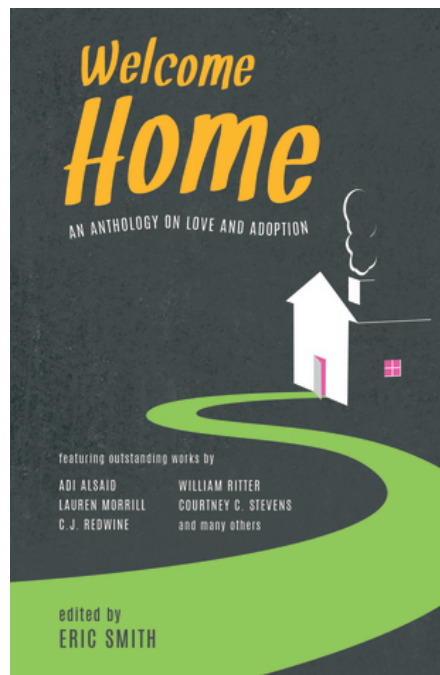




Welcome Home

Eric Smith , Adi Alsaïd (Contributor) , Randy Ribay (Contributor) , Nic Stone (Contributor) , Dave Connis (Contributor) , Helene Dunbar (Contributor) , Libby Cudmore (Contributor) , Lauren Gibaldi (Contributor) , more... Matthew Quinn Martin (Contributor) , Mindy McGinnis (Contributor) , Sammy Nickalls (Contributor) , Karen Akins (Contributor) , Erica M. Chapman (Contributor) , Julie Eshbaugh (Contributor) , Shannon Gibney (Contributor) , Jenny Kaczorowski (Contributor) , Julie Leung (Contributor) , Sangu Mandanna (Contributor) , Lauren Morrill (Contributor) , Tameka Mullins (Contributor) , C.J. Redwine (Contributor) , William Ritter (Contributor) , Courtney C. Stevens (Contributor) , Kate Watson (Contributor) , Stephanie Scott (Contributor) , Natasha Sinel (Contributor) , Tristina Wright (Contributor) , S.M. Parker ...less

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Welcome Home collects a number of adoption-themed fictional short stories, and brings them together in one anthology from a diverse range of celebrated Young Adult authors. The all-star roster includes Edgar-award winner Mindy McGinnis, New York Times bestselling authors C.J. Redwine (*The Shadow Queen*) and William Ritter (*Jackaby*), and acclaimed YA authors across all genres, like Adi Alsaid, Lauren Gibaldi, Sangu Mandanna, Karen Akins, and many more.

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Format : Paperback

Genre : Short Stories, Young Adult, Anthologies, Contemporary, Parenting, Adoption



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From Reader Review Welcome Home for online ebook

Sophiesticated says

Individual Thoughts On The Stories:

1- Carlos and The Fifteen-Year-Old Heart by Adi Alsaid. 4/5 stars

This was one of the stories that I remember the most. Maybe it is because it was the first one I read, the first one that introduced me to the anthology, or maybe because the elements of this first short tale surprised me a lot. I don't want to give anything about this one away, though.

All I'm going to say about Adi Alsaid's short story was that I really liked it. The narration was soothing and it flowed well, and there were unexpected things about the main character and his family that made this very original and unique for me.

2- Strong Enough by Karen Akins. 3/5 stars

Strong Enough was shorter, even more than all of these stories already are. It was definitely underdeveloped like most of the other titles in this anthology, but it was still an interesting glance at a new setting and main character. I like that, even though some of the stories should have gotten or would have done much better with some expansion, they were still fun to read because they went fast and different in some aspects of their environments and protagonists.

3- The Sign by Erica M. Chapman. 4/5 stars

I loved the sign because of the family dynamics and message this one left. I was a bit confused about the plot and backstory of the main character, which was why I took a whole star off. I didn't quite understand who her biological parent and sister were and why they had ended up going separate ways as they had.

Again, this could have been better explained if the story had been longer.

