



Ivy

Julie Hearn

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The only beautiful thing in Ivy's drab life is her glorious red hair. At a young age, her locks made her the target of Carrotty Kate, a 'skinner'. She recruited Ivy to help her coax wealthy children away from their nannies so that she could rob them. Now she has been spotted by a famous painter.

Ivy Details

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Author : Julie Hearn

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From Reader Review Ivy for online ebook

Anne Osterlund says

Ivy

In Which a Young Girl Grows Up With a Dark Past, Is Hired to Work as a Model for a Not-So-Famous Painter, and Learns That the Most Dangerous Thing in the World can be a Jealous Mother.

OK, so my favorite parts of this book were all the chapter subheadings (see above), but I also loved Ivy. And her affinity for animals. This poor girl is forced to pose in a tablecloth with a boa constrictor around her feet! And there are people who are jealous!

Natalie Sapkarov Harvey says

Once I figured out that this was not your average YA novel, I was better able to appreciate the story. Something of a Victorian-inspired with Oliver Twist and The Bell Jar elements, Ivy is a complex tale of its title character. From a poorer than poor family, to a school for wayward children, to a life on the streets with thieves and criminals, Ivy's first few years of life more than difficult and unfortunately formative. She spends the next ten years in a drunken stupor, and then is recognized for her beauty and asked to model for a pre-Raphaelite painter. Here the story really takes off, with intricate twists and turns, and defining moments in Ivy's perception of herself. She is a weak character through and through, until she finds the strength to do something about it. Truly a literary tale, one that older high school students and college-age YAs will appreciate.

Anna Kim says

There is a lot of historical, though not very descriptive, passages about Victorian England the pre-Raphaelite art movement, and the author's coyness about revealing the identity of "the Italian" gets tiresome pretty quickly, especially for those who studied English literature and was able to ascertain the name fairly early on.

This is a pretty typical story of a hard luck girl who, through sheer luck (and it was luck since Ivy is pretty dumb, not uneducated, though she is that, too) manages to fall on her feet and literally escape to a better life. The secondary characters are much more interesting than the heroine. They are better developed and it is easier to understand their actions and even their thought processes. Either because of her laudanum addiction or just her inherent dullness, Ivy is just not that interesting. As I mentioned earlier, she goes through life and finds her happiness on sheer dumb luck and not through any physical or intellectual effort of her own.

X says

Nothing wonderful, but entertaining enough and a quick read. The story was interesting, but I thought it could have been done better. There were things that seemed a bit out of place at the end, and there were a

good many things I would have liked wrapped up better, though they were not so important to the plot. Still, there were a few sweet moments and overall it was an enjoyable diversion.

Haley says

Ivy is merely a poor relation in an already-poor family, and she's made to never forget it. But if she's anything it's irrepressible, even in the slums. She won't eat meat even though she's undernourished, and she doesn't take guff from anyone.

When she is noticed by an artist for her rare, incongruous beauty, she is given opportunity to model for him as Eve in The Fall. She takes it, and so do her housemates, who would pretty much force her to anyway- anything for a little extra cash.

This peasant girl is unfortunately intertwined with the eccentricities of London's wealthy- but all her mishaps lead to hilarity.

Not as good as The Minister's Daughter, but Hearn still manages to write historical fiction with a punch- and that punch is usually her unruly heroine. YA for girls who will scream if they have to read another glittery story about a friggin' princess.

Stephanie Graham Pina says

I started this book wanting to love it because of its subject matter since the Pre-Raphaelites and Lizzie Siddal in particular are dear to my heart. I'm disappointed that I couldn't embrace it as much as I had hoped. I can't understand why the author couldn't use Rossetti's name. Repeatedly he is referred to as "the Italian". After the third or fourth reference, I was exasperated. After reading it so many times (the Italian, the Italian, the Italian) it just became an intrusive element in the story.

The artist, Oscar Frosdick, is described twice as a "member of the Pre-Raphaelite elite". Yet when he paints Ivy as Ophelia, he chooses the nearest roses he can find for Ophelia's flowers instead of using the actual flowers Shakespeare named in Hamlet. The flowers are symbolic and no Pre-Raphaelite artist would have accepted such a substitution. I felt that this was a slapdash scene and is another example of how this story has great potential that it simply didn't meet.

