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Half A World Away



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Synopsis

A kid who considers himself an epic fail discovers the transformative power of love when he deals with adoption in this novel from Cynthia Kadohata, winner of the Newbery Medal (*Kira-Kira*) and the National Book Award (*The Thing About Luck*). Eleven-year-old Jaden is adopted, and he knows he's an "epic fail." That's why his family is traveling to Kazakhstan to adopt a new baby to replace him, he's sure. And he gets it. He is incapable of stopping his stealing, hoarding, lighting fires, aggressive running, and obsession with electricity. He knows his parents love him, but he feels...nothing. When they get to Kazakhstan, it turns out the infant they've traveled for has already been adopted, and literally within minutes are faced with having to choose from six other babies. While his parents agonize, Jaden is more interested in the toddlers. One, a little guy named Dimash, spies Jaden and barrels over to him every time he sees him. Jaden finds himself increasingly intrigued by and worried about Dimash. Already three years old and barely able to speak, Dimash will soon age out of the orphanage, and then his life will be as hopeless as Jaden feels now. For the first time in his life, Jaden actually feels something that isn't pure blinding fury, and there's no way to control it, or its power. From camels rooting through garbage like raccoons, to eagles being trained like hunting dogs, to streets that are more pothole than pavement, the vivid depictions in *Half a World Away* create "an inspiring story that celebrates hope and second chances" (Publishers Weekly, starred review).

Book Information

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Age Range: 10 - 14 years

Grade Level: 5 - 9

Customer Reviews

"What an honest, beautiful, and moving book about the transformative power of love. Cynthia Kadohata's *Half a World Away* reminds us that every person has the power to change someone else's life." -- R.J. Palacio, bestselling author of *Wonder*. *Booklist Starred Review* Cynthia Kadohata has written a remarkable, insightful study of a troubled boy, of the challenging circumstances in which he finds himself, and of his painful journey to bonding and, perhaps, to love. Along the way, she has given readers a candid and often disturbing look at the adoption process in a remote country, while her memorable novel is further enriched by the depth of her characterizations; even minor characters come alive on the page. Thought-provoking and emotionally engaging, *Half a World Away* is wholly satisfying. -- Michael Cart for Booklist *Publishers Weekly Starred Review* Without sugarcoating the complexities and mishaps that can accompany overseas adoption, Kadohata creates an inspiring story that celebrates hope and second chances. "Kadohata's stunningly intimate narrative reveals a complex boy, as self-protective as he is a danger to himself, but oh so clear about the true nature of things." (The New York Times) "[Q]uietly powerful." (The Washington Post) "If literary genius is composed, at least in part, by an uncanny ability to enter other worlds, then 'Half a World Away' proves Cynthia Kadohata's genius - not that there was any doubt." (The Boston Globe) "Kadohata creates an inspiring story that celebrates hope and second chances." (Publishers Weekly, STARRED REVIEW) "Thought provoking and emotionally engaging, this is wholly satisfying." (Booklist, STARRED REVIEW) --This text refers to the Hardcover edition.

Cynthia Kadohata is the author of the Newbery Medal-winning book *Kira-Kira*, the National Book Award winner *The Thing About Luck*, the Jane Addams Peace Award and Pen USA Award winner *Weedflower*, *Cracker!*, *Outside Beauty*, *A Million Shades of Gray*, *Half a World Away*, and several critically acclaimed adult novels, including *The Floating World*. She lives with her hockey-playing son and dog in West Covina, California.

This is an outstanding book. My sons (ages 8 and 5) are adopted, and my older one is starting to wonder about his story. He's known he was adopted since birth, but now that it's become an interesting topic for him, he loved this book and it really helped us open up some important

conversations. I would suggest the parent read the book first (I didn't) so he or she is prepared for the discussions this book makes possible. However, it's the first book about adoption that my son had ever shown an interest in, and it gave us a chance to talk about some things that had clearly been plaguing him. If you're an adoptive parent, by all means, buy this book, read it, and decide when is the right time to have your child read it.

I personally like this book a whole lot. It seems emotional some. Like the kid talks about his emotions and feelings but not in a mushy way. In the book he is supposed to be a "Troubled Child" but he mostly acts like any normal kid his age. A lot of times I agreed with the things the kid said and thought in the book. His character seemed relateable and even humorous. If I knew the kid in real life I would like him. His adoptive parents obviously love him but I thought they actually handled things in the wrong way when it came to Jaden. Which in honesty is real. Some parents just don't know how to handle any kid. Especially when they get old enough to have and voice their own opinions. I actually haven't finished the book in completion yet but I love it so far. And whatever the ending is, is just life I guess. I would recommend this book for any kid 8+. Even a high school kid would read it. It has such a common subject that any body can relate too. Getting a new brother or sister, son/daughter. But this subject can be broad and emotions can run high! The subject is so real. I learned new things about adoption as well. Which I was glad to learn. It's odd that as an adoptive family you can pick and choose a kid like some kind of store item. But you want to make sure that the kid fits in and you are the right family for them. Flights, money, time, bonding, language barriers, etc. things can get in the way of your goal. It's exhausting and time consuming but your ultimate goal is something we all need and desire...LOVE.

Incredible insight into the main character's pic but the ending seemed abrupt and a too simple tying up of loose ends. The complicated character needed a less simplistic outcome.

Great story, I hope my children take away a lesson or two from the story.

I loved this book. Cynthia Kadohata always seems to be able to make me cry.

An excellently written book. I felt the compassion of the main character and enjoyed his antics as I can understand his reasoning. I find he is very intelligent. I would love to read more books of this nature.

This book has so many storylines that just keep you reading! I read this book for 2 days and am sadly done! If you are looking for a 6th grade level book than this is the one! Natalie 10 grade 5

It wasn't the idea of the ending I didn't like, just that the author needed to continue on and tie up the loose ends!

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