



Nop's Trials

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A novel about the bond between a farmer and his black-and-white border collie that James Herriot called “beautiful [and] as gripping as any thriller.”

On Christmas Day, Virginia livestock farmer Lewis Burkholder and Nop, his black-and-white border collie, go out to feed the sheep. But the holiday is shattered when Nop fails to return home. Stolen by two hardened criminals who see in the young stock dog a \$300 payday, Nop suffers abuse and brutality as he courageously adapts to his new life, which holds no shortage of surprises. At the same time, Lewis refuses to believe that his beloved dog is gone for good. His determination to be reunited with Nop—and Nop's own unwavering loyalty—reveals the depth and strength of the bond that can exist between humans and dogs.

Nop's Trials Details

Date : Published August 1st 1992 by Lyons Press (first published 1984)

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Author : Donald McCaig

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From Reader Review Nop's Trials for online ebook

Sandra Platt says

Sadly, I didn't like this book. I know it's about a dog, but there's terrible violence and I couldn't get very far. I get enough of that in my work.

H Gibson says

I believe this book is for anyone who ever loved an animal. It was written in the way I remember great books used to be written: a story for the sake of a story. No social or political agenda to push, multiple POVs layered to show depth and insight, even the quirky writing device of the dogs' thoughts - basically all the good things that are missing from writing today. Anyone who loved James Herriot's stories will enjoy Nop's Trial. It reads like the Black Beauty of the dog world, so be prepared for cruelty toward animals at the hands of humans. Still, the story ends on a satisfying, hopeful note without sacrificing believability.

Smokinjbc says

I originally read this book soon after acquiring my first border collie. The book is about a young, tremendously talented sheepdog named Nop and his gruff owner, Lewis. When Nop isn't making a big impression on the trial field, he is Lewis' right hand dog when it comes to his sheep. On Christmas morning, Nop disappears and the book is about Lewis's quest to find his dog.

The book is fast moving and gut-wrenching, with beautiful descriptions of the work of these sheepdogs. Even the uninitiated sheepdogger (or everyday pet owner) can understand the impact of this loss on Lewis and the farm. This book will keep you on the edge of your seat for most of the story and will be well worth it! There are some graphic and hard scenes, so this may not be the book for someone looking for a "feel-good" animal story.

Britta says

I'm not sure why I added *Nop's Trials* to my Kindle, because I tend to be really picky about the books I read, and it's very much outside my usual/preferred genres. I'm glad I read it, though. It was something different, and McCaig has a laudable understanding of canines. *Nop's Trials* is a sweet story of one dog's resilience in the face of hard times and one owner's perseverance in getting his dog back. Some readers might be put off by the animal cruelty displayed throughout the novel, but I thought it made the story more realistic--and it allowed me to appreciate the perseverance and resilience even more.

Peggie says

This is my second reading of this book; a recent day spent at a professional-level sheepdog trial prompted me to reread it. I enjoyed it as much the second time around. McCaig is a grand storyteller, creating characters who are realistic and subtle, and a plot line that carries the reader along easily. He also knows dogs, and writes about them with great respect and realism. All in all, a refreshing page-turner with a satisfying ending (for those of us who occasionally read to escape!)

A??ela W. says

I read this book for a challenge. This was not the type of book that I normally read. On Christmas Day, Virginia livestock farmer Lewis Burkholder and Nop, his black-and-white border collie, go out to feed the sheep. But the holiday is shattered when Nop fails to return home. Lewis did everything he could to find him he refused to believe that his dog was gone. Nop went through a lot of abuse it was sad as a dog owner I would hate to have my pet go through the things that he went through. With that being said I read this book for a challenge. This book was well written with no errors in grammar or spelling.

Candy says

I loved Nop! You'll love him, too!

Mary Jane says

This is a neat dog story. Nop is a border collie who is a working sheep dog and trial champion. He gets separated from his home/farm and the book tells of his adventures and his owner's search for him. The characters are interesting - both human and canine. Though it's not a gripping read, the pages keep turning. The last few chapters it gets to be "I HAVE to find out what happens!".

The writing wasn't amazing, but not terrible, either. I'd recommend the book to anyone who likes dogs.

