



## The Apprentice

*Pilar Molina Llorente , Juan Ramón Alonso (Illustrations) , Robin Longshaw (Translation)*

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**The Apprentice** Pilar Molina Llorente , Juan Ramón Alonso (Illustrations) , Robin Longshaw (Translation)  
In Renaissance Florence, thirteen-year-old apprentice Arduino's dreams of being a painter are challenged after he discovers the extreme measures the Maestro Cosimo di Forlc will take in the name of jealousy. Arduino faces a decision that could cost him his only chance to realize his life's dream.

## The Apprentice Details

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Author : Pilar Molina Llorente , Juan Ramón Alonso (Illustrations) , Robin Longshaw (Translation)

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### Tirzah says

*The Apprentice* is a simple but charming story of a young boy's dream to become a painter in Renaissance Italy. In order to achieve his dream, young Arduino must overcome challenges that test his courage, loyalty, and passion for painting. Throughout the story, the reader learns about the social customs and statuses during that time period among men and women, which make this story not only an entertaining read but also a possible book for an art history classroom. The illustrations add to the story, making it an overall delightful read.

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### Kristine Hansen says

This is a book we started for school and then misplaced for almost a year, which required going back and starting over entirely. That said, I'm glad we finally read it.

The story of Arduino, a young man who aspires to be an artist was one that really resonated with my daughter who loves to draw. What I didn't expect was the friendship that Arduino makes when he's apprenticed to an artist, and what the final outcome of this book eventually turned out to be. Fast paced and interesting, we were actually a little disappointed when this book ends.

The reason for the four stars was because this book did start slowly, and it took a couple of chapters to get into it (which was probably the reason it had gotten lost in the first place). Overall though, it's a solid read, so definitely stick with it.

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### Lea says

Given a challenge to read a book set in the Renaissance, I hit our school library card catalog hoping to find a few options for a quick read. I found one. One book set in the Renaissance. This book. So I read it. I'm sure it is one of those books that rarely gets checked out because the cover looks dated, and the story doesn't have dragons or vampires or a dystopian society or a clique of mean girls who get what's coming to them, and that's a shame, because it is really a good story of a young man, the son of a respected tailor, who wants to be an artist in Florence, Italy. Arduino's apprenticeship was not all he hoped for. In the midst of it, he befriends another young man in worse circumstances. By helping his friend, Arduino's dream of learning from a skilled master is fulfilled. Fast-paced read with solid historical content.

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### Penny says

I was quite surprised at how quick a read this book was. I managed to finish it cover to cover in a day without taking too much time out of my day. It was a decent book, but not a real page turner for me.

The basic premise of the story is of a boy that wishes to break from his father's profession (a tailor) and take

up as a painter. An apprenticeship is set and he's sent to a master painter's house to learn. Unfortunately the guy isn't fantastic, and Arduino doesn't have a chance to learn much working under the Maestro.

Not long into the story, Arduino sneaks off to find a secret part of the house, where he finds a man kept there that changes everything. The story from that point focuses on how this boy is going to help the man, that becomes his friend, and still manage to keep his apprenticeship.

In this case I just found I couldn't develop love for any of the characters, and I felt some details were just never further looked into. For example, the Maestro looks at Arduino's original sketch and gives what seems a wicked grin. Maybe it's just because I'm an adult looking at a children's story, but I'd almost wanted to see that go somewhere, like the Maestro attempting to pass Arduino's work off as his own, or something of the like. It just seemed to be forgotten about.

In general, for a quick read it's a decent story. It gave a little hint of what it may have been like to be a painter's apprentice and talked about things like the art of fresco, even if it was very vague. I wouldn't say it really gave a glimpse into the time period, but it wasn't a bad little read. While I don't think I'd read it again, it's definitely not a book I regret reading, or didn't really have the drive to finish through to the end.

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### **Kari Trumbo says**

This is the fictional account of a young boy in Florence, Italy who has the dream of becoming a painter during the Renaissance. I really enjoyed the story and so did my children. You know a book is good when even the one who does not have to be listening will steal the book when I am done reading so she can read ahead. That happened with this book. A highly enjoyable, interesting book.

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### **Megan Franks says**

I was looking for a light, enjoyable book set on the Renaissance for middle schoolers in our classical school, and this fit the bill perfectly. Set in Florence, it follows a young boy who dreams of becoming an artist (though his family business is tailoring). His father reluctantly sets up an apprenticeship with a local maestro who doesn't actually teach much art at all due to the illness he is trying to hide from his clients. That's not all he is hiding. There's an even bigger secret in Maestro's attic!

The story is an uncomplicated but pleasant read which will help young readers learn more about Renaissance society, apprenticeship, and art. It even touched on the dismal lives of women during this time period. Highly recommended!

