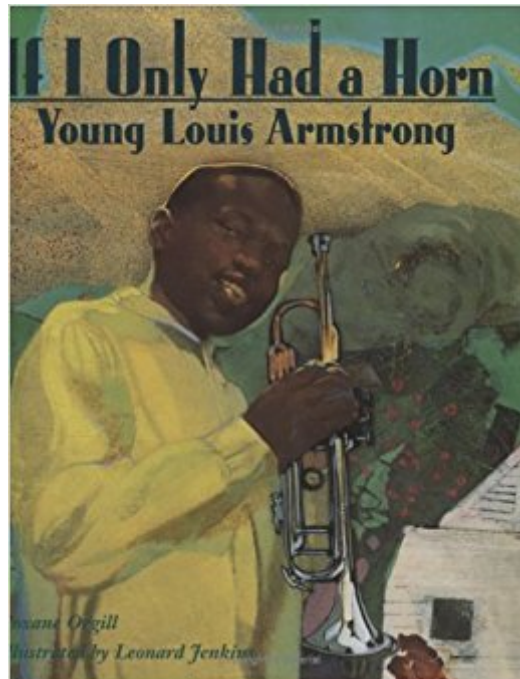




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# If I Only Had A Horn: Young Louis Armstrong



## Synopsis

Roxane Orgill's vivid words and Leonard Jenkins's dramatic pictures combine to tell the story of a boy who grew up to be a giant of jazz - the legendary and beloved Louis Armstrong. As a poor boy in New Orleans, where music was everywhere - dancing out of doorways, singing on streetcorners, crying from the cornet of the great Joe Oliver for all to hear - Louis longed for a horn so that he too could sing, bring home pennies, and, most of all, tap happy-feet blues till the sun rose. It wasn't going to be easy. Many things, not all of them good, had to happen before he got his horn. But when at last he did, he sent music spiraling up into the New Orleans night sky like a spinning top gone crazy.

## Book Information

Lexile Measure: 860L (What's this?)

Hardcover: 32 pages

Publisher: HMH Books for Young Readers; Library Binding edition (September 29, 1997)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0395759196

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Product Dimensions: 8.2 x 0.4 x 10 inches

Shipping Weight: 8 ounces

Average Customer Review: 4.2 out of 5 stars 9 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #1,668,918 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #48 in Books > Children's Books > Arts, Music & Photography > Music > Jazz #371 in Books > Children's Books > Biographies > Musical #2000 in Books > Children's Books > Biographies > Multicultural

Age Range: 4 - 7 years

Grade Level: Preschool - 3

## Customer Reviews

Orgill tells the story of a boy overcoming incredible odds to achieve his dream, without becoming too dark, maudlin or even overly hopeful, and Jenkins's dark palette looks the way jazz sounds. Ages 5-8. Copyright 2002 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to the Paperback edition.

Grade 2-5. According to an author's note, many stories exist about the esteemed Louis Armstrong, especially in regard to his first encounters with a trumpet. To tell a story that is as "true as possible" to Armstrong's character, Orgill has sifted through his autobiographies and through various

biographies to fashion this musically charged tale. Young Louis's love of song and dance is well known in the streets of New Orleans, but his exuberance gets the best of him one wild New Year's Eve, and after shooting an old .38 into the air, he finds himself in the Colored Waifs' Home. There, a Mr. Davis takes an interest; he makes the boy learn rhythm on a drum and practice "mellow tones" on an old bugle before giving him a cornet?but finally, Louis's dream comes true. As the story ends, Louis leads a band down Liberty street and, as we know, marches into musical history. A more hardened tale than Alan Schroeder and Floyd Cooper's admittedly "fictional re-creation" Satchmo's Blues (Doubleday, 1996), this account is probably closer to the truth. Using the two books together, however, could give teachers a great platform for discussing truth in biography. In tune with the text, Jenkins peoples the story with a rich array of faces and backs the characters with montages of swirling colors in acrylic, pastel, and spray paint to create a setting that pulses with the sounds of jazz.?Barbara Elleman, Marquette University, Milwaukee, WI Copyright 1997 Reed Business Information, Inc.

