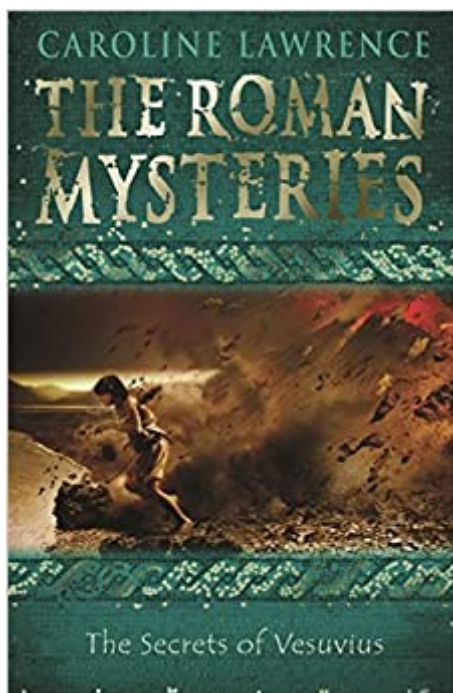


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# The Secrets Of Vesuvius (The Roman Mysteries)



## Synopsis

It's the summer of AD 79 and Flavia Gemina and her friends, Jonathan, Nubia and Lupus, set sail for the Bay of Naples where they are going to stay with Flavia's uncle near Pompeii. Once they arrive, they are soon absorbed in a quest to solve a riddle that may lead to treasure. But then tragedy strikes: Mount Vesuvius erupts and the friends must flee for their lives! Not just a mystery - this is an absolutely thrilling action adventure that brings history to life!

## Book Information

Series: The Roman Mysteries (Book 2)

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Age Range: 12 - 14 years

Grade Level: 7 - 9

## Customer Reviews

Young detective Flavia Gemina and her sidekicks Jonathan, Nubia and Lupus return in *The Secrets of Vesuvius*, the second in *The Roman Mysteries* series after *The Thieves of Ostia*. Here the quartet travels across the Bay of Naples to spend time with Flavia's uncle near Pompeii. They investigate a potentially treasure-yielding riddle, but when Vesuvius erupts, the friends run for their lives. Ages 11-14. Copyright 2002 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Grade 4-7-A mystery set in ancient Rome. When Flavia, Jonathan, Lupus, and Nubia rescue an admiral from a boating accident, he not only rewards them, but he also offers them a riddle that holds the promise of great treasure to anyone who can solve it. He explains that he saw the riddle

on the wall of a blacksmith shop and that the blacksmith could help solve it if they can find him. Later, the four friends spend the summer with Flavia's uncle, who lives near Mt. Vesuvius in Pompeii and find Vulcan, the blacksmith. He is an orphan and wants to solve his own mystery of why his parents abandoned him. Just as they are all beginning to figure out these conundrums, the great Vesuvius erupts and they must flee for their lives. The action begins slowly and doesn't really pick up until the volcano starts erupting, about halfway through the book. Also, the mystery element is somewhat confusing and hard to follow. However, the many interesting details about Roman life incorporated into the story provide insight into the period. Readers who are interested in the time as well as fans of the first book in the series, *The Thieves of Ostia* (Roaring Brook, 2002), may be willing to stick with it until the end. Kristen Oravec, Cuyahoga County Public Library, Strongsville, OH Copyright 2002 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

I bought this for my fifth grade class, because I need engaging, well written historical fiction for them. Luckily I read it first. I enjoyed the story very much. The writing was descriptive and the characters were engaging. There were some adult issues in the book which made it "too adult" to put in my fifth grade classroom library. Spoilers! One of the characters suspects that his wife has been unfaithful and has had a baby by another man. I won't say whom because you may want to buy this for your older student. My opinion (you may agree or disagree) was that this subject made me decide not to invest in the whole series for my classroom. That being said, I am planning on reading more to see if there are any I can use in my class, because the writing style was such that I know my kiddos would like it!

