



# Becoming Lisette

*Rebecca Glenn*

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## **Becoming Lisette** Rebecca Glenn

Independent and beautiful, Élisabeth Vigée, affectionately called Lisette by friends and family, has progressed in the art of oil painting faster than anyone could have anticipated. Having received instruction from her beloved father, Louis Vigée, a prominent Parisian guild painter, Lisette possesses all the qualities of a brilliant young painter, but is saddled with a singular disadvantage – being a woman in 18-century Paris. Undeterred, Lisette believes that she can become a painter.

Approaching a marriageable age, her parents have other plans for Lisette, ones that don't include painting. Lisette finds support in Queen Marie Antoinette and a dashing art collector and French Army officer named Amante, who is clearly intrigued by her talent and beauty. After Lisette's father dies unexpectedly, her family is left in dire financial straits. Lisette wants to support her family, but before she can sell a single painting, her mother marries a wealthy merchant jeweler named Le Sèvre. Le Sèvre discovers Lisette's artistic abilities and soon has her painting portraits of his noble and wealthy jewelry clientele.

It quickly becomes clear that Le Sèvre only wants to control Lisette, leading to severe consequences for her budding career, Amante's pursuit of her affections and even her safety. Lisette realizes that she must find her own way – before it is too late.

Becoming Lisette is Book One of the Queen's Painter Series.

## **Becoming Lisette Details**

Date : Published April 22nd 2015 by Zinerva Publishing, LLC

ISBN : 9781941081204

Author : Rebecca Glenn

Format : Paperback 334 pages

Genre : Historical, Historical Fiction, Literature, 18th Century, Fiction, Regency

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## From Reader Review Becoming Lisette for online ebook

### Julia says

First of all this was a very interesting book and for the author to have chosen such a little known artist such as Mrs. Louise Elisabeth Vigee was a risky move. Fortunately Rebecca Glenn was able to pull it off while bringing 18th Century France to a light that very little of us would have ever had a chance to experience.

First of all I just want to get a few things off that is from a historical viewpoint. From the timelines that I have seen for this artist the actual story for the most part is fictitious and the dates are out of order so there was a lot more freedom given within the story than in most other historical fiction tales. Does this take away from the actual story? Not a bit....

The other thing is that I loved how each of the covers for the books in this trilogy are actual self-portraits from various episodes in Mrs. Vigee's actual life. They bring a clarity and beautiful focus for the story that is within the pages.

As for what the author has contributed to the story I think there were parts that were slightly repetitive and that felt like you were just reading the same thing with bits changed. Fortunately since the story is engrossing instead of putting me off it just made me want to read just a bit faster to see what was going to happen next.

Rebecca has also done a wonderful job in building her characters. It is hard enough to make characters from scratch but when you are working in a book where the characters were already made and larger than life in some senses there are some even more unique issues to put up with. Right now the author has fit a perfect balance between the real life and fictitious personalities so there is no clash of wills. In some cases a bit more could be done to build the characters but I like where they were going as of right and I truly love how Marie Antoinette so far isn't being portrayed as the monster that history likes to show her as.

So all in all I am loving this book and can't wait to see what the rest of the series brings. Is she going to be directing the series back to follow the chronology of Mrs. Vigee's actual historical life or is she going to redirect the series in a whole new other way - a tantalizing teaser that I can't wait to unravel.

For those who may be interested about the actual Mrs. Vigee I came across a website that covers her art in my curiosity to see if she was an actual person. There is an actual free download of her memoirs, which I hope I get a chance to read eventually when I can finish cleaning out some of my to-read pile, and also a catalogue of some of her pieces (the link will be included below). Enjoy!

<http://www.batguano.com/vlbkimbellind...>

**\*\*Please note I received a free copy of this book in exchange for my honest review\*\***

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### Melissa says

An interesting book that shows the actual problems that faced women from various points in a male-dominated society. Many of us don't even understand the closeness or fortune that we have in being able to escape such times with the freedom that we face except when we see it coming from another country that still considers women second-class citizens.

What captivated my attention on this particular story was the history. The book takes place just before the French Revolution so you get a chance to read and feel what it was like in this years building up to a bloody coup. Along with the protagonist you are able to see the irreverence that the masses actually have towards the royal couple while at the same time revering and wanting to be a part of them.

