

Reader's Guide 2010

for

Lucia, Lucia

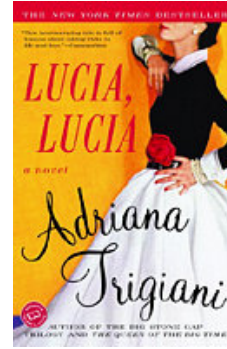
by

Adriana Trigiani



Lucia, Lucia

A Novel
by Adriana Trigiani



About This Book

It is 1950 in glittering, vibrant New York City. Lucia Sartori is the beautiful twenty-five-year-old daughter of a prosperous Italian grocer in Greenwich Village. The postwar boom is ripe with opportunities for talented girls with ambition, and Lucia becomes an apprentice to an up-and-coming designer at chic B. Altman's department store on Fifth Avenue. Engaged to her childhood sweetheart, the steadfast Dante DeMartino, Lucia is torn when she meets a handsome stranger who promises a life of uptown luxury that career girls like her only read about in the society pages. Forced to choose between duty to her family and her own dreams, Lucia finds herself in the midst of a sizzling scandal in which secrets are revealed, her beloved career is jeopardized, and the Sartoris' honor is tested.

Discussion Questions

1. Why do you think the novel begins in the present before telling Lucia's story in flashback? Is this an effective way to relate Lucia's story? How do you think your reading or interpretation of the novel is affected as a result of partially knowing the story's ending?
2. **Lucia, Lucia** is set in 1950s Greenwich Village. Discuss how Trigiani portrays the neighborhood, especially in contrast to its usual bohemian image.
3. On page 45, Lucia's father tells her, "You deserve your own life." Do you think Lucia eventually gets her own life, or is what happens to her the result of circumstances beyond her control? Overall, how much is Lucia free of her traditions? How much is she a captive to them?

- 4.** What role do the men in Lucia's family --- her father and brothers --- play in shaping her life and her destiny?
- 5.** What's behind Lucia's decision to stay at home and care for her mother despite the opportunity to advance her career? Also, why does she stay on at B. Altman's despite having to change positions and the changes in the store? Is it only because she has to care for her mother, or are there other factors?
- 6.** Why do you think Lucia keeps all of her wedding presents in her apartment and continues to wear her mink coat? What do you think Lucia's life was like in the years after being jilted by John Talbot until the time she tells her story to Kit?
- 7.** Religion plays a large role in shaping the Sartoris' behavior and customs, as well as the behavior of those closest to them. What is Lucia's view of religion and faith, especially during her and her family's various trials?
- 8.** Dante and John Talbot love Lucia in different ways. Discuss the ways they both love her and the different ways she loves them back. Does Lucia have a true love? Given her experiences, what do you think is Lucia's view of love?
- 9.** How do you think Lucia's life would have turned out if she had married John Talbot? If she had married Dante? Do you think Lucia would have been happier if she'd moved to Hollywood to work with Delmarr?
- 10.** On page 249, Lucia tells Kit that people don't change very much in their lives. Do you think Lucia changes? If so, how?
- 11.** On page 249, Lucia tells Kit that people don't change very much in their lives. Do you think Lucia changes? If so, how?
- 12.** Why does Lucia choose to bestow her things on Kit? Is Kit like Lucia? Does Lucia see some of herself in Kit, or vice versa?
- 13.** Lucia believes in beauty, style, and elegance. Do these qualities betray her or do they give her life meaning?
- 14.** Do you think there is any truth in John Talbot's saying to Lucia that she is a woman who can survive being left at the altar (page 255), or is he just making excuses for himself?
- 15.** In her last meeting with John Talbot in the state prison, Lucia seems unusually poised and equanimous throughout their conversation. Are you surprised either by her composure or by her attitude toward him?
- 16.** What do you think are Lucia's dreams? On page 256, Lucia says that she has no regrets over the events in her life. Do you believe her? Do you think Lucia has led a happy life?

Biography

ADRIANA TRIGIANI is beloved by millions of readers around the world for her hilarious and heartwarming novels.



