

Hannah Is My Name

Belle Yang

2004

Candlewick Press

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Belle Yang

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Based on the author’s journey to the United States as a child, *Hannah Is My Name*’s Na-Li comes to America from Taiwan in 1967. While adjusting to her new ‘American’ name, “Hannah”, the young immigrant waits with her parents for their green cards that will allow them to remain in their new country.

Born in 1960 in Taiwan, Belle Yang spent part of her childhood in Japan. At age seven she emigrated to the United States with her family. She attended Stirling University in Scotland, graduated from the University of California, Santa Cruz in biology but went on to study art at Pasadena Art Center College of Design and the Beijing Institute of Traditional Chinese Painting.

She returned from China to the United States late in 1989 after the Tiananmen Massacre.

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"I returned with gratitude in my heart for the freedom of expression given me in America. I returned convinced that I would firmly grasp this gift with both hands."-- from the introduction to *Baba*.

Yang herself adapted well to American academia, earning a 4.0 grade-point average in high school and accepting a Regents Scholarship to attend UCSC in the late 1970s. Although she eventually earned a B.A. in biology, her life was changed forever when she spent her junior year abroad studying in Scotland. While traveling through Spain, Yang realized that she had fallen in love with the art, architecture, museums, and galleries of Europe.

Upon her return to the United States, Yang finished her degree at UCSC and went on to study at the Art Center College of Design in Pasadena, as well as the Institute of Traditional Chinese Painting in Beijing. She traveled throughout China and was particularly enthralled by Hunan Province and the Gobi Desert. "I think China defined my style," said Yang, "particularly the folk art which is bright and cheerful. It's fun and whimsical, whereas traditional Chinese painting is very restrictive because each brushstroke must be perfect from years of studying calligraphy."

Yang spent three years exploring art in China, but returned to her parents' home in Carmel Valley after the Tiananmen massacre in 1989. "I had seen friends in China who weren't allowed to write or paint, so when I came back, I made a vow that I'd make use of my freedom," Yang noted. But following her parents' advice, she agreed to stay with them for one year in order to decide what to do with her future.

Other books include:

[Chili-Chili-Chin-Chin](#), [The Odyssey of a Manchurian](#), and [Baba: A Return to China Upon My Father's Shoulders](#)

Award for this book:

Multiculturalism Books from San Francisco Children's Book Press and Candlewick Press,

Annotation:

*Hannah Is My Name* is a story about a little Chinese girl who is faced with moving to a new country. She has so many things to learn and worry about. Hannah has to learn a new language and how to act the way that children act in America. One thing she has to worry about is weather or not she gets to stay in this country. Her family has to wait a long time to find out if they get their green cards. They even have a time that they almost get found out that they don't have green cards. The author even talks about what it is like if a family has to go back to their country. The author does a great job of telling this story that is like what she experienced when she came to the country. She is able to express what it was really like. The pictures show how things are different from what she is used to. It is done in the style of how things are drawn in her country.

Book talk:

Have you ever wondered what it would be like to move to a new country? Hannah and her family did just that. Hannah is faced with learning a new language and she has to also worry about if her family will be allowed to in this country.

Characters:

Main- Hannah- a brave little Chinese girl who works hard to adjust to a new country.  
She is six years old.

Baba- determined make a new life for his family in this country

Mama- works hard and worries about green cards not arriving

Mr. Choo- fills out paper work for green cards

Man in Uniform and cap-helps Baba and Hannah escape person checking green cards

Conflict:

A child's battle to fit in a new country while waiting for green cards

This is a internal conflict and external conflict. It is an internal conflict because the little girl has to figure out how to fit into this new country. It is also an external conflict because the girl doesn't know if her family's green cards will come.

Conflict Resolution:

Hannah tries her best to learn all that she can and the green cards come

Genre:

Family Fiction

Setting:

San Francisco

1968

Point of View:

First Person

Art Medium

The illustrator uses Representational Art. She paints the pictures to show who thing looked to a little girl new to this country. To keep the pages balanced she uses side boards on the side of the writing. She also does a nice job of using bright colors to bring the reader into the story.

Theme:

The theme is about a little girl who waiting for her green card and she must adjust to the language, school and a way of life that is all different to her. I believe that the title is about a girl who is finding herself in this new country.

If you like Hannah is my Name, you'll love: The Odyssey of a Manchurian by Belle Yang, Baba: A Return to China Upon My Father's Shoulders by Belle Yang, Three names of me by Mary Cummings, Brothers by Yin, My Mei Mei Ed Young and Uncle Peter's Amazing Chinese Wedding by Lenore Look.

Reading Level:  
4.2

Interest Level  
K-3

Bibliography

An Odyssey Homeward

[http://review.ucsc.edu/summer.97/alumni\\_profile.html](http://review.ucsc.edu/summer.97/alumni_profile.html)

Belle Yang

<http://www.belleyang.com/>

Chinese Historical Society of America

[http://www.chsa.org/events/book\\_readings.php?event\\_id=158](http://www.chsa.org/events/book_readings.php?event_id=158)

Glossary of Terms

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Literature, Arts, and Medicine Database

<http://litmed.med.nyu.edu/Annotation?action=view&annid=977>

UC Santa Cruz Currents online

<http://currents.ucsc.edu/04-05/01-10/yang.asp>