



The White Giraffe

Lauren St. John

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When Martine's home in England burns down, killing her parents, she must go to South Africa to live on a wildlife game preserve, called Sawubona, with the grandmother she didn't know she had. Almost as soon as she arrives, Martine hears stories about a white giraffe living in the preserve. But her grandmother and others working at Sawubona insist that the giraffe is just a myth. Martine is not so sure, until one stormy night when she looks out her window and locks eyes with Jemmy, a young silvery-white giraffe. Why is everyone keeping Jemmy's existence a secret? Does it have anything to do with the rash of poaching going on at Sawubona? Martine needs all of the courage and smarts she has, not to mention a little African magic, to find out. First-time children's author Lauren St. John brings us deep into the African world, where myths become reality and a young girl with a healing gift has the power to save her home and her one true friend.

The White Giraffe Details

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Author : Lauren St. John

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From Reader Review The White Giraffe for online ebook

Slawka Scarso says

Yes, I do know this is a young adult/children novel but this doesn't mean an adult shouldn't appreciate it all the same. Except in this case the book was extremely disappointing. The storyline is fine, but the characters and the dialogue are so fake at times it is quite irritating.

The fake African accent of Grace, for instance, is annoying but then at least she is a nice and well developed character. The teacher and headmaster are just a concentrate of clichés, same goes for Alex, the game keeper. Plus that line at the beginning when the father tells Martine «everything happens for a reason». Oh dear, how banal is that? And yes, I was already this cynical when I was 11, Martine's age.

But the most irritating character of all is the grandmother - from now on there's a big SPOILER, beware. The grandmother is cold and distant at first but in the end her reasons for behaving like that make no sense. When she finally starts to demonstrate Martine she cares for her, she leaves her in the port accepting her desire to solve the problem by herself. Oh please, you're eleven! Shut up and just let granny call the police.

And yes, I do understand that for plot reason it would have been a boring end but at least she could have somewhat participated in the granddaughter's great finale. Instead she just goes back home, trusting that the white giraffe will take the child back to the game reserve.

Now, I'm fine with magic, fine with special powers but the story needs to be credible all the same and this one simply was not.

Cherie says

If I had read this book first, I may not have read the 2nd. I doubt if I will read the other two books in the series.

Becky Loader says

Ah. We all need a White Giraffe in our lives.

Haley says

This book sucks VERY badly.

I am warning you.

First point: It seems like Martine Allen, Jeremiah and Tendai are a love triangle. For those who don't know, Martine is an eleven year old girl, Jeremiah is the white giraffe, and Tendai is forty.

Second, **NOBODY RIDES GIRAFFES**. There's a reason why it never happened.

Thirdly, what's with the odd dialogue??

"Lucky I missed you, hey!"

"There was nothing wrong with that kudu, nothing!"

Who the hell writes like that?

Lauren St. John, that's who.

Ah, yes. That lady. If you were to flip to the last page, you may see this:

This is her first young adult novel.

There's no way that The White Giraffe is a young adult novel as IT WOULD BE SHUNNED BY THE YOUNG ADULTS.

Overall, the writing is only okay. Everything is meh. The story line is pretty bad and the characters . . .

Don't get me started. Martine Allen is so friggin annoying and cries like, 24/7. Oh my God, Jemmy **might** get captured! Boo-freaking-hoo.

And Ben. Like, omigod, he's so hot! He's eleven yet somehow, he's got muscle! He's so smart! And he's soooo sweet and just plain hot, hot, hot . . .

Sarcasm noted.

So, yes, never ever ever again will I read this book. If I wasn't reading this at school, this book would have been burned and its ashes would be floating in the Pacific, Atlantic, Merridean . . .

It's *that* bad.

•Abby• says

I read this book back when I was in sixth grade thanks to my wonderful teacher who had recommended it to me. I absolutely fell in love with this book and went on to read the second book and almost went through the third book. For some reason, I was just thinking back to all of my books I had read about three or four years ago and this one really stood out...now I am really wanting to reread this series ??

