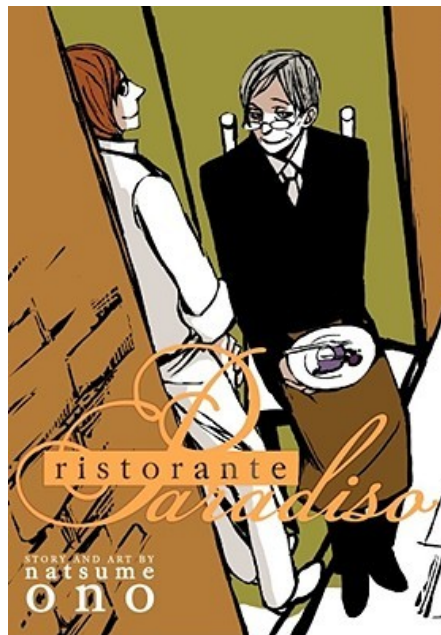




Ristorante Paradiso

Natsume Ono

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Ristorante Paradiso Natsume Ono

A charming tale of a mother/daughter reunion, a burgeoning romance, and a little restaurant in Rome.

R to L (Japanese Style). A charming tale of a mother/daughter reunion, a burgeoning romance, and a little restaurant in Rome. In exchange for playing "the daughter of an old friend," Olga offers Nicoletta a place to live and an apprenticeship at the restaurant. Nicoletta fits in well among the vibrant personalities at Casetta Dell'Orso. She gets along particularly well with the kindly headwaiter, Claudio, a divorced man who, after years, has still never taken off his wedding ring. As Nicoletta's feelings for Claudio become complicated, she finds a sympathetic ear in Olga, leading the estranged pair to form a friendship neither expected. But as they grow closer, the pressure exerted by the secret they share becomes too much to bear.

Ristorante Paradiso Details

Date : Published March 16th 2010 by VIZ Media LLC (first published January 1st 2006)

ISBN : 9781421532509

Author : Natsume Ono

Format : Paperback 176 pages

Genre : Sequential Art, Manga, Comics, Graphic Novels, Fiction, Romance

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From Reader Review Ristorante Paradiso for online ebook

Vicki says

I didn't get on all that well with this one. It wasn't terrible, but I'm not quite sure how it's got so much critical acclaim.

The story setup intrigued me: a girl is abandoned by her mother as a child because her mother falls in love with a man that doesn't want to date women with children. Once she's grown into a young woman, the girl decides to go and confront her mother (and the man that she is still with), with the truth. Throw in the backdrop of an Italian restaurant staffed incongruously with only older bespectacled men, and you've at least got a good hook for people like me who are after something a bit off-the-wall in their comics entertainment.

The main problem I had with the comic tho was the writing. Things just seemed to happen because that's what the author wanted to write, rather than the characters actually causing things to happen because of who they were. One example: at the start, the daughter thinks to herself that she doesn't understand the appeal of the all-older-bespectacled-male waiting staff at the restaurant, but the very next time she sees one of the staff she immediately starts to think how sexy he is.

The author could have written it as if the daughter's mind changed over time, or even that there was something specific about the man that suddenly caught her attention, but in fact she just seemed to contradict herself entirely in the space of just a couple of pages at the start of the book.

There also really isn't much of an emotional impact anywhere in the book around the daughter and the mother's relationship, which is a missed trick in my opinion, given the plot.

The artwork is probably going to be marmite to a lot of people: you'd love it or hate it. Its drawn with nib pens in quite a scratchy, quick style. Personally there are moments where I think the artwork is quite beautifully balanced, but most of the time its quite ugly to me. It's reminiscent of the kind of pen illustrations you might get in a magazine about wine (which is actually pretty fitting, considering the Italian restaurant backdrop), but I'm not really a fan of that style of illustration unfortunately.

All of the supposedly sexy male staff at the restaurant were drawn looking pretty similar, so at points they were very hard to tell apart from each other. The choice to give everyone elongated, spindly bodies and hands was probably 100% conscious on the part of the creator, but again, I'm just not a fan of that style of art (it screams 'I'm out of proportion!' to me :S)

So I would say flip through a few pages of this book if you can before buying and take a look at the art - if you love the art then you'll probably forgive the story a bit. But if you're a fan of enigmatic tall older men with glasses, you should probably just go straight out and buy this anyway ;)

Teetee says

Thought I would like this since its a older/younger dynamic but didn't care for the art or storytelling.

