



## Those Who Leave and Those Who Stay: Neapolitan Novels, Book Three

By Elena Ferrante

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### Those Who Leave and Those Who Stay: Neapolitan Novels, Book Three By Elena Ferrante

Soon to be an HBO series, book three in the *New York Times* bestselling Neapolitan quartet about two friends in post-war Italy is a rich, intense, and generous-hearted epic by one of today's most beloved and acclaimed writers, Elena Ferrante, "one of the great novelists of our time." (Roxana Robinson, *The New York Times*)

In the third book in the Neapolitan quartet, Elena and Lila, the two girls whom readers first met in *My Brilliant Friend*, have become women. Lila married at sixteen and has a young son; she has left her husband and the comforts her marriage brought and now works as a common laborer. Elena has left the neighborhood, earned her college degree, and published a successful novel, all of which has opened the doors to a world of learned interlocutors and richly furnished salons. Both women are pushing against the walls of a prison that would have seen them living a life of misery, ignorance and submission. They are afloat on the great sea of opportunities that opened up during the nineteen-seventies. Yet they are still very much bound to each other by a strong, unbreakable bond.

Ferrante is one of the world's great storytellers. With the Neapolitan quartet she has given her readers an abundant, generous, and masterfully plotted page-turner that is also a stylish work of literary fiction destined to delight readers for many generations to come.

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### Editorial Review

#### Review

##### Praise for **Elena Ferrante** and *The Neapolitan Novels*

“Ferrante’s novels are intensely, violently personal, and because of this they seem to dangle bristling key chains of confession before the unsuspecting reader.”

—James Wood, *The New Yorker*

“One of the more nuanced portraits of feminine friendship in recent memory.”

—Megan O’Grady, *Vogue*

“Amazing! *My Brilliant Friend* took my breath away. If I were president of the world I would make everyone read this book. It is so honest and right and opens up heart to so much. Reading Ferrante reminded me of that child-like excitement when you can’t look up from the page, when your eyes seem to be popping from your head, when you think: I didn’t know books could do this!” —Elizabeth Strout, author of *Olive Kitteridge*

“I like the Italian writer, Elena Ferrante, a lot. I’ve been reading all her work and all about her.”

—John Waters, actor and director

“Elena Ferrante may be the best contemporary novelist you’ve never heard of.”

—*The Economist*

“Ferrante’s freshness has nothing to do with fashion...it is imbued with the most haunting music of all, the echoes of literary history.”

—*The New York Times Book Review*

“I am such a fan of Ferrante’s work, and have been for quite a while.”

—Jennifer Gilmore, author of *The Mothers*

“The women’s fraught relationship and shifting fortunes are the life forces of the poignant book.”

—*Publisher’s Weekly*

“When I read [the Neapolitan novels] I find that I never want to stop. I feel vexed by the obstacles—my job, or acquaintances on the subway—that threaten to keep me apart from the books. I mourn separations (a year until the next one—how?). I am propelled by a ravenous will to keep going.”

—Molly Fischer, *The New Yorker*

“[Ferrante’s Neapolitan Novels] don’t merely offer a teeming vision of working-class Naples, with its cobblers and professors, communists and mobbed-up businessmen, womanizing poets and downtrodden wives; they present one of modern fiction’s richest portraits of a friendship.”

—John Powers, *Fresh Air, NPR*

“Elena Ferrante is one of the great novelists of our time. Her voice is passionate, her view sweeping and her gaze basilisk . . . In these bold, gorgeous, relentless novels, Ferrante traces the deep connections between the

political and the domestic. This is a new version of the way we live now — one we need, one told brilliantly, by a woman.”

—Roxana Robinson, *The New York Times Book Review*

“An intoxicatingly furious portrait of enmeshed friends Lila and Elena, Bright and passionate girls from a raucous neighborhood in world-class Naples. Ferrante writes with such aggression and unnerving psychological insight about the messy complexity of female friendship that the real world can drop away when you’re reading her.”

