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# Nest



## Synopsis

For fans of Jennifer Holm (*Penny from Heaven*, *Turtle in Paradise*), a heartfelt and unforgettable middle-grade novel about an irresistible girl and her family, tragic change, and the healing power of love and friendship. In 1972 home is a cozy nest on Cape Cod for eleven-year-old Naomi Chirp Orenstein, her older sister, Rachel; her psychiatrist father; and her dancer mother. But then Chirp's mom develops symptoms of a serious disease, and everything changes. Chirp finds comfort in watching her beloved wild birds. She also finds a true friend in Joey, the mysterious boy who lives across the street. Together they create their own private world and come up with the perfect plan: Escape. Adventure. Discovery. Nest is Esther Ehrlich's stunning debut novel. Her lyrical writing is honest, humorous, and deeply affecting. Chirp and Joey will steal your heart. Long after you finish *Nest*, the spirit of Chirp and her loving family will stay with you. Praise for *Nest*: "A poignant, insightful story of family crisis and the healing power of friendship."--Kirkus Reviews, Starred "A stunning debut, with lyrical prose and superbly developed characters. . . . [Readers] will savor *Nest* and reflect on it long after its conclusion."--School Library Journal, Starred "Ehrlich's novel beautifully captures the fragile bond shared by Chirp and Joey and their growing trust for each other in a world filled with disappointments and misunderstandings."--Publishers Weekly, Starred "Chirp's first-person voice is believable; her poignant earnestness is truly heartrending. Ehrlich writes beautifully, constructing scenes with grace and layers of telling detail and insight."--The Horn Book What authors are saying about *Nest*: "Nest sings with heart and emotion. Simply gorgeous."--Jennifer L. Holm, New York Times bestselling author of *Turtle in Paradise* "Nest speaks to the heart. I wanted to put my arms around Chirp and never let go."--Holly Goldberg Sloan, author of *Counting by 7s* and *I'll Be There* "I loved the book! It's so tender and touching and real. Chirp is a marvelous character, and Joey's just plain lovable. I worry about him. Congratulations. The book is absolutely splendid and I hope everyone in the world notices."--Karen Cushman, author of the Newbery Medal, *The Midwife's Apprentice* and the Newbery Honor, *Catherine, Called Birdy* "A remarkable work. Esther Ehrlich's characters stand out so real and true: Chirp's friendship with Joey is tender and moving, and truly unforgettable. One can see Cape Cod and feel Chirp's love for the birds wheeling overhead. I wanted this story to go on and on. What a brilliant future this author has. I can't wait to read her next book."--Patricia Reilly Giff, two-time Newbery Honor-winning author

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

This item was given me for my review. *Nest* by Esther Ehrlich is a complicated novel to review as an adult reader. On one hand, it is an interesting story, reasonably well written, and complicated enough to cover issues that are worth delving into. However, as a mother with a chronic illness, *Nest* is not the kind of book I would necessarily choose for my child to read, and I will address this further down. Ehrlich is a wonderfully descriptive writer, her characterization is good, and she moves the plot along at a fairly even clip, and I think this is a novel that a mature reader or a child reading with an adult to help with the harder issues, might enjoy. Joey and *Nest*'s relationship was interesting and touching, but I would have liked to have seen the development process. It seemed like there was a gap somewhere. Chirp's sister, Rachel, was a nice character to include. It was a nice change from the totally self-absorbed teen stereotype that seems so common. The drawbacks in the story, then, really are in the way the author handled the tougher issues. **SPOILER ALERT:** While Hannah, Chirp's mother, is acknowledged to have struggled with depression off and on through her whole life, that does not happen until later in the book. For the first part of the book, one is led to believe that Hannah's depression is instigated by her diagnosis of MS. Additionally, the

treatments for MS at the time the book was written were limited, so the prognosis was even more grim then, but I wonder if the average middle school child is going to understand this? Issues of child abuse are also addressed but never resolved or given much hope.

"Nest" is a beautifully written story of family love, tragic loss, and strong friendship. Esther Ehrlich has captured the personalities of her characters with sensitivity and compassion and the period of time - the 1970's - authentically and accurately. Her deft handling when describing situations and individuals makes the novel one that is both compelling to read and one that will touch your heart. The strength of "Nest" and of Esther Ehrlich's writing is in the depiction of the era in which the novel is set and in the characterization. She deftly weaves the political and anti-war sentiments with respect to Richard Nixon and Vietnam into the story. Ehrlich depicts the acceptance of recreational marijuana and the free-spirited attitude of adults through Rachel's attendance at a gathering in her friend's home. Throughout "Nest", characterization is an even stronger aspect than the era's depiction. Handling sensitive topics such as debilitating illness, depression, suicide and its impact on family members, grief, and abusive relationships with aplomb, Ehrlich creates empathy for the characters. Hannah's depression is real. As she descends toward her ultimate solution, her hopelessness is heartbreaking. Her family's attempts to help leave them emotionally drained and physically exhausted. Rachel, assuming the burden of "mothering", is frustrated and overwhelmed by her responsibilities. Dr. Orenstein is the least sympathetic character; he seems distant, clinical, and oblivious to the emotions of his own family. Joey is one of those remarkable individuals who, even though bullied and abused, retain their sweet nature and empathy for others. Although recommended for grades 4 - 6, "Nest" is a wonderful read for anyone of any age.

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