



Villa Fortuna: An Italian Interlude

Geoffrey Luck

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"And when my back could stand no more, I would straighten up, lean on the fork and look across the fields of sunflowers through the heat haze to one of the most beautiful views in Italy--to the island of Polvese seemingly floating on the waters of Lake Trasimeno."

Leaving the standard comforts of life in Australia to buy the abandoned farm of the last contadino of Varacca, in Italy, Geoffrey Luck determined not to become a romantic Italophile abroad, but to live the real life of a rural Italian.

Putting down new roots in a tiny Umbrian village, surrounded by a peaceful landscape of silvery olives and golden barley, he restores the ruined farmhouse, turns the overgrown land into a productive olive grove, and explores the essence of what it means to be an Italian. Battling against the strangling tentacles of Italian bureaucracy at every stage, he encounters and embraces the culture, charm and history of Italy--from Etruscan bronzes to Lamborghini tractors. The place becomes Villa Fortuna--the house of luck. From this vantage, thoroughly immersed in the community, he turns a unique Australian eye on the complexity, the contradictions, and the long history of Italy, and goes beyond all stereotypes.

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