



***See You at Harry's* by Jo Knowles**

ISBN: 9780763664558 (Paperback); 9780763659943 (E-Book)

Candlewick Press, 2012

*Age Range: 10 and up (Suggested by Publisher)

Grade Range: Grade 7 and up

BOOK SYNOPSIS

Starting middle school brings all the usual challenges—until the unthinkable happens, and Fern and her family must find a way to heal.

Twelve-year-old Fern feels invisible. It seems as though everyone in her family has better things to do than pay attention to her: Mom (when she's not meditating) helps Dad run the family restaurant, Sarah is taking a gap year after high school, and Holden pretends that Mom and Dad and everyone else doesn't know he's gay, even as he fends off bullies at school. Then there's Charlie: three years old, a "surprise" baby, the center of everyone's world. He's devoted to Fern, but he's annoying, too, always getting his way, always dirty, always commanding attention. If it wasn't for Ran, Fern's calm and positive best friend, there'd be nowhere to turn. Ran's mantra, "All will be well," is soothing in a way that nothing else seems to be. And when Ran says it, Fern can almost believe it's true. But then tragedy strikes, and Fern feels not only more alone than ever, but also responsible for the accident that has wrenched her family apart. All will *not* be well. Or at least all will never be the same.

REVIEWS AND PRAISE

"*See You at Harry's* offers, on the one hand, a deft and delicate handling of commonplace traumas—how to negotiate bullying on the school bus, what it means for everyone in a family when a teenager comes to terms with his sexuality—and, on the other, the enormous and mercifully rare drama of a child's accidental death. And while the distinction between these narrative elements—their disparate weights—may seem to an adult huge, Knowles is aware that a child's perspective is somewhat different." —[The New York Times](#)

★ "Sit back in a comfortable chair, bring on the Kleenex and cry your heart out. . . . Prescient writing, fully developed characters and completely, tragically believable situations elevate this sad, gripping tale to a must-read level." —[Kirkus Reviews](#), **starred review**

"Through the eyes of Fern, Knowles introduces a cast of distinct, fully developed characters who exhibit authentic emotions, foibles, and expressions of love. Readers will feel deeply for the family in the aftermath of the plot's heart-wrenching turn, which pulls them closer together." —[Publishers Weekly](#)

"Highly recommended for readers dealing with their own grief issues, but any teen can benefit from the reminder that family can be simultaneously humiliating and invaluable." —[Booklist](#)

“This is a powerful, spare portrait of a flawed but loving family that experiences the unthinkable—and survives.”
—*The Horn Book*

“Knowles paints a moving and authentic picture of a family grieving.” —*School Library Journal*

“Sometimes your heart has to break before it can heal. *See You at Harry’s* will make you weep, but it will also fill your soul with the extravagant gift of love. This may be the most beautiful book ever.” —Lauren Myracle

“Heart-breaking, soul-sustaining, and all-around beautiful.” —Rebecca Stead

“*See You at Harry’s* is one of the most beautiful, moving books I’ve ever read. Full of laughter, love, and tears, it will break your heart and put it back together again, with a little more light, a little more hope than there was before.” —Kate Messner

“This story of an imperfect but loving family and how it holds together through shattering tragedy as well as everyday complications is full of true heart. Jo Knowles’s love for her characters shines through on every page.” —Sara Zarr

“*See You at Harry’s* is a beautiful, deeply moving story—one never shying from the flawed truths that come from being part of a big, messy family. I finished the book the way I do every Jo Knowles novel: holding it close, not wanting to let go.” —Nova Ren Suma

“Jo Knowles writes a family you know in your bones—their routines, rituals, petty gripes, recurring jokes—which is why it about kills you when something equally real and terribly unexpected threatens their very existence as a family. Thankfully, Knowles brings hope—first a flicker, then a big, booming beacon of it. I loved it.” —Linda Urban

“Jo Knowles has crafted a shimmering, pitch-perfect novel of love, loss, and resilience that finds the beauty in the small joys of everyday living, the comfort in the often-infuriating bonds of family, and the gentle hope that grows from the heartbreak of tragedy. Beautiful and life-affirming.” —Libba Bray

“The story, as told in Fern’s voice, grabs at the heart with its unfathomable anguish. Uniting many separate plots, the author creates flawless flow, in-depth characterization, and dialogue that all give superb insight into an average, loving family having a difficult time. Powerful and gut wrenching, *See You at Harry’s* by Jo Knowles is heartrending.” —*New York Journal of Books*

“Readers will take these authentic characters to their hearts in this powerful story of loss and love.” —*Washington Parent*

AWARDS AND ACCOLADES

- A *New York Times* Editors’ Choice
- A *New York Times Book Review* Notable Children’s Book of the Year
- A *Kirkus Reviews* Best Young Adult Book of the Year
- An American Library Association Notable Children’s Book
- An American Library Association Rainbow List Selection
- A YALSA Best Fiction for Young Adults Selection

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Candlewick Press
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- A Bank Street College Best Children’s Book of the Year
- A National Council for Teachers of English Notable Children’s Books in the Language Arts
- An Indie Next List Selection
- A Crystal Kite Award Winner
- A Goodreads Choice Award Nominee
- A Cooperative Children’s Book Center Choices List Selection
- A Capitol Choices Noteworthy Book (Washington, DC)
- A Maine State Library Cream of the Crop List Selection
- A Black-Eyed Susan Book Award Nominee (Maryland)
- A Truman Readers Award Nominee (Missouri)
- A Rhode Island Teen Book Award Nominee
- A South Carolina Junior Book Award Nominee
- A Morning Calm Medal Nominee (Korea)
- A Dorothy Canfield Fisher Children’s Book Award Master List Selection (Vermont)

MEDIA AND RESOURCES

- [Classroom Ideas](#)
- [Reading Banned Books](#) (Vermont Lt. Governor David Zuckerman with Jo Knowles and Senator Dick McCormack)
- [Vermont Public Radio Author Interview](#) (about book bans)
- [Vermont Public Radio Author Interview](#) (on the Dorothy’s List Award)
- [Red Wine & Blue Author Interview](#)
- [Book Browse Interview](#)
- [Simmons University Alumnae Feature](#)
- [Make Kindness Your Superpower Interview](#)
- [Writing Process, Writer’s Advice, and See You at Harry’s Interview](#)

AUTHOR STATEMENT

[From Vermont Public Radio interview with Jo Knowles:](#)

To quote Matt Krause, [books] might make students feel “discomfort, guilt, or anguish.” That’s what books are supposed to do. I mean, that’s what good literature does—it makes kids feel, it makes kids think, it helps them see other points of view and other experiences. And that’s what makes them have more empathy for others. If we removed all books that did those things, we would have the opposite.

And suddenly, now, they refer to other people as an “other,” or different. I have kids who read *See You at Harry’s* and ask me, *Why did you make Holden different?* Holden is a gay character in the book. Well, he’s not different. He’s a human being. But when kids are not exposed to all kinds of identities, that’s how they view other people who aren’t like themselves. And I think that’s very problematic.

*A NOTE ON AGE RANGES

A publisher-suggested age range covers the gamut of readers that publishers envision using the book, whether for independent reading, family sharing, group study, or in other ways. Educators have the best sense of the appropriate age range for the diverse learners they work with and understand these ranges vary depending on a book’s intended use.

