

Love and gelato by jenna evans welch: my feelings after reading the book

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Jenna Evans Welch's book *Love & Gelato* is a lighthearted summer read about a girl named Lina who is sent to Italy in order to fulfill her mom's dying wish that she get to know her father who she has never met. Lina doesn't really want to go to Italy because her grandparents, best friends, and her whole entire life are in the States. But her grandma convinces her to go to Italy and she ends up having her mom's journal and starts discovering a lot about her mother, her father, and even herself. The title of the book already gives an idea as to what it means. Gelato is often mistaken as the fancier name for ice cream but truth to be told, gelato is the Italian word for ice cream. As for its distinction, gelato is served at a slightly warmer temperature forming creamier, smoother and denser consistency than a regular ice cream. In the story, the setting is in Tuscany which is a region in central Italy having its famous capital - Florence. By considering the word "love" in the title of the novel, it's no surprise that there's a romance waiting for Lina in Italy.

I have never been to Italy like Lina at the beginning of the story so I was enchanted by the author's skill to festoon such a detailed setting that really made me feel as though I was in Tuscany without experiencing it in first hand. I honestly got on my phone and googled a lot of the landmarks and things they were talking about, which I've never really done before. I was fascinated by the historical locations, the character's homes, and the memorial cemetery in the countryside that Lina calls home over the summer. Also, anytime there was a description of food I was 100% elated because I am quite a fan of Italian dishes made with pastas. Juxtaposed against the lightweight, summery feel of the setting is a deeper mystery that takes up

most of the novel's focus. Lina's deceased mother has left her a journal that details her own time in Florence when she was a young adult and how it changed the course of her life forever. As Lina brings herself to read her mother's words bit by bit, it guides her exploration through Tuscany and her understanding of her own life and history.

I loved getting to know Lina's mother through her journals. Though I anticipated all of the twists, I still enjoyed reading about her story at photography school and comparing her Italian experience to Lina's, and watching Lina piece it all together. While this is by no means a heavy book, I appreciated that Lina's grief is talked about often and is something that she constantly deals with throughout the course of the book. This novel also has some really great adult, parental figures and it was touching to see Lina develop a relationship with Howard despite losing her mother.