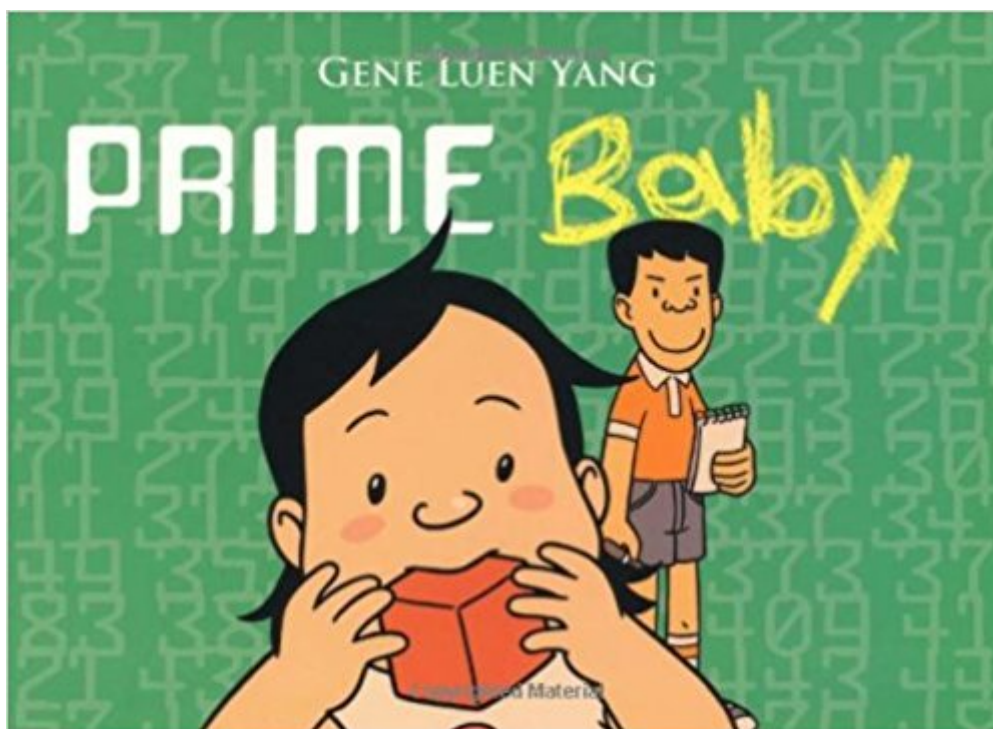


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Prime Baby



Synopsis

From the pages of the New York Times and the pen of Printz Award winner Gene Luen Yang comes a tale of math, aliens, and new siblings. Thaddeus doesn't like his new sister (she's not that smart--and she gets all the attention). He likes her even less when he discovers that she's an inter-dimensional conduit for peace-loving aliens (who are totally lame--all they want to do is knit socks for the homeless and have sing-a-longs!). But what's even worse is that no one will believe him about any of this! How is he ever going manage to grow up to become the President of Earth? First serialized in the New York Times Magazine, *Prime Baby* is a laugh-out-loud look at sibling rivalry.

Book Information

Age Range: 12 and up

Lexile Measure: 580L (What's this?)

Paperback: 64 pages

Publisher: First Second; 1 edition (April 13, 2010)

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ISBN-10: 1596436123

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Shipping Weight: 5.6 ounces

Average Customer Review: 4.7 out of 5 stars 6 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #685,446 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #6 in [Books > Teens > Literature & Fiction > Social & Family Issues > Family > New Baby](#) #532 in [Books > Children's Books > Growing Up & Facts of Life > Family Life > New Baby](#) #3033 in [Books > Teens > Literature & Fiction > Comics & Graphic Novels](#)

Customer Reviews

Starred Review Eight-year-old Thaddeus Fong is insanely jealous of his baby sister and exploits his intelligence as a weapon against his social insecurities. Politics ranging from those of the family to those of state are explored and sent up as Yang unfolds a rich and spirited story that lays bare psychological and social truths, a parable in which ever-forgiving space aliens play a major role in advancing not just the plot but also character development. Using the flat, cartoony style of his award-winning *American Born Chinese* (2006), Yang pulls us in from the first page and packs in several surprises as well as clever asides within its 56, multi-paneled, single-strip pages, allowing

plenty of white space to force readers to note the finest details of the action in counterpoint to Thaddeus' attempts to interpret every interaction as a personal slight. The color palette employed is soft, subtly contradicting Thaddeus' emphatic evil-versus-good outlook with its relative gentleness. For readers who value humor and humanity (not just slam-bang action), Christians, newcomers to graphic novels, and fans of Yang's simultaneously childlike and sophisticated ability to create and maintain tension should all be satisfied by his new book.

