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# Fly by Night # 1: Fly by Night

Emma Patton

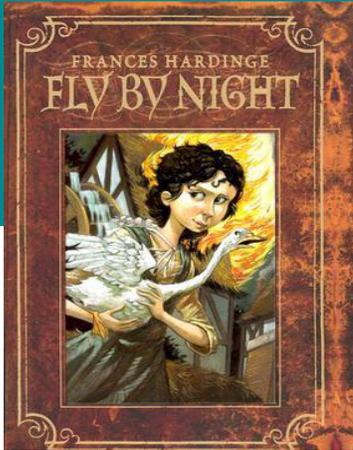
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## Book Review

### Fly by Night #1: Fly by Night

#### Author

Francis Hardinge

#### Illustrator

#### Reviewer

Emma Patton

#### Rating

Dependable

#### Level

Intermediate, Young  
Adult

#### Pages

483

#### Year

2005

#### Publisher

HarperTrophy

#### ISBN

9780060876302

Mosca Mye is a twelve-year-old girl with a love for reading, a mischievous streak, and a pet goose. When she sees an opportunity to escape her small town by convincing notorious storyteller and con-man Eponymous Clent to take her on as his secretary, she takes her chance. Clent agrees to let Mosca travel with him in exchange for her freeing him from the stocks. She plans to stick with Clent until she gets to the big city and finds a school that will take her. But, as much as Mosca wants to simply embark on her own journey and fill her mind with knowledge from books, she soon becomes involved in the dizzying complexities of the politics that govern the written word. There are a lot of perspectives, and Mosca doesn't know whose side she is on, but she does know that the choices she makes and the information she chooses to share could have a lasting impact on her entire society.

Fly By Night employs an entertaining cast of characters. However, though the publisher recommends the book to readers aged ten and up, the complexity of the story's conflicts makes it a frustrating read for even an adult reader. The fictional society has multiple underground groups with different ideologies and interactions. However, the distinctions between these groups are not sufficiently clear, and it is easy for the names of different groups and characters to quickly lose meaning. And, unfortunately, an understanding of the politics is essential to the full experience of the story. The world that author Francis Hardinge creates for Fly by Night is original and creative, but some of the explanation of that world is insufficient, and it requires extremely careful reading to pick out all the necessary facts in a story that is dense with background information and political intrigue. Some uncommon vocabulary is used in the writing, so younger readers will find a seemingly endless supply of unfamiliar words, which is a useful learning opportunity but could also make the reading process tedious.