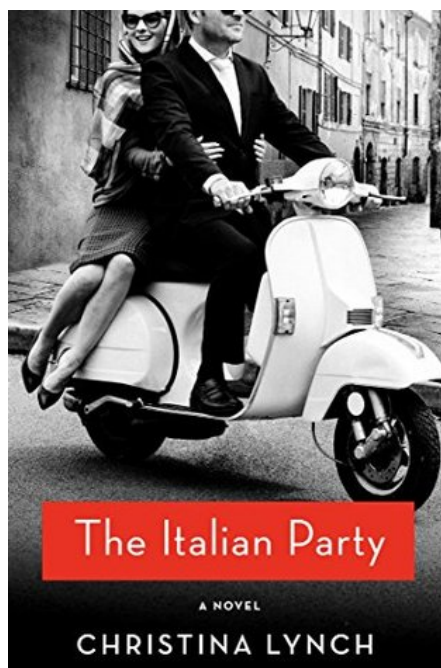




The Italian Party

Christina Lynch

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Newly married, Scottie and Michael are seduced by Tuscany's famous beauty. But the secrets they are keeping from each other force them beneath the splendid surface to a more complex view of Italy, America and each other.

When Scottie's Italian teacher—a teenager with secrets of his own—disappears, her search for him leads her to discover other, darker truths about herself, her husband and her country. Michael's dedication to saving the world from communism crumbles as he begins to see that he is a pawn in a much different game. Driven apart by lies, Michael and Scottie must find their way through a maze of history, memory, hate and love to a new kind of complicated truth.

The Italian Party Details

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From Reader Review The Italian Party for online ebook

Bianca says

Party noun

1. a social gathering of invited guests, typically involving eating, drinking, and entertainment.
2. a formally constituted political group that contests elections and attempts to form or take part in a government.

When I first saw the title, I thought of the party, as in gathering, but this is mostly about a political party, the reason for Michael and his new wife, Scottie, for moving to Siena, Italy in 1956. Michael is a CIA recruit, pretending to be a Ford tractor salesman. Scottie has her own secrets. Theirs was quite the whirlwind courtship and marriage, so it's fair to say they barely know each other.

Scottie is trying to make a home in Siena, although she's not very domestic. She hires the very eager teenager, Robertino, to teach her Italian, which she picks up surprisingly quickly.

Meanwhile, Michael is setting up the business and is making the occasional "business" trips to Roma where he meets his lover.

As Scottie immerses herself more and more in the Italian way of life, Michael goes ahead with his plans to sway the local elections, as the representative of the Communist party is the favourite. There are complications and misunderstandings. And revelations.

I quite enjoyed this novel. It was different, playful but it also had depth. I thought Cristina Lynch did justice to both the Americans and the Italians, especially back in post-war Italy. Perspective, immersion and openness to different cultures make for an enriched life experience.

This novel had a distinct filmic quality about it. The period, scooters and country make one think of black and white movies.

Great job, Ms Lunch. I'm looking forward to reading more from you.

I would be remiss not to mention the immense pleasure that Edoardo Ballerini brought to my listening experience. I'm completely in love with his voice and tone. Also, his Italian pronunciation was excellent, which reminds me, I quite enjoyed the many Italian words and expressions spicing up the novel. Without them, in my opinion, the novel would have been less enjoyable.

Cheri says

!! NOW AVAILABLE !!

*"Love is a flower
That blooms so tender
Each kiss a dew drop
Of sweet surrender*

*"Love is a moment
Of life enchanging
Let's take that moment
That tonight is granting.
There's no tomorrow
When love is new
Now is forever
When love is true
So kiss me and hold me tight
There's no tomorrow
There's just tonight."*

-- "There's No Tomorrow," (Ole Sole Mio) Dean Martin, written by Christopher Difford, Glenn Tilbrook

It is April of 1956 when this story begins in Tuscany, where two newlyweds, Michael and his wife Scottie, are driving down the Via Cassia after leaving Florence. They've brought with them, almost a symbol of America, a Ford Fairlane, canary yellow and white, sized for comfort, and outrunning the tiny Italian cars they were passing with ease.

