



Foto © Katja Brinkmann

FRANCESCO CAROFIGLIO

A writer, architect and theatre director, Carofiglio was born in Bari. Besides *L'estate del cane nero*, *Ritorno nella valle degli angeli* and *Radiopirata* (all published by Marsilio), he is also the author of the novel *With or without you* (BUR) as well as of two graphic novels created with his brother Gianrico and published by Rizzoli: *Cacciatori nelle tenebre* (2007) and *La casa nel bosco* (2014). With Piemme he published *Wok* (2011), *Voglio vivere una volta sola* (2014), *Una specie di felicità* (2016) and *Il Maestro* (2017). All of his books have been widely acclaimed by both readers and reviewers.

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Spellbound summer



In the summer of 1939 nothing seemed
amiss as we made our bags for the countryside.
Like we were going on holiday.
When in fact we were running away.

FRANCESCO CAROFIGLIO

Spellbound summer

Francesco Carofiglio takes us by the hand and guides us to the discovery of a last summer of innocence. Returning once more to the distinctive themes of his personal style – the paradoxical resilience of the frailest of memories and the innocent gaze of those who might still be saved.

It's the summer of 1939, Miranda is nine years old and her world is facing the abyss. But she has no idea. And that summer will be the happiest of her life. As of many others'. Miranda and her mother leave Florence for Villa Ada, the house of her paternal grandfather – the Marquis Ugo Soderini – on the hills surrounding Pistoia. Her father is "elsewhere". The farm, the lush countryside, the mystery of the woods are a perfect setting for Miranda's adventures with Lapo, the son of the farm manager. For their reckless bicycle rides, their dares, their risky discoveries. For country fairs, dances and their first, innocent kiss. But the woods are also haunted by creatures only a child can see – or thinks she sees. And those same woods haunt the paintings locked up in grandfather's studio – a place no-one is allowed to enter. That small corner of the world is enshrined in a magic light. And in her nineties Miranda shows us that light, penetrating the fogs of memory. To travel back in time, becoming once more a child innocent of all experience, a child who has not yet suffered, not yet found and lost, is more than just a compensation. It is a balm, an antidote. Because *there is no wisdom, there is no old age. Possibly not even death.*

Miranda, the protagonist of *L'estate dell'incanto*, is ninety years old. Resilient and with a mind of her own, she has made difficult choices in her life, choosing her independence over marriage and children, and in her old age she rediscovers her roots. She immerses herself in the past but still looking towards the future.

I'm not sure it's true that one gets used to anything. What matters is rather to keep our eyes wide open, to preserve our sense of wonder.

As a child Miranda is spellbound by the discovery of an unknown world and then becomes witness of the horrific darkness that engulfed so many lives. But this is just one season, one life within an endless dimension of time. The countless trajectories of existence converge in the present, generating an unexpected result – sudden youth.

The world Miranda discovers as a child is magical. The countryside where animals speak and the studio where her grandfather, a painter, evokes new images on canvas, preserve the voices of her childhood. But something else is lurking in the background. A sense of pending doom. A monster on the prowl. And all living creatures around Miranda are trying to warn her of the danger.

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FROM THE BOOK

It happened in summer, many years ago. And as my old woman's thoughts are taken over by shadows, one small corner of the world still shines with light. I close my eyes and see once more, untouched, the radiant beauty of the countryside. Every single detail shimmers in the trembling of my eyelashes, touched by the slanting rays of the morning sun. I was ten years old and the world was standing on the brink of the abyss. But for me everything was summer and countryside. The best summer of my life.

I've had a wonderful life. I have lived each instant to the brim, recklessly, my soul galloping at full tilt, like a breathless race on skinny legs.

I'm not sure what will survive of this race, this slipping away of seasons, this speed. What law of falling bodies will take me back down to earth.

One would need to know the tactics of the universe, the grammar of fundamental particles, the wondrous trajectories of swallows in flight. As for me, all I hear is the silence closing in. I hear the sound of oceans, a swirling of water. My heavy eyelids keep thoughts within a finite space in this suspended wake.

One would need to live the end to recount it. Reveal the passage without the burden of standing guard, the compulsion of prayer. Fall into the void with the grace of an angel, somersaulting into the point of tangency, letting go.

I only want to live once

Pages: **192**
Publication: **2014**



Violette is a little girl like many others. She lives with two brothers, Jean and Augustin, a caring mother, a father immersed in his job. She has a dog, Javert, encountered by chance and loved at first sight. And moves from one home to the next; first in Rome, then in Paris, and finally in Plouzané, Bretagne, just a few steps from the sea – the best possible place to heal the wounds of dreams that never came true. Violette's days, like those of many children, rush by like a breeze, between walks, conversations, games and books. Nights are different. Because Violette never sleeps. She wanders barefoot in the dark, wearing her baby-blue dress. Every day she sees the world changing around her, people living at an ever faster pace, growing up, growing old, vanishing. While she remains unchanged – same hands, same face. Because Violette isn't really there. She was never born, but she is everything her parents and brothers ever wished for. So she lives, laughs and runs. She exists, as long as someone keeps thinking of her. Hovering over the magical boundary between dreams and reality, Violette reveals her world with a wistful lightness all of her own, alert to instants, feelings and gestures no-one else could even conceive.

The master

Corrado Lazzari was the greatest actor of the Twentieth century. Back then he was sophisticated and powerful, idolized by fans the world over. Now he completely alone. Fame, success, friends – everything is gone. His days pass by unnoticed until she comes into her life, and everything changes. Alessandra is a young student of theatre history and – timidly, naively – she tries to get close to Corrado. At first he is reluctant, but then he is swept away by the young woman's thirst for knowledge. And through the words of the theatre and Alessandra's presence Corrado might discover a way to both accept his downfall and to achieve immortality in one perfect instant.

Pages: **160**
Publication: **2017**



A sort of happiness

The life of Giulio d'Aprile, an analyst whose marriage has fallen to pieces, changes suddenly one day at the end of October, when doing the rounds in the hospital he works for he comes across his old mentor. The man who was a brilliant, insightful and authoritative teacher has turned into a worn out relic. His memory is almost gone, his eyes stare unfocused. Thus the Professor becomes Giulio's patient, and the two men engage in a duel. They will both have to face a painful truth they've been hiding, in a swift-paced and inexorable turning of the tables. Until the final face-off, when an event suddenly sets them on a new journey, between darkness and light. Like a crack in the wall. Like a sort of happiness.

Pages: **240**
Publication: **2016**

