



The Mystery of the Cupboard

Lynne Reid Banks , Tom Newsom (Illustrator)

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When Omri puts away the cupboard in *The Secret of the Indian*, he vows that it will be forever. Little Bear, Boone, and the other miniature figures he had brought to life will remain plastic. But then Omri and his family move to an old country farmhouse that they inherited from a distant relative, and he unearths a faded journal hidden in the thatched roof. To Omri's utter amazement, the notebook was written by his "wicked" great-great-aunt Jessica Charlotte on her deathbed. Even more astonishing: It reveals how the cupboard and its magic were created--and changed the destiny of his family,

In trying to right a wrong done in the past, Omri finds he has no choice but to break the promise he made to himself. The magical cupboard is opened once more!

The Mystery of the Cupboard transports readers from the peaceful English countryside of today to, the elegant drawing rooms and boisterous music halls of pre-World War I London and introduces them to an unforgettable new set of characters--both big and small--and an enthralling series of adventures. Continuing the enchantment of the earlier works in the series, this is Lynne Reid Banks's richest, most memorable "Indian in the Cupboard" book ever.

"In this latest installment in the award-winning Indian in the Cupboard series, Omri's fascination with the little people of the cupboard has matured into an obsession with discovering the origin of their life-giving magic. With the help of his great-aunt's hidden diary and a meeting with an elderly roof-thatcher, Omri is able to piece together his own family's history....These rich, well-rounded characters speak eloquently and entertainingly within a polished mystery."--Publishers Weekly.

The Mystery of the Cupboard Details

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Laura says

I listened to this book with the kids in the car. We are going to finish the series - I think it has been good so far, although I definitely loved it a lot more as a kid. Patrick can really get on the nerves!

Betsy says

Boys and I both enjoyed this one--me quite a lot, especially in comparison to the last one. The novel explains the origin of the magic and the cupboard through a diary of Omri's great-grandmother's sister.

Anne Hamilton says

Omri finally discovers the complex history of the cupboard which has the ability to bring plastic figures to life in this fourth book in the series.

His parents decide to move to the country. At first he's appalled that they would uproot the family just because this mother has inherited a cottage from a distant relative. Then it's his father's turn to be appalled - the cottage is a centuries-old Dorset longhouse with a thatched roof. And the thatch needs repairing - urgently. And at phenomenal expense.

Gradually Omri comes to suspect that the house has something to do with the mysterious cupboard he's locked up in a bank for safekeeping after it causes so many terrible problems in a previous book.

In a clump of thatch, he discovers a carefully wrapped journal written by a former owner of the house. As he reads the spidery brownish handwriting, he comes to understand the mind of an actress who lived by her wits and psychic abilities many years before. But who was so jealous of her sister that her revenge on her twisted to hurt those she loved.

A nice wrap-up to the series. Even though, on reflection, the story is somewhat contrived to take account of all the events in the previous books, it doesn't really feel that way while reading it.

Nora McNabb says

The mystery of the cupboard was a pretty good book, what I really liked about it was where the story took place. Of course since it wasn't a picture book there were no pictures but the way the author made the setting sound now I want to go to England. In the beginning the family lives in an apartment in London but then they suddenly move to the country, and that is where the mysteries start taking place.

Kristen Nelson says

Indian in the Cupboard Book #4.

Omri and his family have just inherited a house out in the country. This home is in need of a lot of improvements, including a thatched roof. During the new thatching process, Omri is led to discover a hidden secret: a journal and a cash box that were placed there by the previous owner. In this journal, Omri discovers that his ancestor, Jessica Charlotte, is actually the owner of the key and the cupboard and the mystery as to why, together, they create magic to bring plastic people to life.

Stef Rozitis says

I enjoyed this much more than I expected to. I think children's books used to be written more carefully and complexly even as recently as the 90s. Considering it was the fourth in a series (the first was even made into a movie) I really wasn't expecting much.

Omri and his family are relatively believable- neither in perfect harmony nor really any of them bad people either. At times he madly loves his parents and other times he is angry and sullen. His brothers are difficult to get along with. Omri's interest in the cupboard is compared at one point to a drug addiction, the overarching theme of the book is to try to understand and connect with instead of judging others. The character of Jessica who initially only comes through her journal is a case in point- she is the "wicked" great aunt, but her wickedness is largely constructed by her circumstances and people also experience her as warm, generous and charming.

