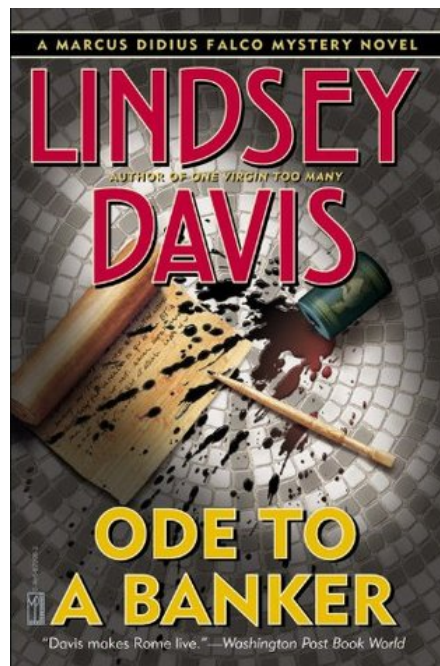




Ode to a Banker

Lindsey Davis

[Download now](#)

[Read Online](#) ➔

Ode to a Banker

Lindsey Davis

Ode to a Banker Lindsey Davis

In the long, hot Roman Summer of AD74, Marcus Didius Falco, private informer and spare-time poet, gives a reading for his family and friends. Things get out of hand as usual.

The event is taken over by Aurelius Chrysippus, a wealthy Greek banker and patron to a group of struggling writers, who offers to publish Falco's work - a golden opportunity that rapidly palls.

A visit to the Chrysippuscriptorium implicates him in a gruesome literary murder so when Petronius Longus, the over-worked vigiles enquiry chief, commissions him to investigate, Falco is forced to accept.

Ode to a Banker Details

Date : Published September 30th 2002 by Mysterious Press (first published 2000)

ISBN : 9780446679060

Author : Lindsey Davis

Format : Paperback 384 pages

Genre : Mystery, Historical, Historical Fiction, Crime, Fiction, Historical Mystery

 [Download Ode to a Banker ...pdf](#)

 [Read Online Ode to a Banker ...pdf](#)

Download and Read Free Online Ode to a Banker Lindsey Davis

From Reader Review Ode to a Banker for online ebook

Cameron Toney says

Its been a while since I read any Falco, and its been too long.

For those unfamiliar with the concept, M. Didius Falco is a classic hard-boiled detective, but in ancient Rome. This is such a good concept for a mystery series that I am constantly annoyed that I did not think of it first.

Falco and company, including his wife Helena Justina, their daughter Julia, and the constantly entertaining mob of Falco's family always make for a good read, and the book has been lovingly researched. Some of the stuff about Roman home life is absolutely fascinating, including a lot about the cuisine of civilian Rome. This is this second book I've read this year about publishing, and the snakes contained therein. In both cases (the other being The Silkworm), there is a disclaimer in the beginning, saying that any resemblance is purely coincidental.

But this one also tackles the murky world of Roman banking, which also seems a bit on the nose in these times, but hey. I'll take art being the mirror up to life.

I will say that the mystery was the weakest part of this. It all comes together rather too well at the end, and it isn't quite believable. Ah well.

I won't let it be so long until I visit Falco's Rome, this mystery notwithstanding. Its a great environment.

Rosalind says

Murder in the Slush Pile

This episode in the Roman crime saga takes us back to base in Rome for a romp in the worlds of classical publishing and banking, and of patronage. Those worlds have many similarities with their counterparts in our own time and no doubt draw on the author's own experiences at a time in her writing career when her writing has become successful enough to be financially self-sustaining.

Our hero Marcus Didius is headhunted by a wealthy publisher, but turns the proposed deal down as too exploitative. Shortly afterwards Chrysippus the publisher is found brutally murdered in his library - literally a body in the library, signalling that this is going to be in part a clever Agatha Christie spoof with Falco becoming more Poirot than Marlowe. Chrysippus is a Greek banker as well as a patron of the arts, but who wants him dead? A disgruntled author or a hard-up bank client? Or someone entirely different with a grievance? The Falcon family saga moves on, with cameos from Ma, Pa and bossy sister Junia as well as Maia the Nice One. Anacrites is scheming and romance comes for Petri. There's a nice swipe at writers groups, and a neat joke that you'll miss if you haven't studied Latin concerning the fate of a manuscript submitted by one Martialis.

