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## Rome and a villa

*Eleanor Clark*

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**Eleanor Clark : Rome and a villa** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Rome and a villa:

13 of 13 people found the following review helpful. Best book on Rome Hadrian's Villa in EnglishBy A Customer"You walk close to your dreams"--that's the first sentence of Eleanor Clark's chapter on the fountains of Rome. Her book is lyrical but informative, and for some readers, perhaps too heavy with information, but I have found it indispensable both while in Rome and later back in the US thinking about where I had been. Originally published as separate articles in The New Yorker magazine, each chapter focuses on a particular subject. One of my favorites is the section on Protestant Cemetery (actually the cemetery of the non-Catholics), where Keats, Shelley, Gramsci and many other non-Catholic writers, politicians, diplomats, and artists are buried. This is not a typical guidebook, however, and anyone who buys it in order to get maps, pictures, and restaurant tips will be disappointed. Nevertheless, it is an excellent guide to the city--it is thoughtful, it is full of strong opinions, and it is sometimes very funny, too. Eleanor Clark was married to the writer Robert Penn Warren, whose career overshadowed hers. Those who know his work but do not know the work of Clark may be surprised to find out just how good she is.2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. The Best Collection of Essays About RomeBy John SessionsI have been going to Rome for more than fifty years, speak and read Italian, and have many relatives there. Eleanor Clark's essays are by far the most evocative I know of in either English or Italian, and the last three in particular, on Hadrian's Villa, the Protestant Cemetery, and the poet G.G. Belli are deeply moving. Even for the reader has never been to Rome the literary value of these essays makes them extraordinarily rewarding.0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Dull.By DanielDull.

IN 1947 A YOUNG AMERICAN woman named Eleanor Clark went to Rome on a Guggenheim fellowship to write a novel. But Rome had its way with her, the novel was abandoned, and what followed was not a novel but a series of sketches of Roman life written mostly between 1948 and 1951. This new edition of the essential classic *Rome and a Villa* includes an evocative introduction by the preeminent translator William Weaver, who was close friends with the author and often wandered the city with her during the years she was working on the book. Once in Rome, the foreign writer or artist, over the course of weeks, months, or years, begins to lose ambition, to lose a sense of urgency, to lose even a sense of self. What once seemed all-consuming is swallowed up by Rome itself; by the pace of life, by the fatalism of the Roman people, to whom everything and nothing matters, by the sheer historic weight and scale of the place. Rome is life itself - messy, random, anarchic, comical one moment, tragic the next, and above all, seductive. Clark pays special attention to Roman art and architecture. In the book's midsection she looks at Hadrian's Villa - an enormous, unfinished palace - as a meta-phor for the city itself: decaying, imperial, shabby, but capable of inducing an overwhelming dreaminess in its visitors. The book's final chapter, written for an updated edition in 1974, is a lovely portrait of the so-called Protestant cemetery where both Keats and Shelley are buried, along with other foreign notables.

From *The New Yorker* "Clark is full of talent . . . and these essays gather up Rome and hold it before us." "A brilliant piece of traveler's impressionism, written with verbal polish." -- *Time Magazine*, April 14, 1952 "You are transported . . . as if conducted by a genie, one who knows where he is going and why." -- *The New York Times Book*, April 13, 1952 About the Author ELEANOR CLARK is the author of the National Book Award winner *The Oysters of Locmariaquer, Eyes, Etc.*, and the novels *The Bitter Box*, *Baldur's Gate*, and *Camping Out*. She was married to Robert Penn Warren.