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Young Australian artist Mia Moretti has been cancer free for nine months. But her battle with the illness has taken its toll, leaving her depressed and tormented by overwhelming fears. What's more, she can't seem to paint anymore. Mia needs a fresh start so when a surprise opportunity to travel to Tuscany presents itself, she takes it. With any luck, this trip will help her find whatever it is she needs to open her heart and start painting again.

What she doesn't count on is meeting Luca, a handsome Italian mechanic. With his smile, his warmth and his inspirational outlook on all the good things life has to offer, he sweeps her off her feet. As Mia slowly lets down her walls and allows Luca in, her passion for life is reignited and her new perspective begins to inspire her art. But just when she's ready to let go of her past, will a tragedy threaten her new life with Luca?

Full of heart and hope, a love story about la dolce vita in Tuscany.

The Florentine Bridge Details

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From Reader Review The Florentine Bridge for online ebook

Alli Sinclair says

This breathtaking debut novel is one that will stay with me for a long time. Set in one of the most beautiful regions of the world, Carnevale takes readers on an emotional, cultural and scenic journey into the world of Mia and Luca. Mia's struggle touched my heart and Luca's support and encouragement made me fall in love with him, just like Mia did. I adored this novel and I cannot wait to read Vanessa Carnevale's next book. For a wonderful escape into beautiful Florence, I highly recommend this beautiful book (and make sure you have tissues nearby!).

Kirsty Dummin says

A lovely, heartwarming and romantic read. I smiled most of the way through, with a few tears for good measure.

Dale Harcombe says

Four and a half stars.

Though nineteen year old Australia Mia Moretti has been cancer free for nine months, it has not stopped the fears that haunt her days and nights. Fear of the cancer returning has taken such a hold on her that she can no longer paint. When an opportunity arises to travel to Tuscany she jumps at the chance, hoping it will get her life and art back on track. Her parents understandably worry, but let her go knowing this is something she needs to do. In Tuscany Mia meets more than she bargained for. She meets openhearted people and also Luca. For much of the book this seems like a sweet young love story. It is also about overcoming fear and learning to hope. Then the unthinkable happens? Will this latest tragedy stop Mia in her tracks or will she able to work through it? And what about Luca? Does he have a role in her future?

Sure, Mia behaves like a nineteen year old some of the time, but she is very likable. I also liked Luca and some of the minor characters, which include Mia's parents, Signor Fiorelli, an elderly artist, Clara and several others. One of the major characters is this book is the setting. I am not likely to ever visit Italy but I would easily see the places mentioned because of the way they are described. It all sounds as beautiful as the cover depicts it. This is more than just a love story, it is a story about fear and hope, about family and friends and the role they have to play in shaping a person and supporting in hard times. It is a delightful and engaging read that had me up till late last night because I simply hard to find out what happened.

Margi says

Oh what a wonderful story. One oozing with young love, healing, hope and emotion so beautifully described and descriptively written. I thoroughly enjoyed my holiday read which was set in Italy telling the story of a young artist fleeing Australia struggling to recover from cancer. An amazing story of girl meets boy who fall madly in love and so much more.

I highly recommend this book.

Natasha Lester says

I was very lucky to read this book as a manuscript and I was absolutely transported to Tuscany and I did not want to leave! Such a gorgeous love story, interwoven with a story of art, of finding and trusting oneself, and of learning to live life. Vanessa obviously knows Italy very well and it all comes to life in the book: the language, the landscape, the art and the atmosphere. A story and a set of characters that will stay with you long after you reluctantly have to leave them and Tuscany behind.

Jodi says

If your ideal novel is one that is painted with vivid descriptions, and accompanied by a beautiful, emotion-filled love story, then this one's for you.

The Florentine Bridge is the debut novel from Australian author Vanessa Carnevale, is a captivating love story set against the backdrop of the gorgeous Tuscan skies of Italy.

Nineteen-year-old artist Mia, has packed her bags and paintbrushes to start afresh in a small village on the outskirts of Florence. Thousands of miles away from her family back in Melbourne, Mia, now in remission from cancer, is intent on trying to get her life back on track and be inspired to pick up her paintbrushes again. But, it is a lot harder than she thinks. Self-doubt and fear consume her every thought, and even the beautiful Tuscan scenery doesn't seem to be helping. That is, until she meets Luca.

