



# Behind the Canvas

*Alexander Vance*

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## **Behind the Canvas** Alexander Vance

A girl discovers she has the ability to inhabit the world of famous paintings, and tries to help a boy trapped behind the canvas.

There is a world behind the canvas. Past the paint of the canvas is a realm where art lives, breathes, creates, destroys.

Claudia Miravista loves art but only sees what is on the surface, until the Dutch boy Pim appears in her painting. Pim has been trapped in the world behind the canvas for centuries by a power-hungry witch, and now believes that Claudia is his only hope for escape. Fueled by the help of an ancient artist and some microwaveable magic, Claudia enters the wondrous and terrifying world, intent on destroying the witch's most cherished possession and setting Pim free. But in that world nothing is quite as it appears on the surface. Not even friendship.

## **Behind the Canvas Details**

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Author : Alexander Vance

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# From Reader Review Behind the Canvas for online ebook

## Jocelin says

With a title like “Behind The Canvas”, the book obviously starts in an art museum. The protagonist of the story is named Claudia Miravista. She is a slightly awkward girl in middle school who happens to adore art. This field trip is something that she can really get into. She wanders off in the museum by herself and stumbles upon a painting where there is a boy that has the “dreamiest blue eyes”. She tells some of her classmates because they are talking about cute boys and she wants them to see said, “cute boy with the dreamy blue eyes” in the painting. When she goes back to the painting, he is gone. Of course, they make fun of her and she is left with the feeling that only a young unsure preteen feels. Could she have hallucinated the whole thing or did she really see him and he wasn’t there in the picture the second time?

Then we find out she is not crazy, the boy w/ the blue eyes seeks her out in her home and tells her that he desperately needs her help. He has been trapped behind the canvas for a few centuries and he wants to get out. We discover that he is a Dutch boy named Pim and he has been cursed by a witch to spend eternity in the world “Behind The Canvas”. She can help, because of course she has “special powers”. She proceeds to help him but, she must do the impossible: find a way for her parents not to find out. Of course, she needs the assistance of a quirky old lady and a plan to spend some time away in another realm for who knows how long.

This book was very fascinating. I was intrigued by it from the very beginning. I did have a few issues with the book but, for the most part I did enjoy it. I did love the footnotes at the bottom of random pages. A lot of them were brimming with dry wit about varying subjects on artists and techniques. I think that the author could do an additional ebook on the art reference book. I did feel like the book started out really strong but, as the story moved forward it lost some of its strength. I felt like the story of a boy being trapped in a painting by a witch does have bite. The conclusion was a letdown because, you did have a “battle” of the “girl with special art powers(Claudia)” defeating the witch.

I would recommend this book for fans of the artworld.

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## Siddharth Chakravarthy says

**Spellbounding !**

**Magical !**

**Fascinating !**

I could come up with a lot more adjectives like this, but I don't think they would be enough to describe the beauty of this book.

Right from the first page till the last, this book siphoned my entire attention and focus.

Like how Claudia had the ability to go through the paintings, I too had an ability on my own.

I possessed a portal through which I could go to uncharted places and experience the Magic of it.

I was referring to the Book of course :D The book is enchanted. This book literally cast a spell on me.

I was able to free myself from it only when i finished reading the last page of the book.

The concept was so cool. It had so many un-expected twists and turns. I learnt a lot from this book.

It was so inspirational. It showed the power of our will. Sometimes, we often under estimate our innate abilities when posed with a seemingly hard task.

I learnt that, " Hope is the key to the lock called Fear, which we ourselves create to lock up our abilities " When you compare the frail, scary Claudia at the beginning of the story , with the Claudia at the climax of the story, you will notice her transformation. Despite the fact that she was posed with unfathomable dangers and daunting challenges, she rose to the occasion to save the good from the evil only because she was able to believe in herself. That was so inspiring.

It also piqued my interest in Arts. Various references to the world famous artists, paintings were made. This book changed my entire perspective towards art and paintings. (Next time i come across any painting in a museum, I swear i won't see it like how i used to).

There is an entirely different world *behind the canvas*. It was a whole new experience for me as well, imagining all those wonderful places and being able to admire the beauty of it.

It was all possible only because of Alexander Vance's magic weaved into the paper through words.

This book is like a gem hiding among millions of other books, yearning to be read by a person, hoping that the person would read it would appreciate the beauty and the charm it possess.

....which I did right now :)

Glad that I came across this :')

Feeling sad that my sojourn at the wonderful world behind the canvas has finally come to an end.

