



THE LAMPLIGHT SERIES



ESCAPE FROM ROME

A
DECIDE-AS-YOU-GO
ADVENTURE

13
ENDINGS

KATHRYN
BUTLER

“Reader beware: Peril lies ahead! Kathryn Butler has written a fast-paced adventure story that introduces brave readers to profound truths about the Christian quest. In *Escape from Rome* foolish choices often lead to sorrow, and wise choices sometimes yield feasts and joyful reunions. Just like in life, though, circumstances can also spiral beyond the chooser’s control—for good or ill. And sometimes the miracles of redemption and forgiveness intervene, both where they are sought and where they are least expected. Whatever perils you face as you battle lions, gladiators, and flames in these pages, dear reader, you can trust your character’s fate in the hands of this gifted storyteller who points all endings to the sovereignty and love of God.”

Ginger Blomberg, author, *Charlie and the Preschool Prodigal*; mother of five

“The Lamplight Series captures all the adventure and excitement of the ‘choose-your-own’ books we loved as children yet thoughtfully remains grounded in a biblical worldview. Readers will return again and again to explore new paths, carefully considering how each choice shapes the outcome. A thrilling and delightful read!”

Korrie Johnson, children’s book reviewer,
GoodBookMom.com

"You open this book and are pulled right into a fun and exciting decide-as-you-go adventure by Kathryn Butler. What do you do next? If you want to travel to ancient Rome, come face-to-maw with lions, feel the heat of the Great Fire, and pray with persecuted Christians for God's deliverance, turn to the next page! Book 2 in the Lamplight Series delivers another fast-paced story with deep biblical truths for kids."

Amanda Cleary Eastep, author of the Tree Street Kids series

ESCAPE FROM ROME

The Lamplight Series

The Hunt for the Kraken

Escape from Rome



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*To Jack and Christie—when your path courses through
fiery trials, run to the one whose grace is sufficient.*

NOTE TO KIDS

*Your word is a lamp to my feet
and a light to my path.*

PSALM 119:105

Life is full of choices. Some are easy, like what to have for lunch or what you'd like for Christmas. Others are more difficult, like what to do when a friend does something wrong or whether to tell the truth if it might get you into trouble. Some problems have more than one right choice! Most frustrating of all, the wisest decisions don't always make things easy.

Thankfully, the Bible can help guide us when choices seem difficult. God gives us Scripture out of love for us, so we might walk in his ways (Hebrews 4:12; 2 Timothy 3:16). When we abide by God's word, we're always making the choice—however hard—that pleases *him*.

In the adventure that follows, you get to choose the direction of the story. Some choices will lead to

success and others to failure. Some will draw you toward mystery and others into disaster. In all cases, God's word can speak wisdom and truth into the path ahead. At the beginning of each chapter, a "Guiding Light" Bible verse can help teach you about your decisions. Think about these verses. Try to memorize them, if you can.

When you make wrong choices, whether in a book or in real life, take heart. This happens to all of us, because we're born in sin. The good news is that when you trust in Christ, you're forgiven. Seek to know Jesus. Let his word guide you, and embark upon the greatest adventure of all—a personal relationship with the living God, who made heaven and earth and who so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son. Whoever believes in him will not perish but have eternal life (John 3:16)!



THE MUSEUM

“Don’t touch that!” your cousin Lusi shouts.

You jump backward and accidentally knock into an armless marble statue on a stand behind you. The centuries-old sculpture wobbles backward, then forward, then backward again. You reach to steady it, but you’re too late. The sculpture topples off the stand, crashes to the ground, and rolls across the linoleum floor. It comes to rest against a wooden crate, leaving a trail of marble chips and dust behind it. As if to mock you, a chunk of the statue’s nose breaks loose and falls to the floor with a *plink*.

Lusi groans in disgust. “Well, *now* you’ve done it!”

“Me?” you say, your cheeks burning. “This wouldn’t have happened if you hadn’t shouted at me.”

“I wouldn’t have *had* to shout if you hadn’t touched that oil lamp.”

“I didn’t touch it!”

“You were about to!”

You glance at the clay lamp on your Aunt Daphne's cluttered desk. It's just a drab-colored earthen lamp, lumpy and boat-shaped, but something about it draws you. Unlike the gold-embossed and gem-encrusted items you've seen on the museum shelves, nothing glittery adorns it. And yet, the letters etched into the clay—*Ego sum lux mundi*—stir you with wonder, even though you don't understand them. A tiny symbol of a fish at the end of the inscription seems meaningful, although you're not sure why. "I *wasn't* about to touch it," you repeat. "I was just looking."

Lusi narrows her eyes and pinches two fingers together. "Your nose was *this close* to it."

