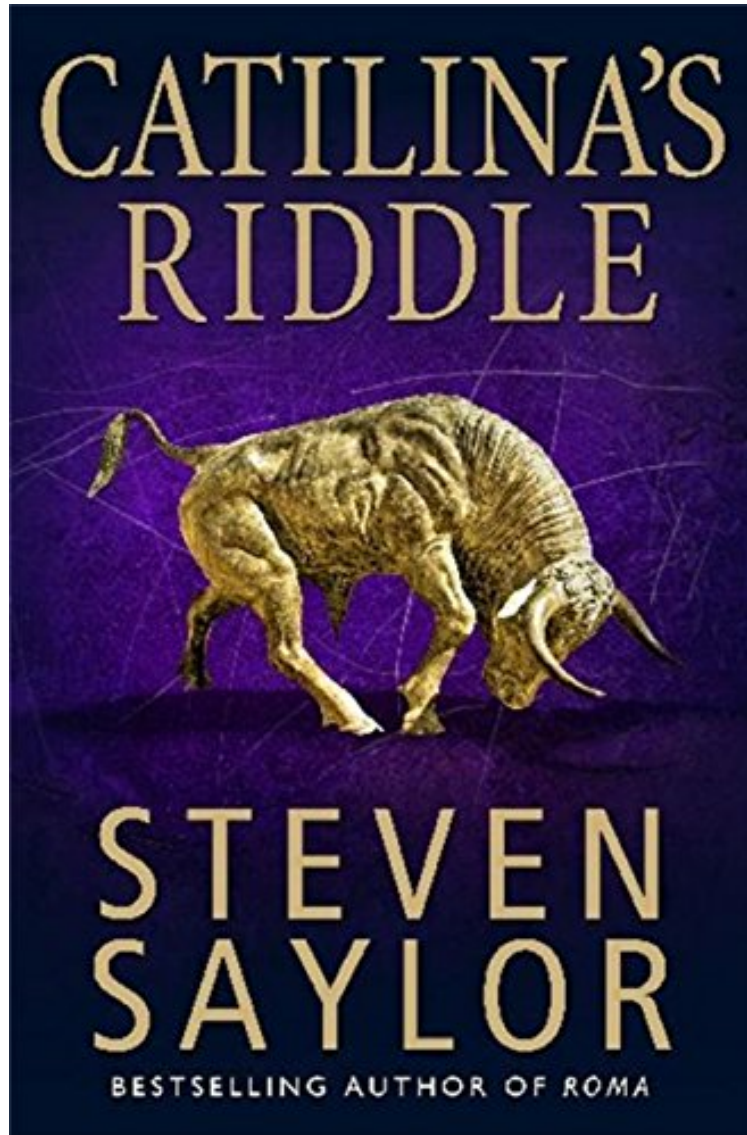


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Catilina's Riddle (Gordianus the Finder)

Von Steven Saylor

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Von Steven Saylor : Catilina's Riddle (Gordianus the Finder) before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Catilina's Riddle (Gordianus the Finder):

KundenrezensionenHilfreichste Kundenrezensionen3 von 3 Kunden fanden die folgende Rezension hilfreich. The tale of CatilinaVon Nadia YarThe Roman private detective Gordianus, called the Finder, seeks to flee the dangers and the corruption of Rome and retires with his family to a farm in the Etruscan countryside. But Rome won't let him go: his benefactor, now arch conservative consul Cicero presses Gordianus to become one of his spies in order to bring down

an alleged criminal conspirator, the radical reformer Lucius Sergius Catilina. When Gordianus tries to refuse this dubious request, a headless body turns up on his farm. At first, Gordianus tries to solve the riddle of this "Nemo" (lat. for Nobody) and to steer clear of both the Ciceronian and Catilina's party. But soon, the powerful Roman elite leaves the hounded Catilina and his desperate supporters no way out except for armed insurrection, and Gordianus' family becomes drawn into this tragic civil and military confrontation. Please note that "Catilina's Riddle" is not in the first line a mystery novel. It is a political thriller, a human tragedy and a colorful panoramic view of Roman society and politics that seems disturbingly up-to date. The book starts out slowly, so be prepared to give it time. It is, however, not too long. In fact, "Catilina's Riddle" ought to be longer than it is, because Saylor regrettably neglects to describe in proper detail the social misery, poverty, enslavement and sheer human desperation that led to the uprising of Catilina. The historical sources about Catilina's conspiracy are very scarce, very biased and therefore highly contradictory in themselves. Cicero's speeches against Catilina are not much more than poisonous invectives of a conservative statesman against a popular reformer, and Sallust draws on them heavily in his book. Many writers that tried to tackle this historical material seem to accept Cicero's statements at face value, completely missing the fact that these speeches are not honest fact-based narratives but sharp political weapons that were intended to destroy Catilina's name and career, to drive him out of Rome and ultimately to get him killed. The results of wide-spread trust into Cicero's integrity are stories told straight from Cicero's papers, keeping in line with his political stance, including all the defamations and the slander that the ancient Roman orator heaped on his opponents. Saylor's book is a wonderful surprise. The author does not only masterfully tell a tale that is riveting, powerful and moving but goes to great lengths to reconstruct the historical reality. When trying to put together a coherent version of the events of 63 BC, one must perforce arrive at the conclusions Saylor seems to have arrived at: that Catilina's cause was most just, and his alleged crimes probably never took place. Saylor's great historical novel moves one to tears by giving a glimpse of the truth.

