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The Girl Who Fell from the Sky

By Heidi W. Durrow



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Rachel, the daughter of a Danish mother and a black G.I., becomes the sole survivor of a family tragedy after a fateful morning on their Chicago rooftop.

Forced to move to a new city, with her strict African American grandmother as her guardian, Rachel is thrust for the first time into a mostly black community, where her light brown skin, blue eyes, and beauty bring a constant stream of attention her way. It's there, as she grows up and tries to swallow her grief, that she comes to understand how the mystery and tragedy of her mother might be connected to her own uncertain identity.

This searing and heartwrenching portrait of a young biracial girl dealing with society's ideas of race and class is the winner of the Bellwether Prize for best fiction manuscript addressing issues of social justice.



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Editorial Review

Amazon.com Review

Amazon Best Books of the Month, February 2010: Early on in *The Girl Who Fell from the Sky*, Rachel Morse (the girl in question) wonders about being "tender-headed." It's how her grandmother chides her for wincing at having her hair brushed, but it's also a way of understanding how Rachel grapples with the world in which she landed. Her parents, a Danish woman and an African-American G.I., tried to hold her and her siblings aloft from questions of race, and their failure there is both tragic and tenderly wrought. After sustaining an unimaginable trauma, Rachel resumes her life as a black girl, an identity she quickly learns to adopt but at heart is always reconciling with the life she knew before. Heidi W. Durrow bolsters her story with a chorus of voices that often see what Rachel can't--this is particularly true in the case of Brick, the only witness to her fall. There's a poetry to these characters that draws you into their lives, making for a beautiful and earnest coming-of-age novel that speaks as eloquently to teens as it does to adults. --*Anne Bartholomew*

From Publishers Weekly

Durrow's debut draws from her own upbringing as the brown-skinned, blue-eyed daughter of a Danish woman and a black G.I. to create Rachel Morse, a young girl with an identical heritage growing up in the early 1980s. After a devastating family tragedy in Chicago with Rachel the only survivor, she goes to live with the paternal grandmother she's never met, in a decidedly black neighborhood in Portland, Ore. Suddenly, at 11, Rachel is in a world that demands her to be either white or black. As she struggles with her grief and the haunting, yet-to-be-revealed truth of the tragedy, her appearance and intelligence place her under constant scrutiny. Laronne, Rachel's deceased mother's employer, and Brick, a young boy who witnessed the tragedy and because of his personal misfortunes is drawn into Rachel's world, help piece together the puzzle of Rachel's family. Taut prose, a controversial conclusion and the thoughtful reflection on racism and racial identity resonate without treading into political or even overtly specific agenda waters, as the story succeeds as both a modern coming-of-age and relevant social commentary. (*Feb.*) Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.

From [Bookmarks Magazine](#)

Durrow fashions a classic fish-out-of-water tale in her brilliant debut, which some compare to Toni Morrison's *The Bluest Eye* in its exploration of race and identity. It comes as no surprise that *The Girl Who Fell from the Sky* was awarded the 2008 Bellwether Prize, the award founded by author Barbara Kingsolver to support literature of social responsibility. This is certainly not an easy read, with each chapter told from a different character's viewpoint with a "Rashomon quality that builds tension around the ... mystery," and readers may have to schedule some time for emotional recovery (*Washington Post*). However, Durrow's novel is ultimately a powerful and ultimately uplifting work of fiction.

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Jennifer Perez:

Now a day individuals who Living in the era exactly where everything reachable by interact with the internet and the resources included can be true or not demand people to be aware of each details they get. How people have to be smart in acquiring any information nowadays? Of course the answer is reading a book. Reading through a book can help persons out of this uncertainty Information specifically this *The Girl Who*

Fell from the Sky book as this book offers you rich data and knowledge. Of course the data in this book hundred per cent guarantees there is no doubt in it you probably know this.

Mildred Patton:

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Mary Bunnell:

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Louis Ono:

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