



# The Temple of Light: A Novel

*Daniela Piazza*

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**The Temple of Light: A Novel** Daniela Piazza

**On the brink of death, the Duke of Milan entrusts his only heir to the church, which is guarding a thousand-year-old secret**

It is the early fifteenth century, and the Italian peninsula is ravaged by war. While Milan fights for its political and economic life, Duke Filippo Maria Visconti lies on his deathbed with no heir to succeed him. But the old nobleman has a secret: He has a son.

Visconti hands over the one-year-old child to the archdeacon Onorio, who agrees to keep him safe. Little does young Niccolò know that when he comes of age, he will inherit the great Visconti fortune and become the city's next duke.

Years later, in the shadows of a new cathedral, the members of a secret brotherhood practice alchemy and plot court intrigues, working to fulfill the ancient prophecy of the goddess Belisama. The brothers, sustained by blind faith, will do whatever it takes to achieve their *Grande Opera*, but first they need peace in the city, and Niccolò is the only one who can help. But when he starts to witness mysterious rites and killings, Niccolò will be forced to reconsider his destiny.

## The Temple of Light: A Novel Details

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Author : Daniela Piazza

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# From Reader Review The Temple of Light: A Novel for online ebook

## Robert says

This was an ARC from NetGalley.

I got about a quarter of the way through this book, and could not finish it. I love historical fiction as a rule, but this book was so dry. The pacing of the story was so slow that it was all I could do to get through what I did.

The settings bounced around, and for that matter, the time bouncing was an issue for me too. It made the story hard to follow, and hard to get into. The story had so much potential, but after getting through what I did, I just simply did not enjoy the story. The only part of the story i liked was some of the character names, but honestly, the story fell flat for me. 1/5 Stars

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## Judy Lesley says

The main reason I feel comfortable giving this book a three star rating (on Amazon.com) is because it could have a special appeal for readers interested in Italian history, specifically the history of the city-state of Milan in the 1400's and also readers particularly interested in early Catholic church history. Otherwise this would definitely earn two stars from me.

The novel centers on a changing group of Druid priests who work through the centuries to bring The Temple of Light into existence in order to worship the goddess Belisama (Celtic times), then Minerva (Roman era), and finally to the Virgin Mary (Christian era). All this time the Druids have studied and worked in secret to build the perfect altar on which to place their religious relics so the goddess would be pleased and bring about the apocalypse. The current group of Druids are also Catholic priests and are using the many times destroyed and rebuilt cathedral in Milan to accomplish this feat. Their mathematical computations and alchemy experiments will provide the answers for exactly how tall they need to build the spire and where to place the stone of light.

I'm sorry to say I did not find this a very interesting or enjoyable book to read. The author's style of writing was very dry, stiff and formal and it kept me from feeling any personal attachment or connection with the characters. I'm sure she had done a great deal of research into this subject matter because she included so very much of it in the novel. Nothing slows down a plot more than having too much factual material included in the body of the work. Even though Nicolo was a character who appeared through almost the entire book, I really never cared what happened to him. Incidents of rape and torture were so mechanically included they only caused me to want to get through reading them. Unfortunately, this is not a book I would personally recommend.

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## Sheryle says

ARC provided by NetGalley and Open Road Integrated Media

I really wanted to like *The Temple of Light* by Daniela Piazza but found it to be a difficult book to get into and in which to stay interested. There were so many characters it was hard to keep track of them all and the Italian names were quite confusing. At times, I didn't know exactly who or what I was reading about. While it was very obvious the book was extremely well researched, perhaps we didn't need all of the history or, maybe, it could have been presented a bit more interestingly. I felt like I should have had a course in Italian history before reading this book.

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## **Meagan says**

### **Interesting to read about Milan, but hard to read about the people**

This book takes place in Milan, Italy in the 1400's. If you're not familiar with Italian words, be prepared to learn a lot of new ones (from people's names and the names of places). It takes place over the course of thirty or so years. You read about all of the details the brotherhood needed to put their plan in action and can follow the progress of the cathedral being built to their specifications.

I thought the story would focus more on Niccolo and maybe the members of the secret brotherhood. But a lot of time was spent talking about other supporting characters, almost to the point where I didn't feel Niccolo was a main character at all. It just seemed that the back of the book didn't explain the story well enough.

The description for the book mentioned mysterious rites and killings, so I was prepared for that. I wasn't prepared for the amount of rape mentioned in this book. I'm sure it was common in the 1400's, but I really don't need to read that much about it. I was very tempted to stop reading at those points. But, I just skipped ahead and tried to give the book the benefit of the doubt. Sadly, it doesn't really get any better. I wouldn't recommend this book unless you really like reading about Milan in the 1400's (and are indifferent about all the rape and murder).

