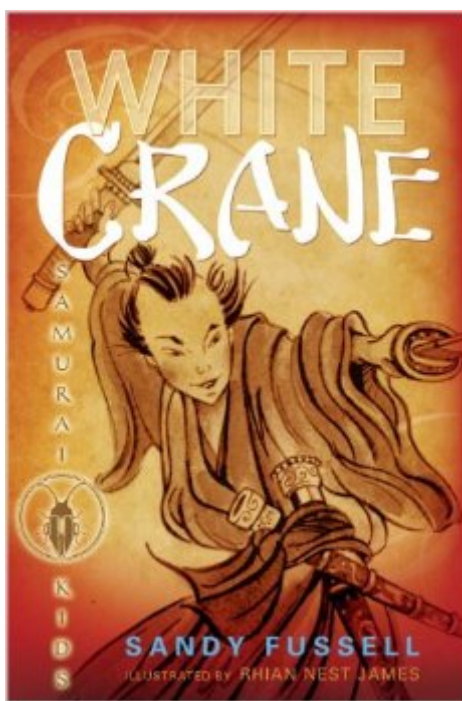


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# Samurai Kids #1: White Crane



## Synopsis

Can a one-legged boy become a great samurai warrior? Meet some unique aspiring champions in this kick-off to an exciting new martial arts series. Niya Moto is the only one-legged samurai kid in Japan, famous for falling flat on his face in the dirt. The one school that will accept him is the Cockroach Ryu, led by the legendary sensei Ki-Yaga. He may be an old man overly fond of naps, but Ki-Yaga is also known for taking in kids that the world has judged harshly: an albino girl with extra fingers and toes, a boy who is blind, a big kid whose past makes him loath to fight. A warrior in his time, Ki-Yaga demands excellence in everything from sword fighting to poetry. But can the ragtag Cockroaches make the treacherous journey to the Samurai Trainee Games, never mind take on the all-conquering Dragons? In a fast-moving, action-filled tale that draws on true details of feudal Japan, Niya finds there's no fear they can't face as long as they stick together for their friendship is more powerful than a samurai sword. From the Hardcover edition.

## Book Information

Series: Samurai Kids (Book 1)

Paperback: 256 pages

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ISBN-10: 0763653462

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Product Dimensions: 5.1 x 0.7 x 7.7 inches

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

Average Customer Review: 4.6 out of 5 stars See all reviews (12 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #493,349 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #14 in Books > Teens > Literature & Fiction > Sports > Martial Arts #61 in Books > Teens > Historical Fiction > Asia #127 in Books > Teens > Literature & Fiction > Social & Family Issues > Special Needs

## Customer Reviews

Sometimes it's hard to choose the right book for your kids. They want active, exciting stories, written in a kid's voice. Parents might prefer a children's story with something worthwhile to say, and without swearing or gratuitous violence. Finding a book that gets the balance right in appealing to both kids and their parents is no easy task. This book gets it exactly right! Samurai Kids, Book 1: White Crane, was written by Sandy Fussell, and published by Walker Books. I'd recommend this book to kids over eight, particularly those with an interest in martial arts or who want lots of action,

humour and tension in their books. It's about a group of misfit kids who want to be Samurai warriors. They are the Little Cockroaches, under the tutelage of their sensei, Ki-Yaga. The narrator is Niya Moto, a boy with one leg. Despite their disabilities, or sometimes because of their disabilities, the Samurai kids want to prove to themselves and those who despise them that they are worthy of the title Samurai Warrior. It's a novel, but *White Crane* is also illustrated beautifully by Rhian Nest James. The occasional line drawings and chapter banners add a wonderful Asian "flavour" to the book, and are reminders of authentic Japanese/Chinese art work. The book would make an excellent choice as a resource for students studying culture, or for anyone who wants to encourage tolerance and respect as key human values. There's even a Samurai Kids website, with lots of added extras and fun stuff for kids to do. Apart from it being a rattling good adventure story, with characters you feel like you know, *White Crane* also impressed me because of Sandy Fussell's meticulous attention to detail.

Niya is such an entertaining main character. I found some of the humor in this book to be a little juvenile, but it's perfect for kids in middle school and younger (4th or 5th grade). He is unafraid to poke fun at himself, however he also teases the kids at his Ryu and his teacher. I would have preferred less explanation of everything that the samurai did, I think readers can figure it out from the context, but I know there are readers who might be more impatient and don't want to have to look things up. One thing I didn't understand was the spirit animals (Niya's is the white crane). I couldn't figure out if the spirit animals were real or if the kids simply referred to their spirit animals to give them courage. Just when you start to think the ending will be predictable, the author slices (with a samurai sword of course) your predictable thoughts and inserts a fun twist in the end. The artwork was very well done. Each chapter has a relatively simple illustration to start it off, along with one full picture in each chapter. What I found most interesting was how tasteful the drawings of the students were. There's no gore or anything, in some pictures you can see Niya's one leg or Mikko's one arm but for the most part the missing body part is artfully hidden. The pictures are in black and white which suits the book more and the illustrations added to the fun and vivid imagery of the story. *White Crane* is an engaging story set in feudal Japan when the rules of the samurai are slowly changing to become more modern. There is a lot of struggle going on between teachers vs. students and students vs. students over what traditions should stay and what should go. I love that the author gave each of these students disabilities that were seemingly impossible to overcome.

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