



2018

The Elephant Thief

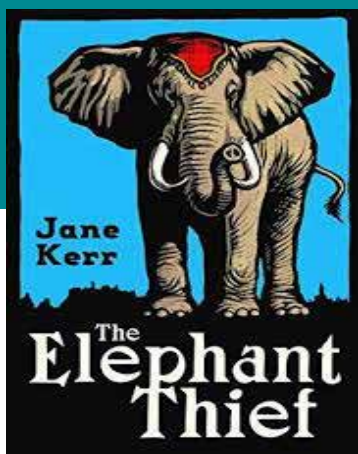
Cynthia Frazier

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Book Review

The Elephant Thief

Author

Jane Kerr

Illustrator

Reviewer

Cynthia Frazier

Rating

Outstanding

Level

Intermediate, Young
Adult

Pages

308

Year

2017

Publisher

Chicken House

ISBN

9780316245111

Who would have ever thought that ‘Boy’—a filthy street orphan, pick-pocket, and thief—would end up becoming an Indian Prince named Dandip? All because of a wager between rival zoo owners, an elaborate scheme was hatched with ‘Boy’ dressed up in a fancy Indian costume riding an elephant named Maharaja. Newspapers started carrying the story and soon, everyone in England knew about the ‘Prince’ and his elephant and lined the streets as the duo trekked 200 miles from Scotland to England. Boy liked having clean clothes and good food to eat, and he was starting to know how to communicate with Maharaja. Soon after the journey begins, things began going wrong, and Boy feels that he is being followed and that Maharaja is in peril. He fears that dangerous people from his past are catching up with him. On top of this, they only have ten days to get to Manchester or all is lost.

A journalist and newspaper radio producer for twenty years, *The Elephant Thief*, is Jane Kerr’s debut book. This novel is based on a true story of an elephant who was sold in Edinburgh, destroyed his railway car there and, walked with his trainer 200 miles to a new zoo in Manchester in 1872. The skeleton of this elephant, Maharaja, resides in the Manchester museum, where Jane first heard the story. The author added a street urchin, a missing fortune, a diabolical gang leader and various other supporting characters to the story. She created an historical mystery/adventure tale of the ten day trip that will delight boys and girls nine to twelve-years-old, and capture the interest of young adult to adult readers. Younger children may be disturbed by the harsh treatment, violence and cruelty suffered by ‘Boy’ and Maharaja.

*Contains mild Violence.