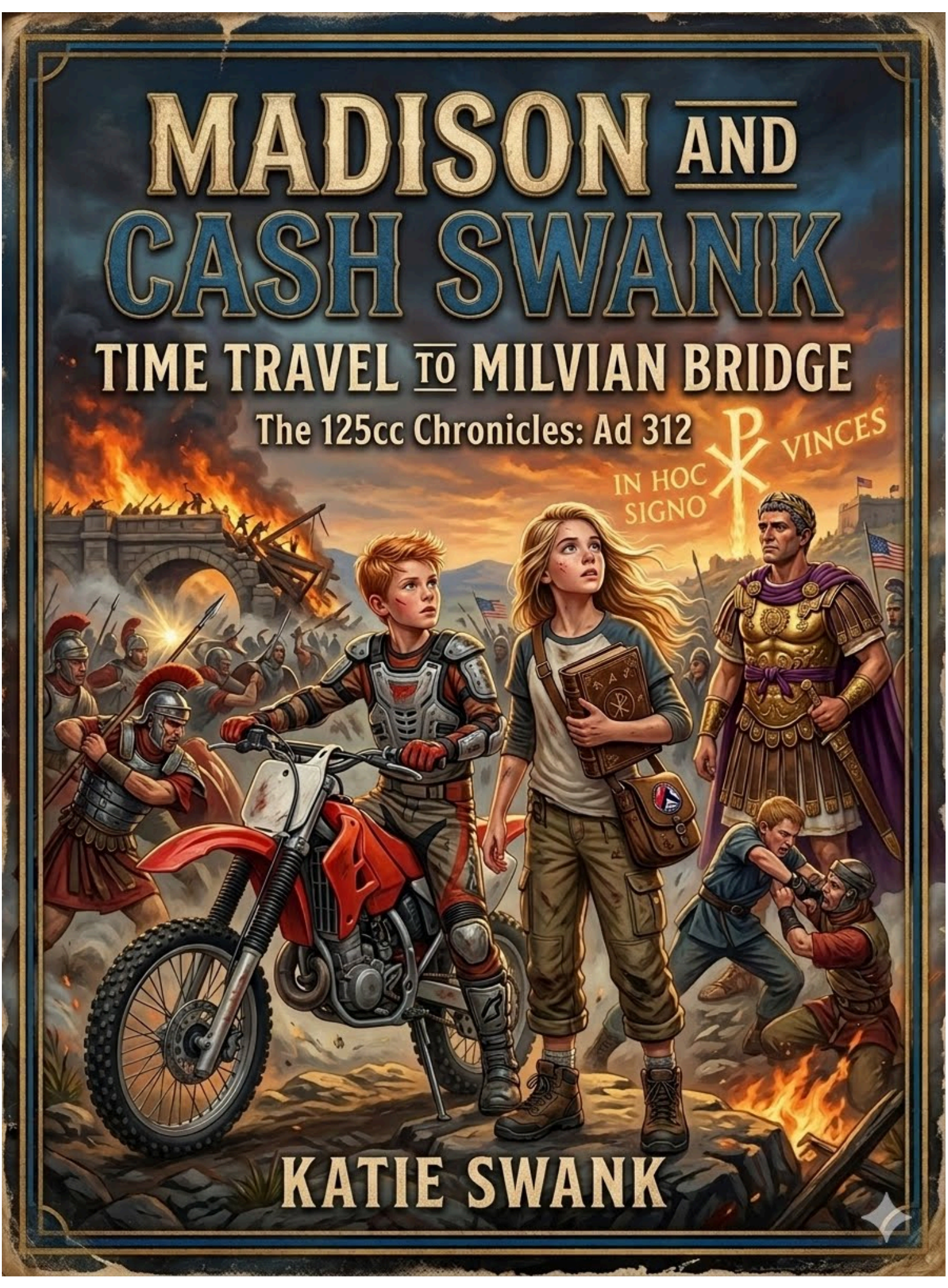
MADISON AND CASH SWANK

TIME TRAVEL TO MILVIAN BRIDGE

The 125cc Chronicles: Ad 312



KATIE SWANK

Name: _____

Date: _____

Chapter 1: The Gateway at sunset

The warm ocean breeze drifted straight through the open garage door in sunny Oceanside, California, carrying that familiar, classic mix of salty sea air and fresh engine grease. Eleven-year-old Cash Swank gave one final twist to his wrench, tightening the last crucial bolt on his heavily modified 125cc dirtbike. His spiky, strawberry-blond hair caught the glowing rays of the late afternoon sun, and his striking blue eyes were locked in with total focus. Right next to him, his twelve-year-old sister, Madison, was hunched over an ancient, mysterious leather-bound book, her crazy-long, waist-length blond hair cascading right down her shoulders like a golden waterfall.

