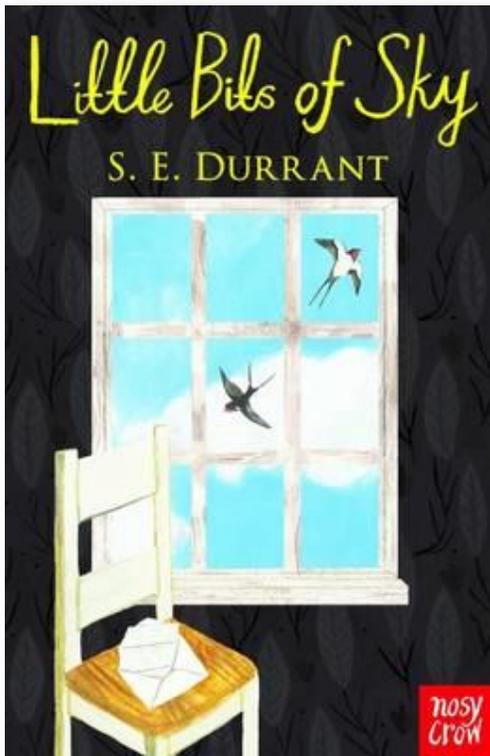


Helping you choose the best books for children

LoveReading4kids Reader reviews of **Little Bits of Sky** By S. E. Durrant



Below are the complete reviews, written by the LoveReading4kids members.



Olivia Arnold, age 11

This book was amazing (with a capital A)! Definitely unique. Somehow you come to like all the characters you meet; bringing out a brilliant story line.

The sudden twists of the plot leave you thinking for a while, wondering what could happen next and whatever it is, it's always more unexpected than the last surprise. It's unlike any other book I've read about care kids.

It can be sad in places but is ultimately uplifting with a happy ending (which everyone loves!) and in some places I laughed out loud! For instance when they talk about computers – it's set in the 80s

and 90s. As well as one ongoing problem many other big and small difficulties are to be overcome throughout the book. Each caused by the last – a nuclear chain of events.

This book was great and it deserves to be a bestseller. While I was reading this I felt many emotions (one step to being great). Most things surprised me (another step to being great). My copy came with me on many car journeys and even saw a beach! I could relate to many characters – how Ira tried to protect her little brother Zac, how Esther loved pink - and I'm sure others could as well.

Sam Harper, age 11

A happy, sad and very positive book with unexpected twists. I'm really glad I've read 'Little Bits of Sky'.

When nine year old Ira and her younger brother Zac run out of foster homes they arrive at Skilly, a children's home. They don't like it very much at all. It's run by the slightly scary Mrs Clanks but Silas, the caretaker, tells them exciting stories and Hortense, the cook, gives them lots of hugs. They soon settle into their attic room and Ira finds a letter from Glenda, a girl who lived in their room at the orphanage in 1947. Ira writes to the ghost of Glenda and even starts to talk to her and sees her playing around Skilly. Because Ira and Zac want to stay together, Ira doesn't think they'll ever find a new family, or that their real mum will come and find them, but then they are sent for a holiday in the country to stay with Martha. At first she seems old and a bit quiet but they have a brilliant time climbing trees, painting, going for walks and collecting eggs straight from the chickens (although Zac is really messy and quite a few things get broken!). They're sad to leave but Martha keeps in touch with them and invites them back for more holidays with her and her new puppy, Dash. Ira and Zac love it there but at Easter they get caught up in the Poll Tax protests and everything goes terribly wrong. Will Martha want to see them again and will Ira and Zac ever find a new home?

I've never known what it's like to live in a children's home but this has allowed me to take a look inside. All of the children are different, all there for different reasons and all coping in different ways. There were some very happy moments and some really sad times too. Overall it's a positive book and I'm really glad I read it. I especially liked the final chapter set 25 years later.

Jane Emmins, age 11

This book was different to others I have read because of Durrant's perfect way of describing the characters and the moving moments in the story that touched my heart.

It was also different to others because of the time it was set, creating exciting new things for the children to discover as their story was affected by the evolving world around them. Unfortunately, at points, I found this book hard to follow with children of our age not having lived in the era it was a struggle to image the story in my head as easily as other books set in the modern day or in familiar points in history.

This book would have been more enjoyable if it made sure all of its components were relevant to the storyline. At points I felt the book was at a standstill and could cause potential readers to lose interest. Though the death of Dash didn't affect the outcome of the story it was very emotional and it helped the book connect with me. My only worry is that younger readers of this book could be upset or worried by the death and the violence surrounding it.

I loved the book's characters Because of Durrant's way of describing them in enough detail that it felt as they were my friends. I also loved the garden at Skilly, I felt that it helped Zac and Ira find their way in the harsh world that they were put in and at troubled points in the story the garden was always in their thoughts.

I would give 'Little Bits of Sky' 6/10: a moving with characters that stay in your mind long after you've finished reading.

Cally Evans, age 10 - Thomas Cowley School

I would recommend this book to readers who like life stories and finding the silver lining of every cloud.

Mircle (Ira for short) is a care kid with a brother called Zac. She is the main character of this story and a really interesting person. Ira is taken from her last softer home to an orphanage called Skilly House. She doesn't want to be there but then no-one wants to be there. She takes you through stages of her life as she makes new friends, hopes and has fun.