4- Up by a Million by Caela Carter. 5/5 stars

This one follows a girl whose mother is in prison, and it was probably one of my favorites. It was unique and heartbreaking. I loved everything about this one except for the fact that I would prefer this much more if it was a full novel. There is still SO MUCH that can be told and that I would be glad to read!

5- Mama's Eyes by Libby Cudmore. 5/5 stars

This is also fighting for the first place with Up by a Million because it was FANTASTIC. There are a couple of 5 stars throughout this Anthology, and Mama's Eyes is one of them! It was one of the most thrilling and exciting stories and it kept me on the edge of my seat. I highly enjoyed this one and I can't wait for more people to read it.

6- A Kingdom Bright and Burning by Dave Connis. 3/5 stars

What I liked about this one was the message it conveyed at the end and the WAY the author designed this story to transmit it. Since I was constantly jumping from one new story and setting to another, I sometimes had a hard time understanding the context. At the start of A Kingdom Bright and Burning, I was slightly confused but then the whole idea and structure started making sense to me. It did not blow me away in any sense, and it did not impact me as greatly as it should have because it was such a great idea. It was kind of magical realism and that excited me a lot. Because of its originality, I gave it 3/5 stars.

7- The Inexplicable Weight of Mountains by Helene Dunbar. 4.5/5 stars

8- Webbed by Julie Eshbaugh. 3.5/5 stars

This "mermaid" tale was very beautiful. I liked the main character's love for the water and the ocean. I

enjoyed it, but it was way too short for me to get really invested in it.

9- Life: Starring Tallulah Grey by Lauren Gibaldi. 4.5/5 stars

I thought this would be a vampire, paranormal story! It was so good and so fun. This is another one that I had a great time with.

10- Salvation by Shannon Gibney. 4.5/5 stars

11- Twenty-Seven Days by Jenny Kaczorowski. 4/5 stars

Some stories are about the lost children trying to find their way. Some of the characters in this anthology are alone at first sight but have an entire family of people that will care for them always. This story is about friendship and it was touching. It needed more development and a couple more pages, still.

12- Ink Drips Black by Julie Leung. 2.5/5 stars

13- Upon the Horizon's Verge by Sangu Mandanna. 5/5 stars

Another fantastic story that kept me wanting to read! I was at the edge of my seat because the concept was great and everything was executed flawlessly. It touches upon that feeling of wanting to connect and meet your biological family. It amazes me that in 10 pages all of the things this particular story encompasses were transmitted in such an impactful way. I loved this story too and I think that it will be a favorite for other readers.

14- Lullaby by Matthew Quinn Martin. 4/5 stars

This was the science fiction-type short story that I mentioned before. It was one of the most creative stories of all.

?

15- Census by Mindy McGinnis. 2.5/5 stars

I love Mindy McGinnis and I decided to request this ARC because she participated in it. Her writing style was great as always, but it was way too short a story for it to impact me in any important way. I did not feel very affected nor touched by this one, unfortunately, and I was a bit disappointed.

16- Invited by Lauren Morrill. 4/5 stars

"Invited" was about a teenage mom that gave her daughter for adoption, but who is welcome to participate in the child's life. It is another story about connecting to former family, but this time it is more centered on the point of view of the mother.

17- Empty Lens by Tameka Mullins. 3/5 stars

This was about a blogger who observes mother-daughter relationships and takes photographs of them. She does interviews and expresses herself freely in this safe place of hers on the internet.

18- A Lesson in Biology by Sammy Nickalls. 3/5 stars

I had fun reading this. I enjoyed the main character's humor and sarcasm.

"As I sit in biology class studying the paper on my desk in front of me, I can't help but be darkly amused by the sight of an illustration of a healthy, vibrant tree... printed on a sheet of dead tree."

19- Tunneling Through by Shannon Parker. 4/5 stars

20- These Broken Stars by C.J. Redwine. 2.5/5 stars

This story was set in the past, and it was very short. I honestly didn't get much from it and it was MEH for me.

