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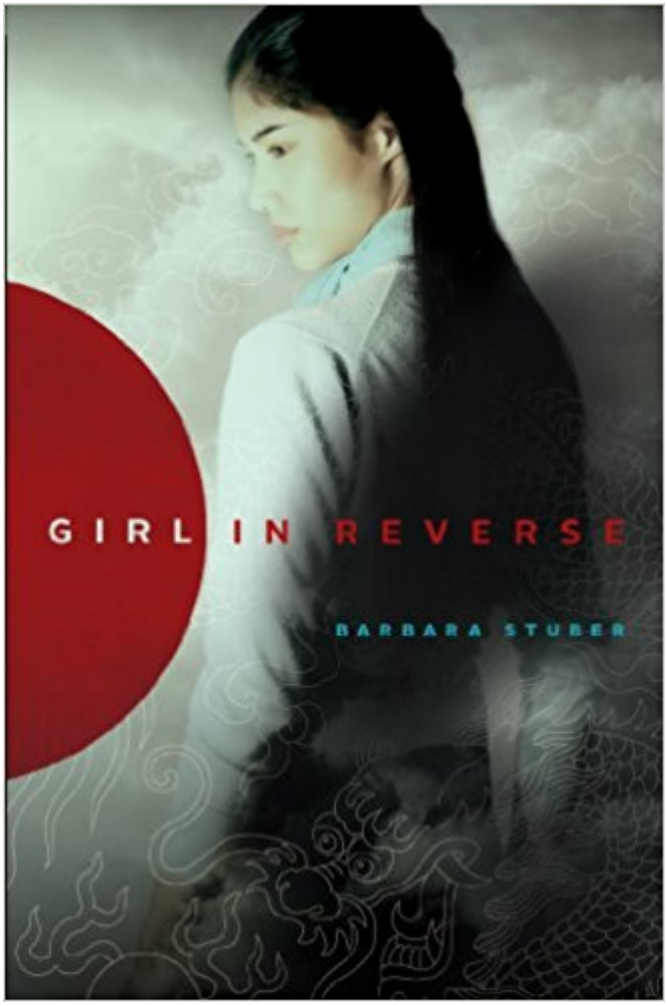

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Synopsis

Being adopted isnÃ¢â ¬â„¢t easyÃ¢â ¬â •especially when youÃ¢â ¬â„¢re seen as a national enemy. A teen seeks the roots of her identity in this stirring novel from the acclaimed author of Crossing the Tracks.When Lily was three, her mother put her up for adoption, then disappeared without a trace. Or so Lily was told. Lily grew up in her new family and tried to forget her past. But with the Korean War raging and the fear of Ã¢â ¬Å“CommiesÃ¢â ¬Â• everywhere, LilyÃ¢â ¬â„¢s Asian heritage makes her a target. She is sick of the racism she faces, a fact her adoptive parents wonÃ¢â ¬â„¢t take seriously. For Lily, war is everywhereÃ¢â ¬â •the dinner table, the halls at school, and especially within her own skin. Then her brainy little brother, Ralph, finds a box containing a baffling jumble of broken antiquesÃ¢â ¬â •clues to her past left by her Ã¢â ¬Å“Gone Mom.Ã¢â ¬Â• Lily and Ralph attempt to match these fragments with rare Chinese artifacts at the art museum, where she encounters the artistic genius Elliot James. Elliot attracts and infuriates LilyÃ¢â ¬â •especially when he calls their first kiss Ã¢â ¬Å“undimensional.Ã¢â ¬Â• With the help of Ralph and Elliot, will Lily summon the courage to confront her own remarkable creation story? A poignantly beautiful novel, Girl in Reverse celebrates the formation of identity as well as the art that draws us all together.

Book Information

Lexile Measure: HL690L (What's this?)

