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# The Italians

*Luigi Barzini*

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*Luigi Barzini*

**The Italians** Luigi Barzini
The 'fatal charm of Italy' has held Lord Byron - and millions of tourists ever since - in its spell. Yet, beneath 'the brilliant and vivacious surface', what are the realities of Italian life? Few writers have ever painted a portrait of their compatriots as crisp, frank and fearless as Luigi Barzini's. Cutting through the familiar cliches, he instructs us with a cascade of anecdotes and provides a marvellous guided tour through centuries of history. He examines Machiavelli and Mussolini, popes, pilgrims and prostitutes, cliques and conspiracies, Casanova and the crippling power of the Church. Yet alongside the Baroque exuberance and spectacular display, the love of life and the life of love, he also shows us a divided nation, injustice, ignorance, poverty and fear. All this is Italy, a country of dazzling achievement and an uncanny aptitude for getting round problems; both its virtues and its vices are celebrated in this sparkling book

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