

MY BRILLIANT FRIEND

The Story of the Lost Child

With **Alba Rohrwacher, Irene Maiorino and Fabrizio Gifuni**

Directed by **Laura Bispuri**

*Based on “The Story of the Lost Child” by Elena Ferrante
published in the US by Europa Editions*

An **HBO-Rai Fiction** Series

A Fandango, The Apartment, Fremantle Italy, Wildside and Mowe production, with Lorenzo Mieli producing for Fremantle Italy, The Apartment and Wildside (both part of the Fremantle Group), and Domenico Procacci for Fandango, in association with Rai Fiction and HBO Entertainment

CAST

Elena Greco (Lenù)	Alba Rohrwacher
Raffaella Cerullo (Lila)	Irene Maiorino
Nino Sarratore	Fabrizio Gifuni
Franco Mari	Stefano Dionisi
Elena's mother (Immacolata)	Anna Rita Vitolo
Pietro Airola	Pier Giorgio Bellocchio
Adele Airola	Daria Deflorian
Lila Cerullo (as a girl)	Gaia Girace
Marcello Solara	Lino Musella
Pasquale Peluso (as a boy)	Eduardo Scarpetta
Michele Solara	Edoardo Pesce
Maria Rosa Airola	Sonia Bergamasco

CREW

Director	Laura Bispuri
Written by	Elena Ferrante Francesco Piccolo Laura Paolucci Saverio Costanzo
<i>Based on</i>	<i>"The Story of the Lost Child" by Elena Ferrante, published in the US by Europa Editions</i>
Director of Photography	Vladan Radovic
Editing	Carlotta Cristiani
Set Design	Giancarlo Basili
Set Decoration	Elio Maiello
Costumes	Antonella Cannarozzi
Hair	Antoine Mancini
Makeup	Valentina Iannucilli (Ep. 1-2-3-4-5-6-7) Alessia Iacino (Ep. 4-7-8-9-10)
Casting	Laura Muccino (u.i.c.d.) Sara Casani (u.i.c.d.) Florinda Martucciello (u.i.c.d.)
Production Organizers	Franco Rapa - Angelo Zemella
Sound Mixer	Fabio Conca (a.i.t.s.)
Music	Max Richter
MOWE Co-Producer	Roberta Trovato
Line Producer	Paolo Bogna
Fandango Producer	Laura Paolucci
Creative Producer	Nicola Lusuardi
Executive Producers	Paolo Sorrentino Jennifer Schuur Elena Recchia Guido De Laurentiis Saverio Costanzo

Non-contractual credits

Rai Producers

Francesco Nardella
Luigi Mariniello
Daria Hensemberger
Giulio Luciani

Produced by

Lorenzo Mieli for Fremantle Italy, The Apartment and Wildside (both part of the Fremantle Group)
Domenico Procacci for Fandango

A Fandango, The Apartment, Fremantle Italy, Wildside and Mowe production

In association with Rai Fiction and HBO Entertainment

Complementary Program (POC) 'NEW STRATEGIES FOR CINEMA IN CAMPANIA' 3 - Resolution of the Regional Council of Campania no. 564 of November 3, 2022



IN ASSOCIATION WITH

Campania Region

Campania Region Film Commission Foundation

Toscana Film Commission



Film Commission Turin Piedmont

City of Florence



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SYNOPSIS

The two protagonists Lina (or Lila) and Elena (or Lenù) are now adults, with eventful lives full of discoveries, falls and “rebirths” behind them. Both have struggled to break out of their neighborhood, a prison of conformity, violence and hard-to-break bonds. Elena, now an established writer, left Naples, married and then separated from her husband, has two daughters and is now back in Naples to pursue a youthful love interest who has rematerialized in the midst of her new life. Lila has never left Naples, and is as entangled as ever in family and Camorra relationships, but she has invented an impressive career for herself as an IT entrepreneur and is ever more playing her fascinating and charismatic role as the hidden but authentic leader of the “Rione” (which will lead her, among other things, to a clash with the powerful Solara brothers). Through the new trials that life throws at them, they discover in themselves and each other ever new aspects of their personalities and their bond of friendship. Meanwhile, in the background, the history of Italy and the world unfolds, and this too is something the two women and their friendship will find themselves confronting.