"Cash, the text is literally shifting again," Madison whispered, her stunning blue eyes widening in total shock.

Right there on the old parchment, the moving geometric lines started swirling and crystallized into a radiant, glowing monogram. It was a bizarre combination of the Greek letters Chi and Rho, looking exactly like a capital 'P' with an 'X' slashed right through the stem. Right below the glowing symbol, a single, ominous date burned itself directly into the page: Rome, October AD 312.

"The Battle of the Milvian Bridge," Cash said softly. His faith had become a solid, totally unwavering compass over their last few time-travel adventures, and he knew exactly what this meant. "This is the massive moment that changed the Roman Empire forever. Constantine is about to face off against the tyrant Maxentius for absolute control of Rome."

Suddenly, the custom copper coils wrapped all around the frame of the dirtbike pulsed with a vibrant, electric-blue light that filled the whole garage. The ancient leather book in Madison's hands caught the exact same energy resonance, its pages violently snapping open and vibrating like a solar sail catching a solar flare.

"Hold on tight, Maddy!" Cash shouted over the sudden hum, slamming his boot down to kick the starter.

The engine didn't just rev—it roared with a high-pitched, harmonic whistle that rattled their teeth. In a split second, the surfboards hanging on the garage wall blurred into a dizzying tunnel of sapphire light. The solid concrete floor vanished completely beneath them, ripping them right out of twenty-first-century California and hurling them headfirst into the most pivotal, dangerous clash of ancient history.

With a bone-jarring THUD, the dirtbike's knobby tires slammed down hard onto a rough, stone-paved Roman road. The fresh, clean California sea air was gone in an instant, replaced by the choking dust of thousands of marching legions and the heavy, smoky smell of wood fires. In the far distance, a massive, terrifying army lay encamped across the hills under a bruising, deep orange sunset. They had officially arrived.

Name: _____

Date: _____

Chapter 2: The Ambush at the Outpost

Cash quickly cut the engine, the sudden silence rushing back over the landscape as he coasted the dirtbike into the deep shadows of an ancient stone vineyard wall.

"We need to keep the bike hidden," he muttered quickly, grabbing a bunch of dried olive branches and piling them over the frame to camouflage the chassis.

But before Madison could even step away from the wall, a sharp, metallic clank of iron armor echoed right through the trees. A scouting party of Maxentius's elite guards erupted from the brush. Their short swords were drawn, and their eyes were totally wild with malice.

"Spies for the rebel Constantine!" the lead soldier barked. He was speaking in Latin, but the supernatural energy of Madison's book instantly translated the words right inside their minds. "Seize them!"

A massive, heavy hand lunged straight for Madison's shoulder. Instant adrenaline took over. Remembering the rigorous jiu-jitsu training their father had consistently drilled into them back home in Oceanside, Madison didn't freeze. She stepped right inside the soldier's reach, trapping his arm. Securing a firm, unbreakable grip on his extended wrist, she pivoted her hips with perfect leverage and executed a flawless shoulder throw. The heavily armored Roman flew over her back and slammed into the dirt with a massive thud, the wind knocked completely out of his lungs.

At the exact same time, another soldier rushed Cash. Cash ducked right beneath a wild, swinging sword, shot low for the soldier's legs, and executed a perfect double-leg takedown. He hit the ground rolling and quickly transitioned to side control, pinning the heavy guard flat against the dirt before the guy could even use his armor against him.

"Look!" Madison yelled, pointing her finger toward the sky.

As the remaining soldiers grouped up and prepared to charge the siblings, a brilliant, blinding flash of lightning tore straight through the completely clear evening sky. It struck a massive boulder sitting right between the kids and the attackers. The giant rock split clean in two with a deafening, thunderous CRACK, sending a shower of sparks into the air. Terrified out of their minds by the supernatural blast, the remaining guards dropped their weapons and fled screaming into the dark woods.

"That was a straight-up miracle of deliverance," Cash said, his striking blue eyes flashing with excitement as he helped his sister up and brushed the dust off her clothes. "God is literally fighting for us."

