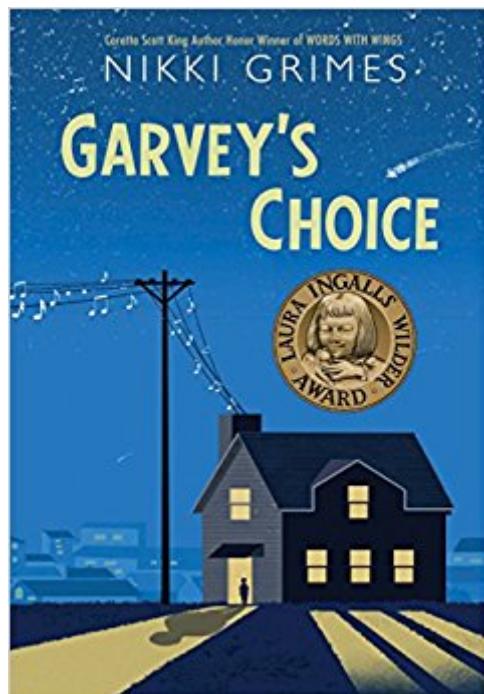


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# Garvey's Choice



## Synopsis

A Kirkus Reviews Best Book of the Year A School Library Journal Best Book of the Year

Garvey's father has always wanted Garvey to be athletic, but Garvey is interested in astronomy, science fiction, reading; anything but sports. Feeling like a failure, he comforts himself with food. Garvey is kind, funny, smart, a loyal friend, and he is also overweight, teased by bullies, and lonely. When his only friend encourages him to join the school chorus, Garvey's life changes. The chorus finds a new soloist in Garvey, and through chorus, Garvey finds a way to accept himself, and a way to finally reach his distant father; by speaking the language of music instead of the language of sports. This emotionally resonant novel in verse by award-winning author Nikki Grimes celebrates choosing to be true to yourself.

## Book Information

Lexile Measure: 620 (What's this?)

Hardcover: 120 pages

Publisher: WordSong (October 4, 2016)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 1629797405

ISBN-13: 978-1629797403

Product Dimensions: 5 x 0.6 x 7.5 inches

Shipping Weight: 4 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.6 out of 5 stars 13 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #39,396 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #96 in Books > Children's Books > Growing Up & Facts of Life > Friendship, Social Skills & School Life > Bullies #133 in Books > Children's Books > Arts, Music & Photography > Performing Arts #332 in Books > Children's Books > Literature & Fiction > Poetry

Age Range: 8 - 12 years

Grade Level: 2 - 7

## Customer Reviews

Gr 4-8 •Grimes's latest is a sensitively written middle grade novel in verse that takes its syllable count from Japanese tanka. Garvey is an overweight boy who is teased at school and whose father constantly prods him to be more like his athletic older sister, Angie. But Garvey has a best friend (Joe), an open heart (which leads him to a new friend, Manny), and, as readers learn midway through the book, a talent for singing, which lands him a coveted solo in the school's

chorus concert. Through that talent, Garvey finds a way to connect with his father and combat his bullies' rude remarks with a newfound strength of purpose. Those who thought Planet Middle School's Joylin was a remarkably lifelike portrait of an angst yet kind adolescent will fall hard for Garvey, a tender, sincere boy who dislikes athletics. Grimes writes about adolescent friendships in a way that feels deeply human. VERDICT A short, sweet, satisfying novel in verse that educators and readers alike will love. •Abigail Garnett, Brooklyn Public Library

**FIVE STARRED REVIEWS!**

- \* "Grimes returns to the novel-in-verse format, creating voice, characters, and plot in a series of pithy tanka poems, a traditional Japanese form similar to haiku, but using five lines. (w)ritten from Garvey's point of view, the succinct verses convey the narrative as well as his emotions with brevity, clarity, and finesse." *Booklist*, starred review
- \* "(A) sensitively written middle grade novel in verse; (readers) will fall hard for Garvey, a tender, sincere boy who dislikes athletics. Grimes writes about adolescent friendships in a way that feels deeply human. A short, sweet, satisfying novel in verse that educators and readers alike will love." *School Library Journal*, starred review
- \* "Grimes' newest follows a young black boy searching for his own unique voice, lost among his father's wishes and society's mischaracterizations. This compassionate, courageous, and hopeful novel explores the constraints placed on black male identity and the corresponding pains and struggles that follow when a young black boy must confront these realities both at home and in school.... This graceful novel risks stretching beyond easy, reductive constructions of black male coming-of-age stories and delivers a sincere, authentic story of resilience and finding one's voice." *Kirkus Reviews*, starred review
- \*\*"Writing in five-line tanka poems, Grimes (*Words with Wings*) weaves a heart-wrenching story about a boy who isn't the jock his father dreamed he would be; in simple, searing language, Grimes captures Garvey's heartache at his father's inability to accept him as he is, as well as the casual but wounding teasing Garvey endures at school...Garvey's journey to self-acceptance is deeply moving and will linger with readers long after they finish this brief, incisive verse novel." *-Publishers Weekly*, starred review
- \*\*"Grimes uses novel-in-verse format to tell Garvey's story from his perspective. Similar to haiku, Grimes writes in tankas, another form of Japanese poetry. The poems are succinct and rhythmic, making this an ideal book for reluctant readers or those challenged by large chapter books. Middle school students will easily be able to find elements of themselves, siblings, or friends in the character of Garvey. Grimes delivers a compassionate bildungsroman story that gives glimpses of hope for Garvey's future." *-School Library Connection*, starred review
- "Grimes tells a big-hearted story of Garvey... (e)mploying the Japanese poetic form of tanka, five-line poems (or, here, stanzas)

with haiku-like syllable counts, Grimes reveals Garvey's thoughts, feelings, and observations, the spare poetry a good vehicle for a young man's attempts to articulate the puzzle that is his life."

