

A Teacher's Guide to the Boston Jane Series By Jennifer L. Holm

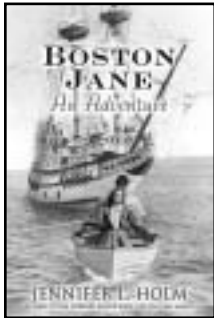
Dear Teacher:

It is with great pride that we bring you this Teacher's Guide to Jennifer L. Holm's Boston Jane series—including *Boston Jane: An Adventure*, *Boston Jane: Wilderness Days*, and *Boston Jane: The Claim*. As part of your curriculum, examine the thematic connections of friendship, greed and cruelty, prejudice, betrayal, and community in these historical fiction novels.

Happy Reading!

HarperCollins Children's Books

About the Books



**Boston Jane:
An Adventure**

Tr 0-06-028738-1
Lb 0-06-028739-X
Pb 0-06-440849-3
Ages 10 up
Grades 5 up
• ALA Best Book
for Young Adults

Sixteen-year-old Jane Peck grows up in Philadelphia, making house calls with her physician father—and spitting, and throwing cowpats with her best friend, Jebediah. When the handsome William Baldt becomes an apprentice to her father, Jane's life takes an unexpected turn. Intrigued by William and harassed by Sally Biddle for her unladylike behavior, Jane enrolls in Miss Hepplewhite's Young Ladies Academy. She learns about being a proper young lady and wins William's admiration. William leaves Jane heartbroken when he leaves Philadelphia to make his fortune in the Washington Territory—but his departure is soon followed by a written marriage proposal that beckons Jane to follow him west. Bravely, Jane leaves all she knows and journeys to Washington Territory. When she arrives at Shoalwater Bay, she is greeted by a surprise that forces her to reconsider her future.



**Boston Jane:
Wilderness Days**

Tr 0-06-029043-9
Lb 0-06-029044-7
Pb 0-06-440881-7
(Pb available in
March 2004)
Ages 10 up
Grades 5 up

After receiving word of her father's death, Jane realizes that she is alone in the world and has no reason to return to Philadelphia. She decides to make her home in Shoalwater Bay, living in the wilderness and making the best of her life without William, her unfaithful fiancé. Jehu Scudder, a young sailor whom Jane met on the trip to the Washington Territory, begins to show an interest in her, but the arrival of the almost perfect Mrs. Frink sends Jane into a fit of jealousy. Her adventures lead to a manhunt for an accused murderer and test her ability to see people for who they really are.



**Boston Jane:
The Claim**

Tr 0-06-029045-5
Lb 0-06-029046-3
Ages 10 up
Grades 5 up

When Jehu Scudder presents Jane with a claim for 120 acres of land overlooking Shoalwater Bay and begins building her a home on the land, Jane expects that their relationship will soon develop into marriage. Jane has a job working with the Frinks in their hotel, she belongs to a women's sewing circle, and she's made many friends. But then Sally Biddle arrives from Philadelphia and does everything she can to destroy the life Jane has built in Shoalwater Bay. Soon Jane's friends are no longer talking to her and, worse, William reappears and attempts to take away Jane's claim. What will it take to put her life back together again?

Praise for the Boston Jane trilogy:

"Strong characterizations, meticulous attention to historical details, and a perceptive understanding of human nature make this a first-rate story not to be missed."

—ALA *Booklist* (starred review)

"An outspoken, self-reliant young woman readers will long remember." —*Publishers Weekly*

"An exciting combination of danger, humor, misunderstandings, and first kisses." —*Kirkus Reviews*

New!

Pre-Reading Activity

The Boston Jane series is partially based on actual events and people who lived in the Washington Territory in the 1850s. Go to Washington HistoryLink.org: The Online Encyclopedia of Washington State History (at www.washington.historylink.org/output.cfm?file_id=5029). Read the “Three Years at Shoalwater Bay” section of the Mr. James Swan biography aloud to your students to prepare them for the adventures that Jane experiences. Then brainstorm with the students about the living conditions of the settlers—how they lived, what they ate, and what they wore.

THEMATIC CONNECTIONS

Friendship

Jane’s attitude toward friendship changes considerably from when she runs the streets of Philadelphia with Jebediah to when she works for Mrs. Frink in the hotel. What are some of the situations that form Jane’s opinion of what a friend should be? How does Sally Biddle influence Jane’s idea of friendship? Think about some of your own experiences with friends and how they have shaped your thoughts about friendship.

Greed and Cruelty

Living in the wilderness created hardships for early settlers, but some of the people Jane encounters make her life even more difficult. Mrs. Dodd’s treatment of Katy, Mr. Black’s relentless pursuit of Mr. Russell, William’s attitude toward the Chinooks, and Sally’s determined plot to destroy Jane’s life are examples of the cruelty Jane experiences. How do people in today’s society show cruelty? How can enduring hardships affect a person’s compassion for others?