21- The Snow-Covered Sidewalk by Randy Ribay. 3/5 stars

Jumping from one story to another made it hard sometimes to understand context, as I already said. I had many missteps because I often got confused with the gender of the main character. There was so much diversity in this anthology that it happened to me often, and maybe even if a guy was apparently hitting another one, I then assumed the main character or the flirter must be gay. Well no, the protagonist of The Snow-Covered Sidewalk was a girl and I laughed out loud when I heard her being called by her name and realized she was female.

It was a fun story.

22- Deeply by William Ritter. 4/5 stars

WEIRD but very funny. And creepy. Monster biological fathers are awesome.

23- Meant to be Broken by Stephanie Scott. 4/5 stars

This was about a best friend disappearing all of a sudden, and the protagonist is left behind heartbroken and determined to know what happened. I enjoyed it a lot.

24- Moving the Body by Natasha Sinel. 5/5 stars

I NEED A FULL NOVEL about this concept! The characters, the family dynamics, everything that was discussed about adoption and brotherhood was fantastic in this short story. I didn't want to put the book down while reading it and it was a THRILLING ride. I am astounded by how well developed the history of this family and the plot twists were written, and in such a small amount of pages.

I applaud this author because she made me feel extremely engaged in a short tale consisting of no more than 12 pages. What most of the different stories in this anthology failed to do was expand sufficiently enough on the characters for me to feel attached to them and interested in their whole stories.

The author managed it in this one, and that was why it was one of my favorites!

??

25- In Pieces by Eric Smith. 4/5 stars

Short and sweet but also effective. This was a futuristic story and very imaginative.

26- Peace of Paper by Courtney C. Stevens. 4/5 stars

WONDERFUL short story by Courtney C. Stevens! Her name sounded familiar to me, but it took a google search for me to find that she is the author of Faking Normal and Dress Codes for Small Towns, a book I am HIGHLY anticipating reading! It was amazing and it made me all the more excited to read her books soon!

27- Happy Beginnings by Nic Stone. 3.5/5 stars

28- The Take Back by Kate Watson. 4/5 stars

This is about a boy whose family has just adopted a baby sister, but who is forced to give her back because the biological mother has decided to keep her. It is absolutely heartbreaking and it made me really sad. But it was great so you should definitely read it. Love oozes out of this story.

29- Jar of Broken Wishes by Tristina Wright. 4/5 stars

This is about a foster girl who wishes on other people's wishes and hopes to be loved by the perfect family. It was cool and enjoyable, but it was not the best story to end this anthology. However, I did realize afterward that the order was chosen because of the authors' last names, but it was not the greatest story to wrap the book. It felt like a lacking finale.

Top Favorite Stories:

Up by a Million
Mama's Eyes

Upon the Horizon's Verge
Moving the Body
Peace of Paper

Overall Thoughts:

I had the idea that all of these stories would be 100% contemporary and set in the real world, but some here and there had some magical or unusual elements, and some were even science fiction. I loved this happening because I honestly never knew what would come next.

The characters were all very diverse and representation was on point, in my opinion. There were characters from all ethnicities and even a transgender protagonist. The different plots and situations never ceased to surprise me because they were all very diverse and different in their own way.

But one of the problems I had was the recurring “family tree” theme included in many of the stories, despite the fact that it appearing in many adopted children’s minds at some point is understandable. Still, this made me feel that some stories all talked about the same thing when viewing adoption from the kid’s point of view. It irked me to have seen the tree so many times.

Another of my struggles was that all of the stories were SO SHORT! Almost everything needed more development and the reason why I didn’t enjoy or feel connected to most characters as I should have been was that they needed to be expanded further on!

These were 29 short stories had unique plots and ideas, but since they were so many and so small, they didn’t all deliver as efficiently as they were set to. Most didn’t feel as if they were intended to really impact me. They started quick and finished in a flash. This made it extremely hard for me to remember things about the book without checking it constantly.

