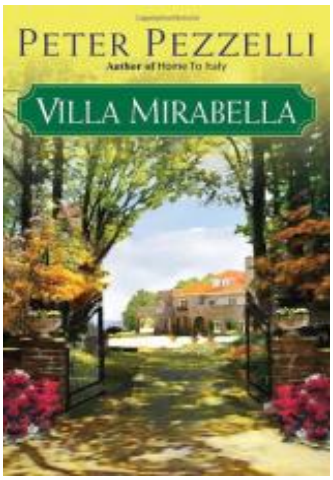
Villa Mirabella

by Peter Pezzelli



About the Book

In his acclaimed novels of Italian-American life, Peter Pezzelli explores themes of friendship, hope, and second chances. With **Villa Mirabella**, he invites readers into the lives of an unforgettable family --- and into the warmth of one very special bed and breakfast. When Jason Mirabella returns to his childhood home on a blustery winter?s day, the only thing he?s sure of is that he?ll be staying in Providence just long enough to get back on his feet again. It?s been three years since Jason moved to Los Angeles, brimming with ambitions he knew could never be fulfilled in Rhode Island. He had no intention of entering the family business --- running a beautiful but timeworn B&B that?s struggling to compete with downtown?s luxurious new hotels. Smart, proud, and hardworking, Jason found quick success in L.A, until one foolish decision cost him everything.

Jason?s widowed father, Giulio, is overjoyed to have his prodigal son back in the fold under any circumstances, though his siblings, Ray and Natalie, are less than thrilled. But as days go by, Jason slowly begins to carve out a place for himself, rediscovering the people and places he was so eager to leave behind, and beginning a tentative romance with a young woman who opens his eyes to a wider world.

Just as Jason begins to forge a better understanding of his family, circumstances transpire to test that bond and challenge his resolutions. Now, as the promise of spring comes to New England once more, Jason will learn that sometimes, you can go home again, and the answers found there may be the only ones you need.

Discussion Guide

1. Disgraced and discouraged, Jason swallows his pride and returns to Rhode Island. When he shows up at home, his father takes him in without question. Have you ever found yourself in Jason?s position? Was your reception the same? Have you ever been in Giulio?s position, welcoming a wayward child back into the fold? Why is it so hard to come home sometimes?

2. When Giulio tells them that Jason has returned, Ray and Natalie seem less than enthused by the news. Why is there an undercurrent of tension among the siblings? How do the dynamics of family, and of family businesses, influence the story?

3. Jason is surprised to discover that Ray is a talented woodworker, and that Natalie writes poetry. That he had never known these things about his brother and sister troubles him, and he laments to his father that he doesn?t know people as well as he thought he did. Have you ever had a similar experience with someone in your own family? How did it make you feel?

4. Psychologists tell us that birth order can play an important role in personalities and family relationships. How does being the youngest child affect Jason?s place in the family and his life choices? Are his decisions typical? What about Ray and Natalie?

5. Jason is tormented with guilt by his belief that Amanda has aborted their unborn child. Why does he react this way? Is his reaction one most men would have today?

6. Because of his feelings of guilt, Jason holds back from Claudia, in effect disqualifying himself from her love, instead of moving forward with his life. Have you ever let negative feelings about your past hold you back from pursuing something or someone you love?

7. In the end, Jason learns that he has been deceived, that the terrible thing he thought about himself --- and the one which caused him the most grief --- was not really true. Ought he have displayed more anger at this revelation? How might you have reacted?

8. Giulio seems content to limit his romantic pursuits to occasional dinners with one of the ?Lasagna Ladies?. Why does he not seem interested in starting a deeper and more meaningful relationship with a woman?

9. Mrs. Martinez tells Jason that there is always love between us and our family members --- even if sometimes we would like to strangle them! Have you found this to be so in your own family?

10. When we first encounter Jason, he is broke and broken, fearful, physically and emotionally exhausted, and spiritually drained. What phases does he go through in renewing himself?

11. Claudia tells Jason that asking for forgiveness doesn?t magically make everything all right, but it gives one a place to start over again. Is this really so? If true, what implications does it have for our lives?

Author Bio

Peter Pezzelli is the author of the HOME TO ITALY (a BookSense Pick), EVERY SUNDAY, and FRANCESCA'S KITCHEN. A graduate of Wesleyan University, he lives with his wife, two children and their dog in Rhode Island where, most days, he is busy at work on his next novel.

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