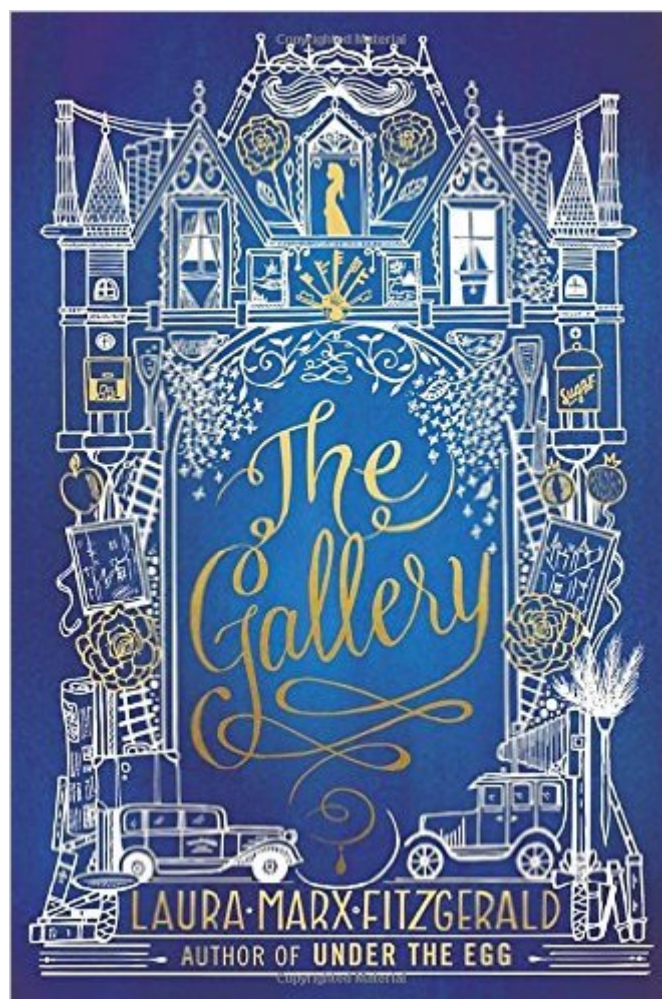


The book was found

The Gallery



Synopsis

A riveting historical art mystery for fans of *Chasing Vermeer* and *The Westing Game*, set in the Roaring Twenties! It's 1929, and twelve-year-old Martha has no choice but to work as a maid in the New York City mansion of the wealthy Sewell family. But, despite the Gatsby-like parties and trimmings of success, she suspects something might be deeply wrong in the household—specifically with Rose Sewell, the formerly vivacious lady of the house who now refuses to leave her room. The other servants say Rose is crazy, but scrappy, strong-willed Martha thinks there's more to the story—and that the paintings in the Sewell's gallery contain a hidden message detailing the truth. But in a house filled with secrets, nothing is quite what it seems, and no one is who they say. Can Martha follow the clues, decipher the code, and solve the mystery of what's really going on with Rose Sewell? Inspired by true events described in a fascinating author's note, *The Gallery* is a 1920s caper told with humor and spunk that readers today will love.

Book Information

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Age Range: 10 and up

Grade Level: 5 and up

Customer Reviews

The Gallery is the perfect summer book for me. The mystery is wonderful and makes this story a page-turner. (Also, I heard the author speak at Books of Wonder, and clues are hidden in the cover

art, which was really cool.) But what I love most about the book is the main character, Martha. She's just a great kid, full of courage and empathy. Not that we need every book to teach a lesson, but I don't mind that Martha incidentally happens to be a great example of a young person who follows her conscience, even when she knows doing so might get her into trouble. I got this book because I loved Laura Fitzgerald's first book, *Under The Egg*. And as great as *Egg* was, *The Gallery* is even more fantastic. The writing is absolutely beautiful, and the dialogue is wonderful, the pacing terrific. Just a great story in every way. It has the feeling of a classic.

