

# LoveReading Reader reviews of My Sister Lives on the Mantelpiece by Annabel Pitcher

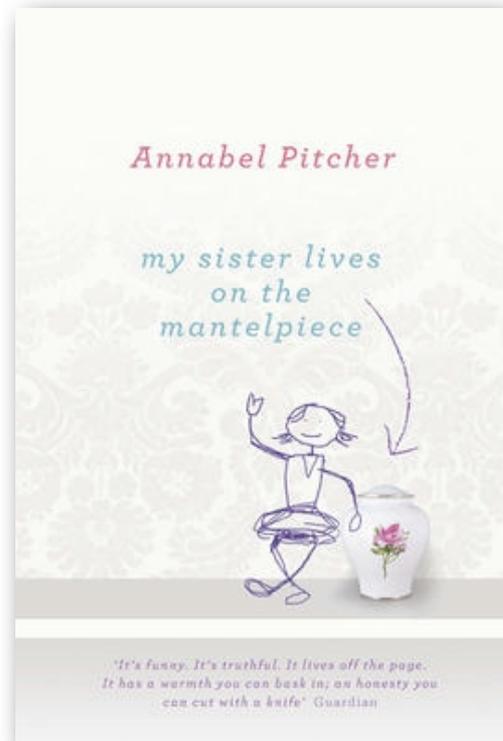
**Below are the complete reviews, written by LoveReading members.**

## **Chloe Sheehan**

*The first line of the book gripped me completely. I got the impression from the first part of the book that the parents paid more attention to preserving Rose's memory than focusing on Jamie & Jasmine.*

*At first I wondered why Jamie's dad had a problem with Muslims, then I read on and found out that Rose was killed by Muslims & it suddenly made a lot more sense. Personally I felt that this book was an emotional roller coaster, with laughs & cries. I learnt how to love each one of the characters, I really liked how Sunya & Jamie developed their relationship throughout the book.*

***Overall this book was a fantastic read, I have no faults & really enjoyed it. I am looking forward to reading her next book.***



## **Rachel Bourn**

***My sister lives on the mantelpiece is the heart-wrenching story of Jamie, a boy living in the aftermath of 7/7. Honest, funny, and beautifully written, this could easily become a classic.***

*Jamie's sister was killed by a bomb placed in a bin when he was seven, and everything changed. Five years on, Jamie's family is being torn apart by something he can't even remember; he is forced to grieve for the sister he barely knew. He can't even cry for her.*

*They each have their own way of coping. Jamie's mother left them; Jamie's father drinks and blames every Muslim in the world for what happened to his Rose, and tries to pass his prejudices and racism onto Jamie, whom I am happy to say is above it all. ("The radio came on and the music was loud but all I could hear were the lies that Dad told. All Muslims are murderers. Too lazy to learn English. Make bombs in their bedroom."); and Jas, Rose's twin, skives school, and drastically changes her appearance to stop being Rose's duplicate, Rose's substitute.*

*And Jamie just carries on, lying about his family in classes, being bullied for being different, and attempting to hide his friendship with a Muslim girl, Sunya, from his intolerant father.*

*So his mother has run away with a new man, his dad is permanently drinking, and his sister is meeting boys at midnight. Could anything worse happen to Jamie? You'll have to find out for yourself.*

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## Josh Travers

*My Sister Lives on the Mantelpiece* is unlike any book I have ever read, the story of a boy whose entire life is shaped by the horrific death of a sister he can barely remember. Struggling to bring balance to his family which was torn apart by sadness and sorrow, he must deal with the prospect of a new home, a new school and new strife as he tries to answer the questions that burn in his mind. This beautifully crafted story reads like a work of art as each sentence wrenches you out of your chair and into the world of Jamie Matthews, a world wrought with turmoil and tragedy. It is a story of such power that it evokes emotions of grief and gloom, with the occasional dosage of heart warming humour injected expertly every so often onto the page.

