



Luciano's Luck

Jack Higgins

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In the Summer of 1943, the Allies were poised to invade Sicily. Yet the price would be high in blood and time unless the island people rose in revolt against their Nazi oppressors.

But only the Mafia could command an uprising, and Mafia supremo Antonia Luca hated everything American. Someone very persuasive indeed was needed to change his mind.

And they didn't come any more persuasive than the man known as Lucky Luciano...

“100 percent proof adventure” New York Times

“Total credibility...a thundering climax... Jack HIGGINS HAS DONE IT AGAIN” Yorkshire Post

Luciano's Luck Details

Date : Published June 1st 1981 by Stein & Day Pub (first published 1981)

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Author : Jack Higgins

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Aγγελικ? says

Το μυθιστορημα αυτο αποτελει πηγη νεων γνωσεων. Κατ' αρχας οσον αφορα τον Λουτσιανο του οποιου την υπαρξη δε γνωριζα. Δευτερον, τα αποσπασματα που αναφερονται στην απανθρωπια των Ναζι, με παρακινησαν να βρω κι αλλες πληροφοριες για τον Β παγκοσμιο. Σημεια που με χαλασαν ηταν οι ερωτικες σκηνες Ροζας-Σαβετζ και ο θανατος της Μαριας. Επισης ηθελα λιγες παραπανω ανατροπες... Το τελος ηταν ευχαριστα παραξενο! :D

Michael says

Could it be that, just prior to the invasion of Sicily in WWII, General Eisenhower authorized the release of Mafia boss, Lucky Luciano, from federal prison to participate in an undercover operation on the island? According to author Jack Higgins, he met Sicilians who claimed to be eyewitnesses of Luciano's presence in Sicily during the war. Hence this fictionalized account of what those adventures might have been like.

This book is an enjoyable story about just such a adventure. Although it's not a must-read, I recommend it for a few hours of entertainment and some action as well.

John says

I read this on an eight hour flight down to Mexico. Not my normal type of book but not bad. I do not think I will be looking for anymore books by this author. Will not remember one thing about it .

Jonathan says

Typical Jack Higgins book with an entertaining mixture of fact and fiction. Centres on a plan to aid the allied invasion of Sicily by gaining the support of the Sicilian Mafia. To do this, a team of agents are parachuted into Sicily, including the American gangster 'Lucky' Luciano and the local mafia don's estranged daughter, now a nun.

Good Points

The story is fast paced and certainly doesn't lack for action. Their are grizzly murders, gun battles and punch ups galore; just what we've come to expect from Jack Higgins. I also liked the plausibility of the story; it does feel as if it the basic premise of the story could have happened. I also thought that the character of 'Lucky' Luciano was very vividly portrayed as he appears likeable while still exuding enough savagery to appear realistically as a mafia boss. Finally, Higgins doesn't romanticise the Mafia - the reader sees it as it is in real life, a ruthless gang more than capable of extremely ruthless behaviour.

Bad Points

Unfortunately, there are rather a lot of these. For a start, Luciano is the only character who really seems to

'live' in the story, the rest of the characters appear flat and two dimensional. I appreciate this book is meant as light entertainment but even compared to other books by Higgins (such as The Eagle has Landed), the characters aren't up too much. Also, I'm beginning to get a bit sick of the good German, bad German conflict in Higgins novels. I appreciate that not all German soldiers in WW2 were ardent national socialists but surely the difference was by no means as clear cut as they often are in Higgins books? All the Germans in this book are either despicable Nazis or reluctant patriots which I personally find a little annoying. Finally, the end of the novel is a little abrupt, as if Higgins had trouble working out how to tie up all the loose ends.

Conclusion

Despite the bad points, this is not a bad book as long as you don't expect too much. It certainly isn't Higgins best work but by no means is it his worse either. It delivers a lot of action in a fairly realistic scenario, likeable if not very detailed characters and a fairly satisfactory ending. A good book to read on the beach or on public transport; not dull by won't cause you to become so involved that you'll miss your stop.

