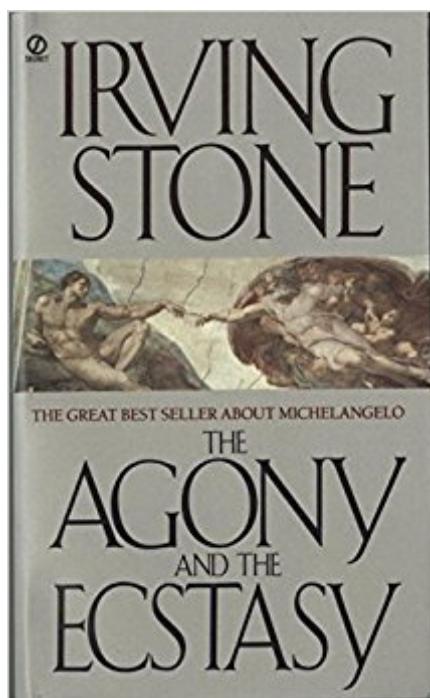


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The Agony And The Ecstasy: A Biographical Novel Of Michelangelo



Synopsis

Irving Stone's classic biographical novel of Michaelangelo 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

"[Stone] has painted the portrait of a supreme craftsman who was also one of the most versatile artists of all time." --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Irving Stone (1903-1989) was born in San Francisco. He wrote several books in a genre that he coined the "biographical novel," which recounted the lives of well-known historical figures. In these novels, Stone interspersed biography with fictional narrative on the psychology and private lives of his subjects. He also wrote biographies of Clarence Darrow and Earl Warren, and short biographies of men who lost presidential elections.

I first read this book when it originally came out. And when my book club decided to read it, I didn't object because I remembered that I liked it. Well, I think I enjoyed it more the second time. I was fascinated by the historical background and learned a lot about that time period....and about the making of sculpture. The characters were fleshed out enough to be interesting and added information to what I had learned in history classes--although as in all historical fiction, it would be

nice to know what is real and what is the author's imagination. The book is well written and an easy and interesting read. If you are planning a trip to Italy, I would definitely put it on my pre-trip reading list.

When I first received the recommendation to read it, I thought that it would be a boring description of times long gone with a silver lining in the art itself. Boy was I wrong! It is an incredible journey through time with twists and plots that revolve around art, religion, politics as well as romance, friendship and family. It is a story about the struggle to follow your passion to whatever end. It is the kind of book that left me with a sense of "OK.. now what? What could I read to be on par with Mr. Stone's creation?" Let's say that from now on, I will never look at sculpture or art as a whole with the same eyes. Even though I knew that it was a biography work, I still read it like a fiction book and this helped putting me in every situation described.

The book came recommended and when the brick arrived (758 pages!), I wondered if I'd get through it. The writing seemed flat and the young Michelangelo just barely arousing curiosity but...something sparked as my reading progressed and, not unlike the mystic white marble that Michelangelo revered, the tremendous work of Irving Stone came to reveal itself after many turning of the pages. This book is similar to a work of art, and while not perfect (like iron stains in good marble), soulfully satisfying in the end. Michelangelo was a lover of beauty, whether it came in male or female form, sculpting and painting them as God had created them. Stone masterfully recreated Michelangelo's imaginative thinking process and "crusty" dialogue, absorbing the trials and tribulations of an artist during the tumultuous times of pontificates playing musical chairs, and whose capricious demands challenged Michelangelo's integrity and self-worth. "Man passes, only works of art are immortal." Stone has chiseled a fully realized Michelangelo for me and I look forward to seeing for myself, some the celestial works he left behind when I depart for Rome next week.

I loved this book so much and couldn't believe I could get so "into it". It is brilliantly written and brings all the character to life with such awareness of their feelings and determination. Michaelangelo had to be given his gift by God. No one could have such obsessive, unequalled talent otherwise. What I loved the most, was his relentless determination to sculpt I could not have imagined how difficult and what talent it took to make creations like "David", the "Pieta", "Moses", "Christ on the Cross", and the unimaginable "Sistine Chapel" lying on his back for 4 years!!!! I felt as though I knew him personally by the time I finished this masterpiece.

I read it 35 years ago and it made me fall in love with art. A recent trip to Italy and seeing Michelangelo's artwork in person inspired me to re-read the book - it's still fantastic.

Here is a timeless masterpiece , written so beautifully about the great genius of Michaelangelo. Having read many years ago, I am traveling to Rome and wanted to freshen my memory. HOWEVER the size of this paperback is so very small , reading in this format is difficult and uncomfortable. I do not recommend this particular publication. Really disappointed.

I totally loved re-reading this book. I first read it 40 years ago, but appreciated it so much more now that I know more about art and history. I can appreciate Michaelangelo's thought process as he decided how to pose his subjects, and what facial expression to put on their faces. It was fascinating to read about the way the different popes affected his work, as well as how other contemporary famous people affected his life: the De Medicis, Da Vinci, Raphael, and even Martin Luther. I highly recommend this book.

Wonderful novel blending history, art and the culture of Italy on the 15th and 16th Century. I read this as a teenager who was studying to be an artist and found it very inspiring. As an adult, I was traveling to Florence with my family and revisited the book once again. As an adult who was going to visit many of the sites described in the book, I found that the book gave me better understanding of the traditions and legacy of the Florentine culture. One of the most inspiring books to read if you are an artist.

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