



To Sing Frogs

John M. Simmons

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Venture deep into the heart-warming-and heart-wrenching-world of international adoption as John Simmons' poignant memoir chronicles his family's personal quest to rescue five children from an impoverished rural Russian orphanage. To Sing Frogs recounts the Simmons family's journey to discover the true meaning of family, while nurturing Sarah, adopted at age five, through the inner turmoil of survivor's guilt, having left so many of her closest friends behind at the orphanage.

To Sing Frogs Details

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From Reader Review To Sing Frogs for online ebook

Meg - A Bookish Affair says

Foreign adoption has always been something that really intrigues me. While we are still not quite ready for children, adoption is definitely something that I have thought about in the past. I really think that it would be wonderful to be able to adopt and if I were to adopt, I would probably go overseas. John Simmons and his wife are really amazing. Although they already have several biological children and one adopted child already (all boys by the way), they find it in their hearts to open their home to more children and decide to go overseas, specifically to Russia, to adopt girls.

Their journey to bring their new children home is what really pulls you into the story. As humans, families (those that we choose and the ones that we do not choose) are so important to our well being. In a place like Russia, the children that end up in orphanages often have no idea what it means to have that support system or that love that builds them up throughout life. It's a very sad existence. My heart broke reading about some of the children that John and his wife, Amy, meet while they are in Russia to adopt their children.

I love books that highlight important subjects and adoption and family are definitely important subjects. Adoption may not be for everyone but I think there are a lot of people who are very curious about it. Mr. Simmons gives a very open picture of what adoption was like for him and his family. I appreciated that he didn't seem to hold anything back: the good, the bad, the ugly. He talks about his hopes and dreams and fears for his family and the children that they are bringing to the United States. I definitely appreciated his candor!

I also really liked the writing style of the book. Mr. Simmons has a way with telling a story! You feel like he's having a conversation with you and telling you a story about how complicated yet amazing and fulfilling it was to bring the children to the United States. You laugh with him and you cry with him (there is a scene with his new daughter and Santa Claus that definitely made me shed a tear). This is a story of a lot of ups and downs but it ends very happily!

While this book will not be released until this summer, I urge you to add it to your TBR list if you like memoirs and are interested in foreign adoption.

Yanice says

10.10.13 - I have just finished reading the book, but I think I'll need a night to sleep over this very touching story, to be able to write an appropriate review.

11.10.13 -

First of all: I was thrilled when I won the giveaway for this book. I have never been a First Reader before, so when it arrived really quickly, I immediately started reading it. A big thank you to John M. Simmons who listed the giveaway and by doing so enabled me to read this magnificent book. The subject of the book wasn't really that close to my heart in the beginning, but that changed really quickly. Already the prologue leads us right into the middle of the difficulties of adopting children, especially those

with another cultural background.

I really enjoyed the overall speed of the narration throughout the book. It had a lot of details to the surroundings which I found very helpful in getting a picture of the setting in my head plus I thought it supported the story itself and the emotions well. Another thing was that I absolutely LOVED the pictures in the middle of the book. They made it feel very personal and special.

What I didn't like were the negative interjections and thoughts that seemed a bit too snippy for my taste. On the other hand, I have never had to deal with that much frustration and waiting for something that was very dear to me. So this argument isn't really that valid. I was actually amazed throughout the book how much strength Amy & John both had in pursuing their dream of adoption and making the life of two girls that much better. I really take my hat off to them!

Concluding, I would say that this book is perfect for couples wanting to adopt because it really shows the ups and downs, the good and the bad side of adoption. But I think even people like me, who aren't that closely interwoven with the subject should consider reading it as it highlights how we all have to adapt to each other and respect each other. Plus there's the chapter giving the book its name (I'm not going into detail on purpose, because it's a very special chapter) which very emotionally shows how we're all different but still the same.

Karen & Gerard says

To Sing Frogs by John M. Simmons is a memoir about family, friends, life, and other things that don't make sense. It is about a couple who adopt three children from Russia. The best parts of the book were:

- (1) all the red tape and the various hurdles the couple had to go through to get the children to be part of their family;
- (2) the kids, the joy they felt that somebody wanted them and then the trials of coming to America and not knowing the language and the customs; and
- (3) how the couple wished that they were able to take a lot more kids in.

