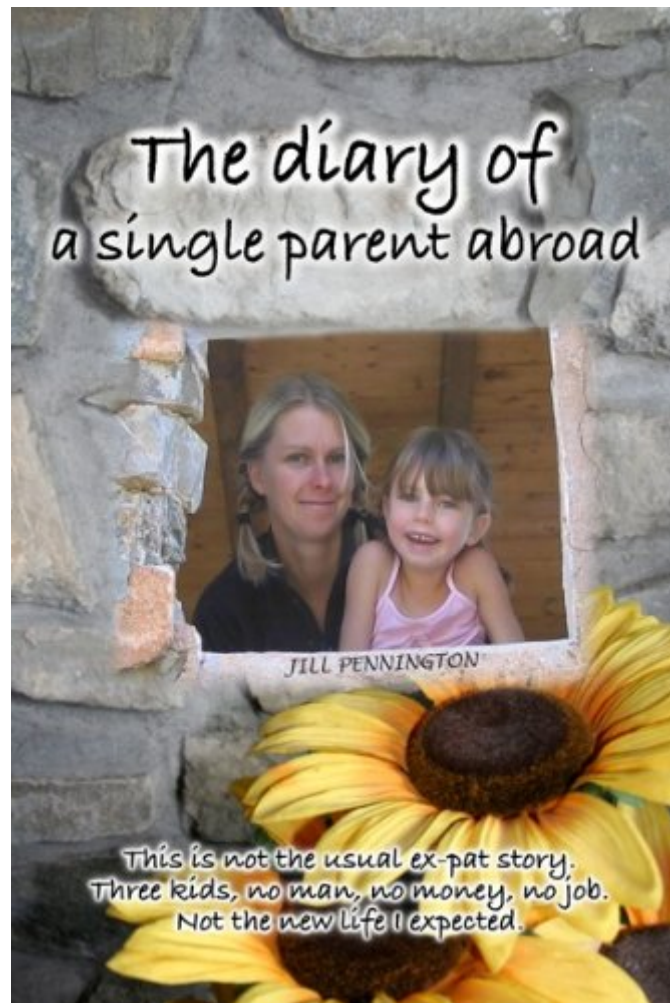




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The Diary Of A Single Parent Abroad



Synopsis

When Jill and her family moved to Italy she expected life to change but she had no idea how massive that change would be. Shortly after the move, she discovered her husband had been having an affair and had no intentions of staying in Italy. Despite being in a foreign country with no income, limited language skills, a house that needed rebuilding and three young children to care for, she never once considered returning to the UK. With strength and determination she accepted any challenge, dismantling a derelict house to ground level, digging out a three metre deep well with her hands to get free water and overcoming her fear of the chainsaw to cut the winter wood. When there was very little money for food she made risotto with nettles collected from the roadside. She overcame many problems, learned new skills and discovered that money is not important, the only things in life that matter are health, happiness and her children. Jill's story is delivered with an ever present hint of humour because, as she says, 'Without laughter life wouldn't be funny'.

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Customer Reviews

I read Jill Peningtons self published book in one sitting. Her story is real, and I can't remember when I last read such an honest account of life for someone struggling with so many issues that we might

experience at some time in our own lives, and with such a sense of humour and optimism. I found her story impressively informative given her financial difficulties were such a distraction. After having read so much about living abroad and all the learning experiences that are documented by writers I found this story encouraging, uplifting and at times truly hilarious

Okay, so her husband dumped her (and his kids) but he did it in a rather unusual way. He didn't just move in with one of their female friends. First he sent his wife to Italy to buy their dream home and get the kids settled in. THEN, he moved in with the OTHER WOMAN. The author is (fortunately) a feisty, hard-working woman and she faced the hardships of raising a family by herself with spirit, determination, intelligence and humor. Her story of trying to wring money out of a dead-beat dad, dealing with a notoriously frustrating government, and hatching schemes to support herself and her children is told with a light touch and not an iota of self-pity. She finally gave up on Italian men ("The only way to get an Italian man's respect is to give birth to him!") but she still loves Italy and the laid-back, close-to-the-earth lifestyle it offers. I admire this lady tremendously and I hope she keeps us up-to-date.

I began this book after supper one day expecting to read for a couple of hours and then put it down to go to sleep. Instead I welcomed the new day, with the lightening sky as I finished the last chapter. I did not expect to be captivated by this story but needless to say, I was. I have read quite a few accounts of people living abroad and, in fact, that is how I spent the first 20 years of my own life. What I didn't expect is to become so involved with this writer and her children and the people who surround her in her adopted country, Italy. Because this is a memoir I try to stay away from commenting on particular characters as they are real people, living and breathing humans (well some of them are). Let me just say that, in my opinion, this writer faced some amazing challenges with grace, humour and maybe a glass or two of wine. I admire her ability to keep the health and welfare of her children at the forefront of each of her decisions. Hard to do when all the decisions and responsibilities fall onto a single set of shoulders. I admire her ability to find something to laugh about when other, more violent options, might feel preferable. In general, through some very trying times, our author raised 3 children from childhood to the cusp of their adult lives. We each make choices, that in hindsight we would change in the future, but that is never an option and we continue to make the best of each situation. It seems to me that this writer is very good at doing that. I enjoyed learning about the renovation of two very different types of home. Being introduced to life in rural Italy, not one of the countries that I lived in though we did visit. Ms. Pennington's prose allowed

me to absorb some of the native beauty of the country that she chose to call home. Her love of her new lifestyle, despite all the challenges, shows throughout the tale. I wish the book had continued but am glad that there is a forum to keep "in touch" this this brave and amazing woman.

"Diary" pulled me in. I wanted to know what was going to happen. The main character, Jill Pennington, is such a likable person. She is plucky, enthusiastic, resourceful and positive, balanced by a wry sense of humor. As her fortunes decline, she keeps fighting and the reader always feels a big break is just around the corner. Although to be honest this book could have used one more edit, it's a very enjoyable read and had the effect of inspiring me to minimize my troubles and celebrate the moment more. I enjoyed her point of view, in that her way of speaking was reflective of Yorkshire, in the UK, with all the charm of unfamiliar (to me) expressions. I also very much enjoyed reading about day-to-day life in a tiny village in the Italian countryside. A knock on the book is that by the end I felt the author hadn't changed over the years in Italy. No insights emerged in spite of her experience. At the end, in fact, I was left with a question of what she was going to do with her new business endeavor now that her partner was leaving (again)? The ending felt rushed, as if she had tired of telling the story. But to be fair, as the title suggests, it's a diary rather than a novel. And in fact, she's so resourceful and upbeat that I think I know the answer: she'll get by, one way or the other, with energy and good cheer. Life will not get the better of Jill Pennington. I wish her well.

As a US citizen, and speaker of one language... I had great admiration for the determination and the "just keep moving on" attitude this author and mother had. I believe that I would have called my "mommy" and asked to be flown home a month into this venture. (Sad, but blatantly true) A wonderful touch of humor made me actually want to meet this woman while she so colorfully explained her adventure through her personal journal of a strong woman making a new life, with three children in Italy. It really was inspiring. Jill is certainly a wonderful story teller and I hope that there's more to come.(?)

I really enjoyed this book. Jill is an awesome woman. She has a special way of making you feel like you are there with her. I admire the way that she never gave up on herself or her children! Jill gives me the feeling that I can accomplish lots of things if I put my mind to it, work hard, and believe in myself. I am so proud of her for writing this book. Hopefully we will have another book from her and her adventures. Good luck to Jill and I hope she has many, many more successes in her life.

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