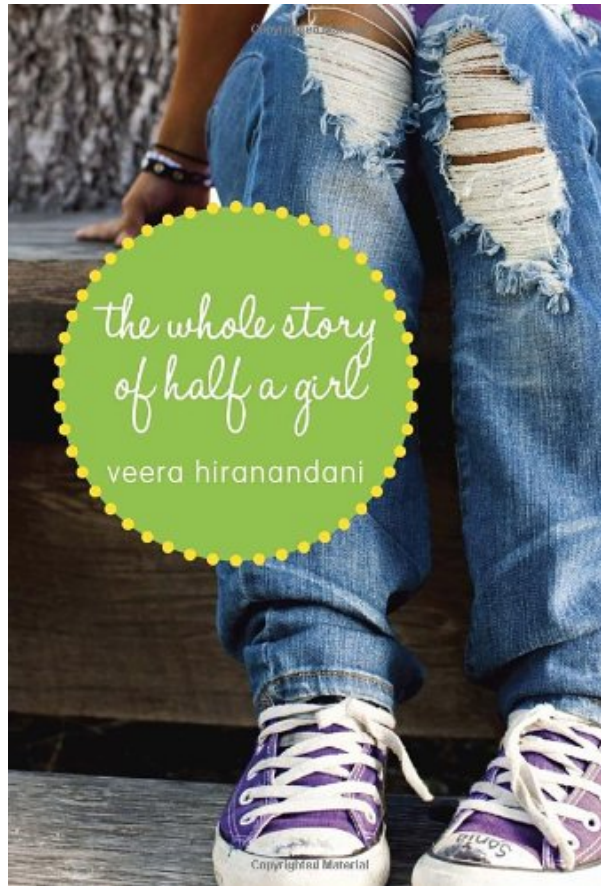
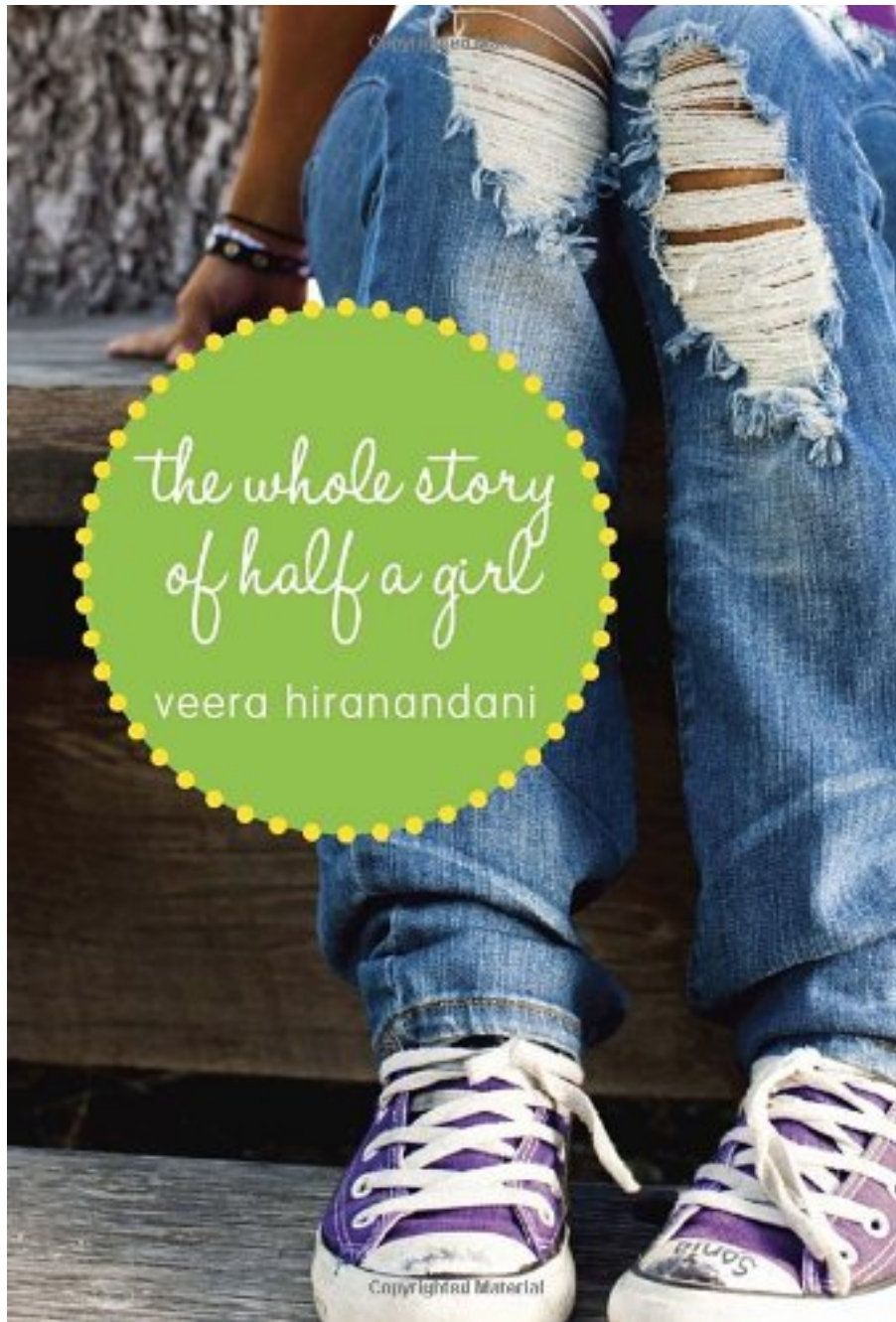