What unfolds is a heart-warming, intimate love story that takes the reader on a chauffeured voyage of Florence, and the beautiful surrounding landscapes. It is both delicate and heart-breaking as the two lovers battle their own inner demons, tearing them apart, and threatening to break them altogether.

What I loved besides the magnificent way Vanessa paints the scenery, was the internal thoughts of Mia. Her fear, her frustrations, and her realisations were handled delicately allowing the reader to invest in her story. Mia's character development and arc were beautifully formed, and we can see her grow from beginning to end.

Vanessa has been able to put every emotion into her characters, and it is tenderly transferred from author, to character, right through to reader, making for a glorious emotion-filled read. The story was so beautifully written and portrayed, that I didn't want it to end.

Sharon says

Mia Moretti is a young Australian artist and for the last nine months she's been fighting the greatest battle of her life. Her struggle with cancer has taken its toll on Mia physically and mentally. Sadly, her love for painting had taken a back seat since her sickness and now that she was feeling better she thought the desire to paint again would return, but it hasn't.

When an opportunity comes Mia's way to travel to another country she decides this might be exactly what she needs to get her back to painting again. Italy has such beautiful landscapes and buildings this was sure to get Mia back to her love of painting. Meeting the handsome Italian mechanic, Luca was never in Mia's plans and before she knew it, she was letting her guard down something she promised herself she wouldn't do. Luca showed Mia all the beautiful sites of the area as well as introducing her to friends and family. Can the handsome and charming Luca inspire Mia to paint again or will her artistic skills be lost forever?

Oh my goodness, what's not to like about this BRILLIANT story. The plot line in this story just sweeps you up and carries you away to another world. In case you haven't worked it out yet I ABSOLUTELY LOVED this book. HIGHLY RECOMMENDED.

Sue Gerhardt Griffiths says

This is the most sweetest and saddest love story I've ever read. I was in bed sick with the flu but I still read this in two sittings as once I picked it up it was awfully hard to put down and then only because I was too ill to continue and needed sleep. I loved Mia and Luca's instant connection and their love story was most intriguing. The vivid description of Florence and the Amalfi Coast was breathtaking, it took me back to when I visited Italy 32 years ago - loving and exploring Lake Garda, Limone and Venice (also breathtaking) and now I want to see the rest of Italy especially Florence and the Amalfi Coast.

This book has a slow and even pace until wham when all of a sudden your heart skips a beat at the twist towards the end - the one the reader will not see coming. I read frantically right up until the very end needing and wanting to know desperately what happens to Luca and Mia and Luca's romance. I loved every inch of this gorgeous book.

Highly recommended.

Marie McLean says

I really enjoyed this book. I was quite surprised at the effect it had on me.

Full review at

<https://mariemclean.com/2017/02/24/a-...>

Amanda - Mrs B's Book Reviews says

Debut Australian author Vanessa Carnevale bursts onto the writing scene with her stunning contemporary romance novel, *The Florentine Bridge*. Set against the magnificent locale of Florence, Italy and surrounds, it is a gentle story that explores one inspiring young Australian woman's passage to overcome illness, self doubt and find love.

Nineteen year old Mia is a promising artist, who hails from Melbourne, Australia. Mia has recently overcome a battle with cancer. Trying to find meaning in her life, Mia heads to the other side of the world, to Florence, Italy, where she hopes to reignite her passion for painting. When she arrives in a small village on the outskirts of Florence, Mia soon realises moving and starting anew is not an easy process. She does

manage to build some trusting acquaintances, which assists her move. Despite the spectacular setting, the perfect muse to get her painting on track, Mia lacks the urge to put brush to paper. When a handsome and understanding young man named Luca enters her life, Mia's world in Florence immediately changes. Mia's relationship with Luca is the catalyst that sparks her return to painting. Enjoying love, life and the rich culture of Italy with Luca by her side, things couldn't be better for Mia. However, Mia and Luca's new found love for one another is put to the test, when life deals them both situations that will challenge their strength, both as a couple and an individual.

I have had *The Florentine Bridge* on my radar for some time, the blurb, as well as the exquisite cover, enticed me so much that I contacted the author to request an early review of this debut novel. The author granted my wish and as a result, I was able to read this novel prior to its release. It has been a privilege to be one of the first readers to enjoy this book and I cannot recommend this novel enough. Once I opened the first page, I was immediately lost in Mia's heartfelt journey. The housework, dinner and life in general was put aside, while I spent time with Mia and Luca in picturesque Florence.

