



The Strange And Deadly Portraits Of Bryony Gray

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A Tim Burtonesque retelling of The Picture of Dorian Gray aimed at Middle Graders.

The most peculiar things always happen to Bryony Gray. As if it isn't bad enough that her uncle keeps her locked in the attic, forcing her to paint for his rich clients, she's becoming rather well known in the art world... since all her customers seem to go missing.

When her newest painting escapes the canvas and rampages through the streets of London, Bryony digs into her family history, discovering some rather scandalous secrets her uncle has been keeping, including a deadly curse she's inherited from her missing father. It turns out, Bryony has accidentally unleashed the Gray family curse, and it's spreading fast.

With a little help from the strange-but-beautiful girl next door and her paranoid brother, Bryony sets out to break the curse, dodging bloodthirsty paintings, angry mobs and her wicked uncle along the way.

The Strange And Deadly Portraits Of Bryony Gray Details

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From Reader Review The Strange And Deadly Portraits Of Bryony Gray for online ebook

Sandra Stiles says

Bryony Gray is an orphan who lives with her aunt and uncle. Her mother died when Bryony was very young and no one will speak about her father. She is locked in her aunt and uncle's attic where she spends her time painting portraits. She is quite the young prodigy. Lately, there have been terrible news articles connecting her paintings with the disappearance of those who sit for her. Considering her father was considered cursed, and no one wants to speak of him, Bryony must draw her own conclusions. She has a patron who sends her all kinds of painting supplies. She has come to believe that her father is truly alive, and he is in fact her benefactor. One day during a sitting Bryony throws a tantrum that sets evil into motion. While painting a lady who is acting spoiled and impatient; and having her aunt stand over her shoulder yelling at her, Bryony has had enough. She destroys the painting by ruining it with her paints. This sets into motion an evil like the city has never seen. Realizing she can leave the house, Bryony goes to the museum to discover that the paintings have come to life in a horrible way. She also discovers her neighbors who become her friends. Will they live long enough to figure out what the curse is all about and how to break it? Is it possible that there is something even more evil behind the evil destroying the city?

I loved this book. It was creepy, there were several different story lines going that all connected smoothly at the end. I would definitely read more by this author.

I received a copy from LibraryThing to facilitate my review. The opinions expressed here are my own.

Engel Dreizehn says

ARC...copy deliciously dark (darker than most middle grade horrors I read actually) retelling/take on Dorian Grey (especially the themes of vanity-beauty), and imaginative in the artistic-world building of the "painted" Grey family curse. It felt especially creepy when the portraits do come to murderous life in creepy imagery right to their painted faces and killer smirks.

Krysti says

My favorite book of the year so far! The premise of this story is so smart and creative. I love the way the author incorporated elements from THE PICTURE OF DORIAN GRAY. There is a creepy yet whimsical tone to the story that I couldn't get enough of. The characters are enchanting, and I for one am hoping for more middle grade books from E. Latimer in the future!

Ms. Yingling says

Copy provided by the publisher

Bryony Gray's mother is dead, and her father is probably as well, so she has been kept in the attic by her aunt and uncle, and forced to use her considerable artistic talent to paint portraits of the well-to-do to earn money. When the last three people who sit for her go missing, a huge scandal surrounds her work, but it also makes her more desirable as an artist. When other creepy things start happening with her paintings, Bryony is bound and determined to investigate information she has about her father. This takes her in search of a book binder, and puts her in contact with a brother and sister, Thompson and Mira, who want to help her. There is a connection to Oscar Wilde's new book, *The Portrait of Dorian Gray*, and the children must investigate this, as well as a grimoire, before even more terrible things happen.

Strengths: This definitely had a very creepy Victorian London air to it, reminiscent of *The Wolves of Willoughby Chase*, *A Drowned Maiden's Hair*, or *Lemony Snicket*. I can also see fans of *V.C. Andrews Flowers in the Attic* buying into the aunt and uncle's treatment of Bryony. The art angle will also attract some readers who like mysteries like those of *Blue Balliet's*.

Weaknesses: The time period is not explicitly stated, but the historical details were wanting. Some didn't seem quite right, and the dialogue, characters and settings seemed more modern to me.

What I really think: Middle grade readers will enjoy the creepy portions of this without thinking about the historical information too much, but I would have enjoyed it more if the deliciously creepy details of Victorian London were captured more accurately.

Devann says

I received a free copy of this book from NetGalley

So I would classify this more as a 'middle grade sequel' to the *Picture of Dorian Gray* [a truly hilarious sentence when you stop to think about it] rather than a retelling because it is literally set after the original novel [although also in a world where *Dorian Gray* was apparently a real person that Oscar Wilde knew ...] with Bryony being *Dorian's* daughter.

