Ginny has ten items on her big to-do list for seventh grade. None of them, however, include accidentally turning her hair pink. Or getting sent to detention for throwing frogs in class. Or losing the lead role in the ballet recital to her ex-best friend. Or the thousand other things that can go wrong between September and June. But it looks like its shaping up to be that kind of a year! Heres the story of one girls worst school year ever -- told completely through her stuff.

Features:
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My Personal Review:
This just in: Middle school is HARD. Its bad enough that you have to deal with changing classrooms, let alone changing for P.E. in the locker room in front of classmates. You have to navigate your way between classes and through the cafeteria without losing your cool or your lunch. You have more schoolwork and homework to do than you did in elementary school. Your moods may suddenly shift, and your friends, siblings, and parents might suddenly seem like foreign life forms.

Middle School is Worse Than Meatloaf: A Year Told Through Stuff by Jennifer L. Holm, with artwork and illustrations by Elicia Castaldi, is a unique look at one girls seventh grade experience. It relays all of the fears and concerns of a typical middle school student, but in a very cool format. It really is told through Ginny's stuff: her to-do lists (she likes scratching out tasks as she completes them), her tests and essays, notes to and from her mom, her grandfather, and her teachers, her older brothers hand-drawn comics, even her report cards and bank statements (she makes money baby-sitting, then spends it and ends up with the same balance every month).

The concept is executed wonderfully. Holm and Castaldi have given Ginny a definite life and personality, just through her stuff. Castaldis artwork is
beautiful. News clippings, greetings cards, and store receipts all look authentic. It brought to mind The Baby-Sitters Club Chain Letter book from many years ago. Though the BSC book actually had letters you could unfold, cards you could open, and other trinkets readers could keep, I liked that Middle School was all right here on the page, so nothing could get torn or out of place.

Every single thing written, drawn, or otherwise included on the page is a part of the story. When Ginny dyes her hair against her moms wishes, we see the receipt from the store where she bought the dye and other items, then the receipt from the hair salon where Ginnys mother takes her to fix her hair. When her mother remarries, a newspaper clipping describes the affair. When Ginnys older brother gets in trouble, he draws her comic strips to show what he did and to express his remorse. The comics are rendered by Holms real-life brother, Matthew, who also works with her on the fun graphic novel series Babymouse.

A complete story is told here, just through one girls stuff. Not only is this contemporary and appealing to kids currently in middle school, but it wont feel dated in five years because it is based on fairly timeless themes. Its not about having stuff - meaning its not about the desire to have material items - but rather its what your stuff says about you.

If you havent seen this book, please go find it. Get Holms previous works while youre at it!

For More 5 Star Customer Reviews and Lowest Price:
[ Middle School Is Worse Than Meatloaf: A Year Told Through Stuff by Jennifer L. Holm - 5 Star Customer Reviews and Lowest Price! ]