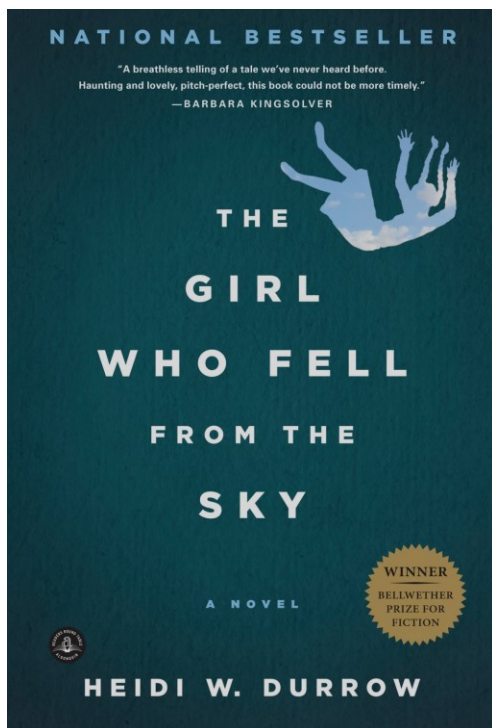


THE GIRL WHO FELL FROM THE SKY



Book Summary:

After being the lone survivor of a tragedy, a biracial young woman lives with her grandmother and experiences racism.

Summary of Concerns:

This book contains explicit sexual activities; sexual nudity; violence including child abuse; alcohol and drug use by minors; alcohol abuse; profanity and derogatory terms; controversial racial commentary; racial prejudice; and alternate sexualities.

Adult

By Heidi W. Durrow

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CONTENT WARNING

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Minor Restricted
BookLooks Review Rating

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| 10 | I am light-skinned-ed. That's what the other kids say. And I talk white. ...They say white people don't use washrags, and I realize now, at Grandma's, I do. |
| 28 | Playing tennis is one of the things that goes in the white category, along with classical music and golf. ..I don't ever mention that I'm related to white people. And most of the time I try not to let the black girls like Tamika see me talk to Tracy, because Tracy is a white girl. And the way they say that—white girl—it feels like a dangerous thing to be. But Grandma always wanted Pop and Aunt Loretta to know white things. Like when Pop wanted to be a musician. Grandma made him play the piano, when what he wanted to play was the banjo or harmonica. A piano is more white than a harmonica. |
| 48 | Funny how Laronne made him a black man in her mind when Nella first mentioned him. She wasn't sure if it was out of her own bias or a certain wish. From what Nella said, the man—Doug—didn't seem to have a real job. That could have been the reason she thought the man was black—her bias. |
| 52 | Anthony Miller is handsome and has a broad nose and thick lips, and those are the black things in a person. ...He pulls me closer to him than I have ever been to a boy. Then Anthony Miller kisses me on the lips. The kiss runs all the way to my middle. He kisses my hurt ear next, not knowing that it is hurt, and strokes my hair along my back. |
| 53 | I always know when they start talking about me or white folks because they start to talk real low. Sometimes I think that I can hear better because I have one good ear. No matter how softly they whisper I can hear them. And when Miss Verle says "them titties" make me look "too grewed up." I can hear her and hear Grandma agree. |
| 55 | "He kept being Nathan. He couldn't help but mess around. Aunt Loretta pauses for just a second and says in almost a whisper: "Then he didn't care what it was he was messing with. He messed around with it all—my friends, his friends' wives, and then whatever, woman or man." |
| 57 | When Anthony Miller kisses me, I try not to sweat; I'm so happy. ...We kiss until the light changes; that's when people come into the church again. I like to have this secret. Anthony Miller is only for me. Inside. |
| 59 | "Say some more." "Like what?" "Like—I like kissing boys," she says. ...He's white. White people don't think black people are pretty. Mostly it's because of our hair. It works different. And it smells different with more lotions in it. Also, black women are not as pretty as white women. There are exceptions—Aunt Loretta, Miss America—but not many. |
| 70 | These are the first words she says to me: "Mmmh, girl. You got them boys pantin with your titties all hanging out. Don't try to steal my man with those." |
| 71 | Roger liked white girls, but not American white girls. They didn't do much for him, because they acted like you were supposed to be happy just because you got to rub your brown on their cream. But not these European girls—they loved the black boys they met in the bars near the American base. Roger loved them back. |
| 74 | They kissed. ...They kissed some more. And that night Roger couldn't help but make love to that shy |