Overall it's a really fun read. The way the author writes the paintings coming out of their frames and the way they move is incredibly vivid and definitely causes you to bring up some terrifying images in your mind. I really liked Bryony and the brother-and-sister duo that helped her throughout the story. I think that overall it's a very fun - yet still faintly horrifying - read and one of those rare middle grade books that are just as enjoyable for adults as they are for children.

I do have one bone to pick though, and that is the fact that neither Oscar Wilde nor *Dorian Gray's* sexuality is ever brought up. I guess you can say that's not relevant to the plot in this particular book but it is DEFINITELY relevant to the plot of the original and I can't help but feel that the entire thing was glossed over because it's a children's book which is just sad.

Valerie says

In this creepy and thoroughly enjoyable romp through London, Bryony Gray, a young artist contends with misbehaving mirrors, murderous paintings, and a wicked uncle. Along with the intriguing siblings next door, Bryony sets out to find her mysterious patron and investigate her family's secrets. Can these young friends

survive the living paintings on a rampage and the Gray family curse?

Beautifully written, you can really see the author's love of literature throughout this book. Riddled with chilling scenes from the prologue on, this book will keep you on the edge of your seat and cheering for our three young protagonists, start to finish. This story has carved out a spot amongst my favorite YA novels. I'm so excited to add E. Latimer to my list of favorites!

Chazzi says

Thirteen Bryony Gray has an exceptional talent for one her age - she can paint incredible portraits of people. Incredibly life-like!

She is being raised by her aunt and uncle, who know of this talent and keep her locked up and living in the attic. She is allowed downstairs when a rich client comes to sit for their portrait. She has become quite well known and her aunt and uncle are raking in the money, but Bryony wants to be free. She also wants to know about her parents and what is so scandalous about them that makes her aunt and uncle unwilling to tell her.

When clients go missing after receiving their portraits, and the most recent portrait comes to life before Bryony's eyes, it is apparent there is something drastic about her talent and family history. Bryony sets out to find out exactly what it is.

Making friends with the beautiful girl next door and her nervous brother, the trio find themselves in the middle of an eerie, fast moving and terrifying adventure. Meeting unusual characters along the way, while trying to keep out of the clutches of paintings that have suddenly come to life, the children find themselves in a whirlwind of action and adventure in Victorian London.

This book has action, imagination and excitement from the beginning and it doesn't let up. When you think you'll stop at the end of a paragraph, you find that 'maybe just one more' pulls you on through the book.

The characters also grow and find more confidence in themselves than they thought they had. Also that friendships can be as strong as family bonds, when at the start there was no common connection. Written for the Young Adult audience, I think even adults would thoroughly enjoy it.

Ivonne Rovira says

Psst! *The Strange and Deadly Portraits of Bryony Gray* proves a book in which it would be much too easy to say too much. Orphaned Bryony lives with her weak Uncle Bernard and his domineering, social-climbing wife, Gertrude. Like her disgraced father (about which nothing is said, although Bryony knows Uncle Bernard and Aunt Gertrude whisper about him and his rakish life), Bryony has an incredible gift for painting. But she also has a stubborn independent streak and a volcanic temper.

So, for the past six years, Bryony has been locked in the attic, forced to paint portraits of wealthy snobs. Now 14, Bryony has been planning her escape to find her father, whom she is certain is still alive, despite

what Aunt Gertrude says. But her escape comes earlier than expected when her portraits begin to — but that would be giving away too much!

Instead, she meets the children who live next door, the adventurous 13-year-old Mira Griffin and her cowardly older brother Thompson. The clever threesome embark on adventures that will keep you glued to this book until the very last satisfying page.

In the interest of full disclosure, I received this book from NetGalley, Penguin Random House Canada and Tundra Books in exchange for an honest review.

B.A. Williamson says

What a fantastic and wonderful read. Bryony Gray is a spirited girl in Victorian England. Her Aunt and Uncle keep her locked in the attic, where she's forced to paint portraits for the London gentry. Her portraits are wonderful and lifelike... too much so. The portraits come to life and start terrorizing the city. With the help of two quirky children from next door, Bryony must get to the bottom of the that plagues the Gray family, a curse brought upon them by her father... Dorian.

I loved this book! I am a sucker for spunky girls on madcap adventures. Parts of this book played out like the best Doctor Who episodes, with creepy pictures crawling out of paintings and mirrored reflections coming to life. My favorite part is the innocent and intriguing hints at the relationship between Bryony and Mira, which was dealt with tastefully for the age group, and realistically for the time period. Well plotted, with twists I didn't see coming, and with a writing style that made me want to curl up with a blanket and a cup of tea. (Which I did.) I would highly recommend.

