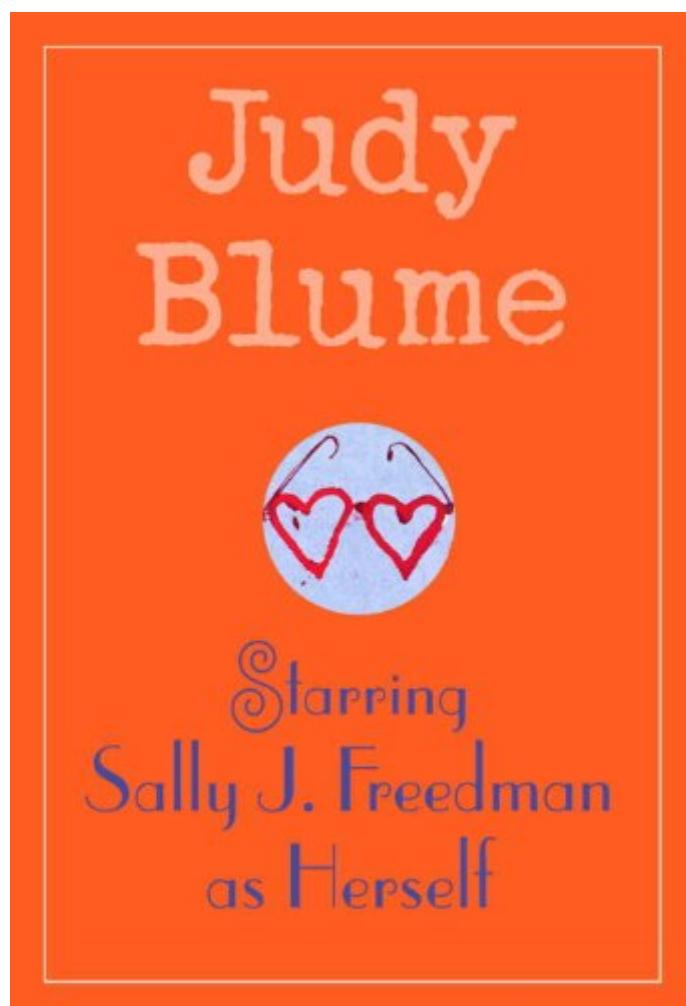


The book was found

Starring Sally J. Freedman As Herself



Synopsis

When Sallyâ™s family moves to Miami Beach for the winter of 1947, she is excited and nervous at the same time. What will school be like in Florida? Will she make any friends? Will she fit in so far away from home? Miami Beach has so many things to worry and wonder about, Sally is in for one unforgettable winter!

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Many young people, upon hearing the name Judy Blume, immediately think of the 'Fudge' books or Blume's famous 'Are You There, God? It's Me Margaret?'-- 'Starring Sally J. Freeman As Herself' is a book that is often overlooked. Some kids might be wary of a piece about a girl growing up in the 1940s, but aside from references to the war ending and 40s pop culture, Sally is just your average 10-year-old; no different than 10-year-olds you might find today. She has a terrific imagination, loves to play games, swim, hang out with friends, dance, dream of being a star, and occasionally think about boys. Sally is one of the sweetest, most interesting little characters you'll ever read about in children's literature. The book flows from one of Sally's adventures to another. Once you get into it,

you won't want to put it down. Older readers (teenagers and above) might enjoy the advanced humor that younger readers may miss. All in all, a great book, one you can read again and again.

Much like Betty Smith's *A Tree Grows in Brooklyn*, *Starring Sally J. Friedman* contains a portrait of an era. The novel contains more than mere descriptions; I could actually feel what it was like to live in Miami right after World War II. Sally's neighborhood, the school, the beach...all were so perfectly created that I felt that I was there, spending time with Andrea and Shelby along with Sally. Probably the descriptions in this novel are so apt because this is largely an autobiographical tale. I read that Judy Blume really did spend one school year in Miami with her mother, brother and grandmother, and that many stories contained in *Sally J. Friedman* really happened to Judy Blume. The novel realistically addresses true concerns and fears concerning adolescence. While most people no longer worry about one of their neighbors turning out to be Adolph Hitler, children often fear things that they learn from newspapers. Their understanding of current events is often one-sided and uninformed, as they are shielded from all the facts by well-meaning adults. They fill in the gaps with their imaginations. Additionally, kids and adults alike have concerns about fitting in, keeping and making friends, and mortality. I especially enjoyed Sally's relationship with her mother and father. Her mother is a worrier...to the point that she lets much of the joy in life pass her by. Her father is more free spirited, and tries to explain to Sally why her mother behaves the way that she does. One beautiful scene in the novel occurs when Sally's dad explains that one can worry so much, that they don't enjoy what they have when they have it. Sally struggles to be more like her father, while appreciating the concerns and motivations of her mother. While this book paints a picture of an era, it contains smart prose and human insight that is timeless. As all good historical fiction does, it teaches us something about the past while involving us in a story that is universal.

Apparently, this book is loosely based around part of Judy Blume's life at age 10, back in 1947, in Miami, just after the war. She states this in the beginning of the book. Not sure if all of it is accurate, but Sally seems to have a pretty charmed life. Black maids, trips to the beach, even a ride in the Goodyear Blimp. And her dad's a dentist. Sally herself is a sweet little girl. I enjoyed reading about the 40's pop culture references in the book such as fashion, movies and music as well as how they spoke. Sally is very hung up, obsessed even, with Adolf Hitler, it being not long after the war ended in 1947. Sally is Jewish, as is Blume, and Sally is terrified of Hitler and enjoys making up stories about Hitler with her friends. One reviewer complained of Sally and her brother discussing their parents "doing it", and how it wasn't age appropriate reading for a 10-13 year old. Not sure what

alternate universe she's living in, but most kids know what sex is in the year 2011. Too bad she shut the book off, she might have liked the rest of it. It was one sentence in the book. It's a Judy Blume book for Christ's sake, not an Anne Rice novel. All in all I enjoyed the book. Sally seemed a little spoiled though and it was annoying.

I used to read many of Judy Blume books as a teenager, but this book together with Blume's "Deenie" have remained dear to me till this day, around 20 years later. I think there is something about this book that is able, so I feel, to address young readers and adults alike. I will not write about the content as so many people have done so before me, just about my thoughts concerning this book. Sally is looking at the adult world with open curious eyes, not always able to understand grown ups and the grown-up world. The adults in the book, on the other side, are so much better understood by me today, their characters (so well defined) and their efforts to try and raise their children according to the best of their knowledge and what they deem important in life. This book is dear to me for many reasons. First of all - the characters are so Jewish I immediately feel its close to home. I am talking about the ever worried mother, the constant haunting of the holocaust, the conversations, the Yiddish expressions... and especially my favorite character in the book which is Ma Fanny, the lovely grandmother. I love this book because of the adults efforts to build a sheltered world for the kids who are, as the mother and grandmother say "all my life" and thus sometimes protect them too much from the outside world. Because of the good yet real family relationships ("you are worth a million...more even"...) and the accurate portrayal of the family life. Sally is such a funny lovable character and her inner portrayal is rich and trustworthy.

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