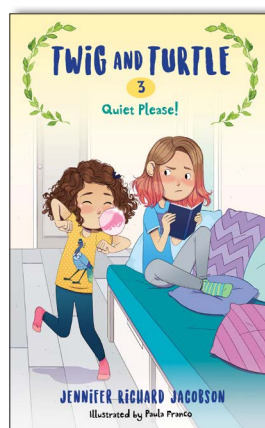


**BONUS!**  
Author Study  
Inside

# Twig and Turtle

by Jennifer Richard Jacobson  
illustrated Paula Franco



Family, friendship, new school challenges, and a rather large dog problem combine as sisters adjust to their new tiny house life in this charming chapter book series from award-winning author Jennifer Richard Jacobson.

Eight- and six-year-old sisters Twig and Turtle are excited and curious about their new small town in Colorado. And for their cool, tiny house! Their family is united in living more simply and not stressing out the Earth's resources, but life in a tiny house isn't as easy as it seems. How are they supposed to fit their Great Dane? Which toys should they decide to keep? What about managing all the noise? Twig and Turtle navigate challenges and learn about the big world from their tiny house.



# Big Move to a Tiny House

## Book 1

### Pre-Reading

Twig and Turtle move with their parents into a tiny house. Draw a tiny house floorplan for a family of four. Include places for personal items like toys, books, and clothing. Display the floorplans. Which is the tiniest? Which offers the most creative storage places?

### Discussion Questions

- How do you define a tradition? Discuss Twig and Turtle's first day of school traditions. How does living in a tiny house change one of their traditions?
- Explain why Mr. Harbor, Twig's third grade teacher, suggests that she meet with the social skills club. What is the purpose of the club? How does the club give Twig "a group"? Twig's mom thinks that she needs confidence. Define confidence. How does she find confidence after joining the club?
- Twig is sad when she learns that her grandmother must get rid of Bo, the dog that used to belong to Uncle Nicky. Why does Grandma think that Bo needs a new home? Explain why a tiny house isn't a good option for Bo.
- Twig loves to read and write. Discuss Mr. Harbor's reaction to Twig's story about Bo, the dog that belongs to Twig's grandmother. How does her writing prove that she has good ideas?
- What is a therapy dog? What is Turtle's role in Twig's idea that Bo become a therapy dog at Happy Trails Elementary School?

### Activities

- Bo is a Great Dane and would seem like a fifth person in Twig and Turtle's tiny house. Use books in the library or sites on the internet to find out about various breeds of dogs. Make a list of five breeds that are small enough to live in a tiny house. Write a one-sentence description of each breed.
- Bo performs his job as a therapy dog very well. Since Twig is a good writer, write an article about Bo for the school newspaper. Include the following in the story: Where did Bo live before coming to Happy Trails? Why did he need a new home? What is his job as therapy dog? Where does he spend his nights? How does he spend weekends? How have students reacted to Bo?



# Toy Store Trouble

## Book 2

### Pre-Reading

Twig and Turtle are only allowed five toys. If they get a new toy, they must get rid of an old one. Make a list of the five toys you would keep if you were in their situation. Write a sentence that expresses why you chose each toy.

### Discussion Questions

- Explain what Twig's mom means by "Sharing's another way of enjoying yourself without owning lots of things" (p. 28).
- Twig is more of a "rule follower than a rule breaker" (p. 65). Discuss the rule that Twig breaks. How does she feel guilty? At what point does Turtle discover that Twig is hiding Stella, the doll that David gave her? How does Twig prove that she is a good problem-solver when she suggests a new way of storing their toys so that she may keep Stella?
- Mrs. Wallaby is opening a toy store but is having trouble thinking of a name. She decides to sponsor a naming contest. Explain why Twig and Turtle are so eager to enter the contest. What is a dilemma? How might winning the contest cause a dilemma for them?
- Discuss the way Mrs. Wallaby arranges her toy store. Why do Twig and Turtle decide to rearrange it? Explain Mrs. Wallaby's reaction to their effort. How does Mom react? What should they have done before they changed Mrs. Wallaby's arrangement?
- Explain how Twig and Turtle make Mrs. Wallaby reconsider the way she has the toys arranged. Why is Turtle so surprised when she wins Mrs. Wallaby's contest? What is humorous about the name?

### Activities

- The children in the town of Happy Trails are eagerly awaiting the announcement of the new toy store naming contest. Think of an appropriate name and write a paragraph that explains to Mrs. Wallaby why this name is a good choice.
- A map gives directions for finding one's way. Turtle draws a map of Mrs. Wallaby's toy store and arranges it in a way that kids might find their way to toys that most interest them. Brainstorm different ways that Mrs. Wallaby might consider arranging the toys. Draw a map of the arrangement that makes the most sense to you.



