

# NEWS FROM PUTNAM

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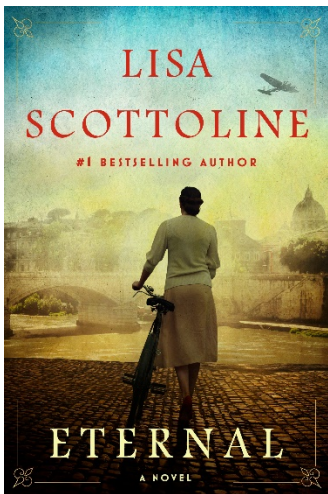
# ETERNAL

## Lisa Scottoline

### #1 Bestselling Author

“Lisa Scottoline delivers fast-paced intrigue, but also an authentic, tender coming-of-age tale of three best friends navigating the complexities of Fascism, war, and romance.”

—Lisa Wingate, author of *Before We Were Yours* and *The Book Of Lost Friends*



Over the course of her stellar and prolific career, #1 bestselling author Lisa Scottoline has sold over 30 million copies of her page-turning thrillers and beloved humorous essays. Her novels have always explored themes of family, justice, and love and her masterpiece, **ETERNAL (G.P. Putnam's Sons; On Sale: March 23, 2021)**, is the culmination of a lifetime of work: a sweeping historical epic fueled by devastating true events. Named for Rome, the Eternal City, this moving novel lifted from the pages of history is the book that Scottoline was born to write. It will be forever etched in the hearts and minds of readers, as will the powerful truth it asserts—what war destroys, only love can heal.

Set in Rome during the ventennio, the twenty years of Mussolini's rise and fall, **ETERNAL** centers on Elisabetta, Marco, and Sandro, who grew up as the best of friends despite their differences. Elisabetta is a feisty beauty who dreams of becoming a novelist; Marco, a brash and athletic son in a family of professional cyclists; and Sandro, a Jewish mathematics prodigy, kindhearted and thoughtful, the son of a lawyer and a doctor. Their friendship blossoms to love, with both Sandro and Marco hoping to win Elisabetta's heart.

Now, their relationships are changing—as is the world around them. In the autumn of 1937, Mussolini asserts his power, aligning Italy's Fascists with Hitler's Nazis and changing the very laws that govern Rome. As anti-Semitism takes legal root and World War II erupts, Sandro suddenly can't finish his studies and Marco, who takes pride in his work at the local Fascist office and hopes to rise in the party, realizes that these laws are destroying his best friend, but isn't sure where his loyalty lies. Elisabetta,

abandoned by one parent and orphaned by the other, tries to make ends meet as her country crumbles around her. The Nazis invade and occupy Rome, perpetrating new atrocities against the city's Jews, culminating in a final, horrific betrayal. Against this backdrop, the intertwined fates of Elisabetta, Marco, Sandro, and their families will be decided.

Unfolding over decades, **ETERNAL** is a saga of loyalty and loss, family and food, love and hate—all set in one of the world's most beautiful cities at its darkest moment. Scottoline has been researching the Italian Holocaust since her undergraduate days when she took an intimate year-long seminar at the University of Pennsylvania taught by the late Philip Roth called “The Literature of the Holocaust,” studying the work of Primo Levi, among others. Following that course, she knew that someday she’d write about these events. Her background as an Italian-American, a lawyer, and an adjunct professor at the University of Pennsylvania Law School fueled her interest in the subject. After she conducted decades of research, including numerous trips to Italy, **ETERNAL** was born.

