



# The Remarkable Adventures of Tom Scatterhorn: The Museum's Secret

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New to Choice:

off

Media type:

Book

BfK Rating:

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With his parents away, 11-year-old Tom Scatterhorn is sent to live with his eccentric aunt and uncle, who own a mouldering museum full of stuffed animals. Tom learns about a long-standing feud with another family in the town, and is amazed to find that the stuffed animals have a habit of coming to life! Things become clearer when Tom time-travels back a hundred years, via a strange trunk he finds in a cupboard. But there remains a surprise of apocalyptic dimensions when Tom returns to the present?

There are echoes of many children's classics from the past in this novel and this exuberant intertextuality enhances the effectively written, multi-layered text. Chancellor makes skilful use of the Victorian and Edwardian roots of boys' adventure stories by returning Tom to this period ? a past approvingly described as ?dangerous and brutal but colourful and crazy?. It is this world which provides for Tom an Indian tiger hunt, as part of an adventure described as being ?worthy of Phileas Fogg himself?. Yet, true to the book's eclectic style, this adventure is a vignette, lasting for just three absorbing chapters. The story's other adventures include Tom's experience of an ice fair, a powerful evocation of a fantasised past enhanced by the smells and sounds described.

There are many other themes and allusions which make a rapid appearance, including conservation and evangelism. In fact, there are almost too many to be easily assimilated, and it takes some time for the overall arc of the story to become apparent. Nevertheless, the book is successful and makes a gripping read as incident follows incident. It will appeal to a wide range of 10-14 year-olds, especially those with some experience of the wide range of texts referred to during the story.

Running Order:

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