Jackie says

Destiny becomes reality as Martine's young life is shattered by the untimely death of her parents. Living a serene, idyllic life in England is commonplace for this 11-year-old only child. When a tragic fire tears her world apart, she is sent to live with her grandmother in South Africa. There she finds that these series of events have been foretold. She has 'the gift' and although her grandmother chooses to ignore the signs, its

prophecy becomes clearly evident shortly upon her arrival. Martine can communicate with all animals, bond with them, and most importantly, act as their protector. A rare connection is made between the illusive white giraffe and Martine, as an age-old lore becomes the means with which Martine will use to protect her silvery-white, gentle friend.

Readers who liked *Listening for Lions* by Gloria Whelan, will most assuredly enjoy *The White Giraffe*.

Relyn says

10/10/08

Audiobook format

I have been listening to this book for about three days now. It is wonderful. Really great. One of the many wonderful things about it is the audiobook reader. This woman is nothing but incredible. I mean it! She is the best audiobook reader I have ever heard. OK. She ties with the reader of *Shadow of the Wind*. I'm going to be looking for more books narrated by her.

I love having Sloane come to school with me. It is so wonderful to be in the car together. On the drives we talk and laugh and I really know what is going on with her. The only thing is, I have really missed my time with audiobooks. Before Sloane started school, I used my drive time to listen to books on tape. Talking with her is much better, but she has discovered audiobooks in a big way. She has her own mini iPod and wants to listed to her books. So, one way we talk. The other way, we each stick buds in our ears and listen to our own books. Are we a bookish family or what?

More on *The White Giraffe* when I finish it.

10/12/08

I finished it, and I must say I was sad to have it end. Fantastic book. Of course, am not feeling very verbose today. So, all I will say now is, "Give it a listen. I think you'll like it."

Jess Hancock says

An enchanting, emotional and endearing read.

Patterns:

Martine and Tendai being outsiders, orphans both having suffered a tornado us about f grief and suffering. Martine didn't fit in at school, Tendai was bullied for the colour of his skin. I felt Jemmy is included here too. Protected and secluded for the colour of his skin.

Secrecy and lies are apparent through the book, Gwyn Thomas not revealing Martine's past, Tendai hiding the truth, Alex lying about the poachers on the game reserve.

Spiritual, there is a real spiritual element to this story. The strong powers, Martine having 'the gift', Grace predicting the future.

'The child who can ride a white giraffe will have power over all the animals'

Puzzles:

I would like to know more about Ben. What's his story? He's such a huge, important character at the end of the book, but this isn't reflected throughout. Why?
Was the fire that orphaned Martine accidental....?

Connections:

Having recently read the Dream Snatcher, I easily drew comparisons to both stories. Martine/Moll - orphans
Zulu/Gypsy - tribes
Forefathers/elders - hierarchy, generation, family
Bones - in both stories help create the spiritual element of the story
Giraffe/wildcat - companionship, human/wild animal

A truly magical, credible story, full of loyalty, courage, bravery, maturity, compassion, trust and decency. I'm so glad I have had the pleasure of reading this book, the children in my book club chose it, and we will be discussing and reviewing it in Wednesday.

From the start it is evident Lauren's upbringing was on a game reserve. Every description transports you there, the imagery is that strong.

I would recommend this book to both children and adults. Year 4+
A delightful read and I look forward to reading #2 in the series.

Pam Browning says

I just finished The White Giraffe by Lauren St. John and it was wonderful. A student recommended it to me and she was right this book was a fun and fast read. Martine, a middle school aged girl loses her parents in a fire right at the beginning of the book and has to move to South Africa (Cape Town) to live with a grandmother she didn't know she had and one who seems not too excited to have her there. The book centers around several mysteries about Martine's past and the possibly mythical white giraffe. With all the description of the South African scenery and wildlife, especially the animals on her grandmother's wildlife sanctuary, I feel like I actually made an overseas trip. The pace was fast moving from the giraffe encounters to Martine's family mystery and to her school issues. The mysterious tone keeps you hooked right to the last page. I would recommend this to readers who like mysteries set in other countries, especially if they enjoy realistic adventures. Thanks to my recommender!

