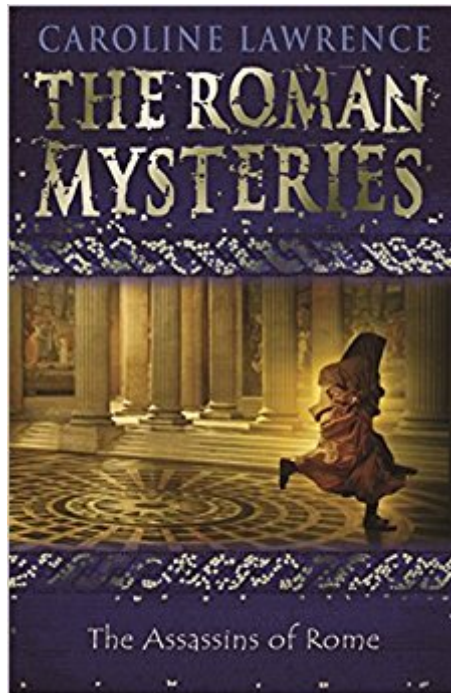


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# The Assassins Of Rome (The Roman Mysteries)



## Synopsis

The fourth in Caroline Lawrence's internationally bestselling Roman Mysteries series, re-issued with a fantastic new cover look. Jonathan goes on a secret quest to Rome, and Flavia, Nubia and Lupus set out to find him. Their dangerous mission takes them to the Golden House of Nero where a deadly assassin is rumoured to be at work - and they learn what happened to Jonathan's family during the terrible destruction of Jerusalem nine years earlier. A talented storyteller, Caroline Lawrence has created a delightfully readable and accessible series that children will want to read time and time again.

## Book Information

Lexile Measure: 670L (What's this?)

Series: The Roman Mysteries (Book 4)

Paperback: 224 pages

Publisher: Orion Children's (April 1, 2003)

Language: English

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ISBN-13: 978-1842550236

Product Dimensions: 5 x 0.8 x 7.8 inches

Shipping Weight: 6.4 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.6 out of 5 stars 11 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #219,606 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #59 in [Books > Teens >](#)

[Historical Fiction > Ancient](#) #85 in [Books > Children's Books > Literature & Fiction > Historical](#)

[Fiction > Ancient Civilizations](#) #146 in [Books > Teens > Mysteries & Thrillers > Historical](#)

Age Range: 12 - 14 years

Grade Level: 2 - 4

## Customer Reviews

Grade 4-7 – Amateur sleuth Flavia Gemina and her friends Nubia, Lupus, and Jonathan return in the fourth book (Roaring Brook, 2003) in Caroline Lawrence's Roman Mysteries series. They are celebrating Jonathan's birthday and are told that Jonathan's uncle Simeon has just arrived for a visit and is telling tales of assassins hired to kill Emperor Titus. Simeon is on his way to Rome and Jonathan begs to go along with him, believing that his mother may be one of the Jewish women that Titus is holding captive in his palace in Rome. The pair leave Ostia for Rome, secretly followed by their friends. Jonathan eventually finds his mother, and Flavia, Nubia, and Lupus solve the

mystery surrounding the assassins and discover that many rumors about Titus are false. Each chapter alternates between the two adventures, which converge at the end of the book. Justine Eyre provides a skilled reading, giving the friends distinct voices and deftly handling the diverse accents of the minor characters. In most instances, the pacing is excellent, but the pause between the two story lines is too brief to fully alert listeners to the change. Chock full of rich details about Roman life in the first century, this is an exciting and fun listening experience.~ Wendy Woodfill, Hennepin County Library, Minnetonka, MN Copyright ~ © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

An interesting and exciting read that is extremely well researched. It is packed with accurate detail of everyday Roman life. The story is so well paced and involving that you don't realise just how much information you are absorbing~ SCHOOL LIBRARIANThe author's classical and Hebrew scholarship underpins the lively, modern tone of the thrilling adventures of four young detectives~ Nicolette JonesImmensely readable~ TIMES EDUCATIONAL SUPPLEMENT

It is a great book really giving a wonderful background to Rome itself and Roman and early Christian history. It is excellent for preparing a travel with children to Rome but also relates back to Jerusalem's history at that time. It can be read in the context of history lessons, but also for purposes of religious history. It can be read independently of the two previous books (The Secrets of Vesuvius and the Pirates of Pompeii), but I would advise to read the Thieves of Ostia first as it introduces the characters of the children.

