



The Boy Who Loved Alligators by Barbara Kennedy

Subjects: Alligators—Juvenile fiction; Self-esteem—Juvenile fiction; Florida—Juvenile fiction

Book List: Florida

Props: Alligator, dog

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They had come from Grandmother's funeral and were eating in the kitchen of the old house. Aunt Bessie sent Jim into the other room but he could hear what they were saying.

(Use a Southern accent to speak as Aunt Bessie) "Jim's homely, but he's a real good kid. He's 13 and can pretty much take care of himself. He'll be no trouble." *(Stop speaking with an accent)* Jim had been living with his grandmother and now that she was gone, he had to find another home. All six of them had a reason why they couldn't take him. Finally, Billie, who was related somehow through a cousin, said she'd keep him at her home in Orlando but only for the summer while her two girls were in Atlanta with their father.

Jim was excited about going to Orlando, even though he knew that he wouldn't be going to Sea World or Disney. Billie worked 2 jobs and even so had hardly enough money to buy food and pay her bills. She even rented out a room to help pay the mortgage. She only had a room for Jim because her daughters were away.

Billie keeps telling Jim that he can only stay for the summer but his plan is to become so valuable to her that she won't want to let him go. He has coffee ready for Billie when she gets up in the morning. He cleans the

house and does anything he can to help. He mows her lawn and then gets jobs mowing neighbor's lawns. He saves his money figuring he will rent that extra room from Billie when her girls come back and he can't have their room anymore.

One day he meets old Mr. Morrison and his dog Trudi *(Bring out dog)* who live down the street. *(Put dog down)* He likes visiting them because there's a lake behind their house and in the lake is an alligator. *(Bring out alligator)* Jim begins going down there every afternoon and talking with the alligator. He feels a kinship with this reptile because they are both so ugly. He buys marshmallows with some of his own mowing money and feeds the alligator. He's been told not to do it but he doesn't realize the problems it will cause nor does he know that feeding an alligator is actually against the law. *(Put alligator down)*

What's going to happen to this alligator who now expects to be fed daily near the Morrison's dock? If Jim isn't there one day, will he find something else to eat? And what about Jim? Will anyone find out that he's been feeding the alligator? And as the end of the summer draws near, will Jim even have a place to call home? *(Hold up book)* *The Boy Who Loved Alligators* by Barbara Kennedy.



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