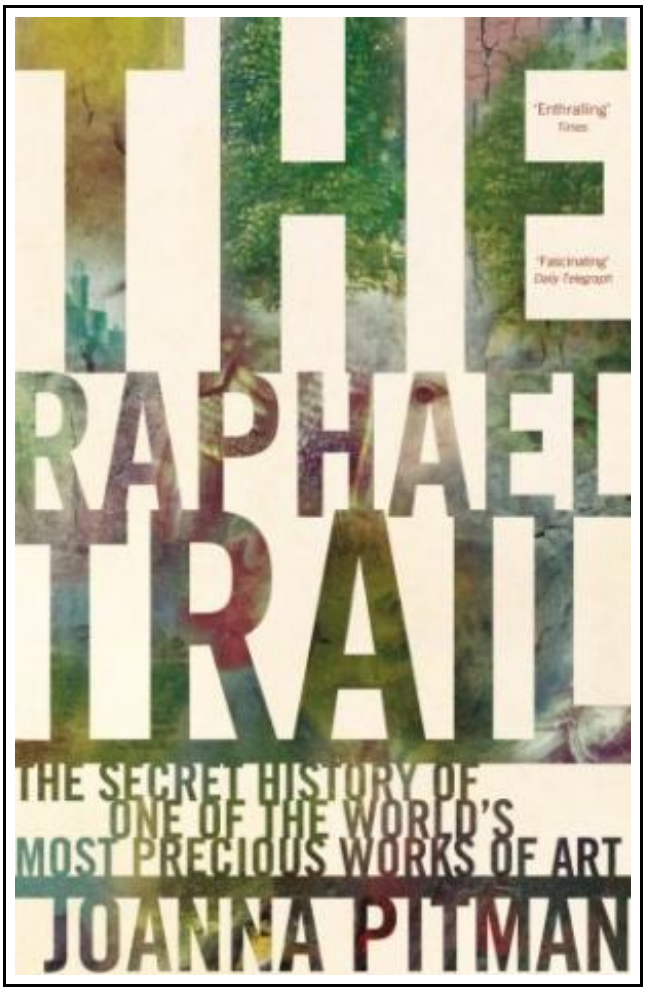
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THE RAPHAEL TRAIL: THE SECRET HISTORY OF ONE OF THE WORLD S MOST PRECIOUS WORKS OF ART (PAPERBACK)

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Ebury Publishing, United Kingdom, 2007. Paperback. Book Condition: New. 192 x 126 mm. Language: English . Brand New Book. Raphael s St George and the Dragon is the work of a genius - an exquisitely rendered vision of heroism and innocence by one of the greatest painters of all time. Yet, the painting s creation is only the beginning of a fascinating story that spans centuries of power play and intrigue, taking in a cast of characters both colourful and terrifying. For the young Raphael, the painting was an expression of his growing talents and a crucial step in his ascent to the peak of the Renaissance art world. But for a succession of jealous owners, it became a symbol of power and prestige. Painted in Italy, St George and the Dragon was sent to England as a gift for Henry VII in exchange for the prestigious knighthood of the Garter, art being traded for honour. The painting then mysteriously disappeared for a century before re-emerging as one of the key works in the great collection of art built up by Charles I, only to be sold when the collection was forcibly broken up after his execution. When Catherine the Great, a monarch of enormous appetites - political, sexual and cultural - later heard the painting was again on the market, she dispatched the famous philosopher Diderot to add it to her vast collection at the Hermitage in Russia. Treated both as an icon and as a Western masterpiece, St George and the Dragon survived fire and the Russian Revolution, only to be sold by the arch-Communist Stalin to Andrew Mellon, Capitalism s chief priest and one of the last US Robber Barons, in a secret and utterly illicit transaction. Exceptionally written and breathlessly paced, The Raphael Trail shows how...

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