THE WHOLE STORY OF HALF A GIRL BY VEERA HIRANANDANI



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From Booklist

After Dad loses his job, Sonia Nadhamuni has to move from private to public middle school, and it is not easy for her to fit in, especially because Dad is Hindi and Mom is Jewish American. Sonia sometimes feels “too dark to be white, too light to be black.” Why is Kate, the star of the cool white crowd, so nice to Sonia, even taking her shopping and getting her on the cheerleading team? Should Sonia sit with Alisha and the black crowd in the lunchroom? There is also conflict at home: Mom hates cheerleading, shopping, reality TV, and junk food; Sonia hates Mom’s tofu-heavy cooking. To her shame, Sonia denies her Jewish roots. Then Dad gets depressed and things become much worse. Told in Sonia’s wry present-tense voice, the mixed-race-family identity conflicts, as well as the universal contemporary drama of trying to act cool—and decent—will easily pull readers through this debut novel. Grades 4-6. --Hazel Rochman

Review

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From the Hardcover edition.

About the Author

VEERA HIRANANDANI has an MFA in Fiction Writing from Sarah Lawrence College. She has written fiction for both children and adults. *The Whole Story of Half a Girl* is her debut novel.

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What greater praise than to be compared to Judy Blume!--"Each [Blume and Hiranandani] excels in charting the fluctuating discomfort zones of adolescent identity with affectionate humor."--Kirkus Reviews, Starred

After her father loses his job, Sonia Nadhamuni, half Indian and half Jewish American, finds herself yanked out of private school and thrown into the unfamiliar world of public education. For the first time, Sonia's mixed heritage makes her classmates ask questions—questions Sonia doesn't always know how to answer—as she navigates between a group of popular girls who want her to try out for the cheerleading squad and other students who aren't part of the "in" crowd.

At the same time that Sonia is trying to make new friends, she's dealing with what it means to have an out-of-work parent—it's hard for her family to adjust to their changed circumstances. And then, one day, Sonia's father goes missing. Now Sonia wonders if she ever really knew him. As she begins to look for answers, she must decide what really matters and who her true friends are—and whether her two halves, no matter how different, can make her a whole.

From the Hardcover edition.

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- Published on: 2013-02-12
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- Original language: English
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- Dimensions: 7.63" h x .55" w x 5.25" l, .35 pounds
- Binding: Paperback
- 224 pages

From Booklist

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Most helpful customer reviews

5 of 5 people found the following review helpful.

Best Middle Grade Novel Ever!

By A reader from Massachusetts

Ms. Hiranandani's fantastic debut novel is not only an important and creatively crafted book for young readers but as an adult, I enjoyed the ride back to adolescence connecting to all the joys and heartaches many of us experience. The main character Sonia represents a unique but also universal experience of growing up. Ms. Hiranandani's writing allowed me to connect to Sonia, her friends and family as fully developed characters. I became lost in the book and am now reading it with my son. A fantastic book for parents and young readers to read together!

4 of 4 people found the following review helpful.

My Daughters LOVE this book.

By Marcie C

My daughters (10 and 12) both read this book in one sitting. They could not put it down. Such a refreshing book--tackles big social issues with wonderful dialogue--fast-paced and keeps the language at middle-grade level. The main character, Sonia, is believable and likable--she deals as best she can with her father's depression, and yet the story remains upbeat and light. So glad we have added this fantastic book to our shelf! Will certainly re-read again and again, and will recommend it to friends!

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful.

A review from Bookworm1858

By bookworm1858

I really applaud this book for tackling a lot of big issues and balancing them well while keeping the book at a middle-grade level. To start with, this book looks at a young girl in a typical nuclear family, parents and sister, who live a comfortable existence. After her father loses his job, it causes a big shift in the family dynamics and precipitates a lot of change.

This could totally have been an issue book. Sonia's dad loses his job, causing a big change in the family finances and pushing her dad into depression. Sonia has to leave her beloved private school to start sixth grade at public school where she has to navigate mean girls and an entirely different school culture. She also starts to wonder: is she Indian? Is she Jewish? Can she be both? Plus she's growing up and is soon going to be a teenager with all those emotional issues. Basically there's a lot of stuff here! Any one of those could have been the focus of a book. But this one never felt weighted down despite the seriousness, which I would have to say speaks well of the writer. At times some issues were dealt with superficially in my opinion but remember that this is a middle-grade novel and for that age group, I would say it does a good job.

Particularly interesting to me was the family situation. I don't think I've read many books with a depressed character and seeing its impact on this family really struck me. I also really loved Sonia, which is a big plus. She's confused about some of the changes in her life and is just trying to do the best she can. Of course, she makes mistakes (one colossally huge one later in the book) but she always retained my interest and sympathy.

Overall: A very pleasant experience with excellent balance between light and serious for a fast and absorbing read.

See all 41 customer reviews...

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