DIRECTOR’S STATEMENT

When Saverio Costanzo asked me if I wanted to direct the last season of *My Brilliant Friend*, it seemed like the fulfilment of a wish I'd had years back when I found out that a series based on Elena Ferrante's novels was going to be filmed.

So, I immediately decided to take on the formidable challenge of shooting all ten episodes from the fourth and final book of the Neapolitan Novels, to enter Ferrante's world and to immerse myself in the world of the series.

The most important thing for me was to strike a balance between the previous seasons and the new one I was building.

The basic principle that makes me believe in this project heart and soul is sincere direction. Essentially, I do not believe in pre-calculated operations but only in adhering to the subject matter of the story I am telling. The deeper and more authentic this adherence is, the more the work will benefit from it. For this reason, I plunged completely into the story I was going to tell, experiencing it firsthand, showing great respect for the past, the characters, the locations, and the expectations of the audience who loved the previous seasons, while also seeking something new that would harmoniously connect with the old. This balance was the result of a continuous search, day after day, that involved various aspects.

In fact, this season will see some very important changes in the cast. The characters are entering adulthood, they're changing, and most importantly, the actors are changing. I was able to carry out some extensive work with the latter. We started from scratch, and I think the same characters, having matured, have also become more complex, nuanced, deep and authentic. I was always looking for that delving that Elena Ferrante makes into the subtlest folds of each of her creations, never sparing them, but making them so recognizable that it's as if you could touch them with your hands as you read the pages. I tried to take my actors by the hand and descend as far as possible into their souls to bring them closer to Ferrante's story. A tremendous journey each of us took into her writing. For me, it was vertical one. Every day I searched and every day I found more elements in her story. Dynamics and relationships that at first lay beneath the surface, that could not be seen on a primary level, or even on a second or a third level. I had the feeling of descending vertically into a kind of labyrinth of her writing, and the more I searched, the more I found. An endless process that fascinated me immensely.

This season, as we move forward in time, there are several things that have changed along with the new cast. But again, I want to emphasize that I made sure that these changes were gentle, as natural as possible. The "Rione", for example, becomes full of color in the 1980s. But the feeling that comes

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across when you look at it is that it's always been that way. Its transformation comes across as quite natural, and everything seems to be connected to the past. With the camera, I combined what is my fluid style of constant symbiosis with the characters, a certain freedom of movement and very long takes (which is the way I love to shoot) with moments of suspension and minimalist storytelling to emphasize different atmospheres. The same fluidity blends with pauses that linger on particular glances, reactions, fears, suspicions, failures, hopes and understandings that seem to arise in simple real life. The editing accompanied and recreated this mix of styles, conveying the vitality I always seek when I shoot. Editing and photography were my pillars in this new work, which stimulated me to continuous research and evolution.

Laura Bispuri

CHARACTER DESCRIPTIONS

ELENA "LENU" GRECO

Author, daughter of Immacolata and Vittorio Greco, sister of Elisa, Peppe and Gianni Greco, married to Pietro Airola. Immersed in her career, absorbed by her frequent escapades with Nino, Elena is now a successful woman and writer who also has to grapple with the oppressive roles of lover and mother. Despite her differences with Adele and Nino's secrets, the time has come to find stability with him and her daughters in Naples. Returning to her roots, to the neighborhood, to Lila, who can still stab her where it hurts, means complicating her existence. But if these were all things she endured as a child, now it's time to reign over them.

RAFFAELLA "LILA" CERULLO

Now an entrepreneur, the second daughter of the large Cerullo family, she first married Stefano Carracci and is now the partner of Enzo Scanno. Loved and admired by everyone in the neighborhood, she and Enzo founded an IT company that has transformed her from factory worker to business owner, earning her the respect she deserves in the "Rione"; even that of the Solaras. But the new balances are precarious, and will lead her to start a full-fledged war at Elena's side. Lila will be forced to face painful family matters that will reveal her strength, but especially her weaknesses.

