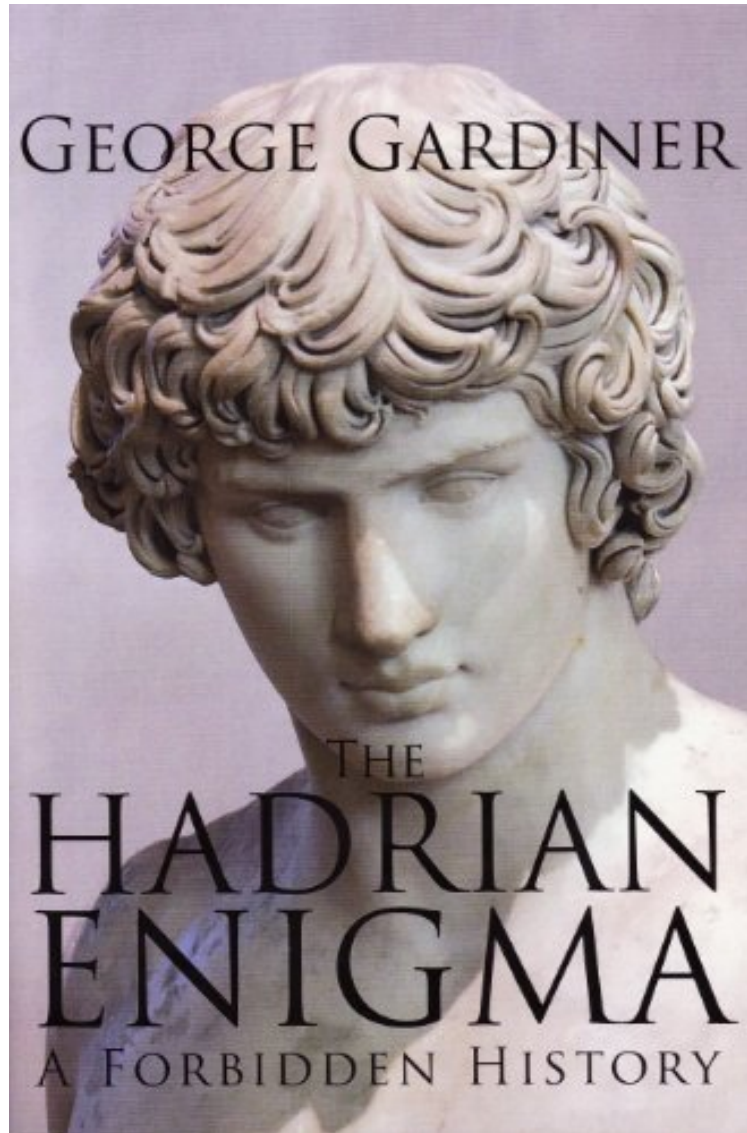


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## THE HADRIAN ENIGMA - A Forbidden History (English Edition)

Von George Gardiner

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**Von George Gardiner : THE HADRIAN ENIGMA - A Forbidden History (English Edition)** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised THE HADRIAN ENIGMA - A Forbidden History (English Edition):

KundenrezensionenHilfreichste Kundenrezensionen4 von 4 Kunden fanden die folgende Rezension hilfreich. A Masterful Recreation of Ancient RomeVon Ernest GillOn October 28th of the year 130 AD, during an Imperial tour up the Nile, near the village of Hir-wer, the youth Antinous fell into the Sacred River and died. It is said that Hadrian