The beauty in this novel lies in a number of factors. Firstly, the main protagonist Mia is a character readers will easily be able to both like and relate to. Her transformation from just overcoming cancer, to finding the strength to move across the globe, far away from the comfort of her parents, was admirable. Carnevale makes the reader see that Mia's journey is not an easy one and her life in Florence is not all hearts and roses. By the end of the novel, I couldn't believe how far Mia had come, both professionally as a budding artist and personally, in her changed outlook on life.

Supporting Mia is a colourful cast of periphery characters that fill out the pages of Carnevale's debut novel. Luca, the leading man, is both a character that will make the reader swoon but he is a very real character. Luca has his own back story and inner demons that must be overcome in order for his relationship with Mia to work. Alongside Luca are some unforgettable minor players, such as a local waiter, an elderly artist who mentors Mia, Mia's employer Clara and flatmate Stella. Each of these characters adds a solid layer to *The Florentine Bridge*.

A review of this novel would not be complete unless I mentioned the setting. Although I visited Italy some years ago, Florence included, Carnevale has depicted the setting in such a way that I gleaned so much more from this rich location. It is obvious to the reader that Carnevale has lived and breathed Florence and Italy in general. Her setting descriptions are peppered with authentic anecdotes on landscape, art, culture and food that transfers vividly onto to paper for the reader.

The Florentine Bridge is a novel that resonates with you, long after the last page is read. It takes the reader on a heartfelt journey, filled with lessons in love and life. It also offers an authentic portrait of Italy – its culture, people, art and landscape, which I relished. *The Florentine Bridge* makes a late but nonetheless completely worthy entry into my list of best books of 2016. Vanessa Carnevale has a bright writing career ahead of her with the release of this stunning debut novel.

With thanks to the author and publisher for an earc copy for review.

*<https://mrsbbookreviews.wordpress.com>

Janine says

My first 5 star book for 2017. This is a beautiful, emotional, picturesque and thought provoking book -hard to believe it is a debut novel. I was swept away with the descriptions of Florence and surrounds. The depictions of the architecture, art, people, culture and of course the story of Mia and Luca had me captivated from beginning to end, in fact I read half of this book in one day.

This is more than just a love story, it is life-lit as well. Vanessa had me hooked and just when I thought I knew what was going to happen, she threw in an almighty twist - I then knew I couldn't put it down until I had finished. We have an exciting new author in our midst - and she comes from Melbourne, one I will be following from now on. Cannot recommend it more.

Brenda says

Absolutely exceptional! Breathtaking; beautiful; heartbreaking and outstanding!

When Mia Moretti arrived in Florence, she was unsure of her feelings. Her confidence was at an all-time low, but she was in remission – had been for nine months. She loved her parents back in Melbourne, Australia, but had felt the need to recover her old self on her own. The apartment she was to share with Stella was a two storey wonder of architecture – the friends who surrounded Stella immediately included Mia into their lives.

Mia's depression was slow to lift – she was unable to paint; her artistry had left her and she had no idea how to get it back. When Mia met Luca, he showed her how to feel again. Gradually his zest for life, his gentle friendship and beautiful smile let Mia open her heart once again. And she found herself once more able to paint...

As Mia and Luca explored the famous Italian landscape, the coastline and small towns, the happiness they felt together was absolute. Holidaying on the Amalfi Coast, crossing wishes from bucket lists – the past was a long way behind Mia. Nothing could possibly go wrong – could it?

The Florentine Bridge by Aussie author Vanessa Carnevale is a masterpiece of writing! The story is tender and gentle, the gradual romance the same. I have never read a novel like this one before, and it is now firmly in my best reads for 2016. The author painted incredible word pictures – I haven't been to Italy, but now, I'd love to go just to walk where Mia and Luca walked. Filled with emotion, hope and love, *The Florentine Bridge* is one I highly recommend, and one I'm so glad I read. I love the cover too :)

With thanks to NetGalley and the publisher for my copy to read and review.

Lucy says

I'll admit, I don't prioritise reading nearly enough, and rarely get to the end of books... *The Florentine Bridge* is the first book I have read in its entirity for a few years, and every moment spent reading it was mesmerising. *The Florentine Bridge* is the perfect book to pick up on a weekend or holiday, when you want to disappear to another place, the world of other people falling in love in a beautiful space. At times it felt a little like I was spying on the lives of two young lovers, a little guilty to intrude on their incredibly personal

space and feelings... I was surprised to find that Mia prompted me to reflect on my own emotional journey and affections for my husband - I was prompted to question my own insecurities of uncertainty and worthiness, and feelings of devotion and love. The Florentine Bridge isn't only intensely emotional, it is vivid in Vanessa Carnevale's skilful illustration of place, space and time. I could sense the sand between my toes; the dappled sunlight on my skin; the hum of chatter, footsteps and engines on the streets of Florence; the aroma of coffee and lemons; the breeze in my hair on the back of a scooter breathing in the Tuscan countryside; I simply felt immersed in "*la vita bella*" with Mia and Luca.