# Quiet Please!

## Book 3

### Pre-Reading

Twig is involved in a read-a-thon at school, but she has trouble finding a quiet place to read in her family's tiny house. Write a paragraph that suggests one creative way to solve this problem.

### Discussion Questions

- Define obsessed. How is Twig obsessed with helping her class win the read-a-thon? Explain the competition that develops between Twig and Matteo. At what point does the read-a-thon start to turn Twig off to reading? Discuss whether the read-a-thon is more about the number of minutes read than it is about books.
- Discuss Twig's problem finding a quiet place to read. What is the funniest place she finds? Describe her private spot at school. Explain why Mr. Harbor feels it is important that he tell Twig's parents that she fell asleep in the library. How does Twig's family solve the "quiet" issue at home?
- Discuss the rules of the read-a-thon. What is an obstacle? What are some of the obstacles that Twig's class encounters in the read-a-thon? How is the problem solved?
- Twig is on a soccer team and allows the opposing team to make a goal. Explain what she means by "I feel like I'm a mouse in a cage" (p. 28). Describe her feelings after her team loses the game. How does Bo, the therapy dog, help Twig deal with defeat?
- Twig is in competition with herself and others on the soccer team and in the read-a-thon. What does Twig learn about competition by the end of the book?

### Activities

- Make a suggestion to Mr. Harbor about a good book to read to his third grade class. Write a paragraph that includes the title of the book, a sentence that tells what the book is about, and a sentence that tells what you like most about the book.
- Twig's dad is a comic book artist. Draw a picture for the cover of a comic book that he might create about the family's problem with finding a quiet place.



# *Make New Friends, But Keep the Old*

## Book 4

### Pre-Reading

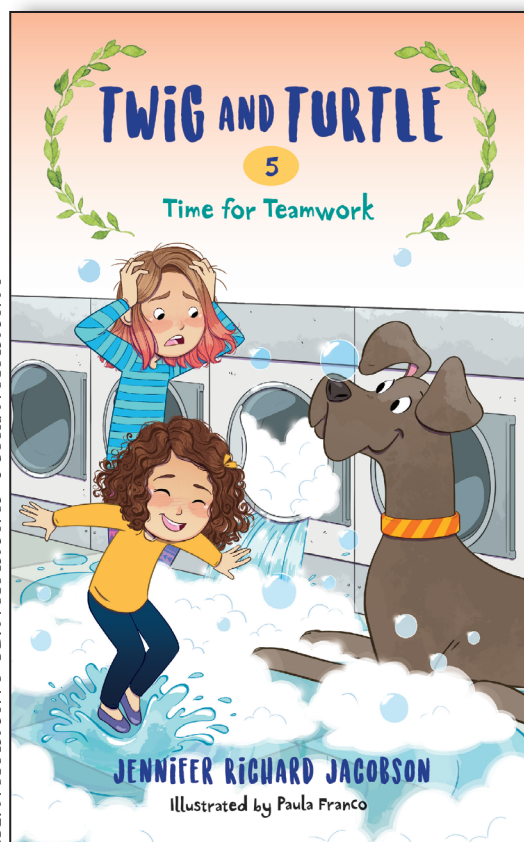
What are the qualities of a true friend? Write a paragraph about one good way to include a new friend in the things you do at home and at school.

### Discussion Questions

- Twig tries to make Effie, the new girl from Denver, feel welcome. How does Twig feel when she learns that Effie isn't really a new girl and that Angela and Effie were best friends before Effie moved to Denver?
- Describe Effie. She attended a performing arts school in Denver. How does Effie act as though she is always on stage? Sometimes actors hide their true selves. What is Effie hiding? How does Twig change her mind about Effie when she learns more about Effie and her family?
- Grandma comes to stay with Twig and Turtle while their parents take a vacation. What is the most fun thing about Grandma? How does Grandma have to adjust to being in a tiny house? Grandma is surprised to learn that the girls had to get rid of their book collection when they moved. What is her solution to rebuilding their collection?
- Twig is on the Harvest Party Committee. Consider Twig's characteristics and discuss why she is the perfect person to serve on this committee. Mr. Harbor changes his mind about keeping the committee small. Explain Angela and Effie's role in his decision.
- Twig has trouble speaking up, but Turtle never has a problem with saying what's on her mind. How does Twig finally get the courage to speak up to Grandma and at school? What happens when she does say what she is thinking?

### Activities

- Twig and Turtle's grandma comes for a visit and brings seven tiny surprises, one for each day she is there. Make a list of seven tiny surprises that would excite the girls and could be properly stored in their tiny house. Share your suggestions with the class.
- Write a paragraph that explains the title of the book.



## Time for Teamwork

### Book 5

#### Pre-Reading

Define teamwork. Twig is very good at making lists. Make a list of five activities other than sports that require teamwork.

