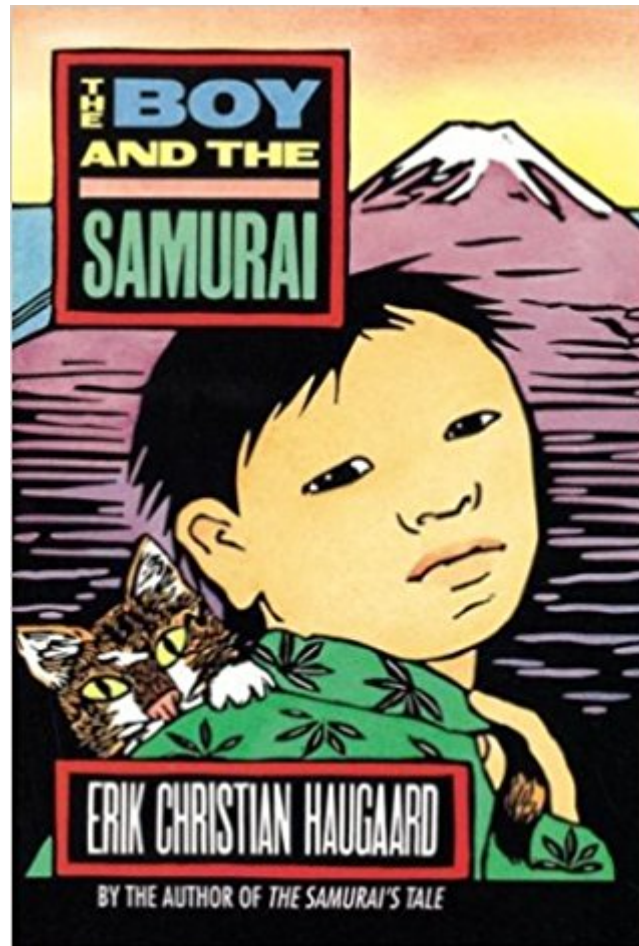




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# The Boy And The Samurai



## Synopsis

Saru, a street urchin in sixteenth-century Japan, learns to survive by his wits in a city torn by war.

## Book Information

Lexile Measure: 700L (What's this?)

Paperback: 256 pages

Publisher: HMH Books for Young Readers (September 25, 2000)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0618070397

ISBN-13: 978-0618070398

Product Dimensions: 7.5 x 5.1 x 0.6 inches

Shipping Weight: 7 ounces

Average Customer Review: 4.1 out of 5 stars 12 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #1,075,173 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #104 in [Books > Teens > Historical Fiction > Asia](#) #440 in [Books > Teens > Historical Fiction > Military](#) #607 in [Books > Children's Books > Literature & Fiction > Historical Fiction > Military & Wars](#)

Age Range: 12 and up

Grade Level: 7 and up

## Customer Reviews

Saru ("monkey") lives by begging in feudal Japan. Orphaned and abandoned, Saru watches the constant battling of the warlords and their hired samurai with disgust. He recalls his adventures as a street urchin--he runs afoul of a band of thieves, then sees them massacred; he spends the winter alone living under the shrine of a minor deity, and makes a true friend in Priest Jogen. It is with Jogen that Saru has his greatest adventure. Despite his prejudice against samurai, the boy concocts a plot to rescue the imprisoned wife of the samurai Murakami. Offering a vivid look at an unusual place and time, Haugaard ( *The Samurai's Tale* ) has created a character that will linger in the reader's memory. Saru's story is drawn with a verisimilitude that overcomes a potentially alien setting, and makes his reminiscences immediate and sympathetic. Ages 10-14. Copyright 1991 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to the Library Binding edition.

Grade 5 Up-- In feudal Japan, orphan Saru lives by his wits in a city still threatened by the conflict of rival warlords. He spends winter nights under a little-used shrine, with only a stray cat for warmth; eventually, he makes a few friends who change his life. Saru is likable, the other characters

interesting, and the story often moving--the little cat is an excellent touch--but this book does not deliver. The plot moves slowly, with repetition of philosophical ideas and devices. The promised Samurai of the title shows up two thirds into the story, while other apparently major characters are set up, and then do not play large roles. The viewpoint is that of the adult looking back, and is sometimes overly mature. While Saru's insights into the plight of women in his society are laudable, they are also anachronistic. The preface is slow-moving and remote, and may alienate readers. The setting, however, is beautifully realized. Haugaard subtly conveys the foolishness of the feuding warlords, and how their behavior affects the common people; he is realistic about poverty without dwelling too much on the lurid details. The philosophy of the Samurai is introduced easily, as are the beliefs of Buddhism. The language unselfconsciously evokes the patterns of Japanese speech. Fantasy readers, primed to enjoy other cultures, may like this, as may those who have enjoyed the works of Katherine Paterson set in Japan, and Lensey Namioka's tales. --Annette Curtis Klause, Montgomery County Department of Public Libraries, MD Copyright 1991 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to the Library Binding edition.

