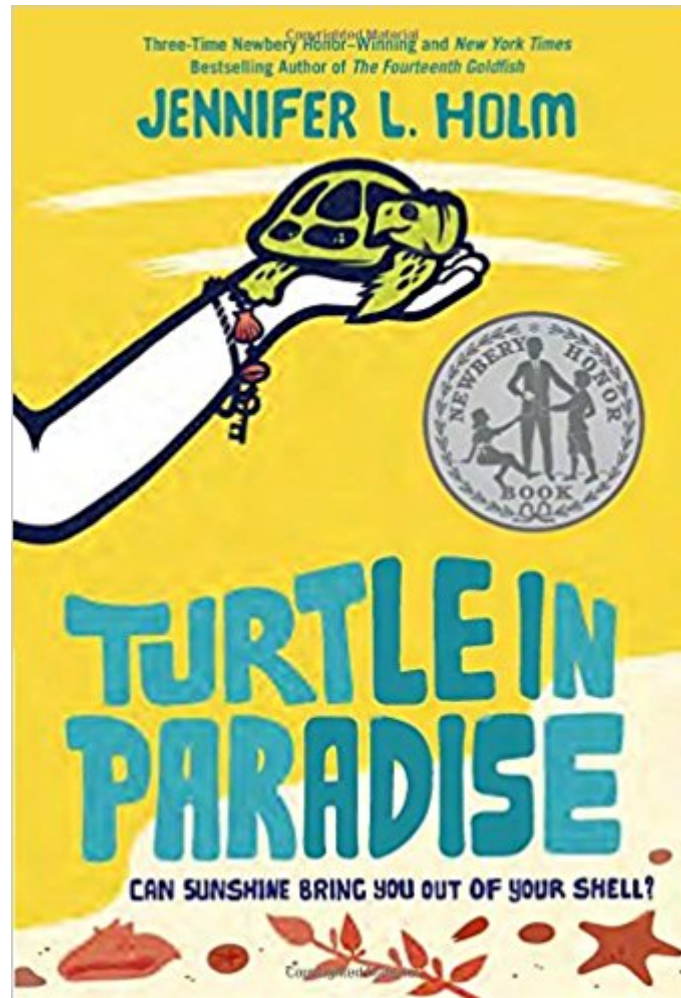




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Turtle In Paradise



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Synopsis

In Jennifer L. Holm's New York Times bestselling, Newbery Honor winning middle grade historical fiction novel, life isn't like the movies. But then again, 11-year-old Turtle is no Shirley Temple. She's smart and tough and has seen enough of the world not to expect a Hollywood ending. After all, it's 1935 and jobs and money and sometimes even dreams are scarce. So when Turtle's mama gets a job housekeeping for a lady who doesn't like kids, Turtle says goodbye without a tear and heads off to Key West, Florida to live with relatives she's never met. Florida's like nothing Turtle's ever seen before though. It's hot and strange, full of rag tag boy cousins, family secrets, scams, and even buried pirate treasure! Before she knows what's happened, Turtle finds herself coming out of the shell she's spent her life building, and as she does, her world opens up in the most unexpected ways. Filled with adventure, humor and heart, *Turtle in Paradise* is an instant classic both boys and girls will love. Includes an Author's Note with photographs and further background on the Great Depression, as well as additional resources and websites. Starred Review, Kirkus Reviews: "Sweet, funny and superb." Starred Review, Booklist: "Just the right mixture of knowingness and hope . . . a hilarious blend of family drama seasoned with a dollop of adventure."

