



## Of Numbers and Stars: The Story of Hypatia

*D. Anne Love , Pamela Paparone (Illustrator)*

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Hypatia grew up on the northern tip of Egypt in the city of Alexandria in the fourth century C.E. Tutored by her father, the mathematician Theon, Hypatia quickly became an authority in the subjects of mathematics, astronomy, and philosophy. Word spread of her brilliance, and scholars from all over the world journeyed to Alexandria to seek her teachings.

## Of Numbers and Stars: The Story of Hypatia Details

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Author : D. Anne Love , Pamela Paparone (Illustrator)

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## **From Reader Review Of Numbers and Stars: The Story of Hypatia for online ebook**

### **Linda says**

Throughout the years, different students have studied famous people, both ancient and recent, and Hypatia was often chosen to research. While this book is for younger students, I know my older students would have enjoyed hearing of the life of this woman, who studied many things because her father thought girls should study as well as boys. The story shows the beginning studies, like learning about the fish in the sea, stars in the sky, and birds in the air. But when Hypatia, already an accomplished scholar, discovered mathematics while visiting her father at his university one day, she fell in love. She became respected and sought out for her knowledge. The illustrations add information as Hypatia's story is told. It's a good biography, with a page of extra information at the end.

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### **Abby Johnson says**

Hypatia lived in the 4th century in Alexandria, Egypt. In a time when women were rarely educated, Hypatia was taught by her father and had an insatiable thirst for knowledge. She became a respected and well-known scholar of her time, giving lectures and advising other scientists and mathematicians. The art and text are paired beautifully here and back matter lists sources and additional information. A wonderful informational picture book, perfect for Women's History Month.

Full review on my blog: <http://www.abbythelibrarian.com/2011/...>

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### **Lisa Vegan says**

Well, one way for me to tell what makes a successful book is finishing it and then wanting to learn much more than what was contained in the book. This book made me more curious about Hypatia and her life and times, probably more than is known, unfortunately.

This is one of six picture books being read in March over at the Children's Books group and I saved what I thought would be my favorite two books for last. I read this book second to last and it did not disappoint.

Hypatia was a remarkable woman with an unusual and wonderful, and perhaps an even more remarkable, father (Theon) who decided that, unlike most females of her time, she would have opportunities to learn and study. She became an expert in mathematics, astronomy, philosophy; she was a scholar, learner (of many, many things), teacher, writer, and she was famous during her lifetime.

Well, what a bummer of an (true) ending in the author's note in the back. Despite Hypatia's fate, I do think children will find her inspiring. There's a "More About Math" short note in the back of the book that is interesting. (I didn't love math until I took college psychology department statistics, then I was sad that I hadn't been taught math well because I think I could have enjoyed it earlier.) This book might encourage some kids to get excited about math and science and learning in general. This biography is engaging and well

told, and some interesting discussions could ensue between those who have read it.

I'm not sure how I feel about the illustrations. They fit the book so I do like them. (If this style of art appeared in another book it's likely I would not be a fan.) Near the start of the book, there's a pictorial map of the Alexandria area of Egypt that I found very appealing.

The other five books I'm reading for the book club my library owns and I'll most likely be able to renew them and keep them for reference during at least part of March; this book I had to get from inter-library loan so, sadly, I will not be able to keep it too far into the month of the discussion. Luckily, it's a memorable book about a memorable woman.

5 or 4 stars? 4 or 5 stars? Numbers are sometimes difficult.

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### **Christine Turner says**

The daughter of mathematician Theon, Hypatia grew up on the northern tip of Egypt in the great city of Alexandria in the 4th century A.D. Unlike most girls of her time, Hypatia learned to read and write, and as she grew older was tutored in mathematics, astronomy, and philosophy. In time, word spread of her brilliance and scholars from all over the world came to her seeking her advice and opinions in these subjects. Records of her fame as a teacher can be found in the writings of Socrates. One of her most famous students, Synesius, developed the astrolabe under her direction.

Subject: Mathematicians -- Egypt -- Biography -- Juvenile literature.

Women mathematicians -- Egypt -- Biography -- Juvenile literature.

Philosophers -- Egypt -- Biography -- Juvenile literature.

Hypatia, -415-Juvenile literature.

Added Author:

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### **Bart Everson says**

One of the favorite books my family has discovered in recent years is *Of Numbers and Stars* (2006, Holiday House). It's a picture book about Hypatia. I've read it to my daughter a dozen times at least, starting when she was five. By age seven she read it to herself.

I asked my daughter what she thought was the most important element of the story, and she cited the unusual freedoms that Hypatia enjoyed. At a time when most girls weren't allowed to do such things, Hypatia rode a horse through the streets of Alexandria. She was also educated in mathematics, science, and philosophy, but I think the horse made the biggest impression on my daughter.

