



# Midnight in the Piazza

*Tiffany Parks*

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**Midnight in the Piazza** Tiffany Parks

**Mysteries abound in this exciting race through Rome!**

Beatrice Archer may love history, and Rome may be chock-full of it, but that doesn't mean she wants to move there!

Too bad Beatrice's father got a job as the head of the history department at the American Academy in Rome—now, Beatrice has no choice but to get used to the idea.

When she arrives in Rome she explores her new city as much as she can, but it isn't until she hears talk of a strange neighborhood legend that Beatrice perks up. A centuries-old unsolved mystery about the beautiful turtle fountain outside her window? Sounds like fun!

Before Beatrice has a chance to explore, though, she sees a dark figure emerge from the shadows of the square in the middle of the night—and steal the famous turtle sculptures that give the fountain its name.

When no one believes her story, Beatrice knows that it's up to her to solve the crime and restore the turtles to their rightful place. With the help of her new friend Marco, she navigates a world of unscrupulous ambassadors, tricky tutors, and international art thieves to unravel one of Roman history's greatest dramas—before another priceless work of art is stolen.

## Midnight in the Piazza Details

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Author : Tiffany Parks

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## **From Reader Review *Midnight in the Piazza* for online ebook**

### **Ms. Yingling says**

E ARC from Edelweiss Plus

When Beatrice's father gets a job as the head of the history department at the American Academy in Rome, she is angry that they have to leave their home in Boston. She's not given a choice (her father is very fortunate to have a job!), and the two are soon ensconced in the Jewish Ghetto. Beatrice wants to explore, and her father reluctantly agrees. She meets a few other children who speak English, including Marco, and starts to establish some routines. When she is awakened one night by a clanging from the fountain in the square, she looks out and sees a man stealing the sculptured turtles from it. The next morning, however, the turtles are still there, although their position seems slightly off. Even though she is busy with exploring and taken Italian lessons from, Beatrice is enthralled with the story of the Palazzo Mattei and the fountain that was built overnight. The more she investigates the palazzo and the turtles, the deeper Beatrice gets into a complicated mystery in which her own tutor might be involved! Will she be able to use her skills of deduction to figure it out before an important piece of history is lost for good?

**Strengths:** The details about living in Rome were just exquisite, and I loved the fact that the mystery was happening actually in her front yard. This is great for students who like Blue Balliet's art mysteries or Marianne Malone's *The Sixty-Eight Rooms* but also for anyone who wants to live in a new and exciting foreign city. I want to go get some gelato and eat it by a fountain right now!

**Weaknesses:** I never understand why tweens don't want to move to foreign countries-- how fantastic that would be! Also, I couldn't believe that her father didn't use a computer. In academia these days? Pfft. The history professors at the University of Cincinnati were all about computers when I was there in 1987, so that stretched my credulity.

**What I really think:** This reminded me a bit of Runholdt's Kari and Lucas mysteries or Gonzalez's *Moving Target* books, which see a steady circulation in my library. Also a bit like the very new Asselin and Malone *Art of the Swap* book. It's not the gory type of murder mystery that my students want, but it involves traveling to Italy, so I'm sold!

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### **Stefan Ulstein says**

Parks brings Rome to life with all the heat, dust and magnificent public art that makes it eternal. Her thirteen-year-old Beatrice comes to love the art and the history. If only school could have made them so alive! Beatrice's relationship to Marco brings back those first stirrings of attraction, with all the miscalculations and missed signals. It's a delightful story of unfolding maturity set in a page-turning mystery that romps through the streets, piazzas and underground vaults. My twelve-year-old granddaughter couldn't put it down. What I liked most was the way that the young characters are developed with dignity and class. It's an exotic mystery but it always reads like something that could really happen. Kids will enjoy it and emerge a little wiser about the role of art in society.

