



The Seven Wonders

Steven Saylor

Download now

Read Online ➔

The Seven Wonders

Steven Saylor

The Seven Wonders Steven Saylor

The year is 92 B.C. and the youthful Gordianus has just turned eighteen, and is about to embark on the adventure of a lifetime: a far-flung journey to see the Seven Wonders of the World. Gordianus is not yet called “the Finder”—but at each of the Seven Wonders, the wide-eyed young Roman encounters a mystery to challenge his powers of deduction.

Accompanying Gordianus on his travels is his tutor, Antipater of Sidon, the world’s most celebrated poet. But there is more to the apparently harmless old poet than meets the eye. Before they leave home, Antipater fakes his own death and travels under an assumed identity. Looming in the background are the first rumblings of a political upheaval that will shake the entire Roman world.

Teacher and pupil journey to the fabled cities of Greece and Asia Minor, and then to Babylon and Egypt. They attend the Olympic Games, take part in exotic festivals, and marvel at the most spectacular constructions ever devised by mankind. Along the way they encounter murder, witchcraft and ghostly hauntings. Traveling the world for the first time, Gordianus discovers that amorous exploration goes hand-in-hand with crime-solving. The mysteries of love are the true wonders of the world, and at the end of the journey, an Eighth Wonder awaits him in Alexandria. Her name is Bethesda.

The Seven Wonders Details

Date : Published June 5th 2012 by Minotaur Books (first published January 1st 2012)

ISBN : 9780312359843

Author : Steven Saylor

Format : Hardcover 321 pages

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

 [Download The Seven Wonders ...pdf](#)

 [Read Online The Seven Wonders ...pdf](#)

Download and Read Free Online The Seven Wonders Steven Saylor

From Reader Review The Seven Wonders for online ebook

Kathy Davie says

It's a prequel full-length novel of short stories woven together for the Roma Sub Rosa historical mystery series in which we're introduced to Gordianus Junior.

The short story, *Down These Strange Streets: Styx and Stones*, is pulled from this novel.

My Take

Yep, it's a torture session all the way through as Saylor won't let on why Antipater had to fake his death until the very end. I did enjoy his "death" by the way — Roman funereal rites are, um, interesting.

Seven Wonders is a nice blend of being introduced to Gordianus (the younger) and our tagging along on their tour of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World in this collection of short stories woven into a single tale.

Reading the trip is a great way to travel and discover new cultures, new foods, and be involved in mystery after mystery — at least until they invent time travel! — not that I enjoyed everything I learned in each culture.

Oh, man, the Cynic at the Games was pretty funny — a natural-born heckler, he had some good points. The bare bones of what's left of the Hanging Gardens is fascinating, but more so is the tour we embark on of the Pharos Lighthouse. Wow. It's incredible what the Ancients were able to accomplish.

And I still want to get an airline ticket to follow in their footsteps...!

The Story

Gordianus Senior is also a Finder, and he's worried about Junior being caught up in the wars that will soon engulf Rome. So together Gordianus the Papa and Antipater, a Greek tutor and poet, fake Antipater's death and Antipater whisks Gordianus out of Rome.

It will be a challenging trip for the two: in Rome, sentiment is rising against Greeks while everywhere else in their known world, the tide is turning against the Romans.

The first stop on their journey is Ephesus, "home to the great Temple of Artemis" where they will stay with a former pupil of Antipater's and solve a terrible crime. The next stop is in Halicarnassus, home of the great Mausoleum and where Antipater's widowed cousin, Bitto, lives a most horrific lifestyle — in Antipater's eyes. It's her neighbors that are the problem. One which Gordianus resolves quite unexpectedly. It's on to Olympia from there where Gordianus and Antipater are in time for the Olympic games. And, yes, another mystery even as they take the tour to view the great statue of Zeus. The ruins of Corinth are along their path to the harbor, and the two stop to rummage and pay homage to its destruction. The next stop is Rhodes to see what remains of the Colossus of Rhodes where Gordianus uncovers a nasty plot.

