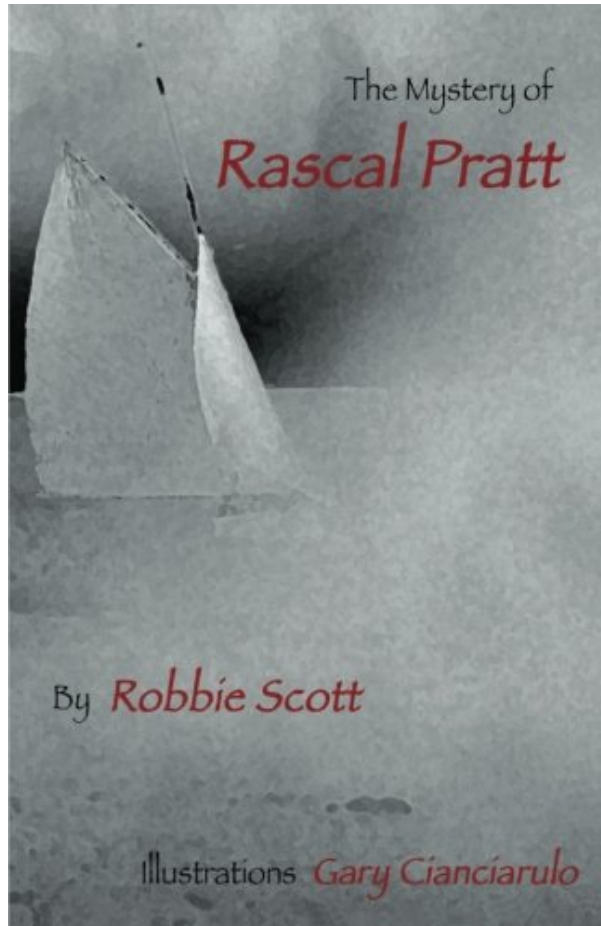
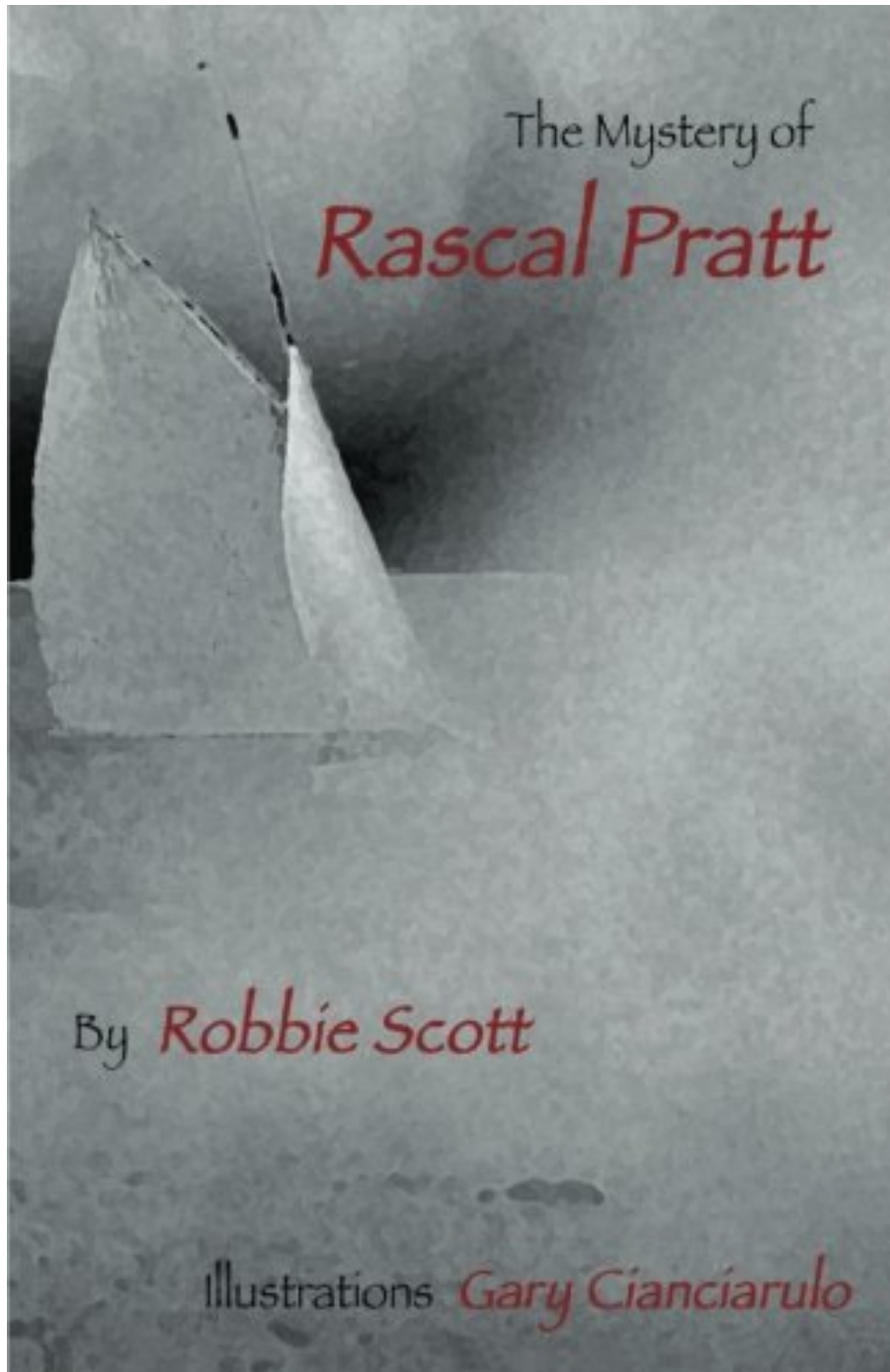


