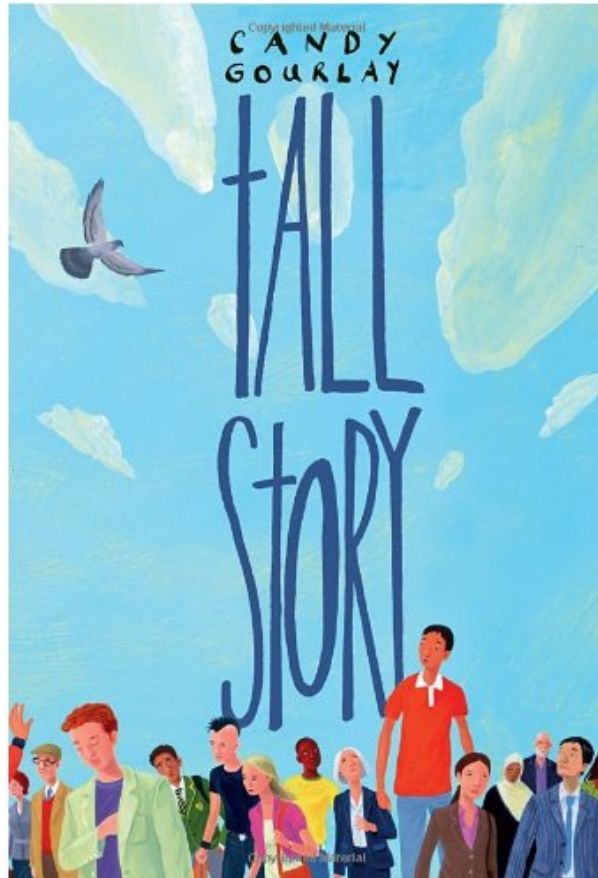
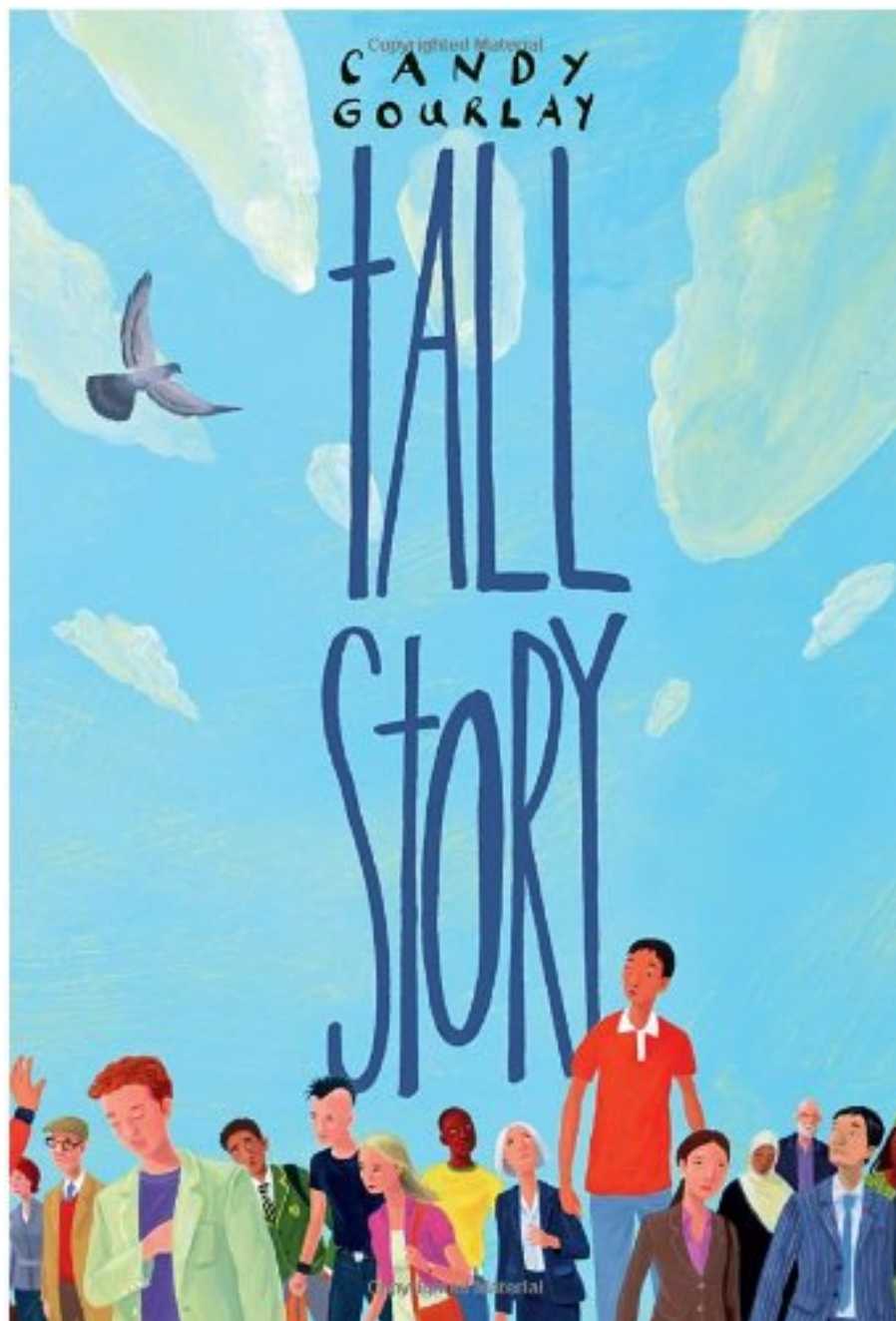