The ending, well, wasn't quite an ending. Or even an explanation. There are too many things left unexplained and characters left abandoned.

April says

Sometimes a girl just needs a really good work of historical fiction to ease her hectic life. Ivy by Julie Hearn was exactly what the doctor prescribed. First, there is the gorgeous cover, which actually kind of threw me. I went into the book expecting some sort of romance, just because there was a woman on the cover. Silly me. What I got in return was something much better.

Read the rest of my review [here](#)

PurplyCookie says

In true Dickensian manner, this atmospheric, richly detailed story takes readers from the slums to the upper-class locales of mid-1800s London. Ivy is a victim throughout much of the book, trying to escape villains who seek her demise. Orphaned and living with uncaring relatives, she runs away at the age of five, after bad experiences during her first day at school. She returned home a few years later, a laudanum addict.

At 15, she's roused from her typical drugged state in order to earn money as a painter's model, at which point the adventure goes full throttle: the painter's mother is jealous enough to try both poison and imprisonment to do away with Ivy; the painter himself is so self-centered that he only notices Ivy's physical strikingness, not any of her social or emotional needs.

It is perhaps as grim as Dickens, and yet there is a lightness here that I found enjoyable. I enjoyed the way the author played with some of the traits of Dicken's books; for one thing, there are some wonderful names here: Mrs. Hortense Merryfield (who is anything but merry) and Mrs. Christiana Larrington for a start. And then there are the chapter headings: my favorite perhaps was "Chapter 2: In which Mrs. Larrington Suffers in a rather Extremely Confined Space."

What really sets this story apart is the addition of the opiate; laudanum: a popular medicine of the time. The heroine is shown to be quite frail in her addiction. You end up empathizing with this poor girl early on and that never seems to let go even in the end.

The story starts out with cockney speaking thieves living in a hovel and ends up in an artist's studio. The story has a nice twist at the end which leaves the availability for a sequel. While the journey is complete it--at times--seems to be a tad bit rushed.

More of Purplycookie's Reviews @: <http://www.goodreads.com/purplycookie>

Book Details:

Title Ivy

Author Julie Hearn

Reviewed By Purplycookie

travelmel says

EDIT: BEGINING THE BOOK:

I've grown tired of the book I've been trying AND TRYING to read: Bitten - and I left the new Mortal Instruments book somewhere so I'm going to try this! The cover summary reminds me of the Gemma Doyle trilogy. Mysterious, supernatural/magic, nineteenth century England.

EDIT: FINISHED

OH I WAS HAD!! Swindled, Kabozled.... I am so dumb! So I'm reading and reading and mark my words it's an enjoyable read BUT where was the magic? Where was the supernatural??? Where were my goosebumps?? Where? In another book. After about 270 of 370 pages I read the back flap again, certain I had SOME MAGIC to look forward to. None. After re-reading the back I realized that the BACK was PRAISE for A DIFFERENT BOOK. (The Ministers Daughter - which I will definitely be reading) *****SIGH... HEAVY SIGH***** FORHEAD SLAP!!!!

Oh well. So this book: I read the reviews on goodreads and they're correct. This is a Dickensian tale. Nicks, theives, and beggars meet the elite art world. I would recommend looking up this painting: Beata Beatrice before reading the book. Just look at it. The book mentions it a lot but of course in the context of (mostly) fiction.

The book was really well written (in my opinion) I was often impressed with how something was said, described, or the witty (NOT FUNNY) cleverness of the prose. I read it in one sitting (though I had to sleep at the end and finished the last 30 pages the next day.) - it was engaging. But, I am the same person who caught "Great Expectations" on late night TV one night and watched the entire thing from 2-5 am. Yes, it's LONG.. and enthralling, just like this. You don't know why but you must...if you like that sort of thing.

I liked it and continued turning pages and each page had something pretty and good to read but.. it was sort of like eating a large salad for dinner. The bits were tasty but it lacked satisfying substance somehow and you can eat and eat and eat and it doesn't look like you've made a dent in the supposed meal. Finally, when it's done, you are full and you're glad you ate it. Make sense?

3.5 stars. 4 stars if I liked salad more. And sometimes, I do.

EDIT: I was thinking about this book and I realized that it's a **story**... almost a biography. I think I kept waiting for an event but there wasn't one and that's ok. I mean, stuff happens, but there is no "bad force" and "good force" or ruling family and desitiny. It's the story of these people's lives and so that's that. It's still good on its own, I guess.. I'm just more used to reading books with "events." Ya know?