If you wanted to meet Marcus Didius Falcon for the first time I'd suggest you didn't start here because in so many ways it's not typical. Best to begin at the beginning anyway.

Kathy says

Finally caught up on the back story and ready to continue with the rest of the series. An interesting food fact

uncovered is the French food rissole. It is a meat, fish or sweet, enveloped in a pastry and fried. Can be served hot or cold, eaten at any time of the day. A little research and viola! The Romans acquired this food through their annexation of Gaul, which is modern day France. Several web searches later and I'm a happy camper.

Lys says

La Davis ama intrecciare problematiche moderne (o senza tempo) con il solido background della sua Antica Roma e anche questo romanzo nella serie di Marco Didio Falco non fa eccezione.

Editoria, editori a pagamento, speculazioni finanziarie, banche senza la minima etica e tanto altro fanno da contorno a questo delitto tanto complicato quanto dalla soluzione semplice e lineare.

L'ironia e il sarcasmo della Davis sono sempre perfetti e accompagnano piacevolmente tutto il romanzo, imperdibile per ogni appassionato delle sorti di Marco Didio, investigatore. (Sarebbe un romanzo imperdibile anche per tutti gli altri, ma magari allora è meglio che inizino dal primo volume della serie, giusto per non perdersi le altre perle della saga).

Hannah says

One of Davis' best offerings in the Falco series. One To A Banker combines all elements that mystery fans would definitely love; a sensational murder, numerous suspects that all seem to be involved in some manner or another and a snarky, world-weary detective who reveals the true culprit of the murder in a manner not unlike Agatha Christie's Hercule Poirot. An exciting mystery that offers the usual, fascinating wealth of information about the Roman world, woven subtly into the plot in a way that would not distract readers new to Roman history.

Ann says

Not the best in the series. Felt many of Falco's comments were way too snarky and the denouement went on forever....

Rachael Krotec says

"Dead men wait."- Favorite line from this one!

Malcolm says

Falco's on form in this outing, grappling with financiers, patrons of the arts and writers – the first two being the same chap. Davis reminds me that contempt for banker predates the collapse of 2008 as she brings her sharp wit to bear on an, at times, decidedly anachronistic tale of a wise cracking hard boiled loner.

Falco, a little bit V I Warshawski, more than a little Sam Spade and for this outing a dash of Poirot, is

dragooned by his old friend and now vigile (aka, police) Petronius Longus, to take on an investigation of the patron of the arts Aurelius Chrysippus – banker, publisher and pompous ass. In doing so he is drawn into the murky world of banking and the murkier world of publishing all the while grappling with the close to impossible to see through world of his family with their tensions, pretensions and yearnings. To top it off, there is more than one murder, a couple of fairly ferocious beatings and a prime role of an adventure story in the Greek style.....

There is plenty of cap doffing to other practitioners of the genre, a good dose of knowledge of Roman history and society and plenty of opportunity for sardonic chuckles. Falco continues to entertain.

Scot says

This is the twelfth installment in the Marcus Didius Falco series. Falco is an upwardly mobile investigator (known as an informer) working in Vespasian's Rome in the seventh decade of the first century of our modern calendar. As usual, author Lindsey Davis offers an entertaining romp through a well researched historical past. One can always count on witty banter and some interesting secondary or supporting characters in this series, although this time around I do think there were so many suspects for the murder being investigated that some of them lacked sufficient distinctiveness. Still, it was an emphatically grisly and therefore memorable murder. The victim was a Greek who ran a publishing house and also a bank, and so in this volume we come to learn much about Roman attitudes toward Greeks, what type of literature was popular and how it was produced, performed, disseminated, and marketed, and the ins and outs of loan transactions and high finance dealing in the Roman fiscal system of that period. The part about banking did not intrigue me so much but my fascination with the genres of literature described and the travails and tasks of those involved in that ancient publishing industry compensated for the unintentional but inevitable reminder of recent Wall Street and big bank unethical shenanigans. Along with playfully presenting a mix of characters representing different stereotypes of professional authors, it was evident the author was having some fun, in a roundabout manner, reflecting on pressures, demands, struggles, and rivalries in the publishing world, concerns that she deals with today.

