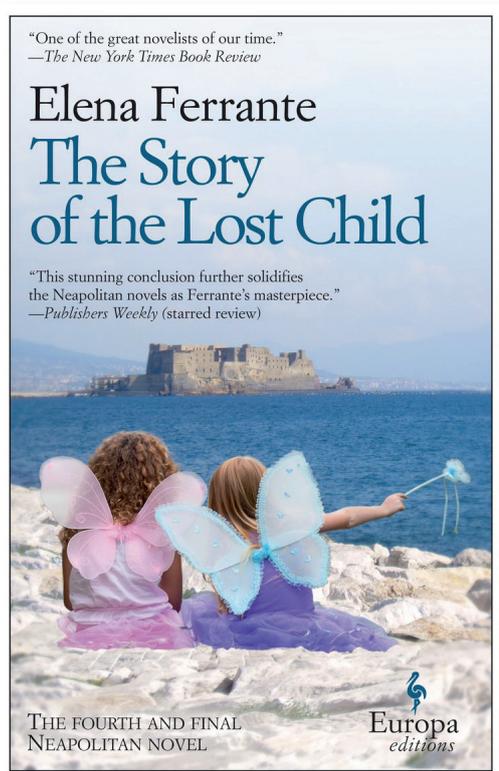


Reader's Guide



The final in four-part series of Neapolitan novels by Elena Ferrante:
My Brilliant Friend (2012)
The Story of a New Name (2013)
Those Who Leave and Those Who Stay (2014)

The Story of the Lost Child Elena Ferrante

Translated by Ann Goldstein

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About the author	Elena Ferrante was born in Naples. This is all we know about her. True to her belief that “books, once they are written, have no need of their authors”, Ferrante has stayed resolutely out of public view. She is the author of <i>The Days of Abandonment</i> , <i>Troubling Love</i> , and <i>The Lost Daughter</i> . Her Neapolitan novels include <i>My Brilliant Friend</i> , <i>The Story of a New Name</i> , <i>Those Who Leave and Those Who Stay</i> , and <i>The Story of the Lost Child</i> . She is also the author of <i>Fragments</i> , a collection of writings on reading, writing and absence, to be published in 2016.
About the translator	Ann Goldstein is an editor at The New Yorker. She has translated works by, among others, Elena Ferrante, Pier Paolo Pasolini, Alessandro Baricco, and Alessandro Piperno. She is the editor of the <i>Complete Works of Primo Levi</i> in English. She has been the recipient of several prizes including a Guggenheim Fellowship, the PEN Renato Poggioli Prize, an award from the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and an award from the American Academy of Arts and Letters.
About the book	The fourth and final instalment of the Neapolitan Novels series, <i>The Story of the Lost Child</i> is the dazzling saga of the friendship between two women: brilliant, bookish Elena and fiery, uncontrollable Lila. Both women fought to escape the neighbourhood in which they grew up: a prison of conformity, violence, and inviolable taboos. Having moved to Florence, started a family, and published several well-received books, Elena returns to be with the man she has always loved. Lila, on the other hand, never succeeded in freeing herself from Naples. Her entrepreneurial success draws her into closer proximity to the nepotism, chauvinism, and criminal violence that infect her neighbourhood; she becomes the unacknowledged leader of the world she has always rejected. Against the backdrop of a Naples that is as seductive as it is perilous and a world undergoing epochal change, this story of a lifelong friendship is told with unmatched honesty.
Discussion points	<p>At the beginning of the novel, Elena describes her memory of Montpellier as an ‘escape’, yet she also describes it as the place where she felt her various ‘limitations’. What, then, does ‘an escape’ mean to her? Is it merely an escape from a bad marriage or something else?</p> <p>In the earthquake episode, the style of narration changes, resembling stream of consciousness. Is the sudden fragmentation in the writing style a reflection of Lila’s state of mind, and further, a premonitory sign of things to come?</p> <p>While Elena Greco is proud of, and even craves the visibility that comes with success, Elena Ferrante has always shied away from the limelight. Could the first be a commentary on the latter?</p>
Themed reading	<p>Dacia Maraini <i>Woman at War</i></p> <p>Silvia Avallone <i>Swimming to Elba: A Novel</i></p> <p>Gianna Manzini <i>Game Plan for a Novel</i></p> <p>Margaret Atwood <i>Negotiating With The Dead: A Writer on Writing</i></p>
Useful links	<p>http://www.theguardian.com/books/2015/sep/03/the-story-of-the-lost-child-elena-ferrante-review-finale</p> <p>http://elena ferrante.com/</p> <p>http://www.independent.co.uk/arts-entertainment/books/reviews/the-story-of-the-lost-child-by-elena-ferrante-book-review-a-dark-and-voyeuristic-peek-into-the-inner-10496849.html</p> <p>http://themanbookerprize.com/interview/story-lost-child-interview</p>