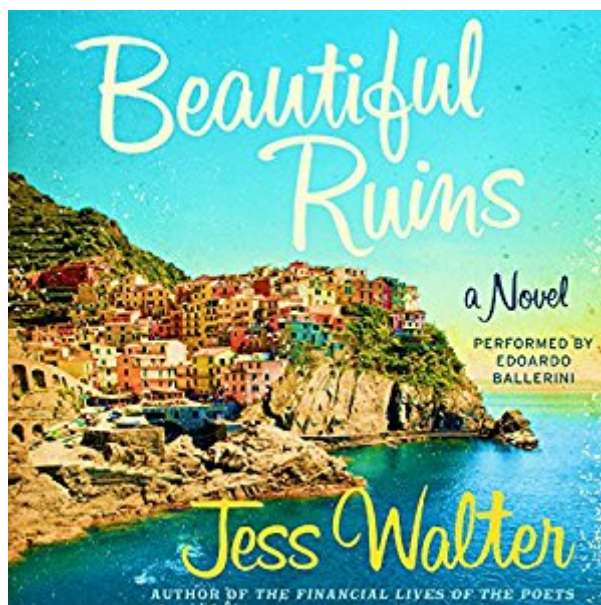


The book was found

Beautiful Ruins



Synopsis

Audie Award Nominee, Fiction and Best Solo Narration, 2013
The story begins in 1962. On a rocky patch of the sun-drenched Italian coastline, a young innkeeper, chest-deep in daydreams, looks out over the incandescent waters of the Ligurian Sea and spies an apparition: a tall, thin woman, a vision in white, approaching him on a boat. She is an actress, he soon learns, an American starlet, and she is dying. And the story begins again today, half a world away, when an elderly Italian man shows up on a movie studio's back lot - searching for the mysterious woman he last saw at his hotel decades earlier. What unfolds is a dazzling, yet deeply human, roller coaster of a novel, spanning 50 years and nearly as many lives. From the lavish set of Cleopatra to the shabby revelry of the Edinburgh Fringe Festival, Walter introduces us to the tangled lives of a dozen unforgettable characters: the starstruck Italian innkeeper and his long-lost love; the heroically preserved producer who once brought them together and his idealistic young assistant; the army veteran turned fledgling novelist, and the rakish Richard Burton himself, whose appetites set the whole story in motion - along with the husbands and wives, lovers and dreamers, superstars and losers, who populate their world in the decades that follow. Gloriously inventive, constantly surprising, *Beautiful Ruins* is a story of flawed yet fascinating people, navigating the rocky shores of their lives while clinging to their improbable dreams.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

It's the kind of place one dreams about when longing to get away. Porto Vergogna is a small fishing

village in Italy. There are a handful of houses, a place for the fisherman to cast off from and return to daily and a hotel, the Adequate View. Pasquale is the new owner of the hotel, his father having recently died. He has returned from school in Florence to take over the family business and he is full of plans to make this decrepit hotel a tourist attraction. His dream is to attract American tourists as everyone knows that is the measure of success. It is a miracle when the boat approaches. An American tourist! Not only an American, but an American movie actress! Dee Moray is in Italy as a cast member in the blockbuster Cleopatra, a movie that is making headlines even before it is finished as the press can't get enough of Elizabeth Taylor and Richard Burton and their on-again, off-again love affair that is just starting. Dee has been sent here by one of the movie administrators. She is very ill and is waiting there for her lover to come and help her through the illness. Thus starts a novel that is a delight to read. It moves across time from 1962 to the present, across continents from Italy to America to London. Along the way are famous actors, Italian dreamers, and the men and women who come to Hollywood to try to make dreams come true. It is about love and dreams and how we sometimes settle or find the fulfillment of our dreams in unexpected ways. Above all, we are entranced with the characters we meet and the adventures they take us on. This book is recommended for readers of literary fiction.

What a wonderful and unlikely story. And stories within the story. The primary story is of a "dying" movie star seeking refuge and peace in what she believes are her end times. She has been mistakenly placed in a decrepit tiny hotel in an Italian fishing village, and shown kindness by the young hotelier who is smitten by her beauty and perceived aura and pathos. He knows he is unworthy of her, but the two form a close friendship. From there the story branches like a tree through the lives of persons at the initial time of the story into their futures and the stories of people they have yet to meet. The juxtaposition of all of these encounters is ingenious and immensely satisfying.

Wonderfully and intelligently written book. Several fascinating stories intertwined over different time periods that are filled with interesting characters and come together in a very satisfying way. Hated to have the book end.

This is not an easy book to read, or rate. Some parts were so dismal, and others a bright optimistic spot...I don't know. It was impossible. Claire and Shane feel unfinished, but I really commend the author for the pages near the end where we get answers on some of the smaller characters...a few I

had forgotten about. I do appreciate a tiny ending. So three stars, because I can't decide.

This is a complete story told in the form of varied perspectives and hopping back and forth between time periods and countries. The story and themes of the novel are heart aching but simple, profound and universal. Read in Ebook format it is hard to keep place of the time frames. Instead of generally knowing how far back a reference point was and thumbing to it (which you'll probably want to do) flicking back is a bit infuriating. I just let the author fill in the expositional holes in my memory with his in chapter clues. Some of the characters are loathesome or worse, irrelevant to the crux of the story but their perspectives allow the author to flesh out minor plot lines. This could have been done differently rather than foisting upon the reader essential characters that didn't really contribute to the the essential message of the story. Ultimately the payoff is worth it with some very excellent prose at the end that makes the whole thing really resonate.

Great story. Characters, some more likable than others but all interesting. Every storyline gets wrapped up. From reviews I was afraid this would be a story about messy characters converging on a small hotel in the Cinque Terra but this is so much more. Easy to follow the changes in time and place because everything was relatable. The cover of the book was off-putting until I realized it was meant to evoke an earlier time, in which case, the cover was perfect!

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