It's Babylon and its fabled hanging gardens after this where Antipater and Gordianus experience the same regrets we do in this modern day about the Mayan ruins. It's off to Egypt and the Great Pyramid after that where Gordianus prevents the ruin of a man and finds another ruin.

Last on the list is the Library of Alexandria, for Antipater and Gordianus have the same question: who made this list of Seven Wonders and why? And along the way, they pass the Pharos of Alexandria. It's a stop that resolves a number of questions and strips Gordianus of the last of his innocence. He also encounters what he

considers the Eighth Wonder of the World.

The Characters

Gordianus is turning eighteen as they set out on their journey from Rome. **Gordianus**, the father, is a Finder who loves puzzles and his son. **Damon** is the ancient doorkeeper in the house. **Antipater of Sidon**, soon to become **Zoticus of Zeugma**, is a world-renowned Greek poet and scholar with a secret life. He has been, informally, Gordianus' Teacher. **Consul Quintus Lutatius Catulus** had thought he was Antipater's best friend, and he's rather put out about the funeral.

Ephesus

Eutropius is a widower with a daughter, **Anthea**, who will perform in the procession along with one of her friends, **Chloe**, the daughter of her father's friend, **Mnason**. **Amestris** is a slave girl in the household of Eutropius. The **Megabyzoi** are the priests with **Theotimus**, the head priest.

Halicarnassus

Bitto, Antipater's cousin, loves life and has found a unique way to ensure a comfortable lifestyle. **Tryphosa** and her daughter-in-law, **Corinna**, are Bitto's unwelcome neighbors; **Timon** was Tryphosa's son and Corinna's husband before he died.

Olympia

Exagentus, a wealthy man from Pontus, is the friend with whom Gordianus and Antipater stay during the Games. **Protophanes of Magnesia** is an athlete favored to win the pankration, until events threaten to derail his plans to participate. **Simmius** is the Cynic. **Phidias** is the artist who sculpted the great statue of Zeus.

Corinth, or at least its ruins

Titus Tullius and his party are fellow guests at the inn where Antipater and Gordianus are staying. **Ismene** is a waitress and a witch while **Gnaeus** is a retired Roman soldier who runs the inn. **Marcus, Quintus Menenius**, and **Lucius** are Roman soldiers stationed there.

Colossus of Rhodes

Posidonius is a scholar, scientist, and explorer who has spent time in Gaul. **Zenas** is his faithful and reliable slave. **Gatamandix** is a Druid of a tribe called the Segurvoi and another guest. **Cleobulus** is a young Rhodian and one of Posidonius' pupils. **Vindovix** is a Gaul with a fairly extravagant mustache and an interest in Gordianus. He claims an ancestor of his posed for the Colossus.

Babylon

Darius is the guide who attaches himself to our duo. **Mushezib** is an astrologer who befriends them. The **priestess of Ishtar** has jurisdiction over the abandoned temple.

Egypt

Hidden relics and the origin of the Delta's name appear here along with Antipater's musings over the Nile's origin. **Kemsa** is their guide there. **Djal**, son of Rhutin, is in desperate need of help, and we learn of the reverence Egyptians have for the mummies of their ancestors. We also learn of the three different funerary plans. All graded by cost, of course. **Anubis** and **Isis** are part of a vision quest Gordianus experiences.

Alexandria

Isidorus is a chance-met fellow passenger on the way who just happens to work at the Library. And we learn that inter-office politics and paperwork have been around for a very long time. It's also where Gordianus discovers the truth of the saying "Stay here long enough, and every traveler in the world will cross your path" when he sees the assassin who escaped in Olympia. He also encounters a small group of spies against Rome: **Anubion** is some sort of supervisor at the lighthouse and **Nikanor** has become a liability. **Bethesda**

is the slave Gordianus buys.

The Cover

The cover is the greens of a sea at dark of night with a pair of ships sailing under a lightning-filled sky off the coast where the lighthouse of Pharos shines.

