

Character briefing – Gellius Pulcher

You were born a Roman citizen. Back in the glorious times of the Republic of Rome, the army was all made up of citizens, but these days they are quite unusual in its ranks: most Roman citizens live comfortably enough that a career of fighting and discipline is not appealing. You are different. Your strong shield-arm is valued by your comrades, and your swift blade even more so.

Your family are humble: your father was a builder, helping to construct the great monuments of the city, as well as the cramped apartment blocks where the real people live. But he fell from a high piece of scaffolding, and died, leaving your family living off the city's dole. Having become a legionary in the Legio II Augusta, you send money back, to help your mother and your young sister – you don't want them to have to wash clothes, or do needlework, or anything worse.

As a boy you were always the strongest and fastest among your friends, and when you got older, your looks were also frequently complemented. If you can stay fit and healthy, perhaps you'll be able to make a good marriage, after your army service is done – although that's a long way off yet. You are about 25 years old, and the only language you speak is Latin.

You first served in Germany, on the Rhine, which was rather peaceful and boring – but useful for training in the craft of combat. But coming to Britain this year has been wonderful! It's been fight after fight, finishing with the conclusive Battle of the Medway. You've repeatedly distinguished yourself for

bravery and skill. Sometimes, during a fight you feel as though you lose control – you rise above your body, somehow, and just watch as it continues its work of slashing and stabbing. You are a little afraid of this phenomenon. But for sure it's effective.

You have with you a pendant that your mother gave you, an old stone carving of your household god (who you just call 'Lar', and who has no gender). Although the god is mostly back in Rome looking after your family, it still protects you out here in the barbarian lands. You have more faith in Lar than you do in the grand gods (Jupiter, etc), who are unlikely to be very concerned about people like you.

Marcus Constantinus: a provincial Italian, but an experienced soldier. He has the reputation of caution. Maybe not as brave as a real Roman would be.

Felix: a sneaky German who will never be a real soldier. You suppose his kind are useful, but you're glad you don't have to spend too much time with them.

Senovara: a creepy barbarian priestess – she probably has all sorts of dark powers. You wonder if you might have killed some of her friends or relatives, in the big battle.

Civitas: ○ ○ ○ ○

[check off a circle each time you spend a point]