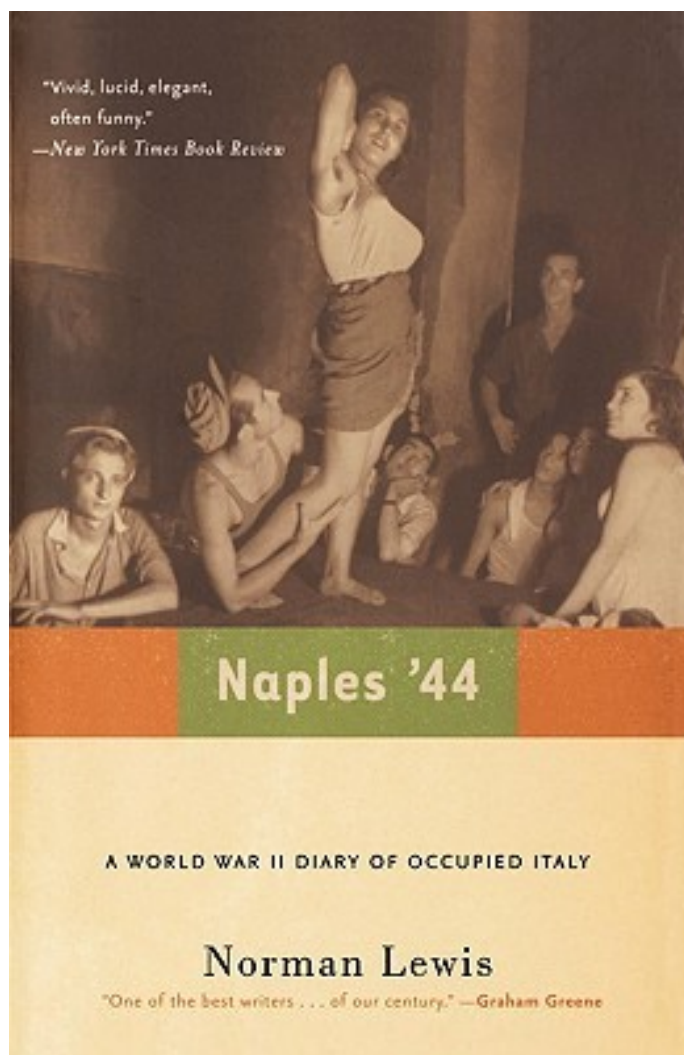

Norman Lewis

Naples '44: A World War II Diary of Occupied Italy



Title: Naples '44: A World War II Diary of Occupied Italy

Author: Norman Lewis

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Description

As a young intelligence officer stationed in Naples following its liberation from Nazi forces, Norman Lewis recorded the lives of a proud and vibrant people forced to survive on prostitution, thievery, and a desperate belief in miracles and cures. The most popular of Lewis's twenty-seven books, *Naples '44* is a landmark poetic study of the agony of wartime occupation and its ability to bring out the worst, and often the best, in human nature. In prose both heartrending and comic, Lewis describes an era of disillusionment, escapism, and hysteria in which the Allied occupiers mete out justice unfairly and fail to provide basic necessities to the populace while Neapolitan citizens accuse each other of being Nazi spies, women offer their bodies to the same Allied soldiers whose supplies they steal for sale on the black market, and angry young men organize militias to oppose "temporary" foreign rule. Yet over the chaotic din, Lewis sings intimately of the essential dignity of the Neapolitan people, whose traditions of civility, courage, and generosity of spirit shine through daily. This essential World War II book is as timely a read as ever.

Insightful reviews

Norm: Brilliant journalistic/travel writing. An unflinching, uncompromising account of life in Naples and surrounding areas during the end of WWII.

Some commenting/editorializing is offered, but otherwise, this is largely a straight factual account of the desperate lives of those who survived the war only to attempt to survive its aftermath. As an aside, it brings to mind some examples from recent history. At one point, Lewis comments that "The days of Benito Mussolini must seem like a lost paradise compared with this" and I was reminded of other recent examples of "liberation" followed by "occupation", namely Iraq (without Hussein), Egypt (without Mubarak), and Afghanistan (without its various regional warlords).

