

The Masterpiece

by Fiona Davis

Author Fiona Davis has chosen the history of The Grand Central Station Terminal in New York City as the background for her novel, *The Masterpiece*.

In the 1920's the Grand Central Station School of Art existed in the upper eaves of The Terminal. There, famous artists worked on their creative inspirations. These artists were mostly men since women artists were looked down upon.

In 1928 Clara Darden taught at the art school but is not always treated fairly since she is a woman. She has dreams of becoming the cover illustrator for *Vogue* Magazine, and is determined to reach her goals. With the help of Oliver Smith, a wealthy poet, she secures the job at *Vogue*. She becomes romantically involved not only with Oliver but also with a fellow teacher at the art school, Levon Zackarian. But the Great Depression forces the owners to close the art school and everything changes for Clara and her fellow artists. She suffers a great tragedy and in 1931 disappears without a trace.

Fast forward to 1974 when developers threaten to tear down the historical landmark in order to build a skyscraper on top of The Terminal. Virginia Clay, a former socialite who has fallen on hard times, takes a job in the information booth of The Terminal. She is recently divorced, is a breast cancer survivor and has a college aged daughter. While exploring the old abandoned art school Virginia finds a painting by Clara Darden that looks very similar to a painting she has seen in an art auction catalog. She thinks Clara may be the artist named Clyde, whose valuable painting will soon be auctioned off. Virginia is curious and searches for the artist who painted *The Clyde* and what circumstances led to the disappearance of Clara Darden in 1931. Virginia also gets involved in the fight to preserve the famous landmark of New York City, Grand Central Terminal. The fight was led by Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis.

The *Masterpiece* by Fiona Davis is a blend of the past and the present. It has strong determined female characters, lots of twists and turns and unveils a lot about the world of art. It is a great historical fiction.

You will find *The Masterpiece* by Fiona Davis in the Adult Fiction section of the library.

Happy Reading!