TALL STORY BY CANDY GOURLAY



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From Booklist

Starred Review Working through the many meanings of “tall story,” first-time author Gourlay slam-dunks this tale of a towering boy from the Philippines and the pint-size, basketball-crazy half sister with whom he has recently been reunited. Told in the alternating voices of Bernardo, who suffers from gigantism, and Andi, who longs to play point guard on her school’s b-ball team, the novel effortlessly encompasses real-world dreams as well as magic realism. Bernardo was left behind when his mother, a nurse, immigrated to the UK and forged a new family. In San Andres, Bernardo is seen as a reincarnated folk-hero giant who protects the area from earthquakes, though he believes the blame for his freakish height falls on the local witches who cursed him. In contrast to Bernardo’s anxieties over coming to the UK, Andi’s struggles of readjustment to her changed family appear minor. Wonderfully, though, Gourlay uses the dual viewpoints to show that Andi’s concerns are no less important. And, it turns out, she finds that there is more than one thing worth wishing for. This will capture the hearts and minds of sports lovers—and just about everyone else as well. Grades 6-9. --Karen Cruze

Review

Starred Review, School Library Journal, March 2011:

"Contemporary Tagalong and British vernacular enhance the brother/sister narration and enliven the depiction of cultures. In her first young adult novel, Gourlay offers an appealing blend of diverse characters, emotional conflicts, well-paced action, and an upbeat finale. The challenges facing separated, immigrant families and the universal teen desire for acceptance and respect ring true."

From the Hardcover edition.

About the Author

CANDY GOURLAY was born in Manila during the dictatorship of Ferdinand Marcos. After working as a journalist for some years, she moved to the U.K. in her twenties. Candy is now a full-time writer across a range of mediums: short stories, blogs, Web sites, journalistic features, and radio programs. *Tall Story* is Candy's first full-length published novel. Visit her on the Web at CandyGourlay.com.

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Andi is short. And she has lots of wishes. She wishes she could play on the school basketball team, she wishes for her own bedroom, but most of all she wishes that her long-lost half-brother, Bernardo, could come and live in London where he belongs.

