

Bridge to Terabithia

Jess Aarons is a fifth grader who excels at running, has a secret love for drawing, but is much restrained by the ways of the world. He is always cautious to avoid getting into trouble, therefore almost always behaved himself, and rarely gathered enough courage to do anything risky. However, that all changed when Leslie Burke moves in nearby. She is nice to chat with, and has a way with bullies and teachers, but most of all, she seems to bubble with imagination. Together, they invent a magical kingdom named “Terabithia” and crowned themselves as king and queen. The only way to this imaginary country is to swing across a creek on a rope, and only in this sacred and enchanted place could they be free of the troubles at school. Under Leslie’s influence, Jess becomes more creative, more imaginative, and braver than he used to be. They are much more than best friends. What they share is the other hidden half of themselves, and by helping each other, both of them learn to cope with complicated situations, and moreover, face the numerous difficulties they meet in life.

However, things didn’t turn out to be the happy ending one expects. On a dreary, rainy day, Jess goes on a trip to the museum with his gorgeous music teacher, Miss Edmunds, only to discover that Leslie is dead when he returns. It appears that the rope connecting them to Terabithia broke while Leslie was trying to cross the rising creek. She drowned. Jess is devastated by this news. He can’t bring himself to believe the fact that the cheerful, carefree girl he had once known is now gone forever. His emotions drifts from shock and disbelief to anger and self-blame, but as he comes to understand the ways of life, and calm down enough to think about all Leslie has taught him, he finally overcomes his sadness, though there will always be a dull throbbing when he is reminded of Leslie, the girl who changed him. In the end, Jess learns to accept the reality of Leslie’s death, and to continue on with his life.

“Bridge to Terabithia” is definitely a page-turner, and though it seems to describe the friendship between Jess and Leslie, I feel as if it is actually telling us that we all have a veiled character that no one knows about, and like Jess and Leslie, has a place to ourselves, real or make-believe, where we can put down our burdens and feel free to unleash the other part of us that we are not allowed to be when dealing with the outside world. It is also a very touching book, and I couldn’t stop the tears spilling down my cheeks as I neared the tragedy at the end of the story. I have read this book more than once, and still, I feel my eyes welling up with tears every time I get to the part which Leslie dies. It is a spellbinding book full of love, friendship and wisdom. Therefore, I would certainly recommend it to readers who are looking for an adventurous and touching tale. “Bridge to Terabithia” is not only enlightening, it also stimulates insight and wiser thoughts within us. In my opinion, this is a magnificent book that readers of all ages will enjoy.