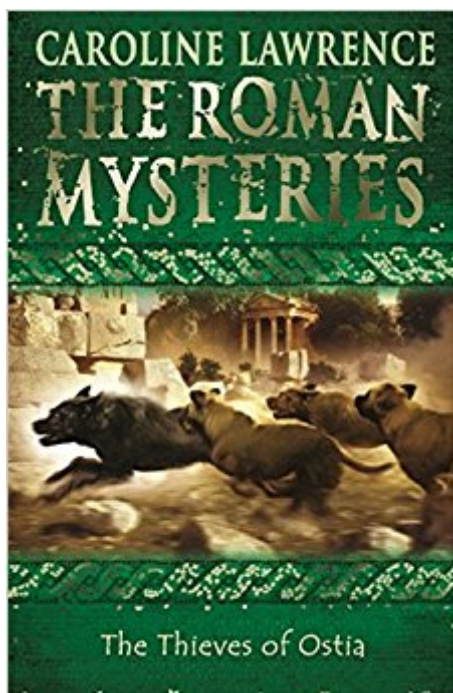


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# The Thieves Of Ostia (The Roman Mysteries)



## Synopsis

The first in Caroline Lawrence's internationally bestselling Roman Mysteries series, re-issued with a fantastic new cover look. Flavia Gemina is a natural at solving mysteries. The daughter of a ship's captain living in Ostia, the port of Rome, in AD79, she and her three friends, Jonathan, a Jewish boy (and secretly a Christian); Nubia, an African slave girl; and Lupus, a mute beggar boy, must work together to discover who is beheading the watchdogs that guard people's homes, and why. 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

Series: The Roman Mysteries (Book 1)

Paperback: 208 pages

Publisher: Orion Children's; New edition (April 1, 2002)

Language: English

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ISBN-13: 978-1842550205

Product Dimensions: 5.2 x 0.5 x 7.8 inches

Shipping Weight: 8 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.6 out of 5 stars 45 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #103,440 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #36 in [Books > Teens >](#)

[Historical Fiction > Ancient](#) #44 in [Books > Children's Books > Literature & Fiction > Historical](#)

[Fiction > Ancient Civilizations](#) #81 in [Books > Teens > Mysteries & Thrillers > Historical](#)

Age Range: 12 - 14 years

Grade Level: 2 - 4

## Customer Reviews

In this atmospheric debut novel, the first installment of a planned series, readers are whisked to the first century A.D. to help girl detective Flavia Gemina solve a brutal crime in the Roman port city of Ostia. When the guard dog belonging to Flavia's secretly Christian neighbors is slaughtered, Flavia sets out to find clues. She is accompanied by four trusty companions: Jonathan and Miriam, the Christian children; Nubia, a slave girl whom Flavia has recently acquired with her birthday money (with the purpose of emancipating her); and Lupus, a mute beggar boy. Many adventures later a pack of wild dogs chases them, they narrowly escape malicious slave traders and discover that their chief suspect has committed suicide by jumping from a lighthouse the children catch the culprit.

Those looking for thrill-a-minute entertainment will find their fill of near-catastrophic events here, but the violence may be hard for some readers to stomach. Red herrings emerge too conspicuously and dialogue is sometimes stilted. Nonetheless, this historical mystery offers an intriguing glimpse into the customs, attitudes and class systems of the Roman empire. Ages 9-14. Copyright 2002 Cahners Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Grade 4-6-This story takes place in the Roman port city of Ostia in the year A.D. 79. Flavia Gemina, daughter of a sea captain, is an accomplished amateur detective. Her companions include her neighbor, Jonathan; Lupus, a young beggar; and Nubia, an African slave about her age. When Jonathan's dog is beheaded and other canines are slain, Flavia and her friends set out to find the killer. Running from slave traders and wild dogs are only some of the dangers that they encounter. The book is fast paced, but another strength is its description of Roman life. The author provides a glimpse at the various classes that make up this society, and through the lives of the characters, readers learn about the attitudes, beliefs, and customs of the period. The treatment of slaves and the confusion about Christians are just some of the facts that are included. Vivid descriptions of the architecture, economy, and politics lend an authentic note. The information is skillfully woven into the story, providing details that heighten readers' interest. An enjoyable mystery, and more. Lana Miles, Duchesne Academy, Houston, TX Copyright 2002 Cahners Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Jake: In the book, "The Thieves of Ostia" from Caroline Lawrence, there are several main characters: Flavia Gemina, Miriam, and Jonathan. They are set to find the murderer of Miriam and Jonathan's Dog, Bobus. On their search to find the murderer other fatal cases happen. I like this book very much. It never gets boring and in addition to a captivating storyline it provides good information about ancient Greek and Roman times (e.g. Castor, Pollux, the Gemini sign, and Cerberus, the three headed dog of the underworld which is Greek). I also loved the way how Flavia solved the mystery, about "The Thieves in Ostia". I really don't have much criticism. A fact about the book that I didn't like, is that a lot of animals get killed along the way. Nina: I would recommend this book to 6th/7th grade English teachers, people who like plots with adventure and people who like realistic fiction. There are lots of creative details in this story. The fact that there is a lot of history and Roman style in this book makes it more fun to read. The interesting personalities of the main characters add to the already intriguing story. It is practically impossible to accurately guess the

ending, because it takes an unexpected twist just before the climax. I enjoyed reading this book and look forward to reading the sequels.

**Julia:** This book is so amazing!! Every time a chapter ends you cannot stop reading because you have to see how the situation ends... Once you start something exciting, the chapter ends and the people mentioned in it are others than in the chapter before! I would highly recommend this book for 5th and 6th graders (I'm a 6th grader and I loved it!) or for reading assignments; the way Flavia Gemina solves the mystery of the dog murderer and how/why the dog murderer did it is so smart!

