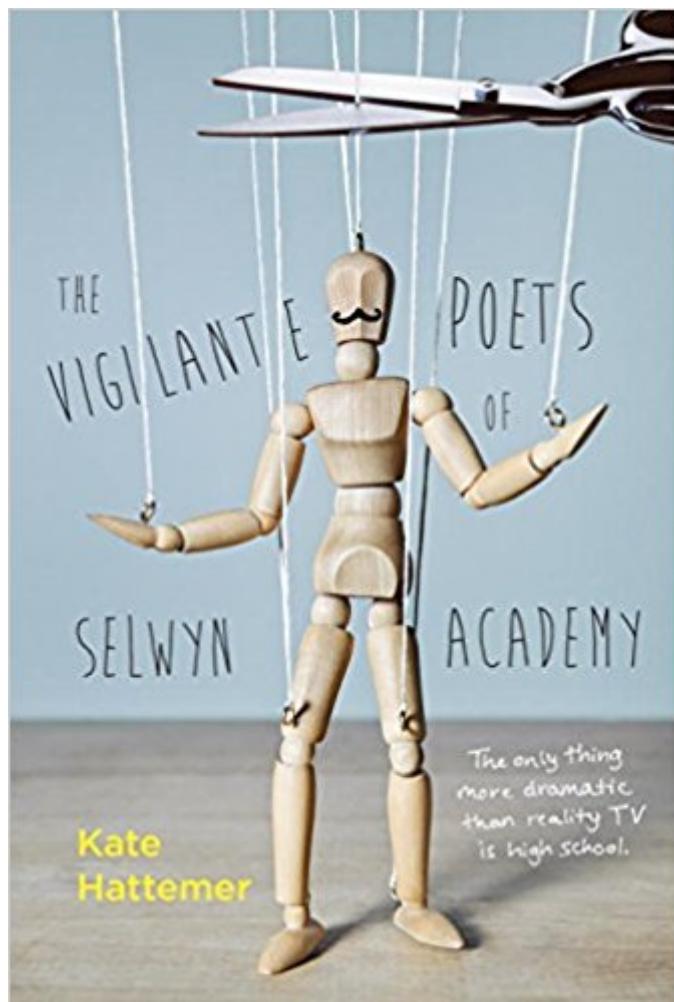


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# The Vigilante Poets Of Selwyn Academy



## Synopsis

Whip-smart dialogue and an inside look at the seedy underbelly of reality TV come together in this critically-acclaimed debut perfect for fans of *Unreal*, *John Green*, and *Frank Portman*. *Witty*, sarcastic Ethan and his three best friends are students at Selwyn Arts Academy, which has been hijacked by *For Art's Sake*, a sleazy reality-television show. In the tradition of *Ezra Pound*, the foursome secretly writes and distributes a long poem to protest the show. They're thrilled to have started a budding rebellion. *But the forces behind the show are craftier than they seem. The web of betrayal stretches farther than Ethan could have ever imagined, and it's up to him, his friends, and a heroic gerbil named Baconnaise to save Selwyn.* From the Hardcover edition.

## Book Information

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Average Customer Review: 4.2 out of 5 stars 65 customer reviews

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Age Range: 12 - 17 years

Grade Level: 7 and up

## Customer Reviews

Gr 8 Up •Ethan Andrezejczak is a junior at a Minnesota arts school that is hosting a competitive "reality" television show starring its students. Ethan strikes just the right note of teenage hesitancy and the shrug of paralyzed inaction so common to many stalled in the years leading to adulthood. Ethan tells the story about how he wound up attending the school, with his limited talent at drawing and music. His friends consist of the truly talented writer Luke, brainy Jackson, and

stylishly dreadlocked Elizabeth. When their inspiring English teacher introduces them to Ezra Pound's *Cantos*, Luke composes a long poem that voices his outcry against the corrupting influence of the sleazy TV people capitalizing on their school's art and integrity. He pulls his friends into clandestine raids on the school's printing press and distributes his protest poem to the student body. Being a part of the reality show rebellion energizes Ethan, even though his crush, ballerina Maura, is one of the leading contestants. The group discovers just how deeply the school administration is in league with the show's producers, and a surprising betrayal leaves Ethan bewildered with little solace beyond the distractions of his zany preschool triplet sisters and a sickly gerbil that does tricks. With a quirky cast of characters set against a reality television invasion, the ample humor and realistic angst make this an enjoyable story. •Suzanne Gordon, Lanier High School, Sugar Hill, GA --This text refers to the Hardcover edition.

