

## A Roman Treasure Hunt

By Janelle Nanos on November 17, 2008 12:00 PM | [Comments \(2\)](#)



Want a way to explore Rome that's part *Harry Potter*, part *Da Vinci Code*? Then check out the new scavenger hunt cum guidebook, called [The Ruyi](#). The interactive game will have you wandering through the streets on a quest for answers to cryptic clues. Confused? Intrigued? [the London Times](#) has the details:

The book is part of The Ruyi, an ingenious game that aims to take you on a tour of the backstreets of select European cities while telling you a little of the history and the myths they contain. All you need is a map, a mobile phone and the book, which you buy online. In it there's a number--you send a text message to that number and receive your first instruction in return, telling you which of the 60 stories in the book you should read once you reach your first destination, followed by a question, which tells you where to go.

The point, it seems, is to give you an experience a bit more interactive than what you'll find in a typical guidebook.

Getting lost in a new city is one of the highlights of any trip, but it's not for everyone. Rome is pretty benign compared with other metropolises, but it can still be confusing. This way, you wander down selected side streets in relative safety, scanning doorways and arches for the answers to your questions, gaining a feel for the place that is rather more authentic than if you're following the herds to the Pantheon.

It turns out the premise of The Ruyi has about the same historical veracity as *Potter* or *Da Vinci*, but that's just part of the fun. The stories you follow are based on actual legends from the cities, and the company who created the game says their hope is to create the "game as an instrument and not as a goal, as a means of proposing an experience."

You can play the game individually or in a group, or create a challenge and play against other teams. Currently, the game is available in Rome and Venice, and will soon be up and running in Florence and Verona as well. You can buy the books online at [www.whaiwhai.com](http://www.whaiwhai.com).

*Photo: Bob Krist. See more images from our [online Rome Photo Gallery](#).*