How very notable to bring something with them that represents something so very American. The people that they pass can't help but stare, and think: *"Americani"*

The war had ended eleven years before, and the rebuilding going on around them was still an ongoing reminder. Scottie is taking in all the scenery as they driving, and asking her new husband questions about himself, his life. After all, they barely know each other. All she knows about him, really, is that he is handsome, well dressed in the normal attire of the times, a nice suit, and from where she sits, excellent prospects for the future. All he really knows about her is that she is stunningly pretty, twenty years old, and dresses in an effortlessly stylish fashion, typically adorned with something like the pearl choker she is wearing on this day, a hat, and a smile, and a Vassar education. A living, breathing, walking commercial for the American Way of Life. *"Gli americani"* but she carried herself in a way that reflected a refinement, *raffinatezza* that appealed to the people of Siena, the city where the world's first bank came to be.

Old-world charm abounds here, even though the ruins of war are visible to remind all of the recent past, the food seduces these newlyweds, lulling Scottie, especially, into believing in their marriage despite the stories they've each withheld from the other, the lies they've told one another to be where they are. Married, but without any real knowledge of who the other really is.

Secrets that needed to be kept secret are part of this story, Michael's opened a Ford dealership to sell tractors to the local farmers, but that's only one of his secrets.

This is a bit of a romp, with intrigue around every corner as the story progresses, and the American government concerned about Russia's involvement in anything and everything. The era of fear of an internal infiltration of communist agendas, the fear that it would infect Americans and turn the people, the country toward communism. There's the other side of this that is more personal, how two newlyweds who would be shunned by others if their truths were told, truths that have the potential to divide them from each other. Life was complicated in general, but living as relative strangers in a strange land complicates things more. Trust is slowly gained, and walls eventually come down, but there are surprises right up to the end.

A deliciously engaging, entertaining read.

Pub Date: 27 Mar 2018

Many thanks for the ARC provided by St. Martin's Press

Liz says

Well, the big question here is who is concealing the most secrets, Scottie or Michael? One after another, they're revealed to us. The newlywed couple has come to Siena, Italy, 11 years after the end of WWII. They know so little about each other, and most of what they think they know is wrong.

I felt for Scottie when she first arrives in Siena. Years ago, a group of us rented a house in Pontassieve. While most of the gang made their way from Florence to the house via train, the landlady and I spent a few hours struggling between her elementary English, my few words of Italian and a modicum of French for both of us to teach me how to use the alarm, the dishwasher and the washing machine. Luckily, the couple meets Robertino, a teen willing to teach her the language and do any other job that pays.

And as the book goes on, Lynch does a wonderful job of showing us Siena through the eyes of Michael and Scottie.

There is a dry humor here, based on each's naivete. They are just so young! The narrative is told from multiple people's point of view. In addition, the author injects concepts to help the reader understand someone's mindset or move the story forward. I would love to know if the CIA's rules to which Michael clings are factual to the time. "The rules were very clear that agents were not supposed to go native...The agency actually preferred if their people didn't speak the language." OMG, how did we ever win the war against Communism? And there's always the dichotomy between American and Italian culture. And ours never comes out looking like the best way. While the book starts with a light feel to it, it gets meatier as it goes along. In the end, I was really drawn into this. I kept reading rather than save it for another day. Well done, Ms. Lynch!

My thanks to netgalley and St. Martin's Press for an advance copy of this book.

Debra says

3.5 stars

Scottie and Michael are newlyweds living in Tuscany in the 1950's. What could be better! Sound like the adventure of a lifetime and in many ways, it is. But they both have secrets they are keeping from the other. They really didn't know each other for too long before they decided to get married. Michael liked that Scottie was educated at Vassar. That meant she came from money, right? She is a blonde from California and he believed she must come from a "good family." Scottie looks good on his arm. She is quite beautiful, and Michael liked the image they presented. Scottie liked that Michael was educated at Yale. He wears a sharp looking suit and is a handsome man. He is kind, intelligent and charming. Plus, he has a good job. What more could a girl ask for? Plus, Scottie has a secret and has not been forthcoming about her past as she should have been.

Michael also has secrets he is keeping from Scottie. Michael has a secret job. Scottie believes he works for the Ford company and they are in Italy, so he can do business for Ford. Michael really works for the CIA and

is in Sienna to make sure a certain candidate wins the election. His goal is to make sure that the current communist leader is not re-elected. That is not his only secret.

When Scottie's Italian teacher goes missing, she learns many things. There are "truths" out there. The truths about herself, her husband, her marriage, and world affairs. When the "truths" come out how will both Michael and Scottie react? How will this affect them individually, as a married couple and as American's living abroad.

