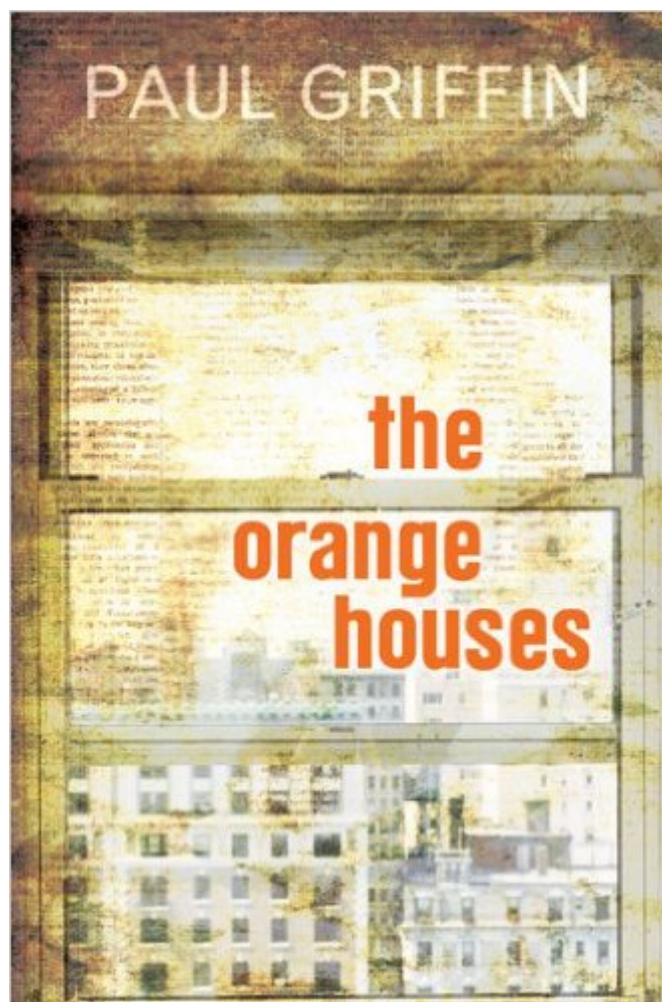


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# The Orange Houses



## Synopsis

Meet Tamika Sykes?Mik to her friends (if she had any). She?s hearing impaired and way too smart for her West Bronx high school. She copes by reading lips and selling homework answers, and looks forward to the time each day when she can be alone in her room drawing. She?s a tough girl who never gets close to anyone, until she meets Fatima, a teenage refugee who sells newspapers on Mik?s block. Both Mik and Fatima unite in their efforts to befriend Jimmi, a homeless vet who is shunned by the rest of the community. The events that follow when these three outcasts converge will break open their close-knit community and change the lives of those living in the Orange Houses in explosive and unexpected ways.

## Book Information

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Product Dimensions: 8.4 x 5.8 x 0.7 inches

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Average Customer Review: 3.9 out of 5 starsÂ Â See all reviewsÂ (15 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #2,156,884 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #83 inÂ Books > Teens > Literature & Fiction > Social & Family Issues > Emigration & Immigration #317 inÂ Books > Teens > Literature & Fiction > Social & Family Issues > Special Needs #3832 inÂ Books > Teens > Literature & Fiction > Social & Family Issues > Being a Teen

## Customer Reviews

15 yr old Tamika (Mik) Sykes is partially deaf. She likes to turn off her hearing aid and shut the world out.18 yr old Jimmi Sixes is a war veteran, trying to find a reason to live16 yr old Fatima is a refugee from Africa. All she wants is a new beginning and to see the Statue of Liberty.I didn't connect with these characters. This disconnection has a lot to do with my not believing the Black characters created by Griffin a white author. A characters believability is subjective. When a Black character doesn't feel right, I lack the vocabulary to say way that is, something is simply not ringing true. So I usually stay clear of Black characters created by White authors that don't hit the mark for me, since I can't put into words what doesn't work. My problem with The Orange Houses goes well beyond the characters. I want to take a moment to point out a few things. Maybe people will think

twice about throwing out words like authentic so easily. Fatima is an African refugee. The author never specifies a country. Last time I checked Africa was still a continent. Griffin not naming a country of origin, like what difference does it make, got me thinking about author Chimamanda Adichie recent talk on the danger of a single story. I thought Fatima had a lot of money for a refugee. "Fatima gave the man half of what she had left after the boat ride: five hundred dollars. (pg.13) She finds her way to the Bronx, and the Orange Houses. While exploring her new neighborhood on the first day, Fatima meets Jimmi. He is impressed by the angels Fatima makes out of newspaper. Jimmi decides to introduce Fatima to Mik. I knew eventually the characters might become acquainted but this was too quick.

Why does humanity persist in slaughtering its young? Set in the West Bronx over the course of a month's time, Paul Griffin's *THE ORANGE HOUSES* is the tale of three young victims of war, three refugees of sorts who come together to provide each other a path to salvation as the clock ticks down -- chapter by chapter -- to a terrible day of reckoning: Tamika (Mik): "Meningitis struck her ten years before, when she was five. Technically her hearing loss was 'moderately severe,' what lawyers looking to sue hospitals pegged 50 percent deficient. Being halfway to sound was like never being able to catch your breath." She got by just fine when she kept her hearing aids turned on. She didn't much. The machines were what City Services could give her, old technology that jugged her ears and rattled her with phone and radio static, a high-pitched whir. They sharpened and dulled everything at the same time the way water will just below the surface. But turned off and plugging up her drums, the aids screened out the world. She lived for this silky silence. Fatima: "The women tiptoed onto the deck as if they were treading landmined sands. For nine days they had been hiding in the backup engine room of this oil tanker fit for hauling two million barrels of light sweet crude and, this time around, thirty-four refugees. Each woman's passage cost twenty-five hundred dollars. This blind faith cash had been raised a coin at a time, person by displaced person, family by fractured African family. Those who had endured were sending their best shots at survival, if not by bloodline then heritage, west." Of the thirty-four, most were going to Camden, where the Immigration police did not go.

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