

THE SECRET OF SANTA VITTORIA BY ROBERT CRICHTON



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From Library Journal

Crichton's 1966 novel, narrated here by Christopher Hurt, depicts the efforts of an Italian mountain village to protect its hoard of wine from German soldiers near the end of World War II. It was hugely popular because of its blend of adventure, romance, and comedy flavored with nostalgia for the war. The story holds up better than most popular fiction because of its balance between sentimentality and darker elements and especially through the attention to detail about daily life in Santa Vittoria. Even though the characters rarely rise above caricature and the young lovers are tiresome, Crichton's village is vividly credible. Likewise, Hurt's reading is better during the narrative portions; the accents he bestows upon the characters make them more caricatured. A minor but pleasant diversion for popular fiction collections. ?Michael Adams, CUNY Graduate Ctr.

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Review

"Charming, horrifying, touching, and funny . . . Narrative gold." --Newsweek

"Will lift you up and fill your soul with delight." --Cleveland Plain Dealer

"[A] comedy in the classical manner, with echoes all the way back to Don Quixote." --AudioFile

About the Author

ROBERT CRICHTON (1925-1993) an American novelist, served in the infantry during World War II and was wounded in 1944 during the Battle of the Bulge. After the war he attended Harvard University on the GI Bill. His bestseller, *The Great Imposter*, was adapted into a successful film. His novel *The Secret of Santa Vittoria* was on the New York Times bestseller list for over fifty weeks, became an international bestseller, and was adapted into a Golden Globe winning film of the same name in 1969.

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[Read by Christopher Hurt]

Remote from the rest of war-torn Italy, the little town of Santa Vittoria has but one thing to boast of: its fabulous wine cellars. For this cause, the citizens, led by their wine-loving mayor Bombolini, scheme and plot to prevent the Germans from locating and looting the town's only treasure.

A bestseller and the inspiration for the famous film starring Anthony Quinn, this warm, rich novel has already drawn thousands upon thousands into the exuberant and perilous life of Santa Vittoria, the little Italian town that stands alone against the German army to affirm, for all time and all people, the fundamental dignity of man.

- Sales Rank: #355277 in Books
- Brand: Brand: Simon Schuster
- Published on: 1966-07-15
- Number of items: 1
- Binding: Hardcover

Features

- Used Book in Good Condition

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Most helpful customer reviews

14 of 14 people found the following review helpful.

The Secret of Santa Vittoria

By A Customer

I bought this book on a pavement in Bombay and have read it a dozen times since. Santa Vittoria, a small hill town in Italy, struggles to hide their most precious possession from the occupying Germans, a million bottles of fat black wine. Consequently, in the struggle between the methodical, self procalimed 'superior-raced' Germans and the uncouth, seemingly naive but clever Italians, the latter manage to hide the wine and keep it too. The Nazi captain Von Prum tries to find the hidden wine till the last day of his departure from the little town, but the secret lies safely in the hearts of the people, for whom wine is their life and blood. A cleverly written book, with subtle humour and insights into workings of an Italian mind, *The Secret of SV* makes one wonder why it isn't in the list of the so-called "popular, best read" lists.

11 of 11 people found the following review helpful.

A Great (lost?) Treasure

By S. D. Lord

I simply echo the others - read this book - it is wonderful.

It's full of the drama and comedy of life, like a fine play. Yes - the characters can be seen as stereotypes, but more often they evolve into a rich complexity, as their lives and ideals clash. Their close community and common dangers propel them through a suspensefull and wryly narrated struggle. Like Steinbeck, Crichton crafts the events of a time to work changes on people and force out their best, and so the tale inspires. I read it years ago, and reread it, and then gave it away. Now I have regained it (used), and find myself again rereading it. Why in heaven's name is this book out of print?

10 of 10 people found the following review helpful.

My All-time Favorite

By A Customer

This is a wonderful book. I've read it at least 4 times and I don't generally reread books. I agree with the two other reviewers. Why isn't this book still in print? It is a great book for book clubs to read as it raises so many questions of honor, right and wrong, ethics etc., etc. Great discussion material! How do we contact the publisher to make our feelings known? There must be others who feel the same way!

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