The titles while writing this post didn’t ring any bells, so I couldn’t remember what they were about. To prevent this, I had made a screenshot of the first page of every short story, but even re-reading it sometimes didn’t work. It proved that their size and lack of punch stopped me from remembering them at all. Some few stood out on my mind without having to go through them again, but they were a reduced amount.

I would still recommend you check out this book if you want some short (really short), diverse and important stories, all unique and creative in different ways. From narration to writing style and characters, each short story did give me something special, and most conveyed messages worth reading about.

Because of the flaws that I found in this anthology, I decided to give it over all 3 stars. Many of the stories in it deserve to have a spotlight and a much higher rating, so that was why I reviewed each individually as well.

A Welcome Home Booksih Playlist can found on the original blog post.

Elise (TheBookishActress) says

This was written with the intention of giving adopted kids stories of their own, which is a great idea, and I'm sure if I were adopted this might be easier to connect with. The problem is that **all the stories are only around ten pages**. Ten pages is just not enough to come up with a coherent plot and character development, no matter the talent of the author.

At some point I decided I didn't want to keep going with this; it was clear that though many were very talented, almost none of the authors were given appropriate pagetime. I'll be coming back to the other stories over time, but before I put this on hold, I did want to check out a few stories by authors I love. I know this

means I may have missed a hidden gem or two, and trust me, I don't want to miss those. But I really can't go read and review this many stories right now. I'm sorry.

It seems that the best stories were left for last,

- *Carlos and the Fifteen-Year-Old-Heart* by Adi Alsaid: 2 stars. Meant to show the divide between adopted parents and kids, the concept and intent of this story were interesting. Unfortunately, this just felt really fake deep to me, and the romance was instalove 101.
- *Strong Enough* by Karin Atkins: 3 stars. Adopted superhero kid and very sweet. Unfortunately, it's only around five pages long. Boo.
- *The Sign* by Erica M. Chapman: 4 stars. Follows a girl who goes to meet her biological father, only to realize he's dying. This was really sad in a good way. Unfortunately, it was also really not long enough.
- *Up By A Million* by Caela Carter: 4 stars. This one follows a girl whose mother is in prison. It's heartbreaking in just the right way.
- *Mama's Eyes* by Libby Cudmore: 3 stars. A suspense story about a girl who loses her adoptive mother. This was fine. I just don't feel like it offered anything new, and the writing seemed slightly melodramatic.
- *A Kingdom Bright and Burning* by Dave Connis: 4 stars. Slight magical realism!! Again, too short to have the full impact. But I liked this.

From here, I stopped reading fully and started reading stories exclusively from authors I've had interest in the past. I will come back to the others, don't worry!!

- *Upon the Horizon's Verge* by Sangu Mandanna: 4 stars. I've never read anything by this author, but her books have always seemed intriguing to me, so I wanted to give this a try. This is a nice and creative story, maybe one of my favorites in the collection. The theme of trying to connect with your former family is well-done.
- *Census Man* by Mindy McGinnis: 4 stars. This follows a girl in foster care wishing for a family that wants her. McGinnis is a great writer, and this short story is no exception. Again, really too short to have much impact.
- *Peace of Paper* by Courtney C Stevens: 4.5 stars. This has one of the best sections in the entire book about how orphaned people are perceived. It's really emotionally in-touch. Definitely worth the read. I've never read any of Steven's books, but I'm interested, so we'll see how I do in the future.
- *Happy Beginning* by Nic Stone: This was the only story I gave 5 stars. Following best friends / girlfriends Jenna and Nyara, who has just run away from home. Ny is black and has been adopted by white parents, but doesn't feel at home with them. There's so much I loved about this. I read Stone's *Dear Martin* earlier this year and noticed that she's very good at getting emotion out of her readership. This book is told in second person in reverse chronological order, which was a creative choice I loved. And oh man, Jenna and Ny kinda killed me?? The purest, healthiest relationship. I can't believe Nic Stone saved 2017 with this ten-page story. I'll be in back crying.
- *The Take-Back* by Kate Watson: 4.5 stars. I wasn't actually planning to read this, but the opening grabbed me so I stuck with it. This follows a boy whose newly adopted sister has just been taken back by her mom. It's *heartbreaking*. And great. Go read it.