Hardcover: 336 pages

Publisher: Margaret K. McElderry Books (May 13, 2014)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 1442497343

ISBN-13: 978-1442497344

Product Dimensions: 5.5 x 1.2 x 8.2 inches

Shipping Weight: 14.9 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.4 out of 5 stars 23 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #1,270,561 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #66 inÃ Â Books > Teens > Literature & Fiction > Social & Family Issues > Family > Adoption #404 inÃ Â Books > Children's Books > Geography & Cultures > Multicultural Stories > Asian & Asian American #429 inÃ Â Books > Children's Books > Growing Up & Facts of Life > Family Life > Adoption

Age Range: 12 and up

Grade Level: 7 and up

Customer Reviews

Gr 7 UpÃ¢â ¬â •Lillian Firestone describes herself as "a Chinese character without a plot." Adopted at an early age by an American couple, Lily has few memories of her birth mother and knows practically nothing about her Chinese heritage, yet she has been the recipient of Asian slurs from friends and classmates for as long as she can remember. Now, at the height of the Korean War, media-fueled hatred for Communist China is making high school, and even her home life, intolerable. When her little brother finds a hidden box of priceless Chinese antiquities bearing Lily's name, she becomes obsessed with discovering why she was abandoned by her "Gone Mom." Her adoptive parents dismiss her concerns, adamant that she is a member of their family and that she should not be living her life "in reverse." She seeks help from the nun at the orphanage, who helped with her adoption, but discovers more questions than answers when she is handed yet another box of Chinese artifacts left for her by her birth mother. It is the opening of a new exhibit of Chinese art and antiquities at the museum that finally provides her with some surprising revelations about her past. Stuber has created a fully realized, age-appropriate personality in the protagonist but fails to adequately develop the stories of intriguing secondary characters, such as her adoptive mother and Sister Evangeline, that could have provided additional insight into Lily's struggle for self-discovery to readers who face similar issues with their own adoptions.Ã¢â ¬â •Cary Frostick, formerly at Mary Riley Styles Public Library, Falls Church, VA

ItÃ¢â ¬â„¢s 1951, and 17-year-old Lily, the only Chinese person in her Kansas City high school, has become the object of intense bullying. Meanwhile, her dorky but lovable younger brother has discovered a strange lacquered box hidden in the attic. It came from LilyÃ¢â ¬â„¢s birth motherÃ¢â ¬â •her Ã¢â ¬Å“gone momÃ¢â ¬Â•Ã¢â ¬â •and inside is a jumble of strange objects that help Lily learn about her history and her ties to a beautiful new acquisition in the Chinese wing of her local art museum. Her adopted parents are no help, begging her to focus on moving forward instead of Ã¢â ¬Å“living in reverse.Ã¢â ¬Â• LilyÃ¢â ¬â„¢s first-person narration captures her frustration at school and with her family, her anger over the insults she hears on a daily basis, her guilt about searching out her biological mom, and her reluctance to share her past with the people who love her, all in a jolting tone that matches the fits and starts of her struggle to find her provenance. Stuber (Crossing the Tracks, 2010) offers a poetic, introspective story of a girl caught between two worlds. Grades 8-11. --Sarah Hunter

A great story about the cruelty of being a victim of bullying and how a young woman overcomes

great obstacles to learn her true identity.

Barbara Stuber crafts words together like a wizard! Although written for young adults, anyone will enjoy this story of a family getting healed by the mystery of the past. The sweet relationship between Ralph and his sister is a bit idealized but what we all wished we had. It's nice to have a story with a happy ending.

This is a wonderful book on many levels: great prose and imagery, vivid descriptions of an exotic time and place (Kansas City in 1951) and a heartfelt emotional journey through the eyes of a teenage girl who doesn't fit in. I recommend it not only for the YA audience it was intended for but to adults as well. It would be a great book to read together.

This young adult fiction, though set in the 1940's, looks at the timely topic of racial discrimination, as well as that of self identity. While most of the characters feel a bit static to me, it's a readable story of a half-Chinese high school senior finding her identity in white bread middle America. Appropriate for middle school and early high school.

Really enjoyed the book.

Carefully developed storyline. Plot addresses an adopted girl who struggles with parents of different ethnicity. She feels discrimination and a lost heritage since she is adopted.I would suggest for teen agers as well as adults!

Loved the book!

It's written in a form that may appeal to young adults. Shallow storyline

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