

Counting by 7s

By Holly Goldberg Sloan



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In the tradition of Out of My Mind, Wonder, and Mockingbird, this is an intensely moving middle grade novel about being an outsider, coping with loss, and discovering the true meaning of family.

Willow Chance is a twelve-year-old genius, obsessed with nature and diagnosing medical conditions, who finds it comforting to count by 7s. It has never been easy for her to connect with anyone other than her adoptive parents, but that hasn't kept her from leading a quietly happy life . . . until now.

Suddenly Willow's world is tragically changed when her parents both die in a car crash, leaving her alone in a baffling world. The triumph of this book is that it is not a tragedy. This extraordinarily odd, but extraordinarily endearing, girl manages to push through her grief. Her journey to find a fascinatingly diverse and fully believable surrogate family is a joy and a revelation to read.

"Holly Goldberg Sloan writes about belonging in a way I've never quite seen in any other book. This is a gorgeous, funny, and heartwarming novel that I'll never forget."—John Corey Whaley, author of Where Things Come Back

"Willow Chance subtly drew me into her head and her life, so much so that I was holding my breath for her by the end. Holly Goldberg Sloan has created distinct characters who will stay with you long after you finish the book."—Sharon Creech, Newbery Award-winning author of Walk Two Moons

"In achingly beautiful prose, Holly Goldberg Sloan has written a delightful tale of transformation that's a celebration of life in all its wondrous, hilarious and confounding glory. Counting by 7s is a triumph."—Maria Semple, author of Where'd You Go, Bernadette

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Counting by 7s By Holly Goldberg Sloan Bibliography

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Editorial Review

Amazon.com Review

Amazon Best Books of 2013: Counting by 7's is a delightful, powerful, and beautifully written book that I can't forget and want to give to everyone around me. Holly Goldberg Sloan's quirky characters nestle into your heart and stay there, particularly 12-year-old Willow Chance. A young genius obsessed with the number seven, plants, and diagnosing medical conditions (especially skin disorders that she can surreptitiously photograph) Willow is a true outsider looking for a way in. Her parents tether her to the world, and when they are killed in a car crash Willow's comfortable sphere is shattered. Though a tragedy, the loss of her parents is also Willow's entry into the lives of others. The bond she forms with an unlikely cast of characters is heartfelt and transformative. Like Willow's beloved plants, these are people putting down new roots and rising toward the sun. --Seira Wilson

From School Library Journal

Gr 5-8-Twelve-year-old Willow Chase lived with her adoptive parents in Bakersfield, California. There in the midst of the high desert, she grew a garden in her backyard, her sanctuary. She was excited about starting a new school, hoping this time she might fit in, might find a friend. Willow had been identified in preschool as highly gifted, most of the time causing confusion and feelings of ineptness in her teachers. Now at her new school she is accused of cheating because no one has ever finished the state proficiency test in just 17 minutes, let alone gotten a perfect score. Her reward is behavioral counseling with Dell Duke, an ineffectual counselor with organizational and social issues of his own. She does make a friend when Mai Nguyen brings her brother, Quang-ha, to his appointment, and their lives begin to intertwine when Willow's parents are killed in an auto accident. For the second time in her life she is an orphan, forced to find a "new normal." She is taken in temporarily by Mai's mother, who must stay ahead of Social Services. While Willow sees herself as just an observer, trying to figure out the social norms of regular family life, she is actually a catalyst for change, bringing together unsuspecting people and changing their lives forever. The narration cleverly shifts among characters as the story evolves. Willow's philosophical and intellectual observations contrast with Quang-ha's typical teenage boy obsessions and the struggles of a Vietnamese family fighting to live above the poverty level. Willow's story is one of renewal, and her journey of rebuilding the ties that unite people as a family will stay in readers' hearts long after the last page.—Cheryl Ashton, Amherst Public Library, OHα(c) Copyright 2013. Library Journals LLC, a wholly owned subsidiary of Media Source, Inc. No redistribution permitted.

From **Booklist**

Starred Review In a voice that is frank, charming, and delightfully odd, Willow Chance narrates the strange and heartbreaking circumstances that lead her to find an offbeat, patchwork quilt of a family. As an adopted, self-identified "person of color," precocious genius Willow unabashedly knows that she is different, but her parents love and support her idiosyncrasies, such as wearing her gardening outfit to school, her preoccupation with disease, her anthropological curiosity about her peers, and her obsession with the number seven. That self-assuredness shines through Willow's narrative and becomes crucial to her survival after the unexpected death of her parents, which makes Willow a prime candidate for life in a group home—an environment that could be disastrous for an unusual child like her. Luckily, she finds new friends who are compelled to protect her: Mai and her family, who live in the garage behind the nail salon they own, and Willow's slouch of a guidance counselor, Dell. Sloan (I'll Be There, 2011) has masterfully created a graceful, meaningful tale featuring a cast of charming, well-rounded characters who learn sweet—but never cloying—lessons about resourcefulness, community, and true resilience in the face of loss. Grades 7-10. -- Sarah Hunter

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Leonard Parnell:

What do you in relation to book? It is not important to you? Or just adding material when you want something to explain what yours problem? How about your time? Or are you busy particular person? If you don't have spare time to perform others business, it is gives you the sense of being bored faster. And you have extra time? What did you do? Every individual has many questions above. They must answer that question because just their can do that. It said that about e-book. Book is familiar in each person. Yes, it is right. Because start from on pre-school until university need this particular Counting by 7s to read.

Jennifer Byler:

Reading can called thoughts hangout, why? Because when you are reading a book specially book entitled Counting by 7s your brain will drift away trough every dimension, wandering in every aspect that maybe unidentified for but surely can become your mind friends. Imaging every single word written in a guide then become one contact form conclusion and explanation in which maybe you never get previous to. The Counting by 7s giving you one more experience more than blown away the mind but also giving you useful details for your better life within this era. So now let us present to you the relaxing pattern at this point is your body and mind will probably be pleased when you are finished reading through it, like winning an activity. Do you want to try this extraordinary shelling out spare time activity?

Delores Nault:

Reading a book being new life style in this yr; every people loves to learn a book. When you learn a book you can get a great deal of benefit. When you read books, you can improve your knowledge, because book has a lot of information upon it. The information that you will get depend on what types of book that you have read. In order to get information about your examine, you can read education books, but if you want to entertain yourself look for a fiction books, this kind of us novel, comics, and soon. The Counting by 7s offer you a new experience in looking at a book.

Wayne Sutphin:

On this era which is the greater man or who has ability to do something more are more important than other. Do you want to become considered one of it? It is just simple approach to have that. What you need to do is just spending your time little but quite enough to have a look at some books. Among the books in the top collection in your reading list will be Counting by 7s. This book that is certainly qualified as The Hungry Hills can get you closer in becoming precious person. By looking up and review this reserve you can get many advantages.

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