



The Big One-Oh

By *Dean Pitchford*

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Charley Maplewood has never been one for parties? that would require friends, which he doesn?t have. But now that he?s turning ten?the big oneoh? he decides to throw a birthday party for himself. Of course things don?t work out as he plans. In trying to make friends, he ends up inviting the class bully, and that?s before he ruins the cake and sets the garage on fire. Will Charley be able to pull it together before the big one-oh . . . becomes the big OH-NO?

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Editorial Review

From School Library Journal

Grade 3–7—Charley is a master cook, a comic-book maniac, and a basically friendless nine-year-old. When his father sends him an early birthday gift and inquires how he is going to celebrate his big day, Charley is inspired to throw a party. The ensuing story chronicles his attempt to determine a theme, bake a cake, and make enough friends to have a gathering worthy of turning 10. The fast-paced plot will keep readers involved to the end. The novel is peopled with a host of unique characters including a mysterious neighbor, Charley's mother's seedy boyfriend, and an older sister obsessed with working at a fried chicken fast-food restaurant. Readers will enjoy the gross-out details and embarrassing situations in which Charley finds himself during his quest for a successful celebration. The author does a wonderful job of crafting the boy's character within the strange and bizarre events leading up to the satisfying conclusion. It's often very funny, but it's also poignant as Charley's loneliness and cluelessness about how to make a friend are clearly evident. This novel would be especially effective for a class read-aloud or as a choice for reluctant readers.—*Melissa Christy Buron, Epps Island Elementary, Houston, TX*

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Review

Pitchford's debut for kids is sure to be a big hit with readers. -*Kirkus Reviews*

About the Author

Dean Pitchford, author of *The Big One-Oh* and *Captain Nobody*, starred on Broadway in *Pippin* and *Godspell* before turning to songwriting and screenwriting. His multimillion-selling songs include the Oscar-winning “Fame,” “Footloose,” “Holding Out for a Hero” and “After All.” He has been nominated for four Academy Awards, five Grammys and two Tonys. His stage musical adaptation of *Footloose* played over 700 performances on Broadway and is now being produced around the world.

Users Review

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Iona Calhoun:

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