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# Too Close to Home

*Aoife Walsh*

## Too Close to Home Aoife Walsh

Meet Minny: her life is a complicated whirlwind of unbearable PE lessons, annoying friends and impossible-to-live-with siblings. Minny is desperate for some space in a house spilling over with family and hangers-on. She has to contend with her autistic sister Aisling's school bullies, whilst trying to keep her self-absorbed BFF Penny happy, *and* look normal in front of new boy Franklin. And on top of this, now Dad has announced that he's returning to London – with his new girlfriend.

Secrets, lies and home truths will out, frying pans will be burnt, and arguments will flare up in a story full of humour, honesty and minor household emergencies.

## Too Close to Home Details

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Author : Aoife Walsh

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## From Reader Review Too Close to Home for online ebook

### Anna says

Thoroughly enjoyed this book. Can't fault it at all. It's intended for teenagers and is pitched at just the right level. However, as an adult reading it I didn't feel like I was reading a children's book. It's so intelligently written and the plot twists were not at all predictable, unlike lots of fiction intended for older readers. Highly recommended!

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### Ann Elin Odland says

Til tider litt rotete og kaotisk som gjorde det vanskelig å følge med, men liker hvor realistiske karakterene er, og det var mer fokus på vennskap og familie enn forelskelse

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### Trish says

This is one of those lovely, funny, crazy, heartfelt stories.

Minny is a teenager trying to find her own place in the world, and also within her messy, extended family and set of friends.

A really lovely read, full of humour and warmth, the characters are interesting and realistic, loveable though flawed.

If you enjoy the Casson family books by Hilary McKay, the Pea books by Susie Day or the Mountfield family books by Anne Fine then you'll love this book too.

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### Lizzie (Littlehux) Huxley-Jones says

Too Close to Home is a captivating family saga, as jam-packed with characters as Minny's home is.

Minny is a fourteen year old girl living in her Babi?ka's house with her three siblings Aisling, Selaena and Raymond, and mother Nita, desperately trying to find some space for herself to grow into. When Minny's father Des returns quite out of the blue after disappearing four years ago, Minny and her sisters must decide how much they are willing to let him back in. Alongside her father's reappearance, Minny has to face the reappearance of a family friend staying with her Grandmother, her seven year old sister's devotion to the Bible and her Babi?ka's new boyfriend, Gil.

Aoife Walsh magnificently fits in extremely complex issues into this single book – divorce, jealousy, lying, mainstream schooling of autistic people, devotion to God, fostering, classism, fatherhood, forgiveness and acceptance, to name a few.

Walsh also provides a sensitive, accurate portrayal of an autistic teenager struggling within a large family and with the social challenges of mainstream schooling in oldest child Aisling. It starts as a slow burn, eventually building into a fast-paced explosive ending.

And now I can't stop thinking of "life is like a train" metaphors.

Thank you kindly to Chloe Sackur at Andersen Press for sending me a copy of Too Close to Home.

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### **Deb says**

Enjoyable story but felt the ending was rather abrupt. Perhaps a sequel?

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### **Lyd (Li'l My) says**

I will start by saying that, on the whole I did enjoy this book and would probably recommend it to certain people.

I found the book fairly slow to get into and until about 50 pages in I found myself simply not caring enough about it to pick it up. However, after the first hurdle, once things started actually happening I really got into it and found it hard to put down.

The book is good at giving you a real insight into Minny's family life and I did find myself caring a lot about the different characters. I felt that this book was very interesting in that it brought you into knowing about the family life however, other than that I do think the actual story and plot of the book was lacking in some senses. the plot didn't really go anywhere unexpected and parts of the story felt undeveloped.

On reaching the end of this book I felt that I was expecting more from the conclusion, it left me with questions and almost felt unfinished. Almost as if it was only the first half of a story, maybe prompting a sequel?

If a sequel were to be released I would be first in line to buy it as despite some dead ends in the book I thoroughly enjoyed reading it and a second book might be just what it needs to tie some loose ends together.

3/5 Stars.

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### **L.H. Johnson says**

I described this on Twitter as one for the 'I write this sitting in the kitchen sink' crowd. And it is; it's a book full of complicated and complex and Casson-esque characters, all of them bumping against each other in their complicated and complex lives. Too Close To Home isn't really about much on the surface (except, in a way, it's about everything and perhaps that surface stillness is so very metaphorical for the book itself) but underneath it's peddling away like mad. There's Minny; central character (and oh I am full of semi-colons and punctuation in this review, but that's this book - thoughts and movements and emotions and people all jumbling against each other and trying to find their space in life).