This was an enjoyable book that touches on many things. It is part humor - part drama - part romance. It touches on living abroad, living with secrets, world affairs in the 1950's, how secrets affect us, identity, duty, being true to yourself, and living a lie. I found it to be well written and engaging. Plus, the setting and the food will make you wish you were reading this book while vacationing in Italy! Plus, all the characters are likable, engaging and I felt for all of them. Both Scottie and Michael are likable, and I can't say more about them without giving away some of the plot. What I will say is that this book is charming, entertaining and well written. It's not a page turner but it will suck you in to these characters world and into their lives.

I received a copy of this book from St. Martin's press in exchange for an honest review.

See more of my reviews at www.openbookpost.com

Brenda - Traveling Sister says

The Italian Party is a fun, witty, and entertaining cinematic story that I really enjoyed reading. Jennifer who was reading this one with me pulled me into a coulee with her and I was really glad I decided to join her. What a nice pleasant change of pace this one was. Without her, I would have missed out on such a fun read done on the lighter side with some serious subjects to make this an interesting story.

Christina Lynch does a great job creating interesting characters here with young American newlyweds Scottie and Michael. They arrive in Siena both carrying their own secrets from each other that complicated their relationship. I loved seeing things from Scottie's innocent way of looking at the world and it was very refreshing. They are well developed and I enjoyed following along with them as they grow and learn more about themselves and each other.

Christina Lynch does a fanatic job adding depth to the story by adding some interesting subplots and interesting Italian characters that felt like I was in a coulee in Italy. I enjoyed this one from start to finish I highly recommend.

Publication date March 20, 2018

Thank you, NetGalley, St Martin's Press and Christina Lynch for a copy to read and review.

Review is written and posted on our themed book blog Two Sisters Lost In A Coulee Reading.
<https://twosisterslostinacoulee.com>

Coulee: a term applied rather loosely to different landforms, all of which refer to a kind of valley.

Elyse says

NO JUICY SPOILERS

It's tempting to want to share spoilers - however- this sexy-romantic-historical fiction comical spy story with secrets that keep coming and coming - is such delightful entertainment—that personally - I suggest JUST READ IT —skip reviews until AFTER you've read it. The surprises are a comic-tragic-kick-of-fun.....pushing your curiosity buttons as to how and the heck are these guys going to weasel out of these situations.

This novel is a delicious adventure from start to finish. Oh....and hungry? You're in Italy for goodness sake.. the best Italian cuisine in the world! I had the best laugh when a can of Del Monte peaches, topped with whipped cream with a maraschino cherry on top (as seen in the June issue of LIFE), was 'desired' (American canned food) over 'anything' Italian. Instead of Gelato? Really? Gotta laugh!

"The Italian Party" is filled with hanky panky enjoyment.

The secrets that American newlyweds Scottie and Michael have kept from each other adds lots of chuckling to Christina Lynch's debut novel.

There was much that Michael and Scottie didn't know about each other—yet this handsome American couple (he always dressed nicely in a cut suit with a camera around his neck -and she a blond knockout always in an elegant hat and pearl choker) —glided into Siena, Italy....(1956)...looking charismatic as if they were a royal couple: "young, healthy, wealthy, and in love".

Michael felt as if he had won the lottery when Scottie agreed to marry him- A Vassar girl from a good family out in California. "And the best part was, she wasn't smart. Because that's what Michael wanted. What he needed."

Michael was from the Bronx.

"Scottie was taught that a woman likes to feel beautiful, and a man likes to feel superior".

Scottie, too, felt like she won the lottery when she married Michael: A Yale Handsome sensitive man with an artistic soul. She thought of Michael as compassionate- having endured the tragedy of losing his brother. He wasn't wealthy but he was hard working and had a good job with a Ford tractor agency....(so he told her).

Actually - Michael didn't work for Ford—(coming to Siena to open a Ford Office) —It was only his cover job. His real job was to secretly make sure Catholic party candidate, Gianni Manganello, won the Siena mayoral election.

Michael, unbeknownst to Scottie, was working for the CIA. His purpose was to make sure the Communist mayor, Ugo, was defeated.