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| | white girl who came from a little town in a little country he knew nothing about—except that in her country’s stories, wishes came true. |
| 91 | “Now, you don’t even remember being there, do you? I remember. I remember that night you were born. Your mother was eating and drinking like no tomorrow. You see she never lost those pounds you put on her, don’t you? You’re the one gave your mama a nice black girl’s ass.” |
| 92 | Roger got tired of being careful, of seeing how weak his son really was. Roger would beat him when his nose bled. His hands would twist the tender yellow skin on his son’s arm. |
| 93 | But then there was the kiss good-night that lasted a little too long. It was the first time Roger had heard Nella raise her voice. She called her own sister a whore. It was also the first time Roger hit a woman—really. |
| 104 | In an entry dated two weeks before the accident, Laronne read: “He was drinking with his friend when he knows alcohol’s not allowed in the house. He didn’t know I had come home.” |
| 117 | “You listen to white music.” “That’s jazz.” |
| 123 | He was taken me on picnics around base by Loetzbeuren, the snacks he brought the Saltine crackers, martinis in the thermos and also a blanket so we could smooch. ...When he said but you cannot be pregnant, we cannot get married, and when I said why not he said cause you are white and I am not. |
| 128 | “You know what? One time I found my mama’s birth control. And a fake penis. Bet you got something like that somewhere here. I’ll show you.” |
| 132 | He was drinking with his friend when he knows alcohol is not allowed in the house. |
| 144 | "Hey, monkey." Brick knew the young man meant him. "You play." ..."Nice job, monkey. I'm gonna let you stay here tonight, and tomorrow you go with us up to the highway. Bet you'll score us something good." |
| 146 | “You see it?” the young man said turning to her. “It puts on a sad monkey face and plays that thing. Girl, we’re gonna be set. People gotta help us if we have a kid.” They kissed then, a long nasty kiss that made the young woman press herself against the young man. Brick wasn’t a monkey or an it, but he felt like one until the woman looked directly at him that moment and said, “It looks scared. Are you scared?” “Yes, ma’am.” “Don’t call me ma’am. I’m nineteen. My name’s Lisa.” “He doesn’t need to know names. He needs to keep his monkey ass in check.” “Come here, monkey,” the woman named Lisa said. ...“You like to cuddle don’t you, monkey? Come on here by me.” Her arm was around him and she nestled his face onto her chest, pressing him against her partially bare breast. “That’s my tittie, monkey. Don’t get ideas,” the man said. ...“You look like you could use some love,” Lisa said. She pet his head and caressed his shoulder. “You go to sleep little monkey. We got a big day ahead.” |
| 147 | About the way black folks used to care about more than loud thumping music and gold chains. She’s only so bold when she’s drinking the sherry Miss Verle brings. |