Garrett W. says

Garrett White p5-7

The White Giraffe August 18, 2012
By Lauren St. John
Fiction
181 pages

The White Giraffe is about a girl named Martine. She lives a happy life in England with her Mom and Dad. But one night everything is changed. Martine escapes a threatening house fire that takes the life of her parents. Now Martine has a big decision to make. Does she stay in England at an orphanage or go live in

South Africa with her Grandmother she has never met? Martine decides to go live with her grandmother in South Africa. So Martine is shipped over seas to her new life. When she arrives in Africa, Martine is a little surprised. She never really new that Africa had many cities. Martine is transported to her final destination and her key to a fresh start. After living in Africa for some time, Martine is told about the White Giraffe. It is a mystical creature that wanders the game reserve. Martine quickly makes friends with the giraffe and one night the White Giraffe saves Martine from a large Cobra. Martine also saves the White Giraffe from poachers and after that they end with a nice easy life..... or not.

My thinking about the book: The White Giraffe is very positive. For one thing I give it four **** because it is a good book throughout the whole story. Ok, sure it is a little sad when the parents die. It's also boring when all it talks about is Martine's choice for a few pages, but overall it is a very interesting and fun book. When Martine's house catches on fire, I felt scared. Martine was scared, but she was also very brave. Martine used her sheets and covers from her bed and tied them together to make a rope to slide down. I for one would be so scared that I would have probably just jumped out the window! If I survived and I found out that my parents were dead I would just be too sad and I probably wouldn't be able to move on. I do not know how Martine did that. How did she move on in life? Another thing I wonder about is that how Martine did not freak out when she saw the White Giraffe for the first time. Ok yeah, I would be a little scared at first but I think I would be less scared when it didn't hurt me. I really like this book and I strongly recommend it; so get reading!

Amanda Thomas says

I had one of my student's randomly select a book from my library one day so I could model how we read and think. The lesson however took a slight turn as instead of giving them the planned for assessment, we continued reading for the rest of the hour. We couldn't put it down and when I told the kiddos we had to stop and go to lunch the glorious whining rang through my classroom, "Noooooo!" My students would rather read than eat. I call that a TEACHER WIN. I plan on using this book in the future to practice many reading skills, but also to share with them the process Lauren St. John took to create this brilliant piece of work. I'm going to use it to teach passionate writing. It is day one of my summer and I cannot wait to get back in the classroom again.

Erin Reilly-Sanders says

Overall, this tale of a girl reluctantly sent to live with her grandmother on a game preserve in South Africa is a fun adventure with a lot of animals and a tiny bit of culture thrown in. However, I found the inclusion of magic somewhat disturbing, similar to other semi-fantasy books set in Africa. The portrayal of blacks as some sort of shaman always tends to disturb me, as it seems somewhat unlikely that this is an attitude that they would be comfortable with. Most blacks are Christian and while they may incorporate traditional beliefs, magic could be seen as a primitive association. In this book, Martine, a complete foreigner, seems to come and usurp their magic as some sort of savior, which also seems like the wrong message. At least the book has been written by someone with some personal experience in this part of Africa so the viewpoints presented aren't wholly from an outsider. I guess I'm also not a big fan of unrealistic mixing of animals and people (a la Animorphs) where so many people seem to get the wrong idea from zoos that animals and nice

and cuddly and innocent. Instead, I think the recent movie/tv series Earth presents a much more accurate picture of animals as organisms that think but act powerfully to achieve their needs, ignorant of the human needs for love, relationship, conversation, and even letting the underdog win.

Benenden School Library says

I found this book exhilarating as I felt I was riding on the back of the white giraffe on Martine's game reserve in Africa! If you haven't read this book you really should!

You will adventure with a young girl whose parents died in a house fire while she managed to live. She was thrust over to Africa to live on a game reserve with her grumpy grandma who doesn't seem to want anything to do with her. Martine's head was bursting with questions. Why didn't mum mention you? How long have you lived out here? Did mum ever live here?

"You will find out in good time, Chile," Grace would say. Grace is a game reserve worker's aunt who helps Martine along the way with finding the (mythical, maybe not so!) White Giraffe, whom Martine was destined to ride in sheer darkness across African plains as the legends read. Grace herself provided the information which answered all these questions.

The unthinkable can happen, though, and when the giraffe is stolen, the saving is all down to Martine.