The title sums it up quite succinctly, for we are visiting *The Seven Wonders*.

Melissa says

Gordianus is back! I just finished the Roma Sub Rosa series a month or so ago, and it's great to meet a young Gordianus just becoming aware of his talents in this prequel. Saylor's gift of making the ancient settings seem alive and natural is still present in this book, and we get a more light-hearted, less cynical protagonist than in the later installments of the series, and we see some of the early experiences that shape Gordianus's character. He's still recognizable as the Finder we've come to know and love, but Saylor does a great job of showing his youth and inexperience. It's endearing and a bit bittersweet.

Each chapter reads a bit like a short story, though the volume holds together as a novel through the character development of Gordianus and through some events whose significance only becomes clear toward the end.

My only quibbles- (view spoiler)

All in all, this was a fun read, and I learned a lot about the Seven Wonders. As with almost all of Saylor's novels, I felt like if I suddenly found myself in the places described, they'd seem almost familiar, and I honestly struggle to remind myself that Gordianus was not a historical person. I am now prompted to go and do my own reading about the places and historical people represented in the books. I am looking forward to whatever Saylor has in store for Gordianus next!

Anna says

This book is about an amiable young Roman detective. I love any books about

- a) young amiable people
- b) Romans
- c) detectives (in non-scary stories).

As a result, I really enjoyed this book. I found the main character endearing, and the world immersive. I stayed up late to finish it last night and couldn't concentrate on my work this morning because I running through ancient cities in my imagination.

Our hero visits the seven wonders of the world, along with ruined Corinth, solving a mystery in every place and bedding a stranger in every place apart from Corinth. The mysteries themselves were not the point of the story, and it was usually extremely obvious what the outcome of each would be. Likewise, the romances were fairly banal. Each chapter was around 77-78 pages on my e-reader, so the author didn't have much space to develop either the mysteries or the love/lust stories. I wonder if he set himself the rather mammoth task of squeezing all of this into one book and then found he couldn't really achieve it well. However, none of this mattered. I found myself much more interested in the hero and the ancient world than the plot. Throughout the novel there were questions about whether the hero's tutor was playing him or not, and these questions were deliberately not revealed at the end. Gah. I know this was the point but I still would rather

have known!

The writing was hit and miss. Some of the descriptions were beautifully written. I could imagine myself in the hero's shoes, experiencing the splendour of the ancient world. However, the text was exposition-heavy and the dialogue clunky. I had assumed it was the first novel of a new author, or a self-published book, but it turns out this is a prequel for an already popular series. I assume then that the problems with exposition and dialogue were caused by the fact the author was cramming so much into one book.

HBalikov says

This is a prequel to the Rome Sub Rosa series that Saylor began over 20 years ago. For those who haven't read any of those ancient Rome mysteries, it will do no harm to start with this story of a young Gordianus who leaves Rome on his 17th birthday to see the world.

There is a big plot that isn't evident at the beginning. The Roman Empire is having its troubles, both in Italy and along its borders. Gordianus and his teacher, a celebrated poet traveling in disguise, learn more about the world as they go from one wonder of the ancient world to another.

Here are some of the things that Saylor does with great aplomb:

- We get an understanding of the critical events that affect Gordianus' growth and the man he becomes;
- We discover the mix of races, religions and politics that were extant at that ancient time;
- We become familiar with each of those seven wonders and their significance;
- We are immersed in the day to day of a world that no longer exists.

Well done, Saylor.

Mara S. says

I had this book on my shelf for years, but this year I decided to grab it and finally start reading. Ancient history is one of my favorite topics, so I was really excited to read this story...

Turns out, I should have DNF on the first chapter. The misogyny of this book is clear and simply disgusting. Women on this story were only used to satisfy the main character, or to justify something evil within the chapters. And women seem to be very weird here, because they only have boobs and transparent fabric on their skin (occasionally hair or skintone, BUT just to 'help' the description).

