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Little Darlings

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Editor's Choice:

off

Media type:

Book

BfK Rating:

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After her foray back to Victorian times in **Hetty Feather**, Jacqueline Wilson returns with a tale of 21st-century culture that could not be more contemporary. Ageing rock star, Danny Kilman is still famous enough to get parts in films and appear in happy family photoshoots for ?Hi!? magazine. Sunset, his daughter, hates the celebrity limelight however, and longs for privacy and peace instead of paps and rowing parents. Then she meets Destiny, a girl from a rundown estate who looks uncannily like her, and is named after a long-forgotten Danny Kilman song. The two girls begin an unlikely friendship, and support each other as the glitter starts to come off the rock star lifestyle. Ultimately, the real reason behind their close bond is revealed.

Little Darlings is another winning Jacqueline Wilson story, which her fans will devour like celeb-obsessed readers with the latest issue of **Hello**, particularly with Nick Sharratt's lovely ?Hi!? magazine parody on the cover. It's not just fluff however as Wilson also provides young wannabes with food for thought about the nature of fame, and the downsides of celebrity, as she probes beyond the groomed public faces of her characters. Despite the rather engineered coincidence employed to bring them together, the moment when Destiny performs with her father thus revealing her paternity to the world, is genuinely moving.

Where **Little Darlings** occasionally falls down is in the trueness of her young heroines' voices, particularly Sunset. ?I fashioned her a little apron out of a tissue and she bustled about the house, diligently dusting with her paw? is how she describes Sunset playing with one of her teddies. Though this is a 10-year-old who has been forced to grow up fast when she doesn't really want to, her vocabulary is sometimes over-sophisticated, and her turn of phrase harks back almost to **Hetty Feather**. One ?old-fashioned? element I would have liked more of was the letter correspondence between Sunset and Destiny which evolves because Destiny does not have e-mail.

Still, with Destiny and Sunset only just beginning their public lives as sisters, you wouldn't bet against there one day being a sequel to this pleasurable novel.

Running Order:

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