



# Livvie Owen Lived Here

*Sarah Dooley*

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Olivia "Livvie" Owen feels things differently than her parents and two sisters. Livvie is autistic. Her family has had to move repeatedly because of her outbursts. When they again face eviction, Livvie is convinced she has a way to get back to a house where they were all happy, once.

The problem is, Livvie burned down that house.

But she's not giving up. Here is her story.

### **Livvie Owen Lived Here Details**

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## From Reader Review Livvie Owen Lived Here for online ebook

### Katie says

Livvie Owen Lived Here is a powerful story of one autistic girl's journey to find someplace to call home. It was so gut-wrenching at times that it managed to pull on my heartstrings; something that most novels fail to do.

I think this a book that everyone needs to read. Autism is something that isn't spotlighted in YA a lot, especially for an older character such as Livvie, but this novel is a great portrayal of less than wealthy family that deals with the weight of things that come with her. It sparkles with realism and importance; nothing is dolled up for the pages and autism isn't prettied for Livvie's character but I loved every second of it.

And it can be very educational as well. I have several autistic cousins, and while I love all of them very much, Livvie Owen Lived Here has me looking at them with a newfound adoration. Despite her problems, Livvie is smart and she just wants her family to be happy. If this hadn't been in her point of view, we just would've seen the horribly wrong decisions she makes to get her family to happiness. But since we're in her head, we're able to read about why she thinks those horribly wrong decisions are perfectly acceptable to her. Things are put into new perspectives in this novel. You're placed in a completely new mindset, Livvie's mindset, and it teaches you so much.

Overall, I absolutely loved Livvie Owen Lived Here. Although it's quick read, it's very emotionally powerful and raises awareness on a subject that most authors are afraid to touch with a ten-foot-pole. I definitely think this one that everyone needs to pick up!

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### Jackie says

A fictionalized account of one family's everyday struggles and hopes as they live with a daughter/sister who has autism. Livvie Owen, 14, struggles herself with questions, frustrations, and friendship as she navigates the complicated world around her.

Her family clearly loves her and wants only the best for her, but her outbursts and inability to contain her emotions have left the family coping with multiple evictions and moves throughout the town of Nabor. Livvie remembers and cherishes her time in the summer house with orange cat, yet these loved things have been taken from her because of misunderstanding and bias.

*Livvie Owen Lived Here* is narrated with emotions that come pouring through. Even the tone of voice captures a disability and you begin to see hardships the family endures...yet, their love for one another is top priority.

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### A says

So, I read this a couple years back. I loved it, the author has a spectacular sense of story, and I always appreciate autism in a book. Sometimes the autism bits did feel tacked-on. I was really sad that there wasn't a sequel, but the sequels are never as good, anyway. Made me cry. I've been meaning to reread it.

## **Diane Ferbrache says**

Livvie is a 14 year old autistic girl. She has two parents, a loving older sister and a younger sister who has little patience with Livvie's disability. After the mill closed & her parents lost their jobs, her family has moved numerous times, usually evicted for one reason or another. When Livvie begins hearing the mill whistle in the middle of the night, and begins obsessing over their former home and her long dead cat, things begin to fall apart.

Told in Livvie's own voice, the story is sometimes confusing since Livvie switches regularly from first person to third, but the heart of the book is in Livvie's voice. She's smart, but cannot read; perceptive, but clueless; selfish, but loving. The author uses her experiences with her own homelessness and as a special education teacher to create a memorable character. There are some puzzling plot issues – what really happened to the family's first home is only implied and the ending wraps up a little too easily and happily – but the characters keep you interested throughout.

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## **Phoboliccardo53 says**

Livvie Owen Lived Here is a fiction book about a girl named Livvie who has Autism. She lives in "Nabor-with-an-A" and keeps getting kicked out of her house for her raging outbursts. When she continues to hear a whistle from a mill that stopped blowing their whistle 10 years ago she finally takes a night adventure to the mill to find out why it keeps "calling her".

While on her adventure she finds her old sun house and becomes determined to move in. She has been suspecting that her family will be kicked out ever since Janna came when she first heard the whistle, but when finds out that they are getting kicked out she is more motivated than ever to get back to the sun house. But she has no idea just what she has no idea just what the sun house holds.

I liked the book but it wasn't really anything special. It was really slow not very interesting but the ending was one of my favorites. It has something you would never expect and you see a different side of Livvie you didn't see in the rest of the book. I would rate this book 3 out 5 stars, definitely not the best book I've read. I would recommend this book to anybody who enjoys slow moving books and feels close to the reader, or goes into the characters shoes. If you have read *The Breathing Room* by Marsha Hayles then you will like *Livvie Owen Lived Here*.