### **ABOUT THE AUTHOR**

Lisa Scottoline is the #1 bestselling and Edgar Award–winning author of thirty-three novels. She has over thirty million copies of her books in print in the United States and has been published in thirty-five countries. Scottoline also writes a weekly column with her daughter, Francesca Serritella, for the *Philadelphia Inquirer*, which have been adapted into a series of memoirs. She has served as President of the Mystery Writers of America and has taught a course she developed, “Justice in Fiction,” at the University of Pennsylvania Law School, her alma mater. She lives in the Philadelphia area. Visit: [www.scottoline.com](http://www.scottoline.com)

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**ETERNAL • Lisa Scottoline • G. P. Putnam’s Sons**

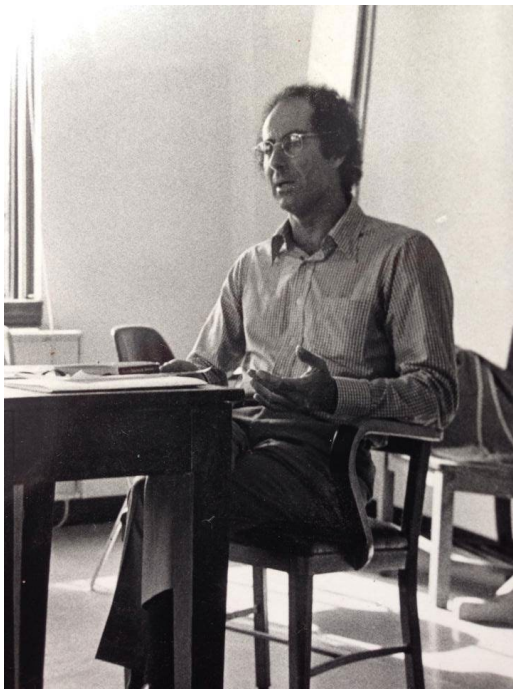
**On Sale: March 23, 2021 • ISBN: 9780525539766 • Price: \$28.00 (\$37.00 Canada)**

# A CONVERSATION WITH LISA SCOTTOLINE

## Why did you write *Eternal*, and why now?

I have wanted to write this novel ever since my college days as an English major at the University of Pennsylvania, where I took a year-long seminar taught by the late Philip Roth. One semester was “The Literature of the Holocaust.” He introduced us to the books of Primo Levi, an Italian Jewish chemist deported to Auschwitz during World War II, but survived to write the heartbreaking memoir *If This Is a Man*, published here as *Survival in Auschwitz*. Mr. Roth thought Levi was one of the most talented writers the world has ever produced and that the Italian Holocaust wasn’t well-enough known, world-wide. When I learned of a singular horror that took place in the Jewish Ghetto of Rome in October, 1943, I knew I had a story that needed to be told.

## Describe your seminar with Philip Roth. Do you have any anecdotes from your time with him?



I remember Mr. Roth’s seminar very well, because every class was almost exactly the same. We fifteen-or-so students arrived early and sat down in our chairs, the kind with a half-desk attached, and the chairs were arranged in a U-shape around his little wooden desk.

Precisely when it was time for class, which I seem to remember was two o’clock, Mr. Roth entered the room. He was a very tall, lanky guy with an insanely intellectual air, and he walked in a stooped way, his face appearing through the doorway before the rest of him lurched in, leading with his head like a well-read giraffe. He always wore a lightly-starched oxford shirt, pressed khaki pants with a brown leather belt, and brown wingtips, an outfit he would wear to almost every class. He barely looked at us or made eye contact, but murmured a hello, then sat down in his chair, crossed one long leg over the other, and slowly unbuckled his watch.

His watch had a leather strap, and he took it off and set it face-up on his desk. He asked us to call him Mr. Roth, though every other seminar professor had us call them by their first name, in those let-it-all-hang-out days. Then he began to talk about the novel assigned for that week, taking us through its pages and pointing out its various themes, relationships, details, or particularly terrific sentences. He never consulted his notes, which were handwritten and kept in a slim black binder, but he spoke extemporaneously, making point after point, giving us insight after insight, as if he *apprehended* the entire novel, all of a piece.

Imagine taking physics from Einstein. It felt like that.

He spoke, and we listened. We hung on every word. We wrote down whatever he said. It was an English-major fever dream.

At the end of every class, he would ask us if we had any questions. I was insecure and never said a word, but in truth, I had no questions. On the contrary, what I had were answers: namely, his insights into writing, plot, character, structure, and narrative.