—*Entertainment Weekly*

“Ferrante seasons the prose with provocative perceptions not unlike the way Proust did.”

—*Shelf Awareness*

“It would be difficult to find a deeper portrait of women’s friendship than the one in Ferrante’s Neapolitan novels, which unfold from the fifties to the twenty-first century to tell a single story with the possessive force of an origin myth.”

—Megan O’Grady, *Vogue*

“Ferrante’s writing is so unencumbered, so natural, and yet so lovely, brazen, and flush. The constancy of detail and the pacing that zips and skips then slows to a real-time crawl have an almost psychic effect, bringing you deeply into synchronicity with the discomforts and urgency of the characters’ emotions. Ferrante is unlike other writers—not because she’s innovative, but rather because she’s unselfconscious and brutally, diligently honest.”

—Minna Proctor, *Bookforum*

“Ferrante can do a woman’s interior dialogue like no one else, with a ferocity that is shockingly honest, unnervingly blunt.”

—*Booklist*

“The truest evocation of a complex and lifelong friendship between women I’ve ever read.”

—Emily Gould, author of *Friendship*

“Elena Ferrante is the author of several remarkable, lucid, austere honest novels . . . *My Brilliant Friend* is a large, captivating, amiably peopled bildungsroman.”

—James Wood, *The New Yorker*

“Compelling, visceral and immediate . . . a riveting examination of power . . . The Neapolitan novels are a tour de force.”

—Jennifer Gilmore, *The Los Angeles Times*

“*Those Who Leave and Those Who Stay* surpasses the rapturous storytelling of the previous titles in the Neapolitan Novels.”

—*Publishers Weekly* (starred review)

“Ferrante’s voice feels necessary. She is the Italian Alice Munro.”

—Mona Simpson, author of *Casebook* and *Anywhere But Here*

“Elena Ferrante will blow you away.”

—Alice Sebold, author of *The Lovely Bones*

*“The Days of Abandonment is a powerful, heartrending novel.”*

—Jhumpa Lahiri, Pulitzer-prize winning author of *The Lowland*

*“The Neapolitan novel cycle is an unconditional masterpiece . . . I read all the books in a state of immersion; I was totally enthralled. There was nothing else I wanted to do except follow the lives of Lila and Lenù to the end.”*

—Jhumpa Lahiri, Pulitzer-prize winning author of *The Lowland*

*“Reading Ferrante reminded me of that child-like excitement when you can’t look up from the page, when your eyes seem to be popping from your head, when you think: I didn’t know books could do this!”*

—Elizabeth Strout, Pulitzer-prize winning author of *The Burgess Boys*

*“Elena Ferrante: the best angry woman writer ever!”*

—John Waters, director

*“The feverish speculation about the identity of Elena Ferrante betrays an understandable failure of imagination: it seems impossible that right now somewhere someone sits in a room and draws up these books. Palatial and heartbreaking beyond measure, the Neapolitan novels seem less written than they do revealed. One simply surrenders. When the final volume appears—may that day never come!—they’re bound to be acknowledged as one of the most powerful works of art, in any medium, of our age.”*

—Gideon Lewis-Kraus, author of *A Sense of Direction*

*“Ferrante tackles girlhood and friendship with amazing force.”*

—Gwyneth Paltrow, actor

*“Elena Ferrante’s *The Story of a New Name*. Book two in her Naples trilogy. Two words: Read it.”*

—Ann Hood, writer (from Twitter)

*“Ferrante continues to imbue this growing saga with great magic.”*

—Booklist (starred review)

*“One of Italy’s best contemporary novelists?”*

—The Seattle Times

*“Ferrante’s emotional and carnal candor are so potent.”*

—Janet Maslin, *The New York Times*

*“Elena Ferrante’s gutsy and compulsively readable new novel, the first of a quartet, is a terrific entry point for Americans unfamiliar with the famously reclusive writer, whose go-for-broke tales of women’s shadow selves—those ambivalent mothers and seething divorcées too complex or unseemly for polite society (and most literary fiction, for that matter)—shimmer with Balzacian human detail and subtle psychological suspense . . . The Neapolitan novels offer one of the more nuanced portraits of feminine friendship in recent memory—from the make-up and break-up quarrels of young girls to the way in which we carefully define ourselves against each other as teens—Ferrante wisely balances her memoir-like emotional authenticity with a wry sociological understanding of a society on the verge of dramatic change.”*