***This book will make you laugh and it will make you cry, but most of all it will win your heart and send your mind on a meander of thought long after you have turned the final page.***

## Jhaneel

After reading 'My Sister Lives on the Mantelpiece' i was truly over whelmed by it. **Annabel Pitcher has truly captured very emotional issues and has turned it into a heart warming story, that all ages could enjoy.** Relationships throughout the story was very complex but was told innocently through Jamie's eyes. Overall Pitcher did a splendid job and i'm so glad i had the opportunity to read such a brilliant book!

## Morgan Steigmann Aged 13

Sixty-two people died that day in London. James' sister was one of them. Now, five years on, nine-year old James must learn to cope with his family's loss whilst trying to juggle the tragedies that it has brought with it. The troubles of a nine-year-old aren't meant to include death, drinking and divorce, but James doesn't know that. All he knows is what his family tell his about that day in September, and how he should miss Rose and cry about Rose like everyone else does. But the tears won't fall. He hasn't cried since, and doesn't know why he should.

This touching, heart-warming account of James' struggle to keep going and make sense of his family's horrific past will be sure to leave you hungry for more. You find out the long-awaited answers along with James, as he tries to piece together the puzzle of what happened five years ago in London, and why his dad will never be able to look at Muslims in the same way.

Pitcher gives us a real insight into what it must be like to have lost someone you can hardly remember, and be expected to write, think and talk both to and about a girl that now lives in an Urn on the mantelpiece.

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**Morgan Steigmann Aged 13 ... con't** *This book is guaranteed to make you think, and is a truly great read for anyone looking for a new, unique take on the idea of an ordinary family losing a treasured member. James' thoughts may be slightly hard to understand at some points, as he is still working out many things himself. This story will captivate you from start to finish and is sure to be in your top ten very soon!!*

## **Izzy Read**

*This book is about Jamie and his family, 5 years after the death of his sister, Rose. The whole family struggle with the grief and sadness of her death, up to the point where his mum leaves with another man. Aiming to start a new life, him, his sister (Jas), and his dad move to the Lake District. Even though it is a new start he struggles to fit in.*

***I loved this book; it seemed so real.** In the words, I seemed like Jamie was there; living in the Lake District, walking home from school, wearing his Spiderman t-shirt. It also warmed your insides with the pure innocence and determination. As well as emotional, it was also funny at parts; seeing it through a 10-year-olds eyes. The best bit about the story for me is the ending: where everything becomes clear for Jamie.*

***Anyone one with a warm heart and a smile can read this book.** Both boy and girl, both old and young can read this book. The only way I can think to improve it is putting the speech in speech marks, instead of italics.*

*Overall, it was a brilliant book, and I really hope there is a sequel!*

## **Georgina, aged 15**

***My sister lives on the mantelpiece is the heart-wrenching story** of a young boy looking for recognition, in a World where he is unnoticed by his parents who are too distraught about his older sister's death to notice anything. It could be described as a modern 'To Kill a Mockingbird', as it tackles issues such as racism and violence for a young character, who doesn't necessarily understand the situation.*

*The character of Jamie is a fairly simple one; a young boy who believes that he is worthless due to the lack of parental attention, and whose father's racist beliefs impact his life. When Jamie makes friends with his Islamic classmate Sunya, it is not the teasing of his peers that puts him off hanging out with her, but the fear of what his father might think of a Muslim girl. This is reflected in the chapter which focuses on Halloween - Jamie goes trick-or-treating with Sunya, and when his father comes to pick him up in a drunken state, all Jamie worries about is whether his Dad can see the colour of Sunya's skin through her costume.*

