

Finally, the summer was here! Livia, Marius and their parents, Crispus and Cornelia, left the city of Rome to go to their villa in the countryside. As soon as they arrived, Livia jumped down from the wagon and ran to her bedroom. From her window, she could see the garden and, in the distance, the beautiful sea.

Marius, her 10-year-old brother, ran into Livia's room. 'Come on!' he said. 'Let's play charioteers!'

For the next half an hour, Livia and Marius ran around the garden pretending to be the most famous charioteers in Rome.

That evening, Livia and Marius's parents invited some local people to dinner. One of them was a rich businessman named Petronius. He lived in a large villa on the hill. He talked and smiled a lot, but Livia didn't like him. His smile was cold.

Near the end of the meal, they heard voices in the kitchen. Their old cook, Salvia, was arguing with the servants because a huge cake was missing!

Somebody, or something, took it!

That night, Livia couldn't sleep. She was worried, thinking about the cake and wondering what happened to it. She got up and looked out of the window. The garden was grey in the moonlight.

Then she saw a shape beside a large tree. It was white, like a marble statue. She couldn't remember a statue in that position. She rubbed her eyes and looked again, but the shape wasn't there anymore!

Early the next morning, Marius went down to the kitchen for breakfast. He found Livia already there.

'Are you hungry, too?' he asked.

'No, I couldn't sleep.'

'So why are you down here?'

'I want to know who stole the cake.'

'Maybe it was a wolf,' said Marius.

'I don't think so,' said Livia. 'Somebody broke the lock and climbed through the window. Follow me.'



1 1.6 Read and listen to the story.

2 Read and order the events.

- Livia's parents had a dinner party.
- Livia found it difficult to sleep.
- Livia and Marius played in the garden.
- Livia saw a mysterious shape in the garden.
- Livia and her family arrived at their villa.
- Salvia discovered a cake was missing.



They walked out into the garden. Livia remembered the white shape she saw the night before. She ran over to the tree.

'What are you looking at?' asked Marius.

Livia pointed at the ground. There were small pieces of cake!

Livia and Marius walked to the end of the garden and looked over the wall. Livia saw something in the shade of some trees. They climbed over the wall and found a boy sleeping. His hair was red and his skin was as white as milk. Half of the cake was lying next to him.

'So he stole the cake!' said Marius loudly, annoyed. The boy woke up. His eyes were bright green and scared. 'Why did you steal our cake?'

The boy sat up. 'Hungry,' he said. He knew only a few words in Latin.

Then Livia saw red and purple marks on the boy's arms, and she understood everything. The marks were from metal chains. The boy was a slave; he had obviously escaped from his master. Suddenly, they heard barking dogs. The boy jumped to his feet. Some men were shouting. One of the voices belonged to Petronius.

'Come on! Let's find that boy!'

'We must help him!' cried Livia.

'Come with us,' said Livia to the boy.

Half an hour later, the three children were standing inside Crispus's study. Livia described the morning's events. However, she didn't mention the stolen cake. Then she said, 'Petronius seemed to be in charge of the hunt. I know he's a businessman, but what is his business?'



'He buys and sells slaves,' said her father. 'I think this boy is one of his.'

'Can he stay here?' asked Livia.

After a long silence, their father said, 'Listen carefully. I will buy the boy from Petronius, but you must help pay for him. You'll have no pocket money for a year. Do you understand?'

They understood, and they didn't care. The boy was going to be safe!

'Would you like to stay with us?' Crispus asked the boy. The boy nodded and smiled from ear to ear.

'Have you got a name?' Crispus asked.

At last the boy spoke. 'Yes,' he said. 'My name is Flann. Thank you.'

In the afternoon, Petronius came over for a visit.

Crispus spoke to him in the dining room.

'I found him in the garden this morning. He was very hungry, so I gave him some breakfast.'

Petronius was angry, 'Very well,' he said. 'I will sell the boy to you. But don't trust him. He ran away from me. He will run away from you, too.'

1 Read and listen to the story.

2 Read and explain the situations.

1. Livia examined the ground around the tree.
2. There were red and purple marks on the boy's arms.
3. The boy jumped up when he heard the dogs and the voices.
4. The boy was very happy.

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