



An American In Europe

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Even from a distance, tourists can always identify the proper tombstones in Verona cemetery. Perhaps it's because the markers themselves give the impression of being lovers, as they are carved from fine, white marble and lean toward one another, as if straining to touch. The short intervals etched onto their surfaces provide as much confirmation as the names, which have nearly worn away beneath the fingers of lovesick youths and lonely housewives. The area surrounding the graves is well groomed and well protected; widows leave flowers in springtime and young men linger at midnight, dreaming that they too will one day find something suitable to die for.

Jerry was dying to get laid.

It had been three weeks now, on the tour, and despite all the stories he'd heard about loosened loins in Europe and the eroticizing effect of twenty people on one bus for four weeks, he'd gotten absolutely nothing. It wasn't that there weren't women—oh God there were women, women of all shapes and sizes (the latter of which he held in more liberal regard every day), Australian women on extended holidays with accents thick enough to make you bite through the Spanish-leather watch band you'd gotten for a great fucking price in Madrid, fellow Americans whose boyfriends faded a little more from memory every day, and French beauties whose aired nipples, tight like sun-dried tomatoes, had inspired a slightly altered stroke in the warm salt of the Mediterranean. There were women; there were WOMEN. The only thing was none of them wanted to talk to him.

Now that he was in a city famous for the concord given to young people who didn't know each other very well having sex, he had a plan. There was one day in Verona, and he was going to have sex.

That actually isn't a plan at all. Still, here's his running diary.

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June 17, 8:12 A.M.: Rise early. Have to take full advantage of time available. Have decided that best place to start is close to home. Of eleven women on trip, am now only repulsed sufficiently by two as to prevent sex.

Woman Possibility

Tricia: Bad—still hasn't cheated on boyfriend.

Sandra: Moderate; breasts now outweigh gut.

Michelle: None. Stubble.

Janice: Good. Freak danced in Paris. Downside: slightly repugnant.

Wendy: Slight. Pretty.

Priya: Moderate. Light drinker.

Cindy: Slight. Gut still outweighs breasts.

Laura: Good. Other girls don't talk to her.

Michelle 2: None. Odor.

Tammy: Moderate. Don't remember who this is.

Emily: Good. Just got dumped.

Preliminary triage: Emily, Laura, Janice.

Action to take: Get up and head down to breakfast. Ask one of above to go to museum. Just close eyes for a few more minutes.

12:18 P.M.: God damnit.

1:00 P.M.: Just had lunch. Unlike most Americans, can be comfortable without going to McDonalds. What's the point of coming all the way over to Europe if you're not going to try new things? Decided instead of small restaurant in main plaza. Spaghetti and meatballs excellent.

1:40 P.M.: Settled at main plaza to examine guidebook. Highlights of area include the famed Piazza Bra amphitheater, the marvelous Castelvechio, and of course, the Tomba de Giulietta. Nice to be in a place of real culture for once instead of parade of tourist traps we've been led through so far. I mean, God, how many people have gone to see the Eiffel

Tower? The smaller towns are the ones that reflect the real culture of the area; that's where the real people live. It's sad how many people are drawn instead to these big, empty symbols. When I move to New York City after graduation, I'm sure not going to spend all my times at the Empire State Building.

List of coolest things I've seen so far, according to guidebook.

1. Musée du non qualifié—Paris
2. Squatter's Row, Northwest London
3. Gaudi Cathedral, Barcelona
4. Nothing, Rome

2:20 P.M.: Ran into Sandra and Priya while walking through Old Town. They love it too! They'd just finished a walking tour through the city and told me all about the architecture around us. Evidently Verona was built in three successive waves, each highlighting its own distinctive style, between which armies came in and burned everything. Priya has absolutely fantastic tits. I'm not sure if they're only big because she's skinny or whether they really are big, but either way, they look big.

Girls invited me to head over to cathedral, but decided instead to look for internet café to check on fantasy baseball team.

2:50 P.M.: Spent past half-hour looking for internet café; no luck. Not sure what this place has against technology. If Prior threw a shutout and I wasn't able to start him because we weren't able to get this country into the 20th century following the Big One, am going to punch some Guido in the face. Mark my words.

After giving up on search, have decided to duck into local place to avoid midday heat. Have just ordered glass of house red to help wind down.

3:30 P.M.: Women here are gorgeous. It's amazing to think of the connection all people have, at that most basic level, even if they're unable to understand each other. Why do we need to speak? Why can't we just listen to the things our bodies tell us? I feel like I could walk up to any woman in here and strike up a conversation without knowing a word. We'd find a way to understand each other. We'd speak beyond words.

4:10 P.M.: Women here just like women everywhere. Was hoping refinement and culture here would indicate more sophistication in other areas, but sadly, not the case. Every girl I went up to just kept talking with her friends until I went back to my table. Is that any way to treat a guest? I even tried

saying "bonjourno," but evidently efforts to cross cultures are looked down upon here.

All I can do is make the effort. You think they'd do the same.

4:15 P.M.: One more plan. Going to "accidentally" bump into girl at bar, strike up conversation in apology.

6:20 P.M.: Offerings at Italian clothing stores better than anything you'd find in U.S. New pants cut into Amsterdam fund, but worth it to be part of style that seems to be everywhere here. Just shows how they really live to dress instead of dressing to live.

Stomach a little uneasy after afternoon, so decided to stick with something I know for dinner. Not sure if it's the water here or what, but have been feeling run down for the past week. Buy bottled water here, but who knows if it's just refilled from the tap?

Also, what's with the toilet seats?

Still struggling to master conversion rate. Forty euros seems steep for dry cleaning.

7:20 P.M.: Back in hostel. Have decided to nap after long day.

9:20 P.M.: Showered and changed clothes to head back to hostel bar. Most of crew already there when I got there, along with several others. Diversity amazing: Canada, UK, US, New Zealand, Australia, South Africa, etc.

11:00 P.M.: Bar starting to heat up—DJ really good, playing all kinds of stuff I haven't heard in years. Have maneuvered towards Emily, but keeping Laura in sight in case. Dancing as group now, hope that will change soon.

Body shots! Gotta go.

12:15 A.M.: Complete miscalculation on my part. Standards falling faster than anticipated; missed initial plunge in bathroom. Group whittled down past Sandra, who is currently grinding in corner between Pete and Toby. Emily and Laura off to bed twenty minutes ago. Attractive women off with New South Wales rugby team. Janice hooking up with accountant from Chicago in far corner. Hoping to move in if he goes to bathroom.

12:35 A.M.: Debating whether to talk to Cindy. Stomach, breasts? Stomach, breasts?

12:43 A.M.: Breasts.

1:30 A.M.: Everything well. Cindy dancefloor. Ok machine bathroom. Waiting everyone leaves. Keep quiet. Shhh.

2:00 A.M.: *Hi, this is Cindy. Paul asked me to write something, so I'll say he's a great mate. Can't wait to visit in the States!*

7:00A.M.: Ugh.....ughhhhhhhhhh.....

8:00 A.M.: Barely made bus for trip to Venice. Awoke second time to Percy retching. Still not certain of own timing in that matter. Age old question: is it better to have hooked up with a fatty, or to have never hooked up at all?

Cindy still not speaking to me. Have told her through Michelle-2 will wash blouse at next campground.

Bus making some stops today, but planning on just crashing. Need to rest up for Venice tomorrow, one more day on trip of a lifetime.