#### Discussion Questions

- What is cabin fever? Why is cabin fever especially difficult in a tiny house? Explain Twig and Turtle's solution to cabin fever.
- Turtle has many "shiny ideas." What is her latest "shiny idea"? Why doesn't she share her ideas until just the right moment? Debate whether Twig is jealous of Turtle's ability to come up with "shiny ideas."
- Define enterprising. Why does Mrs. Wallaby call Turtle enterprising? This makes Twig determined to become enterprising as well. How does she get the idea for her business? Discuss how she advertises her services.
- Several things go wrong for Twig. How does this make her feel like a failure? Explain Bo's role in helping Twig move forward. What does she learn about taking jobs that are too big to complete in one day? How does coming up with a plan to solve her problem make her a better business person?
- How do Twig's friends and Turtle become members of her business team? What does Twig learn about responsibility?

#### Activities

- Make a poster that advertises Twig's services. Include a list of small services that can be completed by Twig and larger ones that are best completed by a team.
- Twig has to admit what went wrong with each of her jobs. A good businessperson would put their apology in writing. Write a letter of apology that Twig might write to one of the following: Mr. Bryant, Cara, Mr. Kim, or Mrs. Wallaby.



## No Hard Feelings

### Book 6

#### Pre-Reading

Twig is feeling rejected by her friends. Define rejection. In what ways do her mom and dad deal with rejection in their jobs? Write a paragraph that suggests one way that someone like Twig can deal with rejection.

#### Discussion Questions

- Twig and Turtle are into Mae's Say, a website run by a teenager trying to save the earth. Discuss how Mae has become an online wonder. How does she convey her message to her fans?
- Discuss Twig and Lottie's relationship. What is Twig's reaction when she learns that Mae is Lottie's cousin? Mae is coming for a visit, and Lottie can pick one friend to join them for dinner. Twig feels rejected when Lottie picks David instead of her. Explain why Lottie picks David.
- Twig deals with her disappointment by inviting Angela over. Discuss Twig's feelings when Angela tells her that she is going to the bookstore with Effie.
- Turtle has a friend playing with her, and she invites Twig to join them. How does Twig respond to Turtle's invitation? Explain what Twig means, "It may have sounded as if I rejected Turtle. But really, I turned myself down" (p. 35).
- Describe Dad's rejection challenge. Explain why his plan sounds scary to Twig. How does Turtle react to the challenge? What are the rules for the challenge? Discuss what happens when the family goes to breakfast at Tres Café. What is Twig's first no? How do Mom and Dad get their first no? Describe the prize for winning the challenge.
- Angela and David are Twig's best friends, and she knows that she should want happy things for them. How does she feel guilty for being jealous of them? What helps Twig finally realize that just because she wasn't picked by her friends doesn't mean she was rejected? Describe how Twig wins in the end.

#### Activities

- Write a paragraph that Twig might write for her social skills class that explains one of the things she learned from being rejected (pp. 97-98).
- Divide into groups and create a "Save the Earth" dance similar to Mae's Say. Perform the dance with or without music.

## Jennifer Richard Jacobson Author Study

There are so many ways to conduct an author study. Here's a simple approach to get started.

### CHOOSE THE AUTHOR

The first thing to do when beginning an author study is to choose an author. This part is easy—today it's Jennifer Richard Jacobson!

### RESEARCH THE AUTHOR

- Using the library and the internet, research information about author Jennifer Richard Jacobson. Her website [JenniferJacobson.com](http://JenniferJacobson.com) is a good place to learn lots about her.
- Ask students: What are some interesting facts you've learned about the author? Make a list of five of the most interesting. Share these facts in a group discussion. What is the fact that most came up among the students? Discuss why that might have resonated with so many.
- Have students write a paragraph or short biography about Jennifer Richard Jacobson.

### CHOOSE THE BOOKS / READ AND RESPOND

- Jennifer Richard Jacobson has written many books across age ranges and genres from picture books to middle grade.
- Set up an area in the classroom to display copies of Jennifer's books. Read aloud and share books with the class. Set up time for silent reading as well. In the attached guide, there is lots of information as well as discussion questions about her Twig and Turtle series, so that is a good starting point for those books.
- Encourage students to keep a journal in which to capture their thoughts after reading.

### CULMINATING ACTIVITY

- Choose one or more of the activities in the guide for the six Twig and Turtle books for a culminating activity.

### About the Author



**Jennifer Richard Jacobson** is the award-winning author of many books for children and young adults including the Andy Shane early-reader series and her most recent book, *The Dollar Kids*. A graduate of the Harvard Graduate School of Education, when not writing, Jennifer provides trainings in Writer's Workshop for teachers. Jennifer lives in Maine with her husband and dog.