

If You Were Me and Lived in... Turkey: A Child's Introduction to Culture Around the World

Carole P. Roman

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Children see the delights of Turkey through the eyes of their Turkish peers.

Former educator Carole P. Roman gives children a taste of life in other countries in her If You Were Me and Lived In... series, which has so far featured trips to Mexico, France, Norway, Kenya, and South Korea. In her latest book, she applies the same successful format to Turkey and imagines a day as a young Turkish boy or girl.

The tour starts with the cover image of two children pointing to Turkey's outline on a simplified globe, and proceeds with a rough map of the country with its capital, Ankara, shown on the first page. Successive pages highlight sights that have the greatest appeal and significance to Roman's target audience of preschoolers and children in the early elementary grades. She wisely relates the things that these readers are most interested in: food, toys, holidays, and children's names.

The device of having these young readers visualize themselves as the book's main characters is very effective and fosters a connection between them and children of other countries. The illustrations are simple, brightly colored, and not overly detailed, as a child might draw himself, which further reinforces the idea that the reader is part of the story.

This volume would be a welcome addition to a preschool or kindergarten through third-grade classroom library and would also be valuable for parents who are planning a trip or are relocating to Turkey. Older readers might require more information, but this book is just the right length for the very youngest readers, who might be overwhelmed by any more details.

That said, the Turkish family members depicted in the illustrations all have bright blue eyes, a rarity in the Turkish population. Most Turks have brown eyes and a few have green eyes. There is also a double-page feature of the famous Hagia Sophia site that is hard to read because the underlying drawings of bushes and trees obscure the text. A useful pronunciation guide at the rear lacks consistent spacing between the Turkish words and the opening parentheses following them, and the dedication on the copyright page contains a punctuation error ("parent's" should not have an apostrophe).

Overall, this latest addition to Roman's children's geography picture book series is a successful new volume that entertains as much as it instructs.

RACHEL JAGARESKI (February 3, 2014)

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