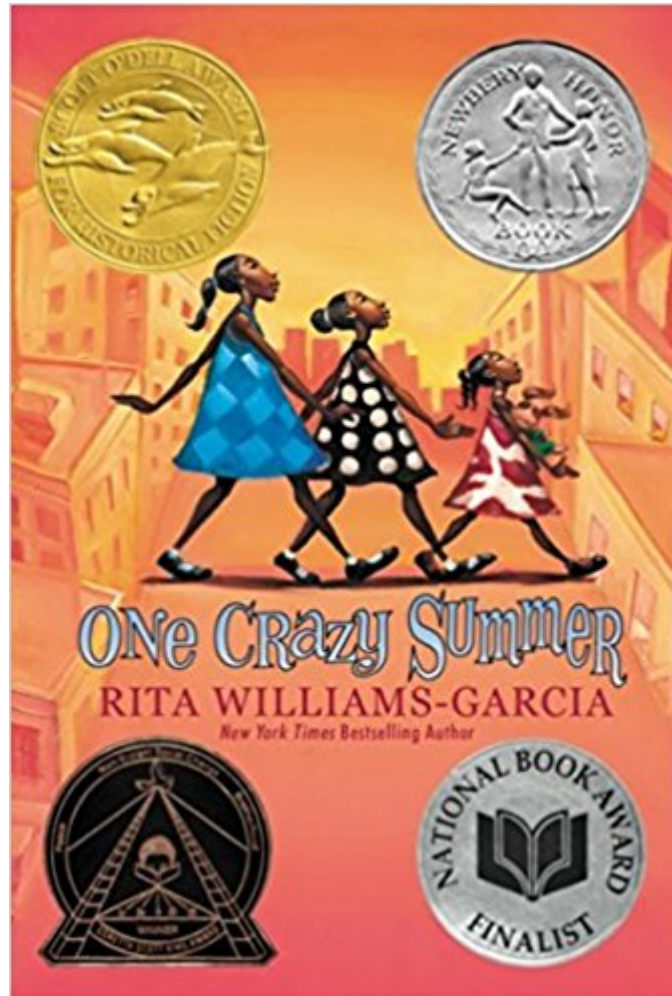




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One Crazy Summer



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Synopsis

In this Newbery Honor novel, New York Times bestselling author Rita Williams-Garcia tells the story of three sisters who travel to Oakland, California, in 1968 to meet the mother who abandoned them. Eleven-year-old Delphine is like a mother to her two younger sisters, Vonetta and Fern. She's had to be, ever since their mother, Cecile, left them seven years ago for a radical new life in California. But when the sisters arrive from Brooklyn to spend the summer with their mother, Cecile is nothing like they imagined. While the girls hope to go to Disneyland and meet Tinker Bell, their mother sends them to a day camp run by the Black Panthers. Unexpectedly, Delphine, Vonetta, and Fern learn much about their family, their country, and themselves during one truly crazy summer. This moving, funny novel won the Scott O'Dell Award for Historical Fiction and the Coretta Scott King Award and was a National Book Award Finalist. Delphine, Vonetta, and Fern's story continues in *P.S. Be Eleven* and *Gone Crazy in Alabama*. Readers who enjoy Christopher Paul Curtis's *The Watsons Go to Birmingham* and Jacqueline Woodson's *Brown Girl Dreaming* will find much to love in *One Crazy Summer*. This novel was the first featured title for Marley Dias's Reading Party, launched after the success of #1000BlackGirlBooks. Maria Russo, in a New York Times list of "great kids' books with diverse characters," called it "witty and original."

Book Information

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in Books > Children's Books > Literature & Fiction > Historical Fiction > United States > 1900s

