

Discussion Guide: Not in a Tuscan Villa

Early in their story the Petralias become disenchanted with their dream. What would you have done in their situation?

The book is not a travelog but the authors do travel throughout Italy. What were some of your favorite locales and why?

The authors had several experiences with the Italian healthcare system. Did any of their experience influence your view of universal healthcare in general or Italian healthcare in particular?

What did you learn about Italian history? About American history?

The Petralias are constantly comparing Italian culture with America's. What were some of their comments? How did you feel about them?

There's a running theme in the book of looking for the perfect place. How did the authors' view of the ideal change? What were the attributes of their ideal city? What constitutes an ideal place for you?

What is your perception of the Italian work ethic? What parts of the book informed your opinion?

What is the Theory of Imperfection? What is its relevance to the book?

La Famiglia, the family, is a pillar of Italian life. How did the authors experience it during their stay? How does the Italian family differ from an American one?

Did the book change any of your ideas about Italy? What were they and how did they change?

Living in another country inevitably leads to mistakes. What were some of the humorous and serious ones the authors made?

How do you think the authors feel about America? Did their own beliefs and feelings change during their year abroad? If so, how?

What were some of the incidents in the book that illustrate the special relationship between Italy and America?

The Petralias strove to make friends in their adopted home. How did knowing locals enhance their experience?

The authors worked on improving their Italian. What were some of the outcomes? How does knowing the local language change a person's experience when traveling?

Did reading the book make you want to do something out of your comfort zone? Is there a dream you'd like to make real?

How did John and Nancy change over the course of their year?