



# 13: Thirteen Stories That Capture the Agony and Ecstasy of Being Thirteen

*James Howe (Editor)*

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"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.

## 13: Thirteen Stories That Capture the Agony and Ecstasy of Being Thirteen Details

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Author : James Howe (Editor)

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## **From Reader Review 13: Thirteen Stories That Capture the Agony and Ecstasy of Being Thirteen for online ebook**

### **ajoshy7 says**

This book is a compilation of short stories, so I am going to talk about only one. Fahed, a poor young boy really wants to get these new sneakers that EVERYBODY at his school has because they always bully him about his old, tattered, faded blue shoes that he wears to school everyday, but the problem is that he is too poor to buy these new shoes. So, he asks his mom and she says never! Then, he asks his new friend and he says yes, but he will have to go with their gang called "The Bullets" and they said that they would give him those amazing shoes. He heard rumors about them and how they aren't such nice people. Then, we found out those weren't just rumors... they were real! This story is about desperation, sadness, and kindness.

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### **Elaine says**

13 short stories. 13 YA authors. The stories are based on real events, people, feelings from their own lives. You get the story first and then the explanation of "where that story came from." Sometimes the fictional story has more power, sometimes the real story. It is probably different for different readers. In all of them, you crack open a little about how the art of storytelling works and what it feels like to be 13.

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### **Lela says**

The book Thirteen by James Howe (also includes many guest writers who include their own stories from when they were younger) is a realistic fiction book of short stories that capture the pure essence of being 13. From crush problems to friend problems. First kisses and first dates. Fights and makeups. Being 13 is hard, and each and every short story in this book shows you exactly why.

Throughout the book, you meet different characters for each story. Each character displays a different feeling/personality or realization that can be associated with the age of 13. A girl who's first babysitting jobs makes her realize the truth about her friend, a boy and his best friend who share an experiment which makes them second guess themselves, a boy from the hood who just wants to fit in, and much more. The book is written in chapters, each chapter being a new story. The author of each story also includes a "behind the scenes" page about the connection between their story and what it was really like, what it taught them, and what they are trying to teach the reader, along with a little about themselves and who they have grown into. In my opinion, some stories had stronger messages than others, but overall the author's voice got through to me as a reader and each story had its own good meaning. One of the weaknesses this book has is that some stories are specifically targeted at one type of kid and not every kid can relate to them as well, but there is also a good side of that because each story caters to a different kind of kid and setting and they add more variety to the book. Overall, this book was very good but personally, I prefer a long story rather than a collection of short stories but it just depends on your preferences. Otherwise, I did like the overall message of the book. I recommend this book to kids from 6-8 grade and anyone who likes humor or realistic fiction because some stories are funny and some are serious, but every young teen can relate to at least something in them.

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### **Broc Sherwood says**

Thirteen stories that capture the agony and ecstasy of being thirteen by James Howe. Non Fiction. Over all I felt this book was just an average Joe shmoe, the first story Whats the Worst That can Happen by Bruce Coville was probably my favorite story over all. Murphy the main character the this story is in live and he joins the drama play just because his crush Tiffany is in it but Murphy always with bad luck on the performance night he falls of the stage and breaks his leg in the process of the medics getting him on the stretcher he finds out that Tiffany has a boyfriend that was in the audience. This story was very confusing because every story in it has a major cliff hanger. This story was published in 2003 and i would recommend this book to all ages because of its variety of stories about a thirteen year old so it can get kids prepared or bring back memories.

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### **Aimee says**

As a parent of a 13 year-old, I reflect a lot on what that age is all about. These stories are entertaining and useful in reminding us adults what it was like to be 13. Almost as entertaining as the stories were the authors' memories of their own 13 year-old selves. Easy to read and a possible jumping off place for conversations...I recommend this book to other parents of teens and pre-teens.

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### **Ali says**

I really liked it. After every story I was left wishing that i could have read more

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### **Sarah says**

A collection of short stories by numerous young adult authors, this book is like examining the age thirteen through a prism. Each view is different, yet true, and each is wonderful. Some stories are a bit more light-hearted than others, but the collection offers insight into what turning 13 feels like. There's something for every teen reader in this collection.

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### **Ashley says**

There was nothing totally awful about these stories, but none were super extraordinary either. My favorites were Angel and Aly, Jeremy Goldblatt Is So Totally Not Moses, and Squid Girl. I also enjoyed Noodle Soup for Nincompoops, Black Holes and Basketball Sneakers, and What's the Worst That Can Happen? The other 7 stories were unremarkable by my standards. I appreciated that every author took the time to write a personal note and include an image of their 13 year old self. I'm going to pass this collection along to some of my students (who coincidentally are 13) and see how they feel about it. I will update when I have some decent feedback from one of my kids.... experts on all things 13.

