

Review #1

Hope For a Hurting World

Giv is a stray mutt, a dedicated survivor, the loyal witness to a string of episodes in recent American history. Stolen from his home as a puppy, he sees the highs and lows of Dallas' Deep Ellum, survives Hurricane Katrina with a cat on his back, escapes an animal testing lab, and saves a young boy from a raging wildfire. He's as indomitable as Benji, but grittier.

This book is essentially a road movie told from a dog's point of view. Giv moves from the heart of one survivor to another, steadily opening up hearts that had turned closed and bringing hope in his wake. People who had given up, who had run away, who wanted to die, all find hope in Giv's gentle loyalty.

Boston Teran depicts America sunk in dark malaise, a country adrift and wondering what it stands for anymore. But the love of a dog teaches people how to love once more, how to trust, and how to live like there's something worth dying for. People discover how to give because Giv teaches them that they have something others need.

Alternately angry and touching, this book is what America needs at a time like ours. In an era that has taught us to be hard-hearted and selfish, Giv reminds us that we are the hope for others in this world. And if we can find our way back to the home where we belong, maybe there's still hope for us and the rest of our hurting world as well.

Kevin L. Nenstiel
July 30, 2009

Review #2

A while back, I was contacted by Jim at [Kelley and Hall](#) about reviewing a book by Boston Teran called [The Creed of Violence](#). It looked really interesting so I said, sure! A short while after they sent me that book, they sent me another one of his books, [Giv: The Story of a Dog and America](#). I wasn't under any pressure to read or review it, but I thought it would be a great addition to my [Dog Days of November](#) reads. So I grabbed it off my shelf.

And O. MY. GOSH. I loved it. I'm not sure if I loved it because I had no expectations or what, but what a beautiful book. Beware: If you are the type that might tear up while reading a book, this is one of those books. The idea behind the story is based on events in the author's life. You can read his idea for the [book here](#).

The story follows the life of a dog named Giv. The book is composed as the story of Giv's life written by one of Giv's many owners, Sergeant Dean Hickok. From Giv's birth, by chance, fate, or luck, he gets passed on from person to person, from experience to experience. The blurb from the press release by Americans Speak says "The Forrest Gump of dog books." I'm not sure about all that, but boy does Giv go through some stuff. He's in Dallas with some struggling musicians checking out the book depository, he's there through Hurricane Katrina in New Orleans, and he's there for an Iraqi war veteran.

While the book is about a dog named Giv, it's also about the people he meets. Memorable characters. Heart-wrenching characters. It's about the free-will, undying spirit of man and man's best friend. I loved how the idea of the act of rebellion, not always a bad thing, was a pivotal aspect of the book and the character of Giv. Boston Teran wrote rebellion as "the power to choose freely who one will or will not be". I like that. As he points out, America was founded by rebels and there's a little bit of rebel in us all.

I find it hard to write about this book and not sound cheesy or blubbery...but I can't help it. I really loved it. I was really surprised how much I liked it. It's not a book I would have picked up on my own but I am so glad I was sent it.

As a side note: who is [Boston Teran](#)? Apparently no one knows! The About the Author section states that it's either a pseudonym of a well-known writer, or a group of writers, or who knows! Apparently *Creed of Violence* has been bought by Universal for the second-highest price ever paid for a manuscript and another novel, *God is a Bullet* is highly acclaimed and is being adapted to film as well. Interesting, right?

Has anyone else read this or have it to read? I'd love to hear another person's opinion. Or have you read any other Boston Teran novels? Thoughts on just who Boston Teran is?

I'd love to give away a copy but I'm going to make my husband read it. That and I want to keep mine. So go buy it, borrow it...just read it.

<http://lifeandtimesofanewnewyorker.blogspot.com/2009/11/giv-boston-teran.html>
November 13, 2009

Review #3

TCM Reviews (www.tcm-ca.com/reviews/3107.html)

Giv: The Story of a Dog and America
Reviewed by Connie Harris

Dogs touch us in ways we cannot explain. The invisible beyond the visible within each of us. Through Giv's journey through life we experience goodness and evil, sorrow and tragedy, even triumph. The will to survive and the determination to overcome all that life throws our way to hold us back.

Giv's journey through life is an unusual and difficult journey. Giv is our window to the soul of this nation as we follow him from state to state and person to person. We are introduced to the people that Giv's life has touched. There is something special about Giv that brings up deep reservoirs of loss that passages of time cannot resolve.

Giv is found on a back road in Kentucky by Dean Hickok, sergeant, late of the U.S. Marines – war tested and weary, the victim of hardened years at the tender young age of three. Dean determines to reunite Giv with his owner in New Orleans post Katrina. Thus begins the journey into Giv's life...

Giv: The Story of a Dog and America is a well-written, moving and touching story. Giv will live on in your heart long after you've turned the last page.

Review #4

Amazon.com

By Jemima Adams (Nashua, NH)

The protagonist Giv is a dog who has amazing adventures and endures all kinds of abuse and deprivation. Offspring of a dog with a mysterious past, Giv knows security and love in his first home but gets stolen and subsequently ends up with various owners – some who love him and some who do not. Giv's will to survive, his capacity for faithful love and his selfless courage enable some of the broken-spirited human characters in the novel to experience redemption from their pasts. These people have been devastated by loss from 9/11, war, murder, Katrina and other life-altering events.

Boston Teran has threaded the tale of Giv's travels with many insightful reflections about American people in various difficult circumstances. He not only portrays the low points in the lives of his characters, but also some emotional highs. Characters fall in love, find creative inspiration, and connect with their future purpose. The amazing qualities found within Giv and other Characters reflect the spirit of contemporary America. The story contains mystery, introspective reflection, and plenty of drama. It touches upon the most tragic national events faced by Americans of this generation. Boston Teran's novel evidences great sympathy toward those who have experienced these losses first hand and it also expresses hope and faith in America's ability to endure.

I really enjoyed this book. I fell in love with its lyrical writing style from the first page. The writing is smooth, poetic and rhythmic. The story develops systematically and the ending is very climatic and satisfying. The characters seem very realistic and the setting encompasses many different parts of America to create an interesting mosaic of images.

The book came to me with the quote, "The Forrest Gump of dog books". This was so right on target. The author crafted the story so well that I had to go back to make sure the story was fiction. This is the story of Giv, a dog who travels all across the states. He survives a kidnapping, Hurricane Katrina, an abusive period only to be rescued by a Marine, who finds it was he that needed rescued. This Marine decides to find Giv's owner, which takes him across the country. Once again Giv rescues someone and it is believed that Giv is lost. When found his past meets up with his future. This was a wonderful book. Each owner has a story. It is usually one that starts out negative until Giv enters the picture. Lives are changed because of him. Anyone who has ever had a pet, or read stories of animals who have rescued others, often giving their own life for the human will want to read this book. Just like in Forrest Gump, every negative thing that happens to him turns into something positive. I gave this book a 5 out of 5 rating.

Musings of a Book Addict Review
July 16, 2009