The story was a bit slow at times and seemingly repetitive but altogether a good read that catches the attention. You definitely won't be able to sit back and not take sides on this one!

\*\*Please note; I received a free copy of this book in exchange for my honest review\*\*

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### **Becca W says**

Wow, this book was amazing. Normally, I don't read historical fiction due to the fact that I'm not into history as much as I am into the future or the present. Becoming Lisette was a great exception to my reading habits, I must say.

From the start of the book, I was absolutely hooked. I honestly couldn't stop reading once I started, and I finished the book within 2 hours of beginning. The whole idea of the story being in the POV of a woman in old-day France made the story even better. My favorite part of the plot was the ending though, that's for sure. Overall, I absolutely loved reading this book. I'm glad that I had the opportunity to read this book!

I would recommend this book to anyone who likes romantic fiction books or historical fiction romances!

I hope you enjoy Becoming Lisette by Rebecca Glenn!

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### **Mallory Kellogg says**

DNFed at 27% Another one bites the dust.

While the writing style isn't bad, there doesn't seem to be much plot. Lisette is a painter (gasp) in 1772 Paris. That is frowned upon. Nobody takes her seriously. That seems to sum up the plot. Minor things happen, but nothing really says "ah! I see now!"

Not to mention, Lisette spends 90% of her time off in her own head. She constantly stands, staring into space. Not paying attention. Ignoring her mother. Daydreaming of painting. Its amazing she wasn't labeled mentally deficient or didn't burn her house down. All that staring. Geez. How did she find time to do anything?

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### **Blow Pop says**

Content warnings: abuse, domestic violence, theft, manipulation via money and threats

I got this book for free by signing up on the author's mailing list (as told to me by the author themselves).

I would like to say I'm very grateful to the author for telling me that I could get the book by signing up on their mailing list. As the author doesn't HAVE to do that. Nor do they have to tell people about it. And personally, I'm quite the fan of getting books for free (or very little money as I'm on a serious budget and can't buy nearly enough of what I want to read).

Onto the review.

So the description of this made me go "ooooohhhhhhhh this looks interesting" and I first saw it in a giveaway post. Naturally I didn't win the giveaway but that didn't change my interest in the book it was more of a "let's wait til I have some extra money and then I'll eventually buy it if it never comes to my library in ebook form".

I've been talking about book covers lately and this is going to be no different. I like the cover. I like that the girl on the cover isn't overtly sexualised. Or in a sexualised position. She's in a position to where it looks like she's either getting ready to paint or has just finished painting and is starting to put things away. For the time period, it would definitely be sexualised with the dress she's wearing because of how "low cut" it is (even though for this time period we're currently in it's a very modest cut dress). Also, there's not a lot going on on the cover either. Which is nice.

I know I'm going to be calling and labelling this book as historical fluff. Because for me it is. It's a "I can turn my brain off and just focus on enjoying what I'm reading" type of book. Which I classify as fluff (I also classify erotica and romance and everything in between as such as well). This isn't a bad thing. Sometimes I NEED something fluffier to read.

I mean there was plenty to think about with this book. But it wasn't more of a required type of thinking while reading book. It was more of an it's optional to think about while reading but preferable to think about afterwards book for me. Because yeah, I could spend weeks reading this and analysing until the cows come home but that would take more energy than I typically have in a day (matter of fact it'd take about the energy that I have in a whole year) and I definitely wouldn't find enjoyment in it (which is also why I tend not to do a lot of analysing in my reviews).

I really admired Lisette's father. How, despite the times, he actively encouraged her to paint and practice and get better at painting. (view spoiler) I definitely did not like the abusive jerk face asshole (whose name I refuse to use and kept substituting that for while reading which made it easier and more fun to read the parts about him). He felt slimy to me the second he appeared. It was good to know my thoughts were correct. And I loved the ending about him (which I will not spoil).

