



A Stopover in Venice

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An enchanting debut novel—a fairy tale of sorts.

The time is the present. The novel opens on a train en route to Verona. A young American woman is on an Italian tour with her famous musician husband. In a moment of fury and despair at their lifeless marriage, she drags down a piece of her luggage and gets off the train in the countryside. Marooned and on her own for the first time in eight years, she returns to Venice, gets a room at the Hotel Gritti Palace, sets out to explore the city, and chances on a group of boys tormenting a small dog, which she rescues and smuggles into the hotel.

The following day she is accosted by a man who claims that the dog belongs to his employer. Reluctantly she follows him to a Gothic palazzo and to the dog's owner, an elderly contessa. The young woman becomes faint. The contessa insists that she stay the night . . .

What started off as an impulsive act of defiance opens out into an adventure—and a mystery—that summons up centuries of the Venetian past, the discovery of a lost masterpiece, and the heroine's reclamation of herself.

A Stopover in Venice Details

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From Reader Review A Stopover in Venice for online ebook

Paula says

A story within a story, two romances, one contemporary and one that took place in the 1500s, full of art and mystery. A fun read with great descriptions of Venice and lots of art history references. I especially enjoyed the book since I read it while I was having my own adventure in Venice. Thanks, Bonnie!

Lindsay says

The first book I happened upon at the library last week. I read 15 pages before I checked out and completed the book in less than a week. I couldn't put it down. It was a bit like a fairytale, but better, because this sort of thing could actually happen. A woman who has felt that she has become somewhat invisible to her husband, suddenly gets off a train in Venice Italy, and her life completely changes from that day forward. This book shows you that no matter how stuck you feel in your current situation, you can change your life at any point. It just takes a bold effort.

Rachael says

I don't even know where to start. This book was DREADFUL.

So our heroine (ha!) Cornelia (really, Cornelia?!) aka Nel, is withering away in a passionless marriage with her famous musician husband.

Nel (woe is me!) travels all over the world with her husband. But heaven forbid that she ever be alone, so while he is busy working, Nel chooses to sit and mope. When he is finished working (as in the entire reason they are abroad in the first place) all she does is moan that she didn't get to see anything. Can anyone imagine a more terrible life?! Nel can't.

So finally she gets super fed up at her husband for not holding her hand enough and gets off the train in Venice all by herself. Our damsel in distress gets a hotel room and then orders room service, cos, ya know, why eat out in FREAKING ITALY.

So the next afternoon, Nel finally decides that it's time to actually leave her room. She happens upon a dog being abused, which she saves and then smuggles back to her hotel room for more room service.

A day or two later, a man recognizes the dog and whisks both of them back to the dog's home.

Our damsel in distress faints, because what else do damsel's do? When she comes to, the dog's owner insists that she spend the night. Nel is hesitant - staying the night means no room service after all - but agrees.

The next day Nel and the woman Lucy get to talking and Nel regales her with her oh-so-terrible life. Lucy is busy at home, meanwhile, working to uncover a fresco that is in the process of being discovered in one of the house's - formerly a medieval convent - rooms.

Here begins an utterly boring and predictable "mystery" about who painted the fresco.

At times I wondered if the author had ever actually engaged in a conversation with anyone. (Also, the lack of any quotation marks was distracting and annoying!)

Everyone played their roles as expected, events unfolded as you knew they would, and everyone learned their mundane life lessons.

I was hoping for a fun art-themed historical fiction, but what I got was dreck.

Skip this one.

Lynn says

I think this book tried to do way too much in a few hundred pages. The biggest problem is that the author is way too proud of the fact that she is Harvard educated. I am sure that Yale graduates don't have that problem. Not a bad read, but a bit tedious at points. Being a genealogist and interested in art history, parts of this I just can't swallow.

However, the overall message, that sometimes, change is good and that you need to take control of your own happiness are valid. It really helped to have a likeable dog character in the book - I picked it up in "dog days of summer" section at the library and was intrigued by the venue (Venice) and the art history facet.

Alina C?r?u says

De obicei sunt destul de sceptic? atunci c?nd vine vorba de c?r?i nou ap?rute, deoarece nu po?i fi niciodat? sigur dac? romanul pe care l-ai cump?rat a meritat sau nu banii ?i timpul t?u. Totu?i, ?n multitudinea de c?r?i de duzin?, po?i g?si, ?nt?mpl?tor sau nu, ?i c?r?i bune. Nu neap?rat valoroase, dar pl?cute ochilor ?i min?ii.

?n aceast? categorie se ?ncadreaz? romanul de debut al scriitoarei ?i actri?ei americane de Broadway Kathryn Walker, *Mistere vene?iene (A Stopover in Venice)*, ap?rut ?n 2009 la Editura Tritonic, care ne ?mbarc? ?ntr-o c?l?torie plin? de mister, art?, reflec?ii ?ndreptate spre trecut - fie c? este vorba despre trecutul protagonistei sau cel istoric - dragoste ?i, nu ?n ultimul r?nd, m?re?ia ?i splendoarea Vene?iei.

Cornelia Everett este o t?n?r? actri?? de origine american?, care ?i-a dedicat via?a ?n totalitate so?ului ei Anthony, un muzician egoist, irascibil, ?nc?p???nat ?i ironic. ?n ciuda sacrificiului ei, Anthony este mai interesat de cariera lui, Cornelia fiind o prezen?? neglijabil?. D?ndu-?i seama c? via?a l?ng? Anthony nu ?i mai aduce nicio satisfac?ie, Nel ??i ia bagajul ?i hot?r??te s? coboare undeva l?ng? Vene?ia, pentru a petrece un timp singur? cu g?ndurile ei, a se plimba ?i, ?n cele din urm?, a se bucura de via??. Amintirile protagonistei legate de primul so?, care a decedat, la c?snicia e?uat? cu Anthony sau la cariera actriceasc? au caracter autobiografic. Autoarea a fost c?s?torit? de dou? ori: prima dat? cu scriitorul ?i actorul Douglas Kenney, iar a doua oar? cu c?nt?re?ul James Taylor - o c?snicie nefericit?, precum ?n cazul Corneliei.

