

Beauty in The Eye of The Hurricane

Want a book that successfully mixes interesting topics with an engaging story line?

Hurricane Summer by Asha Bromfield is a coming-of-age story in which Tilla flies to Jamaica with her younger sister Mia to visit their father. In this poignant novel, we follow the journey of Tilla finding herself, who she can be without her father's love, and transitioning from a young teenage girl to a young woman. Bromfield uses a hurricane to symbolise the challenges and changes that Tilla goes through during that summer.

This story touches on many themes which are considered taboo but important to talk about, such as racism, colourism and sexual abuse. Tilla goes to Jamaica but much of her family view her as an 'outcast' and a 'spoilt brat' because of her different life in 'foreign'. This is interesting as family is normally viewed as a safe place to be, with people who will love you unconditionally. However, Tilla finds that people like her Aunt Herma and cousin Diana are constantly finding ways to hurt her, physically and mentally, lashing out because of the class and cultural difference. Bromfield depicts the theme of classism in a way that causes the reader to think about how it can affect us.

However, Bromfield also uses family to show the importance of finding your place. Her cousin Andre makes her feel like she belongs. Despite their differences in level of wealth, he views her as his cousin and invites her to places and events where she can make more friends. As a society, we can learn from this book and be more welcoming to improve and have a better future. Hostility towards others is the root of many problems.

Among the many books I have read over the years, this is one of my favourites because we as the readers can learn alongside Tilla. Bromfield makes Tilla feel like a realistic and relatable character. Unlike some other YA novels where the main character will have a large amount of plot armour and they don't face a lot of adversity, in *Hurricane Summer*, Tilla copes with a lot of hardship. However, she is still able to stand up for herself and find herself. The book focuses mainly on Tilla's relationship with her father; I wanted to know more, and wished there were flashbacks or memories comparing how her mother is a constant in her life.

The writing structure of the book is very engaging. It's fast paced and there's always something to think about. Bromfield does a wonderful job of extending the story over pages without it feeling dragged out.

Overall, I would rate this book a 5 and recommend it to others who feel like they are struggling with understanding the journey that they need to take to overcome adversity in their life and find themselves as this book gives us a first-hand experience as we follow the story of Tilla expertly crafted by Bromfield.

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