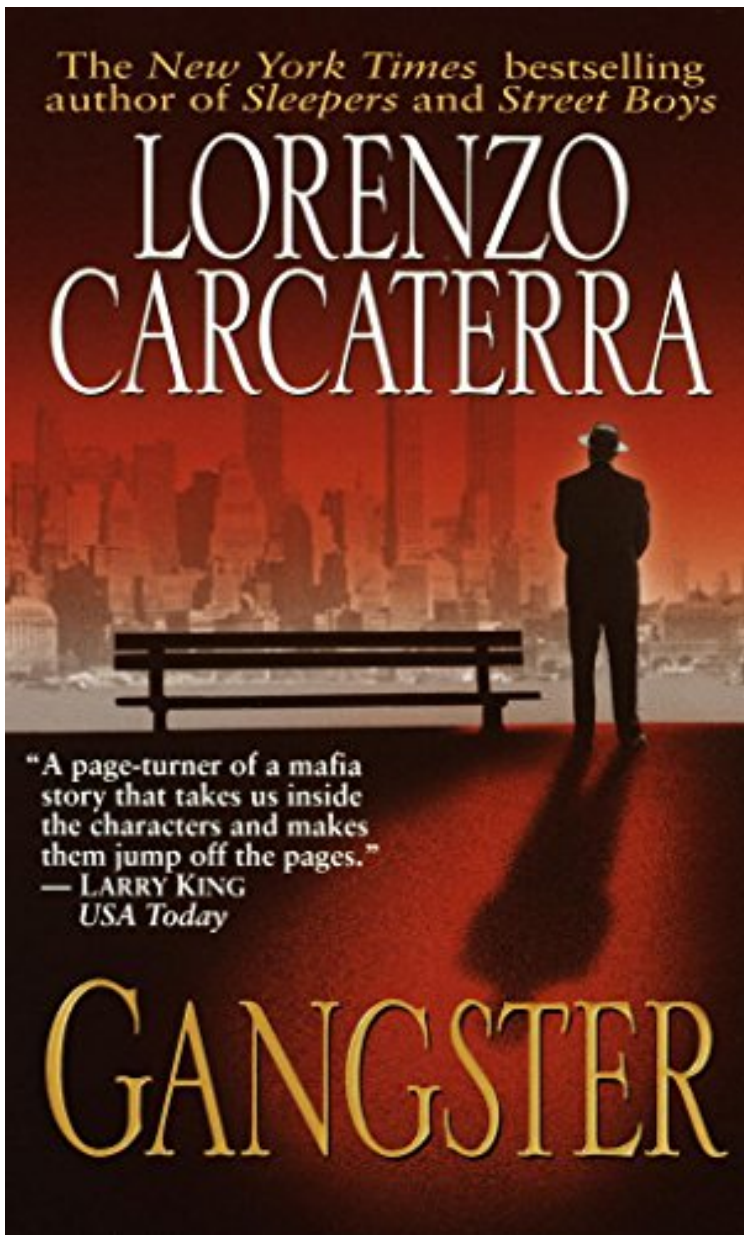


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# Gangster



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## Description :

Prsentation de l'diteurLove. Violence. Destiny. These powerful themes ricochet through Lorenzo Carcaterra's new novel like bullets from a machine gun. In Gangster, he surpasses even his bestselling Sleepers to create a brutal and brilliant American saga of murder, forgiveness, and redemption.Born in the midst of tragedy and violence and raised in the shadow of a shocking secret, young Angelo Vestieri chooses to flee both his past and his father to seek a second family--the criminals who preside over early 20th century New York. In his bloody rise from soldier to mob boss, he encounters ever more barbaric betrayals--in

