



Henri's Scissors

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Step into the colorful world of Henri Matisse and his magnificent paper cutouts!

In a small weaving town in France, a young boy named Henri-Emile Matisse drew pictures everywhere, and when he grew up, he moved to Paris and became a famous artist who created paintings that were adored around the world. But late in life a serious illness confined him to a wheelchair, and amazingly, it was from there that he created among his most beloved works—enormous and breathtaking paper cutouts.

Based on the life of Henri Matisse, this moving and inspirational picture book biography includes a note from the author, dynamic quotes from Matisse himself, and an illuminating look at a little-known part of a great artist's creative process.

Henri's Scissors Details

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Author : Jeanette Winter

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From Reader Review Henri's Scissors for online ebook

Tiana says

Fiction Twin Text: "Brush of the Gods" by Lenore Look (2013)

Content Crossover: Art/Art History

Rationale: Both these books discuss two different artists. Both start as painters but take different paths. I want the children to get in touch with their creative side and realize that art comes in many shapes and forms. I would read each book, while reading we would complete a Venn diagram as a class. The center of the circles where they connect, we would put the similarities between the artists. When we finish we would use the chart to talk about other artist and how they compare to the similarities of these two discussed artists. For our project the children will create their own collage by cutting pictures from magazines that describe themselves or show their personality.

Karen Witzler says

A children's book about Matisse and his later work with cut-outs. Enjoyable.

Laurie says

Booklist starred (June 1, 2013 (Vol. 109, No. 19))

Grades K-3. Masterful picture-book biographer Winter (*The Watcher*, 2011) offers an elegant, accessible portrait of expressive artist Henri Matisse. She tackles his childhood, law career, and establishment as a painter of note in the first eight pages, using small, square-frame illustrations with text placed above and below. As an old man, Matisse becomes ill, and the book turns a stylistic corner, spending the balance of its pages exploring the changes in his circumstances and the subsequent development of his medium and his genius. Unable to paint, he begins cutting shapes from paper and dives into the process, allowing his shapes to grow with his imagination. And the book adapts in turn, the imagery now sprawling across pages, filling the space with rich color in exuberant compositions. At the end, Matisse falls into dreaming, joining his shapes in the heavens, and Winter wonders, "Are some of the stars we see at night coming from Henri's scissors? Perhaps." With a gentle narrative dotted with quotes from the artist himself, luminous illustrations, and a warm, celebratory spirit, this exemplary picture-book biography delivers a clear, sensitive portrait of the whole man, story and soul alike. A brief author's note concludes.

Horn Book (September/October, 2013)

In her latest picture book biography (see Barbara Bader's article "Persons of Interest," beginning on page 11), Winter focuses on Henri Matisse's later life, during which the painter took up collage. The book's opening pages feature a simple, sedate layout: brightly colored but rather quiet acrylics showing Matisse as a child and then creating famous early works are contained in neat square borders on cafe au lait pages. When he

becomes so ill that "his paintings floated by in his dreams," the pages go to midnight blue as he -- and readers -- wonder: "would he ever have the energy to paint again?" Then bedridden Matisse discovers the magic he can make with scissors, and the book's design opens up; cut paper is integrated into the illustrations; and Winter begins to include quotes from the artist himself regarding this revelation ("My pleasure in cutting things out grows even greater. Why didn't I think of it earlier?"). With text that is straightforward and unflowery, Winter relies, successfully, on the strength of her own art to capture the essence of Matisse's. A brief author's note explains her specific interest in this portion of the artist's oeuvre.

katrina hedeem

Horn Book starred (Spring 2014)

Winter focuses on Henri Matisse's later life, during which the painter took up collage and discovered the magic he can make with scissors. Winter's text is straightforward and unflowery, and she includes quotes from the artist regarding this revelation. Winter relies, successfully, on the strength of her own art to capture the essence of Matisse's; cut paper is integrated into the illustrations.

