



2018

Small Spaces

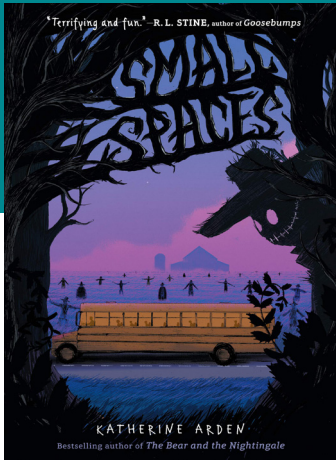
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Book Review

Small Spaces

Author

Katherine Arden

Illustrator

Reviewer

Karen Abbott

Rating

Excellent

Level

Intermediate

Pages

224

Year

2018

Publisher

Penguin Group

ISBN

9780525515029

Olivia Adler has an attitude. She especially dislikes people who make exceptions for her because her mother was killed in a plane crash. When she sees a woman about to throw a book into a pond, Olivia steals the book out of the woman's hands and races away. It is a strange book, and when she begins to read it, she isn't quite sure what is going on. Her class goes on a field trip the next day, and the things in the book begin to make some sense, especially when the bus stalls and they can't get any cell reception. Ollie and two friends head into the woods on their own. Soon they are surrounded by mysterious scarecrows, ghostly apparitions, and a terrifying corn maze. Ollie has courage, and with the help of her friends and her mother's old watch, she knows that she can help them all find their way back home.

Olivia is a great, cranky little heroine. She never quite lets it slip that her mother is dead, or how her mother died, just that things are hard and that she hates it when people give her "sympathy face." She seems to want to get in trouble as if to prove that she can. Maybe that would make her feel more normal—but there is no such thing as normal once she takes the book. There is, however, plenty of well-developed mystery and sustained suspense. The proliferation of creepy scarecrows that come alive at night but freeze during the day is an excellent device to provide readers with something chilling, whether they are moving or not. The major characters are well written and a joy to read about and discover. This adds to the desire a reader feels to keep them safe. There are several unanswered questions that a reader can resolve on their own from the hints provided. This book is a fantastic Halloween read, but works year round for all who love a well-written spooky story.

*Contains mild violence.