

Battle for Freedom

Rowan watches helplessly as Roman soldiers steal her precious sheep. When she's spotted, Rowan has to flee but vows to never let it happen again. After meeting a wounded Iceni soldier in the marshes, Rowan realises she could be vital in helping Queen Boudicca's fight against the Romans. But can she find the courage to fight for their freedom?

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This book is Brown Band/Level 12

Battle for Freedom

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Maverick

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Illustrated by
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'Battle for Freedom'

An original concept by Amanda Brandon

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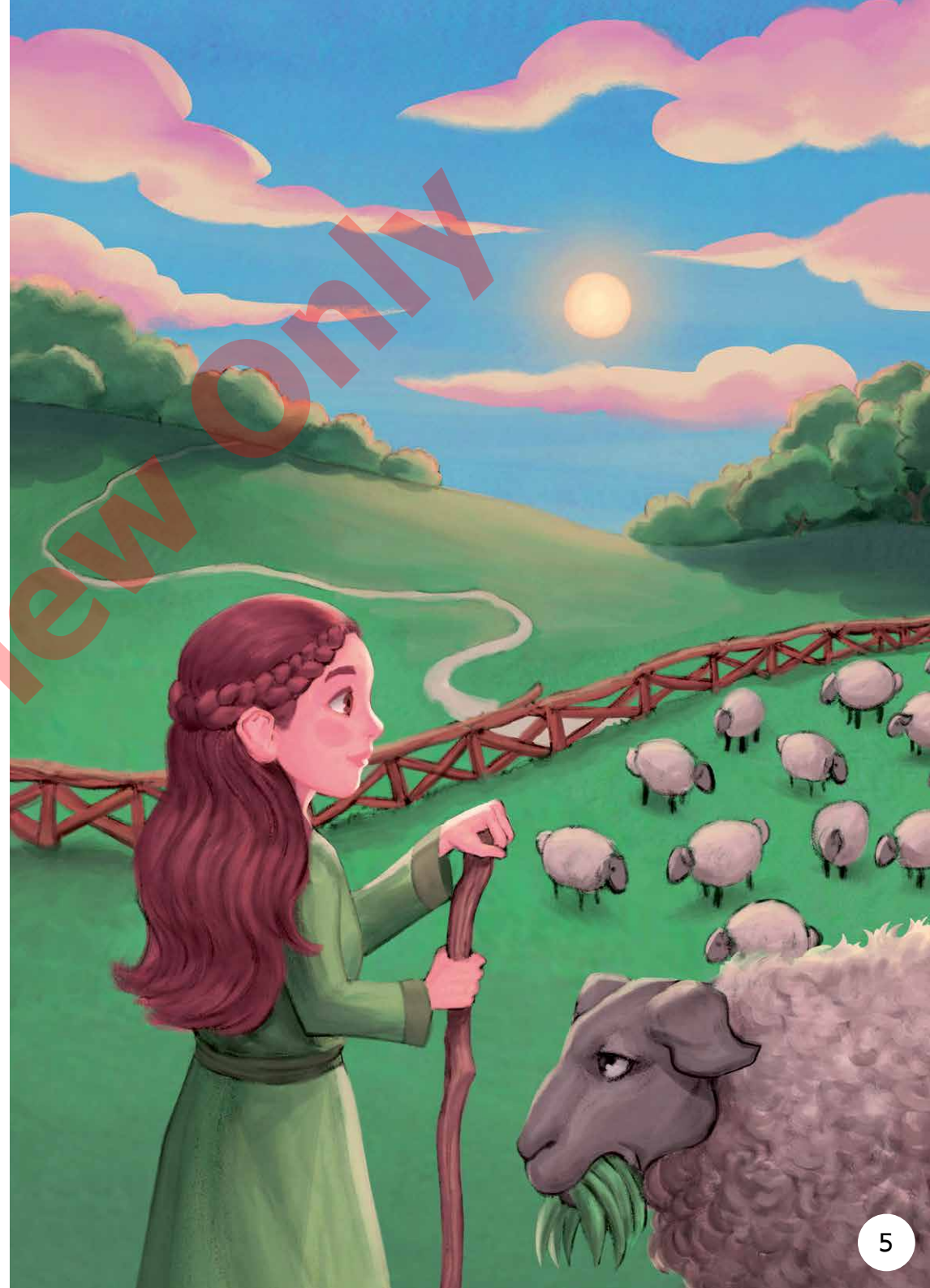


Chapter 1

Rowan shivered in the damp air and felt wet grass brush her legs. She tightened her leather belt and hurried across the muddy field. It would be a foggy night ahead.

She wanted to count the tribe's sheep before the mist came down and she could see no further.

As she approached the field, she saw the sheep had gathered together for warmth. Their woolly coats created a blanket in the barren field. She sighed with relief. At least she wouldn't have to round them up.



