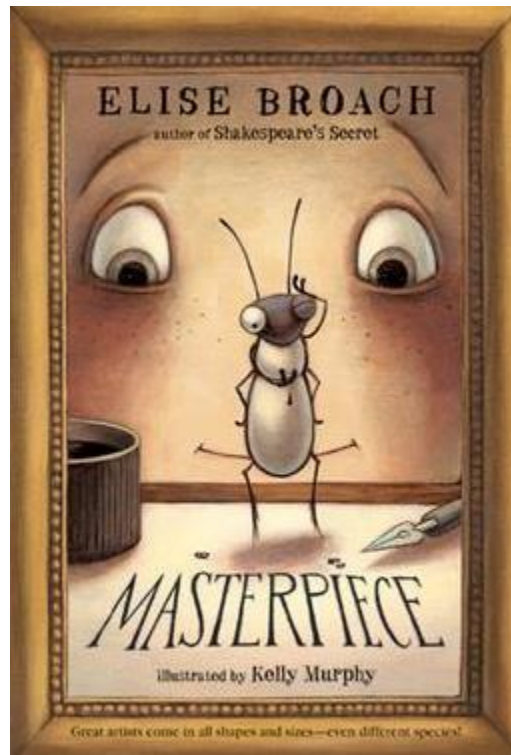


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## Masterpiece

Elise Broach

Illustrated by Kelly Murphy

### Introduction

*Masterpiece* is a *New York Times* bestselling middle-grade mystery novel written by Elise Broach and illustrated by Kelly Murphy. Elise Broach is a *New York Times* bestselling author of several books which includes *Masterpiece*. *Masterpiece* is the first book of six in the Masterpiece Adventure chapter book series for young readers.

## Summary

This mystery novel follows the adventures of Marvin the beetle and James Pompaday, an eleven-year-old boy. Marvin lives with his family under the sink of the Pompadays' apartment in New York City. When James gets a pen-and-ink set for his birthday, Marvin the beetle decides to surprise him by sketching a magnificent miniature drawing. Although the illustration was created by Marvin, James receives all the credit for the picture, and they become unlikely friends. Unbeknownst to James and Marvin, they get caught in the middle of a heist at the Metropolitan Museum of Art that could lead to the recovery of a famous drawing created by Albrecht Dürer. James has a plan, but he needs the help of Marvin to succeed.

## Discussion Questions

1. Briefly described the friendship between Marvin and James. Do they remind you of people from your life?
2. Elise Broach, the author of *Masterpiece*, mentions that she intended for Marvin and his family to resemble a kind of ground beetle. Looking at the illustrations of Marvin and his family of beetles in the story, what characteristics differ between Marvin and his family and real-life beetles you have seen in nature? Do you see any similarities?
3. Marvin and his family tend to be helpful and friendly towards the Pompaday family during the entire book, yet at the same time they are cautious so they are not removed from the apartment or squished by James's family. Do you know of any insects in real

life that are beneficial to people? Do you feel there are some insects in real life that are negatively characterized due to their appearance? Explain your answer.

4. Marvin decided to create a miniature drawing with the pen-and-ink set that James was given by his father for his birthday. Marvin thought it would be great to draw a picture for James for his birthday. James's parents believe that James drew the picture instead of Marvin. James's dad Karl compares the drawing to one of Albrecht Dürer's contemporaries. Albrecht Dürer is a German Renaissance artist, painter, and engraver that created a lot of pen-and-ink drawings. What Renaissance artists are also mentioned in the book? Do you know of any other famous Renaissance artists not mentioned in the book?
5. Once the word spreads of James's talent to draw using pen-and-ink, he is recruited by Christina Balcony and Dennis MacGuffen, who work at the Metropolitan Museum of Art. Christina and Dennis want James to forge one of the four *Virtues* drawn by Albrecht Dürer called *Fortitude*. With three of the four *Virtues* stolen, Christina and Dennis hope to use the forged *Fortitude* miniature as bait that will lead them to the other *Virtues*. To accomplish this, James will need the help of Marvin to draw the forgery, but that also comes with a set of challenges along the way. What are the challenges that both Marvin and James face in the story? How do they overcome them?

6. Although Marvin and James find out who has stolen the *Virtues* drawn by Albrecht Dürer, there is a bit of a twist at the end of the novel. Did you like the ending? Explain your answer. If not, what would you change?