



Title: A Certain Slant of Light

Author: Laura Whitcomb

Description:

In the class of the high school English teacher she has been haunting, Helen feels them: for the first time in 130 years, human eyes are looking at her. They belong to a boy, a boy who has not seemed remarkable until now. And Helen terrified, but intrigued is drawn to him. The fact that he is in a body and she is not presents this unlikely couple with their first challenge. But as the lovers struggle to find a way to be together, they begin to discover the secrets of their former lives and of the young people they come to possess.

Reviews

Washington Post:

A Certain Slant of Light, Laura Whitcomb's lyrical and utterly compelling first young adult novel, features two ghostly young protagonists who become lovers -- yes, in the flesh, though it takes a bit of work for them to get there.

Whitcomb juggles numerous narrative and thematic devices with astonishing skill, all the more remarkable in a first-time novelist: first love and grown-up grief; the stirrings of sexual passion after an incalculable loss; blame, betrayal and forgiveness; the power of art to redeem even those who seem irrevocably damaged.

A Certain Slant of Light is marketed as a young adult novel, but its themes and its language are unapologetically grown-up. By the end of the book, Whitcomb's star-crossed lovers are confronting the moral repercussions of their passion. Can James and Helen restore Billy and Jenny to their rightful bodies, giving them each another chance at life, while retaining their own abiding love for each other I held my breath, hoping that this wonderful new novelist could pull it off. She did, which only made me want to read this haunting book all over again to see exactly how.

School Library Journal:

Whitcomb writes with a grace that befits Helen's more modulated world while depicting contemporary society with sharp insight. In the subgenre of dead-narrator tales, this book shows the engaging possibilities of immortality -- complete with a twist at the end that wholly satisfies.

Horn Book Review:

Having sailed through establishing her original premise, Whitcomb successfully navigates a complex plot that after many dramatic turns is resolved both cleverly (in the case of providing Billy and Jenny with a continuing relationship after they each return to their bodies) and happily. "Just walk up to your hell and give it a push," James tells Helen, and together they find their own heaven.

Publishers Weekly:

First-time author Whitcomb infuses Gothic romance with modern-day drama to create a highly sensual, supernatural story of two spirits caught in purgatory. The author's poetic prose, capturing the spirit and sorrow of the two unearthly protagonists, will likely have a mesmerizing effect on readers.

Richie's Picks, Great Books for Children and Young Adults:

Alternating between sensual, gritty, dark, delightful, and frightening; between atmospheric fantasy and down-and-dirty contemporary YA realism, *A Certain Slant of Light* is absolutely awash in literary quality and an award winner waiting to happen.