; that is, the eyes show signs of self-restraint, mercy, pity, hatred, love, sorrow, joy; in fact, the eyes are the windows of the soul" ~Pliny the Elder, Natural History	Literary quotation
<i>The Wolf Den</i>	24	"Perfumes are the most pointless of all luxuries...their highest attraction is that, as a woman goes by, their use may attract even those who are otherwise occupied" ~Pliny the Elder, Natural History	Literary quotation
<i>The Wolf Den</i>	25	"They must conquer or fall. Such was the settled purpose of a woman – the men might live and be slaves!" ~Tacitus on Boudicca, Queen of the Icenii, Annals 14	Literary quotation
<i>The Wolf Den</i>	26	"Thais: Me not speaking from my heart? That's not fair! What have you ever wanted from me, even in fun, that you didn't get?" ~Terence, the Eunuch	Literary quotation
<i>The Wolf Den</i>	27	"Pythias: I don't know who he was, but the facts speak for themselves about what he did. The girl herself is in tears and when you ask her she can't bring herself to say what's up" ~Terence, The Eunuch	Literary quotation
<i>The Wolf Den</i>	28	"Poems are praised, but it's for cash they itch; A savage even is welcomed if he's rich" ~Ovid, The Art of Love II	Literary quotation
<i>The Wolf Den</i>	29	"Vouchsafe no easy promise to his prayer nor yet reject it with a ruthless air; Blend hopes with fears; but hopes must grow more bright" ~Ovid, The Art of Love III	Literary quotation

'Fanfiction' and the Canon in Elodie Harper's *The Wolf Den* Trilogy

Book	Ch.	Epigraph	Type
<i>The Wolf Den</i>	30	"If anyone has not seen Venus painted by Appelles, he should look at my girlfriend; she shines just as bright" ~Pompeiiian graffiti	Inscription/ Graffito
<i>The Wolf Den</i>	31	"I see that it's brothels and greasy bars that stir your desire for the town" ~Horace, Satires 1.14	Literary quotation
<i>The Wolf Den</i>	32	"Take me to Pompeii where love is sweet!" ~Pompeiiian Graffiti	Inscription/ Graffito
<i>The Wolf Den</i>	33	"I don't care about your pregnancy Salvilla; I scorn it" ~Pompeiiian Graffiti	Inscription/ Graffito
<i>The Wolf Den</i>	34	"When you are dead you are nothing" ~Pompeiiian Graffiti	Inscription/ Graffito
<i>The Wolf Den</i>	35	"You may look perhaps for a troop of Spanish maidens to win applause by immodest dance and song, sinking down with quivering thighs to the floor" ~Juvenal, Satire 11.162	Literary quotation
<i>The Wolf Den</i>	36	"Suns when they sink can rise again, but we, when our brief light has shone must sleep the long night on and on" ~Catullus, Poem 5	Literary quotation
<i>The Wolf Den</i>	37	"Now, my little love, entrust your happiness to the wind. Trust me, the nature of men is fickle" ~Pompeiiian Graffiti	Inscription/ Graffito
<i>The Wolf Den</i>	38	"The common night awaits us we all must walk death's path" ~Horace, The Odes 1.28	Literary quotation
<i>The Wolf Den</i>	39	"He who does not know how to protect himself does not know how to live" ~Herculaneum Graffiti	Inscription/ Graffito
<i>The Wolf Den</i>	40	"He who hates life easily scorns god" ~Pompeii Graffiti	Inscription/ Graffito
<i>The Wolf Den</i>	41	"The pair of us were here, dear friends forever" ~Pompeiiian Graffiti	Inscription/ Graffito