friendship, in his brutal business, in love-- yet simultaneously comes to understand the meaning of loyalty, the virtue of relationships, and gains a perspective on the lonely, if powerful, life he has chosen. As the years pass, as enemies are made and defeated, as wars are fought and won, the old don meets an abandoned boy who needs a parent as much as protection. By taking Gabe under his wing and teaching him everything he knows, Angelo Vestieri will learn, in the winter of his life, which is greater: his love for the boy he cherishes, or his need to be a gangster and to live by the savage rules he helped create. A sweeping panoramic with riveting characters, a unique understanding of the underworld philosophy, and a relentless pace, *Gangster* travels through the time of godfathers and goodfellas to our own world of suburban Sopranos. But this is more than just an authentic chronicle of crime. Setting a new standard for this acclaimed author, *Gangster* is a compassionate portrait of one man's fight against his fate--and an unforgettable epic of a family, a city, a century.

Extrait Summer, 1906

He hated dredging up memories. They did not stir in him a taste for nostalgia or loves lost. He saw in them only one purpose to harden the shell he had chiseled with care, the one that hid all that could be deemed vulnerable and kept entombed the signs of humanity. When he talked to me about his early years, it was with the voice of a stranger, as if what had been had touched the life of another, one a safe distance removed from the fray. In the telling, his eyes never strayed beyond my face and his voice retained its deep pitch, no matter the emotional import of what was recalled. I was ten when I first heard the story of his ocean crossing, and as I sat in the hospital room listening to Mary's account of the tale, the early moments of the dying man's life came exploding back, as real, as hard and as fresh as a wave. His ship was three days out of Naples when the storm hit. Four levels below the deck, walled-in against an overworked engine, six hundred men, women and children were crammed into a space designed for two hundred. The stench of waste mingled with that of burning oil and spouting steam. The cargo hold, normally a dry haven for luggage and sealed goods, was now little more than a moaning assembly of humanity. Families sat in small circles, huddled under tattered coverlets of soiled sheets and clothes. Infants wailed against the pangs of hunger and the nibbling of rats. The elderly chewed tobacco leaves instead of food, black spittle coarsing down their chins. Women, young and old, sang Neapolitan ballads to lift deadened spirits and prayed daily to a stern God for a quick end to a dark journey. They boarded the ship under a blanket of darkness, paying twenty-five thousand lire--nearly five hundred dollars per head to a local broker, Giorgio Salvecci, an overweight landlord who kept a tan overcoat draped over his shoulders regardless of season. Salvecci shipped skins Italian immigrants across the Atlantic Ocean and into the harbors of New York, Boston and Baltimore. At the turn of the century, during the height of the Italian migration to American soil, Salvecci and his crew of thugs sent fifteen hundred transports a week off to an uncertain future. They were openly indifferent to their customers' ultimate fates; their part of the bargain ended with the payment of under-the-table cash. In return for a few thousand extra lire, Salvecci could also be counted on to supply false documents that would be rubber-stamped at Ellis Island and other points of entry, allowing the less-than-desirable access to the Golden Land. Convicts, thieves, con men and murderers: all, eventually, made their way to Salvecci. He was their last hope, all that separated them from a long stretch behind the hard bars of an Italian prison. The ships commissioned by Salvecci to cross the Atlantic were beaten and worn-down cruisers that had seen far better years and far more magnificent voyages. What once had been the pride of a vibrant fleet had been reduced through neglect into ocean-chugging pimps, rushing loads of human hope and misery toward a mysterious new country. The ships had majestic names culled from a more glorious past to cart along with their deteriorating bodies: *Il Leonardo*, *La Vittoria Colonna*, *La Regina Isabella*, *Il Marco Polo*. They had once carried the gold of Venetian merchants across the angry seas of the Adriatic. Now, weighed down with age, they swam slowly over the Atlantic. The passengers were fed once a day, in the late afternoon, by a large, muscular man covered from forehead to ankles in tattoos. His name was Italo and he came from a northern mountain region known more for rugged terrain than culinary expertise. It would take Italo a dozen trips to fill the bowls of the hungry, as he lumbered down narrow steel steps, carrying a large pot filled with hot stew. He dipped the bowls into the scalding liquid and scampered away, leaving them to devour what he knew to be a meal unfit for animals. On occasion, he would throw large chunks of old bread into the hole and watch dirty hands dive for the delicacy. Passengers built small fires around which they'd circle, using old wood and clothes in an attempt to stay warm and keep their children safe. It was an eight-day journey of pain, but one that each person on that stifling deck desperately needed to complete. They were leaving behind a land of dry soil and little promise for a place where, they were told, every one of their dreams would come true. That is what they needed to believe, what would give them the courage to go on as around them grandfathers died in silence and infants

