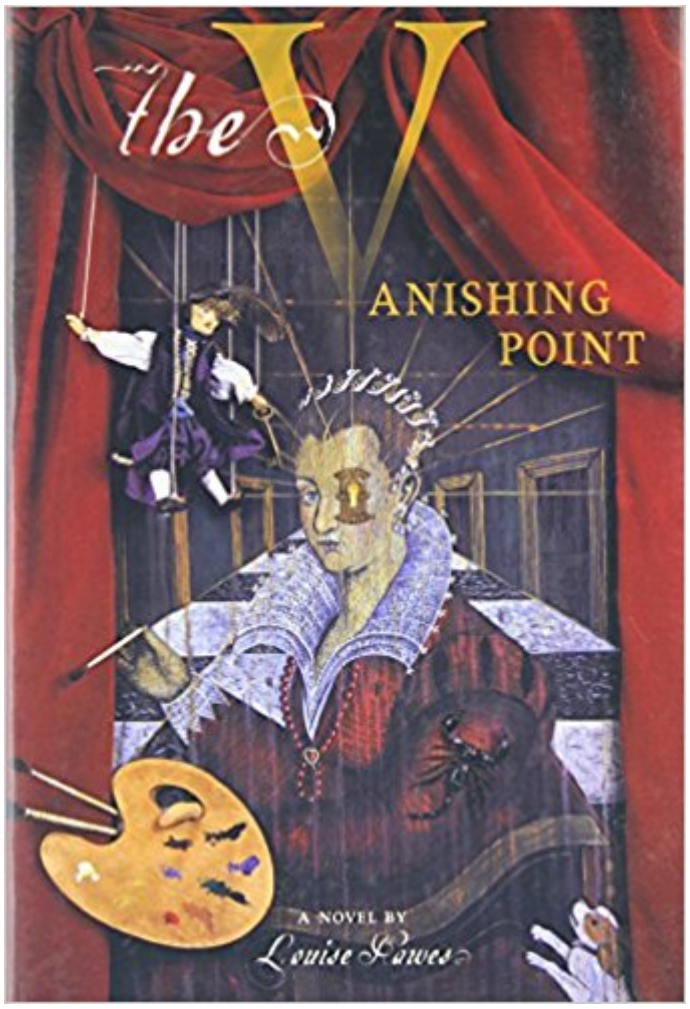
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The Vanishing Point



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Synopsis

In lush, glowing prose, Louise HawesÃ¢â ¬â„¢s historical novel draws readers into the life and art of sixteenth-century Bologna with a compelling account of Lavinia Fontana, arguably the most famous female painter of the Italian Renaissance. Here readers will find a coming-of-age story filled with quest, complication, and catastrophe as well as miracles and hope. Although the novel is set four hundred years ago, the hard choices it involves speak to all times, all places, and are sure to tap into readersÃ¢â ¬â„¢ own conflicts between head and heart, real life and dreams.

Book Information

Hardcover: 240 pages

Publisher: HMH Books for Young Readers; English Language edition (September 27, 2004)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0618434232

ISBN-13: 978-0618434237

Product Dimensions: 5.5 x 0.8 x 8.2 inches

Shipping Weight: 14.4 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.2 out of 5 stars 5 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #535,345 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #30 inÃ Â Books > Children's Books > Literature & Fiction > Historical Fiction > Renaissance #50 inÃ Â Books > Children's Books > Biographies > European #1546 inÃ Â Books > Children's Books > Arts, Music & Photography > Art

Age Range: 10 - 12 years

Grade Level: 7 and up

Customer Reviews

Grade 6-9Ã¢â ¬â œBased on a real 16th-century Italian painter, this book offers a fascinating glimpse into the life of a Renaissance artist. Vini, 14, the only child of painter Prospero Fontana, is desperate to have her father recognize her talent. Knowing that he will take no notice of her abilities because she is not the son he longs for, she persuades his least-talented apprentice, Paolo, to pass her work off as his own. Eager to impress Vini, whom he clearly loves, clumsy Paolo agrees to her scheme. When Prospero learns the truth, he accepts his daughter into his studio. Despite the ridicule of her fellow apprentices, who scoff at the notion of a woman being a serious artist, Vini's talent flourishes under his tutelage. At this point, the novel deteriorates from solid historical fiction into a rapid series of improbable events that gives it the feeling of a soap opera. Vini loses her sight