Adriana was raised in a small coal mining town in southwest Virginia in a big Italian family. She chose her hometown for the setting and title of her debut novel, the critically acclaimed and bestselling *Big Stone Gap*, followed by the sequels *Big Cherry Holler*, *Milk Glass Moon*, and the fall 2006 release *Home to Big Stone Gap*. *Lucia, Lucia*, *The Queen of the Big Time*, *Rococo* and *Very Valentine* were all instant *New York Times* bestsellers. Adriana's novels have been translated and sold in over 30 countries around the world.

Adriana also teamed up with her family in 2005 to pen *Cooking With My Sisters*, which was co-authored by her sister Mary, with contributions from their sisters and mom; the cookbook-memoir features recipes and stories dating back a hundred years from both sides of their Italian-American family.

[Click here](#) to see a few photos from Adriana's family album.

After graduating from Saint Mary's College in South Bend, Indiana, Adriana moved to New York City to become a playwright. She founded the all-female comedy troupe "The Outcasts," which performed on the cabaret circuit for seven years. She made her off-Broadway debut at the Manhattan Theatre Club and was produced in regional theaters of note around the country.

Among her many television credits, Adriana was a writer/producer on *The Cosby Show*, *A Different World*, and executive producer/head writer for *City Kids* for Jim Henson Productions. Her Lifetime television special, *Growing up Funny*, garnered an Emmy nomination for Lily Tomlin.

In 1996, she wrote and directed the documentary film *Queens of the Big Time*. It won the Audience Award at the Hamptons Film Festival and toured the international film festival circuit from Hong Kong to London. Adriana then wrote a screenplay called *Big Stone Gap*, which became the novel that began the series. Adriana spent a year and a half waking up at three in the morning to write the novel before going into work on a television show.

Trigiani's latest literary blockbuster *Very Valentine*, the first in a series, debuted at number nine on the *New York Times* bestseller list following its February 2009 debut. In this contemporary family saga, 33-year-old Valentine Roncalli, must save her family's custom made shoe company - one

of the last family owned business in Greenwich Village - while juggling the personal demands of love, family ties, and an unexpected trip to Italy. The novel's sequel, *Brava Valentine*, debuts February 2, 2010.

Trigiani's premiere young adult novel, *Viola in Reel Life* - the first in a series - debuted September 1, 2009! Readers of all ages are entertained by and enamored with fourteen-year-old film-maker Viola Chesterton.

Fans everywhere will soon see Adriana's work on the big and small screens! She wrote the screenplay for and will direct the big screen version of her novel *Big Stone Gap*, which will go into production this summer. Adriana has also written the film adaptation of *Lucia, Lucia* and *Very Valentine* - which will be made into a Lifetime Original movie!

Critics from the Washington Post to the New York Times to People have described Adriana's novels as "tiramisu for the soul", "sophisticated and wise", and "dazzling." They agree that "her characters are so lively they bounce off the page", and that "...her novels are full bodied and elegantly written." Her novels have been chosen for the USA Today Book Club, the Target Bookmarked series, and she's now officially a regular with Barnes & Noble Book Clubs, where she has conducted three online book clubs. Adriana speaks to book clubs from her home three to four nights a week. Her books are so popular around the world that *Lucia, Lucia* was selected as the best read of 2004 in England by Richard and Judy.

Adriana is married to Tim Stephenson, the Emmy award-winning lighting designer of the Late Show with David Letterman. They live in Greenwich Village with their daughter, Lucia.