NINO SARRATORE

University lecturer, son of Donato and Lidia Sarratore and brother of Marisa. From a young age devoted to forming useful relationships, as a grown man he continues to weave his web of protection to achieve his many goals, often even running the risk of undermining them. But Nino is prepared to do anything, even if it means neglecting Elena, his wife Eleonora, and especially his children. His unbridled and at the same time devoted passion for women will place him on shaky ground, but his brazenness will keep him standing.

IMMACOLATA “IMMA” GRECO

Housewife, mother of Elena, Peppe and Gianni, married to Vittorio Greco. After vehemently opposing Elena and Pietro’s civil marriage, she again interferes in the relationship to prevent the couple from breaking up. Immacolata’s life has been a complicated one, and difficulties will not be far behind this time either, but a woman like her has long learned how to fight back. Between Gianni and Peppe under the Solaras’ thumb and Elisa still not married to Marcello, she has now placed all her hopes in Elena.

PIETRO AIROTA

University professor, son of Adele and Guido Airotta, younger brother of Mariarosa, married to Elena Greco. For a man with a traditional mindset like Pietro, accepting his wife Elena’s infidelity and facing a painful separation is certainly not easy. Always focused on his work and the writing of groundbreaking academic essays that will take him far, it is within his own world that he finds happiness again, thanks to a brilliant student. Accepting that his daughters live in Naples remains difficult, but finding compromises with Elena is essential.

ADELE AIROTA

Married to Guido Airotta, mother of Pietro and Mariarosa. With her husband Guido, she takes care of her granddaughters Dede and Elsa during Elena’s repeated absences and her son Pietro’s marital crisis. To leave the girls in the care of Elena, so absorbed in herself, to take them to live with Nino, an unreliable stranger, especially in a city like Naples, would be a most careless mistake. Determined to protect them from the life choices of Elena, with whom she believed she’d made a pact, she does all she can to keep Dede and Elsa with her.

MARIAROSA AIROTA

Sister of Pietro, daughter of Guido and Adele Airotta and partner of Franco Mari. A staunch feminist, she is extremely close and devoted to her family, particularly her mother. However, this doesn’t stop her from extending a helping hand to Elena in her time of need. Sadly, a tragic event will leave an indelible mark on her life, and she will have to find the strength to get back on her feet.

MARCELLO SOLARA

Son of Manuela and Silvio Solara, partner of Elisa Greco, Elena’s younger sister, with whom he decided to build a family. This also involves taking care of his mother-in-law, Immacolata, and his brothers-in-law, Peppe and Gianni, whom he takes under his wing. The red book that Mrs. Solara kept, which allowed her to be so influential in local politics, has ended up in his hands. Lila, whom Marcello blames for Michele’s downfall, poses a challenge to the family business, yet the Solara family will also find themselves in conflict with Elena.

MICHELE SOLARA

After his mother’s death, Michele lost his mind and threw Gigliola and the children out of the house, saying he no longer wanted to see them. Something inside him has cracked, he’s changed. Many blame Lila, others blame Alfonso. Always supported by his brother Marcello, Michele must return to his former ruthless, brutal self to regain his credibility in the neighborhood.

FRANCO MARI

Elena's boyfriend during her university years in Pisa and Mariarosa's partner. He is drastic and pessimistic in his view of the future, which has led him to stop believing even in himself. Despite this, he remains friendly and loving towards Elena, and especially with her daughters, even contributing to their education.

EPISODE SYNOPSIS

EPISODE 1 – THE SEPARATION

Elena stays in France with Nino longer than planned, but she's aware that she has to make up for lost time with her daughters. The painful separation from Pietro, the success of her novel, the constant escapades with Nino; time passes and her daughters only listen to their grandparents, the Airotas. When even Pietro builds a new life for himself, Elena decides to take Dede and Elsa to Nino's house in Naples, where they will all live together. But when she returns to her hometown, Lila reveals to her that Nino is still living with his wife.

EPISODE 2 - DISPERSION

Nino has rented an apartment in Via Tasso in Naples, but Elena can't forgive his constant excuses and leaves him. Forced, this time by Adele, to take her daughters back, she takes them to live with Mariarosa and Franco, despite their unstable living conditions. Nino's pleas for forgiveness are relentless, and after Franco's suicide, Elena finally decides to move in with her daughters at Nino's place in Via Tasso.

