

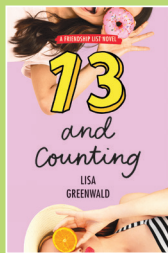
LOYAL TO THE LIST

1. Write at least one letter to each other a week.
2. Do something daring.
3. Master the art of tie-dye.
4. Keep a gratitude journal.



For the first time since they met in fourth grade, Ari and Kaylan are going to separate summer camps—and they'll need a list of 13 and 3/4 ways to keep their friendship together while they're apart. But when "something daring" almost gets them both kicked out of camp—*forever!*—it's time for these BFFs to rethink their loyalty to the list. Could this year's friendship list be their last?

Read all the books in the **FRIENDSHIP LIST** series:



HARPER

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Ages 8–12

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ARI LEANS OVER MY ADIRONDACK chair and says, "Listen, I think the rest of the list should be figured out when we're apart. Stuff might come to us at camp, and we can write each other to discuss it." She pauses. "This just feels like too much pressure to finish tonight, and I really want to play Best Case Scenario." She takes a big gulp of lemonade and then *aaaahs* about the refreshment. "I'm going over to the hammock."

Ari walks away, but I feel frozen in place, unable to move, even though a gentle hammock swing sounds lovely.

"Fine," I reply, feeling tiny droplets of agita creep all over my skin because we'll be apart without a complete list. But maybe it's a good thing; maybe the list will be something to focus on if I get scared or homesick or even more agity. "Let me just read it over, aloud, so we know where we stand."

A FRIENDSHIP LIST NOVEL

13

and

3/4

LISA GREENWALD

HARPER

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1

KAYLAN



IT'S KIND OF AMAZING HOW the human brain works. I am here, in this moment, at the pool, having fun with Ari and the lunch table girls, but inside I'm completely and totally freaking out about leaving home for a full month. Freaking out in a way I've never freaked out before. And I'm pretty used to freaking out. It's basically my middle name(s).

"We were thinking something interactive," M.W. tells all of us. "Go up on the diving board and yell out your list ideas and then jump in and swim over to the group. K? But quick, one after the other."

Ari and I are about to start our fourth list to help us stay close while we're apart this summer. Of course, she's soooooo happy to be going back to her favorite place on earth, Camp Silver, while I'm a looming skyscraper

of agita. I mean, I know it was my choice to go to Laurel Lake Camp for the Arts and focus on comedy. I applied and everything. And I was beyond excited when I got in.

But right now? I'm scared out of my mind. I'm regretting all of that.

Ari and I made our first list of Eleven Fabulous Things to Make Us Even More AMAZING Before We Turn Twelve before sixth grade because we were so nervous about starting middle school and we thought it would calm us down to have a project. Then we just couldn't stop making them. The thing is, we hadn't really planned on doing another list so soon since we just finished the last one, but, well, we couldn't resist. And of course, the lunch table girls want to share some of their brilliant ideas with us.

"I'll go get my phone in the waterproof case so I can record everyone jumping," June suggests. "And then I'll text you guys the video so you'll remember all of our amazing ideas."

"Everyone at the pool will hear," I say, biting my pinkie nail. "But I guess who really cares? We're leaving!"

I laugh my nervous laugh and look over at Ari, praying we can unpack some of this leaving-home agita tonight at our sleepover.

I lean closer to her and rest my head on her shoulder.

She whispers, "Kay! So amazing you're not stressing about people hearing this. You've come soooo far since

freeze dancing at the pool two summers ago.”

“I have, right?” I raise my eyebrows and pull her into a sideways hug. “OMG, Ari, I’m out of control nervous about leaving home and going to camp for a whole month. A month is a realllly long time. Completely freaking out right now.”

“Shhh.” She tries to soothe me. “We’ll talk tonight. I kind of can’t believe they came here with all these list ideas, totally surprising us. Can you?”

“Guys! Stop whispering to each other,” Amirah scolds. “For real. Join the group. We planned this day! We even got you a balloon arch!”

It’s true that they really did go all out with the decorations. They wrapped the lounge chairs in streamers too and got a gold foil A balloon and a gold foil K balloon and an arch of gold and silver balloons that they tied to the trees. It’s all pretty remarkable. I guess they’re really gonna miss us.

“And we love it!” I yell. “Really and truly love it!”

Cami stands up and walks behind me and wraps her arms around my neck. “Kay! I can’t believe you’re leaving. What am I gonna do without you?”

I turn around to face her and whisper, “Don’t say that; it makes me feel bad.”

“Why? You don’t want me to miss you?” Cami asks.

I clench my teeth; I need her to stop. “I don’t know. I’m

a jumble glob of emotions right now and truthfully anything can send me over the edge.”

“Hey, guys!” Cami turns and shouts like she wants everyone at the pool to hear her. “Can we discuss that we’re going into our senior year of middle school in the fall? I mean . . . this is big-time stuff, people.”

“We know,” June groans. “But school just ended and it’s summer. Let’s not talk about the fall. K?”

“K.” Cami rolls her eyes. “I’m going first!”

She runs over to the diving board and stands there for a few seconds like she’s about to make some kind of acceptance speech. Then she says, “Ready? Here are my three brilliant ideas. Actually, wait, I have four. I forgot. Okay, ready?” She pauses for a second before she jumps. “Sneak a gigantic pool float into your bag and use it in the camp pool, dye your hair blue, teach the entire camp a dance you’ve made up, and . . .” She jumps in and screams, “Make a difference!”

