



Thin Space

Jody Casella

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Ever since the car accident that killed his twin brother, Marshall Windsor has been consumed with guilt and crippled by secrets of that fateful night. He has only one chance to make amends, to right his wrongs and set things right. He must find a Thin Space—a mythical point where the barrier between this world and the next is thin enough for a person to step through to the other side.

But, when a new girl moves into the house next door, the same house Marsh is sure holds a thin space, she may be the key—or the unraveling of all his secrets.

As they get closer to finding a thin space—and closer to each other—Marsh must decide once and for all how far he's willing to go to right the wrongs of the living...and the dead.

Thin Space Details

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Author : Jody Casella

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From Reader Review Thin Space for online ebook

Jessica Ciarcz says

I wanted to rate this book higher, I really did. But the truth is, I can't. I was bored out of my mind until the last 50 or so pages. I was planning on putting it down so many times but I kept reading it only because it was part of a read-a-thon.

I couldn't find myself relating to any of the characters at all, and even though I felt bad for them, I just didn't care about their lives. The MC was a dick the majority of the time, which I could sort of understand because he's dealing with grief, but it was just too much for me.

The ending and the plot twist were both really good. I did not see it coming at all, but I just couldn't enjoy the rest of the book, which is why I gave it such a low rating. So unfortunate cause it could have had so much potential.

Kelly says

*A head's up to readers: if you pick up an ARC of this, do not read the jacket copy unless you want the big twist ruined for you. Because the referenced titles on the copy will tell you exactly what happens, if you're not interested in the story being spoiled for you.

Marsh's twin brother died in a car accident a few months ago; Marsh was the driver. It was only a couple months later when Mrs. Hansel, Marsh's neighbor, died. She was the older woman that Marsh and brother Austin used to do community service for, and she was the one who introduced the boys to the concept of the thin space -- the portal where souls enter and leave the body, where it's possible to traverse time and space and be reunited with those who've passed on. Now that both Austin and Mrs. Hansel are gone, Marsh has become the crazy kid, looking for this thin space.

He's convinced it's in Mrs. Hansel's old home, since she was born there and died there.

The grief consumes Marsh, and he's finding himself acting out of character. He's being aggressive, getting involved in altercations, wandering around barefoot, careless. When Mrs. Hansel's home is sold to a new family, he finds himself making quick friends with Maddie, one of the new kids who moved in. He's not so much taken with her in a romantic sense; he knows that getting to know Maddie means he can get into the house and seek out this thin space.

Of course, he begins to fall for her. It's slow but earned. However, it's not without complications -- Logan, Marsh's girlfriend, isn't ready for them to break up. And it's not entirely clear whether or not Marsh is ready for that relationship to end either. Because that relationship reminds him of Austin and Austin's relationship with Katie. The four of them would double date.

The four of them had been on a double date the night Austin died.

Little by little, Marsh opens up to Maddie, though, and he learns that she, too, is dealing with loss in her life. That she, too, would love to find a thin space to reconnect with her departed father. And the night that Mrs.

Golden, school counselor, wanders into Maddie's house on the promise of delivering treats, Maddie discovers that the counselor is also looking for the thin space. And she has found it.

(view spoiler)

The writing here is good, and the pacing is spot-on. The story kept me hooked and eager to see how much Marsh would reveal and how much he'd hold back. I wanted to know what would happen, what could change, the moment he got to see Austin through the thin space. The story was wholly satisfying and solid, and it'll appeal big time to readers who loved the parallel worlds of Emily Hainsworth's *Through to You*, as well as those who love the whats-real-what's-supernatural elements of Nova Ren Suma's books (it is not as lush in the writing, but it is similarly structured in plot). This is indeed a book that tiptoes the line and begs the reader to wonder whether or not there is a thin space or whether or not that thin space (view spoiler)

I see this being really popular with readers who love ghost stories, who love stories about grief and mourning, and who like there to be just a tiny touch of romance. This isn't about finding and falling in love with someone else. It's about finding and appreciating the love that's already around you and coming to terms with what it is YOU have to do to maintain and sustain it. For Marsh, it meant games of truth and games of deceit. For Marsh, it's about dealing with grief in its many ugly, confusing, frustrating forms.