after suddenly being stricken with measles, then recovers it just as suddenly as the result of either a scorpion’s sting or Paolo’s kiss. Her mother gives birth to yet another dead boy and insists that the puppet Vini substitutes for the corpse is a living child. Finally, the teen forces Prospero to be tolerant of his wife’s mental state by threatening to give up painting. Although she describes the lack of information about Lavinia Fontana’s adolescent years in an afterword, Hawes’s overly dramatic speculation detracts from the novel’s strength as historical fiction.Ã¢â ¬â œGinny Gustin, Sonoma County Library System, Santa Rosa, CA Copyright Ã Â© Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.

Gr. 8-10. Vini’s imperious father, a sixteenth-century Bolognese portraitist, teaches his students the importance of seeing: "Paint first with your eyes." But he can’t see what’s right in front of him--his 14-year-old daughter Vini’s hunger to paint alongside his male apprentices. Earning a place in her father’s workshop is just the first of many challenges Vini faces. The other painters regard her as an aberration; measles threatens her eyesight; and her mother’s surprise pregnancy causes deep anxiety about Vini’s place in her family. In imagining the adolescence of Renaissance artist Lavinia Fontana, a historical figure whose biography is outlined in an endnote, Hawes deftly blends history and invention, introducing a romance that flowers alongside Vini’s talent, and giving her a role in resolving a poignant family conflict. At times Hawes projects perhaps too much sophistication into Vini’s perceptions (in painting the objects in a still life, she is "a partner to each, a loving consciousness that holds, cherishes"), and the story line relies overmuch on contrivance. Nonetheless, fans of historical fiction will lose themselves in Hawes’ sumptuously evoked Renaissance Italy, and aspiring artists will respond to Vini’s amazement at "how full of drawings the world is." Hand readers in the latter category the adjacent Read-alikes column for a diverse palette of novels that explore art and the artistic process. Jennifer MattsonCopyright Ã Â© American Library Association. All rights reserved

Everyone takes feminism for granted. No one who reads this book will ever do so again. Young readers will learn what it was like to try to "follow your heart" if you were a woman in the days of the Renaissance. Lavinia Fontana, a genius and probably the most famous female painter of the Italian Renaissance, did not have an easy path. Forbidden to paint because of her gender, she has to convince a boy who works in her father’s studio to pretend her paintings are his so that she can learn and get materials so she can paint--in secret.Readers will want to rise up in rage against Lavinia’s father, though, like Vini, they will eventually come to some tolerance of him.A heartrending

story with a great end, The Vanishing Point is a must-read.

This was a very fast read full of imagery and a simple story. It is a great book for an afternoon read. The author captures the mind and senses of an artist and paints them into the page.

Presenting the fictional teen years of a famous woman painter of the Italian Renaissance, a woman whose less talented husband mixed her paints and cared for their eleven children while Lavinia Fontana fulfilled private, church and papal commissions and supported her parents. It has an interesting plot with depth, symbolism, well-rounded characters and insightful psychology. The a successful Renaissance art studio and home and the streets of Bologna are brought to life by vivid descriptions of their sights and sounds, especially the marionette theatre. I so enjoy this story that I am sharing it with my homeschool co-op's middle school literature class!

This is a beautiful, richly-detailed portrait of a young girl in Renaissance Italy. Readers will laugh, cry, and experience Vini's hunger for the art she is forbidden to explore. We follow Vini as she grows to understand more about her parents and herself. Teens will identify with her as she learns more about the nature of life, love and longing. Adults and some perceptive teens will appreciate the symoblism of Vini's awakening adulthood as she "breaks the strings" that have controlled her young life, just as they control the puppets on the town square. Excellent historical detail enlightens without sounding pedantic. After I finished it, I handed the book to my 17-year-old daughter. She couldn't put it down, until she turned the last page. I have recommended this book to many adult friends, and so far, no one has been disappointed!

This book is a wonderful cross between history and fantasy. I'm more of a fantasy type person, but I found this a wonderful story with just a touch of romance. I must warn you that it may seem strange at first due to the fact that it's in first person, but as the story goes on, it feels more welcome.

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