

THE EYE OF RA BOOK 2

BEN GARTNER

SOL INVICTUS



Teacher Resource Guide

Sol Invictus by Ben Gartner

Book Summary

Siblings John and Sarah barely made it home last time, but in their next time traveling adventure the challenge really heats up.

Surrounded by clashing cultures on the ancient Roman frontier, they must fulfill their quest to unite the emperor with his enemy, an Alemanni barbarian, or risk being stuck in time forever. An action-packed fantasy full of sword fights, chariot chases, fearsome wild animals, and high mountain survival. For graduates of the Magic Tree House looking for a thrilling middle grade page-turner, read Sol Invictus, book two of The Eye of Ra series!

Author Biography

Ben Gartner is the award-winning author of **The Eye of Ra** adventure series for middle graders (ages 8-12). His books take readers for a thrilling ride, maybe even teaching them something in the meantime. Ben can be found living and writing near the mountains with his wife and two boys.

Ben loves getting mail from readers, so please email him at ben@bengartner.com with notes and pictures of your activities!

You can also connect with Ben at BenGartner.com



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Historically Significant People, Places, & Things

Before you begin reading, write what background information you might already know about these terms.

While you are reading, add in additional details you discover.

When you have finished reading, do some additional research to learn more about these various people, places, and things.

Person, Place, or Thing of Historical Significance	Background Information	What I Learned While Reading Sol Invictus	What I Learned From Additional Research
Gladiators			
Venatores			
Caesar Constantius			
Crocus			
Sol Invictus			
Saturnalia			

If you have time, brainstorm a creative way to share what you have learned about one of these people, places, or things. You could create a stop-motion video, a news report, a 3-D diorama, an ancient newspaper, a children's book or some other type of creative project!



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Common Core

(list of standards covered in this guide)

3rd Grade: ELA RL 3.1, 2, 3, 4, 6; W 3.7, 8; SL 3.1, 4

4th Grade: ELA RL 4.1, 2, 3, 4, 6; W 4.7, 8; SL 4.1, 4

5th Grade: ELA RL 5.1, 2, 3, 4, 6 W 5.1, 7, 8; SL 5.1, 4

6th Grade: ELA RL 6.1, 2, 3, 4, 6; W 6.1, 7, 8; SL 6.1, 4, 5

7th Grade: ELA RL 7.1, 2, 3, 4, 6; W 7.1, 7, 8; SL 7.1, 4, 5

Themes

Sol Invictus has themes of courage, responsibility, survival, loyalty, independence, and family. As students discuss possible themes in the book, have students look for evidence in the story to support the themes.

Text-to-Text Connections - Have students brainstorm other books they have read with similar themes. How are they similar? How are they different?

Text-to-Self Connections - Have students think about a time in their lives when they have experienced similar themes. How did they navigate those experiences? In what ways was it similar to John and Sarah? In what ways was it different?

Similes

A simile is a figure of speech that directly compares two things using words such as "like" or "as"...How many similes can you find as you read **Sol Invictus**?

Here are a couple to get you started...

- Running with full force toward the soldiers like a freight train about to smash into a cliff wall. (ch 7)
- She winced in surprise when a hand suddenly shot into view like a zombie pushing from the grave. (ch 20)



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Character Traits

Character traits define who a character is on the inside, their personality.

Character traits are demonstrated through a character's speech and actions. You can look at their dialogue, internal thoughts, actions, and motivations to determine their character traits.

Character	Trait Try and find at least two traits for each character.	Evidence When you cite evidence don't forget to include the page or chapter number to help others take a closer look at your evidence.
Sarah		
John		
Aurora		
Crocus		
Lucas		
Caesar Constantius		

Here are a few sample character traits: ambitious, arrogant, brave, caring, cheerful, compassionate, concerned, content, cooperative, determined, diligent, fair, honest, humble, inspiring, irresponsible, optimistic, pessimistic, remorseful, and responsible.



