



Tuscan Holiday

Holly Chamberlin

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Holly Chamberlin sweeps readers away to beautiful Tuscany in this tender novel about a mother and daughter whose Italian vacation changes them both forever. The daughter, Marina, is blinded by an Italian who shows her how unpredictable passion can be, while her mother, Elizabeth, embraces her uncertain future

Tuscan Holiday Details

Date : Published September 1st 2008 by Kensington

ISBN : 9780758214034

Author : Holly Chamberlin

Format : Paperback 368 pages

Genre : Fiction, Womens Fiction, Chick Lit, Cultural, Italy, Romance

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From Reader Review Tuscan Holiday for online ebook

Beth Bedee says

I thought this was a good, well-written book. It was a bit more reflective than I typically like my books. Both main characters, a mother and daughter, are looking back on their trip to Florence. There is a lot of discussion of feelings and not a lot of action. I felt that the book really captured a relationship between a mother and daughter.

Three things really bothered me:

1. At the beginning of each chapter were short letters or anecdotes about mothers and daughters. At first, I thought maybe one of the characters was a writer and was the one writing these. But they are unrelated to the story and just take up space. Some are humorous. Others are bitchy. I stopped reading them about halfway through.
2. They go into explicit detail about every meal they eat. Who cares? It does not develop the plot.
3. The term "Tuscan Holiday" is overused throughout. It could be a drinking game....drink every time the mom says it.

All in all, I enjoyed the book. At the end, I wanted to know what happened to the the characters. So, it definitely kept me interested.

Siân says

I wanted to like this book far more than I did. However I found it frustrating in places. I wanted to smack the daughter. And the ending just left me cold. I wanted to know what happened when they got back from Italy. Also, I wanted more of Italy. It was still an ok read, but I wouldn't rush to reading it if you haven't already.

Julie Barrett says

Tuscan Holiday by Holly Chamberlin

Marina Caldwell just graduated from college and before she marries her graduation gift from her parents is a 2 week trip to Tuscany. She's excited til she finds out her mother is going with her.

Her fiancée has a surprise-the honeymoon he's planned for them will be in Hawaii. She had hoped to go play tourist at the Grand Canyon and Sedona in Arizona.

On the trip of a lifetime many times men approach her mother and she's not swayed by them. She accepts drinks and the daughter can't fathom that men find her mother attractive.

She's constantly looking for a gift for her intended although they do a bit of sight seeing.

Love the daily journal and all their deepest thoughts to one another coming to light. The journey is one that puts you right on the street/museum with them as the details as so great.

Other surprises occur and Marina comes to realize she's not made any decisions as a couple for their wedding. That doesn't quite sit well with her and she plans to rectify that.

I received this book from The Kennsington Books in exchange for my honest review

Cheryl says

I quite enjoyed tagging along with this mother and daughter on thier holiday in Florence. The scenery, the food, the galleries and the museums all sounded wonderful. I even enjoyed the sarcastic, snippy comments by the advise columnist and the commentary on motherhood.

Sure, the daughter was a pain in the ass for the first half of the book, but she was, of course, transformed by the experience of travel. (In just 2 weeks!) Well, that and a Florentine lover...

Kellie says

This was a fun summertime read- especially if you are traveling. It's mostly about a complicated mother daughter relationship with Tuscany and romance mixed. I thought the fake quotes from relationship books and advice columns were very entertaining.

Janet says

Upon her daughter, Marina's graduation from college, Elizabeth Caldwell decides to take her, and herself, on a trip to Italy. She hopes the trip will allow them more bonding time. Of course, the trip becomes much more than that as each woman, in different stages of their lives, discover new things about themselves, and each other.

I wanted to like this book, but a few big things held me back. One little thing that bothered me were the "Dear Abby" type letters that were written at the very beginning of each chapter. Often they'd loosely mirror what had just happened or what was going to happen in the story, but overall they seemed misplaced and disjointed. At times the advice, perhaps an attempt at humor, really wasn't very funny. By the time I got to the middle of the book, I'd skip those parts completely.

Another thing that bothered me about this book was its title. "Tuscan" Holiday conjures up images of soaking up the sights of Italy, but instead of soaking, I felt the sights were just touched upon. Little detail was given to the journey itself. Instead I felt the backdrop could have really been anywhere. There was, however, more attention paid to Italian food rather than Italian culture.

But perhaps the biggest thing that irked me about Tuscan Holiday were the characters themselves, mainly the character of Marina, the daughter. At twenty-one, she was rather self-obsessed, self-righteous and downright rude to her mother. Even after having a change of heart I still felt a lot of Marina's motives were in the best interest of Marina. Any reader could see her uptight character was destined for change, but the way it comes on so suddenly after such a slow buildup seems far-fetched. Even the motives of characters at home i.e. Marina's grandmother and Elizabeth's mom never get explained. I just feel like if they were going to bother giving a bit of back story then perhaps that should have been the focus and we could have added those characters to the mix right at home, rather than an exotic locale, seemingly picked at random.

Erin says

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The title frustrates me. I am a purist. If something doesn't impact the story, it shouldn't be in the book. For example, if you are going to title a book "Tuscan Holiday" the local should be well researched and treated as a character in your story. As it is, the title recalls images of Diane Lane and Sandra Oh but pales in comparison by almost ignoring the atmosphere and spirit of central Italy. Sure it mentions the tourists sites but one could get the same feeling reading this as any travel guide. I've never been to Tuscany but I've been all over the UK and Normandy. There is a magic to international travel. The shopping, the food, the people. It doesn't matter what you are into, something will capture your attention in a way nothing in the United States can. The characters of Tuscan Holiday might as well have gone to the Olive Garden and saved the pennies of which Elizabeth's daughter Marina is so obsessed.