*I received this book from GoodReads First Reads and wanted to leave my opinion about it.*

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## **Zeb Kantrowitz says**

*Temple of Light* by Daniela Piazza

It's the middle of the fourteen hundreds and the Church is at the apogee of its power. The Duchy of Milan is ruled by Duke Filippo Maria Visconti, who is dying without a male heir. He calls the archdeacon Onorio to his deathbed for his last confession.

He has a one year old bastard that he wants Onorio to educate and protect. Niccolo should be trained to be a monk and only told of his heritage at a later date. He should only succeed his father if when he comes of age, Milan is under the thumb of a tyrant.

Niccolo grows up under the tutelage of Onorio and the monks and builders of the glorious new Cathedral being built. He becomes a learned man as well as a sculptor. He falls in love with the daughter of a baker and a mason; his best friend becomes a member of the current Duke's personal guard.

But, there is a secret Brotherhood who are building the temple to fulfill an old Celtic prophecy related to the goddess Belisama (viewed now as the Virgin Mary). When Niccolo is near to his majority, he is initiated into the secrets of the Brotherhood.

To have money to continue building the Cathedral, they need the help of both the current Duke and the church in Rome. The current Duke lavishes money on himself and the Duchess (who is Niccolo's half-sister), but has little for the cathedral. When he begins another costly war, the Brotherhood determines it's time for Niccolo to declare himself and become Duke.

The story of the Niccolo, the Brotherhood and the City of Milan are what this book is about. If you liked Ken Follett's "Pillars of Earth" this is your book. If not, try something else.

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### **Patricia Moren says**

Although I enjoy reading a wide range of books, I found this one very difficult to get into. It was more a history lesson than a story. There were lots of characters and facts but nothing I could identify with to enable the story to progress

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### **Stephanie says**

The story begins with a brutal rape scene and it turned my stomach. In my opinion this is not a way to start a story. I have to admit; I didn't think I would finish this book. Though I am used to writers writing violence in stories-when needed-I felt this story focused on too much brutality and took much away from other themes of the story. Though I do realize this story takes place in a period of history ravaged by war. Still, too much brutality for my taste.

I was intrigued with certain aspects of this story. Milan captured my attention and the political and economic life during that time. However, I found it hard to follow due to the fact that some of the names were not known to me. Which I will be researching on my own time. Also, I would like to add that I felt like I was back in history class.

The premise of a Visconti dying and had no known surviving male heirs intrigued me at first but did not hold my attention.

None of the characters appealed to me. I am all about character development AND wanting to find a connection to the characters. That did not happen for me in this story.

I lost interest in this story quickly and as an avid reader of Historical Fiction I found that very disappointing. I do like the book cover and title. That is what first captured my attention and had high hopes going in. I am sad to say I have rated this book two and a half stars.

Stephanie M. Hopkins  
[www.layeredpages.com](http://www.layeredpages.com)

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## **Philip Bailey says**

An interesting story with a smattering of fact but mostly fiction containing bits of everything some people want and things some people do not want. At times poignant, romantic, violent, gruesome, salacious and entertaining. But much too often it became a tedious read with religious phraseology I did not understand and overloaded with details and names of objects or places in a foreign language that I am not sure is still in modern usage. The book could have been much shorter and more enjoyable minus these details and surely this is an author who shows great promise.

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## **Nancy says**

Good Historical Background on Renaissance Italy, But too Long

The Visconti ruled Milan for generations. Now the last Visconti duke is dying without a legitimate heir. The Sforza, another noble family related to the Visconti, are waiting to be invited to rule the city. The city fathers don't like it, but the other choice is annihilation when Sforza attacks the city.

The old duke, however, is not childless. He has a son, Niccolo, by a noble woman. The child is only a baby and the duke fears that his enemies will have the child killed, so he entrusts the boy to Archdeacon Onorio. Unbeknownst to the duke, Onorio is a secret Druid. The Druids made their home in Milan many years before. They worship their goddess, Bellsama, who later evolves into the Virgin Mary, in a temple constructed near the foundation of the cathedral that is being constructed.

Niccolo grows up wanting to be a sculpture, and succeeds in becoming an artist. His closest friend is Lorenzo, a young commoner, who is a paid killer for the Sforza. Lorenzo's sister Maria becomes the mistress of an aristocrat, but is then abandoned. Niccolo falls in love with Angelica, but it is another doomed relationship because she, too, is a commoner, and he is a noble. The lives of these characters growing up form the basis of the story.

I enjoyed the amount of historical detail in the book. I hadn't realized that the Druids had so much influence in Italy. The descriptions of their rites and their study of alchemy and magic are fascinating, but this much detail detracts from the plot. The story moves back and forth in time, which also tends to be confusing.

I recommend this book if you enjoy historical novels and have an interest in renaissance Italy. If you like lots of detail you'll enjoy this book, but if you're looking for a briskly moving plot, you'll be disappointed.

I reviewed this book for Net Galley.