"I was trying to read the inscription!"

"You couldn't have read it anyway. It's Latin." Lusi raises her eyebrows. "Do you know how to read Latin?"

You grit your teeth. Why can't Lusi just leave you alone? It's bad enough you have to spend the summer with Aunt Daphne, puttering around in a museum when you could be fishing, camping, or hiking above the tree line with your parents. Last summer, you had an adventure on the North Sea, with monstrous

sea creatures, crashing waves, and an enchanting blue light that transported you like magic. But this year? There's no hope of sunshine and saltwater. No promise of campfires and the scent of pine trees. Instead, you'll spend weeks in Aunt Daphne's dusty offices, poking around and running errands for her as she sorts and restores artifacts. And worst of all, you'll spend every waking moment with—

"Ahem!" Lusi folds her arms across her chest. "Aren't you going to pick that statue up?"

"Yes, I'll pick it up!"

Since your arrival, ten-year-old Lusi has made your summer even worse. For starters, she's reminded you about thirty times that although she pronounces her name "Lucy," she spells it L-U-S-I, short for *Lusitania*. "It's the ancient word for the Iberian peninsula," she declared on the first day. Like always, when she spoke, she jutted her chin into the air and twirled her messy curls around one finger.

"The *what* peninsula?" you'd asked.

"*Iberian*. Where Spain and Portugal are?" She'd snorted and rolled her eyes. "You have no sense of geography, do you?"

No, you thought, *I don't*. But your parents once told you a ship called *Lusitania* sank during World War I. You might not have a sense of geography, but you have enough common sense to know it's foolish to brag about being named after a sinking ship.

"If you won't pick it up, I will," Lusi says with a huff.

At her words, you snap back to the present, crouch down, and wrap both arms around the statue. It's almost as big as you are, and when you try to lift it, it doesn't budge. For a moment you consider asking Lusi for help, but the impatient tapping of her foot discourages you. With your ears growing hot and your frustration mounting, you draw a deep breath and heave the statue into your arms.

"Hey, your eyes are turning all bloodshot!" Lusi says.

You don't answer but instead lean back under the weight and shuffle across the room. Your shoulders burn, and for a moment you're worried they'll pull from their sockets. After you finally ease the sculpture back onto its base, your arms quiver and your vision momentarily darkens. You lean forward with your hands on your knees and draw a few deep breaths.

When your sight clears, Lusi steps toward the statue, removes her black-rimmed glasses from her shirt pocket, and slips them onto her nose. She doesn't even need glasses—the lenses are just plastic—but she wears them whenever she wants to seem clever. Lusi purses her lips and leans toward the statue to scrutinize it.

“You dented the nose,” she says.

You wipe sweat from your forehead with the back of your hand. “I didn't mean to.”

“But you did. You know this sculpture is almost two thousand years old, right?”

With a grumble, you scoop up the fragment of nose still on the floor. Then you tilt your head to the side and jam the piece into place as if it were a piece from a jigsaw puzzle. “There,” you say with a nod and a half-smile. “Good as new.”

Lusi glowers at you. With her arms crossed in front of her chest and her chin again in the air, she saunters up to the statue, then puffs on its face as if she were blowing away fluff from a dandelion. Immediately, the fragment again flicks to the ground and unveils the unsightly dent in the statue's nose.

"What'd you do that for?" you shout.

"Lusi? I heard a big crash. Is everything all right?"

Aunt Daphne clicks into the room. As usual, the hair she slicked back into a tight bun that morning has pulled free, and a few scraggly strands fly around her face. The lime-green scarf she ironed and tightly knotted around her neck is now also loose and wrinkled. Plaster dust covers one lapel of her blazer like dandruff. She eyes you both over rectangular, wire-rimmed spectacles half the size of Lusi's. "What's going on?" she asks, her bright-red lips turning into a frown.

Without hesitation, Lusi points to the statue's nose. You freeze, hold your breath, and wait for Aunt Daphne's reaction. Maybe she won't notice?

"Oh, my stars! The Minerva!" Aunt Daphne howls. She sweeps across the room, her small frame trembling like that of a frightened mouse, and stares at the maimed statue with her hands over her mouth. "Do you know how long and hard I worked to restore her?" she whispers, tears welling in her eyes. She turns toward you and Lusi, and suddenly her eyes flash with anger. "Who did it?" she says, her words sharp. "Who's responsible for this?"

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Lusi stares back at her, her fake glasses magnifying her eyes to as wide as a tree frog's. Without a word, she takes a step back, swallows, and then points straight at you.

What do you do next?

If you blame Lusi for the accident, turn to page 8.

If you apologize for breaking the statue, turn to page 14.