This is a feel good book that I think you would enjoy reading! There is no big "wow" factor, but a happy, heartwarming ending. I liked the pictures in the book too!
(Gerard's review)

Karen's review:

To Sing Frogs by John M. Simmons is an interesting read on so many levels. First of all, it is a true story of a Mormon couple who had three boys of their own, but who adopt a special needs boy (Jack) and later three girls and one boy from Russia. It was amazing at how many hoops they had to jump through and all the delays. In spite of the author being a cynic who really doesn't believe God cares or is involved in our lives, the answered prayers of the three little orphans from Russia seems to at least make him wonder.

I'm glad I took the time to read To Sing Frogs in spite of the dumb title. This book is so well written that I felt the father's frustrations and the joy of the girls who were adopted. I loved the author's sarcasm throughout the book and how the orphans prayers were answered in spite of the odds. I think anyone considering an international adoption or interested in orphanages or Russia would enjoy this book. It's different from any other book I've read.

Tima says

John and his wife Amy decided to adopt two girls from Russia to add to their family of boys. Their journey before, during, and after the adoption is told in this realistic look at foreign adoption. The author doesn't sugar coat anything. He deals with emotions, hardships, blessings, and miracles. The two little girls that they initially decided to add to their home soon grew to more as they witnessed first hand the need in the orphanages.

It's a true look at the reality of adopting outside your comfort zone. But I felt the author did a great job of showcasing the blessings as well as the difficulties. The style of writing is very clear and concise, but still has an infusion of heart and soul. While the book was probably written primarily to encourage adoption, it can definitely be read by the casual reader. I enjoyed reading this book and feel the author will be very successful in promoting adoption using this method.

I received this book free of charge from SS/PR in exchange for my honest review.

Katsche Haberfield says

Disclaimer- I won a copy of this book on Goodreads.

To Sing Frogs is a heartwarming story about one family's quest to expand their family through adoption. John Simmons and his family already have a complete family, however decide to expand their brood and begin an what can only be describe as an "adventure" in the ups and downs that is adopting a child in Russia. I won't spoil the story and tell you how many children they end up adopting, but I can tell you that this is both a fascinating and frustrating read. Fascinating because I have never adopted a child, so it provides insight. Frustrating, because you feel John's frustration with the whole process. I was moved to tears at the end of the book with the excitement of the girls reunion.

My only comments is that I gave it 3 stars rather than 4 stars because I felt it lost a bit of the tension and excitement because it was too long- could have been more tightly edited. Other than that a really interesting and worthwhile read. I wish John the best for his charitable actions in helping the older orphans integrate into society post 16.

Sharen says

As I read To Sing Frogs it took me back to the struggles, the up and the downs, but most of all it took me back to the orphanages where all those beautiful children lived. A person can never come away from seeing those children all wanting parents and families without being forever changed. John has such a way of writing that brought more vividly to my memory each detail, longing, joy and heartbreak of that incredible ongoing experience. I too have been to those orphanages and come away loving each individual child and wishing I could give each a home. This book helps us see the changes which came into John's heart and the understanding that no one is ever forgotten by someone much greater than ourselves, that we are just the instruments to make it happen and fortunate enough to be used in such a sweet way. In the end we come away having received the most. I love reading and rereading the book not just because of John's experiences, but because I like the candor, humor and honesty with which it is written. In the end I love how I feel when I

read To Sing Frogs.

Judy says

I really enjoyed this well written book. I am looking forward to reading more from this author!

Ira Therebel says

An interesting and well written book on international adoption from a Russian orphanage.

I read this book for two reasons one is because I like to read about lives different from mine, it helps to open the eyes to the world more. And the second is that as someone who was born in USSR and left the country in the early 90's as a kid (not adopted, I have loving parents who simply immigrated) I love to read about my old country. See what is going on, how people experience it, it's beauty and problems. And the book satisfied both of my interests.

John M. Simmons is a person very different from me in our way of handling or viewing things so it was interesting to see his ideas and opinions. He really lets you into exploring his experience. We get to hear about his feelings and commentaries on the issue. It is also interesting to see him developing and changing his views along with the experience progressing, as for example about interracial adoption.

What I like the most about this book is its honesty. John M. Simmons tells about adoption and orphan situation as it is. He shows us the problems that his family faced during it as well as the rewards (who surely outweigh the problems), the joy the kids felt as well as the issues that came with the psychological side effects of abuse and neglect. And while we feel so much happiness for his family and the kids they rescued he also doesn't let us forget about the sad situation of orphans in Russia and what happens to the ones who outgrow the childhood unadopted.

I would have liked to read more about the older siblings coming into the family, but as the author said it would be a book on itself so I understand why it was not really included. And maybe more about RAD issues to see how they were fighting them. But the book as it is is already a great book describing the experience.

