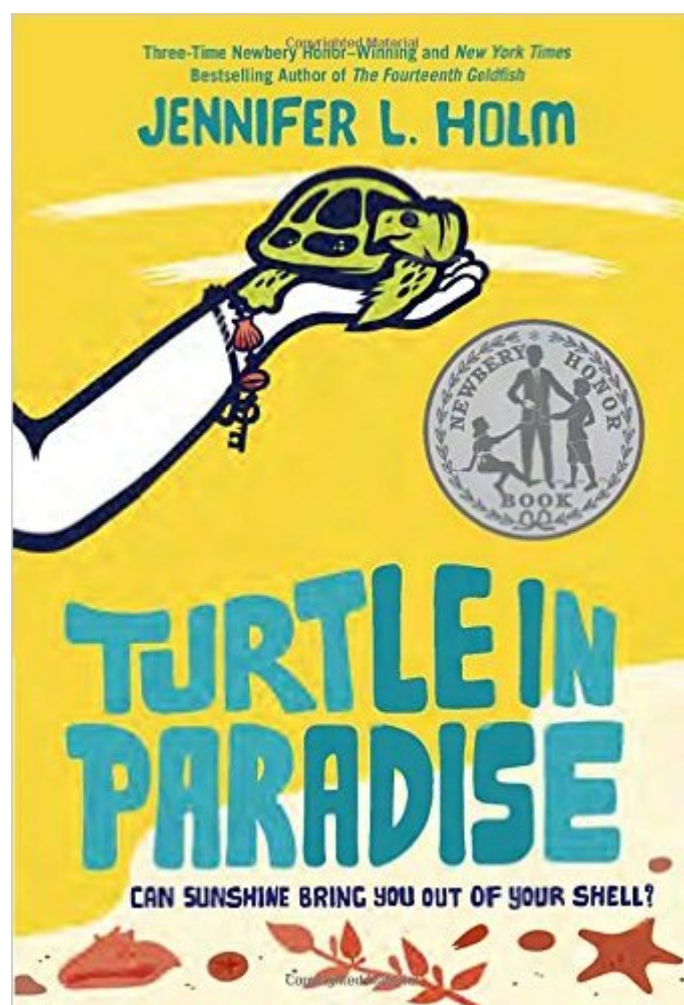


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# Turtle In Paradise



## 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

Lexile Measure: 610L (What's this?)

Paperback: 224 pages

Publisher: Yearling; DGS REP edition (December 27, 2011)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 037583690X

ISBN-13: 978-0375836909

Product Dimensions: 5.2 x 0.5 x 7.6 inches

Shipping Weight: 6.4 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.6 out of 5 stars [See all reviews](#) (198 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #10,713 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #20 in [Books > Children's Books > Literature & Fiction > Historical Fiction > United States > 1900s](#) #400 in [Books > Children's Books > Growing Up & Facts of Life > Friendship, Social Skills & School Life > Friendship](#) #610 in [Books > Children's Books > Growing Up & Facts of Life > Family Life](#)

Age Range: 8 - 12 years

Grade Level: 3 - 7

## Customer Reviews

TURTLE IN PARADISE is a lively, Depression-era yarn about an eleven-year-old girl with a tough exterior named Turtle. She has never known her father. She has been forced to move again and again as her mother has struggled in a buyer's market to make the best of a series of horror-show, live-in housecleaning positions around the mid-Atlantic region. Mom's latest employer -- this one in New Jersey -- can't stand children, and the times call for desperate measures, so Mom's latest boyfriend, Archie, has contracted with an acquaintance who is traveling in the right direction to deliver Turtle and her cat Smokey to Key West, Florida. Mom hails from Key West and Turtle heads down there to squeeze into a small house with her maternal aunt and three boy cousins, none of whom she has ever previously met (and without the letter Mom mailed to Aunt Minerva having ever arrived). It seems like Turtle is related to half the neighborhood and, being that she is the spitting-image of her mom, every grownup she meets immediately wants to know whether she is related to Sadie Belle Gifford. The question we immediately ask ourselves is whether one of the guys in town can be the father Turtle has never met. We come to find out that the grandmother who Mom told Turtle was dead is actually very much alive, and quite an ornery character, although she is now incapacitated by a stroke. And then, thanks to Smokey, Turtle finds a long-lost treasure map... What I really enjoyed is that Jenni Holm -- who was inspired by old family stories about Key West -- keeps throwing you off balance by permitting you to discover clues. And so you think you've figured something out -- and you have -- but what you thought was the big mystery is only another step along the path.

Eleven year old Turtle doesn't like kids 'cause they are nothing like Shirley Temple (and Turtle doesn't like HER either). See, Turtle's had some bad experiences with the children of her mother's various employers. No kid is nice to the housekeeper's kid. When Mama's new employer Mrs. Budnick shares Turtle's low opinion of children and refuses to let Turtle stay in her house, Mama sends Turtle to Key West and the home of an aunt and far too many boy cousins none of whom Turtle's ever met. New environment, new culture, new family, new rules. Her eleven-year-old cousin Beans (everyone has a nickname, so Turtle fits in THAT way) runs the Diaper Gang, a babysitting service with a secret weapon against diaper rash & they have a rule: no girls allowed. Turtle usually tags along anyway because despite the colorful locals (including a very familiar mustached author) there isn't much to do on the island. Her mother may have Hollywood dreams, but Turtle is down to earth. She views life as more like the story of the three little pigs: you just set up a new house & a big bad wolf comes to blow it down (Mama's not the best at picking men)...but Archie could be different...but the two of them are up in New Jersey--while Turtle's stuck in the mud and the

heat.Holm again mixes her family's history with a well told story (much like she did in "Penny from Heaven" in 2006). This one has all the local color you could want and rum runners and pirates and a heroine who's just the right mix of snarky and charming. A winner for fans of Holm or historical fiction.(And now full disclosure: I read most of this while walking on my treadmill right next to a framed manuscript page from "Penny from Heaven.

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