***The Van Gogh Deception***

By Deron Hicks

### **Annotation:**

When a young boy is discovered in Washington DC’s National Gallery without any memory of who he is, a high-stakes race begins to unravel the greatest mystery of all: his identity. As the stakes continue to rise, the boy must piece together the clues of his origins while using his limited knowledge to stop one of the greatest art frauds ever attempted.

**Book Talk:**

A boy is found in the National Gallery of Art in Washington D.C. and he doesn’t know his name, or who he is, but as his foster sibling Camille -- who names him Art -- is about to discover, he knows lots about art history. No one seems to be looking for him, except criminal mastermind Dorchek Palmer, who will resort to anything, including kidnapping children to protect his forged Van Gogh painting.

**Book Trailers:**

* https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SOi2F8Ih3kk

### **Author on the Internet:**

* Website: http://deronhicks.com/
* Twitter: https://twitter.com/DeronHicks
* Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/DRHicksMysteries
* Instagram: https://www.instagram.com/drhicksmysteries/

### Items to use in a library d**isplay**:

* Paint pallette and brush
* Art prints of Van Gogh paintings
* Map of Washington D.C. museums
* Map of the National Gallery of Art

**Book Club Discussion Questions/Topics:**

* Pretend you have lost your memory and walked into your room. What objects in your room would show what kind of person you are? Why?
* The Impressionists, and Van Gogh has left a lasting legacy in art history. What is it about this time period and style of art, that captivates so many people?
* What makes Camille such a good friend to Art, especially since he is a foster?
* What qualities do both kids have that make them work well as a team when they are being hunted by Dorchuk Palmer and his mininons.
* How does the author create suspense and tension throughout the book?
* How do the alternating points of view contribute or take away from the story?
* Is there anything we learn about Dorchuk Palmer that makes him a sympathetic person?

**First Line of the Book:**

* “For almost three hundred years, the simple stone structures on the outskirts of the small French village of Locronan had served as home to a family of farmers.”

**Non-Fiction Companion Title(s):**

#### *Van Gogh (Great Artists Collection)* by Jessica Bailey

#### *Vincent van Gogh (Xtraordinary Artists) by Valerie Bodden*

* *Vincent and Theo: The Van Gogh Brothers* by Deborah Heiligman (grades 9-12)
* *An Eye on Art: Focusing on Great Artists and their Work* presented by the National Gallery of Art

**What to Read Next:**

* Cha*sing Vermeer* by Blue Balliett
* *Framed!* by James Pontii

Other Books by this Author:

* *Shakespeare’s Grave*

**Additional Resources:**

* Music: Beethoven
* Poetry: https://www.scholastic.com/teachers/blog-posts/alycia-zimmerman/ekphrasis-poetry-about-art/
* Art/craft activity: <https://artsycraftsymom.com/van-gogh-projects-for-kids-inspire-your-heart-with-art-day/>; https://www.pinterest.com/pin/95771929554445545/?lp=true
* Interview with the author: http://hmhyoungreadersblog.com/kids/middle-grade-mania-the-van-gogh-deception/
* Book Study: Great Artists, Impressionists, post-Impressionists, Letters to Theo
* Lesson ideas: <https://www.nga.gov/education/teachers/lessons-activities/self-portraits/van-gogh.html>; <http://www.educationworld.com/a_lesson/00-2/lp220_02.shtml>; <https://www.albrightknox.org/learn-discover/educators/lesson-plans>; http://lessonplanspage.com/artlesson-htm/
* Virtual Tour: <https://www.nga.gov/collection.html>;

**Name that Book:**

* “The room was filled with famous paintings and sculptures. The boy, however, didn’t seem to notice. The crowd swirled about the room, but the boy just sat on the bench, his hands in his lap and blank expression on his face.” -- Prologue
* “The new doctor -- the not so nice one -- had diagnosed him with a type of amnesia caused by a traumatic event. The nice doctor had told him there was not much they could do for him--his memory would return when he was ready for it to return.” p. 17HB
* “‘What happens to the boy when you find him?’ the man finally asked in a low voice. Palmer carefully folded up the newspaper and took a final sip of his american. Before he stood to depart, he rached down to pick up his messenger bag and looked the man directly in his eyes. ‘There are questions, Dr. Belette, that you should not ask’.” p. 54HB
* “It was a portrait of a tortured soul and deep introspection. Van Gogh, Art knew, had spend most of his short life desperately searching for himself and for his place in the world.” p. 99HB
* “Detective Wasberger--Art didn’t know how else to think of him, although he was pretty sure now the man wasn’t a detective and wasn’t named Wasberger--turned in his seat to face the two kids, ‘Don’t even think of trying anything.’” p. 138HB