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Hana Hashimoto, Sixth Violin



Synopsis

In this beautifully written picture book, Hana Hashimoto has signed up to play her violin at her school's talent show. The trouble is, she's only a beginner, and she's had only three lessons. Her brothers insist she isn't good enough. "It's a talent show, Hana," they tell her. "You'll be a disaster!" Hana remembers how wonderfully her talented grandfather, or Ojiichan, played his violin when she was visiting him in Japan. So, just like Ojiichan, Hana practices every day. She is determined to play her best. When Hana's confidence wavers on the night of the show, however, she begins to wonder if her brothers were right. But then Hana surprises everyone once it's her turn to perform --- even herself! The Asian American female protagonist in this story offers a unique perspective, and bestselling author Chieri Uegaki has woven in lyrical scenes from Japan that add depth and resonance. The details in the artwork by Qin Leng connect the two places and contain a feeling of melody throughout. In the classroom, this book could serve as a celebration of music and performing arts, multicultural studies or the importance of intergenerational relationships. It is also a fabulous character education tie-in for discussing courage and perseverance. This terrifically inspiring book offers hope and confidence to all children who are yearning to master something difficult. Perhaps even more important, it allows children to see that there is more than one way to be successful at a task.

Customer Reviews

K-Gr 2â "During a summer visit to Japan with her older brothers, Hana Hashimoto listens attentively to the music of her grandfather. Each day, Ojiichan practices classical music he performed as a violist with a symphony, and in the evening, he creates sounds like crickets chirping or raindrops falling on umbrellas. Back home, Hana starts studying violin and after only three lessons signs up for the school talent show. Despite her brothers' teasing, she practices diligently and overcomes last-minute jitters for a unique performance of sound effects that are inspired by Ojichan's playing but that definitely are her own creations. This low-key story melds a number of themes without didacticism. Hana's determination, hard work, and creativity are bolstered by her connections to her grandfather and supportive parents. Even her brothers ask for after-dinner encores following her success. Leng's illustrations incorporate musical notes that link the lives of the grandfather and granddaughter. The illustrations also capture Hana's emotions, particularly during the talent show. First, the stage stretches endlessly before her until she spots friends and family in the audience, then she imagines Ojiichan's encouraging presence. The quiet story would make a fine addition to most libraries.â "Kathy Piehl, Minnesota State University Library, Mankato

And that, folks, is how you tell a completely charming yet refreshingly unsentimental tale of an intergenerational bond of love.â•The Horn Book MagazineUegaki's book is winning in every possible way ... Hana displays courage, creative problem-solving and lots of spunk.â•Kirkus Reviews

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