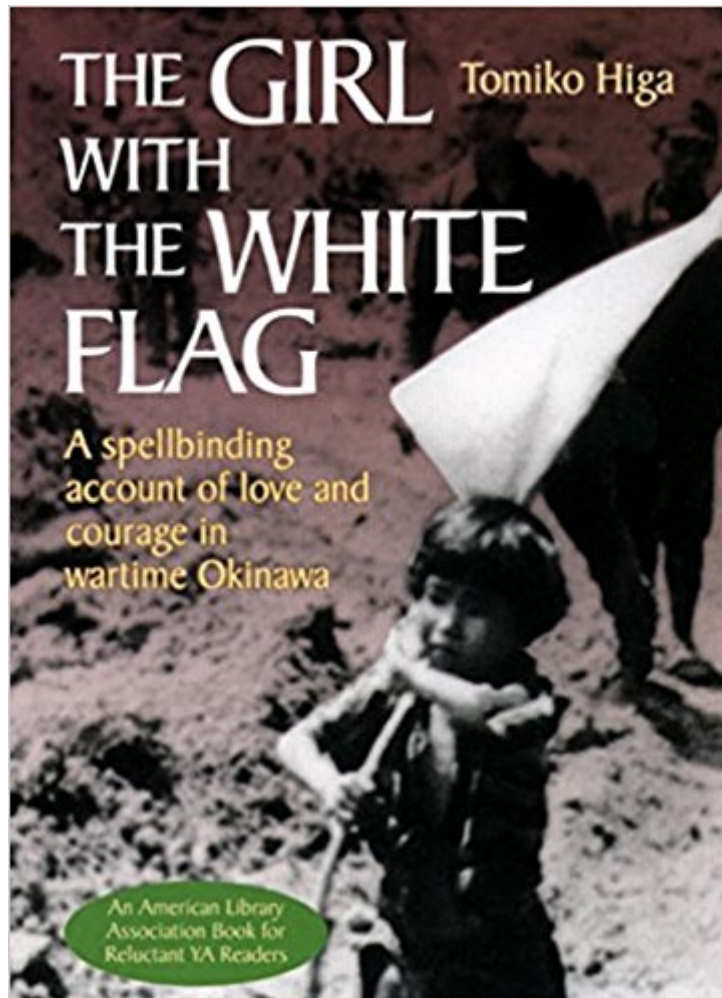




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The Girl With The White Flag



Synopsis

New York Newsday called this memoir of a warhood childhood in Japan "one of the saddest and yet most uplifting books about childhood you will ever encounter." Separated from her family in the confusion and horror of World War II, seven-year-old Tomiko Higa struggles to survive on the battlefield of Okinawa, Japan. There, as some of the fiercest fighting of the war rages around her, she must live alone, with nothing to fall back on but her own wits and daring. Fleeing from encroaching enemy forces, searching desperately for her lost sisters, taking scraps of food from the knapsacks of dead soldiers, risking death at every turn, Tomiko somehow finds the strength and courage to survive. Many years later she decided to tell this story. Originally intended for juvenile readers, it is sure to move adults as well, because it is such a vivid portrait of the unintended civilian casualties of any war.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

YA-- Higa tells of her experiences as a seven year old wandering for seven weeks in battle-torn Okinawa in 1945. Her nine-year-old brother was killed beside her as they slept. Separated from her sisters, she survived on her own and then with an elderly, handicapped couple. Although bloody corpses are a common sight, the book is not depressing. Aspects of Oriental culture and religion, such as the importance of family and the relationship of man to nature, can be seen. Sentences are usually short, but they don't detract from the effectiveness of this moving, autobiographical memoir. Recent immigrants from countries ravaged by war will find it particularly meaningful. All will be touched by Higa's tenacity under impossible circumstances and will be reminded that children

continue to be the worst victims of war. --Claudia Moore, W. T. Woodson High School, Fairfax, VA
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Iwo Jima, Saipan, Okinawa. The names of Pacific War battlegrounds conjure up vaguely similar memories to Americans above a certain age. But there was a difference. On Okinawa for the first time U.S. forces encountered a large civilian population. Estimates are that at least 75,000 Okinawan men, women, and children perished, many of them committing suicide rather than surrender. This book tells the story of the climax of this battle from the perspective of a seven-year-old girl, the author, who struggled against the odds to survive and to lead others to survival. Some rare photographs illuminate the ending to this simply told story, as the girl in the title comes into camera range of an American soldier. A charming story, a quick read for young and old alike.- John H. Boyle, California State Univ., Chico
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I Enjoyed this book very much. Being of Okinawan ancestry, it was not until I visited Okinawa that I took an interest in the Battle of Okinawa. The ravages of war on a country and its people is so horrible....This was a brave little girl, who lived to tell her story. This is NOT a book for elementary school children.

but is no relation. And found I enjoyed it more than I thought I would. There are many mentions in the customer reviews about it being middle school or young adolescent lit, so I was a little leery. And it is in a way, because the episodes in her life are just presented the way she remembered them. There is no tying it back to a larger political idea, no closure of narrative like one expect in an adult novel, and often "characters" in her story walk away never to be seen from or heard from again. So, in that way, if you are expecting an adult account with deep reflections, ramifications both political and social, and prescriptions and condemnations, then you need to read another book. But Higa's account was refreshing in that way that children are. She presents everything without guile or over-analysis. You feel the visceral experience with her as she climbs over the wasteland that her country becomes. She never sugar-coats anything because there is no need to when just presented factually. You feel her need, understand her young judgements, and are just charmed by her plucky character. In today's multicultural educational system, this book would be a good addition to any history of WWII.

Book was very short. Fast Read.

My own mother was just 5 years old and lived in Naha at the time the battle for Okinawa took place. She has never spoken at any length of what she remembers. I only know my grandmother and my aunt were shot (my aunt was wrapped and carried on my grandmother's back. One shot killed both of them) My mother and her two brothers watched them both die. This book allowed me to understand exactly what it was like for my mother without her having to say a word. Thank you so much Tomiko Higa san

I got the book yesterday, read it today. What a story, every one should read it in this day of America's love of war! We need to know what war does. There should be a full color version for adults. Our leaders from the White House down should be made to go back in time and live this battle of Okinawa - the second largest battle in WW2. Little Tomiko is a hero, and grown up Tomiko is one also for telling her story and that of a people, Okinawans, that never wanted war but yet paid such a heavy price. I've lived with these people twice, once from 67-69 and then from 78-81. Tomiko's book tells their story very well.

great story.

I was recommended this book by an Okinawan friend and truly enjoyed it. I've read a lot of books on the war in the Pacific and in Europe, but this one was completely different. This is from the perspective of a young child trying to survive in a war zone and not really understanding why they picked her land to settle their differences. This is not a history book and all the questions that you may have while reading the book, do not necessarily get answered...more like what real life is like.

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