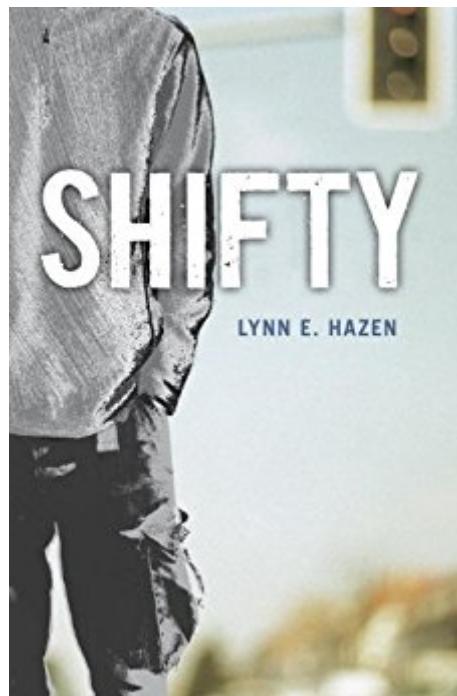


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# Shifty



## **Synopsis**

Fifteen-year-old Shifty knows all about moving around and next to nothing about where he came from. When he's assigned to a new foster home and family, he tries hard to keep cool and stay out of trouble. But it seems like the more he tries to do the right thing, the more trouble he finds. As Shifty navigates a series of messy summer adventures, he struggles to find a balance between the street-wise spirit that has helped him survive and his longing for a place to call home. Lynne E. Hazen has created a fast-paced, page-turning plot full of surprises and warmth.   From the Hardcover edition.

## **Book Information**

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## **Customer Reviews**

I fell head over heels in love with this book. Hazen's descriptions of Soli's experience as a fosterkid, of San Francisco's neighborhoods, of the relationships Soli has with his foster sister and foster mother are heart-shattering and as real as they come. I came to care for Soli deeply. I rooted for him, and wanted him to get away with all the trouble he creates. Which he does, sometimes. This is

a REAL winner.

Lynn taught a YA class for me at Stanford. I am grateful to Lynn for writing such a beautiful, thought provoking, entertaining, inspiring and touching story. Thank you, Lynn.

I loved Shifty. Loved the characters, loved the must-turn-the-page feel. Loved to learn about the foster world. Great read. Would recommend it to all.

RATING: 4.5 out of 5Shifty is the kind of kid that I have always admired, gutsy out of necessity, but a kind soft heart just looking for a place to call home. And given a chance and a little extra room, he will most of the time make the right decision even if it seems unusual to the rest of us.Ms. Hazen has given a voice to foster kids and the majority of the people who care for them, not only those in San Francisco but all over the country.Shifty is a kid that might work on the nerves of teachers at school even though you can't call him bad. He is just resourceful and probably more "street wise" than the majority of his teachers, but only because he has had to be for so long.As this story starts, Shifty is finally in a foster home that is as close to normal as he can remember, and includes Mother Martha, little sister Sissy, and baby Thaddeus (aka Chance) two other hard to place foster kids. Sissy barely speaks at first due to prolonged physical abuse, and Baby Chance is a newborn crack addicted baby that required almost all of Martha's time. The antics of Shifty with "tagalong" Sissy are "haha" funny and engaging because of his ingenuity and guts, and will have you laughing right up to the end. And that is an important aspect in this book, which would otherwise depress you because of the plight of not only these kids and their circumstances, but also because of the pressures that are regularly placed on the foster parent trying to just do the "right thing" all the time.I would recommend this book not only to adults who need to be enlightened but also to middle schoolers and up who need to see how the real world operates for some kids. Understanding usually brings about compassion. Thank you, Ms. Hazen for giving us a look into the foster care system with an eye towards hope.

Abandoned on a Greyhound bus just days after he was born, Soli has a lot working against him. Luckily, this plucky 15-year-old seems to have found a real home at long last.His foster mom, Martha, is a shining example of a woman whose heart is in the right place. Though she does not have much money, she dedicates her life to taking care of Soli, a sweet little girl named Sissy, and Thaddeus, a baby boy born addicted to cocaine. Martha has always seen the good in these kids,

and she doesn't believe that people should be defined by labels like "foster kid" and "crack baby." The social workers and people who run the foster care system never give Soli the benefit of a doubt, filling his files with untrue information about how dangerous and suspicious he is. However, Soli doesn't conform to their low expectations. He loves his foster family and never shirks his responsibilities as a big brother and son. Perhaps driving Martha's van without a license isn't legal, but Soli is a good driver and his intentions are pure - he drives to buy groceries or pick up Sissy when Martha cannot. Still, driving without a license is risky business. Driving home bag ladies, escaping tow trucks, and having tomatoes thrown at Martha's white van are par for the course. Anything to avoid being stopped by authorities, where he might get in serious trouble for driving sans license. Soli's biggest dilemma right now is Sheila, the new social worker who is determined to shut Martha down. Sheila is just looking for any little slip-up to file a complaint against Martha, so Soli and Sissy are on their best behavior. Martha is the mother they never had and they will do anything to remain living with her. Who knows what kind of family they might be placed with if they are thrown back into the system? Written with heart and compassion, *SHIFTY* is a fun and fast-paced read. Readers will be rooting for Soli from page one, indignant at the judgmental people he is forced to put up with and sympathetic to the hardships that he is forced to endure. Lynn E. Hazen reveals a world that most readers could never have imagined, and Soli is an optimistic and courageous character that readers will identify with. After reading *SHIFTY*, you will want to adopt a foster child yourself, providing a loving home that all children deserve. Reviewed by: Amber Gibson

Lynn Hazen had me cheering for Soli (aka Shifty) all the way. What an incredibly great read! She flawlessly gave the world a heart-warming story about a hard-edged issue--the forgotten children in foster care who are always trying to climb uphill into acceptance. When Soli erred, I wanted to jump into the book and give him hugs to let him know that the truth would liberate him, not bind him. The hard-knocks he experienced along the way reminded me how resilient some children need to be to survive. The ending was perfect--it gave me a glimpse into the new Soli. He would need a new nickname now. I want to know more about Soli, perhaps with a new name, like 'Merit' or something similar. Let's hope Hazen gives us a second book that follows the life of Soli and Sissy. This fast-read is a modern day quintessential story about the life of children in a foster home. It's a reminder to all of us that the foundation of their needs is love. I'm glad Soli, Sissy and Chance were afforded that basic need.

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