Kirkus Reviews (June 15, 2013)

In her extensive picture-book--biography oeuvre, Winter has proven to be particularly attuned to selecting the just-right elements of her subjects' complex lives while making them both accessible to and readily understood by young children. Here she limns the major biographical details of Matisse's long life: A French law student recovering and on bed rest after an appendectomy is given a paint set; he discovers his true calling, abandons the law, moves to Paris and embarks on a long career as a member of the Fauvist movement. Many years later, once again bedridden and frail, he begins the final and perhaps most enduring stage of his work. Winter both describes and employs Matisse's signature, late-career technique of brilliantly colored, hand-painted, cut-paper compositions. She enlivens the simple text with liberal yet judicious quotes from Matisse's letters and comments from contemporaries. This is a beautifully designed book that will certainly connect with readers, although the closing spreads may be too poetically obscure for the intended school-age audience. Winter writes that at Matisse's death, "the rainbow of shapes cradled the old artist and carried him into the heavens." The book's final question, "Are some of the stars we see at night coming to us from Henri's scissors?" seems forced. This soaringly sentimental resolution notwithstanding, the book is a charming introduction to a widely reproduced, child-friendly artist, one that children will assuredly encounter and affirmingly embrace. (author's note) (Picture book/biography. 5-8)

Publishers Weekly (May 27, 2013)

After quickly tracing French painter Matisse's journey to becoming an artist ("He was happy, and his paintings made people happy") and explaining how illness left him unable to paint at the end of his life, Winter (*Kali's Song*) describes his discovery of a medium less physically demanding than painting but just as expressive: painted paper and scissors. "Why didn't I think of it earlier?" he asks delightedly. Simple, folk-style paintings show Matisse in a wheelchair in a studio amid his collages; in a quiet visual cue, a plant with oversize leaves suggests inspiration for their big, organic shapes. He continues to create until his death, another moment Winter handles gracefully: "The rainbow of shapes cradled the old artist and carried him into the heavens." Old age can be fertile and useful, Winter implies; disability doesn't mean the end of creating, and triumph is possible where only sadness could have been foreseen. All of these messages lie obliquely in the text, but even readers who don't dig that deep will share Matisse's joy. Ages 5-8. Agent:

Susan Cohen, Writers House. (Aug.)? (c) Copyright PWxyz, LLC. All rights reserved.

School Library Journal (June 1, 2013)

K-Gr 3-At age 72, following surgery for cancer, Henri Matisse was too weak to paint. During his convalescence at the seaside, he picked up scissors and began cutting shapes from painted paper. In his own words, "It seems to me that I am in a second life." Winter's picture-book biography focuses on that second life, neatly summarizing his childhood and career in the first eight pages: "He kept on painting, forgot about law, and left his small town to be an artist in Paris." Winter captures the joy that Matisse found in cut paper, both through her acrylic and cut-paper illustrations and through quotes from his letters. The images are evocative of his art, with bright colors and rounded shapes. The first pages, depicting his youth and adulthood, are deeply framed like museum art, then transition to full-page compositions when his life changes due to illness. The author addresses his death with a light touch: "Then one night, Matisse walked into his paper garden, and the rainbow of shapes cradled the old artist and carried him into the heavens," where perhaps he now uses his scissors to make the stars in the night sky. Libraries with demand for picture-book biographies and art history will want to add this well-done title to their collections.-Suzanne Myers Harold, Multnomah County Library System, Portland, OR (c) Copyright 2013. Library Journals LLC, a wholly owned subsidiary of Media Source, Inc. No redistribution permitted.

Robin says

Picture book biography focuses on Matisse's late work - his paper collages/"cut-outs". Simple yet evocative text, with quotes from Matisse himself.

Janis says

Bright, coloring children's picture book biography of Henri Matisse. I had no idea that, later in life, Matisse was unable to paint, and instead turned to cutting paper into designs. This book had me immediately jumping onto my computer to learn more. I can't wait to share this with students and show them the real Henri and his art. Nominated for the North Carolina Children's Book Award (2016-2017).

