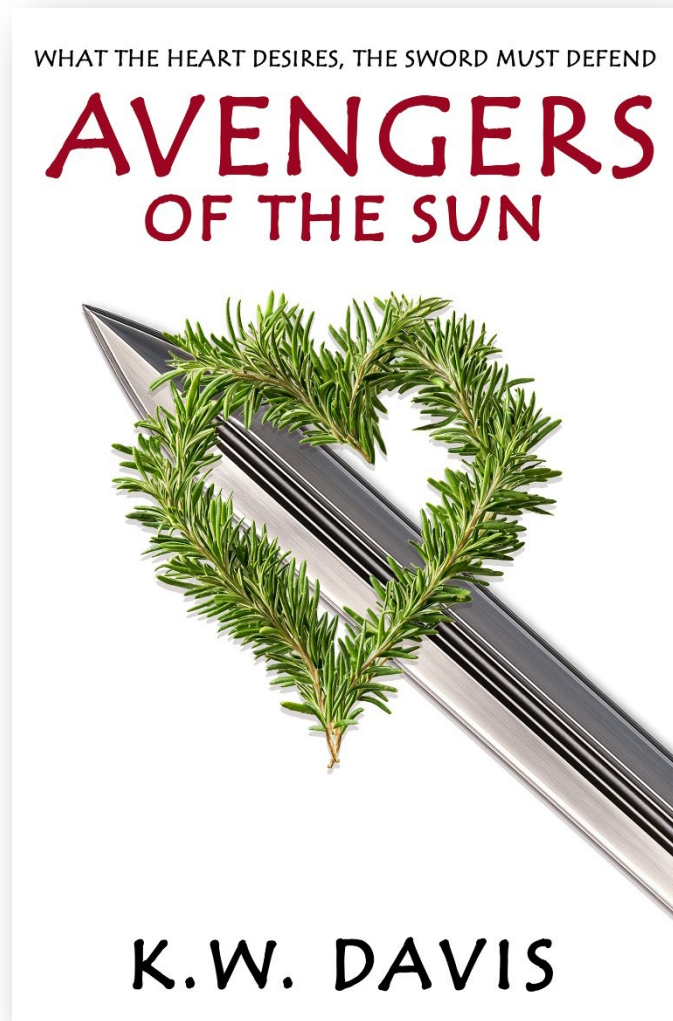


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AVENGERS OF THE SUN | A NOVEL BY K. W. DAVIS

ROME, 312 CE. THE EMPIRE TREMBLES ON THE EDGE OF TRANSFORMATION.

Publication Date: July 1, 2026

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AVENGERS OF THE SUN

A Novel by K. W. DAVIS



AVAILABLE JULY 1, 2026

"A powerful story marked by reflections about finding and embracing truth and purpose in life."

MIDWEST BOOK REVIEW

Rome, 312 CE. The empire trembles on the edge of transformation.

Civil war between Constantine and Maxentius fractures the ancient world. But beneath the clash of armies lies a war fought in shadows, where a single uncovered truth could topple an emperor.

At its center is **Senara**, a brilliant spy embedded deep in Maxentius's palace. Her fragile safety shatters when **Ekimmu**, a ruthless counter-espionage agent of chilling, predatory precision, arrives hunting the hidden enemy he senses in the shadows.

In the tightening snare, Senara finds an unexpected ally and an unexpected love in **Aetius**, a soldier whose courage burns as fiercely as her own. Together they plunge into a deadly pursuit toward the **Battle of the Milvian Bridge**, a hunt that will test their loyalty, their faith, and their devotion while the fate of an empire hangs in the balance.

A sweeping ensemble tale of passion and peril, where ancient faiths collide and four lives become entwined in a struggle that will shape the destiny of Rome.



FOR FANS OF The Silver Pigs | I, Claudius | Ben-Hur | The Eagle of the Ninth

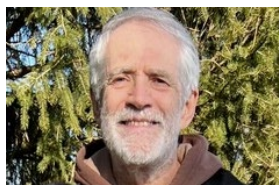
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BOOKSELLERS: ORDER AT A WHOLESALE DISCOUNT

Available to the trade through **IngramSpark** with standard wholesale discount. Order by ISBN.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Ken Davis has spent his life in history and education — a US Army Reserve veteran with a teaching degree from IUP and a Penn State master's in historical research, with further study at Nottingham Trent University, Plimoth Patuxet, Old Sturbridge Village, Brown, and Wittenberg. The inspiration for **Avengers of the Sun** grew from his belief that our need to find someone to trust and love has not changed since Roman times. Ken resides in Oberlin, Ohio with his wife Deb and their two rescue poodles.