Perhaps one popular book critic said it best: "Trigiani defies categorization. She is more than a one-hit wonder, more than a Southern writer, more than a woman's novelist. She is an amazing young talent.*"

*** From Adriana Trigiani's Official Website**

Assorted Reviews

Publishers Weekly Review: Greenwich Village is a far cry from the rural Virginia of Trigiani's best-selling trilogy (*Big Stone Gap* ; *Big Cherry Holler* ; *Milk Glass Moon*), but the emotional terrain covered in the author's first novel is warmly familiar. Poignant and feeling, it looks back on the experiences of the beautiful daughter of an Italian-American family in Greenwich Village in the early '50s. Kit Zanetti, a young playwright in present-day New York, accepts an invitation to the apartment of "Aunt Lu," as she is known in their building. Aunt Lu on first glance is an eccentric lady in her 70s who trails around in a fur. Once Kit can be bothered to listen, however, she finds out that Aunt Lu was once the most beautiful girl in Greenwich Village, **Lucia** Sartori, an intelligent and ambitious seamstress in the custom department at B. Altman's, who's determined not to let the traditions of her loving family lock her into the patterns of the past. When her impending marriage to childhood sweetheart Dante threatens just that, she refuses him, startling her beloved family. Then, fatefully, she meets the dapper John Talbot, who seems the man of her dreams, even draping her in full-length mink, and she ignores the signs that he is trouble and plans marriage. Jilted on her wedding day, **Lucia** finds out that he is a con man. Despite her pain, she decides to go to California to follow her dream, but when her mother falls ill she does exactly what she was trying to avoid: she becomes the maiden aunt and caretaker of the Sartori clan. Will some well-meant meddling by Kit disarray **Lucia's** carefully controlled life? This old-fashioned drama wears its heart on its sleeve—subtlety is not its strong suit—but readers will laugh with and weep for **Lucia** and her lost dreams. 10-city author tour. (July) --Staff (Reviewed July 7, 2003) (Publishers Weekly, vol 250, issue 27, p54)

Booklist Review: The author of the *Big Stone Gap* trilogy (*Big Stone Gap*, 2000; *Big Cherry Holler*, 2001; *Milk Glass Moon*, 2002) changes venues from the Blue Ridge Mountains of Virginia to New York City's Greenwich Village. What has not changed is Trigiani's heartfelt depiction of homespun characters whose emotions are always very close to the surface. When aspiring playwright Kit Zanetti agrees to have tea with her dignified 70-year-old neighbor, **Lucia** Sartori, she does so out of politeness; hours later, however, she has been treated to a vivid depiction of life on Commerce Street during the 1950s. The daughter of an Italian grocer, **Lucia** worked for high-end department store B. Altman's as a custom seamstress. Her love for beautiful things draws her away from her childhood sweetheart and into the arms of a suave bon vivant, who takes her to posh nightclubs and fine restaurants but eventually breaks her heart. Trigiani offers an inviting picture of Italian family life as well as a finely detailed appreciation of Old World craftsmanship, whether it be clothing or cooking. -- Joanne Wilkinson (BookList, September 1, 2003, p62)

School Library Journal Review: Budding playwright Kit Zaneetti is invited to tea by her elderly neighbor, and she is amazed at the apartment full of memorabilia. Her question about a beautiful full-length mink coat begins the story of "Aunt Lu's" long and interesting life. *Lucia* Sartori, the youngest child and only daughter of a prosperous Italian grocer in Greenwich Village in the early '50s, is engaged to marry her childhood sweetheart, Dante Di-Martino. Almost on the eve of the wedding, *Lucia* is shocked to learn that his mother expects her to quit her job as a seamstress at B. Altman's department store to stay at home and help her future mother-in-law and to prepare for the children she is expected to have. *Lucia* resents having to choose between career and marriage, so she breaks the engagement. Later, she meets suave and debonair John Talbot, who sweeps her off her feet. He gives her a beautiful, full-length mink coat. Only after being jilted at the altar does *Lucia* learn that he is a con man. After this unfortunate event, *Lucia's* plans to go to California to pursue her career are thwarted when her mother becomes ill. Now she must decide between love and duty or her own happiness. Finely drawn characters move the story along with warmth and humor, relationships in *Lucia's* big Italian family are lovingly detailed, and there is a strong sense of place. Readers who enjoyed *Trigiani's* "Big Stone Gap" trilogy (Random) will find that she again tells an engaging story. Carol Clark, Fairfax County Public Schools, VA --Carol Clark (Reviewed December 1, 2003) (School Library Journal, vol 49, issue 12, p176)