2 von 2 Kunden fanden die folgende Rezension hilfreich. A well-crafted blend of mystery, history and character. Von Ein Kunde Steven Saylor continues his fine Roma sub rosa series of mysteries framed by incidents in the turbulent era of late Republican Rome. Drawn reluctantly into a web of political machination and murder, Gordianus the Finder (Saylor's toughminded sleuth) must solve a baffling crime and extricate himself and his family from peril. The delineation of Roman life and society is extraordinary; even better are the characters--Gordianus especially is fully realized, an intelligent, complex man of his times. Any reader of historical fiction such as "I, Claudius" as well as any mystery-lover will enjoy this book, and will be hunting for the rest of the series as soon as they put it down. Highly recommended!

1 von 1 Kunden fanden die folgende Rezension hilfreich. Good, but tries to be too many things at once. Von Helga Abendroth Gordianus the Finder finds himself as a fish out of water, after he unexpectedly inherited the farm of his late friend, Lucius Claudius. Not only are the other Claudii, Lucius Cousins, less than delighted about their new neighbor and their deceased cousins will, Gordianus also has trouble adapting to country life and the duties of a master of the farm slaves. And as if all that would not be enough, he finds himself drawn into the struggle between Cicero, the newly elected consul of the year, and Catilina. Then, a headless body turns up on his farm... This book is a nice mixture of a murder mystery with a brilliant and very compelling view at Catilina's conspiracy, which is astoundingly friendly to Catilina and gives a gripping view into Roman politics and political maneuvering. In addition, we get themes of Gordianus struggling with the unknown demands of country life and a building coming-of-age conflict with his adopted son, Meto. So, all in all, the book is a nice and mostly satisfying read. Unfortunately, those strengths are at the same time somewhat hampering the story: with all these elements, the book tries to be too many things at once. The story of the murder mystery does not really moves forward, and Gordianus seems rather sluggish and inept in his ability of finding the truth and combining facts. The reason seems to be that if he was too sharp or too successful, the story would be over too quickly, and the book could not wrap both the murder mystery and the political events in one narration. However, the artificially slowed pace does not really work well for the narration, and so the book leaves the reader somewhat less satisfied than the earlier books of the series. So, all in all, a good read, but as a story it was not as well built as I expected. Still, very much worth reading!

Kurzbeschreibung The year is 63BC, and Gordianus the Finder unexpectedly achieves the dream of every Roman - a farm in the Etruscan countryside. Vowing to leave behind the corruption and intrigue of Rome, he abandons the city, taking his family with him. Gordianus' longtime patron, Cicero, has also achieved the dream of his lifetime - a much coveted consulship, Rome's highest elected office. Urgently, he requests a favour of Gordianus: his help in keeping watch on a radical populist senator, Catilina, suspected of conspiring against the state. Against his will, Gordianus finds himself drawn deeper and deeper into a web of deceit, intrigue and murder. From Publishers Weekly Saylor (Arms of Nemesis) has written another gripping and entertaining historical whodunit. Narrator Gordianus, disillusioned by the corruption of Rome circa 63 B.C., has fled the city with his family to live on a farm in the Etruscan countryside. But this bucolic life is disrupted by the machinations and murderous plots of two politicians: Roman consul Cicero, Gordianus's longtime patron; and populist senator Catalina, Cicero's political rival and a

candidate to replace him in the annual elections for consul. Claiming that Catalina plans an uprising if he loses the race, Cicero asks Gordianus to keep a watchful eye on the radical. Although he distrusts both men, Gordianus is forced into the center of the power struggle when his six-year-old daughter Diana finds a headless corpse in their stable. Shrewdly depicting deadly political maneuverings, this addictive mystery also displays the author's firm grasp of history and human character. Copyright 1993 Reed Business Information, Inc. From BooklistSet in ancient Rome, the latest in Saylor's carefully researched historical mystery series centers on the age-old theme of politics. Even in 63 B.C., it seems, ambitious, clever, scheming, scamming politicians flourished. Take Gordianus, a Roman citizen turned gentleman farmer who has fled noisy, crowded Rome to seek peace in the Etruscan countryside. To his chagrin, Gordianus finds he can't escape the intrigues and influences of the city as easily as he had hoped. He becomes embroiled in a bitter political rivalry between his patron, Cicero, and a clever up-and-comer, Catilina. Saylor has written a sweeping and marvelously evocative story, with page after page of authentic detail and meticulous descriptions of the people, places, and politics of early Rome. If there's a fault, it's the overemphasis on ambience and atmosphere, leaving a story that's occasionally slow to develop. There's no doubt that history buffs will savor the splendid historical detail, but mystery fans looking primarily for fast pacing and lots of action may lose interest. Emily Melton