In all these things, Hypatia was encouraged by her father, Theon of Alexandria. He was a scholar, noted for his work in mathematics and astronomy. Though little is known about him, it seems he had an enlightened attitude toward the rights of women, or at least his own daughter. (One wonders how Theon regarded his wife. I hasten to add that my own wife is my partner in all things; I'm writing here from a personal

perspective, but I suspect she'd agree with the spirit of this review.) Hypatia proved to be quite brilliant in her own right, suggesting a strong natural-born intellect, but without her father's influence and advocacy, it's doubtful she would have had much opportunity to develop these gifts or to pursue her career as the first female mathematician in recorded history.

As a committed feminist and as a father of a young girl, I see Hypatia as an inspiring figure, a role model of sorts. True, we've come a long way since 5th century. Women can now go horseback riding in public, to say nothing of the right to conduct their own affairs. And yet I'm aware that gender equity is hardly a done deal. The gains of recent history, such as they are, might be easily undone without continued vigilance, and moreover there are still plenty of serious challenges that must be confronted.

And what about Theon? He's no less inspiring to me. Like Theon, I want my daughter to have every opportunity to develop her natural gifts, and not be unduly burdened by stilted societal expectations. I do my best to bring a feminist consciousness to my parenting. I'd never buy my daughter a Barbie, but I backed GoldieBlox on Kickstarter. I encourage her interest in all subjects, but if I emphasize science and mathematics a little more, it's because I'm aware of our country's gender gap in those areas. Above all, I want to bolster her confidence and self-esteem, to let her know she can accomplish much if she puts her mind to it.

As crucial as those issues are, I see something even more profound at work in the story of Hypatia and her relation to her father. Theon didn't just advocate for his daughter's equal rights. He also shared his love of logic, knowledge, and the natural world with her. In the story as told by D. Anne Love, and reflected so vividly in the illustrations by Pamela Paparone, Hypatia is clearly fascinated by the beauty of the universe, the manifold forms of life, the deep and abiding truths found in numbers and stars, and Theon is right there beside her, a guide, a teacher, a collaborator.

That's who I want to be. It's one of my most deeply cherished hopes that as my daughter grows up, her appreciation for nature will continue to increase, that she will remain sensitive to the aesthetics of existence. I want to help her grow and develop those faculties to the best of my ability.

Perhaps if I'd lived 1600 years ago I might have been a scientist, like Theon, but it was my fate to be born in a time when so many of our endeavors have become extremely particular. Stephen Hawking notes that "in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, science became too technical and mathematical for the philosophers, or anyone else except a few specialists." I'm not one of those specialists. It almost pains me to admit it! Still I think there's great value in playing the scientist in every day life. I have a broad array of interests and a general curiosity about things, and I try my best to share that with my daughter.

Recently, for example, we were curious about the coming of springtime. Could it be detected by observation of the temperature? So we started a chart of highs and lows for each day. It's been gratifying to see the chart expand daily, and I've relished the abstract beauty of our colored pencil markings as they grow across the grid. It's also revealed some truths about winter weather in the subtropics, as the graph is impressively jagged. We've enjoyed it so much that we've decided to keep it going for a while, and we fully anticipate a smoother graph in the summer.

It's my hope that through this little project my daughter might learn a little something about science and mathematics and art, about observing the natural world, about collecting data and representing it visually, about seeing patterns and appreciating beauty.

In my daughter I see so much potential for the future. She might do great things. I don't know if the world needs heroes anymore, but I'm pretty sure our society needs a major readjustment in how we relate to each

other and the Earth. Perhaps my daughter will help to continue that process.

Even as I cherish such hopes, I'm also cognizant of the risks. The struggle for the future is contentious, and those who take an active role may pay a price. That price often seems higher for women. It's worth remembering that Hypatia came to a very bad end. Love and Paparone don't depict this in their book *per se*; it's addressed sensitively in an author's note. The preponderance of online reviews express some difficulty with this. It's a painful and bitter pill to swallow, but I can't conceive of a better way to handle it in a children's book.

We wish our children were growing up in a more just and humane world, but as adults we know it ain't so. We shelter our children from such harsh realities to some extent, but we know they will confront injustice and cruelty in their own time. All we can do is equip them, nourish them, love them, and hope for the best.

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### **Luann says**

I don't remember ever learning about Hypatia of Alexandria. But after reading this biography, I would love to learn more! This is a very well-done biography for children, and the perfect book for introducing children to Hypatia and this period in history. I think D. Anne Love hit the perfect balance of just enough detail to keep things interesting, yet not too much to bog the story down. Pam Paparone's illustrations are wonderful and also hit that perfect balance of simplicity with just enough detail to add interest and establish the setting. This includes a bibliography and a short author's note giving additional details about Hypatia along with a brief history of math.

