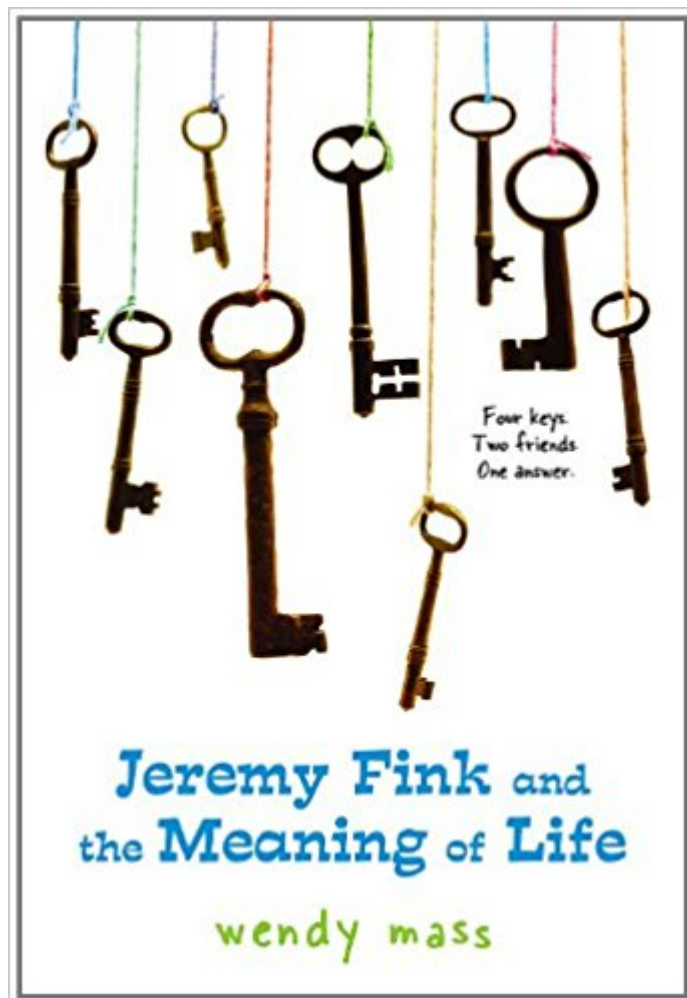


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Jeremy Fink And The Meaning Of Life



Synopsis

In one month Jeremy Fink will turn thirteen. But does he have what it takes to be a teenager? He collects mutant candy, he won't venture more than four blocks from his apartment if he can help it, and he definitely doesn't like surprises. On the other hand, his best friend, Lizzy, isn't afraid of anything, even if that might get her into trouble now and then. Jeremy's summer takes an unexpected turn when a mysterious wooden box arrives in the mail. According to the writing on the box, it holds the meaning of life! Jeremy is supposed to open it on his thirteenth birthday. The problem is, the keys are missing, and the box is made so that only the keys will open it without destroying what's inside. Jeremy and Lizzy set off to find the keys, but when one of their efforts goes very wrong, Jeremy starts to lose hope that he'll ever be able to open the box. But he soon discovers that when you're meeting people named Oswald Oswald and using a private limo to deliver unusual objects to strangers all over the city, there might be other ways of finding out the meaning of life. Lively characters, surprising twists, and thought-provoking ideas make Wendy Mass's latest novel an unforgettable read.

Book Information

Lexile Measure: 710 (What's this?)

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#176 in [Books > Children's Books](#) > Growing Up & Facts of Life > Family Life > Parents

Age Range: 10 - 13 years

Grade Level: 3 - 7

Customer Reviews

Grade 5-7
An elaborately locked wooden box requiring four separate but missing keys

holds the treasure in this modern-day quest. Jeremy's father lived his life preparing for an early death, as foretold by a fortune-teller. He did, in fact, die when Jeremy was eight, but a package from him containing the locked box arrives one month before Jeremy's 13th birthday, the day on which the box is to be opened. With his friend Lizzy, Jeremy searches for the keys while contemplating the words engraved on the box, *The Meaning of Life: For Jeremy Fink. 13th Birthday*. The search for the keys takes the friends around and about New York City, where they meet a large and increasingly convenient range of supporting characters, from members of a spiritualist congregation to a prominent astronomer, all of whom point them toward their own takes on the meaning of life. Mystery and adventure fans will be pulled in by the locked box, and, as a bonus, will get to know quirky, scientific Jeremy and impulsive Lizzy. Some readers might become impatient as the metaphysical quest lengthens, but those who stick with the story will find a warm picture of parental love and wisdom and of a boy growing into his own understanding and acceptance of life.

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The summer he turns 13, Jeremy receives a mysterious box with the engraved words "the meaning of life: for Jeremy Fink on his thirteenth birthday." The box was left by his father, who has been dead for five years. It has four locks, but Jeremy finds no keys to open them. As Jeremy and his best friend, Lizzy, embark on a quest to find the keys, they travel across Manhattan from flea markets to fancy office buildings and museums, searching, as it turns out, not only for keys but also insights into science, religion, art, friendship, and family. The overlong plot lurches from one contrivance to another, and the end is a total setup, but readers will be hooked by the kids' fast, funny urban adventure, as well as by the quest and the "existential crisis." The many open-ended questions make this fun for group discussion: "Why are we here? Is that even the correct question?"

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This book is lovely, and so much better than the movie so worth reading even if your kids have already seen it. It addresses coming of age, but with a focus on the power of wonder. An uplifting and fun story.

What a terrific book. I read it aloud to my 5th graders and they were spellbound. They tell me there's

a movie, but there is no way it could live up to the novel; the characters are so quirky and do such a good job of explaining themselves. No aliens or car crashes, but you won't be disappointed! I wish Mass's next novel was available on Kindle-- Pi in the Sky. Only the free preview is!

A classic, yet modern, fairy tale for all ages. This novel sets forth to find the meaning of life and in the end, it is found! A beautiful journey that can touch anyone, at any age. A must read.

Unlike any other book I have ever read, this one is quite the drama! It has everything a good book needs: Comedy, Drama, Mystery, Pain and a bit of an unknown type of genre. It is almost like a puzzle, which you have to figure out while your reading; so you are reading while trying to figure out something - unknown. Jeremy and his friend, Lizzy, are on a journey to open up a box - a box sent from Jeremy's dead father. They go everywhere, they take all of the opportunities to find it - they do not give up! They went everywhere possible - everywhere - just to find that key, that key, that will open up the box... will they find it? Will they?

We chose this as our "one book, one school" in our middle school. All staff and students were to read it over the summer. It was very age appropriate. The majority of kids told me they liked it.

Wow! My son and I got more than we bargained for with his story that delves into the search for meaning in life through science, religion, humanism, etc. I thought the book got off to a slow start and my son thought it "rambled". However, over all, we were impressed that the book took on these lofty topics in a fun and entertaining way.

Normally, I would never of read a fiction by choice, I had to read for summer homework. But this has to be one of the best books I've ever read! Full of mystery and anticipation that keeps you on your toes. Also, this book will make you think deeply about your life and how you live it. I think me and Jeremy would've gotten along well.

I read this book aloud to 6th graders. I loved it and they were into it too (there is one chapter that gets a bit long for everyone). It was such a good story I cried as I read the end (yes in front of a room full of kids :) I bought the book on tape to play to another group of kids. It doesn't hold their attention like the read aloud did

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