A powerful, eerily beautiful book about self-expression -- and who the first painter might have been. The moon of the singing grass has come and gone three times, and still there is no rain. Mishoo’s prehistoric clan is starving, her little sisters arms like twigs. Can a Dream Catcher bring them rain? Mishoo’s mother had been the clan’s Dream Catcher. She spoke with spirits, trying to catch a dream of rain. Now she is a spirit herself. She tells a sleeping Mishoo: “You are Dream Catcher. You must go to the cave of the she-tiger. Mishoo dares to go—and there discovers rock that looks like dripping animal fat, rock like giant fangs from the saber-toothed tiger. Something stirs inside her. And as she picks up a charred stick from the fire and begins to draw the animal she sees buried in the stone, she wonders, Am I catching spirits or being caught myself? This powerful and strikingly original picture book provides a fascinating glimpse into the prehistoric world as it imagines who the first painter might have been.

My Personal Review:
FIRST PAINTER literally took my breath away. It is a truly powerful and beautiful picture book—the words, the illustrations, and the design. I’ve read it three times in a row and I love it more with each rereading. FIRST PAINTER is Lasky’s fictional story about what she imagines could have been the first cave painter. The story is told from the perspective of Mishoo, a young girl who is the shaman for her prehistoric tribe. There is a severe drought and their tribe is dying (“My younger sister, Erloo, is so thin her wrists are like twigs.”). Mishoo must visit the cave of the she-tiger in one last attempt to bring water to her people. There, in the cave, the walls seem to come alive to Mishoo with their shadows and indents. She uses a fire stick and the colors from her spirit bundle to draw horses and bison and the she-tiger. She gathers energy from her paintings and finally emerges days later to clouds—“immense and woolly against the horizon.” Rain has arrived, and so too has Mishoo’s passion to paint again and again! I’ve enjoyed Lasky’s books for many years, but she has outdone herself this time. This book is brilliant—the words are simple, yet poetic and powerful. The first-person telling pulls me into the story (as close as I can come to being there in prehistoric times). The whole idea for the book is thought-provoking and should encourage many children’s discussions and
imaginings about not only who painted the first picture, but who started the first language (with words or gestures?), who made the first fire (by accident or on purpose?). Is the "need" for artistic expression solely a human need? On and on. This is my first experience with Rocco Baviera’s illustrations, but they won't be my last—what a master! He used bear grease, animal fur, raw earth pigments, and more to create his primitive and powerful images. They are achingly, hauntingly beautiful; and they perfectly capture the spirit of the first paintings and the first painter. I expect to see this book on many award lists. Thank you, Kathryn Lasky, Rocco Baviera, Melanie Kroupa, & Chris Hammill Paul (DK Ink)—what a gift you have given the world!

For More 5 Star Customer Reviews and Lowest Price:

First Painter by Rocco Baviera - 5 Star Customer Reviews and Lowest Price!