Gretchen Bernard says

I started watching the anime, then found out about the manga. My local library had a copy, so I decided to read and finish it before continuing the manga. I enjoyed it very much, though I do feel like the anime flows better, even though the story is unchanged as far as I can tell.

Estara says

This is one of the properties where scanlations/fansubs did it for me. I totally understand that not every reader of scanlations goes on to buy the books that become available, even if they have liked them. Not even I have that money for every long-running series.

But I remember the time where I couldn't get an impression of a property and only had to rely on reviews in a magazine (not even multiple ones, because there was only one anime magazine and no manga one). I bought much more cautiously and was quite slow to start buying again if I got burned during the buying and watching/reading of a series.

The drawing style of this one-shot is not at all my taste. But I had seen some chapters as scanlations and the storyline was intriguing and then I watched the fansubbed anime series (which I would buy in a heartbeat if they licensed it) which did the admirable trick of staying close to the design but making the people much more attractive.

I love the quietness of the story: abandoned 21-year-old daughter confronts mother, falls in love with the people at the restaurant the mother's current husband owns. You get the sense of directionless resentment and then the opening of Nicoletta's heart and her first big love.

The fact that all the guys at the restaurant are middle-aged and older gentlemen works because Nicoletta realises how much she is like her mom in her obsession with Santo Claudio Paradiso, going directly after him, almost ignoring any obstacle - she even molests him physically right when he helps her out with an umbrella to her door the first time.

With no space wasted we find out why Claudio is so vague and why he is no longer together with his ex-wife whom he continued to love, why Olga, Nicoletta's mother, left her and now is sorry for it, why her current husband Lorenzo didn't want a woman who had a child from a previous marriage (there's actually a believable reason in his and his brother's Gigi story); that you can love without having to destroy someone else's love; that you need to develop dedication and patience if you really want something; that you don't need to make the mistakes of your parents.

All this in a lovely Italian setting around food and good wine. From what I infer some bits in the anime series were probably gotten from the Gente prequel series and the series had way more time to slowly develop the characters and their interaction and background, but even this one off really works. Like a dolce to savour after a satisfying meal.

Forthright . says

Nicoletta comes to Rome, determined to get a little revenge on the mother who abandoned her when she was small. Olga is married to the owner of a quaint little restaurant in the heart of Rome, and Nicoletta shows up

unannounced. Only to be intrigued by the waitstaff, all of whom are suave, bespectacled gentlemen over fifty. And most especially by kind Claudio. Despite a significant age difference, Nicoletta is in danger of falling in love.

A charming blend of restrained romance and family drama, with mother-daughter moments providing most of the character development. There's less in this single volume than was in the anime, but I suspect the adapters borrowed from the three-volume sequel, *Gente*, which I'm diving into next!

Julia says

Ristorante Paradiso is short manga series set in Rome, Italy around a restaurant staffed by older men all wearing glasses. (I've jokingly called it the restaurant of Tim Gunns and it's not entirely wrong.) The series recounts the arrival of Nicoletta and her interactions with the staff.

Natsume Ono's art is an acquired taste, especially the faces. The exaggerated eyes and expressions can be disconcerting. I particularly had issues with both of the main female characters in the story, especially Nicoletta's interactions with Claudio, but it may be an older man-younger girl thing. I seem to recall I had the same reaction to the beginning of the anime, too. But it's a short manga. And you'll still wind up wishing you could stumble across this little restaurant.

Carrie says

Basically set in a maid cafe for women who think older distinguished gentlemen in glasses are sexy, it follows Nicoletta, a 21 year old who tracks down her mother, now the wife of the owner of the aforementioned restaurant. Nicoletta develops a hearts-in-her-eyes crush on one of the waiters, but he's still in love with his ex-wife. There's some drama and pining, there's some backstory about all the waiters, there's a lot of art that seems to mostly be hair and glasses. (I have nothing against hair and glasses.)

