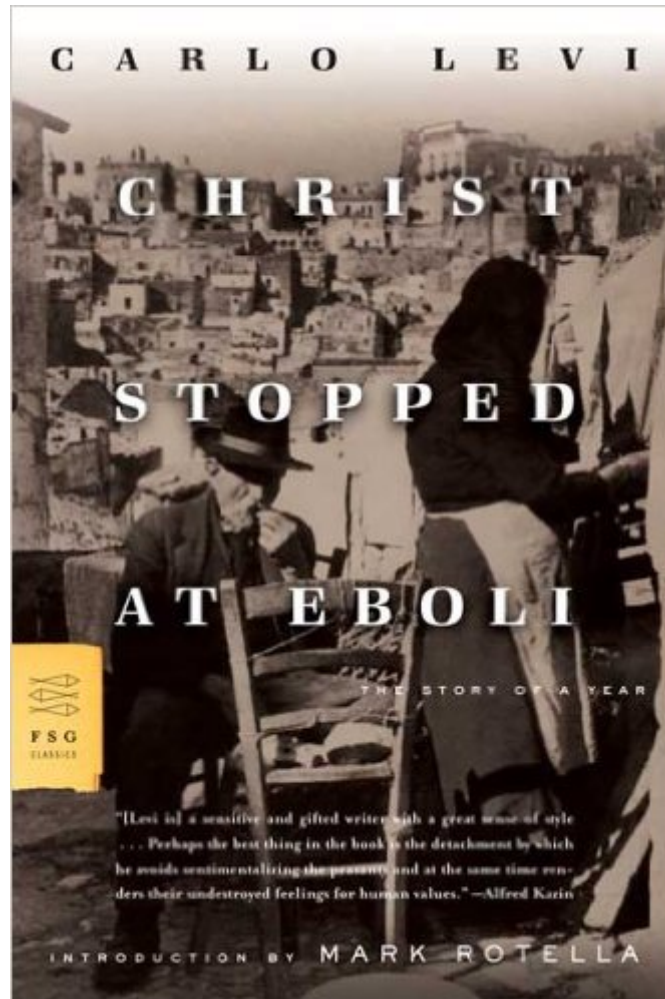


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Christ Stopped At Eboli: The Story Of A Year (FSG Classics)



Synopsis

It was to Lucania, a desolate land in southern Italy, that Carlo Levi—a doctor, painter, philosopher, and man of letters—was confined as a political prisoner because of his opposition to Italy's Fascist government at the start of the Ethiopian war in 1935. While there, Levi reflected on the harsh landscape and its inhabitants, peasants who lived the same lives their ancestors had, constantly fearing black magic and the near presence of death. In so doing, Levi offered a starkly beautiful and moving account of a place and a people living outside the boundaries of progress and time.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

This is a moving account of Carlo Levi's house -- or better, town -- arrest in a remote corner of Italy during the Mussolini era, when the fascists determined that it was much less expensive for them to put political prisoners in out of the way villages and have the local police responsible for keeping them there, than to put them in prison. What must have felt like banishment, Levi soon turned into one of the most lyrical books I have ever read. Now, remember, that he was writing about a place that had not changed since the time of Christ--hence the title. He is not writing about religion, but rather, about a region, where the realities of poverty, of peasants farming a harsh landscape controlled by absentee landowners, nonetheless had the power to interest and enchant. Levi describes both the warmth and the backwardness of the people, the humbleness of their homes (so humble the only natural light comes into them when the door is open--there are no windows). He recounts the marvelous meals he enjoyed there, made from next to nothing, the sound of the

workers' return from the fields, and more. He laments that when he asks about local folk songs, there are none. This -- a wild terrain chosen as backdrop in the recent film "The Passion of the Christ" -- is not a landscape to inspire singing. The towns are like small outposts on the steep sides of the valleys. The only signs of rising above the poverty are displayed in households where someone in the family has gone far away to work in places like Pittsburgh, and sent money home. Think what it must have meant, that the rigors of steel mills and coal mines were an improvement over life in this region.

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