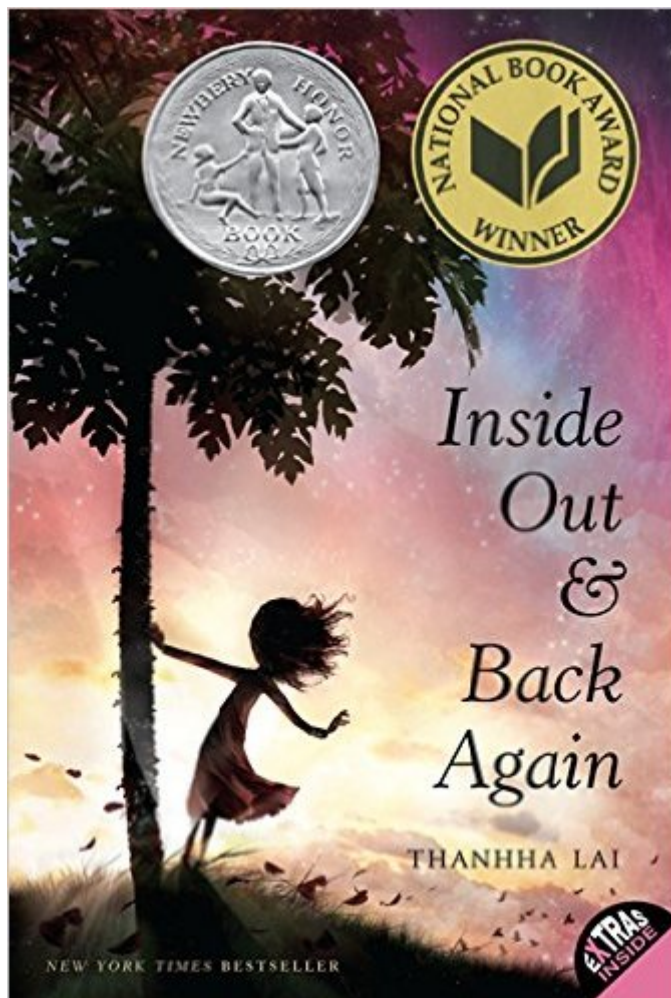


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# Inside Out And Back Again



## Synopsis

Inside Out and Back Again is a #1 New York Times bestseller, a Newbery Honor Book, and a winner of the National Book Award! Inspired by the author's childhood experience as a refugee fleeing Vietnam after the Fall of Saigon and immigrating to Alabama this coming-of-age debut novel told in verse has been celebrated for its touching child's-eye view of family and immigration. HÃ has only ever known Saigon: the thrills of its markets, the joy of its traditions, and the warmth of her friends close by. But now the Vietnam War has reached her home. HÃ and her family are forced to flee as Saigon falls, and they board a ship headed toward hope toward America. This moving story of one girl's year of change, dreams, grief, and healing received four starred reviews, including one from Kirkus which proclaimed it "enlightening, poignant, and unexpectedly funny." An author's note explains how and why Thanhha Lai translated her personal experiences into HÃ's story. This paperback edition also includes an interview with the author, an activity you can do with your family, tips on writing poetry, and discussion questions.

## Book Information

Lexile Measure: 800 (What's this?)

Paperback: 288 pages

Publisher: HarperCollins; Reprint edition (January 2, 2013)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0061962791

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Product Dimensions: 5.1 x 0.6 x 7.6 inches

Shipping Weight: 0.3 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.6 out of 5 stars 501 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #600 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #1 in Books > Children's Books > Geography & Cultures > Explore the World > Asia #2 in Books > Children's Books > Geography & Cultures > Multicultural Stories > Asian & Asian American #2 in Books > Children's Books > Literature & Fiction > Historical Fiction > United States > 1900s

Age Range: 8 - 12 years

Grade Level: 3 - 7

## Customer Reviews

\*Starred Review\* After her father has been missing in action for nine years during the Vietnam War, 10-year-old HÃ flees with her mother and three older brothers. Traveling first by boat, the family

reaches a tent city in Guam, moves on to Florida, and is finally connected with sponsors in Alabama, where HÃ finds refuge but also cruel rejection, especially from mean classmates. Based on Laiâ™s personal experience, this first novel captures a child-refugeeâ™s struggle with rare honesty. Written in accessible, short free-verse poems, HÃâ™s immediate narrative describes her mistakesâ”both humorous and heartbreakingâ”with grammar, customs, and dress (she wears a flannel nightgown to school, for example); and readers will be moved by HÃâ™s sorrow as they recognize the anguish of being the outcast who spends lunchtime hiding in the bathroom.

Eventually, HÃ does get back at the sneering kids who bully her at school, and she finds help adjusting to her new life from a kind teacher who lost a son in Vietnam. The elemental details of HÃâ™s struggle dramatize a foreignerâ™s experience of alienation. And even as she begins to shape a new life, there is no easy comfort: her father is still gone. Grades 4-8. --Hazel Rochman

--This text refers to the Hardcover edition.

