



Paradise of Exiles: The Anglo-American Gardens of Florence

Katie Campbell

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The crumbling, abandoned villas above Florence proved irresistible to an eccentric colony of late 19th-century English and American expatriates. This entertaining book features 20 of these characters and the unusual gardens they created. They include bereaved philosopher Charles Strong, whose Rockefeller in-laws financed his villa retreat; crossdressing English essayist Violet Paget; beautiful Serbian Princess Jeanne Ghika, who lived in seclusion with her American companion Miss Blood; and eccentric English romance writer Ouida. These Anglo-Florentines injected new life into Tuscany's decrepit gardens, touring the countryside for inspiration and trawling old libraries for treatises and manuals. Some smothered their walls with scented climbers, replaced gravel terraces with emerald lawns, and stuffed box parterres with bright bedding plants and orchards with exotic shrubs. Gorgeous photography, archival images, literary references, and gossipy tidbits bring this irresistible intersection of bohemia and nature to life.

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