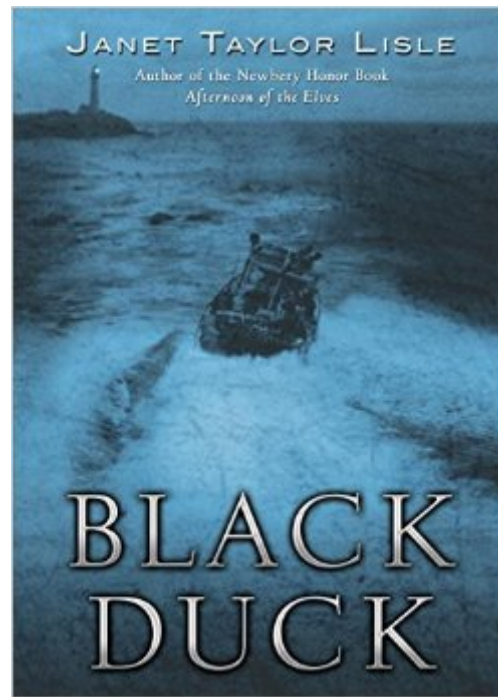


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# Black Duck



## Synopsis

It is spring 1929, and Prohibition is in full swing. So when Ruben and Jeddy find a dead body washed up on the shore of their small coastal Rhode Island town, they are sure it has something to do with smuggling liquor. Soon the boys, along with Jeddy's strongwilled sister, Marina, are drawn in, suspected by rival bootlegging gangs of taking something crucial off the dead man. Then Ruben meets the daring captain of the Black Duck, the most elusive smuggling craft of them all, and it isn't long before he's caught in a war between two of the most dangerous prohibition gangs. "Riveting mystery and nonstop adventure." --School Library Journal

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

How do you resist the siren call of a book when your co-workers (who are ALL children's librarians) are singing its praises yea unto the highest of heavens? Ah, "Black Duck". Winner of this year's least-enticing-cover award (at least from a child reader viewpoint), it's proof positive that Janet Taylor Lisle is back, baby! And the subject of her latest fascination? Rumrunners. By and large, I avoid historical fiction like it was the plague itself. But there's only so long that your average joe (average joe = me) can ignore a whole host of children's literature specialists who think a particular item is heaven on earth. And so I read "Black Duck" and found a rather nice book. I don't think I'm quite as taken with it as some folks out there, but I think I can safely say that when it comes to Prohibition Era children's books, Lisle's latest effort has more subtlety and sheer intelligence than pretty much any other title covering the same subject. You want your kids to be mindlessly amused? Give `em something light n' fluffy. You want them to be challenged and possibly haunted by the

world's shifting morality? Black Duck `em. David's almost a freshman in high school, but he's already figured out what he wants to do with his life. He wants to be a reporter. That means finding something to report on, and in a town like Newport there's not much for a kid to find. That is, until David uncovers an old time rumrunner by the name of Ruben Hart. At first, Hart is reluctant to divulge what he knows about the past. Yes, he heard of the infamous rumrunning vessel The Black Duck that was gunned down by a Coast Guard cutter. Beyond that, he won't say anything ... at first. As David and Ruben get to know one another better, however, the elder of the two begins to tell his tale.

I am very glad I chose to read Black Duck by Janet Taylor Lisle. Usually I do not read books if I do not have to for school so I had no clue what to do when my teacher said we needed a silent reading book for the second quarter. I had the idea to ask my older brother if he had any books in his bedroom I could use for a while, he said I could look in his closet for something to read. I saw the spine of the book and I was confused, and intrigued by the title. I pulled out and became even more confused when I saw a boat on the cover. Now, I know that judging a book by its cover is generally frowned upon however, before reading the back cover, or the first few pages to see if it was something I might like, I just grabbed it and left my brother's bedroom. For some background information, Janet Taylor Lisle has written about fifteen other books such as Highway Cats in 2008, and The Crying Rocks in 2003. She is also the author of Afternoon of the Elves which is a Newberry Honor Award winner. Black Duck is historical fiction novel, Black Duck, was published in 2007 so I assume her other books that were published around the same time are written with the same suspense and detail that Black Duck. What was very interesting about this book is that it is written about a past time from the view of a high school kid many years after the event happened. The way that the author reveals a majority of the story through a character who is essential to the story but is not the main character and still gives the main character a key role kept me intrigued throughout the story. Black Duck is much like the well-known novel The Hunger Games. The Hunger Games is an extremely popular novel and series and now the series is being made into movies as well.

Dead Bodies washing up on the beach, kidnapping, rumrunning, this book never has a dull moment! David, a freshman in high school, wants to be a writer. But, his dad wants him to work for the family landscape business. However, David is determined to get a job with the newspaper, so he goes to Ruben Hart. Ruben knows a thing or two about the "Black Duck," and this book is the spine-chilling interview between Ruben and David. It all started when Jeddy McKenzie, Ruben's

best friend, and Ruben are walking on a beach one day, and come upon a dead man's body. It was washed up, and there is a bullet hole in the man's neck. The boys run home, and call the shady deputy, because Jeddy's dad, the chief of their small town's police force, is out of town. It takes awhile for Charlie to get to the scene, but when he does, the body is gone. They realize they are dealing with some serious men, because there are no marks on the sand, so somebody flew in, landed on the water, got the body, and flew out. Ruben and Jeddy think it is rumrunners. They know its going on in their town, and the man had a siut and expensive watch on. However, nobody knows Ruben took the man's pipe and tobacco pouch out of the man's pocket...until later. Then one night, Ruben sneaks down to a harbor, and secretly watches an unload take place. It also happens to be off the famous "Black Duck," the fastest and sneakiest smuggling speedboat in the news. Outruns and outwits every coast guard cuttter everytime. David wants to tell Jeddy, but he just can't, and he knows that Jeddy would tell his dad, because Jeddy wants to be a cop, and he tells his dad everything, even thpugh Ruben doesn't think he should. Thus, begins the seperation of Ruben and Jeddy.

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