



# The Pearl Girl

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## Summary

*The Pearl Girl* is a fictional story about a teenaged girl, who is visiting the Netherlands. She happens to be at the scene of the theft of a painting and is kidnapped. The story shows how she manages to get help. She and the painting are safe at the end of the story.

**Pages 1–7:** Fifteen-year-old Kate is at a museum in The Hague with her father and mother. There she sees one of Johannes Vermeer's most famous masterworks, "Girl with a Pearl Earring". Later, Kate's father realizes that he has left his guidebook and passport at the museum. The museum guard Paul Van Dyck was closing the door, but Kate asks him to let her in. When they come near "Girl with a Pearl Earring," they encounter two thieves. Paul is wounded and Kate is kidnapped.

**Pages 8–14:** Kate realizes that the thieves have stolen "Girl with a Pearl Earring." First she is forced into a car, and later she is taken to a boat. Inside the boat, she finds a ship in a bottle. She quickly writes a note, puts it in the bottle, and throws it into the canal. An old man finds her note and reports to the police. Kate and the painting are rescued. Back in The Hague, the museum's director gives Kate a pair of pearl earrings as a reward.

## Background and themes

**Girl with a Pearl Earring:** This is a famous painting by a Dutch painter Johannes Vermeer. It was donated to the Mauritshuis in The Hague in 1902. There's a novel called *Girl with a Pearl Earring* (1999) by Tracy Chevalier, which was inspired by this painting. The book was very successful, and so a movie based on it, *Girl with a Pearl Earring* (2003), was made, starring Scarlett Johansson and Colin Firth.

**The Hague:** In the story Kate is visiting the Mauritshuis in The Hague. The Hague is the third largest city in the Netherlands. The Dutch Parliament is located here as well as all foreign embassies. The Hague is also home to many international organizations such as the International Court of Justice (ICJ) and the International Criminal Court (ICC).

**Resourcefulness:** Kate found herself in a dangerous situation but she managed to make a plan to get out of it.

## Discussion activities

### Pages 1–7

#### Before reading

- Discuss:** Talk about the painting "Girl with a Pearl Earring". Bring in a picture or use the one on the front cover. Have a whole class discussion by asking these questions: *Do you know this painting? Who painted it? What do you think of the painting? Who do you think this is? What is she wearing?*
- Predict:** Have students look at the front cover. Tell them that the girl's name is Kate. Ask them to guess what happens to her in the story.

#### After reading

- Discuss:** Put students into small group, and have them discuss what they would do if they found themselves at the scene of a crime.
- Role play:** Have students work in groups of three or four. Have groups act out the scenes: **(a)** the Grants at the museum, **(b)** the Grants at the coffee shop, and **(c)** Kate at the museum again a few minutes later.

### Pages 8–14

#### Before reading

- Predict:** Ask students to predict what the thieves will do about Kate. *Are they going to kill her? What will happen?*

#### After reading

- Check:** Have students go back to their predictions. Were they right?
- Read carefully:** Put students into small groups, and have them write a timeline for the last half of the story. They can list the times and the things that happened.
- Discuss:** Tell students to imagine that Kate writes a letter to her parents in the Black Dog's kitchen. Students can discuss what she says in the letter.

## Vocabulary activities

For the Word List and vocabulary activities, go to [www.penguinreaders.com](http://www.penguinreaders.com).