Kristy says

When I picked this book out of my pile to read, I admit I judged the cover. I thought it was going to be a cheesy love story or be about some kind of jacked-up version of Poison Ivy

But, I was way off.

Ivy is a girl living in London, with basically no one to care for her and no way of supporting her own self. One day she happens to meet a Skinner, a robber of small children. But, this woman, this Kate takes a liking to the read-headed little Ivy and devises a plan to use her. She takes her in along with the rest of the band of thugs and theifs. When things go wrong on a rob, Kate tells Ivy to run away-to go Home! She crawls back to the sham she calls a family, but not before catching the eye of an artist, a painter. He pays to have her model for his pictures. Things get really interesting when the Mother of said artists decides she doesn't like this model and tries to kill her left and right without her son knowing. He's an idiot. We wonder if Ivy can out think and dodge this mad-woman or if she is truely spineless and addicted to her "medicine".

Sidenote: London really takes a beating in this one.....

Eh, 3.5 stars.

Mara says

Cover Blurb: Not a fan of it; it leers, and it is really quite misleading about what sort of book it is. I was expecting something sappy, and horribly mushy, and probably even edgy, with more than one bedroom scene. Yeah, my expectations were not high, and now that I've read the book, I really think they ought to have chosen a different approach with the cover.

What I Liked: I love, absolutely *love*, Mrs. Frosdick! She is wonderfully horrid; I am seriously jealous of the Author for coming up with her. I loved how she kept trying to kill Ivy, and how very proper she was in her behavior; she was worthy of Dickens. Carrotay's gang was very amusing - a very good nod to Fagan's boys in *Oliver Twist* without being too obvious. And Ivy's relatives were completely awesome, conniving little crooks.

What I Disliked: I did like Ivy, but I got to know so little about her personality that it really did begin to feel like the story had no protagonist. I was able to see her potential, which is what kept me from getting annoyed with her, but the Author really should have given the Reader more opportunity to know her. I got to know all of the other characters very well - and I loved them! But a story will always feel hollow if there isn't a protagonist.

Believability: While all of the characters felt legitimate, and the Author did a superb job with accents, there were a few unconvincing things. One: Ivy being a vegetarian. I'm sorry, but if a child were starving on the streets, like Ivy, that child would get over her qualms about eating meat very quickly. Two: Ivy recovers from her laudanum addiction with remarkable ease, especially considering how addicted she's supposed to be. She has one severe relapse - which isn't even that severe in itself - and that's it. Sorry; not buying it.

Writing Style: I actually really liked it. While not nearly as bitingly sarcastic as Dickens (it's hard to be that cynical; he was a master at it), her writing follows along the same lines, and it is hilarious. Unlike some people, I did like how the Author kept referring to Rossetti as simply "the Italian." But because it was so obvious who "the Italian" was, the Author shouldn't have ever said his name in the book, because then it gave an impression that the Reader was supposed to be shocked at the revelation of his identity. I found the whole scene with Carrotay Kate revealing who she is was confusing - and I personally didn't even understand the point behind it.

Content: Ivy's relatives constantly hint to Ivy that if Mr. Frosdick wants Ivy to become his mistress, she should let him - for a price, naturally. This does lead to her relatives constantly making rather lewd jokes, but Mr. Frosdick never once makes any sort of advance on Ivy, and the relatives' jokes are never graphic.

Conclusion: To be honest, the ending was extremely anticlimactic. And I thought the Author passed up a lot of opportunities to bring her story in so many different directions. Like with Carrotay Kate's gang - she could have done so much more with them, or Ivy's time at the school, and her relatives' constant scheming. While the Author had rather Dickensonian characters, she missed opportunities to deepen her plotline and connect characters together that Dickens never would have. And I think that if the Author hadn't passed them up, this book would have had a far more interesting, far more satisfying ending. I did like the book - Mrs. Frosdick

totally makes it worth reading, - but I mostly saw missed possibilities in it, and for that I am sad.

Recommended Audience: Historical fiction fans, especially Readers who are looking for a story that has a hint of Dickensonian humor to it. Don't be fooled by the cover, people - it's really a very funny story. Girl-and-guy read, fourteen and up.

