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Paper Things

Aylea Stephens

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Book Review

Title: Paper Things  
Author: Jennifer Richard Jacobson  
Reviewer: Aylea Stephens  
Publisher: Candlewick Press  
Publication Year: 2015  
ISBN: 978076366323  
Number of Pages: 384  
Interest Level: Intermediate  
Rating: Excellent

Review

When Ari’s older brother, Gabe, doesn’t want to live with their guardian anymore, Ari chooses to leave with him and they become homeless. Gabe can’t find a steady enough job to get an apartment, so Ari and Gabe switch between staying with Gabe’s girlfriend and two roommates, Gabe’s friend in a tiny apartment, and sometimes a juvenile homeless shelter. All of this change makes it hard for Ari to keep up with school and her friends, particularly when she is trying to apply to Carter, the middle school for gifted students. The only constants in her life are Gabe and her paper things, the people from catalogs she cuts out to be her paper families. When things are getting too hard in her turbulent life, Ari manages to make new friendships and realize that she wasn’t alone through any of what she has been through, enabling her to get out of her homeless situation.

*Paper Things* is a beautiful book that will have the reader thinking more thoughtfully about homelessness. Ari is a strong, thoughtful character in spite of everything she goes through. She’s always positive and tough. Gabe is a great character too, willing to do whatever it takes to do what he thinks is best for Ari, even though he might not be right all of the time. The relationship between Gabe and Janna (their guardian) is never fully explained, so the reader is left wondering why Gabe is putting himself and his sister in such a difficult situation to get away from her. The ending is wrapped up a little too conveniently, but the lighthearted tone of the book makes it so the change from homelessness to not being homeless isn’t jarring. *Paper Things* shows that even though life can be difficult sometimes, there are still people around to help others get through hard times and have reason to hope for a brighter tomorrow.