—Megan O’Grady, *Vogue*

*“My Brilliant Friend is a sweeping family-centered epic that encompasses issues of loyalty, love, and a*

*transforming Europe. This gorgeous novel should bring a host of new readers to one of Italy's most acclaimed authors."*

—*The Barnes and Noble Review*

*"Ferrante draws an indelible picture of the city's mean streets and the poverty, violence and sameness of lives lived in the same place forever . . . She is a fierce writer."*

—*Shelf Awareness*

*"Ferrante transforms the love, separation and reunion of two poor urban girls into the general tragedy of their city."*

—*The New York Times*

*"Beautifully translated by Ann Goldstein . . . Ferrante writes with a ferocious, intimate urgency that is a celebration of anger. Ferrante is terribly good with anger, a very specific sort of wrath harbored by women, who are so often not allowed to give voice to it. We are angry, a lot of the time, at the position we're in—whether it's as wife, daughter, mother, friend—and I can think of no other woman writing who is so swift and gorgeous in this rage, so bracingly fearless in mining fury."*

—*Susanna Sonnenberg, The San Francisco Chronicle*

*"Everyone should read anything with Ferrante's name on it."*

—*The Boston Globe*

*"The through-line in all of Ferrante's investigations, for me, is nothing less than one long, mind-and-heart-shredding howl for the history of women (not only Neapolitan women), and its implicit j'accuse . . . Ferrante's effect, critics agree, is inarguable. 'Intensely, violently personal' and 'brutal directness, familial torment' is how James Wood ventures to categorize her—descriptions that seem mild after you've encountered the work."*

—*Joan Frank, The San Francisco Chronicle*

*"Lila, mercurial, unsparing, and, at the end of this first episode in a planned trilogy from Ferrante, seemingly capable of starting a full-scale neighborhood war, is a memorable character."*

—*Publishers Weekly*

*"An engrossing, wildly original contemporary epic about the demonic power of human (and particularly female) creativity checked by the forces of history and society."*

—*The Los Angeles Review of Books*

*"Ferrante's own writing has no limits, is willing to take every thought forward to its most radical conclusion and backwards to its most radical birthing."*

—*The New Yorker*

*"The Story of a New Name, like its predecessor, is fiction of the very highest order."*

—*Independent on Sunday*

*"My Brilliant Friend, translated by Ann Goldstein, is stunning: an intense, forensic exploration of the friendship between Lila and the story's narrator, Elena. Ferrante's evocation of the working-class district of Naples where Elena and Lila first meet as two wiry eight-year-olds is cinematic in the density of its detail."*

—*The Times Literary Supplement*

*“This is a story about friendship as a mass of roiling currents—love, envy, pity, dependency and Schadenfreude coiling around one another, tricky to untangle.”*

—*Intelligent Life*

*“Elena Ferrante may be the best contemporary novelist you have never heard of. The Italian author has written six lavishly praised novels. But she writes under a pseudonym and will not offer herself for public consumption. Her characters likewise defy convention . . . Her prose is crystal, and her storytelling both visceral and compelling.”*

—*The Economist*

*“Ferrante is an expert above all at the rhythm of plotting: certain feuds and oppositions are kept simmering and in abeyance for years, so that a particular confrontation – a particular scene – can be many hundreds of pages in coming, but when it arrives seems at once shocking and inevitable.”*

—*The Independent*

*“Those Who Leave and Those Who Stay evokes the vital flux of a heartbeat, of blood flowing through our veins.”*