Longer review to come. I see this book getting some Morris talk. It's satisfying, well-written, and compelling, with loads of reader appeal.

karen says

looks like it's just me out here, not liking this book. which is fine - i don't like crowds anyway. imma just stretch out my arms and wave 'em around and tell you all the things i didn't like about this book.

now, some of them are specific to me. i have twin-fear/suspicion, i have hang-ups about people rolling up in public spaces with bare feet, and i find it very difficult to connect emotionally with books. the first one is only half-serious, the second is dead-serious and comes from years of having to explain to people that we are meant to be civilized and the civilized do *not* run around a bookstore barefoot in manhattan, and the third one is something i wish i could change, but it's not going to happen. i love reading. i love books. i love them for their characters and stories and structure. but when i read, it's like all my emotions turn off completely. i am never scared by books, i have cried maybe twice as an adult reader, and i rarely ell oh ell. it's just how i'm wired. my thinking-bits do not connect to my feeling-bits.

and this book requires you to be able to access your emotions in order to fully appreciate it.

marsh has just lost his twin brother austin in a car accident in which he was driving, but not at fault. even though he wasn't to blame, he feels crippling survivor's guilt, and has not been able to readjust to life on his own, without his other half. he drifts through his days, having lost contact with his former friends and his girlfriend, unable to communicate with his parents and focused on a mystical goal: to discover a "thin space" between this world and the afterlife and find his brother in whatever comes next. he learned about the concept of thin spaces from mrs. hansel, an elderly neighbor who has since died. she told him about the ancient celtic belief that whenever a soul passes out of this world in the exact same place where it entered, a thin space forms, allowing a living being to slip through and enter the afterlife. she was convinced that she knew the exact spot where her soul entered, and, near death herself, she promised to create such a space for

marsh, dying on that spot, so he could visit his brother.

the only catch is that the thin space can only be entered if the living person is barefoot, so, unable to get into his neighbor's home after her death, marsh has been walking all over town barefoot ever since the death of his brother, hoping to find another thin space. school, the bus, the streets, the hospital, the football field - in the dead of winter, his feet and legs turning red and numb, marsh has been searching for a way in.

fortunately for his nerve endings, his neighbor's house is sold to a family with two kids who end up at marsh's school, one of whom is a pretty girl named maddie he decides to befriend in order to gain access to the thin space mrs. hansel promised to leave for him.

i think a big stumbling block i have with this book is the way the characters behave, particularly maddie. let's just look at the situation objectively, as an outsider, without any insight into marsh's thoughts/feelings/inner turmoil/objectives and without that automatic sympathetic connection we feel with the character in whose head we find ourselves when reading. let's approach the situation as though we are maddie. she is new to the school, trying to put her past behind her, and making an adjustment to a whole new world in terms of surroundings and climate, and dealing with her overprotective big brother and her mother's rapid-fire romantic life. and the first person she gravitates towards is the troubled dude who wanders around school barefoot, not talking to anyone, except to snap crossly, conversationally distant at best, and getting into physical fights pretty regularly. he is clearly unstable, and it's also clear her brother has cause to be so overprotective - maddie seems to make poor choices. maddie is a sweet, friendly girl, so why her first instinct is to invite the barefoot kid spouting off about celtic rituals and doorways to the afterlife into her home beggars belief.

and this: "*Hey, do you ever wish you could go back in time, do something over?*" seems a particularly insensitive question to pose to a boy who she knows has just lost his twin brother. like many of the conversations in this book, it seems to exist not as an example of how people would actually interact, but in order to push the characters to their next episode or to heighten marsh's distress. his girlfriend stays away from him to give him space until it becomes necessary to the plot for her to come back in. bullies and resentments spring up at psychologically-opportune checkpoints, adults and backstories surface as needed. it's less organic than orchestrated and it doesn't do the plausibility any favors.

as far as the twist - it was set up so early on, and so clearly hinted-at, that there was absolutely no element of surprise or reveal when the time eventually came.

i dunno - i am surprised this has such high ratings on here, but it might just be because other readers are able to feel for marsh in a way i myself cannot, and are responding to the grief-narrative like empathetic humans and not a horrible robot.

not bad, just not luminous.

~◊~**Doxi(ela) ♥ ?? love & semi-colons~◊~ says**

3.5 stars

I was expecting a book about the paranormal, but that's most definitely not what I got. This is not a book about ghosts and spirits; it's a book about grief, memories, and letting go.

