



How My Parents Learned to Eat

Ina R. Friedman , Allen Say (Illustrations)

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An American sailor courts a young Japanese woman and each tries, in secret, to learn the other's way of eating.

How My Parents Learned to Eat Details

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Author : Ina R. Friedman , Allen Say (Illustrations)

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From Reader Review How My Parents Learned to Eat for online ebook

Miss Balzaretti says

The children's book, *How My Parents Learned to Eat*, tells the story of a young Japanese-American girl retelling the story of how her parents met. The book focuses on the difference between how her Japanese mother and American father eat meals. Her mother using chopsticks and her father using a knife, fork, and spoon. The book shows that cultural barriers can be overcome and that learning things from different cultures can be exciting and helpful in making relationships with people who are different than us. The illustrations by Say are one of my favorite parts of this book. They stay authentic to each character's cultures and represent their heritages well. They support the text well and engage the reader. Something else I really liked was the incorporation of a biracial family. I feel that they are underrepresented in children's books and I think this book does a great job telling this family's story. I think it would connect with a wide variety of my students in my classroom. I would use this as a teaching tool to teach about nontraditional families. After reading this I could have students do an activity about their own families and what makes them different from other families. Since this book has two characters with different ethnicity that I was also written in Japanese too.

Jon(athan) Nakapalau says

Love can be expressed in many ways...learning the customs of the one you love shows them that you value who they are. A great book for a child who has parents from different cultures and ethnic backgrounds.

Emily Johnson says

How My Parents Learned to Eat follows the story of how a young girl's parents met and fell in love despite cultural differences. Her mother was Japanese and her father was American. The cultural difference between them, such as how they eat, provided them with some relationship obstacles. The story follows these obstacles and how they overcame them. There are many things that both teachers and students can learn from this story. One of these lessons is that a lot of us are from multicultural backgrounds and that is what makes us who we are. We see this when the main character's parents are learning about and incorporating the other's culture into their own lives and when they get married and pass both onto their daughter. Another lesson that can be found in this book is that it is okay to ask and learn about other people's cultures. Both John and Aiko were very uncomfortable with the culture and language of the other, but once they learned about it, they were much more comfortable and informed.

I will definitely integrate this book into my curriculum. One activity that could be used in the classroom is to have students survey their parents about their cultures and then identify aspects of their everyday lives that are impacted by those cultures. Another activity that would reflect the book well would be to have students research how and what people from a variety of cultures eat. Students could also identify how culture is defined through what and how they eat at home and these differ throughout all the students in the classroom.

Maren Prestegaard says

I have to say . . . this book was really interesting. Not often reading kid's books do I say "Huh. I learned something there."

Made the both of us ponder.

A Reading Rainbow selection.

Naa-Shorme Aidoo says

Food is such an important and engaging part of culture that everyone can relate to. What I love about this story (so many things), is that it would never even occur to a young reader that it is not common in another culture to use a fork and knife. Once that reality is brought to their attention it becomes easier to inquire about other cultures and how they do things. This story presents multiple perspectives, the American, that most of our students here can relate to and the Japanese perspective, which is foreign to most of our students. That means that throughout the entirety of this story the audience can connect with the American sailor's unfamiliarity as it leads to his desire to learn. The character and audience are essentially having the same experience of learning. Just as in *The Name Jar*, the "other" is ultimately encouraged while one's self realizes how it could be "othered" when looking in with a different perspective.

The fact that our main characters are parents shows the foundation set and also subtly addresses the state of being of mixed culture or race. It embraces the young girl's ability to use both a fork and chopsticks and shows how her parents' compromise has manifested in the next generation. Once again we are faced with real emotions of anxiety toward acceptance but ultimately see these similarities in the midst of differences that do not hold them back from spending a lifetime together.

The reader also walks away with a better understanding of Japanese culture and some of its great foods.

Shu Xiao says

This is such a cute little book! It tells the story of how a little girl's Japanese mother and American father learned to eat in American/Japanese ways because they really loved each other and wanted to pick up each other's lifestyles. In the end, they created a lifestyle of their own. It feels like a cute version of *The Gift of the Magi*. Ellen Say's art is once again very pleasing to the eyes. It would be a good book for kids who have parents from different cultures.