Age Range: 8 - 12 years

Customer Reviews

Starred Review. Grade 4 – It is 1968, and three black sisters from Brooklyn have been put on a California-bound plane by their father to spend a month with their mother, a poet who ran off years before and is living in Oakland. It's the summer after Black Panther founder Huey Newton was jailed and member Bobby Hutton was gunned down trying to surrender to the Oakland police, and there are men in berets shouting "Black Power" on the news. Delphine, 11, remembers her mother, but after years of separation she's more apt to believe what her grandmother has said about her, that Cecile is a selfish, crazy woman who sleeps on the street. At least Cecile lives in a real house, but she reacts to her daughters' arrival without warmth or even curiosity. Instead, she sends the girls to eat breakfast at a center run by the Black Panther Party and tells them to stay out as long as they can so that she can work on her poetry. Over the course of the next four weeks, Delphine and her younger sisters, Vonetta and Fern, spend a lot of time learning about revolution and staying out of their mother's way. Emotionally challenging and beautifully written, this book immerses readers in a time and place and raises difficult questions of cultural and ethnic identity and personal responsibility. With memorable characters (all three girls have engaging, strong voices) and a powerful story, this is a book well worth reading and rereading. – Teri Markson, Los Angeles Public Library Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Starred Review Eleven-year-old Delphine has only a few fragmented memories of her mother, Cecile, a poet who wrote verses on walls and cereal boxes, played smoky jazz records, and abandoned the family in Brooklyn after giving birth to her third daughter. In the summer of 1968, Delphine's father decides that seeing Cecile is "something whose time had come," and Delphine boards a plane with her sisters to Cecile's home in Oakland. What they find there is far from their California dreams of Disneyland and movie stars. "No one told y'all to come out here," Cecile says. "No one wants you out here making a mess, stopping my work." Like the rest of her life, Cecile's work is a mystery conducted behind the doors of the kitchen that she forbids her daughters to enter. For meals, Cecile sends the girls to a Chinese restaurant or to the local, Black Panther-run community center, where Cecile is known as Sister Inzilla and where the girls begin to attend youth programs. Regimented, responsible, strong-willed Delphine narrates in an unforgettable voice, but

each of the sisters emerges as a distinct, memorable character, whose hard-won, tenuous connections with their mother build to an aching, triumphant conclusion. Set during a pivotal moment in African American history, this vibrant novel shows the subtle ways that political movements affect personal lives; but just as memorable is the finely drawn, universal story of children reclaiming a reluctant parent's love. Grades 4-7. --Gillian Engberg --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

I really enjoyed this window into a collage of experiences that I, as a white person, cannot directly relate to for the most part. Williams-Garcia addresses abandonment, too-early responsibility, and the day-to-day life of the late-60s Black Panther movement in Oakland. While I know something about being the daughter of a woman who is not capable of being a mother, I only know snippets about the Black Panthers, and they are largely shaped by mainstream media. Regarding this theme, there are many nuances to be gleaned between the lines, such as a woman's reticence to fully engage in the movement, or the implications of a child ratting out a fink. Published in 2011, this book still holds current cultural significance for large portions of our society. Personally, this is one of those times when an artful novel brings me some understanding of a life I'll never experience, and hopefully enlarges my own humanity in doing so. May I approach the enlightenment here offered as a fellow being on this planet, and not a sightseer snapping a photo to capture gooey crooning over foreign-to-me cuteness.

The book was interesting right from the start. I'm from Oakland and the same era. I would recommend this book for young readers. I haven't been able to read a book for several years. This book was the perfect book to read and allow me start back doing a much loved and missed last time

I don't know if readers too young to remember the events that are the background of One Crazy Summer will love the novel as much as I did, but it is still a wonderful historical fiction/realistic family story. I was the same age as oldest sister, Delphine, in the summer 1968, and I remember from the TV news and adult conversations the events Delphine is experiencing. I, too, could not figure out if the Black Panthers were good guys or scary guys. But I was watching it on TV; Delphine was living it. Sent away from her safe, sheltered life in Brooklyn to Oakland, to visit the mother she has not seen since she was four, turns Delphine's life upside down. She spends her days at a Black Panther day camp learning how to organize demonstrations and stand up for her rights when confronted by police. She learns she is not colored, she is black. She learns her mother is not crazy,

she is a victim and a survivor with a strong beautiful poetic voice. She learns her younger sisters can teach her as much as she teaches them. She learns life is complicated. She will teach much to all readers.

I didn't enjoy the book enough to finish it. The story seemed to drag on without really catching my interest. My 10 year old granddaughter ask if she could stop reading it because it was boring. I told her yes and we would find another book that would interest her more.

I loved this book and felt it captured a summer for me in California with my brothers , sister and cousins. We actually went to a black panther summer program and it was unforgettable and life changing. Thank you Rita for writing it. I loved the characters and your words. I had tears in my eyes. I have two more of your books in this series , a gift from a friend who is a teacher. I can't wait to read them!

Really good, but I find it hard to believe that this is a book intended for 8 year olds. Kids are smart, but this book required a highly nuanced emotional range and a knowledge of the Black Panther movement. Loved it though!

This is emotionally hard to take. I wouldn't give it to anyone who can't process a lot of questions and sadness. But if they are old enough, and have support, it is well worth it.

I really liked this book for it's pro freedom of speech ideology. I picked it up for my son, who didn't understand the dialect (even though it was minor) and was completely distracted by it. He's also at the age where all girls have cooties so I chose to drop it for a few months. I love juvenile fiction that depicts events in history. This book tells about a snippet of time (a summer) in the lives of three girls abandoned by their "revolutionary-minded" mother. Not a sugar coated - everything is resolved at the end kind of novel. Worth the read.

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