

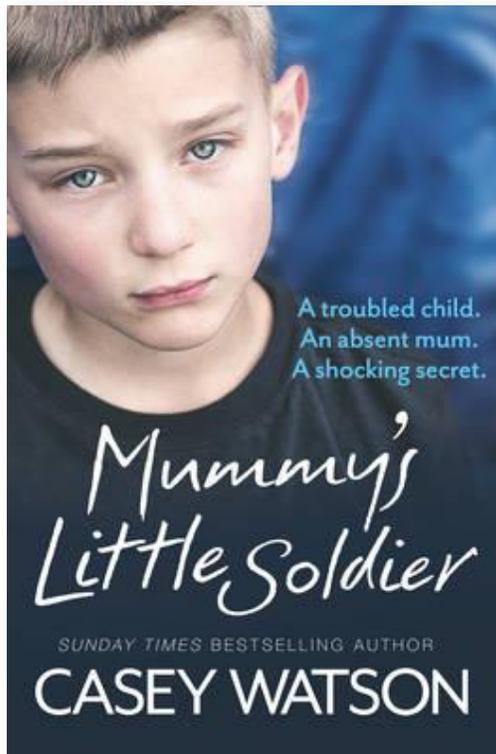


Helping you choose
your next book

LoveReading Reader reviews of **Mummy's Little Soldier** By Casey Watson

H A R P E R
element

Below are the complete reviews, written by LoveReading members.



Anne Rhodes

*The beginning of a new school year, and **Casey already has four disparate children under her wing in the Unit – when along comes 13 year old Leo**, with a somewhat typical teenage attitude of shrugs and non-committal responses....but **locked away in his head are other reasons for his inability to tell what troubles him**, what causes him to get into scrapes, to constantly, almost permanently be late back for classes.*

Alongside her slow but steady progress with the other children, she finds herself pulled more and more into trying to work out what makes Leo as he is. She empathises, she worries more and more

about him, and working alongside her colleagues she does her best to contact his mother....to no avail. His older brother, Max, now in the Army, comes home on leave and for a while Leo is somewhat better – but inevitably Max has to return to Afghanistan and Leo backslides again.

Leo gets on well with the other children in the Unit – they are all working on a special project together – but – one day things come to a crashing denouement and it is only when Casey finally manages to find out Leo's secret (just in time to save him being excluded permanently) that things can at last be sorted out for him – something he never dreamed could be sorted out so well.

Joan Hill

This is an absorbing true story of a boy at breaking point and whose behaviour is threatening expulsion from school – until his problem is identified and help is at hand.

When thirteen-year-old Leo joins Casey's small unit in mainstream education he is prone to outbursts of anger, unauthorised absences and to bad timekeeping in getting to school in the mornings and after home lunches. He is otherwise a likeable and helpful boy. Letters home are ignored and his mother avoids all efforts to get her to visit school to discuss Leo's problems. Leo is secretive, defensive and is on his very last chance when matters come to a head and once again he absconds from school. Casey is determined to get to the bottom of what is troubling Leo so profoundly and decides to take the bull by the horns and pay a visit to his home. What she discovers changes Leo's life beyond his wildest imagination.

Casey Watson's storytelling is involving and interesting and I loved the way she built up a trusting relationship with her pupils. Despite this, Leo would not address what was happening at home and with stubborn determination carried on living the life he was so used to. I liked the way she included the stories of her other pupils, classmates of Leo's and I particularly liked the way Casey updated their stories in the Epilogue. It made me feel warm and happy and completed my enjoyment of the story.

Follow Joan on Twitter: @JoanHillo7

Phyllippa Smithson

Was this meant to have been an auto-biography or fiction? Very good but marred by a sense this was more an academic guide to managing disturbed children than a story.

Casey Watson is a behavioural learning teacher and a mother of teenage children. As a new term starts, she welcomes initially 3 children assigned to her special class and then four. The fourth is Leo who has a history of being trouble and arrives at Casey's school having been ejected from others. Casey comes between him being given a chance at her school and yet another eviction as within days of the new term he has been disruptive in every class he has attended.

As she applies her skills in uncovering the real person behind the persona a child may seek to present, she grows ever fonder, concerned and engaged with her

unanticipated pupil.

Leo is trouble but in learning the details of his background and upbringing, his are not troubles any child should have to contend.

Extremely easy to read, credible characters and a real charm, this is a very likeable story. *Just feel that having read it, my expectations of the book were not well managed. I am left with a sense I have been educated in the art of managing troubled children rather than a fully engaging fiction.*

Maggie Crane

Well written book, *very correct as to the ways matters are dealt with and resolved, if possible, by the statutory authorities with damaged children who are troubled. Anyone reading this book will be delighted, upset, amazed, and possibly left thinking about the situation for years.* *One sure thing is they will not want to put the book down and will enjoy this book, wanting to read it again, and again.*

Nikki Chandler

Another fantastic and insightful story from Casey Watson! You cannot fail to be drawn into her behavioural unit and the life of disturbed young Leo, a must-read!

Having read the majority of Casey Watson's previous books, I had high expectations of Mummy's Little Soldier and I was not disappointed! Casey's storytelling of the behavioural unit within a school, and her strong relationships she builds with the usually disturbed children she works with is so insightful and makes you feel you are there with her.

Leo is particularly troubling for Casey as she struggles to understand what is causing his behaviour, and a mum who appears to be absent. Casey gets a shock during a home visit and this results in changing Leo's life.

This is a great book, not just focusing on Leo but also with details of the other children in the behavioural unit and their progress.

I look forward to new releases from Casey Watson, and will continue to read all her stories, I highly recommend this, and have in fact already incessantly talked about this book and how amazing Casey's work is. I read this in one sitting as I could not put it down!