

A Brief History of the Prospero Family

As far back as family history can remember, the Prosperos have been making a fair amount of money selling grapes. There have been good and bad times, but for the most part, the family was well-off.

In 1752, Alecto Prospero was born. He was the fifth of six children and the third of three boys. He also had a much better head for business than any of his siblings and even surpassed his father. He very quickly became heir-apparent to the family business. As a young boy, Alecto befriended Anton Rigaletti. Anton also showed great potential in business and, as the boys grew older, they began formulating a plan to expand the Prospero family business. With the combination of cleverness and Anton's mysterious ability to get anyone to do what he wanted, it seemed impossible for the friends to fail. At the age of 17, the young men turn the Prospero family's grape business into The Fortunato Wine Company. The family wealth explodes. Alecto names his first-born son Anton in honor of his friend and business partner and instructs each of his children to do the same with their first-born sons. Anton Rigaletti is named the boy's godfather.

Groomed by his father and godfather, Anton Prospero grows to be almost as clever as his father and is given control of the family business when he turns 30. Alecto, tragically, dies in an accident shortly afterward. Mysteriously, his body is never found. Anton Rigaletti, who has aged remarkably well, almost not changing since turning 35, attends the wake but, as had become his habit, must leave before morning and cannot attend the funeral. He vows that he and his family will always look after the Prospero family. Anton Rigaletti, known as a man of his word, keeps his vow. A nephew of his, by the name of Roderigo Giovanni, appears at the home of the late Alecto Prospero one evening to announce Anton Rigaletti's death, but shortly afterward many nephews and cousins appear to start aiding each of Alecto's decedents. Each son is given a part of the original vineyard or a plot of land to work while something similar is included in the dowry of each daughter. Every first-born son is given the name Anton or some derivative and the habit of naming second sons "Alecto" is quickly picked up.

Anton Rigaletti's relatives, who all possess a myriad of last names, are all very skilled in business and very concerned with family. No member of the Prospero family, no matter how distant, is allowed to go unaided. Claudia's uncle, Alecto Gregorio Prospero, had an affair with a young woman in the village. The woman bore a son whom Alecto Gregorio refused to acknowledge. News of this reached Simon DeMichio, a distant cousin of Anton Rigaletti, who quickly showed up at Alecto Gregorio's door in the middle of the night and demanded that the child be acknowledged and brought into the house as he was a part of the family. Alecto Gregorio insisted that the child was not family because he did not bear the name, to which Simon replied, "Who cares about names? Names are fluid. You can change them at will. I could be called a duck if I chose. Names do not matter. Family and blood, that's what matters. The child is your blood. The child is your family. You will bring your family into this house and care for him for the rest of your life as you will all the rest of your children." The following morning, after Simon left shortly before dawn, Alecto Gregorio went into the village and retrieved his son. As the boy was the

first-born son to Alecto Gregorio, he was given the name Anton Simon Prospero. The mother was given full right to visit her son and given money on a monthly basis to help her support herself.

Claudia's father, Antonio Giuseppe Prospero, married Annabella Roselia in 1828. In 1829, they gave birth to their first child, Antonio Miguel Prospero. Annabella did not want to name her son Antonio as she did not fully understand the family tradition, but she agreed so long as she was given the right to name their next child. Antonio Giuseppe agreed so long as he chose the child's middle name. In 1833, Claudia Antonia Prospero was born.

In 1849, Antonio Giuseppe died in an accident and his body was never found. After Alecto Prospero, he was the third member of the family to have died in such a manner, leading some members of the family to believe that the family was cursed. Jacob Giovanni, a relative of Anton Rigaletti of some sort, showed up to help the family stay on its feet. Antonio Miguel was a troublesome young man and had been troublesome his entire life. He had no desire to understand business and preferred stalking about playing cruel tricks on people, particularly his sister, and stealing. He had also been accused of killing other people's livestock on multiple occasions. In place of being able to at all groom Antonio Miguel, Jacob Giovanni would spend much of the time during his visits with Claudia. Later on the same year, Antonio Miguel disappeared. Annabella panicked, not knowing how they would keep their small vineyard or claim on the family business. Jacob Giovanni assured her that they would lose nothing and promised to take over their assets until an appropriate male in the Prospero family could be found to officially take over.

In the winter of 1850, while Jacob Giovanni was transferring the paperwork over to one of Claudia's cousins, Claudia Antonia Prospero vanished from her bedroom in the middle of the night.

Annabella lived a long life, well taken care of by both families, but she never learned what happened to her children and never remarried. She was comforted by the words of Jacob Giovanni, repeated often by all of Anton Rigaletti's relatives and eventually picked up by the Prospero family, "Anton and Alecto live. As they live, they watch."

The Fortunato Wine Company continues to do extremely well and is still in the control of the Prospero family and the relatives of Anton Rigaletti.