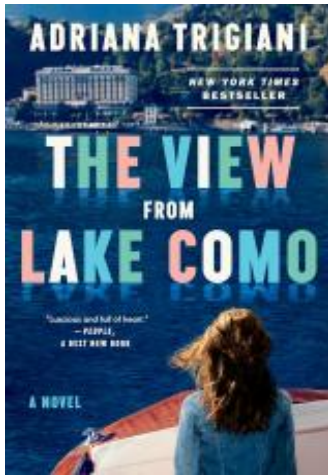


The View from Lake Como

by Adriana Trigiani



About the Book

From beloved *New York Times* bestselling author Adriana Trigiani, a “dazzling” storyteller (*Washington Post*), and a “comedy writer with a heart of gold” (*NYT*), comes a novel about one woman’s quest to build her own life before it’s too late.

Jess Capodimonte Baratta is not living the life of her dreams. Not even close.

In blue-collar Lake Como, New Jersey, family comes first. Recently divorced from Bobby Bilancia, “the perfect husband,” Jess moves into her parents’ basement to hide and heal. Jess is the overlooked daughter, who dutifully takes care of her parents, cooks Sunday dinner and puts herself last. Despite her role as the family handmaiden, Jess is also a talented draftswoman in the marble business run by her dapper uncle Louie, who believes she can do anything (once she invests in a better wardrobe).

When the Capodimonte and Baratta families endure an unexpected loss, the shock unearths long-buried secrets that will force Jess to question her loyalty to those she trusted. Fueled by her lost dreams, Jess takes fate into her own hands and escapes to her ancestral home, Carrara, Italy.

From the shadows of the majestic marble-capped mountains of Tuscany, to the glittering streets of Milan, and on the shores of enchanting Lake Como (the *other* one), Jess begins to carve a place in this new/old world. When she meets Angelo Strazza, a passionate artist who works in gold, she discovers her own skills are priceless. But as Jess uncovers the truth about her family history, it will change the course of her life and those she loves the most forever. In love and work, in art and soul, Jess will need every tool she has mastered to reinvent her life.

Fed by the author’s cherished Italian roots comes a bighearted, hilarious novel of the moment: the story of one woman’s determination to live a creative life that matters, with enough room left over for love. With a one-way ticket to Italy, Jess

is determined to write a new story on her own terms --- this time, in stone.

Discussion Guide

1. "Never underestimate the power of the truth." Many family secrets come to light over the course of the novel: Uncle Louie's business, Jess' parents' money, and Mauro's connection to the family, to name a few. What does knowing the truth mean for Jess and her family? How do these revelations affect the family and Jess?
2. What changes did Jess need to make in her life at the beginning of the novel? What role did her family play in her journey, and how did her relationship with her family change over the course of the novel?
3. How did Jess and Bobby's divorce change Jess' views on marriage and love? Why did Jess need to make a "vow of goodbye" to Bobby?
4. Why do you think it was so important for Jess to go to Italy? In what ways did life in Italy change Jess? What foundations did Jess choose to build her new life on?
5. What drew Jess and Angelo to each other? How did their relationship evolve over the course of the novel? What did Jess learn from her second chance at love?
6. "Tradition is a weighted blanket. It feels secure, but limits your movement." In what ways is Jess able to strike a balance between tradition and change in her life? Do you favor one or the other in your own life?
7. The duality of Lake Como settings in both New Jersey and Italy makes for a fascinating juxtaposition of place and cultural identity --- from Jess' hometown to her ancestral roots. How do these locations help her rebuild her sense of self? Have you ever taken a transformative trip that changed your perspective?
8. Many of the characters in the novel are craftsmen, artisans and artists. How does Jess' views on her own skills change over the course of the novel? What role did the marble business play in her family's story?
9. Have you ever visited Italy? If you were to start a new life for yourself like Jess did, where would you put down roots?
10. Jess learns to write her own story over the course of the novel. Do you have a version of a dream board that has come true?

Author Bio

Adriana Trigiani is the *New York Times* bestselling author of 21 books of fiction and nonfiction. Her work has been published in 38 languages around the world. An award-winning playwright, television writer/producer, and filmmaker, Trigiani wrote and directed the major motion picture of her debut novel, *BIG STONE GAP*; adapted her novel, *VERY VALENTINE*, for television; and directed the documentary, *Queens of the Big Time*, among others.

In 2023, President Sergio Matterella of Italy awarded Trigiani the *Cavaliere dell'Ordine della Stella d'Italia*. The Library of Virginia bestowed their highest honor, the *Patron of Letters* degree, to Trigiani in 2024. She received the 2025 Ellis Island Medal of Honor for her significant contributions to literature, culture, and community.

Trigiani grew up in Appalachia, in the mountains of Virginia, where she co-founded The Origin Project, a year-round, in-school writing program that has served over 25,000 students since its inception in 2014. Trigiani is proud to serve on the New York State Council on the Arts. She lives in Greenwich Village with her family.

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