• *Jar of Broken Wishes* by Tristina Wright: 4 stars. This is a story about a foster cared girl wishing and getting the wrong results. I liked it. I felt that this ended on a slightly meh note, but I liked it a lot. I'll be reading Wright's debut 27 Hours this fall (it looks so cool!!) so this made me feel even more optimistic.

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Hristina says

I liked the idea behind this collection more than I liked the collection. Short stories about adoption, all of them with happy endings? Yes please. But the execution let me down a little, I feel like most of the stories were rushed and ended abruptly. It was more of a glimpse into a story, then a story itself. There's a lot of interesting glimpses into potentially beautiful stories, making me wish there was at least a little bit more. What was absolutely enjoyable though was the abundance of different writing styles displayed. Each author brings something different to this anthology, therefore making it special.

I'm really torn between recommending this book or not, it all depends on what you enjoy in a book? If you want plot or character development, I'm sad to say that there isn't enough material for that part to shine. If you're a fan of writing styles, this one is the perfect book to enjoy that.

*Copy received through NetGalley

*Actual rating: 3.5

jv poore says

This collection of short stories about adoption is outstanding. With each story written by a different author, your Want to Read list may grow exponentially (mine did.)

La La - Everyone's Crazy Aunt says

This was one of those anthologies I have talked about before where a publishing house (this time it was an agent) gets a couple of high profile authors to contribute stories to a themed anthology and then they fill the rest of the book with unknown, some even previously unpublished, writers. Collections like this are usually less than 50% good, and that would be okay if the publisher only charged \$1.99, or even better, 99¢ for the ebook because they are basically promotional samplers. This ebook is \$8.60! That's robbery.

The biggest problem I had with this book, besides the duds, was that it was apparent many of the stories were not originally about adoption, and they were made anthology "worthy" by adding something about adoption, or foster care, or making the MC an adoptee and then juggling the story around to make it fit.

A couple of the stories weren't even about adoption at all. I really liked the one by William Ritter, the author of the Jackaby books, but it wasn't about adoption. There was also one that should never have been tweaked to represent adoption because of a negative element, and another that should not have been included because of the negative slant to it.

Another thing was there were too many weak endings. My buddy reader mentioned this, too. I have a feeling many of those were chapters from full novels doctored up to read like a short story. Again, okay if the book

is \$1.99, not okay if it is almost \$9.00.

?

My favorite was Peace of Paper by Courtney C. Stevens because I loved the realistic Contemporary writing style and it was a solid short story with a beginning, a middle, and an end. It was about how important it is to have family discussion and support when you are making a big life decision. I also really liked Twenty-Seven Days by Jenny Kaczotowski. It was about foster care and my aunt fostered children when I was growing up.

Others I liked a lot...

Tunneling Through ~ Shannon Parker

These Broken Stars ~ C.J. Redwine

A Kingdom Bright and Burning ~ Dave Cronnis

Webbed ~ Julie Esbaugh

These two were liked by both of us...

Invited ~ Lauren Morill

Upon the Horizon's Verge ~ Sangu Mandanna

*Eight good stories out of twenty-eight garnered this anthology two stars from me. My buddy reading partner was kinder with three stars even though she only really liked four of the stories.

I was both sent a physical ARC unsolicited, and approved for an eARC via Netgalley, in return for an honest review.

Stephanie says

I'm honored and excited to be a part of this short story collection focusing on adoption stories. The book releases September 5, 2017!

Tasha says

3.5 stars

I do have ratings for each individual story which I will add later (if I remember). Overall I enjoyed this anthology. I have no experience with any kind of adoption process but I really hope these stories can help others, who might have been through similar things, feel heard.

