



Across the Divide

Books Reviewed:

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Reviewer:

[Janet Fisher](#) [3]

~~Editor's Choice:~~

off

Media type:

Book

BfK Rating:

5

It is very refreshing to read a novel for teenagers that deals with things of the mind, moral attitudes to issues and how it affects them. This is such a story. Olivia's mum is a 'peace activist' and when she ends up being arrested, Olivia goes to stay with her Dad on Lindisfarne. Her parents did not marry, not in fact her father's choice, as Olivia finds out on this holiday. Combined with this, things at school where there has been a move to start a cadet force, have set her on a collision course with not only her mother's beliefs but those of Aidan, a boy with whom she has grown up. She has moved out to live with her paternal grandparents, one of whom is a vicar but also in the army reserve and has served in Afghanistan and who signs her consent form to join the cadet force. On the island Olivia encounters an old fashioned boy with whom she strikes up a friendship, but he is from the time of the Great War. The story tells of Olivia's coming to terms with her mother's inability to see any point of view but her own, Aidan's Quaker beliefs, and the behaviour of some of her fellow students, and ultimately her decision to arbitrate a decision about the cadet force.

This is a thoughtful, well- argued story of a girl trying to work out things in her own mind, finding out how to be her own person instead of being part of the pack. Olivia finds out that some people see things only in their own terms without even trying to understand someone else's point of view. Her interaction with William dealing with his own issues illustrates Olivia's experience completely, linking it with a past much in the public mind at this the centenary year of the ending of the Great War. This is a very good novel indeed and hopefully will encourage other young people to think hard about the issues that impinge on their lives.

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