

**OLIVE'S OCEAN  
BY KEVIN HENKES**

**Louisiana Young Readers' Choice Award Nominee 2006  
Grades 6-8**

Submitted by Martha Harrell, School Librarian  
Riverfield Academy, Rayville

**Title: Olive's Ocean  
Author: Kevin Henkes  
Publisher: Greenwillow Books, 2003  
Pages: 217**

**Summary**

This is a beautifully told coming-of-age story with very realistic characters and genuine emotion. Twelve-year old Martha Boyle wants to be a writer, and she loves the ocean. When Olive Barstow's mother gives Martha a page from Olive's journal, Martha is shaken. Olive had been killed by a hit-and-run driver while riding her bicycle. Olive had attended the same school as Martha, but Martha didn't really know her. She is taken aback when she reads in the journal about Olive's desire to be a writer, her love of the ocean and her admiration towards Martha. Olive had wanted to be Martha's friend. When Martha and her family go to visit Martha's grandmother on Cape Cod for the rest of the summer, Martha keeps thinking that she needs to do something to acknowledge Olive. Her summer is filled with numerous emotional ups and downs: her grandmother is getting older, her brother is pulling away and her first crush ends in humiliation. But there is humor and hope as well.

**Awards and "Best Book" lists**

Newbery Honor Book  
ALA Notable Children's Book  
ALA Best Book for Young Adults  
Horn Book Fanfare  
New York Public Library Books for the Teen Age  
ALA Booklist Editor's Choice

**Author's Biography**

Kevin Henkes was born in Racine, Wisconsin in 1960. He remembers drawing at a very early age and became an author-illustrator when he was nineteen years old. His first picture book, *All Alone*, was published in 1987 by Greenwillow. He has written and illustrated many picture books and has written several novels. His picture book *Kitten's First Full Moon* is the 2005 Caldecott Medal Book and

*Owen* is a 1994 Caldecott Honor Book. Kevin lives in Madison, Wisconsin with his wife, son and daughter.

### **Journal Article**

"The Complete Package" by Kathleen T. Horning. *School Library Journal* Oct. 2004. pg 50-53. This is an interesting interview with author Kevin Henkes.

### **Other Juvenile Novels by Kevin Henkes**

*The Birthday Room*

*Protecting Marie*

*Sun and Spoon*

*Two Under Par*

*Words of Stone*

*The Zebra Wall*

### **Related Titles**

*Alida's Song* by Gary Paulsen

*Blackberries in the Dark* by Mavis Jukes

*Journey* by Patricia MacLachlan

*Keeper of the Night* by Kimberly H. Holt

*A Long Way From Chicago* by Richard Peck

*Say Goodnight, Gracie* by Julie Deaver

*A Sudden Silence* by Eve Bunting

*What Are We Going to Do About David* by Willo Davis Roberts

*You Shouldn't Have to say Good-bye* by Patricia Hermes

### **Web Sites**

Kevin Henkes

[www.kevinhenkes.com](http://www.kevinhenkes.com)

Author Kevin Henkes' web site contains biographical information and details about his books, including excerpts.

Common Sense Media

<http://www.commonensemedia.org/mediaguide/review.php?id=2254&type=Book> Includes a list of related novels, a summary of the book, and CSM reviews.

Harper Children's Books: *Olive's Ocean*

[http://www.harperchildrens.com/catalog/book\\_xml.asp?isbn=0060535431](http://www.harperchildrens.com/catalog/book_xml.asp?isbn=0060535431)

Contains author information, a reading guide with discussion questions, an interview with the author, and information on other books by Henkes.

Student Discussion of *Olive's Ocean* [www.fairrosa.info/archive/ne2004/olive.html](http://www.fairrosa.info/archive/ne2004/olive.html)