

# Clash of Civilizations Over an Elevator in Piazza Vittorio

Amara Lakhous

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A compelling mix of social satire and murder mystery.

A small culturally mixed community living in an apartment building in the center of Rome is thrown into disarray when one of the neighbors is murdered. An investigation ensues and as each of the victim's neighbors is questioned, the reader is offered an all-access pass into the most colorful neighborhood in contemporary Rome. Each character takes his or her turn center-stage, giving evidence, recounting his or her story the dramas of racial identity, the anxieties and misunderstandings born of a life spent on society's margins, the daily humiliations provoked by mainstream culture's fears and indifference, preconceptions and insensitivity. What emerges is a moving story that is common to us all, whether we live in Italy or Los Angeles.

This novel is animated by a style that is as colorful as the neighborhood it describes and is characterized by seemingly effortless equipoise that borrows from the cinematic tradition of the Commedia all Italiana as exemplified by directors such as Federico Fellini.

At the heart of this bittersweet comedy told with affection and sensitivity is a social reality that we often tend to ignore and an anthropological analysis, refreshing in its generosity, that cannot fail to fascinate.



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