Prejudice

William Baldt shows complete scorn for the Chinook people and their contribution to the pioneer life. In what ways does William benefit from the Chinooks’ contribution? How does he sway the other pioneers’

opinions and influence them with his own way of thinking? Are the methods William uses employed today against minority groups? Think about some examples of racial, gender, or religious discrimination. How can you combat prejudice when you see it?

Betrayal

Being betrayed by a friend can cause us to lose faith in humanity and question all of our relationships. When Sally comes to Shoalwater Bay, Jane’s friends betray her by believing Sally’s lies. If you were Jane, how would you handle the situation with the sewing circle? Have you ever been betrayed by a friend? How did it make you feel about yourself? Would you handle the situation differently if it happened again?

Community

The pioneers depended on one another for food, clothes, homes, and security. How would you feel about having to meet the needs of others in your community so completely? Brainstorm a list of ways the pioneers helped one another, and compare and contrast these to how people help one another in today’s society.

ACROSS THE CURRICULUM

Social Studies

The Pacific Northwest in the 1850s contained pioneer settlements with a few brave people determined to make a new life. However, the Chinook Indians helped the pioneers to succeed by teaching them to build homes, make a profit from the oyster beds, and sew and cook with native materials. Divide students into groups and ask each team to investigate a specific aspect of the Chinook Indians' way of life. Have each group script out a scene that demonstrates what they've learned about the Chinook custom they investigated. The scenes, when combined, will serve as a class documentary on the Chinook way of life. Have each group of students act out their scene from the script.

Science

In *Boston Jane: An Adventure*, many of the Chinook suffer from smallpox. Divide students into groups of three, and ask them to investigate smallpox. What caused the disease, and how did it spread? How did Native American medicine treat smallpox? Is it still possible to catch smallpox today? Is there an inoculation to prevent the disease? After they research smallpox, ask students to write a report describing the medical practices used to treat smallpox or other diseases during the 1850s.

Geography

When Jane traveled by sea to the Pacific Northwest, she sailed around two continents. The Frinks, however, traveled by land. On a map of the Western Hemisphere, have students trace both journeys. Discuss the hardships of each route. Which would be preferable? Ask students to choose a travel route and

write a one-page paper stating why they think it was the better route. Then have students consider what it would be like to travel to the Pacific Northwest via these routes today. How would they choose to travel to the Pacific Northwest now?

Language Arts

Mr. Swan, based on a real person, was the only character who kept a journal of his adventure. His journal has since been published. Have each student choose a main character from the Boston Jane books and record that person's thoughts, feelings, and reactions to various experiences. Ask students to decorate their journals in a way that symbolizes the character. For example, Sally Biddle's journal might be designed with fashion pictures, and Jehu Scudder's journal might have a ship or building tools on the cover. Encourage students to share their journals with the class, and have other students guess which character's journal each one is from the cover design.

Art

Except for the cover art, the Boston Jane books do not have illustrations to accompany the text. Select descriptive passages from the books, and have students draw a scene as they imagine it. Students can use the Internet to locate period photographs to help them envision different pioneer scenes. Display the completed artwork around the room in book sequence, and use the images to review the stories, the travel routes, and the progression of life in the Pacific Northwest.

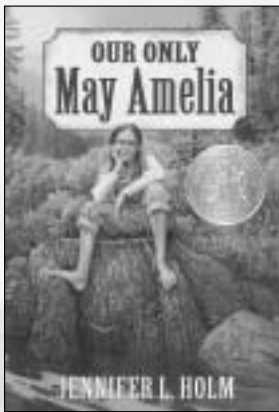


About the Author

Jennifer L. Holm grew up with four brothers in Audubon, a small town in Pennsylvania. She has always loved to read, which led to her career as a writer. Ms. Holm lives in New York with her husband, Jonathan, and her cat, Princess Leia Organa, named after the character in *Star Wars*. She is a versatile writer whose works include historical fiction, mystery, and humor titles.

Log on to www.jenniferholm.com to learn more about Jennifer L. Holm!

Also available by Jennifer L. Holm:



Historical Fiction

Our Only May Amelia

Tr 0-06-027822-6

Lb 0-06-028354-8

Pb 0-06-440856-6

Ages 9 up • Grades 4 up

- Newbery Honor Book
- ALA Notable Children's Book
- *Publishers Weekly*
- "Flying Starts" Author
- Parents' Choice Silver Honor



Mystery / Thriller

The Creek

Tr 0-06-000133-X

Lb 0-06-000134-8

Pb 0-06-000135-6

Ages 12 up • Grades 7 up



Humor

The Stink Files, Dossier 001: The Postman Always Brings Mice

Tr 0-06-052979-2

Lb 0-06-052980-6

Ages 7-10 • Grades 2-5



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