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Sol Invictus may contain words that are new for you. Before you begin reading, it might be helpful to better understand some of these words. Using this list, you can investigate the definitions and then use this list as a bookmark to remind you of these words.

alcove
cadence
curt
deflated
dissipated
evasive
excruciating
exuberance
fragility
malevolent
menacing
pendant
precariously
raucous
scepter
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Vocabulary Bookmark

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Reading Response Questions

A few ideas for incorporating these questions into your reading of Sol Invictus...

- Have students keep a journal while they read and answer questions as you read.
- Utilize Think-Pair-Share and discuss these questions throughout the reading.
- Select a couple of questions for students to write a longer written response. This is an opportunity to cite evidence in their writing to support their answers.

Why did John make tilapia barley stew so often? (ch 1)

Would you rather be a gladiator and fight a human or be a venator and fight a lion, bear, tiger, elephant, or crocodile? Which animal would you want to fight? Why? (ch 3)

Predict: At the end of chapter 3, who do you think the figure is moving toward John and Sarah? (ch 3)

Predict: What do you think will happen when John traces the eye of Ra on the pendant? (ch 5)

Why do you think Sarah was so reluctant to accept the boy's help in the arena? (ch 7)

How does Sarah feel about having been transported to ancient Rome? (ch 8)

Who does Crocus think sent John and Sarah? And for what purpose? (ch 9)

How is their camping experience compared to camping experiences you've had? (ch 12)



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Reading Response Questions

Before reading chapter 14 - As Sarah lays awake trying to sleep she has lots of questions going through her mind. What questions would you have running through your mind if you were John and Sarah in this situation? (ch 14)

Predict: What do you think John and Sarah need to do to get back home? (ch 14)

"I think the pup is trapped" ch 16, page 112
VOTE: Should Sarah try to help the wolf pup?

"Even a lone wolf needs help once in a while." (ch 16) - What do you think this quote means? How do you think it applies to Sarah? Are there similarities between Sarah and the wolf?

Is there a time when you have reframed a situation and it helped you get through the situation? (When John reframed the situation as an adventure, Sarah was more inclined to continue) (ch 18)

Sarah takes adventurous risks and John is generally more hesitant. Are you more like John or Sarah? How so? (ch 19)

Why does Crocus refuse to pretend to be a Roman? (ch 21)

Predict: How will they escape the three Roman legionaries blocking their way out of the cave at the end of ch 22?

Do you think John and Sarah should be looking for ways to go back home before they've accomplished their mission? Should they leave Aurora and Crocus behind? Why? (ch 23)



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Reading Response Questions

"Just leave me alone for once, John" Then softer: "Just leave me alone. You're better off that way." Why does Sarah feel so responsible for the situation(s) they are in? (ch 25)

Predict: What do you think will happen to Aurora, John, and Sarah now that they have been captured by the Romans? (ch 25)

Sarah realized she takes John for granted. What is something you take for granted? (ch 26)

How do you think John and Sarah are feeling about being separated? (ch 26)

What experiences does John have that might help him be brave as he prepares to fight in the arena with real weapons against real wild animals? (ch 26)

How would you be feeling if you were in John's shoes in ch 27 preparing to go into the arena?

What does John discover is the secret to leaving ancient Rome and getting back home? (ch 27)

Sarah and Aurora both struggle with feeling like they have a lot of responsibility but wanting more freedom and independence, have you ever felt like that? Describe a time when you felt that way. (ch 29)

What do you think this means? "We should all be treated as a piece of the whole. The mountain is the less without every rock." (ch 29)



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Reading Response Questions

How did Sarah's selflessness save Aurora and Crocus's life? (ch 29)

Does Sarah agree with Aurora's assessment that she is selfless? (ch 29)

"It made her irritable to have no one to confide in about her shame, but it was her own embarrassment that prevented her from reaching out, if she really admitted it. It was so hard to apologize and seek forgiveness." (ch 29)
Why do you think it is so difficult to apologize? Have you ever had a time when you didn't want to apologize but it worked out when you did?