Other students would ask questions, and he answered each one succinctly. His tone was polite, and he barely made eye contact; he never cracked a joke, though he was brilliantly funny writer. And if a student asked him how he himself would have written the sentence or structured a paragraph, he would deflect the question by answering: “But that’s not what Levi did.”

He didn't give us prompts for our writing assignments, but required us to devise our own, and when he graded our papers, he wrote no comments, only the letter grade on the last page, in red flair pen.

I got an A from Philip Roth.

Just saying.

I saved my notes and books from class, though God knows where they are, but I was able to find a photo of him teaching, which I took myself (included here). I was a photographer on the yearbook staff, and they needed a photo of him, so I went to him before class and asked his permission to photograph him. He hesitated, then nodded, lips pursed.

It was the moment when I realized that his distance in class wasn't a lack of warmth, but a form of self-protection. I went back to my chair, took a shot while he was speaking, and put the camera away. The photo shows him exactly as he looked every day of class, never moving from the chair, his legs crossed and his hands gesturing, long fingers aflutter. I attach it here.

Looking back, I've come to understand that he was the best professor I ever had, not only because of his genius, but also because of his distance. We were a group eager to please, to perform for him, to guess at what he wanted us to say, and to say that for him. We all wanted to hear about him, or have him tell us how to write, but that was something he steadfastly denied us. He didn't want it to be about him, and by withholding his own opinions, he forced us back on our own.

The best advice you can give to any writer is to find her own voice. He knew he couldn't tell us that, but like any great writer, he showed us.

### **How is ETERNAL like or unlike your previous novels?**

Everything I've ever written, whether series, standalone, fiction or nonfiction, has explored themes of family, justice, and love. I truly believe that *Eternal* is the culmination of a lifetime of my work. The novel is the epic story of a love triangle set against the *ventennio*, the twenty years of Mussolini's rise and fall. In the meantime, Mussolini and the Fascists are promulgating a barrage of discriminatory Race Laws against Jews like Sandro and his family, systematically stripping away their rights, even before Italy enters World War II. I also think *Eternal* is the first popular fiction novel covering the Italian Holocaust.

### **How is your Italian-American heritage reflected in the novel?**

ETERNAL is a tale of love and loyalty, family and food, a portrait of one of the world's greatest cities in its darkest moment. Every sentence in this novel reflects my heritage, especially its powerful and unapologetic emotionality. And my very own feisty Italian mother found her way into Nonna....

### **What were some of the specific locations in Italy you visited that informed the novel? Did you speak to anyone that lived in Italy during that time period about their experience?**

Rome struck me as the best location for the novel, since its so-called Ghetto is home to the oldest continuously-existing Jewish Community in all of Western Civilization. And during my research, I learned about a horrific event that took place in the Ghetto in October, 1943, which historians have termed the Gold of Rome. It was part of the Nazi's plan to eradicate Rome's Jews, but it wasn't well-known outside the scholarship, and it needed to be.

I loved doing the research for the novel and visited all of the neighborhoods of Rome in which the scenes take place, and even traveled to Carpi to see the remnants of the transit camp that appears in the novel. Lots of details about the research can be found in the Author's Note and on my website, along with videos filmed on location.

# PRAISE FOR *ETERNAL*

“Lisa Scottoline delivers fast-paced intrigue, but also an authentic, tender coming-of-age tale of three best friends navigating the complexities of Fascism, war, and romance.”

—**Lisa Wingate, author of *Before We Were Yours***

“The master storyteller Lisa Scottoline is at the height of her powers with *ETERNAL*. This magnificent epic is the story of three childhood friends who come of age during World War II Italy. You are with them in the worst of times as they navigate their lost dreams. You will root for their survival as they find redemption in a post-war world they must build with hope. Love. Faith. Friendship. Courage.

It's all here and it is essential reading.”