Other facts like describing an asian person using 'almond eyes' and the main character being so damn 'delicious' that even !foreign! gods want to sleep with him (stupidest thing I have ever seen in a story) were enough to make this read very long, and not interesting at all.

In terms of writing style I found it very mechanical and slow, but I read a translated version.

I decided to give 2 stars because I really enjoyed the way he described the greek wonders, specially the statue of Zeus.

Steven Harbin says

The last 2 entries in this series left me a little underwhelmed but with this "prequel" set in Gordianus the

Finder's youth, I fell back in love with author Saylor's "Roma Sub Rosa" series. So much so that I'm going to go back and give the last 2 books another try. Briefly, this latest book is a group of short stories regarding the 18 year old Gordianus and his tutor, the Greek poet Antipater of Sidon (a real historical figure) and their grand tour of the ancient Hellenistic world, with an itinerary which includes visiting each of the "Seven Wonders of the Ancient World." Each of the short stories was previously published independently in the last few years but they read well both alone and in this form where some overall plot threads come together at the end of the book. I think it would be better to have read some of the previous books in the series, especially Roman Blood before reading this book, but it's not necessary. I recommend this to anyone who enjoys historical mysteries as well as anyone who is interested in Roman and Hellenistic history. I'm hoping that Saylor will come back with some more stories set in the decade of Gordianus youth, between the events of this book and those of the aforementioned "Roman Blood."

Tita says

Já sabem que sou mega fã do autor e de Gordiano mas falta-me de ler o primeiro livro sobre a juventude desta fantástica personagem.

Vamos acompanhando a viagem de Gordiano com o seu antigo tutor, pelas maravilhas do mundo e onde vai resolvendo mistérios, escrito em forma de contos mas que se interligam entre si.

Vejam também a minha opinião em vídeo, [AQUI](#).

Rachael says

This addition to the Roma Sub Rosa series is a deviation from the norm in many ways. First, it is a prequel, going back in time to when Gordianus was eighteen and showing the process of the boy becoming the man and Finder returning readers know so well. Second, it purports to be a novel but is much closer to a short story collection. Third, it is a bit of a travelogue, focusing on places over anything else. The execution of each of these three things is largely responsible for how well the book succeeds or fails.

As a prequel, this left me rather underwhelmed. Gordianus is, in many ways, far too advanced in his trade already. We are told at the start that his father, the man currently known in Rome as the Finder, has taught young Gordianus all the tricks of the trade and that is really all the development of his skills we are given. The father disappears from the book entirely after a few short pages. While Gordianus occasionally thinks of his father's lessons as he uses his detective skills, there is no real sense of him being anything other than the professional readers of the series already know. We are told in the end that while he had the skills, he lacked one critical aspect of his adult personality and really of maturity and he has now developed that, but we are told that rather abruptly without it really having been demonstrated previously. The only area in which Gordianus grows and matures throughout these tales is in his sexual awakening and those were fun little moments that amused me but have no heft to them.

As a blend of novel and short story collection, this almost succeeds, but ultimately I was again disappointed. Most of the tales here, seven of ten chapters if my count is correct, were published in various magazines and anthologies as individual short stories before being collected here. As such, each chapter is a contained story with characters, stand alone plot, and completed mystery. The mysteries are necessarily much less complex than those of the full novels in this series, but roughly on par with the previous short story collections. I of course enjoyed some stories more than others and personally prefer the previous collections over this one,

but as short stories I have no real complaints with them. The attempt to unite the stories into one novel, however, was much more problematic. There is an overarching plot lingering in the background of the stories, articulated most clearly in the first and last proper chapters (ignoring the epilogue for the moment) which were not previously published as stand alone tales. The problem is that this overarching plot is rather weak and the twist or mystery reveal that comes in the last chapter was obvious to me at most one-third of the way through the book.