I bought this thinking it was a book written for pre-teens, but now I'm not sure I would classify it that way. As an adult, I found the book delightful and well written. I found the story interesting if not enthralling. But throughout the tale, there are some very sage observations about life that make it a worthwhile read. Too, the opening of the novel was probably my favorite. It is a kind of epilogue that nevertheless comes at the beginning of the story. The aged Samurai and the now adult "Boy" are looking back over their lives. They discuss in very engaging ways about how to write the story of one's life. The rest of the novel is the story that the "Boy" has written of his life. Rating: I find it hard to rate literature, because there is such amazing works out there, that any comparison would shame most stories. So the four stars I give this is my estimation of the story's likely appeal to a an audience of thoughtful readers. I hope this helps. Peace

Got this book for my husband, and I'd say he loves it. He's been reading it nonstop since I gave it to him. Book is in really good condition too.

This book fits in perfectly with the Australian ACARA National Curriculum. Great for an integrated English History unit. It is such a shame that it is not published any more.

A Review by Brock This was story of a boy name Saru, who was an orphan of war. His father was

killed in battle and mother died when he was born. He lived alone, under a small shrine, after his foster mother died in a fire. He later lived with a Priest at the temple in his town. When he was there, he met a samurai who told him about his wife, who was being held hostage at the king's castle. Saru then devises a plan to get her out and escape that town to the ocean. The story overall was really good. It's basically a fictional auto-biography. The main character is telling the story as if it were from his past. The plot was really good because there wasn't a main plot; it was just what happened to Saru during his life. For example, Saru was sleeping under a small shrine one day, and the next day he ends up meeting someone who will pay him to run an errand, then it tells about that he stopped an inn from being robbed. When you're reading it, you want to find out what's going to happen to him. Also, the main character is very realistic for that period of time. The book was set in feudal Japan, so Saru, an orphan who is very poor, is a very believable character. To illustrate, Saru must bow and stop every time he sees a Samurai, because if he doesn't then he made be kicked or even killed. So, overall, it was a really good book. I would recommend this to most readers, however it needs to be someone who actually likes to read, otherwise they would probably get really bored. It's also good for people who are either interested in medieval times, or Japan in general.

I read the book because I had to for school. I wasn't expecting much from it; I had yet to be impressed with their "core literature" selection which included books like "Shadow Spinner," "The Golden Goblet," and "Catherine Called Birdy." This book is better of any of the preceding. It follows an orphaned boy, "Saru," through the times of the warring states in Japan, from the 15 hundreds to 16 hundreds. During that time warlords had divided the states in civil war, so we find character's avoiding and entering battle. The first section of the book describes Japan, a place with winter's as cold as the hearts of the Samurai, and summer's as warm as the hearts of the priests. As the book moves onward we meet a disgraced Samurai who wishes to free his wife. The book describes most of the Samurai as cold blooded murderers, so it is very interesting to see how Saru slowly begins to trust the other man. Despite its predictable outcome and rushed ending I give the book four stars for some very creative writing by Haugaard.

Immerse yourself in this thrilling and thought provoking tale by Erik Christian Haugaard, the Boy and the Samurai. Erik Christian Haugaard is a renowned author that grew up in Denmark but later moved to other countries like the United States, Italy, Spain, and Japan - the reasons for his unique style of writing and interesting ideas. This colorful background has made him the sensational author he is. Saru, which means monkey, is a smart young boy. He is agile, able to think on his feet, and

comprehensive, three traits that aren't seen often enough. Saru is placed in the care of a wet nurse after his mother dies. His father dies later in the troubling times of 16th century Japan in a great battle. A great fire comes destroying the village, leaving Saru completely alone. He lives as a beggar in a little shrine on whatever scraps he can find. His cleverness also helps him know the ways of the world and the people around him. His many adventures lead him up to the greatest one where he helps a desperate samurai save his wife from the crazy emperor. This book has filled me with much thoughts and interest about the Japanese culture and has prompted me to read more historical books such as this. I think that anyone who enjoys the book, The Phantom Tollbooth will enjoy this book as well.

I liked the way the story goes up and down. For instance, at one time, the boy cannot wait to show a silver coin to his friend, but then his friend did not meet him. So, the book has a lot of suspense. The book really flows and the boy seems really clever but sometimes he goes the wrong way. I would highly recommend this book to other kids to read, but if they are grossed out by even one drop of blood, then maybe they wouldn't like it.

Hi, This book is about a boy named Saru who is orphaned at a young age. He learns to survive with a priest. He deals with robber gangs and powerful samurais. One day he meets a samurai who wants to rescue his wife from another powerful samurai. So they two men journey off together to find the wife. But their future...they do not know. I think this book was really good. Very detailed and exciting events. A definite 5 star!

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