

Emma Branstetter

Καθαρός

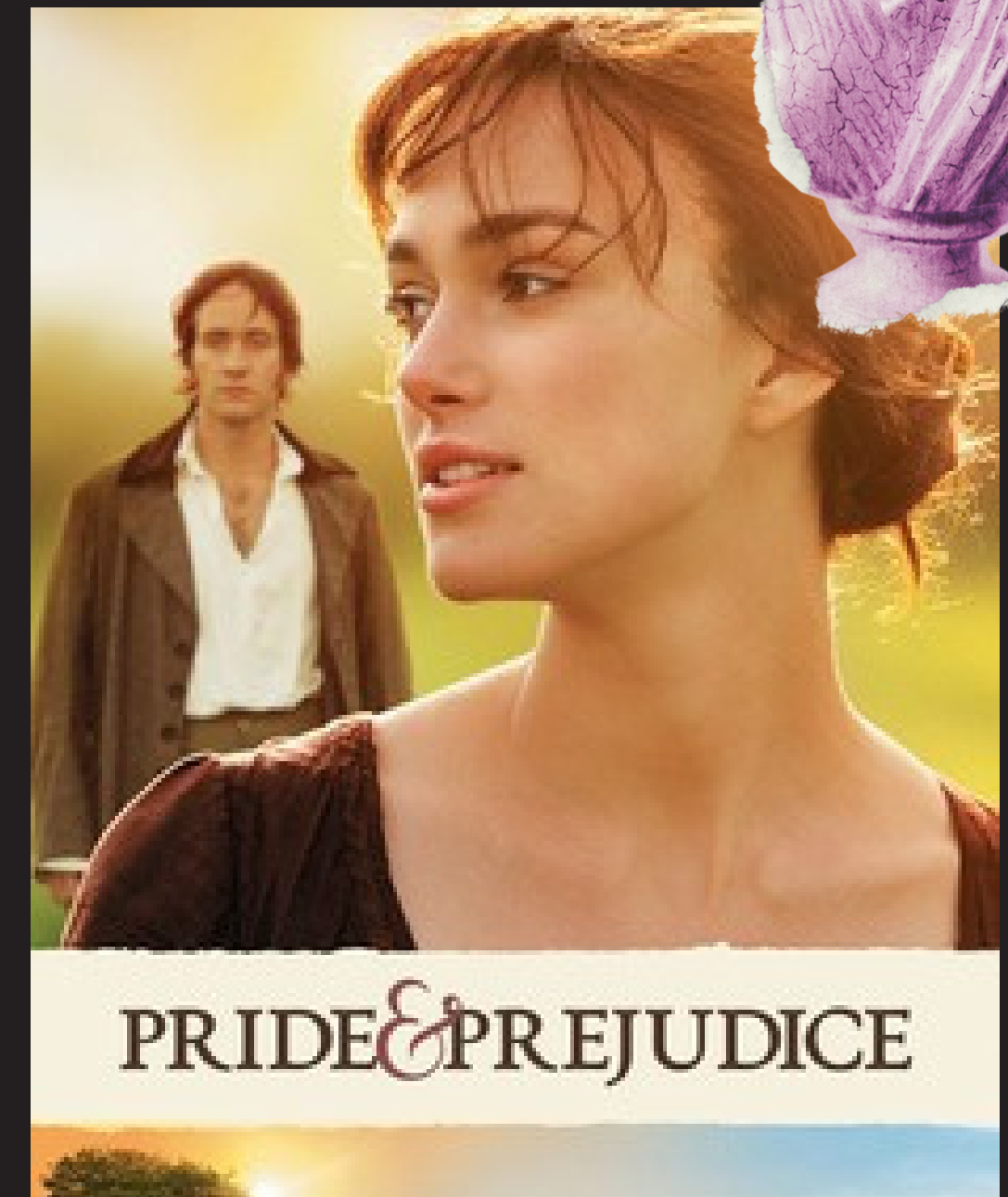
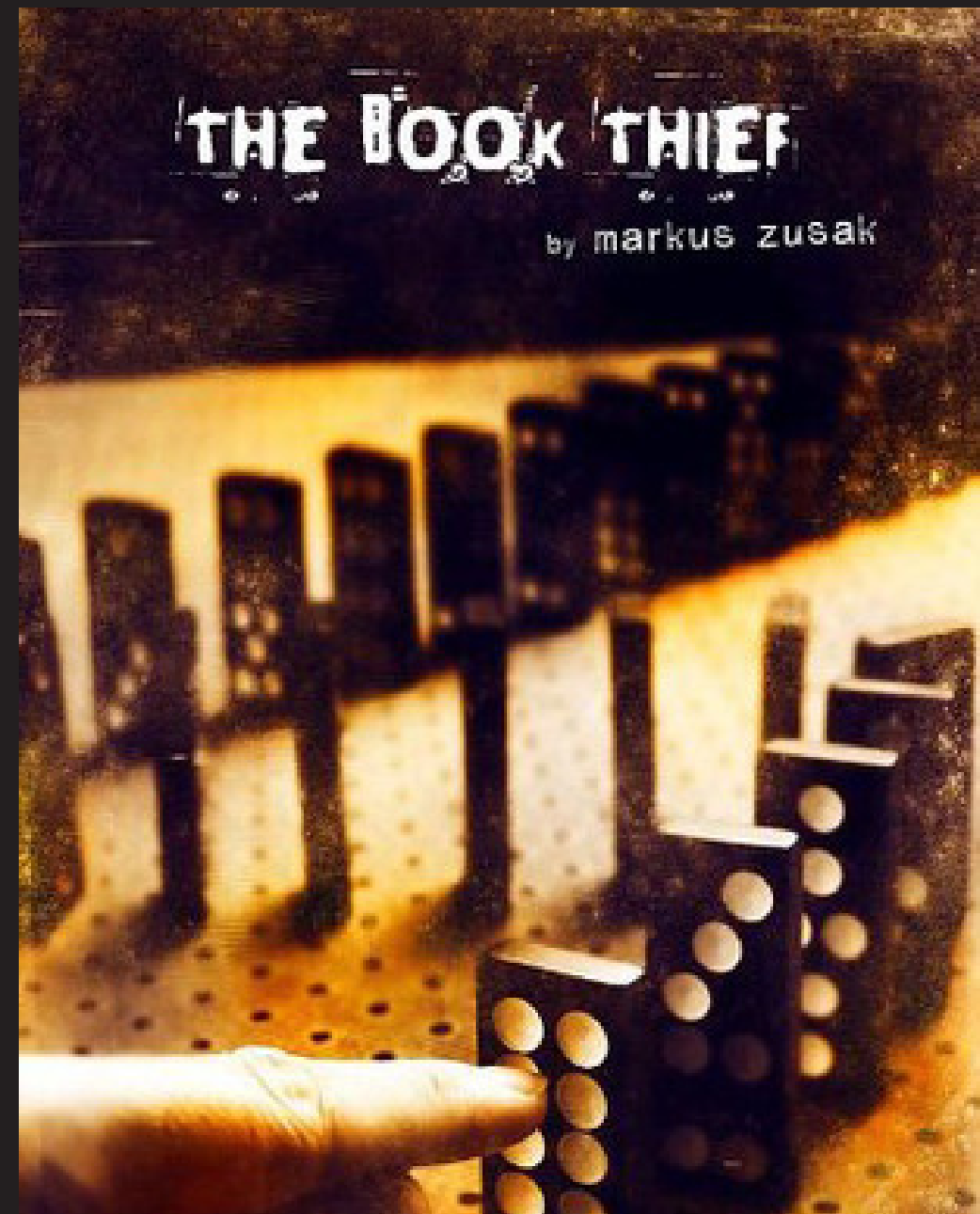