âœOpen this book, read it slowly to savor the delicious language. This is a book that asks the reader to be careful, to pay attention, to sigh at the end.â• (Kathi Appelt, bestselling author of Newbery Honor Book *The Underneath*)âœBased in Laiâ™s personal experience, this first novel captures a childâ”refugeeâ™s struggle with rare honesty. Written in accessible, short freeâ”verse poems, HÃâ™s immediate narrative describes her mistakesâ”both humorous and heartbreaking; and readers will be moved by HÃâ™s sorrow as they recognize the anguish of being the outcast.â• (Booklist (starred review))âœThe taut portrayal of HÃâ™s emotional life is especially poignant as she cycles from feeling smart in Vietnam to struggling in the States, and finally regains academic and social confidence. An incisive portrait of human resilience.â• (Publishers Weekly (starred review))âœAn enlightening, poignant and unexpectedly funny novel in verse. In her not-to-be-missed debut, Lai evokes a distinct time and place and presents a complex, realistic heroine whom readers will recognize, even if they havenâ™t found themselves in a strange new country.â• (Kirkus Reviews (starred review))âœAmerican and Vietnamese characters alike leap to life through the voice and eyes of a tenâ”yearâ”old girlâ”a protagonist so strong, loving, and vivid I longed to hand her a wedge of freshly cut papaya.â• (Mitali Perkins, author of *Bamboo People*)âœLaiâ™s spare language captures the sensory disorientation of changing cultures as well as a refugeeâ™s complex emotions and kaleidoscopic loyalties.â• (The Horn Book)âœHaâ™s voice is full of humor and hope.â• (School Library Journal (starred review))âœIn this free-verse narrative, Lai is sparing in her details, painting big pictures with few words and evoking abundant visuals.â• (Bulletin of the Center for Childrenâ™s Books)âœTold in compelling

free verse.â • (Brightly.com)

I found it very interesting to read about the Fall of Saigon from the viewpoint of a child who becomes a refugee and ends up coming to Alabama in the 1970s. However, I didn't find the child (and main character) to be entirely sympathetic. Quite a bit of pouting and sulking. She experienced very real trauma in fleeing her country and being bullied by American classmates, so for her to pout, for example, over receiving dried papaya rather than fresh papaya from a friend and throw the gift away was off-putting to me. I definitely wasn't an angel as a child, but her using the very limited family grocery money to buy herself treats, while at the same time acknowledging that her mom was getting very thin? Wow. I understand the author inserted a lot of her own experiences into the work, but I probably would have enjoyed the story more if it had been from the viewpoint of the mother or the girl's brothers.

My daughter is 11 and she does enjoy poetry but the whole book is poetry and she was a little disappointed with that. I think we were both hoping for at least some story line to follow. There are also some words that I need to look up to figure out the meaning and context in the poem and how to pronounce them which makes reading this book frustrating due to the interruptions. I think for the right kid this book would be really interesting. Maybe a group of kids reading it together, doing the research together, and having others to discuss the significance of the poetry could help make it more interesting and significant.

This was a lovely and insightful book written from a child's point of view about coming to America from Vietnam. Having taught children of the evacuees in the 70s, I could feel the honesty of the action and of the author's words. While all of the occurrences were believable, I found myself needing more information/details. I realize that this would have diminished the aspect of being told in a child's voice, but information about other characters in the story was lacking. Nonetheless, I was touched by the story and the main character's struggle with other's judgments and cruelty and ultimate journey to define herself in a new culture and environment.

Bought this book for my 10 year old daughter for her Battle of the books - for 4th grade. My daughter loved reading this poem book. The story was really good, funny and it was well liked by the entire Battle of the books group.

Good read for the kids (girl 9 years old boy 11 years old).

I loved the book and it was not a very hard read. The only thing I could think could be better is the ending, but it wasn't bad. Amazing!

Ha has spent all of her ten years in Saigon (Vietnam). She knows the markets, she does well in school, and she loves the papaya tree that she planted behind her family's house. But the war is creeping ever closer and her mother struggles to provide enough food. As it becomes apparent that Saigon will fall to the Communist North, Ha and her family make a painful choice to flee the country in hopes of finding refuge. When they land in America things seem to be working out, but as Ha struggles to adapt to a new language, a new religion, new climate, and new food, she wonders if it wouldn't have been better to stay in Vietnam. And what about the father she has never met who went missing nine years earlier? Usually I am not a big fan of novels written in free verse. I like my poetry to be poetry and my stories to be prose. But I have had the privilege of reading this book and several others that have convinced me that done right, free verse can be particularly powerful. This story is based on the author's experiences as a child and maybe that's why they are so realistic. I promise you will not be able to read this book without feeling compassion for Ha and her family. You will cheer for their successes and feel discomfort at the poor treatment they receive from many. The book provides a thought-provoking look at a topic (immigration) that remains controversial still. Highly recommended.

Wonderful, heartwarming story. Gives kids perspective of how it feels to be a foreigner . Illustrates the resilience of the human spirit . I read it with my daughter. Some parts do require adult explanation if child is a young reader/pre-teen. Overall totally worth the read. I wish the schools would assign more things like this book.

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