

A Million Things

By Emily Spurr

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Blurb:

Rae is ten years old, and she's tough. She's had to be - life with her mother has taught her the world is not her friend. Now suddenly her mum is gone and Rae is alone, except for her dog Splinter.

Rae can do a lot of things pretty well for a kid. She can take care of herself and Splinters, stay under the radar at school and keep the front yard neat enough that the neighbours won't get curious. But she is gnawed at by fear and sadness; haunted by the shadow of a terrible secret.

Lettie, who lives next door, might know more about Rae than she lets on. But she has her own reasons for keeping the world at arm's length. When Rae finds out what they are, it seems like she and Lettie could help each other.

But how long can a friendship last when it's based on secrets?

Tender, funny, heartbreaking - *A Million Things* is a story of grief and resilience, told with eloquent simplicity. In brave, spiky Rae, Emily Spurr has created a character you will never forget.



Lamont Review:

This is a truly heart-wrenching story that you will not want to put down!

Rae is ten, and finds herself alone, apart from her dog Splinter, who is her rock and always by her side. She is resourceful, resilient and smart and, despite what is going on in her life, is determined to not let the outside world in or ask for anyone's help.

However, the inner battles of fear, sadness and anger that she faces on a daily basis are never far from the surface and as time goes on there is a sense of desperation about the situation she is in. Memories of her Mum, both good and bad, are always on her mind and she is determined to try and keep the house a home, but this is becoming increasingly difficult.

Her neighbour, Lettie, who Rae has always thought of as a 'nosy old goat', is having her own battles. The unlikely relationship that forms between these two is an absolute highlight, and ultimately, it is this friendship and the conversations and insights into life that they have, that end up helping both of them.

Rae is a character that will stay with you long after you finish this book. She is brave and sassy, but underneath it she is really just a little girl who wants to be loved. This is a highly emotional read that has a real mix of themes including grief, resilience, community, friendship, suicide, hoarding and mental illness, and will best suit readers aged 15 and up.

Reviewed by Sam

Teacher Notes prepared by the publisher are available for this title on our website.