



The American Doctor

Salvatore J. Forcina

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The inspiring memoir The American Doctor shares tested advice for pursuing one's dreams.

Salvatore J. Forcina's moving memoir *The American Doctor* is about struggling to find a place in the world.

An Italian immigrant to the United States (by way of Argentina), Forcina made his career as a general and vascular surgeon. He opened a thriving private practice and was the chief of surgery at two New Jersey hospitals. But he faced obstacles to achieving these dreams, from circumstantial ones (being born into poverty and not speaking English when he first moved to the US) to internal ones (being shy and meek, qualities attributed to years spent in a religious boarding school). He credits stalwart determination with his eventual success and seeks to use his story to inspire others to persist in pursuit of their own dreams.

The narration is enthusiastic and effusive, expressing enthusiasm around topics like family, personal interests, and Forcina's adopted homeland. There are emotional tributes to Forcina's parents and wife, complemented by anecdotes that relate their unrelenting support of him; he calls their support crucial to his success. Excitement is also expressed for Forcina's hobbies, including opera and ancient history, whose stories and events are metaphorically tied to his own; herein, appreciating art and being aware of what happened in the past to avoid repeating past mistakes are both important. And the book displays patriotism when it comes to the United States, with fervent and familiar praise of the nation (it is called the land of opportunity and the promised land; "God Bless America" is written in all caps, in a break with the book's general stylistic conventions). Comparisons are made between the US, Argentina, and Italy (the latter of which Forcina left when he was eight years old), alongside expressions of gratitude for Forcina's change in setting.

However, the prose is also lackadaisical to distracting effect. There are vague and ambiguous phrases throughout the book, as with the inclusion of a quote that is attributed to Martín Fierro, a fictional gaucho-poet, in a way that makes it seem as though he were a real historical figure. And there are stilted sentences where awkwardly placed modifiers muddle meanings. Further, thoughts are often repeated within short spans of time, interrupting the book's flow.

Closing with emotional life and career reflections, the memoir *The American Doctor* shares tested advice for the pursuit of one's dreams.

CAROLINA CIUCCI (June 29, 2023)

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