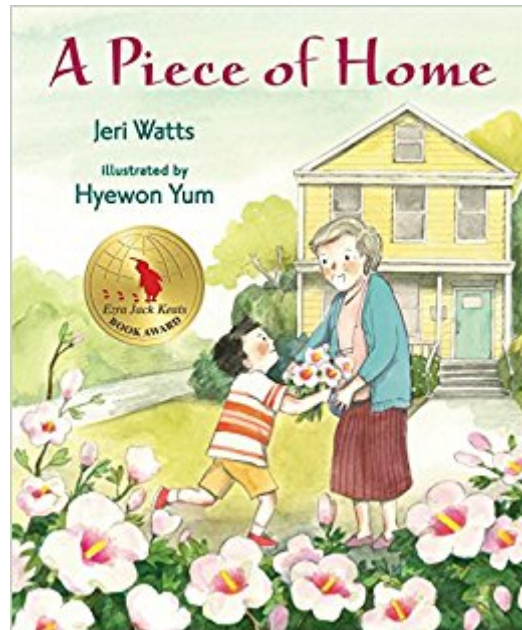




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A Piece Of Home



Synopsis

A child-friendly story about the trials and triumphs of starting over in a new place while keeping family and traditions close. When Hee Jun's family moves from Korea to West Virginia, he struggles to adjust to his new home. His eyes are not big and round like his classmates', and he can't understand anything the teacher says, even when she speaks s-l-o-w-l-y and loudly at him. As he lies in bed at night, the sky seems smaller and darker. But little by little Hee Jun begins to learn English words and make friends on the playground. And one day he is invited to a classmate's house, where he sees a flower he knows from his garden in Korea – mugunghwa, or rose of Sharon, as his friend tells him – and Hee Jun is happy to bring a shoot to his grandmother to plant a "piece of home" in their new garden. Lyrical prose and lovely illustrations combine in a gentle, realistic story about finding connections in an unfamiliar world.

Book Information

Lexile Measure: 650 (What's this?)

Hardcover: 32 pages

Publisher: Candlewick (June 14, 2016)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0763669717

ISBN-13: 978-0763669713

Product Dimensions: 8.9 x 0.4 x 10.6 inches

Shipping Weight: 13.4 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 5.0 out of 5 stars 6 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #176,723 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #89 in Books > Children's Books > Geography & Cultures > Multicultural Stories > Asian & Asian American #344 in Books > Children's Books > Growing Up & Facts of Life > Fiction #448 in Books > Children's Books > Growing Up & Facts of Life > Family Life > Multigenerational

Age Range: 5 - 8 years

Grade Level: Kindergarten - 3

Customer Reviews

K-Gr 2 "When his family moves from Korea to West Virginia, Hee Jun has a difficult time adjusting. He doesn't look like the other children, he can't understand English, and when he tries to speak, the words "feel like stones" in [his] mouth." Even the sky looks "smaller and darker" than in Korea. His grandmother stays in school each day with his little sister, who is also having a hard time, but Hee

Jun must cope on his own. As the months pass, though, brother, sister, and grandmother begin to learn English and Hee Jun slowly transforms from an outsider to an ordinary boy among his classmates. The story comes full circle when Hee Jun brings home a gift from a new friend—a rose of Sharon plant, the English name for the mugunghwa blossoms his grandmother grew in Korea. "A piece of heaven," she says. 'A piece of home.'" The young boy's distress, as well as his grandmother's, at not fitting in is evident in the large watercolor illustrations. He appears alone in his front yard, slumped over his desk, or frowning as he sits in the center of the classroom.

Grandmother changes from the brightly dressed teacher she was in Korea to a bowed woman wearing drab clothing. But the mugunghwa plant, foreshadowed on the title page, brings renewed spirit to them both as they savor a piece of home. This immigration story, paired with Irena Kobald's *My Two Blankets*, can offer readers who feel different and alone hope that things will get better, and may encourage others to help them on their way. VERDICT The lengthy text paints a realistic picture of difficulties faced by a family striving to make a new start, and the positive resolution is quietly satisfying. A solid addition for most collections.â "Marianne Saccardi, Children's Literature Consultant, Greenwich, CT

