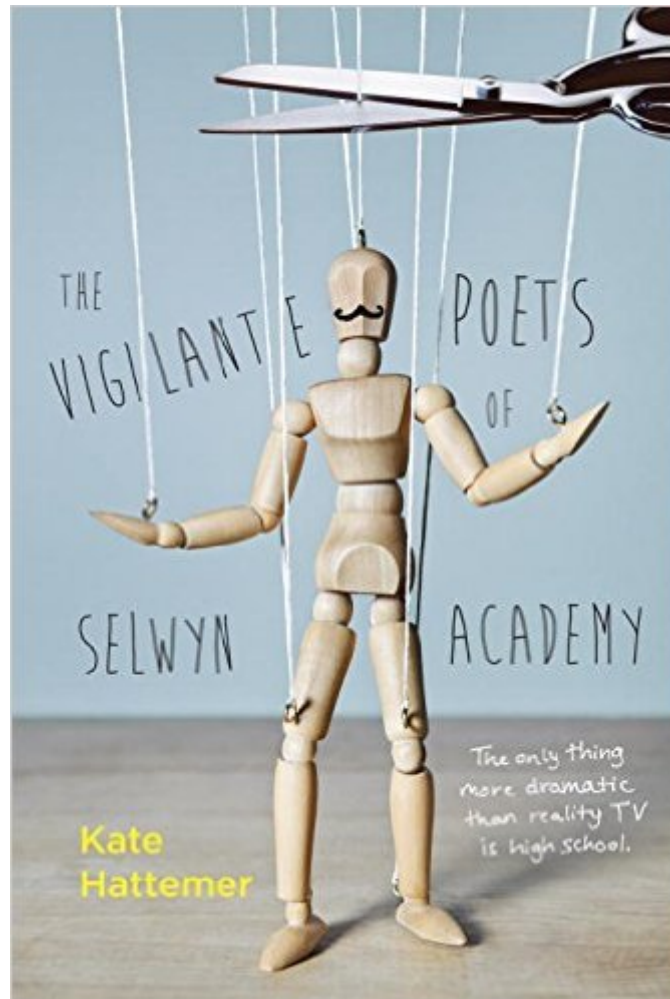


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The Vigilante Poets Of Selwyn Academy



Synopsis

Whip-smart dialogue and an inside look at the seedy underbelly of reality TV come together in this critically-acclaimed debut perfect for fans of *Unreal*, John Green, and Frank Portman. Witty, sarcastic Ethan and his three best friends are students at Selwyn Arts Academy, which has been hijacked by *For Art's Sake*, a sleazy reality-television show. In the tradition of Ezra Pound, the foursome secretly writes and distributes a long poem to protest the show. They're thrilled to have started a budding rebellion. But the forces behind the show are craftier than they seem. The web of betrayal stretches farther than Ethan could have ever imagined, and it's up to him, his friends, and a heroic gerbil named Baconnaise to save Selwyn. From the Hardcover edition.

Book Information

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Average Customer Review: 4.3 out of 5 stars See all reviews (73 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #499,218 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #28 in Books > Teens > Literature & Fiction > Performing Arts > Television & Radio #235 in Books > Teens > Literature & Fiction > Social & Family Issues > New Experiences #86076 in Books > Children's Books

Age Range: 12 - 17 years

Grade Level: 7 and up

Customer Reviews

The Vigilante Poets of Selwyn Academy was an enjoyable, delightful read, and one of my all-time favorite reads for 2014 so far. Kate Hattemer shows that she not only has the ability to get inside the heads of Ethan and his friends, but also does so in a way that's entertaining, funny and completely true to the teenage experience. Ethan and his friends not only have a compelling story to tell, but they will also likely remind readers of the energy and enthusiasm they had for intelligently and hilariously fixing life's problems when they were the same age as Ethan and company. Reading Vigilante Poets made me feel nostalgic not only for my teenaged days, but also

slightly jealous of all the people who are about to read this book for the very first time â “ this is a book that will stay with you for a very long time. Highly recommend for: all fans of YA contemporary fiction/contemporary fiction, fans of good â™80 movies, and fans of shows like Glee, and Buffy.

Narrator Ethan Andrezejczak attends elite Selwyn Academy, where students walk down the halls debating opera or Shakespeare and everyone is gifted or talented or both. Ethan's course load includes fifth-year Latin, Advanced Figure Drawing, and Ezra Pound. So what happens when a television reality show begins filming in the Academy's posh corridors? Of course chaos ensues. The student body immediately splits. The beautiful people are eager to compete on the show for fame and glory and, oh yes, the \$100,000.00 prize. Ethan, who describes himself as "of the Untalented caste," is with a small minority who think the television project will ruin the school. They decide the way to rebel is to write and anonymously publish a long poem on the evils of the reality show. Really? A long poem as a vigilante weapon? Read on! The plot zigzags back and forth until you're not sure who's real and who is pretending. Plenty of humor here, from the gerbil who does circus tricks to Ethan's little sisters, four-year-old triplets. Not to mention his friends, each unique in a different way. There's mystery, too: are the good guys and bad guys who you think they are? What's going on behind the scenes? I love the way that when the climax comes (don't worry, no spoilers here), I realized that the narrative had already given me all the clues to the solution, but they were so cleverly hidden that it was still a surprise. Underneath the goofy plot is a serious question: who decides what is art? The question isn't heavy-handed or intrusive, just something to ponder. Overall, this is a fun read that still has me smiling as I think about it days later.

I loved this book. Even the minor characters have depth. It has a balance of comedy, drama, and heartbreak that reminds me of a John Green novel. The narrator tries so hard to be self-aware -- and it's really funny to be reading his words, realizing that he can tell us what is going on while he still often really doesn't have a clue. I laughed out loud multiple times while reading this book, but -- without spoiling the ending -- it's not one of those books where everything gets tied up in neat little ribbons at the end. The narrator very much stays in character, and even in epilogue, he can only tell us about things within his scope of knowledge -- and within his limited awareness. The other thing I really liked about this book is that it inspired me to try harder. There is a recurring refrain about not wanting to get to the end of your life and say "I should have been able to do better." It applies (and is applied here) to big things, but it applies to little things as well. Two of the characters have a conversation about drawing -- and one points out that people say they can't draw, but often they

never really tried. They were crappy at it in third grade and gave up. This book makes me want to try harder, so I don't get to the end of my life and say "I should have been able to do better." I read it a week ago, and I'm still carrying that feeling with me. Pretty amazing for a novel.

I don't often get the time to review, but I couldn't believe there were so few reviews attached to this outstanding book. In a year full of knock offs and rip offs and lame trilogy endings, Vigilante Poets is like a refreshing breeze - original, funny, poignant and thoughtful. The writing is solid, the characterizations full and nuanced, the plotting an intriguing roller coaster ride of 'I know where this is going... oh wait, no I don't.' It's not another dystopian or post apocalypse hero story; the characters are bright art school fringers spurred on to action by the fakery of "reality" TV, greed, hypocrisy and a profound unfairness taking place in their school. These are kids who can use Ezra Pound's Quartos as the basis to sway their fellow students to the cause, but are just as able to plot and carry off an elaborate break-in for an unauthorized midnight print run on the old basement news press in their school. The notion of growing up to understand how people change and who your friends really are underpins the story without overpowering it. Kate Hattemer deserves to be heralded for a funny, intelligent debut in a season of timid, copycat YA writing.

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