Find Ken at avengersofthesun.com

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Current Words Publishing Releases *Avengers of the Sun*, a Novel of Espionage, Love, and Empire at the Crossroads of History

Current Words announces the release of *Avengers of the Sun*, a debut historical fiction novel by K. W. Davis, on sale July 1, 2026. Set against the civil war between Constantine and Maxentius in 312 CE, the novel follows a brilliant spy, a ruthless counter-espionage agent, and two soldiers whose fates converge at the Battle of the Milvian Bridge—one of the pivotal moments in Western history.

At the story's center is Senara, an operative embedded deep within Maxentius's palace. Her cover fractures with the arrival of Ekimmu, a counter-espionage agent of chilling precision who suspects exactly what she is. Thrown into the tightening trap is Aetius, a soldier from the eastern empire whose courage and conscience set him apart from the men around him. Across 404 pages, their loyalties, faiths, and devotion are tested as Rome itself hangs in the balance.

The novel draws on Davis's extensive knowledge of history as an educator and researcher to render the textures of Roman life with uncommon authenticity. But the book's driving question is not merely historical: as Davis sees it, the human need to find someone trustworthy to love has not changed since Roman times.

Diane Donovan, senior reviewer at Midwest Book Review, describes the novel as “A powerful story marked by reflections about finding and embracing truth and purpose in life.”

Avengers of the Sun will appeal to readers of Lindsey Davis, Robert Graves, and Rosemary Sutcliff, and to anyone drawn to stories where the private stakes of love and loyalty are inseparable from the sweep of world events.

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AVENGERS OF THE SUN

By K. W. Davis

PROLOGUE

A small Roman villa near Colonia Glevum, Britannia

Summer, 333 CE

All of you are likely wondering why you were sent here, to my home along the beautiful Sabrina River. You will hear a story from long ago. It is a true story, the story of how you came to be. Your parents and I wish that you would listen well so that someday you can tell our story to your own children and grandchildren. Remember it keenly, for its lessons are like a map guiding your path into the future.

Fifty years ago, my father was a centurion serving in Persia when Emperor Carus dropped dead on a soggy field outside his tent. "Thought lightning fried him," my father told me. "But when the son was found dead the next morning, we just shook our heads and sucked down another pour of posca. As their bodies were swelling in the sun, we mules were ordered to vote for Diocletian. 'Twas an easy vote."

My father respected Diocletian, and always stood when he said these next words, like an orator delivering his address.

"I rise out of respect for Diocletian. We knew him as Jovius from Dalmatia, never ruffled, a fierce warrior. He clawed up the ranks as a leader should, eating dust, carrying out orders, building roads, and fighting Persians. He served under more emperors than some of us had years of service. He was smart and knew tactics. He cared for his legionaries and wouldn't waste the lives of men who would bleed for the empire. He made us feel like we were part of something great. We liked him."

As with any great leader, Diocletian's strategy cut straight to the bone. Protecting Rome was easier if we could respond quickly to our enemies. He divided the empire into four sections and made his best generals co-emperors to help guard each part. He created more legions and stationed them permanently on the most dangerous frontiers. He reformed taxation, ended inflation by freezing prices across the empire, and signed a peace treaty with the Persians. By then, father had retired, and I was a centurion in Asia, charged with protecting Arabs and their desert trade routes.

When Diocletian stepped down after twenty years, the empire began rotting from the top. Succession plans were ignored as new egos blazed, vying for control, making deals with the troops to become the next emperor. One tried breaking up the capital's shielding army, but those Praetorians revolted, choosing Maxentius as their new puppet. An eastern general, Galerius, tried to punish him, but Maxentius bribed away the general's army, forcing him to slink back in defeat to his home in Moesia.