I was also very impressed with the foundation the family does. It is not part of the book except the last few pages of afterwards dedicated to it, Ele Lembre is sure a great idea to help kids who outgrew their time in orphanages and didn't get adopted go against statistics and get a chance to live well. Just another great idea how to help, not everyone needs to adopt but there are always different opportunities.

I got this book for free through goodreads giveaways

Christopher says

I have known others who have gone through the process of international adoptions with mixed results. This book is a testament to the passion and unstoppable determination of one father's plight to save five children

from Russia. This was a powerful story that was brutally honest and it takes you through the whole experience. The author has held nothing back for better or worse and gives the reader an insight into international adoption as well as into his experience that will leave you emotionally drained in parts but also uplifted in others. The story was well written, and you will completely drawn in from beginning to end as you want to see what happens next with the saga that the author and his family were on! I highly encourage all families to read this!

On a side note, I was completely impressed to find out that the author was giving all proceeds from his book to benefit the Ele Lembra Foundation!

Jocelyn Linde says

John M. Simmons' poignant memoir chronicles his family's personal quest to rescue five children from an impoverished rural Russian orphanage. With an honest point of view, the author's story is refreshing and truly remarkable. Definitely worth reading! I really love that all proceeds from the book go to the Ele Lembra Foundation to assist those aging out of the orphanage system.

Sherri Scofield says

My reading dates are not a typo: I started this little book 4+ years ago. And re-started and re-started and re-started. I finally did it!

Not sure why it took so long to grab my interest, because it is a great little read and supports a great cause. I would recommend it as interesting / educational as well as for adoption purposes.

An update on the family would be interesting.

Nedra says

I edited this book for John, and found it a wonderful read. It is a great story of adoption, but also is a story of growth for a dad who truly loves all his children. Buy it and read it. It will be a treat.

Martha Chalé says

This was truly really beautiful!!!

I didn't know what to expect when I received it (first-read winner), I wasn't sure what I was going to find... what I found was a family of people that restored my faith in humanity. The Simmons family is so full of love is hard not to feel loved as well.

John Simmons tell us about the complicated - and sometimes unknown - world of adoptions. Their, his and his wife, journey through this process, all the "buts" and the "maybe" and the "no's"...Through all the story you keep asking the same question that keeps John up at nights: how can countries/people be blind to the needs of this kids?

John's writting is heart-breaking, honest and brutal, he doesn't keeps anything inside, if he thinks something

is crap he'll tell you. The way he describes the people they find along the road and all the things that happened made me think of miracles, I can't find another word (sorry John... Mysterious ways believers ;)).

I must say the feelings that left in me the story were mixed: I was happy, but then a part of this all was so sad, then I felt angry and then I just wanted to help this kids, do something!! Also I finished the book fascinated by Amy Simmons, I must say I have to declare myself a mysterious ways believer.

I gave it 4.5 stars (but that's impossible to give) just because I ended with some doubts about certain people in the story.

I totally recommend this book to everybody: believers, non-believers, parents, kids, grandparents... we all can learn something about this. And maybe you'll end the book considering (or reconsidering) adoption - just like me.

X_x

Cindy says

This book is simply a MUST READ. Not since I'd read, The Family Nobody Wanted by Helen Doss, have I been so moved and inspired! To Sing Frogs is an epic journey of the Simmons family! Their intentionality and determination to "do the right thing" and "go the distance" inspired me. I loved that John described their challenges with honesty: He didn't sugarcoat the challenges and haunting realities of those orphans left behind- and yet I was inspired to wish I was younger and had more money so that I might embark on the same journey of building a safe haven- a family! Even if you can't adopt, you'll be inspired to join with John and Amy in their ministry to those who are left behind and help make their transition into the world, a little better, a little kinder! Simply put- this book is what we're all supposed to be doing with our lives- loving in action and deed- not just words and philosophy!

Mary Lenahan says

The only word that can describe how I felt after reading this amazing memoir is Wow! John M. Simmons' writing style causes you to feel as if you are sitting in his living room having a conversation with him rather than reading his written words. As such you experience every emotion that he and his wife felt as they traveled their road to adoption. The heartbreak of leaving so many children behind in the orphanage, the frustration of the red tape involved in finally getting their children home. The incredible faith of his wife who never lost sight of the fact that God had a reason for everything that happened along that path. As an adoptive parent I too found myself in a position of having to trust that God was in control of my fate but like John I often questioned if God had so much control and power why bad things happen. This book is a must read for anyone who has been touched by adoption in any sense of the word as well as for anyone who needs to be reminded that there is still hope in world full of turmoil.
