



## Where I'd Like to Be

*Frances O'Roark Dowell*

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A ghost saved twelve-year-old Maddie's life when she was an infant, her Granny Lane claims, so Maddie must always remember that she is special. But it's hard to feel special when you've spent your life shuffled from one foster home to another. And now that she's at the East Tennessee Children's Home, Maddie feels even less special.

She longs for a place to call home. She even has a "book of houses" in which she glues pictures of places she'd like to live. Then one day, a new girl, Murphy, shows up at the Home armed with tales about exotic travels, being able to fly, and boys who recite poetry to wild horses. When Murphy offers Maddie something she has never had before, Maddie begins to wonder if she has finally found someone who *feels* like home.

## Where I'd Like to Be Details

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## From Reader Review Where I'd Like to Be for online ebook

### **Sarah Nottingham says**

Where I'd Like To Be is about a shy and sweet little girl named Maddie. Maddie's Granny ensures her that she is special because as a baby a ghost saved her life. Sadly though Maddie has been shuffled in and out of foster homes her entire life and now has been placed into an orphanage, where it is hard to feel special, loved or wanted by anyone. Maddie longs to feel loved and to have a family to call her own. With the help of a new friend named Murphy Maddie grows throughout the book and ultimately gains a nontraditional family and love.

I thought this book as good but also very sad. The books overall theme is friendship but also overcoming abandonment and issues with foster care. The book gave me insight as a teacher on why children tend to act out in school when they are in the foster care system. I enjoyed that the book dealt with such a serious issue but gave you her perspective and the reader could easily interact with the main character.

This would be a good book to use as an independent read, for classroom discussions on diversity and different family dynamics and throughout lesson plans. I would recommend using this book as an independent read instead of a read aloud book because the length and the touchy subject matter. I would recommend this book to children that have dealt with foster care, adoption and the over ally lonely students. You could use this book to discuss diversity such as family dynamic and help students understand foster families. The students could also reflect in journals on how they felt about the book and why they liked or didn't like the book.

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### **Rocio Molina says**

Lovely and whimsical but very real matters

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### **Keely says**

This is my all-time favorite book. It is one of those books you sleep with once you finish rereading it for the seventh time.

I am 13, and I think the first time I read this book was when I was around 7. Obviously, I barely understood the themes of foster-care in it, but I still liked it enough to get it again at the library when I saw it a few years later. I have now read it at least seven times; I usually read it at least once a year. (This is my first real review, so please excuse my wild thoughts)

Themes: Friendship, Foster-care, Orphans, Abandonment

"When I was just a baby, a ghost saved my life. This is according to my Granny Lane, who I lived with at the time in a trailer on Roan Mountain." (to give an even greater show of how much I love this book, I memorized that line)

Granny Lane isn't Maddie's real grandmother. She's just the "old lady who lived next door when [Maddie's] mama decided to take a break from baby-raising." Since Granny Lane got diabetes when Maddie was eight,

she's been shuffled to lots of foster homes, most recently, the East Tennessee Children's Home.

One of my favorite things about this book is that the story has each character's stories woven in throughout the book as they sit together in their homemade fort, basically a one room house. Chapter 17 is my favorite story. It's so sad, but with so much positivity that you can't help but love the characters even more. It's fantastic.

I just hate the ending. We need another book! Mrs. Dowell, if you are reading this, hear our plea for more of Maddie's story! Does Maddie go to live with Penny? Do she and Murphy ever make up? Can Murphy really FLY?!

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### **Michael Beyer says**

This book made me cry. And that is not unusual, even though I am a 60-year-old man. A Tale of Two Cities by Charles Dickens made me cry. At the end, not during the funny parts. But this was a book about a lonely eleven-year-old girl trying to make friends. Why should that make me cry?

But it is also a bittersweet tale of memorable child characters who have nowhere left to turn but each other, and their imaginations. The poetic sting of it can make a grown man cry. You should read it. You will understand then.

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### **Dr. A. says**

This book was very sweet and I was rooting for Maddie. I am not sure why the back cover says she is 12 as she is 11 and talks about that often.

Early on this book about children in a group home reminded me of the Boxcar Children and that is a personal favorite.

Among my complaints, likely not shared with the young reader, is the lack of reality in this sugary story. Sure there are some sad tales of foster care woe woven throughout, but for the most part Maddie and her friends live a pretty dreamy, perfect existence. They are well cared for, supported by the community, and manage to build a fort...tools, supplies, and all...in a Judge's back yard, without incident or concern...or adult supervision. They are all mentally healthy and deal with their emotions moderately well, even pathological liar Murphy. In short, it wasn't very realistic. Additionally, the story felt scattered and the flashbacks were confusing.

As far as appropriateness, this book contains no language and no sexual content. It is pretty tame and sweet.

Finally, if you want an ending O'Roark Dowell doesn't provide one. We don't leave the story knowing what happens to our characters.

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### **Gracie Skultety says**

I really liked this book, it is now one of my favs. I liked this book because at some parts it was sad and some

parts were really happy. I liked how some parts were so sad they made you feel bad. This book made you feel bad because the girl was a foster child and did not always have the easiest life. When the book talked about the bad things that happened to her it makes me feel bad because I'm not a foster child.

