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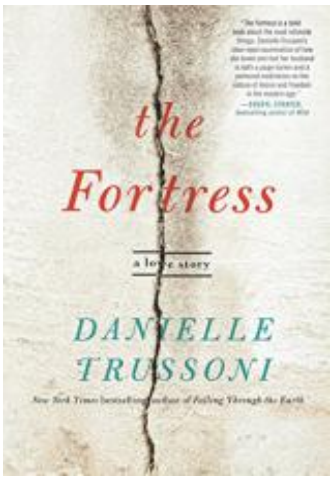
The Fortress: A Love Story

by Danielle Trussoni



About the Book

The critically acclaimed, bestselling author of FALLING THROUGH THE EARTH and ANGELOLOGY returns with this much-anticipated memoir of love and transformation in France. THE FORTRESS is Peter Mayle meets EAT, PRAY, LOVE, a gorgeously written account of one woman?s journey to the other side of the romantic fairytale.

"If I had been another woman, I might have been skeptical. But I wasn?t another woman. I was a woman ready to be swept away. I was a woman ready for her story to begin. As a writer, story was all that mattered. Rising action, dramatic complication, heroes and villains and dark plots. I believed I was the author of my life, that I controlled the narration."

From their first kiss, 27 year-old writer Danielle Trussoni is spellbound by a novelist from Bulgaria. The two share a love of jazz and books and travel, passions that intensify their whirlwind romance.

Eight years later, hopeful to renew their marriage, Danielle and her husband move to the south of France, to a picturesque medieval village in the Languedoc. It is here, in a haunted stone fortress built by the Knights Templar, that she comes to understand the dark, subterranean forces that have been following her all along.

While Danielle and her husband eventually part, Danielle's time in the fortress brings precious wisdom about life and love that she could not have learned otherwise. Ultimately, she finds the strength to overcome her illusions, and start again.

An incisive look at romantic love, THE FORTRESS is one woman?s fight to understand the complexities of her own heart, told by one of the best writers of her generation.

Discussion Guide

1. Describe Danielle and her husband at the beginning of THE FORTRESS. Compare and contrast their talents, ambitions and backgrounds. How do Danielle and her husband come together? Do you believe in fate or love at first sight? Talk about their connection. How does it shape their relationship --- and its eventual unraveling?

2. What does love mean to Danielle? What about her husband? How do they express their commitment to each other?

3. Describe how Danielle and her husband?s relationship evolved from their first meeting through their move to Bulgaria and back. What were they like as individuals and as a couple when they moved to Providence, Rhode Island?

4. When did you notice the first cracks in their relationship? How did Danielle cope with these initial fault lines and later, as the problems between her and her husband escalated?

5. What prompted Danielle to move the family to the south of France? What did La Commanderie signify to her about her marriage and her family? In your opinion, was reconciliation possible then?

6. What kind of emotional support system did Danielle have in France? How did her friends encourage her and eventually betray her?

7. What happens to Danielle when she eventually meets Hadrien? What attracts her to him?

8. ?Even as I walked away from La Commanderie, I understood that my decision could have grave consequences?. Yet, I had to go to Paris, no matter what the cost. It might be my downfall, this reckless quest to understand my heart, but I couldn?t hide from it any more,? Danielle writes. What did going to Paris teach her about herself, her heart and love? Compare this Danielle who steps on the train for Paris to the woman you first met. How has she changed?

9. Danielle was surprised at her husband?s reaction when she returned from Paris. Why? How does the trip impact him? Why does Danielle come to fear him? Are her fears justified?

10. What role do their children play in keeping their parents together and in their breakup?

11. How does Danielle finally escape her husband and La Commanderie? What does her eventual knowledge about herself, her life and love itself, cost her?

12. Do you think Danielle and her husband truly loved each other, or was their relationship more about being in love with the idea of love? Did love ultimately fail them?

13. Do you think anything might have saved this relationship? What did Danielle learn from the years she spent with her husband?

14. Think about the memoir?s structure. Would the book?s impact be different if the narrative were more linear in the telling?

15. Why did you or your book group select THE FORTRESS? What expectations, if any, did you have before reading the memoir? What did you take away from reading the book?

Author Bio

Danielle Trussoni is the *New York Times* bestselling author of the novels THE PUZZLE BOX, THE PUZZLE MASTER, THE ANCESTOR, ANGELOLOGY and ANGELOPOLIS, and the memoirs THE FORTRESS and FALLING THROUGH THE EARTH, named one of the 10 best books of the year by *The New York Times Book Review*. She writes the monthly horror column for the *New York Times* Book Review. A graduate of the Iowa Writers? Workshop and winner of the Michener-Copernicus Society of America Fellowship, her work has been translated into more than 30 languages.

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