—*La Repubblica*

*“We don’t know who she is, but it doesn’t matter. Ferrante’s books are entralling self-contained monoliths that do not seek friendship but demand silent, fervid admiration from her passionate readers . . . The thing most real in these novels is the intense, almost osmotic relationship that unites Elena and Lila, the two girls from a neighborhood in Naples who are the peerless protagonists of the Neapolitan novels.”*

—*Famiglia Cristiana*

*“Today it is near impossible to find writers capable of bringing smells, tastes, feelings, and contradictory passions to their pages. Elena Ferrante, alone, seems able to do it. There is no writer better suited to composing the great Italian novel of her generation, her country, and her time than she.”*

—*Il Manifesto*

*“Elena Ferrante is a very great novelist . . . In a world often held prisoner to minimalism, her writing is extremely powerful, earthy, and audacious.”*

—*Francesca Marciano, author of The Other Language*

*“Regardless of who is behind the name Elena Ferrante, the mysterious pseudonym used by the author of the Neapolitan novels, two things are certain: she is a woman and she knows how to describe Naples like nobody else. She does so with a style that recalls an enchanted spider web with its expressive power and the wizardry with which it creates an entire world.”*

—*Huffington Post (Italy)*

*“A marvel that is without limits and beyond genre.”*

—*Il Salvagente*

*“Elena Ferrante is proving that literature can cure our present ills; it can cure the spirit by operating as an antidote to the nervous attempts we make to see ourselves reflected in the present-day of a country that is increasingly repellent.”*

—*Il Mattino*

*“My Brilliant Friend flows from the soul like an eruption from Mount Vesuvio.”*

—*La Repubblica*

*“No one has a voice quite like Ferrante’s. Her gritty, ruthlessly frank novels roar off the page with a barbed fury, like an attack that is also a defense . . . Ferrante’s fictions are fierce, unsentimental glimpses at the way a woman is constantly under threat, her identity submerged in marriage, eclipsed by motherhood, mythologised by desire. Imagine if Jane Austen got angry and you’ll have some idea of how explosive these works are.”*

—*John Freeman, The Australian*

*“One of the most astounding—and mysterious—contemporary Italian novelists available in translation, Elena Ferrante unfolds the tumultuous inner lives of women in her thrillingly menacing stories of lost love, negligent mothers and unfulfilled desires.”*

—*The Age*

*“Ferrante bewitches with her tiny, intricately drawn world . . . My Brilliant Friend journeys fearlessly into some of that murkier psychological territory where questions of individual identity are inextricable from circumstance and the ever-changing identities of others.”*

—*The Melbourne Review*

*“The Neapolitan novels move far from contrivance, logic or respectability to ask uncomfortable questions about how we live, how we love, how we singe an existence in a deeply flawed world that expects pretty acquiescence from its women. In all their beauty, their ugliness, their devotion and deceit, these girls enchant and repulse, like life, like our very selves.”*

—*The Sydney Morning Herald*

*“The best thing I’ve read this year, far and away, would be Elena Ferrante...I just think she puts most other writing at the moment in the shade. She’s marvelous. I like her so much I’m now doing something I only do when I really love the writer: I’m only allowing myself two pages a day.”* —Richard Flanagan, author of Book prize finalist, *The Narrow Road to the Deep North*

*“Elena Ferrante’s female characters are genuine works of art . . . It is clear that her novel is the child of Italian neorealism and an abiding fascination with scene.”*

—*El País*

## About the Author

**Elena Ferrante** is the author of *The Days of Abandonment* (Europa, 2005), *Troubling Love* (Europa, 2006), *The Lost Daughter* (Europa, 2008) and the Neapolitan Quartet (Europa 2012-2015). She is also the author of a children’s picture book illustrated by Mara Cerri, *The Beach at Night*.

**Ann Goldstein** is an editor at *The New Yorker*. Her translations for Europa Editions include novels by Amara Lakhous, Alessandro Piperno, and Elena Ferrante’s bestselling *My Brilliant Friend*. She lives in New York.

## Users Review

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**David Cain:**

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