We all clap for Cami. She gets out of the pool and grabs her towel off a lounge and comes back to sit with us.

June finishes recording Cami and then hands her phone to M.W. to record. She calls out her list items as she jumps. “Keep a gratitude journal, have a conversation in another language, and this is a no-brainer: get a younger kid at camp to start their own list!”

I look at Ari and she looks at me. Brilliant. All three of June’s ideas are keepers. I know they’ll make it on the

list. Cami's? Not so much. But maybe we'll keep *make a difference*. That feels like us.

M.W. hands the phone back to June and goes up on the diving board, looking sheepish and embarrassed. I'm not sure if it's because her bathing suit is too tight or because she doesn't like talking in front of groups. "I only have one," she says. "But it's a good one. Get two counselors to fall in love." She jumps in and stays underwater for a few seconds and then pops up.

"Ooh!" Cami yells. "I love that one. Wowie!"

I love how Ari and I are on the side of the pool, watching and listening to all of this like it's a show they've prepared for us. I guess it kind of is. I'm still shocked they organized it and got it together. I mean, we didn't ask them to come up with ideas for our fourth list, but we also didn't expect to be working on another list so soon and, well, we are. It's happening. We might as well go with the flow.

"My turn!" Marie says, hopping up from the side of the pool.

"Take it away, Marie Mundlay Burns." I laugh. For some reason, I'm obsessed with saying her full name.

"Write to each other once a week," she says as she jumps. And when she pops up from the water she adds, "And draw a portrait of each other from memory!" She swims over to us. "The second one can be done while you're apart or when you're back home, either way." She

widens her eyes. “Amazing, right?”

“Amazing!” I stand up and shimmy from side to side. “Ah-may-zing!”

Amirah is the last to go. Before she walks over to the diving board, she says, “I’ll admit, I had trouble with this. I feel like I had good ideas for the last list, but this one was tough because I don’t know anything about what it’s like to go to camp or even what happens there or whatever, so I only had two but anyway.” She climbs up the ladder, all chic in her hijab swim cap, and yells, “Do something daring. Master the art of tie-dye.” She jumps and swims over to us. “Also, can this please be the last list? I know I’m not really part of it, but it kind of stresses me out. I’m always a little worried you won’t be able to complete all the stuff.”

“For real?” I ask her, giggling a little. “But it’s not even your thing to worry about.”

“I know.” She bobs under the water and hoists herself up to the side of the pool. “But still. How do you always manage to get it done?”

Ari and I look at each other. “We just do,” we say at the same time. “Jinx.” Everyone cracks up.

“I like your ideas, though, Amirah,” I say. “Don’t you, Ar?”

“Yes!” Ari picks at a cuticle. She seems like she’s ready to be done with this.

A minute later, she gets up to do some jumping jacks off to the side, away from the pool. “Guys, I have so much

nervous, happy, excited energy! Can we pause the list stuff and just have fun? All of your ideas are amazing, but I need your help . . .”

“You do?” Cami tightens up her face. “You never need help with anything.”

I don’t know how it’s possible, but even Cami’s compliments sound mean sometimes.

“Yes, I do,” Ari says, all matter-of-fact. “And I need help now.”

She stops the jumping jacks and sits down on the edge of the pool with everyone else, dangling her feet into the water again.

“Fine. What do you need help with?” Cami asks, leaning back on her elbows.

“Okay, so, don’t hate me because of my feelings that change from minute to minute, but here’s the thing.” She pauses and pushes her sunglasses to the top of her head. “I’m in love with Golfy. I never really stopped being in love with him even though, ya know, my brief love of Jason thing. And I’m so nervous and so excited to be back at camp with Golfy, but what if he doesn’t like me anymore?”

We all stare at her because obviously we don’t have an answer. We don’t even really know Golfy. How can we know if he loves her now or if he ever loved her or anything at all really?

June tilts her head to the side like she’s waiting for

someone else to respond, but then when no one else does, she says, “Ari, hate to break this to you, but I’m pretty sure everyone would like you—boys and girls. You’re gorgeous. You know this, right?”

Ari’s cheeks turn red. “Um, thank you, but I don’t think that’s true.”

“It is.” June smiles. “Also, hello, remember the giant bear thing? That Golfy sent to school on Valentine’s Day? He’s obviously still going to like you when you’re back at camp together. I mean, he just came to see you run the 5K for your last list only a little over a week ago! I feel like you don’t have to worry *at all* about that boy. He is one hundred percent pro Ari Nodberg.”

“Maybe. I don’t know. I just feel like I messed things up,” Ari says. “We didn’t really talk that much when he came for the 5K. And now I’m going to camp with all these expectations and then what if he likes someone else this summer? What if he just wants to be friends now?”

“That would be terrible, I guess,” Marie says, “but how can we possibly know the answer? And what’s the point in worrying about this ahead of time?”

“Yeah, you’re right,” she says, not looking entirely pleased with this help.

I raise my eyebrows, telling her in eye-speak that we’ll hash all of this out at the sleepover later.

She scrunches her eyes back with a half smile.

The lunch table girls are awesome, and so kind to plan this pool day for us, but we need a one-to-one sleepover to prepare for this monumental summer. That probably should have been on the last list, but I guess it didn't need to be.

It's one of those things that goes without saying, without listing.