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Family Tree: The Long Way Home

Leah Christopher

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Book Review

Family Tree: The Long Way Home

Author

Ann M. Martin

Illustrator

Reviewer

Leah Christopher

Rating

Excellent

Level

Intermediate

Pages

214

Year

2013

Publisher

Scholastic Press

ISBN

9781250164018

Dana would much prefer to spend time with her father, Zander, than with Julia, her pesky twin. When Zander dies in an accident, Dana scrambles to find her own identity. Trying to seek closeness to her father, Dana stays in New York City while her mother returns to Maine. Dana, estranged from her siblings and mother, watches as her relationships are altered forever. Facing grief strains Abby and Dana's mother-daughter relationship and trust. The novel ends in mixed emotions: Dana and Julia are reconciled as sisters after an unexpected illness, Abby declines the invitation to Dana's wedding, and Dana and Matthew—who met at art college—are basking in the joy of a new daughter, Francie.

In this sequel to *Better to Wish*, readers discover depth in family relationships that span time and place. Readers see how death and remarriage changes families; they also see how extended family like Aunt Adele can play an important role in an adolescent's life. Cliffhanger questions to be answered in the next installment of the series include whether Abby and Dana will forgive each other and what Dana and Francie's relationship will be like. Although the series cannot claim to be purely historical fiction (juvenile or realistic fiction better describes both novels so far), *The Long Way Home* briefly takes note of current events, such as the death of President John F. Kennedy in 1963, and readers get a taste of life during the mid-1900s. Like its prequel, this novel shines because of Martin's ability to capture coming-of-age experiences.