I felt sorry for her mum. I've been in a similar situation. Only the physical abuse happened once and the rest was emotional/mental/manipulative behaviour. So I have a specific experience based contempt for characters who are like that. I also understand both historically and mentally why she just put up with it. It wasn't a good time for women to be unmarried. Not a lot of jobs they could reputedly hold down and they were considered possessions of their fathers/husbands/men of the house. And mentally, you justify everything to yourself to make it "not as bad". Like her comment about "well he got me x piece of jewellery for this". That's the type of justification you make, especially in the beginning. But it definitely gets harder and harder to the point that you feel trapped like a rat in a cage with nowhere to go or turn to to hide and/or protect yourself. It's a terrible mindset and situation but unless you've been there, you can't really understand it. Unfortunately.

Anyway, I LOVE that she didn't let things deter her. That she kept on trying to find ways to do what she wanted to do. That she was passionate about her work. And passion shows in art. You don't have to be a critic or an art historian to see it either. So I have not a doubt in my mind that her art showed how passionate she was. I liked her meeting with Marie Antoinette. From what I've read about her history wise, a lot of what's portrayed in this book about her is true. That she was pretty lonely. That her husband didn't really want to touch her initially. That he was more interested in locks. And I've always kind of felt bad for her because of it. Not bad enough that I like anything about her. But bad that someone would be forced into a marriage and then been lonely and told what to do constantly.

I'm actually intrigued to read the rest of the trilogy. Eventually. So it was at least definitely good enough for me to consider reading more (and not spite reading either like some of the other things I've read).

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### **Christina says**

I really enjoyed this well-researched, engaging novel about a female painter I was previously unfamiliar with. I always like to feel I'm learning something from whatever I read, and I learned a lot about the materials painters used in this time period plus lots about Lisette's daily life. I was really interested in the fact that Lisette wanted to paint historical scenes and yet she was continually pressured to paint portraiture - the fact that one was nominally acceptable for women while the other was not was very interesting to me. Although obviously a lot of research was put into this novel, I didn't feel at all, as is sometimes the case when the author has obviously done their background work, that such information got in the way of plot or characterization. I felt the author provided just the right blend of plot, characterization and detail. Nothing annoys me more when reading historical fiction to realize that although the novel supposedly takes place in some other era, there are hardly any specifics about the time period and daily life. I love historical fiction because I love to learn about other places and times and if there aren't any details, I just feel like I'm dealing with a lazy author. Not the case here! Great job, Rebecca Glenn! Can't wait to read your next work!

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### **Linda Lowry says**

Nice debut for a newly published author. She did a great job evoking the time period and conveying the desperation an independent, thinking woman must have felt during that time period when forced to yield to the demands of others. The story was well-paced and a very quick read and would be suitable as a young adult novel. The characters were not complex and most of the plot was predictable, but entertaining. There were some minor editorial issues - the overuse of italics, the unnecessary first chapter and the abrupt ending. The descriptions of scene and clothing were rich and added to the story, but left me to wonder why the characters were not more fully developed. Lisette loved to paint and she desired to paint historical paintings more than portraits, but the story doesn't reveal how this desire began or why it burned so fervently in her. Lisette's mother and step-father were not developed as individual characters - only as forces operating on Lisette. Sequels are obviously planned for this book - and based on this - I will read them. But, I think this author has a richer, more complex story waiting inside her and I can't wait to read it.

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### **Sharron says**

Did not think this was the type of book I normally read but I found it very entertaining and think have changed my mind about my reading tastes! Instead of only reading mysteries, I remembered that I love art, history, France and especially Paris and the Louvre. Adding the character of a young woman in that period of history who had ambitions that were not encouraged, in fact were suppressed made it all the more interesting. Very thought provoking, how many more wonderful accomplishments could have been made if that was an equal opportunity time in History? Look forward to more books by this author!

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## DeniseF says

I've always enjoyed Elisabeth Vigee LeBrun's paintings so when the opportunity arose to review this book, I jumped at it. *Becoming Lisette* was a such a wonderful surprise: Ms. Glenn has given us a well-written portrayal of this talented artist.

*Becoming Lisette* is an early look at Vigee LeBrun's life, before she has reached the fame and notoriety of her later life. I loved reading about Lisette's passion for art and painting; the descriptions of the colors she used and the way she painted were amazing. I felt like I could almost visualize the paintings as she was working on them.

