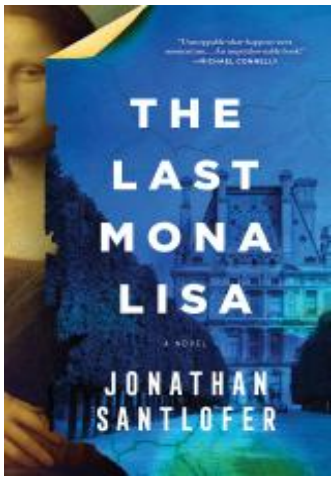
The Last Mona Lisa

by Jonathan Santlofer



About the Book

From award-winning crime writer and celebrated artist Jonathan Santlofer comes an enthralling tale about the 1911 theft of the *Mona Lisa* from the Louvre, the forgeries that appeared in its wake, and the present-day underbelly of the art world.

August, 1911: The *Mona Lisa* is stolen by Vincent Peruggia. Exactly what happens in the two years before its recovery is a mystery. Many replicas of the *Mona Lisa* exist, and more than one historian has wondered if the painting now returned to the Louvre is a fake, switched in 1911.

Present day: Art professor Luke Perrone digs for the truth behind his most famous ancestor: Peruggia. His search attracts an Interpol detective with something to prove and an unfamiliar but curiously helpful woman. Soon, Luke tumbles deep into the world of art and forgery, a land of obsession and danger.

THE LAST MONA LISA is a suspenseful and seductive tale, perfect for fans of the Netflix documentaries *This Is A Robbery* and *Made You Look* and readers obsessed with the world of art heists and forgeries.

Discussion Guide

1. How do you define art? What would you say makes a masterpiece?

2. Art theft and forgery are complicated and fascinating crimes. Why would someone prefer to own a masterpiece (which must be kept secret) rather than viewing it in a museum? Is forgery an art unto itself?

3. Had you heard of Vincent Peruggia?s theft of the *Mona Lisa* before reading the book? What else did you learn while reading?

4. Early on, Luke seems to have a different sense of time from the Italians around him and is told to be more patient. How do American values contribute to impatience? How can we slow down in our daily lives?

5. John Washington Smith decides against using official Interpol channels when Luke?s communications with Quattrocchi first catch his attention. Why did he want to pursue the matter personally? What were the consequences of his decision?

6. Describe Alex. What does she want? Do you think she is justified in doing what she does?

7. While posing as an art dealer, Smith suggests that buying and selling art doesn?t contribute to the betterment of mankind. Do you agree? How do monetary transactions shape our ideas of artistic and social value?

8. Vincent resists becoming involved in the theft for a long time. What finally convinces him to steal the *Mona Lisa* ? How does economic inequality perpetuate crime?

9. Smith describes making and collecting art as an addiction. Do you think his viewpoint is supported by the events of the book? Can you think of any real-world examples that prove him right?

10. Chaudron is meticulous in his forgeries, but he can?t resist signing them. What do you think motivates him to endanger his work, even subtly? Would you take such a risk in his position?

11. What drives Luke to break his long record of sobriety? How does it compare to his temptation in Florence?

12. Why does Luke keep digging after he returns to New York? Would you have been so persistent in his place?

Author Bio

Jonathan Santlofer is a writer and an artist. His debut novel, THE DEATH ARTIST, was an international bestseller translated into 17 languages. Jonathan created the Crime Fiction Academy as The Center for Fiction. As an artist, Jonathan has been making replications of famous paintings for wealthy clients for more than 20 years.

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