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### **Elise Brianna says**

"Behind the Canvas" is an unspeakably incredible adventure with a feel of Narnia (C S Lewis) and The Door Within Series (Wayne Thomas Batson) coming together with oodles of art history and the absolute wonder of creativity. The protagonist, Claudia, is a twelve year old girl who develops an extraordinary amount of courage and bravery throughout the book. She has delightful character and personality - a quiet disposition with a penchant for fierce passion. I love her, I love this book, I love it all.

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### **Kathy Martin says**

Claudia Miravista is a loner. Her interests don't mesh with those of other twelve-year-olds in middle school. She is fascinated by art and the artists who created it. Her proudest possession is Dr. Buchhardt's Art History for the Enthusiast and the Ignorant which is the source of the many footnotes in this story. She loves to hang out in art museums.

Claudia's adventures begin when she sees a blue-eyed boy in the background of a picture where he doesn't belong. She sees him again in a different painting, puts her hand on the painting and wishes that they could be friends. The boy's name is Pim and he tells her the story of how he ended up in the world behind the canvas and begs for Claudia's help. She has to find the witch who cursed him and break her magic staff.

Unfortunately, Claudia lives outside of Chicago and the witch lives in the Netherlands. The only way to get to her is to travel behind the canvas.

Fortunately her grandfather and the director of the art museum are friends and know someone - Granny Custos - who can help Claudia enter the world behind the canvas and, better yet, get out again. Pim and Claudia's plans to meet and travel together are derailed when Claudia enters the wrong canvas in order to get away from a persistent security guard. Claudia has all sorts of adventures including meeting the dragon that St. George fought as she tries to find Pim. Along the way she meets a number of characters from paintings and travels through landscapes from a wide variety of artists. She also learns that Pim might not be the character that he has seemed to be with her. Maybe he's a villain and not a victim.

I thought the story was exciting and filled with action and adventure. I also found the relationship between Claudia and Pim was an engaging story. I enjoyed the snarky tone of the footnotes which combined information about artists and editorial asides.

Fans of adventure, whether they are art lovers or not, will enjoy this fast-paced and entertaining story.

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### **Nadja says**

I've read the first 14 chapters in July but the book didn't hold my attention. Now after 5 months I picked it up again to give it another shot. I managed to read another 5 chapters (of 30) but realised that it wasn't worth the time. I've read almost 2/3 of the book and I'm quite disappointed about everything. I don't like Claudia nor Prim. I really loved the blurb of the book and simply expected something totally different. More of a girl detective solving mysteries in one painting at a time style. And not one world where all the art is connected with known Artists and famous Paintings mixed together. (Mona Lisa knows Sushi?!?!?) One star for the funny excerpts from the Dr. Burkhardt's Art History for the Enthusiast and the Ignorant.

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### **Jacquelyn says**

*Disclaimer: I do not advise turning this particular review into a drinking game. I know, I know, I'm a party pooper. But if someone were to drink every time I type the word "art" (or some variation of the word), that particular person would most likely get alcohol poisoning. Trust me, nothing ruins a party more, than a trip to the hospital. You've been warned. (;*

I think people who enjoy reading fantasy/ magic books but also have an appreciation for classical paintings would enjoy this book. Of those qualities I mentioned, I only have an appreciation for classical art, so I believe a three star rating is appropriate.

(Short background info on me)

I was lucky enough to be raised by a mother who loved all things art and who surrounded our house with artwork. So from a young age I was accustomed to visiting art shows and art museums. Eventually in high school I was lucky enough to visit Paris and there, I got to go to Musée du Louvre in Paris, France where I got to meet the beautiful Mona Lisa and other amazing works of art.

So, I bought this book on book outlet, thinking this story would have more emphasis on art than anything

It has great writing and a lot of imagination but I do believe the plot is too complex for younger middle grade readers.

[illegible]

Everything was going just fine before they entered the world behind the canvas.  
After that, it wasn't so pleasant  
And the ending was upsetting.  
It actually didn't take a lot of time for me to complete the book. I had my examinations.

### Davina says

## Hannah says

BEHIND THE CANVAS is a wonderful journey into the world of art history and an excellent exploration of the nuances of friendship and the grey area between good and evil. A fantastic cast of supporting characters, most of whom are famous artists and their works, create a world that will stay with readers long after they put down the book (seriously, just TRY to get the image of the Fireside Angel lumbering toward you out of your mind). Detailed footnotes from a fictional art history textbook might seem at first glance too academic, but in actuality they are witty asides that both enhance contextual understanding and lend a perfect touch of

humor. I highly recommended this one for readers who love THE MIXED-UP FILES OF MRS. BASIL E. FRANKWEILER or UNDER THE EGG. Ages 9-12.

