

Samantha De Simone

Let's play with BOTTICELLI

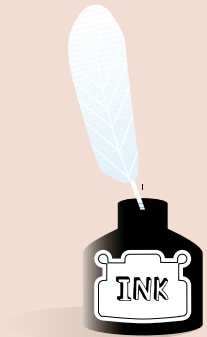
with illustrations by Francesca D'Alfonso



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My story



iao. Hello there! I'm **Alessandro Filipepi**, but everyone knows me as Sandro Botticelli. I still haven't understood why I was given this rather odd nickname: maybe it's because everyone called my brother Antonio 'il Battigello' seeing he was a *battiloro*, that is, 'gold beater' or goldsmith. Or maybe it's because my other brother, Giovanni, was a little chubby and everyone poked fun at him by calling him 'Botticello', or 'small barrel'. A long time ago in our neck of the woods, having a nickname was something common and really no one got offended. That's why my family and I gave in and changed our surname to Botticelli.

And now for my story.

I was born in Florence in 1445. My father was called Mariano and he was a leather tanner, and my mother was called Smeralda. My siblings were all older than me:





Antonio was the first-born, then came my rascally brothers Giovanni and Simone. I used to live in Florence on Via Nuova, that is, on today's Via della Porcellana, in the Ognissanti neighbourhood, where many years ago you'd find countless workshops of weavers and tanners.

As a child I was a live wire, and I just adored studying! I learned how to read, write and count early on, because I always liked learning new things. My parents thought I was a really strange boy because, unlike other kids my age, I had more fun reading books than hanging around on the street. My father wanted me to learn his trade – that of tanning leather – but I didn't like



that sort of thing at all: you have no idea how much havoc I would wreak when I visited his workshop!

But one fine day, my father decided to send me to my brother Antonio so I could become a goldsmith. He certainly thought I would like that sort of job much more. And that's how it all began. I got along well with my big brother, who was about fifteen years older. He let me do whatever I wanted, but especially, he allowed me to stay next to him as he worked. I learned a lot of things in his workshop, and I grew so fond





Adoration of the Magi

1475, Florence, Uffizi Gallery

Gaspare di Zanobi del Lami asked me to make this painting. Gaspare was a good friend of the Medicis, Lords of Florence. That's why he wanted me to paint not only the Magi and the Holy Family, but also some members of the Medici family – the most illustrious representatives of the court – and even himself (the man dressed in blue on the top right).

I'm in the picture, too! I'm the one on the bottom right: can't you see I'm staring at you?





Spring

Around 1482, Florence, Uffizi Gallery

When I think of spring, this lovely garden comes to mind. At the centre of the painting you'll see Venus, the goddess of beauty, and above there's Cupid with his bow and arrow. On the left there are the Graces, in a playful ring-around-the-rosy, while the god Mercury is sending the clouds away from the garden.

To the right is Zephyr, the Western wind, who is grabbing the nymph Chloris, who is frightened and trying to escape. Finally, to the side you'll see the beautiful Flora, goddess of spring, who is scattering her perfumed flowers all over.





Observe the colours of the painting. In your opinion, which of the three palettes did I use for this work?



1



2



3

What a problem! A mouse has nibbled on my painting and now there are holes in it! Help me restore the work: look at the image carefully and colour in the missing parts.



Mice love paintings!



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