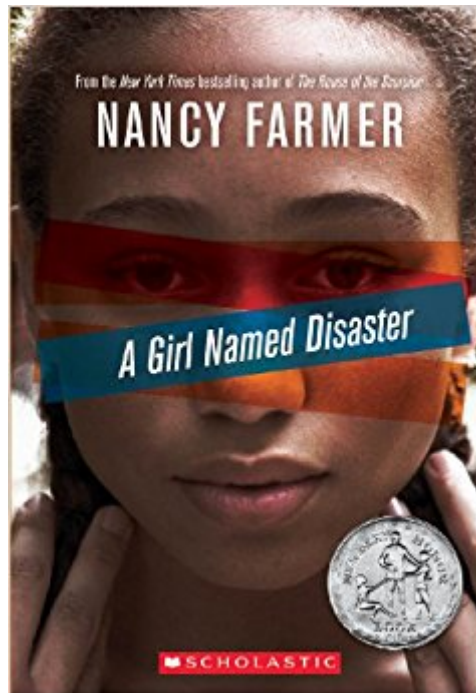




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A Girl Named Disaster



Synopsis

This Newbery Honor book by award-winning, bestselling author Nancy Farmer is being reissued in paperback! Eleven-year-old Nhamo lives in a traditional village in Mozambique, where she doesn't quite fit in. When her family tries to force her into marrying a cruel man, she runs away to Zimbabwe, hoping to find the father she's never met. But what should have been a short boat trip across the border turns into a dangerous year-long adventure, and Nhamo must summon her innermost courage to ensure her survival.

Book Information

Lexile Measure: 730 (What's this?)

Paperback: 336 pages

Publisher: Scholastic Paperbacks; Reprint edition (January 1, 2012)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0545356628

ISBN-13: 978-0545356626

Product Dimensions: 0.8 x 5.2 x 7.2 inches

Shipping Weight: 7.2 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.2 out of 5 stars 142 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #104,785 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #24 in Books > Children's Books > Growing Up & Facts of Life > Difficult Discussions > Runaways #65 in Books > Children's Books > Geography & Cultures > Explore the World > Africa #3286 in Books > Children's Books > Growing Up & Facts of Life > Family Life

Age Range: 8 - 12 years

Grade Level: 3 - 7

Customer Reviews

This 1997 Newbery Honor book, which is set in Africa, is both a survival story and a spiritual voyage. "[The heroine] is a stunning creation?while she serves as a fictional ambassador from a foreign culture, she is supremely human. An unforgettable work," said PW in a starred review. Ages 10-14.-- is a stunning creation?while she serves as a fictional ambassador from a foreign culture, she is supremely human. An unforgettable work," said PW in a starred review. Ages 10-14.

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Grade 6-9?For Nhamo, an 11-year-old Shona girl living in Mozambique in 1981, life is filled with the

traditions of her village people. When family circumstances, a ngozi (angry spirit), and a cholera epidemic force her into a horrible marriage, she flees with only her grandmother's blessings, some gold nuggets, and many survival skills. Still, what should have been a two-day boat trip across the border to her father's family in Zimbabwe spans a year. Daily conversations with spirits help to combat her loneliness and provide her with sage and practical advice. The most incredible leg of her journey is spent on an island where Nhamo closely observes and is warily accepted by a baboon family only to have one of them destroy her shelter and food supply. She makes mistakes, loses heart, and nearly dies of starvation. Even after she arrives in Zimbabwe where she lives with scientists before meeting her father's family, Nhamo must learn to survive in civilization and exorcise the demons that haunt her. A cast of characters, glossary, background information on South Africa and the Shona, and a bibliography ground this novel's details and culture. This story is humorous and heartwrenching, complex and multilayered, and the fortunate child who reads it will place Nhamo alongside Zia (Island of the Dolphins) and Julie (Julie of the Wolves). An engrossing and memorable saga.

—Susan Pine, New York Public Library Copyright 1996 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to the Audio Cassette edition.