Watts's elegant story and Yum's soft, radiant art combine to make the book wrenching, hopeful and lovely in equal measure.â "New York Times Book Review This gentle, compassionate immigration narrative shows the difficulties of adapting to a new culture. Unlike most picture books on the subject, its setting is contemporary and its intergenerational story reflects the struggles of several family members. Scenes in Korea are written in past tense, but once the setting shifts to America, present tense adds immediacy to the simply worded, effective storytelling. Yum, a Korean artist who moved to America, contributes sensitive and expressive watercolor illustrations. A perceptive portrayal of an important American experience.â "Booklist (starred review) Closely observed and greatly moving, Watts's (Kizzy Ann Stamps) story is a useful springboard for discussions about difference and tolerance.â "Publishers Weekly (starred review) Moving from Korea to West Virginia, a young boy leaves the familiar behind...Watts' clear storytelling successfully conveys Hee Jun's emotional journey to readers, and Yum's emotive illustrations sensitively complement the text. Immigrant children will relate to the head-spinning switch from ordinary to different, and their classmates might better understand the emotional impact of moving to a foreign land.â "Kirkus Reviews This immigration story, paired with Irena Kobald's *My Two Blankets*, can offer readers who feel different and alone hope that things will get better, and may encourage others to help them on their way. The lengthy text paints a realistic picture of difficulties faced by a family

striving to make a new start, and the positive resolution is quietly satisfying.â School Library Journal Watts presents an emotionally credible account of what life can be like for newcomers to a place and sensitively portrays Hee Junâs experiences... Yumâs tidy watercolor illustrations feature her usual rosy-cheeked figures, and the art skillfully conveys emotion, increasing the amount of background detail and using an ever-livelier palette as Hee Jun gradually settles into American life. Use possibilities abound for this thoughtful and thought-provoking title.â Bulletin of the Center for Childrenâs Books The soft colorful pictures connect beautifully to the emotions and relationships of the characters. This story is a great jumping-off point for discussions around tolerance, differences, and being the new kid in school.â School Library Connection

It is a lovely book that my daughter and I will read together over and over!

I found this to be a very moving little book. In fact, I got a bit tearful when Hee Jun brought his grandmother a cutting of the mugunghwa (rose of Sharon) plant that Steveâs mother sent home with Hee Jun after she overheard the boys discussing it. The illustration of the boys in Steveâs backyard with Steveâs mother in the background working on cuttings but listening to the boys is my favorite in the book. It is such a kindness for her to hear Hee Jun and realize how much the flower would mean to him. This is a perfect example of how to treat others that I want my daughter to learn. Small things can be so powerful. Actually, we all need that lesson. Hee Jun gives the cutting to his grandmother and she is happy for the "piece of home." I loved the illustrations. The expressions on the charactersâ faces were so perfect and really told the story by themselves. My daughter and I studied everyoneâs face carefully on each page. The illustrations really added to the poignancy of the story. I loved this book. Without being even slightly preachy it teaches the readers both empathy and kindness!

Hee Jun loved living in Korea where he fit in with his classmates at school and his grandmother was a respected teacher. She was also able to have an extraordinary garden there. When his father moves them to West Virginia, everything changes. Hee Jun does not fit in with his classmates due to the way he looks and the way he talks. His grandmother too is different, her inner spark gone. His little sister has problems at school too, taking out her fear physically on her teacher. So their grandmother is asked to go to school with her. Slowly, the family begins to find their place in West Virginia, even discovering a beloved flower with a new name. Watts tells the story of immigration with an eye towards giving people time to adjust and find their footing both with a new language and

a new culture. The sense of loss for the characters is palpable on the page, eliciting a real understanding of the immense change they are undergoing. The little sister's violent reaction to school is handled with sensitivity and understanding, offering the grandmother a chance to connect with her new surroundings. The entire book is filled with deep emotions combined with a gentle nurturing attitude. Yum's illustrations are done in watercolor. They show a loving family that manages to thrive despite the changes. The differences between their lives in Korea and West Virginia are shown on the page, particularly with regards to the grandmother and her vibrant life in Korea compared to her lonely existence in the first weeks in the United States. A strong and thoughtful look at immigration that beautifully explains the huge changes children undergo as they move to a new country. Appropriate for ages 4-6.

A PIECE OF HOME by Jeri Watts tells the story of a young boy who moves from Korea to West Virginia and his struggles to fit in. When his father accepts a job in West Virginia, Hee Jun's family moves from Korea to a strange new world where people speak and act differently. However, he soon begins to assimilate and feels increasingly comfortable in his new home. Librarians will find this picture book to be an excellent addition to their growing collection of books focusing on immigration. Teachers will find the book to be useful in helping new immigrants as well as other children learn about the realities of living in an unfamiliar world. Published by Candlewick on June 14, 2016. ARC courtesy of the publisher.

This picture book brings together two cultures resulting in an understanding of what it is like to try to acclimate to a totally different culture in living, language and location. The language of the book is precise like that of the Koreans and the illustrations showing the Americanization of this country. a must-read book on culture, acceptance and bravery. Written by Jeri Watts, illustrated by Hyewon Yum and published by Candlewick Press. #PB #culture #diversity

This is a great book for teaching children how it feels to be an immigrant. We have a lot of children who have recently immigrated from Asian countries in our community and I think this book will be very helpful. Everyone should read this book!

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