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### **Marlana says**

*Sigh.* Here comes the hard part; I didn't like Behind the Canvas. I wanted to. I desperately wanted to. It sounded eerily similar to my much beloved Elsewhere series by Jacqueline West, but with a different execution. Then, to read on and discover that it is essentially Elsewhere rewritten. . .well, let's just say I wasn't impressed by that.

They say there are no original ideas and I'd have to concur, but then methinks there are ideas that are your own and ideas you merely borrow. This feels a lot like the latter and I wouldn't even say it's particularly well done.

The beginning was insufferable really. The first paragraph where Vance felt the need to upsell paintings and art by insulting drawing, sculpture, and photography - perhaps one of the most unbearable paragraphs I've ever read. Art in all of its forms, writing included, takes an extreme amount of talent, skill, and dedication. I can't even understand what would possess him to write such drivel.

And Pim and Claudia, our main characters.

Claudia is bullied seemingly even by teachers for reasons unknown and is so much of a loner that she can't even figure out how to talk to other kids, but has no problem starting up a random conversation with some weird boy with blue eyes in a painting. Also, she cries a lot at basically everything. She's one step above a damsel in distress.

Don't even get me started on Pim. Just because George R. R. Martin has seemingly brought in vogue the gray protagonist does not mean every writer with a pen needs to start writing gray characters. Especially when you do not have the talent or the skill to bring about the character's redemption or redeeming characteristics.

The only saving grace of this narrative is Alexander Vance's writing. And for that, and that alone, I give this 2 stars.

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### **Ms. Yingling says**

E ARC from Netgalley.com

The Heartbreak Messenger is one of my all time favorite books, and schools where students are very interested in art, or are fans of Blue Balliet's books, will definitely find this book interesting. There are lots of descriptions of famous paintings and footnotes about artists, and this is a decent time travelish kind of fantasy. I just don't have any students who are interested in art at all, so will pass on purchasing.

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### **Stacy Renee (LazyDayLit) says**

A fun story for any young reader who enjoys art or art history.

Claudia loves art. She loves to draw and loves looking at paintings and learning about the artists that painted them. One day she discovers a boyboy with vivid blue eyes in a painting that starts talking to her. She learns that he can move from painting to painting and they quickly become friends. After discovering that he is not a figment of her imagination and is in fact a real boy trapped behind the canvas by an evil witch, she vows to do whatever she can to help him, even if it means traveling behind the canvas and coming face to face with the witch herself.

I love the unique premise of this book. As an artist (whom hasn't painted anything in a couple of years) I love the idea and the thought of a world that is created by artists painting is so unique and fascinating to me. I enjoyed the quirky footnotes that covered artists and styles that I haven't even thought about in years.

I enjoyed the characters, even down to Cash, a dog from one of those poker paintings that I've never been a big fan of. It was easy to feel their emotions throughout the book.

My only complaint is that so little of the world of paintings was discovered when there are endless artworks to peruse, but that is just my love of art wanting more.

I was given a temporary digital copy of Behind the Paint from netgalley in exchange for an honest review.

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### **Alexa says**

Behind the Canvas is one of those novels that I'm torn on when it comes to my rating. (It's actually a 3.75 stars for me, if you must know.) There are so many wonderful things about it - the integration of actual artists and artwork, the clever footnote commentary, the magical adventure. But the first fourth or so is a bit of a slog, and the pacing doesn't quite match that of the rest of it. Still, there's certainly merit to this one and I ended up enjoying it!

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### **Coleen says**

This is an older children's book, and has not only a lot of action, but also quite a bit of art education. The author has included the art info as footnotes so that readers will not get bogged down with these asides. But I loved the information. What a wonderful review of things I knew, and things I never knew about art.

Back to the story, it is inventive and creative and will keep the reader turning pages!

I would like to read the prior book that this author has written.

I received this book in a Goodreads giveaway.

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### **Annette Vellenga says**

WOW.. what a fascinating read. I started the book with a great deal of trepidation but soon found myself drawn into the world of Claudia, Pim, Nee Gezicht, the three Dutchman, Cash and the world behind the canvas.



It was so interesting watching Claudia have to sort her way through different challenges, to see her heart be challenged, and to learn to think past her fear.

I will have no problem letting my 10 year old this book and tend to think that most youth will have no problems reading this story and learning along with Claudia. It very much is an exciting fast moving story.

One of the features I enjoyed (and if I had known about it before I read the book I would have handled the book differently). Throughout the book, various famous artists are named and short vignettes are written about them. I could see reading this book chapter by chapter and then doing a short artist study with my student.. whenever one of those vignettes presented itself. It was a neat addition to the story.

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