George K. says

"Λ?κυ Λουτσι?νο ο Σικελ?ς", εκδ?σεις Bell.

Το πρ?το βιβλ?ο του Τζακ Χ?γκινς που περν?ει στη λ?στα με τα διαβασμ?να. Δεν ?ταν ακριβ?ς ?τσι ?πως το περ?μενα, με β?ση αυτ? που ?χω ακο?σει για τον Τζακ Χ?γκινς, ο οπο?ος ε?ναι απ? τους καλ?τερους στο ε?δος του, κ?τι που στο βιβλ?ο αυτ? δεν φ?νηκε και τ?σο.

Εντ?ξει, ενδιαφ?ρουνσα ιστορ?α ?που γ?νεται μπλ?ξιμο πραγματικ?ν γεγον?των και φαντασ?ας, καλ? γραφ?, ενδιαφ?ροντες χαρακτ?ρες, μερικ?ς δυνατ?ς σκην?ς και σχετικ? καλ? τ?λος (αν και λ?γο απ?τομο), αλλ? δεν ?ταν ο?τε σφιχτοδεμ?νο θρ?λερ με απρ?βλεπτες καταστ?σεις και ξαφνικ? γυρ?σματα, ο?τε αγωνι?σα και τ?σο για τους χαρακτ?ρες ? για τι θα γιν?ταν στην συν?χεια.

?ταν απλ? μια καλο?τσικη ιστορ?α χωρ?ς κ?τι το συγκλονιστικ? ? κ?τι τ?λος π?ντων που να με κ?νει να ανατριχι?σω.

Carol says

Luciano's Luck by Jack Higgins is very short, only two audio tape cassettes. It was a pleasant surprise. Since I had already read some reviews about the fiction in this historical fiction story, I did a little bit of research on this short chapter of history prior to listening to the cassettes. The story starts with General Eisenhower's part in this and the author give some background information about Sicily. Jack Higgins says that Sicily had its own version of government and felt no allegiance to Italy. In fact each town in Sicily had its own capo and obedience was paid only to that capo not to those in other towns.

Basically the plan was to take Lucky Luciano aka Salvatore Lucina out of prison, commute his sentence and smuggle him to Sicily to rally the Sicilians and back the Allied Invasion. There were some secondary story which are probably the fictional part of the story.

I really enjoyed the male narrator's voice which was a bit like Burt Lancaster's. Both he, Tony Amendola and Judith Marx made it an exciting story to listen to. It was very entertaining and dramatic and Jack Higgins added some Sicilian cultural information. He said that when a woman was ready to deliver, a "witch" or streghe was sought out. There was some explicit sex but it was short. He also alludes to Sicilian customs that may have been carried over into the Mafia.

The best reason for listening to this story is that it can cause you to hunger for more details of history and more information on Sicilian culture.

If you have the chance to listen to this story, I highly recommend it.

Jack says

I didn't know there was a person named Lucky Luciano before reading this. It was just a book I picked off the shelf randomly.

I don't understand the title of the novel. With the assortment of characters that Higgins provides, it doesn't make sense to focus on just Luciano, and it doesn't make sense to focus on his luck as luck seems to have little to do with the plot.

Manrico says

Good narrative and background. Flowing and kept me hooked.

Rick Parsons says

Am excellent tale of Lucky Luciano being released from prison to go to Sicily and help convince the mafia to side with the Americans by getting the Italian army to step aside allowing General Patton an easy pass through Sicily.

Christian D. Orr says

Another action-packed, fast-paced, page-turning military history thriller by Jack Higgins, this time involving a plot to employ the aid of legendary American Mafia boss "Lucky" Luciano in convincing his Sicilian counterparts to support the pending Allied invasion of Sicily.