## 'Fanfiction' and the Canon in Elodie Harper's The Wolf Den Trilogy

Book	Ch.	Epigraph	Type
<i>The Wolf Den</i>	42	"The Saturnalia, the best of days!" ~Catullus, Poem 14	Literary quotation
<i>The Wolf Den</i>	42	"Many who Fortuna has raised high, she suddenly throws down, and hurls them headlong" ~Pompeiiian Graffiti	Inscription/ Graffiti
<i>The Wolf Den</i>	44	"We thus began to imprison animals to which nature had assigned the heavens as their element" ~Pliny the Elder, Natural History, on the caging of birds	Literary quotation
<i>The House with the Golden Door</i>	1	"Man alone of living creatures has been given grief...and likewise ambition, greed and a boundless lust for living" ~Pliny the Elder, Natural History	Literary quotation
<i>The House with the Golden Door</i>	2	„They're slaves,' people say. No. They're human beings. 'They're slaves.' But they share the same roof as ourselves" ~Seneca, Letters from a Stoic	Literary quotation
<i>The House with the Golden Door</i>	3	"And all this time the poor slaves are forbidden to move their lips to speak, let alone to eat. The slightest murmur is checked with a trick; not even accidental sounds like a cough, or a sneeze, or a hiccup are let off a beating" ~Seneca, Letters from a Stoic	Literary quotation
<i>The House with the Golden Door</i>	4	"We can tell she ahs been in a pimp's house – she is a wheedler" ~Seneca, Declamations 1.2	Literary quotation
<i>The House with the Golden Door</i>	5	"The things slaves say; the squalid snark; the filthy slanders of a street vendor's tongue" ~Martial's epigrams 10.3	Literary quotation
<i>The House with the Golden Door</i>	6	"He still feels his master's slap and wants to give himself a good time" ~Petronius, the Satyricon	Literary quotation
<i>The House with the Golden Door</i>	7	"A small problem gets bigger if you ignore it" ~Pompeiiian Graffiti	Inscription/ Graffiti

Book	Ch.	Epigraph	Type
<i>The House with the Golden Door</i>	8	"In the estate of Julia Felix, daughter of Spurius to let elegant Venus baths for respectable people, shops with upper rooms, and apartments" ~Notice in Pompeii, on the praedia of Julia Felix	Inscription/ Graffito
<i>The House with the Golden Door</i>	9	"She was welcomed by the kisses of the whores, taught to wheedle, shown how to make all kinds of movement with her body" ~Seneca, <i>Declamations</i> 1.2	Literary quotation
<i>The House with the Golden Door</i>	10	"Give me the pimp's accounts; you will find the entries balance" ~Seneca, <i>Declamations</i> 1.2	Literary quotation
<i>The House with the Golden Door</i>	11	"She stood naked on the shore to meet the buyers' sneers; every part of her body was inspected – and handled"	Literary quotation
<i>The House with the Golden Door</i>	12	"The body seeks that which the mind has wounded with love" ~Lucretius, <i>On the Nature of the Universe</i>	Literary quotation
<i>The House with the Golden Door</i>	13	"Love and fear will not mix" ~Seneca, <i>Letters from a Stoic</i>	Literary quotation
<i>The House with the Golden Door</i>	14	"I'm just a guest then, gazing at my darling while at your touch another takes delight" ~Ovid, <i>Amores</i> 1.4	Literary quotation
<i>The House with the Golden Door</i>	15	"Even woods and the wilder aspects of Nature furnish medicines, for there is no place where Nature has not provided remedies for mankind – so that the desert itself has become a chemist's shop" ~Pliny the Elder, <i>Natural History</i>	Literary quotation
<i>The House with the Golden Door</i>	16	"Now that I know you, you're much cheaper, lighter, and yet desire in me flares even brighter" ~Catullus, <i>Poem</i> 72	Literary quotation

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Book	Ch.	Epigraph	Type
<i>The House with the Golden Door</i>	17	"It's because they're smitten by our looks that our lovers worship us; when our looks have faded they take their fancy elsewhere; if we haven't made some provision in the meantime, we find ourselves abandoned" ~Bacchis speaking in Terence's Play "The Self Tormentor"	Literary quotation
<i>The House with the Golden Door</i>	18	"First Writer: Lovers, like bees, live a honeyed life. Second Writer: I wish" ~Pompeii graffiti exchange	Inscription/ Graffito
<i>The House with the Golden Door</i>	19	"I've never been so foolish in my young life, I swear, or done one thing that I've regretted more, than going from you last night and leaving you alone, trying to hide how desperately I love you" ~Sulpicia, Roman woman poet	Literary quotation
<i>The House with the Golden Door</i>	20	"For this reason too, if proverbs interest you, folk say bad women marry in May" ~Ovid, Fasti: On the Rites of the Lemuria	Literary quotation
<i>The House with the Golden Door</i>	21	"See to it, slave boy, that water washes feet and a serviette wipes away the drops; and that our linen covers the couch" ~Motto from a Pompeii dining room	Inscription/ Graffito
<i>The House with the Golden Door</i>	22	"The praetor should not endure the slave of yesterday, who is today, to complain that his master has spoken abusively to him, or struck him lightly" ~Ulpian, Roman Jurist	Law Text
<i>The House with the Golden Door</i>	23	"If anyone wishes to have a slave – male or female – punished privately, he who wishes to have the punishment inflicted shall do as follows. If he wants to put the slave on the cross or fork, the contractor must supply the posts, chains, ropes for floggers and the floggers themselves" ~Inscription at Puteoli, Roman city near Pompeii	Inscription/ Graffito
<i>The House with the Golden Door</i>	24	"Crescens, the Netter of young girls by night" ~Pompeii Graffiti	Inscription/ Graffito