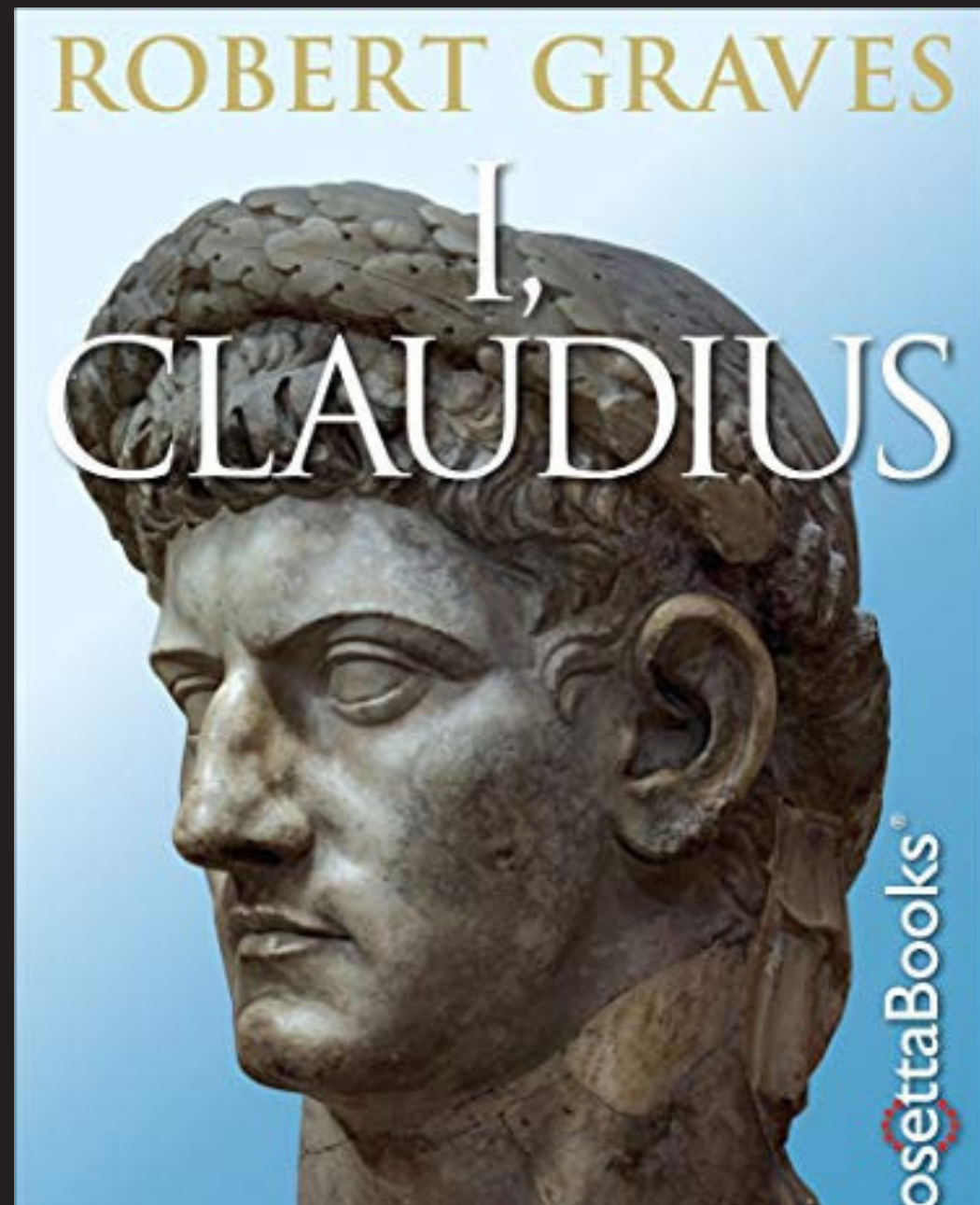
Setting Narrative in the Fourth-
Century Roman Empire



