



## If You Were Me and Lived in ...Italy: A Child's Introduction to Cultures Around the World

**Carole Roman**

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*Italy comes to life through this children's series aimed at familiarizing youngsters with countries across the globe.*

Drawing from her background as an educator, Carole P. Roman has published a delightful series of picture books that introduce elementary-school-age readers to the cultures of countries across the globe. The sixteenth addition to her *If You Were Me and Lived in...* series features Italy as seen through the eyes of a young Italian girl and boy.

Describing Italy from the point of view of two native children is a great way to engage young readers, who are asked to imagine themselves in the relatable situations Roman describes, like picking mimosa flowers on *La Festa delle Donna* (International Women's Day), touring ancient historic sites like the Coliseum, and taking in a game of soccer at the *Stadio Olimpico*. The main characters are enthusiastic tour guides who introduce youngsters to basic facts about Italy's geography, history, food, holidays, and other cultural details, making this book a great resource for parents planning a trip to Italy with their children, or as an addition to a classroom or school library. The author also sprinkles the text with questions, a smart way to connect children with the content and help them envision themselves in each scene.

There are several Italian words and phrases incorporated on every page, another interactive way to make the book's concepts appeal to its young readership. A three-page pronunciation guide at the rear is useful reference. After reading this book several times, one would have sufficient language skills for a rudimentary conversation in Italian.

*If You Were Me and Lived in...Italy* is possibly the tastiest volume in the series. Roman's characters munch *pane* with prosciutto and *formaggio* for lunch with their parents, lick gelato cones, and have a three-course feast with their Nonno and Nonna as their traditional Sunday repast. It's hard not to get hungry after all this delicious reading.

The illustrations by Kelsea Wierenga nicely complement the text, and are appropriately colorful and exuberant. She combines original artwork and photographic images to reinforce the main concepts on each page.

This Italian addition to the author's entertaining and educational *If You Were Me and Lived in...* series is another successful blend of facts and fun.

RACHEL JAGARESKI (January 18, 2016)

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