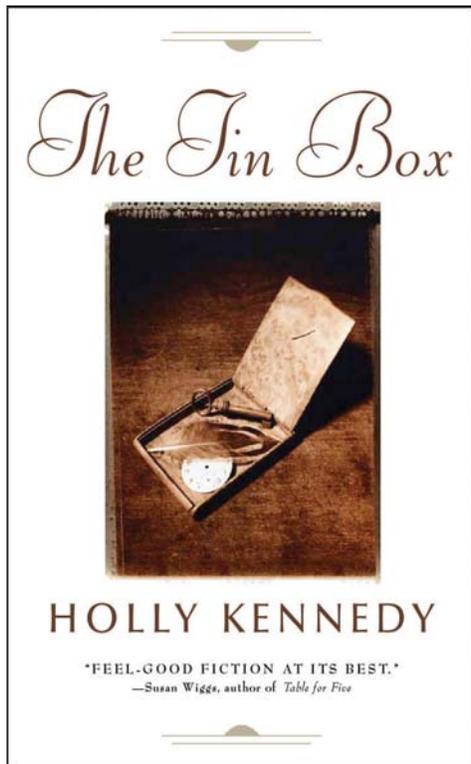


# Holly Kennedy

## The Tin Box



304 pages • 0-765-31244-1

“With its riveting story that slowly builds to reveal Kenly’s deepest secret, Kennedy’s novel has a depth of emotion that is both believable and real.”

—ROMANTIC TIMES BOOKCLUB MAGAZINE,  
TOP PICK! 4 ½-STAR REVIEW

### ABOUT THE AUTHOR



**Holly Kennedy** was born in Alberta, Canada. She was raised in Hinton and Athabasca along with three brothers and a sister. After years in sales and business management in Edmonton and Winnipeg, she decided to chase her dream of becoming a writer.

In June of 2000, she was accepted to Francis Ford Coppola’s Writers Workshop in Belize based on the strength of a short story she’d written called “The Tin Box.” That short story eventually grew into a novel that has now been published in six languages.

Holly is married, has two young sons, and is a stepmother to another son and daughter. She resides in the foothills of the Rocky Mountains near Calgary, Alberta.

### ABOUT THE BOOK

*The Tin Box* is the story of one woman’s desire to save all that she loves while honoring the past that made her into the woman that she is. Everything that matters in Kenly Lowen’s life is threatened when a childhood friend dies. Following the tragedy, Kenly is given an old tin box that they hid on the roof of a tree house fifteen years ago. Inside is a secret that could end Kenly’s marriage and shatter her world, but to find redemption she must risk everything.

In the tradition of heartwarming novels such as Billie Letts’s *Where the Heart Is*, Robert James Waller’s *The Bridges of Madison County*, and Nicolas Sparks’s *The Notebook*, Holly Kennedy’s *The Tin Box* is a first novel that will tug at readers’ heartstrings.

## QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. In *The Tin Box*, we see Kenly grow from a child to an adult. Discuss how she changes and matures. What lessons does she learn from Tommy?
2. How did Kenly's life as a child affect the choices she made as an adult? Share your impressions of her father, his role in her life, and why you believe she stayed with him.
3. Tommy is physically unappealing and yet he has an inner contentment that Kenly lacks. Is this what drew her to him initially, or is it that she felt like an outcast as well? Discuss your views on this.
4. Although the differences between Tommy and Kenly are obvious, what are their similarities? Discuss the dynamics behind Tommy's physical disfiguration and Kenly's internal damage from being raised by a man who made it clear that he'd never wanted her in the first place.
5. Why do you believe everyone is drawn to Max Varda's fire pit? Would Walter Dunning have danced around in his underwear anywhere else?
6. In the small town of Athabasca, Kenly finds the sense of 'family' that she has been missing for years. What are your views on Max's role in her life, as well as Jean's and Lexie's?
7. Throughout the story, Kenly often tells small lies to protect her father. Why does she do this? Do you think she will ever share the secret her father reveals to her in his letter with anyone else? Would you?
8. What would you keep inside a tin box if you had one? Have you ever had a secret you've never shared? Can you relate to Kenly's struggle and her desire for redemption?
9. Discuss the unfolding drama in the delivery room when Kenly gives birth to Connor. Can you relate to what she's going through? How does this compare with your own experiences as a mother?
10. Consider the scene after Connor's accident, where Kenly goes fishing in her pajamas. What kind of turning point is this for her?
11. Do you feel it was realistic for Kenly to put her dream of sculpting aside until she had found some stability in her life? Can you relate to this choice?
12. Secrets figure largely in *The Tin Box*, as does forgiveness, and self-sacrifice. What effect do these elements have on you as a reader? Discuss how the story has changed your perspective in relation to each one.