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### **Kim Roh says**

I read this book with my fourth grade class. The Apprentice takes place in Renaissance Florence . It is the story of a young boy who becomes an apprentice to a well known master artist who is hiding a terrible secret. It is full of mystery and intrigue. Will Arduino prove to be brave and do what is right or will he succumb to his desire to be an artist at all costs?

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## **Laura says**

My kids age 6 through 11 loved this book. They got very into it. This was a great read for kids studying the Renaissance. It helps put into perspective what it is like to be an apprentice from a kid's point of view during this time period.

This book takes place in Florence, Italy, and follows the adventures of a boy named Arduino who wants to be a painter. Fun kids read!

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## **Laura Verret says**

Okay, I've seen this book on Goodreads FOREVER, and have wanted to find a copy for ALMOST FOREVER. A few weeks back, I found it and paid three cents for it. :) #itpaystowait

### **The Story.**

Arduino di Emilio di Antonio Neri is the son of a tailor. His father is the son of a tailor. His grandfather is the son of a tailor. He is from a family of tailors, and it is the expectation of all that he will be a tailor, too. Why, already his two older brothers are at work with their needles and thread, sewing garments for the gentry of the city – why should not Arduino be content with this as well?

But Arduino's blood is filled with a love of art. He dreams of one day being a great artist. But in order to become recognized, he must study with a maestro artist – and to do that, he must win his father's consent. Finally, his father agrees to pay for his apprenticeship with a maestro – one Cosimo di Forli – but only on probation. If Maestro di Forli reports that Arduino is a slacker, his one chance will be gone.

Arduino works hard to please his master, but he soon discovers that not all is as it seems with Maestro di Forli. As Arduino begins to uncover di Forli's abusive treatment of his apprentices, can he find a way to yet stay on Maestro's side? Or will he be sent home for insubordination?

### **Discussion.**

If you couldn't already tell, *The Apprentice* is set during the Renaissance in Florence, Italy. Arduino, a talented boy, yearns for a life beyond that which is offered him, and works hard to earn his chance at an artist's life. His father finally agrees, but it is a temporary allowance – it is up to Arduino's performance and his fitful master's temper to determine what his lot will be.

This topic – the lot of one's life, the degree to which one can influence it, and the degree of contentment one should have in the interim – is a theme of the story. Several people sighingly wish that their lives were better or different, but few actually work towards this end. Several women, too, express their desire to be more influential in their own decision-making.

There are a few Catholic references – the sign of the cross, a painting of the Virgin, etc. – but nothing too serious. Of more concern are the brief snippets of stories told by Melania, the maid, to the young apprentices,

concerning ghosts and goblins.

‘Mother of God’ and ‘my God’ are both used once.

**Conclusion.** A good story for artists and non-artists alike!

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### **Emily says**

This was a read aloud with my twin boys. They are pretty picky about books but they both enjoyed this story about a 13 year old boy who becomes an apprentice to a painter in Renaissance Florence Italy. It gave just enough detail of the time period while still keeping up a fast paced story.

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### **Elaine says**

I enjoyed this short book. It's about a young boy who goes to live with a painter as an apprentice. The painter turns out to be cruel though and has a secret in the attic. There is a wonderful lesson in this book about freedom. I can't tell more or I'll give everything away. A good book for kids ages 9 and up.

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### **Matthew Hodge says**

Read this one to my daughter for school. Translated from Italian, it tells the story of young Arduino, a boy who leaves his family to become apprentice to a master painter.

These young people's historical novels don't always work - they're occasionally good on the detail but not so entertaining on the story side - but this one has it all.

Mysterious noises coming from the attic, a vicious master painter who rules with a rod of iron and enough detail to make the world of Renaissance painting (and the world of masters and apprentices) come alive.

A short read but great for ages 8-12.

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### **Jeremy says**

The apprentice is a good book. it starts of kind of slow but once it get going its fast. the storyline is exciting and at times it's like you are worried for the character. the reason i rated 4 stars instead of 5 is that it's short and at times i needed to re-read parts.

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### **Darlene says**

I read this book aloud to my daughters. It won the 1994 Mildred L. Batchelder Award and is an ALA Notable Book.

We all loved the book! This is a great historical fiction book for studying the Renaissance time period and how people became artists.

Arduino, a young 13-year old boy, does not wish to become a tailor in the family business, so he leaves his home to become an apprentice for a local painter. Sadly, he is mistreated by his Master. He also discovers a secret that the Master is hiding, and Arduino must make a decision whether or not to confront him with it. If he does, he may lose his chance forever to become an artist.

Llorente's writing is so vivid that it was almost like being there in Florence, Italy.

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### **Dawn Roberts says**

A cute, sweet story that I read to ds. Read at the same time as The Second Mrs. Giaconda (about a servant of Leonardo da Vinci) and followed by I, Juan de Pareja (about a slave owned by Diego Velasquez)--gave a great picture of Renaissance Spain and Italy and the personalities of some of the great artists.

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