

The Shoemaker's Wife: A Novel

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Beloved New York Times bestselling author Adriana Trigiani returns with the most epic and ambitious novel of her career—a breathtaking multigenerational love story that spans two continents, two World Wars, and the quest of two star-crossed lovers to find each other again. *The Shoemaker's Wife* is replete with all the page-turning adventure, sumptuous detail, and heart-stopping romance that has made Adriana Trigiani, "one of the reigning queens of women's fiction" (USA Today). Fans of Trigiani's sweeping family dramas like *Big Stone Gap* and *Lucia, Lucia* will love her latest masterpiece, a book Kathryn Stockett, author of *The Help*, calls "totally new and completely wonderful: a rich, sweeping epic which tells the story of the women and men who built America dream by dream."

Kathryn Stockett Interviews Adriana Trigiani

Kathryn Stockett was born and raised in Jackson, Mississippi. After graduating from the University of Alabama with a degree in English and Creative Writing, she moved to New York City, where she worked in magazine publishing and marketing for nine years. *The Help* is her first novel.

Kathryn Stockett:

This is by far your most epic novel to date. How long did it take you to write *The Shoemaker's Wife*?

Adriana Trigiani:

I worked on this story for over 20 years as I wrote scripts and novels and had my own family. There are scraps of paper, dinner napkins, and bills with timelines and notes scrawled across them. There are old notebooks filled with my grandmother's musings from 1985. I collected train tickets, copies of ships' manifests, and a silk tag with my grandmother's name from garments she had created. I traveled as far as the Italian Alps and as close as the few blocks it takes me to walk to Little Italy in New York City to capture the historical aspects of the story. All of this went into the novel. It was a delicious gestation period.

Stockett:

This is a novel, but it is inspired by a true story—a family story, right?

Trigiani:

Yes—my grandparents, Lucia and Carlo. Their love was a dance with fate. It is riddled with near misses against a landscape of such massive world events that it's a wonder they got together at all. My challenge was to present their world to the reader so it might feel it was happening in the moment. I wanted the reader to have the experience I had when stories

were told to me by the woman who lived them.

Stockett:

The novel takes place during the first half of the twentieth century--what is so compelling about this period of time to you?

Trigiani:

The cusp of the twentieth century was a time everything was new-cars, phones, planes, electricity, even sportswear, and in each innovation was a kind of explosive potential. No one could predict where all the inventions would lead, people only knew that change was unavoidable.

My grandparents were delighted every time America presented them with something they had never seen before. And my grandparents' sense of wonder never left them, so I tried not to let it leave the page, be it a cross-country train ride or the first snap of the bobbin on an electric Singer sewing machine.

Stockett:

Through the remarkable story of Enza and Ciro, your novel tells the larger story of the immigrant experience in America.

Trigiani:

What a gift immigrants were and are to this country! They bring their talents and loyalty and make our country even greater. My grandparents were proud to be new Americans. Assimilation was not about copying an American ideal, but aspiring to their own version of it. The highest compliment you could pay a fellow immigrant was: he (or she) was a hard worker. I hear the phrase work like an immigrant said, but really, it's bigger than that-we must also dream like immigrants.

Stockett:

The Shoemaker's Wife seamlessly brings together fictional characters and historical figures-how did the wonderful Caruso enter the novel?

Trigiani:

It started with a three-foot stack of vinyl records-my grandmother Lucia's collection of Caruso. Her absolute devotion to The Great Voice lasted her whole life long. I knew, in order to write this novel, I had to fall in love with Caruso too, because he sang the score of my grandparents' love affair.

When Lucia passed, I went to my first opera, seeking understanding and comfort. As the music washed over me, I began to understand why my grandmother was such a fan. The words were Italian, and the emotions were big; nothing was left unexpressed in the music. If only life were that way.

The fateful first meeting of Enza and Ciro takes place amid the haunting majesty of the Italian Alps at the turn of the last century. Still teenagers, they are separated when Ciro is banished from his village and sent to hide in New York's Little Italy, apprenticed to a shoemaker, leaving a bereft Enza behind. But when her own family faces disaster, she, too, is forced to emigrate to America. Though destiny will reunite the star-crossed lovers, it will, just as abruptly, separate them once again-sending Ciro off to serve in World War I, while Enza is drawn into the glamorous world of the opera . . . and into the life of the international singing sensation Enrico Caruso. Still, Enza and Ciro have been touched by fate-and, ultimately, the power of their love will change their lives forever.

A riveting historical epic of love and family, war and loss, risk and destiny, inspired by the author's own family history, *The Shoemaker's Wife* is the novel Adriana Trigiani was born to write.

Other Books

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