**\*Starred Review\*** When the reality show *For Art's Sake* begins filming at the local high school for the arts, a group of juniors rebels against the prostitution of their talent and forms an underground poetry movement called The Contrecantos. Taking cues from Ezra Pound's work, their poetic protest goes viral and becomes the most-read publication at school. But after one of its number defects, the group must reassess its purpose and decide how to use the evidence of corruption it has found regarding the show's production. Amid the drama and intrigue, narrator Ethan Andrezejczak must do a great deal of soul-searching and maturing to see where he fits into the equation. In this place of immense talent, Ethan is immensely relatable as the voice of the average (that is, socially awkward) teen. Hattemer writes with a refreshing narrative style, crafting both believable characters and a cohesive, well-plotted story. Romance, while in the air, takes a sideline to friendship, which proves to be the book's heart and soul. Relying on the passion and ideals that drive adolescence, this has a vibrancy and authenticity that will resonate with anyone who has fought for their beliefs •or who has loved a hamster. (You'll see.) Grades 8-11. --Julia Smith --This text refers to the Hardcover edition.

The *Vigilante Poets of Selwyn Academy* was an enjoyable, delightful read, and one of my all-time favorite reads for 2014 so far. Kate Hattemer shows that she not only has the ability to get inside the heads of Ethan and his friends, but also does so in a way that's entertaining, funny and completely true to the teenage experience. Ethan and his friends not only have a compelling story to tell, but they will also likely remind readers of the energy and enthusiasm they had for intelligently and hilariously fixing life's problems when they were the same age as

Ethan and company. Reading Vigilante Poets made me feel nostalgic not only for my teenaged days, but also slightly jealous of all the people who are about to read this book for the very first time. This is a book that will stay with you for a very long time. Highly recommend for: all fans of YA contemporary fiction/contemporary fiction, fans of good 80s movies, and fans of shows like Glee, and Buffy.

I don't often get the time to review, but I couldn't believe there were so few reviews attached to this outstanding book. In a year full of knock offs and rip offs and lame trilogy endings, Vigilante Poets is like a refreshing breeze - original, funny, poignant and thoughtful. The writing is solid, the characterizations full and nuanced, the plotting an intriguing roller coaster ride of 'I know where this is going... oh wait, no I don't.' It's not another dystopian or post apocalypse hero story; the characters are bright art school fringers spurred on to action by the fakery of "reality" TV, greed, hypocrisy and a profound unfairness taking place in their school. These are kids who can use Ezra Pound's Quartos as the basis to sway their fellow students to the cause, but are just as able to plot and carry off an elaborate break-in for an unauthorized midnight print run on the old basement news press in their school. The notion of growing up to understand how people change and who your friends really are underpins the story without overpowering it. Kate Hattemer deserves to be heralded for a funny, intelligent debut in a season of timid, copycat YA writing.

I loved the banter, the humor, the quirky characters, and the teen angst. I remember when I was that passionate about things! There was really a lot going on in this story without it seeming cluttered. Ethan was an interesting MC, and I really enjoyed being in his world. There was some interesting social commentary in there too. Overall, a very enjoyable read with Baconaise on top.

Have you ever had one of those weeks when it seemed like nothing really goes smoothly, and each human encounter you have is more frustrating than the last? That's a perfect time to read this book. First, your bad week will seem like nothing compared to the string of disappointments that is Ethan Andrezecjak's junior year. Second, the antics of the 4 year old triplets and the talented gerbil Baconaise will lift your spirits despite yourself. Third, reading a book where a high school protagonist is casually discoursing on tricolons and Ezra Pound will remind you that there are smart, funny people out there (especially, this fabulous new author!) This book made me want to read more of the classics. But what I really want to read is another book by Kate Hattemer!

Vigilante Poets straddled the line between ultra realistic, and utterly implausible to a large degree. The characters, emotions, and mundane qualities exuded real life, but much like a reality tv show, there were things that were off. And it was subtle, but I caught wind. For example: A reality tv show shot from a pool of contestants taken from one school that airs Friday nights at 9, and is shot the week prior to airing on tv. A few things wrong with this, in a glorious tricolon: Friday nights between 8pm-11pm is death to a tv show of this caliber, a reality tv show would most likely film months in advance, so there is time to edit every episode, and a reality tv show that takes only students from one high school in Minnesota would lack diversity which tv begs for. So, I got caught up in some flaws. However, the characters feel all too real. These teens have some unique personalities, are flawed, and do not suffer from many clichÃ©s. The writing was exciting, but also having fun with itself. It also had a realistic plot that was not forced towards an absolute resolution. The one thing that truly brought this book down was the pacing of the plot. So much time was spent waiting, and discovering, that there was only two instances in the book where the main characters did anything to challenge the system. I could not wait for something to happen, which is normally a good thing, but the breadcrumbs were spaced so far apart it was difficult to reach the next one without getting lost and bored. The climax of the book, really grabbed me by the collar though, and I finally got the payoff.

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