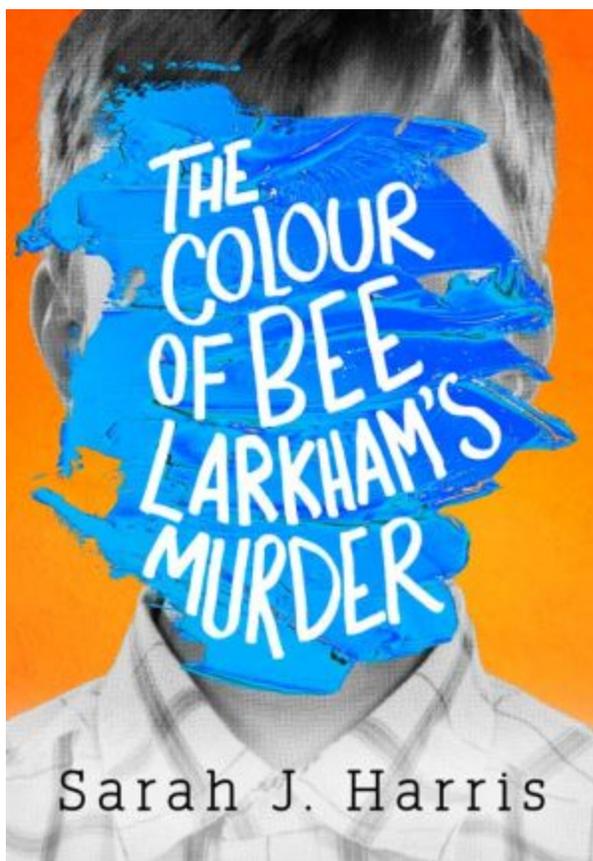


LoveReading Reader reviews of The Colour of Bee Larkham's Murder

By Sarah J Harris

Below are the complete reviews, written by LoveReading members.



E.A. Rhodes

A murder described in colours not words – by a boy with problems. This gripping story is like nothing you've read before. Each character comes to life on the page and in your mind.

Wowee! An intriguing, mesmerising story of a few weeks in a boy's life. Jasper's world is shaped in a completely different way to yours or mine – but very quickly you will find you are absorbed into the world of colours Jasper sees and has to cope with day in and day out.

You and I would find it difficult to understand how to cope with a local murder, never mind not being able

to recognise faces or voices, but this is what a young teenage Jasper has to do.

Bee Larkham is Jasper's new best friend, they share a love of colourful birds and beautiful music.

Nevertheless, Jasper confesses to her murder.

From the first sentence you will be gripped with this intriguing story. Very quickly you will find that you can't put this book down! It's the sort of story

where you want to find out the truth of what happened, you want to keep reading, you want to help Jasper as he tries to cope with life's problems, never mind the extra problems he has to cope with every hour of the day.

This story is unlike anything you have read before. A fascinating slice of a totally different life, and you will be right in there with all the characters. You will smile, you will be sad, you will find yourself talking to Jasper, and all the while you will be drawn into the colours, the paints that Jasper has no option but to use.

Lynne Packer

I loved this book. It is a beautifully written book told with humour and sensitivity through the eyes of a young boy who sees life through colours.

Some books you just fall in love with before you even read them and this is one of them. I loved the title, and book cover and just knew it was my kind of story. I didn't want to put this book down even though I knew I wouldn't want it to end either

This is a beautifully and sensitively written story about the murder of Bee Larkham as told through the eyes of a young boy called Jasper. This is a brilliantly unique story as Jasper has autism and sees life through colours. This story touches on a number of complex issues as the truth of Bee's murder unravels but it does it sensitively and in a way readers can relate to.

Overall this is a great debut novel and I for one look forward to reading more from the author.

Amanda Keeling

Reeled me in hook, line and sinker. Loved the wonderful colourful descriptions and Jasper's innocence. Combined with a mystery that I was itching to have solved. Brilliant!

