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# The Arrival



## Synopsis

"Tan's lovingly laid out and masterfully rendered tale about the immigrant experience is a documentary magically told." -- Art Spiegelman, author of Maus "An absolute wonder." -- Marjane Satrapi, author of Persepolis "A magical river of strangers and their stories!" -- Craig Thompson, author of Blankets "A shockingly imaginative graphic novel that captures the sense of adventure and wonder that surrounds a new arrival on the shores of a shining new city. Wordless, but with perfect narrative flow, Tan gives us a story filled with cityscapes worthy of Winsor McCay." -- Jeff Smith, author of Bone "Shaun Tan's artwork creates a fantastical, hauntingly familiar atmosphere... Strange, moving, and beautiful." -- Jon J. Muth, Caldecott Medal-winning author of Zen Shorts "Bravo." -- Brian Selznick, Caldecott Medal-winning author of The Invention of Hugo Cabret "Magnificent." -- David Small, Caldecott Medalist

## Book Information

Hardcover: 128 pages

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Average Customer Review: 4.8 out of 5 stars 360 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #4,205 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #15 in [Books > Teens > Literature & Fiction > Comics & Graphic Novels](#) #16 in [Books > Children's Books > Growing Up & Facts of Life > Fiction](#) #39 in [Books > Teens > Literature & Fiction > Social & Family Issues > Family](#)

Age Range: 12 - 17 years

Grade Level: 7 and up

## Customer Reviews

Starred Review. Grade 7 Up [View all reviews](#) • Tan captures the displacement and awe with which immigrants respond to their new surroundings in this wordless graphic novel. It depicts the journey of one man, threatened by dark shapes that cast shadows on his family's life, to a new country. The only writing is in an invented alphabet, which creates the sensation immigrants must feel when they encounter a strange new language and way of life. A wide variety of ethnicities is represented in Tan's hyper-realistic style, and the sense of warmth and caring for others, regardless of race, age,

or background, is present on nearly every page. Young readers will be fascinated by the strange new world the artist creates, complete with floating elevators and unusual creatures, but may not realize the depth of meaning or understand what the man's journey symbolizes. More sophisticated readers, however, will grasp the sense of strangeness and find themselves participating in the man's experiences. They will linger over the details in the beautiful sepia pictures and will likely pick up the book to pore over it again and again. — Alana Abbott, James Blackstone Memorial Library, Branford, CT Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.

**\*Starred Review\*** Recipient of numerous awards and nominations in Australia, *The Arrival* proves a beautiful, compelling piece of art, in both content and form. Tan (The Lost Thing, 2004) has previously produced a small body of off-kilter, frequently haunting stories of children trapped in surreal industrial landscapes. Here, he has distilled his themes and aesthetic into a silent, fantastical masterpiece. A lone immigrant leaves his family and journeys to a new world, both bizarre and awesome, finding struggle and dehumanizing industry but also friendship and a new life. Tan infuses this simple, universal narrative with vibrant, resonating life through confident mastery of sequential art forms and conventions. Strong visual metaphors convey personal longing, political suppression, and totalitarian control; imaginative use of panel size and shape powerfully depicts sensations and ideas as diverse as interminable waiting, awe-inspiring majesty, and forlorn memories; delicate alterations in light and color saturate the pages with a sense of time and place. Soft brushstrokes and grand Art Deco-style architecture evoke a time long ago, but the story's immediacy and fantasy elements will appeal even to readers younger than the target audience, though they may miss many of the complexities. Filled with subtlety and grandeur, the book is a unique work that not only fulfills but also expands the potential of its form. Karp, Jesse

This is a fascinating story with no words. To say "the pages are overflowing with art and interesting details to capture your imagination" feels like an understatement. I pick this book up and browse through the pages in no particular sequence just to absorb the images. My son has sat with the book and followed the story from beginning to end. This book powerfully conveys emotion. This is another book that I am thrilled to own, thrilled to share, and I am thrilled that there is someone making gorgeous books such as this! The actual book and binding feel very nice and substantial, which make it not only a pleasure to own but also a pleasure to give.

I knew the basic idea of *The Arrival*, that it was in some way about the immigrant experience, but I had no idea about the approach. And what an approach! I don't know if you would call it metaphorical, magical realist, surreal, or what, but the effect is amazing. There are things here you just won't understand very well, being completely outside of your experience...and this works far, far better than any literal, historically accurate "immigrant story" could, by placing you in the subjective viewpoint of a 'stranger in a strange land'. That's the big scale strategy. But the small scale approach, on a panel-by-panel basis, is equally wonderful. Even before the story really kicks in, and we still seem firmly grounded reality, the first three pages had me hooked. The art is beautiful, and visual story-telling clever and richly emotional. This is really special. It does require a certain commitment and attention to follow along and place yourself in your story, so it may or may not be a good "children's book", but that would depend on the child.

Immigrants the world over have countless different stories, backgrounds, home countries, etc. but Shaun Tan manages to tell the immigrant story in a way that all immigrants - from the African immigrating to Europe to someone moving from a rural area to a city a la "Midnight Cowboy" - can relate to using only pictures. And what pictures... Hand-drawn, thoughtful, emotion evoking sketches. Brilliant. Having lived the immigrant experience, tonight I read the book with my 5 and 7 year old daughters, who were fascinated with the story and the drawings. This is a book like the ingenious Pixar movies where adults and children all love it - sometimes for the same reason but sometimes for very different reasons and interpretations. The book brings out many memories in me of the immigrant experience; For my daughters, it's just a great story of someone going to a new, wonderful, and strange land. How did Shaun Tan know?

The drawings are beautiful and the story is awakening. Page after page of beautiful and masterful art. Each drawing is one you would put on your wall, and it's a book full of these drawings. Drawing is the only medium that it tells the story through, and it tells that perfectly. The artist flawlessly demonstrates happiness, heart-brake, and confusion. Through this form of story-telling, the point slowly emerges that should be understood by all. The book itself is in excellent condition and should last for years to come.

I was so anxious for this book to arrive in the mail; I knew it was going to be something magical, just from the few illustrations I had seen. *The Arrival* is one of the most beautiful pieces of art I have ever seen, on several different levels. I paged through slowly, savoring each image. Tan often uses a

series of small images to convey a thought or a feeling--each is a masterpiece. The book does what so much great art does--it captures the ineffable. It speaks without words, and conveys the universal human experience. The haunting, luminous illustrations seem to cut straight to the heart. It actually brought me to tears, as I recognized in Tan's imagery the small and large moments that animate the soul. I would give it 6 stars if I could.

Spectacularly beautiful book that tells the story of immigrating to a new land with strange, unfamiliar customs and creatures. Shaun Tan is a master illustrator with a unique way of seeing the world. There are no words in this book and none are needed. Amazing.

Moving book without any dialog. The artwork is fantastic. This book would probably be lost on a very young child. Great book for an eight-year old or older. I am an adult and I love the book.

What a beautiful, exquisite book!!! The author/artist has put his heart into this- captured expressions on his characters, gestures, new worlds, plants, creatures, unfamiliar food to eat, etc. He is SO creative and such a wonderful artist!! It must have taken him so long to draw these scenarios! It is a treasure, one that shows you new things each time you "read" through it.

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