



Behind the Canvas

By Alexander Vance

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Behind the Canvas By Alexander Vance

There is a world behind the canvas. Past the flat façade and the crackling paint is a realm where art lives, breathes, creates, and destroys.

Claudia Miravista loves art but only sees what is on the surface-until the Dutch boy Pim appears in the painting in her room. Pim has been trapped in the world behind the canvas for centuries by a power-hungry witch, and he 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 behind the canvas, intent on destroying the witch's most cherished possession and setting her new friend free. But in that world nothing is quite as it appears on the surface. Not even friendship.

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Behind the Canvas By Alexander Vance Bibliography

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Editorial Review

From School Library Journal

Gr 5–8—Aiming to do for art history what Rick Riordan's "Percy Jackson" series (Disney-Hyperion) has done for Greek mythology, Vance's novel follows its 12-year-old protagonist, a budding artist named Claudia Miravista, into a world where famous artists and art iconography come to life as dynamic, idiosyncratic characters. When she unexpectedly spots a living boy, Pim, peering out from the background of a painting at the local museum, Claudia is unexpectedly drawn into both a friendship and an interdimensional conflict, which requires her to join Pim in a mysterious realm built by the imaginations of every major artist since the Renaissance. Initially bogged down by a great deal of explanatory setup (necessary to make such an abstract conceit stick), Vance's story flares to life when Claudia crosses into the canvas for the first time. Soon, she's trading gossip with the Mona Lisa, befriending one of C.M. Coolidge's poker-playing dogs, and running from a particularly frightening Max Ernst creation—all to free Pim from the clutches of an evil artist-witch named Nee Gezicht. Helped along by tongue-in-cheek footnotes from a fictional art encyclopedia, adventurous readers will end up learning a great deal about art history along the way. VERDICT A conventional misfit-turned-hero tale elevated by an inspired concept.—Abigail Garnett, Brooklyn Public Library

Review

“Readers will end up learning a great deal about art history along the way . . . an inspired concept.” -*School Library Journal*

“This well-paced mystery offers a pleasing protagonist and a very unusual setting. Vance cleverly injects the story with a bevy of secondary characters, many of whom readers will recognize from European paintings and popular art, and humorous footnotes from a fictional art-history textbook balance the tension. Themes of trust and loyalty figure prominently in this story, which explores what it means to be a true friend.” ?*Booklist*

About the Author

Alexander Vance's first novel, *The Heartbreak Messenger*, was praised by *School Library Journal* as a "clever read [that] will find an audience with both boys and girls" in a starred review. He works as a multimedia designer and lives in Western New York with his family.

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Bruce Hardin:

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