I wish I could remember how this ended up on my to-read pile. I expect a certain level of ridiculousness from shojo/josei manga, and this cleared the bar with feet to spare.

Álvaro Arbonés says

En el amor no existen reglas. Siempre es fortuito, extraño, arrollador. No importa cuánto nos preparemos o cuanto lo neguemos, pues cuando nos alcanza es como un rayo que nos atraviesa; no sólo es inevitable y destruye aquello que éramos hasta entonces, sino que además nunca podemos saber cuándo ocurrirá. Si es que alguna vez ocurre.

Aunque **Natsume Ono** es prácticamente desconocida en nuestro país cosecha un importante éxito crítico tanto en EEUU como en Japón. También en buena parte de Europa. A ello contribuye un dibujo de ecos manga, pero más estilizado al redundar en la línea clara, donde todo se juega en una composición de viñetas que no teme al espacio en blanco. No existe diferencia alguna entre dibujo y diseño. Una viñeta en blanco o un espacio más prominente entre viñetas puede dar a entender tanto como la sucesión de dibujos, remitiendo a las formas más elegantes del género. Ono siempre sabe dónde colocar *la cámara* para retratar con exactitud

la sensación que quiere transmitir, pero lo hace tanto con el dibujo como con el viñetado o su distribución; tanto con la imagen como la composición o el montaje. Elementos estos últimos que no pocas veces descuidan dibujantes muy bien considerados en Occidente.

Su única pega es narrativa. Al ceñirse hacia cierta linealidad donde los *flashback* van sólo en relación al descubrimiento inmediato, consigue retratar de forma certera el *tempo* propio del *slice of life*, pero también pierde la oportunidad de ir más allá. De no sólo ser un excelente *slice of life*, sino un manga perfecto. Algo que se hace evidente en lo desaprovechada que se siente la relación entre el dueño del restaurante y **Gigi**.

Pero, ¿de qué restaurante estamos hablando? Del *Ristorante Paradiso*. Un restaurante donde todos los empleados son hombres con gafas para vista cansada. Auténticos caballeros. Y allí aparecerá **Nicoletta**, hija del dueño del restaurante, para aclarar con su madre su disgusto por haber sido abandonada durante quince años. Al menos hasta que decide hacerle el favor de no delatarla por el momento de que es su hija en parte por un cierto amor soterrado y en parte porque **Claudio**, el jefe de camareros que le lleva más de veinte años, ha conseguido despertar su curiosidad. O tal vez algo más.

Aquí el conflicto se dilucida en si Nicoletta revelará el secreto de su madre, que tiene una hija, mientras que su relación con Claudio o las revelaciones de los demás miembros del restaurante alimentan, de forma extraordinaria, la forma de ver el mundo de Nicoletta. Cada pequeño paso nos hace comprender mejor cómo o porqué hace cada uno de los involucrados lo que hace y, con nosotros, también aprende Nicoletta, que descubre que, aunque sea difícil de comprender, cada persona está dispuesta a llegar hasta diferentes lugares por amor. No todos haríamos lo mismo en la misma situación.

De ahí que la única pega que podamos sacarle sea ínfima. Su modo de narrar es perfecto, no tiene debilidades o incoherencias —mas al contrario, es uno de los *slice of life* más inteligentes que pueden leerse no sólo en el manga, sino en la literatura en general—, por lo cual la queja va más bien sobre su transcendencia. Sobre la posibilidad de, dando mayor peso hacia ciertos elementos de tensión (la culpa que siente Gigi, el carácter agrio de **Luciano**), pudiera explorarse con mayor profundidad el contexto. Pero entonces hubiera necesitado más de un tomo. Y *Ristorante Paradiso*, tal y como es, ya es casi perfecto.

Partiendo de esa idea, sólo nos cabe esperar que en el futuro podamos leer más obras de Natsume Ono. Y con un poco de suerte, que logre la popularidad que se merece. A fin de cuentas, no todos los días podemos leer una historia tan excepcional que parece, como el amor, demasiado real como para reducirse a la mera pasión.

