



Waiting for Appa

Jennifer R. Kim

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Eunhae is nine years old when she bids a tearful farewell to her father, who leaves their home in South Korea in search of a better life in America for his family. As her Appa tries to comfort her with his parting words, "Love will etch our faces in each other's hearts. We won't forget," Eunhae can't shake the icy fear that overwhelms her. Two years later, when Eunhae and her mother immigrate to America to reunite with her father, they are greeted at San Francisco International Airport with horrific news-Appa is near death-the unfortunate victim of a job site accident. Much to her dismay, Eunhae's father eventually dies and she and her mother are left alone in the world. As they experience cruelty at the hands of relatives, they also find reassurance in the kindness of strangers, but Eunhae is changed forever by the devastating loss.

Twenty years later, Eunhae still lives her life clinging to the memories of her father and a life denied, shutting out all those who love her. Troubled by the shame and hostility surrounding her father's death, she goes in search of answers and uncovers far more than she ever expected.

Waiting for Appa Details

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From Reader Review Waiting for Appa for online ebook

Cory says

I read Waiting for Appa around the same time I read A Step from Heaven, another book that also discusses the Korean immigrant experience. One of my favorite books is Kira-Kira. Because of my previous experience with books about Asian immigrants, I expected to love this book.

I didn't. I knew from the first few pages that I wouldn't enjoy it. But I decided to read on because I wanted to know if it got any better. Sometimes it did, but other times it dragged.

I have the feeling that this is a memoir, and because of this, the author was unable to detach herself from the situation and make the story come alive. It moved from her childhood into her adult years so quickly, I was never able to feel an attachment to the protagonist.

The Bad

1. I wish this had been told in 1st Person. It would have given me a better grasp on Eunhae's perspective. There would have been less metaphors and similes, something I despised in Memoirs of a Geisha.
2. The story focused too much on the death of her father. I understand that's the major theme of the work, but it took up too much space.
3. There wasn't enough character development. As soon as I was interested in a character, they disappeared.
4. The pacing is off. We moved much to quickly through the story. I wish Kim had focused on Eunhae's teen years, and shown her childhood in flashbacks.
5. The Hallmark revelation.
6. There were no supporting characters that Eunhae could talk to. We have Dave, but he doesn't come into the story until much later. She should have had a friend to confide in.
7. There was zero chemistry between Eunhae and Dave.
8. Robert felt like a plot device. I wish he had been fleshed out. He was there for me to feel sorry for Eunhae. And the parallels between him and her father were a little too obvious. I hope he wasn't made out to be the bad guy just because he was Japanese.
9. I know this was supposed to be a tear-jerker, but I in the end, I didn't feel sorry for Eunhae. She had become a little too self absorbed.

The Good

1. Eunhae's mother.
2. Eunhae's mother's second husband. I can't remember his name, but he was a good guy.

3. The surprise. Yes, it caught me off guard.

I didn't dislike this book, and I think the author has great potential. I just wish the characters had been more developed.

WendyR says

Very good book about the love a child has for her father and how that affects her throughout her life. I do have to admit I was a little bothered about the middle of the book by her continued attachment to her deceased father. I thought it was time for her to grow up and get over it but then I understood later why she felt so attached and why she did not want to let go. It's amazing how our childhood fears and beliefs can affect us for a lifetime.

I liked how this book was unpredictable and how I ended up liking her mother so much more in the end. At first I thought she was more of a minor, supporting character so I didn't pay much attention to her. It makes me wonder how many other people I underestimate.

Kate says

I enjoyed this story about struggling with both a parent's death and as an immigrant to a foreign country, and it was a quick read. My only issue was that it went just a little too far with how much of the main character's life was controlled by the loss of her father, even 20 years later. I don't know, having never lost a parent. I also didn't understand the explanation of the circumstances of the death. He "fell into a coma and then died". You don't just "fall into a coma", something has to trigger it, and what that was is never explained

Marjana Simic says

I was lucky to receive this book as a Goodreads giveaway, autographed at that! I was looking forward to reading it and once I started, I couldn't put it down. The story is captivating from the very beginning and it had me crying my eyes out by page 8! Maybe it's because I'm too emotional or because I lost my dad to cancer recently, or because the writing was beautiful, or maybe because of all these things. I couldn't tell. This is a story of heartbreak, courage, determination, and most importantly, love. I related to Eunhae because, like her, I immigrated to a big country where I couldn't speak the language so I understood perfectly well what troubles she went through to accomplish what she did.