I bought this book after reading the recommendation for ages 4+. I should've noted the grade level recommendation (2nd grade+), as I purchased this book to read to my Kindergarteners. I had to basically "re-write" the book at their level and read the script I had come up with myself. I also skipped the part about Louis shooting off a gun and getting arrested. I just told the children in the class that Louis got into some trouble and had to go stay at a special home for older kids who get into trouble a lot. I wish, so badly, that there would be a biography series, a decent, or even, excellent! (oh my!), series for younger grades, as in Pre-K/K. It seems that most biographies try to pack so much information into one book and the children honestly become overwhelmed. This book wasn't too bad about the information overload, it was more or less an issue of just being above grade level for my Kindergarteners. So I suppose if I had read this to 3rd graders I would give it 4 stars. I don't know, something left me wanting more. I feel like there would still be a lot of explaining to do for even third and fourth graders. Anywho... I would love to see more simplistic biographies come out that get to the "meat" of it for younger children who can not tolerate listening to tons of dates and locations. (Which, by the way, this book did not do too much... The most confusing parts for me were the mentioning of the gun issue - what elementary school wants teachers reading about that? Also confusing was how his sister was called Mama... Mama something. I can't remember now. I had to stop and explain to the kids why I thought she may be called that.) TLDR: Anyways, to sum it up, as I'm clearly rambling.. I believe the book is decent to good for older elementary aged children and a bit off target/too difficult for younger elementary. Also, possibly some inappropriate

content for elementary schools/school in general, at least for the younger kiddos for sure.

I am a music teacher in an elementary school where there are many cultures represented. I wanted to add to my collection of stories for children, using February and Black History Month as the backdrop and music as the subject matter. One of the books that met this need was "If I Only Had a Horn: Young Louis Armstrong". The book sheds light on the hardships Louis had as a child and his love of music. It is candid in telling why he was sent to a boy's home (without getting too serious) and how he had to learn patience to earn his horn. The pictures are expressive and my students thoroughly enjoyed the story. I added some recordings to complete the lesson, especially "Dippermouth Blues" which gets it's name from a nickname of his as a child; and that is mentioned in the book. I used this for grades 3-5 and my students enjoyed it, learned about Louis as a boy and how he overcame many troubles for the love of his music. It is a welcome addition to my children's collection.

This book is a bit long for younger children, but works well for 3-4th graders. If you paraphrase the wording, it might work better to keep the kids' attention. I teach music classes and found this helped the students. There is a part of book that says Louis fired his Uncle's gun off in the street for New Years, so we had to discuss why it was dangerous to do that. Luckily, the book also describes Louis' getting caught by the police in the act. This is a touching story which I hope is true. I'm not sure whether it is or not, but the end is very moving and my students were engaged by it.

Very good book for a kid . It met its purpose

I needed it for Black History Month. I teach second grade. My students enjoyed it.

This book is a good buy if you want to share one of the stories of Louis Armstrong with a child. I reiterate, ONE of the stories. When reading about Louis Armstrong, I have come across three different versions of how Satchmo attained his trumpet/cornet. This story suggests that the band director at the colored-waifs home for boys gave him his first cornet. This book is a good portrayal of this book if this is the story you believe. If reading for strictly the purpose of introducing a musical legend and/or instrument to a child, this is a great story. If teaching about the person, I wouldn't rely solely on this tale regarding Louis Armstrong.

This is a well-told story about how Louis Armstrong learned to play the cornet when he was a boy in New Orleans. The story moves at just the right pace, neither too fast nor too slow, and the author captures how young Louis must have felt hearing music all around him but being too poor to participate.

One of the best picture book biographies I've seen, the rich text and earthy pictures evoke the soul of the jazz artist, pictured here as a boy. A lovely introduction to a jazz master for very young readers from six years and older.

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