Some of the stories are really short and I personally didn't get a lot out of a few but there are definitely some goodies in there.

Chelsea says

A lot of strong, heatwarming stories in this adoption-centered anthology. I'm not a huge anthology person, so I gave it a 3.5 overall. Some stories were awesome, some were okay, didn't hate any of them. This anthology probably has the most authors I have ever seen in one anthology, so the stories were all pretty short, almost like flash fiction. Recommended for people who enjoy short story collections!

Welcome Home

Carlos and the Fifteen-Year-Old Heart by Adi Alsaid - 4 stars

Well written but had instalove and a weird fantastical element that felt out of place at first. However, once I figured out what the author was going for I actually thought it was really sweet.

Strong Enough by Karen Akins - 4 stars

Awww this was extremely cute and well written. I loved the inclusion of superheroes. It's not really about adoption, though...

The Sign by Erica M. Chapman - 3.5 stars

This was about a girl going to meet her birthfather for the first time. The character voice instantly drew me in, but it felt kind of rushed and very quickly jumped into drama. It felt like it could have been a contemporary novel and the pacing felt too rushed for a short story.

Up A Million by Caela Carter - 4 stars

I really liked this one. It tells of a girl visiting her mom in prison and her guilt over doing well without her. The mother-daughter relationship was SO sweet.

Mama's Eyes by Libby Cudmore - 2 stars

This one was well written and had such a sweet father-adopted daughter relationship. It suddenly took an abrupt and extreme turn for the weird, and ended up being one of my least favorite.

A Kingdom Bright and Burning by Dave Connis - 3 stars

A story about a mute little boy in an orphanage that is told in alternating perspectives, as the little boy sees the world as a kingdom. Not my favorite - I've never been a fan of these sorts of stories where someone thinks they're in another world.

The Inexplicable Weight of Mountains by Helen Dunbar - 3.5 stars

I quite liked this one. It focused on adoption more than the others and I liked the way it handled it. Not very memorable, though.

Webbed by Julie Eshbaugh - 3.5 stars

About an adopted girl who has webbed toes. A sweet story about a girl coming to terms with her adoption.

Life: Starring Tallulah Grey by Lauren Gibaldi - 4 stars

About an actress in a *Vampire Diaries* type show who has to deal with the paparazzi outing her as adopted and her birth mom being sick. I actually really liked the characters and found it pretty cute.

Salvation by Shannon Gibney - 1.5 stars

A family adopts a boy who survived the earthquake in Haiti but there was also a weird subplot and they briefly mention dogfighting but make no effort to suggest that it's a bad thing which rubbed me the wrong way. There was pretty much no resolution either.

27-Days by Jenny Kaczorowski - 4 stars

Follows a girl going to a foster home and connecting with the girl next door. This was incredibly sweet and well written with an emphasis on female friendship.

Ink Drips Black by Julie Leung - 3 stars

A fantastical legend about a girl taken to a monster when her mother doesn't want her and becomes a Fae changing, but actually a story about mental illness??? I dunno, kind of confusing and ended super abruptly,

though I did really like the writing.

Upon the Horizon's Verge by Sangu Mandanna - 4 stars

About a pregnant teen girl deciding if she should give up her baby for adoption. It was suuuuper sweet and heartwarming and then had a really weird twist (actually a lot of these stories have weird twists which kind of surprises me that so many author decided to take on so much in such a small short stories).

Lullaby by Matthew Quinn Martin - 3 stars

Kind of sci-fi story. It was fine. I liked the bit about dreaming of finding out there was some magical reason you were given up.

Census Man by Mindy McGinnis - 3.5 stars

A historical fiction (I think) story. I quite liked the main character and writing, though it ended very abruptly.

Invited by Lauren Morrill - 4 stars

About a woman going to visit her birth daughter. I loved the themes and writing.

Empty Lens by Tameka Mullins - 3.5 stars

Told in interview and photography format. It was pretty good.

