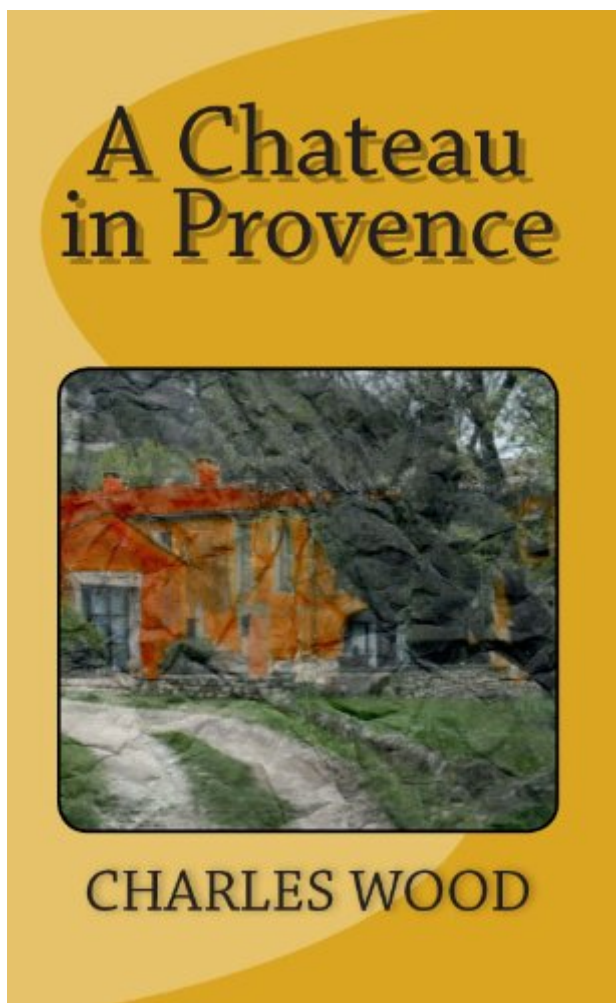


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A Chateau In Provence



Synopsis

Provence is a land of long cafe lunches, of lavender, olives, wine, medieval villages and ruined castles. Its history is steeped with myth and legend and peopled with painters, poets and knights. The beauty of its land has been the backdrop of countless movies and books, and its unhurried lifestyle and sublime climate the envy of millions who are obliged to live in other less agreeable and less privileged places. An American family, the Bakers, came to see and enjoy this very special place - and almost got away with it. As their vacation wound to an end, a simple mistake thrust them into an adventure of a lifetime when Sam Baker decided to celebrate the end of a long family hike with a cold beer at a local cafe. His innocent stop at the cafe have Sam and his family entangled in the affairs of everyone from a likeable, small-time crook and ex-con, to a proud and much decorated policeman in the city of Aix-en-Provence, and ultimately to the government of La Republique Francaise itself. Louis Jaubert spent twelve long years in a Marseille prison for a crime he didn't commit. Now, he's back home in Aix-en-Provence trying to make up for all those lost years. But this time he's not exactly innocent. For months, he has carefully nurtured a plan that will make him rich beyond his imagination. Lately though, after a series of run-ins with the tough cop DesVaux in Aix and now a dumb mistake that's involved the American Baker, Louis is beginning to lose his nerve. Between the bungling American, who's always in the wrong place at the wrong time and the overzealous DesVaux who dogs his every step, Louis' plan begins to unravel. Could it be possible, Louis wonders in a moment of desperation, that these two nemeses could help him pull his plan back together.

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Customer Reviews

I can probably count on one hand the number of reviews I have written. As a public librarian for over 23 years, I've read thousands of books. Of those thousands there are only scores that I would recommend to library patrons. "A Chateau in Provence" is one of the titles that is getting that honor. My favorite genres are contemporary fiction and mysteries. Loving foreign travel, plots set in European settings attract me. This book hits the mark on all accounts. I downloaded the book to my Kindle and read it straight through in almost one evening. I thought Sam Baker and his family would be the main characters, and they were, but fell in love with the hapless criminal Louis Jaubert and the not-so-upstanding policeman Maurice DesVaux. When the book finished, I could not stop thinking of the movie "Casablanca." It was a fun read and would make a dynamite PG movie. Hollywood, are you reading this? I can hardly wait to see what Charley Wood comes up with next -- and where will book 2 be set?