Hope Chasteen says

I loved this realistic fiction children's book. It could also be considered a multicultural book because the setting is in Japan and it talks about a sailor, therefore it could have been in the same time period of the second World War. It is a good read for children to be exposed to another culture and traditions other than their own. It is about a Japanese woman who meets an American Sailor and they start to like each other. The

girl thinks he may ask her to go eat dinner with her, so she needed to learn the proper way to eat American food. What she didn't know was that the sailor wanted to learn the same thing for her. They both learned how to eat properly in each other's cultures. She has to learn to eat with a fork and knife and he had to eat with chopsticks. The couple ended up getting married and had a daughter. It is interesting, because it is told by their daughter perspective. This is why I gave it five stars and this is the aspect that gave me the idea to teach my class how to write stories in a different perspective than their own. I would read this to them for an example.

Susen Saeed says

A young girl tells the story of how her parents met in Japan. Aiko, her mother, was a Japanese school girl, and her father, John, was an American sailor. They met everyday for days, but they were both too nervous to ask the other out for dinner for fear of being made fun of for not being able to use chopsticks (John), or a fork and spoon (Aiko). To avoid being embarrassed, they enlist the help of others to teach them the ways of each culture. After finally going on a dinner date, they realize that there was no need to try to impress the other. John told Aiko her manners were very English like and not representative of the American culture. They promised to use chopsticks on one day, and a fork and knife on the other day for the rest of their lives. That is why the little girl uses both chopsticks and a fork and knife when she eats. She learned to eat from her parents who come from different cultures. This story can be used in a class when discussing a theme of multicultural feasts/food because it compares both the Japanese and the American manners of eating. More specially, it introduces to its readers some common Japanese foods such as soup and sukiyaki. This is a great book to emphasize the difference, as well as similarities, that exists between various cultures. It also speaks to those students who also come from biracial families.

Laura Watson says

This was a great little book about a Japanese-American girl whose parents both learned how to eat with each other. Her dad was an American soldier in Japan who fell in love with her Japanese mom. He never asked her to dinner because he was too worried he could not eat with chopsticks. The mom thought that he did not ask her to dinner because he would think she did not know how to use a knife and fork. So they both secretly learned how to eat in the different ways. The dad tried chopsticks and the mom learned to eat the English way. Then they went to dinner and he taught her the American way to eat and she agreed to show him how to use chopsticks. So in their home their daughter is accustomed to using either knife and fork or chopsticks. This is a picture book. There are words to go along with every picture in the book. The story is told equally through pictures and words.

This book would be a cute way for younger learners to learn about Japanese culture. They can look at the pictures of the Japanese city and see the different kinds of food that they were eating. This would also be a great way to move into learning about the different cultures of the students in the class. We could start talking about all of the different food and ways of eating and move on from there. I think this would be a good book for about 2-3 graders.

Morgan Logan says

This book is about a young girl telling a story about how her parents learned about one another culture. Her

father John was an American soldier who was stationed in Yokohama, where he met her mother Aiko. He hoped to marry her one day, but they lived completely different lives. Their daughter takes us through their love story and how they manage to keep their relationship going. They were scared that their relationship wouldn't last because of their cultures, but they soon realized it wasn't a problem. The text expresses the importance of how parents play an important role in their children's lives. Specifically in this book, their child interactions and communication is a mirror image of how they interact. Her parents were open about learning a new language and learning new traditions which allowed their daughter to be open about it too. This is a great book to introduce into a classroom to express how different cultures can work together.

Chloe Jackson says

How My Parents Learned to Eat is a childhood favorite of mine. The story talks about a girl whose mom is Japanese and whose father is American. The book goes on to discuss her parent's different cultures especially how they eat differently. I think this is great to read at any elementary level especially if you have students in your class who are interracial or if you have a diverse class. For ELL students, each student can write about their culture and the different eating utensils that they use in their country. This will give teachers a great way to learn about their student's country.