WHO LIKES STORIES?



Famous Historical Fiction



DID YOU KNOW



anything can be
historical fiction?



HISTORICAL FICTION

"Historical fiction makes us feel, as a protagonist, what would otherwise be lost to us. It transports us into the past." ¹

¹ Brayfield and Spratt, 28.



AREAS OF INTEREST

The Great Persecution

- How long did it last?
- Who was involved?
- What were the effects?

North Africa Donatism

- What is Donatism?
- How is it distinct?
- How did they effect Christian history?
- How much did culture affect its course?

Constantine

- What is his role?
- What was his impact?
- How should I view him?

Council of Nicaea

- How important was it?
- How can I use it in the context of my story?





GREAT PERSECUTION

303- imperial edict of Nicomedia, issued by Diocletian

311- unofficial wane

313- Edict of Toleration

In the weeks shortly after my father's arrest, through the days when we struggled to find the mundane in the irregular, a flock without our shepherd, we trusted more to hope for the best than we did later.

"Perhaps it is a misunderstanding," they once said, despite how the word spread of martyrs suffering for the sake of their Lord. Or even stranger, famed *traditores*—betrayers of the faith, lost to eternity. "Perhaps they will let him go." *Perhaps they will not harm him*, everyone thought, yet none said. We knew wishing for such fortune was foolish and beyond reason. The emperors needed no reason to lavish their cruelty on us Christians.

