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The Passion of Perpetua and Felicity

Vibia Perpetua and an anonymous editor · *c. 203* · *R. E. Wallis*

If ancient illustrations of faith which both testify to God's grace and tend to man's edification are collected in writing, why should not new instances be also collected? So the Passion opens, in R. E. Wallis's English, Ante-Nicene Fathers, vol. 3, complete as hosted, a short work. Later Perpetua writes that the dungeon became to her as it were a palace, and that she saw Pomponius the deacon at the prison gate. For grades 9–12. Gravity. A martyrdom: do not make a spectacle of the arena. Quote Wallis.

THE CENTRAL QUESTION

How should a school read the Passion of Perpetua and Felicity as this short, complete hosted work—opened by a question about new instances of faith, and then by Perpetua's own dungeon and vision—with gravity, and without turning the arena into a spectacle?

"If ancient illustrations of faith which both testify to"
The opening of the Passion

The hosted file is The Passion of the Holy Martyrs Perpetua and Felicitas, translated by R. E. Wallis, in Ante-Nicene Fathers, vol. 3 (the catalogue dates the English 1869), via CCEL, complete as hosted, a short work. It opens: If ancient illustrations of faith which both testify to God's grace and tend to man's edification are collected in writing, so that by the perusal of them, as if by the reproduction of the facts, as well God may be honoured, as man may be strengthened, why should not new instances be also collected? Later Perpetua writes that she had seen them languishing on her account, and that the dungeon became to her as it were a palace. She saw in a vision that Pomponius the deacon came hither to the gate of the prison, and knocked vehemently. Teach that opening, for grades 9–12, with gravity. This is a martyrdom; do not make a spectacle of the later arena. Quote Wallis, and name Perpetua. The work is short and complete as hosted.

KEY CHARACTERS

Vibia Perpetua
Who writes of a dungeon that became as a palace, and of a vision at the prison gate

Pomponius the deacon, in her vision
Who came to the gate of the prison and knocked vehemently

R. E. Wallis
The translator of this hosted English; name him

HOW TO BEGIN THIS PASSION

"If ancient illustrations of faith which both testify to"
Opening

"the dungeon became to me as it were a palace, so"
Perpetua's account

Grades 9–12
Read the full text free at classicslaunch.org.

01
Ancient Illustrations, and New Instances
THE OPENING OF THE PASSION

If ancient illustrations of faith… why should not new instances be also collected? The book begins by asking why a new instance may be written down.

- Keep "ancient illustrations of faith" and "new instances." If typographic apostrophes in a longer span fail, stop at "illustrations of faith."
- 9–12. Gravity.
- Wallis's English.
- A short, complete work.

"If ancient illustrations of faith which both testify to"
The opening of the Passion

02
Languishing on My Account
PERPETUA'S ACCOUNT

I had seen them languishing on my account. She writes of those who suffer for her sake, before she speaks of the dungeon as a palace.

- Keep "languishing on my account."
- 9–12. Gravity and tact.
- Quote Perpetua, as Wallis writes her.
- No spectacle.

"I had seen them languishing on my account."
Perpetua's account

03
The Dungeon Became as a Palace
PERPETUA'S ACCOUNT

The dungeon became to me as it were a palace, so that I preferred being there to being elsewhere. The prison is named as she found it, not as a later spectacle.

- Keep "as it were a palace."
- 9–12. Gravity.
- Quote this wording.
- An infant is named in the nearby sentences; teach with tact.

"the dungeon became to me as it were a palace, so"
Perpetua's account

04
A Vision at the Prison Gate
PERPETUA'S ACCOUNT

I saw in a vision that Pomponius the deacon came hither to the gate of the prison, and knocked vehemently. A vision, told as a vision, in this English.

- Keep "I saw in a vision" and "gate of the prison."
- 9–12. Gravity.
- Quote this wording.
- The later arena must not be made a spectacle.

"I saw in a vision that Pomponius the deacon came hither to the gate of the prison, and"
Perpetua's account

05
Wallis, Complete as Hosted, with Gravity
THE EDITION

R. E. Wallis, Ante-Nicene Fathers, vol. 3, complete as hosted, a short Passion. For grades 9–12. Gravity throughout. A martyrdom: no gore spectacle of the arena. Quote this English. Name Perpetua, and the anonymous editor of the frame.

- Name Wallis.
- 9–12. Gravity; no spectacle.
- A short, complete work.
- A preface, then her account, then a vision.

"If ancient illustrations of faith which both testify to"
The opening of the Passion

New instances of faith, written down

A dungeon, named as a palace

A vision at a prison gate

Gravity, and no spectacle

Wallis's English, named

What to watch for as you read

GRADES 9–12

1. It opens by asking why new instances of faith should not also be collected, as ancient illustrations are. Quote Wallis.
2. Perpetua: she had seen them languishing on her account; the dungeon became to her as it were a palace. She saw in a vision that Pomponius the deacon came to the prison gate.
3. A short, complete Passion, c. 203, R. E. Wallis, ANF vol. 3, for grades 9–12. Gravity. A martyrdom: do not make a spectacle of the later arena.
4. An infant, and a father, appear in nearby sentences; teach with tact. Quote this English.

Quotations are verbatim from the R. E. Wallis, Christian Classics Ethereal Library, ANF vol. 3, the public-domain text hosted at classicslaunch.org/works/passion-of-perpetua-and-felicity/. Citations give book and chapter (or canto and line) so every line can be checked.