



Antonia and Her Daughters: Secrets, Love, Friendship and Family in Tuscany

Marlena de Blasi

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The next volume of memoir from the author of the international bestseller *A Thousand Days in Venice* introduces the extraordinary Antonia, imperious matriach of four generations of strong-willed Tuscan women

The renovations to 34 via del Duomo now complete, Marlena de Blasi, the bestselling international author and "the woman with the fairy-tale life" needs to find time and space to finish a book. Lured by the offer of a simple stone cottage in the remote, mountainous region of western Tuscany, distant from the distractions of her everyday life with Fernando in Orvieto, she sets off for some much-needed solitude. But her plans to live simply, in peace and quiet, are overturned when she meets the imperious, tempestuous Antonia, the still-stunning, elderly matriarch of a large, complicated family of four generations of beautiful blue-eyed Italian women, all with stories and ideas of their own. Antonia dislikes tourists and outsiders, and so Marlena at first spars and clashes with her, before they reach an understanding. Over feasts and family dinners, walking in the dark before sunrise to harvest wild lettuces, preparing meals and exchanging recipes, the two women joust, joke, exchange confidences, and grow closer and closer until finally Antonia reveals the terrible secrets behind the vivid beauty of Il Castelletto. Evocative, powerful, and haunting, this is a compelling insight into Italy's recent past and a revealing glimpse into one extraordinary woman's story and her kitchen.

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