Erin says

Ivy grew up in England in the mid-1800s. Orphaned and left with selfish relatives, she is given the opportunity to attend school; after a negative run-in with a woman who tries to force her to eat meat, she runs away. Ivy is taken in by a street gang and begins a different sort of life on the streets...

Fast-forward a number of years. Ivy is living with her relatives once again, when an artist inquires about her becoming his model. Although she may be stunning on the outside, there are many things she conceals within - from her final experience with the street gang to an addiction she cannot tell anyone about...

Ivy follows the journey of a lower-class, illiterate teenager as she struggles to separate herself from relatives who seek to profit from her.

I read the sequel to this book, Hazel, prior to Ivy. It was interesting to read the account of Hazel's mother.

Caitlin says

This was a strange book, first why would a staving, orphan girl become a vegetation? It doesn't make sense. Also a lot of the characters felt fake and had no redeeming factors. The story just didn't work for me even if I enjoyed how it ended. So not my type of book but may work for others.

Josie says

I have no idea what was going on with this book. Every time I thought it was going to be one thing, it veered in a completely different direction. It had all the essential ingredients of a Victorian melodrama: an orphaned heroine, a den of thieves, laudanum addiction, pre-Raphaelite painters -- but it was so bizarre, and the writing so clunky, that it left me completely cold. I felt alienated from Ivy, who was very difficult to warm to. I found her vegetarianism unbelievable (as if a starving child would refuse to eat meat), along with her miraculous recovery from her 10-year-plus laudanum addiction. After going cold turkey she had one day of withdrawal symptoms, and was completely fine by the second day. Yeah, right. And god, how annoying was the ending? Nothing was resolved! (Don't even get me *started* on the identity of Carrotty Kate.)

Also, what was up with constantly referring to Dante Gabriel Rossetti as "the Italian"? I don't get why Julie Hearn felt she had to be so coy, as a) any idiot could guess his identity, and b) Lizzie Siddal was mentioned by name several times. And excuse me, but what was all that about Rossetti having poor hygiene and "a stomach the size of a bolster"??? I've seen *Desperate Romantics*, okay. Rossetti looked exactly like Aidan Turner. This is a historical fact.

Louise says

Amazing book. And the tranny was hilarious! And the painter was such a twat ha ha.

Ally says

Did I like this?

Well... I don't even know.

This book was fun and intriguing. It involved poison, thieves, and painting. And it was utterly, utterly confusing.

Why does the painter's mother hate Ivy? So much that she tries to POISON her???

Is Carroty Kate a woman or a man? I thought that the book was implying that she was a man, but then it kept calling her "she."

It was a fun book, but really confusing. I'm lost. I really am.

Cindy Mitchell *Kiss the Book* says

Hearn, Julie Ivy, 351 p. Atheneum (Simon), 2008.

Ivy lives with her aunt and uncle and their extensive amount of children in the the slums of England during the 1800's. As a child, Ivy was taken by a gang of thieves, but returned to her uncle's home after a couple of years. Now, eight years later, an artist has spied the beautiful, ethereal Ivy among the dirty streets and is determined to make her his model, not know that she comes with an addiction. Something about the artist and his household and these new circumstances starts to break through Ivy's fog and she starts to begin thinking and feeling again. Ivy will have enemies and she will have chances, but will she be able to make the choice.

I would consider this book a lighter, female version of Oliver Twist, not so much David Copperfield, with not as great a depth of description, characterization or heart. Another 20 pages to shore up the happy ending would have gone a long way to make me more fond of this work. That being said, it is a good, light read for older students.

HS - OPTIONAL. Cindy, Library-Teacher.
<http://kissthebook.blogspot.com/2008/...>

CLM says

I hate reading books out of order, so when I realized I had read Hazel, about Ivy's daughter, I had to rush to the library (electronically speaking) to order this earlier book. I read it last night when I should have been sleeping. I found this book somewhat disappointing because it was all over the place: dazzlingly beautiful redhead (yes), neglected orphan (yes), abusive family (yes), abusive teacher (yes), Victorian do-gooders (yes), bands of thieves (yes), drug addiction (yes, laudanum), artists (yes), artist's models (yes), jealous mothers (yes), murderous pythons (yes), cross-dresser (this was unexpected, not necessary, and not very convincing).

