

## ***Sally's Bones***

**MacKenzie Cadenhead**

**Reviewed by: Sophia Cheng, Age 15**

**Star Teen Book Reviewer of Be the Star You Are! Charity**

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Sally Simplesmith never coveted the attention of others, but ever since her mother died, had lost touch with any source of companionship, both at school and at home. In a last, desperate attempt at friendship, Sally reaches out to with Viola Vanderperfect, the perfect, sweet-faced little angel, not expecting Viola to bare her devil's horns at her. Shattered by the rejection, Sally pays a visit to the graveyard, demanding death to claim her. Instead she is offered a puppy, a completely undead one with all the traits of a lively, yet loyal dog that fulfills Sally's wish by becoming her new best friend.

Even though her fortunes have taken a turn for the better, Sally is not oblivious to the sinister notes warning her to keep her newfound skeletal companion a secret from the rest of the world. Consequently, when Bones, the dog, makes a surprise appearance in a crowded restaurant, Sally does not know whether to feel terrified by the repercussions of Bone's impulsiveness, or stunned towards everyone's curious reactions to her pet. At school, Sally popularity has risen to unspeakable heights, but she soon learns that her new status at school and everyone's knowledge of Bone's existence is not as spectacular as she imagined it to be, nor is it less problematic than being the outcast of the school was.

*Sally's Bones* by MacKenzie Cadenhead is thoroughly decorated with pieces of clever wordplay set against a charming plotline, and accompanied with stereotypical characters that turn out to be more complex than their names suggests. While the characters' main attributes can be initially inferred from their names, which make them easier to remember, they seem to grow around their stereotypes to reveal a unique character that can be comparable to a real person's. Furthermore, an abundance of creative word choices presented as alliterations and clichés with double meanings can be found in this book. These expertly chosen synonyms compounded with word phrases that lend a humorous touch while giving the reader a sense of the story's tone. On the other hand, the plot itself was mediocre as it was sometimes predictable. All in all, it was a simple, short, but sweet story with a dramatic flair for words.

### **Recommended Readings:**

Although the playful, lighthearted nature of the book sets the intended reading audience as children and preteens, the rich, incredibly varied vocabulary exceeds the reading level of a typical ten year-old. For example, kids may stumble over terms such as "faux pas" and "ad naseum", but as these terms are usually used in reference to another scene, the meanings can be guessed. This story also has a more sinister, spooky edge to it, especially in the beginning, but as with most children's books, there is also a moral to the story. If you enjoyed reading this fun book, other books to keep in mind are *Super Emma* by Sally Warner, *The Phantom Tollbooth* by Norton Juster, and *Superfudge* by Judy Bloom, and *Switched* by Sienna Mercer.