This book is full of all the hints and hues of a world that can only be seen by the main character, Jasper. He has Synaesthesia which is a manifestation of colour to accompany sounds, especially voices, which is helpful when you can't recognise people's faces. He is often misunderstood and finds people very confusing due to his learning difficulty but he finds solace in his colours and his routines. The descriptions of his colourful world would be enough for me to

want to gobble this book up but throw in a good murder mystery too and you've got me hook, line and sinker.

It kept me guessing right to the end. The reveal was actually a surprise, which is a rarity for me in mystery books these days. I couldn't get enough of Jasper and how he saw the world. A really enjoyable read.

[@TheBookGeekBoutique](#)

E.L Norry

Sarah J. Harris has created a brilliant cast of three-dimensional characters. The thirteen year old protagonist Jasper has autism, synaesthesia and facial blindness, so we can't help but root for him.

This is certainly reminiscent of The Curious Incident of the Dog In the Night-Time whose main character was an autistic boy.

From the second I saw the colourful vibrant cover, and the intriguing title, I knew I wanted to read this book.

In The Colour of Bee Larkham's Murder, Sarah J. Harris has created a brilliant cast of three-dimensional characters. The thirteen year old protagonist Jasper has autism, synaesthesia and facial blindness, so we can't help but root for him from the get go.

The prose was accessible and a pleasure to read. Although the novel ran a little too long, this was compensated by Jasper's engaging voice.

I guessed the murderer in the first fifth of the book which reduced the tension to some extent. However, the story was involving and towards the end I found I couldn't put the book down. I yelled out loud to Jasper more than once! It didn't matter too much whodunnit as to how and why they 'dunnit'.

If you love a strong narrator, realistic fully realised characters and a stonkingly good mystery then you'll enjoy this book!

[@Ilovetolurk](#)

Charlotte Walker

This is not a quick read, although it is very interesting.

Told from Jasper's unique point of view, you experience first-hand through the

description of the characters and the navigation of the plot how synesthesia has an impact on Jasper and those around him.

*I feel the style of the plot is similar to *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Nighttime* and could also appeal to fans of *The Shock of the Fall*. This is because at no point do you feel that the narrator knows more than you do. You will find yourself working alongside Jasper to find out what really happened to Bee.*

When the free-spirited Bee Larkham moves in across the road, Jasper is immediately drawn to her colours and her taste in music. They spend a lot of time together watching the wild parakeets nesting nearby, and these flashbacks are described in Jasper's innocent / naive voice. But Bee was killed, and it is heart-wrenching reading as Jasper struggles to find the courage to paint exactly what happened in order to work out who did it. Jasper saw the killer, but when faced can't be recognised and voices can be camouflaged, how do you work out who killed Bee Larkham?

This is a good book. It does take time to read as it requires you to pay attention to the minute details throughout, but I would highly recommend it!

Alison Burns

This is a very original take on a murder mystery. It also gives you some insight into the realities of living with the little understood conditions synaesthesia and face blindness.

*Unique and original. I'm sure these words will be used by everyone who reads this novel. As the story is told by a boy on the autism spectrum, there are inevitable comparisons which will be made with *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Nighttime* and at the start of the book that was my take on it. However, as the story developed, I was drawn in and found myself trying to see the world through Jasper's eyes - and it's a very scary place to be.*

What exactly happened to Bee Larkham? And what part did Jasper play in her fate? Even Jasper doesn't really know but if he is to understand the events of that night, he needs to paint them. The colours will tell him the truth.

This is a very original take on a murder mystery. It also gives you some insight into the realities of living with the little understood conditions synaesthesia and face blindness, and of living with a person who has these conditions.

Cath Sell

With characters more colourful than a reader would normally expect this is a charming, if off-beat mystery and kaleidoscopic trip into the life of thirteen-year old Jasper.

The hero of this book, Jasper, is 13 years old. He has learning difficulties, face-blindness (he doesn't recognise himself never mind anybody else) and he has inherited synaesthesia from his, deceased, mother (he sees everything around him in colours and shapes specific to the sounds he hears.) Not your classic unreliable mystery narrator but one that is a little different.

Jasper's world, and the setting of the book, is very small - school, a few houses in Vincent Gardens, the street he and his Dad live in, and the Police Station. Jasper is an inveterate 999 caller! His world is populated by some characters from school, a few neighbours, the police and wild-and-exotic parakeets. Jasper watches them all using his binoculars....

