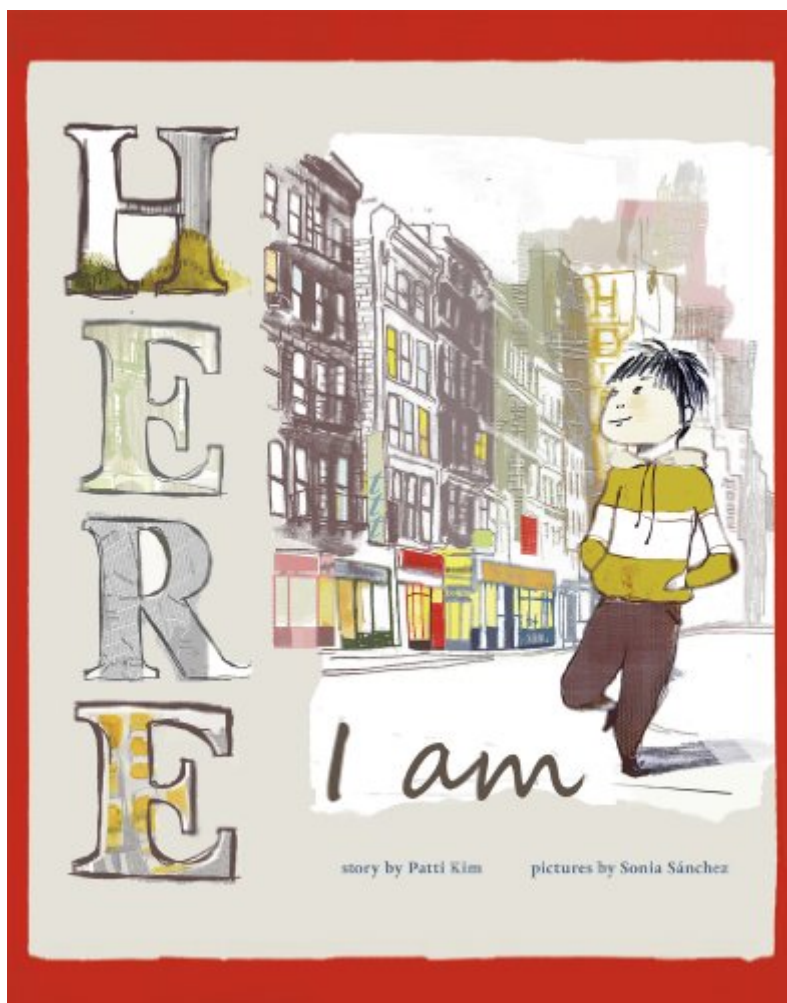


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Here I Am (NA)



Synopsis

Newly arrived from their faraway homeland, a boy and his family enter into the lights, noise, and traffic of a busy American city in this dazzling wordless picture book. The language is unfamiliar. Food, habits, games, and gestures are puzzling. The boy clings tightly to his special keepsake from home and wonders how he will find his way. How will he once again become the happy, confident kid he used to be? Walk in his shoes as he takes the first tentative steps toward discovering joy in his new world. A poignant and affirming view of the immigrant experience.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Here I Am by Patti Kim and illustrated by Sonia Sánchez is a wordless book yet it tells a complex story of one boy's immigration, and struggle to make America his home. Because it relies on the reader's imagination to supply the text, it becomes uniquely personal while remaining a universal story as well. As a wordless book, the success of the story relies on the quality of the artwork.

Sánchez's complex illustrations succeed. They capture the many emotions and struggles which the boy faces. The story begins with the boy peering out an airplane window. This is not the face of an excited child thrilled to be flying the skies to an anticipated destination. Sadness paints his

face. Subsequent illustrations depict signs with random letters. Their message remains gibberish to eyes unfamiliar with English. We follow the boy through his days as he confronts, confusion, loneliness, fear, sadness and isolation. Until he finds a seed which becomes a talisman for possibility, for hope and positivity. Eventually, the seed brings him friendship and a feeling of belonging. In the final illustration, the boy imagines that he sees the words "Here I am." Now he not only can recognize and read the English words, he realizes that he belongs. As part of the back matter of the book, the author includes comments that explain the back story which motivated her to write "Here I Am." With her family, she immigrated to the U.S. from Korea. with her family. This is her personal narrative but it is also more global than that. She writes, "If you are an immigrant or maybe just facing something new and different in your life, I hope my story helps you see that you're not alone." Adoption-attuned (AQ) Lens: Although this story originates from the author's personal experience immigrating to this country with her family, it still has the potential to click with kids who were adopted transculturally or transracially. The emotions and the child's journey learning to cope with being moved to an entirely new life, culture, country and language will resonate with many adoptees. Most adoptees can identify with the struggle to "fit" in a new space--family, school, community or, country. Gayle H. Swift, ABC, Adoption & Me: A Multicultural Picture Book"

A wordless book that tells a lot of stories. Rich and beautiful. Wordless books enable parents and caregivers to hear what a child is really thinking.

Great book for children.

Awesome illustration book

When a young immigrant boy arrives in New York City with his family, he is overwhelmed with all the wonder and confusion of such a big city. A closer look at the boy's pocket reveals a red seed tucked away. For some reason that seed makes him feel really good. Perhaps it reminds him of happier times. Unfortunately the red seed is of no help when it comes to the boy's struggles with learning the route to his new school and understanding the teacher and the students in the classroom. There are no words for the loneliness and anger he feels. Then one day he accidentally drops the red seed out the tiny apartment window. The seed falls on a little girl's head. She picks it up and runs away. During the boy's search for the little girl, his strange new world begins to make "sense." "Here I Am" is a wordless picture book. The story flows in a series of framed drawings,

which invoke the feeling of paging through a photo album. Because of this design Sonia Sánchez's kinetic illustrations stimulate discussion about the boy's actions and feelings. Patti Kim's poignant story about emigrating from Korea to America as a child appears in the Dear Reader section at the end of the book to help confirm the reader's thoughts about what he sees in the pictures. Any child who is faced with a new experience, or helped out a new friend, will find hope and a kindred spirit among these moving images.

I opened *Here I Am* on my e-reader and, because I didn't read the synopsis closely enough, I was surprised to find that the story is told completely in pictures. There is no text whatsoever! And it moved me to tears. The concept of portraying a child's experience of moving to a foreign land is brilliantly executed. I think my favorite part is how the signs around him - in town, in school - are complete gibberish at first, and slowly become more clear as time passes. The artwork is just stunning. It captures every feeling and new experience perfectly: lonely, overwhelmed, excited, curious, happy. The sights and smells and even motion felt so real when looking at these pages! Sanchez is a truly gifted illustrator. I remember feeling many of the same emotions as the boy in this story when my family moved to Italy when I was a kid. *Here I Am* is an encouraging book for children of immigrants, expats, or even members of the military, whether the family is moving to the United States or leaving it to live somewhere overseas. I received a copy of this book from the publisher via NetGalley in exchange for an honest review. I did not receive any other compensation for this review.

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