



The Secret Price of History
 Searching for the Treasure behind
 Alexander's Medallion
 by Gayle Ridinger, Paolo Pochettino
 Fiction - Mystery - Historical
 586 Pages
 Reviewed on 02/05/2015

Author Biography

Gayle Ridinger was born in the United States and graduated from Oberlin College. She worked as a newspaper reporter before moving to Milan, Italy in 1981. She presently teaches English and translation techniques at an Italian university. She translated and co-edited the bilingual anthology, ITALIAN POETRY 1950-1990



(Branden/Dante University Press, Boston, 1996), and her translation of SHAVINGS, prose poems by Camillo Sbarbaro, was published by Chelsea Editions, New York, in 2006. She received the “National Translation Prize” from the Italian Ministry of Culture in 1997, and was named Knight of the Star Order of Italian Solidarity by Italian President Carlo Azeglio Ciampi in 2003. Her children’s book, A STAR AT THE BOTTOM OF THE SEA, was published in 2001 in Italian (Edizioni Arka), and subsequently in Greek, Chinese, Korean, Arabic, and English (Gareth Stevens-USA).

Her father’s family is from Gettysburg, Pennsylvania, and she spent numerous summers there, hearing about the Civil War from family members who were battlefield guides, including a great uncle who had the honour of escorting President and Mrs. Kennedy on their visit.

Paolo Pochettino was born in Milan, Italy, where he studied the classics at secondary school and graduated in mechanical engineering at the Polytechnic Institute of Milan. For years he worked as an industrial manager, and during his career lived in Holland, the United States, France, and India. A long-time distance runner (with 8 marathons to his credit) as well as Himalayan mountain hiker and extensive world traveller, he has survived a plane hijacking and the revolts in Sudan and Yemen. An avid fan of cinema, he co-authored in 1998 the sci-fi movie guidebook IL FILM DI FANTASCIENZA (A. Vallardi Editore, Milan, Italy).

Of Piedmontese background, he has always had a passionate interest in the bloody Risorgimento battles of this region.

Book Review

Reviewed by Steve Lindahl for Readers' Favorite

The Secret Price of History: Searching for the Treasure behind Alexander's Medallion by Gayle Ridinger and Paolo Pochettino has a complex plot that should grab any reader with an interest in history. It jumps back and forth between 19th century and 21st century adventures by following a medallion along with the people who possessed it and the people who searched for it during those two centuries. The story, in both centuries, is about the search for Alexander the Great's third treasure and the role the medallion plays in that search. It's also a detective story because the people searching for that treasure commit horrible crimes and need to be caught. These two mysteries are well written adventures that capture readers and keep them involved in the plot of a fairly long book.

Angie Cebrelli is a TV weather girl who spices up her spots by dressing as historical characters. When she decides to broadcast from a Civil War reenactment at Gettysburg, she chooses the outfit of her ancestor, an Italian immigrant who fought in that battle with the Garibaldi Guards, a group of soldiers with war experience from the Battle for the Roman Republic in Italy. She wears the red shirt that was the symbol for those soldiers, along with a medallion that has been in her family for generations. A bullet hits Angie's arm from someone using live ammunition. Fortunately, a Good Samaritan comes to her aid, but while the man is applying a tourniquet, another man tries to steal her medallion. Here's where Angie's portion of the story takes off as Angie begins her quest to learn why.

The Secret Price of History covers the 19th century Battle for the Roman Republic in great detail and touches on the American Civil War. (There is a wonderful description of the Battle of Gettysburg late in the book.) It also covers the ancient religion of Mithraism and touches on other philosophies such as Transcendentalism. Ridinger and Pochettino's research seems thorough. The Roman Republic (19th century) and the battle to secure it are subjects I have never studied, so that made the story even more interesting to me. I would recommend this novel to anyone who likes historical fiction.