



colette

She has a passion for clothing and style, especially anything pink. When she grows up, she wants to be a fashion editor.



Paulina

Cheerful and kind, she loves traveling and meeting rodents from all over the world. She has a magic touch when it comes to technology.



violet

She's the bookworm of the group, and she loves learning. She enjoys classical music and dreams of becoming a famous violinist.

THE THEA SISTERS



Nicky

She comes from Australia and is very enthusiastic about sports and nature. She loves being outside and is always ready to get up and go!



Pamela

She is a great mechanic: Give her a screwdriver and she'll fix anything! She loves pizza, which she eats every day, and she loves to cook.



Do you want to help the Thea Sisters in this new adventure? It's not hard – just follow the clues!

When you see this magnifying glass, pay attention: It means there's an important clue on the page. Each time one appears, we'll review the clues so we don't miss anything.

**ARE YOU READY?
A NEW MYSTERY AWAITS!**



FINAL PREPARATIONS

It was a beautiful day at Mouseford Academy, and one room in the dorm was **buzzing** with activity.

“**PAM!**” a voice squeaked from inside a closet. “Where’s my straw hat with the pink-polka-dotted turquoise ribbon?”

A second later, Colette emerged from behind a rack of dresses. She scampered over to the bed and rummaged through an **ENORMOUSE** pile of clothes and accessories.

“How should I know, Coco?” Pam replied with a shrug. “There must be around **fifty** hats here, but I don’t see that one anywhere.”

“*At least I found these!*” Colette said. She pulled out a pair of **PINK** sandals from under a pile of handbags. “I simply have to bring them!”



At that moment Nicky, Violet, and Paulina appeared in the doorway.

“Are you two ready?” Nicky asked as she looked around the room. “Whoa! What happened in here? **Did a hurricane hit?!**”

“It’s just our Coco,” Pam said with a laugh. “She’s trying to pack her **bags**. I told her we would only be away for a week, but you know Colette.”

“I don’t care how long we’re staying,” Colette protested. “What matters is that we’re going to **Italy**, a country where fashion and elegance are very important! I need to be prepared for any **occasion!**”

“Yes, but we’re going to **Rome** for an archaeology competition, not a fashion show!” Violet pointed out.

A few days earlier, the Thea Sisters had learned they had been chosen to participate in

She's packing her bags!

What happened?

Did a hurricane hit?

Where's my hat?

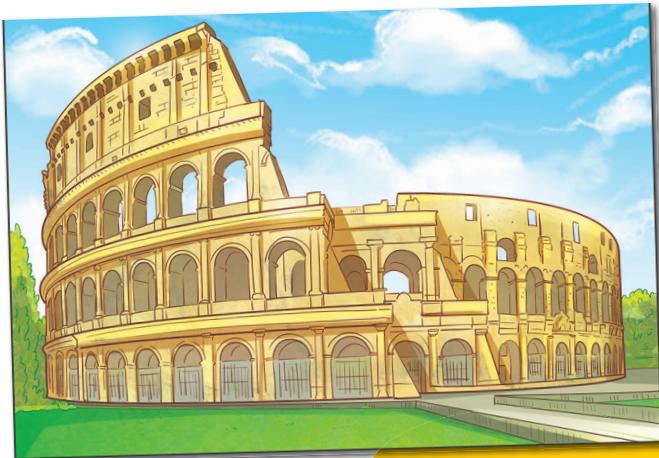




FINAL PREPARATIONS

the **International Archaeology Games** being held in Rome, Italy. A month before that, Amalia Angel, a **famous** Italian researcher, had been invited to Mouseford to give an **INTENSIVE** seminar on Roman archaeology.

The five friends had signed up for the seminar **IMMEDIATELY**, and after just a few classes, they were hooked on archaeology! Professor Angel gave fascinating lectures about life in **ancient Rome**. The Thea Sisters



THE COLOSSEUM



loved her stories about the incredible **works of art** that were created during that time period.

“I know, but I still need to look **fabumouse**,” Colette replied as she tried to close her suitcase without much success.

“Do you remember how much research we did on ancient **ROMAN** buildings like the Colosseum?” Paulina asked.

“It took a long time, but it was **WORTH IT!**” Violet squeaked. “Thanks to that research, Professor Angel nominated us for the competition. I feel like the **LUCKIEST** mouse in the world right now!”

“I know!” Colette agreed as she sat on her bag to get it to **close**. “I was so surprised when our acceptance letter arrived.”

“And just think, we leave today!” Nicky exclaimed. She leaned over Colette and



FINAL PREPARATIONS

snapped the lock on her friend's bag shut.

"Thanks!" Colette squeaked with a sigh of relief. "**Four more bags and I'll be all set!** I just need to find one last thing . . ."

"What's this doing here?" Paulina asked as she **PULLED** something out from behind the chair cushion.





“That’s my **straw hat!**”

Colette exclaimed. “Way to go, Paulina. You found it!”

“Great!” Pam said, hopping up from the chair. “Now I think we’re ready to go.”



**ROME
IS WAITING!**

ANCIENT ROME

According to ancient mythology, **Rome was founded in 753 BC**

by Romulus, who was raised by a wolf along with his twin brother, Remus. Today, the **Capitoline Wolf** —

a bronze sculpture depicting the founding of Rome — is considered a **symbol of the city**.



Rome was governed for more than two hundred years by seven kings: **Romulus, Numa Pompilius, Tullus Hostilius, Ancus Marcius, Lucius Tarquinius Priscus, Servius Tullius,** and **Lucius Tarquinius Superbus**. Once the republic of Rome was founded, it lasted for five hundred years, and Rome became the capital of an enormous empire that stretched across a large part of modern Europe, part of Africa, and part of Asia.

The Roman Empire reached the **height of its splendor** in the first centuries AD. The western half of the empire declined quickly, while the eastern half of the Roman Empire (later known as the Byzantine Empire) survived until 1453.