For the most part, Vanessa Carnevale follows a familiar romance pattern, with young lovers falling head over heels in love, and sharing their romantic adventures with us. Indeed I was ensnared by the easy, comfortable flow of their predictable highs and lows - too young, too fast, too hard? - just love, pure, beautiful love...; but the difference to other modern romance novels I have read which I welcomed is in Carnevale's accurate capturing of anxieties, the depths of sensory descriptions, the intensity of feelings that brought tears to my eyes, and the vivid detail that revealed her intention to *share, through the eyes of Mia, some of what she herself has seen, felt and been in Italy* - for without question, Carnevale could only have painted the story that she does having been personally inspired by the world she aptly illustrates. I also welcomed the disruption to the comfort, when finally, the penultimate chapters quickened my heart, had me biting my lip, desperate to know what would happen, intent on postponing my own family dinner while I finished the story, buoyed by nerves and cautious optimism...

I can't wait to be transported to the world Vanessa Carnevale chooses to share next! I highly recommend Carnevale's debut novel The Florentine Bridge, which will leave big shoes to fill, but I feel confident I can look forward to my next holiday read from this young Australian author.

Theresa Smith Writes says

Part romance and part coming of age, The Florentine Bridge delights right from the start. Vanessa Carnevale has an easy writing style that sweeps you up and immerses you, not only into the lives of her characters, but into the surrounds and the setting of the story as well. It was a real treat to get such a vivid sense of Tuscany through Mia's tourist gaze and I particularly appreciated the more anecdotal references and local conviviality sprinkled throughout.

The true highlight for me with this novel was the artistic angle of the story, but as what usually happens to me when reading a book about art, I found myself desperately wishing I could see Mia's paintings in a place other than my mind. Vanessa's depictions were quite vivid though and rather impressive, leaving me with a true sense of what Mia had created each and every time.

There were many emotional moments throughout this story, plenty of highs and possibly more lows, yet I felt that this was overwhelming a book about joy. The joy of loving, the joy of living, the joy of discovering who you are and what you mean to those around you. The Florentine Bridge is a beautiful novel and I look forward reading many more books by Vanessa Carnevale. Her talent is a most welcome addition to Australia's literary landscape.

#AWW2017

Deborah Ideosepius says

A very pretty romance that appealed to me, though it is a genera I rarely visit.

A gentle, light, story that follows a young Australian woman on her journey as she rediscovers life, her sense of self and her art. Mia had been on track to become an artist back home (Australia), with an acceptance to a renowned art course, a portfolio, friends and family. Then came Hodgkins lymphoma to turn her life around. Sick after the chemo and shattered by her fears of death Mia travels across the world to rediscover her health as she discovers Italy. She never expected to fall in love, but that too is part of her journey back to life and her rediscovery of her love of painting.

This romantic novel restored some of my faith in the genera, the strong main characters of Mia and Luca were well defined and likable. At times, I felt a little impatient with Mia's terror, but that is because I know too much about Hodgkinson's Lymphoma - it is the cancer to have if you must have cancer- it is a hard road coming back from cancer and chemotherapy. This element of personal fear adds a realistic challenge to her journey toward love, much more realistic than many other challenges that have been used by other romance novels I have read.

Luca himself is a very likable man and while he is certainly full on, I believe that intensity and self-assurance is very much the element that many women find attractive. His personal journey is more complex than the mere challenge of conquering Mia's heart and overcoming her fears of intimacy.

The setting was delightful, both Tuscany and Florence are very much backdrops to the story they make charming backdrops which are every bit as romanticised as Mia and Luca's courtship. The emphasis on the visual beauties of the area and the romance of the Italian language is also bound up in the story. To accompany the pleasant setting, Mia's love of art gives us a light and easy introduction to some of the history of art in the area and her slow journey back to her own creativity should appeal to any artist who has ever doubted themselves or had hitches in their creative journey, it certainly spoke to me on an artistic level.