--Francisca Goldsmith

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Through a series of contrivances that include prime numbers, a new facial hair-configuration, sock-knitting aliens and a small island republic, graphic novelist Gene Yang takes the well-worn premise of a jealous older brother to its illogical, yet hilarious, conclusion. "Prime Baby" tells the story of Thaddeus K. Fong, self-described "martyr for truth," and his over-jealous relationship with baby sister Maddie. "Prime Baby" is an excellent gateway book to start off young readers into the world of graphic novels/comics as well as engage reluctant readers. While some vocabulary may evade the grasp of some children, pre-teens especially will relate to the perils of a baby usurping the alpha child's domestic tranquility. Yang's characterization of Thaddeus is nearly flawless, as his personality is cleverly revealed by the story's 3rd panel (In my own classroom, I've used the 1st strip of this book to teach a lesson on literary characterization with students in grades 6th - 8th). Originally serialized in *The New York Times Magazine's* now discontinued *Funny Pages*, the story was laid

out four strips to a page, allowing the reader to ingest more of the plot. However, in its book form, the strips are laid out one per page, breaking the pace of the story, reducing it to the rhythm of a comic strip: setup, joke, setup, joke. Visually, the strips are offset by generous amounts of white space, which helps readers focus on the art, as well as the wondrously muted color palette of brown, gray and orange, as colored by fellow cartoonist Derek Kirk Kim. Infused with good-natured humor and the sarcastic musing of an over-imaginative 3rd grader, Yang never loses sight of the love that exists between brothers and sisters, no matter how many intergalactic, extra-planetary slug pods she may (or may not) spit out. Yang's gift for the economy of storytelling, as well as his crystal-clear characterizations, makes "Prime Baby" a must-have for school libraries, classroom collections and belongs on any shelf where both great writing and comic art are valued.

Cute lesson about family and a wonderful book to share with young ones

Sublime and brilliant.

Prim Baby is a great story with a unique idea for it. Gene Luen Yang defiantly didn't disappoint with this book!

Thaddeus--genius and future President of Earth--is convinced that there is something wrong with his baby sister. After all, she only babbles in prime numbers. But his parents won't listen to him because they mistakenly think he is an ordinary eight-year-old. All that will change when the aliens arrive, Thaddeus is sure. And it turns out that he is right, though not in the way he had expected. Yang allows himself to embrace his snarky side in this short comic-strip story. Thaddeus is very smart for an eight-year-old--and convinced that he's even smarter than that--so readers who like a sarcastic touch will appreciate lines such as "My folks call her an `unexpected blessing.' Please. If it walks like an accident and talks like an accident, let's just call it an accident, all right?" But all is not snark. The aliens are actually do-gooders who come in peace to host sing-alongs and knit socks, something that Thaddeus is not entirely on board with. It's a measure of Yang's skills as a creator that he manages to write a thoughtful story without slipping too deep into "message" territory. The ending is not the rousing finale one might want, but readers will still appreciate the journey. The sly touches found in the writing continue in the art. For example, the alien slug creatures wear salt shakers around their necks, a subtle reference to Yang's Christianity and the wearing of crosses--originally instruments of torture and murder. Thaddeus has just the right

devious look on his face for the future ruler of everyone and his parents have the long suffering attitudes often worn by parents of overly intelligent children. Each comic strip is printed on its own page, so the book is thin and it has the long, low shape of other comic strip collections, such as Garfield. Though its smaller size might make it harder to shelve, the eye-catching cover and small page count should attract readers. There is no content to keep this out of the children's section, but the humor will be best understood by readers old enough to grasp sarcasm. Give this to fans of Evil Genius by Catherine Jinks or I Am a Genius of Unspeakable Evil and I Want to Be Your Class President by Josh Lieb and be sure to include the humorous Discussion Guide.-- Snow Wildsmith

A really cute look at a kid with an overactive imagination. In that regard, it kind of reminded me of Calvin and Hobbes, although Thaddeus has a real little sister instead of a stuffed tiger. I liked the real science bit about prime numbers as artificial order instead of natural chaos, and Thaddeus' extrapolation from that is hilarious. Very short though, especially considering how it's formatted as only one comic strip per page.

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