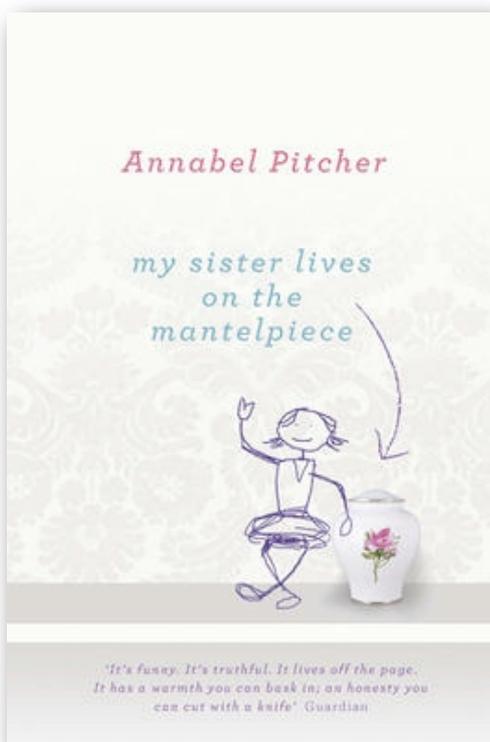
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**Georgina, aged 15 cont...** *Jamie's parents are at the far end of a scale - when their daughter died they both mourned heavily, his father turning to drink, and his mother turning to another man. Both Jamie and his sister Jasmine are neglected as their parents mourn the death of Jasmine's twin 5 years previously, and Jas rebels to try and get attention to no avail.*

*This book is **a touching reminder of grief, and how the young tackle it. 4 stars.***

## By Christie Heaven

*I was astounded by the **gritty and realistic honesty** that Annabel Pitcher achieved in 'My Sister Lives on the Mantelpiece'. By configuring everyday culture and society with hard-hitting universal themes and issues this debut YA novel represents the books that I just love to read. The simple and lovable humor of Jamie's perspective contrasted with successions of tear-jerking scenes leaves me grasping for more. Enchanted by his narrative voice Jamie packs you off on unexpected journey with not even a box of tissues for comfort. I will be anticipating more fantastic realistic adventures to contest with the genius of this novel in the future with feverish and hungry hands!*



## Shriya Samani

*Definitely one of the best reads! It helps you understand how people interpret emotions through different situations. I learnt a lot of things with this book and how to view things in someone else's shoes. It tackled issues such as racism and segregation.*

***The way this book was written as a child's point of view was outstanding!** I felt like I was truly Jamie, suffering the issues surrounding him. I absolutely loved reading this book and recommend it to anyone at any age!*

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## Roshana Wickremasinghe

***This is a story with a beautiful, honest narrative which will grab you by the hand*** and pull you into the world of *My Sister Lives on the Mantelpiece*. The story is told by ten year old Jamie, who is the youngest of a family ripped apart by infidelity, alcoholism and death. When he was five, his sister Rose was blown up in a terrorist attack and his family are very much still feeling the consequences. His mother has run off with another man, his Father has found solace in alcohol, and his older sister has dyed her hair pink and secretly meets boys with green hair at midnight.

*It is surprising how engaging a ten year old boy can be, and the reader will often find themselves agreeing with his outlook on life. He regularly questions things that seem normal to some, such as the value of the ashes of his dead sister. His naive character opens the reader up to alternative views, with the novel definitely having an effect long after the last page.*

*The book deals with some very heavy issues such as bereavement and racism, yet the author still manages to keep it humorous and light-hearted in places. This will make the reader feel all sorts from frustration, empathy, loneliness, elation and just a bit of satisfaction.*

## Sheila Burke

*This is a gritty account of a family whose lives are severely tested by the death of a child in a terrorist attack. While the book reflects the harsh reality of our time yet it does so with humour and warmth.*

***Sheila Burke cont....*** Jamie, a ten year old boy, speaks out from the pages as he grapples with a gamut of emotions and situations both at home and at school. This book bravely confronts many difficult issues such as prejudice, the need to apportion blame, bullying, death, isolation, alcohol abuse and marital breakdown. ***It is truthful and at times both shocking and sad.***

*Jamie is our commentator and through him we are made aware of the far reaching consequences of grief. A grief that is experienced differently by each member of the family. The only coping mechanism that the family members have in common is that they bear their loss silently. Tragically this inability to share their emotions tears the family apart.*

*This book is thought provoking, pacy, very readable and the denouement leaves the reader with hope when Jamie finally comes to understand why his sister still lives on the mantelpiece.*