Twin brothers, both high school football players and academic superstars, are in a car accident. One survives; the other doesn't. The brother who lives is haunted by the accident, by what he did and didn't do. He becomes obsessed with finding his dead brother by using a "thin space," an entryway or gate to a kind of in-between place where the living can cross to the other side and visit with the dead who are lingering there.

He believes that a thin space, which according to Celtic beliefs is formed only if a soul enters and leaves the body in the same physical space, can be found in the house of an elderly woman who recently passed away, a woman for whom he and his brother did odd jobs. This same house is now home to 15-year-old Maddie, the new girl in town, who moves in with her mom and older brother. A friendship develops between the boy and Maddie, and together they try to find a working thin space.

What worked in this book was the portrayal of a boy coping with the loss of his twin, his other half. His pain, anger, and withdrawal felt raw and real, and his relationship with Maddie was tender and believable.

What didn't work, and what detracted from the book, was the various scenes of high school angst: the angry ex-girlfriend wanting to get back together, the jock who insists on picking fights, etc. There was lot of this, too much. We also have the well-meaning school counselor who keeps showing up at Maddie's house for reasons of her own, and a backstory that's supposed to explain why Maddie's brother is so protective of her (but which felt undeveloped and flat).

The book is slowed-paced, and very little happens until 90 percent in. Yes, 90 percent - it takes a while to get there, and by the time you do, you feel like if you read one more fight scene, you'll scream. But don't give up! There are reveals at the end, which I started anticipating fairly early on, but which are powerful nonetheless.

And the last line of the book - well, it was brilliant; such power in one little word. I won't give it away; read it and find out!

💮Geraldine💮 says

Honestly, this book has been on my shelf for at least a year. I decided to pick it up to fill the time, until my one book arrived in the mail.

I've tried to get into this book multiple times, but just kept on putting it off. It was an impulse buy from Amazon. The price tag was good and the premise seemed interesting at the time.

There's one thing about this book that doesn't make sense, logically. That really bothered me, because it seemed like such a simple thing to do. The main character, Marsh, never wore shoes or socks. The reasoning behind this was because he wanted to be able to pass through thin space. It just seems so much more reasonable to put on some socks and shoes and then take them off when a thin space is near. I mean, his feet were obviously in distress from not wearing any socks or shoes. I don't know, it just seems illogical.

I really didn't enjoy this book at all. This book is so dull. The characters are mundane and uninteresting to read about. I didn't really like any of them for that reason alone. I tried to sympathize with Marsh, because he lost his brother, but I found him to be incredibly odd and lifeless.

The beginning kind of dragged a bit. The ending was okay. Just not my cup of tea.

Cath says

This review, is in fact, extremely spoilery.

I cannot even begin to express my emotions for this book in words. I loved it so so much. The main character revealed so little to us, and it made so much sense why he wouldn't want to think about or talk about certain things that the reader may have wanted to know. Do we want to know about the night his brother died? Absolutely. Does he want to relive it just for the sake of satisfying our curiosity? Nope. I found myself analyzing everything that he said, to try to put the pieces together. This was a kind of book where every once in a while it had to put it down just to process everything, or to try to fit things together to guess at the things we didn't yet know. Unfortunately, my over analyzing did lead me to discover the plot twist before it was revealed. And oh my gosh, what a brilliant plot twist it was. How whenever Austin spoke of his brother, he referred to him as "my brother" or "my twin" or just "him" which to the reader, makes enough sense. He's grieving. He doesn't want to say his brother's name. But this managed to conceal the fact that his dead brother's true identity. Genius!! Jody Casella is actually a genius, and I canny stress this enough. I feel like even if my mind wasn't blown when the plot twist was revealed, the foreshadowing alone is enough to blow my mind. Everything fits together so PERFECTLY. I just can't seem to get over this. Overall, this book was thrilling, exciting, and a really fun read. I'll most definitely be recommending it in the future.

Dianne says

This is powerful! This is haunting! This is why I love to read! **Thin Space** by Jody Casella is like being trapped in a dream, and until someone finds the way to pull you out, it goes on and on. Honestly, I have read this twice, it was that good, that intriguing and I picked up even more to like about it the second time around! Grief, guilt and loss can blur our existence, warp our perspectives and cause us to block out the truth, while searching for unknowable answers, believing in a **Thin Space** between the living and the dead, something an elderly neighbor swore existed. Marshall, grieving over his guilt in the loss of his twin, undergoes a huge mental change that manifests itself in unusual and odd behavior. He needs to "talk" with his brother, make things right, but no one believes in the **Thin Space**, until Maddie comes along. Does it exist? Can Marshall lay his ghosts to rest? What about Maddie?

