



The Name Jar

By Yangsook Choi

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The new kid in school needs a new name! Or does she?

Being the new kid in school is hard enough, but what about when nobody can pronounce your name? Having just moved from Korea, Unhei is anxious that American kids will like her. So instead of introducing herself on the first day of school, she tells the class that she will choose a name by the following week. Her new classmates are fascinated by this no-name girl and decide to help out by filling a glass jar with names for her to pick from. But while Unhei practices being a Suzy, Laura, or Amanda, one of her classmates comes to her neighborhood and discovers her real name and its special meaning. On the day of her name choosing, the name jar has mysteriously disappeared. Encouraged by her new friends, Unhei chooses her own Korean name and helps everyone pronounce it—*Yoon-Hey*.

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Editorial Review

From School Library Journal

K-Gr 2-On the way to her first day of school, Unhei is teased by the children on the bus for her Korean name. When she reaches her classroom and is asked her name, she tells her classmates that she has not yet decided on one. To be helpful the children put their suggestions into a "name jar." Eventually the girl decides to keep her own name as one of her classmates takes pride in the new Korean nickname he has chosen, Chinku, meaning "friend." The round, red imprint of the Korean character for Unhei's name provides the graphic manifestation of the story's theme. Attractive golden endpapers feature random repetitions of the stamp imprint interspersed with her classmates' handwritten suggestions on scraps of torn paper. The bold, bright paintings that illustrate the story are realistic, warm, and appealing. Unfortunately, the text sags under the weight of its mission to describe how it might feel to immigrate. A well-meaning and visually attractive effort, but uninspired.

Dorian Chong, School of Library and Information Science, San Jose State University, CA

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From [Booklist](#)

Ages 4-8. Unhei has just come with her family from Korea and is starting school. Her name is pronounced Yoon-hye, which means *grace*, but she feels awkward about it after some teasing on the school bus. She decides to choose an American name, and her classmates oblige her by filling a glass jar with their suggestions. Her mother reminds her that she and her grandmother went to a name master for Unhei's name, and Unhei practices stamping her name with the beautiful name stamp her grandmother gave her. Finally, Unhei decides to keep her own name, and one of her classmates even has a stamp made for himself with the Korean characters for *friend*. The paintings are mostly in gold and earth tones, and the figures have both stature and simplicity--as does the story. *GraceAnne DeCandido*

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From the Inside Flap

The new kid in school needs a new name! Or does she?

Being the new kid in school is hard enough, but what about when nobody can pronounce your name? Having just moved from Korea, Unhei is anxious that American kids will like her. So instead of introducing herself on the first day of school, she tells the class that she will choose a name by the following week. Her new classmates are fascinated by this no-name girl and decide to help out by filling a glass jar with names for her to pick from. But while Unhei practices being a Suzy, Laura, or Amanda, one of her classmates comes to her neighborhood and discovers her real name and its special meaning. On the day of her name choosing, the name jar has mysteriously disappeared. Encouraged by her new friends, Unhei chooses her own Korean name and helps everyone pronounce it--"Yoon-Hey.

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Mary Barker:

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Julia Hale:

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Jennifer Case:

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Eulalia Perry:

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