A Lesson in Biology by Sammy Nickalls - 4.5 stars

About an adopted girl who gets a family tree assignment. Awesome writing - snarky first person. She hasn't published any books but I would definitely read one by her!

Tunneling Through by Shannon Parker - 4.5 stars

About an adopted child coming out as transgender. Very well done. Another person who hasn't published a book that I would love to read from! And her bio says she rescues dogs :)

These Broken Stars by CJ Redwine - 3 stars

Lol that's the title of a pretty popular book series... Fine, pretty unremarkable.

The Snow-Covered Sidewalk by Randy Ribay - 4 stars

Definitely well written and focused on the theme of adoption. Another one that ended abruptly.

Deeply by William Ritter - 3 stars

A very young narrator and cliché bullies. It got suuuuper weird lol

Meant to be Broken by Stephanie Scott - 4.5 stars

A girl looks for her friend who left and she couldn't get in contact with. I really liked this one in terms of writing and a female friendship.

Moving the Body by Natasha Sinel - 4.75?

Probably my favorite—I actually might check out more from this author. This was kind of a thriller but really explored adoption as well. She was able to great distinct characters almost instantly and the story completely sucked me in. I mean, she was able to create tension so quickly!

In Pieces by Eric Smith - 3 stars

Another sci-fi one that failed to grab my attention. Extremely short. I think this subject fits better with contemporary.

Peace of Paper by Courtney C. Stevens - 3.5 stars

I know this is a well-loved author but this is the only thing I've read of hers. Well written and readable, didn't totally grab me.

Happy Beginning by Nic Stone - 4 stars

An emotional, sweet romantic story, I believe the only one with an LGBT romance. Excited to check out more from this author in the future!

The Take-Back by Kate Watson - 4 stars

About a boy coping with the aftermath of his family adopting a baby and the birth mom taking her back. Emotional and well written (can we count how many times I've said well written so far lol).

Jar of Broken Wishes by Tristina Wright - 4 stars

Another really sweet story featuring a female friendship! I liked the writing and theme of wishes.

Holly says

***Carlos and the Fifteen-Year-Old Heart* by Adi Alsaid** was eh. I think I got what he was going for, but it just didn't click well for me. (2 stars)

***Strong Enough* by Karen Atkins** twisted the topic of adoption through a superhero storyline. So that was interesting, but I wish it'd been longer. I know it's an anthology and these are supposed to be short, but it really didn't feel like, well, enough. Also, if you took out the fact that the MC was adopted by non-supers, it would not be in this collection, so there's that. (3 stars)

***The Sign* by Erica M. Chapman** had more focus on adoption and the complicated feelings that can come from wanting to make contact with your birth parents. I think she did well showing that, but it went in a direction I wasn't expecting, and I don't know how to feel about it. But I was pleasantly surprised with the story on a whole. (3.5 stars)

These stories just aren't doing much for me, so I'm gonna skip around to authors I love/know, or those I want to try, and talk about theirs afterward!

***The Inexplicable Weight of Mountains* by Helene Dunbar** was one I wanted to read because I really liked her book, *What Remains*, but I just didn't feel anything for this story. It was about a boy who wasn't sure if he wanted answers to his questions regarding his birth parents/early life or not. Not much went on in it. (2.5 stars)

***Webbed* by Julie Esbaugh** was interesting. I'm not sure I totally get the ending (I mean, I understood her letting go, but not the castle-under-the-water part, like was it real??? Or just made up??? Confused). I kind of wish it HAD been more fantastical, as I thought that was what the author was setting up for. So this disappointed me, but I did like it. (3 stars)

***Life: Starring Tallulah Grey* by Lauren Gibaldi** was kind of eh. It was a lot of dialogue over introspection, more telling than showing. I did find it cool that Tally is a star on a vampire TV show, and unique in that her being a celebrity was a big aspect of how her birth mom coming back into her life is handled. And how very messy families and parents can be. But I just didn't really care for this one. (2.5 stars)

