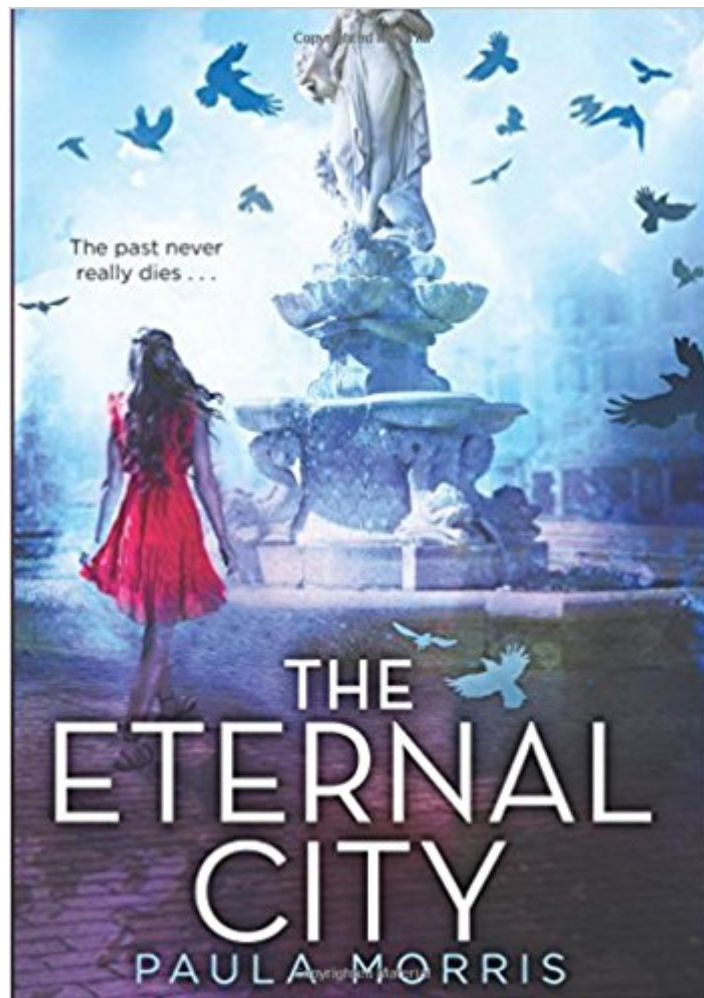


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The Eternal City



Synopsis

From master of suspense Paula Morris comes a tale of gods and goddesses, thrilling romance, and mystery set in present-day Rome. Laura Martin is visiting Rome on a class trip, and she's entranced by the majestic Colosseum, the Trevi Fountain, the Pantheon . . . Everything in this city seems magical. That is, until the magic seems to turn very dark. Suddenly, statues of Cupid and ancient works of art come to life before her eyes. Earthquakes rumble and a cloud of ash forms in the sky. A dark-eyed boy with wings on his heels appears and gives her a message. Laura soon realizes she is at the center of a brewing battle -- a battle between the gods and goddesses, one that will shake modern-day Rome to its core. Only she and her group of friends can truly unravel the mystery behind what is happening. As tensions mount and secret identities are revealed, Laura must rely on her own inner strength to face up to what may be a fight for her life. Acclaimed author Paula Morris brings the ancient world to vivid life in this unstoppable tale of friendship, love, and the power of the past.

Book Information

Lexile Measure: 870 (What's this?)

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Age Range: 12 - 17 years

Grade Level: 7 and up

Customer Reviews

Gr 6 Up – On the last day of Laura Martin's class trip to Rome, all she wants to do is grab her BFF Morgan and soak up the sights in the city that's always enthralled her. Instead, when most of

her group members, including Morgan, fall ill, she's stuck with some classmates she barely knows. As they walk around, strange things begin happening: Laura sees a Cupid statue shoot a pigeon, crows are always flying near her, and a sewer cover tries to eat her hand. Then the god Mercury appears, telling Laura that she wields two powerful stones called the Eyes of Minerva and that the gods are going to war over them. As Laura and her classmates traverse an increasingly dangerous city, they have to figure out what to do with the Eyes before Rome—and everyone who lives there—is destroyed. While fans of Rome and Roman mythology will find an enjoyable story, those looking for more may be disappointed. Some disruptions in an otherwise exciting plot stall momentum, though there are still plenty of periods of tension and intensity. Characters come off as two-dimensional and underdeveloped, and while some are intentionally enigmatic, most feel bland. Protagonist Laura ultimately has little agency and seems to rely on others to make decisions and plans for her. Still, readers interested in mythology and looking for action and romance without excessive violence and gore will find something to appreciate. VERDICT For libraries that can't keep myth-based adventures on the shelves. —Kelsey Johnson-Kaiser, La Crosse Public Library, WI

