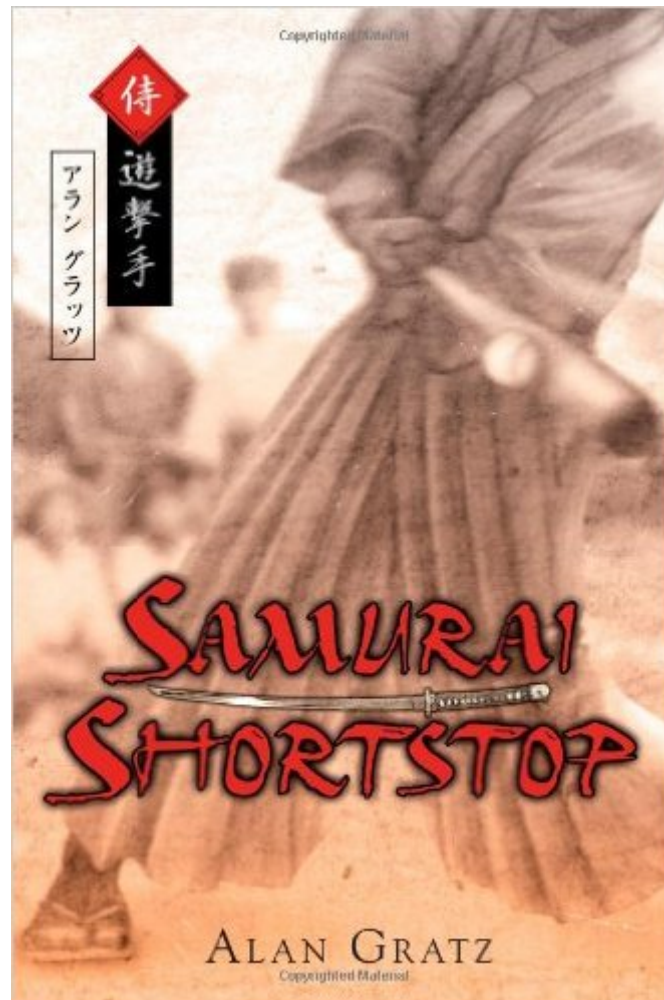


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# Samurai Shortstop



## Synopsis

Tokyo, 1890. Toyo is caught up in the competitive world of boarding school, and must prove himself to make the team in a new sport called besuboru. But he grieves for his uncle, a samurai who sacrificed himself for his beliefs, at a time when most of Japan is eager to shed ancient traditions. It's only when his father decides to teach him the way of the samurai that Toyo grows to better understand his uncle and father. And to his surprise, the warrior training guides him to excel at baseball, a sport his father despises as yet another modern Western menace. Toyo searches desperately for a way to prove there is a place for his family's samurai values in modern Japan. Baseball might just be the answer, but will his father ever accept a "Western" game that stands for everything he despises?

## Book Information

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Average Customer Review: 4.5 out of 5 stars [See all reviews](#) (22 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #386,647 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #40 in [Books > Teens > Literature & Fiction > Sports > Baseball & Softball](#) #48 in [Books > Teens > Historical Fiction > Asia](#) #366 in [Books > Children's Books > Sports & Outdoors > Baseball](#)

Age Range: 12 and up

Grade Level: 7 and up

## Customer Reviews

Samurai Shortstop is about a 16-year old Japanese boy, Toyo. Right from the first sentence of the book it really grabs your attention. Toyo's uncle is preparing to commit seppuku. This is considered an honorable way to kill yourself in Japan. The story draws you into the life of Toyo and helps you to understand his relationship with his father and learning the art of bushido. He goes off to a private boarding school where he learns how to stand up for himself and fight off the seniors who are out to torture the first years. I liked this book because it combines the sport of baseball along with Toyo's

high school experience in Japan. If you want to read a book that is hard to put down and will keep you intrigued until the very last page, then this is the book for you.

I loved this book! The setting, Japan around 1890, was fascinating. The author made the city and the boys' boarding school come alive with selected details. I loved the character of Toyo, a boy who is coming of age at a time when the world is changing drastically. Toyo is under pressure from his father to reject the new ways (baseball, for one, introduced by the Americans) and respect and live up to the old ways (of the samurai), even though the old ways are dead or dying away. In addition to the stress of which path to choose, which kind of person to be, Toyo has to contend with his classmates in the boarding school -- and each and every one of us who has gone through school knows that this is not only not easy, it is often the most important conflict a young person faces before he or she leaves school and enters the larger world. Definitely worth reading!

If I'd been reading this book I might not have gone too far as I'm not a big baseball fan. Thankfully, I was listening to it in my car and I'm glad because it turned out to be a very interesting book. I learned a lot about Japan during a very interesting time in history in the mid 1800s and I had no idea that baseball was such a huge deal in Japan. Be sure to read the author's notes at the end of the book!

Alan Gratz's triumphant first YA, *SAMURAI SHORTSTOP*, opens on the narrator's description of watching his beloved uncle gut himself. Baseball and violence carry this impressively researched depiction of Meiji Japan, and of relationships, between young males, and between father and son. In this polished, always suspenseful story, son and father help one another mature. Martha Bennett Stiles

This book is about a boy that goes to a boarding school named Toyo. The upperclassmen there love to terrorize the younger kids. Toyo is a great shortstop but the seniors don't let him play. The older kids are tormenting Toyo but he has enough to worry about without that. His uncle committed suicide only weeks before and he is scared his father will be the next. His father decides to teach Toyo bushido and Toyo finds out that baseball is a lot like bushido. In the end the seniors end up letting him on the team because of him standing up for himself. When the team plays a big game a fight starts and the Japanese people beat up an American causing the relationship between Japan and America to be ruined. They decide to settle the matter with a baseball game. The relationship is

restored and everyone is happy with what happens.

What an amazing debut! Toyo's story grabbed me from the first page with his uncle's preparation for ritual suicide. I couldn't wait to get to the end of the book to see if Toyo could successfully apply bushido principles to baseball, to see if he and his father could bridge just a little of the gap between them, if he could ever forgive his uncle for leaving him. But now I want more! Bravo, Alan, bravo!

This is a story of a boy named Toyo Shimada. The time is set in Tokyo, 1890. Toyo is sent to a boarding school of a very high caliber, but after he arrives he sees how the upperclassmen treat the first years. To fit in, he joins the baseball team, a sport he loves. He wants to be shortstop, but until he becomes a "man" to the upperclassmen he is stuck in the outfield. He is enraged, but nevertheless he pushes through the tormenting and refuses to quit the baseball team. The only problem is his father, who is still using the ways of the samurai, or warrior. Toyo's father does not want him to play, unless Toyo can convince him otherwise. Other than that, his father has decided to teach him the ways of the warrior, or bushido. At first Toyo does not understand any of his bushido lessons, or why he has to do them, but over the course of the book he learns to use his bushido skills. This book reminds me of a book called Dairy Queen. The story was about a girl, and football, not baseball, but in the end she overcomes many obstacles just like Toyo. In both books, the main focus is overcoming anything that comes your way. They are both also about standing up to important figures in their lives. It happens to be that in both books that person is their dad. Alan Gratz has written an enthralling tale. I enjoyed the book, although it does have some pretty gruesome scenes. I liked reading it because you always want to see what Toyo will do next, what the other characters are going to say, or do. It also tells you a lot about what school was like back then, in Japan. It is a lot different from American school, and the year it takes place in really makes a difference. Overall, this is a great book and you should pick it up sometimes if you are looking for a great read.

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