Jody Casella has packed a lot of story, strong characters and enough tear-jerking intensity into her writing, that you are almost sad to get to the last page, as I said, I've read this twice and can, without a doubt, see read number three on the horizon! Ms. Casella has created a fresh and deeply moving story that will stick with you long after the last page with its great pacing, well-developed characters and a touch of the supernatural!

An ARC edition was provided by NetGalley & Beyond Words Publishing in exchange for my honest review.

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Age Recommendation: 12 & up to Adults

My Rating: 5 Stars

Available from: Amazon / Barnes & Noble

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Lauren says

Every once in a while you come upon a book that completely rocks your world, and *Thin Space* by Jody Casella was one of those books.

When I first heard about *Thin Space*, I knew I had to read it. I'm always looking to read more books featuring a male POV. Plus the concept of a "thin space" was fascinating. Then Jennifer Castle, one of my FAVORITE YA authors, burbled it, making everything a tad more exciting. Therefore, when *Thin Space* ended up in my hands a few weeks ago, I jumped right in.

There's a lot of amazing things going for *Thin Space*, and one of those is the concept. As mentioned before, I was completely taken aback by the concept of thin spaces. I had never heard of them before; however, I was curious to see how Jody would intertwine the idea into the book. Luckily, she did a great job.

Mixing together the main character Marsh's knowledge of them and the fact that he had just lost his twin brother brought so many raw emotions the book. Marsh's dire need to find a thin space jumped off the page and came to life from the start as did his sadness, loneliness, and anger over his brother's recent death. I felt so much for Marsh to say the least. I could understand his want to connect with his brother, to make everything better, just as I'm sure anyone who has ever lost anyone close to them will be able to. At the same time, I was rooting for Marsh to be able to move on and allow himself to be happy again, and thankfully, that started to happen with the addition of Maddie, the new girl in town. Sweet but just as broken as Marsh, Maddie was someone I adored from the start. I loved the scenes that featured her, especially when they involved her helping Marsh. However, what I loved most about their relationship was that it didn't focus on romance or insta-love. Instead, it focused on friendship really and people connecting in the worst of times. It was an awesome change from the typical YA book.

Jody's writing was also great. I loved the way in which she developed the plot as well as the big reveal towards the end. I was never sure of what was going to happen next, especially when it came to Marsh's big secret. When it was finally reveled, I was completely thrown for a loop. In some ways, it made perfect sense (there were so many clues and hints toward it) but in others it completely flabbergasted me, making me love this book all the more. I also have to add that I loved how well she captured the feel of winter. As I write this review, it's nearing the end of July; however, no matter how warm it is outside, the descriptions in this threw a chill at me, making me feel like I was right there with Marsh and Maddie on their journey to find a thin space.

Heartbreaking yet hopeful and beautifully written, *Thin Space* has added a new favorite author to my list. I sincerely hope Jody Casella doesn't stop writing such emotion filled books anytime soon.

Grade: A+

Stormy says

This review first posted on Book.Blog.Bake.

I started reading this book on March 22, 2013. I finished on May 6th. For the month and a half I was “reading” this novel, I was thoroughly uncaptivated by the story Casella was telling, which is a shame, because it’s actually fairly well-written, and it’s gotten really glowing reviews. It’s become one of those instances where I wonder if I read the same book as everyone else, because I found *Thin Space* poorly paced and the middle section of the novel dragged for me enough that I considered not finishing it. Ultimately, I’m glad I did, but I had quite a few issues with *Thin Space*.

If this novel was being rated on the last 10% of the story alone, it would be a solid five stars. The ending has everything I ever want in an incredible novel— a great twist(even if I saw it coming), emotions so intensely cathartic without being sentimental, and a feeling of firm resolution without everything being wrapped up in a neat bow. I love books about siblings probably more than any other relationship, and the ending delivered on that.

However, there was quite a bit of words I struggled through before I reached that 90% mark. Mainly, I was just bored. The mystery in this book didn’t seem much like a mystery to me, as much as I love the idea of a teenage boy who has lost his brother trying to find a thin space. For the most part, Marsh’s character fell flat for me, and the twist that comes at the end is fairly easy to spot if you’ve been paying attention. The plot in the middle of the book consists mainly of Marsh and Maddie, the girl mentioned in the summary, walking around without shoes trying to find a thin space. There’s a lot of walking in this book, and not much of a destination.