Then Andi's biggest wish comes true and she's minutes away from becoming someone's little sister. As she waits anxiously for Bernardo to arrive from the Philippines, she hopes he'll turn out to be tall and just as crazy as she is about basketball. When he finally arrives, he's tall all right. Eight feet tall, in fact—plagued by condition called Gigantism and troubled by secrets that he believes led to his phenomenal growth.

In a novel packed with quirkiness and humor, Gourlay explores a touching sibling relationship and the clash of two very different cultures.

From the Hardcover edition.

- Sales Rank: #210787 in Books
- Brand: Yearling
- Published on: 2012-02-14
- Released on: 2012-02-14
- Original language: English
- Number of items: 1
- Dimensions: 7.60" h x .68" w x 5.17" l, .45 pounds
- Binding: Paperback
- 304 pages

Features

- Great product!

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Most helpful customer reviews

3 of 3 people found the following review helpful.

Debut Gem

By ToyaTex

Gurlay's first novel shows her intimate familiarity with both cultures portrayed in the book - especially the Filipino culture, with its folk beliefs, obsession with basketball, familial loyalty, religion, close community, as well as the reality of immigration overseas to find greener pastures, often at the expense of keeping families geographically intact; and British culture, which she has embraced herself as an adult and in which her children have been raised. Her characters are wonderfully colorful and easy to visualize - from the gentle giant Bernardo to the diminutive and tomboyish Andi - and the rest of the supporting characters have their own engaging stories. I found myself immersed in their lives and laughing with, worrying about and cheering for them. I could easily picture Old Tibo or Jabby in my mind while reading about them. They are unusual but not outrageously so - cultural peculiarities add a rich source of learning for readers unfamiliar with them. There is an interesting mix of fantasy with reality, the fantasy coming mostly from legends and myths told by the characters in Bernardo's small town. The sports theme is not overarching, so as to turn off non-basketball fans. All in all, a page-turner with enough adventure, realism, emotion, myth, diversity and humor to entertain anyone! I highly recommend it!

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful.

Tall Story is a book I would heartily recommend to young readers and up.

By Sue @ Hollywood News Source

In all the years that I've been actively reading, this is the first time I've read a book where the characters are Filipino, where the majority of the story is set in the Philippines, where my culture is breathing and so alive.

Bonus: Tall Story is also written by a Filipino author.

It's incredibly cruel. And it says so much about our publishing industry. We need more diverse books. We need more marginalized authors with unique stories to partake. And we need you to champion them just as much as you do for your standard default books.

‘Why would a giant shudder?’

‘Regret, of course.’ Old Tibo would shake his head sadly. ‘All giants regret that they had to leave Heaven to be with their mortal mothers.’

I’ve been a voracious reader as long as I can remember. At a young age I started devouring classic Filipino short stories about folklore from Sari Manok, the different tales of how Makahiya and Mount Maria Makiling become, The Story of the Piña, Ibong Adarna, The Monkey and the Turtle and more.

These stories molded me. These characters are my people. They are my home.

And reading Tall Story feels like coming home.

“Don’t be surprised now, Andi, your brother is tall. Tall, you hear me?”

Tall Story follows the life of Andi, a thirteen year old girl who is obsessed with basketball. She is persistent and wants to be her school’s new point guard. She is equally hoping her half-brother, Bernardo from the Philippines will be a fan as much as her.

Then he strutted off from the plane.

And yep. He was tall.

He is an eight foot tall, sixteen year old boy.

And from where he grew up, he is heralded as a “hero.”

Because of his unusually long limbs.

And the old legend about Bernardo Carpio, the giant who once saved their village from an earthquake.

Tall Story is consuming, delightful and incredibly sweet.

I could easily guess this would be one of my longest reviews in a while. I will try my best to highlight every bit of selling point. To help with that, here’s the short bullet list of what I’ll be discussing.

