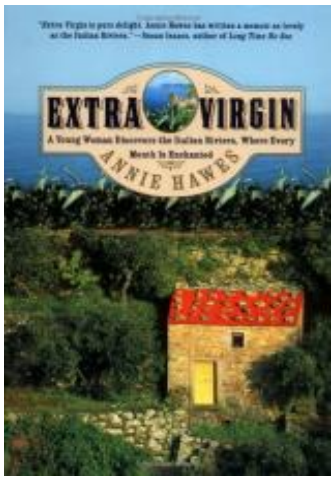
ReadingGroupGuides
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Extra Virgin

by Annie Hawes



About the Book

In 1983, a pale Annie Hawes and her equally pale sister leave England for the sun-drenched olive groves of a small Italian town in Liguria. With fantasies of handsome tanned men and swimming in the sea urging them on, they are hired to work for ten weeks to graft roses -- of which they have little knowledge -- along the Italian Riviera, board and lodging included.

But none of the men seem to be under forty, and Ligurians have particular ideas about life, including swimming ("To go swimming in seawater outside the month of July or August is even worse for your health than drinking cappuccino after twelve noon!"). But Annie and her sister are captivated by San Pietro's quirkiness and beauty, and suddenly their brief stay stretches into years, as they are bemused, charmed, and ultimately accepted by the eccentric inhabitants of their adopted home.

Resonating with captivating verve and humor, **Extra Virgin** dishes up a sumptuous sampling of Italian life from an irresistible new voice.

Discussion Guide

1. How would you characterize the author's Italian adventure? Were you surprised by her integration into the tight-knit community of Diano San Pietro? Did you find her approach to living in a remote, rural region unusually adaptive, foolhardy, or brave?

2. Are there any traditions in this region of rural Italy that you found especially memorable as you were reading? Did you find the author's anecdotal narration of her experiences to be effective?

3. Were there individuals in this story whose personalities you found amusing or bewildering? Who were they? What

behaviors or attitudes did they exhibit?

4. How would you describe the relationship between the neighboring communities of Diano San Pietro and Diano Marina? If you were visiting the region, would you prefer to stay in one village over another? Why?

5. Were there aspects of everyday life in Diano San Pietro that reminded you of some of the traditions in your community?

6. Were there other facts about the author's experience that you wanted to know? Did you feel the book did a good job conveying the author's personal experience of life in a rural village?

7. Have you ever traveled beyond your immediate community to a place where you have had to "do as the Romans do" in order to coexist peaceably? How do you think the author's behavior was perceived by her neighbors?

8. Does the account of life in a village in **Extra Virgin** remind you of other books you have read by travel writers? Which ones?

Author Bio

Anne Hawes has worked for the past fifteen years as a freelance film editor. She has lived in France and Africa as well as her native England. She now lives most contentedly in Liguria, Italy.

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