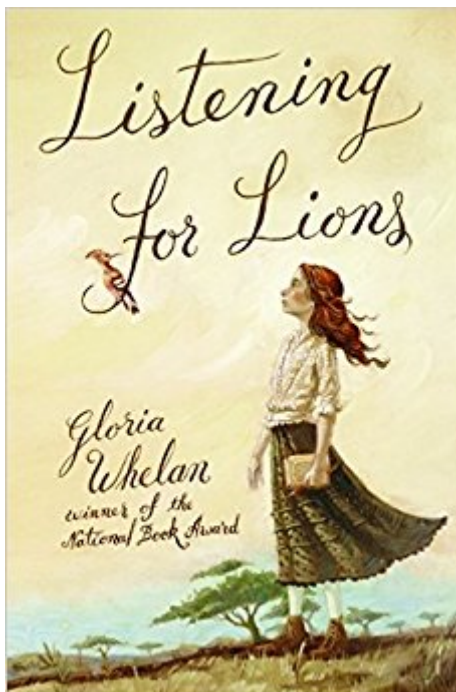


The book was found

Listening For Lions



Synopsis

A critically acclaimed historical novel “that roars” (Kliatt), from the author of the National Book Award-winning novel *Homeless Bird*. Africa is the only home Rachel Sheridan has ever known. But when her missionary parents are struck with influenza, she is left vulnerable to her family’s malicious neighbors. Surrounded by greed and lies, Rachel is entangled in a criminal scheme and sent to England, where she’s forced into a life of deception. Like the lion, she must be patient and strong, awaiting the moment when she can take control of her own fate and find her way home again at last. Named one of New York Public Library’s One Hundred Titles for Reading and Sharing, this tale of a strong young heroine “in the tradition of Frances Hodgson Burnett” (School Library Journal), by award-winning master of historical fiction Gloria Whelan, is a perfect read for schools and classrooms, as well as for fans of *A Long Walk to Water* by Linda Sue Park.

Book Information

Lexile Measure: 900 (What’s this?)

Paperback: 208 pages

Publisher: HarperCollins; Reprint edition (October 10, 2006)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 006058176X

ISBN-13: 978-0060581763

Product Dimensions: 5.1 x 0.4 x 7.6 inches

Shipping Weight: 4 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.5 out of 5 stars 61 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #172,537 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #14 in Books > Children’s Books > Literature & Fiction > Historical Fiction > Africa #25 in Books > Children’s Books > Literature & Fiction > Religious Fiction > Christian > Historical #132 in Books > Children’s Books > Literature & Fiction > Historical Fiction > Europe

Age Range: 8 - 12 years

Grade Level: 5 and up

Customer Reviews

Grade 4-8 “Orphaned by the influenza epidemic in British East Africa in 1919, 13-year-old Rachel is sent by conniving neighbors to visit an elderly man in England, passing as their daughter—his granddaughter—to pave the way for their return and the inheritance

of his estate. The daughter of a missionary doctor and his wife, Rachel has grown up connected to the African countryside and people. Terrified that to reveal her secret would hasten Grandfather Pritchard's death, and fearing life in an orphanage, she goes along with her new identity as Valerie Pritchard. But she cannot help but get involved with his love for the birds on his land, and she entertains him with stories about what is happening outside his sickroom and what kinds of things her friend Rachel saw in their African world. In the tradition of Frances Hodgson Burnett, this is a satisfying story of an intelligent but unassuming girl who wins the heart of an elderly man who is not such a fool as his wastrel son might think. Woven throughout are descriptions of the natural world and the people of what is now Kenya, as well as the surroundings of an early-20th-century English estate. Rachel's love for her rural African world is convincing, and readers will be gratified by the way she contrives to return and continue her parents' work. An old-fashioned and enjoyable read.

—Kathleen Isaacs, Towson University, MD Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. --This text refers to the Library Binding edition.

