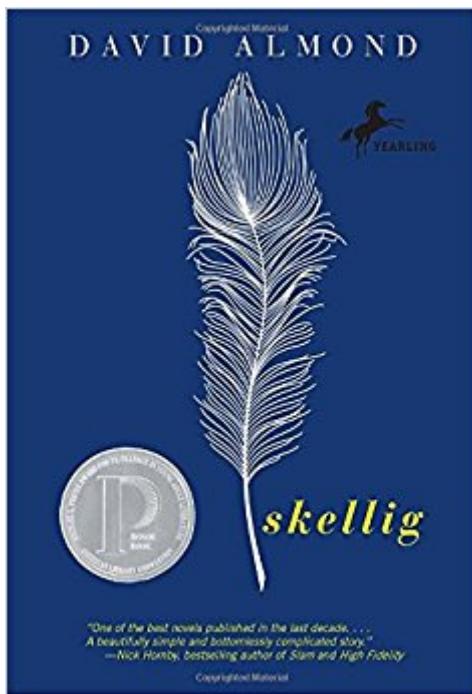


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# Skellig



## **Synopsis**

David Almond's Printz Honor-winning novel celebrates its 10th anniversary! Ten-year-old Michael was looking forward to moving into a new house. But now his baby sister is ill, his parents are frantic, and Doctor Death has come to call. Michael feels helpless. Then he steps into the crumbling garage. . . . What is this thing beneath the spiders' webs and dead flies? A human being, or a strange kind of beast never before seen? The only person Michael can confide in is his new friend, Mina. Together, they carry the creature out into the light, and Michael's world changes forever. . . .

## **Book Information**

Lexile Measure: 490L (What's this?)

Paperback: 192 pages

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Average Customer Review: 4.5 out of 5 stars 247 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #41,295 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #29 in Books > Children's Books > Growing Up & Facts of Life > Family Life > Moving #57 in Books > Children's Books > Growing Up & Facts of Life > Difficult Discussions > Death & Dying #257 in Books > Children's Books > Growing Up & Facts of Life > Family Life > Siblings

Age Range: 8 - 12 years

Grade Level: 3 - 7

## **Customer Reviews**

"I thought he was dead. He was sitting with his legs stretched out and his head tipped back against the wall. He was covered with dust and webs like everything else and his face was thin and pale. Dead bluebottles were scattered on his hair and shoulders. I shined the flashlight on his white face and his black suit." This is Michael's introduction to Skellig, the man-owl-angel who lies motionless behind the tea chests in the abandoned garage in back of the boy's dilapidated new house. As disturbing as this discovery is, it is the least of Michael's worries. The new house is a mess, his parents are distracted, and his brand-new baby sister is seriously ill. Still, he can't get this

mysterious creature out of his mind--even as he wonders if he has really seen him at all. What unfolds is a powerful, cosmic, dreamlike tale reminiscent of Madeleine L'Engle's *A Wrinkle in Time*. British novelist David Almond works magic as he examines the large issues of death, life, friendship, love, and the breathtaking connections between all things. Amidst the intensity and anxiety of his world, Michael is a normal kid. He goes to school, plays soccer, and has friends with nicknames like Leakey and Coot. It's at home where his life becomes extraordinary, with the help of Skellig and Mina, the quirky, strong-willed girl next door with "the kind of eyes you think can see right through you." Mina and her mother's motto is William Blake's "How can a bird that is born for joy / Sit in a cage and sing?" This question carries us through the book, as we see Michael's baby sister trapped in a hospital incubator; as we see the exquisite, winged Skellig crumpled in the garage; as we meet Mina's precious blackbird chicks and the tawny owls in her secret attic; and as we finally see a braver, bolder Michael spread his wings and fly. *Skellig* was the Whitbread Award's 1998 Children's Book of the Year, and this haunting novel is sure to resonate with readers young and old. (Ages 10 and older) --Karin Snelson --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