So. In an attempt to be precise:

1. Walsh's prose is very classic in tone. It's like eating a big authorial cake (stay with me) and finding it full

of Streatfeild and McKay and Smith, and it takes a moment to sink in and when it does, you don't want to let it go. It's rich, vivid and rather timeless. Contemporary yet classic. Classic yet contemporary. That sort of thing.

2. It is a sympathetic and genuine book. It speaks of complex issues and does so in a way that is neither didactic nor "here is the issue and now you should pay attention." In a way, it reminded me of the Susie Day 'Pea' series (it's sort of a textual elder sister to Pea) which is a very huge thing for me. (I love the Pea books, they are beautiful and smart things and now I'm creating a family tree of books and need to move on).

3. If you are into the Chalet School series, there is a moment on p77 which will make you understand this book and everything that it is saying about the world.

4. Too Close to Home is out in July. This is an early review. I debated whether to write it now or to save it for a while. And, as you can see, I wrote it now. This is because sometimes books leave you feeling full of them and in love with everything that they are and wanting to share that and wanting to talk about it all now. It is such a lovely book this, wise and smart and funny and sarcastic and joyful, and it should not fly under the radar. Save the date.

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### **cj says**

Gorgeous, gorgeous book. This reminded me of the books I used to read over and over again when I was a Young Person, which weren't big dystopian trilogies or life-and-death teenage dramas, but comparatively low-stakes, nuanced, thoughtful stories about families and second families and friends and all the complicated dynamics of those relationships. This is a funny, smart book full of flawed, sympathetic characters, and the writing is perfect.

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### **Stefanie Stokes says**

Honestly I wasn't sure if I was going to finish this book at all. It was so slow going and the super long chapters didn't help either, chapter one alone was 40 pages.

The blurb made a big thing about Minny's autistic sister Aisling being bullied but that was actually only a minor plot point. I do feel like her autism was done fairly well though. At least Ash wasn't a stereotype, she was shown to have feelings and emotions which appears to be a rarity for autistic girls in fiction.

The plot was nothing - their lives - and everything - reemergence of their absent dad with his pregnant girlfriend in tow - at the same time. I didn't really understand Minny and Penny's friendship (other than their names being similar, side note small LGBT representation in Penny having two mums), Selena's obsession with religion and the preoccupation with referring to Raymond as just 'the baby'. Also using Nita's name rather than 'mum' was slightly confusing in places. I liked Franklin though.

2/5 stars

For more reviews see: <https://owls-rainbow.blogspot.co.uk/>

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## **Trijnewijn says**

Neem drie zussen, een babybroer, een moeder en een oma met sterke meningen. Zet hen samen in één huis, voeg er nog een klots andere personages aan toe -wat vrienden, familie, een vader die plots weer in het land is- en je krijgt... een glimp op een leven zoals er zoveel zijn. Het gebrek aan vergezochte wendingen en uitzonderlijke situaties maakt het boek net zo mooi. Er is een zus met autisme, waar sommigen heel slecht op reageren en anderen net heel gewoon. Er is een zusje die ineens bijbelfanaat geworden is, als manier om de wereld te verklaren. Er zijn veel mensen op weinig plaats, wat strubbelingen geeft. Er is een ouder die tijdens een depressie wegloopt van verantwoordelijkheden en een lange weg terug af te leggen heeft. Er zijn publieke geheimen waarvan niemand verwacht dat ze effectief uitgesproken worden. Er is van alles wat en tegelijk van niks te veel. Een bijzonder gewoon boek.

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## **Danni Jervis says**

An intelligent gathering of complex issues involving real characters.

Walsh's tone for believable opinions of each character is refreshing, especially from an English POV, where school life is concerned. Minny is a strong lead that is coping with her dad never coming back from America, leaving her with an older autistic sister, younger religious sister, new baby brother, an over stretched mother and an ever suffering Czech grandmother.

Each character is fleshed out with such realistic problems and written with great sensitivity, I couldn't help but feel for them. Especially when concerning ash' autism, all aspects of attitudes were approached within the story.

I highly recommend for fans of David Leviathan or Mark Haddon

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## **Andrea says**

I received this book free through Goodreads first reads.

This book is very busy, the family in it just have so much going on in their lives. I didn't feel that there was too much of a storyline to the book, but it is still quite an interesting look at the life of a family. There are some funny moments and some sadder moments. I wouldn't say that this novel really gripped me, but it was an interesting read none the less.

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