The character of Jenny, is another one who is constructed differently depending which context she finds herself in- one version of her would not be recognised by people in the other setting though both are authentic to who she is.

Patrick seemed a really lovely character, I was sad the plot was so dismissive of him. One of the characters die (I won't ruin it by saying who) and that is treated well within the text. Many little historical titbits and details (as well as the way morals and social systems change over time) come through in the little people- few in number though they be. I suspect the character of "Little Bear" is slightly problematic in terms of being a white person's stereotypical view of a Native American ("Indian") but I think the ignorance here is not malicious at least. Kitsa's side-story also was very cool (and unfolded nice and slowly).

While initially expecting to feel nothing more than mild irritation or smirking tolerance as I read the book, I was in the end actually intrigued. I will probably keep an eye out and if I see a cheap copy of any of the others read that too.

Tip Reads says

I read this book when I was in elementary school. It is a great read for children. I recommend this book as a family read.

Kati says

Yet more growth (and more set-backs) for Omri in this book. Patrick shows up in this book as little more than a means to talk some sense into Omri. We get to learn how the cabinet and key came into being, how they were imbued with their magic, and a great deal about Omri's family on his Mom's side) in the process. There's a good bit of heart-break in Omri's family story. Not the best of the books, IMO, but a solid addition to the series.

Cathy aka The Attached Mama says

I read the first book in this series to the kids last year. Honestly, I had been saving that book for the kids for a long time. My third grade teacher read it to our class, and I remember LOVING it. It was one of the best memories from my childhood---sitting around listening to that book after PM-recess every day. And everyday ending on some huge cliff hanger that would have us begging for another chapter (She was a great teacher if you can't tell.) Anyway, I digress. suffice it to say that I had been hoping to create these same wonderful memories with my OWN children. So I saved "Indian in the Cupboard" until my oldest was in 3rd grade. I read the first book in this series to them, which they LOVED too.

However, reading it as an adult gave me a whole different reaction to the series I didn't like it as much as I did as a child. There were also a couple of moments which I disagreed with as an adult. (For example, the main character Omri has to sneak into his parents liquor cabinet to steal whisky for the cowboy. REALLY?) My kids loved it though, and had me read through the whole series.

The second book in this series was just OK--not as good as the first. (But sequels rarely are.) And the third book in this series seemed more filler than plot. I was honestly ready to be finished with this series and did NOT want to read the last book. My children begged me though, so I gave in. I have to admit that I was pleasantly surprised. It seems that Ms. Lynne Reid Banks got her inspiration back while writing this book! It had lots of twists and kept us entertained throughout.

Meadow Frisbie says

The story BEHIND the cupboard was very interesting. Just as interesting as the stories in the cupboard.

Whitney says

It all just felt a bit contrived and less engaging than any of the books that were just about the magic. It's not that it wasn't interesting, it was just interesting in the way that reading old diaries is interesting, not in the way that great stories are interesting. If you've loved the series I would say read it if you're into backstories. It hasn't changed my opinion of the others (loved them), but neither did it elevate the series for me.

Marti Dolata says

Grabbed my interest, and it made sense, but I think I would have enjoyed it more if I had read the previous trilogy. They and the sequel are now on my want to read list. Appropriate for elementary.

Mary Taitt says

This stupid website ATE MY REVIEW! I am so frustrated because I took all this time to write a nice review and goodreads ATE it and spat out an empty window. Now I have to start all over and I have other things to do so I cannot write as thorough a review.

I liked this book very much and recommend it to anyone who likes children's literature and fantasy. It's spell-binding and enthralling.

Unfortunately, it is a sequel, and I hadn't read the previous books, and it referred back to them constantly. This got very annoying, but I guess that's not the author's fault. She probably assumed people had read the earlier books in the series.

Omri's Mom inherits a house that belonged to her Uncle Frederick, who she never knew. Turns out it previously belonged to his great great aunt who was the first to call back the little people. But her journal, which he finds as the roof is being rethatched, reveals a terrible secret or two.

Ashley Stevens says

So much backstory: I mean, it was totally necessary for the book but made for a long read. Disappointed I never really found out about the earrings. Perhaps it gets cleared up in the final book? Ready to get started on the next one soon

Danielle Cullen says

It was great to finally get the backstory on the cupboard and it's magic! After several books of dealing with the drama between Omri and his friends, it was a nice switch up.