"Perhaps Christ will return and he will be spared." That, I found, was the most disagreeable premise of all. The thought alone of the *Parousia* bewildered me, and the signs of the times only convinced us all the more that it would soon come. However, I didn't want others to tell me how to feel, what to believe. I could see for myself that Christ, who my father served so unabashedly, was the very reason he spent those three years in prison. Why, then, would He cause him—all of them—to suffer needlessly if the divine plan was for Him to return tomorrow? Why, then, were more falling away every day?

Everything had felt both right and wrong at the same time, leaving me, a child, with an unsettled faith and nothing but waning hopes to steady me.

PHRYGIA

Known for King Midas

Located in central Asia Minor

“Before Constantine, Christianity in Asia Minor took the form of a multitude of separate, more or less isolated communities... small communities, with horizons extending not far beyond their immediate neighbors, and few common institutions which would have served to bind the region together as a whole.” ²

² Thonemann, 199.





NORTH AFRICA

Carthage

Metropolis in modern-day Tunisia

Decline after the Punic wars until the Christian era

Donatism

Schism in the African Church

Doves to hawks
traditores

It was the largest of the buildings that held the most history, sneering down at those smaller than them like kings who had grown too old for their kingdoms. But despite the weathered foundations of the metropolis, every person, every thing moved like a single living creature, breathing, moving, every part with a role to fill. Filled to a standard that was stuffy and alien, as though I had stumbled upon an animal I had never seen before, or a book with its pages opened to a foreign language. So much of it was like home—the market barter, the merchants and the trades, even the state officials that walked the arenaceous streets.

But where our home in Phrygia had stood with its vast fields and sparse houses of mortar, Phrygia was to Carthage as a stream was to a raging river. Strange as it was, I felt as if I had never stepped off the boat and was still chartering through the sea. Even still, the seeds of the lower class were something somber, wriggling in dust for the want to become something greater, to be seen. This was the single thing that I knew, something I saw in Phrygia as well. Even in a city so lively as this, it was one more city waiting to be forgotten by its rulers.

CONSTANTINE THE GREAT

Was he really that Great?

Christian? Politician? Expansionist?

“It is Donatism—technically, perhaps, a schism rather than a heresy, for the rent it caused in the one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church was not first and foremost doctrinal. Ecclesiological convention has it that whereas heresy is opposed to faith, schism is opposed to love...”³

³ Quash and Ward, 83.



Donatism Early History

304

311

313-314

317

Height of the
Persecution

Caecilian vs. Majorinus

Majorinus' death

Council of Arles

Skirmish at Carthage

Martyrs of Abitina

“If we compromise, how can we remain set apart?”

“I am a vessel for Christ. But so are you.” Talitha’s eyes shed a darker hue. “And so are all who call themselves Christians. That is how we are set apart. We allow Him to govern our actions. Such is not how the world lives.”

I turned to the fields, the breeze singing a soft tune in my ears. “Then, how *are* we meant to live?” I asked.

When I looked back at Talitha, she was watching me, studying me. As if I were the only other person to exist. And she still stood firm. “According to the purpose He calls you toward.”



NICAEA

- 325
- Fundamental for Christianity going forward

“The council of Nicaea met on 20 May 325. Only half a dozen bishops came from the Latin West; the bishop of Rome excused himself but sent two deacons to represent him. But it was a representative gathering of the Eastern churches, comprising 250 to 300 bishops from all the Greek-speaking provinces. Constantine himself presided at the crucial debates on the doctrinal issue, and took an active part in guiding the discussion.” ⁴

⁴ Jones, 87.

Nicene Creed

I believe in one God, the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all things visible and invisible. I believe in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of God, born of the Father before all ages. God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten not made, consubstantial with the Father; through Him all things were made. For us men and for our salvation He came down from heaven, and by the Holy Spirit was incarnate of the Virgin Mary and became man. For our sake He was crucified under Pontius Pilate, He suffered death and was buried, and rose again on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures. He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead and His kingdom will have no end. I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, who with the Father and the Son is adored and glorified, who has spoken through the Prophets. I believe in one holy, Catholic, and apostolic Church. I confess one baptism for the forgiveness of sins and I look forward to the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come. Amen.

LEGEND SAYS...





CHARACTERS

- Accius - MC (1st limited POV)
- Petrus - father, conflict drives Accius away
- Talitha, Cyrus - foil characters
- Majorinus, Donatus, Athanasius - historical figures, what are their roles?



