

Tiny Infinities

J.H. Diehl

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Alice is a strong, determined young girl. As she starts her summer vacation, she is intent on accomplishing two things: getting her name on the record board at the local swimming pool, and getting her dad to move back home.

Tiny Infinities by J. H. Diehl is an extraordinary and unflinchingly honest book. Each character is flawed in some way, and each is trying to make things better. Alice's parents are reorganizing the family into separate households; they do not have the time or energy to devote to their daughter and her complaints. Alice is too young and too hurt to see that she cannot force her parents to be together.

Alice's father's new neighbors include Piper, a child with a disability that no one can diagnose. Piper's parents need help that Alice wants to provide. Alice's new friend Harriet is brilliant but strange; she seems more interested in the fireflies in Alice's backyard than she does in Alice.

As summer progresses, Alice finds joy in swimming and in taking care of the neighbors, even though she is still personally unhappy. She learns that she has a strong backstroke, she learns how fireflies communicate, and she learns to help Piper. Most importantly, she learns some significant lessons about truth and lies, about personal responsibility, and about how individual choices define a life, shaping it in the space between each moment.

Tiny Infinities is both meaningful and memorable, and the lessons that Alice learns in one transformative summer are universal. Diehl's characters will live on in readers' minds long after finishing the book.

CATHERINE THURESON (May/June 2018)

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