



# 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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## **The Girl Who Fell from the Sky** By Heidi W. Durrow Bibliography

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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:**

**Katherine Lee:**

As people who live in the modest era should be upgrade about what going on or information even knowledge to make these people keep up with the era which can be always change and make progress. Some of you maybe will update themselves by reading through books. It is a good choice in your case but the problems coming to you actually is you don't know what one you should start with. This *The Girl Who Fell from the*

Sky is our recommendation to cause you to keep up with the world. Why, because book serves what you want and want in this era.

**John Silverstein:**

Reading a book for being new life style in this calendar year; every people loves to learn a book. When you read a book you can get a large amount of benefit. When you read ebooks, you can improve your knowledge, because book has a lot of information on it. The information that you will get depend on what types of book that you have read. If you would like get information about your review, you can read education books, but if you want to entertain yourself read a fiction books, these us novel, comics, and soon. The The Girl Who Fell from the Sky provide you with a new experience in reading a book.

**Delores Villarreal:**

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**Mildred Shaw:**

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