RANDOM STREAM OF CONSCIOUSNESS NOTES AND OBSERVATIONS (page numbers are from the Nook Edition)

--p. 10: Aahh, the good old days when you could lie about your age to get into the military and get away with it....even eventually end up as a commissioned ossifer no less!

Ciccio? Inspired by the character from "The Godfather" by any chance?

Central Casting call: Timothy Dalton as Maj. Harry Carter

--p. 11: "'Mafia began as a kind of secret society during a period of real oppression. In those days it was the only weapon the peasant had, his only means of justice.'"

--p. 16: Aahh, Dom Perignon. Obviously Maj. Carter is the sort of chap who appreciates the finer things in life.

Wikipedia lookup: kubelwagen

General observation: Nook edition is full of typos and lack of proper spacing & hyphenation.

--p. 25: Major General Karl Walther?? Art imitating life??

--p. 35; Harvey Grant already a Wing Commander (equivalent of a Lieutenant Colonel in the U.S. Army Air Corps) at age 26? Wow, high-speed!

--p. 39: "'Wars aren't won by men any more. They're run by large corporations, just like big business.'" I respectfully postulate that this wasn't quite yet the case in WWII; it became more true during the Cold War onward.

Aahh, good "Old Blood and Guts" Patton

--p. 40: Ike complaining about paperwork, I feel his pain!

--p. 47: "White House next stop" for Dewey? Paging Harry Truman....

"General Patton's Seventh Army?" Ahem, I believe that was actually than Third Army.

--p. 51: The author misspelled "Franklyn" [sic] Delano Roosevelt. And I wouldn't trust FDR beyond spitting distance.

--p. 55: "'It can be hell. St. Chrysostom called celibacy the little crucifixion.'" Reminds me why I could never be a priest!

--p. 60: "'Robin Hood and Richard the Lionheart rolled into one.'" Helluva compliment!

--p. 64: Ugh, the infamous Einsatzgruppen.

--p. 65: Look up meaning of "Zu Befehl."

--p. 75: "'They've been shooting Ranger and Commando prisoners in uniform under the terms of Hitler's Kommandobefehl for two years now, sir.'" I presume that same policy applied to SAS prisoners?

--p. 76: Ah, the old "automatics jam, revolvers don't" wives' tale. And since when did Smith & Wesson ever make a .32 calibre revolver? And hello, Mr. Higgins, revolvers aren't that easy to silence!

--p. 80: "The Avro Lancaster was the most successful Allied bomber of the Second World War." Um, more successful than the B-17 Flying Fortress or the B-29 Superfortress? That's highly debatable.

--p. 90: So then, "beretta" means "beret" in Italian as well as being the name of the famous firearms manufacturer?

--p. 95: Okay, so which M1, the Carbine or the Garand?

--p. 100: Gotta love a woman who's comfortable scratching her butt in the presence of a dude, heh heh!

--p. 102: "The worst landing of his career," but a good landing is any landing you walk away from.

--p. 104: Good riddance to that Communist POS bastardo!

--p. 106: Full kiss on the lips = Mafia kiss of death; like Michael Corleone did to Fredo in "The Godfather Part II," eh? In any event....Good riddance to that Communist POS bastardo, Part Deux!

--p. 113: "The kind of upperclass girl he had been raised with, girls like Joanna, used their virginity as a bargaining factor." Sounds like my money-grubbing psycho-bitch ex-GF from 2014!

"There was an incredible unreality to it all, like one of those fantasies born in the mind when halfasleep." Kinda like my first experiences with my first GF!

--p. 123: Aahh, the infamous Dieppe fiasco.

--p. 128: "a Beretta automatic of the type issued to Italian officers," as in the M1934?

--p. 129; Would an Italian woman be using "miles" instead of metres?

--p. 131: Fuck yeah, immediate head shot to resolve a human shield situation!

--p. 139: Verga? Like the Spanish word for "dick?"

--p. 149:"an anis-flavoured wine??"