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## **Kalilah K**

*Even though the plot is quite simple and (dare I say it) predictable, it didn't make the story less enjoyable, gripping or take away my eagerness to know what happens next. I read the entire book in two days, which is a miracle because I am a slow reader.*

*I said the plot was quite predictable but I have to commend Annabel Pitcher for the brilliant execution of certain scenes where I found myself thinking, "Pah! we all know what's going to happen now, don't we?" [smirk smirk], only to be thrown off my feet with a surprise turn of events. And they don't turn just once, they twist twice and thrice until you can take it no longer and skip right ahead to see what the final outcome is (it's a disgraceful habit as a serious reader but I admit to it).*

*I thought the story was going to be told from the view of a kid who is miraculously goody-goody and instantly knows right from wrong, but I was pleasantly surprised to be presented with more than just a black and white picture, but a very intricate and well thought-out puzzle.*

**Readers are given every side of the story, which provides a unique perspective on tragic events.** *The author managed this daunting task in such a way that there's no discerning or ultimate baddie – just raw emotion and truth.*

*All in all, it was a nice read. The only thing that curbed my enjoyment of it was the romantic elements and language, so if you're sensitive about that stuff just be warned. But still read it! I think fans of Malorie Blackman's *Noughts & Crosses* will like this book.*

## **Harriet Cunningham**

*Set in the aftermath of the London bombings, in which 10 year old Jamie's older sister was killed, *My sister lives on the mantelpiece* tells a story of truth. By this I mean the idea that what parents say isn't always right.*

*Throughout the book, it is consistently mentioned that Jamie didn't cry for his sister - he doesn't remember her. His mother forces him to write about her for a school assignment (this later leads to him being teased) and his father goes as far as forcing him to say goodbye to her every year, forces him to fake grief. This creates a pretty strong message in my opinion, just because you're told you **SHOULD** feel something, it doesn't mean you will. It's okay not to cry.*

*Jamie also has to deal with the fact that his best and only friend is Muslim. To you and me this would be no problem. Jamie, however, has grown up with his father telling him that all Muslims are evil and have killed his sister. Understandably this causes him to feel a lot*

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**Harriet Cunningham cont...** *of confliction. Sunya is the only one who will stand up for him, and despite the fact that he is really quite rude to her in the beginning, stays with him throughout.*

***I really like this book. It deals with a lot of serious issues really well. Hate, loyalty, love, separation, terrorism even. I would recommend this to anyone.***

### **Emer O'Brien**

*My Sister Lives on the Mantelpiece* is about a little boy, Jamie, whose older sister was killed by terrorists five years ago, but she is still causing her family pain from her urn on the mantelpiece. Her mother has left, her father drinks and hates Muslims. Her identical twin has gone out of her way to prove that she's different. Little Jamie, who can't even remember her, doesn't have any idea what is going on. He only knows his father's prejudices; that Muslims killed his sister, and so all Muslims are bad.

*But when he moves to a small town in the Lake District, Jamie has to question all of this. The book is, essentially, a story about growing up. It's a very well written story; it really makes you feel like you've slipped inside a ten year old boy's skin. This book never flinches away from delicate topics, and it is deeply thought provoking.*

*Annabel Pitcher has created a main character that is so realistic; the reader starts to really care about him like a little brother. When Jamie cries, you cry, and when his life finally starts to turn around, you feel like singing with joy.*

*My Sister Lives on the Mantelpiece* is written by a highly skilled author, the characters are memorable and the plot is well-thought out. But **be warned, it is a real tear-jerker. I cried reading this book, you probably will too.**

*My Sister Lives on the Mantelpiece* is an excellent, excellent book. It's about a little boy whose view of the world is changing from black and white to full colour. I would recommend it highly. But really, do have the tissues out.