Name: _____

Date: _____

Chapter 3: The Council of the Vision

The siblings followed the ancient Roman road toward the northern hills, guided by the soft, rhythmic hum vibrating from Madison's book. Within an hour, their trek was cut short. A heavily armed patrol of Constantine's elite legions surrounded them out of nowhere. Recognizing their totally peaceful stance—and completely baffled by their bizarre, modern clothing—the guards decided not to attack. Instead, they marched them directly into the center of the massive, bustling military encampment and straight into the commander's main tactical tent.

Inside, a tall, powerfully built man with intense, searching eyes and a heavy, serious brow stood hunched over a detailed leather map of the Tiber River. This was General Constantine himself.

"Who are these youth who dare enter my camp speaking of a kingdom not made with hands?" Constantine demanded, his deep voice echoing loudly off the canvas walls.

"General," Cash said, stepping forward without a single trace of fear, showing a confidence that completely defied his ten years. "We are travelers, and we know exactly how heavy your heart is tonight. Maxentius has a massive force twice your size waiting for you right across the river."

Constantine's face grew incredibly grim. Needing air, he stepped outside the tent into the open courtyard, looking up into the darkening evening sky. "The old gods of Rome have abandoned me," he muttered, his voice heavy with exhaustion. "I have prayed for a sign, but there is only silence."

"Look closer, General," Madison said, her waist-length hair blowing wildly in the rising wind as she stepped up and held up her glowing book.

At that exact second, a magnificent phenomenon literally split the heavens wide open. A massive, radiant cross of pure fire appeared directly above the setting sun, burning through the clouds. Written right into the blazing, supernatural light were the ancient Greek words: En Toutoi Nika—"In this sign, conquer."

The entire military camp froze, and thousands of hardened soldiers fell to their knees in absolute, breathless silence. Constantine stared up at the miracle, his chest heaving as he tried to process what he was seeing.

"What is this sign?" he whispered, completely humbled.

"It's the monogram of Christ," Cash said, his voice ringing with a profound, powerful faith that echoed across the quiet camp. "The living God is telling you to trust Him. Put your faith in Him, and He will deliver Rome into your hands tomorrow."

Name: _____

Date: _____

Chapter 4: The Mark of the Chi-Rho

By the early hours of the morning, Constantine's camp looked like a total hive of intense activity. Nobody was sleeping. Moved by the crazy vision of the burning cross in the sky and the absolute, unshakeable certainty of the two mysterious kids, the General had issued a radical command that shocked his entire staff.

"Paint it on every single shield!" Constantine ordered, his deep voice booming over the loud, metallic clanking of armor. "The monogram of the cross! We march under the banner of the one true God!"

Cash and Madison stood right beside Constantine, watching the chaotic scene unfold. All around them, blacksmiths, armorers, and regular soldiers were hurriedly painting the Chi-Rho symbol onto thousands of heavy iron and bronze shields. The air pressure around the camp felt totally electric—like a massive thunderstorm was about to hit, or like unseen armies were aligning right next to them in the spiritual realm.

Suddenly, a massive supply cart loaded down with tons of heavy iron javelins snapped its wooden axle with a loud CRACK

. The entire cart tilted violently to the side, about to dump its lethal cargo right onto a group of unsuspecting young messengers who had their backs turned.

"Watch out!" Madison screamed.

Before the giant cart could crush them, Madison didn't even think—she just reacted. Lunging forward, she used a precise jiu-jitsu frame technique her dad had taught her, using her body alignment to wedge a falling timber and slow down the collapse. At the exact same microsecond, Cash used his explosive athletic speed to sprint in, grabbing the two messengers by their vests and yanking them backward out of the path of the falling iron. As the heavy cart slammed into the dirt, a total freak gust of wind suddenly whipped through the camp, catching the falling javelins mid-air and diverting them safely away into the open mud.

Constantine witnessed the entire split-second rescue, his eyes widening as his respect for the siblings hit a whole new level.

"Your God gives you incredible agility and courage," the General noted, stepping forward and placing a heavy, armored hand on Cash's shoulder. "You shall ride right near my vanguard today. Let's see what your God does next."

Name: _____

Date: _____

Chapter 5: The March to the Tiber

The morning sun slowly crested the horizon, casting an intense, blood-red light across the landscape. The eerie crimson glow lit up thousands of shields, each one freshly painted with the glowing Chi-Rho monogram. Cash and Madison braced themselves, riding on a small auxiliary chariot right behind Constantine's elite heavy cavalry. The air hummed with tension as the entire army advanced toward the ancient, stone-arched Milvian Bridge.