**Marie:** The book *Thieves of Ostia* is so exciting. It is about a girl named Flavia, a boy named Jonathan and a slavegirl named Nubia. Together they solve a mystery: in their neighborhood dogs are getting beheaded. I would recommend this book especially for 5th and 6th graders, but older and younger people can also read it.

**Anneke:** I think the book *the Thieves of Ostia* is a good book because it has suspension and it is interesting. It is very easy to read and not hard to understand. You can learn a lot about the roman times and their living. You can read it in 6th grade even though it is not hard. It gives the children things to think about like , slaves and the way they were treated. You can also learn a bit of Latin and Greek.

**Caroline:** *The Thieves of Ostia* in *The Roman Mysteries Series* starring Flavia, Nubia, Jonathan, and Lupus as main characters by Caroline Lawrence is an interesting tale full of details and primed for excitement. The tale is adventurous, but full of danger. Flavia, with a knack for finding things and a kind heart; Nubia, an African slaved and the only person who really understands dogs; Jonathon, a Jew with strength and knowledge; and Lupus, a mute beggar boy who lives in the streets of Ostia, Ancient Rome must work together to catch a thief who is trying to steal gold coins from Flavia's house. Flavia catches Lupus stealing from her house. Will Flavia ever be able to forgive Lupus for robbing her house? And will Flavia be able to catch the dog killer on her street? This book is to be recommended to children ages 8 and up.

**Max:** The book "*The thieves of Ostia*" is a very good book and is good for children that like mystery stories plus it also can tell you about history and about the daily life people had. The book can also tell you what they had to do and where they had to go. With the book you can also learn what they had to do and where they lived and how they lived. The book can also tell you how rich and how poor people were. The book may not have won a Newbery medal but I would definitely give it one.

**Erin:** I think it is a great book for people around the age nine and higher and for those that are fans of mysteries and ancient history books. I liked how Caroline Lawrence added cliffhangers in the story, because it gets very interesting in the last sentence of some chapters. The cliffhangers try to urge the reader to keep on reading, because it is very fascinating. An example for a cliffhanger is: "There is a man on top of the lighthouse and I think he is going to jump!" and then it moves on to the next chapter. I also loved the fact that Caroline Lawrence made her story very

descriptive and has a lot of exciting facts of ancient history, e.g. Cerberus, the three headed dog in the underworld of Hades or Castor and Pollux, two twins that are called Gemini. I hope that the reader will enjoy the book as much as I did and will want to read the whole series.

Set in the Ancient Roman Empire, this mystery subtly teaches a lot about the culture and beliefs of the time.

I plan to read this book with a group of 10-12 home schoolers this summer. There is much to teach about Classical history, of course, and this book presents the teacher with good opportunities to begin the process, including geography, which is a critical element of history that is often overlooked. The complaint of some of these reviewers about the mention of the faith of Jesus in this story strikes me as the typical, knee-jerk reaction of our times against anything that has to do with the Good Shepherd. That element of the story is a very small part of the overall book (though if it were the main theme, that would be fine with me), and it actually enters into the picture near the end of the book. Even a non-believing, religious skeptic ought to be able to live with that! Good grief. After all, Jesus DID happen. Yes, the relationships of the four children, as some reviewers rightly note, are contrived and improbable - but they are not altogether impossible. As far as young readers are concerned, that issue is irrelevant. Why not let them believe while they can in a world where young people can get along and be friends regardless of social status? Is that a bad thing? In short, the story seizes one's attention from the first page and never lets it go. (My 32-year-old daughter could not put it down and finished it in a few hours.) I look forward to going through this book with the neighborhood kids this summer.

My seven-year-old daughter, who reads above grade-level, read twelve of the first thirteen books in the series (skipping *Sirens of Surrentum* for now). She liked the series so much that she read each book four times, and in the process became very knowledgeable about Ancient Roman history and daily life. She has this to say specifically about *Thieves of Ostia*: "The most interesting part of this book is when they capture the thief at the end. I liked the book very much because it was interesting and exciting. It made me want to read more books in the series."

*The Thieves of Ostia* is a great book. It is full of exciting details and scenes that continue to pull you into reading the rest of the novel. I am a 6th grade boy that normally hates reading but with *The Thieves of Ostia*, I was impressed. *The Thieves of Ostia* is a historical fiction/mystery novel that is

part of the 6 book series, The Roman Mysteries, that takes place in Ancient Italy. In The Thieves of Ostia, Flavia Gemina along with her three friends, Jonathan, Lupus, and slave-girl Nubia, all try to put the pieces together to figure out who is killing the dogs of Ostia. Before I totally ruin the novel, I suggest you go read The Thieves of Ostia.

This book is one of a series of books which are set in ancient Rome and its empire. The whole series should be read in order to avoid confusion. I found one of them by chance, and because I studied Latin in high school (a hundred years ago!) I thought I would try it for "old times' sake". It was fascinating and steeped in the history of the time, as well as exciting and educational for young people. So many kids today don't have a chance to learn "world history"... ancient and boring they think, but this is a chance to enjoy the mystery while learning the history! Lots of action and danger to keep one reading!

I downloaded this book for my thirteen-year-old daughter. She had originally borrowed this story from the public library (in French) and had read it at age ten. She loved the series and wanted to read it in English, hence the download. She feels that the content of the book is very age appropriate and she loved the principal characters. As she put it, 'it is a very good book and a great start to the series. It is full of adventure and mystery.' Thus my daughter highly recommends the book to young teens interested in the period and this style of writing.

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