THE MYSTERY OF RASCAL PRATT BY ROBBIE SCOTT



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Review

Four children bond over multiple mysteries in this historical adventure for preteens.

It's 1866, and young Emma Green has moved with her family -- including her ex-Navy Civil War hero father -- to remote Point Bonita, a lighthouse post overlooking San Francisco Bay. Lonely and isolated at first, she's also confused as to why the move was necessary and why her father seems ashamed of his role in the war. Emma soon meets other children Harris, the son of a rancher, and Sue, the granddaughter of the ranch's oldest worker and they play at solving mysteries every day. Things turn serious when a boat washes into the cove, with raving, feverish boy Rascal Pratt inside. Rascal claims to be an infamous pirate, but his real origins are intertwined in the narrative with the stories of Sue's grandfather ranch-hand Achilles, a Native American seeking his freedom, and the mystery of long-lost buccaneer treasure. Achilles is blind and unable to find the alleged long-lost booty of Sir Francis Drake that would let him buy his way out of bondage. Instead, he entrusts Rascal to find it for him. Rascal, initially distrustful of the other children, is forced to bond with them to find it and to secure his own freedom once his true origins are revealed. Scott's tale manages to deftly tie together all these threads, incorporating a generous amount of historical detail and educational footnotes about different types of boats, vegetation and other trivia along the way. Scott generally avoids talking down to young readers, avoiding preachiness while exploring bigotry and military culture in America's post-Civil War past.

A satisfying adventure for young readers, bucking fantasy trends in current Potter-obsessed lit to winning effect. (Fiction. YA) --Kirkus Discoveries

About the Author

Robbie Scott grew up in South Carolina. He received his B.S. at the College of Charleston in Marine Biology. He resides in San Francisco, where he raises his family and works as an engineer and technical writer.

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Set on the shores of San Francisco Bay in 1866, this adventure tale tells the story of twelve year old Emma Green who finds her world turned upside down when her father takes his first assignment as a lighthouse keeper at Point Bonita, a remote rock on the California coast. Despite Emma's isolation, she manages to make friends with the son of a powerful rancher and with the granddaughter of an American Indian. When a mysterious shipwreck survivor - a feverish boy who claims improbably to be a pirate - washes into their cove, secrets that have been hidden across generations are threatened. In order to survive the rifts, the four youths must forge a fellowship in spite of newly opened mistrusts.

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Most helpful customer reviews

7 of 7 people found the following review helpful.

Rascal Pratt - page turner for adults and kids

By J. Elias

I got the Mystery of Rascal Pratt for my 9 and 12-year old nieces, who are avid readers and they loved it. It's an adventure story with unexpected twists and turns, and features intriguing girl and boy characters. I read it as well and found myself eagerly moving from chapter to chapter, wanting to find out what happens.

The author also creates an interesting educational part of the book by including a number of footnotes that provide information about ships of the 1800s, sea lions, and other interesting facets of the book. You can easily read the whole book without going into the footnotes, but they add a dimension that's great for inquisitive young readers.

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful.

Well drawn characters and an authentic sense of place

By Pop Bop

If you reflect on Nancy Drew and Hardy Boys books, I think it would be fair to say that character development and a strong sense of place are not the first things that come to mind. What does come to mind is action, excitement, adventure, and a bit of mystery.

Well, "The Mystery of Rascal Pratt", which is aimed at pretty much the same reading audience, does give you everything. First off, there is no doubt that you are at Point Bonita, north of San Francisco Bay. This is one of the best middle readers books I've seen for establishing a compelling sense of place. The book is worth reading just to get the feel of post-civil war San Francisco. Second, all of the major and most of the minor characters are well drawn, if a bit romanticised. Finally, the mystery is engaging and, while implausible, certainly appropriate for the reading level.

So, this is one of those overlooked and undermarketed books that deserve a chance, and would certainly be a worthwhile addition to a middle reader library.

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful.

beautifully written story of post-Civil war attitudes told through young ...

By bgalca

beautifully written story of post-Civil war attitudes told through young people's eyes. I especially liked the setting of Marin and San Francisco in those times, without it being only about the Gold Rush. The characters were sensitively drawn and felt real.

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