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# Eight Keys

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Editor's Choice:

off

Media type:

Book

BfK Rating:

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'Maybe things would be different when I was twelve. Such is Elise's hope as she faces the challenges of moving into her new middle school, the principal ones being the bullying and teasing to which she is subjected by Amanda, the nastiest of her classmates. An orphan since she was three years of age and brought up by a lovingly benevolent uncle and aunt, Elise - like her best friend Franklin - is in many respects a young innocent abroad in the world of imminent adolescence; the ups and downs of their evolving relationship are traced by LaFleur with appealing poignancy and charm. When her twelfth birthday comes along it brings for Elise a startling and mysterious development in the form of her discovery of a key giving access to one of the rooms in the barn behind the family home. This, in fact, is the first of eight keys for the first of eight rooms, each of which is found to contain a message left in waiting for Elise by her late father and all them intended to ease her entry into the adult world. It is a plot line not without its improbabilities but such are the quality of the writing and the attractiveness of the distinctive details of its rural American setting that the novel will engage the interest of many pre-teen readers. For those of an older vintage, its acute and sympathetic understanding of loss and vulnerability will strike a note of recognition.

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