

Literacy Skills Teacher's Guide for

11 Birthdays

by
Wendy Mass

Book Information

Wendy Mass, 11 Birthdays
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Interest Level: MG

After having a falling out on their tenth birthday and not speaking to each other for the last year, Amanda and Leo prepare to celebrate their eleventh birthday separately, but peculiar things begin to happen.

Topics: Family Life, Birthdays; Interpersonal Relationships, Friendship; Recommended Reading, Junior Library Guild Selection; Recommended Reading, Junior Library Guild-2009 Spring Elementary; Recommended Reading, Junior Library Guild-2009 Spring Jr./Sr. High

Main Characters

Amanda Ellerby a ten-year-old girl who shares a birthday with Leo, her former best friend

Angelina D'Angelo a mysterious old woman who lives in Willow Falls; she is responsible for the enchantment that causes Leo and Amanda to become caught in the loop

Kylie Ellerby Amanda's older sister

Leo Fitzpatrick a ten-year-old boy who shares a birthday with Amanda, his former best friend

Mr. Ellerby Amanda's dad

Mrs. Ellerby Amanda's mom

Mrs. Fitzpatrick Leo's mom

Ruby Gordon Stephanie's friend who is jealous of Amanda and Stephanie's friendship

Stephanie Amanda's best friend since the trouble between Leo and Amanda

Vocabulary

consequences results, often natural or logical; things produced by a cause or causes; outcomes of events; effects

creative imaginative; original; artistic; inventive; fresh, unusual, or new; having a good or productive imagination; having the ability to think of new ideas

cringe to draw oneself together or shrink back, usually in fear or pain; to recoil in disgust; to cower; to flinch

hostile angry and unfriendly; showing hatred

humiliating discomfoting because of shame or wounded pride; demeaning in the eyes of others; humbling; embarrassing; mortifying

identical exactly alike; matching; the very same

intently with great focus or concentration; in a determined manner; with purpose or determination; closely

involuntarily without a conscious intent; automatically; unwillingly; without thinking or choosing; instinctively; unconsciously

psychic having the ability to speak with spirits; having the ability to sense things beyond the usual natural perceptions; mentally supersensitive; extremely perceptive; clairvoyant

securely in a way that binds something tightly and firmly

Synopsis

Amanda and Leo are born on the same day at the same hospital. An old woman named Angelina D'Angelo is at the hospital and encourages the parents to have the children's birthday parties together. After celebrating their first nine birthdays together, Amanda and Leo have a falling out on their tenth birthday and stop speaking to each other for a year. They spend their eleventh birthdays separately, and peculiar things begin to happen.

When Amanda wakes up on what is supposed to be the day after her birthday, she realizes it is her birthday again. She learns that Leo is experiencing the same thing, although no one else seems to know what is going on. She and Leo begin talking again and must work together to figure out how to stop the repetition of their birthday. They learn that the problem goes back to an old family feud and that the old woman Angelina D'Angelo is involved.

After repeating several birthdays, Amanda and Leo,

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with Angelina's help, figure out a solution. They have one final eleventh birthday together and wake up to find it's finally the next day. Through their experiences, they learn a lot about themselves and their friendship is repaired.

Open-Ended Questions

Use these open-ended questions as the basis for class discussions, student presentations, or extended writing assignments.

Constructing Meaning

Before Angelina revealed her role in the repeating birthdays, how does the reader know she is important to the story?

Angelina was at the hospital when the children were born. She appeared at various times throughout the story, including as the bus driver, at the historical society, and at several of their birthday parties.

Constructing Meaning

While they were "stuck" on their birthday, Leo read his poetry at the senior center and Amanda played drums to audition for a band. They had enough courage to do this because they knew no one would remember it anyway. What would you do if you knew no one would remember it the next day?

Answers will vary.

Teachable Skills

Making Inferences Making Inferences

Comparing and Contrasting Compare and Contrast

Recognizing Cause and Effect Recognizing Cause and Effect

Understanding Sequence Understanding Sequence