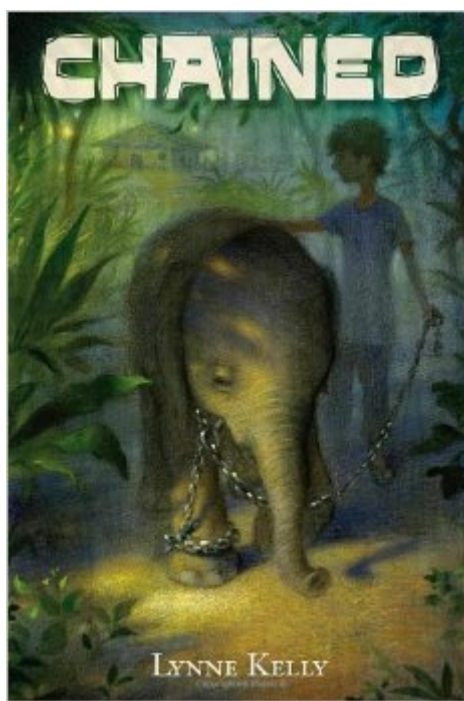


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# Chained



## Synopsis

After ten-year-old Hastin's family borrows money to pay for his sister's hospital bill, he leaves his village in northern India to take a job as an elephant keeper and work off the debt. He thinks it will be an adventure, but he isn't prepared for the cruel circus owner. The crowds that come to the circus see a lively animal who plays soccer and balances on milk bottles, but Hastin sees Nandita, a sweet elephant and his best friend, who is chained when she's not performing and hurt with a hook until she learns tricks perfectly. Hastin protects Nandita as best as he can, knowing that the only way they will both survive is if he can find a way for them to escape.

## Book Information

Lexile Measure: 770L (What's this?)

Hardcover: 256 pages

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ISBN-13: 978-0374312374

Product Dimensions: 5.7 x 1 x 8.5 inches

Shipping Weight: 12.8 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.8 out of 5 stars [See all reviews](#) (27 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #176,681 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #27 in [Books > Children's Books > Growing Up & Facts of Life > Difficult Discussions > Runaways](#) #121 in [Books > Children's Books > Animals > Elephants](#) #171 in [Books > Children's Books > Geography & Cultures > Explore the World > Asia](#)

Age Range: 10 - 14 years

Grade Level: 5 - 9

## Customer Reviews

Elephants! A 10-year-old boy, a younger sister, a mom, a stray dog, and the memory of a good father, who lost his life, too early. In an instant, it's all traded, for the noblest of reasons. Now life includes a cruel and greedy man, the kindest and most humble of men, a man who has lost his way, and the soon-to-be best friend a 10-year-old boy could ever have...in the form of an elephant. Follow along as these best friends learn from one another about love, loyalty, bravery, and doing what's right. If you've read *The One and Only Ivan* and loved it, don't wait another minute to read this book. And if you are an adult and have read *Leaving Time* by Jodi Picoult, read *Chained* and

Ivan. If you haven't read any of them, what are you waiting for? Three five-star book recommendations by a children's, young adult, and adult librarian--No Charge! Do keep the tissues nearby, in all cases! Magnificent!!!!

Meet Chanda. She is the catalyst for today's review of *Chained*, a smart, well-written, and engrossing novel by Lynne Kelly. Chanda is a young girl bitten by fever mosquitoes and now carries a dangerously high temperature. She needs medical help now. With the help of a neighbor, Amma, her mother, takes Chanda to the hospital in the city. Left behind to care for things at home is Chanda's older brother, Hastin. Thus begins an engaging story of one young boy's quest to help the three women in his life, though he has yet to meet the third. Chanda's care will cost the family 4000-rupee they do not have. Without her husband to help, Amma barter her services as a house cleaner in exchange for the needed money. Hastin does not like the accommodations Amma resides in during her one-year stay and is determined to find a job and send Amma home. Finding a job is no easy task when you are a young boy of ten, with little skills. Enter Timir, a once prosperous circus owner who is determined to return to his former glory. He needs an elephant keeper. Hastin needs a job. Timir will graciously talk to the rich man and pay off Amma's debt, and add a salary Hastin will collect at the end of his one-year stint as the elephant keeper. There is a catch. Timir does not own an elephant. He expects Hastin to help trap one in the jungle. Chup! No one should know this, he tells Hastin. Timir promises this job is more adventure than work. Hastin has never seen the jungle, having lived all his life in the desert. Two other characters are essential in this story. One is Sharad, the elephant trainer who trained under one of the best elephant trainers, but has forgotten most of what he learned. The other is the circus cook, Ne Min, an older man with much elephant experience. Ne Min is like a wise grandfather, but with secrets that bring him shame. Fast forward past some wonderful prose and scenes that will throw your emotions topsy-turvy and Timir has his elephant. Hastin names the elephant Nandita and the two become best friends. Hastin must feed, bathe, and sleep with Nandita. He cares for any injuries or ills she may acquire. None of these tasks is easy. Timir, the once jovial employer-in-need, has chained both Hastin and Nandita. He chains Nandita around the neck and feet, while chaining Hastin to a debt. Timir seems reluctant to let the boy work off his debt. Timir is a paranoid and angry man with a cruel streak. Each time he thinks Hastin has broken one of his rules, Timir adds another three months onto the loan agreement. Neither the young boy nor the young elephant think they will ever get out from under Timir's brutal thumb. I need to stop here. There is so much action in *Chained* that I could write twice the normal review. I adore this book. It is one of the, no, it is the best book I have read

