

Book Review on The In-between by Rebecca K.S. Ansari

Alerts: this story is part eerie historical mystery, part disaster, part emotional loss & trauma, and more. Because of the nature of this tale, I will not write any spoilers here. However, that means a short book review, which also means that you, reader, will just have to check this one out for yourself!

Also: some reviewers have pegged this as a story for 8-12 year olds; while others have proposed it is excellent for early teens. Up to you and/or your family, depending on the amount of creepiness, chills and mystery you are prepared to absorb!

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This story has been described as "haunting, engrossing, and thoughtful." I would definitely give it that description, and so much more. This richly interwoven tale, Ansari skillfully weaves together a story of loss, grief, aloneness, and the mystery involving a weird neighbor girl; and throws in some historical disasters to boot. The combination of story elements just flows.

Twelve-year-old Cooper is feeling overwhelmed, angry & alone ever since his dad left their family to begin a new one. Added to this, he's annoyed by his little sister, Jess, and frustrated at his newly added duty of helping to care for Jess & her diabetes. Added to this is the "creepy" new neighbor girl, who seems to never speak but just keeps watching Cooper – adding further to his annoyance.

When his sister Jess discovers a strange story of a 100-year-old train crash tragedy, Cooper reluctantly agrees to take a look, welcoming the "distraction." This tragic mystery, they discover, is related to one of the dead bodies, a boy, who was never identified. As Cooper & Jess uncover more information, they discover an unbelievable connection to their strange neighbor, as reader, we find ourselves more deeply engulfed in their mystery!

"The supernatural storyline is juxtaposed with Cooper's inner turmoil." (*Kirkus reviews.*) Also by Kirkus, "The increasingly dangerous supernatural mystery (with an exceptionally well-described climax) is intriguing enough.... but the characters and their powerfully thematic emotional journeys are what will make the book linger."

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All things to consider as you weigh the possibilities of reading this engaging tale!

~Janet Wilkins