



General

That Dog Won't Hunt

Lou Allin

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That Dog Won't Hunt by Lou Allin reveals that a dog is not just man's best friend but also woman's.

When Rick Cooper meets Gladys Ryan with her stalled car in the Mojave Desert, he is happy to help her. He is equally willing to accept her offer of work in a remote part of Northern Ontario. He exchanges his skills and muscle for a chance to put miles between him and the "homeboys" looking for payback after their shipment of illegal drugs was stolen from him. Though Gladys is considerably older, Rick admires her "cigar band ring" and full-tilt approach to life. He sees an opportunity to quickly make the money he needs to realize his dream of owning a Utah ranch. However, once Rick arrives at the Call of the Wild hunting lodge with only Gladys and her smelly old dog Buck as company, he finds that he has made a deal with a woman who has "blue ice" in her eyes.

Rick narrates the story, so at first the reader is tempted to sympathize with the young man with a troubled past. Is he the victim of an ungrateful schemer? Is he a cold-hearted manipulator? Lou Allin develops her characters with just enough nuance to give them some dimension.

The book also pays homage to classics. Gladys drives a 1970 red Mustang. Her dog and home are named for Jack London's most famous story. Rick admires James Dean's character in *Rebel Without a Cause*. Most importantly, Rick's behavior and thinking are reminiscent of the psychological approach to murder and mystery found in Poe's "The Tell-Tale Heart." These touches should entertain both the emerging reader, the target audience of the Rapid Reads series, and the more sophisticated reader who is looking for a quick reading escape. Because of these qualities, overlooking the few technical weaknesses in the book—missing punctuation and a usage error—is not difficult. However, the reference to a Walmart being built on Kinsol Mountain in 2190 makes no sense. How would the narrator know that?

Lou Allin is an experienced mystery writer, known for her Belle Palmer Mystery series. *That Dog Won't Hunt*

is a clever tale that offers enough intrigue to hold a reader until its ironic conclusion.

Geraldine A. Richards