wailed their last breaths. The dream of America was more than enough to make Paolino Vestieri want to live.

Vestieri was a thirty-six-year-old shepherd from Salerno who had seen a thriving flock of three hundred reduced to a half-dozen, victims of hunger, thieves and sickness. He had an eight-year-old son, Carlo, and a wife, Francesca, eight months pregnant with their second child. Despite the daily difficulties, Paolino had no plans to leave Italy. But then, in the late winter of 1906, his father, Giacamo, was ambushed by a band of camorristas the Neapolitan Mafia. Ignoring his pleas for more time to pay off a long-standing debt, they stripped him nude, hung him from an olive tree and sliced open his stomach. It would be three days before Paolino got word about his father and was able to find his body, and by then the crows and maggots had had their fill. When he returned home, he found Carlo missing and his wife screaming in ways he had never heard a woman cry before. They took Carlo! she shrieked. They took my son! Who took him? Paolino asked, grabbing his wife. The camorra, Francesca managed to shout between screams. They took my boy. They took him for the money your father owed. The money we cannot pay. Stop your crying, Paolino said, removing his hands from his wife and heading for the bedroom to get his lupara. I will get Carlo. Francesca fell to her knees, still crying, head cradled in her hands. I want my son, she moaned. I want my son. If they want revenge, tell them to take it from your father. Not from my boy. They have already taken it from my father, Paolino said, checking the lupara for shells as he walked past his wife and out the door. Paolino stood in the center of the small dining room, his eyes on his son and the man standing above him, smoking a thin cigar. The man inched the cigar from his mouth, curls of smoke clouding his thick, tanned face. He patted the top of Carlo's head. He's a good boy, the man said, smiling. Very quiet. No trouble to us. He's almost a part of the family already. I will get you your money, Gaspare, Paolino said, the lupara hanging over his shoulder, partly hidden by the sleeve of his shepherd's coat. I give you my word. Now, please. Let me have my son. Your father gave his word, too, Gaspare said. Many times. And I am still left with nothing. Besides, the boy will know a better life with us. We can give much more than you. And with your father out of the way, you will no longer have to live in debt. At least to us. Paolino looked down at his son and remembered the early mornings when he would lift him onto his shoulders and carry him down the slopes of the olive groves toward his flock. His head was filled with the happy sounds of a boy's laughter, as he urged his father to go faster and catch up to the grazing sheep. That brief and blissful memory was quickly replaced by the image of a grown Carlo, now a hardened member of the camorra, glowering at him from the top of that very same olive grove, standing tall and silent as men with guns raced to fill their pockets with the wages of the working poor. Paolino Vestieri knew he must never allow the son he loved so much to grow up to be such a man. He stepped closer to Gaspare and his son, ignoring the two men standing on either side of the room. One way or another, Paolino said, my son will come with me. You talk like a brave man. Gaspare put the cigar back in his mouth, his voice turned harder. But your actions will show where your courage takes you. Let me have my son, Paolino said, feeling the sweat race down his neck and back. I have no more to say to you. Gaspare dismissed Paolino with a wave. Tend to your flock, shepherd. Let me worry about the boy. Paolino fell to his knees and swung the lupara from his back to his hands. But he did not aim it at the criminal Gaspare. The gun was aimed directly at his son's chest. The two men in the corner pulled their own handguns and aimed it at Paolino. Gaspare backed away from the boy, his smoldering cigar now cupped in his right hand. Carlo stared at his father, his lower lip quivering. You would kill your own blood? Gaspare asked. Your only son? Better for him to be dead than to live with you, Paolino said. You don't have the heart for such a move, Gaspare said. I don't even know if I do. Then save him and let him come home with me. Gaspare stared at Paolino for several minutes, glaring into his eyes, taking slow puffs off the cigar. No, he said, shaking his head slowly. Paolino turned away from Gaspare and looked at his son. It was as if the two of them were now alone. The hard gaze of the boy's eyes told his father all that he felt he needed to know. It would not take the camorra long to steal the young boy's spirit and turn it against those he loved. They would seduce him with romanticized images of power and wealth, easily lure the child in with vivid portraits of a life much more alluring and appealing than that of a shepherd's son. It would be a corrupt life, one without scruples or morals or decency. They had not had enough time to completely tear the boy away from him, not yet, but Paolino could see that such a path had already been paved. The boy would be a thief, a criminal and, one day, a murderer. I love you, Carlo, Paolino said and squeezed the trigger. He watched as the bullets impact sent his son hard against the stone fireplace. Carlo crumpled to the ground, his face inches from the sparks of the crackling wood, his eyes half-open, dead from his father's hand. Now he belongs to no one, Paolino said. He tossed aside the lupara and walked toward the fireplace. He bent down, picked his son up in his arms, turned and left. I knew this part of the story well. Its emotional impact had been used by many of

