

# KIRKUS

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# REVIEWS

## TITLE INFORMATION

### **LUCY AND CECEE'S HOW TO SURVIVE (AND THRIVE) IN MIDDLE SCHOOL**

Dana, Kimberly

iUniverse (278 pp.)

\$25.46 hardcover, \$15.42 paperback, \$3.03 e-book

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## BOOK REVIEW

Two BFFs compile a manual for youngsters who must endure the ordeal that is middle school.

Meet Lucy and CeCee, two middle schoolers documenting what they've learned as tweens. Lucy, obsessed with becoming popular, works the social aspect, while CeCee, who finds a B+ unspeakable, focuses on academics. The girls provide helpful tips on everything: fashion, acing exams, passing notes and the most socially acceptable jargon. Along the way, they learn even more about themselves and about one another. Dana's novel (*Cheerage Fearage*, 2012, etc.) is a delightful read. Lucy and CeCee write what they know, so they provide a female perspective. While some chapter's lessons won't be applicable to most guys—Chapter 21's "How to Get a Boyfriend"—the majority of their how-to guides have universal appeal. Some of them are positively inspirational: How to not be noticed by the teacher, which includes using a fellow student for cover; and how to covertly chew gum in class (prerequisites for this lesson include gum and a clueless teacher). But while the girls' teachings are often amusing, what really makes Dana's book exceptional are the girls themselves. As their collective account progresses, their insecurities are gradually exposed: Lucy's "Complexion Reports" occur like weather updates and CeCee develops an eating disorder. These tweens aren't stereotypes; they're girls with sturdy personalities and distinctive backgrounds. CeCee once attended Catholic school, and Lucy's mother is the president of the PTA. The lessons in each chapter can be read in any order, but the intimate touches—diary entries, notes, emails, texts—are a story of two girls maturing and understanding and even fighting with each other. "Lingo Lessons" are sprinkled throughout for readers who get headaches from slang, and parents, take note: The girls' approach to more sensitive issues such as cyberbullying and peer pressure to drink or do drugs is intelligent and responsible.

Lucy and CeCee's target audience may consist solely of tweens, but this is a book that can educate readers of any age.