



Summer School

Domenica De Rosa

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Love, rivalry, and writing in a Tuscan paradise.

Relax. Indulge. And discover the writer within...

Patricia Wilson's carefully composed ads for the writers' retreat she runs at her thirteenth-century Italian castle promise so much. But while the splendour of their surroundings and chef Aldo's melanzane never fail to wow the guests, huge maintenance bills and bad news from the bank threaten to close Patricia down. It's make or break time for the Castello.

Each of her seven aspiring authors arrives with the inevitable baggage alongside their unpublished manuscripts. But this August something is different, and soon lifelong spinster Mary is riding on the back of Aldo's vespa, and smouldering odd-job man Fabio has set more than one heart racing.

As temperatures rise, the writers gossip, flirt and gently polish their prose by the pool. But with ghosts, scorpions, and some unexpected visitors to contend with, one thing's for sure: neither the Castello, nor Patricia, has ever seen a summer like this.

Summer School Details

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Natasha says

I really enjoyed this! I think it must be hard for an author to write about a writing course, or make comments on stories without being judged themselves on their ability of writing an enjoyable book, but that wasn't the case with De Rosa. I also admire the author for coming up with so many characters, all different, for just one book, so that you are pulled in to the beautiful tuscan scenery and the castello. I enjoyed the variety of characters and the many twists and revelations that kept coming up. Great book that isn't quite what it seems...

Pat Stearman says

Didn't want to stop reading, didn't want to finish this one! All came crashing to a very satisfactory finish! Good fun.

Tara says

Full review to follow.

Kirsty Darbyshire says

I've enjoyed reading Elly Griffiths' crime books and discovered somewhere along the way that this was a pseudonym of Domenica De Rosa. De Rosa's books looked rather girly and chick lit like and not really my kind of thing. When I spotted one in the library though I picked it up to have a look and ended up absorbed by it.

The 'Summer School' of the title is a fortnight long writing workshop taking place in a renovated castle in Tuscany. The characters seemed a bit stereotypical to start with but most of them broke enough boundaries that they seemed like real enough people. It is all a little predictable and I guessed where several of the storylines were going but that didn't really matter. There were a few things that didn't seem quite right, for example, a character who only seemed to be remembered once every 100 pages. I think there is something a bit odd about reading about a writers workshop - it made me want to rewrite parts of this book! That's not something I usually think about!

On the whole though, a decent piece of light entertainment and I'll quite possibly read more at some point in the future.

Ruthy says

O antes...

"Preparativos

31 de Julho

Patricia O'Hara, mais conhecida por signora O'Hara, ou Patrizia, ou a inglesa do castello, afasta o cabelo húmido da cara, tentando concentrar-se na sua lista. Embora a cozinha seja fresca, lá fora o calor é de tal forma intenso que parece querer irromper pelas janelas. A sua escrita, de um negro intenso que contrasta com a alvura do papel, pulsa desagradavelmente na página."

Hummm com este inicio só faz mesmo pensar no Verão, Sol, praia... e Itália parece um ótimo sítio para desfrutar deste livro! Infelizmente tenho de desfrutar do livro mesmo por aqui mas adivinho grandes momentos a ler, a imaginar e a sonhar visitar todos os sítios mencionados no livro! Já agora também acho que vou imaginar se fosse eu que estivesse num curso de escrita criativa... será que daria resultado?!

E o depois...

Aquele que nos parece um romance literário num Verão deslumbrante na bela Itália transforma-se para nos captar a atenção e surpreender nos acontecimentos futuros pois ninguém imagina tudo o que acontece no final do livro, ou pelo menos, não tudo! De romance passa a manual de escrita criativa e depois a guia turístico acabando numa mistura de suspense e auto-ajuda!

Engraçado e fascinante deu-me vontade de ler mais livros da autora e fez-me questionar: "será que eu conseguia escrever um livro?"

Mafi says

Gostei deste livro. É daqueles livros leves que se lê bem, em dias de sol, na praia, ou em dias chuvosos, à frente da lareira.

A história não é de todo muito original, mas as personagens e o cenário são os ingredientes perfeitos para uma boa leitura.

É mesmo daqueles livros que se lê com gosto, não é viciante, não nos prende, mas as páginas viram-se e quando damos por ele já o acabamos.