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### **Jabiz Raisdana says**

What a perfect little middle school book. The stories vary in style as well as content. This collection is filled with tales about relationships, crushes, first kisses, class, family and growing up. Each story is well written enough to act as a mentor text for aspiring young writers, and they are all filled with enough humor and meaning to teach the reader a thing or two about this awkward time in their lives.

I wish we had more copies of this book, so every person who comes into my classroom could have a chance to explore these stories. Read this one. You will be glad you did.

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### **Kirsten says**

Well, some stories were really good and funny. Others, I didn't want to read them, and they were boring. The ending was not good at all (it was called 'Tina the Teen Fairy'). It was a realistic fiction book, but then fantasy at the end. It didn't make sense. If it was realistic fiction with the same message, it would have been better.

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### **Jianne says**

A total reminiscent of being thirteen years old, which applies to me.

#### **Person Sharing**

\*\* Okay, I just feel like I have to do this. But if you don't want to read about me talking about this and just want to move on with the review then please feel free to skip this part. =)

#### ***What is being thirteen like for you?***

Well, for me being is the time that I felt magic. But it is also the time when that magic died. Being thirteen to many (including myself back then) is just another normal day, in my thirteenth birthday it really wasn't such a big deal to me except the fact that I have a "teen" in my age now. During that time, I was yes in a hurry to be thirteen because I feel that I would have more freedom and more privileged. I get to experience things that I did not experience back then. So yes, I was in a hurry to be thirteen. But right now, being sixteen I want to go back to being thirteen because well, I just wished I enjoyed that part of my life more. Because right now, I feel so old, so ancient and just *different*. I miss being careful and you know not caring about what others think, what people think, when parents don't expect much for you, when you can just be you.

Right now, it's all different. When I was thirteen it was the start of being an adult. To open my eyes to the world, to make the right decisions, to be responsible and to be stronger. There were a lot of trials and all that high school drama (partly the reason why I want to be younger) and right now, with every passing day it's getting scarier to grow up. Well, life back when I was thirteen was sort of like an experience for the later

years to come. Thirteen-year-olds fell in love, have more responsibility, loss their innocence, become ignorant of the world, Mom and Dad are no longer their superheroes, learn new things, try new experience and eventually once we grow older we'll realize that those experiences will reflect how we live our life in the future. It's frustrating, it's tragic but it's also beautiful.

So if you're not yet thirteen, lucky you. Enjoy your childhood while it lasts, I wish that made the most out of mine. If you're thirteen right now, I hope you enjoy every second of it and make it worthwhile. And if you're way past thirteen, then still enjoy life. Being thirteen might not be a big deal to you, but it is. And it's *worth* remembering.

## Review

Oh well, I think that my personal opinion part also mentions what I think of being thirteen which is pretty much what I also thought of this book. This is a total reminiscent of how life was like back then for me and even if I did not experience what the characters in this stories do, I kind of can feel what they're going through because I've been there. And I kind of regret not handling and enjoying being thirteen. It sucks, wish I could go back.

But I can't. So for that, I love this book for reminding that even if I'm sixteen already well I can still experience some of the things in this book and I actually liked all the stories here! It's a great and enjoyable read. And the narrations are very captivating and engaging.

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## Michelle says

Name: Michelle Muro

Citation: Howe, J. (Ed.). (2003). 13: Thirteen stories that capture the agony and ecstasy of being thirteen. New York, NY: Atheneum Books.

Genre: Short stories

Format: Print

Selection Process: Kirkus Reviews

Review:

Becoming a teenager is difficult and many well-known authors such as Meg Cabot, Bruce Coville, Alex Sanchez, Carolyn Mackler, James Howe, and several others, help readers either relive or get through this unique and awkward time. The stories are mixed with both humor and sadness, but each is realistic and covers topics such as sexuality, gangs, friendships, secrets, and of course, embarrassment. Although some are better written than others, young readers will definitely gain something from reading at least a few of these stories. This is a fantastic book of short stories for middle school readers. Each author conveys a specific feeling or topic in which thirteen-year-olds are very familiar. Many young adults will be able to relate to at least one of the characters if not several of them.

Highly Recommend

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**Judine Brey says**

These stories are as varied as most people's experiences with the age of 13. Most are light and lend humor to balance the more serious pieces that are included. Plus, I have to love a short story with the title "Jeremy Goldblatt is So Not Moses." That may have already made its way into a forensics piece.

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**Tanvi Singh says**

I tried to read the book, but it was too boring.

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**Nelsin Martin-Burnett says**

I thought that this was a good book. It was nice being able to finish a few stories every night. Some of the stories were a bit boring but it didn't take long to get through them. I recommend this to people who want to take a break from reading long stories/books and to people who want to learn about being 13.

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