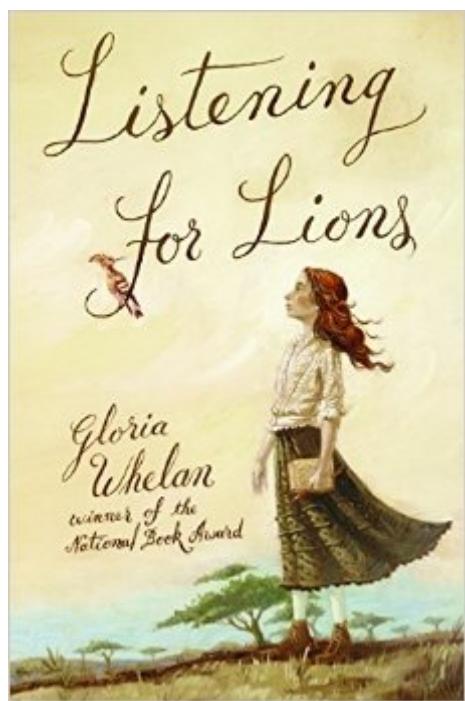


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# Listening For Lions



## **Synopsis**

"If you are among evil people, you must be like the lion, gathering strength and awaiting your time." Africa is the only home Rachel Sheridan has ever known. But when influenza strikes down her missionary parents, she is left vulnerable prey to her family's wicked neighbors. Surrounded by greed and lies, Rachel is entangled in a criminal scheme and sent to England, where she is forced into a life of deception. Like the lion, she must be patient and strong, awaiting the moment when she can take control of her own fate and find her way home again at last.

## **Book Information**

Lexile Measure: 900 (What's this?)

Paperback: 208 pages

Publisher: HarperCollins; Reprint edition (October 10, 2006)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 006058176X

ISBN-13: 978-0060581763

Product Dimensions: 5.1 x 0.4 x 7.6 inches

Shipping Weight: 4 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.6 out of 5 stars (See all reviews) (52 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #56,350 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #6 in Books > Children's Books > Literature & Fiction > Historical Fiction > Africa #54 in Books > Children's Books > Literature & Fiction > Historical Fiction > Europe #126 in Books > Children's Books > Growing Up & Facts of Life > Family Life > Orphans & Foster Homes

Age Range: 8 - 12 years

Grade Level: 5 and up

## **Customer Reviews**

I read LISTENING FOR LIONS, Gloria Whelan's 38th book, as a read-aloud to my fourth graders from the newly released galley of the book (I wrote this review on April 8, but wasn't taking reviews for it at that point). While I am not usually wild about books without much "action," my students and I were really hooked into this book, due to Whelan's character development and interplay. The book was (as many of Whelan's books are) great at illustrating for students the use of symbolism in writing (see also Whelan's HOMELESS BIRD and MIRANDA'S LAST STAND, among others, for examples of symbolism that students can grasp). At the end of the book, my students even broke into spontaneous applause! While some of Whelan's recent books (i.e., CHU JU'S HOUSE and ST.

PETERSBURG #3 / BURYING THE SUN) were starting to sound the same, LISTENING FOR LIONS seemed much fresher in comparison. Nevertheless, many of the same story elements are here as in Whelan's other recent novels: A strong heroine in an international setting loses her loving family and goes on a long, harrowing journey. At some point, she falls under the control of a villainous character (or duo) who tries to make her believe they are looking out for her best interests (out of pity) while they are actually taking advantage of her and her situation for their own gain while they belittle her and keep her down. Eventually she breaks free of their domination, stands on her own, and makes new bonds with new friends / family who truly care about her, and gains the means to provide for herself with a bright future.

... and young readers will be eager to discover how a 13 year old was influenced by lions four generations ago. Rachel grew up in British East Africa (today's Kenya), daughter of missionaries. Her father made the bricks that formed his hospital, an under-funded mission where he also 'filled the pulpit' on Sundays. Her mother taught the Masai and Kikuyu natives, and they all learned from each other. The Africa in which Rachel Sheridan was born was filled with light and the wild beauty of the grasslands. The lessons of life she absorbed were starkly different from those learned today. During the post WW I year of 1919, the scourge of influenza still circled the Earth, and millions of people became victims. Rachel was orphaned, and became the prey of a British couple whose daughter had died. They swiftly schemed to turn Rachel into Valerie Pritchard who could then be sent back to England to work her way into the grandfather's good graces. Mr. & Mrs. P. lost no time in making that happen, leaving Rachel no time to grieve. Rachel, now Valerie, leaves behind the only home she has known and the faithful, sensitive family servant, Kanoro. She will remember the lessons of the lions: gathering strength for the time it will be needed, patience and perseverance. Author Gloria Whelan paints landscapes to entice young readers: the exotic animals of East Africa, the abundant flora and birds there & in England. Whalen draws from Gilbert White's Natural History of Selborne, the 1789 classic revered by all nature lovers, and from a contemporary source about birds of Kenya. The birds have their own colorful place in this story so greatly enriched by the author's research. This is no tame story.

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