Book Information

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Age Range: 8 - 12 years

Grade Level: 3 - 7

Customer Reviews

Grade 3-5 • In 1935, jobs are hard to come by, and Turtle's mother is lucky to find work as a live-in housekeeper. When she learns that her employer can't stand children, she sends her 11-year-old daughter from New Jersey to Key West to live with relatives. Turtle discovers a startlingly different way of life amid boisterous cousins, Nana Philly, and buried treasure. This richly detailed novel was inspired by Holm's great-grandmother's stories. Readers who enjoy melodic, humorous tales of the past won't want to miss it. •Stephanie Malosh, Vernon Area Public Library, Lincolnshire, IL (c) Copyright 2010. Library Journals LLC, a wholly owned subsidiary of Media Source, Inc. No redistribution permitted. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Starred Review Eleven-year-old Turtle is not one to suffer fools gladly. And she runs into a lot of fools, especially the no-goods her starry-eyed mother meets. So it's a tough little Turtle who arrives in Key West in June of 1935. She's been sent to Florida to stay with relatives because her mother's latest housekeeping job doesn't allow children. Unfortunately, Mama has neglected to tell Aunt Minnie she's coming, and Turtle gets the stink eye from cousins with monikers like Buddy and Beans. As Turtle soon learns, everything is different in Key West, from the fruit hanging on trees to the scorpions in nightgowns to the ways kids earn money. She can't be part of her cousins' Diaper Gang (no girls allowed), which takes care of fussy babies, but when she finds a treasure map, she hopes she'll be on Easy Street like Little Orphan Annie. Holm uses family stories as the basis for this tale, part romp, part steely-eyed look at the Depression era. Reminiscent of Addie in the movie *Paper Moon*, Turtle is just the right mixture of knowingness and hope; the plot is a hilarious blend of family dramas seasoned with a dollop of adventure. The many references to 1930s entertainments (Terry and the Pirates, Shirley Temple) will mostly go over kids' heads, but they'll get how much comics and movies meant to a population desperate for smiles. An author's note (with photos) shows Holm's family close-up. Grades 4-6. --Ilene Cooper --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Jennifer L. Holm has accomplished a rare feat--writing a historical fiction book with NO GUNS (gasp!) and a FEMALE PROTAGONIST (the horror!) that boys enjoyed, too. (Lots of compelling secondary boy characters and a pirate treasure/survival adventure element certainly helped.) They were staggered when I reminded them that this is the same author who wrote the Babymouse series... (What? Those... those... PINK graphic novels?!). Since my 5th grade students are mostly first-generation kids from low-income immigrant homes, they connected with this book. Family

separation, relatives you never knew you had, kids as caretakers for other family members, poverty, adjusting and readjusting your dreams to fit reality, being grateful for a terrible job because it's the only one you can get. All of these elements rang true for my students. We also got to learn a little about the Great Depression--a period of history most had never studied--and about Key West--where none of them have ever been. Although they were skeptical at first, my students (both male and female) found a lot to love in this book!

I loved the first person style, and the setting in Florida. I think the plot and the purpose were thin. It's not especially believable to me that a kid would be motivated throughout an entire book by a house in a Sear's catalog that her mother dreams of. I do like the twist at the end. Surprises are always good. Still, I enjoyed the writing and the quirky antics of the group of children who play with Turtle.

This book was so well written that I could clearly hear the voices of it's delightful characters. The scenes were described so well, I could even smell the salt in the air and feel the warm sand between my toes! I didn't want the story to end, as I had fallen in love with the characters and wanted to know more about where life would take them. I believe this book, though it falls within the middle-grade range, is better suited for younger readers who are just discovering the magic of chapter books. It will make them eager to continue their reading adventures!

I'm a 6th grader and read this book in 5th grade for school. I fell in love with it and got it on my kindle fire. It is about a girl who is about 11, that is forced to move to lower keys of Florida after her mom gets a job with a mean older lady, Ms. Budnick. Turtle is not fond of kids even though she is one. As she adjusts to her new life she becomes attached to her new home. She learns new words and way such as a bungy, cut-up, leche, and bollos. Turtle also discovers her "dead" grandmother who also dislikes kids. Turtle and her cousins also discover treasure and in the middle of finding it get stuck on an island for three days in a hurricane! This is an amazing story made up of bits and pieces of actual key west people. This is a short book and could be read in one day. It took me about 2 or 3.

This book is very entertaining. Written for teens or tweens, but can be enjoyed by all. I am 75 years old and some of the references were enjoyable to read. If you don't like this book, I feel sorry for you!

This book takes place in Key West, Florida in 1935, during the Great Depression. Turtle is a ten

year old girl. She and her mom, who is a live-in housekeeper, live in New Jersey with a mean rich lady that does not like kids, so her mom sent Turtle to live with her cousins, Beans, Kermit, and Buddy, and her Aunt Minnie in Key West. The story about Turtle and her family is very funny but also has some sad parts, with a bitter-sweet ending, when Turtle and her mom are reunited. I would recommend this book to friends.

Turtle in Paradise is a very sweet, funny look at a strong, flawed and loving family in depression era Key West Florida. Turtle arrives to live with the aunt and cousins she's never met and discovers that they are quirky, tough and enterprising. Since everyone in town is too poor to hire help, the kids work for candy and create a booming babysitting business specializing in fussy babies. Turtle is fascinated with the Key West folklore and one of the stories becomes real when Turtle discovers a map hidden in her grandmother's house. Of course her very enterprising cousins find a way to sneak away across the bay to investigate the island on the map. Turtle and her cousins reminded me of Tom Sawyer and Scout Finch - without the dark side of Adventures of Tom Sawyer and To Kill A Mockingbird.

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