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In this richly evocative novel--the moving story of one boy's coming of age--acclaimed author Roland Merullo will make you nostalgic for a small Massachusetts city called Revere even if you've never been there. Providing a window into an unspoiled America of forty years ago, **In Revere** welcomes you to the fiercely loyal and devoted Italian-American family of the Benedettos.

Although he was orphaned as a child, young Anthony Benedetto was always surrounded by family, and the vibrant warmth of the Revere community. His Uncle Peter, a former Golden Gloves boxer whose days of glory were behind him, believed Tonio was bound for great things. So did his daughter Rosie, Tonio's favorite cousin, who would take many wrong turns--away from Tonio--through adolescence. His gentle grandparents, who took him in, encouraged him to claim a future outside of Revere, but the warm, unconditional love of his family, and the smells and sounds of Revere stay with him forever.

In Revere, In Those Days Details

Date : Published October 14th 2003 by Vintage (first published 2002)

ISBN : 9780375714054

Author : Roland Merullo

Format : Paperback 320 pages

Genre : Fiction, Literary Fiction

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Suzy says

This book was recommended to me by Rich's dad who actually grew up in Revere, MA. He felt like the story and characters aptly described much of his own childhood. I've always enjoyed Rich's dad's stories about growing up back East, so I thought that this would be at least a good book. I was right - but I had no idea how powerful and wonderful this book would really be!

It's your basic "coming of age" story; the main character is a young boy who is orphaned and then raised by his colorful and intensely emotional and loving Italian-American family. What is most striking about the characters (and, I would say, how you really get to the core of all these supporting characters), is how they reach out to love this boy who has lost so much. The beauty is that none of these family members are perfect - they have so many faults on the side - but collectively, and in their own ways, they come as close to perfectly loving this boy as I have ever read in any story. I think that the author must have experienced this kind of intense family love in order to write about it so convincingly.

I cannot recommend this book enough. It truly is a character driven story (I tend to favor these types of books) and the characters are so real. On three separate occasions, I was so touched by the characters and the story that I had to put the book down, take off my glasses and just WEEP. This is a beautiful book and one that I will not forget in a long time.

Alison Kenney says

I read this because of Marielle's review! What I liked best was the author's revelations or insights into different characters, especially his understanding about what was driving his cousin Rosalie. I also loved the relationship between his grandfather and his friend Vito and the way the main character watched and studied everyone, like his grandmother, so closely in order to understand them and learn about himself.

Desiree says

This is one of the best stories I have ever had the pleasure to read. Roland Merullo has a beautiful gift for writing. You can "feel" everything he describes in this wonderful story. I took my time reading as I didn't want to miss anything...I didn't want the story to end. Had a few good cries during reading...any author who can do that is tops in my book. This is a must have for my library and I can't wait to read more of his work.

Robin says

I read this close on the heels of All Souls, a memoir about South Boston -- so closely in fact, that I was several chapters in before I remembered that this was a novel, and not a memoir. Then, oddly, I found I liked it a lot less. It's said that one can be more truthful in a novel than in a memoir, and I believe there is truth in every word of this story. It took a long time for me to finish it; I kept leaving it about the house. In the end, I

guess I liked it more than I didn't, but it seemed to be too many stories at a time, and those stories were The Departed, School Ties, Summer of 42, and everything Pat Conroy ever wrote. That's good company to be in, I suppose. I just wanted something new. I wish I could be more enthusiastic about it, but there it is.

Gretchen says

I have spent most of my life wishing I had been born into an Italian family. One of my dearest friends in childhood (in the 60's) was Italian, and I remember hoping everyday that she would invite me to her house... to eat, to play, to feel the energy, to stay! This story, by Roland Merullo, takes you back to the late 60's, when the author is "coming of age". Maybe it was this author's style of writing, written with the main character as its narrator, or possibly it was the time-period piece, or maybe it was the whole Italian family "want-a-be" thing that hooked me. But I loved this book!

Gloria says

I enjoyed this book. This is my second book written by Merullo--a local author. My first encounter with his writing was through Breakfast with Buddha, a book I highly recommend. I connected with the narrator in this book, a young Italian American boy living in Revere. While I am neither a boy nor a resident of Revere, I was able to re-experience the richness of growing up Immersed in Italian culture. More than that, I really connected to the decisions the narrator wrestled with in making decisions to grow beyond his local community and family. It is a coming of age story that explores family ties, love, loss, prejudices of the 60s, and finding one's true self when straddling two worlds. I look forward to adding more from this author.