Michael was on a top secret mission. Clare Boothe Luce, American ambassador to Italy was counting on Michael to sway the election so that Western civilization didn't come tumbling down. "Sway the election".....Hm? Seems we've read about this news in our own more current events — seems history really does repeat itself.

I learned a little more about the Cold War - and the 1950's when communism was grabbing hold of the country - and the influence the United States had over local politics.

There are many colorful -wonderful characters that I haven't even mentioned - (with their secrets and drama)- subplots - horse racing - sex - mystery - politics - crime -

The heart of this story belongs to: Scottie & Michael. I found them both ADORABLE!!!

Their individual insecurities - their unhappiness - their hidden happiness - their hidden pain and grief - their

flaws - their humanness touched me.
Both of them had a likable tender side.

If historical spy stories are this much fun - humorous- sweet - sexy - educational - charming - adventurous- with terrific characters - I'll take more please!!!

Thank You St. Martin's Press, Netgalley, and Christina (you're great - I look forward to your next book filled with secrets)

Larry H says

Between 3.5 and 4, rounded up.

On its surface, Christina Lynch's *The Italian Party* is like a fancy dessert—it's lovely to look at, but you aren't sure if there will be any substance beneath the decorative frills. But when you dig in, you realize there's more to it than meets the eye.

Newlyweds Scottie and Michael leave America to move to Siena, Italy, where Michael will be selling Ford tractors to Italian farmers, to get them to start absorbing American culture. It's the 1950s, not long after World War II, and there are signs that Italy is ripe for the influence of Communism, something that America fears.

Scottie and Michael don't really know each other that well—they married fairly quickly, and each made assumptions about the other. Scottie left her studies at Vassar (she wasn't much of a student anyway, and feels good about getting her "MRS." degree), and doesn't want Michael to know that before marrying him she was mostly interested in celebrity gossip, fashion, and horses. Meanwhile, Michael is all too happy to flee his parents' unhappy marriage and the memories of an older brother who died in the war, a brother who wasn't very nice to him anyway.

Neither is really sure how to make a marriage work, and both have major secrets they're hiding from the other. Michael is ostensibly "working" in Rome quite a bit, or he's at his office trying to sell tractors to reluctant Italians, which leaves her home alone, without much knowledge of Italian or anyone to talk with. It leaves her vulnerable to the attentions of other men, so in an effort to help her cope, Michael encourages a teenage boy from the community, Robertino, to teach her Italian.

When Robertino disappears, Scottie is determined to find out what happened to him, and she becomes a thorn in the side of those supposedly investigating his case. The deeper she digs, the more secrets she uncovers—about her husband, his job, their marriage, and their purpose for being in Italy. While these secrets throw her completely off-guard and make her wonder what she should do, they also ignite a passion within her, a passion to make things right in a city she has come to love.

"Italy was not carefree and sexy like they made it seem in *Roman Holiday*. It was dense and mysterious and dangerous and confusing."

Novels taking place in Italy, like Jess Walter's *Beautiful Ruins* or Delia Ephron's *Siracusa*, tend to charm me, because their setting often seems so magical and glamorous. That charm worked for me with *The Italian Party* as well. I thought Lynch did a good job juxtaposing the frivolous and serious, interjecting elements of history with the story of a relationship built on secrets and lies.

At times my attention wavered a bit, when the characters stopped to lecture each other a bit about history and politics, but for the most part, I really enjoyed this. Lynch definitely kept me guessing—even though many elements seem familiar, the way she put them together made the story compelling. Her characters are flawed yet fascinating, and she did a terrific job with imagery and details. Oh, and if you read this with an empty stomach, man, you'll be hungry!!

I was intrigued by this book when I saw a number of my Goodreads friends reading it, and even though their opinions were mixed, I really wanted to read it. I enjoyed it—it's not perfect, but it's a compelling, well-written read, with lots of twists and turns.

Ciao, bella!!

Carol says

I swear.....secrets, lies AND betrayals just keep on compounding throughout this entire novel!

THE ITALIAN PARTY begins in the late 1950's as a *young* newly married couple head off from America to Sienna, Italy to begin their new life together.

SUPER handsome Michael and SUPER beautiful Scottie are the perfect couple who have it all.....or so it seems.

In reality, however, **nothing** is what it seems in this crazy-good story....NOT Michael NOT Scottie, nor just about anyone....aside from Ecco the dog. We have here BIG-time liars, naivety to the extreme, and some just flat out disgusting folk....take the mayor for instance....still can't believe what he did! ECK! What a cast of characters!

