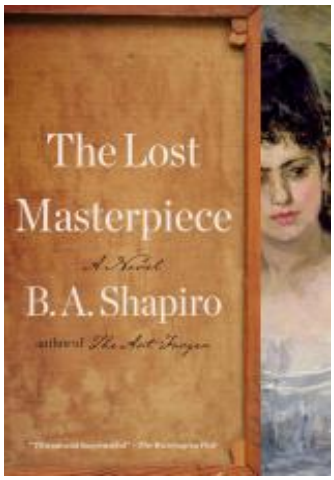
The Lost Masterpiece

by B.A. Shapiro



About the Book

An enigmatic painting. The mystery of who painted it. A riveting thriller from the bestselling author of THE ART FORGER.

In a gripping novel full of plot twists, B.A. Shapiro embeds us in a circle of famous painters in late-19th-century Paris, centering on the anguished Impressionist artist Berthe Morisot --- the one woman in their midst who never got her due --- and the story of Morisot?s great-great-great-great granddaughter, Tamara Rubin, who has inherited Édouard Manet?s *Party on the Seine*, a painting that completely upends her life.

When Tamara inherits *Party*, she discovers a long-hidden family history replete with unanswered questions: How had it been stolen by the Nazis? How had the painting managed to survive three disasters that destroyed every other artwork around it? And, most of all, why had she never known about her ancestor, Berthe Morisot? As the painting begins to metamorphose into darker and more terrifying versions of itself, Tamara?s ordinary life is thrown into turmoil. What wounds and resentments plagued Morisot, and to what lengths will her spirit go for revenge?

THE LOST MASTERPIECE is a story of love, adultery, betrayal, family secrets, and the grueling birth of Impressionism, taking the reader on a whirlwind adventure from the streets of Paris in the late 1800s and the studio Berthe Morisot shared with Manet, Degas and Renoir to the present day. Shapiro brings Berthe?s world to life, tracing her work through generations of descendants and introducing us to a painter as brilliant and original as her male counterparts across 150 years of triumphs, struggles, passions, animosities and malevolence.

Discussion Guide

1. Berthe and Tamara are both independent minded, strong-willed women. Did you see commonalities in their choices as the story progressed? How were they different?

2. In this novel, Berthe Morisot and Èdouard Manet have a passionate affair. Do you think their infidelity was justified? Why or why not?

3. How familiar were you with art history before picking up this book? What did THE LOST MASTERPIECE teach you about art history that you didn?t know previously?

4. How did you react to Tamara?s relationship with Wyatt? Do you think they are good together? Did your perception of them change throughout the book?

5. What did you think of Suzanne and Eugène? Do you sympathize with them? Do you like or dislike them as characters?

6. Impressionism was not popular at first, many critics calling the brushstrokes sloppy and incomplete. Why do you think this is? Did this surprise you, given how popular Impressionism is today?

7. While some events of the book are fictionalized, it?s true that the Nazis stole art, among other property, from Jewish families. How did reading about these events affect your perception of ownership and art?

8. Berthe?s career was hindered because she was a woman. Male artists like Manet and Degas have been enshrined in art history, while it seems that Berthe Morisot is left behind. Do you see any parallels in other situations at that time? Parallels to today?

9. Some of the artists in the book were able to paint because they come from wealthy families. How has wealth influenced art across history and various cultures? How can you tell?

10. This book touches upon the importance of lineage. How does the book depict the tragic destruction of lineage by the Holocaust and the fracturing of Jewish families?

11. What would you have done if you were in Tamara?s position? Would you have kept the painting, sold it, or given in to Damien?s demands? Why?

12. How did you think the story was going to end? Did the ending surprise you?

Author Bio

B.A. Shapiro is the award-winning and *New York Times* bestselling author of 10 novels, including THE LOST MASTERPIECE, METROPOLIS, THE COLLECTOR'S APPRENTICE, THE MURALIST and THE ART FORGER, which won the New England Book Award for Fiction, among other honors. Her books have been selected as Community Reads throughout the country and have been translated into over a dozen languages.

The Lost Masterpiece

by B.A. Shapiro

Publication Date: June 17, 2025

Genres: Fiction, Historical Fiction, Historical Thriller, Suspense, Thriller

Hardcover: 448 pages

Publisher: Algonquin Books

ISBN-10: 1643756370

ISBN-13: 9781643756370