### **Molly Hudson Age 10**

***I thought that this book was brilliant! I really enjoyed reading it and finished it really fast as it was so good! It's told from 10-year-old Jamie's perspective, it tells how a normal family copes when an awful tragedy occurs and how each person deals with it. Looking at the cover, and the title, my first impression was that it would be a sad book, it's not at all; it was actually a funny book with sad parts to it.***

*I thought it was a clever book because Annabel Pitcher writes characters that you can relate to. Like Jamie, for example, you can feel what he is feeling because it is described*

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*so well and you feel like you're in his head, the same with the other characters too. I would*

**Molly Hudson Age 10 cont....**

*recommend this book to people of all ages as I thoroughly enjoyed every second of reading it! Can't wait to read her next book Ketchup Clouds....*

**Seren Mehmet**

*My Sister Lives on the Mantel Piece is a page turning novel. Throughout the book you strongly feel all the pain Jamie is going through. I think the book cleverly explores stereotypes and racism. Jamie's dad continuously uses racist remarks about Muslims- all Muslims. Jamie's new friend Sunya is a Muslim, and she is very nice indeed, so why does Jamie's dad hate them all?*

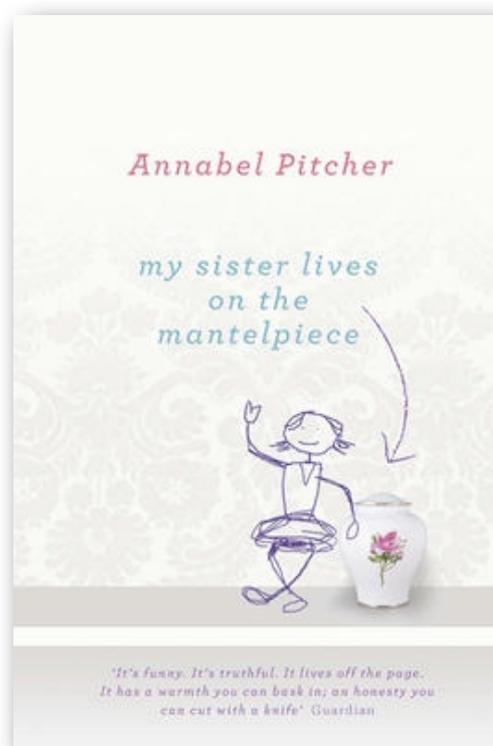
*I think if the book didn't have the swear words in, all children should read it. It's a great lesson and easy to understand.*

*If you're looking for a **harsh, truthful, beautiful, tearful, hilarious, heart-warming tale**, this book is ideal. I can assure you that it won't disappoint. It's an emotion journey about a boy tackling problems with bullying and a slightly dysfunctional family on his own. Personally, I can't find any faults with this book. It doesn't have a fairy-tale ending, but then again that's what makes the book so honest and realistic. 5 stars without a doubt.*

**Hollie Compton, 14**

*A book i'll never forget.*

*It shows the view of a ten year old perfectly, even if he doesn't remember his lost sister. It shows how ten year olds view life and how they think life is fixed so easily or how such little things can bring happiness. My Sister Lives On The Mantle Piece, shows how someone's life can change for the worse after a terrorist attack, and that friendship can blossom no matter who or what your origin. It shows that no matter how bad life gets, there will always be hope some where.*



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**Ryan McGuckian age 13 St. Colm's High School, Draperstown Northern Ireland.**

*My Sister Lives on the Mantelpiece is a touching novel written by Annabel Pitcher. The story is written from the perspective of a ten year old boy called Jamie. Jamie's sister, Rose, was blown up by a bomb planted by Muslim terrorists. After this tragedy, Jamie's family starts to fall apart. Jamie's mum leaves, his dad starts drinking and his sister Jasmine, is very upset. They move to the Lake District to start a new life, but Jamie gets bullied in school and then one day Jamie sees an advert on the television for a talent school!!!!!!!*

***I thought this book was a very easy and enjoyable read. I really liked the fact that it was written from a ten year old's perspective. I would give this book ten out of ten and recommend it to children of both genders. To sum up-----this book is a MUST READ!!!!!!!!!!***