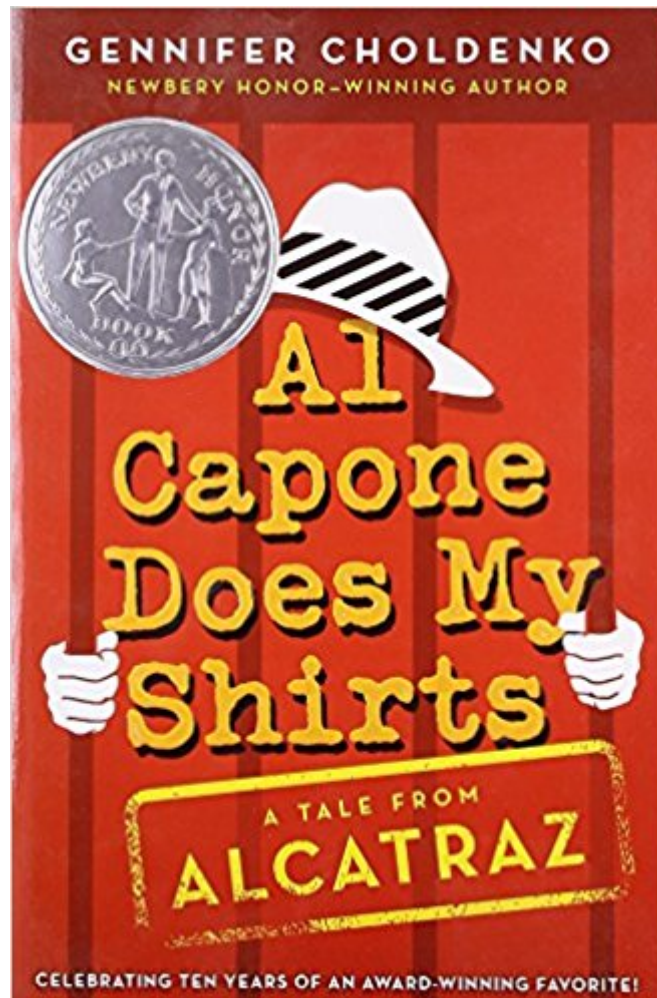




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Al Capone Does My Shirts (Tales From Alcatraz)



Synopsis

A Newbery Honor Book
Today I moved to a twelve-acre rock covered with cement, topped with bird turd and surrounded by water. I'm not the only kid who lives here. There's my sister, Natalie, except she doesn't count. And there are twenty-three other kids who live on the island because their dads work as guards or cook's or doctors or electricians for the prison, like my dad does. Plus, there are a ton of murderers, rapists, hit men, con men, stickup men, embezzlers, connivers, burglars, kidnappers and maybe even an innocent man or two, though I doubt it. The convicts we have are the kind other prisons don't want. I never knew prisons could be picky, but I guess they can. You get to Alcatraz by being the worst of the worst. Unless you're me. I came here because my mother said I had to."Choldenko's pacing is exquisite. . . . [A] great read." —Kirkus Reviews, starred review

Book Information

Lexile Measure: 600L (What's this?)

Series: Tales from Alcatraz

Paperback: 288 pages

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Average Customer Review: 4.5 out of 5 stars 482 customer reviews

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Age Range: 10 - 13 years

Grade Level: 5 and up

Customer Reviews

Grade 6-8--In this appealing novel set in 1935, 12-year-old Moose Flanagan and his family move from Santa Monica to Alcatraz Island where his father gets a job as an electrician at the prison and his mother hopes to send his autistic older sister to a special school in San Francisco. When Natalie

is rejected by the school, Moose is unable to play baseball because he must take care of her, and her unorthodox behavior sometimes lands him in hot water. He also comes to grief when he reluctantly goes along with a moneymaking scheme dreamed up by the warden's pretty but troublesome daughter. Family dilemmas are at the center of the story, but history and setting--including plenty of references to the prison's most infamous inmate, mob boss Al Capone--play an important part, too. The Flanagan family is believable in the way each member deals with Natalie and her difficulties, and Moose makes a sympathetic main character. The story, told with humor and skill, will fascinate readers with an interest in what it was like for the children of prison guards and other workers to actually grow up on Alcatraz Island.--Miranda Doyle, San Francisco Public Library Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. --This text refers to the Library Binding edition.

