



Rome Tales (City Tales)

Helen Constantine

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In ways no guide book can achieve, these twenty absorbing tales by Italian authors ranging from Boccaccio in the Middle Ages to Giacomo Casanova in the eighteenth century, to Pier-Paolo Pasolini in the twentieth and contemporary new writers such as Melania Mazzucco and Igiaba Scego, offer the delight of discovering and exploring one of the world's most unique cities through a wide variety of individual lives and epochs. The tales span seven hundred years but rather than being ordered chronologically, old and new appear alongside one another, reflecting the dual identity of Rome - thriving, modern metropolis and ancient city centre that is one of the wonders of the world. The tales are wonderfully varied in style, tone, and subject matter. Casanova sets about seducing the hotelier's daughter only minutes after his arrival, a notorious Spanish prostitute in Renaissance Rome endures a public hiding without flinching, a Danish tourist in her sixties finds an unusual lover, Pope John Paul II uncovers a vast conspiracy against him, a medieval revolutionary demagogue suffers almost the same fate as Mussolini.

Each story is illustrated with a black-and-white photograph and there is a map of Rome to help readers locate the important sites which feature in the text. A deep sense of timelessness, of separate destinies entwined across a gulf of centuries, is the cumulative effect of this vivid mosaic of dramatic, comic, and tragic stories set in the Eternal City.

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