Book	Ch.	Epigraph	Type
<i>The House with the Golden Door</i>	25	"Oh, if only I could hold your sweet arms around my neck in an embrace and place kisses on your tender lips" ~Pompeii graffiti	Inscription/ Graffito
<i>The House with the Golden Door</i>	26	"Next comes the well-known fertile region of Campania. In its hollows begin the vine-bearing hills and the celebrated effects of the juice of the vine, famous the world over, and, as writers of old have said, the venue of the greatest competition between Bacchus and Ceres" ~Pliny the Elder, <i>Natural History</i>	Inscription/ Graffito
<i>The House with the Golden Door</i>	27	"He always said there was no book so bad that some good could not be got out of it" ~Pliny the younger, on his uncle, Pliny the Elder	Literary quotation
<i>The House with the Golden Door</i>	28	"I want a girl who's easy, who goes around in a coat and nothing else. I want a girl who's already given it up to my slave" ~Martial's epigrams 9.32	Literary quotation
<i>The House with the Golden Door</i>	29	"Seen in a dream, the butchers who cut up meat and sell it in the marketplace signify dangers" ~Artemidorous, <i>The Interpretation of Dreams</i>	Literary quotation
<i>The House with the Golden Door</i>	30	"Nothing can last for all time: when the sun has shone brightly it returns to the Ocean; the moon wanes, which recently was full. Even so the fierceness of Venus often becomes a puff of wind" ~Pompeii Graffiti	Inscription/ Graffito
<i>The House with the Golden Door</i>	31	"Whoever loves, let him flourish. Let him perish who knows not love. Let him perish twice over whoever forbids love" Pompeii Graffiti	Inscription/ Graffito
<i>The House with the Golden Door</i>	32	"May you suffer, Phoebus" ~Herculaneum graffiti	Inscription/ Graffito
<i>The House with the Golden Door</i>	33	"How soft is violence?" ~Herculaneum graffiti	Inscription/ Graffito

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Book	Ch.	Epigraph	Type
<i>The House with the Golden Door</i>	34	"Hail profit" ~Mosaic in Pompeiian house	Inscription/ Graffito
<i>The House with the Golden Door</i>	35	"I see you hurrying in excitement with a burning torch to the grove of Nemi where you bear light in honour of the goddess Diana" ~Propertius, Poems	Literary quotation
<i>The House with the Golden Door</i>	36	"Restitutus has often deceived many girls" ~Pompeii graffiti	Inscription/ Graffito
<i>The House with the Golden Door</i>	37	"I bought my wife's freedom so nobody could wipe his dirty hands on her hair" ~Petronius, the Satyricon	Literary quotation
<i>The House with the Golden Door</i>	38	Well, well, forgotten her flute-girl days, has she? She doesn't remember but she was bought and sold, and I took her away from it all and made her as good as the next" ~Petronius, The Satyricon	Literary quotation
<i>The House with the Golden Door</i>	39	"There is indeed some truth in that line of Callimachus: 'to little people, the gods will always give little.' ~Artemidorus, The Interpretation of Dreams	Literary quotation
<i>The House with the Golden Door</i>	40	"Rivers are analogous in one way to slave's masters and to judges, because they just do what they want at their own discretion without answering to anyone" ~Artemidorous, The Interpretation of Dreams	Literary quotation
<i>The House with the Golden Door</i>	41	"The sin is sweet, to mask it for fear of shame is bitter. I'm proud we're joined, each worthy of the other" ~Sulpicia, Roman woman poet	Literary quotation
<i>The House with the Golden Door</i>	42	"To see one's face reflected in a dish signifies fathering children with a slave girl. But if this dream is seen by someone who is himself a slave, we must conclude the dish reflects his own slavery" ~Artemidorous, The Interpretation of Dreams	Literary quotation
<i>The House with the Golden Door</i>	43	"Show me a man who isn't a slave; one is a slave to sex, another to money, another to ambition; all are slaves to hope or fear" ~Seneca, Letters from a Stoic	Literary quotation