Basically, this is plot summary of the book for me:

Introduction to car crash and dead twin. Marsh walks around barefoot a lot, searching for a not-very-well-described “thin space”. Marsh walks some more. He meets a girl, Maddie, who’s also dealing with things. Marsh walks around some alone. Marsh walks around some with Maddie. Marsh tries to walk around barefoot in Maddie’s house to find a thin space he “knows” is in the house. Marsh walks around some more. Plot twist, emotional impact, the end.

The dynamic between Marsh and Maddie is kinda strange. Sometimes I really liked their friendship and thought it was headed for something more, sometimes I thought there WAS something more that they were both denying, and sometimes I thought it was just a strange pairing. I normally like the whole “pair-the-misfits-together-and-show-them-they’re-not-alone” theme, but I’m not a hundred percent sure it worked for me in *Thin Space*.

As mentioned before, I really like sibling relationships, and that was probably the biggest aspect of *Thin Space* that I truly enjoyed. Obviously, one of the siblings isn’t actually present due to the car crash, but the entire story line does revolve around the twins, and Maddie and her brother Sam serve as a second story line. This wasn’t the book for me, but it wasn’t bad by any means, and I would recommend it to people who like books about siblings, about misfits, or perhaps even about journeys. This isn’t really that emotional book considering the subject, so if you read hoping for that(as I was) you’ll probably be disappointed.

Final Impression: Even though I can see the appeal of *Thin Space* for many readers, it did not have that same appeal for me. It had a good start and an absolutely superb ending, but unfortunately I found the

majority of the book lacking in pacing, emotions, or mystery. It had a great basis with the sibling relationship as a focused, but felt lackluster to me.

Disclaimer: I was provided an advanced copy of this book by the publisher in exchange for an honest review.

Suneha says

2.5 Stars

This was not a bad book, really. I enjoyed the second half very much. It was kind of a thriller and kept me on my toes. But, given the fact that the first half was extremely slow paced and I considered DNFing this book several times, I can't give it 3 stars. Also, the twist was predictable and I saw it coming even before I had reached half of the book, which is also a reason for the low rating.

Overall, it was a nice read but the slow start and the constant urge to add it to my DNF pile made me give it a low rating.

Frank DePascale says

There is a plethora of good, structured books, and this is one of them. The book is called *Thin Space* and it is science fiction. *Thin Space* is written by Jody Casella. It is This book has a fairly interesting plot and something new always happens. There are twists and unexpected plot points in it that make you want to read on. I feel like the novel was executed in a very well way that was easy to understand. That is why I liked it so much.

This book was good, but with everything that's good, there is something that isn't so good. With that being said, I wasn't really interested into the first half of the book. It seemed kind of repetitive and tedious. We were just listening to what Marsh was thinking. He clearly wasn't at his... best. Nobody talked to him, and he didn't talk to anybody. By the second half of the book, we knew a lot about Marsh, but not too much about the other characters. By the time Maddie started to talk to him, she got him to reveal some deeper stuff about his character and we slowly got to see Maddie's story unfold and thicken. It was good to see that she joined Marsh in the search for the thin space. By now, I started liking the book. It was beginning to seem like more was going on, there were some deep conversations between the characters, and there is a HUGE twist at the end. I didn't see it coming at all. The plot twist made me think about it for a while. This book was very interesting, and that is good.

In conclusion, this book was a fun read and I really enjoyed it once it got near the halfway mark. If you want an interesting book to enjoy, then pick up *Thin Space*. I promise it will not disappoint. There are plenty of interesting things inside of the book. It Will also leave you asking "What did I just read?" because what happens will want to make you go back and reread it a few times.

Hallie says

I very much liked the liminal nature of this book, with the reader kept uncertain as to whether the thin space really *does* exist, or whether the characters who believe it does are just looking for a way to cope with

grief. The big, shocking twist didn't surprise me at all, but that wasn't a problem. The only thing I thought was a bit lacking was that there was a rather easy resolution to some of the problems at the end. However, the after-that-part ending left the protagonist with one of the least easy resolutions I've read in a long time, so full marks for that.