É um romance com personagens inspiradores e as descrições da Toscana levam-nos a viajar até Itália e conhecer Patricia, Matt, Sally, Rick, Aldo e Mary entre outros, todos diferentes mas com um único sonho, o de escrever um livro.

Apesar de ter um tom descontraído e leve, o livro ensina-nos a não perder a oportunidade de ver os nossos sonhos concretizados.

Patrícia Alegria says

Opinião: <https://outrolivrodefantasia.blogspot...>

Elise Kress says

Beautiful! Took me right back to Tuscany...

Carol says

Quick summer read with all the flavours and descriptions of sights in Tuscany. Delicious armchair travel

Anne says

This book is full of caricatures - the buttoned-up elderly civil servant, the twinkling Italian cook with the white moustache, the Irish rogue, the Italian stallion... Some of the story lines are quite ridiculous, and the end is so ridiculously schmaltzy and weepy, tying up all the loose ends. I absolutely loved it - I couldn't put it down, and I can say it's a book I really thoroughly enjoyed every moment of. How often can you say that, eh?!

Ne says

Relembro esta obra como algo simples, mas com as suas pequenas pérolas. Refiro-me particularmente aos seus cenários, que são os pontos mais fortes desta narrativa. Contrabalançando assim com as coisas menos boas que encontrei.

Mas comecemos pelas coisas boas.

Adorei Toscana descrita por Domenica de Rosa. A curiosidade e o desejo de conhecer semelhante região cresceu exponencialmente. Adorei também o romance entre Mary e Aldo. Foi algo que nunca tinha encontrado nas minhas leituras. Este último exemplo reforçou ainda mais a minha opinião, talvez um pouco negativa, de que as personagens de Domenica parecem não corresponder à idade que a escritora lhes atribui. A maior parte delas nem as consegui sequer imaginar, sendo assim transmitidas como figuras sem rosto, principalmente no caso de Sally e Rick.

Ao início gostava bastante da personagem Patrícia. Esperei sempre algum acontecimento mais forte e marcante, mas quando este estava prestes a acontecer a autora decidiu presentear-nos com uma cena quase de loucura, o que denegriu em parte a minha opinião de Patrícia, que só veio a melhorar quando esta encontra o homem louro com o cavalo branco. Esse foi o meu momento preferido, que apesar de não ter sido surpresa, foi sendo ansiado ao longo da história, já que a escritora nos vai dando palpites.

Não gostei muito dos textos apresentados das personagens. Não falo do conteúdo, mas sim da ideia de os incluir no decorrer da narrativa. Achei que serviram um pouco para encher o livro e não para acrescentar algo à história. Se era para conhecermos a escrita dos membros do grupo, penso que os pareceres de Jeremy nos dão bastante material. Apesar disso, gostei dos e-mails de Anna, tal como todo o historial desta, e, principalmente, do seu pedido de casamento: simples, mas original e muito engraçado.

A cena final entre Matteo e Fabio não me surpreendeu minimamente. A escritora dá-nos uma pista bastante óbvia muito próxima do momento, o que acaba por estragar o efeito surpresa. Apesar disso, achei que foi uma reviravolta interessante, mas que podia ter sido melhor aproveitada.

De resto, tanto Sam como Cat tiveram apenas o propósito de "enaltecer" a personagem Anna, o que, mais uma vez, não teve grande relevância para a história. O mesmo acontece com Dorothy, com a sua história de infância.

Concluindo, é uma obra leve, mas sem grande conteúdo. Apenas se aproveitando um dos romances e, principalmente, as descrições dos cenários. A escrita não é muito desenvolvida nem original, tal como a capa ou até a sinopse, que por sua vez acabam por ser um pouco enganadoras quanto ao que vamos encontrar no

interior.

Karen says

Summer School has been republished in 2017 as 'One Summer in Tuscany'

Set in the idyllic Tuscan hills, Patricia Wilson's 18th century home earns its keep (or tries to) by playing host to guests on a residential creative writing course. The two week course includes tuition from author Jeremy Bullen and features sightseeing trips into Rome and Florence as well as the chance to explore the local landscape. For the guests it is a chance to hone their writing skills and to have their writing critiqued by a well-known author however for Patricia, facing the worry of bankruptcy, it is make or break time for her business. Add into the equation, a rebellious and moody teenage son and her Tuscan idyll doesn't sound quite so perfect.

