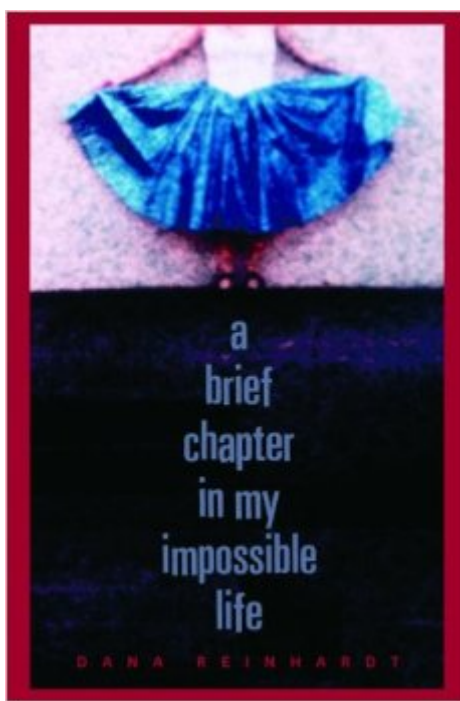


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# A Brief Chapter In My Impossible Life



## Synopsis

Simone's starting her junior year in high school. Her mom's a lawyer for the ACLU, her dad's a political cartoonist, so she's grown up standing outside the organic food coop asking people to sign petitions for worthy causes. She's got a terrific younger brother and amazing friends. And she's got a secret crush on a really smart and funny guy "who spends all of his time with another girl. Then her birth mother contacts her. Simone's always known she was adopted, but she never wanted to know anything about it. She's happy with her family just as it is, thank you. She learns who her birth mother was "a 16-year-old girl named Rivka. Who is Rivka? Why has she contacted Simone? Why now? The answers lead Simone to deeper feelings of anguish and love than she has ever known, and to question everything she once took for granted about faith, life, the afterlife, and what it means to be a daughter.

## Book Information

Lexile Measure: 910L (What's this?)

Hardcover: 240 pages

Publisher: Wendy Lamb Books; First Edition edition (February 14, 2006)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0385746989

ISBN-13: 978-0385746984

Product Dimensions: 5.8 x 0.9 x 8.5 inches

Shipping Weight: 11.2 ounces

Average Customer Review: 4.3 out of 5 stars See all reviews (30 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #4,921,830 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #95 in Books > Teens >

Literature & Fiction > Social & Family Issues > Family > Adoption #1006 in Books > Children's

Books > Growing Up & Facts of Life > Family Life > Adoption #1973 in Books > Teens >

Literature & Fiction > Social & Family Issues > Emotions & Feelings

Age Range: 12 and up

Grade Level: 7 and up

## Customer Reviews

I would classify this as an early young adult book, appropriate for grades 7 and up. It's about a sixteen-year-old girl named Simone, who grows up knowing that she was adopted, without wanting to know anything about her birth parents. She is resentful when her parents tell her that her birth mother, Rivka, wants to get to know her. She eventually gives in, and finds her life enriched by

knowing Rivka. I liked this book a lot. I found myself wanting to keep walking and listening, so that I could spend more time with Simone. I found her voice realistic (and the narrator did a wonderful job with this). She is sometimes a resentful teen, and sometimes awkward or insecure, and sometimes wise beyond her years. She has an unabashedly good relationship with her parents and her younger brother (ok, this is a tad unrealistic in my experience, but still nice to see). She has a small group of true friends, and a crush on a boy named Zack. I found the scenes between Simone and Zack particularly enjoyable. There's a scene in which Simone gets off the phone, and jumps up and down. Reading it, I almost wanted to be her. I certainly could identify with her. This book also has a lot of information about what it means to be Jewish. Simone is an atheist, being raised by atheist parents, but her birth mother, Rivka, was raised as a Hasidic Jew. As Simone gets to know Rivka, she learns about various Jewish ceremonies and customs. I found this a tiny bit heavy-handed. It was interesting to me to learn more about Passover and Seder, etc. But I felt once or twice like the author was deliberately educating me, which I tend to find off-putting when reading fiction. However, this was not off-putting enough to keep me from absolutely loving the book, and it was an important part of the story.

Simone Turner-Bloom is your average above-average teenager. She has a mother, a father and a younger brother. She lives in an upper middle class home and is an excellent student with a gift for math. But, Simone is different from most of her peers in one significant way. She's adopted and doesn't look like her parents or her brother. This doesn't bother her much, because she's happy in her family and really feels an integral part of the Turner-Bloom home. One day, however, Simone's parents tell her that her birth mother, Rivka, wants to meet her. Simone struggles with this decision for months until, finally, she agrees to invite Rivka to Thanksgiving dinner. And, guess what?

Simone finds herself drawn to her young birth mother and they begin a close relationship as Simone finds out about her past from her birth mother. Part of Rivka's past is Judaism, and atheist Simone is drawn to Rivka's practice of Judaism and its culture. There's a hitch, however, in this happy new relationship and it is the reason Rivka sought Simone out before adulthood. Rivka's sick with ovarian cancer and only has months to live. And, in the background of these momentous changes in Simone's life are everyday teenage challenges--first kisses, boyfriends, a friend's family troubles, etc. "a brief chapter in my impossible life" is different from most YA fiction in one, very unique way. Everyone involved--from Simone, to her friends and family, past and present--is essentially good. There's no abuse, alcoholism, or cutting in this book. It's a gorgeous examination of what happens when an extraordinary, but perfectly understandable, event challenges an essentially good,

well-meaning teen.

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