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### **Matthew says**

This is the story of an amazing woman from the ancient world, a woman who defied the rules of the society she lived in and rose to the heights of academia, using mathematics to push forward the entire society. Though her story is obscure, it's one that should be shared and spread. I was amazed with all that she accomplished. The text is just right for an elementary audience, and it would be a great addition to a STEM collection for its focus on inventiveness and mathematics.

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### **Carmen says**

Brief biography with illustrations of the unique Hypatia of Alexandria. Very pretty.

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### **Meltha says**

This is a very informative and positive biography of Hypatia, and the illustrations, which strongly resemble the patterns and pictures found on ancient pottery, are gorgeous. I'm all in favor of getting female biographies of interesting people into the hands of kids at an early age, particular women who loved education and thinking and creating, and Hypatia does indeed fit the bill and is very rarely studied in the elementary grades (or, let's face it, at all). Unfortunately, this is a bit like doing a bio of Marie Antoinette and

ending it before she's thrown in jail. Hypatia suffered a horrible death, and that is mentioned in the end notes. I'm not sure what else could have been done with this information since it certainly isn't how you'd want to end the story. There are also notes on the history of mathematics and a mini-bibliography, which are good additions. This is a nicely put together book, though its handling of her death is a bit problematic. Again, though, I don't know how else it could have been done, and I'm thrilled to find a book that actually has a female character in it from North Africa.

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### **sarafem says**

For girls daring to be different, striving to break barriers, become mathematical and scientific geniuses, I could not recommend a book more highly than this one. This is a true story of Hypatia, a fourth century Alexandrian girl whose father said that she would get an education just like Egyptian boys. At that time women were not allowed to get an education at all, but her father used his influence as a professor to ensure that she got her opportunity. She became a respected scholar and teacher, particularly in geometry and astronomy. Very inspirational story for girls.

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### **Chak says**

We found this short book about 4th century Egyptian female mathematician and scholar Hypatia in the library. It is an easy book to read to a child before bed or in one sitting and has beautiful illustrations. However, you may not want to read the "Author's Note" in the back of the book to a child, since it talks about Hypatia's murder and subsequent lack of investigation, though a few lines under it, there's a short, but good section entitled "More About Math." Hardcover, library-covered weight: 349 grams.

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### **Amy says**

Lovely illustrations but the story itself was presented in a boring way. Not enough attention was paid to why this women's story was important, how rare her situation was and how it may have paved the way for others. It also subtly seems to give all credit to the father, while suggesting that the mother had no particular desire/joy/pride in her daughter's education.

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### **Kathryn says**

I feel very divided in reviewing this book, and torn between giving it three and four stars.

Things I like: This kid-friendly version of the story of Hypatia, a girl born Alexandria in the fourth century CE in a time when girls are not supposed to study philosophy or mathematics or science. But, Hypatia's dad totally rocks and declares that girls should be allowed to learn just as much as boys can and, being a scholar himself, sets out to teach his daughter everything he knows. Hypatia drinks it all in with deep enthusiasm and becomes a very wise woman--people come from miles around to hear her views. I love that the story brings to life such "ancient history" not only with the words but with the excellent illustrations (which I found both lovely and humorous) yet it also touches upon a theme that is still, sadly, prevalent today--boys are

"supposed to be" better at math and science than girls. Hypatia is an awesome example of how girls can excel in these areas, even when other people don't think they can!

Things I didn't like: While I thought the story was really interesting, I never was really captivated by Hypatia herself. It's all very... distant, somehow. The story doesn't convey much of her personality, except what the illustrations convey and even that could have been richer. I was also rather upset by the disconnect between the story and the author's note. We finish reading a delightful and triumphant story about how Hypatia was so awesome and loved by her students... then we turn the page and read about her brutal murder (whether due to her failure to embrace Christianity or her progressive ways has not been proven). WHAT!?!?! I felt like I'd been hit in the head. True, parents can choose not to read the author's note to their children, and I don't even think that Hypatia's murder needs to be mentioned in the storyline itself--but I do think it is doing children (and Hypatia!) a disservice not to show more of the opposition Hypatia faced in her life. We get the idea that girls aren't supposed to ride through the streets of Alexandria on horseback or study the stars, but the weight of just how far against tradition Hypatia went, and how angry many people would be with her because of it, is not really conveyed. Her success would glow even more if it was made clear what she risked in order to attain it (indeed, she ultimately lost her life for her views!)

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### **Kari says**

Little a and I were introduced to Hypatia through a documentary on Alexandria. I was able to locate this picture book through our local library. Paparone's illustrations are beautiful and add much to the text. Love's research into the life of Hypatia is evident. She handles the gruesome end to Hypatia well by including an after note. This makes the information accessible and present but not front and centre of Hypatia's life. Love provides context to the importance of Hypatia's education as well as explains how out of the norm an educated and celebrated woman was not of the times. This is a great book to show girls a strong female role model. it fits well with the push for girls to enter STEM fields as well as Egyptian fans.

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### **Nevada Libert says**

amazing book. about a girl who learn about sience.

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