The murder is solved using all of Jasper's skills and logic and not our own. He is a delightful if frustrating protagonist. The other characters are colourful in more ways than one.

This book comes at you like an intensive paintballing game where you, the reader, are always on the receiving end. You are battered by colour.

It is an intriguing and enlightening book - enjoy and learn!

Bernadette Scott

An unusual murder mystery told by Jasper, a boy who sees sounds as colours and recognises people by the “colour” of their voices.

*I was initially sceptical about this book – the premise is very similar to *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night*; an autistic boy suspects a murder has taken place. However, I was soon immersed in an unusual and compelling story. Jasper (the protagonist) is not just autistic – he also has face blindness and synaesthesia (he “sees” sounds as colours and recognises people by the “colour” of their voice). As a result he has a unique way of interpreting events which makes him both an unreliable narrator but also allows him insights which others may miss. The book opens with Jasper and his father at the police station being interviewed about neighbour Bee Larkham’s death. Bee was an unconventional music teacher and was not popular with all the neighbours. However, she and Jasper established a connection based on their common love*

*of the parakeets nesting outside Bee's house. The story of what leads to Bee's death is told through Jasper's eyes and as a result the reader has to do a certain amount of reading between the lines – things and people (including Bee) are not always as Jasper believes. The novel is both entertaining and thought-provoking, and the last few chapters in particular, as the story draws to its close, are compelling. **A thoroughly enjoyable and thought-provoking read.***

Beth Kemp

Intriguing novel using complex voice to create suspense and uncertainty. Well worth reading!

*I enjoyed Bee Larkham, finding Jasper's narration intriguing and unsettling by turns. There was more than the odd resemblance to *The Curious Incident*, and I occasionally found myself wishing that autistic children could have more varied representation, but Jasper's presentation here is both sympathetic and realistic (no questionable 'super skills' tropes, for example). It is clear that the author has conducted considerable research into face blindness and synaesthesia, and how these colour Jasper's life is rendered particularly effectively. This was a well-paced and interesting story, that nonetheless taught me a lot by experiencing Jasper's voice. It will be interesting to see how the synaesthesia and face blind community respond to it.*

The plot is well-put together and extremely well told, filtered through Jasper's complex voice, which leaves you to work out exactly what must have - or could have – happened when and to whom (or by whom). The roundness of characters that are being described through such a filter is quite impressive, and it is good to see that Jasper is not presented as unemotional, or having heroic family who 'put up with' the challenge of a disabled son.

I would definitely recommend this if you find the premise interesting, as I did.

[@BethKemp](#)

Sue Frances

Funny, original and moving. A highly recommended novel!

I really liked this book. I found it to be very original. I can't remember reading anything like this before. It was both funny and sad.

The story tells us of Jasper, a thirteen year old boy with Synaesthesia. A condition which means Jasper sees everything in a rainbow of colours. But one Friday Jasper sees a new colour, the colour of murder. How can a boy like Jasper find out what happened on that fateful Friday?

Agnieszka Higney

A novel about an autistic boy-detective who sees colours and loves parakeets-interesting, but annoying!

Similar to Mark Haddon's The Curious Incident of The Dog in the Night-Time this is a murder mystery written from an autistic pre-teen boy's point of view. Feels very much overwritten, could be shorter and you wouldn't miss anything. I felt if I read one more mention of parakeets, i would shout! Jasper is a 13-year old boy with autism, who can't recognise faces and sees colours instead of people or noises/sounds. Very annoying main character - Jasper and the main female, Bee were constantly involving themselves in feeding parakeets or playing loud (Alien) music. I didn't have much sympathy for neither of them or the constant mentions of weird colours-they are not simply yellow, red, brown etc. But yellow custard with lumps, yellow French fries etc. I see the attempt made here to bring us closer to autism and its variations. The underlying issues of paedophilia, sexual abuse and even murder were secondary and felt quite weird with this set up. Not sure would I recommend this book. Thank God for the short chapters, which sped up the reading process!

Andrea Rayner

This book is a page-turner that draws you in right from the start. Jasper is an extremely engaging character, but not a reliable narrator. It will keep you guessing right until the end.