British novelist Almond makes a triumphant debut in the field of children's literature with prose that is at once eerie, magical and poignant. Broken down into 46 succinct, eloquent chapters, the story begins in medias res with narrator Michael recounting his discovery of a mysterious stranger living in an old shed on the rundown property the boy's family has just purchased: "He was lying there in the darkness behind the tea chests, in the dust and dirt. It was as if he'd been there forever.... I'd soon begin to see the truth about him, that there'd never been another creature like him in the world." With that first description of Skellig, the author creates a tantalizing tension between the dank and dusty here-and-now and an aura of other-worldliness that permeates the rest of the novel. The magnetism of Skellig's ethereal world grows markedly stronger when Michael, brushing his hand across Skellig's back, detects what appears to be a pair of wings. Soon after Michael's discovery in the shed, he meets his new neighbor, Mina, a home-schooled girl with a passion for William Blake's poetry and an imagination as large as her vast knowledge of birds. Unable to take his mind off Skellig, Michael is temporarily distracted from other pressing concerns about his new surroundings, his gravely ill baby sister and his parents. Determined to nurse Skellig back to health, Michael enlists Mina's help. Besides providing Skellig with more comfortable accommodations and nourishing food, the two children offer him companionship. In response, Skellig undergoes a remarkable metamorphosis that profoundly affects the narrator's (and audience members') first impression of the curious creature, and opens the way to an examination of the subtle line between

life and death. The author adroitly interconnects the threads of the story?Michael's difficult adjustment to a new neighborhood, his growing friendship with Mina, the baby's decline?to Skellig, whose history and reason for being are open to readers' interpretations. Although some foreshadowing suggests that Skellig has been sent to Earth on a grim mission, the dark, almost gothic tone of the story brightens dramatically as Michael's loving, life-affirming spirit begins to work miracles. Ages 8-12. Copyright 1998 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

A beautiful children's fantasy novel. A gentle, open and honest exploration of a young boy's conflicting feelings regarding his deathly-ill baby sister, his parents, and his friends. Almond deftly refrains from answering every question (e.g., the exact nature of Skellig) or tediously driving home every symbolism, leaving room for delightful contemplation. Superb writing throughout. The last paragraph of Chapter Two, in all its starkness, is absolutely heart-wrenching. The initial discovery of Skellig was heart-pounding, and the closing chapters heart-lifting. I won't soon forget "27 and 53"! Themes of forgiveness, family love and loyalty, and non-judgmental acceptance of those who don't fit into society's mold.

This book has wonderful imagery, but what enjoyed was the layout of the story and the layers. A young boy's baby sister could be dying, the family moves into a new home where the boy and his new friend discover love and compassion and the power of believing in something. I would recommend this book to young adults and under, although I am almost fifty and thoroughly enjoyed reading it. discover the beauty around them, the importance of

Don't get confused by Skellig's "Children's Book" label. This story is deep and thought-provoking. Children can certainly read and enjoy it, but many of the subtleties might go unnoticed. The book's protagonist, Michael, is one of the most instantly sympathetic characters I've ever met in a story. David Almond tells the story gracefully, with few words, ignoring what is not relevant. The result is that the story was somewhat shorter than I'd expected it to be, but no matter. It's still excellent. Skellig, the mysterious birdlike man he befriends, and Mina, the artistic girl next door, are powerful supporting characters. The parents in the story, though minor characters, are nevertheless sympathetic and well-drawn. Definitely worth a read, especially for readers who enjoyed Madeleine L'Engle's Time Quintet or Ursula K. Le Guin's Earthsea series.

Skellig is an incredibly deep and moving story that, for me, has made a lasting impression. The writing is so simple, sweet and beautiful and the characters are unforgettable. I will treasure this book, always.

What a wonderful story. The compassion that Michael and Mina showed toward Skellig, a very different being was so touching. Having two children of the opposite sex at that age forming a bond with each other was unusual and great. David Almond has written a book that should be read by 10 to 12 year olds to teach them about compassion.

This book is great for anyone of any age. It has an even amount of mystery and excitement. I Read this book for the first time 15 years ago and its still one of my favorites. Its easy to read for new readers and great to read to kids. the creature skellig shows you to never judge a book by its cover. its a story that will stay with you.

I'm only twelve so I can't say that I'm an amazing book reviewer, but I feel that this book dragged on near the start. We were required to read this book for school, and don't get me wrong, I love books, but I couldn't help procrastinating a little bit because of how nothing really happened at the start. There was nothing to engage me. I loved the story nearer to the end, but the book put me off at the start.

Read this for a 6th grade boys book club. It is a quick read and enjoyable. The story can be interpreted in several ways, and it made our discussion very interesting.

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