-Horn Book Reviews

This book is a classic work of art! I don't know why there are not many more five star reviews. It deserves all the awards it has received, and more. This novel in verse eloquently covers so much sensitive territory in a story of an overweight boy who is not interested in the football his father wants him to play. Garvey is more interested in math and astronomy, and is the butt of teasing and bullying due to his weight. Joe, his best friend encourages him to sign up for chorus. There he makes a new friend, Manny, and finds a place he can really shine. In one of many poignant teaching moments, Manny succinctly admonishes Garvey not to stare at his pale skim milk skin (he has albinism) by saying: "This is me. Get over it." With the encouragement of his friends, Garvey blossoms, and gets the courage to tell his true feelings to people he cares about. I think of the 4-6 grade set as a bit young to have coming of age books, but this is surely an exception. In the process, he earns respect from his former tormentors, creates a new bond with his father, learns to have faith in his own choices and literally, find his voice. Garvey's Choice is spot-on with middle grade issues and feelings. Nary a word is wasted, and every word is chosen for its impact. This is a great book for kids to read on their own. Nevertheless, it would be a fun book to read to younger children and discuss the many thoughtful scenes and marvel at how big life issues are framed in ways young people can absorb easily. Kudos to Grimes!

Nikki Grimes tells Garvey's story in Tanka, an ancient poetry form from Japan. Tanka translates as "short song" "short song". Images flow in an expanding stream, rounding out Garvey's life. He's a young boy, dancing alone by a slide until his first friend finds him and joins in his quiet moment. A skinny kid mocks him at school, and Garvey's too lost in his own world to see the other boy's pain. His father constantly drives him to become someone he'll never be. The tempo rises as Garvey realizes he has gifts, if he can find the courage to move forward. Encouraged by friends who've faced their own demons, Garvey shows the world he can sing. That song transforms his life, and the lives of those who love him.--Kate Calina

Awesome, requires tissues.

Good quality, timely shipping.

All Garvey seems to do is disappoint his father. His father would like him to play sports and to enjoy them too, but Garvey isn't athletic. He'd much rather read science fiction and learn about science. Feeling bad about himself, Garvey consoles himself with food and starts to gain weight. He has one friend, who encourages him to join the school chorus. Soon Garvey is making new friends and displaying his talent. He becomes the new soloist for the chorus and his interest in music starts to build a bridge to his father via a new route. Told in verse, this book of poetry is brief and powerful. Garvey's situation with his father reads a organic and volatile, the desperation to connect creating even more of a distance between father and son as the failures continue. Garvey's use of food as a solace is intelligently done, offering hope that he can find his footing again but also not seeing weight loss as the ultimate solution or weight as the real problem. Verse allows Grimes to cut right to the heart of these situations, revealing the layers of issues at play. Garvey is a bright, funny character. He is shown as a good friend, supportive and also accepting. As Garvey begins to reach out and try new things, he is rewarded by the chorus also reaching out to him. Again, the progress is done in a natural way. Nothing is perfect and there is no magical solution here. It is hard work, talent and slow progress towards a better place. A shining look at loneliness, bullying and the ability of music to break down barriers. Appropriate for ages 8-12.

He wanted his son to be a jock but Garvey had other plans. Garvey would rather learn and study than play catch or shoot a basket. As his classmates taunted him for his weight, I had to wonder if his father even knew what happened at school and if this would even effect how he talked to his son. While at school one day he notices the choir room, his best friends suggest that he should check it out since he is always humming. Garvey wonders if perhaps that might be just what he needed yet he hesitates, what if he fails? Days later, Garvey takes a chance and opens the chorus room door and finds that what lies inside this room is more than just music. It's a lesson in acceptance and empowerment as Garvey learns to embrace his individuality. This is another novel that should not be listened to, the narrator shows no emotion as he reads the novel and he sounded like. A. Robot. When. He. Reads. The. Text. Which. Drove. Me. Crazy. There was no rhythm or perk in his voice and after the novel was finished, the author explained that her novel was written in Tanka, a type of Japanese poetry like a haiku but the author changed the number or

syllables in her novel. That being said, I still think there should have been some type of rhythm in the narrator’s voice as he read. I normally love it when an author plays with their words in a novel and this is the first time I have ever listened to a novel being read using this technique and I think it will be my last time I ever do it. Listening to the audio, I thought the story lacked the emotions and the dramatics that it really deserves. It’s amazing how much a narrator can affect your reading experience. If you do read this novel, don’t listen to the audio, read the text yourself so you can put your own dramatics, your own pauses, and your vocals to the text.

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