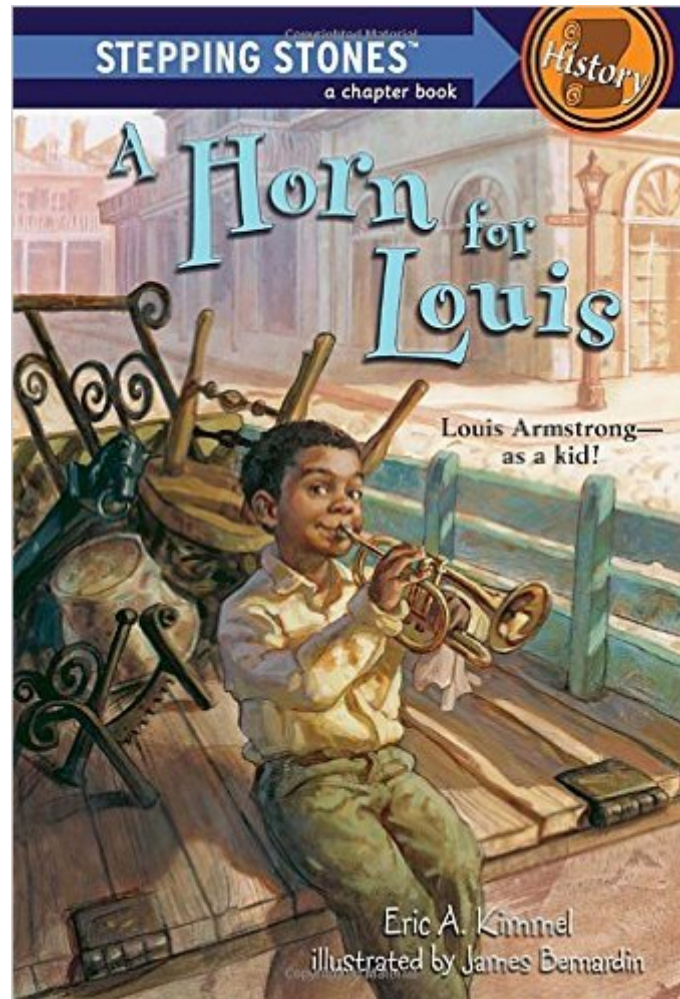


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# A Horn For Louis (A Stepping Stone Book(TM))



## Synopsis

How did famous New Orleans jazz trumpet player Louis Armstrong get his first horn?

Â Seven-year-old Louis Armstrong was too poor to buy a real instrument. He didnâ™t even go to school. To help his mother pay the rent, every day he rode a junk wagon through the streets of New Orleans, playing a tin horn and collecting stuff people didnâ™t want. Then one day, the junk wagon passed a pawn shop with a gleaming brass trumpet in the window. . . .Â With messages about hard work, persistence, hope, tolerance, cooperation, trust, and friendship, A Horn for Louis is perfect for aspiring young musicians and nonfiction fans alike!Â History Stepping Stones now feature updated content that emphasizes Common Core and todayâ™s renewed interest in nonfiction. Perfect for home, school, and library bookshelves!

## Book Information

Lexile Measure: 0440 (What's this?)

Series: A Stepping Stone Book(TM)

Paperback: 96 pages

Publisher: Random House Books for Young Readers; Reprint edition (November 14, 2006)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0375840052

ISBN-13: 978-0375840050

Product Dimensions: 5.1 x 0.3 x 7.6 inches

Shipping Weight: 1.6 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.8 out of 5 starsÂ Â See all reviewsÂ (4 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #445,771 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #15 inÂ Books > Children's Books > Arts, Music & Photography > Music > Jazz #100 inÂ Books > Children's Books > Biographies > Musical #629 inÂ Books > Children's Books > Biographies > Multicultural

