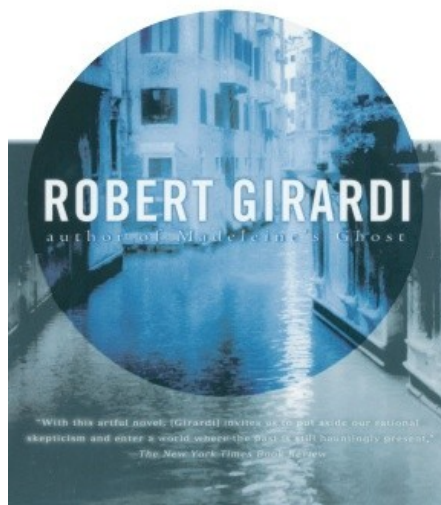


VAPORETTO 13



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Robert Girardi

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Wilson Squire is a currency trader sent by his company to Venice, Italy, to gauge the political climate and its potential effect on the lira. Haunted by recent events in his life and uneasy in the foreign environment, he finds it impossible to sleep, so he takes to walking the damp Venetian streets at midnight. In that labyrinth of alleyways and bridges, Wilson meets the ethereal and perplexing Caterina, a woman who seems to bear the sadness of centuries, a woman wrapped in the past but unwilling to share any of her own history with him. Every night he goes to find her among the thousands of stray cats that she feeds faithfully, and over the course of a few weeks falls desperately in love with her even though he knows nothing about her beyond the vague answers he receives to his constant questions. But something about her compels him despite reason. Even as he begins to learn that to uncover the secret she is keeping means losing her forever, he presses harder for a truth that is as elusive as it is inescapable. As the winter hangs heavy over the deserted city, Wilson finds the impossible answer that will change his life forever.

Vaporetto 13 Details

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From Reader Review Vaporetto 13 for online ebook

PJ Who Once Was Peejay says

Mr. Girardi tells a fantastic tale set in two eras--contemporary and historical Venice, Italy. He has a wonderful ability to make you see and feel this dark, labyrinthine, and corrupting city. He writes beautiful and his characters are satisfyingly real—Wilson Squire, the currency trader, and the mysterious Caterina, whom he falls deeply in love with. In unraveling the mystery of Caterina, he unravels the mysteries of the black core of Venice itself, past and present.

Nicolas says

On est ici dans le fantastique léger, et on suit les pérégrinations de Jack machin (ben oui, j'ai oublié son nom), qui doit se rendre pour affaire à Venise et y faire un voyage d'études. Durant ce voyage, il va plonger dans le rêve et explorer Venise, accompagné de la mystérieuse Caternia...

Soyons clair, ce roman reproduit la trame classique du récit fantastique, qu'on peut retrouver sans problème dans des livres comme *Neverwhere*, de Gaiman. L'originalité essentielle réside ici dans le décor, ou plutôt le troisième personnage : Venise. Venise, cette ville fantasque et sans pareille, dont le roman reprend bien l'essence pour en faire une ambiance palpable de déliquescence, de fin éternelle et sans cesse recommencée. Venise et son atmosphère, si vénitienne. A la décharge de l'auteur, je suis fort enthousiasmé car j'ai eu la chance de visiter ce décor de théâtre somptueux, et donc de saisir cette ambiance, au romantisme noir, où la putréfaction semble cachée au pied de chaque palais, au fond de chaque ruelle. Et Girardi retranscrit à merveille tout cela, en y ajoutant la touche ultime : une aventure sentimentale, ajoutant juste le climat d'érotisme nécessaire à la création d'une vraie ambiance glauque, avec cette Caternia, dont le mystère, une fois révélé, clôtüre naturellement le livre, sans qu'il y ait eu le moindre mort (façon de parler), ni la moindre violence. Trêve de lyrisme. Lisez-le, vous apprécierez sûrement, comme moi, cette douce folie.

Carmen says

3.5 stars - a good read. Now I want to see Venice more than ever!

Janet callan says

the ghostly beauty that is Venice

Craig says

A currency trader moves to Venice and begins a torrid love affair with a dead woman. And, Boy, is his fiancée back in Virginia pissed.

Monika says

Jack Squire on ameerika valuutamaakler, kes läheb ajutiselt Veneetsiasse tööle, emafirma jaoks finants- ja poliitanalüüse kirjutama. Ajavahe tõttu pole tal öösiti und ja nii uitab ta mööda magavat linna ringi. Ühel sellisel jalutuskäigul kohtab ta salapärast naist, Caterinat, kes väljakul kodutuid kasse sööda. Lugu areneb omasoodu ning Jackist ja Caterinast saavad armukesed.