Why does Constantius want to partner with Crocus and the Alemanni? (ch 31)

What did Crocus learn from his time with Sarah? (ch 33)

Do you think John and Sarah should leave Lucas/Lucius in Rome or take him with them back home? (ch 33)

Where do you hope John and Sarah will go on their next errand for the gods? (ch 34)

What would you do with \$552,000 if you had an ancient coin you could sell? (ch 35)

Non nobis solum - 'Not for ourselves alone' in Latin - How could you apply this in your life? (ch 36)

Why do you think the author chose to use multiple points of view in his writing, alternating between John and Sarah?

Sarah struggles with wanting to be around John and also resenting him for being around and looking to her to make decisions. How does she handle these conflicting emotions?



Postcards

Design and create postcards that John and Sarah could have sent to their parents while they were in ancient Rome.

Tip: Think about what picture would be on the front of the postcard and what note they might write to their parents.

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Alternative Point View

Write a short story of Sol Invictus from the POV of Crocus and/or Aurora.

Tip: Share your writing with author Ben Gartner via email at ben@bengartner.com.

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Stress Strategies

Research and put together a presentation for your class on strategies kids can use when they're in stressful situations, like the ones where John and Sarah end up.

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How I Spent My Summer Vacation

by John Tidewell

Put yourself in John's shoes and complete his report. Design a presentation for your class about your summer as if you were John.

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Trading Cards

Design trading cards for the various types of Roman gladiators & venatores. Include a picture and basic information about their weapons, clothing, and who they're typically pitted against.

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Dinner Time!

What would you have eaten for dinner in ancient Rome?
Research, plan, and prepare a typical Roman dinner.

Hint: Use the recipe for Libum in the back of the book to get you started.

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Marketing

Design a flyer advertising an upcoming gladiator game.

Hint: Think about what strategies they might have used to entice people to attend the games.

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Math with Roman Numerals

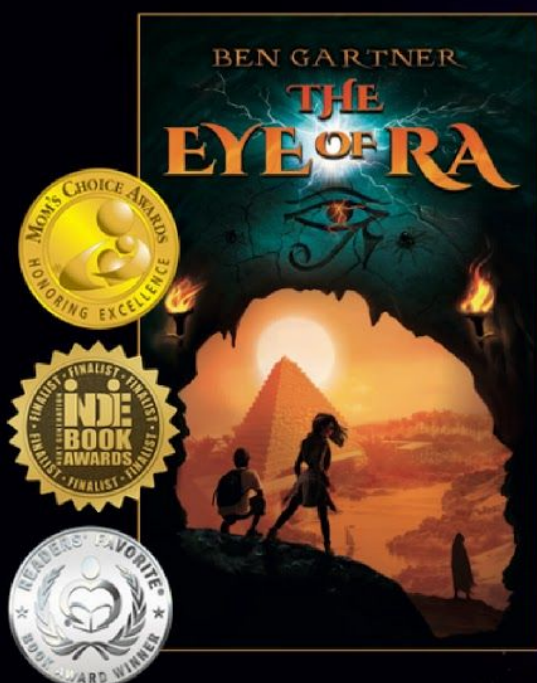
Research Roman numerals and then create a math worksheet for a friend using all Roman numerals.

Hint: Don't forget to create an answer key so they can check their work!

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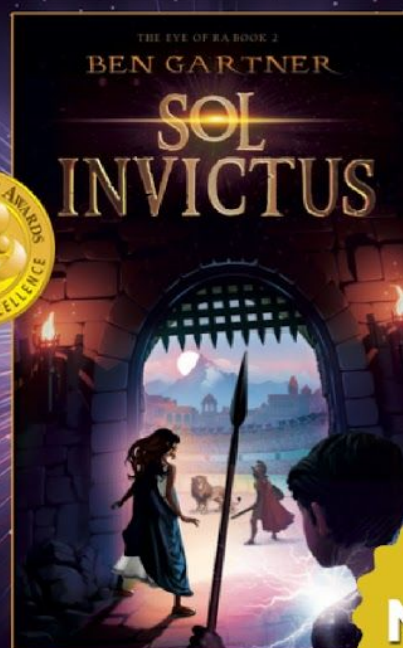


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