I highly recommend this book, especially if you love animals as you experience the truly close bond between man and a wild animal whilst reading this book. To conclude, you will absolutely love this book and feel you're heart sailing across that African plain with Martine! - *Milly, Year 7*

Brynn says

The protagonist in this story is an 11-year-old girl from England who moves to South Africa to live with her grandmother on a game preserve after her parents pass away. I thought what would follow would be a good story for 5th and 6th graders who like animals with a bit of information on a different part of the world. The story, however, is very weak. The language is far too complex for the target age group, the story is boring and often too descriptive, the main character isn't sympathetic and the premise of a fortune telling older south african woman who tells of the coming of this girl to save the animals is frankly a little hokey. I also think that aspect of the story may give a young reader with no knowledge of South Africa an incorrect impression of the country.

Debbie Battaglino says

Great read. Beginning of what is sure to be a series that will keep kids reading. Interesting characters, quick paced storyline, African adventure, and a rare and mystical animal in peril. What could be more compelling!

Deborah Piasecki says

I liked this book because there are several characters that young readers can connect to - Martine, who lost her parents in a fire and has to live with her Grandmother in another country, Ben, who is quiet, but has many strengths, Jemmy, the White Giraffe who befriends Martine and is the catalyst to her healing over the loss of her parents, the Five Star Gang of Caracal School (the kids that everyone wanted to be-rich, popular and ultra cool) Other adult characters important to the story are Gwyn Thomas (Grandmother), Tendai (Gwyn's wildlife reserve helper), Grace (Tendai's sister who has "the gift") and Alex (Gwyn's wildlife reserve foreman).

The book follows the common theme of a new kid in school who eventually becomes the target of the popular kid's pranks, and an unlikely friendship that blooms with another not so popular kid. I do like that Lauren St. John wove a mystery that had to be solved along with African folklore into her book, which adds to the excitement of reading about another country and learning a bit about their culture.

The ending is predictable, but it doesn't spoil the adventure that Martine has experienced. This is St. John's first novel and she left the ending with a hint that there could be more challenges and adventures that Martine has to face...possible in future books.

Rosa says

This was actually a very good book. There is mystery and suspense and magic.

On Martine's 11th birthday there is a fire in her home that kills both of her parents. Martine gets sent to live with a grandmother (Gwynn Thomas) that she has never heard of on a game reserve in South Africa. When Martine arrives she is picked up by Tendai, one of the game reserve's employees, he takes her to visit his aunt Rose who tells her that she has a gift she must use wisely. Martine has no idea what she is talking about. When she gets to the reserve Martine and her grandmother have a hard time getting along. Her grandmother refuses to tell Martine why her mother never told her about the reserve or her grandparents. Martine hears rumours about a white giraffe and eventually she actually finds it and makes friends with it. There are poachers all over the game reserve trying to catch the giraffe and some of the other animals. Eventually the poachers succeed because she accidentally spills the beans in class about how to summon the giraffe (one of her class mates is the son of one of the poachers.) Martine also discovers that she can heal animals with her hands although she does occasionally need help from outside sources. With the help of Ben a unique class mate, she gets aboard the freighter the giraffe is on and rescues the giraffe and the poachers are caught.

Hailey Younger says

For summer reading I read The White Giraffe by Lauren St. John. After a tragedy at her home in England which caused Martine is forced to move with her grandmother Gwyn Thomas who lives on a South African game reserve and whom she's never met before. Martine discovers a whole different living situation and almost a completely different world. When Martine arrives in Africa Tendi who is a worker in the game reserve with Gwyn brings her to meet his aunt. While Martine and Tendi's aunt are talking Tendi's aunt tells Martine that she has a gift but ,Martine had no idea what she was talking about. When Martine is getting settled in and starting school she hears a village legend about the white giraffe which is said to leave footprints at night. When Martine asks her grandmother about the legend Gywn insists its nothing but a silly rumor. One night before going to bed Martine believes she sees the white giraffe and goes out into the game

reserve to go look. While in the reserve Martine is almost bitten by a cobra and next finds herself with the white giraffe and she decides she will call it Jemmy. Later in the book Martine goes back to into the game reserve to find Jemmy while there she meets grace who is gifted at healing. Martine find Jemmy hurt from the poachers and heals him with the medicine that Grace gave to her and Jemmy gives Martine and ride back home and you will have to read this book to found if they catch the poachers or not.