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| 148 | That makes me think of how the other black girls in school think I want to be white. They call me an Oreo. I don't want to be white. Sometimes I want to go back to being what I was. I want to be nothing. |
| 150 | <p>The first time I kissed John Bailey it was in the back hallway by the gym. The second time I kissed John Bailey it was in his basement room laying down.</p> <p>Kissing John Bailey felt real good. It was like everything that's the outside me—the me that people see—made all of what is really me feel really good. When John Bailey touches me, I know this is the skin I want to be in.</p> <p>...“Don't do what your mama did. Some people ain't figured to take care of babies. Specially some people, like your mama—hoing herself to that no-count man.”</p> <p>...“It ain't respectable. Don't be like your mama—sniffin around life like the only nose you've got is the one between your legs.”</p> |
| 154 | <p>“It's from my little jigaboos.” She said it with all love.</p> <p>“Your?” Laronne paused.</p> <p>“My little jigaboos. That's what Doug calls them. It's so cute.”</p> <p>“Nella. Don't say that again. It's not cute.”</p> <p>The first time Laronne heard the word—the first time it was directed at her—she wasn't even ten years old. Nigger, jigaboo—they were the same.</p> |
| 155 | Laronne had been taught to ignore bullies. But as the boys got louder, they kicked the dirt and laughed and laughed harder, and they said, “Oops, sorry, highwater girl.” “Oops, sorry, ugly face.” “Sorry, straw head.” “Sorry, jigaboo.” “Sorry, nigger.” And then it was nigger, nigger, nigger sung and shouted like a Top 40 pop song. Nigger, nigger, nigger, jigaboo. |
| 162 | He has all kinds of things to say about our times, like how racial injustice is worse than when he was growing up, how apartheid has to end real soon and Nelson Mandela must be free, how the government doesn't care about these new drugs like crack taking over our neighborhoods; how ketchup can't be a vegetable to anybody; and how he never thought he'd live to see the day that the young brothers would be killing each other over tennis shoes. |
| 167 | There's no use in talking to a drunk who's been drinking, which he figures she usually has because she smells like the contributions whether she comes in the morning or around supertime. |
| 168 | He says I probably lied about other things too. Like there's probably no reason for me to be saying no all the time when we're kissing. He says because my underwear is small and my shirts are so tight, I must have said yes before. He says he doesn't want to go with me anymore. Not unless he hears me say yes. |
| 169 | <p>I remember him saying this before he leaned away from my kiss: “You're like a daughter to me. Go on home now.”</p> <p>...“She a ho. Think she all cute. She fast like those white girls. She slept with half the basketball team. She touch my man I'll slap her.”</p> |
| 171 | <p>Maybe it is the it I was when Anthony Miller used to kiss me in the vestibule at Holy Redeemer.</p> <p>Anthony Miller and I have never gone this far.</p> <p>...“You're so beautiful. So beautiful.” He says it over and over like it's a spell being cast over him. He closes his eyes. His hands are hungry to touch me. Whatever it is I am at this</p> |

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| | <p>moment, it is something I want to be. But then the way Anthony Miller kisses me is fast. The way he touches me is hard. I feel like I'm going inside farther and farther the more he touches me.</p> <p>When he touches me down there I count. He sticks his finger into me, and it feels like a pen jamming into a top. One. Two. Three. Four. Beautiful doesn't let it hurt.</p> <p>Five. Six. "Please let me see what it feels like," he says. I feel his weight on me and his hands spreading my legs farther apart. Anthony Miller is taking the thing I thought I was giving. He is not big enough to make it impossible to fight back, but I don't. It's like my body thinks: surrender, beautiful. Seven. Eight. Nine.</p> <p>"You are so beautiful," he says, and Grandma opens my bedroom door. She's not supposed to be at home. Maybe she heard his shoe fall to the floor, or the small noise I let out when he thrust harder to get deeper into me, dry.</p> <p>She sees him and doesn't say "Stop" or "What are you doing?" She sees me and says, "You little hussy."</p> <p>...I hide the sheets from Grandma. I wash my hands and brush my teeth. I don't wash down there. I know I am bleeding.</p> |
| 174 | <p>In my diary, this is what I write:</p> <p>"Having sex with Anthony Miller was quite an experience. Anthony Miller got kind of carried away and so did I. The doctor says I have a pretty bad tear down there. I should be more careful. And make sure I'm ready next time. I am still bleeding a little. I think he did something to me. I want him to do it again."</p> <p>It's not a true story, but I tell it to myself.</p> |
| 178 | <p>Sometimes I hide her contributions. I empty out the bottles while she sleeps if anything is left in them. It's what Mor used to do with Pop's beer and cognac bottles. I know Miss Verle will stop by and bring Grandma another bottle of sherry within a day or so. It's still worth it.</p> <p>There are some days Grandma doesn't get out of bed now that she's retired. Those days she drinks the contributions all day. She pours a bit of sherry to have after her coffee in the morning, and then with her tea in the afternoon. With her supper she drinks it straight while watching the evening news.</p> |
| 186 | <p>He says "Mom" and laughs at himself with a voice that is not at all white-guy sounding. It's not the words he says, but his voice—it has the texture of Deacon James's when he preaches, the feel of Drew's when he speaks.</p> |
| 194 | <p>There were a couple of times, though—of course it was only when they were high and drunk—they thought it was funny when his sex got hard. Once he ejaculated while the woman named Lisa toyed with him. He was so scared of having that thing sneeze again for a week he was afraid to touch it when he peed.</p> <p>As the months passed, he grew. His monkey face must have looked suddenly more menacing.</p> <p>...Irritable, totally not high, Paul and Lisa left their monkey and the bill at the diner where they had a late lunch. One monkey wasn't going to stop their show.</p> |
| 195 | <p>"Niggers changed everything around this neighborhood." He couldn't hear the black in Brick's voice.</p> |
| 197 | <p>At night he'd frequent the town bar, have a beer—always too much beer. But he wasn't an alcoholic, which was what he'd told himself on the mornings he couldn't remember how he had found himself to this or that motel or rented room.</p> |

