



I Wish I'd Written: Susan Martineau

Article Author:

[Susan Martineau](#) [1]

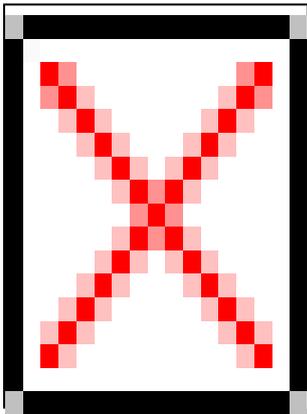
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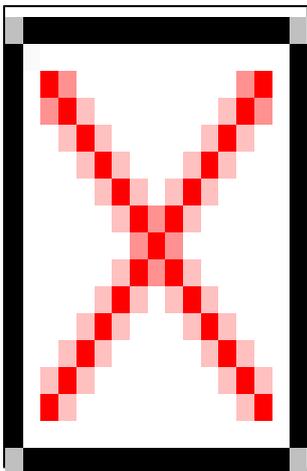
Susan Martineau on the magic of **The Eagle of the Ninth**



One of my favourite books was, and still is, **The Eagle of the Ninth** by Rosemary Sutcliff. In fact, I still love reading anything by Sutcliff, who always manages to bring the ancient world vividly to life whilst crafting a brilliant adventure story.

The Eagle of the Ninth [3] is set in Roman Britain and centres on a mystery involving the disappearance of the entire Ninth Legion of the Roman army into the mists of northern Britain. The marvellously named Marcus Flavius Aquila is the son of one of the vanished soldiers. He is desperate to find the lost bronze eagle standard of his father's legion and to restore their honour. (As a nerdy child, of course I quickly realised that 'aquila' was Latin for 'eagle'!)

As a kid I was not only reading historical adventure stories, but also digging around in the garden



in the hope of finding ancient artefacts. If I found anything the least bit intriguing I used to take it to my local museum to ask one of their long-suffering experts to look at it. I was rattling around in the Roman section of the place one day when I saw a bronze Roman eagle sitting in a display case. It felt as if the book had spun some kind of magic to lead me there. I don't think the fantastic feeling I had that day has ever really left me. The books we read as a child are more powerful than we can imagine!

Susan Martineau's award-winning book **Real-Life Mysteries** illustrated by Vicky Barker (978 1 474960236) £7.99 is published by b small publishing.

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