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## **Caroline says**

In case you travel this year with children to the eternal city then this is book you should get them. I might be a bit biased due to the fact that I follow Tiffany Parks on Twitter where she can make my day by leaving a lovely trail of tweets that cover a city and country that I adore but still. Still the proof in the pudding is in the eating and in this case in the reading. What makes this book stand out amongst many other when it comes down to an exciting story with in the background some memorable statues and buildings? Well, first of all Parks manages to tell a story rather in depth then racing through Rome the whole way. For once you end up in one neighborhood and together with Beatrice you discover its beauty and secrets. That along the way she does not meet up with that many other people makes it also stand out. The ones we meet up all play a vital part in the story. Foremost Beatrice is on her own most of the time in this story and how many times do we wish to be on our own when we are in touristic magnets such as Rome? We long for air and for space when we visit touristic places and wish that we would be able to take that one picture that someone else managed to take for that travel brochure we browsed through before booking our trip. Parks is fully aware of this and uses that sensation to pull us more into the depth of the story she wishes us to tell. She has woven a story about a girl who tries to get her head around not just about the Italian language but also the city in which she lives. When next time in Rome I will be standing in that specific Piazza and Beatrice will be there with me. Nobody else...unless Tiffany Parks shows up who I will then gladly invite for some gelato. Mille grazie Tiffany Parks.

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## **Librarian Lynne says**

Having just gone to Rome & visited the very area where this fun mystery takes place I really enjoyed it.

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## **Vicki Kondelik says**

Thirteen-year-old Beatrice Archer moves to Rome when her father, a college professor, gets a job there. She does not want to go at first, but she soon falls in love with the beautiful turtle fountain outside her apartment in the Palazzo Mattei, near the Jewish Ghetto. One night she sees someone remove the turtles from the fountain, but the next morning they are back in place, and no one believes her. Only Beatrice notices that the turtles are slightly off from their original position. With the help of her new friend Marco, an Italian boy who speaks English, she investigates the mystery of what happened to the turtles. Her adventures lead her into a world of international art thieves. At the same time, she discovers a legend about the 16th century family who owned the palazzo where she lives, and about how the turtle fountain came to be built.

Tiffany Parks, a writer, editor, blogger, and tour guide who lives in Rome, has written a brilliant first novel., steeped in the history of Rome and its art. Her love of Rome shines through on every page. You can taste the gelato while you're reading the book. And you can learn a little Italian along with Beatrice. Tiffany translates all the Italian phrases into English in her footnotes. I hope that, one day, *Midnight in the Piazza* will be translated into Italian. And I would love to see more adventures of Beatrice Archer. *Midnight in the Piazza* was written for children ages 8-12, but people of all ages will enjoy it.

Full disclosure: Tiffany Parks recently took me on a wonderful tour of the sites in Rome where my work-in-progress, a novel about Beatrice Cenci, a young 16th century noblewoman executed for the murder of her abusive father, takes place. The Piazza Mattei and the turtle fountain are very close to the Palazzo Cenci, so

Tiffany took me there as well. The turtle fountain truly is amazing! We had corresponded for about two years before then, but I read her novel before we met face-to-face. But none of this has influenced my opinion of her book.

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### **Sarah says**

I received this as an eARC through Edelweiss in exchange for an honest review.

Beatrice and her father move to Rome for his job as a college professor. While at first she is not completely taken with the idea, especially because she doesn't even speak Italian, she soon finds herself in love with the city. Beatrice falls quickly in love with a gorgeous fountain outside of her new apartment and wants to find out more about it. While investigating the fountain, she uncovers a mystery surrounding it. Someone is trying to steal parts of the fountain, Beatrice is determined to find out who and stop them. She has made quick connections with her Italian teacher and several guys her age, who happen to speak some English.

This was a fun and fluffy mystery. The scenery was compelling. The mystery was able to keep me entertained throughout.

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### **Monica Gallamore says**

Really beautiful presentation of my most beloved place--The Eternal City. Parks does a great job putting the reader in the city space of Roma.

Everything that makes Roma special is in this book--the ruins beneath the modern buildings, the piazza lifestyle, and the friendly locals. I also appreciate how the sad realities of women's place historically is presented for the YA reader.

I will be purchasing an additional copy for my niece who is dreaming of visiting Roma with me one day.

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### **Kristy says**

Horn book review. Solid, sweet middle grade mystery.  
For your Nancy Drew fans.