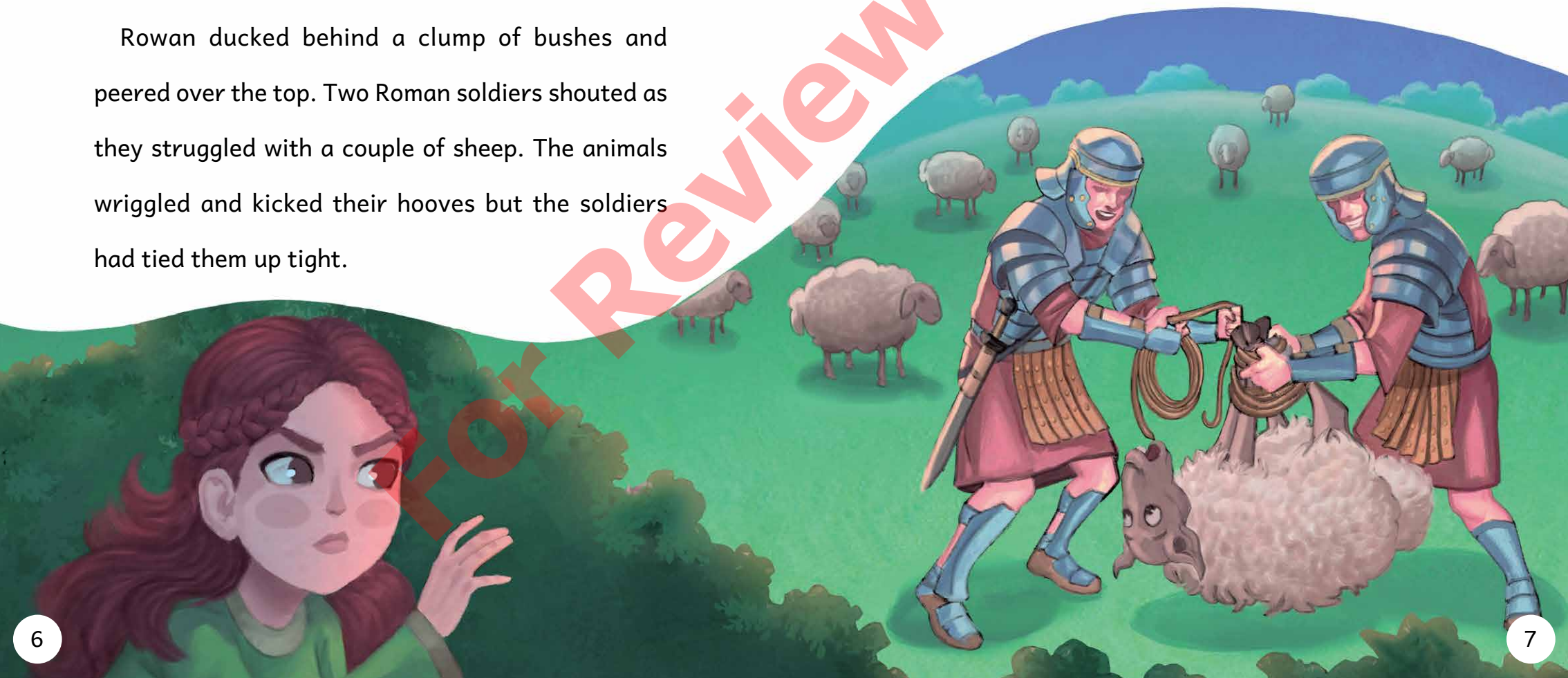
Suddenly, Rowan heard a laugh and the squelch of feet in the thick marsh mud. But they were not the feet of a four-legged sheep.

The noise was followed by a panicked bleat. Her heart thudded against her chest. She wasn't alone. Others were here too.

Rowan ducked behind a clump of bushes and peered over the top. Two Roman soldiers shouted as they struggled with a couple of sheep. The animals wriggled and kicked their hooves but the soldiers had tied them up tight.

Those were *her* sheep. Rowan scowled and clenched her fists. Without thinking, she charged out and yelled, "Stop!"

The soldiers looked startled. Then they laughed. They said something she couldn't understand and pointed at her.



All of Rowan's courage disappeared. What could she do against two Roman soldiers? She saw the glint of their swords. They had roped the animals together and their fists looked big and rough. She swallowed and felt her body freeze.

One soldier took a step nearer. Rowan feared he was going to grab her too. She jolted to life. All she could think to do was to *run!*



Chapter 2

Rowan sped off across the marshland. Thick mud oozed through her wooden sandals and briars ripped at her dress as she crashed blindly into a bush. She picked herself up and ran on.

She looked behind, fearful that the soldiers had followed. By now, the mist had thickened. It swirled in patches around her, making it hard to see ahead. Rowan panted and clutched her side as she stopped to catch her breath. When she calmed down, she listened. There was no sound. No bleats or shouts.