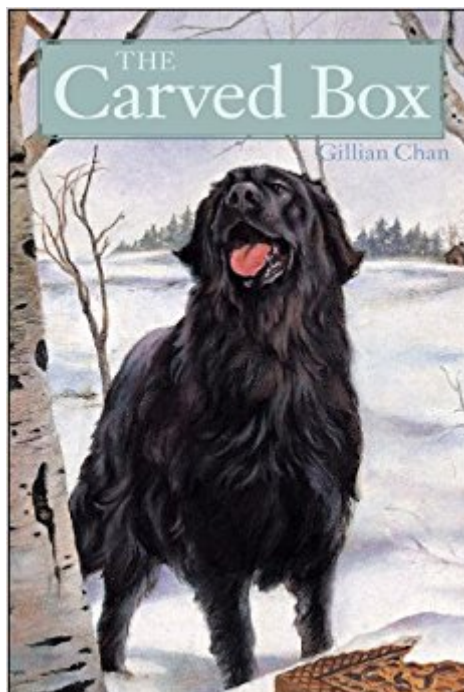


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The Carved Box



Synopsis

Fifteen-year-old Callum, recently arrived from Scotland, finds comfort in the friendship of a half-starved dog and gains the courage to face life in the New World.

Book Information

Hardcover: 232 pages

Publisher: Kids Can Press; First Edition edition (August 1, 2001)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 1550748955

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Shipping Weight: 9.6 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 5.0 out of 5 stars 1 customer review

Best Sellers Rank: #790,849 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #33 in Books > Teens > Historical Fiction > Canada #2982 in Books > Teens > Literature & Fiction > Social & Family Issues > Family

Customer Reviews

Gr 5-8-As soon as orphaned Callum Murdoch arrives in the Canadian wilderness from his home in Scotland, he uses nearly all his money to buy an abused dog from her owner. Dog proves to be the teen's source of comfort as he adjusts to life on his Uncle Rory's homestead. A scholar, the young man resents the monotonous, never-ending hard work; however, he grows to care for his new family, and, at the prompting of Dog, takes responsibility during a crisis. The animal provides a mystical element to this seemingly straightforward historical novel, set just after the American Revolution. When Callum purchases her, he receives a mysterious carved box and instructions never to open it if he desires Dog always to be his companion. In a climactic moment, the box accidentally breaks and readers discover the surprising secret-that she also has a human shape. This mystical ending seems contrived to demonstrate that Callum no longer needs the support of Dog and adds a jarring element to an otherwise highly readable tale of a young man's relationship with his pet, his family, and himself. Crystal Faris, Nassau Library System, Uniondale, NY Copyright 2001 Cahners Business Information, Inc.

Gr. 6-8. Orphaned 15-year-old Callum makes the long journey from Scotland to Upper Canada to live with his uncle. Rory is a good man, but Callum is ill-equipped for the harshness of

eighteenth-century farm life. Callum's first act is to spend his only coin on a dog being abused by its master and a small carved box that comes with the animal. But Dog succors him through the unrelenting labor of the farm, the warring with his sometimes fractious cousins, and his longing for the sweet memory of his mother. Dog listens as though she understands and acts strangely when too far from the carved box. Callum makes a number of mistakes both large and small, but it takes a raging snowstorm and escaped oxen to manifest Dog's true nature. A fantasy element seems tacked on rather than fully integrated, but readers may not notice that as they are swept along with Callum's many trials. For larger collections. GraceAnne DeCandidoCopyright © American Library Association. All rights reserved

I am a fan of Gillian Chan's short stories for young adults. I basically devoured her two short story collections, *Glory Days*, and *Golden Girl*, so when I saw that she had written a novel, I picked it up. From the very first page, I was swept into the story. My own beloved dog had died just a week before I read this novel, and so the character of Dog especially appealed to me. It is not easy to fully develop an animal character in a realistic novel, but Chan achieves this admirably. I had tears in my eyes as I read it. Dog was so "real" that I could almost pat him! And the historical research! As a historical novelist myself, I am very picky when I read other historicals, but this one is spot-on. Bravo! I also loved the touch of fantasy. *The Carved Box* is a universal tale that transcends age limits.

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