FEARON'S WORLD HISTORY, Chapter 9

Reading and Comprehension

Name ___________________________ Period ___________________________

After you read the story of Spartacus, circle the letter of the best answer to complete each statement.

The Story of Spartacus

Spartacus was born in Thrace, a Roman province that had been captured from the Greeks. As a boy, Spartacus lived the peaceful life of a shepherd. When he was older he had to join the Roman army. Spartacus did not want to fight as a Roman soldier. He was brave, and he was strong. But he was not interested in battling for Rome. So he left the army.

Because of this, Spartacus was arrested. He was taken as a slave. There were thousands of slaves in the Roman Empire. Some were treated well. Others had cruel masters who beat them and worked them almost to death.

Spartacus was tall and strong. "He would make a fine gladiator!" someone decided. A training school for Roman gladiators purchased Spartacus. They trained him to fight in the arena. Spartacus would use his training against the Romans themselves.

In 73 B.C. Spartacus, along with 70 other slaves, escaped from their Roman slave-masters. The band of runaway slaves robbed travelers on the Roman roads of clubs and daggers. Soon they had enough weapons to call themselves an army.

They settled in at a hideout on Mt. Vesuvius. There they planned a rebellion. More runaway slaves came to join Spartacus's band. Now they were a strong force. They were able to fight off Roman soldiers who came to recapture them.

When his army was large enough, Spartacus came down from the mountains. Spartacus and his 70,000 men fought for three years against the Roman army. The band of outlaws won their battles! Spartacus wanted to lead his men over the Alps, out of Italy, to freedom. But his men were confident now. They wanted to march on Rome. They convinced Spartacus to lead them.

When the time came to attack Rome, the men lost courage. They tried to turn back. But it was too late. Spartacus and his band were overwhelmed by the Roman army. Spartacus was wounded with a spear through his leg. But he continued to fight. Spartacus was down on one knee. Holding his shield before him, Spartacus struggled on. He saw his men cut down around him. It was the gladiator's last battle. He died bravely. His body was never found. The Roman army, at last, had crushed the rebels.

1. Roman slave masters made Spartacus
   a. work in gold mines.
   b. work in the fields.
   c. fight as a gladiator.

2. Spartacus wanted
   a. to become emperor of Rome.
   b. to be free.
   c. to be wealthy.

3. Spartacus's army
   a. won many battles against Roman soldiers.
   b. lost all its battles against Roman soldiers.
   c. never got a chance to fight Roman soldiers.

4. In the end Spartacus
   a. succeeded in freeing all slaves.
   b. left Italy to live in freedom.
   c. died in battle.