



Some Places More than Others

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~~Editor's Choice:~~

off

Media type:

Book

BfK Rating:

5

Award-winning author, Renée Watson's new novel is a masterful and warm-hearted paean to family life and discovering who you are.

Amara lives with her loving parents in Oregon. A long-awaited baby sister is on the way. But Amara wants to broaden her horizons and is desperate to go to New York for her twelfth birthday as she has never met her Grandpa Earl and her cousins, Nina and Ava. At first her parents are totally opposed to the idea until Amara comes home from school with a project to find out about her family origins and her mother realises this might be just the opportunity to mend a long-standing rift between Amara's father and grandfather. Amara immediately starts planning all the places she would like to see but when she arrives is rather taken aback at the hustle, bustle and noise of New York. Her cousins are not quite as friendly as she thought they would be either and resent having to take their younger cousin sightseeing. And the estrangement between her father and grandfather does not appear to be improving.

But as Amara travels round Harlem her eyes are opened and she begins to realise the much wider significance of where she has come from, her roots and her cultural heritage as she visits museums, statues and local restaurants. But it is in her Grandfather's home that she makes the most surprising discoveries about her father as a young man and hears first-hand the family stories about her legendary Grandma, Grace. Most importantly Amara learns that families are not always perfect and that forgiveness and acceptance are what matters.

This is an exceptional story of a young girl's coming of age, finding out about her roots and her own place in her family, told with economy and grace. It is both touching and thought-provoking yet never feels preachy. It packs a powerful punch. The suitcase project is a brilliant idea too and I would suggest every school should own their own copy of this book.

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