Lindsey says

The usual sarcastic Falco wit. The usual snarky commentary on Roman society. The usual lovely, sensible Helena. Everything was there that I've come to expect in a Falco mystery and it's why I'll always be looking to read more.

Barbra says

Another good read from this author.

Simon Mcleish says

Originally published on my blog here in August 2001.

Recent novels in Davis' Falco series have tended to select a particular area of Roman life on which to concentrate; *One Virgin Too Many*, for example, has several plot strands concerned with religious ritual. In this novel, it is the literary establishment which she satirises. This makes for one of the funniest novels in the series, as Davis works jokes about the clichés of today's publishing world, critics and writers, into her first century setting.

It has already been established that Falco has aspirations as a poet, and at the start of the novel he has been persuaded to join a friend in a public reading. This brings him to the notice of a banker who runs a scriptorium - a sweatshop of slaves copying manuscripts - as a sideline. When this man is eventually murdered, Falco investigates. This is an intricately plotted mystery as well as a humorous historical novel; combining the two this successfully is a considerable achievement. *Ode to a Banker* is one of the best novels in the series.

Georgiana 1792 says

È confortante fare una capatina ogni tanto nella Roma del primo secolo dopo Cristo e ritrovare Marco Didio Falco alle prese con un nuovo caso. Anche se si tratta di omicidi cruenti; anche se nell'estate del 74 d.C. si muore di caldo, esattamente come nel 2012. Falco, con i suoi racconti carichi di ironia, esplora vari aspetti del costume della Roma Imperiale, spostandosi talvolta nel vasto impero governato da Vespasiano e dai suoi figli, Tito e Domiziano. Questa volta, però, il nostro *private eye* non si muove da Roma e dalla sua modesta casa sull'Aventino, nella Corte della Fontana, che condivide con la moglie, la patrizia Elena Giustina, con la figlia Giulia, di due anni, e con la cagnolina Noce, in dolce attesa. L'investigatore privato questa volta è doppiamente coinvolto nelle indagini: infatti ha appena conosciuto la vittima, Aurelio Crisippo, mecenate delle arti, che gli ha proposto la pubblicazione delle sue poesie... a pagamento!

«Siamo un'organizzazione commerciale» mi spiegò. Poi mi atterrò con la verità: «Non possiamo sovvenzionare dei perfetti sconosciuti. Che cosa resterebbe per noi? Credo veramente che tu sia promettente. Se vuoi avere un pubblico più ampio, posso aiutarti. Ma le condizioni sono che dovrai investire nell'edizione, coprendo i nostri costi di produzione». [...] Io pagare loro? Sapevo che questo succedeva, solo che credevo che accadesse soltanto a tristi nullità che scribacchiavano noiosi poemi epici verbosi mentre vivevano ancora a casa con la madre. Non mi aspettavo di trovarmi a che fare con uno sfrontato editore che pubblica opere facendosi pagare dall'autore.

Il suo amico Petronio Longo, capo dei vigili della VII coorte, poi, si trova a corto di personale e lo ingaggia per investigare sul delitto. Ma Aurelio Crisippo, oltre ad essere un editore era anche un banchiere: esploriamo dunque la tecnica bancaria del primo secolo dopo Cristo, le diverse modalità adottate da banchieri greci e romani e le leggi vigenti ai tempi di Vespasiano. *Chi sarà il colpevole? Un cliente insolvente della banca o uno scrittore frustrato? La ex-moglie o l'attuale?* Con la sua solita ironia, Falco investiga, insinua, scava nel passato dei personaggi. E deve vedersela con vari attentati alla sua stessa vita.

Lindsey Davis, come sempre, traspone vicende e costumi attuali ai tempi dell'imperatore Vespasiano. Una feroce critica all'editoria a pagamento, come abbiamo detto, ma anche vicende storiche recenti che si 'ripercuotono' sul passato. Negli intrighi e intralazzi bancari, infatti, la Davis lascia cadere curiosi riferimenti a vicende molto più vicine a noi. La banca di Aurelio Crisippo si chiama infatti 'Aureliana', nome stranamente simile ad 'Ambrosiano'; dopo la sua morte ci saranno scandali e tracolli. Inoltre, uno dei personaggi sarà 'vittima' di un dubbio suicidio che, nella sua modalità, richiama evidentemente la morte di Roberto Calvi, ritrovato impiccato in circostanze molto sospette il 18 giugno 1982, sotto al *Blackfriars Bridge* sul Tamigi a Londra, con dei mattoni nelle tasche.