"wept like a woman" and was disconsolate ever after. His health broke and he was a bitter and sick man the remaining eight years of his life. The Emperor Hadrian was so grief-stricken at the death of his beloved male lover Antinous that he declared Antinous to be a God and founded a city in honor of Antinous -- called Antinoopolis -- on the shores of the Nile where Antinous died. The city was founded on October 30th, called FOUNDATION DAY in the RELIGION OF ANTINOUS. The Egyptians syncretized Antinous fully with Osiris. For the Egyptians he was Osiris-Antinous. Like Osiris, Antinous died in the Nile and was transfigured into a deity. Hadrian reportedly said, "He fell into the Nile." He never elaborated, never said whether it was an accident, never mentioned the circumstances. Gardiner's THE HADRIAN ENIGMA -- A FORBIDDEN HISTORY masterfully recreates that fateful tour up the Nile and the tragic death which changed the course of history. Until the death of Antinous, Hadrian had been renowned as a wise and just ruler. After the Beloved Boy's death, Hadrian became capricious and cruel and waged a prolonged war against rebellious hardline Jews -- reverberations of which war continue to rock the Middle East to this very day. Gardiner's novel is written in the form of a whodunnit with possibly the most original investigator imaginable -- the Roman historian Suetonius, who just happens to be along on the Imperial tour. Author of such juicy tomes as De vita Caesarum (commonly known as The Twelve Caesars) and Lives of Famous Whores and other tell-all books, Suetonius has the investigative skill and the jaundiced eye to peer behind the veil of Roman dignity to see the sordidness underneath. The reader sees the case through Suetonius's eyes as he investigates the death, looking for clues. Gardiner superbly describes the elaborate Imperial compound along the banks of the Nile -- basically a tent city on a fabulously grand scale, a palace made of fabrics with the entire Imperial court transferred from Rome to this remote stretch of the Nile. Antinous had shared his quarters with a couple of other "ephebes", though he had a private sleeping area -- where only Hadrian had ever been. Suetonius and his Patrician assistants (with Strabo as their scribe), sift through His belongings and interrogate everybody, half of whom are either disconsolate with grief or else they have shifty eyes and their own motives -- there are lots of "red herrings" in this book, people who possibly could have done Him in. Hadrian refuses to allow Suetonius to touch the body, which was found at dawn by fishermen who were trying to net ibises in the reeds for sale during the Festival of Osiris and Isis. They plucked a "silver body" out of the water -- Antinous was clad in his Lion Hunt garb which was silver and ivory breast plate and a solid silver mask, and his ornate bow and adamantine-tipped lance .... the fishermen knew He was a God, especially since He drowned on the day of Osiris' Death! Suetonius wonders why in Hades Antinous was wearing all this ceremonial garb (otherwise worn only during Parades) and also wonders about a cut on the left wrist of Antinous and strange red marks around his throat. But Hadrian refuses to let him touch the body or perform an autopsy, saying His beauty will be preserved by the priests of Egypt through mummification. Indeed, Priest Pachrates is standing in the shadows, with kohl-rimmed eyes, and dripping with amulets and talismans, giving Suetonius the creeps. Then Hadrian tells Suetonius to get out and find out what happened in 48 hours ... or else! Whereupon Hadrian throws himself over the body of his Beloved, kissing His cold lips and his hollow eyes (the fish have already eaten the eyeballs) and cradling his naked body -- all the ceremonial garb is strewn on the floor of the tent. A Nubian slave languidly fans the air through mosquito netting which is continually sprayed with water in a vain attempt to slow down the process of decay. The author knows his Antinous History and so the reading is deliciously slow-going for any true fan of historical crime novels. The author peppers the text with Greek and Latin terms and names and expressions which cause the reader to go to the book shelf to dust off reference works. The historical details are a delight. And the characters are outlined in a vivid way which is like meeting old friends. The description of Hadrian is perfect and the author also brings to life flamboyant heir-apparent Lucius, the Empress Sabina, her confidante Julia Balbilla, the Egyptian magician/priest Pachrates and indeed the entire Imperial coterie. Even the Oracle of Siwa Oasis makes a cameo appearance, uttering seemingly incoherent clues which ultimately lead to the unravelment of the mystery. Gardiner's Antinous is blonde with blue-grey eyes and pale skin. He is left-handed we learn as Suetonius wonders if He had inflicted the slash to his left wrist in an attempt to commit suicide and someone says, but sire, the Boy was left-handed, so it is unlikely he would have held his ceremonial dagger in his right hand to do such a deed. And where is the lapis-lazuli talismanic ring (a magical gift from Hadrian) which Antinous always wore on his finger? The ring was supposed to ensure immortality .... What was it that caused such passions among all those who encountered Antinous? Suetonius learns the answer to that question from one person who loved Antinous whole-heartedly. What is it, Suetonius demands, which inspires such ardor among the admirers of Antinous? He is told: "It is beauty, my lord. A beauty of character, a beauty of spirit, a beauty of humanity. Beauty, too, of form and shape, but this was not the primary beauty. It would pass soon into time. Antinous was a beguiling personality whose openness communicated sincerity, security, and wholeheartedness. His spirit was alive to life and love .... Antinous was Apollo incarnate, he was Apollo alive in this world, here, now, with us to see and touch today. He was not distant, out of reach, silent. Old philosophers tell us Greeks how human beauty is a reflection of the divine among us. Yet unlike remote Apollo ... Antinous possessed an emotional warmth no god displays to devotees. For Antinous, LOVE must be tangible and active. In him, it was, generously." In the end, Suetonius discovers precisely how and why Antinous died. And the discovery is such a devastating blow to the Emperor that he suppresses the investigation findings and forbids any mention of the case under penalty of exile. And

that is The Hadrian Enigma -- A Forbidden Story.

Kurzbeschreibung LUST, LOVE, REVENGE, COMING-OUT. Caesar's fatal search for love ...Ancient Rome, 130 years after Christ but still two centuries before Christians achieve state recognition. Caesar Hadrian is the ruler of a vast Empire at the height of its wealth power. One of "the five good emperors", Hadrian dominates a culture ruled by pagan values, inequities, ambiguous sexualities. From a cruel war's victory Triumph through Rome's Forum, to a drunken revel at Athens' Acropolis; from the stirring excitement of a board hunt in the forests of Bithynia, to the steam rooms of a grand Roman bath-house; from the opulent bordellos of Alexandria, to the privacy of an emperor's bed chamber, Hadrian's search for love destroys the very person he most adores. During his 400-strong traveling Court's leisurely pleasure journey through Egypt Hadrian's companion 'Favorite', Antinous of Bithynia, is found dead one dawn beneath the waters of the River Nile. Hadrian is distraught. Is it a drunken prank gone wrong, suicide, murder, or something far more sinister? Hadrian commands the historian, barrister, renown libertine Suetonius Tranquillus to urgently investigate. He is given 72 hours to determine the cause of death. Suetonius, ever opportune, hires a hetaera sex-worker concubine, Surisca of Antioch, as an interpreter paramour to assist the investigation. Between them their courtier colleagues, they interrogate members of the Court as several new deaths occur. In the course of their investigation they uncover a subterranean conspiracy which reveals more than Hadrian may wish to know, or want others to know. They disclose the uninhibited appetites of the ruling classes amid the basic human need for affection bonding, whatever the relationship. THE HADRIAN ENIGMA is Suetonius's secret record of the investigation into one of history's most intriguing, suspicious fatalities. It depicts an era of relaxed morals among the elites which sanctions men loving men in a sexist macho culture of warrior pride, honor shame.

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