

Echo

Pam Muñoz Ryan

Reviewed by: Niharika Sharma, 17

Star Teen Book Reviewer of Be the Star You Are! Charity

www.bethestaryouare.org

Many years ago, Otto was a young boy who, upon getting lost in a German forest, became entangled in a prophecy and received a magical harmonica. Later during the years leading up to World War II, Friedrich, Mike, and Ivy are each musically talented children living in separate parts of the world. Friedrich Schmidt is a German boy who longs to become a conductor, but he is held back by a facial deformity in a time where any sort of abnormality is looked down upon. Mike Flannery is an orphan from Pennsylvania who enjoys playing the piano, but he has to focus on taking care of his brother. Ivy Maria Lopez is a girl of Mexican heritage in California who loves music, but she is forced to move to a segregated school while her family takes care of a farm whose owners have been forced into a Japanese internment camp. Their stories become intertwined when each of them fall into the possession of the harmonica and together cause a chain of events with astounding consequences.

Echo is split into four parts: the fairytale that sets up the premise for the story, and the three separate tales of each of the main characters. Even though every section has its own personal themes, all the main three stories carry messages of the power of hope and music. The writing in this book was phenomenal, and so many lines stood out to me as I was reading it. I loved every one of the characters and their unique challenges that were all connected by music. Though it was slightly strange to have to experience the journeys these children went on separately, the author did a great job of tying each of their stories together in the end and connecting the result of their actions back to the original fairytale. This book was also very comforting to read because it was easy for me to empathize with the individual plotlines and enjoy the feel-good ending.

Though *Echo* is a captivating book that is sure to be liked by most people, it is a long story with over 500 pages. That being said, it is worth the full read even if it seems daunting at first. I would suggest this novel for readers between ages 10 to 15 since it can be difficult to read for a younger audience. Still, I believe that readers of any age would enjoy this book due to its outstanding dialogue and heartwarming plot. This novel is perfect to buy for someone as a gift, for it is sure to charm anyone who reads it.

Recommended Books:

Wolf Hollow, Lauren Wolk

A Night Divided, Jennifer A. Nielsen

The Girl Who Drank the Moon, Kelly Barnhill

Esperanza Rising, Pam Muñoz Ryan

Seeing Red, Kathryn Erskine