Echo
By Pam Muñoz Ryan
Reviewed by Connie Bennett, Vinton Public Library Clerk

Junior Fiction
History; Music
Large Type

     Oh, my goodness, where to begin?  To think that I couldn't connect with this book- that I stopped halfway through, and very nearly didn't finish at all!   After all of that, this has become one of my all-time favorite books!  To say that it was an easy read would be untrue, and yet, as I reread portions and came to the part yet unread, in an attempt to finish this time, I couldn't put the book down.  I have just finished it, at 3:30 AM, and can't say enough about this magical tale.
     In the beginning there is an enchanting fairy tale, of unrecognized princesses and a young boy who fell asleep in a woods soon after acquiring a harmonica.  From there, the book jumps rather abruptly to a small family with a passion for music during the uncertain time of Nazi Germany.  Again, the boy of the family owns a harmonica. (Cliffhanger alert!)
     Part two of the story takes place several years later, in Pennsylvania, USA.  The reader learns of brothers, ages seven and eleven, orphaned, and taken to a Dickensian Home. The thread of history and a deep love for music continues to run through it. (Another cliffhanger!)
     Now, seven years pass, and the book jumps to a migrant town in California where another atypical family takes its part in this fascinating, historically rich story. (Yep, again!) In part four, all of the ends are tied up, and the prophecy foretold comes true in a most unusual and satisfying way!
    I cannot say enough about this book, except to wonder how I've overlooked it for all of these years!  Although labeled as "juvenile fiction", this book is a compelling page-turner for teens to older readers!  Don't let the young people have all of the deliciousness of this awesome book!  Get it and read it!

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