the old mans supporters to explain the harshness of his ways. A brother he would never know had been killed by a father he would never understand in a land he chose never to visit. No one could be expected to carry those wounds without scars. As I listened to Mary tell her tale well into the quiet of the night, I wondered how different it all might have been had Paolino Vestieri simply turned his back and not given in to his most primitive urge, not surrendered to the fear of having a son raised in time-honored ways. I wondered still if the old man had found his brothers death the least bit ironic given the path of his own life.

For there was never a doubt that Carlos murder was the seed that fostered the old mans destiny. Paolino Vestieri buried his father and son on a hill overlooking the Bay of Naples. They would rest there, protected from the hot summer sun and chilly winds of fall by the same two large pine trees Paolino had once climbed as a boy. As the gravediggers shoveled dirt over the caskets, Paolino looked across the serene landscape and knew he was seeing it for the last time. Gaspare had reported Carlos murder to the local constable, making Paolino Vestieri something he never dreamed he would be a wanted man. He quickly and quietly sold his land, his winter clothes and what remained of his flock to a local merchant. The sum he collected was just enough to cover passage for himself and his wife aboard La Santa Maria, scheduled to depart Naples on the night of February 17, 1906. The doctor had warned Paolino that it would be best to delay the voyage until spring, after his wife had given birth. Each day we stay is a risk, Paolino told him. We must leave now. It is not a way for a woman to bring in a new life, the doctor said. There is no life here, Paolino replied. New or old. Give your wife and child a chance, the doctor pleaded. Taking them away is their chance, Paolino said. His wife, Francesca, sat against a grease-stained wall, her face half-hidden by thick strands of brown hair. She rubbed her inflated stomach, her eyes squeezed shut, hoping to will away the constant pain. She was a farmers daughter, an only child raised like a son, toiling on ungriving land from first light of sun to last.

Hardship was as familiar to her as the fresh tomatoes from her mothers gardens. Yet nothing she had endured would be enough to harden her for the days ahead. She had spoken her first words to Paolino at a town gathering to celebrate the final days of the harvest. She was sixteen then, her body as much woman as it was girl, her warm smile quick and easy enough to draw glances from a selection of interested young men.

