



## The Bitter Side of Sweet

By Tara Sullivan

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**For fans of Linda Sue Park and *A Long Way Gone*, two young boys must escape a life of slavery in modern-day Ivory Coast**

Fifteen-year-old Amadou counts the things that matter. For two years what has mattered are the number of cacao pods he and his younger brother, Seydou, can chop down in a day. This number is very important. The higher the number the safer they are because the bosses won't beat them. The higher the number the closer they are to paying off their debt and returning home to Moke and Auntie. Maybe. The problem is Amadou doesn't know how much he and Seydou owe, and the bosses won't tell him. The boys only wanted to make some money during the dry season to help their impoverished family. Instead they were tricked into forced labor on a plantation in the Ivory Coast; they spend day after day living on little food and harvesting beans in the hot sun—dangerous, backbreaking work. With no hope of escape, all they can do is try their best to stay alive—until Khadija comes into their lives.

She's the first girl who's ever come to camp, and she's a wild thing. She fights bravely every day, attempting escape again and again, reminding Amadou what it means to be free. But finally, the bosses break her, and what happens next to the brother he has always tried to protect almost breaks Amadou. The old impulse to run is suddenly awakened. The three band together as family and try just once more to escape.

Tara Sullivan, the award-winning author of the astounding *Golden Boy*, delivers another powerful, riveting, and moving tale of children fighting to make a difference and be counted. Inspired by true-to-life events happening right now, *The Bitter Side of Sweet* is an exquisitely written tour de force not to be missed.

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## **The Bitter Side of Sweet By Tara Sullivan Bibliography**

- Rank: #420877 in Books
- Brand: Tara Sullivan
- Published on: 2016-02-23
- Released on: 2016-02-23
- Format: Deckle Edge
- Original language: English
- Number of items: 1
- Dimensions: 8.50" h x 1.06" w x 5.88" l, .0 pounds
- Binding: Hardcover
- 320 pages

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## Editorial Review

From School Library Journal

Gr 7 Up—Escape for 15-year-old Amadou and his eight-year-old brother, Seydou, doesn't seem likely. The boys were hoping to pay off the family's debt but instead were tricked into picking cacao daily. They are forced to meet unreasonable quotas or be beaten or left with no supper. The boys see little hope for freedom until Khadija shows up. She is the first girl to enter the camp, and she is a fighter. The three band together to escape. The trio are appalled to learn that the cacao pods that they were forced to harvest are used to create candy that is enjoyed by rich children. This story is not only intense but also educational, as listeners might think twice about the chocolate that they purchase, where it comes from, and what sacrifices were made to obtain it. J.D. Jackson's narration relays the intensity of each day faced by the children. VERDICT Readers of *Copper Sun* by Sharon Draper will especially enjoy this title, as it sheds light on a true problem on the Ivory Coast. ["An engaging story that will engender empathy in readers": SLJ 1/16 starred review of the Putnam book.]—Karen Alexander, Lake Fenton High School; Linden, MI

Review

### **Praise for *The Bitter Side of Sweet*:** **An ALA Notable Children's Book – 2017**

“A **gripping and painful portrait** of modern-day child slavery in the cacao plantations of the Ivory Coast.”—*The Wall Street Journal*

★ “A **tender, harrowing story** of family, friendship, and the pursuit of freedom.”—*Kirkus Reviews*, **starred review**

★ “In crisp, accessible prose, Sullivan draws readers into a most compelling story of survival under unspeakable hardship, bravery, and teamwork... **Absorbing and important.**”—*Booklist*, **starred review**

★ “[A] **heart-wrenching survival tale.**”—*Publishers Weekly*, **starred review**

★ “An **engaging story** that will engender empathy in readers.”—*School Library Journal*, **starred review**

★ “Curriculum connections abound and even reluctant readers will be drawn to the **suspenseful plot and distinctive characters.**”—*SLC*, **starred review**

“**First-world readers will learn much about how their pleasures are underwritten by the labor of their third-world peers...** The resolution...is an as-good-as-it-gets kind of compromise that leaves much room for the activism advocated for in the author's note that follows.”—*The Bulletin of the Center for Children's Books*

“This **beautiful story** of love triumphing over cruelty and profit stands out as **an excellent book discussion choice or classroom study.**”—*VOYA*

## About the Author

Tara Sullivan is the author of the award-winning and critically acclaimed *Golden Boy*. She was born in India and spent her childhood living in Bangladesh, Ecuador, Bolivia, and the Dominican Republic with her parents, who were international aid workers. She received a BA in Spanish literature and cognitive science from the University of Virginia, and an MA in Latin American Studies and an MPA in nonprofit management from Indiana University. She currently lives with her family in Massachusetts.

## Users Review

### From reader reviews:

#### Larry Munoz:

This book untitled *The Bitter Side of Sweet* to be one of several books in which best seller in this year, that is because when you read this publication you can get a lot of benefit upon it. You will easily to buy this specific book in the book retail outlet or you can order it via online. The publisher of the book sells the e-book too. It makes you easier to read this book, because you can read this book in your Cell phone. So there is no reason to you to past this reserve from your list.

#### Zoe Harris:

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#### George Miller:

The e-book untitled *The Bitter Side of Sweet* is the reserve that recommended to you you just read. You can see the quality of the guide content that will be shown to anyone. The language that creator use to explained their way of doing something is easily to understand. The author was did a lot of research when write the book, therefore the information that they share to you personally is absolutely accurate. You also might get the e-book of *The Bitter Side of Sweet* from the publisher to make you a lot more enjoy free time.

#### Paula Lauria:

Some individuals said that they feel bored when they reading a reserve. They are directly felt it when they get a half parts of the book. You can choose often the book *The Bitter Side of Sweet* to make your personal reading is interesting. Your skill of reading ability is developing when you like reading. Try to choose straightforward book to make you enjoy to learn it and mingle the feeling about book and reading especially.

It is to be very first opinion for you to like to start a book and read it. Beside that the reserve The Bitter Side of Sweet can to be your friend when you're experience alone and confuse in doing what must you're doing of this time.

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