



# Texas Talking Book News

Texas State Library and Archives Commission

WINTER 2020

## Director's Report

Hello! This is Sarah Jacobson, the new director of the Talking Book Program and the Texas regional librarian for the National Library Service for the Blind and Print Disabled (NLS), Library of Congress. If you read the Fall Newsletter you know we had to say farewell to Ava Smith, the director of the Talking Book Program for the past 18 years. Ava ended her outstanding and long tenure on December 31, 2019. Ava successfully led the Texas program to be a premier and exemplary library in the NLS network of cooperating libraries. It is my desire to continue this level of excellence for all of you.

I'm very excited to be the new director and look forward to providing you with exemplary services.

Best wishes,  
Sarah Jacobson, Director, Talking Book Program

### **The Talking Book Program will be closed on the below listed holidays:**

Monday, February 17 ~ Presidents' Day  
Monday, May 25 ~ Memorial Day

Of course, you can leave a voicemail message or send email on a holiday.

### **Goodreads 2019 Choice Awards Announced**

The social cataloging website for book lovers, Goodreads, has just announced their readers' Choice Awards for 2019. The Texas Talking Book Program has a good number of them in our collection. Are you looking for a story that takes place in the past? Goodreads members chose *DAISY JONES & THE SIX* by Taylor Jenkins Reid - DB 94175, as their favorite historical fiction book for this past year. Are you more interested in non-fiction? *GIRL, STOP APOLOGIZING: A SHAME-FREE PLAN FOR EMBRACING AND ACHIEVING YOUR GOALS* by Rachel Hollis - DB 94474, was chosen as the best general non-fiction book. *THE FIVE: THE UNTOLD LIVES OF THE WOMEN KILLED BY JACK THE RIPPER* by Hallie

Rubenhold - DB 96868, was selected as the best historical non-fiction book. Perhaps you're in the market for a new author to explore. Goodreads readers awarded Casey McQuiston the honor of Debut Goodreads Author for romance, the novel, RED, WHITE & ROYAL BLUE - DB 95171. No matter which genre you enjoy, the bibliophiles at Goodreads have chosen a favorite book published this year. Contact us and we can help you find your next favorite book. For more information: <https://www.goodreads.com/choiceawards/best-books-2019>

## **January 2020 TBP Book Club Title Announced!**

Please join us on Thursday, January 30 at 7 p.m. (Central Time) for our book club discussion of EDUCATED: A MEMOIR by Tara Westover - DB 90188, BR 22656, LB 10807.

Our book club meetings are hosted via toll free conference call, so all you need is a telephone to participate. To RSVP call the Talking Book Program at: 1-800-252-9605 or email us at: [tbp.ral@tsl.texas.gov](mailto:tbp.ral@tsl.texas.gov). Please indicate if you would like us to mail you the digital cartridge or if you prefer to download it from BARD.

NLS Annotation: Memoir exploring the author's path from being raised in a fundamentalist, paranoid Mormon family where she was homeschooled to eventually working her way to graduate degrees at Cambridge and Harvard. Discusses hardships faced by the family, abuse at the hands of a sibling and more. Commercial audiobook. Bestseller. 2018. Violence and strong language.

## **2019 TBP Poetry Contest Winners**

We are pleased to announce the winners of the TBP Poetry contest. Thank you to all that participated in the TBP poetry contest. We received a range of poems - some were happy, some were sad and some were touching.

Choosing the winners was not an easy task. In the end, the judgment came down to the poets' originality, style, structure and impact. The judges were blown away by the talent and creativity they received from you, our patrons. We look forward to the next contest submissions.

**First Place:** Valentine Day by Boyd Reedy

This day was made in God`s own heart,  
For lovers young and old  
To re-affirm their ageless love,  
Their purest thoughts confirm.

I have no worldly goods to offer as my due,  
My only wealth forever true is life and love for you.

**Second Place:** Thoughts by Sherrie Lindemann  
Sometimes I sit and dream  
And let my thoughts go wild,  
The things I see inside my head  
Remind me of a child.  
Our simple thoughts  
Give comfort,  
Like holding on so tight,  
Hoping they don't go away,  
Somewhere in the night.

**Third Place:** A Talking Book Reader's Haiku by Neva Fairchild  
Will you read today?  
But of course. How could I not?  
A new book awaits.

### **Helpful contact information for the Talking Book Program:**

- To order books or report a problem with your machine: 1-800-252-9605
- To request an application or ask about enrollment: 1-800-252-9605
- To access the toll-free information line: 1-866-388-6397
- To contact the Disability Information and Referral Center:  
1-800-252-9605
- To contact the Public Awareness Office: 512-463-5452 or  
1-800-252-9605
- To send email to anyone in the Talking Book Program:  
**tbp.services@tsl.texas.gov**
- To ask for assistance using BARD or to make changes to your account:  
1-800-252-9605 or **tbp.bard@tsl.texas.gov**
- To ask a librarian for reading advice or reference assistance:  
1-800-252-9605 or **tbp.ral@tsl.texas.gov**
- To access the TBP blog:  
**<https://www.tsl.texas.gov/texastalkingbooks/>**
- To see the TBP book club schedule:  
**<https://www.tsl.texas.gov/tbp/tbpbookclub/index.html>**

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Free Matter for the  
Blind or Physically  
Handicapped



## Disability News

Do you need a home computer? Computers for the Blind provides refurbished laptop and desktop computers at a reduced cost (less than \$200). The computers are equipped with a one-year license of either JAWS screen reader software or ZoomText magnification software. Computers for the Blind does NOT cover the cost of an Internet Service Provider (ISP). For more information, visit [www.computersfortheblind.org](http://www.computersfortheblind.org), send an e-mail to [info@computersfortheblind.org](mailto:info@computersfortheblind.org), or call 214-340-6328.