Saan aru, et raamatule lühikest ja tabavat sisututvustust kirjutada, on keeruline asi, kuid "Vaporetto 13" puhul rikub see üksainuke lause kõik ära.

Seda lugedes ning loogilist mõtlemist kasutades on kohe selge, Jack ei saa vaim olla, naine aga küll.

Caterinat puudutav lõpp oli minu jaoks ootamatu ning jättis mõnusalt kõheda tunde sisse, kuid see preestriga jutuaamine oli lihtsalt veider. Oleksin ka tahtnud teada, kuidas Jacki ja ta isa suhted edasi arenesid, kuid sellele kahjuks vastust ei saanud.

Lugedes tabasin end mitmeid kordi mõtlemast, et raamat on küll hea, kõik need linna kirjeldused olid nii elavad, et mulle tundus nagu kõnniksin ise peategelasega koos, aga kui tegemist oleks paksema raamatuga, siis oleksin ma selle arvatavasti käest ära pannud. Miks täpselt, ei teagi, võibolla pole ta stiil päris minu oma. Proovin kunagi sama autori "Madeleine's Ghost-i" lugeda ja see ei meeldinud mulle üldse.

Mary says

A book that is set mostly in Venice. The narrator describes Venice well and provides much info on its history and its traditions. Though it describes a pre-euro Italy, the political players include Berlusconi, showing not much has changed over the years. The story line is a strange one, but interesting. Worth the read for its evocative descriptions of Venice. I enjoyed the journey.

Sue says

Another well written book by Robert Girardi. Again, he weaves a compelling story this time set in Venice. You are still thinking of the characters long after you reach the end of the story.

Marian Deegan says

One of the pleasures of friendship is coming to know someone well enough to recognize flashes of personality in their style. With confidences and intimacy and time spent together, you find yourself able to predict when a friend will respond enthusiastically to a particular artisan's jewelry, a specific architectural style, or an eclectic work of art. Even when the bauble at hand is not one which appeals to your own yens.

I was reflecting on this as I considered Vaporetto 13. Sometimes I read a book which I come to love for its originality, lyricism, and depth; it's simply a great novel. And sometimes I read a book which I cannot help but love because it pushes all of my personality buttons; so much so that it is difficult to set aside the emotional appeal and make an unclouded judgment. Me, I think you are allowed to love a book for whatever reasons seize you. But if one is jotting down impressions for other potential readers, and the personal appeal

card is on the table, I feel a responsibility to flag it.

And so we come to Girardi's tale of Jack Squire, a corporate American Golden Boy sent to Venice to report on Italy's political and financial climate. Practically in the act of stepping into the seductive ambiance of Italy's most notorious merchant city, Jack is waylaid from his mission and coaxed into intrigue by a caped Venetian woman who wanders the canals barefoot by night, feeding cats. It was naturally impossible for me to avoid falling under the thrall of this story, and it's only fair to tell you that from the outset.

Girardi paints Venice gorgeously; as he does the cultural disorientation which befalls every stranger brave enough to open themselves to a foreign city. He understands how certain places cast spells. He quotes Sarpi, the clever Venetian priest who stood against the Pope in defense of Venice. Sarpi, whom I first discovered in Winterson's work through his crafty motto: "Never lie to anyone; but do not tell the truth to everyone." As one who tends to tell stories in snippets, I've felt a kinship with this sly Italian priest from the first.

Girardi writes of the glittering face of Venice, and the darkness lurking behind her mask. He writes of events which cannot be completely explained, and leaves the loose threads dangling untied, just as life does. He writes of hidden private clubs and fabulous liquids in valuable bottles. He observes straight-faced that true Venetians are as terrified of Disney as they had been of the Nazis. This is a tale of focused American commerce colliding squarely with a Jungian world of light and shadow, and that is the intersection I've been drawn to all my life. So I loved this story. If your proclivities run along similar lines, you might love it too. If they do not, well. Whether you elect Girardi's guided tour of Venice is up to you.

To make up your mind, I offer you this snippet of Girardi's writing:

"I could not sleep in Venice. At first it was jet lag and an unfamiliar bed, then something more sinister. The beauty of the city was unsettling to my nerves. Every evening the sun dropped round as an onion behind the big green dome of the Salute, turning the Giudecca channel a fantastic shade of deep rose; the facades of the ancient, delicately crumbling palazzos glowed with muted sadness in this forlorn, beautiful light. It was unbearable. Beauty has a place, of course-between the pages of a book, in pictures on the walls of museums, in high and inaccessible mountain valleys-but a daily diet of beautiful things can be difficult for the aesthetic digestion. American's banal landscape of fast-food chains mall, parking lots, high voltage transformers, and glass-rounded office towers is, in the end, easier on the soul. The Venetians call the hour between six and seven pm l'ora d'oro, the golden hour, when the dying light paints the whole city the color of longing."