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## **Ginny Alexander says**

The Temple in the Light was a good story, but with way too many words. After I got over the desire to look up every church building word I did not know-the reading went a bit faster. The basic story was set in Milan,

Italy, and jumped back in forth in time from the early druids to the 1400s. The current Duke of Milan is preparing to die, and his last request is that his bastard son, Niccolo, be raised by Onorio, a druid in the Church of Milan. Niccolo's upbringing by the church was extensive, and included the secret druid rites as well as the knowledge he would need if he ever became Duke. For Niccolo, however, life was happiest when he was with Angelica and Lorenzo and sculpting in stone-and that is when things get sticky because his life was not his own.

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## **Ivyd says**

2.5 stars

The premise for THE TEMPLE OF LIGHT easily drew me in. Historical novels of all stripes are a favorite. However, there's a fine line between providing readers with enough detail to invoke a strong sense of place and immediacy versus bogging them down with minutia and losing their interest. It's a difficult balancing act and sadly one that isn't pulled off in THE TEMPLE OF LIGHT.

THE TEMPLE OF LIGHT is cluttered with too many unnecessary details and too much information. Ms. Piazza's research and knowledge are evident. There's a lot of fascinating history she's building on but it and the characters get lost in the inundation. Unfortunately, so did my interest.

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## **Beverley says**

Received a copy from netgalley.

Slow to start and continued to read slowly as well.

I've read books about building cathedrals. It was the setting here, that got a lot of pages of detail.

I never really felt like I "knew" the characters. I knew what they were doing but I didn't know what they were feeling, thinking, etc. They felt flat to me. Perhaps I just couldn't relate to them.

I struggled with priests and archbishops also being druids. Maybe if the characters told more of why, it would have been more believable.

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## **Mirella says**

Author Daniela Piazza has written a beautiful novel about the construction of the Duomo di Milano and all the famous persons in the era. The noble Visconti family is in constant battle with other families of the era. Numerous political manoeuvres, romantic liaisons, and a centuries old secret are at the heart of this story. The main character is a young man named Niccolò who has been raised by a group of monks. Only a few know who he truly is, and he must guard the secret of his true identity or his life is at risk. He knows that when the time is right, he will take his real place in the world.

Daniela Piazza has taken historical detail, real personages of the 15th century, and a touch of fantasy, and weaved them seamlessly together in this brilliant, sweeping new novel. Well developed characters, both good and villainous, made the story very enjoyable for me. The plot had constant twists and turns that kept me guessing. It was also fascinating to read all about the financial troubles faced when constructing the cathedral that still stands today, and which I have visited several times. Terrific descriptions, an unforgettable storyline, and compelling characters make this a book you must read. I loved it! Definitely

recommended for everyone who loves Italian history.

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## Gayle says

The last known Visconti, ruling family of Milan, Italy is dying. He has no known surviving male children. On his death bed, he reveals to Onorio, a druidic priest, that he does have an illegitimate male heir. Problem is, this male child is barely old enough to walk. Onorio, and the other druidic priests take the child, Niccolo, in and raise him themselves, not revealing to anyone who the child truly is. The priests are also in the process of building the Temple of Light. As Niccolo grows, he learns the secrets of those he thinks of as family, makes some very odd friendships, and learns who he truly is. This novel follows his life into adulthood and all the trials and tribulations, plots and counterplots, etc.

While i did come to enjoy this book, I found it difficult to follow at times. There are numerous characters with the name Maria, or possibly Maria being used as a title that I was confused at times. Once the things that seemed to be completely out of context started to come together and make sense, I had an easier time following the plot and characters. If you are an aficionado of Italian history or druidic history, you may very well enjoy this novel.

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## Althea Ann says

DNF at 58%.

This tale of Renaissance Milan starts out promising to be quite entertaining... but as it goes on, I found that promise deteriorating.

The first scene is a brutal rape and assault by a lord on two peasants. At my stopping point, I'm not sure if the narrative will ever get around to having the incident be relevant to the plot, or if it was just atmosphere-setting. (This is, indeed, one of those books where all female characters are whores, rape victims, or both, so if that bothers you...)

The main plot follows the boy Niccolo, the secret heir to the Duchy of Milan, who is raised by an order of Italian priests who are secretly actually Druid-Alchemists (yes, it's a bit silly). Niccolo would rather live a modest life as a stonecutter than be a Duke, but he is willing to accept his responsibilities, should it be necessary.

The writing style alternates between a meandering narrative interspersed with violent and titillating incidents, and dry infodumps about a dizzying array of names and facts about the complex politics of Milan and random technical details about architecture or what have you. There are also a few 'flashback' scenes to the ancient Celtic beginnings of the Druid cult, which feel very out of place in the narrative. The end result is a choppy-feeling but tedious flow to the book.

At 58%, I'm not feeling interested enough in what might happen in Niccolo's life to continue. There are many interesting and entertaining books about this time period in Milan's history... one I could recommend is Michael Ennis' 'Duchess of Milan.' <https://www.goodreads.com/book/show/7...>



