

The Enchanted April

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Four Englishwomen, strangers to each other, rent a villa for a month near Portofino for a vacation at an Italian castle.

A discrete advertisement in *The Times*, addressed to "those who appreciate wisteria and sunshine," is the prelude to a revelatory month for four very different women. High above a bay on the Italian Riviera stands the medieval castle San Salvatore. Beckoned to this haven are Mrs. Wilkins, Mrs. Arbuthnot, Mrs. Fisher, and Lady Caroline Dester, each quietly craving a respite. Lulled by the gentle spirit of the Mediterranean, they gradually shed their public skins, discovering a harmony each of them has longed for but none has ever known. First published in 1922, this captivating novel is imbued with the descriptive power and lighthearted irreverence for which Elizabeth von Arnim is renowned. Elizabeth von Arnim Russell (1866-1941), born Mary Annette Beauchamp, was an Australian-born British novelist. By marriage she became Gräfin (Countess) von Arnim-Schlagenthin, and by a second marriage, Countess Russell. Although known in her early life as Mary, "after the publication of her first book, she was known to her readers, eventually to her friends, and finally even to her family as Elizabeth," and she is now invariably referred to as Elizabeth von Arnim. She also wrote under the pen name Alice Cholmondeley. In 1898 she started her literary career by publishing *Elizabeth and Her German Garden*, a semi-autobiographical novel about a rural idyll published anonymously and, as it turned out to be highly successful, reprinted 20 times within the first year. Von Arnim wrote another 20 books, which were all published "By the author of *Elizabeth and Her German Garden*". *Enchanted April* was adapted into an Academy Award-nominated feature film, directed by Mike Newell, in 1992, and a Tony Award-nominated stage play by Matthew Barber, in 2003. Her book *Mr. Skeffington* was made into a movie starring Bette Davis and Claude Rains in 1944.

Other Books

The enchanted april, by elizabeth von arnim,

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