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A Dog Called Homeless

Liz Kazandzhy

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Book Review

Title: A Dog Called Homeless
Author: Sarah Lean
Reviewer: Liz Kazandzhy
Publisher: Katherine Tegen Books
Publication Year: 2014
ISBN: 9780062122261
Number of Pages: 224
Interest Level: Primary, Intermediate
Rating: Outstanding



Review

A Dog Called Homeless is a story of a young girl named Cally Fisher who wants nothing more than to feel close to her mother who tragically passed away a year previously, but nobody seems to want to talk about her, especially her father. In school Cally is a bit hyperactive, which has a negative influence on her relationships with both teachers and peers, but her character begins to change the day she volunteers in a “sponsored silence” at school. Though it was designed that participants remain silent for just a few hours, Cally discovers something about silence during that time that makes her continue it for several weeks. Also around this time, she discovers a dog that appears to be a stray but that seems to have both a connection with her and her mom, and her family moves to an apartment where she befriends the blind-deaf neighbor boy, Sam, who she learns to communicate with through a kind of touch sign language. Cally’s persistent silence becomes more and more frustrating to her family and teachers, but at the same time, with the help of Sam and the dog she named Homeless, she learns more and more about herself and slowly comes to terms with her mother’s death. In the end, the book wraps up beautifully with all questions answered and all problems resolved.

This is an outstanding book that is easy to read, extremely touching, and packed with interesting and important themes. The author did a wonderful job of writing through the perspective of a child Cally’s age (fifth grade), making it easy for children to understand and relate to. Though the plot started off a little slow, it quickly picked up pace, and the concluding chapters were full of so many surprises and emotional moments that I was in tears by the end of it. With descriptive writing that makes the reader feel like part of the story, and with thought-provoking themes like friendship, loss, love, family unity, and the power of communication, this book is sure to be loved by many.