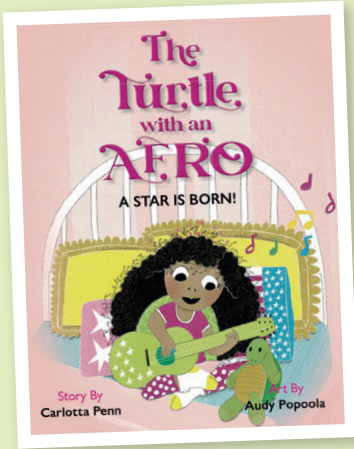


THE TURTLE WITH AN AFRO: A STAR IS BORN!

by Carlotta Penn, illustrated by Audy Popoola



In the second book in the Turtle With an Afro series, Tina Turtle has been practicing for her school talent show but is suddenly struck with stage fright. After careful reflection, she's ready to take the stage with her family cheering her on. The playful illustrations burst with energy on every page, and the lively, rhyming text makes Turtle's journey feel inviting even through her moments of self-doubt.

Content Areas: Music/Performance
SEL Skills: Creativity



INTRODUCTION

Read aloud the title and subtitle, then show children the front cover illustration. Talk about the definition of the word "star," establishing that "star" can mean a star in the sky or a person who is very good at something. Then ask children to share their predictions about the story, and point out Turtle's guitar and the music notes near her.

Common Core Strand:

- **Language: Vocabulary Acquisition and Use**
- **Literature: Integration of Knowledge and Ideas**

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

The following questions can be discussed either while or after reading the story. If discussing the questions after reading, consider revisiting the relevant pages to help children recall details from the text and illustrations.

- ★ What does the illustration at the beginning of the book tell you about how Turtle is feeling before the talent show?
- ★ Why do you think Turtle practices "long and hard" for her performance?
- ★ What details in the illustrations help you know when Turtle is thinking about something that happened in the past?
- ★ If Turtle asked you for advice while she was feeling nervous about the talent show, what would you tell her?
- ★ When Turtle is backstage before her performance, do you think she feels nervous? How can you tell?
- ★ What do you notice about the words on the pages where Turtle performs her song?
- ★ Why do you think the author designed the book this way?
- ★ How do you think Turtle feels at the end of her talent show performance? Why do you think she feels that way?

Common Core Strands:

- **Literature: Key Ideas and Details**
- **Literature: Integration of Knowledge and Ideas**
- **Speaking and Listening: Presentation of Knowledge & Ideas**

BLACK HISTORY HIGHLIGHTS

Madam C. J. Turtle

- ★ In her bedroom, Turtle has a book about "Madam C. J. Turtle, the first female turtle self-made millionaire," as a nod to Madam C. J. Walker (1867-1919), a Black American entrepreneur who became the first female self-made millionaire in the United States.

"Lift up your sweet voice and sing."

- ★ Turtle's dad offers this advice to help her persevere in moments of self-doubt. This line is inspired by "Lift Every Voice and Sing," a late nineteenth-century hymn about Black American faith and freedom. "Lift Every Voice and Sing" is widely known as the Black National Anthem, including by the NAACP.

Turtle's Dream

- ★ When Turtle feels ready to perform, she says, "It's my dream to sing on stage," and when she sings at the talent show, she thinks, "It feels great to live my dream." The focus on Turtle's "dream" references the American Dream as understood in a Black literary context. The quintessential American Dream is typically unattainable for Black Americans, and reinterpreting the "dream" is a key interest of Black American writers like Langston Hughes ("Harlem," *Montage of a Dream Deferred*), Ralph Ellison (*Invisible Man*), and Ta-Nehisi Coates (*Between the World and Me*).

VOCABULARY WORDS

- **talent** something a person is very good at doing
- **perform** to do an activity while people watch, often on a stage
- **groovy** cool, especially good
- **twist** a different approach
- **carapace** the hard shell on a turtle's back
- **shrinking** becoming smaller
- **encouraged** helped someone feel confident
- **dynamite** amazing
- **aglow** lit up
- **bellissimo** very beautiful (in Italian)

Common Core Strand:

- **Language: Vocabulary Acquisition and Use**



PHRASES TO KNOW

- ★ **"I am ready to rock!"** Tina says this phrase when she is ready to perform!
- ★ **"Go, Tina!"** Tina's brother shouts this phrase to say she did a great job in the show!
- ★ **"That's my Turtle!"** Tina's mom calls out this phrase to express how proud she is of Tina!

Common Core Strand:

- **Language: Vocabulary Acquisition and Use**



CREATIVE ACTIVITIES

- ★ **Write a Song:** Review the sheet music at the back of the book and compare Turtle's version with the original song. Point out that after Turtle's version, the author included sheet music without words that says, "Your Version." Then have children work on writing their own version of "Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star."
- ★ **Make a Poster:** Remind children that Brother made a poster to bring to the talent show. His poster was one way he could show his support for Turtle during her performance. Ask them to imagine that they are going to attend the Woodlands Prep School Talent Show and create a poster to hold up while Turtle sings her song.
- ★ **Put on a Show:** Have children think of something they enjoy doing and could perform in front of other people. Help them organize a talent show of their own, like the one Turtle performs in, to be performed in front of peers, family, or community members.

SEL SKILLS: CREATIVITY (COMMON CORE STANDARD)

Guide children in a discussion about the song Turtle performed in the talent show. Ask the following questions:

- **Why do you think Turtle wanted to perform her favorite song with a twist, instead of performing the original version?**
- **How do you think Turtle felt when she got to perform her own special song?**
- **What other examples of creativity did you notice in the story?**
- **What are some ways that you like to be creative? How do you feel when you create something new?**

Common Core Strands:

- **Speaking and Listening: Presentation of Knowledge & Ideas**



PHONICS & LITERARY DEVICES

- ★ **Rhyming Words:** Explain that rhyming words are words that end with the same sound and then read aloud the first page of the story.
 - Point out that the rhyming words on this page are "day" and "away." Then revisit the pages with the lyrics of Turtle's song. Read aloud the song lyrics, pausing at the end of each page to ask children to identify the rhyming words.
 - Challenge children to think of other words that rhyme with one of the pairs of rhyming words in the song ("star" and "are," "high" and "sky," or "me" and "believe"). Repeat this process with other pages in the book to help children practice identifying rhyming words.
- ★ **Simile:** Explain that simile is a phrase comparing two things using "like" or "as." Review the following two similes from the story:
 - "Like a diamond in the sky." Point out that this line from Turtle's song compares a star to a diamond. Ask children why they think a diamond is a good item for a comparison with a star. Offer a brief description or share a picture of a diamond if needed.
 - "I might freeze like a statue." Remind children that Turtle has this thought when she is nervous about her talent show performance. She compares herself to a statue. Have children consider how Turtle might be similar to a statue if she were very nervous when it was her turn to perform.

Common Core Strands:

- **Foundational Skills: Phonological Awareness**
- **Literature: Craft and Structure**