To me the characters were annoying. I didn't care about them until the closing chapters and even then I was left hanging. I wanted to read Marina's meeting with Peter. I also felt the primary cast to be inconsistent. I couldn't believe that Marina would treat her mother with the indifference many young women express to their parents and then, without reason, suddenly became interested in her mother's story. There should have been an event there, something that triggered the change. As it is there is no moment for the two of them. On the same note, Elizabeth seems at first to march to her own drum despite that lack of acknowledgement from her family but once she gets to Italy she becomes a spineless mess. The pity party routine got old really fast.

Like a lot of the other readers I found the advice column and relationship excerpts to be inappropriate to the story. Had one of the characters been a writer or had the passages been better suited to plot I could have seen it working in Chamberlain's favor. Towards chapter ten I began to ignore them completely. I did note certain paragraphs being written in the past tense while everything else in the chapter was in the present. In my opinion, these past tense sections would have been a better alternative to the segments that currently begin each chapter.

A light beach read. Not recommended if you are looking for an in depth mother/daughter novel. Avoid if like me, you picked it up looking for a literary Italian getaway.

Danielle says

I was a bit disappointed with this book. The daughter had to be the most ungrateful and spoiled brat in the history of books. If my mother bought me a trip to Tuscany for her and I for my graduation from college gift I'd be thrilled. And to forget Mother's Day? Wow. Nice work. Although the story was somewhat of a fun read, I just couldn't get past how obnoxious the daughter was and how the mother did not say anything when she should have told her ungrateful brat of a daughter off, and while she was at it, her own mother too. I don't know why some people who reviewed this had a problem with the catty columnist or book quotes that preceded each chapter, they were funny and for goodness sakes, I'm sure most of us could agree with what they said. Obviously if you thought they were inappropriate then you are far too uptight. Anyhow, it was an okay read, and I couldn't beat the price! (Free Kindle book from Amazon)

Christine says

Let me start by saying something that might seem contradictory to my four-star review: The book definitely has its flaws, and I can understand someone not liking it. The characters are black and white: The daughter, the young person, is extremely naive, while the mother, the older person, knows everything. The snippets at the beginning of each chapter were tiresome and unnecessary. The book speaks condescendingly to young people and makes overgeneralizations about them. The daughter's choice is a sad one, but not exactly a hard one--there's no suspense. The plot is a little predictable.

BUT I really, really liked this book. It's a quick, entertaining read. The mother's rants about Jotham's self-centeredness are thoroughly enjoyable. The book sometimes makes thought-provoking comments about life, like this one: "If there's bliss in ignorance, there's also danger and waste." What I liked most about it was the fact that it leads the reader to engage herself in her own self-reflection. It's worth checking out.

JoAnn/QuAppelle says

Why did I finish this poorly written and trite book? Waste of my time.

The stupid pieces from an "advice columnist" at the beginning of every chapter were just ridiculous. I stopped reading them after a while.

And where was the editor?....every time the mother gave the name of an Italian dish (in Italian) she would then say "or beef with pasta". The use of this "or" construction made me nuts.

Elizabeth says

I was really disappointed in this book. It took too long to get into the heart of the story and by the time it did, I already didn't like the characters.

I think the daughter was a brat, was rude, selfish and so naive. The Mom they made out to be this tough woman when she was just a wimp in my mind. A real Mom would have spoken her mind and put that daughter in her place without living in fear of her daughter. At least that's how my Mom did it.

Cindy Feigert says

This book is an interesting take on the relationships between mothers and daughters. She used an interesting technique at the beginning of each chapter, people writing in to the answer lady for advice about mothers. some were quite amusing.

Addie says

This was trite and I should have just abandoned it, but I still have trouble doing that with a book. I would not recommend it. I was hoping for more Italy I guess. It is more like a mother daughter lifetime movie set on vacation in Italy.

Freda Lightfoot says

I thought this book was an absolute delight. I read it as an ebook on my Kindle very quickly and found myself smiling and nodding throughout. It investigates the mother-daughter relationship, and as a mother of two daughters myself, I can only agree with every word. The author was spot on with her internal dialogue as Elizabeth the mother tried to decide how much to say, whether to step in or not as she watches her daughter head down roads bound to lead to disaster. As for the daughter, Marina, she is a delightfully drawn character of a young woman whom we can all recognise. Obsessed with her texting she almost misses the whole point of Florence, let alone the mother-daughter bonding, quite certain she has her life all mapped out. But then meets a luscious Italian... Oh dear, so what about fiance Jotham back home? And what about Mom's baggage, she being a single parent. I felt I knew these people, and really liked them both. I particularly enjoyed the letters to Answer Lady, or agony aunt as we Brits would call her. These examined motherhood very much with tongue-in-cheek, oh but so true. So very true. Loved it.

Stephanie says

I'll start by saying the story is a good premise. Mom and daughter take a trip, hoping to get closer and end up with major life changes. In fact, I'd even say the ending was good. However, the two characters are so snippy, catty, and just plain bitchy that you really don't sympathize with either.

It also seems very apparent to me that Chamberlin is a very angry and bitter daughter and/or mother. The chapter quotes from a rather hateful advice columnist alternating with some horrid quotes about the relationship mothers and daughters have are just so wrong I stopped reading them less than halfway through the book. (I confess I don't know if they're made up or not, just don't care enough to look).

Overall the whole thing left me feeling downtrodden and left a bitter taste for me.
