All The Broken Pieces by Ann Burg

Two years after being airlifted out of war-torn Vietnam, Matt Pin is haunted: by bombs that fell like dead crows, by the family -- and the terrible secret -- he left behind. Now, inside a caring adoptive home in the United States, a series of profound events force him to choose between silence and candor, blame and forgiveness, fear and freedom. By turns harrowing, dreamlike, sad, and triumphant, this searing debut novel, written in lucid verse, reveals an unforgettable perspective on the lasting impact of war and the healing power of love.

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My Personal Review:
Matt Pin was airlifted from Vietnam at the age of 10 and adopted by an American family. He is now in seventh grade and has adjusted well to his new family. He remembers the early adoption classes and meetings when he was learning to speak English, and he is glad they helped him remember the customs and traditions of his culture. His American parents now have a biological son, but Matt has always felt loved and appreciated.

The downside is that Matt also remembers Vietnam. He hasn't forgotten the sounds, the smells, and the horrors of war. He knows his father was an American soldier, but he's not sure why he left his mother behind. Should he want to find this missing father or just put it all in the past? He knows his mother told him she loved him and that was why she sent him away, but how do you give up someone you love?

What haunts him the most is the younger brother he left behind. Matt can't find the words to share the tragic story that separated him from the toddler. His loving American parents hope time will heal the many wounds created by the awfulness of war. Their encouragement, along with that of another Vietnam vet, the game of baseball, and Matt's interest in music, work together to start the healing process.

ALL THE BROKEN PIECES is the first novel for author Ann E. Burg. Written in verse, the spare language brings focus to the raw emotions felt by all the characters. Burg examines the effects of war from many vantage points as she involves her readers in this turbulent time.
Even readers without a connection to this controversial war will come away with an understanding of the widespread damage done when war is chosen over peace.

Reviewed by: Sally Kruger, aka Readingjunky

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