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A Corner of the Universe

Jess Verzello

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Title: A Corner of the Universe
Author: Ann M. Martin
Reviewer: Jess Verzello
Publisher: Scholastic Press
Publication Year: 2002
ISBN: 9780439388801
Number of Pages: 208
Interest Level: Intermediate, Young Adult
Rating: Outstanding

Review

Hattie Owen is content to spend her summer reading her many library books, painting with her father, cleaning with her mother, and visiting with the boarders who live in her home. She is a quiet girl of eleven years who did not expect anything unusual to happen this particular summer. That is, until her parents tell her that she has an uncle named Adam who will be coming home from the special school he’s lived at for the past ten years. Adam has a mental illness that makes him see the world differently, and Hattie seems to understand him better than anyone else. Hattie learns about acceptance, courage, and family love through her unexpected, bittersweet summer with Adam.

A Corner of the Universe addresses the difficulties and conflicting emotions that parents, siblings, and children face when trying to protect and love a family member with mental illness. Hattie’s character is well-written and believable as she thinks, acts, and experiences the changes in her life as an eleven-turning-twelve-year-old should. This novel is one that impresses you to think deeper on some of Hattie’s inner thoughts and feelings as she navigates her new universe. Ultimately, the message is one of accepting and loving your differences and not judging things you don’t understand. This is an excellent choice for middle grade to adult readers who are looking for an emotional impact, or those who would like to understand more about mental illness.

*Contains suicide and moderate language.*