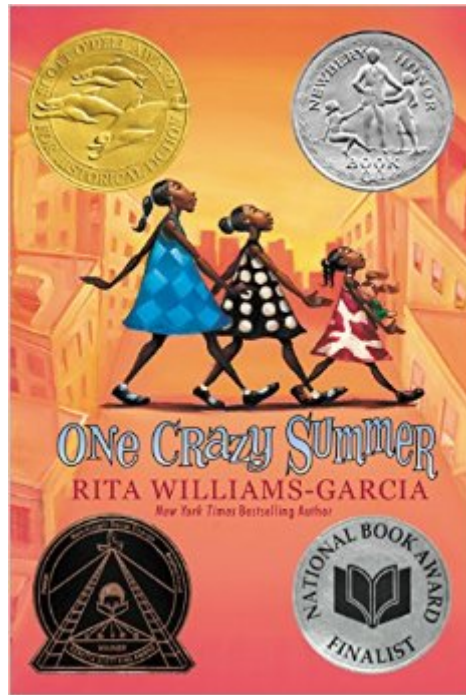


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# One Crazy Summer



## 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. When they arrive from Brooklyn to spend the summer with her, 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. Readers who enjoy Christopher Paul Curtis's *The Watsons Go to Birmingham* will find much to love in *One Crazy Summer*. Delphine, Vonetta, and Fern's story continues in *P.S. Be Eleven*. Supports the Common Core State Standards

## Book Information

Lexile Measure: 750 (What's this?)

Paperback: 240 pages

Publisher: Amistad; Reprint edition (December 27, 2011)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0060760907

ISBN-13: 978-0060760908

Product Dimensions: 5.1 x 0.5 x 7.6 inches

Shipping Weight: 5.6 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.5 out of 5 stars [See all reviews](#) (373 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #1,939 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) [#3 in Books > Children's Books > Geography & Cultures > Multicultural Stories > African-American](#) [#4 in Books > Children's Books > Growing Up & Facts of Life > Difficult Discussions > Prejudice & Racism](#) [#6 in Books > Children's Books > Literature & Fiction > Historical Fiction > United States > 1900s](#)

Age Range: 8 - 12 years

Grade Level: 4 - 7

## Customer Reviews

When I heard that teen author Rita Williams-Garcia had written a middle grade novel for kids I

wasn't moved one way or another. I don't read teen books. Couldn't say I knew much of the woman's work. When I heard that her book was about the Black Panthers, however, my interest was piqued. Black Panthers, eh? The one political group so difficult to write about that you can't find them in a single children's book (aside from "The Rock and the River" by Kekla Magoon, of course). So what was her take? How was she going to do it? But the thing is, "One Crazy Summer" is more than merely a historical tale. It's a story about family and friendships and self-sacrifice. There are so many ideas floating about this little novel that you'd think it would end up some kind of unholy mess. Instead, it's funny and painful and just a little bit brilliant. "One Crazy Summer" is a book that's going to earn itself a lot of fans. And a lot of them are going to be kids. Eleven going on twelve Delphine has always kept a sharp eye on her little nine and seven-year-old sisters Vonetta and Fern. That's because their mother left them seven years ago and never came back again. "Cecile Johnson - mammal birth giver, alive, an abandoner - is our mother. A statement of fact." So when their father packs them on a plane and sends them to Oakland, California to see Cecile, their mom, the girls have no idea what to expect. Certainly they didn't think she'd just leave them in a kind of daycare over the summer run by members of the Black Panthers.

In 1968, the world is in the midst of a great change. In April, Martin Luther King, Jr. is assassinated, and President Johnson signs the Civil Rights Act. The Black Panthers organize to promote Black Power in Oakland. All the news reports and history books rarely talk about the silent witnesses to these great societal changes. Who were the children? How did history change their lives? In the summer of 1968, eleven year old Delphine and her two younger sisters, Vonetta and Fern, take a plane from Brooklyn to visit their mother Cecile in Oakland, California. Her father and Big Ma don't exactly approve of crazy Cecile, but keeping the children from their mother forever is not the solution either. As every good sister does, Delphine takes care of her younger sisters, especially now on this new journey and under instructions from her family to do so. Cecile isn't exactly a fairy tale mother. Rather than cook homemade meals, she gives them money to buy Chinese take-out. Cecile's kitchen is off limits. Strange men in Afros and black berets knock on her door demanding her assistance. Cecile sends her three daughters to a summer camp headed by the revolutionary Black Panthers. Delphine's summer in Oakland isn't exactly the kind of experience her teachers back home would expect in a "How I Spent My Summer Vacation" essay! In ONE CRAZY SUMMER, readers see the historical changes through the eyes of Delphine. With humor, honesty, and innocence, Delphine comments on the events unfolding before her in the way only a child can. Delphine is quite conscious of the differences between blacks and whites in society, yet she is also

a girl who responds from her heart rather than from slogans or mandates from others.

Gold Star Award Winner! It's 1968 and Delphine and her younger sisters, Vonetta and Fern, are being sent to California to visit the mother that abandoned them soon after Fern was born. The girls have grand ideas about a mother who will hug them and take them to Disneyland. Instead, their mother, Cecile, doesn't want anything to do with them, cares more about her poetry, and sends them for Chinese take-out every night. She's more concerned about her work and sends the girls to a Black Panther-run summer camp during the day. The girls learn about revolution and family in a summer they will never forget. It's hard to express how wonderful this book is and how much I adored it. I was pretty sure I would enjoy it, since I had been hearing a positive buzz. But I was completely unprepared for how much this book would pull me in and not let go. I couldn't put it down. This is a quiet book. It's not an action filled book, and there wasn't any suspense that made me keep turning pages. It was just the beautifully written story of three sisters discovering their mother and themselves. There was just something about it that really resonated with me as a reader and I had to keep reading this one; I couldn't stop. The writing is superb. This is a middle grade novel, but the author never writes down to her audience, and the characters are beautifully realistic and the dynamics between the sisters is spot-on. I loved Delphine - I think she's one of my new favorite characters in children's lit. In many ways, she is wise beyond her years, being the oldest sister and having to care for her younger sisters and mediating their quarrels. But she's also a child herself, and she lets herself finally be a child during this summer.

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