



2017

Bubbles

Taylor Nelson

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Book Review

Title: Bubbles
Author: Abby Cooper
Reviewer: Taylor Nelson
Publisher: Farrar Straus Giroux Books
 for Young Readers
Year: 2017
ISBN: 9780374302900
Pages: 260
Interest Level: Intermediate
Rating: Excellent



Review

Sophie Mulvaney, a middle school student with a passion for history and pancakes, has a problem: she's started seeing bubbles over people's heads that tell her what they're thinking. On top of that, her mom has lost her job and broken up with her boyfriend, and Sophie's social studies teacher has assigned her a project where she has to take a big risk, when she could not feel any less adventurous. She and her friends decide to compete in a big triathlon for their project, and Sophie sets off on a mission to fix her mom's woes, which she feels responsible for. While dealing with those pesky bubbles, Sophie has to navigate a possible crush, preteen insecurities, a depressed mom, and deep-set feelings of guilt. She manages to pull off her own triathlon and realizes that she can care about other people's problems without making them her own, and that sometimes the best way to know a person's feelings is to ask.

Bubbles by Abby Cooper is a brilliant middle-grade novel. Woven amid the magic of bubbles that reveal a person's thoughts are very real issues, including depression, anxiety, heartbreak, and insecurity. This book is a wonderful method to teach preteen kids how to deal with problems they don't quite understand and help them realize that people are complex and can't be put in a box. Though the characterization of the relationship between Sophie and her peers feels a little inauthentic and unrealistic, the story on the whole is a good representation of preteen fears and insecurities, as well as the excitement and wonder of embarking on a new stage in life. All in all, Bubbles is a satisfying novel with an amusing tone, realistic issues, and a gratifying conclusion.