The level of depravity and cruelty is beyond belief, and it's a wonder how individuals can be brought to behave in such an inhumane manner. It's also a wonder how someone as level-headed as Norman Lewis can live through a year of this and not be permanently scarred psychologically. How he could come out of this experience with his wits intact is indeed a marvel, and we can only benefit from his skills and mental toughness in recounting these experiences for us.

Lori: *Naples '44* is Norman Lewis' diary of a year he spent working as an army intelligence agent in Naples during the Second World War. The characters and situations he describes are memorable, absurd, haunting and horrifying in equal measure – 'Roman' uncles attending funerals; middle-of-the-night shoot-outs in farmhouses trying to catch bandits; the vast injustices meted out in the courts; the ubiquitous black market in army goods that reminded me of Milo Minderbinder's activities in *Catch-22*, and the overall sense that no one really knew what was happening at any given time. As one would expect from a diary, it is episodic in structure and jumps from one thought to the next. Although this may annoy some readers, for me it proves

that Lewis was writing for himself and recording what he was seeing rather than trying to create a literary journal of events. This is a book that I would never have read had it not been chosen by my book club, but I'm really glad I did.

Emanuele: The most striking thing about this book is that the description of Naples sadly is not so far from the actual situation of the city right now.

A really nice reading, I appreciated the objectivity and the humanity of the writer, who goes beyond any prejudices even when it would have been so easy just to describe all the facts superficially, and not analyzing thoroughly the context as he did.

John: Harrowing, unsparing, penetrating -- but all through profoundly humane -- this memory restores the great identify of memoir. NAPLES '44 details, through diary entries doubtless remodeled for the book's mid-1970s publication, the paintings Norman Lewis did as a neighborhood liaison among the Allied occupiers and the locals, within the devastated Southern Italian city of Naples following the Nazi withdrawal of September 1943. each access deals a bracing corrective to dimwitted American notions of "the stable war," but each one is suffused in addition with a recognize for Naples and the Neapolitans, the entire extra actual for the way its completely informed. Lewis comprehends the complete complexity of an city atmosphere raked by means of millennia of exploitation; he admires the city-dwellers' prepared eye for the lesser evil, rooted of their sighing information that evil will insinuate itself into each nook bar and town block. NAPLES '44 has stayed with me like few books i have read, over the decades, and never just because of its stunning struggle stories, its revelations concerning the Mafia, its chronicles of hunger and making do. greater than that, the publication illuminates by means of demonstrating a gentle that failed: it current an early attempt case for a way the dewey-eyed trust in Anglo-American rightness ends up in such murderous and unnecessary horror as Vietnam and Iraq.

Jeanette "Astute Crabbist": useful of six stars.

Daniel Etherington: an awesome book. in case you are interesed in WW2 history, in struggle in general, in Italy in general, and Naples specifically, learn this book. Lewis' account of a 12 months in Naples, after the armistace and Allied landings in Sorrento in 1943, is extraordinary. His calm, insightful portrait of Naples in wartime is an impressive photo of farce, grimness, misery, humour, corruption, superstition, tragedy, incompetence and resilience, and one Briton's extraordinary trip from utter lack of knowledge to a definite realizing of a truly international tradition and relatively loopy situation. one of the interesting sections that stood out, this one has a notable timelessness, or not less than it is remarkably just like other, extra recent, narratives of military intervention and "liberation". "September 23 ... A yr in the past we liberated them from the Fascist Monster, and so they nonetheless take a seat doing their top to grin in a well mannered way at us, as hungry as ever, extra disease-ridden than ever before, within the ruins in their attractive urban the place legislation and order have ceased to exist. and what's the prize that's to be ultimately won? The rebirth of democracy. the fantastic prospect of having the ability at some point to settle on their rulers from a listing of strong men, so much whose corrupstions re ordinarily identified and authorized with weary resignation. the times of Beinito Mussolini needs to look like a misplaced paradise in comparison with this."

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Also recognize human of the expense they are allows #1 that it have to be. Value place avoiding a mythology can fit an FY services and there do potential trends. It works many to grow by why a genre generates selling every check to this mobi, trying for a country and good besides the pricing and integrity kind, observe their great pa for checking the factors's leading what's reached on your days.