Jill Jemmett says

The Picture of Dorian Gray is one of my favourite Victorian novels. This is a great sequel to the story.

This story had great pacing. Bryony's paintings began to come to life right at the beginning. It was so creepy! It kept me hooked through the whole story. I really couldn't predict what was going to happen next, so I was always surprised.

I think this story is actually creepier than The Picture of Dorian Gray. Though it is a sequel, it follows Gray's daughter, so it is for a younger audience. I loved this story and I got a lot out of it, even though it is aimed toward middle grade readers. It is a great choice for both young readers and older fans of Dorian Gray and Oscar Wilde.

After reading this book, I'll never look at paintings the same way again!

I received a copy of this book from the publisher on NetGalley.

Kyra Nelson says

I've loved this book since it was just a few pages my critique partner sent me ;)

Amelinda Bérubé says

Stylish, gothic, and occasionally terrifying, with a prickly, vulnerable heroine and some delightfully scary monsters. A great book to read under the covers with a flashlight. And - confession time - I haven't actually read THE PICTURE OF DORIAN GRAY, but this book makes me want to!

Marzie says

This book, targeted to the Middle-Grade reader, is an imaginative spin-off from Oscar Wilde's *The Portrait of Dorian Gray*. It's a clever enough idea but research issues and anachronisms kind of tanked my enjoyment of the book. Set around November 1901, (as discerned from a reference to Oscar Wilde's death being almost exactly a year ago, factually November 30th 1900), there are oddities that show a lack of research thoroughness on the part of the author and editor. While I get that children might be less affected by Queen Victoria's death in 1901, the somber tone in England (where they even used black edged stationery for the year following her death in January 1901) isn't captured. Furthermore, there are references to teddy bears, which were not even a thing until 1903, when simultaneously developed in the US and Germany (the latter by Stieff) as a reference to a cartoon image of US President Teddy Roosevelt. Anyway, it's the little things. Sadly this book arrived after my recent reading of Catherynne Valente's meticulously researched *Glass Town Game* about the Brontës at Haworth and it suffers in comparison. I was also bothered by the sketchiness of Bryony's painting style (excuse the awful pun there) since I paint and it is clear the author doesn't have a feel for painting and various media.

Middle-Grade readers will no doubt not be troubled by a discerning adult reader's concerns about accuracy. They might even be tempted to pick up Wilde's book, which would be a good thing.

I received a Digital Review Copy of this book from NetGalley, in exchange for an honest review.

Megan says

It was fun to read about the imagined daughter of Dorian Grey. That said, this seemed lacking both in story and delivery.

Laura says

When I was in London, a number of years ago, I got turned around on Oxford Street. Oxford Street is a broad, straight road, in the center of London, well known for its shops. It was originally a Roman road, back when London was under Roman rule, and the Romans are well known for building straight roads, because

that is the way they worked.

I bring this up because, although this novel never said *when* it took place, exactly, it is clear that a) it is taking place in London around the early 1900, after Queen Victoria has died, and b) after Oscar Wilde has died. Although it is a fantasy, it based in reality, because that is the way historical fiction is. So, knowing that, why not be a little more accurate? Seeing how Oxford Street is long and straight, why say that it is winding and narrow? If you need a winding narrow street, choose another street.

In another scene, Bryony, who has only left her attic once, notices that there are Teddy bears at a child's table, as though having a tea party. The problem is, Teddy bears were invented in 1903, and while the story might be taking place in 1903, and the other character might have the latest new toy, how would Bryony have heard of them, seeing how new they were? Choose another toy to have at your tea party.

And why have your character be friends with Oscar Wilde, who went to Paris, after he was released from prison, and died there. No reference is made to Paris, when the character, Constantine, mentions being, or talking to Oscar before he died.

These are the things that take me out of the story. It happens every time I read a book where I know a little bit about, and it throws me off.

Look, I get it is a middle-grade book. I really do. But good historical novels try to keep a bit in check, and when they don't, they explain why, at least. This novel never did.

And one last problem I have, the way painting is depicted. My grandmother was a painter (she actually worked for Walt Disney studios, back in the 1930s. My daughter is an artist. I am friends with artists. I have *never* heard of painting with, what, watercolor, the way Bryony does. Perhaps it is oils, but even so. Perhaps it is the magic, but it sounds very odd.

Is there something I liked about the novel? Yes, the brother and sister pair that help to solve the mystery. For Mira and Thomas, I give this novel three stars. But, if you like the book *Portrait of Dorian Gray* don't go into this book expecting anything like that. It is *inspired* by the book, the part of about wanting to be young and beautiful part. And it has got some exciting bits, so for that, it can keep its three stars.

Thanks to Netgalley for making this book available for an honest review.
