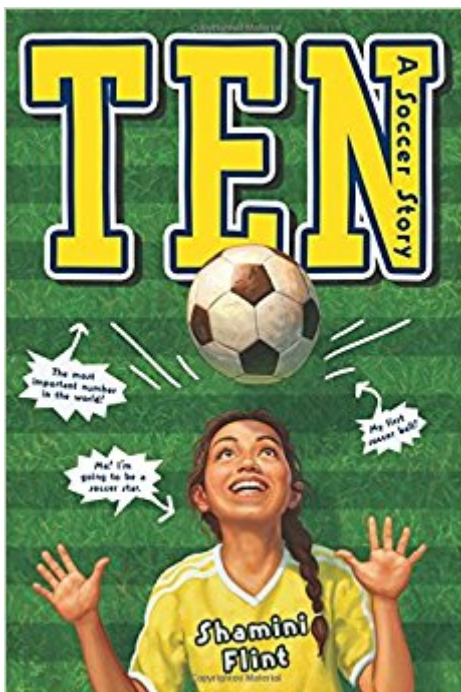


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# Ten: A Soccer Story



## Synopsis

Maya is a passionate soccer fan eager to start playing soccer herself. This is extra challenging because soccer is considered a "boys' game" in Malaysia in 1986. She teaches herself basic soccer skills with only her mother and a potted rosebush as training partners, then gradually persuades enough girls to join her to form a team, all the while trying to keep her unpredictable biracial family together. Reading Maya's witty, observant first-person narrative will make readers want her on their team, and they'll cheer her on as she discovers that winning is great "but losing doesn't mean defeat.

## Book Information

Lexile Measure: 770 (What's this?)

Hardcover: 176 pages

Publisher: Clarion Books (June 20, 2017)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0544850017

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Product Dimensions: 5.5 x 0.7 x 8.2 inches

Shipping Weight: 9.6 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.1 out of 5 stars 12 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #486,820 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #238 in Books > Children's Books > Growing Up & Facts of Life > Family Life > Marriage & Divorce #370 in Books > Children's Books > Geography & Cultures > Explore the World > Asia #432 in Books > Children's Books > Growing Up & Facts of Life > Difficult Discussions > Prejudice & Racism

Age Range: 10 - 12 years

Grade Level: 5 - 7

## Customer Reviews

"...Flint injects humor effortlessly into her prose. Add the antics of a spunky main character and short and sweet chapters for a fast-paced, entertaining read. Universal themes of grappling with race, fitting in, and dealing with divorce help this story transcend cultural boundaries." —Kirkus

Shamini Flint grew up in Malaysia. She is the author of the Inspector Singh Investigates crime novels for adults and of a long list of children's books; the "Diary of" sports series are the only ones published in the US. With a law degree from the University of Cambridge, Ms. Flint served as

a Solicitor of the Supreme Court of England and Wales. Now a full-time writer, she travels internationally to promote her books and watch soccer games. She also plays soccer and has trained her daughter to play and love the game as she does. *Ten* is rooted in her soccer obsession, which began in childhood, and much of it is autobiographical.

*Ten* is kind of a sweet, coming-of-age sort of tale about a girl and soccer. Her parents haven't been getting on so well of late and Maya is sure they wouldn't get a divorce because it isn't done in her culture. But then, girls don't play soccer since it's a 'boys' sport. Maya not only gets her own soccer ball, but gets pretty good and forms a team at her all girls school. The setting is 1986 Malaysia around the time of the World Cup in Mexico. Maya is able to watch her favorite player, Brazil's Zico, as well as some other famous personages in the sport from that time. She tries to put herself in the place of her favorite player, but also realizes that she has to be her own person. Given the type of book, some of what follows isn't really surprising. What is surprising is that Maya is so resilient and strong willed. She knows she needs to stick up to bullying but doesn't exactly follow through until a cliché moment, so there are some things that could have been handled a little more roundedly. That said, the main character's voice is compelling. Middle Grade readers can relate to Maya's struggles even though she's growing up halfway across the world in some circumstances many Western kids can't relate to. Flint puts a lot of herself and her passions into Maya, too, which gives this book a little bit of truth. Overall, a shortish but good read for the target audience. The soccer may draw them in, but the real life stuff will keep them hooked.

"*Ten: A Soccer Story*" by Shamini Flint addresses many topics, perhaps too many. Of course it is about soccer but by the time the reader has finished the fifty second chapter they have been exposed to parental divorce, minority grouping, gender rules, teacher techniques for punishment, other ethnic groups, living in a multi-generation household, several other religions and about another country. If one was to just be interested in soccer I think the reader would need to know about soccer and international players to really understand and enjoy the book. The story takes place in Malaysia sometime around the time when the World Cup was held in Mexico in 1986. Unlike the United States, girls were not playing soccer - it was a boys sport. Maya who is eleven, has watched soccer on the television and has her favorite players and teams. She watches with a serious interest and a wish to become a pro soccer player when she grows up. Reading the descriptions of what is playing on the TV - jinking runs, sliding the ball through the middle of the field, all over the pitch, under the bar and flying over the crossbar meant very little to me and when I

read parts of the story to my granddaughter who are 6-9-10 and have been playing soccer on regional teams for 2-3 years now in the U.S. they were unable to tell me what the actions above meant. The book is written for 10 to 12 year olds in 5th to 7th grade with a 770 Lexile measurement so perhaps they are too young, although they have read several books about soccer and both their mom and dad coach soccer as well as play on adult teams so one would think the girls would know some of the actions mentioned above. I found the word level appropriate in this book. I think with explanations of the soccer moves and more emphasis on the forming of the girls' soccer team the book could have stood on its own without having to add the divorce, the cranky grandmother, the cruel punishments administered to minority students, etc. I am sorry to say that none of the granddaughters wanted to read the book themselves, nor did they want grandma to read it out-loud to them.

*Ten: A Soccer Story* is a fun read for ages 8-12 by Shamini Flint, an author of an adult mystery series who also loves soccer. *Ten* is a heart-warming and funny story of Maya, 10, who believes her calling in life is to become a professional soccer star, even though soccer in her home country of Malaysia is an all-boys sport. Born to an Indian mother and a white English father, she is seen as a misfit in the small conservative seaside town in Malaysia. After teaching herself the basic skills of soccer, with her mother's help, Maya recruits enough girls to form a team and her dream is on the way to fulfillment. In the midst of her excitement, her parents announce they are getting a divorce and Maya's father leaves for England. The story continues with Maya deciding that her soccer team needs to win the Malaysia title so they can travel to London for the championship game. The story is a first-person account told by Maya that will hold the attention of young readers and addresses life issues many young people are facing. A gutsy, honest account sprinkled with humor.

*Ten* is an inspiring story about a young girl who pursues her passion. Maya loves soccer, but girls don't play in her country; it's only a sport for boys. She gets a soccer ball, practices, and manages to recruit enough girls from her school to form a team. At the same time, her interracial parents are planning to dissolve their marriage. When her British father moves back to England, she wants her soccer team to go all the way and qualify to play in London. I thought the author did a nice job of describing Maya and her determination. She knew what she wanted and was not afraid to go after it. She developed a sound plan and followed through. There are aspects to Maya's story to which young readers can relate. This book had short chapters and was quick to read. It's recommended

for ages 10 to 12 and I think that's a good target. Younger readers might enjoy it too, even as a read aloud if they are not yet comfortable with chapter books. My daughter really enjoyed it and is hoping for more from Shamini Flint.

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