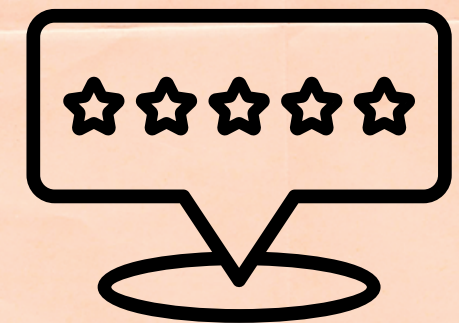
Research



Planning



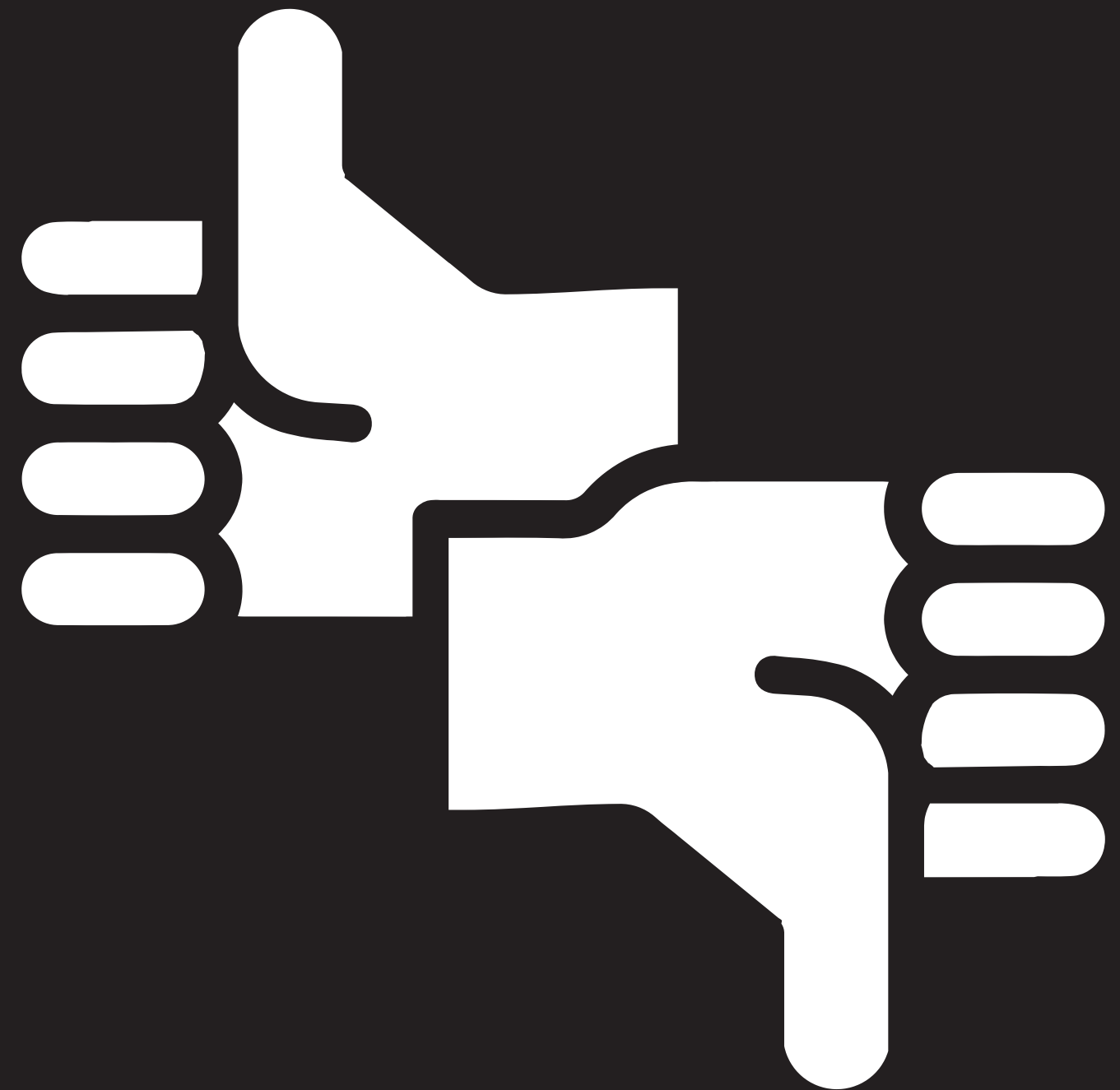
Writing



Review

PEER REVIEW

Come see me!



*Thank
you!*

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