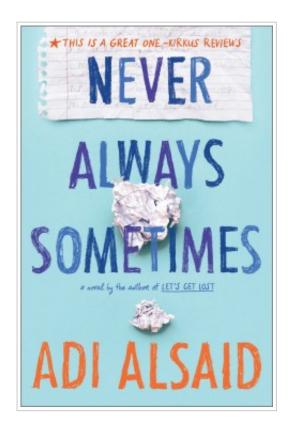
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Never Always Sometimes

by Adi Alsaid

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Rating: 0.0/5 (0 votes cast)

From the Publisher: Never date your best friend

Always be original

Sometimes rules are meant to be broken

Best friends Dave and Julia were determined to never be cliché high school kids—the ones who sit at the same lunch table every day, dissecting the drama from homeroom and plotting their campaigns for prom king and queen. They even wrote their own Never List of everything they vowed they'd never, ever do in high school.

Some of the rules have been easy to follow, like #5, never die your hair a color of the rainbow, or #7, never hook up with a teacher. But Dave has a secret: he's broken rule #8, never pine silently after someone for the entirety of high school. It's either that or break rule #10, never date your best friend. Dave has loved Julia for as long as he can remember.

Julia...

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What We Say

John Green. There I got that out of the way. It's nigh on impossible to talk about a guy writing young adult novels about hyper-witty teenagers in love without mentioning John Green. Alsaid earns his place alongside Green with his second novel. It's got a made for the movies premise: a guy and a girl who are best friends but of course NOT in love with each are on the cusp of high school. They make a list of all the things they should avoid, the cliches of teenagerdom as laid down by the movies and TV. And avoid them they do until senior year just weeks before graduation when they rediscover the list and impulsively decide to do EVERYTHING on the list: go to a beer party, become known for a favorite seat location at lunch, take an epic road trip and so on. Of course, on the list is Never Date Your Best Friend but they leave that one unspoken, for a while. Alsaid's tale is fun and breezy until it's not so breezy and he has a nicely jaundiced take on his hero and heroine. Their too cool for school attitude? It's part of who they are, but they realize they've also missed out and dismissed a lot of their classmates by considering them types (the Jock, the Geek) instead of people. Becoming popular (or at least friendly with others) isn't so bad and suddenly our hero finds himself dating a girl, a really cool girl, even though he's been pining for the heroine for all of his life despite the facf that THEY ARE NOT IN LOVE! The book goes on past where I thought it would end, which is a good thing. Alsaid creates some real characters here and their journey isn't neatly schematic. The dialogue is amusing, the stunts they engage in (like building a tree fort lunch spot overnight) sometimes cinematic but still within the realm of reality) and the romance/friendship at the heart of it has real weight. John Green (and Judy Blume and S.E. Hinton and Sherman Alexie) would approve. -- MIchael GIltz

Less

What You Say

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