—**Adriana Trigiani, bestselling author of *The Shoemaker's Wife***

“*ETERNAL* is remarkable historical fiction that brings to life Rome in the years leading up to and during WWII on the shoulders of unforgettable characters caught up on all sides of terrible events spinning beyond their control. Scottoline’s research is impeccable, her storytelling is propulsive, and the emotional times she describes are deep, moving, and yes, eternal.”—**Mark Sullivan, bestselling author of *Beneath a Scarlet Sky***

“In *ETERNAL*, Lisa Scottoline expands her formidable talents to World War II Italy and the heartwarming tale of three families whose intersecting worlds are torn apart. Scottoline captures the tragic beauty of wartime Rome through the eyes of unforgettable characters with whom readers will hope and mourn and cheer. A passionate story of friendship, loyalty, and unbridled heroism.”

—**Pam Jenoff, bestselling author of *The Lost Girls of Paris***

“What Elena Ferrante did with her Neapolitan Quartet, Scottoline does for war-time Rome: brings it to life as the city is ripped apart by men in power and barely held together by the courage and decency of those who stand against them. *Eternal* is a must read.”—**Lorenzo Carcaterra, bestselling author of *Sleepers***

“At its heart, *ETERNAL* is a beautiful, heartbreaking, yet ultimately uplifting love story. Meticulously researched, this riveting World War II-era novel explores what happens when beautiful Elisabetta must choose between lifelong best friends Sandro and Marco. As they get caught up in the madness that overtakes Italy when it becomes a satellite of Hitler and the Third Reich, each must make a gut-wrenching choice that determines the course of the rest of their lives. Action-packed and haunting, *Eternal* will stay with you for a long time after you finish reading it. I loved this book!”—**Karen Robards, author of *The Black Swan of Paris***

“Lisa Scottoline is a magnificent storyteller. *ETERNAL* is a triangular story of first love, told against the backdrop of WWII in Rome, that is both terrifying and magical; three young people at one of the worst times in history are filled with love, hate, fear, rage, and at the end, survival and hope. *Eternal* is brilliantly written. Scottoline hits new heights in this spellbinding tale of decades-old family secrets and rips apart the fragility of first loves. I was pulled in from the first page by the lives of Scottoline’s characters as they tried to make their way through events beyond their control in this richly detailed story that makes you feel like you’re right alongside them.” —**Andrew Mayne, author of *The Naturalist***

“*ETERNAL* brings to vivid life the drama and tragedy of a dark chapter in history that is still not widely known, though it took place in the heart of Rome, one of the most popular cities in the world. The novel’s protagonists - Elisabetta, Marco, and Sandro - are unforgettable, and through their story, we can better understand the moral and ethical dilemmas inherent in the complex, yet eternal, struggle against fascism and barbarism, and for justice and love.” —**Dr. Stanislao Pugliese, Fulbright Scholar, Professor of Modern European History, Queensboro UNICO Distinguished Professor of Italian and Italian-American Studies at Hofstra University, and author of *Bitter Spring: A Life of Ignazio Silone***

# FROM PHILIP ROTH'S SEMINAR TO *ETERNAL* BY LISA SCOTTLINE

Why did I write *Eternal*, and why now?

I have wanted to write this novel ever since my college days as an English major at the University of Pennsylvania, where I took a year-long seminar taught by the late Philip Roth. One semester was "The Literature of the Holocaust," and Mr. Roth, (which is what he asked us to call him), introduced us to the work of Primo Levi, an Italian Jewish chemist who was deported to Auschwitz during World War II, but survived to write, among other things, the seminal memoir *If This Is a Man*, published in the United States as *Survival in Auschwitz*.

Taking a class with one of America's greatest novelists, studying works of such depth, was a remarkable experience, and the lessons that Mr. Roth taught me informed my writing, even today. There were only about twelve of us in the seminar, and Mr. Roth taught us not only to read differently, but to write differently. He taught us that characterization matters because people matter, and that authenticity of voice matters because truth matters. He taught us that whether your subject is as weighty as the Holocaust or as apparently mundane as domestic life, you have to tell it true. Most of all, Mr. Roth taught us that every sentence matters.