Maxentius' brother-in-law, Constantine, ruled the western provinces. But their connection mattered not to Constantine, who dubbed him "the usurper," and said that the Praetorians should be cleaved apart like splitting firewood. The whole empire shuddered as Constantine marched his army east from Britannia through Gaul, smashing his way across the Alps to the Po River, capturing Turin as easily as a hammer pounding through plaster. Shaken, Maxentius fetched legions for his defense from every corner of Italia and Africa.

Constantine's army aimed its march south, and with every mile, Maxentius surely felt like a noose was tightening around his neck. He sent his best general to Verona to organize defenses, but soon enough, the general joined thousands of his men who lay dead in the mud. Ravens ripped apart their costly flesh, gorging themselves on ragged slices of meat torn from their bodies.

I prayed to Apollo that we in the east would not be dragged into that boiling cauldron. But the fates, and my emperor, Daza, had other ideas.

As philosophers and scribes now know but fear to say, the true history of the Milvian Bridge battle cannot be told. After Nicaea, the new religion's leaders wanted those war tales buried. Brave deeds were scraped away, obliterating every mention made by those of us who fought along the Tiber. True heroes went unsung, erased by fire and sword, replaced by slavering secondhand accounts written by Lactantius and Eusebius, devotees of Constantine, and quick to do his bidding. Those of us who lived the truth knew that if one dared speak it aloud, he would be no more.

Few of us veterans remain to breathe the fragrance of our beautiful world. As voices vanish under the sands of time, so too will our voices fade.

Thus, my cherished grandchildren, it is time for you to know what we know. You must hear the truth that no one whispers, and revel in the bravest of deeds, and your heart must honor the love that made our family strong. Nurture that love and never let it go.

Please, get comfortable, but not too much, so that you may give full attention to our words. And remember the recurring thread in this story, a caution you must always heed: today's actions birth tomorrow's reality, even if the reality does not reflect the truth.

I

Urbs Roma, Capital of the Roman Empire

Year 312

Ninth Day before the November Kalends

Four-legged and two-legged mules are as oil and water, much alike, yet quite different. A four-legged mule serves its master until death. A two-legged mule fights to the death for his master. A four-legged mule has no cares in the world other than eating brush and tough grasses, drinking whatever water is available, dropping globs of manure without the slightest concern for where it is or what it is doing, and carrying half its weight in equipment for twenty miles a day. The two-legged variety builds roads, aqueducts, fortifications, and defeats the enemies of Rome. He takes loving care of his four-legged kin, knowing that much of his success depends on the labor of that kin.

Mules left the port of Ostia in the dead of night. After walking sixteen miles, Apollo's first rays greeted their arrival just north of Urbs' Via Nomentana Gate on a vacant field adjacent to the city's massive Aurelian Wall. Setting up an encampment in autumn's sun was tedious but rewarding labor.

Two-legged mules began unloading tents and equipment from their four-legged brethren, while their centurions followed Polybius' 450-year-old guidelines to designate where streets and tents would be erected.

Lupis of Legio XV led all the mules. Strutting officers who had bought their positions delegated everyday strategy and tactics for 5,000 men to Lupis. Only he wore the combat commander's tunic featuring three blue bands around the white linen fabric above his wrists. Lupis' two centurions were shorter than he and wore the same white linen long-sleeved officer tunic, but with two blue bands around the lower sleeves. On this day Lupis walked to them and said, "The men are in fine spirits."

"All praises to Apollo that we walk on solid ground," Caepio said as he lifted his arms to the sky. He shook his body from head to toe, like a dog shaking off water. "Thirty-five days on a bobbing ship. Still feels like I'm moving."

"I must agree with Caepio," Ancus said while pressing his hands together and raising them as if in prayer. "But a benefit of this miserable assignment is that it delays winter's first shiver."

Lupis grinned. "Good to close our eyes and have the sun's lazy warmth without constant movement or winter's icy wind blowing in from the north. But this civil war in Italia concerns me."

"Yes, the elephant in the room." Ancus took a deep breath. "Emperor Constantine served for many years in our prefecture. He's a brilliant tactician."

Caepio brushed a hand over his short, black hair. "The stables' owner in Ostia told me Constantine's army seized Verona at summer's end. Emperor Maxentius' best commander died there." His hands lifted with palms facing each other, marking distance. "Constantine's troops are probably this close to the capital by now. Maxentius must be worried."

