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Lone Bean

Ariel Woodbury

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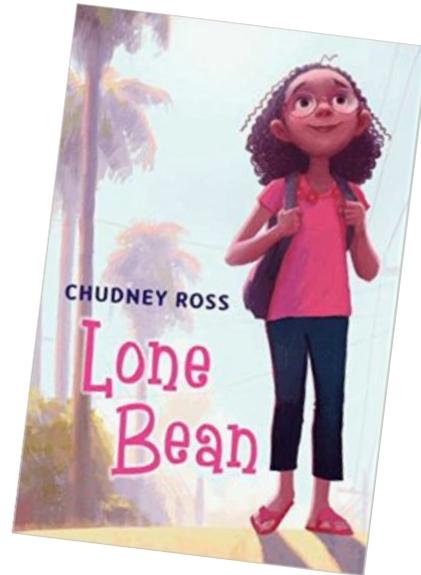
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Book Review

Title: Lone Bean
Author: Chudney Ross
Reviewer: Ariel Woodbury
Publisher: Amistad
Publication Year: 2012
ISBN: 9780061660115
Number of Pages: 208
Interest Level: Intermediate
Rating: Excellent



Review

Bean is excited to start third grade, but when she arrives at school her best friend, Carla, only wants to play with Sam. Bean struggles to fit in and find a new friend, even though she really just wants her old best friend back. To make matters worse, Bean's father wants her to learn an instrument. Bean hates it, especially since she isn't very good and her sisters tease her. Bean's loneliness makes her make some bad choices in who her friends are and get in some trouble. By the time Bean has her first rehearsal, she has learned the value of friendship, the dangers of peer pressure and the importance of being nice to people. She loves playing the violin and loves all her new (and old) friends.

The strongest part of the book is the lesson Bean learns about friendship. She allows her hurt and resentment at her best friend to drive her to become friends with Tanisha, a troubled girl who is the school bully. While Bean does feel compassion for Tanisha, she also comes to her own realization that Tanisha's behavior is not the way true friends should act. While she sympathizes with Tanisha's misguided attempts to reignite their friendship, Bean acknowledges that her relationship with Tanisha is not good for her, and that it results in Bean behaving in a way she knows she shouldn't behave. Given how difficult it can be for kids to understand how much they are influenced by their peers, Bean handled it in a way that was convincingly age-appropriate. Bean has many experiences with her family and friends that elementary school kids will be able to relate to.