



2019

Things That Surprise You

Taylor Nelson

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/cbmr>

BYU ScholarsArchive Citation

Nelson, Taylor (2019) "Things That Surprise You," *Children's Book and Media Review*: Vol. 40 : Iss. 4 , Article 70.
Available at: <https://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/cbmr/vol40/iss4/70>

This Book Review is brought to you for free and open access by the All Journals at BYU ScholarsArchive. It has been accepted for inclusion in Children's Book and Media Review by an authorized editor of BYU ScholarsArchive. For more information, please contact scholarsarchive@byu.edu, ellen_amatangelo@byu.edu.



Book Review

Things That Surprise You

Author

Jennifer Maschari

Illustrator

Reviewer

Taylor Nelson

Rating

Outstanding

Level

Intermediate

Pages

288

Year

2017

Publisher

Balzer + Bray

ISBN

9780062438928

Emily Murphy is starting middle school, and though she's excited for new beginnings, there's a few things she wants to stay the same. But Hazel, Emily's best friend, is ready for everything to be new. She's found new interests, new crushes, and new friends—leaving Emily behind in the dust. On top of the middle school pressure, Emily has to figure out how to deal with her parents' still-fresh divorce and her fragile sister, Mina, coming home from an eating disorder treatment center. As Emily struggles to fit in and find her place, she realizes that what she wanted may not be what she needs, and that learning to live with and accept change is a part of life.

This book is relatable for readers young and old. Everyone who has experienced or is experiencing the typical agonies of middle school will be able to connect to Emily's struggles with wanting to fit in but feeling so out of place. Additionally, the book approaches the issues of divorce and anorexia with sensitivity, but also with realism. The author doesn't sugarcoat the heartache felt by the characters. The theme of evolving friendships is particularly relevant to middle school kids. Overall, this book is a poignant and tender look at this unique stage of life and is full of self-discovery, authenticity, and wisdom that will ring true for readers of all ages.