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## **Tina says**

2.5, maybe? This wasn't bad, it was just -- as the 2-star rating indicates -- "okay." A fast read, had some emotional moments, but, as others have commented, the narrator's voice didn't ring true as someone with autism. Of course, I'm not a specialist, and all the experience I have is knowing several people with asperger's, but even in that regard, I feel like Mark Haddon created a more authentic (and certainly more interesting) character in *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time*. Of course, that wasn't a young adult novel, and maybe that's a key difference here: this book definitely felt more geared toward pre-teens, and had kind of a talking down quality. At the same time, there were passages where I felt the narrator's discomfort and anxiety quite acutely, so I'm not saying it's the worst written book ever. Like I said, just okay.

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Might be a good primer on autism for Middle Schoolers, should they need it.

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## Carly Burgess says

### Personal Response

I thought *Livvie Owen Lived Here* was a very interesting book. It was cool to see the point of view from someone with autism. I didn't like how the book was based in an alternate universe though. I was a little confused with the plot of the story, and how the author never cleared up some points that were made in the book. Overall, *Livvie Owen Lived Here* was not my favorite book.

### Plot Summary (Spoilers)

*Livvie Owen Lived Here* starts with a girl named Olivia Owen. She is a high schooler who suffers from autism. Livvie and her family live in Nabor with an A, which is right next to Neighbor with an E, their infamous town. Olivia already decided that she never wants to live in Neighbor with an E. In the beginning of the book Livvie hears a mysterious whistle that hasn't blown in years in her town. She asked her family if they all heard it and no one did, and they all think she is crazy. Throughout the rest of the book she constantly hears the whistle at odd times and tries, and fails to find it. Towards the end of the book, Liv and her family get evicted from their trailer due to Liv's behavior and complaints from neighbors. They are forced to move and end up moving to Neighbor with an E. Livvie decides that she is excited to live there and can't wait to start their new life.

### Recommendation

I would recommend this book to anyone who is interested in mental illness, or the point of view of someone who suffers from a mental illness. This book could help them to more understand what the world to someone with autism looks like.

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## Hiba Ahmed says

Livvie Owen Lived Here is an amazing book SWBST -

14 year old Livvie Owen is different than many people, she has something what people call Autism. She see's, hears & senses things differently than others. Livvie wants to fit in like everyone else, be normal, and stay at Nabor with an A forever. She hates her little sister Lannie but loves her older sister Natasha. However, all of a sudden, Livvie wonders why her younger sister Lanie is becoming so nice to her, and why tash is trying to avoid her. Livvie realizes things that she has never realized before, like the great feeling you get when you take care of your younger sister, or realizing how many things she has in common with her sister; she wonders if she really is a good sister. There is one thing though, that Livvie is having trouble with, her parents and sisters want to move to Neighbor with an E, but will not admit it, knowing that Livvie loves Nabor with an A. Will Livvie make the right decision, home or family? 'Livvie Owen Lived Here' is a story about Love, Hope and Determination.

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## Mizzio Batista says

Disappointing.

I honestly don't know where to start with this book. The first half is so dull. I literally could only read 20 pages at a time, before falling asleep. It picks up near the end, but barely enough.

The synopsis truly does sell a different tale than the one I read. Where is the complaints and constant moving-house due to outrages outburst by the autistic main character? Where is the description of the fire that she started that destroyed their original house? I didn't read about it! It's BARELY mentioned in passing!

Character were all lovable, yet slightly forgettable. Her parent rarely make their presence known in the beginning, and the author introduces brand new characters near the end of the book. That was really annoying, especially due to the fact that he was one of the best in the novel.

Although this is my first book in which the narrator is autistic, I thought that aspect was done well. However, I'm not too sure. I don't have anything to measure it against. I did like Livvie a lot, as a character though.

Really unhappy with the outcome. Thought this book had more potential.

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## Tom Franklin says

Sarah Dooley has set herself a remarkable goal with "Livvie Owen Lived Here": to write a compelling, believable book from the viewpoint of a teenager with autism.

Parts of Dooley's writing were less than convincing: Livvie's beautiful descriptions, some using complex metaphors for instance, just didn't ring true with me for a teenage who has problems identifying emotions in herself and (especially) other people.

Other parts of Dooley's writing was extremely convincing. Livvie feels herself a stranger in a world she desperately wants to belong to. Her relationship with her family is equally awkward, both loving her sisters and parents while fearing their anger at her outbursts. When Dooley starts one scene with Livvie suddenly becoming aware that she's in the throws of an uncontrollable tantrum that she doesn't remember starting, she makes Livvie very believable.