Gr. 5-8. Twelve-year-old Moose moves to Alcatraz in 1935 so his father can work as a prison guard and his younger, autistic sister, Natalie, can attend a special school in San Francisco. It is a time when the federal prison is home to notorious criminals like gangster Al Capone. Depressed about having to leave his friends and winning baseball team behind, Moose finds little to be happy about on Alcatraz. He never sees his dad, who is always working; and Natalie's condition--her tantrums and constant needs--demand all his mother's attention. Things look up for Moose when he befriends the irresistible Piper, the warden's daughter, who has a knack for getting Moose into embarrassing but harmless trouble. Helped by Piper, Moose eventually comes to terms with his new situation. With its unique setting and well-developed characters, this warm, engaging coming-of-age story has plenty of appeal, and Choldenko offers some fascinating historical background on Alcatraz Island in an afterword. Ed Sullivan Copyright © American Library Association. All rights reserved --This text refers to the Library Binding edition.

I substitute teach occasionally and often when the class is off at music, lunch, etc. I browse the books laying around to see what young folks are reading these days. Many times I pick up something and get hooked. The 5th grade teacher had just got in a copy of "Al Capone Does My Homework" and I read enough of it to be intrigued so when I got home I downloaded the first in the series. I just downloaded the second one and will likely finish it over the weekend. I could barely put down my Kindle. I have yet to read a book written for young people that grabbed my attention like this one. I like historic fiction and this Ms. Choldenko has found a niche in history that few of us know about and filled it with interesting characters and a plot line that doesn't just confine itself to its

unique location. The story of Moose and his sister Natalie is nicely woven into the overall plot along family life during the depression and Moose's coming of age, friendships, romances, and the natural curiosity of the youngsters about their notorious neighbors. I'm definitely buying this one for my 13 year old grandson!

I love this book! I had to read it for an education class but I am so glad I did. I will definitely be reading more of the "Al Capone" books from this author. This book was also recommended in one of my classes that deals with special education. This book is not only for teenagers but I think it's beneficial for any age group! I'm in college and I enjoyed reading it and got a lot out of it. Don't hesitate to buy it!

It is difficult for me to know what to say about a book like this, one that means a great deal to me personally. Set During the Great Depression, Moose is 12 years old, and his father has just gotten a job as an electrician on Alcatraz Island. His mother teaches piano lessons sometimes, and when she does, that means he has to watch his sister after school. Only it isn't like Moose has to watch his little sister, instead Moose has to watch his big sister, Natalie, who is really almost 16, but Moose's mother insists on pretending that Natalie is younger than Moose. Natalie is developmentally disabled and there is a school in San Francisco that can help kids with her difficulties, but in order for Natalie to go to that school they must pretend she is 10 and Moose has to stay out of trouble so his father can keep his job. But when he gets into trouble because the warden's daughter is always scheming, that can be a difficult decree to follow, especially since his mother has demands of her own. With the various demands of all the woman around him, Moose just might need the help of the world's most notorious gangster, Al Capone, to stay out of trouble. At the end, the story indulges in a bit of alternative history. Highly Recommended.

The author's vocabulary and writing style is fanrastic. She is so descriptive. I'm tutoring a fourth grade boy. me both enjoyed the book and made a quadrama about it. He liked the book so just he bought the series and is lettuce borrow it.

I read this book because I was curious after seeing it on the sale rack at the bookstore. It is a young adult book that is probably something I would have really liked when I was about 10 or so. I'm in my thirties now and I really liked it. I have given copies to a few young readers I know and they all really liked it too. It is not geared toward one gender or another...both the boys and the girl I have given it

to really enjoyed it. There are some really interesting historical things in the book and well written characters of all ages. Also, I wouldn't think that anyone would be offended by the material and issues brought up in the book in case you're thinking of giving it to a kid you know.

I have tween granddaughters and struggle to find good reads for them As a former jr. high reading teacher, I set pretty high standards for books. This one made the grade. It was very enjoyable and the characters had depth unusual depth while staying lighthearted. I learned history about Alcatraz, too!

I'm a big fan of tween coming-of-age books, and there are lots of good ones. But, you know, many of them are classics built on nostalgia for a rural past. That's fine, but a little bit of "how I spent my summer down on the farm" with Grama, my cousin, my uncle, or my foster family, goes a long way with modern kids. This novel gives us a strong protagonist, with strong parents, a challenging sibling situation, and a novel setting. All of that is fine by me. The writing style is effective and straightforward, but doesn't overreach. The book earns its emotional punch over time; it doesn't try to bully you emotionally or stylistically, which I think is fine for the target readership. So, definitely worth a try.

This book was assigned to my students for summer reading by their English teacher, so I read it as well. It's a page turner! Simply written in a breezy, creative style, the author seamlessly introduces younger readers to a life unfamiliar to most of us, and to people of special needs, such as the sister of the main character, in a caring manner. As a history teacher, I did not know that families of guards and other workers once lived on Alcatraz. I look forward to discussing the book and the people we met, even the little touch of romance, with my students. And thanks to the "teaser" at the end of the book, I simply have to read the sequel, just to see what else Gennifer Choldenko has cooked up. And I'm 55! Highly recommended!

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