Kaye says

A sweet little book that transitioned nicely into a first grade art project.

Barbara says

Some young readers will be familiar with the paintings of Henri Matisse who was born in France. The text and illustrations, created with cut paper and acrylic paint, cover Henri's formative years and the influence of his mother. After leaving behind a possible law career, he focused on painting. Many years later, after a

successful career, he became ill and was unable to paint. Still, he managed to create, using painted paper and scissors. Eventually, the walls of his room were filled with a paper forest of lively shapes and colors. Many readers and budding artists may draw inspiration from this talented artist who somehow managed to create art even with the limitations his own health and age caused him to deal with. This is another useful title for a text set devoted to illustrators or one for creative spirits. One of the most interesting elements of the cut-outs Matisse created is how fresh and filled with life they were.

Iowa City Public Library says

Winter focuses on the artist's later years when he was confined to a bed and a wheelchair. Here Matisse is depicted using colored paper and scissors and employing his vivid imagination to create artwork that his assistants put up on the walls of his seaside cottage. "A pair of scissors is a wonderful instrument," says Matisse. He wonders why he never thought of using the technique of paper cutting for his designs earlier. In this book the pictures Winter creates are done in acrylics and cut paper.

AMY says

Nice story about Henri Matisse and how he went from drawing and painting to paper craft with scissors. Easy and nice to follow. Good illustrations. Art teacher would love this one. Biographical. Highly recommended for ES. Grade level K-5

Thabata says

I was positively surprised by Winter's book on Matisse. A different take from any other picture book on him I have ever seen before, simple yet creative, furthermore, full of unexpected poetry. Henri's Scissors is uplifting as it deals with drastic changes of careers, illness, old age, the end of life and death. Even though those are mere brushes, they are extremely important in this narrative for a richer content. Drawing with scissors is made beautiful as it should and Henri Matisse's art is both praised and celebrated with delicacy. A lovely reading.

Yesenia says

This informational picture book about Henry Matisse gives the readers just enough information about his life that we are able to learn something new. This picture book takes us through his early years of painting and into his later years, after his illness, of cutting. The author uses real quotes from Matisse, which she found in other books about him. The colorful illustrations really make you pay attention to Matisse's work and show his creativity in his shapes and cutouts. This is a great book for younger children and older children to learn about a famous artist.

Laura says

1) Has anyone ever heard of Henri Matisse? Wait for response. I would share a short biography of the artist that is included in the back of the book. I would then project some of Matisse's famous paintings that he made. Once I finished the book I would then share pictures of the large cut outs Matisse made.

2) With this opening, I would be providing important background information that will allow students to make connections and realize how famous Matisse is. This might activate prior knowledge that students might already had but didn't make the connection to the artist and art work.

3) This story was picked because it talks about a very successful person and how his artist ability was taken away due to illness. Matisse fought back and even though we was unable to even paint again, he was still able to create masterpieces by cutting. Disabilities may limit a person but a person can overcome the limitations.

(2013, June 1). School Library Journal. <http://www.booksinprint2.com.leo.lib...>

Whole And says

Excellent source for an artist in focus lesson on Henri Matisse, his genius, difficulties and how he never betrayed the artist within.

Well done.

Pam says

I love Henri Matisse's paper cuttings so I guess it is expected that I would also love this book. Jeanette Winter does a fantastic job both on the illustrations and the story of Henri Matisse's later years. She easily communicates the simplicity and exuberance of his later art work. I loved how she interspersed actual quotations throughout. The ending is both wonderful and amazing. This book will provide so much inspiration for children both in creating their own artwork and also in persevering when obstacles present themselves. While Winter provides an "author's note" where she communicates more information on the artist, I wish that she and the publisher had taken two pages rather than 3 short paragraphs so more information could have been provided.

Mary Alice says

Have lovely student created art in the Workshop of Wonder now that we've read this book!