C.G. Drews says

Oh my gosh...wow. I was going to start with a long sentence about why this book had my rapt attention and I was deeply and emotionally involved in the psychological journey of Marsh as – But then, I thought, “NAH. LET THE FEELS SPEAK.” So you get “Oh my gosh...wow!!!” And a bunch of exclamation marks (like this: !!!!!)

I LOVED this book! (Surprise!) The combination of real characters, freakishly good writing voice, and a plot to die for (literally, in some cases), I was in love. As a bookworm (read: somewhat obsessed and devoted entirely to all things literature), I get giddy with happiness when I find a book that means my quota. This one got ticks in ALL the boxes. (‘Scuse me while I hug it.)

Okay, so the writing voice. Voice is a really hard thing to capture in books. I feel some books overdo the “teen tone”, while others get a good medium. But THIN SPACE rocked the voice aspect. I loved this writing! My gosh, it flowed out of Marsh like the awkward screwed up teen he was. Not easy to pull off. PLUS, this book dealt with grief. It is dang HARD to write grief properly. There's such a fine line between spending a book mopping or being too unemotionally affected. Again, THIN SPACE got an A+. Marsh's balance between recovery from grief and just everyday thinking was perfect. Sad, but perfect. (He had right to be sad.)

Characters? Maybe I harp on too much about characters...but I LOVE them. They're the flesh and blood of a book (literally, okay?) and if they're flat or boring, then the book is lost (R.I.P. cookery books). You know I'm going to say it, but what the heck. I LOVED THE CHARACTERS, TOO. Marsh is the narrator. He's 16-years-old, just lost his identical twin in a car accident, and he's in a fog. Of grief. His voice is tragic, awkward, and so poignant I honest-to-goodness thought he could be a real person. Maddie is the new neighbour. She's cute and understanding, a soft kind of personality. But she has this freaking-annoying-way-too-much-testosterone brother who wants to beat Marsh's head in for talking to Maddie. I dislike the brother (Sam) by the way. After the accident and Marsh dived into nothingness, Marsh lost most of his friends. Heck, he lost his life by not dying, if you know what I mean. People give him space, but at the same time, they judge him. It's so sad, but it's so realistic.

I tossed up what genre this book would be too: paranormal? Contemporary? It's a contemporary feel, but with the mystical element of “thin space”, which is (in a nutshell) a “portal” between this world and the dead one. You can only find it in places where someone has been born AND died (not the same person, though). And you can only find it with bare feet. Hence Marsh spends half the book sliding around barefoot. Why does he want to find “thin space”? Um, dead people are there. YOU figure it out. At the end of the book, I honestly believe this IS a contemporary. It's about dealing with grief and psychological escapes. It's about creating your own healing as well as dealing with things. Is there such a thing as “thin space”? Maybe if you believe there is.

Now, I really, really want to spill right now and tell you – But I won't. (God bless me.) SO. I'll leave you with two things.

1. I knew the ending. I did. I swear, I knew it from about 30% in. This is somewhat disappointing to me as a reader. That say, I am also a writer. As a writer, I critically analyses plots as I read (so I can be a better writer). The twist is not obvious. No way. It blew me out of the water, and I'd already figured it out! Just, let me say, it knocks you down. LOVE THIS ENDING. (Love this book, but I won't keep repeating myself...nah, I probably will. Hold onto your socks.)

2. I write long reviews about books I love.

You're welcome. Now why are you still here?! GO GET A COPY AND READ IT.

Thanks to NetGalley for the eARC (in exchange for an honest review).

Rose says

This turned out to be a compelling read, although I had my doubts at first. Having been a middle-and-high-school librarian, I was afraid that this was going to turn really dark like so many YA books about death can do. However, this didn't happen, and I think that the book will have real appeal to many teens (and possibly adults who work with and/or care about teens, like me).

Marshall has mostly recovered -- physically, at least -- from the car accident that killed his twin brother Austin, but he is psychologically traumatized. So much so, in fact, that he is completely and utterly focused on finding what his elderly, dying neighbor called a "thin space." This is a space through which one can enter the next world and so commune with the departed. Marshall is desperate to see Austin again -- and to change places with him.

Changing places is something identical twins often do for fun, but Austin and Marshall rarely did this. So why is Marshall so intent now on changing places with Austin? Is it guilt over the accident? Yes, he was driving, but it was a drunk driver who hit their car; he wasn't at fault at all. Is it that he can't bear the grief of his parents any more? Does he feel responsible for that? Is he simply depressed and looking for escape? It's not until near the very end of the book that the reader finds out -- although there were a few clues along the way.