My daughter and I have read the two Scorpion books and the Sea of Trolls trilogy, all by Nancy Farmer, all excellent. So we decided to go back and check on some of Farmer's earlier items. Am I glad we did. If anything, Disaster is even better. While her later books are heavy on adventure and social commentary, Disaster (as well as Ear, Eye, Arm) dwell largely at the personal level. Still plenty of adventure but I feel that we get to know Nhamo much more than we do the protagonists of Farmer's more recent books (Jack and Matt). And this is to our advantage. The nuance of Nhamo's many-faceted character is a delight to discover. So, interestingly, are the characters of Zimbabwe and Mozambique; Farmer really brings this corner of the African continent alive and tangible and genuinely interesting. This and Ear, Eye, Arm are truly great books.

I've loved this book since middle school, and re-reading it now in my early 20s, I still love it. Excellent storytelling - very straightforward and simple, but not dumbed down. The characters feel like actual human beings, and while it's set in a real place on planet Earth, it still lives in a mysterious universe all its own. Whether Nhamo is actually communing with spirits or it's all in her head is left up to interpretation - Farmer just tells the story as Nhamo sees it, and doesn't set out to prove or disprove anything. That being said, the straightforward method of storytelling isn't for everyone - if you like a really complex narrative with a lot of exposition, you will be disappointed (not

saying that's a bad thing, just clarifying the writing style here). Overall, I'd recommend this book for kids or adults - both would probably enjoy it.

The survival story seems to be big in middle school novels so it was nice to read one about a girl. I thought the writing was skilled but the middle was too slow and plodding. The girl's trials in tribal Africa were too severe. She is rejected by just about every human she encounters. She sets out alone in a boat, having never been in one before, in order to avoid a horrendous future. Every time she makes some progress it is wiped out by misfortune. She finds herself at the brink of death at least four times. Nancy Farmer vividly explains Disaster's daily activities right up until the end. Then her whole back story is revealed in one short chapter. Overall *A Girl Named Disaster* is a compelling story that I enjoyed reading. It is an appropriate challenge for middle school students.

I bought this book for a friend after I read a copy I borrowed from the library. This is a great story and, although I have spent a lot of time in Mozambique, I learned a lot reading this book about some aspects of rural village life that outsiders don't always get to see. It's a great story and a great look into another culture. I couldn't put it down! Nhamo is a strong female lead and role model for girls, but this book would be enjoyable for any reader who likes a good adventure book.

I bought this book for my 13 year old daughter and she is very intrigued with the reading. She is now learning about the tribes in Brazil and other social lifestyles in school and this book hit a cord with her interests. I just read an article about "undiscovered people" and when shared with corresponding videos on youtube, she is starting to discover the world without Apple, Microsoft, and all other electronics and social complexities. This book triggers new thoughts in young readers, but needs to be complemented with real world examples to make it a "teachable moment". Otherwise, this book will become just another made up story.

What a great book, my 11 yr. old granddaughter read this book and couldn't put it down.

My whole fifth grade class is listening to 'Do You Know Me?' - also by Nancy Farmer - as a read-aloud while a group of seven girls and the student teacher are enjoying 'A Girl Named Disaster' in a literature circle. While the boys typically love Gary Paulsen's *Hatchet*, 'A Girl Named Disaster' offers many benefits to girl readers. Like *Hatchet*, it is an existential study. The characters in each wrestle with issues of identity, grief, alienation and self-reliance. Nhamo, Farmer's

protagonist is believable, likable and an excellent narrator of the hero's journey away from one's home, through myriad adventures, and transformed, to her new place in the world. Farmer is a great writer of characters. The villains are corrupt, the heroes are benevolent and many characters are wonderfully mixed. Even the generally steady Nhamo loses her senses and attacks a man with a knife in this rich and complex story. For the girl that likes adventure stories with life and death struggles, wild animals, Africa, and a wonderfully flawed Cinderella ending, I recommend this book.

Remarkable book. Beautifully written, great characters and plot and it is one of the best researched books I've ever read.

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