The moment they reached the narrow plains near the Tiber River, the absolute scale of what they were up against became terrifyingly clear. Maxentius's forces were massive. A literal wall of gleaming iron, endless rows of sharp spears, and elite, heavily armored Praetorian Guards stretched across the horizon, completely blocking the way to Rome. The sheer numbers were enough to make anyone's stomach drop.

"They built a temporary bridge of boats right next to the main stone bridge," Madison noted, her fingers tracing the glowing, shifting map inside her ancient leather book. She looked up, yelling over the rumble of wheels. "Maxentius is planning to trap your forces in a narrow bottleneck, General!"

But before the two massive armies could smash into each other, the environment went totally haywire. A sudden, violent dust storm erupted from the dry riverbanks. The wind howled, whipping up blinding clouds of dirt and blowing them directly into the faces of Maxentius's troops, completely blinding their front-line archers.

"The wind is our shield!" Constantine roared, a fierce confidence igniting his face as he drew his heavy spatha sword. "Advance!"

"The Lord is sending another deliverance," Cash whispered to Madison, his knuckles turning white as he gripped the chariot's wooden rail. "Their massive numbers don't mean anything when the wind itself obeys His command."

As the battle erupted into full chaos, an enemy vanguard managed to break through and threaten the general's flank.

Name: _____

Date: _____

Chapter 6: The Clash at the Bridge

The moment the two massive armies collided, the entire ground literally shook. It felt like an earthquake. The air was a chaotic wall of sound—the deafening roar of thousands of men shouting, the brutal clashing of iron swords, and the terrifying, panicked screams of charging warhorses. But Constantine's cavalry didn't flinch. Still totally fired up by that miraculous burning cross vision they had seen in the sky the night before, they charged forward with insane energy, driving deep into the enemy's front lines like a wrecking ball.

But in a massive battlefield, things get messy fast. During the absolute chaos of the melee, a breakaway group of Maxentius's heavy infantry—dudes built like tanks in thick armor—managed to sneak right past the main fighting line. Before anyone could stop them, they completely surrounded Constantine's command chariot, cutting him off from the rest of his army.

"Protect the General!" Cash yelled, his voice cracking over the noise.

Suddenly, a massive Roman foot soldier broke through and lunged straight onto Cash and Madison's auxiliary chariot, his sharp iron sword raised and ready to slash. Cash's athletic training instantly kicked in. Relying on the quick reflexes his dad had taught him back at Fox Raceway, Cash grabbed the soldier's wrist. With a lightning-fast, hyper-precise jiu-jitsu wrist-lock, he twisted the man's arm, instantly stripping the heavy weapon right out of his grip. Before the soldier could even figure out what happened, Madison backed him up. She dropped low and executed a perfect, sweeping low leg-kick. The guard lost his footing completely, slipping on the slick wooden frame and tumbling headfirst over the side of the chariot into the dirt.

But there was no time to celebrate. At that exact microsecond, another enemy spearman sprinted up to the other side, thrusting a heavy iron spear directly at Constantine's completely unprotected flank. Cash and Madison could only watch in slow motion as the weapon flew toward the general.

Then, a total glitch in physics happened.

The moment the sharp iron spear tip slammed into Constantine's basic leather breastplate, it didn't pierce him. Instead, a loud, supernatural crack echoed out. The iron tip shattered into a dozen tiny pieces as if it had just struck solid, unbreakable granite. The spearman froze, staring at his broken wooden stick in absolute horror and disbelief, completely paralyzed by fear before the advancing front line swept over him and washed him away.

"God is my buckler!" Constantine shouted, his eyes flashing with a fierce, newfound faith. He didn't need any more proof. Swinging his sword with incredible strength, he cut through the remaining attackers, totally unstoppable now that he knew the Creator of the universe had his back.

Name: _____

Date: _____

Chapter 7: The Trap Splinters

The battlefield completely flipped. Maxentius's frontline soldiers started to panic, and once the fear crept in, it spread like wildfire. Everywhere they looked, Constantine's advancing army held up shields painted with those glowing, fiery Chi-Rho symbols. It was totally messing with the pagan soldiers' heads. On top of that, the weather went absolutely haywire. Weird flashes of light danced across the Tiber River, and a sudden, creepy shadow fell straight over Maxentius's side of the field. It felt like the universe itself had just picked a side, and it wasn't theirs. Just like that, the Roman army's confidence shattered. Total discipline vanished, replaced by a chaotic, screaming stampede as thousands of terrified soldiers rushed toward a sketchy, temporary bridge made of wooden boats.