From her role of working as a teacher with mentally disadvantaged students, Dooley provides insights into Livvie's world, Livvie's way of explaining her actions and the world around her. Livvie cannot control much in her life (she's only starting to learn to control her angry outbursts, thanks to a caring teacher who has left the school before the story begins) but, like all self-aware people, he feels a sense of responsibility for making things better for her family. It's Livvie's sense of being responsible for so many of the problems in her family that has her trying to find a solution.

While I felt taken out of the story by some of Dooley's wonderful prose (that I found just didn't fit a narrator with autism) I read this book in one day, reading the majority of it in one sitting, late at night in bed. That, alone, should indicate how much I enjoyed it.

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### **Abby Johnson says**

All Livvie wants is to go back to when things were good. Back when the whistle blew on the paper mill every day at 6 o'clock and they lived in the warm, yellow house and Orange Cat was still alive. But the paper mill's closed and if she can't keep her outbursts under control, her family's going to be evicted again. It's not easy for anyone to deal with change and for Livvie it's a particular struggle because she has autism. But Livvie can't go back, so she's going to have to find a way to move forward.

I quite liked this debut novel about a blue-collar family quietly dealing with inevitable change. It's a thoughtful story and Livvie has a strong voice that'll stick with the reader for some time. I'd try it on fans of *The Great Gilly Hopkins* by Katherine Paterson, *Also Known as Harper* by Ann Haywood Leal, and *Anything But Typical* by Nora Baskins.

More on the blog: <http://www.abbythelibrarian.com/2010/...>

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### **Liza Gilbert says**

There was a lot to like about this novel of a young teenager with autism. From my own experience of knowing people with autism spectrum disorders, Livvie's behavior was textbook.

However, I was frequently jarred by Livvie's narrative. For a character who cannot read or write, her choices of \$10 words pulled me out of the story repeatedly. The problem? I'm not sure how Dooley could have written the story from Livvie's perspective and not experience that issue. It was puzzling and bothersome.

Secondly, while I found this to be a genuine and endearing novel, I think it has around zero teen appeal. My observances and experiences have indicated that the teen age is the Age of Alienation. Even teens who are perfectly healthy feel alienated during ages 12-21, and they generally don't want to read about someone who is different. Most of the teens I know what to read escapist fiction, with some exceptions, like Ellen Hopkins.

I think this book would go over well with adults, adults in book groups, and adults who need to know what it's like parenting a child with an autism spectrum disorder. Otherwise, I think that perhaps the altruists among us want teens to know what it's like to be different, when they already feel alienated.

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### **Brooke Nutter says**

I thought this book was good in general. Started off kind of slow but had a good ending. I thought Livvie (main character) developed really well throughout the book. I would recommend to read.

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### **Librariann says**

Is anyone else tired of reading books where the narrator has autism/downs syndrome/cerebral palsy and is therefore SO WISE? Is it politically incorrect to write a negative review book that exists to teach SENSITIVITY and PERSPECTIVE?

14 year old Livvie Owen has one older sister (who is nice), one younger sister (who is mean) and autism. Her fixation is houses, especially the "Sun House," which her family used to live in. Now they are poor and live in a trailer in a dying town, evicted from place after place because of Livvie's destructive tendencies.

My least favorite of my recent reads along the theme, the book jacket gives away one of the book's only "reveals" (that Livvie burned down her family's house.) Okay, I guess, but Sharon Draper's *Out of My Mind* is a much better choice for a reader looking for a different POV. Listen, some of these types of books are just not that interesting, but they will still be used in NO TWO PEOPLE ARE NOT ON FIRE curriculums. And I guess that is okay. Choices are important.

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### **Becca Lee says**

It was a wonderful read and on a subject that is frequently requested by our schools. Livvie and her friends from school are so tender and innocent- they provoke one to frown with sadness and also to smile with joy in the same scene. Livvie grows so much in the book and you are cheering her on the entire way. It is great to see her process and connect with things. The character development is excellent, not just with Livvie but with all the supporting characters.

The reader feels Livvie's emotions. The following is told from Livvie's narrative early on in the book: "I knew I had made the wrong choice. Slippers were not for rain. Slippers were for inside only; there was a rule I had forgotten. I had really messed up this time... 'This was a stupid idea Olivia. You do not have very good ideas sometimes, young lady!'... Another thing, though, about being Livvie Owen. She rarely listened when I spoke to her. Usually when she did, it was already too late. I rocked and tugged until the rain began to lessen...as I tried to relieve the pressure."

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