--p. 152: "'And this drug thing. Infamita.'" A good 3-5 years ahead of the timeframe in the Godfather storyline for the New York Mafia getting involved in the drug business.

--p. 165: Lieutenant Suslov is now Major Suslov??

--p. 173: "the Russians???" Didya mean the Ukrainians there, Mr. Higgins?

--p. 176: "'In this way may I drink the blood of the one who killed you.'"

The Godfather in reverse, i.e. personal, not business, eh?

CENTRAL CASTING CALL: Pierce Brosnan or Timothy Dalton as Harry Carter, James Franco as Harvey Grant, Andy Garcia(?) or Joe Mantegna(?) or Chazz Palmintieri(?) as Lucky Luciano, Casper van Dien as Capt. Savage, Clancy Brown (Sgt. Zim from "Starship Troopers") as Sgt. Detweiler, Simonetta Stefanelli (the

Apollonia chick from "The Godfather") as Rosa, Ed Harris as Oberst Koenig, George Dzundza as Major Meyer.

GENERAL OBSERVATION: This Nook Edition is lacking in proper hyphenation, commas, and spacing of phrases in multiple places.

Vikram says

In July 1943, British and American forces were to be landed on the southern coast of Sicily. British Army units, under General Montgomery, were to land at the Eastern end of the island, while General Patton and the Seventh Army were to land in the South and strike for Palermo.

The terrain, that Patton's Seventh Army would have to pass through, to reach Palermo, was a soldier's nightmare, the area around the Cammarata a warren of ravines and mountains. It could take months to hack a way through it, if at all it were not to be destroyed in ambushes.

General Eisenhower, American Commander, realised that progress would be slow and casualties high, if the Allies were to attack without local support. On the other hand, if the local Mafia used its power, to promote an uprising of the people and to persuade Italian units to surrender, the Germans would have no other recourse, but to retreat.

Charles 'Lucky' Luciano, the infamous Mafia gangster, was serving a sentence of thirty to fifty years in Great Meadow Penitentiary in New York State.

Luciani was sprung out of prison by American Intelligence and dropped into Sicily, along with Colonel Harry Carter and his team of Commandos.

The Plan ?

To meet and to get support from local Mafia Dons, under Don Antonio Luca, the Capo di Tutti Capi (Boss of bosses), so as to prepare the way for the Allied invasion.

The only problem was, that Don Antonio hated the Americans, even more than the German invaders...

Oleksiy Kononov says

I don't like books about mafia, never managed to get through Puzo's Godfather, but Luciano's Luck was different. I took it because of the Higgins's brand, and the book justified my expectations, I literally swallowed it in a couple of days. Real facts mixed with the Higgins's fiction encouraged me to conduct some diggings in history and the role of the Italian mafia in WWII. Bravo, Mr. Higgins!!!

Ray says

More legend than fact, this is a story about mafia leader Lucky Luciano's involvement in paving the way for

the U.S. invasion of Italy during World War II. Not exactly a gripping and heart-stopping story, but an interesting enough story.

Bev Taylor says

they made him an offer he could not refuse

set in 1943 the allies r planning to invade sicily in an attempt to overthrow the italians. this will be helped if the sicilians revolt against the nazi invaders

only the maffia r capable of this but the godfather refuses as he hates the americans after they executed his son

here is where lucky luciano comes in who is head of the mafia in america and has a link with the man's daughter who is currently a nun and living in the uk. one problem, she hates her father, holding him responsible for the death of her mother. one problem, he is in prison for approx 40/50 years!

here is where carter comes in and with the aid of the us govt persuades them to release him to assist with the possibility of some lenience on his sentence, though nothing is put on paper

desperate action is called for and here u have it in spades with germans, loyal italians, a christian democracy, the mafia, communists

will they survive and at what cost?

bev

Susan E Nordstrom says

Fascinating

Hard to put down.. Having read this some time ago ,this second time was just as interesting as the first. One of the best books, full of action and suspense. Jack Higgins is a master of his craft.
