**Turtles All the Way Down**

**By John Green**

Scene 1

Aza impresses me when she puts Davis’s feelings into consideration when Daisy says they should hand over the picture to the police for the reward. I think this is an admirable action because although she hasn’t seen him in years, besides when she and Daisy canoed to his estate to investigate, she still thinks about the situation and how it could affect Davis. This reveals Aza’s loyalty to others, and how she puts others feelings before her benefit. Aza “worried about betraying him” even though she “barely knew him” (77). Aza’s inner thoughts prove that she is selfless, and she fears deceiving others for her benefit. She “kept thinking about the case” and how “it *was* valuable information the police didn’t have” (77). Aza seems to have the traits of an overthinker, and she thinks “maybe Davis would hate me, if he ever found out” but ponders “why should I care about what some kid from Sad Camp thought of me?” (77). Aza wants to do what’s right but what’s right to her may not be right for someone else involved in the situation. One of her weaknesses is being unsure of herself and she thinks maybe she “missed something in the police report” so she “went through it again” (77). Aza is a selfless person who can also be an overthinker and needs reassurance in some situations.

Scene 2

I feel impressed when Aza visits Dr. Singh to discuss what she is dealing with and how she is feeling. Aza opens up to Dr. Singh and admits she “hasn’t been great” and deep-down she feels she “isn’t in control” of her own thoughts; almost “a kind of imprisonment” (165-166). This showcases her openness and honesty and divulges her trust towards her doctor. Aza is sincere and isn’t afraid to reveal her true feelings. When Dr. Singh asks her if she’s telling her everything, and what she’s scared of saying, Aza thinks to herself that she is “embarrassed of it” but also feels saying it “might be dangerous somehow” (165). In this scene, Aza wants to be completely truthful and honest because she knows that her doctor wants to help her, but she fears embarrassment and the impact of her words. Aza is a strong communicator who regularly thinks about what her words and actions could result in. Her main weak point is feeling as if she’s not in control of her own thoughts and that she may be “only a set of circumstances” (165).

Scene 3

When Aza confronts Daisy about how the character was practically based on her, I am impressed because Aza usually slides these kinds of things under the rug, but in this situation, she stands up for herself. When Daisy tells Aza that her “anxiety does kind of invite disasters” and she’s “exhausting and self-centered,” they have a back and forth argument in the car (214-215). Aza also wants to be heard and wants her and Daisy’s friendship to go back to the way it was. Towards the end of their argument, Aza exclaims to Daisy to “stop talking” because she hasn’t “shut up in 10 years” and that she’s “sorry it’s not fun” hanging out with her because she’s “always stuck in her head” (217). I am proud of Aza for sticking up for herself and confronting Daisy even though it was challenging for her to find her voice. Aza wants Daisy to understand how she feels and that they both have their own problems they’re going through. She fears that their friendship is splitting, and that Daisy doesn’t understand her point of view. Aza’s actions reveal her courageousness and bluntness. I feel Aza’s words prove that she is a determined and honest person. This scene also showcases that she responds to confrontation with confrontation which isn’t always the best way to go.

Character Appraisal

Aza Holmes struggles with anxiety and OCD. This causes her to have “thought spirals” where she doesn’t feel in control of her own thoughts. Throughout the story, Aza is a dynamic character because she comes to an epiphany. After she is hospitalized following a car crash, she is caught drinking hand sanitizer because she cannot stop thinking about bacteria entering her body. This confrontation causes Aza to come to the realization that she needs help and support and she isn’t doing well. Aza starts taking a new medication and can accept that her mental illness is always going to be a part of her, and she just has to overcome the challenges one step at a time.

Themes

The major theme this story explores is mental health. The story takes us through the life of Aza Holmes who struggles with OCD and anxiety. Her thoughts turn into a never-ending spiral which deters her from living her life like she would like to. Another theme that ties into this is friendship. Daisy; Aza’s best friend, sometimes finds it difficult to deal with Aza because of her mental illness and it builds a block between them getting along.

Personal Connections

A personal connection I can make to Aza’s conflicts is that she overthinks many situations. Although Aza suffers from OCD and anxiety which I cannot personally connect to, I would say I overthink and overanalyze a lot of things which is one the conflicts presented throughout the story. I similarly handle these experiences. For example, we both ponder what would happen if something were to happen and make up situations in our heads. I believe Aza Holmes is someone we should strive to be like because she works through challenges that come her way and she cares about others a lot. Aza isn’t perfect but no once can be so I believe she is someone we should admire and look up to.

Star Rating

I would rate this novel a 9/10. My reasoning for this is because I thoroughly enjoyed the plot of the story and the character development of the protagonist; Aza Holmes. Taking us through the perspective and daily struggles of a teen living through OCD and anxiety, I feel as reading it is an eye-opening experience. I felt that I wanted to keep reading each time I finished a page and it was a well-written story.