I also really enjoyed reading about life in Paris during that late 17th century. Lisette's family wasn't very well off while her father was alive so it was interesting to see lower-middle class life and then the jump to upper-middle class life. There was such a huge shift in the way Lisette and her mother lived their every day lives and it was fascinating to see how differently people of various classes lived. I will say that I loved reading about the meals that Lisette and her mother prepared and served. They were so intricate and there was such a controlled structure to how they were served and in what order. It made me want to research French food!

I was a little disappointed with how abruptly this story ended but when I realized that there will be second book, it made more sense (can't wait to read the next one!). Overall, I found *Becoming Lisette* to be a great book. 4 stars.

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## Earl says

*Becoming Lisette* by Rebecca Glenn is a captivating read that makes you want to keep reading until either the sun comes up or the book ends. But don't read it too fast or you may miss the attention to detail that enriches this story. This is historical fiction at its best: a strong story so you will care about the characters and historical detail so you can be transported in time.

This novel has definitely made me want to read upcoming books in the series. As a bit of an aside, visit Glenn's website and listen to her podcasts, they are quite interesting.

I would recommend this book to not only those who love historical fiction but also for those interested in art history and history in general.

Reviewed from a copy made available by the publisher via LibraryThing.

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## Sara says

One of the things that drew me in about this book was the cover, not only does it depict a painter but also looks like a painting. It plays well into the story.

In the beginning of this book, you can already sense the pain of Lisette not being with her father and not

being able to do her calling; painting. As a talented, yet unacknowledged allegory painter, Lisette struggles through loss, sex-based restrictions, a domineering step-father and more. Her determination is something to be admired.

In this story, you have a sense of what it would have felt like to have lived in that time period. The descriptions of how the streets were, the smells, the politics that were in place and the morals going on. There were social graces that you did not break, dare you besmirch your good name.

I am giving this book a 4 out of 5 stars. I really enjoyed reading it and am very grateful to the author for allowing me a copy of it. I cannot wait to read the other books! Keep up the great work!

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### **Irene Ramos says**

I won this book on a booklikes giveaway. This was a charming story. The author Rebecca Glenn does a fantastic job of describing all the scenery and the grand houses. This is a story about a young woman named Lisette that overcomes all the odds to follow her dream to become a painter. It was a great read. I can't wait for the next book in the series.

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### **E says**

Becoming Lisette, by Rebecca Glenn, is the beautifully told story of a French girl whose dream is to become a painter just as her father is. The story opens in 1766 on the morning of her last day of living at a Covent school. Lisette is being kept in a cell as punishment. Her crime was drawing. Her father is coming to bring her home and she looks forward to the time she can paint with her father. We follow her life until 1774 and there is a great deal that happens during this time. Tragedy strikes the family and as a result things get even worse. Lisette becomes a victim of cruelty and seemingly insurmountable obstacles, but she remains passionate about her art. It quickly becomes obvious that Lisette is resourceful and determined to succeed. Can she do it?

The author has crafted a fascinating protagonist and her story is engrossing. Her attention to detail enhances this historical novel. She brings eighteenth century Paris alive to the reader. Highly recommended.

I received this book for free through LibraryThing and I give this review of my own free will.

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### **Marci says**

I absolutely love historical fiction and this book ranks on the top of my list. You will champion Lisette as she overcomes obstacles through intuition, grit, and creativity. I can't wait for the next installment in this serious and hard to have to wait!

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### **Toni Osborne says**

Book 1, in "The Queen's Painter" series

“Set in Paris during the 18th century, “Becoming Lisette” is a historical fiction novel that revolves around a pretty girl named Elizabeth “Lisette” Vigée who has a passion for oil painting. Her dream was to become a successful painter in a male dominated society.

This is quite an engaging story that showcases how Lisette forges on to become a painter through the years. We grow with her each step of the way and as her character develops over the entire book she becomes a strong and inspiring woman and eventually a prominent French painter.

The story is refreshing and successfully evokes the time period and the lifestyle of people. We see the beauty as well as horror of life through Lisette’s eyes as one door closes and another opens. This book is a rich literary work that captures the beauty of deep emotion and draws you into a world of exotic sights. Each page and every scene has tone and texture and is colourfully written.

The major characters are based on real people although the story has been enhanced for our enjoyment the author has done an extremely wonderful job bringing every aspect alive. The story is a richly written portrayal of a talented artist and is meticulously researched to highlight the key points. Well-done.

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