from a debut author and the best book by anyone so far this year. Chained is a novel all aspiring authors need to deconstruct. It is near perfect execution of craft. Scenes unfold naturally without one unnecessary word and the plot is unusual, well researched, and builds to the perfect ending that will satisfy the reader. The well-defined characters have unforgettable personalities, including Nandita. This is the kind of writing editors and publishers are looking for. The story is set in Northern India and features two distinct regions: the dessert and the jungle. Important subjects include family, loyalty, honor, and trust. Chained is a good choice for social studies teachers. The story contains many concepts a teacher can use to great success in her classroom. Being well constructed, in addition to being wonderfully told, makes Chained a great choice for a book report. The issue of animal care, wild animal care in particular, can lead off a classroom discussion that will every student interested. Chained is also a story boys and girls will not put down, if they can get it away from their parents long enough to read it. Yes, Chained is a middle grade book. Yes, Chained could be marketed to adults, it is that good, that engaging of a story. If you can only purchase one book, make it Chained. This one is going to be on every library's most requested list.

I just read this book to my 2nd and 3rd grade daughters. I actually found it by accident while searching our library shelves for another book; so glad I decided to pick it up! From the first chapter 'we' were hooked. My girls would start asking me every evening around 6:30, "Are you going to read 'Chained' to us tonight?" My 3rd grader may have been okay reading it by herself, but reading it together was a treat for all of us and we were able to periodically stop and discuss the characters, plot and make predictions. I can't say enough about the richness of this novel. It was also VERY refreshing to read a story to the girls about a country - and culture - that is foreign to them. I highly recommend this book.

I loved this book so much, I read it twice! A sweet brother, a young elephant, a villain and India details make this fascinating and heart tugging. Life isn't always easy, but love abounds. Curl up in a chair and prepare to be charmed by this engaging book!

I read this book with my 11 year old son who is a reluctant reader to say the least. While he will never admit to liking a book or reading, I think this book had a huge impact on him. He became extremely emotional at the ending, which really surprised me. I really enjoyed this story very much too. It just made me love elephants even more!

A well-written middle-grade novel about a boy who become an indentured servant to pay his sister's medical debts. He is sent to work at a circus in the woods in India. First, he must help trap a baby elephant. He is reluctant to help because he watches the elephants every day and has become attached to them. The circus owner is a cruel, deceitful man. He illegally traps the elephant and then charges Hastin more days for being slow, for dropping things, for making mistakes. Soon Hastin's days as servant turn into months and still the circus owner makes him feel like he owes him more days. Hastin passes most days helping the Burmese cook with cleaning and cooking, repairing fences and caring for the baby elephant that has been captured. The elephant and boy are treated harshly. The chapters are elegantly crafted with true elephant facts, Indian culture, and the different languages and cultures that abound in India. This little gem of a novel will endure the passage of time because nothing about it is dated. These practices take place in India today, and if not India, somewhere in the world man will always oppress man.

When I was ten, I would have read this book a thousand times, hugged it, bawled over it and slept with it under my pillow. With her unforgettable characters, vivid world building and tense plot, Lynne Kelly has created a new classic.

My 9 year old son just finished this book at 11 PM last night. It was the first book he has read entirely on his own that is a book at or slightly over his reading level. He couldn't put it down. As a mother, it was joyous for me to see him find a book that he wanted to read over playing a video game. He wanted to tell me all about every stage of the story, and I could tell it struck him emotionally! Thank you Lynne Kelly. Please write another book!

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