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# 13: Thirteen Stories That Capture The Agony And Ecstasy Of Being Thirteen



## **Synopsis**

"If thirteen is supposed to be an unlucky number...you would think a civilized society could come up with a way for us to skip it." -- from "What's the Worst That Could Happen?" by Bruce Coville No one will want to skip any of the twelve short stories and one poem that make up this collection by some of the most celebrated contemporary writers of teen fiction. The big bar mitzvah that goes suddenly, wildly, hilariously out of control. A first kiss -- and a realization about one's sexual orientation. A crush on a girl that ends up putting the boy who likes her in the hospital. A pair of sneakers a kid has to have. By turns funny and sad, wrenching and poignant, the moments large and small described in these stories capture perfectly the agony and ecstasy of being thirteen.

## **Book Information**

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Age Range: 12 and up

Grade Level: 7 and up

## **Customer Reviews**

Grade 6-9-Remember being 13? Ann Martin, Bruce Coville, Todd Strasser, Rachel Vail, Stephen Roos, Ron Koertge, and several other popular authors join Howe in writing about that awkward year. The stories are a mixture of humor, pathos, and poignancy, and most are based on personal experiences. Meg Cabot's "Kate the Great" deals with changing friendships and a first baby-sitting job that goes awry while Alex Sanchez's "If You Kiss a Boy" focuses on the awakening of sexuality. Ellen Wittlinger's "Noodle Soup for Nincompoops" is especially fun as Maggie becomes the advice columnist for her school paper and discovers what happens when people actually follow her

suggestions. Lori Aurelia Williams deals realistically with the gang experience in "Black Holes and Basketball Sneakers." Howe has chosen excellent authors for this volume and they have written oh-so-true stories about that wonderful, terrible first year of being a teenager. Janet Hilbun, formerly at Sam Houston Middle School, Garland, TXCopyright 2003 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to the Hardcover edition.

Gr. 6-9. In this wide-ranging collection, familiar authors for young adults contribute short fiction about 13-year-old characters who are experiencing bewildering feelings, making discoveries, or undergoing the embarrassments typical of the age. Editor Howe's contribution tells about an idealistic boy whose wish that his bar mitzvah will "mean something" leads to chaos. Alex Sanchez's young narrator is attracted to his best friend and wonders, "Why is it so pervie to kiss another guy?" And in Ellen Wittlinger's contribution, a shy, young writer's talents send her into her school's spotlight. As with most anthologies, this has some weak selections, but taken as a whole, the stories avoid the made-to-order feel of many themed collections. The mostly well-developed characters represent a wide variety of backgrounds, and although there are allusions to specific family dramas--poverty, a parent in prison--the authors expertly narrow their focus to the pressures, anxieties, crushes, and euphoria that adolescents everywhere will recognize. Teens will also appreciate the background notes and photos of each author as an adolescent that close each selection. Gillian EngbergCopyright © American Library Association. All rights reserved --This text refers to the Hardcover edition.

kids tested, mother approved

He could not put it down. He is going thru the horrible hormone stage and I think he really related to the stories. I think he knows now that what he is going through (puberty) is a normal stage of growing up and that he is not alone. I also wrote him a little note inside that if he ever needs to talk about anything that he can't talk to his parents about, he can count on me. There are a couple of homosexual stories in the book and Although my nephew is not gay, I believe they will teach acceptance and understanding that everyone is different and everyone's feeling should be considered.

I read this with my son when he turned 13. It was a great book to open up conversations about a wide range of subjects. Because discussions were about stories (not about my son,) it was a

non-threatening way that I was able to get to know him & learn about the way he sees and feels.

My son is in 8th grade and never a big reader (which I am trying to change). This book appealed to him on two levels. First, the short story format was less "stressful" than having to commit to a full length book. Second, the variety of stories has something for everyone. Some stories he identified with personally and others he felt helped him understand someone his age with a different background. There was also a mix of humor and seriousness that he really enjoyed. We both recommend this book heartily.

My son is not an avid reader, and in fact, it's mostly been me reading this to him, but the stories are well suited to his new teenagehood, and they are well written. He loves them and can't get enough. Some material has sparked deep conversations, and overall, I could not be happier with this book.

I bought this for our nephew's 13th birthday. He's enjoyed it.

The jury's out on this one. It was a Christmas present for a 13-year old who is already showing the teenage attitude. I'll let you know when he gets around to reading it.

Spot on. Using in 8th grade Language Arts class. Perfect balance of complexity, accessible content, humor, seriousness, the new, and the familiar. Guaranteed good read!

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