While the story is interesting, the writing confused me at times because of the use of present tense when I felt it should have been past tense. I also did not understand why Eunhae waited 20 years to find out the truth, why not earlier. The ending felt a little abrupt. I would have liked to read more about Eunhae's relationship with Dave and the details of how they got together, but maybe the author wanted to keep the focus of the book on Eunhae's relationship with her dad.

"Waiting for Appa" is a great read and I'm very glad I have had the opportunity to read about Korean people

and Korean customs. I will definitely never forget this story because of the closeness of a daughter to her father, something I miss every day.

Alison says

on my kindle

Megan says

This book had the basis of a good read. Different culture, girl growing up without a beloved parent, trying to live out her parents' dreams, and twist at the end. However, I felt like I couldn't delve beyond the surface of the story to actually feel and care about the characters. Not sure if that was the writing or just my interactions with the book. Worth reading. 3.5 stars

Sunshine says

I received this book through Goodreads Giveaways. I thoroughly enjoyed it. :-)

Faye Oliver says

(Review originally on www.fridgefullabooks.blogspot.com)

I was excited to read this book. I managed to pick it up for free by signing up for a free trial of Kindle Unlimited on Amazon. Reaching 200 pages in length, it took me two days to read this book.

Although it saddens me to say it, in my opinion there were probably more negative points than positive points when it comes to Waiting for Appa. Now, having never lost a parent before, I can't even imagine the grief and anguish one must feel at the death of a parent. It's for this reason that deciding whether the book is good or not is hard for me. It certainly dealt with how the death of her Father affected Eunhae, and in great detail. It affected all of her relationships from that point onwards and affected the development of her personality. But there were a couple of flaws about this book that stopped me from really enjoying it.

Eunhae's character. When Eunhae was a little girl and her Father had just died, I really really felt for her. I empathised with the little girl who had lost her Father so much. She was so cute and devastated that my heart truly did reach out to her. However, as Eunhae turned in to an adult and a teenager, this completely changed and Eunhae didn't seem like a very nice person. Take her encounters with Dave for example, she never actually seemed to want him around. Most of her encounters with Dave always seemed to end in an argument, or her taking out whatever frustrations she had on him. I can only assume that all the other times they had the most fun and games and laughter, otherwise I don't know how their friendship lasted so long. As a result, I could never fully engage with Eunhae as an adult, her dialogue always seemed to be full of frustration or the essence of feeling misunderstood.

Characters. On a whole the characters (apart from Eunhae's Mother) seemed quite flat and lacked personality. Dave seemed to be put on the earth completely to serve Eunhae. I never really understood Robert. It was only Eunhae's Mother I could really empathise with. She tried her up-most best to provide for her daughter and make sure she didn't have to go without what the other kids had. I probably liked her so much because she reminds me of my Mother.

Time. In just 200 pages, it's hard to talk about someone's childhood and adult life in adequate detail. Although I know this book focused on how the death of her Father affected her, time skipped to frequently in this book. Especially during her teenage years, there were perhaps three chapters on her university years? And most of them featured her and Dave arguing, from what I can remember.

To be honest my main problem with this book is that it basically stayed the same. From when her Father died, Eunhae couldn't let go of him, wouldn't let go of his ashes, resented her Mother for maybe catching feelings for someone else, thought of her Father all the time. More than twenty years later and Eunhae is still exactly the same. And then all of a sudden she was able to let go of his ashes. And then it was only when she found out a revelation about him was she able to move on with her life. I don't know maybe if there had been a more gradual realisation that Eunhae had to eventually move on with her life, and not just because she discovers something about her father, maybe if time had moved more slowly and the author hadn't tried to cover so much of Eunhae's life, and maybe if the characters were a bit more realistic, I could have very much enjoyed this book more. As it stands, it was a quick little read and it's most strongest point was that it made me think how utterly terrible it would feel to lose my Mother.

Pamela Barrett says

Eunhae, a 9 year old South Korean girl, clings to her Appa (father) who is leaving for America to make a better life for her and her mother. It will take 2 years for them to join him, and not a day goes by without her deeply missing him.

When they finally arrive in San Francisco he isn't at the airport to greet them. Instead of a loving joyful reunion, they are met by his unfriendly family who inform them that her Appa is in a coma and near death. In a blink of an eye, her father dies, her mother is at the mercy of in-laws who mistreat them, and they have to find their way in a land where they don't speak the language. There is no time to grieve the loss of her father, and there is family history that no one talks about. It will take Eunhae 20 years to make this journey through grief to wholeness.

I recommend this wonderful book to anyone who has lost a loved one, especially a parent, and who has found it hard to move on with their life.

Lissa says

Won novel from goodreads giveaways

fantastic novel. i have really enjoyed it. Can't wait to read future readings by this author