"They're destroying their own escape route!" Madison yelled, her voice barely cutting through the deafening roar of trampling horses and crashing armor. She clutched her mysterious old book tight to her chest, watching in total shock from a nearby ridge as the fragile floating bridge began to bend and snap under the massive, frantic weight of the fleeing cavalry.

Realizing he was losing everything, Maxentius went into full desperation mode. Refusing to back down, the tyrant pulled his sword and led a final, furious charge of his elite guards straight across the stone arches of the Milvian Bridge. He was heading right for Constantine. When the two leaders clashed, it was a blinding blur of swinging steel. Swords slammed together with a sound like thunder. Driven by pure rage, Maxentius forced his massive warhorse forward. The giant beast reared up on its hind legs, its heavy iron horseshoes striking the stone railing in a shower of wild sparks. It hovered right over Constantine, threatening to come crashing down and crush him instantly.

Cash didn't freeze. Relying on the quick reflexes and athletic coordination he'd built up back home, his eyes locked onto a heavy, curved Roman shield left in the dirt. He sprinted forward, scooped it up, spun around, and hurled it like a giant, heavy Frisbee. The shield sailed through the air with perfect precision and struck the rearing horse's iron mouth-bit with a loud clang! The sudden, stinging hit totally threw the panicked horse off script. The beast violently jerked its head and swerved mid-air, completely throwing Maxentius off balance and leaving him totally wide open.

Right then, the massive stone bridge beneath Maxentius made a deep, terrifying groaning sound that Cash could feel vibrating right through to his teeth. A sudden earthquake—one that nobody else on the riverbanks even felt—slammed into the Milvian Bridge. The main stone arch cracked right down the middle, and the central blocks gave way completely. With a massive roar, the stone collapsed into the rushing, muddy waters of the Tiber River below, sending up a giant wave and dragging the tyrant down under the dark water, ending his reign for good.

Name: _____

Date: _____

Chapter 8: The Liberation of Rome

The smoke of battle slowly cleared from the banks of the Tiber River, leaving behind an eerie, breathless silence where the chaotic screams of conflict had just reigned. Along the muddy shores and near the shattered remains of the Milvian Bridge, the surviving forces of Maxentius threw down their swords and heavy bronze shields, their clattering armor signaling an absolute surrender to the army of the cross. The road to Rome lay completely open, the iron grip of the persecutors finally broken after centuries of systematic oppression, bloodied arenas, and hidden underground prayers.

The heavy, iron-reinforced gates of the ancient city swung wide as Constantine rode into the heart of the empire. His polished armor gleamed like a mirror in the brilliant afternoon sun, reflecting the vibrant crimson and gold of the newly hoisted Chi-Rho banners snapping in the breeze. Beside his majestic imperial chariot walked Cash and Madison. Their clothes were torn from the intensity of the struggle, and their faces were heavily smudged with dark tufa dust and sweat, but their eyes shone with a profound, unshakeable joy. The citizens of Rome—many of whom had spent a lifetime hiding their devotion to Christ in fear of their lives—flooded the stone streets by the thousands. They wept openly, throwing fresh laurel wreaths beneath the horses' hooves and chanting the name of the deliverer who had brought an end to their long night of tyranny.

As the procession reached the Forum, Constantine ascended the steps of the Curia. He turned to face the gathered Roman senate, who stood trembling and uncertain of their fate under this new conqueror. Instead of claiming personal glory or demanding the traditional sacrifice to the pagan gods, Constantine raised his hand for silence and pointed directly toward the two young travelers from California and the sacred monogram emblazoned on the standards.

"This victory does not belong to me, nor to the might of Roman steel," Constantine announced, his voice echoing powerfully off the marble pillars. "It belongs to the God of the Christians, who has shown His almighty power this day through undeniable signs and wonders in the heavens. Rome will no longer be a slaughterhouse for His saints."

That evening, the chaotic celebration of the city faded into a peaceful stillness. In the quiet, open-air courtyard of the imperial palace, surrounded by fragrant jasmine and the soft splashing of a marble fountain, Constantine sat cross-legged on a bench, stripped of his heavy battle armor. He looked down at the scratched 125cc dirt bike leaning against a ancient column, and then at the worn, glowing pages of Madison's mysterious old book resting on a stone table.

