

Novel Resource #2

Title: Hannah Is My Name
Author and Illustrator: Belle Yang
Candlewick Press 2004

Belle Yang: Belle Yang was born in 1960 in Taiwan. When she was seven years old she immigrated to the United States with her family. She attended Stirling University, which is in Scotland. However, she graduated from the University of California, Santa Cruz in biology. After completing college, she went on to study art at the Pasadena Art Center College of Design and the Beijing Institute of Traditional Chinese Painting. She delivered a keynote address at Students of Color Conference in January of 2007. Belle Yang is an American writer who writes in English and thinks in Chinese. "It is as though we, the readers of English, can now miraculously read Chinese."

Characters: Hannah (a Chinese girl who helps her Baba and learns to adapt to a new country) She is a seven year old girl, who is eager to help and eager to learn.

Mr. Choo (man in Chinatown who translates mama's answers into English)

Mama (Hannah's mom, quiet woman who doesn't tend to voice her feelings)

Baba (Hannah's dad, hard-working man who is determined to make a permanent home in America for his family)

External Conflict: Hannah, her mama, and her Baba await their green card

Internal Conflict: Hannah struggles to learn English and fit in with other children in her class.

Conflict Resolution: Hannah learns to speak English, and eventually even gets in trouble for talking in class. (she is happy she can say something besides her name). The green cards are received, and Hannah and her family can finally call America their home.

Genre: historical fiction

If you liked this book, you'll love the following:

Baba: A Return to China Upon My Father's Shoulders by: Belle Yang

The Odyssey of a Manchurian by: Belle Yang

Chili-Chili-Chin-Chin by: Belle Yang

The Color of Home by: Mary Hoffman

Good Bye, 382 by: Shin Dang Dong

Interest Level: K-3

Reading Level: 3.1

Setting: The story took place in the late 1960s. Martin Luther King's death actually takes place during the time the family was awaiting their green cards. The story takes place in America (San Francisco). There are several different locations within San Francisco where the story took place (Hannah's school, Baba's work, their home, immigration office, Chinatown).

Point of View: The story was told in first person from the perception of a child.

Theme: A family moves from China to America and have to fill out paperwork. They go through a long waiting process, so they can become free citizens. Hannah is the American name, which she is not crazy about at first, but when she gets her green card she is proud to say, "Hannah Is My Name".

Illustrations:

The illustrator uses cartoon drawings to go along with the story. The illustrations are not realistic, but do show some expression in the faces of the characters. The drawings are kept very simple, and there is not a lot of detail. Along with detail, the illustrator does not use any shadowing in the drawings to depict depth.

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The illustrator does use color as the center of interest. There are so many bright colors in the pictures that the reader's eyes are drawn to the pictures. The story features gouache pictures of San Francisco. There is a collage of geometric cutout shapes which depict the people crowding the streets, at school, and at the workplace.

Book Talk:

Hannah Is My Name is a children's picture book told by a little girl named Hannah. She tells a story about her family moving from China to America. In the story, Hannah and her family worry about when they will finally get their green cards. Hannah's Baba (dad) is a hard-working man, and is excited to get his green card so he can get a better job. Hannah and her mom go to fill out paperwork, and a nice gentleman named Mr. Choo helps Hannah's mom translate what she said. Mr. Choo tells Hannah and her mom to take the papers to the immigration office, so they can get their green cards. All of a sudden, some people knock on the door! Hannah and her family do not know if someone could be coming for them when someone knocks at the door. The people at the door are coming to check for green cards, and Hannah and her family have to try and hide right away.

Annotation:

The story is told by a little girl named Hannah, who is trying to adjust to her new home in America. The title, Hannah Is My Name is appropriate, because it's the little girl's American name. Her Chinese name, Na-Li is what she is used to being called, and she does not think of herself as Hannah. At the end of the story, her family finally gets their green cards, and her name on the card is Hannah. When she sees the card with her name on it she is so happy. She is glad to finally be an American citizen, and she is proud to call herself Hannah. The title sums up the meaning of the story. She is now an American citizen, so she accepts that her name is Hannah. The story will let children be exposed to the frustrations people from other countries have to go through. America, the land of the free, is taken for granted by many. When children read this story and hear how badly Hannah and her family wanted to become citizens, they may question her family wants to become citizens so badly. This story will teach children that we are fortunate to live in a free country. What it means to live in a free country will make an excellent topic of discussion for the children. Things have changed so much in our society. The story addresses the death of Martin Luther King, which is an excellent opportunity for another great lesson. The story skims the surface of how women are treated differently in China. Hannah's mom remains silent when something upsetting happens, and there is an illustration on one of the pages where she is hiding behind her husband's shoulders. The culture difference of the role of women are portrayed very well.

