Handout: Dolce far niente

THEORY

dolce far niente Italian [ˈdoltʃe far ˈnjɛnte]: pleasant idleness

[literally: sweet doing nothing]

The phrase “dolce far niente” literally means "sweet doing nothing" = "Delicious idleness". Sheer indulgent relaxation and blissful laziness, being deliciously idle.

This expression was used in the book Eat, Pray, Love.

Eat, Pray, Love: One Woman's Search for Everything Across Italy, India and Indonesia is a 2006 memoir by American author Elizabeth Gilbert. The memoir chronicles the author's trip around the world after her divorce and what she discovered during her travels. The book remained on The New York Times Best Seller list for 187 weeks.

The film version, which stars American actress Julia Roberts, was released in 2010. At 32 years old, Elizabeth Gilbert was educated, had a home, a husband, and a successful career as a writer. However, she was unhappy in her marriage and often spent the night sleeping on her bathroom floor. After separating from her husband and initiating a divorce, which he contested, she embarked on a rebound relationship which continued for some time but did not work out, leaving her devastated and alone.

Afterwards, while writing an article on yoga vacations in Bali, Gilbert met a ninth-generation medicine man who told her she would one day come back and study with him. After finalizing her difficult divorce, Gilbert spent the next year traveling around the world. The trip was paid for in advance with a book deal from the publisher. She spent four months in Italy, eating and enjoying life ("Eat"). She spent three months in India, finding her spirituality ("Pray"). She ended the year in Bali, Indonesia, looking for "balance" of the two and found love ("Love") in the form of a dashing Brazilian factory owner.

Sources: Wikipedia