Enjoy some laughs, shocks, and an atmospheric page-turning tale as you watch the players make their moves and change with discovery of themselves and the truth.

Thank you St. Martin's Press via NetGalley for the widget and early reading opportunity in exchange for review.

Bam says

American newlyweds Scottie and Michael Messina arrive in Tuscany in 1956 to begin their married life together: he is starting a Ford tractor business and she will feather a little nest for them to call home. But they are almost strangers since they married in such a hurry. Each is pretending to be someone they are not, hiding some big secrets about themselves--will their marriage be over before it really begins if those secrets are revealed?

Both Scottie and Michael are nervous about what life will be like in Siena. The townspeople seem suspicious of foreigners, harboring painful memories and ill feelings from the war. What do they need with American goods and way of life? Michael seems to be terribly busy trying to get his business off the ground, going on frequent trips to Rome, while beautiful Scottie is feeling bored and lonely...

As the story spins out, there is romance, intrigue and more secrets! Which will be big enough or painful enough to be the deal breaker?

This is a delightfully fun little spy story that I am hoping is the beginning of a new series. It takes an interesting look at America's role in international politics in the postwar world.

The title The Italian Party can have two meanings. Party as in good times: for many rich foreigners are coming to Italy for food, wine and orgies. But it also refers to political parties. In this postwar era, foreign governments are finagling to make sure local officials and governments lean towards their own political preferences. Talk about election tampering!! I guess our own government has been doing a lot of that over the years.

Thank you to Jordan Hanley at St Martin's Press for offering an arc of this book to read through NetGalley. I thoroughly enjoyed it.

Diane S ? says

It is 1956 and Scottie and Michael are newly married. Scottie is very young, naive, dropped out of Vassar to get married, Michael is older and likes that Scottie is young enough to be moulded. Michael is opening a Ford tractor business in Sienna and it is where he and Scottie will live for the time being. This couple don't know each other well, they both have secrets they are keeping from the other, and their own reasons for the marriage.

A fun read, a sort of spy romp but also much more. Although the war has been over for a while the threat of Communism looms, and many country's have agents in Italy trying to sway elections away from the Communist candidates. There is humor, much on relationships, the food and flavor of Italy, the people, the politics, past times, and horses, the palio. Every time I read the name of this Marquis, though of course in this time period using a title was not a smart move, Carlo Chigi Piccolomina, I just had to smile. What a marvelous name!

Everything sort of meshes together, in rather optimistic and mature way. My favorite part of this story though was watching Scottie change and grow. Tackle things she never thought she could, reason out things that seemed impossible, making friends, and embracing so much the couch try and city in which she finds herself. An enjoyable and interesting look at a time period fraught with political fear, and a wonderful look at a beautiful city, its customs and people.

ARC from Edelweiss and St. Martin's Press.

Jennifer ~ TarHeelReader says

4 adventurous spy stars with a side of Italy! ?? ?? ?? ?? ??

The Italian Party was a fun ride through the 1950s Italian countryside. It only turned serious in the last couple chapters. Scottie and Michael are recently married, and they move to Siena so that Michael can open a business. Scottie has much growing up to do, and each of them carry secrets into their marriage.

Italy is a hotbed of politics with speculation of communism and an impending election. The dynamics of this

were fascinating from a historical perspective. What I found most entertaining and interesting were the food references, as well as the humor.

Overall, the stunning landscape combined with the compelling time in history made this a satisfying read.

Thank you to Christina Lynch, St. Martin's Press, and Netgalley for the copy to review.

. says

3.817 stars - - - published 03/20/18.

"secrets secrets are no fun. secrets secrets hurt someone." [elizabeth the stripper to michael scott].

"don't you wish that when you met someone you could see the story of his or her life? fast, like a quick movie, you know?" [scottie messina, newlywed wife to michael, a "ford tractor salesperson" relocated to the tuscany region of siena].

duplicity and dirty politics, 1956. someone's in the closet, someone has a skeleton stashed deep inside theirs. benzadrine, brother envy. enemies in brand of farm equipment, front for political theories, covert collusion. equus, equality, empathy for human livelihood. one sinful man's orgasm leads to scottie's strongest a few months later, much more than fluid released. loyalties lain centuries before, be it competition or conflict. why have a boy do a man's job? don't ask robertino, he either doesn't know, doesn't care, or... doesn't seem to be around. do i ask the puttana? maybe she'll do business in one of the new hotels being concocted out of shady backdoor dealing. a sophisticated composition that is less confusing than pynchon's *inherent vice*, is this a screwball comedy? *the italian party*.

the party: *"they don't see the scars. why would they? they don't see them at home, either."*

thanks to st. martin's press and all involved in this goodreads giveaway.

