Section Reading Support HOW 81
The Fate of Ancient Rome, Section 1

Roman Society

Men and Women
- Roman law encouraged large families
- Father had absolute power over household
- Amount of freedom a woman enjoyed depended on her husband's wealth and status
- Wealthy women enjoyed independence, and some wives of famous men became famous themselves

Poor
- Lived in rundown housing with no running water, toilets, or kitchens
- Were given free grain by the emperor to prevent them from rioting
- Enjoyed watching gladiator battles in the Colosseum

Rich
- Had huge villas where much of empire's food was grown
- Held elaborate feasts of exotic dishes
- Enjoyed watching gladiator battles in the Colosseum

Slaves
- Almost every wealthy family owned slaves
- Household slaves led good lives
- Slaves who worked on farms, in mines, and as gladiators led short, brutal lives
- Some slaves were able to save money and buy their freedom

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