Her relaxed manner convinced even the most hesitant to approach and ask for a brief dance or extend an offer for a cup of homemade wine. She had seen Paolino in the town square on a number of occasions picking up lumber with his father, laughing and joking with friends on his way home from school, standing in silent prayer in the back of the old wooden church. He was rugged and handsome and, at eighteen, his actions were more those of a man than most of the other boys in town. He didnt ask her to dance nor did he offer a cool drink. He didnt think either would be the proper first approach. Instead, he handed her a white rose plucked from his mothers garden, smiled and walked away. She returned the smile and the warm feeling in the center of her stomach told her that soon she would be a married woman. Those early years together were special, Francesca once told her mother, as both women busied themselves preparing another in an endless cycle of large family meals. I imagine they always are when two young people are in love. And when Carlo came along, he helped make our life together even better. Then it all ended. A life filled with sun was thrown into a dungeon. And from such a place no exit can be found. Paolino tried many times to explain his terrible action to his wife, but it was something she would never allow herself to understand. He truly believed that the life of a camorrista was far worse than an early death. He was prepared to go through life knowing he had murdered his own child than to see that boy grow up into one who preyed on those too fearful to return the fight. You think it better to be a starving shepherd? Francesca asked him. His life would have been one stained by other peoples blood, Paolino said. But now it is you who is marked with an even deeper stain, Francesca said, staring at him with a cold, empty hatred. Such a stain can never be erased. Not in Gods eyes. Not in the camorras. And never in mine. Paolino knelt before her and pointed to her bulging stomach. We have another child, he whispered. We must do all that is possible to raise this one in the right way in the right place. Far from here. Far from these people. We are these people. Francesca fought back the tears she had shed each day since the rainy morning when she had laid her son to rest. That cannot be changed, no matter how far away we run. We are this place. And we are these people. Im not, Paolino said, standing. But my next child will be, she said with a chill. A thin line of oil had made its way down from the engine room. It circled around one of the many small fires built from damp wood and rags, attempts by the passengers to allow shreds of light into their dark world. The oil licked at the edges of the fire, coming to rest just beneath a rusty kettle boiling dark brown water. The fire embraced the oil, causing sparks and flames to widen and spread and rush down the sides of the room like an agitated snake. The boat rocked from the strength of the storm, heel to hull slapped by vicious waves. The stifling heat mixed

