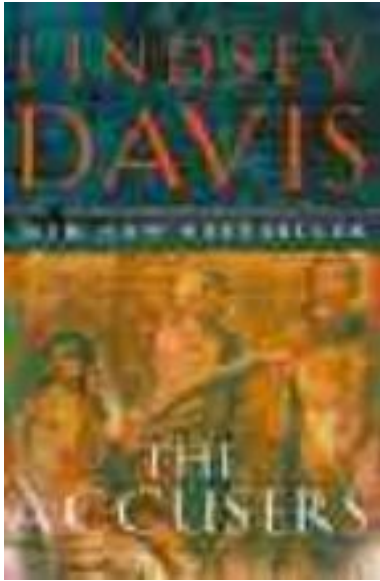


THE ACCUSERS



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Having returned from his trip to Londinium, Falco takes up employment with Paccius Africanus and Silius Italicus, two lawyers at the top of their trade. For the trial of a senator they need Falco to make an affidavit confirming repayment of a loan. Having been out of the country and starved of Forum gossip for some time, Falco has little interest in this trial, so he makes his deposition and then leaves. The prosecution are successful and a large financial judgement is made, but one month later the senator is dead, apparently by suicide.

The heirs are now in a situation of not having to pay up, and the prosecutor Silius Italicus suddenly decides to seek out Falco. With a little coercion, Falco joins the prosecution in seeking to persuade a magistrate to instigate a new trial against Metellus' son. Blinded by the vision of rich pickings to be gained by the prosecution, Falco temporarily forgets that, if they fail, the financial penalties levelled against the informers who brought the case are potentially enormous.