This is book four of the Roman Mysteries. I downloaded this for my thirteen-year-old daughter to read. She really enjoyed it and felt that the content was age appropriate. She finds that she really identifies with the principal characters in the book. She recommends this story to any young teen interested in this period and this type of writing.

I read this series with my son & we both absolutely love them! And this was our favourite book so far.

My 11 year old boy is really enjoying reading these books. As soon as he finishes one, he asks for

the next. I got the first one from the library because of the title (I am originally from Ostia - Rome). After the third book he asked me: "Do you know who Plinio was?". But of course! I used to jog in the pinewood next to the villa of Plinio il Vecchio...

### Great kids book

I have taught introductory Latin to junior high students for several years. I use these books to incorporate Roman culture into our studies. Both the boys and girls enjoy these books as they are fast-paced and easy to read. They can connect with the four main characters as they are representative of both genders. The kids enjoy the storyline and the action/adventure/mystery format. I like the books because they contain historically accurate people, places, events and culture. They contain age-appropriate details and include a little Latin too (Flavia calls her father "pater" which is Latin for "father" and each book has a Latin motto. The motto for Assassins of Rome is *Lacrimae rerum* translated, sad things happen). In this book alone, there are at least 7 historic persons mentioned including Emperor Vespasian, Emperor Titus, Domitian and his boyhood friend, Britannicus, Nero and his wife Poppaea Sabina, and the Jewish historian, Flavius Josephus. The historic buildings noted are The Golden House, the Colosseum, Circus Maximus, and the Roman Forum. Four festivals are also mentioned; Ludi Romani, Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippur, and Sukkot.

It is Jonathan de Mordecai's eleventh birthday, and despite the presence of his friends Flavia, Nubian and Lupus, he's feeling a little apprehensive. Something bad always happens on his birthday, and sure enough, a visit from the local magistrate informs the family that a dangerous assassin known as Simeon is on the loose, and could be targeting Jonathan's father. Yet things may not be as bad as they appear: only a few chapters in, we learn that the assassin is actually Jonathan's uncle - the brother of his missing mother. He is on an important secret mission to Rome, and under the cover of darkness, he shares some astonishing news with his nephew. Refusing to be left behind, Jonathan accompanies Simeon to Rome, ignorant to the fact that his father has just been arrested. Hot on his tail are Flavia, Nubian and Lupus, hoping to stop their friend before he does something that gets him killed. "The Assassins of Rome" marks the first installment in this series that is specifically character-centric. Up until now the children have shared the spot-light, but "Assassins" definitely belongs to Jonathan. Likewise, it is less of a mystery as it is a mission, for Jonathan accompanies his uncle to Rome in the hopes of finding what happened to his long-lost

mother. Previous books have mentioned the siege of Jerusalem by Roman legions in 70AD, and Lawrence draws upon the bloody aftermath of that event in order to shape the context of this plot. No one, either adult or child, will walk away from this book without a rudimentary understanding of what happened and why, as well as the major figures that were involved. As Jonathan uncovers the sad story about his mother's past and her current whereabouts, Lawrence draws upon themes of child abandonment and religious persecution - and the potentially frightening idea that a child may not be the most important factor in a parent's life. With his low self-esteem and rather self-deprecating nature, Jonathan suffers under the implication that he's responsible for his mother's disappearance, particularly after overhearing a conversation between his father and uncle that confirms his guilt. Lawrence takes him on a journey of discovery through the streets of Rome and into the old Emperor's palace, guided by a little girl who lives in secret behind the walls. Meanwhile, his friends uncover what the assassins are *\*really\** doing in the city, and find their own way into the palace... Historical figures such as Emperor Titus, his brother Domitian, and his ex-paramour Berenice have important roles to play, in keeping with their real-life personalities, and other original characters are introduced or explored further. Particularly delightful is the young Jewish girl Rizpah, who lives in the darkness of the palace's secret passages and tunnels, and who is implied to be an albino who hides herself away from the sun (though in an odd oversight, Lawrence describes her as having pink eyes; despite this widespread belief, albino eyes are usually grey or blue - it just bugs me). Other than that, Lawrence once again finds the perfect balance of interesting and relevant historical tidbits to weave into her story, without getting too bogged down with displaying her extensive research to the detriment of the plot. At times the two plot strands that are at work throughout most of the book change too often between paragraphs, flitting back and forth in a choppy manner to the point where you begin to lose track of what's happening, but "The Assassins of Rome" is more character-driven than previous installments, and has the usual plot twist that manages to be neither convoluted nor obvious.

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