uncomfortably with the cold blasts of air and ocean water that shot through cracks in the galley walls. The ships engines cranked wearily away, trying to keep pace with the storm, sprays of heat and moisture blasting into the crowded hold. A half dozen oil lines were now flowing out of the battered engine room, sliding past feet and rodents, inching close to the heat of a dozen small fires. They heard the screams before they smelled the smoke and then the panic took control. Soon, heat and flames were at full attack, sending people running in a mass for the one door leading out of the cargo hold. They climbed over one another, forsaking friendships and family for the sake of one clean breath. The rush to escape left no room for the weak and the elderly who were so easily cast aside. The fires spread quickly and plumes of dark gray smoke covered the hold like mounds of old wool. A young woman, the shorn ends of her dress swallowed by fire, stood with her arms held out and her head tilted back, welcoming the rush of the heat and the call to death. A child was left alone against a wet wall, his small hands covering his ears, his eyes shut, willing himself to another, safer place. An old man sat on a crate in the center of the hold, a hand-rolled cigarette in his mouth, a picture of peace in a place gone mad with fear. This cannot be Gods will, a lone woman wailed, her body crushed by the rush of bodies. We have done nothing to deserve this much hatred. Look around you, a man shouted back at her. And tell me how you can still believe that there is a God. I will believe in Him till the day I die, the woman insisted, her body weak, her eyes defiant. That day has already begun, the man said and squeezed past her, hoping to make it out of the inferno. Paolino Vestieri stood and watched the rush of flames inch their way to the engine room. He knew it was now down to a question of minutes. He looked at Francesca, overcome by the smoke, white strands of spittle dotting her lips and sweat streaking her brow. He reached over and stroked her face, rubbing his dirty fingers across soft cheeks, and kissed her gently on the lips. Ti amo, cara, he said to the woman he loved. Filomena, the midwife, a scarred old woman in a worn black dress and tattered shawl, leaned her bulk forward and pressed against Francescas stomach. Francesca moved her legs farther apart, her feet resting against the back of an old man. She pulled her head up and held her eyes shut, waiting for the pain in her stomach to pass. The screams and cries around her seemed to exist in a faraway place, the smoke that seared her lungs arrived from a territory untouched by madness and ruin. The sharp pangs had been coming at a steady rate for the last hour, knifelike stabs that forced her to dig her nails into the splintered floorboards, covering her fingers in blood. She opened her eyes and looked up at the midwife. Is there enough time? she asked. Only the angels know, Filomena said. She rubbed and massaged Francescas legs and thighs with rough, thick hands, inching the baby along, one painful movement at a time. What do you need me to do? Paolino asked, standing over the midwifes shoulders. Filomena turned her head, arching one heavy eye up toward Paolino, staring at him for several moments. Do you love this woman? she asked. Very much, Paolino said, avoiding eye contact. Then stay behind me and look nowhere but into your wifes eyes. Filomena then turned back to Francesca, leaned closer to her and shouted above the din around them. It is time now, little one, she said, the smoke from the fire enveloping both of them, its force thick enough to hold. Take full breaths if you can and push with all your strength. The rest you will leave to me. Francesca Conti Vestieri nodded and looked around her one last time as she said a silent prayer, wishing that out of all this debris, filth, fire and danger a healthy child would be born. She looked above the midwife at her husband. Promise me one thing, she said. What? He reached over Filomena, grabbing both of his wifes hands, holding them tight, the blood from her cuts rubbing against the soot and scabs on his skin. He stared into her eyes and through her pain and the heat, the anger and the fear around them, could still taste her fierce hatred. You will build a good life in this new country for this child, Francesca said. Promise me that. I promise, Paolino said. Promise me! Francesca shrieked. Paolino leaned in closer to his wife, his lips brushing against the side of her cheek. I promise you, he whispered. As your husband and as a man. Francesca nodded, her head and body damp with sweat and blood, her torso cramped. Paolino stepped away from her, his eyes burning with tears, smoke charring his nostrils and filling his lungs. He looked around, saw bundles of people climbing above one another, reaching for a sky they could not see. The hold was a cauldron of flames, strewn bodies, water bursting through galley holes, cries for help and shouts of despair all blended as one. The hull of the ship was tilted to the right, its aged body tired of the fight, eager to surrender to an ocean that knew no mercy. The youthful promises of what had once been Paolino Vestieris dreams of a simple life were now reduced to charred rubble and warm ashes. Filomena was crunched down, her elbows sliding on the floor, her hands buried inside Francescas legs, feeling for signs of a new life. A full fire was burning just behind her, but the old woman ignored all but the task of her chosen profession. I see the head, Filomena shouted above the crowd noise, lifting her own head ever so briefly. With a full dose of her strength she tore at the lower rungs of her dress, not stopping until her hands were crammed with cloth. Filomena wiped the

blood from the sides of Francescas legs with the remains of her torn dress, smiling down at the drained young woman. Francesca bit down on her lower lip, cutting into the skin. How much longer, signora? she asked through blood and clenched teeth. That is up to you, Filomena said. Crumpled bodies, victims of the crush and the smoke, surrounded them. The tilt of the ship was forcing them to grip even deeper into the wet, soiled boards. Push, my child, Filomena whispered. With all that's left of your strength. Francesca arched her head back and let out a scream loud enough to echo off the sweaty walls of the cargo hold. Her breath came in spurts and her eyes bulged from the pain. The midwife looked down between Francescas legs, her hands gently gripping the top of the babys head, and saw the large well of blood building up around her feet.

