

**THE TRUTH
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Sicilian Vespers.

Thick, coarse, sulphuric fog rubbed itself against the windows of the aeroplane. It was like being burned in a bundle of yellow chiffon scarves. The noise of the engine rose steadily to a crescendo roar and then dimmed to a purr in a sickening ritual cycle. We were dropping down blindly into the African heat of Sicily—Paradiso del Mediterraneo.

'Scylla and Charybdis' said the stewardess helpfully, pointing a long, elegant manicured finger downwards.

[. . .]

The nearest I got to manifestation on the bus was a lecture from the driver about the evil eye. He advised me that it was unnecessary to buy a silver goat-horned charm. All that was necessary was a secret, obscene but highly effective gesture with the right hand. I comforted myself with the thought that the Germans who had got that wonderful view as far as Mount Erice would certainly be fool enough to buy useless charms. All the way back to Palermo I sat in front with the driver. We raced the train to the crossings under the shadow of the purple mountains, hooted the horn like mad things, and made the protective gesture against *mal'occhio* to each other.

For three days running I tried to find a manifestation by setting out eastwards to Cefalu where **Aleister Crowley** once had a sinister tower in which he practiced the black arts. Something always seemed to stop me half way at Solunto. At least I think it was Solunto. I always have a sneaky feeling in foreign parts that as long as I don't ask the way I can pretend to be a native and therefore will not be overcharged for chocolates and cigarettes and wine.

[. . .]