Chivitouille says

La premisa con esta historia es no tener muchas expectativas, disfrutarla como es, aunque posiblemente te pueda llegar a dejar indiferente.

Ciertamente llegue a esta historia por el único motivo de que otra de las obras de la autora tuvo un anime, ACCA: 13-Territory Inspection Dept., que visual y musicalmente me dejó enamorada y aunque la historia tiene algunos giros particulares logró su cometido de entretenerme.

Por lo que siendo *Ristorante Paradiso* su única obra publicada en español, no quería dejar pasar la oportunidad de poder leerla. Lo que sí, es que teniendo el estilo que tiene, muy probablemente, sin ser demasiado pesimista, sea la única obra de esta mangaka que sea traducida al español (espero estar equivocada)

Con un ritmo pausado, lento, poco a poco te va envolviendo, haciéndote participe de esta pequeña etapa en la que se desenvuelve la protagonista, esperando que algo suceda, pero que al final solo se queda en una trama que avanza sin dar una conclusión cerrada.

Nicoletta, un día llega a un reconocido restaurante, con un objetivo personal en mente, y aunque en un principio está determinada a conseguirlo, el ir conociendo y conviviendo con todos los trabajadores del restaurante, poco a poco va cambiando su perspectiva.

Me gusta el crecimiento que va dando mientras está en el restaurante, pero hay algo que al principio tal vez en apariencia no termina de encajar del todo, no sé si sea su cambio repentino, que por el hecho de no querer estar sola, de aprovechar su libertad y estadia en la ciudad y de convertir esto en uno más de sus objetivos, decide lanzarse de frente a conquistar a alguien que ha llamado su atención, lo que la vuelve obstinada por lograr que el dicho caballero se fije en ella, como si fuese un capricho, lo que provoca ciertas situaciones inesperadas y que rompe un poco con el ritmo de la historia pero que al final deja esa actitud hasta cierto punto infantil para luego convertirse en un personaje más maduro, dando como consecuencia más situaciones que no hacen más que reafirmar el cambio en ella. Así que lo que empieza como algo que se siente un punto y aparte en la trama, termina por convertirse en un factor que genera un cambio positivo en la protagonista.

La historia resulta bonita pero desear que haya una conclusión cerrada y no tenerla, puede ser un poco decepcionante, pero a cambio el epílogo logra reconfortarnos con una especie de conclusión para todos los personajes, dejándote un buen sabor de boca.

Una trama con un ritmo que no a todos pudiera resultar atractiva, con un estilo de dibujo demasiado particular pero característico de la autora, que da como resultado una historia bonita, que no va más allá del relato temporal de la vida de la protagonista, un momento de su vida que le dará muchos cambios que la harán crecer y replantearse varias cosas, dando como resultado un crecimiento personal que no muchas veces solemos encontrar en este tipo de historias.

Al final he disfrutado de esta historia y me deja con la curiosidad de poder leer más obras de Natsume Ono.

Hannah says

So really this is probably more deserving of a three, but I have some personal bias for the themes and a huge soft spot for the (superior) anime, which helped me feel better during a tough time and remains very close to my heart. So four stars it is.

Jessylyn says

Imagine a quaint little restaurant located on the charming streets of Rome. Inside the tables are occupied to maximum capacity and appetizing Italian food are catered by handsomely mature bespectacled gentlemen. This is the kind of restaurant Nicoletta waltz into in Ristorante Paradiso.

When in Rome...

This manga is a nice slice-of-life romance about a young woman named Nicoletta who travels to Rome in order to confront the man her mother remarried. As a young child, Nicoletta's mother left her to be raised by her grandparents with this as her reason: "There's a man I'm destined to be with. But he'll never marry a divorced woman". (This is not really a spoiler because this is explained within the first few pages). Now at

age 21, Nicoletta travels to Rome to confront her mother's husband, which is why she finds herself outside of Casetta dell'Orso and where our story begins.

Like mother, like daughter.

Nicoletta's relationship with her mother is interesting to say the least. After basically being abandoned as a child, it's easy to understand Nicoletta's resentment towards their mother. Due to some circumstances, Nicoletta doesn't outright say she is her mother's child and instead plays the "daughter of a friend" role. I appreciate that this story isn't all about hating her estranged mother, but instead mother and daughter trying to rekindle their lost relationship.

