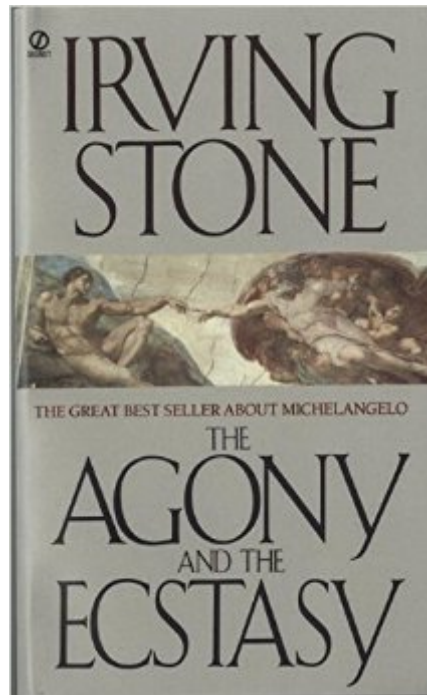


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The Agony And The Ecstasy: A Biographical Novel Of Michelangelo



Synopsis

Irving Stone's classic biographical novel of Michelangelo "in which both the artist and the man are brought to life in full. A masterpiece in its own right, this novel offers a compelling portrait of Michelangelo's dangerous, impassioned loves, and the God-driven fury from which he wrested the greatest art the world has ever known. From the Trade Paperback edition.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Irving Stone had the ability to do for a single person what James Michener had the ability to do for an entire country. Stone gives us biography on a large scale and it is impossible to read him without learning something or coming away from the novel a better person. The Agony and the Ecstasy is the "biographical novel" of Michelangelo but much more than that it is the story of the Italian Renaissance in all its glory. Through Michelangelo's eyes one gets a full feeling for Florence and Rome at the time. Stone paints with a broad brush the stories of wars, feuding princes, religious machinations, and the wonderful art that the Renaissance produced. This novel is however much more than that. It is an analysis of the struggle that is necessary to create. We experience the creation of just about every major work of art of Michelangelo and the personal struggles that went into the creative process. We see the artist as he struggles with family, princes, popes and other artists to get his designs accepted. And finally we see the glory of a life well lived as the artist dies leaving a truly monumental body of work behind. I don't know how much of this work was novel and how much was pure biography but I do know that the result was one of the most enjoyable reading experiences that I've had for many years. The reader need not worry that he or she is not an expert

on Renaissance art when this work is read. Supplemental material and photographs of the works discussed may be found on several web sites. Jump in and enjoy.

Stone took 6 years to research on his biography of Michelangelo. By the end of the book one can only marvel at the tremendous effort Stone undertook. "Agony and Ecstasy" is truly an absorbing and inspiring tale of the greatest genius in art history. Michelangelo's magnificence in sculpture, painting, architecture and poems is compellingly told. The best parts of the novel are the creations of each sculpture, Michelangelo's greatest love. Michelangelo's intensity and passion as he chisels and hammers away on his beloved marbles is vividly written and deeply moving. His rivalry with Raphael and Da Vinci, his struggles with his family, the Popes, the Medici family, his contemporaries and the tumultuous era he lived in are convincing and underlay with sadness. Certain aspects of his life are poignant and heart wrenching - the years wasted quarrying marbles never used, his unsavoury father who only wants money from him and of course the uncompleted Julius II Tomb which haunts him till the later years of his life. By the end of the book, one can only love this titanic genius for his awesome and fearsome talents, which could only be God given, his perseverance, his obsession and passion. The three Pietas, The David, the Madonna and Child in Bruges, Sistine Chapel Vault, Night, Day, Dusk, Dawn, The Last Judgement, St Peter's Dome....Michelangelo is no longer just the creator of these soul stirring, colossal and exalted art works. Stone has given this great genius who lived 500 years ago flesh and blood. Michelangelo is a man driven by his transcendent powers in art, evoking awe, reverence, love and sympathy from us.

I am only 14 years old and I read this book for two reasons. One-my Mom made me, and Two-my big trip to Italy was coming up. After the first chapter, you FELT like you were Michelangelo himself as you flipped through the pages. I found myself more and more interested to read the book rather than just reading it because my Mom wanted me to. I definitely recommend this book to anyone who loves the arts, history, Italy-especially Tuscany and Florence, and even geology to some extent. This novel fascinated me. You are taken from about the time Michelangelo Buonarroti was nine to the day he died. You learn SO MUCH about the sculptures he did-a whole chapter is dedicated to his beloved David. You are taken through Michelangelo's mind and life. From this book, I learned a ton about sculpting, frescoing, and much about the history of Italy. So by the time I got there-to Italy-I knew more than anyone in my family about everything I saw by Michelangelo. He was a genius. Please read this book. You will be inspired and fascinated as I was and you will learn SO

much. You will laugh and cry and by the last page, you are craving to read more. I promise you will not regret flipping through those pages and taking a journey through Michelangelo Buonarroti's mind! :)

As one of Michelangelo's biggest fans, I can truly say that Irving Stone did an incredible job on this biographical novel. Although Michelangelo was known as a sculptor, painter and architect, his greatest love was the marble, and this book shows it. I just returned from a two week vacation through Italy where I stayed in Florence for about a week. The streets and piazzas where Michelangelo and Granacci walked has been captured by Stone in true detail. San Marco and Santa Maria Novella are exactly as Stone describes. I have also seen most of Michelangelo's works and it is wonderful to see the personal "story" behind each of the works. Not only does this book walk with you through Michelangelo's life, but it also gives the reader a piece of Italian history with the Medici family and the Pope. This book gives me another justification why Michelangelo is God sent. No one should judge his work until they have stood in front of David and the Pieta or looked up at the Sistine Chapel. It is one of the most incredible experiences of my life. This book may not be an easy read to some because the Italian names may be hard to follow. Some of the historical conflicts among the Medici family, the Pope and Savonarola may be a bit confusing if the reader is not familiar with the attitudes of that time. There are also a minuet of Italian phrases which may be confusing to those who do not understand Italian. But if you are looking for a great book that not only gives you the history, but the emotion, then this is for you.

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