I found this book interesting, though I found at times it did not flow as well as it could do. This is because the book is written as a book made from diary entries over a period of three years in the late 1980s.

I would recommend this book to readers who like life stories and finding the silver lining of every cloud.

Olivia Armstrong, age 12

*On the 18th of April I read a book called 'Little Bits of Sky' written by S.E Durant. It is a diary about an unloved girl and her brother, Miracle, also known as Ira, and her younger brother called Zackary or Zach for short. **When Ira was 10 and Zach was 8 they moved to a new care home called Skilly. This is where their adventure begins.** However they do occasionally visit a woman called Martha who tells them stories about the way to survive in life.*

Zach and Ira never knew who their parents were the only thing they know them is a picture they find.

Elizabeth Wood, age 12

This book made me keep reading to find out what happened next. A feel good read.

This book is about the story of Zac and Ira, who are two children who live in care. They have recently been moved to Skilly care home and the book is the story of their life there. My favourite character was Martha because she seems very kind and caring, although it took me some time to warm to her. This story kept me guessing, I never quite knew what was going to happen next. Each evening as I finished reading I tried to guess what would happen next, but the next night I always got it wrong. There were parts of the story that made me laugh, and one part that made me cry. I would recommend this book to anybody who likes family stories, probably for children who are 11+. I would give this book 8 out of 10.

Iris Akidil Age 10

This book took me into a different world full of emotion and it made me think a lot.

This moving book is about a woman called Miracle who looks back on her childhood diaries, which she wrote while she was living in a children's home in London.

While Miracle was growing up in care she had her younger brother, Zac, to love and look out for. Throughout the book Miracle and Zac have many adventures together, sometimes they are full of despair, other times they are full of joy and hope, but they always have each other.

My favourite character is Silas, the caretaker, as he is always jolly and positive. When I read this book it took me into a different world, full of emotion and it made me think a lot. As soon as I read the first sentence I couldn't stop reading it.

Sue Wilsher

'Little Bits of Sky' is the story of Ira (Miracle) and her little brother, Zac, as they grow up in the care system. Told as Ira sees things, it is beautiful- honest, yet

unsentimental – and incredibly moving.

Their story starts in October 1987 as Ira and Zac are being taken to Skilly House , a children’s home, by Anita, their social worker. Ira’s understanding of how life for her and her brother works is painfully sad for the reader, yet normalised by her as she reads the signals of her brother’s body language from familiarity with the situation.

Skilly House has a wonderful garden with a massive tree and the siblings share a room on the top floor. Silas and Hortense who work there soon become very important to the children as do some of the other residents, but Ira initially doesn’t like Mrs Clanks, the manager, although this might change.

The children’s story continues until June 1990 and it would be a shame to spoil it by saying too much so I won’t! Suffice it to say, you won’t be disappointed!

Beautifully written, with very convincing, appealing characters, ‘Little Bits of Sky’ is an absolute must read. *Ira’s voice is a powerful one, offering an insight into a world many know little about, but this is not what makes the novel so successful. Alongside the feelings of vulnerability, loss and insecurity, the strength of love, friendship and finding your place in the world come shining through. The ending allows the reader a glimpse of where many of the characters find themselves ‘today’, offering a satisfying conclusion.*

Heather Greenan, age 12

BEST BOOK I HAVE READ IN AGES!

*I really enjoyed this book because it was interesting and exciting. **Even though it was sad in parts I still loved the story and it was really believable.***

My favourite character in the book was Martha because she gives people second chances. She seemed like a really bubbly happy character. I also liked Ira (Miracle) because she was a really kind loving big sister.

I think this is aimed at about 8 year olds to adults because you need to be able to understand some of the historical events that happened at the time the story is set. Overall I would rate this book 8.5/10 as I really enjoyed it!

Iris Pritchard-Williams Age 9

This story is about two orphans that go to live in a house called Skilly House, the story is quite sad because somebody dies but it is also really happy at the end, you will probably cry at some point

This story is about two orphans that go to live in a house called Skilly House, the story is quite sad because somebody dies but it is also really happy at the end, you will probably cry at some point reading this story.

There is a caretaker called Silas and a woman called Hortense who cooks and looks after the children, and lots of other children, there is a lady called Mrs Clanks who is scary but ends up being Ira's imaginary friend.

The main characters are Ira (Miracle) and her brother Zac (Zachery) and they live in Skilly House. Ira is my favourite character, closely followed by Martha who lets them come to stay with her for a holiday. My worst character is jimmy.

It took me a little while to get into this book, but then I really enjoyed it.

A note from Charlie (the mum)

*I also read this book, just to make it sure it wasn't too harrowing for a 9 year old, and **I can confirm that it is a wonderful book for a 9 year old, my little girl really enjoyed it, as did I.***

We read a bit together to get her started off, and then she was so interested that she read the rest by herself.

Whilst I was reading it I was hooked, I definitely wanted to find out what was happening next, I loved the connection between Ira and Mrs Clanks and I also enjoyed that we got to see them all grown up at the end.

@charliepw

Christian, age 10

I find this book very imaginative and exciting because there is a lot of drama and is very realistic. It's very emotional which makes it very effective. This book is also one of my favourite books because I like the way the book is based on a true story and is very exact on a real person's feelings.