When Laura Marx Fitzgerald's *THE GALLERY* begins, 12-year-old Martha has been kicked out of school and has taken a job at the Sewell mansion with her mother, who is the head of staff. Once she enters the house, she is astounded by the sheer beauty of the place, and doesn't mind the work in the kitchen. But once her mother tells her that Mr. Sewell's wife, Rose, is a madwoman who lives upstairs and never comes out of her rooms, the excitement begins. She tries to figure out what's really going on from all the staff who work there, including the footman, Alphonse, a fanatical art history buff. With his help, she starts to put the puzzle pieces together. Laura Marx Fitzgerald brings together a mix of true stories and events from the 1920s, breathing new life into famous pieces of art and a hostage situation. *THE GALLERY* was just the right amount of fiction and history because, while the story is engaging for kids, it also teaches the reader about stories about famous paintings, the election of Herbert Hoover, the stock market crash and vaudeville. I was delighted that at the end of the story, the author provides a list of the paintings that were mentioned in the book and which newspaper stories and real people she drew from to create this novel. This book was well-researched and it is clear that Fitzgerald's art history studies at Harvard and Cambridge Universities inspired this novel. As she weaves paintings into the web of her story, I feel the need to look them up online and see them for myself. In fact, she has inspired me to go to my local museums and learn more about the stories behind some of the paintings. This book is perfect for children who have not discovered the fun (yet!) in going to art museums (which, let's face it, is most of us!). This is because *THE GALLERY* puts excitement and colorful history into paintings and their myths. Reviewed by Maya Berman

Well written with well-developed characters Laura's second book is such a great read. Although I am not the target audience for this book I thoroughly enjoyed this semi-fictional dip into New York past.

Itâ€™s 1929 and after being booted from school, 12 year old Martha must join her mother and work in the grand Sewell mansion as a maid. Mr. Sewell, a wealthy newspaper owner, appears charming and generous, but Martha knows something is wrong in the Sewell household. Mrs. Sewell, the once plucky and brave Rose Pritchard, refuses to leave her room, surrounding herself with her impressive art collection. But is Rose really crazy? Is she using her precious art to send Martha a message? Well, Martha is plucky and brave in her own right, and sheâ€™s determined to uncover the truth!

Laura Marx Fitzgeraldâ€™s *The Gallery* is a thoroughly thrilling middle-grade, bursting with mystery, history, art, and quirky characters. Spinning together both real-fact history and wildly fun imaginings, Fitzgerald offers young readers an unforgettable and entertaining reading experience. Fast-paced, yet not lacking in details or world-building, *The Gallery* drew me in easily and had me excitedly turning pages. Marthaâ€™s moxie and determination are irresistible and contagious! *The Gallery* is full of quirky, eclectic, strange, and interesting characters that are a lot of fun to figure out. The author creates a fully believable and enthralling 1920â€™s NYC setting. With attention to details, accurate slang/vocabulary, and vivid descriptions of clothing, people, and pop culture, readers will feel transported. And the grand, immense Sewell mansion is the perfect setting for an equally grand mystery! With gasp-worthy revelations, crazy schemes, and plenty of twists and turns, readers will have a blast solving the great Rose Sewell mystery alongside Martha! The authors use of art is especially clever and intriguing. And readers wonâ€™t see the explosive ending coming!

My final thoughts: Mystery, history, a charming setting, and engaging characters... *The Gallery* has it all and young readers will enjoy it greatly!

First of all, this in no way resembled *The Westing Game*, so I don't know why the publisher would compare it to that book. Anyway, it was an enjoyable read turned mystery. Taking place in the 1920's makes the setting of a wealthy family interesting and it's told from the pov of a young girl and she is quite a character. I don't know that 10 or 11 year olds would stick through the book all the way through-it just isn't exciting enough, imo, but it had enough twists to keep it interesting. Fascinating was the author's note at the end about how she came to write the story.

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