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The Girl In Between



Synopsis

"A deeply moving story of family, homelessness, and the ghosts that won't let us go. Haunting and unforgettable." —Megan Shepherd, New York Times bestselling author of *The Secret Horses of Briar Hill*

Told in the naïve voice of a homeless girl sheltered by her mother from the world, this is a moving debut perfect for fans of David Almond, *A Monster Calls*, and *Room*. I'm invisible. Ma says I'm supposed to be so the Authorities don't get me. She goes out into the streets almost every day but I'm not allowed. I've got to stay inside the mill so they don't see me. In an old, abandoned mill, a girl and her ma take shelter from their memories of life on the streets, and watch the busy world go by. The girl calls it the Castle because it's the biggest place they've ever stayed, a home of her own like no other. The windows are boarded up and the floorboards are falling in, but for her neither of those things matter. Then developers show up, and it's clear that their lives are about to change forever. Desperate to save their refuge from the Authorities and her mother from her own personal demons, the girl seeks out the ghosts of the mill. And with only Caretaker — the old man who's slept outside the mill for decades — around to answer her questions, she begins to wonder what kind of ghosts are haunting both the mill and her mother.

The Girl in Between is a compelling, witty, and at times heartbreaking novel that explores themes of loneliness and grief with effortless warmth and an unforgettable voice that will stick with you long after you've finished.

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Customer Reviews

"A deeply moving story of family, homelessness, and the ghosts that won't let us go. Haunting and unforgettable." —Megan Shepherd, New York Times bestselling author of *The Secret Horses of Briar Hill* "A skillful debut presents a nuanced view of homelessness. . . heartbreakingly beautiful. . . The blend of dark and lovely will appeal to David Almond fans." —Kirkus "Carroll's lovely prose, laced with gothic imagery and canny clues, will carry readers through this slow-burning exploration of homelessness, the haunting hold of memory, and what it means to forget, to forgive, and, just maybe, to move on. Like the stories our unlikely heroine adores, this part fractured fairy tale, part fable is sure to cast a delightful yet devastating spell all its own." —Booklist "Shines with true originality." —SLJ "A poignant, heartbreaking, and, ultimately, healing debut novel. . . This is a sensitive portrayal of a timely issue, presented in a unique and nonjudgmental fashion. The sorrow, futility, beauty, and, finally, hope will stay with the reader. This is for every reader who enjoys stories of family, love, and loss, mystery, and the power of hope and optimism." —VOYA

Sarah Carroll currently splits her time between a houseboat in Dublin and travel abroad. She recently returned from five years in Tanzania, where she founded and ran a hostel while working to support local community projects. She continues to promote ethical overseas volunteering through her blogs and films while planning her next book. *The Girl in Between* is her debut novel.

What a great book! This story touched my heart in so many ways. I have a new perspective on the homeless. Excellent read!

Homes offer a sense of identity, particularly for those in their formative years. Sarah Carroll's *The Girl In Between* depicts life on the street and on the move for a young girl and her mother from the eyes of the young girl. Within the walls of her Castle, a young girl can dream of the fairy tale life she wants instead of the harsh reality of homelessness she faces every day. While she has free reign over the Castle, she must be vigilant to remain invisible from the outside world or risk being taken away from her mother by the Authorities. With Authority representatives in yellow vests coming around her Castle to evaluate it, the girl fears that her home may be taken away from her or she from it, which would greatly change her life. In learning about the Castle's history as a mill from a fellow squatter, called the Caretaker, who is struggling against his past and grief to leave the mill after forty-seven years, the girl realizes that her mother also needs to face what's haunting her in order to keep moving forward. A

quick read that presents the realities of the world through the lens of a young girl offering a new perspective from which to consider the unfortunate issue of homelessness that plagues society. While the perspective of and experience with homelessness from the vantage point of young girl was quite intriguing and interesting as it was written in a manner that was captivating and using language that befits the narrator, the narrative was ultimately rather confusing, perhaps because it lacked an appreciable plot. With the minimal plot present, the “twist” at the end of the story, while a key point of the narrative, wasn’t as poignant as it could have been had a plot been reasonably developed. Overall, I’d give it a 2.5 out of 5 stars.

Thanks to the #kidlitexchange network for the review copy of this book - all opinions are my own. The main draws into this book are definitely going to be the characters and the story. The main character, the girl mentioned in the title, drew me in from the start. She had an innocence about her, a precociousness that comes with childhood, but also an underlying sense of understanding and that innate self-preservation that comes with a difficult life. And then there’s the story. Told from the girl’s perspective, the details are shared in a way that only a child can get away with (their home is the Castle, their neighbor is Caretaker, her mother’s friend is Monkey Man), and it adds an emotional dimension to the story that you wouldn’t get from an adult’s viewpoint. And did I mention the ending? Oh, man. It’s a solid punch to the feels. Highly recommend. While this book is categorized as young adult/teen, I think it will appeal more strongly to the younger readers of this age range.

This book made me feel sad. Sad because the child, whose name we never know, lives in an abandoned building and thinks it is the best place she has ever lived, not counting Gran’s house. Sad because her mother is a drunk and a drug addict who keeps her "safe" by taking her to drug dens and other abandoned buildings. Sad because she lives in hiding on the streets when her mother could have left her with her grandmother. But it isn’t a sad book. The girl has a vivid imagination. The mill, which is falling apart, is a castle, complete with ghost. She people watches, and makes up stories about the people she see regularly. She loves her mother and knows her mother mostly loves her. But her mother made some bad choices, and those made for a sad ending.

“I’m invisible. Ma says I’m supposed to be so the Authorities don’t get me.” Carroll has written a haunting debut novel that will have you guessing long after you’ve finished reading. While The Girl In Between’s main character is a young girl that is never named, you will connect with her daily struggles almost immediately. Living in an abandoned warehouse with her mother, this young girl is captivating and resourceful while living through dangers the average person doesn’t have to contend with. Just as I started to suspect something, the story began to evolve. You won’t want to stop reading! This YA novel is not to be missed! Thanks to @penguinrandomhouse for the ARC of this book! All opinions are my own. Next I’ll be passing this book on to the @kidlitexchange #kidlitexchange reviewer network now!

Well written story that keeps you engaged. A poignant portrayal of the life of a homeless child (and mother.) But wow, talk about a surprise ending. I felt duped. This might actually work better as a short story, but after reading this novel (although rather short), I felt deceived. This ending didn’t work for me at all after listening to this girl telling her own story through the entire book and then to have it end this way.

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