Decide for yourself. But I would cajole especially anyone who loves travel to open these pages and surrender to Venice through Girardi's eyes.

Judy says

I wanted to read about Venice. There are several surprising references to St. John's College, which the protagonist says he attended, although part of his description of that education is erroneous. !*Spoiler alert! I didn't expect this book to include the undead.

Greg says

Venice, cats, what's not to love! Or really like.

msleighm says

I love this book so much. It would get six stars, if I could. I read it first in 2000, either when I was in Venice or shortly after I returned from my trip (my honeymoon for my short-lived marriage). My ex-h and I were both opera singers at that point in time. My Crohn's was in remission, or at least under control. Italy seemed the obvious place to go.

When I got to Italy, I was mesmerized. I literally said, send all of my things (including my cats), I don't want to leave. I came away from that trip to Italy with two things... 1) the knowledge that a couple should *always* take an overseas trip before they get married, even if you've been living together, you learn a lot about how a person handles new stressors & 2) a nasty case of bronchitis, because everyone there smokes, 24/7, especially the concierge in our hotel who was right down the hall from our hotel room and the smoke came up under the door; day and night. Leaving was the only option.

Unfortunately, I missed a few of the sites we had scheduled for the last few days of the trip; and though he dragged me out of the hotel room for a gondola ride, I have no memory of it and it wasn't in the least bit romantic.

This book has haunted me all these years. I've wanted to read it again. It's a short read, less than 200 pages. It has everything I would have liked to see and more. Cats, Venice in the moonlight, gondola's, ancient Palazzo's (both renovated and being reclaimed), dank churches, and cemeteries. When I found it in a box of books, I pulled it out and put it back on the shelf. It's one of those works that stays just behind my shoulder with it's own particular hum frequency.

A United States stock market trader, with a tenuous relationship with his father, and an obviously mismatched fiancé, is sent to Venice by his firm for a year to report on financial and political issues leading up to the Italian elections. He is haunted by the death of his mother's cat, at the Vet's hands due to old age, and his leaving the country; the cat was the last link to her, a surrogate sister, his mom having died in a car accident when our hero was 12. The book is so tightly written, we've learnt most of this by page 13, and he's off to Italy.

There are very few books I'd read more than once, and even fewer that I'd read more than twice. This is one of those special, magical books for me. This one won't go back into the bottom of a box.

Margaret says

Excellent story of Venice. Author was Michener Fellowship recipient.

Story is about Jack Squire, an American currency trader, who is sent by his company to work at a bank in Venice. He meets a strange woman at night who he thinks is another insomniac. (Since his arrival in Venice he has not been able to sleep). Caterina is the woman's name and she won't let him know anything about her. They meet at night and he never finds out where she lives or anything about her. He learns from her to let go

of material things and his material world. He also develops another skill while he is with her, he can look into people's eyes and see their illnesses.

Great story that gives a lot of flavor and history of Venice. Should read before you go to Venice!!

Baret Magarian says

This is a rather underrated and neglected book but in many ways it's an impressive achievement. Principally because it is one of those rare books that allows the reader to dream, to get immersed in a kind of trance. The evocations and descriptions of Venice are wonderful, nuanced, palpable. Girardi really allows you to experience the city on a audio-visual-olfactory level, with all of its damp, its phantasmagorical charm and melancholy. The book is really about how to live: whether mere being is life, or living actively is life. This duality is reflected in others: money versus love, Italy versus America, the past versus the present. Towards the end Caterina, the heroine, tells a long story about Celestina: the story within the novel is a classic narrative; riveting and devastating and seems to be the key to the whole book. The book leads to, and away from, that diamond-like core. With it, Girardi seems to be saying, the past remains for ever present, continually tipping the present towards the void of history, towards abstraction, towards loss. This is a novel that seductively calls to you, leading you into a cul-de-sac, into a trap, into an awakening. Like Celestina, like Jack, like Caterina, you end up transformed, searching ever and again for the "thing", the central nugget of meaning, until at last you abandon your odyssey and slip into the maelstrom of history... a beautiful read.

Roz Morris says

Disappointing. The protagonist is drawn to a mysterious woman he meets feeding stray cats in Venice at night and spends much of the novel wondering about her. But to us she seems a cardboard cut-out - not mysterious but deliberately vague. There are some lovely visual descriptions and it's full of Venice atmosphere, but I couldn't feel any fascination for the woman - and also I didn't particularly engage with the deeper issue the main character was grappling with. However, there was a nice scene near the end where it all came into focus - although I still can't see why the Venice stuff was necessary.