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### **Ivonne says**

I thought that this book was amazing it took my breath away. The characters in this book are orphans and they have had a hard life. I've never imagined that kids so young could go through so much. The book is mainly about a little girl named Maddie and she's been in the shelter for quite a while she's been adopted and abandoned many times. She always sees different kids walk the halls. After all the time she has been there she is friends with a younger kid named Rickey Ray that admires her very much. One day an abandoned girl named Murphy walks the doors to the shelter for the first time and makes friends with Maddie. Her character is very closed minded and is hard to talk or open up to people but with the friends she makes Maddie, Corrine, Rickey Ray, and Kevin. Kevin doesn't live in the shelter he just lives by there. When Kevin and Murphy find a "book of houses" that belongs to Maddie they plan to build a house but they don't have the money or place, so Kevin offers his back yard and they built a fort instead. That little fort becomes their hideaway place there "run away from all the cause in this world place".

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### **Ayanna says**

What would you think if you were told that a ghost saved your life when you were an infant? Well, that's what Maddie's Granny Lane claims. Now 12, Maddie is living at the East Tennessee Children's Home, so she tries to feel as if she's special. It's difficult, however, when you have been sent to different foster homes your whole life. She wants a home so badly that she makes a "book of houses," in which she gathers pictures of houses --- houses where she longs to live someday. One day, a new girl named Murphy comes to live at the East Tennessee Children's Home. Her mind is filled with magical tales about exotic travels, being able to fly, and boys who recite poetry to horses. Maddie they become really good friends. Then one day, while Ricky Ray, Maddie's friend, is visiting her, Maddie decides to show Murphy her precious scrapbook. Murphy eventually comes up with an idea to build a fort.

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### **Susan says**

Lovely story, sad but sweet. Good for all ages.

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### **Jaylie says**

I enjoyed this book. The beginning was a little boring. The fact that a ghost saved Maddie's life was kind of pointless and did not really change the story or character.

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## **Karli says**

### **A Review of Where I'd Like to Be**

Life is full of big changes. It's never easy to get through them. In France's O'Roark Dowell's book Where I'd Like To Be the main character Murphy knows this all too well. Murphy is a girl who never told anyone what really happen to her parents, or what her real name is. All she said was lies to everyone in the foster home. One day everything went down hill for Murphy, and all the lies came out. If you like suspenseful books, you would want to read this book because you always want to know what comes next.

Life isn't easy living in a foster home. Especially when you get older. All Murphy wanted was to fit in with everyone. Until one day it all went down.

The main characters are believable because every time they feel emotions you feel that way too. When Maddie found out that Murphy was lying to her she didn't want to believe anything that Murphy was saying. For example Murphy said to Maddie, " You believe me, don't you?" In this part of the book I feel bad for Murphy because she just wanted to fit in with everyone, when everything just fell apart. I think that if Murphy would have told them all the truth, they would have still wanted to be friends with her no matter what her family was like. When some boy threw an eraser at Murphy as a joke, she went along with him. For example, " No way she said. Finders keepers." Murphy could have been upset for someone throwing something at her but, instead she thought it was funny. While the book has some sad parts, it also has some funny parts in it too.

Where I'd Like To Be has a lot of great aspects to make it a fantastic book. Not only does the book have interesting characters, but it also has an interesting plot. If you want to read a book that you never want to put down read this book. The book explains it self. You never have to question what's happening.

I was eager to read on because I wanted to find out what happen to Murphy's parents. The way she is explaining her parents is sad because it sounds like she had a lot of fun with them. When Murphy's real mom got her from the foster home, every lie that Murphy said came out. For example it says in the book, " Murphy's mother was not dead." In this part of the book, I was wondering if Murphy's dad was dead or alive. I felt really bad for Murphy because all she was trying to do was to get through the problem she was living. When Maddie found out that Murphy was also lying about her parents' job I was thinking how could you believe her anymore? Everything she is saying is a lie. For example, " her parents were not researchers." I just wanted to flip out on Murphy because if she would have just came out with the truth no one would be mad at her. I feel that Murphy was just embarrassed in what her family really was. So she made them sound cooler than they really were.

The main character Murphy gives us an idea that life is full with big changes, and it's never to easy to get through them all. With all the believable characters and amazing plots, this book explains a lot about life and how to get through it. This book makes you feel warm inside because of the emotions the characters make you feel.

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## **713tia says**

When i finished this book i thought it was very interesting. It is a great book for anyone to read. It is about these kids who are in a shelter called "HOME". This knew girl who is knew to the shelter joined in. This girl named maddie who is the main character was almost killed when she was a baby, but a ghost saved her. Her mom really didn't care about her much. Most of her life she stayed with her next door neighbor. she was an old lady. after a while maddie had to move out and went to go stay with her aunt because the old lady had hip surgery. She could't take care of a girl if she could barely take care of herself. so maddie moved with her

Aunt , but thyat didn't last lomg because have of the time her aunt was barley their to take care of her. i felt very bad for maddie because she kept on moving around from place to place. What about her education? She had to keep transferring schools, barley had enough time to study. At lasT she got situated at one place.it was a shelter called "home". She was doing pretty good in their with a few other children. She went to school everyday. One day this new girl came into the shelter. Her name was murphy. Maddie was always trying to be her friend but it seemed like murphy didn't want to. Murphy told maddie that her parents had died in a car crash. maddie was very sad to here that.

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### **Alicia says**

Amazing book!!! The book shows real life things and shows how life can be for some people.

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### **Heather Lowry says**

Read this with my 9yr old daughter and it was a good book. Sad moments thru the book, but overall mood is upbeat.

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### **Mikayla Van De Walle says**

this book is really good if u like addventure and... kind of a heart warming story

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