



2004

Sky Carver

Gillian Streeter

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Whitlock, Dean. *Sky Carver*. Clarion, 2005. ISBN 0618443932. \$16.00. 256 p.

Reviewer: Gillian Streeter
Reading Level: Intermediate, Young Adult
Rating: Outstanding
Genre: Fantasy fiction;
Subject: Magic--Juvenile fiction;

Being the only child of the famous artist Thomas Painter is bad enough when you cannot paint, but young Thomas Painter (he secretly calls himself Carver) has always wanted to carve wood for a living. In the midst of a dry spell in his village, a mysterious wand drops from the sky. It signals the beginning of a strange and magical journey to find a mage who will save his town and teach him about the mysterious power that seems to come from the wand.

Although *Sky Carver* is Whitlock's first novel, he has previously written many shorter stories. The novel has elements of fantasy in it -- magic, mages, and transformations -- but also includes odd Americana bits, such as the steam boats, guns, and bicycles used by the folk downstream from Carver. The story is original and magical, the characters are well described, but parts of the story could be explained more, such as Carver's parents' role in his journey. Despite these shortcomings, many fantasy devotees will find *Sky Carver* an engaging read.