## A DISCUSSION WITH HOLLY KENNEDY

### How did you come to write this book?

Initially, I wrote *The Tin Box* as a short story formed around a few elements that have always fascinated me. One is how undeniably enticing a secret can be. Whether you're eight or eighty, whisper that you have one and most people will lean forward almost involuntarily, waiting for more. Secondly, for me, there is a certain allure to an old tin box, and when I see one, I immediately want to know what's inside (probably because I've had one for years). Last of all, I have always been equally intrigued and disturbed by how quickly we tend to judge each other in society based on the way we look, so I wanted a big part of this story to focus on the distinct paradox of one character who is outwardly disfigured and another who is inwardly flawed.

### Why did you choose Proteus Syndrome as the disease that Tommy suffers from?

After researching a variety of diseases associated with physical disfiguration, I chose Proteus Syndrome because it's so rare, and by creating a fictional character who suffers from some of its worst symptoms, I had hoped to shed some light on it in the process. After making that decision, I then contacted the mother of a boy who had Proteus Syndrome and explained what I was doing. When she agreed to assist me, I flew to San Francisco and met her fourteen year old son, Sean. Sadly, he has passed away since then, but I can tell you that he was an incredible young man, every bit as wise and beguiling as Tommy is in *The Tin Box*; every bit as memorable.

### What made you decide to write a fire pit into the story?

I grew up with fire pits, and having one in my life has become somewhat of an institution. I have one in my backyard today and there was one in each of the backyards of the homes my husband and I owned before this one. When I think back over the years, some of the best conversations I've ever heard happened when I was sitting around a fire pit, so I guess it only seemed natural that I would use one to bring these people together in *The Tin Box*.

## How did a tree house come into the story?

I believe there is something enchanting about the wonder a tree house can offer a child when they are growing up, and because I wanted to give Kenly and Tommy a place to let their guard down and evolve their friendship, it seemed perfect to give them one in this story. I wanted it to be their own personal sanctuary away from the rest of the world, a place I would have gone when I was a teenager, if I'd had one just like it.

## PRAISE FOR *THE TIN BOX*

“The novel’s moving conclusion is a testament to love and forgiveness.” —*PUBLISHERS WEEKLY*

“Holly Kennedy is a writer to watch.”

—JACQUELYN MITCHARD, *NEW YORK TIMES* BESTSELLING  
AUTHOR OF *THE DEEP END OF THE OCEAN*

“*The Tin Box* is a very special novel by a spectacular new talent. Holly Kennedy writes with compassion and authenticity about the things that matter most.”

—SUSAN WIGGS, AUTHOR OF *TABLE FOR FIVE*

“*The Tin Box* is a rare jewel.”

—ROBYN CARR, AUTHOR OF *BLUE SKIES*

“I guarantee once you dive into the first pages of this novel, you will not be able to put it down.”

—LINDA HOLEMAN,  
BESTSELLING AUTHOR OF *THE LINNET BIRD*

Forge of Empires – A free to play browser game. Good strategy online games are what Forge of Empires stands for. Forge of Empires (FOE) was published in 2012 as the newest strategy online game by InnoGames and has since been one of the most successful browser-based games available. InnoGames, known as a publisher of high quality titles such as the strategy game Tribal Wars and the Greek empire game Grepolis, is combining strategic game-play in an empire builder with excellent visual appeal.