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11 Before 12

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Book Review

11 Before 12

Kaylan and Arianna can't believe summer is over and middle school is about to begin. To be completely prepared for their new school, they have a plan. First, they will think of eleven things to do to become the coolest kids in middle school before they turn twelve. Then they will show off their amazing new selves with a giant birthday party. However, middle school is a big change, and both Kaylan and Arianna start to change in different ways. Soon, Kaylan isn't sure that they'll finish the list or plan their joint birthday party, or even if they'll still be friends by their birthday. Arianna doesn't even use her real name anymore, and she has lots of new friends that Kaylan doesn't exactly fit in with. She seems embarrassed to be even seen with Kaylan anymore. The list was supposed to bring them together, but it seems that all it did was break them apart.

11 Before 12 perfectly encapsulates the drama and worry that every kid faces in the awkward summer between elementary and middle school. Sometimes the book does exaggerate this drama to a fault. There are many books out there for pre-teen girls to read to get through this time of life, and this one will slide right into that niche. Though not a standout, pre-teen girls will find that this book is engaging and funny—a good way to spend a summer afternoon. Readers will identify with Kaylan's first crush, first kiss, first middle school class, first big fight with a friend, and many more firsts. However, Kaylan and Arianna can seem more like caricatures than characters in some instances, which can lead to a disconnect with the reader. But for the most part, 11 Before 12 will fit in perfectly on a pre-teenage girl's bookshelf. Though not exceptionally well-written or memorable, it is an enjoyable, quick read.

*Contains mild language.

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Illustrator

n/a

Reviewer

Katelyn Osborn

Rating

Dependable

Level

Intermediate

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396

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