



# Wish You Happy Forever: What China's Orphans Taught Me About Moving Mountains

By Jenny Bowen

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*Wish You Happy Forever* chronicles Half the Sky founder Jenny Bowen's personal and professional journey to transform Chinese orphanages—and the lives of the neglected girls who live in them—from a state of quiet despair to one of vibrant promise.

After reading an article about the thousands of baby girls languishing in Chinese orphanages, Bowen and her husband adopted a little girl from China and brought her home to Los Angeles, not out of a need to build a family but rather a commitment to save one child. A year later, as she watched her new daughter play in the grass with her friends, thriving in an environment where she knew she was loved, Bowen was overcome with a desire to help the children that she could not bring home. That very day she created Half the Sky Foundation, an organization conceived to bring love into the life of every orphan in China and one that has actually managed to fulfill its promise.

In *Wish You Happy Forever*, a fish out of water tale like no other, Bowen relates her struggle to bring the concept of "child nurture and responsive care" to bemused Chinese bureaucrats and how she's actually succeeding. Five years after Half the Sky's first orphanage program opened, government officials began to mention child welfare and nurturing care in public speeches. And, in 2011, at China's Great Hall of the People, Half the Sky and its government partners celebrated the launch of The Rainbow Program, a groundbreaking initiative to change the face of orphan care by training every child welfare worker in the country. Thanks to Bowen's relentless perseverance through heartbreak and a dose of humor, Half the Sky's goal to bring love to the lives of forgotten children comes ever closer.

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### Editorial Review

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Jenny Bowen—founder and CEO of Half the Sky Foundation, a nonprofit organization providing Western-style caretaker training and programming for orphans in China—has a story to tell. A former screenwriter and filmmaker and the adoptive parent of two Chinese daughters, she conceived Half the Sky in 1998 to help orphaned Chinese children, virtually all of them girls, who were left languishing in institutions across China. Her idea was simple: give all these children a caring adult presence so they have a chance to develop cognitively, physically, and emotionally. Despite distracting references to her own childhood and petty remarks, Bowen conveys how vision, persistence, and adaptability can pay off dramatically. In its early years, Half the Sky sent American adoptive families to “rebuild” orphanage infant rooms in a few willing institutions and train staff in developmental caretaking. Within a decade, Half the Sky became a partner nongovernmental organization with the Chinese government, working with 52 sites and affecting many thousands of children. Whether Bowen is responsible for fundamental changes in the Chinese child welfare system or was in the right place at the right time is a conclusion for readers to make. --Carolyn Saper

### Review

“Bowen’s remarkable narrative illustrates how dedication, compassion and love can create enormous change against incredible odds.” (Publishers Weekly)

“Memorable and moving, Bowen’s story is a gift straight from the heart.” (Kirkus Reviews)

“Both heartrending and victoriously uplifting, *Wish You Happy Forever* provides the backdrop on the lives of thousands of orphan girls and their foster grandmothers, teachers, volunteers, donors, and the ever-grateful adoptive parents. This is a must read for lessons on compassion, persistence, and true love.” (Amy Tan, bestselling author of *The Joy Luck Club*)

“Jenny Bowen is a brilliant and amazing person. Her work and writing are great, profound and inspiring.” (Anne Lamott)

“An astonishing and inspiring tribute to the power of human imagination harnessed to passion and purpose.” (Jane Pauley)

“The hopeful smiles of a million waiting children shine from the pages of Jenny Bowen’s writing. This compelling story is a page turning must-read of breaking down barriers as one woman embarks on the monumental quest of building families, forever.” (Nia Vardalos, author of *Instant Mom*)

“An inspiring story of triumph in the face of struggle, Bowen’s lyrical prose and her remarkable journey transforming Chinese orphanages amidst government bureaucracy, earthquakes, snowstorms, and more, is a testament to the power of perseverance.” (Dr. Larry Brilliant)

### From the Back Cover

In the summer of 1998, Jenny Bowen looked out her kitchen window onto her garden, and her life changed forever. Her three-year-old daughter Maya, whom she and her husband had adopted months earlier from an orphanage in China, had transformed from a vacant-eyed, sickly little girl into a joyous being thriving in an

environment where she knew she was loved. Watching her daughter play, Bowen was overcome with the desire to help the orphaned children she couldn't bring home. And that's when Half the Sky Foundation was born.

*Wish You Happy Forever* tells the story of China's momentous progress in its treatment of orphaned and abandoned children. When Bowen began Half the Sky in 1998 determined to bring a caring adult into the life of every orphaned child, it seemed impossible that China would allow a foreigner to work inside government orphanages, let alone try to bring meaningful change. Inevitably, the pathway to collaboration was fraught with challenges: Bowen had to find ways to lead her organization past closed doors and naysayers, bureaucratic roadblocks and reluctant government officials, as well as natural disasters and flustered board members to realize her vision for a loving, more nurturing approach to child welfare in China. But despite the oceans and ideas that divide us, in the end, all of us want only good for our children. Now the Chinese government not only trusts but partners with Half the Sky to make life better for the children in its care.

To this day, Bowen is the only Westerner working with the Chinese government to transform its entire child welfare system from the inside, and Half the Sky, with fifty-two children's centers throughout the country, has helped more than a hundred thousand children. Bowen's beautifully written memoir, *Wish You Happy Forever*, teaches us that saving a child's life can transcend language and cultural barriers, and that, above all else, a determined dreamer with a loving presence speaks at the greatest volume.

## Users Review

### From reader reviews:

#### Arturo McDaniel:

The book *Wish You Happy Forever: What China's Orphans Taught Me About Moving Mountains* can give more knowledge and information about everything you want. Why then must we leave a good thing like a book *Wish You Happy Forever: What China's Orphans Taught Me About Moving Mountains*? Some of you have a different opinion about book. But one aim this book can give many info for us. It is absolutely suitable. Right now, try to closer together with your book. Knowledge or facts that you take for that, you could give for each other; you are able to share all of these. Book *Wish You Happy Forever: What China's Orphans Taught Me About Moving Mountains* has simple shape however you know: it has great and large function for you. You can seem the enormous world by wide open and read a guide. So it is very wonderful.

#### Dale Moore:

What do you concerning book? It is not important with you? Or just adding material when you require something to explain what your own problem? How about your spare time? Or are you busy particular person? If you don't have spare time to accomplish others business, it is make you feel bored faster. And you have free time? What did you do? Every person has many questions above. They must answer that question simply because just their can do that will. It said that about publication. Book is familiar in each person. Yes, it is suitable. Because start from on pre-school until university need this specific *Wish You Happy Forever: What China's Orphans Taught Me About Moving Mountains* to read.

**Sue Eldred:**

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**Mildred Shaw:**

Spent a free time to be fun activity to complete! A lot of people spent their down time with their family, or their own friends. Usually they undertaking activity like watching television, likely to beach, or picnic inside the park. They actually doing same task every week. Do you feel it? Would you like to something different to fill your current free time/ holiday? Could possibly be reading a book may be option to fill your no cost time/ holiday. The first thing that you'll ask may be what kinds of e-book that you should read. If you want to consider look for book, may be the book untitled Wish You Happy Forever: What China's Orphans Taught Me About Moving Mountains can be excellent book to read. May be it may be best activity to you.

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