

My Brilliant Friends: Ferrante and Domenico Starnone

Without knowing for certain who wrote what, we will read and discuss three novels by the best-selling and pseudonymous Elena Ferrante (*Troubling Love*, *My Brilliant Friend*, and *The Days of Abandonment*.) and two short novels by the man thought to be her husband, Italian novelist Domenico Starnone (*Ties*—which parallels *The Days of Abandonment* from the husband's point of view—and *Tricks*—whose couple-troubles are narrated by a grandfather). Since Ferrante believes books (and their authors) live separate and autonomous lives, we will concentrate on the stories, comparing and contrasting their setting (Naples), themes, characters, male/female points of view, narrative strategies, conflicts and psychology. This is a literary discussion course for people who love to read and talk about what they have read. 140-190 pages per week.

Textbooks are available as new and used paperbacks as well as on Kindle through <http://www.amazon.com> and elsewhere. In the past students have found books much easier than Kindles to access for class discussion. A detailed syllabus as well as additional discussion materials will be provided both in a Xeroxed package and emailed to students as a Word document file.

Elena Ferrante, *My Brilliant Friend* (Book I of the Neapolitan Novels), translated Ann Goldstein, 2012.

Elena Ferrante, *The Days of Abandonment*, translated Ann Goldstein, 2005.

Elena Ferrante, *Troubling Love*, translated Ann Goldstein, 2006.

Domenico Starnone, *Ties*, translated Jhumpa Lahiri, 2017.

Domenico Starnone, *Trick*, translated Jhumpa Lahiri, 2018.

Date	Tentative Assignments
Sept 25	Introduction. No assignment, no need to read ahead, but bring the four books to the introductory session.
Oct 2	Reading Assignment: <i>Troubling Love</i>
October 9	Reading Assignment: <i>My Brilliant Friend</i> , 27-178
October 16	Reading Assignment: <i>My Brilliant Friend</i> , 178- 331
October 23	Reading Assignment: <i>Days of Abandonment</i>
October 30	Reading Assignment: <i>Ties</i>
November 6	Reading Assignment: <i>Tricks</i>
November 13	Reading Assignment: Closing discussion and celebratory review

Leader: Lois Marie Harrod is a poet and writer, who teaches creative writing at the College of New Jersey and literature at the Evergreen Forum. She has published 17 poetry collections including *Woman*, forthcoming from Blue Lyra in December 2019.

Wednesdays: 1:30 p.m. to 3:30 p.m., 8 weeks: September 25 through November 20 (no class on 10/9)

Location: Presbyterian Church of Lawrenceville, Maximum 15 seats