Lupis glanced at the formidable Aurelian wall protecting Urbs. "I agree. However, Emperor Daza wants us to stay out of their fight. Delivering Ekimmu to Maxentius is all the aid he's willing to give."

"Since Diocletian's death," Ancus grimaced, "the empire's tetrarchy is beginning to collapse. These western co-emperors loathe each other."

"It's a fight to the death," said Caepio. "Constantine wants to add Maxentius' prefecture to his own."

"I doubt he'll be satisfied with just half an empire," Ancus said as he kicked at the encampment's grassy surface. "Our prefecture in the Orient may be next on his list."

Before Lupis reached the disturbance, something tugged at his sleeve. He looked down to see a wrinkled hand clutching its fabric. It belonged to a shriveled old woman he had written off as a vagrant.

As their eyes met, her free hand covered her heart. "Helvétius Lupis, we must talk."

A chill filled his core. She knows my name! He stood fully erect in a defensive stance, his arms crossed. "Do I know you?"

"You know me, and my sisters, my son."

His nostrils flared. This was his first visit to Italia. He knew no one here. "Be quick! As you can see, that commotion needs my attention."

Her eyes glowed a bright ginger. "Bend down."

A slice of energy entered his brain, instructing him to kneel.

The crone leaned toward his ear. "Last night, I dreamed Saturn ate you and your men."

Shivers trickled down his spine.

Her icy hand clenched his, and her voice gained strength. "I knew not what the dream meant. But now, here you are, arrived from the east."

The chill from her hands flowed into his body. He struggled to control his shivering. "Are you a sorceress casting a spell?"

"No, my son. In this land, I'm revered as Morta. But you're a wolf born in distant Moesia. You remember me by my Greek name, Atropos."

She knew his name and ancestry! Recalling a tale from childhood, he cradled her frigid hands with his. He took deep, controlled breaths to hide his nervousness. "I do remember. You are the spinner of life, one of the three Fates."

She glanced at the suns embroidered on the tops of his sleeves and smiled. "Tis your good fortune to recall my sisters and me, dear son of Apollo. I do not cast spells. My dreams warn of the future. Be aware! The man you escorted to Urbs, this evil gust of wind, is a living shadow of Death. He is poised to destroy all of you! When hope seems lost, your success lies in the strength of lessons learned."

Morta kissed Lupis' hands and squeezed them before hobbling away to disappear amongst the crowd, her words echoing in his mind as distinctly as the cold of her flesh lingered in his fingers.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

K. W. Davis



Ken Davis has devoted his life to history and education. After serving in the US Army Reserve, he earned a teaching degree from Indiana University of Pennsylvania and a master's in historical research from Penn State, with additional study at Nottingham Trent University—where he developed the craft skills that would eventually shape *Avengers of the Sun*.

His immersion in the past goes well beyond the classroom. Over thirty-five years, Ken and his family volunteered as living history reenactors, portraying 18th-century French marines and Pennsylvania frontiersmen at historic sites throughout the eastern United States and Canada. That commitment to embodied history earned him a featured extra role in the 1992 film *The Last of the Mohicans*.

As an educator, Ken was recognized with Distinguished Pennsylvania Teacher of the Year and National Endowment for the Humanities awards. His short fiction has been published in the US, UK, and Canada. He is a member of the Horror Writers Association and the Authors Guild.

The inspiration for *Avengers of the Sun* grew from years of watching young people search for trustworthy relationships in a complicated world. Ken believes the human need to find someone to trust and love has not changed since Roman times—and wrote this novel in the hope that readers will believe it's still possible today.

Ken lives in Oberlin, Ohio with his wife Deb and their two rescue poodles.

Author website: avengersofthesun.com

ABOUT CURRENT WORDS PUBLISHING



Los Angeles-based Current Words Publishing is an independent press dedicated to bringing distinctive voices and richly imagined stories to readers. Founded and led by editorial partners Dianne Pearce and David Yurkovich, CWP pairs careful editorial craft with an author-centered approach to publishing—ensuring that each book receives the sustained attention it deserves from manuscript through market.

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