

Thunder From the Sea

by Joan Hiatt Harlow

Margaret K. McElderry Books, 2004

The year is 1929 in Newfoundland, and orphan Tom Campbell is leaving the only home he's known for 10 years. Fisherman Enoch Murray and his wife Fiona are taking him from the Mission orphanage to work and live with them on Back O' the Moon Island. Tom's dreams of having a real family are coming true as he begins his life with the Murray's. On his first fishing trek, Tom encounters a rough storm at sea and finds and rescues a beautiful black Newfoundland dog who Tom coins as Thunder. As the story unfolds, Thunder and Tom develop the usual strong companionship that exists between a boy and his dog. Thunder proves invaluable as he protects many characters from imminent and sometimes unforeseeable peril. Throughout the novel there is strain on Tom as he worries about his place within the family and the uncertainty of Thunder's real owner coming to take him back. Joan Hiatt Harlow has written a charming and delectable book about the bond between a boy and his dog, and the anxieties of orphan children as they adjust to new family life. Ms. Harlow's use of vivid descriptions of Newfoundland's landscape and culture make a colorful setting and era believable. Her use of foreshadowing will captivate every reader and leave them wanting more. This book is for every child who dreams of having that special canine relationship, and for those who already know.

Interest Level/Reading Level

ages 7-13/ grades 3-6

Point of View

Third Person/Limited Omniscient

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Themes

The power of love and family are undeniable.

Good things come to him who waits.

He (God) knows exactly what we need.

Genre and Setting

Historical fiction/adventure in 1929 Newfoundland

Book Title Meaning

The novel receives its title from Thunder being rescued at sea during a thunderstorm.

About the Author

Award-winning Joan Hiatt Harlow is best known for integrating historical facts within her children's books. She successfully weaves intense factual research into the novels, allowing readers to depict the life and times of the era. Born in 1932 and presently residing in her native New England, Ms. Harlow began writing at the tender age of four, shortly after learning how to read. With her fan base strong, she has earned herself many awards including the **Magazine Merit Award for Fiction** in 2000, the **Sunshine State Book Award** in 2002 for her novel *Star in the Storm*, and **Best Children's Book of the Year** in 2003 for her compelling novel *Joshua's Song*. Other novels Joan Hiatt Harlow has authored include *Poems Are For Everything*, co-authored with daughter Kristan Harlow, *Shadows on the Sea*, *Midnight Rider*, *The Wishing Sky*, *The Creatures of Sand Castle Key*, *The Dark Side of the Creek*, *The Mysterious Dr. Chen*, *Shadow Bear* and *Thunder From the Sea*. Coming in July 2007 is *Blown Away*, set in the Florida Keys in 1935 when the worst hurricane in history landed. Among authoring children's books, Ms. Harlow enjoys astronomy, traveling, history, swimming and music.



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Engaging and Captivating Passages

- Chapter 12, p. 107 “Amos emerged from the hut carrying a rifle...Crack! With a yelp Thunder fell to the ground!”

Amos Bosworth shoots at the dog when he thinks Thunder has gone mad and is antagonizing his wife Ruby.

- Chapter 17, p. 145 “There's peril waitin' across the bay...”

Mummers come at Christmastime and warn Tom to keep Thunder away from Chance-Along.

Characters and Traits

Tom, age 13, main character

- forgiving
- courageous
- steadfast
- patient
- grateful
- angry
- conscientious
- loving
- ethical
- understanding
- dependable
- calm
- cooperative

Thunder, 1 yr., Newfoundland dog

- clever
- dependable
- loyal
- steadfast
- obedient
- smart
- courageous
- loving

Enoch, adopted father to Tom

- patient
- dependable
- determined

- ethical
- generous
- pleasant
- humble
- gentle
- honest
- helpful
- reasonable
- tough
- wise
- fair

Fiona, adopted mother to Tom

- pregnant
- nurturing
- careful
- sensitive
- loving
- soft-hearted
- gentle
- generous

Bert Bosworth, neighbor to Tom

- boastful
- greedy
- conceited
- illiterate
- coward
- repentive
- troublemaker
- jealous
- spiteful

Amos Bosworth, father of Bert

- greedy
- spiteful
- redeeming
- jealous

Conflict/Resolution

Internal and External

“If you liked *Thunder From the Sea*, you'll love *Star in the Storm*, an award-winning book beautifully written about the relationship between a girl and her beloved dog. Other books written in this adventure genre about human/canine friendship include *Old Yeller* by Fred Gipson, the *Shiloh* trilogy by Phyllis Naylor, and *Souder* by William Armstrong. Recommended children's books by Joan Hiatt Harlow include, but are not limited to, *Shadow Bear*, *Joshua's Song*, and *Shadows on the Sea*.

Booktalk

The year is 1929 in Newfoundland, and orphan Tom Campbell is leaving the only home he's known for 10 years. Fisherman Enoch Murray and his wife Fiona are taking him from the Mission orphanage to work and live with them on Back O' the Moon Island. Tom's dreams of having a real family are coming true as he begins his life with the Murray's. On his first fishing trek, Tom encounters a rough storm at sea and finds and rescues a beautiful black Newfoundland dog who Tom coins as Thunder. As the story unfolds, Thunder and Tom develop the usual strong companionship that exists between a boy and his dog. Thunder proves invaluable as he protects many characters from imminent and sometimes unforeseeable peril. It seems like all of Tom's dreams are coming true. But is it all too good to be true? The Murray's had opened their home to him, but had they really opened their hearts? Will Tom stay, and if not, will he have to leave his beloved Thunder behind?