The one thing that does successfully unite these stories is the travelogue theme of the collection. Gordianus is traveling the known world, visiting each of the Seven Wonders in turn and encountering a mystery at each place. The physical descriptions of the wonders themselves were a bit flat, but the overall sense of place and time with all the little details that I consider to be one of the hallmarks of Saylor's series are here and as fantastically done as ever. Gordianus's journey gives him and the readers a sense of the culture and history of multiple places around the Mediterranean and the background is as vibrant, entertaining, and educational as Saylor at his best. My personal favorite of the historical backgrounds focused on Gordianus's visit to the Statue of Zeus at Olympia, a visit which just happens to coincide with an Olympic Games, but perhaps my enjoyment of that was due solely to the fact that I read this the week of the opening ceremonies of the 2012 London games.

Joaquin Garza says

Una atronadoramente mediocre novela de 'misterio histórico' que resulta ser atronadoramente mediocre como misterio y atronadoramente mediocre como novela histórica.

Georgina Ortiz says

Steven Saylor never fails to amuse (and educate) with his stories. Some bits better than the others. Noticed that this particular collection is somewhat lighter in tone than the Roma Sub Rosa series.

Final rating: 3.5 stars

Melinda says

I have not read anything by this author before but had some books from his Sub-Rosa Rome series ready to start, when I found out that these books were a prequel of sorts - giving some background about the 18 year old young Roman finder. So (liking to read things in order), I gave this a crack before I started the main series.

Not disappointed. The story flowed well and certainly gave some historical facts (some of which were delivered lecture style). Basically our young MC and his older Greek tutor leave Rome and go off adventuring - to visit all the seven ancient wonders. As it happens, at every port the duo encounters a mystery to solved, a wrong to be righted - with our young hero often 'saving the day'. Sometimes it all felt a little too contrived, the language bordering on middle school (although there were some sexual references so not really a younger kid read), however it the writing had a certain innocence to it, naivety?? So enjoyable, but off to read how this young finder turned out and see what he gets up to as a 'proper adult'.

Stephen says

A few years ago, I read through the Roma sub Rosa series in which a first-century Sherlock Holmes named Gordianus the Finder made his living investigating murders and other sundry mysteries which were in great supply during Rome's transition from republic to empire. The Seven Wonders marks the return of the Finder, or rather his beginning as a freshly-togaed young man touring the world with his tutor, Antipater of Sidon -- a poet who fakes his own death, and not just to get out of town. Although Gordianus will encounter mysteries in every city he visits, the greatest intrigue is in his own camp. The stars of The Seven Wonders are the wonders themselves, as Saylor's story is a fictional travelogue of the ancient world. Today, of course, only one of the "Seven Wonders of the Ancient World" remains standing, the Great Pyramid. The others have been lost to natural disasters or human neglect. In Gordianus' day, most of them dominate the landscape of their cities. The Colossus of Rhodes has already fallen from earthquakes, but even partially submerged it's magnificent -- and the Hanging Gardens, though largely a pile of rubble, are a very impressive pile of rubble protected by the staggeringly beautiful Ishtar Gate. Gordianus invariably arrives in each city just as something special is going on: the Olympics, for instance, or a fertility festival. The Seven Wonders is a cultural tour of the classical world punctuated by death, theft, and skirt-chasing. (Gordianus was a responsible family man in virtually every other Roma sub Rosa series, but here he's young, knows no fear, and is randy as a goat in springtime. He even manages to be seduced by a goddess while sleeping in the Great Pyramid.) I daresay the novel is more enjoyable for the setting than the actual mysteries, since most of the time the reader is kept clueless until Gordianus reveals what he's been noticing and mulling over without letting the reader know. Had the work been longer, the mysteries might have been more enticing -- but 300 pages is brief considering the scope of his travels.

The Seven Wonders is enjoyable enough, though nothing on the order of Roma or Empire.

Adrienne says

Oh to have seen the 7 Wonders! Going along with Antipater and Gordianus was NOT a substitute, but what a pleasant voyage. The details were keen and a good look in on what it must have been like to have seen the sites. And the sights at the sites.