Starred Review Gr. 6-9. In 1919, in British East Africa, 13-year-old Rachel loses her missionary parents during an influenza epidemic. When she turns to her English neighbors for help, the Pritchards ensnare her in a shocking, ill-intentioned scheme. Disowned by their rich family, they had planned to send their daughter, Valerie, to her grandfather's estate in England, where they hoped she would help to reinstate them in his will. But after Valerie dies of flu, the Pritchards conspire to send Rachel, whose red hair matches their daughter's. Whelan creates deliciously odious villains in the Pritchard parents, who, with shameless cunning, manipulate Rachel into agreeing to the deceit. Once in England, Rachel and the perilously ill grandfather develop a surprisingly strong, affectionate bond, although she continues the ruse, believing that "one more disappointment would be the end of the old man." In a straightforward, sympathetic voice, Rachel tells an involving, episodic story that follows her across continents and through life stages as she grapples with her dishonesty, grief for her lost parents and life in Africa, and looming questions about how to prepare for grown-up life at a time when few choices were allowed to women. Gentle, nostalgic, and fueled with old-fashioned girl power, this involving orphan story will please fans of Frances Hodgson Burnett's classic *The Secret Garden* (1912) and Eva Ibbotson's *The Star of Kazan* (2004). Gillian Engberg

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My twelve year old son Aidan declared this book better than *Call it Courage* because the main

character didn't know she was courageous and had to find courage because of her circumstances and the main character in Call it Courage was trying to prove he was courageous so that doesn't really count. Considering he is a 12 year old boy and Call it Courage is ripe with killing animals, outdoor survival, and other boy stuff, I'd call this a fairly ringing endorsement!

A beautiful work of historical fiction that draws children into the life of a young girl from the early 20th century. This book gives voice to a life and experiences that bring the reader a greater understanding of what life was once like. The book also has elements of adventure and intrigue as the story develops. While it is geared toward a younger audience, upper elementary to middle school, I think it has appeal to readers of all ages.

This book has the basis of a really good story. But, sadly, it felt like I was reading a summary rather than a novel. Too little character and story development.

Listening for Lions is about a young lady, raised in Africa, whose parents die. She is tricked into impersonating the daughter of a very unscrupulous couple. I very much enjoyed the details in this book, as well as the wide story arc. It ended rather unexpectedly and abruptly though, which was the only reason for the four, rather than five, star review. I have stayed up too many nights in a row reading excellent books, so apologies for the inelegant review. It's a great book. I'm glad I bought and read it. Definitely recommended.

I really, really wanted to like Listening for Lions. The cover is beautiful, the title intriguing, and the plot sounded creative and full of possibility. Unfortunately, I found the book to be tedious, the characters muddy and one-dimensional, and the actual story fell far short of my expectations. The villains in this book truly are--greedy, scheming, hateful people who are furious about having been "exiled" to Africa. They're lazy, cruel, and have not a spark of humanity. (I'm trying to avoid spoilers here, but there are several instances when they could have shown glimmers of being real people, but didn't.) Part of this one-dimensionality is a part of the first person voice (meaning it's hard to write in the first person and illuminate all the characters' motives), but it seems intentional here, and I think it's a shortcoming. The grandfather Rachel goes to live with isn't particularly developed, either, nor is his staff, or really, anyone Rachel meets along the way. The lack of character development might have been okay had Rachel been a more sympathetic character. Instead, she's wracked with guilt over the situation she finds herself in (that she really couldn't have done anything to change),

homesick, and generally pretty whiny. I get the impression we're supposed to see her as heroic, a great storyteller with a plucky spirit, but instead, she seems pretty mousy to me, managing to make even a leopard attack seem sort of every day. What redeems this book is the clarity of setting. The scenes in Africa are beautifully described and it's easy to picture yourself there in a completely different time. The scenes in England are similarly beautiful, and I liked that the author didn't seem to give extra care to writing one or the other. In fact, she did a really lovely job of imbuing Africa with an obvious sense of being Rachel's home without diminishing the English setting. I'm not sorry I read it, it's a quick read, and of historical interest, but it could have been so much more, and I am disappointed in the end result. For the setting, I think it's worth the 3 stars and the time to read it, but it's definitely not a book I'll be keeping in my collection. This one's getting donated to the library.

This is a great book and very hard to find on CD. We were glad to find it. It arrived quickly and works great. This is one of our favorite young adult fiction books and according to a friend that grew up in Africa, very much like her childhood. We let her borrow the book and she was moved to tears it brought back so many memories.

Loved every page. I'd recommend this book to all readers! I loved the ideas presented: grief, strength, love of family, morals, free thinking, the importance of a good education, women's ability to do whatever a man is capable of, and so much more. I see Amy Adams as the star in this "would-be" hit!

My daughter recommended the book and I read it in about four hours. I couldn't put it down..It is a work of fiction and I so wanted it to be a true story. I could see mature young readers, but too young or immature wouldn't deal with the harsh storyline. Read it!

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