"Your book contains the unfolding map of the future, and your strange iron beast carries the very speed of the wind," the Emperor said softly, his voice heavy with awe. "But it is not your technology that has truly humbled me today. It is your faith. Tell me, how can a mere boy and girl stand so firm, completely untroubled, in the chaotic midst of an empire's collapse?"

Cash stepped forward, his striking blue eyes locking directly onto the ruler's gaze with a fierce, quiet confidence that seemed far beyond his ten years.

"Because our King has already conquered the world, General," Cash said, leaning gently against the handlebars of his bike. "Empires rise and fall, crowns rust, and kingdoms turn to dust. But His love never fails, and His kingdom will have no end."

Name: _____

Date: _____

Chapter 9: The Final Spark

The next morning, the coordinates on Madison's ancient book began to fracture once again, the moving lines spinning in a tight circle that pointed directly back toward the hidden vineyard.

"It's time to go home, Maddy," Cash said, his voice laced with a gentle maturity.

They walked back to the limestone cave, Constantine accompanying them with a small guard of honor. As Cash pulled away the olive branches, exposing the dirtbike, the copper coils instantly flared into a brilliant, pulsing sapphire blue halo.

"Your departure is as mysterious as your arrival," Constantine smiled, bowing his head in deep respect. "But the name of Christ will never be forgotten in this empire. I will issue a decree—the Edict of Milan—ensuring no Christian shall ever face the lions again."

Madison climbed onto the back of the seat, her long blond hair catching the blue light of the portal. Cash gripped the handlebars and kicked the starter. The engine whistled its perfect harmonic note, synchronizing with the glowing pages of the book.

"Stand firm, Constantine!" Cash yelled over the roaring hum.

A brilliant flash of white light enveloped the cave. The ancient marble structures, the red banners, and the Emperor of Rome vanished into a tunnel of rushing wind.

Name: _____

Date: _____

Chapter 10: The Oceanside Legacy

With a sharp screech of rubber, the dirtbike skidded across the smooth concrete floor of the Oceanside garage, coming to a gentle stop next to a row of surfboards. The cool, crisp California sea breeze rushed through the door, carrying the familiar scent of salt air.

Cash killed the engine. The copper coils sat silent, looking like ordinary metal once again.

Madison climbed down, holding the ancient book securely against her chest. When she opened the cover, the chaotic symbols of the fourth century had completely cleared, locking into a permanent, beautifully inscribed layout that read: The Victory of Faith.

The side door of the garage opened, and Daddy Swank stepped inside, his tool belt jingling. He looked at their dusty clothes, then at the bright, serious expressions on his children's faces.

"You two look like you just finished a heavy sparring session," their dad smiled, his own blue eyes bright with pride. "Did you keep your guard up?"

Cash looked at Madison, a deep, knowing smile breaking across his handsome face. He walked over and clapped a hand onto the dirtbike's handlebars.

"We kept our guard up, Dad," Cash said, his voice ringing with an unshakeable, profound certainty. "But more importantly, we saw that when you trust God, the biggest bridges in the world can't stand against His deliverance."

Name: _____

Date: _____

Grade _____

Part 1:
Use the words in the box below to complete the sentences. Each word is used only once.

Tiber | Chi-Rho | Maxentius | Constantine | Praetorian Guard | AD 312

1. The historic Battle of the Milvian Bridge took place in October of the year _____.
2. The two Roman leaders fighting for absolute control of the Western Roman Empire were _____ and Maxentius.
3. The famous Christian monogram painted on the shields of the winning army is known as the _____.
4. The Milvian Bridge crossed over the _____ River, which was a vital water route leading into Rome.
5. _____ was the rival emperor who drowned during the chaotic retreat from the battlefield.
6. The elite unit of the imperial Roman army that fought alongside the defeated emperor was called the _____.

Part 2: True or False
Write True or False next to each statement based on historical facts.

1. _____ Before the battle, Constantine reported seeing a miraculous vision in the sky featuring a Christian symbol and a message telling him he would conquer.
2. _____ The Greek phrase associated with Constantine's vision, En Toutoi Nika, translates to English as "In this sign, surrender."
3. _____ The temporary bridge that collapsed and caused many soldiers to drown was made out of a string of wooden boats tied together.
4. _____ Following his massive victory at the Milvian Bridge, Constantine immediately ordered a renewed, brutal persecution of all Christians throughout Rome.