<http://alinasbookishhideout.com/recen...>

<http://elitere.ro/mistere-venetiene/>

Olga Ptashnyuk says

Not sure if it is because of my obsession with Italy, but I loved this book. There were moments that really make you think about what is really important in this life and how short our life could be.

Robin Arnold says

I hope this isn't a new trend, to not use quotation marks. I thought maybe it might be the copy of the book I was reading, a not for resale publishers copy printed by a local company, but then I saw others comment. It's more like reading stream of consciousness, and about watching paint dry. The idea of this plot is good, but I was disappointed in the development or lack there of.

Julia Martin says

After I got used to the writing style (no quotes when characters are speaking), I thoroughly enjoyed this book. I learned a lot about Venice and Venetian art, while enjoying a good story with interesting characters.

Anderse says

My mother, who has been to Venice a few times, always said that this ancient city would be the perfect place to disappear in one needed (or wanted) to. My dad then found this book and the whole family has taken turns reading it.

Anyone who likes art history and the mysteries of the people behind the art will like this book. Anyone who knows Venice and likes art history will love this book. I know the places she describes on her walks and I can picture myself following her steps.

It is a plainly written book but has very engaging stories in both modern times and in the the 1500s. The inclusion of letters and diary entries from the past really makes the story come alive.

When can I move to Venice? I'm packing now.....

Barbi says

I picked this up because its premise seemed really interesting--a woman, yearning for adventure becomes embroiled in a fascinating art mystery. Sure it's a little cliché, but I wasn't looking to read a great masterwork of literature. However, the premise is the only thing that's interesting about the book. As other reviewers commented, it becomes bogged down in art history jargon, and the shift between conventional narrative and academic narrative is awkward at best. And really, if I had been looking to read an academic treatise, I would have picked up one. And I have to say, this is one of the most poorly written novels I have ever read. At one point the narrator becomes excited when she is "having advice" by Lucy. For me, grammatical problems like

this are not acceptable in published works. And typographically, the novel is a bit difficult to read because there is absolutely no differentiation between dialouge and narrative. After I got through the first half of the novel, I couldn't take it any more. I skimmed the last half to get an idea of what happens so that I could be done with the novel. It's definitely not worth reading.

Natalie says

I liked this book. I liked the descriptions of Venice and the explanations about 16th century artists and the intrigue of the artists who lived in that period. I also liked the strength and intelligence of the characters and how the main character found herself.

Susan says

I became wrapped up in the story of this woman's quest to rediscover herself and gain independence after being lost in the life of her famous husband. She stumbles into a world of art, history, and mystery in Venice. The prose is delightful.

Miriam says

Kathryn Walker appears to have something against quotation marks. The dialogue is not differentiated from the rest of the text in any way. Maybe this was supposed to be artistic. Perhaps it was a technique intended to slow down the reader (if so it sure worked; it took me half again as long to read this as it should have). Either way it annoyed me because I had to keep rereading paragraphs because I wasn't sure if we were hearing a conversation or the protagonist's thoughts. This was especially irksome as I didn't enjoy Cornelia or her story all that much and would have preferred to breeze though it. I should really stop picking up novels because they claim to be about art, I am almost always disappointed.

If you read the plot synopsis and think it sounds interesting, I recommend you watch the film "Pan i Tulipani" instead.

Annea says

I was annoyed by the lack of quotes - it made for extra work reading dialog. I finally just skipped to the end to see exactly how it ended (romance wins out, of course). Trite book, tedious to read, pompous. Did make me want to visit Italy, however.

Elizabeth says

A pleasant way to spend some vicarious time in Venice. On a European tour with her famous musician husband (a thinly-veiled James Taylor, the author's own ex), Nell is suddenly seized by an impulse to get off

the train carrying their entourage from Venice to Verona. As she makes her way back to a Venice hotel, she turns over in her mind the disintegration of her marriage. Their early days together were "exotic and blissful; we floated above the banality of ordinary life; nothing could touch us." "Except time. Time could touch us and did, with the usual icy finger. Ecstasy fades, but one hopes that companionship, that word again, replaces it. ... Loneliness and the humiliating sense that my life was being wasted began to gnaw on me. ... My attempts to talk about our situation, to save this marriage, as they used to say, left me feeling like a beggar. Or a fan. No one of importance." Pretty juicy when you realize she's probably writing about herself and Taylor, but also heartfelt and touching as prose.

As her first day of wandering about Venice on her own winds to end (literally, as Nell winds her way through the mazes of Venice sidewalks and alleys -- Walker captures this feeling well), Nell performs an act of kindness toward a small animal, a dog being tormented by a group of boys. This act leads to a human encounter that propels the rest of the story. Without going into spoilerland, I'll say that Nell finds acceptance and true connection with some diverse, but ultimately like-minded individuals, and with them, throws herself into a pursuit that brings purpose, meaning, and self-assurance back to her life. Aspects of this part of the story have a fairy-tale like quality and wrap up a little too neatly, but I enjoyed it nonetheless, and learned quite a bit about an artist I had overlooked in the past. "A Stopover in Venice" was solid 3-star (liked it) read for me, which I would recommend as a thoughtful way to spend a summer weekend, particularly if you love Venice.