It was more blood than she had seen in many a birth, and the old woman knew that only the kindness of a grudging God would allow her to walk from this with two lives intact. There was no feeling of time in the cramped hold, each moment gripping its own eternity, each second packed with a lifetime of dark memories. The fire strolled among a people accustomed to life and death entering their world without invitation. They

all knew, each and every person in that room, what it meant to be touched by the cold hands of the unwelcome. The wave crashed hard, bending the side of the wall closest to Filomena and Francesca. The bolt sent them, along with Paolino, veering down the slope of the floor. Their backs touched flames, their hands cast aside the dead. Filomena ended up facedown, her head cut by a sharp piece of rusty iron. Blood rushed down the sides of her neck. Let me help you, Paolino said, tugging at the old womans shoulders. Forget me, she said in a groggy voice. Get to the child. The infant is who needs you now. The only one you can help.

She reached up and grabbed Paolinos shirt and forced his face down closer to hers. The only one, she said. Paolino turned to look at his wife, resting in a heap against the cold metal of an oil-slicked wall. You're wrong, Paolino said in a voice that was filled more with fear than conviction. She will live. They will both live. You don't have the time, Filomena said, thick plumes of smoke rushing by her face. You must go and save what can be saved. Paolino rested the midwifes head on the floor and covered it with a patch of cloth

torn from her dress. He crawled over to his wife, the smoke engulfing him, the flames spouting in all directions. He pulled at his wifes back until she rolled over with a thud, splashing his face and chest with thick streams of dark blood. Paolino looked down at his wifes legs and rubbed his hands against the waist of his shirt, his eyes searching for the face of his child among the ruin of her body. He pulled a rag from his back pocket, cleared some of the blood and sweat from his wife and then reached down to hold the babys head. His right hand gripped its soft top and for several long seconds he was afraid to do more than hold it.

He looked up and saw his wifes beautiful face, now smeared with grease and dirt, her cheeks glowing red, her lips tinged a dangerous shade of blue. He spotted the flutter in her eyes and wanted to reach up, hold her and tell her how much he loved her. Tell her how sorry he was for all the pain he had caused. But he said nothing. Instead, Paolino lowered his head and once again began tugging at his child, trying to ease the baby from the safety of a mothers womb. The head was hanging silent and low as Paolino pulled the shoulders out and then watched as the rest of the body quickly slid forward. He ignored the screams and shouts around him. He closed his eyes to the explosions that now rocked the hold and the angry waves that lashed at the outside of the boat. He ignored the inferno surrounding him as well as the cold ocean waiting to swallow up

anyone foolish enough to escape. He held the umbilical cord in the palm of his right hand, the final connection between mother and baby, and looked around for a sharp object with which to cut it. He stripped a wooden shank off one of the floor panels and began to cut frantically at the cord, desperate to break the baby free. With a final frenzied tug, he cut it clean away and lifted the child from Francescas body. Holding him at eye level, Paolino slapped him twice on the back with the flat of his palm. He waited for what seemed to be nothing short of a lifetime for a sign of life. He smiled when he heard the babys cry rise high above the

screams and shouts, roar past the moans of approaching death. His son now cradled to his chest, Paolino brought him close to Francescas face. Look, amore, Paolino whispered. Look at your son. Francesca looked at her baby through smoke-ravaged eyes and managed a weak smile. E un bello bambino, she whispered, gently stroking the infants forehead. She then closed her eyes for the final time, her hand slipping off her husbands leg down to the floor. Paolino Vestieri stood, cradling his minutes-old son in his arms, his feet resting against his wifes body, and looked around the hold. He saw the fire now raging out of control. Bodies rested in rows on the floor, many surrounded by the elderly, sitting quietly, resigned to their fate. Mothers rocked back and forth on their knees holding their dead while fathers blindly tossed their children toward the apparent safety of the cramped stairwell. The strength of the fire had reached the engine room, flames wrapping themselves around old pipes, churning pistons and rusty crankcases. The ocean continued its assault, intent on toppling the old ship and bringing her to rest. For such a young man, Vestieri had seen more than his fair share of