Coinciding with Marshall's search for the thin space is his growing friendship with Maddie, the new girl in school who just happens to have moved into the house vacated by the elderly neighbor -- now dead -- who told Marshall and Austin about thin spaces in the first place. Strangely enough, she becomes his thin space partner, helping him figure out where a thin space may be and even going so far as looking for thin spaces, herself. She has her own reasons for doing this. In some ways, Marshall and Maddie are using each other for their own individual purposes, but the friendship they form while doing so eventually supercedes the selfish motives they at first hide from each other. Along the way, they deal with the usual "stuff" of teen life: bullying, girlfriends, family issues, loneliness.

The biggest drawback I found to this book, reading it for myself, is that the story is sometimes a bit confusing, especially when it comes to Logan and Kate, Marshall and Austin's former girlfriends. Which girl went with which twin? Herein lie the clues to the mystery of why Marshall is so determined to change places with Austin -- but the confusion for the reader doesn't clear until the book's end, and I think that this way of obscuring Marshall's reasons didn't quite work. Perhaps teen readers will feel differently, but it seemed a little clumsy to me.

I am certain that teens will find this a good read. My only caution would be that the theme of changing places with a dead person -- impossible as we know that is -- is in some ways tantamount to suicide, and those adults who work with teens (parents, librarians, teachers, etc.) might want to keep that in mind if they suspect a certain reader to be vulnerable to a suicide attempt.

Overall, a really interesting story, well-told.

Rose says

Jody Casella's "Thin Space" is a story of loss and grief. Be prepared to bring out the tissue box, because it's not without moments that kick one at their core. For me, this was a personal read because it talks about a character who experiences the loss of their twin. As a fraternal twin myself, I couldn't imagine losing my sister in any measure. She's been a part of my life for almost 30 years. She's my best friend and maybe even more than I can explain in mere words. I knew going into this novel that it was probably going to resonate with me on the subject matter in itself, but I honestly had no idea how much. Nor did I realize just how well the story came across on its own terms.

Marsh lost his identical twin Austin three months before this story takes off, from a terrible car crash that left him and his family broken in more ways than one. For Marsh, it's like he's lost a part of himself, and he wanders between desperation, depression, anger, identity issues, and wondering what his life measures up to. All sentiments I could feel for in the spectrum of the story. But there's a bit of a catch to this. Marsh believes he can find a way to reach his brother again, through a Celtic legend that was told to him by a neighbor who passed on as well. He has to find a "thin space" - a link between the world of the living and the world of the dead. He believes it's the only way to reach his brother one last time. His neighbor told him that one of the ways to reach the world is to find the space and walk barefoot into it. So Marsh tries to find a "thin space" everywhere he can possibly go, even walking barefoot on pavement, through snow, and other areas. Sometimes even to the point where his feet are raw.

Suffice to say, people around him think he's crazy. Either that or in such a state of grief, they don't know what to do with him.

Marsh finds himself compromised to a point when he realizes a new family's moving into his deceased neighbor's house. The daughter of that family, Maddie, ends up in his company and the two have a complicated relationship of hidden truths and understanding of grief while Marsh continues his search for a thin space. But there are other factors to consider, such as the fact that Marsh is neglecting his old girlfriend, crossing boundaries with Maddie's brother in the mix, and acting up in school where he'd previously been a good student, even where he used to be on the football team, but fell out of it.

Maddie makes an unlikely union with Marsh to find a thin space, while also wanting to use it for her own aims. The two eventually find it, but both receive answers that they did not bargain for in the measure of things, and it's a coming of terms that really hits home.

I think after a point, I suspected the end point of this story, but it still managed to shock me with the reveal. It was very well done, and a nice punctuation of grief that straddles the realistic and the supernatural, though very light on the latter. The ending comes across as something of a new beginning, a coming of terms, and a

realization of grief from something that Marsh can't run from anymore. It's clear, from the encounter that comes with Marsh finding his brother in the thin space, that he has to come to terms with the reality, and progress from there.

I'll admit this story made me shed tears when it was all over. It hit that far home with me, and I'd certainly applaud Casella for weaving an important tale like this so well, for its contemporary elements as well as its punctuation on grief and the ways that a boy copes with losing his identity, in more ways than one.

Overall score: 4.5/5 stars

Note: I received this as an ARC from NetGalley, from the publisher Simon Pulse.
