



Counting by 7s

By Holly Goldberg Sloan

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Counting by 7s By Holly Goldberg Sloan

A *New York Times* Bestseller

In the tradition of *Out of My Mind*, *Wonder*, and *Mockingbird*, this is an intensely moving middle grade novel about being an outsider, coping with loss, and discovering the true meaning of family.

Willow Chance is a twelve-year-old genius, obsessed with nature and diagnosing medical conditions, who finds it comforting to count by 7s. It has never been easy for her to connect with anyone other than her adoptive parents, but that hasn't kept her from leading a quietly happy life . . . until now.

Suddenly Willow's world is tragically changed when her parents both die in a car crash, leaving her alone in a baffling world. The triumph of this book is that it is *not* a tragedy. This extraordinarily odd, but extraordinarily endearing, girl manages to push through her grief. Her journey to find a fascinatingly diverse and fully believable surrogate family is a joy and a revelation to read.

*** “Willow's story is one of renewal, and her journey of rebuilding the ties that unite people as a family will stay in readers' hearts long after the last page.”—School Library Journal starred review**

*** “A graceful, meaningful tale featuring a cast of charming, well-rounded characters who learn sweet—but never cloying—lessons about resourcefulness, community, and true resilience in the face of loss.”—Booklist starred review**

*** “What sets this novel apart from the average orphan-finds-a-home book is its lack of sentimentality, its truly multicultural cast (Willow describes herself as a “person of color”; Mai and Quang-ha are of mixed Vietnamese, African American, and Mexican ancestry), and its tone. . . . Poignant.”—The Horn Book starred review**

"In achingly beautiful prose, Holly Goldberg Sloan has written a delightful tale of transformation that's a celebration of life in all its wondrous,

hilarious and confounding glory. *Counting by 7s* is a triumph."—Maria Semple, author of *Where'd You Go, Bernadette*

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Editorial Review

Amazon.com Review

Amazon Best Books of 2013 : *Counting by 7's* is a delightful, powerful, and beautifully written book that I can't forget and want to give to everyone around me. Holly Goldberg Sloan's quirky characters nestle into your heart and stay there, particularly 12-year-old Willow Chance. A young genius obsessed with the number seven, plants, and diagnosing medical conditions (especially skin disorders that she can surreptitiously photograph) Willow is a true outsider looking for a way in. Her parents tether her to the world, and when they are killed in a car crash Willow's comfortable sphere is shattered. Though a tragedy, the loss of her parents is also Willow's entry into the lives of others. The bond she forms with an unlikely cast of characters is heartfelt and transformative. Like Willow's beloved plants, these are people putting down new roots and rising toward the sun. --Seira Wilson

From School Library Journal

Gr 5-8—Twelve-year-old Willow Chase lived with her adoptive parents in Bakersfield, California. There in the midst of the high desert, she grew a garden in her backyard, her sanctuary. She was excited about starting a new school, hoping this time she might fit in, might find a friend. Willow had been identified in preschool as highly gifted, most of the time causing confusion and feelings of ineptness in her teachers. Now at her new school she is accused of cheating because no one has ever finished the state proficiency test in just 17 minutes, let alone gotten a perfect score. Her reward is behavioral counseling with Dell Duke, an ineffectual counselor with organizational and social issues of his own. She does make a friend when Mai Nguyen brings her brother, Quang-ha, to his appointment, and their lives begin to intertwine when Willow's parents are killed in an auto accident. For the second time in her life she is an orphan, forced to find a "new normal." She is taken in temporarily by Mai's mother, who must stay ahead of Social Services. While Willow sees herself as just an observer, trying to figure out the social norms of regular family life, she is actually a catalyst for change, bringing together unsuspecting people and changing their lives forever. The narration cleverly shifts among characters as the story evolves. Willow's philosophical and intellectual observations contrast with Quang-ha's typical teenage boy obsessions and the struggles of a Vietnamese family fighting to live above the poverty level. Willow's story is one of renewal, and her journey of rebuilding the ties that unite people as a family will stay in readers' hearts long after the last page.—Cheryl Ashton, Amherst Public Library, OHα(c) Copyright 2013. Library Journals LLC, a wholly owned subsidiary of Media Source, Inc. No redistribution permitted.

From [Booklist](#)

Starred Review In a voice that is frank, charming, and delightfully odd, Willow Chance narrates the strange and heartbreaking circumstances that lead her to find an offbeat, patchwork quilt of a family. As an adopted, self-identified "person of color," precocious genius Willow unabashedly knows that she is different, but her parents love and support her idiosyncrasies, such as wearing her gardening outfit to school, her preoccupation with disease, her anthropological curiosity about her peers, and her obsession with the number seven. That self-assuredness shines through Willow's narrative and becomes crucial to her survival after the unexpected death of her parents, which makes Willow a prime candidate for life in a group home—an environment that could be disastrous for an unusual child like her. Luckily, she finds new friends who are compelled to protect her: Mai and her family, who live in the garage behind the nail salon they own, and Willow's slouch of a guidance counselor, Dell. Sloan (*I'll Be There*, 2011) has masterfully created a graceful, meaningful tale featuring a cast of charming, well-rounded characters who learn sweet—but never cloying—lessons about resourcefulness, community, and true resilience in the face of loss. Grades 7-10. --Sarah Hunter

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Cassie Merritt:

Now a day individuals who Living in the era exactly where everything reachable by interact with the internet and the resources in it can be true or not demand people to be aware of each information they get. How people have to be smart in getting any information nowadays? Of course the answer then is reading a book. Examining a book can help individuals out of this uncertainty Information especially this Counting by 7s book because this book offers you rich info and knowledge. Of course the data in this book hundred per cent guarantees there is no doubt in it you may already know.

Virginia Carter:

The actual book Counting by 7s has a lot of knowledge on it. So when you read this book you can get a lot of profit. The book was authored by the very famous author. Mcdougal makes some research prior to write this book. That book very easy to read you will get the point easily after perusing this book.

Dennis Ross:

Reading can called head hangout, why? Because when you find yourself reading a book especially book entitled Counting by 7s the mind will drift away trough every dimension, wandering in each and every aspect that maybe unidentified for but surely will become your mind friends. Imaging each word written in a publication then become one web form conclusion and explanation that will maybe you never get before. The Counting by 7s giving you a different experience more than blown away your thoughts but also giving you useful data for your better life within this era. So now let us teach you the relaxing pattern is your body and mind is going to be pleased when you are finished reading it, like winning a. Do you want to try this extraordinary investing spare time activity?

Victoria Manson:

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