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Martius XVIII 75 AD

Dear Commentarius,

It is hard being X years old. Today was the worst day I've had since I was laid at my father's feet.

At schola, we were learning geography and looking at maps of the land controlled by our glorious Roman Empire. I lost concentration and the magister shouted, 'Atticus! You will not receive an important job if you cannot learn to concentrate.'

Then, my stylus broke so I couldn't scratch my answers on the wax tablet. Luckily, the magister didn't notice.

As well as geography, the other subjects we learn are Greek and Roman literature, history, mathematics and rhetoric.

Girls are lucky. They don't have to go to school because they won't get to do important jobs like us.

When most of the boys get to XI, they will leave schola and go to work. Because my pater is wealthy, I will have to attend the grammaticus to carry on my learning before I get an important job.

My pater said he will take me to the amphitheatre later to watch the chariot racing. I love the chariot racing. Pater said if I am extra good, he will buy me a dormouse to eat.

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Martius XVIII 75 AD

Dear Commentarius,

It is hard being the youngest of X children. That's why I'm called Decima. Because I'm a girl, I have to stay in the domus and help my mater. She teaches me how to cook, sew and weave cloth. I need to learn all these skills so I can look after my husband, my children and my villa when I am older. I'm IX now and I am sure I will be married in V years.

Even though I am nearly grown up, I still like playing with my dolls and model animals. I make them myself from bones and old pieces of cloth. The horse is my favourite. I do know that I won't be able to play with toys forever. When I am married, I will have to put my childish toys away. Anyway, there won't be time to play, I will be so busy!

If I get all of my work done today, my mater says she will take me to the plaza. I love visiting the shops, we go nearly every day. Mater usually sees someone she knows and shares the latest gossip. We also delivered an invitation to her friend Justina. Mater loves writing invitations and I helped her too. I am learning to read and write but my progress is slow! Mater's birthday party will be lovely. I will help to bake bread for the celebrations and hopefully enjoy some juicy grapes!

We love to listen to the music in the plaza too. Most of the musicians are slaves. The paterfamilias says it is low behaviour to play music and dance in public.

I have to admit – I do like it!

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