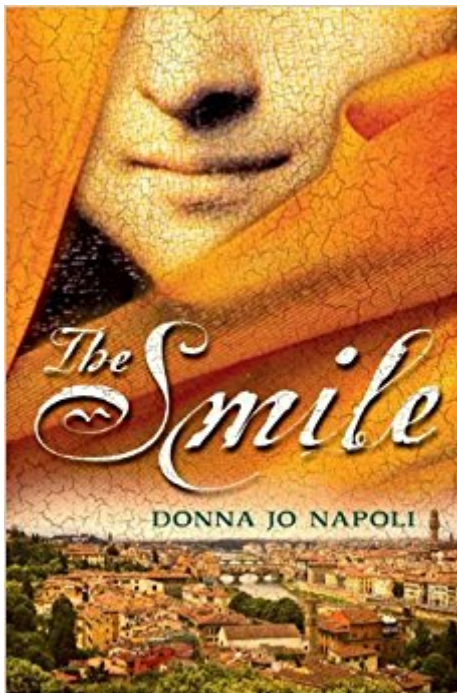


The book was found

The Smile



Synopsis

Hers is the most famous portrait in the world. Here, in prose as rich as the high Renaissance, is Mona Lisa's tale—a story of passion, intrigue, loss, and, most of all, love. Elisabetta longs for romance, though she thinks she is too plain. Then, on a fateful visit to glittering Florence, she catches the eye of the great Leonardo da Vinci, and falls for a boy named Giuliano de' Medici. It is a dangerous time to be—or be involved with—a Medici. As tragedy and chaos threaten their happiness, Elisabetta faces the bittersweet truth of love.

Book Information

Lexile Measure: 580L (What's this?)

Hardcover: 272 pages

Publisher: Dutton Books for Young Readers (October 16, 2008)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0525479996

ISBN-13: 978-0525479994

Product Dimensions: 8.4 x 5.9 x 1 inches

Shipping Weight: 12.8 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 3.9 out of 5 stars 22 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #1,121,942 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #38 in [Books > Teens >](#)

[Historical Fiction > Renaissance](#) #57 in [Books > Children's Books > Literature & Fiction >](#)

[Historical Fiction > Renaissance](#) #973 in [Books > Teens > Romance > Historical](#)

Age Range: 12 and up

Grade Level: 7 and up

Customer Reviews

Grade 6–10 • In the Florentine countryside, Monna Elisabetta struggles to become the noblewoman she's destined to be. Although her father is challenged to keep his silk business thriving during difficult economic times, Monna's mother is planning to give her an elaborate 13th birthday party in order to meet a suitable husband. But upon Mamma's sudden death, the event is canceled, and Monna turns her grief into preparing meals and working alongside her father. His friend Leonardo da Vinci has introduced her to Giuliano de' Medici, who becomes smitten with her smile. When her father remarries into nobility, Monna is forced into an arranged marriage, despite the fact that she has given her heart to Giuliano. This tribute to the woman behind Leonardo's masterpiece is another wonderfully researched and well-crafted novel from Napoli. Artfully blending

fact and fiction, the author tells a tender story of a girl coming of age during a turbulent time. Readers will be moved by the plight of this three-dimensional protagonist. — Kimberly Monaghan, formerly at Vernon Area Public Library, IL Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.

The identity of the woman the world calls Mona Lisa has ignited speculation since Leonardo da Vinci created her portrait and left it untitled, unsigned, and undated. In this richly embroidered romance set in Renaissance Florence, Napoli imagines the young life of the woman behind the famous smile. Thirteen-year-old Elisabetta, the daughter of a wealthy silk merchant, is starting to think of marriage when Leonardo da Vinci, a family friend, introduces her to young heir Giuliano de' Medici. The teenagers share an instant attraction that deepens into friendship and, finally, love. Political turmoil that escalates into war threatens the young romance, though, and Elisabetta is caught between her passionate attachment to Giuliano and her dutiful obligations to her family. Napoli skillfully draws readers into the vibrant settings, from opulent Florentine palaces to rustic hillside villas, with tangible, sensory details that enliven the novel's intriguing references to history and art. Elisabetta's strength and individuality, as she grows into marriage and motherhood, will captivate readers, as will her wonderment over love's complexity. Grades 8-11. --Gillian Engberg

If you like reading about Italian history or the customs and daily lives of the well-off typical Italian family, this is a good read. The romance isn't forced or the highlight of the story, the things unfolding around Betta make you turn the pages faster than you would think from the cover. I've recommended this book to all of my friends, I discovered it in Highschool and it's always been a favorite. If you like it I recommend Romeo's Ex:Rosaline's Story by Lisa Fielder or any of the Historical Fiction Novels about royal women by Carolyn Meyer. This is the first book I ever read more than once, and trust me it's almost as good the second time as it is the first. I can't praise this book enough, BUY IT.

I like many of Donna's books, especially "Bound" but this one just didn't hold my interest. It felt like some parts dragged a bit and sometimes I had a hard time remembering who was who because some of the names sound very similar. I didn't feel a sense of urgency or make much of a connection with Elisabetta. I guess I like my heroine's with a bit more spunk, like Birdie in Catherine Called Birdie. I understand the author has to be historically accurate and maybe there wasn't a lot of excitement that she could have worked in without stretching the truth too much. Anyhow, it could just

be me. It seems everyone else enjoyed it immensely, so it's worth giving a shot. Just wasn't my cup of tea. I would recommend reading the sample first. It gives you a good idea of the tone of the book.

As I middle-school English teacher, I had the joy of introducing this book to my students this fall. Our school had selected the book because of the connection to fine art, but I was pleased that the book delivered something much more interesting--the story of a young noble lady during the Italian Renaissance. My students cheered for Elisabetta's pursuit of marriage for love. They saw how the life of a woman during this time period was based almost solely upon her marriage. Middle-school girls will find this story especially interesting because most of the story takes place when the main character and narrator is close to their ages. The boys who read the book also enjoyed it because of its engaging story and the attitude of the narrator. I also kept telling them that they were getting a rare inside view of the mind of a teenage girl. Overall, I recommend this book to young adult readers. My only complaint (and the complaint of my students) is the ending, but I won't spoil it for those who are about to pick up this book.

To be honest, I didn't really like this book. The pacing was odd, and there were a lot of short sentences that didn't explain as much as they could have. First person is pretty hard to write, and there was something strange about this story that didn't quite cut it. I didn't particularly like Elisabetta's character either, she seemed a bit whiny, and her feelings were unreasonable at times. I was required to read this for a school book group, good for learning more about Italy in the Renaissance, but otherwise I would not suggest this book, and don't read it to kids who are younger than 12.

I would give it 5 stars as it is a very good historical fiction but I didn't find it appropriate for 7th grade level (as recommended here). There is so much sexual content that I finished it (because it is an excellent story otherwise) but my children didn't. Glad I previewed it for them.

As with all Donna Jo Napoli books I have read there is no happy ending. But with all Napoli books I have read it is one that stays with you after you finish reading it. The smile is probably one of the better Napoli books but I honestly think all of her YA books are amazing. Well recommended.

On a recent trip to Italy we had to choose books that could be enjoyed by an 11 year old, her Mom and grandma. This book was everyone's favorite! In fact Donna Jo Napoli's books are fabulous at

any age! Wonderful historical fiction, she is my favorite!

One of my favorite Napoli stories. I couldn't put it down.

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