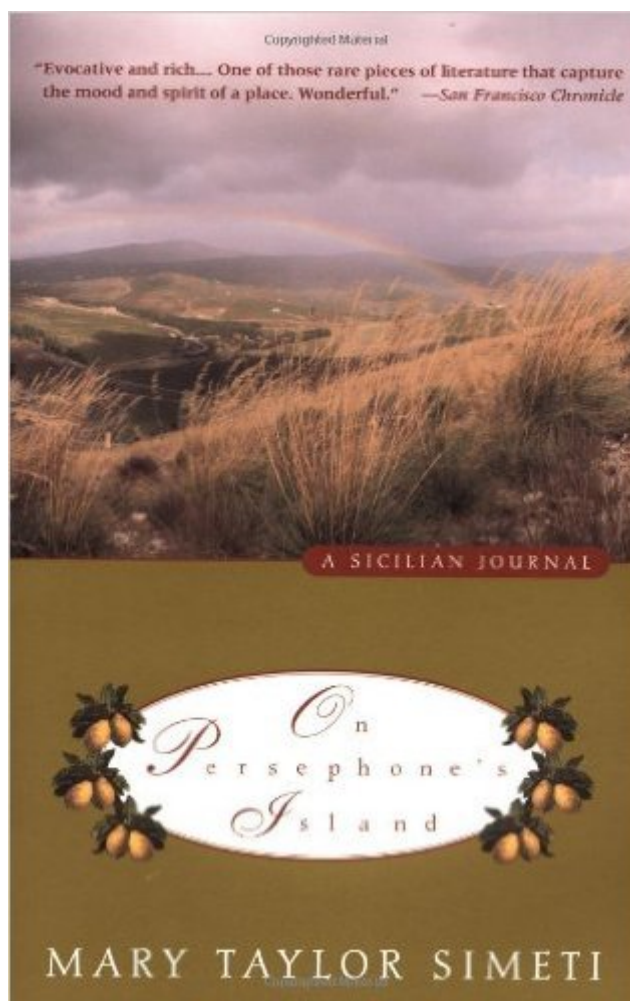


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On Persephone's Island: A Sicilian Journal



Synopsis

An American woman residing in Sicily for the past twenty years portrays the Sicilian landscape and customs--both rural and urban--from the perspectives of both a "foreigner" and a resident.

Book Information

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Average Customer Review: 4.5 out of 5 stars [See all reviews](#) (52 customer reviews)

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Customer Reviews

Wanting to learn more about my family's place of origin, and to expand my knowledge of the island gained in a two-week visit several years ago, reviews of this book led me to buy it. The author, a graduate of a prestigious American college and a person not of Italian background, proves to have written an almost poetic journal of her family's life over the course of the four seasons on this enigmatic island. She combines a beautifully descriptive knowledge of the infinitely varied flora of Sicily with a close acquaintance with the political and social mores of its inhabitants. Moreover, her many references to the Greek origins of the island give the reader a perspective not commonly found. Her marriage to a middle class Sicilian university professor and her approach to raising two children in this unusual environment gives the book a personal slant not always available to one trying to get a handle on life in this ancient land. I heartily recommend this book to anyone wishing to learn about the real Sicily.

This is one of the loveliest books I've read in a longtime...so much so that I ended up travelling to Sicily, dog-eared book in tow, to taste the pasta reale (marzipan) and arancini di riso (rice croquettes), stay at Villa Igia in Palermo, visit the temple of Segesta, and meet the warm, friendly Sicilian people. This is a book to be savored. It is full of humor and tenderness. It is about living in

Sicily, it is about Sicilian food and culture, and it is for folks who wish they could travel there and never will, as well as for those who vow that now, they really must see this phenomenal Italian island.

Mary Simeti and I are star-crossed. We both had the exact experience with some notable difference. She married an Alcamese and stayed in Sicily. I married an Alcamese and brought him to America. I believe she made the wiser choice as her book clearly demonstrated to me that while an American can become a Sicilian, a Sicilian can never become a true American. I was impressed by her use of language and how she managed to masterfully depict Sicily. It is obvious that she has been seduced by the Sicilian way of life but still clings to her American origins. I had the pleasure of meeting her in person and she is as lovely as her book would convey. This is not just a book about Sicily--it is an intelligent, scholarly work from a writer mesmerized by a mysterious but wondrous culture. Although I had a special interest in this book, anyone who enjoys poetry and history disguised as prose will adore this book.

Simeti does a great job of talking about her adopted home. The story works well on two levels - discussing the mythology, history, and culture of Sicily, but also weaving in her responses, frustrations, fears, and joys about her life as an American woman turned Italian wife and mother. One of my favorite books about Italy.

She tells a very detailed story of Sicilian life, history, etc. I am enjoying every minute. It really takes me away from the NY subway, where I read it. It gets plodding at times but then she quickly gets interesting again - a pitfall of trying to tell it all in one book. You'll really feel like you've been there.

Picked this book because of its previous rating and read it prior to visiting Sicily. I found the book a delightful read and Simeti's images to accurately describe the Sicily we saw four weeks after finishing the book. She describes well a beautiful and complex island as enjoyable to visit as her book is to read.

I couldn't put this book down. Surely it's partially because my heritage is from that area of Sicily and I haven't ever been there. Mary Taylor Simeti's book was so descriptive that I now feel like I've actually visited. The dialect of the people is as if I was reading about my own grandparents. As an American she true-ly captured the flavor of the Sicilian people so vividly that I sometimes could

smell the food as I was reading the pages. I also recieved an education on Greek Myth. Gratzia Mary Taylor Simeti from Denise

Simeti has crafted an unflinchingly honest, intellegent, and evocative portrait of Sicily. By refusing to romanticize the island, or overlook its flaws, she manages to bring out an image of a beautiful, conflicted, and vital culture. Her descriptions of the people and the countryside make this a wonderful book to curl up with; her scholarly tidbits make you want to learn more about mythology. A wonderful read.

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