What people don't know about Mr. Roth is that he was also a student of world literature. He championed the work of many authors not well-known in the United States, like Primo Levi, and the two men became friends. Mr. Roth told our class that he thought Levi was one of the most talented writers the world has ever produced, and the Italian Holocaust that had victimized Levi wasn't well-enough known, world-wide.

He was right. I'm Italian-American, a lawyer, and I've been an adjunct law professor at the University of Pennsylvania Law School, teaching a course I developed called Justice & Fiction - but I hadn't known much about the Holocaust in Italy. To read *Survival in Auschwitz* is to see the horrific concentration camp through the eyes of a matter-of-fact, and often wry, observer. For example, the first line of the Levi's Preface reads: "It was my good fortune to be deported to Auschwitz only in 1944...."

After I took Mr. Roth's seminar, I knew that I would write about the Holocaust in Italy someday, and I began my research, reading everything I could on the subject. Rome struck me as the best location for the novel, since its so-called Ghetto is home to the oldest continuously-existing Jewish Community in all of Western Civilization. And during my research, I learned about a horrific event that took place in the Ghetto in October, 1943, which historians have termed the Gold of Rome. It was part of the Nazi's plan to eradicate Rome's Jews, but it wasn't well-known outside the scholarship and it needed to be.

That awful event held so many other true, if smaller, stories, like the Catholic hospital in Rome which hid its Jewish patients from the Nazis by fabricating an ersatz, highly-contagious virus called Syndrome K, the name itself a sly reference to Nazi Field-Marshal Albert Kesselring. The more I read about the Gold of Rome, the more I knew I would build *Eternal* around that time.

But I could not write *Eternal* until I was ready.

So in the meantime, I started writing, some thirty-two novels. One or two of them touch on the Italian Holocaust, like *The Vendetta Defense*, a Rosato & Associates novel in which lawyer Judy Carrier defends an old Italian immigrant of murder, which he admits he committed, in retaliation for the murder of his wife by Mussolini's fascists. Later, in *Killer Smile*, lawyer Mary DiNunzio investigates the decades-old death of an Italian POW who had been interned during World War II in a camp in Missoula, Montana.

I also refined my thoughts about family by writing a series of humorous memoirs with my daughter Francesca Serritella, now a novelist in her own right. Those memoirs, like *Why My Third Husband Will Be A Dog*, are collections of short essays, many of which feature my late mother, Mother Mary. She was the feistiest combination of fact and fiction ever, like most mothers (just ask Philip Roth.) And by the way, Mother Mary found her way into *Eternal*, where she informed the character of Nonna.

Everything I've ever written, whether series, standalone, fiction or nonfiction, has explored themes of family, justice, and love, and *Eternal* is the culmination of a lifetime of my work. The novel is the epic story of a love triangle set against the *ventennio*, the twenty years of Mussolini's rise and fall. The characters are three best friends and their families - Elisabetta and the D'Orfeo family, Marco and the Terrizzi family, and Alessandro "Sandro" and the Simone family. The threesome grow up together in Rome, but both boys fall in love with the beautiful Elisabetta, who loves them both but isn't ready yet to decide between them, since she first wants to become a novelist. In the meantime, Mussolini and the Fascists are promulgating a barrage of discriminatory Race Laws against Jews like Sandro and his family, systematically stripping away their rights, even before Italy enters World War II.

Because *Eternal* was bigger in scope than my previous work, the writing process was completely different. I've written three books a year in my time, but *Eternal* took longer and came out longer. The first draft was *a thousand* pages. I thought every page was essential, but it wasn't. (Did I mention I like sentences, too?)

I hope you find *Eternal* an emotional and vividly dramatic story of three people, set in one of the most glorious cities in the world, against the most turbulent of times. I also hope that you ponder the questions about law and justice that it raises. For example, if law is supposed to lead to justice, what happens when law itself is unjust? What result when the world turns topsy-turvy, and good becomes bad, and bad becomes powerful?

That's the long answer to these questions: why *Eternal*, and why now?

As to the questions raised by the novel itself, I leave those to you.