death. He had killed a son and buried him in the dry soil of his native land, alongside the violated body of his own father. He had watched his wife die bringing new life into a world she had grown to despise. And now he stood, staring at an out-of-control fire that would so easily welcome him and his child. Vestieri lowered his head, held his child closer to his side and disappeared into the thick smoke of a sinking ship. There were 627 passengers aboard La Santa Maria, even though the official log registered only 176 names. Eighty-one of them survived the ice storm and the engine fire on that frigid February night in the middle of the Atlantic Ocean. Paolino Vestieri was one. His son, Angelo Vestieri, was another. I looked away from Mary and stared down at the old man in his bed. He had always told me that destiny was nothing more than a lie believed by foolish men. You choose your path, he said. You decide the curves of your life. But I couldn't help wondering if he had been wrong. That maybe a life such as his, that began stained by the darkness of death, had already been placed on a preordained track. Such a start could place a hole in a man's heart that no amount of time could repair. It would split his spirit in ways that might chisel it away from basic decency and harden his views and judgments. It could easily help turn him into the man Angelo Vestieri grew to become. Mary's eyes caught mine and she nodded, our thoughts seemingly cross-linked. It seems like he was doomed from the start, I said to her. That's one way to think of it, I suppose, she said, pouring herself some water from a plastic pitcher. What's another? I asked. That his life turned out exactly the way he wanted it to, she said. As if he planned it himself from the very start.

Revue de presse Praise for Gangster by Lorenzo Carcaterra 'An extraordinary read, like crossing "The Shawshank Redemption", "State of Grace" and "Goodfellas" ' TIME OUT 'Reads like a treatment for a Martin Scorsese script' INDEPENDENT 'Horrorifying . . . full of tension . . . harrowing . . . gripping' WATERSTONES CHOICE OF THE MONTH 'A courtroom drama as gripping as any by Grisham' THE TIMES 'A quick, brutal tale' INDEPENDENT ON SUNDAY 'Startlingly good' OBSERVER '[A] tough two-fisted tale of New York street-life and the victory of rough justice over the law' FINANCIAL TIMES 'Horrific . . . violent . . . a compelling and intense tale.' EXPRESS 'Riveting . . . gripping . . . unexpectedly poignant' SUNDAY TELEGRAPH 'A savage story of violence and revenge' THE TIMES 'Reads like an Elmore Leonard thriller' IRISH TIMES 'An incredible tale of cruelty, endurance and revenge . . . impossible to put down' MAXIM 'Gruesome, bloodsoaked . . . spectacular' THE TIMES 'Breathtaking' PUBLISHING NEWS 'Brutal . . . violent . . . devastating. Not for the faint-hearted' DAILY EXPRESS 'Startlingly good crime fiction' Observer 'Brings the city streets to life' Sunday Telegraph 'Gangster is a brilliant, multilayered novel that breathes and bleeds on every page. Lorenzo Carcaterra has captured the gritty, frightening, and conflicted world of organized crime - and the human beings who inhabit it - with honesty and depth. This book transcends the genre of 'crime fiction.' It is a full-blooded novel, and an epic read' Robert Crais 'If you are a Sopranos fan, this is the book for you ... these people are fascinating, in the way tarantulas seen from a distance are fascinating. But one wouldn't want to get too close' Irish Times 'An epic that embraces not only a handful of flawed men and women on the margins of society, but their time and place too. [Carcaterra's] familiarity with the underworld shines through...[he] knows the underworld's rhythms and philosophy as well as he knows its dirty streets, rain-slicked piers and smoke-filled social clubs' Denver Post 'Expect high demand for this very compelling drama'

Booklist