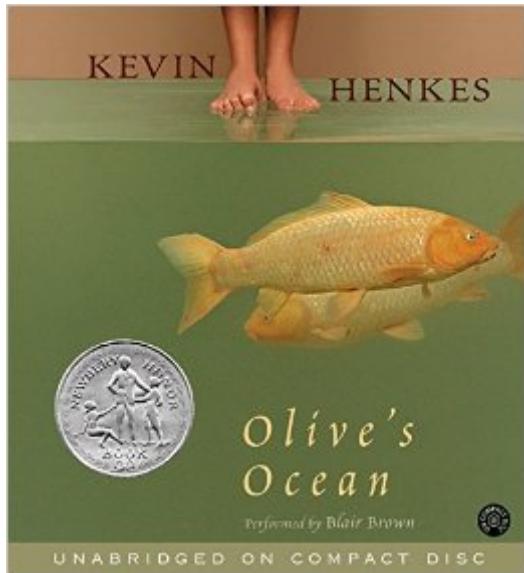


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## Olive's Ocean CD



## **Synopsis**

"Olive Barstow was dead. She'd been hit by a car on Monroe Street while riding her bicycle weeks ago. That was about all Martha knew."Martha Boyle and Olive Barstow could have been friends. But they weren't -- and now all that is left are eerie connections between two girls who were in the same grade at school and who both kept the same secret without knowing it. Now Martha can't stop thinking about Olive. A family summer on Cape Cod should help banish those thoughts; instead, they seep in everywhere. And this year Martha's routine at her beloved grandmother's beachside house is complicated by the Manning boys. Jimmy, Tate, Todd, Luke, and Leo. But especially Jimmy. What if, what if, what if, what if? The world can change in a minute. Performed by Blair Brown

## **Book Information**

Audio CD

Publisher: Greenwillow Books; Unabridged edition (April 27, 2004)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0060748141

ISBN-13: 978-0060748142

Product Dimensions: 5.4 x 0.6 x 5.7 inches

Shipping Weight: 3.8 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.0 out of 5 stars Â See all reviews Â (153 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #3,222,496 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #3 in Â Books > Books on CD > Authors, A-Z > ( H ) > Henkes, Kevin #1207 in Â Books > Teens > Literature & Fiction > Short Stories #1659 in Â Books > Books on CD > Children's Fiction > General

## **Customer Reviews**

Olive's Ocean is by Kevin Henkes (of Lilly's Purple Plastic Purse fame). When I read the recommendation in Booklist for this Newbery Honor book, I decided to order it for our school's library. Renaissance Learning identified it as a 4.7 reading level. This seemed to be a book that would appeal to our fourth and fifth graders. I thought that Kevin Henkes would create a novel that would appeal as much to our older students as his his picture books appeal to our younger students. Please be aware that this book has quite a bit of profanity. It also has many sexual references. These two bits of information are not included in the reviews. Olive's Ocean is really more appropriate for students in middle or high school. I would not have purchased it for our elementary students had I been aware of this.

Twelve-year-old Olive Barstow has died in a car accident. No one in the neighborhood knew her, and none of the kids at school remember much about her except that she was a little weird. But thoughts of Olive haunt Martha, and she has a hard time thinking of anything but the death of this unknown classmate, a girl her own age with hauntingly similar aspirations. For young adult readers, this book is a powerful look at the affirmation of life and the mysteries of death. Olive is completely unknown to us, yet thoughts about what her life could have been permeate the thoughts, movements, and actions of our protagonist. This is a clever look at how the life of another can add dimension to our own existence. Family relationships are written candidly and realistically. It's impossible not to love Martha from the beginning of the story when she wishes a good morning to her two-year-old sister until the end of the book when she resolves to be the person she wants to be. This book is a far cry from Kevin Henkes picture books about little mice, yet it carries the same beautiful messages about life and family and friends.

As a fan of Kevin Henkes' picture books, I was eager to read this novel. It didn't disappoint. The sensitivity that peeks out from behind the whimsy in Henkes' picture books is given a chance to shine in Olive's Ocean. Just before leaving on her family's annual summer trip to Cape Cod, 12-year-old Martha receives a strange gift -- a page from the journal of a dead classmate she hardly knew. Upon reading the dead girl's words, Martha becomes haunted by the knowledge that she and this girl were so much alike, they could have been friends. She's determined to do right by Olive, who was friendless in life, and she's determined to find herself in the process as well. Martha achieves both goals, not without a few stumbles and setbacks along the way. Martha has a lot to think about -- boys, her aging grandmother, her father's obvious unhappiness with his chosen occupation (writing) and her excitement and uncertainty over her own chosen occupation (writing!). There is a certain epiphany about three-quarters of the way through the book that I feel comes too fast and too easily, but it's forgiveable because the rest of the book rings so true. This book reminded me of a sort of "beginner" version of one of my favorite books in the world -- "A Ring of Endless Light" by Madeleine L'Engel. "Olive's Ocean" is great for 10-year-olds and maybe even some eight-year-olds, whereas I'd give "A Ring of Endless Light" to kids ages 12 and up, and maybe a few astute 10-year-olds. It's wonderful to see another side of Kevin Henkes. There was already no doubt that he and his colorful books are here to stay, but this piece in a more muted palette is beautiful as well.

"Olive's Ocean" is a story of self -discovery and personal changes wrought by tragedy. The main

character, twelve-year-old Martha Boyle, begins her journey when her classmate Olive dies suddenly as the result of a bicycle accident. Until Olive's mother shows up at Martha's doorstep with Olive's journal page, Martha doesn't realize what an impact she had on her classmate's short, lonely life. This realization makes Martha think about her past, present, and most importantly, her future. During summer vacation at her Grandmother's ocean-side home, Martha learns a lot about life, death, love, and family. This book is beautifully written in a very conversational style that makes the reader feel like he or she is seeing the world through the eyes of a twelve-year old girl. The pages are full of vivid images that will stay with you long after reading the book. As the story unfolds there are times of great joy, sadness, and confusion. This book will definitely cause self-reflection. My only caution about sharing this book with the recommended age level of 9-12 year olds is that it contains some curse words and a few crude remarks that I felt were inappropriate for elementary readers. However, overall "Olive's Ocean" is well worth reading and would be nice for parents to share with their preteen children.

Olive's Ocean

By Kevin Henkes

"Olive Barstow was dead. She had been hit by a car on Monroe Street while riding her bike weeks ago. That was about all Martha knew." Martha Boyle ends her school year in a disturbing way. After discovering her daughter Olive's diary, Olive's mother finds an entry that mentions Martha. Martha receives this diary entry and is quite surprised. Martha wasn't even Olive's friend. When arriving home Martha rushes to her room to read it. The diary entry tells about Olive's hopes including wanting to become Martha's friend, that "[Martha] is the nicest person in my whole entire class" Martha is going to the beach that summer to visit her grandmother Godbee. Her grandmother lives on the beachfront. Martha learns, from the entry that Olive wished to but never lived by the ocean. This makes things much worse for Martha. As the story unfolds, Martha's word is turned upside-down. Always haunted by Olive, she starts to like a person she used to hate and is faced with the troubling fact that Godbee my soon die. Henkes writes this story beautifully, making serious concepts seem friendly to children. The second you end it you will you will turn back to the first chapter for more.

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