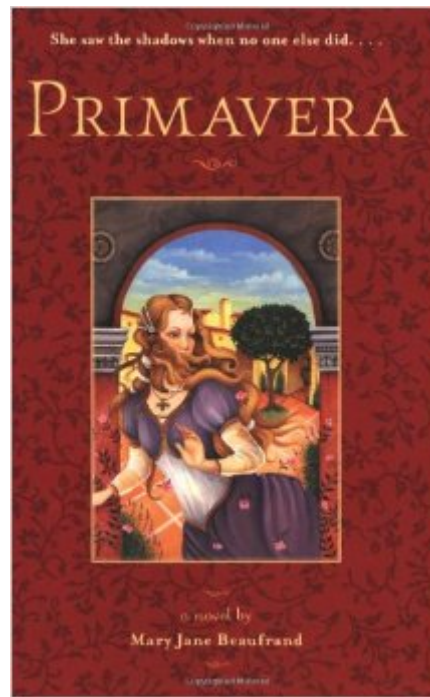


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# Primavera



## Synopsis

The Italian Renaissance was a cultural explosion of art, architecture and learning, but it had a darker side. Two powerful families, the tyrannical Medici and their biggest rivals, the Pazzi, are tangled in a bloody struggle for ultimate power. Caught in the whirlwind is Flora, the last daughter of the Pazzi. As her beautiful older sister is being painted by the famed artist Botticelli, Flora is dreading her fate. Destined for life in a convent, Flora is determined to take matters into her own hands, even as her world crumbles around her. When Flora decides to run away, she has no idea that the decision will save her life. As her family falls to their murderous enemy, Flora must find a new life and a new identity. Inspired by actual events, *Primavera* is a dazzling coming of age story set during a time of beauty and wealth, ambition, rivalry and brutality. Historical art references to Botticelli and his famous painting, *La Primavera*, give this book an appeal similar to *Girl with a Pearl Earring*.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

The Italian Renaissance brings to mind beautiful images, paintings and sculptures, glorious and expensive brocades, string quartets in the garden; a rich texture of life indeed. But it was also a time of great strife and cruelty the likes of which we could never imagine in this day and age. Sprinkled throughout with Italian words and phrases, *PRIMAVERA* dips the reader into the Renaissance period. Flora, the youngest daughter of the Pazzi, strives to find beauty and normalcy in a life that is anything but. Scorned by her own mother, she lives as little more than a servant while her older sister, Domenicia, is primped, plucked, painted by the famed Botticelli, and otherwise prepared for the wedding that will join the Pazzi to the Medici. As Flora contemplates her mother's plan for her

future, life in a convent, a member of her father's guard arrives with a missive from the Pope himself. The guard, Emilio, hangs around and becomes the friend and companion that Flora has never had. When Emilio and Nonna, the grandmother who's raised and protected her, convince her to train with the guard, Flora finds strength that carries her through the difficult months to come. *PRIMAVERA* is a captivating read. I found myself rooting for Flora and Emilio. Ms. Beaufrand painted her characters so realistically that I felt their pain, their fear, their guilt, and yes, even their joy. True to great historical fiction, the author did not flinch when she described some of the tragedies that befell her characters. Be warned that some of the scenes are quite graphic and not for the faint of heart. Yet I hesitate to limit this book to those only in 9th-grade and up. If you know nothing about this time period, yet enjoy historical fiction, you will love this well-written novel. If you are a fan of the Renaissance you will revel in all of the historical details Ms. Beaufrand has so expertly shown. Reviewed by: Cana Rensberger

My daughter just finished this book and told me he was great. I thought I'd take a look to see what her definition of great was and I have to tell you I couldn't put this book down. I found it very exciting and fast moving and I had to know what was going to happen next. This book does not disappoint. I have to tell you I'm now going to read Mary Jane's other book even though, not being a teen, I'm not the audience it is intended for.

*Primavera* is a thrilling book that is written with such detail and emotion it is amazing that it is fictional. One is immediately transferred to the time of the Renaissance at the beginning of chapter 1, and is put into the place of the main character, Flora. The conflict surrounds the Medici family and how they mistreat others, even families of their own similar ranking. *Primavera* deals with love, hope, loss, fear, friendship, joy, and guilt. This book is a captivating read, and I would recommend it to anyone in 6th grade and up. I am a voracious reader in 7th grade, and I loved this book, and even though it has some quite detailed violent scenes, it is still appropriate. *Primavera* is fast paced and there aren't any slow parts. This book is also available on Kindle; however I would buy the real book due to the fact that the cover is so beautifully drawn with hidden depth.

*Primavera* is the story of a young girl, Flora, living in Florence. She is the youngest daughter born to one of the most influential families in the city, the Pazzis. The story follows Flora as she struggles to find her true self in the craze of her power-hungry family. It also follows the romance between Flora and one of her family's guards, Emilio. I give this book a 3/5 because it was a very intriguing

story. The story definitely gives a new spin on Boticelli and the Primavera. I enjoyed reading the toils of Flora and Emilio and their blossoming love. The character development was also very well executed. However, Beaufrand forced too many facts into the book and made it very difficult to understand the content without getting confused. I often found myself rereading passages of the book because I did not understand the chapter. The transitions were not very smooth and often lost me.

This is a lovely book about the various aspects of life in Renaissance Florence. The relative positions and problems of rich and not-so-rich are clear. The girl Flora is sheltered from being totally focused on position by a grandmother who has had wealth and power and traded it for the work of the kitchen and the love of her granddaughter. As a former seventh grade teacher and school librarian, I would say that seventh grade and up is ideal for this book. Although scenes depict violence, they do so with distance rather than detail. And it is true to the times--the author hasn't just thrown violence in for its own sake. Yes, this book is aimed at girls. I would call it a coming-of-age novel rather than a romance though it is the romance that gives it a warm ending. If we only knew the fate of Flora's brother? I was disappointed to find that Beaufrand has not yet published anything similar. I hope we will see more from her in the future.

This book really wavers between 3.5 and 4 stars. Although the historical background is well-researched and presented, the writing is not 5 star. The plot seems rather contrived and the verbiage reflects many of today's social mores. It cannot go down in the annals of classic children's fiction due to these limitations. There are passages that are inappropriate for younger children, so as a previous reviewer said, it should be recommended for readers of 8th or 9th grade and up. I obtained this book from the library in a search for good children's Renaissance fiction, preferably based in Florence. So far, I have found only *The Apprentice* by Pilar Llorente, which is for a younger age group. I have rejected a few already and now add this one to that list. It is a shame that so many of them are really romance novels, which will hardly illuminate the time period for young male readers. This one is a mild romance novel. Romance is definitely a part of the story, but not the only thing that carries it forward.

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