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What Stars Are Made Of

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Editor's Choice:

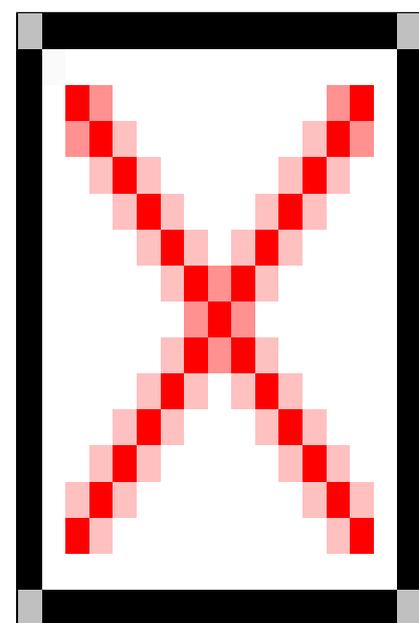
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Media type:

Book

BfK Rating:

3



This semi-autobiographical novel by new young American writer Sarah Allen revolves around twelve-year-old Libby and her experiences of learning how best to co-exist with her Turner Syndrome. Afflicting around one female in every two and a half thousand, all born with one missing chromosome, this leads to reduced height, poor hearing, and a greatly enlarged heart necessitating daily injections. As conditions go, its effects tend to be less visible save to those looking for potential victims for teasing. Unfortunately Libby has several of those in her class at school

She also has a tendency, another aspect of the syndrome, to go on and on once started, of the type that other children find wearying. Her older sister tells her to learn the art of the silent question: something asked only in one's own head when silence otherwise may well be the best option. And while there are some wise and witty moments in this story there are times when a similar type of easing up might also have been helpful too. Overflowing with love for her parents, her sister and her brilliant teacher is all very well but there is too much about it in a narrative that could have done with a couple of extra sub-plot without any need of further pages.

That said, Libby's determination to honour an overlooked woman scientist from the past for her special class project and her adventures in so doing are worth listening to. Her author also expertly captures that particular mixture of naiveté and understanding typical of bright children on the cusp of adolescence. Writing about a condition she knows from her own life, her insistence through her character Libby on the possibility of overcoming different obstacles, physical and other, is moving and admirable. Her novel, although not perfect, deserves an audience.

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