Characters + plot (family and friendship dynamics)

Filipino culture + superstition

Sexism + feminism

An immigrant character

The characters are well-crafted. They speak to me. I love Bernardo’s intimate relationship with his Aunt and Uncle, with his friend Jabbar and the way he interacts with his fellow countrymen. Bernardo’s relationship with his mother and half-sister, Andie is fascinating. I adore that Bernardo and his mother converse in Tagalog, their fierce love and regard for each other is heartwarming. And because Bernardo and Andie didn’t have plenty of time to get to know each other before, there is strangeness coming from Bernardo. He didn’t know how he would approach his younger sister who completely grew up with a different upbringing than him.

Andie, on the other hand has pent up resentment coming from her side which she will soon find a way to understand. Gourlay delivers this situation and difference very well.

The villager's strong belief in superstition is extremely amusing to me because I know most Filipinos still follow the traditional ways. It is true and my whole clan is a firm devotee. There is indisputable intersection between Filipino culture and our strong belief in folklore and history. We are very protective of this. They're as good as the gospel of the Gods.

Once again, Gourlay balances the firm culture of the story, the magical voice of the narrator and the scientific reason. This is what makes this a brilliant story. Everything is effortlessly woven together.

Andie, our thirteen year old female character isn't exempt to sexism. At such a young age, she has a handful of people discouraging her from achieving her dream.

"It's not the ideal career for women." her mom says.

"We don't have a basketball team for girls." The captain of the boy's team says.

But that didn't stop her from persevering and showing everyone she can do it. This is a wonderful message to partake to everyone, especially younger kids.

How were my new classmates going to react when I stepped in through the door? Would my legs fit under those desks? Would they laugh at my broken English? I had not slept a wink the night before, worrying. Aside from the constant alienation Bernardo experiences because of his height, he starts thinking about how his classmates will perceive him, because of his "broken" and unusual English.

This left a mark on me.

How many people who don't have English as their first language feel the need to change their accent because theirs isn't the norm? Because it seems embarrassing and they are ashamed? Because it doesn't conform to the standard of western culture?

Plenty. There are hundreds. Thousands. Millions.

That bulls*** needs to stop.

I am tremendously happy Tall Story discusses this in such a manner.

At this point, if you're not clamoring for this book I don't know what to tell you anymore. Tall Story is a book I would heartily recommend to young readers and up.

Review also posted at Hollywood News Source.

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful.

Truly Filipino at heart.

By Maria @ Bookchilla

..Oh, wow. What a heartwarming, feel-good book :)

Family is very, very important. Would you agree? The sole reason that I do not want to work abroad is that, I do not want to be separated from my better half, my toddler son, and my "senior citizen" parents. I want to be with my best friend as we grow together in our married life. I want to be here when my son grows up. I want to be here for whatever number of years my parents have left before they retire to the afterlife. And so,

Tall Story having centered on a Filipino family, here and abroad, pricked me, and that made it so dear to me.

I understood Nardo. Longing for a mom who's halfway around the world with his little sister. Constantly anxious over the townspeople's belief that he is their hero. Awkward over his gigantism. When his immigration papers came, suddenly living in London with his family is not a far-fetched idea. But the people of San Andres will not let him go, for fear of catastrophe hitting them once their hero leaves. And so Nardo's blackouts began.

I understood Andi, too. The jealousy over a brother that her mom probably loved more than her. The determination to own something for herself through her basketball skills. and the incredulity of how being a girl limits her from reaching her dreams.

How Candy Gourlay reflected Filipino family virtues through the characters was really nice. Andi's disdain for his brother was not prolonged, and so did Nardo's despair. The common destroyers (sibling rivalry, parent-child separation, overworked parents) of a family was kept at a minimum, thereby keeping the lightness of the story intact.

I love Jabby (well, minus the freak show incident). And that scene where he's calling for help? Creepy. Because I know that happens, like all the time.

I did not like Nardo's mom, though. What kind of a mother discourages her daughter's dreams because of her height, or thinks there is something wrong about her son, and be ashamed about it? Grrr.

Tall Story is a favorite. Something about it is hopeful, and it has a certain degree of kindness we can all benefit from, once in a while.

See all 15 customer reviews...

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