«È il primo suicida che abbia mai visto che si è arrampicato sotto un ponte, quando la maggior parte delle

persone disperate si butta giù da sopra. Inoltre, non solo si è legato alla pietra in una posizione molto scomoda, ma si è legato addosso un pesante fagotto di tegole per tetti. Ora, potrebbe averlo fatto nel caso gli fosse mancato il coraggio e all'improvviso si fosse voluto tirare nuovamente su...»

Da brava inglese, poi, Lindsey Davis non perde occasione per ricordare ciò che ogni madrelingua anglofono ha nel DNA, ovvero i versi di Shakespeare.

Già nell'indagine *Ultimo Atto a Palmira*, Marco Didio Falco si è improvvisato commediografo, scrivendo — e recitando — una versione ante-litteram — in versione commedia più che tragedia — dell'*Amleto* (vi suggerisce niente il titolo "*Lo spettro che parlava*"?) In questo caso, incentrato proprio sul mondo letterario, non poteva mancare un commediografo. E indovinate le sue origini? Era naturale che Urbano Trifone provenisse dalla Britannia, anzi da un luogo sospettosamente vicino a Stratford-upon-Avon e che, durante il suo colloquio con Falco ed Elena Giustina, lo scrittore prendesse in considerazione l'idea di creare qualcosa di stranamente familiare, vagamente simile a *Sogno di una notte di mezza estate*... E la Davis non perde occasione per tirare fuori e criticare le ipotesi e i dubbi sulla paternità delle opere di Shakespeare:

«Perché le idee folli sono prese sempre così seriamente? Oh, naturalmente! Certi individui non accetteranno mai che uno scritto erudito e colto, che sfoggia un linguaggio ardito e che offre una grande vastità di temi e impressioni possa venire dalle province, tanto meno dal centro della Britannia.» [...] «E allora io, quest'uomo che ti sta di fronte, chi dovrei essere?» «Il fortunato che conta il denaro al botteghino» ribattei ridacchiando. «Mentre i grandi scrittori che tu "impersoni" ti lasciano spendere i loro diritti d'autore.»

Il narratore dell'intera serie è Falco, il protagonista che, sotto alle sue arie da uomo vissuto e coriaceo, nasconde un cuore tenero e sensibile che lo rende gradito al pubblico femminile. Forse perché c'è un lato femminile molto sviluppato in lui (il che non meraviglia, dato che nasce dalla penna di una donna!). Ancora un caso travolgente per Marco Didio Falco, che i riporta alle forti emozioni dei casi più belli nati dalla mente di Lindsey Davis. E già non vedo l'ora di ritrovarmi ancora sull'Aventino con Falco, Elena, Petronio e compagnia bella.

Potete leggere l'articolo completo QUI

Cat says

Very standard, overwrought Christie-esque ending, though women pretty entertaining

Larry says

As has been the case with many of the books in this series, this book has a slow start. Not much happens prior to the grisly murder that Falco is called on to solve. By this point in the series the reader is familiar with Falco, his family, and his associates. Davis uses that to develop subplots involving the romantic affairs of Falco's widowed sister, his mother, and the chief spy Anacrites.

Davis is very effective at describing Ancient Rome, and its customs. The geography of the city is very important to the protagonists who must walk from one point to another. However, Davis' modus operandi is to take a stock 1940's detective story and re-imagine it in an ancient setting. The world-weary private eye, becomes Didius the informer, his cop friend becomes Petronius the vigile, a publishing house becomes a scriptorium. The publisher murdered in his library, a motley collection of disgruntled writers are suspects, but there is a banking connection that adds complexity.

There are points in the book where the tension between ancient setting and modern plot becomes a little too great for my taste, once corpses begin to turn up, the plot moves along rapidly, and it becomes a gripping story.

Rachel says

I used to love this series, but while I still love reading about Falco and his friends and family the mysteries don't seem to hold my attention and I found myself skipping through parts of this one.

Simon Binning says

This episode in the career of Falco the Informer sees him tasked with uncovering the murderer of a publisher, who also happened to be a banker. There are any number of potential suspects, and the unraveling of the mystery is therefore quite complicated. This is a good old fashioned murder-mystery, and the denouement even takes place in a library with all the suspects present.