***Census Man* by Mindy McGinnis** felt so different from the first few I read, because I think it was

historically set? It was about a little girl in an orphanage who was waiting to be adopted, who hadn't had the best life but who still had hope that she'd find people who want her. I liked it; her writing is always enjoyable. And I thought it was neat that it was inspired by Mindy's grandmother's early life. (3 stars)

Invited by Lauren Morrill was very middle for me. I think this could have been better if it'd been longer, because I really wanted more from Corey's character. She gave up Ella for adoption, which is SO HUGE, but you don't really get to see the impact it's had on her. She talks about it a little bit with one of Ella's dads, but that's it. So it being a short story just didn't have that almost necessary aspect? It wasn't bad, though! (3 stars)

In Pieces by Eric Smith was SO. CONFUSING. I feel like I got dropped in the middle of an ongoing series. Like, the main character, Arcas, is going to meet his birth parents? In the future? He's teleporting to them? idk, the sci-fi aspect completely derailed the story for me, and there was too much of it for me to get a sense of who Arcas is and what he's feeling. This would have been better as a longer book. (2 stars)

Peace of Paper by Courtney C. Stevens was really good! I didn't have much doubt given the love I have for her novel, *Faking Normal*. She just GETS life and teens and I found this so refreshing. This went in a direction I was NOT expecting (and it almost lost me because I wasn't getting the point of the story for so long), but one that I thoroughly loved. And I loved the message that everyone is worthy. (4 stars)

Happy Beginning by Nic Stone was good too! Though a bit bittersweet, I really enjoyed it. It was about Nyara, but told through the POV of Jenna, like she's telling Ny all of this. And I liked that setup. I also really liked how the author tackled the complications of adoption (even when the adoptive parents are so kind and loving), especially with Ny who is black and Mr. and Mrs. J who are white, which makes it harder for her. This makes me even more excited for Nic's debut! (3.5 stars)

So, I read more of the stories than I thought I would. But I'm not interested in reading more, sadly. I think this type of anthology is needed, for sure. Adoption is very underrepresented (and misrepresented) in books. And some of these were REALLY good! But I think there are just too many authors here, and the stories are SO short, that there's not enough time to truly appreciate them all. I love the theme and how diverse the anthology is, but I'm sad that this just didn't work for me overall. :(

Amber says

A mixed bag, but there are some goodies in it.

I received an ecopy of this through netgalley; however all opinions are my own.

Jen says

OhMyHeart...this book should come with a pallet (not a box) of tissues.

My Top 5 (in no particular order)

The Take Back

Peace of Paper

Up By A Million

These Broken Stars

Ink Drips Black

Read it.

Natasha Sinel says

I am so excited to be a part of this! Can't wait to hold it in my hands.

Brenda Drake says

Gripping my heart and holding it until the final page, I cried, I laughed, and stayed up late reading the many stories in this anthology. Home comes in many sizes and colors, and it's the characters and the love they share that make the many stories of this anthology real. I have personal experience with adoption. My daughter came to me fresh out of eighth grade from a troubled home. She's become so much a part of my life that it feels like she's always been here. The many genres of stories in this anthology touch on various kinds of families brought together by love not blood. It shows us that not all adoptions are the same, not every situation is perfect, but love can bring hope and ease pain. There were moments of joy and laughter mixed in with tears. I connected to so many characters and wanted to read more of their stories. I can't wait to share this book with my daughter!

C.J. says

Super excited to be part of such an important anthology.

Liza Wiemer says

I'm really looking forward to reading this. What many people DO NOT know about me is that I have/had an adopted brother. There's an intense story there, one perhaps I'll share/write about one of these days.

But it does remind me of this: Remember, be kind and compassionate to people. Unless you live with someone, you really don't know what goes on behind closed doors, and even then, within your own home, you may not know everything. Be very careful with your assumptions and judgments. xx

This is a definite pre-order for me!!!
