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River Boy



Synopsis

Fifteen-year-old Jess's grandfather has just had a major heart attack, but he insists he finish his painting, River Boy. At first, Jess cannot understand why this painting is so important to her grandfather, especially since there doesn't seem to be any boy in it at all. But while swimming in the river herself, Jess begins to feel the presence of a strange boy. Could this be the same one her ailing grandfather struggles to paint? And if so, why has he returned?

Book Information

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Age Range: 12 and up

Grade Level: 7 and up

Customer Reviews

"She needed to swim. To be deprived of swimming would be like a perverse kind of drowning. She loved the sensation of power and speed, the feeling of glistening in a bed of foam." Jess is a passionate distance swimmer, and has been looking for a unique water challenge to test her endurance. But when her adored grandfather, an irascible artist, suffers a heart attack, she focuses all her energy on making him well. Though weak and perhaps dying, her grandfather insists that the family still take their planned vacation--a trip to the rural countryside where he spent his boyhood. There, Jess finds a river that is perfect for swimming, the same river that is the inspiration for her grandfather's latest painting, titled River Boy. As the shadowy image of a boy takes shape on her grandfather's canvas, Jess encounters her own river boy, a mysterious young man who seems to

be able to swim as well as she does. In discovering how the two "river boys" are related, Jess finds both the swimming challenge she has been searching for and a graceful way to cope with her grandfather's passing. British author Tim Bowler gently illustrates the fear of a loved one's passing by using a river's timeless flow as a metaphor for the journey of life. Teens will relate to Jess's frustration with her lack of control over her grandfather's situation, while being moved to a better understanding and acceptance of death. *River Boy* is the winner of the 1998 Carnegie Medal for excellence in children's literature. (Ages 11 and older) --Jennifer Hubert --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

It is the last wish of 15-year-old Jess's grandfather to return to his childhood home by the river. "Bowler's 1998 Carnegie Medal winner succeeds in conveying the strong bond between Jess and her grandfather; as the novel unfolds, the heroine realizes they have more in common than she'd ever imagined," said PW. Ages 12-up. (Jan.)nCopyright 2002 Cahners Business Information, Inc.

Jess' grandfather is acting very strangely. He has always been grumpy and irritable--that's no different from usual. He has always been a painter, too, obsessed with finishing a painting he's started and especially nasty to those around him until he does manage to find the inspiration to finish it. But the painting he's working on now is not in his usual style, and this one has a name: "River Boy." He's never named one of his paintings before. To make matters even stranger, he has insisted his son and daughter-in-law and granddaughter Jess go on a vacation to the place he lived growing up. The family drives for hours and moves into a small cottage by a river that starts up beyond them and eventually flows down into the ocean. Jess, an excellent swimmer who craves time in the water, loves the location and the river. Jess' parents are worried, though. Before they left, Jess' grandfather had a heart attack. He insisted on being let out of the hospital in order to go on vacation, but their vacation spot is so secluded, they worry he will have another heart attack and won't be able to get to a hospital again in time. Her grandfather is fixated on one thing--finishing the painting he's started. It seems to be the only goal he has left in life, but it becomes more and more difficult as he gets weaker and weaker. Jess is torn. She doesn't know how to help him or what he needs. Furthermore, there seems to be a mystery surrounding this place. She keeps seeing a boy out in the river at the strangest hours, a boy she suspects is watching her. Who is he? Is he really as mysterious as Jess thinks, or is her imagination simply running away with her? I really liked the relationship between Jess and her grandfather. They were very close despite his crabbiness. It was nice that Jess was able to look beyond that. I thought the ending of this book was really good.

Things really came together and made sense. However, I didn't like the way Jess' grandfather treated her father; that made me dislike the character of the grandfather a little bit.

The book I chose to read and review was *River Boy* by Tim Bowler. It is a very interesting book to read which is very surprising to me because the cover made it seem like a boring book (never judge a book by its cover). The story had a mystery to it that you couldn't figure out until the very end of the book. I like how the author used the river flowing like humans' life and death. Our birth is where the river forms and our struggles are like the rivers fast times and slow times and the river finally flows into the ocean, and that is our death. I enjoyed this book a lot and is now one of my favorite books. It must be good because it won the 1998 Carnegie medal (which is a medal for the best children's book). It was a good book to me so I think reader age 13-17 would enjoy it also.

I have to say it's been some years since I read this book. I came across it as I am sorting old books out. And this is one I will hold onto. Its message has been with me since I have read it. I remembered it when I saw the book, and realized it has become part of my life. If you read to learn about yourself or others. This is a must read.

The book is about Jess and her ill grandfather. Jess's grandfather just had a heart attack, but before dying, he wishes to complete a painting. To him, painting is like breathing, and w/o finishing it, he would die unfulfilled. The painting is named *River Boy*, and shortly after, Jess starts seeing this *River Boy*. For Jess, it is a long ride to let go of her grandfather and to understand the past of this mysterious "river boy". The book is a good quick read, so that afterwards you can reflect on its meaning. It has a slight deepness that's attractive, but not too much, so that it doesn't make the reader sink. Instead, it is slow, gentle, yet enticing. Enjoy it.

Tim Bowler portrays the relationship between Jess and her Grandpa with sensitivity but at no time does it become over-sentimental. There are many mystical, spiritual and emotional elements to this book that make it a book which is accessible on so many levels. I am 21 years old and read this book because I had to study it as part of my teaching degree but would definitely put it into my top ten - it reminded me so much of my relationship with my own grandad. This will most certainly become a classic in children's literature

I think that this book is a must read. I found that I could never put it down- it was so gripping! I

always wanted to know if Jess and her grandfather was alright. You can almost feel the same sort of anxiety that Jess was feeling. River Boy is a great book and I would recommend it strongly to anybody over the age of 12.

I am 12 years old and in my view this book was a well thought out master piece ,and you must read it.

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