

Miscalculations of Lightning Girl, The

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When Lucy was struck by lightning at age eight it changed her life: she acquired savant syndrome and math superpowers. Homeschooled her entire life, she is shocked when at age twelve her grandma insists she attend school. Lucy struggles to fit in as her math skills and compulsive behaviours are very noticeable, but she befriends others who have trouble fitting in and together they work to save unwanted animals in a local shelter. Suitable for a class read-aloud or literature circle, this engaging novel explores accepting and embracing differences, strengths and abilities, being true to oneself, friendships, families, fitting in at a new school, and bullying.

Subjects: English Language Arts
Grades 4-8

Evaluation Date: Dec 2021




Social Considerations

Resource Evaluation

CURRICULUM FIT

Does the resource support BC curriculum?

 Extensively

This resource supports the Big Ideas from the English Language Arts curriculum for grades 4-8 including exploring stories and texts can help us understand ourselves and make connections to the world, people understand texts differently according to their perspectives, and that questioning what we hear, read, and view contributes to our ability to be engaged citizens.

SUGGESTED CLASSROOM USAGE

This resource could be used as a classroom read-aloud and in literature circles. This book can allow students a chance to connect with and understand how people have different abilities and strengths. This book also explores different types of families as well as the complexities of friendships such as making friends, virtual and in-person friendships, and bullying.

SOCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

Ability/Disability

This book portrays a girl who has acquired savant syndrome after being struck by lightning which has given her beyond-typical math skills. She also demonstrates some routines around hand washing, using Clorox wipes to sanitize everything, sitting and standing three times before being able to sit, and reciting the decimal points in Pi to allow her to keep her mind clear.

Socio-Economic

Lucy, whose mother passed away from cancer and whose father never met her, lives with her grandmother in a modest apartment in North Carolina which is contrasted at times with the lavish home of her friend Windy.

Violence

At one point Windy references a knife being brought to school by a student at a nearby school and how her mom refers to the school now as a "gang school".

Ethical and Legal

Lucy and her friends are working on a project to save animals from a shelter and some of the animals are considered unadoptable and could be turned over to animal control. Consent is also an issue with Lucy's friend Levi taking pictures of others without their permission. This is something he is repeatedly warned about. As well, when Windy hugs Lucy she says, "I don't move. I don't breathe. I don't approve". At the birthday party, one of the characters is jumping around attempting to pull down everyone's pants.

Humour

Lucy's routines and phobia of germs are used in a light-hearted way and her friends embrace her quirky ways.

Safety

Prior to enrolling in a public school, Lucy's only friends were her virtual friends from an online math group. Lucy does not know anything about these friends other than their shared love of math. It is evident that these friends are adults which is shown when one asks her what she is teaching when she mentions she has class and another time she wonders if she could be chatting with her teacher. This could create a safety concern as neither Lucy nor her guardians know who she is really communicating with. At the pool, Madison's mother tells her to stand up straight and signals for her to suck in her stomach, and also reminds her to watch her diet. This could lead to body insecurity issues.

Do the social considerations support, rather than detract from, student learning?



Extensively

This novel takes a light-hearted look at the life of a student who is different and struggling to fit in. It shows us how differences can be embraced and accepted by others and one does not need to change who they are to be accepted by others. The social considerations could also lead to class discussions around appropriate behaviour, friendships, consent, and differences in ability, strengths, and challenges.

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GENERAL CONTENT

Content

Is the resource engaging?



Extensively

Is the content current for the intended curriculum and grade?



Extensively

Is the content accurate for the intended curriculum and grade?



Extensively

Is the content relevant and important for student broad understandings?



Extensively

Audience

Is the content appropriate to the emotional maturity and cognitive level of students?



Extensively

Does the resource provide opportunities for creative and critical thinking?



Extensively

Is the level of detail appropriate?



Extensively

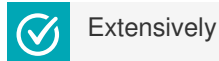
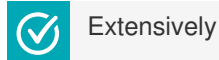
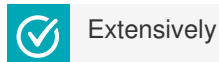
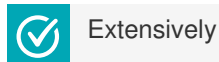
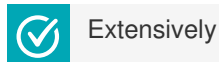
Is the language use appropriate to the emotional maturity and cognitive level of students?



Extensively

The Miscalculations of Lightning Girl is a story for students of middle school age. This story about a middle school girl with phobias and repetitive behaviours will appeal to all students who are trying to fit in and find their way in school and especially in a new school.

TECHNICAL DESIGN

Does the resource make effective use of the medium?**Is the resource easy to use?****Is the location of illustrations appropriate?****Is the use of font, text size and presentation suitable?****Are extraneous elements/illustrations kept to a minimum?**

This story is written in a clear font with small graphics used at the beginning of each chapter to highlight the math theme. Lightning bolts and symbols such as pi are used to enhance this. Bold print is used when Lucy is chatting to her online friends to highlight this type of conversation.

Does the text show insight into the complexity of the human condition?



Extensively

Does the text broaden students' experiences and understanding?



Extensively

To what degree is this text stylistically rich?



Extensively

Plot description

This is a story of 12-year-old Lucy Callahan who gets struck by lightning and acquires some special math superpowers. After initially being homeschooled, her grandmother forces her to go to middle school where she tries to fit in despite sticking out because of her compulsive behaviours and genius math skills. She befriends some other students who have trouble fitting in and they all come together for a project to save the unwanted animals in a shelter.

Genre

- Contemporary

Literary Highlights

- Point of view

Type

- Novel

Visual Highlights

- Other (specify)
- Novel

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

Reading Level

- At intended grade level(s)

A Junior Library Guild Selection An Indie Bestseller; Parents' 15 Best Children's Books 2018; Texas Bluebonnet Award Master List 2019-2020; Best Children's Books of the Year 2019, Bank Street - OUTSTANDING MERIT; NPR 2018 Great Reads; Amazon Best Children's Book of 2018 - Age 9-12; Barnes and Noble's Best Young Reader Books of 2018; Indie Next List Summer 2018. There is a description in the back of book about: Pi and Fibonacci which are math concepts. The author's website: <http://www.stacymcanulty.com/mlg> contains video links of 3 chapter sections where the reader can follow along with the author, Stacy McAnulty.

GRADES AND SUBJECTS

Subjects

- English Language Arts: 4-8

ADDITIONAL INFO

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