Jasper is an extraordinary boy. He has synaesthesia. This means that when he hears words and sounds he sees an amazing range of colours. However, he also has prosopagnosia or face blindness which means he cannot recognise people's faces – even his dad's.

Jasper lives with his father on a quiet street, and life is pretty routine. But then Bee Larkham moves in to her mother's house across the road and the parakeets come to roost in her garden. Jasper loves the parakeets and would do anything to protect them. This includes anything Bee asks him to do. But then one Friday, everything changes. Jasper discovers a new colour – the colour of murder. He

knows that something dreadful has happened to Bee. Is it his fault? He remembers a knife and blood. What did he do? And did his father cover it up? Jasper needs to find out what happened, but everything is starting to unravel. If only he could remember people's faces ...

The Colour of Bee Larkham's Murder is a page-turner that draws you in right from the start. Jasper is an extremely engaging and interesting character, but not a reliable narrator. His synaesthesia, autism and prosopagnosia add to the sense of mystery and keep you guessing a right until the end.

Carneika Washbrook

If you enjoyed reading *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time*, read this book. It has the same vibe and tone, but the author has matured in her writing.

From the first page of this book you get a sense of mystery and confusion that makes you want to keep reading. It's a murder mystery where you're not sure the author knows where she's going with the story until she gets there. Right down to the way each chapter is dated with a colour reference makes it feel like you are reading someone's diary.

Written from a young teen's point of view, not only is it interesting to read, it gives you a real sense of perspective. There were moments where you can almost see what it was like to look through Jasper's eyes. Facial blindness isn't something we tend to know much about. But the vivid description of seeing in colours makes you want to learn more.

*If you enjoyed reading *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time*, you'll absolutely love *The Colour of Bee Larkham's Murder*. It has the same vibe and tone, suitable for younger and older readers. But the author, seems to have matured in her writing, maybe because she's writing through the eyes of an older character.*

[@carniecreek](#)

Catherine Purcell

How difficult would your world be if you couldn't recognise your close family and friends? Jasper Wishart, 13 years old, has developed strategies to help him. His dad wears blue shirt, blue jeans, always..and the colour of his voice is muddy ochre. Because alongside his prosopagnosia (face blindness) Jasper also

has synaesthesia, he experiences colour with sounds and words and each voice is as unique to Jasper as fingerprints. So **when Bee Larkham (sky blue) disappears Jasper is haunted by the colour of her murder (ice blue crystals with glittery edges and jagged, silver icicles).**

Confused by the police response, Jasper sets about piecing together the events leading up to Bee Larkham's murder, he needs to re-paint his memories, "I will force the colours to tell the truth. One brushstroke at a time."

As Jasper forces himself to remember and repaints his memories this quite extraordinary murder mystery reveals itself layer by acrylic layer.

Thoroughly enjoyable, immensely interesting, moments of heartbreaking sadness. A triumph!

[@hushedtomes](https://twitter.com/hushedtomes)

J.E. Burton

Wow what a book. Like nothing I've read before.

It captivated me from the start and I found it hard to put down. Jasper is autistic, but also has face blindness and synaesthesia and 'sees' the sounds of the world as colours, and recognises people's voices by their colour.

He knew who had murdered his new friend Bee Larkham, but the colours were confusing for him and it took a long time for him to sort them out and then get his Dad and the police to believe him.

You will need to concentrate when reading this book, otherwise important facts may pass you by in a kaleidoscope of colour.

It is weird and wonderful, like nothing you will have read before, and I thoroughly enjoyed it.

Deborah Dumville

Unlike any book I've ever read. What a fascinating story of Jasper, an unusual boy with learning difficulties. His synaesthesia (a new one on me, I had to google it!) means that he experiences colour when he hears sounds or reads words and we accompany him on his journey painting his adventures during the time his new neighbour Bee Larkham moves in next door, builds a friendship with Jasper and subsequently disappears. A confused boy with huge

*trust issues exacerbated by the facial blindness he suffers, and a complicated woman whose colour reminds him of his dead mother. A **brilliant debut read that really pulled me in.***