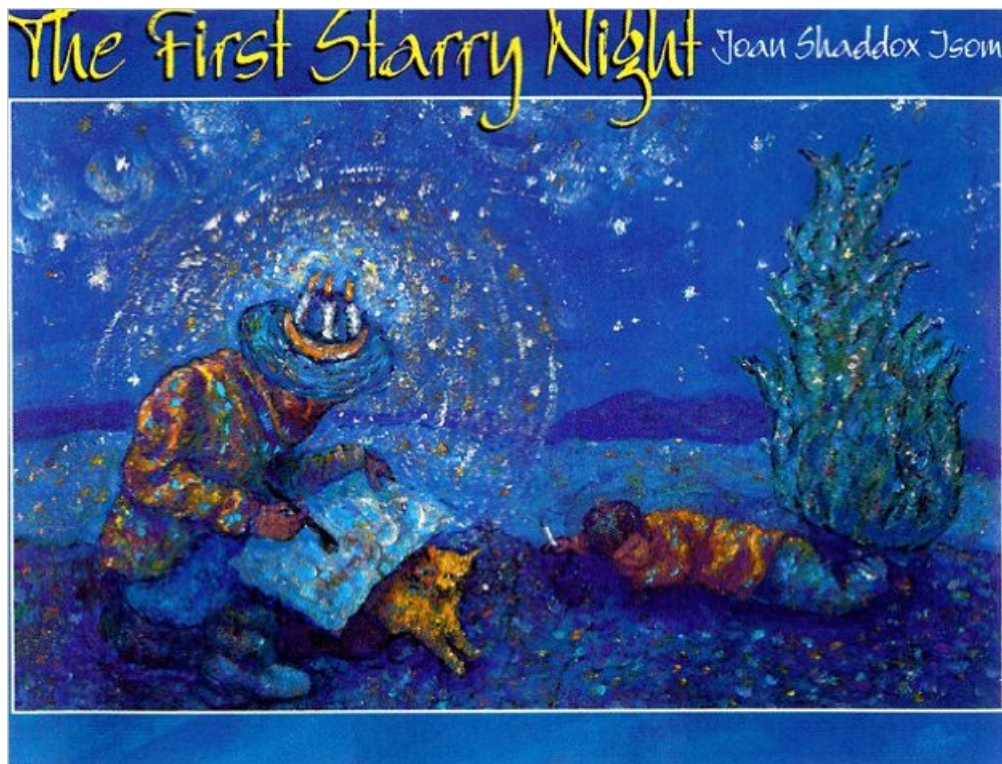


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# The First Starry Night



## Synopsis

Set during van Gogh's time in Arles, France, this story tells of van Gogh's friendship with a young boy, Jacques, who lives in the same house. As van Gogh teaches Jacques a new way to look at the world around him, the two become fast friends, even brothers. When van Gogh finally leaves Arles, he leaves behind some paintings; but more than paintings, he leaves memories which will last the young boy a lifetime. Illustrated with paintings done in the impressionist style, **THE FIRST STARRY NIGHT** is a beautiful introduction to van Gogh's work as well as a moving story about the true meaning of friendship and brotherhood.

## Book Information

Lexile Measure: 560L (What's this?)

Hardcover: 32 pages

Publisher: Charlesbridge (April 1, 1998)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 1879085968

ISBN-13: 978-1879085961

Product Dimensions: 8.1 x 11.2 x 0.4 inches

Shipping Weight: 1.6 pounds

Average Customer Review: 4.8 out of 5 stars [See all reviews](#) (9 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #1,377,600 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #124 in [Books > Children's](#)

[Books > Biographies > European](#) #3069 in [Books > Children's Books > Arts, Music &](#)

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Age Range: 5 - 8 years

Grade Level: 1 - 3

## Customer Reviews

**THE FIRST STARRY NIGHT** provides a perfect introduction for children to the life and works of the artist, Vincent Van Gogh. Jacques sees past the rough exterior that Van Gogh portrays to others and recognizes the loneliness and longing for friendship within his heart. We often forget that in their innocence children recognize the inner needs of another individual in ways that we as adults do not. A child is much more accepting of the uniqueness of the individual, not focusing on the oddities or eccentricities. Joan Isom portrays a kind and caring side of Van Gogh not often displayed in other books, but a side that every child should and needs to see. The comparison of the stars to a good painting or a good story in their everlasting qualities is one that should be instilled in every child. The

emphasis on the fact that we all see things differently and an appreciation for those differences is a lesson that I try to incorporate daily in the classroom. I think that we all long for a "brother of the heart" and that those of us who are fortunate enough to have found such a person are truly blessed. This book provides the inspiration to each of us to reach out to others and to the stars just as Vincent Van Gogh did on that "starry night" long ago.

This is a wonderful book about Vincent Van Gogh. It is beautifully illustrated and brings to life the story of "The Starry Night." The relationship between the boy in the story and Vincent is that of beloved friends. Vincent's insanity is never brought to the fore; however it is dealt with along with a subliminal message of compassion and tolerance. As an Art History teacher I have used this book on numerous occasions to introduce Van Gogh to children as young as Kindergarten and as old as 5th grade, with each level taking from it what they could. The illustrations in the book are exceptional. One can only be moved by Vincent painting in the darkness with a halo of starlight around his hat. Teaching Van Gogh to children is always a touchy subject. How do we separate the genius from the insanity? This book brings Vincent to a level of understanding that children can comprehend without ever mentioning his illnesses. It is a lovely, well-written story that introduces Van Gogh and one of his most famous paintings in a delightful manner.

"Why do you love the stars so much?" young Jacques, who washes pots and pans in Madame Rouel's kitchen, asked his friend Vincent. "Maybe because they are like a good painting or a good story. They stay." Joan Shaddox Isom's THE FIRST STARRY NIGHT, like the stars that Vincent loved so much, is a story that stays: in the heart's mind and memory. Enriched by Joan Isom's illustrations, this portrait of Vincent van Gogh--as seen through the eyes of Jacques, his "little brother of the heart"--is as full of star-spun magic as Vincent's own paintings. One reads the last words of this elegant and perceptive tribute to this lonely and mis-understood painter, with a sudden shock of recognition: for Vincent's never-ending stars still whirl like pinwheels across the night sky above us--and though we may have feared to lose him, we see that "he is not lost at all.

Excellent telling of how van Gogh painted The Starry Night with a text that engages children. The colorful illustrations captivated my second graders, and they kept watching for Melon the cat on every page. The book is appropriate for either a read aloud or for independent readers. I highly recommend this book for anyone teaching a unit on van Gogh or wishing they had been with him on that First Starry Night. The book works well with the book Camille and the Sunflowers.

Impressive story depicting van Gogh's efforts when painting The Starry Night. The story unfolds a unique friendship between two lonely individuals. The illustrations are vivid and absolutely captivating. They leave the reader with a "feel" for the warmth of the friendship, the warmth of the shared experiences between the two individuals, and the warmth that each of us feels when discovering one has found a "friend of the heart." I will definitely utilize this book when teaching Children's Literature at the University level. Elementary teachers would be able to share this book with students, delve into van Gogh's work, and possibly discuss the value of being a friend

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