

One Death, Nine Stories

From Candlewick

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How could one teenage boy's life elicit other kids' first experiences — even after he dies? Nine interconnected stories from nine top YA writers.

Kevin's the first kid their age to die. And now, even though he's dead, he's not really gone. Even now his choices are touching the people he left behind. Ellen Hopkins reveals what two altar boys (and one altar girl) might get up to at the cemetery. Rita Williams-Garcia follows one aimless teen as he finds a new life in his new job — at the mortuary. Will Weaver turns a lens on Kevin's sister as she collects his surprising effects — and makes good use of them. Here, in nine stories, we meet people who didn't know Kevin, friends from his childhood, his ex-girlfriend, his best friend, all dealing with the fallout of his death. Being a teenager is a time for all kinds of firsts — first jobs, first loves, first good-byes, firsts that break your heart and awaken your soul. It's an initiation of sorts, and it can be brutal. But on the other side of it is the rest of your life.

With stories by
Chris Barton
Nora Raleigh Baskin
Marina Budhos
Ellen Hopkins
A.S. King
Torrey Maldonado
Charles R. Smith Jr.
Will Weaver
Rita Williams-Garcia

One Death, Nine Stories From Candlewick Bibliography

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Editorial Review

From School Library Journal

Gr 9 Up—Kevin Nicholas, a popular high school football player, has committed suicide, though readers don't know that at first. In fact, through nine stories, each told by a different author and from a different point of view, readers come to know only a little about Kevin himself. Instead, readers observe the reactions of Kevin's sister, his best friends, people who barely knew him, even of the funeral home workers who handles his body. The death of a teenager, especially by his own hand, can be impossible to understand, but lives don't stop just because one life did. Each chapter deals with the process of initiation, acceptance, growing up, and moving on even in the face of death. The authors included are all well-known young adult writers, such as Ellen Hopkins, Rita Williams-Garcia, and A. S. King, and it is clear that they know and understand their audience. Despite the differing perspectives and characters, the writing is remarkably consistent in tone. The vignette feel of each section may appeal to reluctant readers who can manage a narrative in small chunks without losing the arc of the story itself. More enthusiastic readers will devour it whole. Keep it in mind as bibliotherapy, should the unfortunate need arise, or as a springboard for journaling or creative writing.—Katherine Koenig, The Ellis School, PA

Review

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—School Library Journal

[The characters'] experiences are sensitively portrayed, and they struggle with very real issues of ethnic and sexual identity. ... Complex and emotionally demanding, this collection aims for and will resonate with serious readers of realistic fiction.

—Kirkus Reviews

Rita Williams-Garcia's fantastic opener introduces Morris, a blank-minded boy working at his uncle's mortuary the day Kevin's corpse arrives. Both Ellen Hopkins and A. S. King look at sexual and romantic relationships; Torrey Maldonado examines one of the young men in Kevin's thrall; and so on. ... Fascinating.

—Booklist

The talents of the writers, including Rita Garcia-Williams, Ellen Hopkins, A. S. King, Will Weaver, and Nora Raleigh Baskin, keep the stories consistently moving and authentically voiced... Useful as a model for a group creative-writing exercise, this would also make for therapeutic reading and discussion in the aftermath of a tragedy.

—Bulletin of the Center for Children's Books

There are plenty of dots to connect and introspection from adolescents on the precipice of something new and unknown.

—Publishers Weekly

About the Author

Marc Aronson is an editor and author of many award-winning books for young people, including *Master of*

Deceit: J. Edgar Hoover and America in the Age of Lies, and *Pick-Up Game*, which he co-edited with Charles R. Smith Jr. He lives in New Jersey.

Charles R. Smith Jr. is the photographer of *My People*, winner of a Coretta Scott King Illustrator Award, and the author of *Twelve Rounds to Glory: The Story of Muhammad Ali*, winner of a Coretta Scott King Author Honor, as well as co-editor, contributor, and photographer for *Pick-Up Game*. He lives in Poughkeepsie, New York.

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Wesley McFarland:

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Patricia Koop:

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Darren Perez:

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Veronica Turner:

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