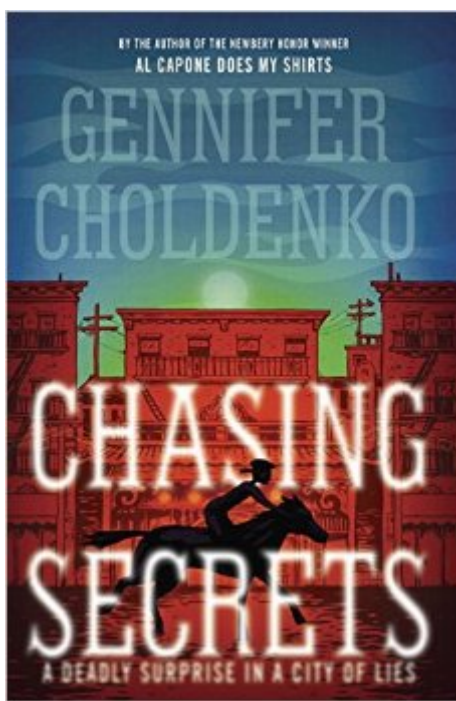


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# Chasing Secrets



## Synopsis

Newbery Honor-winning author Gennifer Choldenko deftly combines humor, tragedy, fascinating historical detail, and a medical mystery in this exuberant new novel. San Francisco, 1900. The Gilded Age. A fantastic time to be alive for lots of people . . . but not thirteen-year-old Lizzie Kennedy, stuck at Miss Barstow's snobby school for girls. Lizzie's secret passion is science, an unsuitable subject for finishing-school girls. Lizzie lives to go on house calls with her physician father. On those visits to his patients, she discovers a hidden dark side of the city—a side that's full of secrets, rats, and rumors of the plague. The newspapers, her powerful uncle, and her beloved papa all deny that the plague has reached San Francisco. So why is the heart of the city under quarantine? Why are angry mobs trying to burn Chinatown to the ground? Why is Noah, the Chinese cook's son, suddenly making Lizzie question everything she has known to be true? Ignoring the rules of race and class, Lizzie and Noah must put the pieces together in a heart-stopping race to save the people they love.

## Book Information

Lexile Measure: 0540 (What's this?)

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Shipping Weight: 7 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.6 out of 5 stars See all reviews (30 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #153,162 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #87 in Books > Children's Books > Geography & Cultures > Multicultural Stories > Asian & Asian American #140 in Books > Children's Books > Growing Up & Facts of Life > Difficult Discussions > Illness #211 in Books > Children's Books > Growing Up & Facts of Life > Health > Diseases

Age Range: 9 - 12 years

Grade Level: 4 - 7

## Customer Reviews

When Lizzie Kennedy finds out that the plague has broken out in Chinatown in Gennifer Choldenko's latest, CHASING SECRETS, she wants to know why it hasn't made national

news. What's really going on? Why doesn't anyone want to talk about it? Why is it such a secret? Lizzie lives in San Francisco with her father, a doctor, and her older brother, Billy. Lizzie hates attending Miss Barstow's School for Girls, but she is thrilled when she gets the rare chance to accompany her father on his rounds. Lizzie's natural curiosity is peaked when she discovers a lot of rats have died in the city, Chinatown is under quarantine but nobody seems to know why and their servant, Jing, has a son she never knew about. Her curiosity gets the better of her and she can't resist the urge to unravel all the mysteries. Before reading CHASING SECRETS, I had no idea that there were plagues of this nature in the United States. Choldenko does a great job making history come alive by combining historical facts with fictional plots and characters, just as she did with her Al Capone at Alcatraz series. Her writing is fast-paced and easy-to-read, yet packed with humor, insight and lots of interesting information. I would be happy to read more of her books. When Lizzie Kennedy finds out that the plague has broken out in Chinatown in Jennifer Choldenko's latest, CHASING SECRETS, she wants to know why it hasn't made national news. What's really going on? Why doesn't anyone want to talk about it? Why is it such a secret? Lizzie lives in San Francisco with her father, a doctor, and her older brother, Billy. Lizzie hates attending Miss Barstow's School for Girls, but she is thrilled when she gets the rare chance to accompany her father on his rounds.

Newbery Honor-winning author Jennifer Choldenko, known for her Alcatraz trilogy, shifts her focus to Gilded Age San Francisco in CHASING SECRETS. Heroine Lizzie Kennedy is a bright young girl interested in the work of her physician father. When her family's cook Jing goes missing, Lizzie starts paying more attention to what is happening in her city. I found the facts behind CHASING SECRETS fascinating and appreciated that Choldenko detailed the history and some resources in the back of the novel. I had no idea that there had been a plague outbreak in modern America. Choldenko is known for developing a rich historical setting, and she doesn't fall down on that front. This turbulent time in American history is given its due. As Lizzie starts digging deeper into San Francisco's secrets with the help of her brother and another friend, she's shocked by how many secrets different people are keeping and their motivation for them. It starts with Noah, Jing's son, who Lizzie finds hiding on the Kennedy property after Jing's disappearance. At first, she can't believe that Jing didn't trust her enough to tell her about Noah. Then she starts to realize how the Chinese are being treated. They are being quarantined in Chinatown, even though white residents are free to enter and leave that quarter - defeating the disease-prevention motive for the quarantine. People are on the edge of rioting. I liked that Lizzie didn't just listen to her family and others that told

her nothing was wrong. As a girl, she's used to people disavowing the medical knowledge she's learned at her father's side and other things she knows. She loves her father and uncle, and trusts them, but she trusts her own curiosity and observations more.

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