Praise for *Ruined* : * "[A] haunting love letter to New Orleans . . . thoroughly embraces the rich history, occult lore and complex issues of race, ethnicity, class and culture." -- Publishers Weekly, starred review "Fast-paced . . . [an] atmospheric page-turner." -- Booklist "Entertaining and unique...straddles the line between ghost story and realistic fiction so well." -- VOYA

Review courtesy of Dark Faerie Tales
Quick & Dirty: A trip to Rome goes wrong when everyone but a handful of schoolkids are left to survive a war with the gods!
Opening Sentence: Laura Martin wasn't even meant to be in Rome that June.
The Review: This book is aimed at the younger adults and would be great for someone looking for an adventure story mixed with magic, myths and legends. The combination of mysterious characters in *The Eternal City* intertwined with the legends of the gods was intriguing. My favourite God was Mercury, probably because the others weren't as prominent in the story and had less interaction with the humans than Mercury did. And part of my fascination with him was because I could sense an attraction between him and Laura so I expected something more to happen; unfortunately that wasn't the case. The storyline was fairly predictable, which I would expect given the target audience, but there were parts that surprised me. For example, I expected one of the teachers to be secretly involved in the whole war of the gods thing (Percy Jackson springs to mind) but again that

didn't happen. The poor kids were literally stuck to fend for themselves in a foreign country, caught in a war between the Roman Gods! I guess if the teachers were involved and the teenagers had some sort of protection, then I would have compared it to Percy Jackson and assumed the author lacked originality. "Jack was right," Dan muttered to Laura. "This is the worst school trip ever. If our parents knew we'd be fighting random seagulls and statues, they'd sue the Department of Education." My main disappointment was the character of Megan. She had so much potential to begin with but it sort of disappeared when she became one of the students that fell ill. I can understand why the author chose to remove her from the main storyline; if Megan was still there no one would give Laura a second thought. It's a sad reality but some people have stronger personalities than others. It was clear that Laura was Megan's shadow, so to speak. The author tried to bring more spark to Laura but there's only so much you can do to a natural vanilla! A plus point to this read is that there were a lot of action and drama filled scenes. I liked the contrast between fighting to survive in one scene and teenage issues like ego clashes, cliques and crushes in the next. The story is centred around an odd but interesting mix of school kids and it was pretty obvious that Dan would like Laura but I still found their mini romance sort of sweet. Especially when Dan becomes jealous of the attention Laura receives from other guys. A war might be going on but boys will be boys. Overall, a fun light read, great for the younger adult. Notable Scene: The trouble was, Laura thought, that dangers seemed to lurk everywhere. A dart wielding cherub on a tomb. The Mouth of Truth. The walls of a fresco. The woman at the Trevi Fountain, and the man here at the Fountain of Tortoises. Stone horses that moved, painted snakes that slithered, bronze tortoises that crawled and snapped and bared their teeth. Rome was alive with danger, seen and unseen, real and artificial. How could she believe anyone when they told her not to be afraid? FTC Advisory: Point/Scholastic provided me with a copy of The Eternal City. No goody bags, sponsorships, "material connections," or bribes were exchanged for my review.

A solid premise for a book. I totally loved the concept and idea for the book. Laura Martin was a character who I came to like. Her friends as well seemed a little bit more interesting. This was a book that definitely was interesting. Things I liked about it: 1. The Main Characters Growth Laura is a character that at first I didn't connect with. It took me some time to get to know her and what her motivations were. After two chapters, I saw that this was a young woman who needs to be in Rome for a very specific reason. Plus we learn that she is going to play a big part in what is

going on with the Gods. She has a gem stone that may cause her more harm and doesn't realize. I also love how Laura starts to take control of more situations later on in the book.

2. Greek Gods I love books where there are Greek Gods around. The Gods have reasons for doing things but they often use mortals. Mortals are sometimes their champions or representatives and send omens. Of course there is a fight brewing among the Gods. None of our characters really know this. Some of them are seeing things that the other ones can't. I kind of like how Mercury only shows up to Laura. Some of the characters see things coming out of statues. So we never know what they are going to do.

3. Mystery/No Adult Supervision Of course this leads to things being asked about things that normally they wouldn't be. Of course all the adults are sick during the school trip which leads our teenagers to have more freedom. I often like when characters have freedom to explore and learn things that they might not. I felt like also the characters can argue and express themselves a lot.

Things I didn't like

1. No Romance I was kind of disappointed that there was no romance. Sometimes the romance is what I'm expecting. Especially when a book is supposed to take place in Rome, which is said to be one of the most romantic places in the world. I guess you can't have everything
2. Dragging at times. Stupid fights The pacing could have been a little bit better in my opinion. There were of course going to be fights/arguments with the teenagers. At times I felt that some of the fights were stupid and served no purpose. They took the pacing down a notch or two. I don't mind arguments/fights in books if they are interesting and enhance the story, but at times it felt weird.

Overall a good book with some flaws in it. I think that there might be room for a sequel. Think that there's potential for a sequel.

Rating: Four Hearts

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