EPISODE 3 - COMPROMISES

In the neighborhood, Lila is now well-liked for her generosity; Elena decides to leave her daughters with her while she travels to New York with Nino. When they return from their wonderful trip, both Lila and Elena reveal that they're pregnant. Nino is delighted with the news and Elena wants to trust him, even though he continues to lead a double life. Distraught by the news of the Bologna massacre, Elena has to take Immacolata to hospital because her health has suddenly deteriorated. She soon finds out that her mother has a tumor.

EPISODE 4 - EARTHQUAKE

Lila keeps warning Elena not to trust Nino; Elena is perturbed, what does her friend know about Nino and what else does she know about Alfonso and Michele? Without their kids, the two spend the day together in the neighborhood, where Lila is respected by everyone and where we learn that Marcello has long since introduced a drug trade.

A sudden earthquake forces everyone to flee, and Lila, terrified, reveals her weaknesses to Elena. At dawn, Lila can reunite with her family, but Elena is alone, because Nino is with Eleonora.

EPISODE 5 - THE BREAK

Basic Sight has become the center of the neighborhood. It's where Elena meets Michele and Alfonso, it's where Immacolata would like Peppe and Gianni to work instead of selling drugs for the Solaras. When Elena's daughter is born, Lila takes Immacolata to visit her, but she collapses. Elena lets Nino and Lila take her to hospital, but the image of the two so close together is a nightmare for her; jealousy goes to her head. Lila spends the night with Immacolata in hospital, and the next day Marcello and Elisa have her moved to a clinic.

EPISODE 6 – THE CHEAT

Alfonso accompanies Elena to the clinic to see Immacolata, and on the way confesses to having had an affair with Michele. Meanwhile, Lila gives birth to Tina and Immacolata draws her last breath. After the funeral, Elena decides to focus on herself and promises her publisher that the novel will be published in the fall of 1982. When Elena catches Nino in the act of having sex with the maid, she runs away from home and takes refuge with her daughters at Lila's. Lila finally reveals the naked truth: Nino never stopped pursuing her.

EPISODE 7 - THE RETURN

Antonio tells Elena that Nino has repeatedly cheated on her. To blow off steam, she sleeps with him. Some time later, while Nino has disappeared, it's time for Elena to submit her novel; she ingeniously decides to send her old typescript set in the "Rione". Nino returns to her, but Elena has no more feelings for him and moves back to the neighborhood. After Elisa's wedding, Elena discovers that her book is a success, but the Solaras are ready to wage war against her for sullyng their family name.

EPISODE 8 - THE INVESTIGATION

Busy with her conferences and presentations, Elena neglects her daughters and it's Lila who takes care of them; Imma falls ill with pneumonia. Carmen sues Lenù for slander and she discovers that it's once again the Solaras who are behind it. After Alfonso's death, it's open warfare. Thanks to Lila's information on the Solaras' affairs, she and her friend prepare an exposé article to take revenge. However, it's not enough to land them in jail, and in the finale Lila discovers that Gennaro has started shooting up heroin.

EPISODE 9 - THE DISAPPEARANCE

Nino, who hasn't visited his daughter Imma in a long time, shows up at the neighborhood. When Tina disappears, suspicion initially falls on the Solaras, but it turns out they're helping to organize the search. With the death of her brother Rino, Lila becomes increasingly desperate, and Elena lets her spend lots of time with Imma. In the finale, thanks to Lila, Elena dives back into her writing, while one morning someone shoots at the Solara brothers.

EPISODE 10 – THE RESTITUTION

Time goes by, Pasquale is arrested and Elena asks Nino, now an important member of parliament, for help, despite the complications of the Tangentopoli corruption scandals. Lila and Enzo are breaking up and Elsa runs off with Gennaro, her sister's love. When Elena's daughters move to the United States to live with their father Pietro, Elena, now elderly, chooses to live in Turin and devote herself to her writing. Lila, long gone, manages to surprise her friend Elena yet again.