JennEllen says

My feelings for this book can be summed up in a single, eloquent statement: meh. I didn't love the book, nor did I hate it. There were things that I did enjoy--the characters were well-developed and there were several scenes that were touching and/or funny and/or profound. Overall, however, the tone struck me as self-indulgent, not only in the way that most memoirs (though this was a fictionalized memoir) tend to be, but also in the excessive flowery language and severe overuse of metaphors. I don't consider it a waste of time to have read it, but I'm glad it was a library book and not a purchase.

Linda says

Revere is a seashore town in Massachusetts, and the narrator of this story, Anthony Benedetto, tells the story of his life. Anthony's family is a close-knit one. He and his parents share a two-family house with his grandparents, and when his parents are killed in a plane crash, Anthony simply moves downstairs and is raised by his grandparents. He is especially close to his Uncle Peter, and Peter's daughter Rosalie is Anthony's best friend, although they part ways as Rosalie runs with a bad crowd as they grow older. For me, the relationship between Anthony and his grandfather is the key to the story. He helps Anthony deal with the grief of losing his parents, but more importantly, Grandfather understands that Anthony is trying to reconcile his Italian ancestry and values with 20th century American life. Anthony is a good boy, smart in school, and

Grandfather has plans for him. He teaches Anthony to ice skate and play hockey. He encourages Anthony in his education and Anthony wins a scholarship for high school at Phillips Exeter Academy in NH. From the blurb in the cover, "As the New World calls to him, Anthony gradually grows up and away from Revere but hints that it is as much a part of him as his eye color and the size of his hands. His eventual realizations – that geography is destiny, that suffering is universal, and that he is able to pass on, to his own children, the priceless Benedetto inheritance of warmth and caring – form the essence of who he becomes as a man."

Katy says

The descriptions of Italian-American family life resonated so strongly with me that at times I forgot that this book a) isn't intended to be an autobiography, and b) isn't *my* autobiography! (ignoring the differences in location, decade, and gender of course...)

I became absolutely swept up in the richness and familiarity of the characters and the exploration of why they were the way they were (this is a level of detail that can drag in a book that isn't as well-written as this one). This book gave me a renewed appreciation for character-driven prose instead of plot-driven. I felt all of the emotions as raw as if they were my own.

Definitely looking forward to reading more by Roland Merullo.

Lynn Schuster says

I loved this tender novel about growing up in a family of strong ethnic traditions and respecting those while wanting something more. While this family was of Italian American ancestry I see so many parallels to my German first generation German and Slovak paternal and maternal grandparents. They had so much love would do anything to support the grandchildren , made mistakes and blamed themselves , sadly self critical and humble.

Amy Galaviz says

This book is a coming-of-age story centered on Tonio, a young man growing up among an Italian-immigrant family in Revere in the 1960s. Revere is only a few towns away from me, so I read this book hoping to gain a historical perspective of the area, and how people from there came to become the way they are. However, this book turned out to be more of a memoir of Tonio's fictional life, with his feelings about himself, his family, and his life examined and discussed at length, and not so much of a portrait of the town. While it was sad and all how he was orphaned as a young boy, I found most of the book a little too preachy and Hallmark-cardy for my taste. I understand how it must be traumatizing to lose ones parents at such a young age, but there were things about Tonio that seemed unusual, unrealistic, and downright bizarre. The way in which he was able to cope with tragedy living in a rough neighborhood, with no moral shortcomings whatsoever, and go on to be so successful in life was inspirational, yes, but not very believable, and it is rare to meet people in real life who would be able to cope so well. Also, the book mentions that he is interested in girls as a teenager, but it seems he only admires them from a distance, and the only girl he ever really thinks about is

his cousin Rosalie. As a star athlete and student wouldn't one expect him to be more aggressive with girls? Also, what is up with his relationship with Lydia, a woman more than twice his age? I could understand at first how they bonded because they both lost their closest family members, but when their relationship turned sexual and she took his virginity, I was like, 'whoa.' The whole situation made me a little squeamish. Overall, this book had potential, but unfortunately did not fulfill my expectations.

jeannine says

This was good; I read it one summah when we was down the cape for v'cation. I had a hahd time not saying 'Raveah' every time I read the title!! :) he he

Kathleenmanley says

I enjoyed the book--the feel of Revere in the 60s and the contrast to Philips Exeter. The descriptions of his family members, particularly the uncle, are great. I just didn't think this hung together very well as a novel. The ending sort of fell off. At times the narrator refers to his current adult life as an artist, but we don't ever hear how this came to happen. He suffers the loss of many family members, especially his cousin who he feels very close to, but I don't really understand how he overcomes them. There is some reference to meditation and Buddhism when he has his first sexual encounter with a much older woman. There were a lot of tangents. Breakfast with Buddha was a much better book with many of the same themes.