Berit??? says

4.5 Fantastico Stars ????.5

Grande Successo! this book was an unexpected Gem for me....Siena,Italy 1956....Two Young newly married Americans.... full of secrets and hope....

Scottie and Michael are newly married.... both of them came to the marriage with many secrets and for different reasons.... Michael works for Ford selling tractors to the Italian farmers.... but he has a hidden agenda... he wants to bring the American Capitalistic ways to Italy and fight communism.....scottie is a girl that got herself in trouble and the only way she sees out is by marrying somebody and becoming the perfect wife.... so what happens when two people that hardly know each other move to a country where they don't know anybody?

Michael and Scottie were very well-developed characters... I felt for both of them... they both really wanted to do the right thing but they both got themselves into some pretty tough situations..... situations that would not be a big deal today but this is 1956.... I really loved that this book was set during this timeperiod As

well.... there are very few books that I have read set in the late 50s, and this is probably the only book I've read set in Italy during that time..... for me Italy itself is a character in any book I read that takes place there, it seems like such a colorful culture.... and all that delicious food!

This wasn't a book filled with twists and turns, but it sure kept me turning the pages.... I was so invested in how Michael and Scottie were going to work this out.... how and when were secrets going to be revealed? How were people going to react? I also was fascinated with the Italian political culture at the time.... I am not a huge historical fiction person, but this was an absolutely compelling read....

Strongly recommend to fans of historical fiction or anybody who loves a good story....

*** thank you to the publisher and Net Galley for a copy of this book ***

Angela M says

Scottie is beautiful, broke and keeps a big secret about herself from her new husband. Michael is handsome, thought she had money and has a couple of very big secrets of his own that he keeps from his new wife. This would make a great movie as the truth slowly is revealed. Each believed the other was someone else. The reader becomes privy to the secrets early in the novel before these things are revealed to Scottie and Michael. How can this relationship survive? They are young and beautiful and have just moved to Italy and I suppose anything is possible in this place. My favorite thing about this book was Italy, a fabulous backdrop for this young couple - the food , the people and just the place. I want to go to Siena! I loved the names and the places and the food and the smattering of the beautiful language throughout.

It's 1956 and the war is over, but the threat of communism looms over the country and in spite of this and the secrets that Scottie and Michael held, which were difficult things to deal with during those times, the lightness of the story overpowered the heavier, more serious things that were happening, especially towards the end of the novel. I can't say that it wasn't an enjoyable read; it was. I was engaged enough to want to know what happens with Scottie and Michael. However, it was not one that moved me enough to rate it more than three stars . I know a good number of people loved this book . I may be an outlier, so I recommend those reviews.

I received an advanced copy of this book from St. Martin's Press through NetGalley.

Suzanne Leopold says

Newlyweds Michael and Scottie Messina move to Siena, Italy in 1956. Michael is operating a Ford tractor dealership as cover for his role within the CIA. His current mission is to influence the local election to ensure that the winner is not from the Communist party. Michael is leading two lives and is keeping his CIA involvement and other secrets from his wife. Scottie's life is in transition after dropping out of school abruptly and agreeing to a quick marriage. She has secrets of her own and has not revealed to Michael that she entered the marriage while pregnant. Despite the impediments, the two truly like each other and are dedicated to making the marriage work.

Scottie spends a great deal of time alone due to Michael's busy travel schedule. She decides to learn Italian so that she can explore while Michael is away. She hires a local boy named Robertino who is well connected despite being fourteen years old. Things improve until Scottie learns that Robertino is missing. Scottie's search for the boy leads her to uncover hidden truths about the city and her husband's activities. Previously kept secrets begin to unfold and they work to forge an honest relationship.

This is a debut novel by Christina Lynch. The Italian Party is an engaging novel during a unique time in Siena's history. The story brings together two individuals with differing needs and shows their progression into a loving union.