Comments or complaints regarding programs and services of the Texas State Library and Archives Commission may be made to:  
Director and Librarian, PO Box 12927, Austin, TX 78711-2927

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## Books Worth Revisiting: Steven Saylor's Gordianus the Finder Mysteries

The history of the ancient world has always been a bountiful source for writers. The Roman Empire especially has been the inspiration for countless histories, for plays and poetry, and for fiction. Detective and mystery stories set in ancient Rome open up all kinds of possibilities in storytelling. In 1991, Steven Saylor (1956- ) published his first novel in what would become the *Roma sub Rosa* series. *Roman Blood*, featuring Gordianus the Finder, takes place in the waning days of the Republic and introduced readers to the man hired “to find” things or “to find” the truth about things. Readers also met Gordianus’ companion, the slave girl Bethesda, as well as nearly every prominent Roman of the time. Saylor, who majored in classics at the University of Texas at Austin, often bases his stories on actual, little-known events. The series follows Gordianus’ adventures from his teenage years into his sixties. The series contains eleven novels, two collections of short stories, and three prequel novels written before the final novel was published in 2018. The series is best read in chronological order, beginning with the three prequels. All are available for BARD download or as a duplication-on-demand digital cartridge by mail.

1. **The Seven Wonders (DB 95418):** The young Gordianus sets out on a journey to visit the seven wonders of the ancient world. At each stop, he finds a mystery to solve. At the end of his journey, he meets the slave girl Bethesda.
2. **Raiders of the Nile (DB 95419):** Gordianus must rescue Bethesda, who has been kidnapped by bandits intent on stealing the golden sarcophagus of Alexander the Great.
3. **Wrath of the Furies (DB 95420):** Gordianus and Bethesda journey to Ephesus to prevent a massacre of Roman citizens by Mithridates the Great, one of Rome’s deadliest enemies.
4. **Roman Blood (DB 36648):** Back in Rome, Gordianus is hired by the up-and-coming orator Cicero to find out the truth about a man accused of patricide.
5. **The House of the Vestals (DB 46381):** Gordianus solves a series of mysteries in this collection of short stories which also introduces Lucius Claudius, a friend and patron of Gordianus.

6. **A Gladiator Dies Only Once (DB 62021):** Another collection of short stories, one of which has Gordianus helping his mute adopted son Eco solve the mystery of some missing figurines.
7. **Arms of Nemesis (DB 41404):** With the slave revolt led by Spartacus as the backdrop, Gordianus finds himself working for Crassus, the wealthiest man in Rome.
8. **Catilina's Riddle (DB 39565):** Gordianus moves his family to the countryside to escape increasingly turbulent Roman politics. Cicero badgers him into keeping tabs on Catilina, a political rival of Cicero's.
9. **The Venus Throw (DB 43363):** Gordianus hunts for the murderer of his friend and mentor, Dio of Alexandria. When he discovers who the murderer is, the shock is almost beyond comprehension.
10. **A Murder on the Appian Way (DB 47844):** The situation in Rome deteriorates day by day. An upper-class Roman named Clodius is found murdered on the Appian Way. Cicero again hires Gordianus to find the truth of the matter. Meanwhile, Julius Caesar and Pompey the Great have emerged as dangerous political rivals.
11. **Rubicon (DB 49556):** Julius Caesar plunges Rome into a civil war when he crosses the Rubicon. Gordianus' son-in-law is kidnaped by Pompey and forced to serve in his army, unless Gordianus can find who murdered Pompey's kinsman.
12. **Last Seen in Massilia (DB 53710):** Gordianus journeys to Gaul in search of his second adopted son Meto, who has gone missing while serving as Caesar's secretary.
13. **A Mist of Prophecies (DB 55821):** Gordianus is at the market when a woman rushes up to him, collapses, and dies in his arms. The woman is a seeress named Cassandra, and she has been poisoned.
14. **The Judgment of Caesar (DB 61137):** Gordianus travels back to Egypt with Bethesda, who is seeking a cure for a mysterious illness. While there, Gordianus crosses paths with Cleopatra.
15. **The Triumph of Caesar (DB 73061):** Caesar has triumphed over Pompey, ending the civil war. Caesar's wife fears that a plot is afoot to kill Caesar, and she hires Gordianus to find the plotters.
16. **The Throne of Caesar (DB 95421):** As a favor to his faithful secretary Meto, Caesar nominates Gordianus to the Roman Senate. Gordianus will put on his toga and take his seat on the Ides of March, but the situation seems ominous.