Cathy says

I mostly loved this book, the characters, the dialogue, the insights and descriptions. I give it 3 1/2 stars though because it left me unsettled. More than nostalgia, there was a melancholy, a dense fog, over the book that never seemed to go away even when Tony came of age, even when he came to some understanding. He told us, in the end that he was happy, I'm not convinced he could be. Did he really find a way to bridge his two worlds and find peace? The writer see Tony could see the essence in someone beyond the wrapping and that gave him comfort?

There were loose ends that seemed to evaporate-did formal meditation really help? Did just let Rosalie go? How did he become a painter? What happened to Uncle Peter? I liked the idea of Lydia, but she was a strange character and didn't seem believable.

The love this family shared was beautiful and tragic. It held Tony up, it allowed Uncle Peter to remain impotent, it tortured Rosalie. The relationship between Tony and his grandfather was particularly beautiful, and that is what remains with me.

Ray Daniel says

Place has always been important to me. A strong sense of place, especially of a place a I know is a gift that I

appreciate from a writer and try to offer as an author.

I have never read a book that is as beautiful and as evocative of place as this.

I grew up in Revere, my Italian/Spanish family having branched out from the North End to a triple-decker on Campbell Avenue and then to a single family on Arlington Avenue. Roland Merullo captured, shared, and revived those days when my sprawling Mediterranean family packed together to share holidays and birthdays, graduations and wakes. The book brought me back to the before our family slipped apart, a victim of time, mortality, and geography. I felt as if I'd been given a gift.

What a wonderful book!

Nix says

It was . . . interesting. Got kinda mature towards the end, but what I think was the major love scene got torn out of my book. Other than that . . . well, it isn't my genre, and I can't blame it for that, but it was okay all the same.

I have to wonder, though. Being that Merullo himself went to Phillips Exeter and Brown, was this actually a memoir? Sounds like that could be Mr. Merullo, hidden under a thin shell of Anthony.

Bob Olson says

I grew up in Revere, on a side street off of Park Avenue much like "Jupiter Street", the home base of this captivating novel. My adolescence was probably 15 years earlier than the action of this story, but it still rings true to me. Merullo captures the Revere I knew as well as the Italian families I grew up beside. But you don't have to have grown up to appreciate this novel. The struggles of adolescence and "fitting in" at school could well have been your as well. A very atmospheric and enthralling read. Highly recommended.

Eva Nickelson says

This is a wonderful book about the Italian-American immigrant experience. The protagonist is Anthony Benedetto, and the book follows him through middle school and high school. He loses his parents near the beginning of the story, and from then on, his grandparents and his godfather, Uncle Peter, take over, trying to give him something close to what his parents wanted for him. This leads to hockey and Exeter, and away from the closeness of his large Italian family.

The prose in the book is amazing. Murello has a beautiful way of stating both the horrific and the mundane. The pace of the book was well done, and the characters were all varied and multidimensional, very life-like.

Catherine Marenghi says

In Revere, In Those Days This lovely novel made me think I was reading a memoir -- it was so vivid and true to a time and place. Refreshingly, this story of an Italian-American family is NOT about the Mafia, but the kind of Italian-American family that will be immediately recognizable to all like me who were raised in one -- people deeply connected to each other and to their cultural roots.

As an extra treat, I live on the North Shore of Massachusetts, and the author's references to the local region are spot on. I have recommended this book to a number of friends who have loved it. It is an accessible, beautifully written and lovingly rendered portrait of a young man coming of age.

Meichler says

Solid 3 stars for this one. A nice, coming of age story that is beautifully written, which takes place North of Boston near where I lived for quite some time, this is the fictionalized story of a boy named Anthony who - grows up. Anthony loses his parents tragically and is raised by his grandparents, who are sweet old Italians. He adores his Uncle who seems like a shady character though his whereabouts are never quite confirmed. He goes to school. He makes friends. He is completely boring. Those individuals around him (such as his rebellion, gorgeous cousin and his black roommate - going to school in the '60's) are interesting, as is his uncle, his grandparents, even his parents who we only know for a short time. Anthony, however, has the most straight edge high school career I've ever heard of and I found myself, often, thinking, "why am I reading about this kid?". That said, it was a beautiful story in a lot of ways - his relationship with his grandparents made my heart swell, given that I, too, am very close with my grandparents; his loss of his parents brought tears to my eyes - those are genuine testaments to how well written the book was. I just - didn't care too much about our Anthony. I wish we would have gotten to know the other better and spent less time on a boy who barely leaves his room.