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Book	Ch.	Epigraph	Type
<i>The House with the Golden Door</i>	44	"But those you see with figures like to each and faces like both parents, these having sprung from the father's body and the mother's blood...by two hearts breathing as one in mutual passion, an neither masters the other nor is mastered" ~Lucretius, <i>On the Nature of the Universe</i>	Literary quotation
<i>The House with the Golden Door</i>	45	"Mistress, I ask you to love me" ~Pompeii Graffiti	Inscription/ Graffito
<i>The House with the Golden Door</i>	46	"But tears cannot put out the flame; they inflame the face and melt the spirit" ~Pompeii graffiti	Inscription/ Graffito
<i>The House with the Golden Door</i>	47	"Not always is a woman feigning love when she sighs and clings to a man in close embrace" ~Lucretius, <i>On the Nature of the Universe</i>	Literary quotation
<i>The House with the Golden Door</i>	48	"The women who have avenged" ~Herculaneum graffiti	Inscription/ Graffito
<i>The House with the Golden Door</i>	Epi- logue	"Now we come to examples of changing Fortune, which are innumerable. For what great joys does she bring except after disasters, or what immense disasters except after enormous joys?" ~Pliny the Elder, <i>Natural History</i>	Literary quotation
<i>The Temple of Fortuna</i>	1	"Berenice was at the very height of her power... she dwelt in the palace, cohabitating with Titus. She expected to marry him and was already behaving in every respect as if she were his wife; but when he perceived that the Romans were displaced with the situation, he sent her away" ~Cassius Dio, <i>Roman History</i>	Literary quotation
<i>The Temple of Fortuna</i>	2	"We are so subject to chance that Chance herself takes the place of God; she proves that God is uncertain" ~Pliny the Elder, <i>Natural History</i>	Literary quotation
<i>The Temple of Fortuna</i>	3	"What a splendid comrade you were when we were on active service together" ~Pliny the Elder to Emperor Titus, <i>Preface to the Natural History</i>	Literary quotation

## 'Fanfiction' and the Canon in Elodie Harper's The Wolf Den Trilogy

Book	Ch.	Epigraph	Type
<i>The Temple of Fortuna</i>	4	“Even at his funeral, the leading mime actor Favor, who was wearing a mask of his face and imitating the actions and speech of the deceased during his lifetime, as is the custom, asked the procurators how much the funeral and the procession had cost and, hearing that it was ten million sesterces, exclaimed that they should give him a hundred thousand and throw him into the river” ~Suetonius, “The Deified Vespasian,” the Lives of the Caesars	Literary quotation
<i>The Temple of Fortuna</i>	5	“Domitian hated [Titus and Vespasian] because they had not supplied all his numerous and unreasonable demands, as well as because they had been held in some honor; for he regarded as his enemy anyone who had enjoyed his father's or his brother's affection” ~Cassius Dio, Roman History	Literary quotation
<i>The Temple of Fortuna</i>	6	“His cruelty was not only extreme but also ingenious and unpredictable. The day before he crucified one of his stewards, he invited the man into his bedchamber, made him sit down beside him on the couch, then sent him away happy and confident” ~Suetonius on Domitian, Lives of the Caesars	Literary quotation
<i>The Temple of Fortuna</i>	7	“The only time he took from his work was for his bath, and by bath I mean his actual immersion, for while he was being rubbed down and dried he had a book read to him or dictated notes” ~Pliny the Younger on his uncle, Pliny the Elder	Literary quotation
<i>The Temple of Fortuna</i>	8	“There had been tremors for many days previously, a common occurrence in Campania and no cause for panic” ~Pliny the Younger, on the eruption of Vesuvius	Literary quotation
<i>The Temple of Fortuna</i>	9	“Shared danger is the strongest of bonds.” ~Livy, History of Rome	Literary quotation

