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A Song For Bijou



Synopsis

Life for Alex Schrader has never involved girls. He goes to an all-boys prep school and spends most of his time goofing around with his friends. But all that changes the first time he meets Bijou Doucet, a Haitian girl recently relocated to Brooklyn after the earthquake-and he is determined to win her heart. For Bijou, change is the only constant, and she's surprised every day by how different life is in America, especially when a boy asks her out. Alex quickly learns that there are rules when it comes to girls-both in Haitian culture and with his own friends. And Bijou soon learns that she doesn't have to let go of her roots to find joy in her new life. Told in alternating viewpoints against the vibrant backdrop of Haitian-American culture, Alex and Bijou take their first tender steps toward love in this heartwarming story.

Book Information

Lexile Measure: 750L (What's this?)

Hardcover: 304 pages

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Product Dimensions: 5.9 x 1.2 x 8 inches

Shipping Weight: 12.8 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.5 out of 5 stars [See all reviews](#) (19 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #641,572 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #201 in [Books > Children's Books > Geography & Cultures > Explore the World > Central & South America](#) #492 in [Books > Children's Books > Growing Up & Facts of Life > Difficult Discussions > Prejudice & Racism](#) #3751 in [Books > Children's Books > Growing Up & Facts of Life > Friendship, Social Skills & School Life > School](#)

Age Range: 8 - 12 years

Grade Level: 5 - 8

Customer Reviews

What attracted me to what can only be described as a middle grade romance? Was it the adorable cover, the "adorkable" main characters, the title, which includes the singular of my favorite French word, or the spicy hints of conflict? It was all of the above, plus a soupçon of culture and compassion, all rolled together in a little American-Haitian story of first love. I'm very hard on love

stories; I feel like in YA lit they tend to be too cinematic, too much of what a particular author wishes happened to them, instead of what most often happens. Full of zingy one-liners and intelligent patter, they keep readers on the sideline to watch the performance of love. This novel allows readers to participate a bit more - because there are missteps and obvious Bad Guys, and the winces and cringes as the main narrator, Alex, runs into walls, and the flinches as secondary narrator, Bijou, misunderstands things, are very real...Alex Schrader just noticed girls five minutes ago, and he's Mr. Obsession. Last year it was Angela. This year it's ... Bijou. Bijou Doucet... She has an amazing name, she has an amazing face, she has little butterfly beads on the ends of her braids....Alex is smitten, in the cute, dizzy way that isn't often ascribed to boys in literature. He's just a mess, and she's slightly horrified... and not just because Alex is horribly shy and barely able to look her in the face. Refreshingly, it's not even because he's a Caucasian American and she's Haitian, and completely clueless about the country or the culture. It's because He's A Boy. And she, Bijou Doucet, does. not. want. a boyfriend. Why is that boy staring at her? Why is he always red? Bijou, dear readers, is Not Impressed. Yet.

I can't tell you how sick I am of boy-crazy girls in literature, even though I do my best to steer clear of books that fit that description. Why can't anyone write about a girl-crazy boy? Well, *A Song for Bijou* is just that: a book about a girl-crazy boy. But Alex is really only crazy for one girl, and that's Bijou Doucet, who came to New York City from Haiti after the earthquake. Alex really wants to get to know Bijou better, but that's hard when a) she goes to the all-girls school next to his all-boys school and b) in Bijou's culture, boys are not friends with girls. Not ever. But Alex and Bijou are smart kids. They'll figure something out. I hate to call this book *adorable*, mainly because the word is used for everything nowadays, but that's what *A Song for Bijou* is. Adorable. Alex feels like a real seventh-grader, but he's also a nice kid most of the time. He's the kind of seventh grade boy I wish I remembered from my middle school years. His friends and Bijou's also feel like real middle-schoolers, with all the endearing annoyance that comes with that. And Bijou herself is great: she's a strong main girl, but it's a quiet strength. Her strength is in managing to keep going, even though she's in a new land, even though people tease her. She also isn't your typical poor-little-starving-orphan-girl, which I appreciate. I'd also like to address a little thing that often stops experienced readers in their tracks: the switching POV. This book goes back and forth several times between Alex and Bijou. Many have groaned about POV switcher stories, but I can't tell the difference! They talk about the same things twice! They're annoying! I'm happy to say that this is one of the

better-done POV switchers I've seen in a long time.

First of all, I have to say if it hadn't been for the #Weneeddiversebooks hashtag, I would have never found about this adorable book. One of the whole points about the #Weneeddiversebooks hashtag was so that people like me could be introduced to more books that feature diverse characters beyond the "default". So wonderful authors like My fave author Ellen Oh and some new favorites like Lamar Giles, made the visibility of this type of awareness possible. Where do I begin? First off, it's not really second nature for me to pick up Middle Grade books. I'm always afraid that the protagonists aren't written intelligent enough for kids to learn something, or better yet for me to learn something. Luckily, This wasn't one of those books. The story revolves around two seventh graders, Alex and Bijou. Alex is born and bred in Brooklyn, NY, whereas Bijou is from Haiti. I guess you can say this book is one of those first love books because the story centers on the friendship between two kids who can grow to be something more. The POV switched from both characters, which I loved!!!! I loved hearing from both Bijou and Alex. I was worried it would only be from the boys POV. But seeing as though I've read very few POV's from boys so far, Alex might just be my favorite. The author choose to spend the first 50 pages introducing Alex and the next 50 introducing Bijou. After that it alternates depending on the situation. But I loved how Bijou and Alex's POV's weren't dumbed down for who this book is marketed at, for readers between the ages of 8-12. Sometimes I even forgot that i was reading from the POV of 2 12 year olds. I really loved that this wasn't a "race"book. Alex loved him some Bijou.

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