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# Half Bad (The Half Bad Trilogy)



## Synopsis

“An enthralling fantasy in the Harry Potter tradition.” Time magazine “A bewitching new thriller.” The Wall Street Journal In modern-day England, witches live alongside humans: White witches, who are good; Black witches, who are evil; and sixteen-year-old Nathan, who is both. Nathan’s father is the world’s most powerful and cruel Black witch, and his mother is dead. He is hunted from all sides. Trapped in a cage, beaten and handcuffed, Nathan must escape before his seventeenth birthday, at which point he will receive three gifts from his father and come into his own as a witch—or else he will die. But how can Nathan find his father when his every action is tracked, when there is no one safe to trust—not even family, not even the girl he loves? In the tradition of Patrick Ness and Markus Zusak, *Half Bad* is a gripping tale of alienation and the indomitable will to survive, a story that will grab hold of you and not let go until the very last page.

## Book Information

Lexile Measure: HL680L (What’s this?)

Series: The Half Bad Trilogy (Book 1)

Paperback: 432 pages

Publisher: Speak; Reprint edition (January 13, 2015)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0147511461

ISBN-13: 978-0147511461

Product Dimensions: 5.6 x 0.9 x 8.2 inches

Shipping Weight: 12 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 3.9 out of 5 stars See all reviews (228 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #92,560 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #80 in Books > Teens > Literature & Fiction > Social & Family Issues > Violence #93 in Books > Teens > Literature & Fiction > Social & Family Issues > Family > Parents #408 in Books > Children’s Books > Growing Up & Facts of Life > Family Life > Parents

Age Range: 12 and up

Grade Level: 7 and up

## Customer Reviews

Twenty pages into *Half Bad* one notices "similarities" and "resemblances" to fantasy classics such as Pullman’s *These Dark Materials*, Harry Potter books and even the *Matrix*. Another orphan outsider, more half bloods and lots of Good v Evil (White v. Black). Progress further for the deeply

affecting first love or the standard issue "troublesome prophecy". By 50 pages in one wonders "does the world really need another three book series of this?". Happily, the answer is an emphatic yes. A very good English professor once told me "there is nothing thematically new in literature since the ancient Greeks. Literary greatness lies in the story telling.". If that is so, then Sally Green's Half Bad is damn near great. Themes you think you know are subverted, and you feel a bit disconcerted; fallen down a rabbithole. Think Harry and Lyra visit a Brave New World. Black is (not necessarily) bad and white is about as far from good, pure and virtuous as one can get. Green's hero isn't merely a misfit--he's a juvenile delinquent, a thief and prone to violence. And oh yes, he is very, very appealing, with a story that is deeply moving for all its superficial familiarity. Young Nathan Byrne suffers from more than just adolescent raging hormones. The kid is practically feral, and becomes more so with each passing year. A functional illiterate (yes, you read that right) who would rather be beaten and tortured than attempt to learn his ABCs, this is an anti-hero who will make some squirm but many more care deeply about his journey through adolescence. A journey made possible, in part by muggings and petty thievery. Imagine Ron and Hermione rolling a banker to finance their search for the deathly hallows.

I got this book because one of my students recommended it. I was interested because it is rare that I get a recommendation instead of being the one giving one. I wasn't disappointed. The story starts a little confusingly with action that is occurring around half-way through the novel while the main character, Nathan, is being held prisoner somewhere. I would liken it to a POW camp with the stuff he goes through. He then begins to fill in the story with his own memories of his life as he continues to deal with the current conditions that surround him. Nathan is a type of half-blood in a world that holds an underworld population of witches: White and Black. The color designation is not about skin, but about magical abilities. Nathan's mother was a powerful white witch with amazing healing abilities while his father was a very dark black witch who killed a lot of bad people and ate their hearts to absorb their magical "gifts" (ala Syler from the original "Heroes" television show). Despite this, with Nathan's mother deceased and a society of witches that hate him simply because of his birth, he truly has to fight for his existence. He lives his young life with his grandmother and three siblings that are from a different father. One sibling hates him and blames him for their mother's death while the other two love and care about him deeply. His grandmother also loves him and wants him to have a happy life. Unfortunately, the rest of the world seems against that idea except for those of black witch blood and one white witch who Nathan falls in love with. It is an amazing story about a young man who has to become more than he or anyone expected without knowing

who in his life is friend or foe.

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