Book	Ch.	Epigraph	Type
<i>The Temple of Fortuna</i>	10	"Victoria is unconquered here" ~Graffiti from Pompeii's brothel	Inscription/ Graffito
<i>The Temple of Fortuna</i>	11	"May the gods make us happy" ~Pompeii graffiti	Inscription/ Graffito
<i>The Temple of Fortuna</i>	12	"How about reflecting that the person you call your slave traces his origin back to the same stock as yourself, has the same good sky above him, breathes as you do, lives as you do, dies as you do?" ~Seneca, Letters from a Stoic	Literary quotation
<i>The Temple of Fortuna</i>	13	"Here love will be wise" ~Herculaneum graffiti	Inscription/ Graffito
<i>The Temple of Fortuna</i>	14	"Methe, slave-girl of Cominia from Atella, loves Chrestus. May Pompeian Venus be dear to them both and may they always live in harmony" ~Pompeii Graffiti	Inscription/ Graffito
<i>The Temple of Fortuna</i>	15	"They must conquer or fall. Such was the settled purpose of a woman – the men might live and be slaves!" ~Tacitus on Boudicca, <i>Queen of the Iceni</i> , Annals 14	Literary quotation
<i>The Temple of Fortuna</i>	16	"In difficult and desperate cases, the boldest counsels are the safest" ~Livy, History of Rome	Literary quotation
<i>The Temple of Fortuna</i>	17	"It was not clear at that distance from which mountain the cloud was rising (it was afterward known to be Vesuvius); its general appearance can best be expressed as being like an umbrella pine, for it rose to a great height on a sort of trunk and then split off into branches, I imagine because it was thrust upward by the first blast and then left unsupported as the pressure subsided, or else it was borne down by its own weight so that it spread out and gradually dispersed" ~Pliny the Younger, letter to Tacitus on the eruption of Vesuvius	Literary quotation



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Book	Ch.	Epigraph	Type
<i>The Temple of Fortuna</i>	18	<p>“He gave orders for the warships to be launched and went on board himself with the intention of bringing help...he hurried to the place which everyone else was hastily leaving, steering his course straight for the danger zone”</p> <p>~Pliny the Younger, writing on the rescue mission launched by his uncle Pliny the Elder during the eruption of Vesuvius</p>	Literary quotation
<i>The Temple of Fortuna</i>	19	<p>“Elsewhere there was daylight by this time, but they were still in darkness, blacker and denser than any ordinary night, which they relieved by lighting torches and various kinds of lamp”</p> <p>~Pliny the Younger, on the final day of Pliny the Elder's rescue mission</p>	Literary quotation
<i>The Temple of Fortuna</i>	20	<p>“A terrifying black cloud, split by twisted blasts of fire shooting in different directions, gaped to reveal long fiery shapes, similar to flashes of lightning, only bigger”</p> <p>~Pliny the Younger, on the eruption of Vesuvius</p>	Literary quotation
<i>The Temple of Fortuna</i>	21	<p>“We attended to our physical needs as best we could, and then spent on anxious night alternating between hope and fear. Fear predominated, for the earthquakes went on, and several hysterical individuals made their own and other people's calamities seem ludicrous in comparison with their frightful predictions”</p> <p>~Pliny the Younger on the aftermath of the eruption of Vesuvius</p>	Literary quotation
<i>The Temple of Fortuna</i>	22	<p>„[Emperor Titus] chose commissioners by lot from among the ex-consuls for the relief of Campania; and the property of those who lost their lives by Vesuvius and had no heirs left alive he applied to the rebuilding of the buried cities”</p> <p>~Suetonius, The Lives of the Caesars</p>	Literary quotation

Book	Ch.	Epigraph	Type
<i>The Temple of Fortuna</i>	23	"Love dictates and Cupid points the way as I write I'd rather die than be a god without you" ~Pompeii Graffiti	Inscription/ Graffito
<i>The Temple of Fortuna</i>	24	"Here is Vesuvius that until recently was green with shady vines. Here did the noble grape load the vats with juice...Here was Venus' seat, that she favored over Sparta; this spot was famous for its Herculean name. All lie sunk in flames and dismal ash. The gods themselves must have wished this was not in their power" ~Martial, Epigrams	Literary quotation
<i>The Temple of Fortuna</i>	25	"This alone is certain, namely that there is no such thing as certainty" ~Pliny the Elder, Natural History	Literary quotation
<i>The Temple of Fortuna</i>	26	"Timarete scorned the duties of women and practiced her father's art" ~Pliny the Elder on the Greek artist Timerete, famous for her painting of the goddess Diana	Literary quotation
<i>The Temple of Fortuna</i>	Epi- logue	"Fortune favors the brave" ~Words spoken by Pliny the Elder, on his rescue mission during the eruption of Vesuvius	Literary quotation

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