



2017

Through the Skylight

Paige Price

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Price, Paige (2017) "Through the Skylight," *Children's Book and Media Review*: Vol. 38 : Iss. 2 , Article 14.
Available at: <https://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/cbmr/vol38/iss2/14>

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Book Review

Title: Through the Skylight
Author: Ian Baucom
Illustrator: Justin Gerard
Reviewer: Paige Price
Publisher: Atheneum Books for Young Readers
Publication Year: 2013
ISBN: 9781416917779
Number of Pages: 390
Interest Level: Intermediate
Rating: Excellent



Review

Siblings Jared, Shireen, and Miranda had no idea that on the rainy day they walked into an English bookstore in Venice they would soon be drawn into a magical world of villains and heroes. The bookseller gives them an old book and three seemingly ordinary objects. However, the objects turn out to be magical, waking up Venetian history around them, and the book contains a story of three children kidnapped and forced into slavery with many other children in a time long ago. That story intrudes on the present time when the siblings run into the children from the story in real life. Using the magic that comes naturally to all children, they have to work together to rescue the other children kidnapped by a monk that is using the children's magic for his own evil purposes.

This story was fantastical and educational at the same time, and was a pleasure to read. Because the children are in Venice, the author took the chance to discuss different bits of history that happened around that area such as the children's crusades. He talked about the art, architecture, and geography as well in a way that would be interesting and engaging for his audience. Paintings become much more fascinating when the characters in them can come to life and jump out of the landscape! Apart from teaching his audience about Venetian history, the author created children in the book that grew throughout the story into strong, well-developed characters who learned a lot about themselves and what it means to be brave, loyal, and above all, to never stop believing in the magical side of life.