Madeline Bergstrom says

How My Parents Learned to Eat by Ina R. Friedman is a vibrant picture book telling the story of a Japanese schoolgirl and an American sailor who soon become parents of a bicultural child who is narrating the story. The American sailor wants to take the Japanese schoolgirl out to eat, but is nervous because he is not familiar with her cultural values, so she decides to learn. Likewise, she attempts to learn more about American culture, so that she can go out to eat with him. On their first outing, she comes wearing American styled clothing to fit into his culture and chooses to go eat Americanized food to honor his culture. The next time they go out, he shows her that he has learned how to use chopsticks and has become a bit more culturally competent. The two come from different cultural backgrounds, but were open to learning about each other's customs in order to honor their distinctive cultures. In the future, they were able to come together and share each of their customs with each other further, and with their daughter, who is now growing up bicultural. This is a great way to display some Japanese and American cultural customs when it comes to dining and dress. Readers also learn how to honor other people's cultures and how it is possible to have more than one culture, as many children do these days. Great addition to the library, and could act as an easy read aloud.

Kathryn says

This is a wonderful story to show that the way people EAT food is so much a part of their culture. The little girl in the story has a Japanese mom and an American dad and she explains that sometimes they eat with chopsticks and sometimes with knives and forks. She goes on to explain about how her parents met and that they were always too nervous to go out to dinner together because he couldn't eat with chopsticks and she couldn't use a knife and fork so they weren't sure which restaurant they would be able to go to in Japan that would allow them both to be comfortable. But, soon their love for one another became stronger than their fear of utensils and they set about trying to learn how to eat outside their comfort zone so they could surprise

each other by going out to eat. It's a very cute and sweet story. It would also be a great one for children being raised in a multi-cultural family. I remember liking it on "Reading Rainbow" years ago!

Henna Patel says

Summary/Annotation: This story is about a little girl who tells us in the beginning that she uses chopsticks to eat and forks and knives as well. She talks about the story of how her parents met. Her mother is Japanese and her father is an American sailor. This sweet story goes through the events of their relationship.

Response: This was a wonderful book with amazing illustrations. I really enjoyed reading this book because it kept me engaged. I thought it was a great book that discusses how important traditions and values are. This book made me feel very happy to see how her parents relationship influenced their daughter as well. Two different cultures come together and it is such a good thing that their daughter is aware of both cultures very well.

I gave this book four stars because I think it was a great book especially to share with my students. I think it has very good illustrations and teaches much about the importance of accepting cultures.

Classroom Connection: I would use this book to read to my students and discuss about how important is it to hold on to your own traditions and values. I was born in America and my parents were born in India. I am born and raised in America. I still follow some traditional customs that keeps a strong relationship with my family and community. Having these traditions teaches us how to accept others for their own cultures. I think it is important especially for family values. I would use this book to have my students discuss what traditions and customs they follow.

Text Complexity: According to lexile.com this book is rated 450L. This book would be appropriate to read aloud for students in kindergarten or first grade. Although students in first and second grade should be able to read this book independently. The assignments to go along with the book should be adjusted depending on grade level.

Nina G. says

This book is about a little girl who talks about how her parents met in Japan and how they had to learn one another's cultures-especially when it came to eating! They were so nervous that they "secretly" learned how to eat the way their different cultures do. The illustrations are cute and follows easily with the book.

My response: I liked how this book was coming from a child's perspective. I think it can teach everybody that at the end of the day we all have our similarities. This book is an easy read for children to learn about different cultures at the elementary level. The illustrations can give children a general idea of Japanese culture. I noticed in the first page of the book the girl is eating Japanese food and the last page she is eating steak. We can definitely infer that she appreciates both of her cultures which is important for kids to understand.

Classroom Connection: I think this is a great book to teach students about cultural diversity and tolerance. I think it is important for kids to realize that everybody comes from a different background, but that is what makes people unique. Being that this has an interest level of K-2 I think it would be too early for students to

do any formal research on Japan. This book seems best for read aloud and the teacher can point out Japan on a map. I think as a class the students can compare and contrast American and Japanese culture as well as learn new vocabulary words from the book. It would also be fun for the teacher to bring in chopsticks so students can see how it is to eat with them. (<http://www.cedu.niu.edu/~carger/cultu...>) (Lesson 4)

Lexile: 450L

Guided Reading: M

This book can be used for read aloud in 1st and 2nd grade but should be read independently by the 3rd grade. Easy to understand for children.