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| 202 | I forget that what you are—being black or being white—matters. Jesse makes me see there’s a different way to be white. And Brick makes me see there’s a different way to be black. |
| 206 | A full bottle of contribution stands empty beside her. It’s the second in two days. |
| 208 | “Then it’s good you don’t work there,” Lakeisha says with a high voice and her best white people accent. |
| 210 | White guys don’t notice black girls, and black girls don’t look at white guys that way. ...“Girl, he ain’t thinkin friend when he looks at them titties. Me, I want that fine tall one,” Lakeisha says, ignoring me. |
| 214 | “How do I know you’re not gay?” That’s what the women would tease him with. His beauty. He had learned that the women who said this wanted him to be rough with them—take them in his arms hard. He’d done it a couple of times—both drunk and high—but not without the uneasy feeling that claimed his throat and his gut later. He’d hold the women the way the bruising hands of the pigeon man had held him. It was not the touch he wanted or wanted to give. |
| 224 | “Gotta have something to drink for a party.” Jesse’s bought two six-packs of beer from the grocery store with a fake ID. “That’s what I used to say,” Brick says when he sees the beer. ...Lakeisha takes a beer and hands one to me. “I ain’t gonna tell, if you don’t.” She opens the beer. I do too. |
| 225 | We talk about everything. So we also talk about sex. The boys talk about sex. Lakeisha and I listen. “I got my sex education from the Sears, Roebuck catalog,” Jesse says. He’s two beers into the night, and I can see the red rise into his cheeks. “I was like nine years old and my older cousin—he was twelve and didn’t know anything. But I didn’t know that then. The things he told me. Anyway, he said I could see it for myself right there in the Sears catalog. There were girls in their bras and underwear. “I go home that day. Sneak the catalog into the bathroom with me, find the right page, and start wonking off. Then my dad opens the door. I’m like shell-shocked. He says, ‘Son?’ and he can see I’ve got the catalog open to the bigger-sized women. He says ‘Excuse me, son. Go on ahead.’ He closes the door and I go right back to it. That’s the whole sex-ed talk he ever gave me. Guess he was just glad I wasn’t gay.” |
| 229 | Jesse passes the joint to me, but I wave it away. I keep drinking my beer. |
| 230 | “Don’t be mad, okay? You want some? Do you want to try?” He gestures with his hand after he takes another puff. “No,” I say, but I reach for another beer. ...My bottle of beer is empty. Jesse hands me another. I drink it like I am thirsty. |
| 232 | He pulls me to him. We kiss. ...He kisses me again. The sirens have died. But now there is a loud honking. Two or three cars, honking like they are speaking to each other. Loud rock music. A scream. “Nigger!” “Nigger!” And then “Nigger lover!” Again and again and again. |
| 234 | He draws circles within circles on my middle. He makes me brown and browner still. “I’ve never done it with a black girl before,” he says. |

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| 237 | Nigger, nigger, nigger lover. |
| 241 | “Afraid you were gonna have three little jigaboos on your hands?” Laronne said. |
| 254 | “Your girl, she’s a cocktease,” the man yelled as he walked away. “You can’t let her play with a man like that.” |

| Profanity/Derogatory Term | Count |
|---------------------------|-------|
| Ass | 6 |
| Bitch | 4 |
| Cock | 1 |
| Fuck | 3 |
| Goddamn | 1 |
| Jigaboo | 6 |
| Monkey | 13 |
| Nigger | 21 |
| Shit | 5 |
| Tit | 4 |