There are also the usual family storylines going on through the book, involving virtually all Falco's extended family, as well as Petro and Anacrites, and their stories interlace with the mystery plot in a nice way.

This is one of my favourite episodes in the series so far. The plot take you into areas - banking and publishing - that are not the normal settings for Roman fiction, and that adds significantly to the interest. The family developments are, as usual, well handled, and the main characters are now whole, well-rounded individuals.

Assaph Mehr says

In another mystery relating to the art world, Falco explores the trade in scrolls and plays.

Expect less plot twists than usual, though Felix gets emotional as it's his poetry on the line. We get a behind-the-scenes look at the sweatshops of scribes copying scrolls, gruesome murders (naturally), and a ground-level but critical look at the stratified Roman society. Since the publisher was also a financier, we get a look at Rome's banking industry.

Be aware that while it's not necessary to read the books in order, it certainly helps - certainly so far into the series.

--

Assaph Mehr, author of *Murder In Absentia: A story of Togas, Daggers, and Magic* - for lovers of Ancient Rome, Murder Mysteries, and Urban Fantasy.

Jamie Collins says

What I want to know, is, where's the wedding? Falco spent 9 books trying to elevate himself to the middle social rank specifically so that he could marry the senator's daughter. Now he's wearing his gold ring, and

Helena Justina is expecting again, but there's not the first mention of a wedding. Humph.

Anyway, this is another entertaining Falco book. This time he's investigating the murder of a book publisher/banker, which means the reader gets to hear a little about the Ancient Roman incarnations of those industries. I imagine the author had some fun with this: there's a "strenuous" disclaimer at the beginning: "The scroll shop of Aurelius Chrysippus in the Clivus Publicius bears no relation to my publishers - who are models of editorial judgment, prompt payment, fair dealing, strong marketing, and lunch-buying."

I've never really bought into the idea of Falco as a poet - it doesn't seem to fit his character. So I'm glad that, despite the ground covered in this book, his poetry isn't given much more attention than usual.

While there's nothing particularly outstanding about this series entry, I always enjoy the books that are set in Rome, not least because we get to spend some time with Falco's friend Lucius Petronius Longus and with Falco's indomitable family.

This is a rather slow-moving series: twelve books have covered only about 4 years of Falco's life. There are eight further books already published, and I'm trying not to peek ahead for spoilers.

M.G. Mason says

Yes, it's that time again when I dip into the colourful world of Lindsey Davis' 1st century Roman informer (Private Detective) Marcus Didius Falco, his high-class wife Helena Justina and their growing family as Falco seeks to move up a class and gain some credibility and standing. This is number twelve in her twenty book series following the demobbed legionary. Just eight to go after this one.

Falco has taken it upon himself to write poetry and some of the early narrative will ring true and amuse writers – the distractions, the lack of free time and the obstacles to the creative process. In fact, it carries on in this manner and the jokes are about writing, creativity and publishing. There is a lot of satire on our art and the industry, including jokes at the expense of publishing houses – especially vanity publishing. Yes, this is the self-parody and the nod to her readers who are also writers and with that, it is one of the funniest books of this hilarious series. Davis' books have always been funny, but on few occasions have I been so reduced to tears of laughter as I was with this one.

A vanity publisher had been murdered, and after being prime suspect for all of about three pages, Petronius Longus asks for Falco's help. It is once again down to the Roman world's most hapless and infamous Informers to find out who did it and why. With cameos from historical figures including the imperial family, Falco grumbles his way through another adventure.

Not wanting to repeat myself on style and flow, after all I have written reviews of all of these so far, I'm just going to say that there's no change of form here. You know what to expect from the quick wit, colourful range of characters, the edutainment factor and his developing relationship with the regular characters. Anacrites is still lodging with Falco's mum and you feel that when the time comes, it will not be a pretty ending between them.

I felt a bit thrown into the beginning of this one, there was no reintroduction and subtle reminders as from previous books, Davis just dives in and I felt it a little difficult to adjust, which is odd for a series that has accessibility as one of its core strengths. Thankfully, this last just a couple of chapters and I soon found myself back into the most major characters are reintroduced by about chapter 5.

Great stuff, as ever.

[See more book reviews at my blog](#)