I downloaded this eBook with anticipation as I am an avid fan of Provence. Enjoyed reading it as it references so many locations that I know and love. The story was fun, a wee bit light and facile, but amusing nonetheless. What kept this book in the ** category for me was the lack of attention to the French references - awkward grammatical and spelling mistakes, proper accents in some cases, none in others, all in all quite inconsistent and nothing that couldn't have been corrected by proper revision/proofreading. This unfortunately was so prevalent that it became a major distraction. Granted, anyone who is not familiar with French and Provence wouldn't take notice and after all, this is not a guide book, but it seems to me that the author - with his background and French connections - could have been a wee bit more careful. So, fun for lovers of Provence, but a tad aggravating for Francophiles.

This is a ridiculous, transparent and obvious story, and I cannot bring myself to finish reading it. I can get past the missing accents on French words, but misspellings and bad grammar are inexcusable. Strasberg? Limoge? Une petite dejeuner? How about l'docteur and le hotel?

Espresso? And then there was "the Baker's hotel" instead of the "the Bakers' hotel" as well as spots where apostrophes were simply eliminated. But my favorite was referring to "the madam" (minus the e) as if the old lady owned a brothel. The motivation for the policeman's dishonesty was that he couldn't afford medical care for his wife and mother without taking bribes. In France, the land of socialized medicine? I guess the editor thought that such a sorry story didn't deserve a onceover before putting into print, or in my case, onto my Kindle. Since one star is the least one can give, I had to go with that, though I would've preferred to give it no stars at all. Don't waste your money. I'm sorry I did.

"A Year In Provence" this is not. I couldn't finish it, even though I was just listening to it on Kindle. There was nothing that brought this book to life: no lush descriptions of Cezanne's work, no meticulous filler on the milieu of Provence. It's as though just b/c the author sets the story in Provence, we readers are suppose to automatically fill in the details. Even worse, the characters didn't have a French feel: the mother read like something from "Throw Momma From the Train," or perhaps a relative of Norman Bates. I can plow through anything that has somekind of payoff; I'm currently rereading Les Mis to prepare for the movie's release, but this just sort of went down the drain in the middle, so I pulled the plug. Sorry.

I couldn't understand the title of this book. It didn't have anything to do with a chateau, but I thought the premise was fun. Some Americans vacationing in France get caught up in intrigue over a painting stolen by the Nazis and never returned. As a matter of fact, my own novel, *The Summer of France*, deals with some Nazi-stolen art as well. In spite of the good plot, the characters were not fleshed out enough so the reader could relate to them, and some basic editing would have helped the book. Also, when writing with a different language included, like French, it's always a good idea to check and re-check to get it right. Since I'm an English teacher, some basic punctuation issues, like misplaced commas, bugged me too. [...]

It was ok. I liked the other book based in Italy by the author better. This one seemed to jump around a bit too much and didn't spend enough time on the family. Or on Provence. Not sure why it was called a Chateau in Provence. I would have liked more on the area. Also seemed strange that the family was so complacent in light of what was happening to them. And, things just happened without much explanation and not a lot was tied together.

WHAT A PLEASANT SURPRISE TO LEARN THAT FRATERNITY BROTHER, FRIEND, AND FORMER COLLEGE ROOMMATE, CHARLIE WOOD, AUTHORED AND PUBLISHED HIS FIRST BOOK RECENTLY. CHARLIE AND HIS LOVELY WIFE, KATHY, CONDUCT TOURS IN PROVENCE AS WELL AS OTHER LOCATIONS IN EUROPE. THIS BOOK COMBINES MANY ACTUAL PLACES, VILLAGES, ROADS, HOTELS, AND CAFES THROUGHOUT PROVENCE THAT THEY HAVE EXPERIENCED AND INCLUDE IN THEIR TOURS. CHARLIE HAS CLEVERLY INTERTWINED THESE REAL LOCATIONS WITH A LIVELY MYSTERY STORY ENCOMPASSING THEFT, DECEIT, AND HISTORICAL REFERENCES. HIS CHARACTERS ARE WROUGHT WITH INTRIGUE, LARCENCY, AND MIXED WITH VARIOUS OTHER CHARACTER FLAWS. HIS FIRST BOOK IS A WINNER AND I LOOK FORWARD TO HIS NEXT LITERARY VENTURE.

Charley Wood writes knowingly and lovingly of a part of France we think of as tranquil and bucolic. He spices it up with suspense, intrigue and even humor. Just when you think you have it figured out, Mr. Wood takes you on another detour, another dead end, another superhighway to his unexpected conclusion. His characters delight and disappoint, his plot writhes and twists and turns, and at times, I can imagine Charley trying to keep a straight face as he leads the reader to another false conclusion. My only disappointment was that the author did not give us a brief preview of his next book at the end of this one.

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