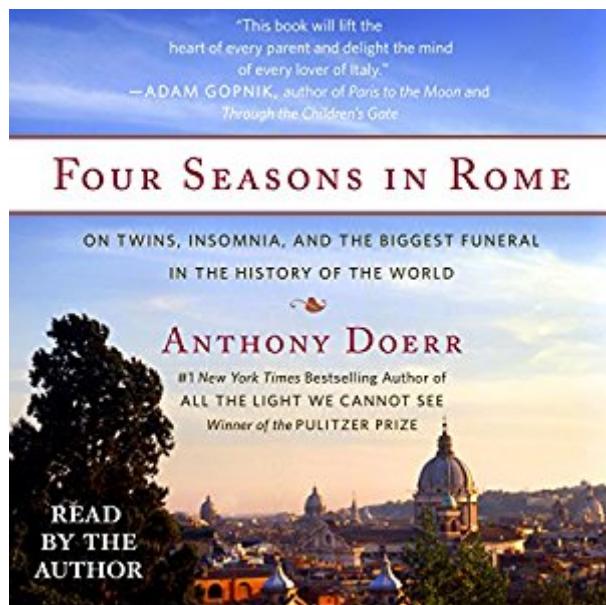


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# Four Seasons In Rome: On Twins, Insomnia, And The Biggest Funeral In The History Of The World



## Synopsis

Anthony Doerr has received many awards - from the New York Public Library, the National Endowment for the Arts, and the American Library Association. Then came the Rome Prize, one of the most prestigious awards from the American Academy of Arts and Letters, and with it a stipend and a writing studio in Rome for a year. Doerr learned of the award the day he and his wife returned from the hospital with newborn twins. Exquisitely observed, *Four Seasons in Rome* describes Doerr's varied adventures in one of the most enchanting cities in the world. He reads Pliny, Dante, and Keats - the chroniclers of Rome who came before him - and visits the piazzas, temples, and ancient cisterns they describe. He attends the vigil of a dying Pope John Paul II and takes his twins to the Pantheon in December to wait for snow to fall through the oculus. He and his family are embraced by the butchers, grocers, and bakers of the neighborhood, whose clamor of stories and idiosyncratic child-rearing advice is as compelling as the city itself. This intimate and revelatory book is a celebration of Rome, a wondrous look at new parenthood, and a fascinating story of a writer's craft - the process by which he transforms what he sees and experiences into sentences.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

In a word, fantastic. Perhaps the clearest tribute is that I've never been to Rome, raised children, nor tried to write a novel, yet still found this book to be wonderfully compelling. "Four Seasons in Rome" is alternatively hysterical and poignant, and always beautifully written. Doerr - an accomplished fiction writer - couldn't have made a smoother transition to a new genre. In fact, his nearly super human powers of perception are especially well-suited for describing and bringing to

life the sounds, smells, feel, and wonder of everyday Rome. A perfect reminder of the beauty of the seemingly mundane. And a perfect summer read for just about anyone.

I don't read much -- I have a really short attention span -- but anything about Rome usually catches my attention. I've been there a few times and have absolutely fallen in love with that city. Some travelogs about Rome are too highbrow for me, or a little too intellectual, so I'm always searching for non-fiction that conveys a real sense of the city. This book did it. It's very easy to read, and the author so perfectly nails the details about the city (and even gave me a few clues about new things to go and see that I haven't seen before!). The way he describes the nuances of each season makes me crave a return trip. It's a beautifully-written book, for anyone who loves Rome, or for anyone who's curious about visiting this most amazing city.

If you have ever had children...if you have travelled or want to travel to Europe...you should read this book! It is a relatively quick read, which is good for busy people - you won't be able to put it down. Anthony Doerr recognized a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity, that happened to come along at a most inopportune time, and grabbed it. On the day his twin sons were born, Mr. Doerr received notification that he had received a grant to study or work at pretty much whatever he wanted for a year in Rome. Luckily his wife Shauna also must have recognized the necessity of grabbing this chance while it was available, and so they packed up their babies and traveled from Boise to Rome. Lucky for us, he decided to spend part of his time constructing this memoir. After reading Doerr's elegant, evocative prose, it's easy to see why the powers-that-be decided that his gift should be nurtured. He is just as awed by the adventure of raising his children as by the experience of living in Rome. Unlike other books in this very broad genre of expat memoir, Doerr does not focus on the quirks and foibles of the Italians. Rather, he describes his own little circle of family, friends and acquaintances and frequently lapses into long lyrical musings on historical events, nature, or whatever happens to strike his fancy. "The Biggest Funeral in the History of the World," aka the funeral of Pope John Paul II, is not treated as a gigantic pageant, despite the hyperbolic title. Through Doerr's eyes it is a profoundly moving and inclusive experience shared by millions. I loved this book. It is the kind of book you want to urge your friends and loved ones to read, to give as a gift. I look forward to reading much more from this gifted and warm writer.

This was one of the best books I've read in a long time. I've never read any of Mr Doerr's books before, but his style and thought and descriptions were so absorbing....being a grandmother of

three, two of them small boys, I loved every word of his descriptions of his sons. Also being a raging italophile, I loved the descriptions of Rome and the countryside as well, let alone he and his wife's bravery at moving to a foreign country with not one, but two newborns! I highly recommend this book.....and look forward to reading it again myself.

As an American who moved to Rome to have a baby, I can relate to this book. My experience is different. I live with an Italian and all my friends are Roman, but I still found Doerr's observations lyrical and prescient. As a new father, I actually enjoyed how he was learning the city as he became a parent, an experience I know and grok completely. It was useful to see how someone had to endure a lot of the same difficulties that I have experience. How often do you get to read something parallel to your own life? I also enjoyed his descriptions. For me they came quite close to my own observations, as distant as they may be (a fact that he acknowledges). I read the book on a the train from Rome to Turin, so it's something that is quite fast and easy on the mind. Additionally I enjoyed his sense of impermanence and how that is a character of Rome. Bravo!

I purchased "Four Season in Rome" after hearing an interview with Anthony Doerr on NPR. My oldest son has just completed 5 years of studies in Rome and I have been there to visit him many times. I hoped that the book would evoke memories of my trips and of his experiences living there; it did...and more so! While Mr. Doerr is more than kind to both the city and to Romans in general, he does paint a vivid and fascinating picture of this most unusual and unforgettable city. And as a BONUS the book is as much about raising twin boys as it is about the city! In short, I loved it and I will be purchasing more copies for Christmas gifts to family members who also love Rome AND who happen to have twins, as well!

What a treasure! I found this book to be alternately informative, thought-provoking and inspiring. With a newborn at home, I can completely relate to Doerr's internal monologues on raising his twins. He has also captured the essence of being a stranger in a strange, but welcoming, land. As with his other works, Doerr doesn't dumb down his prose or style, but challenges you to come along on the mental and spiritual trips that he takes. His humorous stories evoke some of the best that authors like Bill Bryson have to offer without falling into the same hokey themes that travel writers often fall victim to. Great all-year-round reading!

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