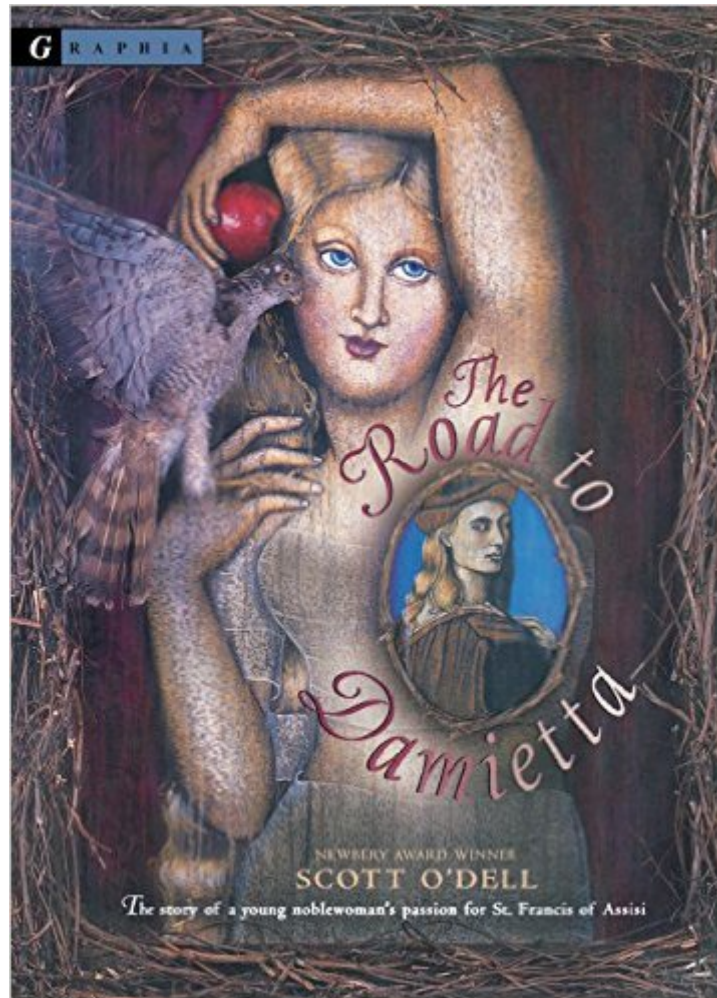


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The Road To Damietta



Synopsis

Rich in the atmosphere of thirteenth-century Italy, *The Road to Damietta* offers through Ricca di Montanaro's eyes a new perspective on the man who became the famous Saint Francis of Assisi, the guileless, joyous man who praised the oneness of nature and sought to bring the world into harmony. "Lord, make me an instrument of Thy peace," he said. "Where there is hatred, let me sow love, where there is injury, pardon; where there is doubt, faith; where there is darkness, light; where there is sadness, joy."

Book Information

Lexile Measure: 980 (What's this?)

Paperback: 307 pages

Publisher: HMH Books for Young Readers (October 25, 2004)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0618494936

ISBN-13: 978-0618494934

Product Dimensions: 5 x 0.8 x 7 inches

Shipping Weight: 9.6 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 3.6 out of 5 stars See all reviews (7 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #2,618,577 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #67 in Books > Teens >

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Age Range: 12 and up

Grade Level: 7 and up

Customer Reviews

I read this book many years ago as an adolescent and through the years carried a strange, bittersweet recollection of the story. Now that my daughter is nearing on that stage in her life, I thought I'd give it another read to see if she might like it only to discover that I am still susceptible to the rich, lyrical, historic beauty of Scott O'Dell's novel. This is the story of Francis of Assisi, as told through the enamored eyes of young Ricca di Montanaro, a fictional contemporary. Her story is not just the point of view for this historical novel, but the decadent substance of the book. Through Ricca we see in full color the vibrancy of 13th century Italy. The pettiness of the noble and merchant classes, the undercurrent of treachery in the church, and the breathtaking beauty of an already ancient landscape. At the beginning, Ricca and her friend, Clare, swoon over Francis Bernardone's

playboy antics. But when Francis infamously strips naked in the public square and declares himself a mendicant for Christ, their paths diverge. Ricca's continued obsession with Francis disregards completely his devotion to peace, nature and God. Her jealousy of Clare's burgeoning involvement with Francis's way of life is one of many clear illustrations of just how blind her 13 year old mind is to his commitment. Even a brief stint in an Italian convent cannot shake her conviction that Francis can and will change for her, if she can only prove her love. Soon, all of Italy is religiously obsessed: the Fifth Crusade has begun. The Road To Damietta is a journey that Ricca undertakes to follow Francis, and it ends in heartbreaking realizations for both of them.

I think I was eleven or twelve when I read THE ROAD TO DAMIETTA for the first time. I was in the middle of a serious Scott O'Dell binge and had just moved back to the States after living in Italy for a few years. So it had the added attraction of taking place in that country I loved at a time when I was having a fair bit of trouble transitioning back to the American culture and pace of living. I'd already burned through Sarah Bishop, Island of the Blue Dolphins, The Serpent Never Sleeps, Spanish Smile, and Streams to the River, River to the Sea by the time I came across a copy of THE ROAD TO DAMIETTA in a narrow, dusty bookstore in West Yellowstone. My copy had the cover you see above on the left. I have always liked it. Though the French cover in the middle is also quite nice. I have to be honest and say that the current cover on the right kind of scares the crap out of me. Don't think I would ever have picked it up based on that cover alone, which would be a shame as it's really a beautiful book and one of the first young adult historical fiction novels I ever read.

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