Liviu says

FBC Review:

INTRODUCTION: Outside speculative fiction, no contemporary writer is more appreciated by me than Steven Saylor for his wonderful Roma sub Rosa series with its main character Gordianus "the Finder" who is my current #1 fiction hero.

I summarized my impressions to the Gordianus novels [HERE](#) and I reviewed Empire, the second installment in the author's take on Roman history by following about 11 centuries of the fortunes of a patrician family entrusted with a special religious symbol.

What about the author's highly awaited return to Gordianus' adventures in The Seven Wonders? Read on for my take on it, but in brief I have to say that it fulfilled my expectations and even surprised me a bit towards the ending which opens the possibilities of more from Gordianus' early career before his brilliant entrance in the Rome of the high and mighty helping Cicero's stinging Sulla's dictatorship in Roman Blood.

OVERVIEW/ANALYSIS: The Seven Wonders consists of short stories - most published last year in various magazines and anthologies of which I have previously read some four - glued together with an introduction in Rome where we get to see Gordianus father and an epilogue in Alexandria, where Bethesda appears in the hero's life.

The topic of the stories is self-explanatory and the blurb above covers the needed details more than adequately, so I will talk about the general feel of the book rather than of each adventure individually. There is a mystery - sometimes more obvious, sometimes more thriller-like than puzzling - but in each case the setting and the secondary characters are the highlight in addition of course to the still wise-cracking narration of Gordianus.

Structurally The Seven Wonders has an unifying thread of the Mithridatian menace to Rome which leads to the ambiguous of motivations of various characters and giving a subtle feeling to the book as a whole which cannot be discerned by reading the stories in separation on original publication.

Also as hinted throughout the series, Gordianus is not averse to men either and here he comes out - to us of course as the classical antiquity's mores were different and trickier; I really loved that part and I would just note that more than anything, this shows the difference between the 1990's and 2012 in US social mores and of what is deemed appropriate to publication in mainstream books...

Gordianus' voice at 18 still compelling and while he is appropriately youthful and overall I think I prefer his more mature and wiser voice of the novels, the book gets the balance well in this regard. Also the Rome introduction and the Alexandria finale are outstanding as historical fiction on their own, so there is scope for more young Gordianus, both in Egypt and at Rome, though I still want that promised novel with Gordianus warning Caesar on the Ides of March...

Since most of the stories were published earlier they obviously need self-containment, so by necessity tend to be simplistic as mysteries and lack the powerful unity of the novels, while the continual switching of venues tends to break the narrative flow but that was to be expected in what is essentially a "fix-up" novel.

I would have really loved more about the travel itself as Gordianus and Antipater cover quite a distance in visiting the Seven Wonders and occasionally interesting venues in their neighborhoods - the time is done well, no flying so to speak -but the travel details are skimmed on and I missed that.

Overall, The Seven Wonders (highly recommended novel of 2012) is a very good introduction to Gordianus. While not at the level of the best novels in the series, the book does quite a good job within its parameters that impose quite a few restrictions, while managing to have a unifying thread and excellent first and last parts.

Hermine says

I'm a huge fan of the Roma Sub Rosa series and had been waiting for this book for a while knowing it would

well be worth it. Steven Saylor knows how to tell a great story and he did just that with Seven Wonders.

The story follows Gordianus on his first real adventure (adventures, perhaps?). Despite reviewer criticism that perhaps the characters in this book aren't as fully developed as they are in the series itself, I don't feel the same way. Gordianus is a developed character for those who have read the series prior to this book. This is just a book of short stories, and I don't see how characters that don't exist from one chapter to the next could be or why they should be more developed than they were.

It was a light, quick, and fun read of a few short stories that kept me occupied for a couple days. I already feel as though I know Gordianus through all the books I've already read, so I just needed him to tell me a few stories to pass the time, and he did that well.

The story ends in Alexandria, but I would have loved to read more Alexandria exploits or even read about Gordianus' journey back home to Rome. But hopefully that is another book in the making.
