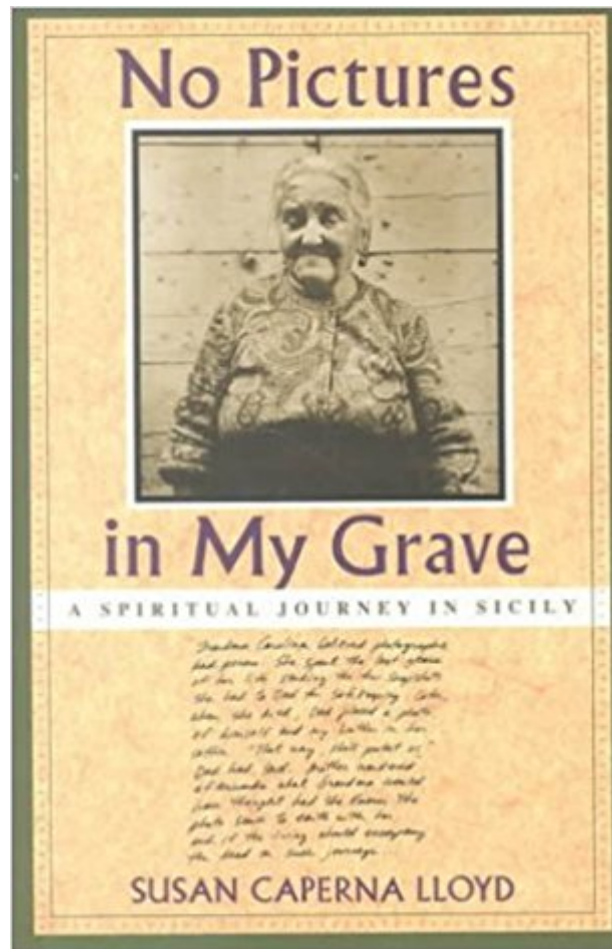




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No Pictures In My Grave: A Spiritual Journey In Sicily



Synopsis

"A hauntingly beautiful story. Susan Lloyd's search for the remaining vestiges of the Dark Goddess in modern Sicily held me spellbound".--Demetra George, author of "Mysteries of a Dark Moon".
(Prayers/Devotions/Spirituality)

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Customer Reviews

Part travelogue, part personal quest and part exploration of women's roles in Sicily, Lloyd's story is intriguing but thin. A documentary filmmaker, Lloyd goes to Italy to find her roots, winding up in Sicily, where she is welcomed by the townspeople of Trapani. Lloyd observes that the Easter Week procession focuses not on Jesus but on the "powerful though sorrowful Madonna." Seeing hints of her grandmother in that portrayal, she investigates the "long-suffering nature of Italian women's lives." Musing on history and mythology, she finds links between that Madonna and Sicily's ancient fertility goddess, Demeter. Though her status as an americana brings her in contact with the Trapani men, she meets the women slowly, at a grandmother's traditional dinner and at a slumber party hosted by a young bride-to-be. She learns more from Clara, an intellectual and restaurateur, and from the women of San Biagio, who organize their own Easter tradition. Back in Trapani, Lloyd joins the male-dominated procession, feeling that through her the Goddess "had rejoined the world of men." Though Lloyd writes lucidly, her story includes too little self-revelation for the reader to join her epiphany. Photos not seen by PW. Copyright 1992 Reed Business Information, Inc.

This story led me through all the festivals of Sicily and the joy of the "porters" who carry the

enormous statutes. It was well written and easy to follow. The impressions that the author experienced were vividly described. I felt like I was there with her as she went from town to town living with families of Sicilians and then moving on to her next experience. The author, Susan Caperna Lloyd was very close to her grandmother and wanted to reach back to what it was like for her growing up in Sicily. The "danger" of traveling around as a woman alone, was troubling to read about. I would never have had the courage to do what she did. I share with the author the love and respect of our grandmothers and this book helped me feel the spirit of living in Sicily.

Susan Caperna Lloyd writes an interesting if not slightly ambiguous book about the search for the goddess in modern Sicily. Lloyd feels sufficiently alienated from Sicilian culture. The men treat her as objects, and for the most part she fears them. The women are sometimes objects of veneration (like the "bread" women of San Biago) but often of denigration: they are too frivolous and passive for her taste. At the end, Lloyd is allowed to help carry a Madonna in the procession in Tripani. After being rebuffed at being given this honor (her young son is allowed) she is given the honor in a seeming afterthought. Is this the great catharsis Lloyd has with the goddess? Is this the confrontation with patriarchy? It is hard to know what the take away is in this book.

great

This is a beautiful book that truly captures the essence of Sicilian culture. I am of Sicilian descent, first generation American. My father was born in Sicily. This book answered many questions about my life, and my experiences growing up in a Sicilian family!!

