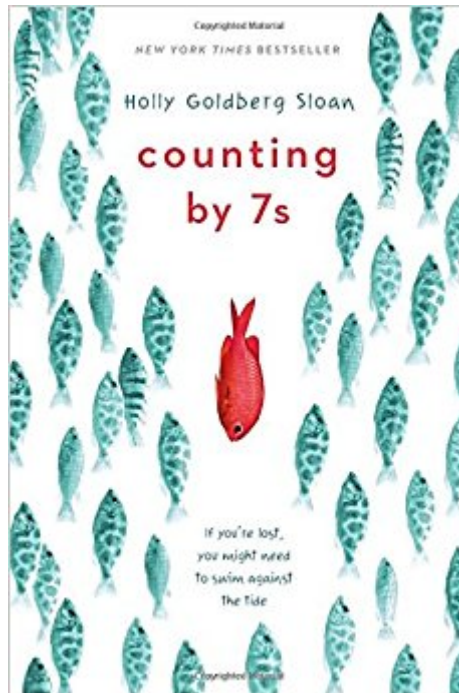




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# Counting By 7s



## Synopsis

A New York Times Bestseller. An Best Book of the Year 2013. A Kids' Indie Next List Top Ten Book-- #4, Best Books of Autumn 2013. B.E.A. Buzz Book Award 2013. A Texas Bluebonnet Award Nominee 2014-2015 Master List. A School Library Journal Best Book of the Year. An E.B. White Read Aloud Honor Book. A Dorothy Canfield Fisher Children's Book Award Nominee. A National Public Radio Best Book of the Year. 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." 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* "Holly Goldberg Sloan writes about belonging in a way I've never quite seen in any other book. This is a gorgeous, funny, and heartwarming novel that I'll never forget."--John Corey Whaley, author of *Where Things Come Back* "Willow Chance subtly drew me into her head and her life, so much so that I was holding my breath for her by the end. Holly Goldberg Sloan has created distinct characters who will stay with you long after you finish the book."--Sharon Creech, Newbery Award-winning author of *Walk Two Moons*

## Book Information

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Hardcover: 384 pages

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Age Range: 10 - 14 years

Grade Level: 5 - 9

## Customer Reviews

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

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, OH

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I love a well written story. This novel may have been written for a teenage audience, but a well written story surpasses age limits. Willow Chance is an uplifting protagonist. This story begins with the death of Willow's parents, but this story is far from depressing. This is a story about hope and change. I would recommend this book to anyone, from 10ish on up. Beautifully written, clean story.

I absolutely loved this book! In fact I think all other books will have trouble measuring up to this one. I usually avoid YA books, but I was deeply involved in the story the entire time I was reading it. Willow is an intelligent, beautiful character. I loved spending time with her and the other characters.

I was quickly engrossed in this book after deciding that Willow may be a bit autistic. And then with the arrival of each new character it was a challenge to put down. I love how one little girl can change lives and how all these people rally around her even as she is a complete stranger.

Written for young adults, this clever, interesting and insightful novel deals with what I call the lost and found -- that is, with the painful losses and (pro)found delights of family connections broken & remade. It especially concerns itself with intentional families, created by bonds of caring rather than blood. Bravo!

This book was fascinating. And heartbreaking. It didn't seem like a middle school book, but rather a book about a middle school student--for adults too. I loved the themes of individuality, change/mutation, gardening, family, strength, sorrow, etc. I really couldn't put it down. Thankfully I had an entire to read it. This would make a wonderful movie.

Phenomenal voice. Very character driven and magical, hard to put down. I cried several times, I laughed, I thought it was delightful and clever. This was marketed as middle grade, but I think it has such crossover appeal, that it could have easily been marketed as adult.

This book was surprisingly moving, despite being somewhat predictable. I don't know what I expected, but the characters were pretty great and it had its share of comic moments also.

The main character is "of color" and she makes friends with others of different colors but the story is not centered around racial issues. The insights into the thought processes of highly intelligent people are well-portrayed instead of functioning as a device to show how pitiful and alone she is. The details are well-researched and every character has at least one encouraging trait. Misfits are people, too.

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