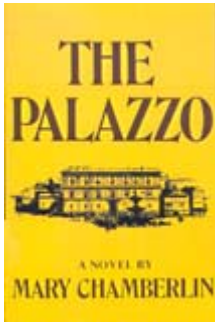


The Palazzo



The Palazzo Salvini in Rome, once the proud Renaissance palace of a cardinal, is now a run-down apartment house, distinguished by its smoking electrical wiring, its comatose furnace—and the tenants who share its leaky roof. The tenants, caught up in the complications of this light-hearted, sophisticated comedy of international fun and games, reflect the atmosphere of their residence—either remembering or looking forward to better days.

There's Caroline Salvini, a beautiful American who has been the perfect wife, Italian style, to dashing Lorenzo—until she suspects he's having an affair; there's Caroline's mother-in-law, the Marchesa, nursing her liver through a very trying time and hoping to avert a marital crisis for her son; there's Pippo, the swinger with a get-rich-quick scheme that may get him arrested; and there's Randy, an American boy who keeps finding things in his apartment—a girl in his bed, his freaked-out, nomad friends showing home movies (rated X).

A curious coincidence propels this disparate assemblage into an explosive and hilarious climax that leaves the gracious Old World sputtering indignantly in the motorcycle and marijuana fumes of the graceless new breed.

In a bracing, astringent style that is part spumoni and part spice, Mary Chamberlin writes about the eternal delights of the Eternal City—about Americans in Rome doing as Americans do and Romans doing as Romans have done for centuries.

Trade Paperback

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The Author

Mary Chamberlin



MARY CHAMBERLIN was born in Lebanon, Illinois, and is a graduate of Monticello College in Alton, Illinois, where she was admitted when only fifteen years old.

She attended the American Academy of Dramatic Arts in New York City and had a brief theatrical career, terminated by marriage and motherhood.

In 1954, she moved to Rome, where she has lived ever since. She is also the author of *Dear Friends and Darling Romans*, published as well by IDKPress, and has written for television, magazines, films, and newspapers.

The script for her award-winning teleplay, *The Ascent of P. J. O'Hara*, is preserved in the archives of the Steven H. Scheuer Collection at Yale University.

The Palazzo Website

The IDKPress website (<http://www.idkpress.com>) provides additional background on the book, sample text, photographs, reviews, and links to the various on-line vendors of the books.

Other Books Published by IDKPress

Escape from Paradise, From Third World to First by John & May Chu Harding (ISBN: 0971092907)

Dear Friends and Darling Romans by Mary Chamberlin (ISBN: 0971092931)

Contact Information

IDKPress
10645 N. Tatum Blvd.
Suite 200 #640
Phoenix, AZ 85028
info@idkpress.com

Review from *The Book Reader* Fall/Winter 2002-2003 Edition

THE PALAZZO. By Mary Chamberlin] IDKPress, paper. Another time, another sensibility, another world. This novel was originally published in 1971 at a time when memories of the Second World War and its aftermath were still fresh. *The Palazzo* deserves to be re-published—it's original, extraordinarily well-written, and it captures the beat and the pace of Italian life in the 1950s. Pippo La Rose observes, "The weary heavens had worn themselves down to a drizzle." Luisa Salvini knows the sun is out: "She hadn't yet opened her eyes, but she knew it all the same. She could hear it." American Carolyn Salvini observes, "Mrs. Aiken belonged to the sisterhood of women who have chosen to separate themselves from the world by desks." Dino, the husband of Tullio's eldest teenage daughter, is making American suggestions—Tullio confides to Beppe Bonaccorsi that Dino "wanted me to cover the murals with pine wood and buy special checker-board tablecloths and put little brass lamps on each table." They are incredulous at this scandalous invasion of the new world. The major scenes take place in the Palazzo Salvini which the Marchesa Luisa Salvini has converted from a palace into separate rental apartments. The roof leaks, a glass veranda is shattered, the wiring system hisses and puffs and then smokes out, the antiquated elevator 'may not know how to stop, the furnace belches noxious fumes. The guidebook says that there is "no finer example of pure Renaissance style than the well-preserved Palazzo Salvini." But this is Italy, circa 1957 or so, and the lives of the tenants, Italian and American, are brilliantly caught in this treasure trove of marvels. Wittily written, it provides us with the crowded humanity that has always been Rome—that eternal city filled with volatile lives densely packed into an endless humor.

Excerpt

“You are waiting for someone?”

She wet her lips and nodded.

“Please allow me to introduce myself. I am the Marchese Salvini. Lorenzo Salvini.” He took out his wallet, pulled a card from it and handed it to her. Months before he had found a small stack of Lorenzo Salvini’s cards, secured by a rubber band, lying on the top of the rubbish Gino had put out to be collected. Some of them were yellowed, but he had salvaged a dozen or so from the center that were quite presentable. She dropped the card into her bag without looking at it, and Pippo made a mental note to retrieve it later. He had only a few left.

“I’m beginning to think the person I’m waiting for isn’t coming.” She craned her neck about to check on recent arrivals, and her breasts strained against their silken prison.

“I’d be very happy to give you a lift.” He realized now that she wasn’t wearing stockings, though when he had studied her from across the room, he had assumed she was, simply because her legs were so tanned. Furthermore, she wasn’t wearing a brassiere. She was, he would have bet his last lire, absolutely naked except for her dress. “I think you can be fairly sure your friend is not going to come.”

“He is very unreliable.” She pulled the coat from her arm and swung it around her shoulder.

“Your bags?” Pippo asked.

“There’s only this one.” She touched a small satchel on the floor with the toe of her shoe. “I’ve come down for some fittings and I’ll only be here overnight.”

Pippo had a struggle concealing his astonishment. He thought of his mother’s dressmaker, who came to their apartment, and the patterns and pins and material and thread that littered the dining table. This woman plainly dwelt on dizzy heights of luxury. He was glad he had chosen Lorenzo Salvini’s identity instead of a half-dozen others that he could lay claim to with the cards in his wallet. He picked up her bag and gripped her arm. “You have an appointment then?” he said, guiding her toward the door.

“At four,” she said.

“Ah, well. That’s a long time off. I, too, have an appointment this afternoon. But meanwhile we can have a leisurely lunch.” He waved the bag at Sergio as they approached the car. “No luck with my lost briefcase, but look what I found instead.” Sergio, who had been leaning against the Jaguar, stood up and registered surprise and pleasure. It had frequently been observed that Pippo and Sergio complemented each other because Pippo was dark and Sergio was fair, and Pippo was garrulous and Sergio was quiet. It was also true that Pippo was bright and that Sergio’s wits were ever so slightly blunted, and that this was the basis of their friendship. “My friend, Principe Borgia,” Pippo said.

“Sergio Borgia,” Sergio amended with aristocratic modesty. His responses weren’t up to coping with a first name that wasn’t his own.

“I am Amanda West,” the American woman said in her sleepy child’s voice.

“Sergio doesn’t speak English, I’m afraid,” said Pippo. “You speak Italian?”

“No. None. None at all.” Amanda said.

“Ah, what a pity,” he pretended. It was instead a great advantage to be able to converse with Sergio in a language she

didn’t understand. “Well,” he sighed, “I shall have to act as interpreter.” He got in beside Amanda and addressed Sergio in Italian. “You did bring the keys to the Fregene house. didn’t you?”

“Of course,” said Sergio.