If the idea of a writing retreat sounds inviting, the diverse mix of guests and the conflict of personalities could scupper the chance of a relaxing time. Not everybody gets along, alliances are formed, and there are hopes of romantic attachments. With guests ranging from a young female 'yummy mummy' who is confident that she has written the next best seller, to an elderly spinster who has spent the best part of 30 years writing her crime novel and who has no expectations of it ever being published, the tutor Jeremy begins to despair of seeing a half decent novel or idea from many of his pupils. He was once (and it was only the once!) a best-selling author however in the 20 years since then he has written nothing else and lives off his previous claim to fame.

This is a very easy read and that is meant as a compliment. It is written with a lighter touch however as the story progresses, we learn more about the lives of the characters and their hopes and dreams and there are a few surprises along the way. For my own personal tastes I would have liked to have seen a little more depth to the characters but it was still very enjoyable. The descriptions of the surrounding landscape and countryside are captivating whilst the food prepared by Aldo the chef will make your mouth water.

Over the course of the 2 weeks, the guests spent their time sightseeing, relaxing by the pool, eating and sleeping during the hot afternoons. There doesn't seem to be an awful lot of writing going on but by the time they return home however, they will have learnt a lot about themselves. Some will realise that their dream of publication is just that, a dream, whilst others will have had a life changing experience.

One Summer in Tuscany would make for a perfect summery read, with a glass of something chilled at hand!

Pauline says

Not a bad read but not as good as Nicky Pellegrino books.

Diana Matias says

Gostei muito de visitar a Toscana com a Dominica de Rosa. ja coloquei na minha lista de cidades a conhecer. Um dia, talvez. As personagens são fortes e tentadoras. A escritora conseguiu dar importância a cada uma

sem desprezar as mais secundárias. Gostei tanto da Anna, do Aldo, da Mary e do Sam também. Concorde com o final de todas as personagens, não poderia ser de outra forma.

Ricki Treleaven says

This week I read *Summer School* by Domenica de Rosa. Maggie @ Normandy Life sent it to me, and I enjoyed this book. It is the perfect beach or lake read. This book is difficult to find here in the states, but Amazon has a few copies.

Have you ever wanted to take a vacation where you learn something new or improve skills you already have? I would love to attend an art workshop in a beautiful place: Paris, Sedona, Florence, or maybe even San Francisco. I have friends who have travelled to France for cooking classes. That would be a fun way to spend a vacation, too. The characters in *Summer School* are attending a writer's retreat in Tuscany, and the accommodations are in a thirteenth-century castle. Patricia O'Hara owns the castle, and Aldo, her talented cook, impresses and guests at every meal with his delicious cuisine. The writer's workshop instructor is Jeremy Bullen, a snarky bestseller who is suffering from writer's block: a condition he has had for twenty years.

The seven participants in the workshop arrive wanting one thing: to finish their books and get them published. My favorite aspect of this book is how every character, especially the students, evolve and/or have an epiphany about what they are meant to do with the rest of their lives. Some realize they are not meant to write at all, while others become more determined and confident in their writing. Patricia markets her Castello della Luna as the perfect Tuscan setting for creativity and inspiration. Plus the added bonus of an international bestseller as the instructor and Aldo's delicious meals should be the perfect combination for a successful business. Most of the workshop sessions are full, but overhead, impending maintenance on the castle, and a balloon note due too soon might cause Patricia to lose her beloved castle.

The August students arrive in time for sweltering heat and Patricia's first notice from the bank. For a group of around eleven or twelve adults, there is a surprising amount of drama, hurt feelings, revealed secrets, crushes, flirtations, ghost stories, true love, and a storm worthy of a Gothic novel. August would not be my first choice in visiting Italy. Many businesses are closed, and the heat limits daytime activity. One would think that the students would have had ample time to finish their books, but instead they spend a lot of time "up in each other's business." I love that about this book! I am not ashamed to admit it. Although some of the flirtations and lust never amount to anything, I love the one couple who find each other and make a commitment. It is very sweet, and their story certainly makes *Summer School* worth reading.