Christie Bane says

It's rare to find any person who has a great understanding of people and a great understanding of dogs. It is even more rare for that person to also be a great writer. But Donald McCaig can do it all -- "get" people and dogs, and tell a damn good story, so good I wanted to immediately go out and read everything he's ever written. This book is about Nop, a young border collie who belongs to Lewis Burkholder. Lewis is a humble Virginia farmer, soft-spoken, man-of-few-words, guy who does the right thing. Not rich by any means, but likes to train dogs and compete with his dogs now and then. Nop is a young dog, coming along well, who has the misfortune to get stolen from Lewis, which sets him off on a lengthy series of misadventures until he is finally reunited with Lewis. A truly great dog story, a classic. Read it!

November Is Nyarlathotep says

A warm, endearing, close-to-life story of the lives of a Shenandoah Valley farmer, his wife, adult daughter, and especially hardworking Border Collies, Nop and Stink Dog. The latter once came too close to the livestock and was "stove-up," rendering it unfit for running and herding. But the two dogs unite in relating their interjected portions of this tale, against the author's narrative backdrop.

It's easy to understand how this book became an immediate classic, for its endearing story and valuable life lessons. I readily engaged with the novel and read it in no time at all. I think it would be suitable reading for middle grades on up, and with judicious selection, to read to younger children as well. Who wouldn't adore these beloved dogs?

Cynthia says

I love dogs. I thought by the cover, the book would be similar to a James Herriot book (which I really like!).....but that was not so! The author did a heck of a job of telling this story.....but there is so much graphic violence against animals/dogs in the story.....that it made it a very tough read. All that violence is what prevents me from giving it any more stars, but it probably is what makes the story so compelling? Yikes.

Carolyn Vandine west says

Great books, I read Nop's hope first not knowing there was another book first.

However that being said I was glad I did, Nop did have lots of trials not the ones I thought they would be. Since I read the second book first I knew he would persevere but I was so sad at what he went through. Glad it is fiction, I am a huge dog lover and it would be heartbreaking to know it was real. That being said, watch for animal abuse it happens right under our noses.

I volunteer for our local humane Society and see how the poor things are mistreated. Pets are a responsibility we take for life, like marriage and parenthood

I have one border collie whose work is her frisbee, although she is 13 now and has hip dysphasia her day is not complete without "working" her frisbee

Wonderful book don't pass it by.

Rochelle says

A must-read for any dog lover. And the best part is, there is a sequel!

Jane Guyton says

I am not a dog owner (though I do like sheepdog trials) and I loved this book. I wanted to read a book about a part of the country I don't know well, about people living lives very different from my life on a topic about which I know next to nothing. So I bought this book and thoroughly enjoyed it. The story is totally engaging, the characters very well drawn and the writing is lovely. I particularly liked the way the dogs refer to each other as "Thou," although I don't want this comment to make you think this is a book about anthropomorphism. It is not. It's a different kind of adventure, and I really pulled for Nop and Lewis all the way through.

Dawn Dorsey says

Nop is a working stock dog, a border collie, and this is his story. He is happiest doing the work for which he was bred and trained, and loves his master, Lewis, almost as much as his work. Together they have won several competitions, and together they manage the sheep and cattle on the farm.

On Christmas morning, after feeding the stock, Nop and a visiting puppy go out to stretch their legs, and that's when his trouble starts. A pair of local thugs steal them, and Nop must fight a huge Norwegian elkhound to save his friend. She is killed instantly, and Nop badly injured, which only begins his life of abuse. Even while Lewis tries to find him, Nop lives a nightmare of abuse, and we follow him on his odyssey in the dog underworld. He works the rodeo circuit, adopts and protects a bag lady, and eventually is sold to a research lab, where his future looks grim indeed, and he watches for his first opportunity to escape.

The charm of Nop's story is that we see it mostly through his eyes. We also learn about his people, and the world of competitive working dog handling, but we feel first Nop's joys, sorrows, loves, losses, fears, and loyalties. We experience his intelligence and resourcefulness, such that even hired thugs respect his strength and worth, and cannot bring themselves to kill him outright. It is his own strong spirit that saves his life and eventually brings him home.