Age Range: 7 - 10 years

Grade Level: 2 - 5

## Customer Reviews

Children's books that take place in New Orleans have started popping up like daisies in a field. Not too long ago I discovered "Maggie's Amerikay" by Barbara Timberlake Russell, which discussed the mixing of Irish and former slaves in The Big Easy. And now I've found Eric A. Kimmel's, "A Horn For Louis" which in turn discusses the mixing of former slaves and Jews in The Big Easy. Now I consider myself to be a number one fan of author Kimmel's remarkable picture book, "Anansi and

the Moss-Covered Rock", so I was intrigued by this particular title. Kimmel has attempted to write an early chapter book on the slightly fictionalized youth of Louis Armstrong. Early chapter books, by the way, are rarities. Finding a well-written story that adheres to simple words and small chapters but STILL seems interesting... well that's a toughie. Few writers are up to the challenge. A big round of applause then to Mr. Kimmel who not only brings us some great factual information but a story with a full helping of heart, guts, and sass. A rare and wonderful find. It's 1907 and young Louis Armstrong is off to work. He may only be a kid, but with his job at the Karnofsky junkyard he's bringing in a much-needed dollar a day for his mom and kid sister. It doesn't hurt that the Karnofskys are wonderful people. They feed Louis great food like kasha and black bread and treat him like a member of the family. On this particular day, it's the first night of Hanukkah. Louis doesn't know much about the holiday, but he knows how to do his job on the junk cart. With a little dinky tin horn that he keeps in his pocket, the boy is able to announce to customers that the junk cart is near. Louis yearns to someday be a brilliant musician like his idol Joe Oliver, the man the people call King. Unfortunately, a clash with some local boys ends with Louis destroying his little tin horn. It'd be great if he could buy beautiful new horn, but he just doesn't have the money. Fortunately for him, it's Hanukkah and the Karnofskys are not going to rest until Louis Armstrong gets a horn of his own. In his Author's Note, Kimmel mentions that he personally went to New Orleans to do some research on this book. It seems to me that he must have written the story just before the tragic events of Hurricane Katrina. The book deftly captures street names, neighborhoods, and little details that most young reader titles would eschew in favor of plot. That's what sets "A Horn For Louis" outside of the pack. Add in the multiple facts about Jewish immigrants to America, and a full glossary of Yiddish terms, AS WELL as a really remarkable Bibliography, and you have one of the finest titles for early chapter readers to hit the market in quite some time. That's not even mentioning the black and white illustrations by James Bernardin either. Bernardin gives us a Louis Armstrong that feels and looks realistic. This kid has a spark of life to him. The pictures in this book are plentiful and Bernardin is just as adept at portraying a New Orleans mausoleum as he is at showing Louis buttoning and unbuttoning his shoes. So let's do some recap here. You've got an award-winning author with a gift of the gab and an illustrator with some artistic chops to match. You have tons of factual information, great source notes, and a glossary of terms for spice. Top it all off by noticing that this is an early chapter book (one of the most neglected literary forms in children's literature) and you've got yourself a fabulous, nay necessary, addition to your library. There is no excuse for not purchasing this book. It's as good as it gets and then some.

This simple chapter book takes an episode from the life of jazz great Louis Armstrong and makes it accessible to children. At the same time, it provides a glimpse into Armstrong's positive relationship with a Jewish family in New Orleans, making the book of particular interest for Jewish readers. As a young boy, Louis worked on a junk wagon owned by the Jewish Karnofsky family. He attracted customers to the wagon with his burgeoning musical talent by playing on a simple toy horn. The incident related in this book shows how the toy was lost, and how the kindly Karnofskys helped him obtain his first real horn. Kimmel brings the characters to life in this engaging tale. The rough life of Storyville is whitewashed, but this is appropriate in the context of a book for youngsters. The focus remains on the relationships between Louis and his loved ones, and on his dreams of becoming a great musician. The book makes an excellent introduction to Louis Armstrong as a famous personality and to the importance of jazz in the American experience. At the same time, it provides an encouraging look at interracial and interfaith relations in our history. An unusual but desirable selection for Jewish libraries serving children. Recommended for ages 7 -10. Reviewed by Heidi Estrin

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This nicely illustrated little book is a great way to introduce kids to the life and music of Louis Armstrong. The biographical information dramatized is accurate (according to the latest footnoted biography of Pops by Terry Teachout -- also recommended) and presented in an engaging way.

Highly recommended!

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