This series was very useful when I was trying to woo my 11 year-old stepdaughter away from TV and back to reading. Sad to say, TV and computer games are so dynamic that books often can't compete with them for a child's attention. However this series, following the adventures of young sleuth Flavia and her friends, has enough pow wham and boom to be absolutely gripping. Set in the aftermath of the AD 79 eruption of Vesuvius, this is a powerful story with many modern resonances, while remaining historically correct and well-written. Highly recommended to young readers who want a thrilling read.

The book introduces Pompeii and surroundings - a wonderful preparation for holidays to Naples and surroundings. It also tells the story of the eruption of Vesuvius. It's a great book for teenagers,

younger children need more explanation, which is fine too. I would advise to first read the Thieves of Ostia that introduces the children. The Pirates of Pompeii is an immediate sequel to the Secrets of Vesuvius.

My family has read every book in this Roman Mysteries series. We read them aloud to our children. When we come to the end of one chapter, they beg for us to continue to the next.

This is the second book in the Roman Mysteries series of books. I downloaded this so that my thirteen-year-old could read this while on summer vacation. She burnt through it in one day. She found it to be a good story and a nice follow up to the original book. She feels that the content was age appropriate and she recommends it to early teens interested in the time period and this type of writing.

A series about four children living in ancient Rome. Flavia Gemina is the daughter of a sea-captain, and with her African slave girl Nubia and friends Jonathan, a Jewish doctor's son and Lupus, a mute boy, she is excited at the prospect of sailing across the Bay of Naples to spend the summer on her uncle's farm near Pompeii. Here the children meet Pliny, author of the famous 'Natural Histories' and Admiral of the war fleet. Pliny befriends them and sets them a puzzle - to unravel a riddle and find a wandering blacksmith. The friends run around the city of Pompeii, are invited to dinner in neighbouring villas and learn the legend of the blacksmith god Vulcan, whose forge shakes the earth and causes molten rock to pour forth from some mountains. Not even Pliny, however, realises that the mountain above them, Vesuvius, is a volcano about to erupt. The puzzle the friends are solving suddenly fades beside the clues they have noticed about the true nature of the mountain and their danger. The reek of sulphur frightens the adults around them, who have known it to kill sheep; although earth tremors are more usual and less worrying. Barking dogs, fleeing snakes and birds falling dead are cause for wonder, until Flavia recalls reading scrolls about a volcanic eruption elsewhere. Convinced that Vesuvius is waking, the friends decide they have to warn the inhabitants of Pompeii and nearby Herculaneum - and then ash begins to fall from the sky, setting like cement on the paving slabs. An exciting story which will be enjoyed by bright pre-teens to mid-teens, this tale brings to life the everyday Romans and their adventures. Having visited Pompeii and hiked up Vesuvius to look into its still-smoking crater, I found the book fascinating.

A challenge from Pliny sets Flavia and her friends to solve a riddle and find a treasure. But a

pleasant visit to her uncle outside Pompeii finds them all in danger from a supposedly dormant volcano. Apart from the improbabilities common in juvenile fiction, such as Flavia conveniently having three friends representing different races, religions, and social statuses, this started as an enjoyable story. I was appalled to read about a young woman wearing an engagement ring and wondered where Lawrence acquired her reputation for historical accuracy. Guess what? Romans did use engagement rings. More serious was the lack of a satisfying ending. I was not surprised that Lawrence didn't manage a happy ending to a story set around the destruction of Pompeii, but the failure of the "heroes" to rescue everyone is more complex emotionally than is suitable for a juvenile audience. Nor does the soap-opera who-is-the-real-father plot reflect values I would have wanted my children reading about at that age. I don't understand why authors like to pull real people into fictional stories; wondering how accurate or fanciful the portrayal is distracts me from the story. The title bears little relationship to the plot. The only overall praise I can give this book is that it is historically accurate and it kept me reading all the way to the vague and unsatisfying end.

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