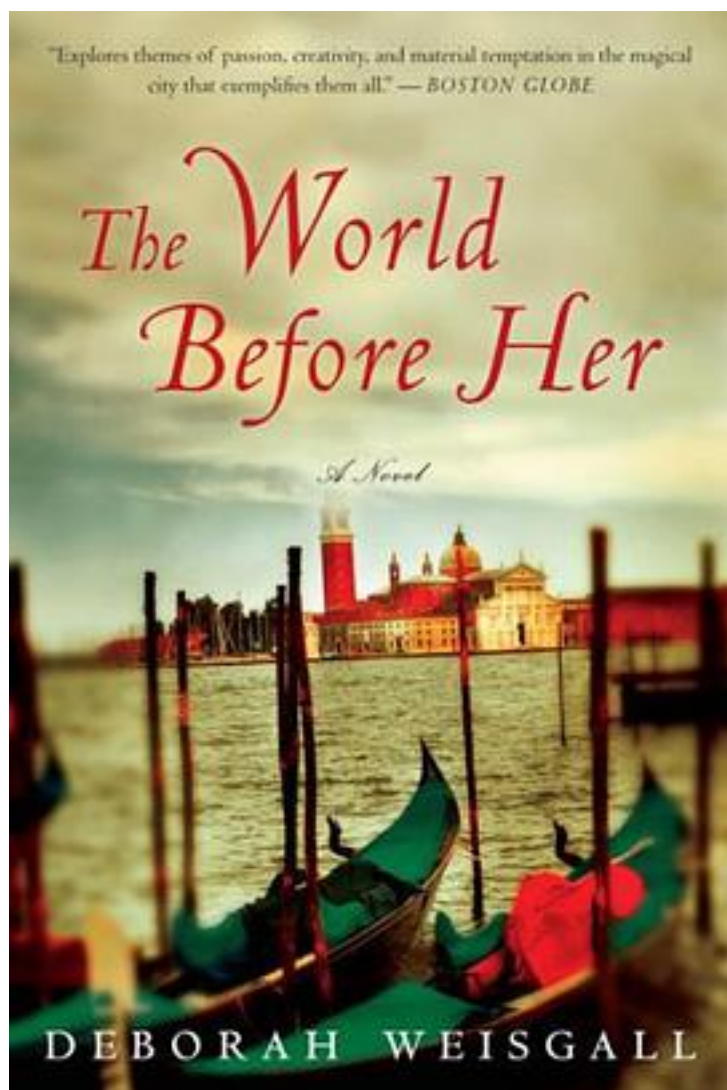


World Before Her



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Marian Evans--who writes under the pen name George Eliot--has come to Venice on her honeymoon. It is 1880 and she is newly married to John Cross, twenty years her junior. She has come to this city of canals and bridges to start again, to forget the death of her longtime partner, George Henry Lewes--with whom she shared twenty five years of happiness and art. In this new marriage, in this intensely romantic place, can she give herself the happy ending that she provided for Middlemarch's Dorothea Brooke? A century later, sculptor Caroline Spingold takes us to Venice again. Scarred by her father's abandonment just after she and her parents spent a summer in the city, Caroline vowed never to return. But now her powerful, wealthy older husband has brought her back against her will, to celebrate their tenth anniversary. Told in alternating chapters subtly linked by themes of art, love, and the challenges of marriage, *The World Before Her* tells of two women, their surprising similarities, and the reckoning Venice will force them to make with their desire, their memories, and their very selves.

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