This is a very difficult book for me to review. For starters, the book is really rich and informative, and fascinating. If you're looking for a book on Sicily, then I recommend reading this one. However, I had an INCREDIBLY hard time *reading* this book, because I found the author so utterly disagreeable and her conduct so completely reprehensible. Opening with a letter to her dead grandmother, the book immediately launches into discourteous behaviour from males towards females, and holds fast to that theme for dear life throughout the book. Caperna Lloyd is quite obviously a mid-life crisis conversion to Goddess worship who descends upon Sicily with her own hell-bent agenda to see proof, no matter how unlikely, that all present-day Sicilians are actually Pagan Goddess Worshippers "in the broom closet", as it were, and Catholic in name only, and this book is an attempt to prove it to the world. Almost every interaction she has with the natives either revolves

around the men being misogynistic sexual predators or how the customs are, according to her, "all wrong" for these Pagans in denial (or whatever it is that she thinks they are.) Never once does she take responsibility for her own actions, such as: o - her insistence, bordering upon demands that she be allowed to be a carrier of the floats in the annual Easter parade, which for several hundred years has been a men's ritual. She has this as a mission because it somehow proves to herself that she is better than anyone else if she succeeds in doing so...she effectively portrays her invasion to be a victory of Goddess Worship over Christianity and the patriarchy. The fact that the reasoning behind the tradition of men carrying doesn't make sense to her, or being distasteful to her should not detract from the validity and beauty of the tradition..but to Caperna Lloyd, it does o - her complete inability to communicate effectively in English to people who only speak a language she didn't bother to learn, (in their native land, no less) o - her arbitrarily deciding to jaunt across the island where she knows no one, to hike, in a dress and high heels, across the rocky terrain in the middle of the afternoon, leaving her with less than enough time to get back to her origination point, and also leaving her with not enough money to pay for a hotel, so she is forced to rely on the kindness of strangers, of which she is unappreciative and sees an attack around every corner, o - another jaunt across the island, determined to see Pagan Goddess Statues inside the Churches, but neglects to give herself enough time to accomplish this task and then is frustrated with the caretaker for not bending to her unannounced schedule o - her unreasonable disdain of the keeper of the gate key to Grotta del Genovese, the cave that houses the pictures of The Goddess in The Grotto, who seeks to protect the paintings from deterioration and thus refuses to allow her to take photographs. As someone who is a professional photographer, she should realize the man is only trying to protect the artifact for future generations, but Caperna Lloyd's selfishness and mission will allow her to recognize none of that and she forces the man to allow her to take the pictures, future generations and historical reference notwithstanding.Perhaps, however, the most telling piece of evidence in her helter-skelter, badly planned and poorly thought out adventures is the fact that when she gets back to her hotel room, after having insisted upon taking the pictures of the cave paintings, she discovers that she had no film in her camera.Mind you....this woman is a professional photographer.Quite frankly, her behaviour on the island, from her own telling, absolutely mortified me, and it worries me that more Americans may behave this way, making those of us that follow unwelcome.However, if you can get past her personal agenda, feminazi politics and discourtesy, it's a good book.

Sometimes the context and timing of acquiring and reading a book is as important as its content.

Maybe it always is, only the synchronicity more evident at certain times. No Pictures in My Grave was a late birthday present from my beloved, who has a nose for books and movies. Depth and magic. The title belies the content of this treasure. Other reviewers have given their own perceptions of the story, which would not be mine, nor shall I attempt to tell it. What moves me is the story as a whole, in all its disparate parts (so like the feminine!), and that it contains as much mystery as the mysterious Ms Lloyd often refers to in various aspects of her experiences. To me, this amazing bundle of chapters is soaked in complexities, feelings, and the life of the soul; in reality, in outer adventures both banal and magical; and in the all-consuming search that is a blending of antiquity, culture, religion, anthropology, family and personal quest. Nothing captures my attention more than images and stories of the Black Madonna. I could not tell you one single historical fact on the Her and all the stories escape my memory -- but the emotion of Her mystery fills me. Susan Lloyd's unique quest satiates this hunger with my utmost gratitude. "Take-away" is not even a glimmer of a concept - quite the opposite. As another reviewer responded, I too would be ready to make the voyage to Sicily! Without scholarship but with the luck travel generally brings, I would create my own purpose and story, as the author does. I was as unprepared for the ending as I was for the entire book. The seeming contradictions of women's awakening into their own against immeasurable resistance from patriarchal men, and the ecstatic experience of acceptance into the world of men, within the age-old context of their honoring the spiritual feminine -- circles within circles - I love it. No 'answers' needed. All is process. It is what the feminine is, process. I could go on... Thank you, Ms Lloyd, for a perfect expression. I often wept.

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