"Most of our guest are here for the waiters. Our customers share a particular weakness for handsome gentlemen."

Left to Right: Furio, Teo, Claudio, Luciano , Gigi and Vito

Ladies, eat your heart out!

The story is set primarily in the ever popular restaurant, Casetta dell'Orso. This restaurant is popular for two reasons: 1) The food. 2) The staff. Now I think one of the selling points of Ristorante Paradiso is definitely the abundance of charming bespectacled gentlemen. While I wouldn't call this story a reverse harem (all the guys don't fall for the female protagonist), the readers could easily pick out a favorite if they wanted to. I would say that Ristorante Paradiso is the Ouran High School Host Club equivalent for older women. What's nice about this manga is that we do get some insight on all the characters (some more than others). Everyone has a personality and story behind them fleshing out their character.

City of love.

Now, I know that Paris is typically the city of love, but after reading this manga I think it would be nice to fall in love in Rome. Nicoletta falls in love in the insta-love kind of way, but being a short romance prequel manga to the series I didn't really mind. Like her mother, Nicoletta feels with her heart, but she also doesn't act rashly on it. She is constantly trying to understand if what she is feeling is simply an attraction or real love. To me, when Nicoletta acted for the sake of "love" she did it in a way that was confident and reflects how sure she is of her feelings. I really admired her personality because of it.

Would I recommend it?

I loved the anime and love being able to carry the manga with me to read whenever. So yes, I recommend it. This is a nice light read if you want to stray from the typical shōjo romance manga out there.

Aleksandra says

3.5 stars

This was lovely and peaceful. Surprisingly I was more invested into development of relationship between mother and daughter than in romance. The romance is on pre-relationship stage during the entire book but it was cute, I liked Nicoletta and Claudio scenes together.

The art was pretty but a bit rough? I had trouble figuring out who's who because many characters have similar designs.

Hollowspine says

A graphic novel about a young woman who goes to Italy to confront her absent mother. She arrives to find her mother in an idyllic love, surrounded by handsome gentlemen. As her jealousy intensifies she also finds herself hesitant to break that idyllic world as she falls in love as well.

The characters in the novel already have a presence, and I wasn't surprised to find out that there is already another graphic novel about them.

I was interested to find it completely different from other works by Japanese artists, in art as well as to some extent content. There is one thing I noted though that seems to be common in Japanese works and that thing is a harem. This one was a little different in that, unlike most manga, it did not consist of young girls and the people in the harem were not all in love with the same dude. This harem consisted of older, glasses wearing men. And they all had separate personalities and lives that did not completely revolve around one person.

So, although I, for the main part, do not like harem style comedies etc. I did like this story. I also didn't think, unlike so many things in fiction, that the ending was too forced or happy ever after. I liked the open-endedness of it, and the little vignettes at the end.

This is the second graphic novel I've read by Natsume Ono and so far I've been very impressed by the originality and maturity of the work.

Rita Mar says

[Read for Scallywagathon '18 for the challenge "Book that starts with 'R'"]

The thing I really love about Natsume Ono titles is how she builds a nice collected world and just fills it with realistic but also very colorful and different characters with realistic personalities. All with a simple, sketchy art style that I'm in LOVE with.

Rachel says

Too short to be anything amazing, but a good comfort read. Nicoletta has moved to Rome to confront her mother for abandoning her, however she discovers a lot by actually spending time with her, and even experiences burgeoning love. The love interest is an older gentleman by the name of Claudio who is going through his own abandonment issues with his ex-wife. Nicoletta has difficulty deciding what stance to take, she knows that before Claudio can even think of having a relationship, he has to let go. Ono's easygoing drawing style is not as refined as some, but it does have a unique tone and some finer points. Deep eyes and long mouths give many of the characters a peaceful and kindly look that one associates with the elderly. Even though there are some initial troubles, few stories and styles can bring the word "contentment" to mind. Like the gentlemen of the restaurant, this manga is for those with a more refined and quiet taste in romance and slice-of-life.
