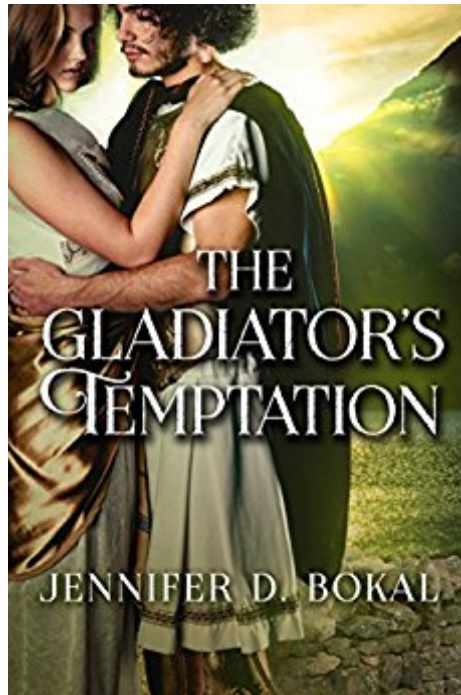




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The Gladiator's Temptation (Champions Of Rome)



Synopsis

With her standing in Roman society already on shaky ground, Fortunada must be careful with her reputation. After her faithless husband cast her aside and married another, the devoted mother of two wasn't eager to let another man fill her bed until she met Baro, Rome's reigning gladiatorial champion. It's in his strong arms that she finds true pleasure and, to her delight, love. When her champion proposes marriage, pledging to make her family his own, it seems fate has finally smiled on Fortunada. But her fortune takes a turn when her former husband resurfaces, demanding to take their children as is his right. With Baro having already sacrificed his career for their love, throwing away his title in a bid to break free of his contract, how can she tell him that the price of her sacrifice—her children—is too high? Will love triumph, allowing Fortunada both her champion and her family, or must she walk away from the man who's given up all for her?

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Customer Reviews

This is an author to watch. The Gladiator's Temptation follows The Gladiator's Mistress, and both stories are gems. Fortunada's husband divorced her three years ago to marry another woman.

Fortunada has finally opened her heart to the gladiator known as Baro the Equestrian, Champion of Rome, and they are making plans to marry when her ex-husband shows up to take away her two children. The only way Fortunada can remain with her children is to remarry Albinus. This is a devastating blow for both Fortunada and Baro. That's when the real adventure starts.

Enjoyable but characters somewhat flat, and plot predictable

So so

My MusingsI received an Advance Reader Copy of *The Gladiator's Temptation* from the publisher via Net-Galley in exchange for an honest review. The book description sounded interesting, and I looked forward to reading it. I had read *The Gladiator's Mistress* and while I enjoyed it, I liked this book a great deal more. Fortunada is a divorced woman and takes the gladiator champion of Rome as her secret lover. She never expected to fall in love with Baro, but he steals her heart. When he offers marriage and promises to care for her children, she believes her life will, at last, be happy. Baro is under contract to a Ludo, but he is a free man. He is captivated by Fortunada. When he sees Fortunada taking seeds to prevent pregnancy, he realizes she wants her to be his wife. While he has two years left on his contract, Paullus is a fair man. Surely he will release him if he stays on as an instructor. When Fortunada's ex-husband returns for his children, Fortunada is placed in a terrible position. She must either remarry Albinus to keep her children, or follow her heart. Meanwhile, Baro is faced with losing to an opponent to gain his freedom. Will Baro and Fortunada find a way to be together that allows her to keep her children, or will she succumb to duty to stay with her little ones? The historical detail is fantastic, and I truly got the sense of this very long ago time. From the description of the costumes to the vivid description of the gladiator's arena, I became enmeshed in that part of the story. Baro is a great hero. He's brave, determined and loyal. He truly tries to do the right thing, but his lanista refused to listen. He's very protective of Fortunada, even though she has broken his heart. Fortunada's character is more complex. She's torn between her love for Baro and her duty to her children. That's a terrible place to be. My heart hurt for the decisions she has to make to be with her children. In her time, she has no rights. She has to be with her children even if it means having to marry her ex-husband. There is a good bit of suspense in this story, and it had me clinging to the arms of my chair waiting to find out what would happen next. Ms. Bokal paints a great visual picture of the action scenes. I could feel the terror that Baro and Fortunada

experienced. The Gladiator's Temptation is a great romance. Baro and Fortunada have fantastic chemistry from the first scene to the last. If you are looking for a story set in a period of history that is fascinating, then you will enjoy this book as much as I did. Happy reading!

In 100 BC Rome, Fortunada, a golden-haired beauty, and Baro, a gladiator, meet secretly. They are in love and plan to marry. Although Fortunada is divorced with two young children, Baro is willing to break his contract with a Ludus, a gladiatorial school. Fortunada's ex-husband, Albinus, returns unexpectedly. Having divorced his second wife, he plans to start a Ludus in another town. Fortunada is alarmed that he wishes to not only take custody of his children, but also "having been offered a dowry" remarry her. Baro intentionally loses a fight and obtains his release. Fortunada is faced with a dilemma of having to either remain with her children or go with her lover, who has thrown off his career for her. This captivating love story explores the laws and norms of the Roman era. Under the paterfamilias system, women had very few rights, if any. Children were considered the property of the husband; divorced or widowed women would be returned to their father and could be sold into slavery. The boundless efforts that Fortunada has to exert to keep her children, and Baro, under those oppressive conditions are well narrated. The evocative love scenes and settings transport us to Rome, while enjoying the story. This review first appeared in the HNR magazine issue 76 (May 2016)

Once again, Jennifer Bokal shows a love of history and takes us through time. With polished writing skills, she uses the romance genre to depict the social and legal challenges faced by two categories of second class citizens: gladiators and women. While the status of women was quite enviable in ancient Rome, compared to the millenias of oppression that would follow the fall of the Roman empire, Fortunada has limited options under the rule of the Paterfamilias, and we follow her through her struggle for the freedom and the life she wishes. Baro, as a gladiator, even if he is a champion, and a free citizen who contracted with a Ludo, finds himself equally trapped, bound by his contract and unable to marry as he wishes. While I enjoyed the first book in the series, "The Gladiator's Mistress" a tiny bit more, this is a great addition, and I really appreciated the care with which certain everyday life details are seamlessly woven into the narration.

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