



The Great Elephant Chase

Gillian Cross

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When the elephant came to town, Tad and Cissie went to the show like everyone else. Little did they know it would change their lives for ever. Because of the elephant, they get involved in a chase across America, by train, by flatboat, and steam boat. This book is the winner of the Whitbread Children's Novel Award and the Smarties Prize.

The Great Elephant Chase Details

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Author : Gillian Cross

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From Reader Review The Great Elephant Chase for online ebook

Dieuwke says

The first two chapters pull you in, with sentences that promise lots of action and unexpected twists. And the delivers what it promises: a fantastic voyage of two kids and an elephant. Just when traveling gets a bit boring, a chase, a good or a bad character pops up, keeping it an easy and entertaining read.

I particularly focused on the growth of the characters and must admit the tipping point for Tad happens too sudden. From being ordered around to being able to see himself as a worthy human being takes more than just an elephant chase.

Nevertheless the book is charming, well written and the plot is really good. All characters continuously and consistently fight for what they want, making them believable and recognizable.

Waiting for the day my kids are old enough.

Elif Elif says

fffffff

Lillia says

such a gem =)

Arel ?ükrü says

?ts soo good

Matt Linzey says

This is a book that I have just finished reading after a conversation with one of my higher achieving year 6 pupils who loves his books and highly recommended it.

A wonderfully engaging adventure story between two really well developed characters - Tad and Cissie - which sees the orphan boy and his friend and her elephant travel across the country to avoid Hannibal Jackson.

A tense atmosphere is created within this story which is balanced out wonderfully by a witty humour. The book is a real page-turner and will enthral readers of year 6 age up and above.

Clearly a favourite among children of both sexes having been voted for, by children, from a shortlist for the Smareties awards.

Lucy says

It was a good book. it had a good storyline, but it was very hard to imagine what was happening.

Joseph says

I would give this book 4.5 stars but since that is not possible I'm stuck with four. This is a great book with lots of twists. I found it hard not to read it at any opportunity. This book may be suitable for adults but I would say its for young adults (like me).

It is about a young boy called Tad who hides away in an elephant crate and eventually steals it along with the owner's daughter to stop his unlikeable cook and partner stealing it. There are many great twists along the journey!

Debs Awesomemo says

Yet another childhood gem

Barbra says

It takes a little to plow through the beginning of this nineteenth century adventure, but once we learn about Tad and how he came to be stowed away in an elephant trailer, the images seem to fly off the pages. We follow Tad and Cissy as they travel by train, flatboat and steamboat with Khush the elephant, all the while trying to keep him hidden from an evil con man. I loved the way you could see, hear and smell every scene. For confident readers age 10 – 12

Grof says

This is the second book that I've read from Gillian Cross. The newer one, *Shadow Cat* is almost identical in logic, suspense and the faked out story like this one. It again makes no sense, the story is unappealing and bland. I don't recommend reading this book.

Andy Verschoyle says

Well written, does not talk down but keeps sentences short, accessible language, adventure plus relationships and credible characters. I enjoyed reading this for myself but has enough excitement at start to get a young reader engaged before embarking on a long adventure.

Sharon says

I really liked this book when I was younger. I remember finishing it, then promptly starting the story again.

Devon says

This is a childhood favourite of mine, one that I've reread more times than I can count. I've never tired of it. It's the heart-warming story of two outcasts burdened by their own guilt – Tad, the slow, clumsy boy who's spent his whole life being told he is worthless and Cissy, small and frail looking but with a ferocious will – and the elephant who brings them together. Make no mistake, Khush is as much a character and hero in this story as the children. If he wasn't, we wouldn't care so much about making sure he isn't taken by a cruel man. We know Khush loves Tad and Cissy, we know they love him. We know it would be wrong to separate them. The children's desperation is understandable and helps us constantly root for them as they embark on what looks like an impossible journey.

As they cross an America that's still in the early days of European settlement, we see these three different personalities learning to work together, understand each other and form their own family. Tad finds acceptance and someone who needs him for the first time in his life, Cissy finds a way to help her overcome her grief and Khush finds the people he knows will take care of him. When one person falters (as all three do at various points), the others help pick them up as the prospect of a real home comes ever closer, but Mr Jackson and Esther (a quite magnificent pair of villains) are never far behind.

With a detailed setting, vivid supporting characters and well-maintained pace and tension, this is an easy but engaging read. The ending took me by surprise the first time I read it, but in a good way. It's immensely satisfying and makes you feel that nothing else would have been right.

Charlotte says

SOME SPOILERS AHEAD.

This was a strangely formal yet enjoyable novel. The characters were few but well-written and the plot was progressive and realistic. Plus, the many drawbacks of fleeing with a fully-grown, Indian elephant added humour and unpredictability to the story.

Gillian Cross's writing style was unapologetically adult; she didn't attempt to 'speak down' to the reader. In fact, her writing was so proper that it highlighted the difference between Cissie and Tad's dialects and succeeded in establishing their conflicting personalities early on.

I particularly liked Cross's inclusion of two formats: prose and letter-based narrative. It was an effective way of allowing the reader into Tad and Cissie's heads without making use of the multiple-perspective approach, which falls flat more often than not.

There were two specific parts of the plot that I thought were inspired. Including Esther and Mr Jackson in the beginning of the story before Khush and his entourage were introduced was a stroke of genius. It made the transition into the main plot smoother and more believable.

The ending was similarly impressive. The age difference between Tad and Cissie was evident at most key points in the novel but primarily at the end, when the group reached Ketty. Cissie's journey at that point was over. Tad, on the other hand, was expected to pack up and go. It was nice that he got to keep Khush but the dose of reality was undermined slightly by the happy ending.

Finally, the characterisation of Khush was managed really well. Short of making him talk, I don't think Cross could have done it better. Khush teased Tad and Cissie, he demonstrated a clear attachment to them and he teetered between obedient and obstinate, depending how hungry and how comfortable he was. Khush was a fully-fledged character in the novel, not just an animal that happened to accompany the main protagonists.

Miss Amanda says

gr 4-6 193 pgs

1881, PA/Western US. 15 year old Tad didn't mean to runaway with the traveling medicine show. But, just like his aunt says, he can't seem to do anything right. But the elephant's owner Michael Keenan offers him a job and unlike Tad's aunt, is happy with how well Tad takes care of the elephant. When Michael Keenan is murdered, Tad and Michael Keenan's daughter Cissie begin a race toward Cissie's sister's home in Nebraska and safety. They hope to be able to reach Nebraska before the people who killed Michael and want the elephant for their own can get them.

Great story for animal lovers. I only wonder what the author was thinking with the page layout. There seems to be less space than usual between each line, giving the book a very crowded feeling.
