

Parental discretion. Words in blue font are to make you aware of not reading such words out loud for younger children (depending on parental preference)

THE STORY BEGINS...

Valentine moved at a brisk pace past the towering Corinthian columns that lined the way to his destination. Tempted to take the smooth limestone steps two at a time, he forced himself to gain composure as he ascended into the cool darkness of the room where Atticus was eating cena (*midday or evening meal*).

"I can't believe this!" Valentine shouted. "The emperor has gone too far. He is forbidding marriage?! The most sacred relationship of all?! It's against man! It's against God!" He presented a written declaration distributed that morning by the kingdom, as he slumped into a chair. His friend's brow furrowed at the disappointing news that Valentine was sharing.

NAME VARIATIONS:

Valentine, Valentino,
Valentinus

All of these were a common name at the time, meaning "strong, healthy" in Latin. No one agrees on the correct name for any of our St. Valentine characters

LEGEND #1 (LESSON 1)

"We are powerless to stop this. What can we do?" Atticus asked, extended a platter of dry goat cheese, fish, and bread in Valentine's direction. He sensed that Valentine was considering this question... as if it had an answer. Valentine graciously accepted the offer to eat dinner, but mostly he ate in silence, his mind spinning. *I have to do something. I cannot let this happen! No marriage allowed?! What will happen if these men—soldiers for the emperor—are forced to fight and can't even have the motivation of returning home to start a family of their own when it's all over?* "The emperor claims this will keep the men focused on *him*, instead of on a family. All it is going to do is dishearten them! At least if they know they have someone waiting for them..." Valentine trailed off.

He took another bite but stopped eating with a hunk of cheese half-way to his mouth.

"I know that look," his friend started. "Valentine... wait!" Atticus was too late to speak up as Valentine rushed out of the room. The silhouette of his oldest friend was already growing smaller into the distance as he sprinted down the stairs into the setting sun.

HE FOUGHT THE EMPEROR'S DECREE

"Jaron, Cecilia, may peace follow you into this uncertain time." Within a month of his interaction with his friend, Valentine was now pronouncing a couple's vows. Valentine's eyes sparkled with excitement as he spoke in a barely audible voice over this new man and wife. "Now, we must leave before anyone grows suspicious of our time together," he warned them.

"Valentine, how can we ever repay you for this noble deed?" Jaron shifted his helmet (*cassis*) to his other arm as he moved to embrace the man who just made his only dream of marrying his bride become reality.

"Just live a long, joyous life together and remember the love that binds you." Valentine returned the embrace, nodded, then quickly left the newly-wedded couple at the sound of voices approaching.

LEGEND #1 CONTINUED (LESSON 1)

JAIL

A short time later after overseeing many marriages in disobedience to the emperor's order, Valentine found himself in trouble.

"Valentine! Valentine!" Feeling a pressure upon his shoulder Valentine awoke to see the shadow of his dearest friend Atticus standing over him.

"There's no time! They are looking for you! You must depart from this place at once!"

Realizing he wasn't dreaming, Valentine put his feet to the cold floor beneath his bed. "What is your concern, dear Atticus?"

"The emperor! He has found out your secret and has demanded your arrest! You must..."

The shape of two other men darkened the doorway, their crests reaching the door frame.

"The emperor has declared you a traitor to his empire! Your actions have cost you your life!" they announced.

The soldier (**legionnaire**) removed the sword (**gladius**) from the sheath at his side while his comrade advanced with the clang of metal at every step.

"Valentine!" Atticus lunged forward in a last attempt to protect his friend, but it was in vain. Within seconds he stood alone in the room, tears staining his tunic, as they dragged his best friend away.

LEGEND #1 CONTINUED (LESSON 1)

THE SENTENCE

Atticus leaned heavily against the stone wall and shook his sandaled foot vigorously, waiting for news of what would happen to Valentine.

Seconds later a small pebble bounced across the dirt. About to continue on his way under a cloudless sky, a messenger suddenly approached to give him an update.

“Atti--cus!” His solemn expression lifted momentarily at the sight of the exasperated messenger.

Perhaps he brings good news... perhaps the emperor has changed his mind and allowed marriages once again! Maybe he will let Valentine go free!

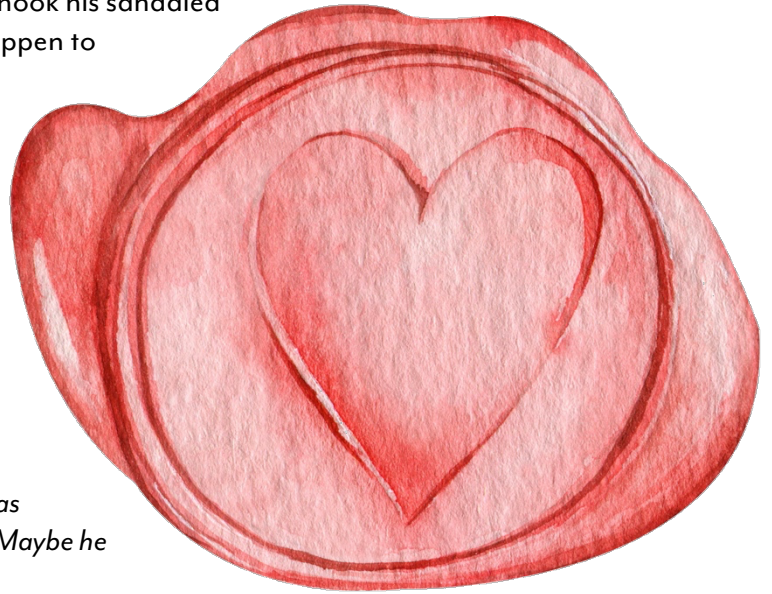
Handing over the small scroll, the messenger strained to regain his own composure, for he too was a fan of Valentine. Lucius the messenger hated his job in this moment.

“It’s news-- of Valen...tine. Urgent news-- from a guard himself!” the messenger handed over the sealed document.

“Thank you, Lucius! You are a good man!” Atticus’ fingers slipped as he anxiously unrolled the crisp page filled with the news. Immediately the color drained from his face as he stumbled backward. As the paper drifted to the ground, Lucius caught what it contained:

I regret to inform you the Prefect took the life of (beheaded)
our dear friend early this morning on this day, XIV Februius CCLXX.
I will never forget the great sacrifice he made.

Be safe. Magnus



WHO HE WAS:

This St. Valentine is said to have been persecuted for his faith under Emperor Aurelian and also Emperor Claudius II.

Claudius II was emperor in 268-270, where Aurelian reigned 270-275. Emperor Claudius II is more often documented in this story, but not everyone agrees.

It is stated that Emperor Claudius II felt as though single men made better soldiers with less distractions, so he made marriage for young men **illegal**.

St. Valentine (sometimes called a Bishop and other times a priest) saw this as an injustice and performed marriages in secret!

He supposedly cut decorative hearts out of parchment, giving them to the soldiers as a reminder of their vows.

When it was discovered what he was doing, he was imprisoned and then put to death by Claudius.

But Wait...

What are the arguments against this theory? Could it be true?



GO BACK TO LESSON #1 AND PICK UP WHERE YOU LEFT OFF!