Several things puzzled me: 1) Ivy is a vegetarian in approximately 1890. Would an illiterate five year old growing up in a slum around the turn of the century boycott meat? (unlikely she would have had much opportunity to eat meat in the first place) I realize there were vegetarians in Victorian England but I question whether Ivy would really have been aware of what she was eating other than that there wasn't enough of it. She does have a weird affinity with animals but is otherwise fairly cold, both in this book and in Hazel. This is not surprising, given her violent childhood but it makes for an odd heroine.

2) Ivy becomes addicted to laudanum when she is 5-7 years old, yet suddenly manages to detox ten years later with barely any agony at all. Let alone how did this girl in the slum get so much laudanum (and she wasn't selling her body which would have been plausible).

3) I read this book partly because I was curious about her relationship with Hazel's father but it ends before she meets him. She is about to begin working at a Home for Dogs, which we know is where he will fall in love with her, while searching for his sister's pet.

Ivy is 40? 50? when Hazel ends so her story may not be done but this book left me unsatisfied, especially as it was my last read of 2009.

Nafiza says

Doesn't the synopsis sound divine? I thought so too. I checked this book out from the library because the synopsis coupled with the cover won me over. There's an ethereal sense about the girl on the cover, perhaps the curve of her cheeks that whispers of vulnerability and I'm going to wax poetic until I stop myself.

Okay, I'm done.

Anyway, the book didn't deliver as I had hoped it would. It was sort of like seeing the potential, knowing it was in there but failing ultimately to find it manifested. I liked the way Ivy was characterized and the other characters too were superbly delineated. The villains, the supporting characters, most of them were granted the attention I love in my books.

There is this painter in the book who is called "The Italian." Now, if you're into art and paintings, you'll probably know more than me but I didn't. I couldn't understand what his importance was to the story and honestly, the book ended and he still didn't seem to have gained much importance to the narrative. There was no point to him. So why is he granted that much importance? Because he's the famous artist (I think one of the Rossetti brothers, I'm only familiar with Christina Rossetti and that too because of her Dear John

poem) and...

This book had sparks of brilliance that failed to materialize into a full blown fire. None of the plot lines were explored to my satisfaction and the ending was just an abandonment of the narrative. What happens to Ivy? Why doesn't the mother get punished? And what about the Italian? There was no disclosure, no poetic justice (or justice of any kind), there were no developments of character...it seemed more like a vignette (albeit an extended one) than a novel. I am not saying that all novels have to be linear or follow the pattern of a beginning, middle and end. What I'm saying is that when I'm reading a book, I expect to take away something from it other than a lingering annoyance. It is because I cared about the characters and because they were intriguing that I read the book. The entire book is one giant tease. Honestly. Which is a pity because it could have been so much more.

Morgan F says

Ivy's life is far from picturesque. Orphaned at a young age, she moves in with her in-laws, a poor family of scoundrels. At the age of five, she runs away and finds herself an addition to a troupe of thieves, in particular, the "skinner" Carrot Kate. In order to silence Ivy's screams in the middle of the night caused by nightmares, Kate starts giving Ivy laudanum, one drop at a time.

Eleven years later Ivy is back home with her family, when her bright red hair and pale beauty catches the eye of a pre-Raphaelite painter, who wants her as his muse and model. Ivy is forced into an arrangement with the artist, Oscar Aretino Frosdick, by her bullying Cousin Jared and her "invalid" aunt, who desperately want the money. But not everyone is happy with this, including Ivy who escapes through her addiction and Frosdick's jealous mother. Ivy must now decide what she wants from her life, only made more difficult when her past comes back to haunt her.

I really enjoyed this book. I love books set in London, particularly the Victorian-era, so this book definitely was a treat. I loved how this book was romantic, but not in the traditional "girl-loves-boy" kind of way. The intentionally anachronistic writing oozed charm and humor, and the chapter headings were great. An example is "Chapter Twenty-five: In Which Oscar's Physical Well-Being Is Once Again at Risk."

The plot was very Dickensian, and I couldn't help comparing it to *Oliver Twist* in my mind. The characters were quirky, and Ivy was a good protagonist. She had flaws and strengths. I liked how despite everything she has been through, she still maintained a childlike fascination with animals.

I do recommend this book and its beautiful cover art. I went in expecting some typical rags-to-riches romance, but was pleasantly surprised.