Dniemuth04 says

This book started out like a very uninteresting and quite depressing book just like my last book, "Rash." The first scene that I was introduced to was in Martine's dream which plays a vital role in what happened later in the book when she found out her healing powers. Her dream described her touching a goose with her hands; they were lighting up in a glow as she healed the goose to perfect health. When she awakened she was greeted by a heat wave from her house being on fire. Fortunately, she managed to escape out her window and her neighbors were there to help her through this rough time. She eventually finds out that she had a grandmother name Gwyn Thomas. When Martine heard that name for the first time she had a bad feeling. She was right when she saw her grandmother, she was bossy and laid down the rules. Gwyn never bought clothes unless absolutely necessary; she didn't waste money on really anything. Years past and Martine was a young woman and she was slowly getting promoted to be on the safari team. Her grandmother new the codes to the gate and Martine overheard the numbers, memorized them, and stealthily got through the main gates to search for the mystical white giraffe. Martine had her first glimpse of the white giraffe from her window on clear evening with a full moon. There were many poachers that wanted what's in the reserve, but luckily the patrol kept most out. While deep into her voyage she came across wounded animals that had been the result of poachers, and just as it was in her dream her hands burst out with a bright yellow light. After a bright harmless explosion of light the animals were healed. Martine believed that no one can see this creature except her. This was the result of the mystical bond her and the giraffe have. One evening after Jemmy, the giraffe, and Martine were comfortable with each others presences a few poachers spotted the white giraffe. They began chasing after her and Jemmy, she jumped on his back and became the first known ever human to ride a white giraffe. The stealthiness of the giraffe evaded the poachers. After they had returned to the secret cave she was introduced to Sangoma, a healer, she gave her a mixture of medicines that could be used to heal special problems. Poachers captured Jemmy and the race is on to save him at the docks. After meeting a boy her age named Ben they both went off looking for Jemmy. Ben discovered him injured in a cargo ship. Martine used her ability and healing medicine to get Jemmy to full strength. Then they rode back to game reserve safely.

There were many minor characters, the people that lived in the village, along with a few major characters. A few of the major characters were Martine and her parents. Later in the story there was a whole new set of characters that are joining the story. There is Gwyn Martine, new guardian, also her grandmother. More semi major characters were the game reserve workers which didn't know about Martine breaking through the front gates. Another huge character was the White Giraffe itself. Jemmy helped Martine find her inner strength and powers.

Most of the settings that took place was in the safari the south end of Africa where her grandmother lived. A short portion of the book took place in Martine's bedroom along with the sheriff's office, where she was held for a short while till they found her legal guardians. Jemmy's secret cave, that can only be found in the dark by Jemmy, where another woman lived that helped heal wounded animals was a smaller portion of the book. This was the reason that she had not found out that there was a secret cave until later on in the book. The

book took place during Martines early years of life, eight years old, to sixteen. The most influential time of her life.

Within this story the main theme was when things were going bad and you think everything was in the dumps, just remember that everything gets better in time. In this predicament a horrible tragedy happened to Martine's parents, but in return she had been sent away and discovered her true meaning in life. Without this tragedy she never would of found out her powers. She realized that even though she had lost her parents, she still had good meaning in the world and things to accomplish that not many can't say they can do.

I enjoyed reading the book because of the correct morals that are taught and how good always comes to those in need, but I wouldn't recommend it to anyone our age. To me it is too predictable and childish in the sense of the events that take place.

Sarah Sullivan says

Listened to this on audio while driving, and it was a definite upgrade in narrator from the last audio book I listened to. I found the story to be pretty compelling, considering that animal narratives are never my favorite genre. BUT, I have some major concerns with the way race is dealt with in this book. Here we have a white girl who moves to Africa and gets to be the long awaited savior of the animals who the mysterious, wise tribal woman assures us is going to save them all. Ugh. It's not just that nearly all of the sympathetic characters in this AFRICAN story are white - it's that nearly all of the CHARACTERS are white. And those that aren't are pretty stereotypical.
