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The Unlikelies

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Sadie is prepared to have a long, lonely summer before her senior year, but all of that changes when she comes to the rescue of a baby in distress and the video of her good deed becomes internet famous. Soon she is introduced to a crew of other local heroes, and they form their own league to fight back against haters and trolls. When their initial efforts meet with heartening success, they turn their efforts to help a heroin-addicted friend. But this problem isn’t as easy to solve as kickstarting a international kindness movement. Some people don’t want to be helped, and the best we can do is support each other as we try to be there for another who is choosing to drown.

Firestone has written a refreshingly real take on the high school summer story. Sadie and her friends come from widely varied backgrounds and experiences that breathe believability and relatability into each of the characters. The story is more engaging than it might be, because while Sadie is the main character, each of the Unlikelyes has their own narrative and problems ongoing throughout the book. Firestone presents us with some of the real beauties and challenges of friendship in the midst of a somewhat fantastical catalyst. Issues of race, socio-economic status, tragedy, abuse, addiction, trust, sex, and disability are deftly woven into the story in a way that feels natural simply because they are a part of the characters’ day-to-day lives rather than being dwelt on or sermonized. It is engaging to see each character learn and grow from their separate and combined experiences, expanding their understanding and worldviews as they move through this traditional coming-of-age style narrative.

*Contains moderate violence, mild sexual content, and moderate drug abuse.