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### **Lisa Kizer says**

Beatrice is a 13 yo Bostonian who moves to Rome with her absent-a-lot father. Being left alone in a strange foreign city, she witnesses an art theft that no one believes actually happened. She convinces Marco, a Roman boy around her age to help her some. It is a quick and easy read but... it does not mean it is a great read. It seems to be missing something that will make it even better.

There is Beatrice, who whines about being in Rome when she wanted to stay in Boston. Her father, whom I have lots of issues with. He does not realize because he never calls to check up on Beatrice that her phone is

broken along with where she is. There is her elderly neighbor lady Signora Costaguti, who points out that significant coincidences are called synchronicity and nothing is a pure coincidence. Which seems to blow up the point of every mystery book written. Just not there with this book.

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### **Derek Farmer says**

This is the perfect book! It's art, adventure, and curiosity swirled together. The main character is a strong, intelligent young woman who uses books, not the internet, to engage with the world... and I LOVE that! This is the type of book we Generation Xers loved as children. It is a story that makes the ancient world of Rome - magical - and excites the reader to explore the mysteries our world has on offer. Five stars - and 10 - if the rating system went that high. This book will be a hit with your child, and even with you when you're looking for something fun to read.

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### **Elizabeth Tharp says**

2.5 stars

Midnight in the Piazza wasn't a bad book, but there wasn't really anything extraordinary about it either. From the beginning of the main mystery, there isn't really a question whether or not Beatrice will accomplish her goal. The suspense starts draining from the story as coincidences working in Beatrice's favor result in a lecture on the nature of synchronicity. Once it becomes clear that the book is written as a proponent of synchronicity, the suspense is eradicated all together. After all, if the universe is working in Beatrice's favor, there is no chance that she will fail. The other aspect of the book that bothered me was the obvious bias in favor of Beatrice. Beatrice knows better than the adults, she makes better decisions than the adults, and she sees things that the adults can't see, with the end result that adults are depicted as clueless or flat out wrong while children are depicted as wise and just. The book's details about Italy were fascinating and the included phrases in Italian added a delightful and artistic touch. Unfortunately, the advocacy for synchronicity and children's superiority to adults detracted from the book's plot and appeal.

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### **Jeanne Ruczhak-Eckman says**

As a girl who grew up on Trixie Belden and Nancy Drew, I personally enjoyed reading about 13 year old Beatrice Archer and how she solved the missing turtles and other works of art. Tiffany Parks does a great job visualizing Beatrice as she follows her instinct and the clues.

Parks did an excellent job capturing the feel of a 13 year old girl, who was being torn away from everything she knew and set loose in a new place. She also convinced me that we were in Italy. My one issue, more as a parent than a potential young adult reading this, is that I would never allow my 13 year old daughter to wander free in a new country with such a language barrier. I also doubted that a university professor was not more computer literate.

That said, all in all I enjoyed the book and would suggest it to any young adult who enjoys mysteries, or travel.

Disclaimers:

The book I read was a paperback not an ebook but I did not have that option. I did acquire the book through a giveaway here on Goodreads.

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### **Anna Karwowska says**

Well-written and filled with interesting tidbits about Rome. However, this book uses "synchronicity" as a way to deus-ex-machina the plot along. Without going into spoilers, the ending stretches the realms of possibility just a bit too much for my taste. Would recommend for kids who like mysteries and who want a quick read.

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### **Patty Morosic says**

Leaving the United States and moving to Rome, Italy, was not 13-year-old Beatrice's idea. But move there she did with her Father. Beatrice becomes curious about all things Rome when she sees someone steal the turtles from the Turtle Fountain! Midnight in the Piazza follows Beatrice's journey in Rome trying to solve this mystery with one suspenseful adventure after another. This captivating book gives the reader a factual glimpse in not only the history of the city, its buildings and fountains, but incorporates it in a delightful "whodunnit" as well. The words flow beautifully from Tiffany's pen and her descriptions are very vivid. I could not put the book down and feel it is a must read for all children aged 8 and upwards to adult.

Patty M.

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### **Janis says**

When her academic father gets a position in Rome, Beatrice reluctantly says goodbye to Boston for a new life – a life that gets interesting when she witnesses a strange crime involving a famous fountain. I really enjoyed this middle reader for its exciting setting, lively mystery, and introduction to great Italian art (and gelato!).

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