

Great Reading Recommendations:



St Dominic's Grammar School

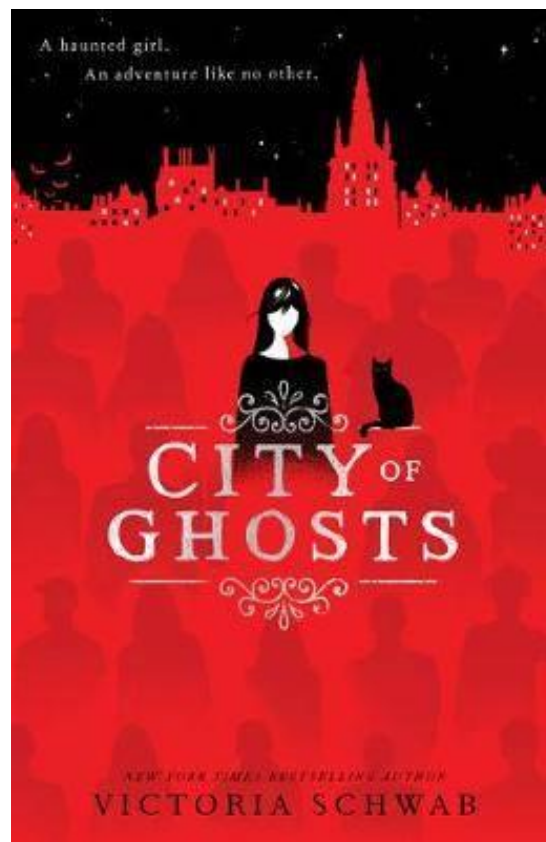
City of Ghosts

Author: Victoria Schwab

Instead of summer at the beach, Cassidy's parents have dragged her on a trip to Edinburgh to film their new TV show. This wouldn't be so bad, except that since her near-death experience last year, Cass has been able to see and feel ghosts whenever they're near –and Edinburgh is one of the most haunted cities in the world.

Cassidy can cross the 'veil' into a realm between the worlds of the living and the dead. She's desperate to understand this ability, but the ghosts of Edinburgh are more powerful than any she's encountered before, and she quickly finds herself losing control. Pulled into the veil without her choice, Cass attracts the attention of the deadly Raven in Red, who's intent on stealing Cass's life-force and trapping her in the veil forever. Can Cass unravel the secrets of the veil and find a way back to the living?

Hooking you from the very first page, it has just the right amount of spookiness, mystery and action, keeping you on the edge of your seat without getting gory. Victoria Schwab is a superb storyteller, blending well-crafted characters with a perfectly paced plot. A ridiculously fun, spine-tingling read.



Little Bird Flies **Author: Karen McCombie**

Bridie loves the tiny Scottish island where she lives, but can't help dreaming of what lies beyond the boundaries of this small world; she's determined that one day she'll fly free and cross the ocean to America. But for now she's tied to Tornish by traditions and promises and family. Until Bridie's island life is turned upside down by the arrival of a new Laird. He's brought with him his snooty family, a mysterious lady in black, and some worrying new ideas about how the island should be run.

Bridie's family try to carry on as normal. But who is the woman in black? And when the Laird's devastating plans for Tornish are revealed, Bridie and her family are faced with a heartbreaking choice. Will Bridie find her wings when she needs them most?

Little Bird Flies is a beautiful story of changing times and the upheaval of a small rural community, seen through the eyes of one young person. Set in the 1860s, the story chronicles rural life, family and friendship. It's wonderfully told, with a hopeful and outward-looking perspective. Bridie is caring and compassionate, tied to her past, but filled with dreams of a different future



Some Places More Than Others

Author: Renée Watson

Amara desperately wants a trip to New York for her birthday, to meet her dad's family and see where he grew up and she can't understand why her parents are reticent about the trip. Until she discovers her dad hasn't spoken to his dad, Grandpa Earl, for twelve years – not since the day she was born. What could make them so mad at each other?

For Amara, this makes the trip even more important. Perhaps she can untangle the web of secrets that's got her family twisted into this knot, and help her father mend the past. Harlem, NY is very different from her home in Oregon and, arriving in the city, she's plunged in a whole new world. But it's one with a powerful history that speaks deeply to Amara and leads to surprising revelations about people she loves and her own sense of self.

Renee Watson is an outstanding storyteller and Amara's voice is clear and compelling. Concepts of family history are neatly tied together with the extensive roots of black American history that are revealed to Amara, giving her a true sense of empowerment and identity. A textured, warm and positive story, beautifully written and with a poetic feel.



Talking to Alaska

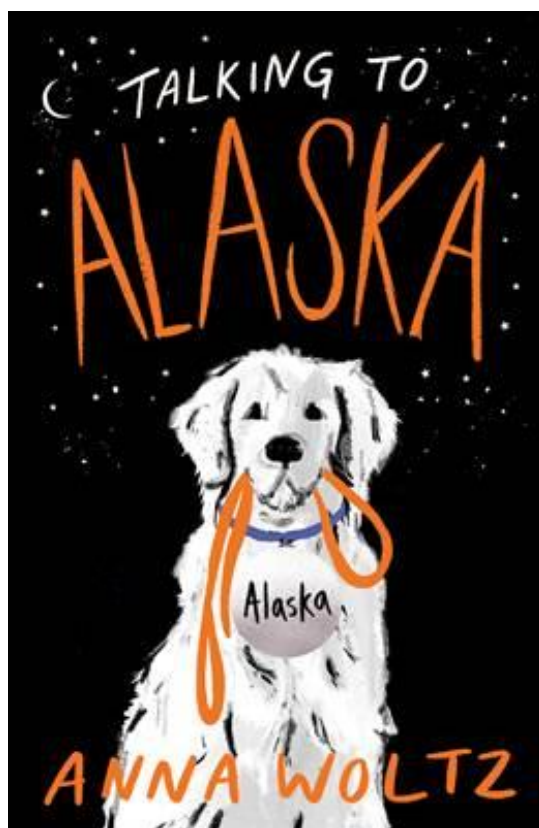
Author: Anna Woltz Translator: Laura Watkinson

It only takes one day at their new school for Parker and Sven to become mortal enemies. Parker's had a terrible summer and just wants to be invisible, while Sven is desperate to make an impression and be known as anything other than 'that kid with epilepsy.'

When Parker discovers her beloved dog Alaska – who she had to give away last year – now belongs to Sven, she's determined to steal her back. Of course, that's much easier said than done...

Meanwhile, Sven is mortified when Alaska is brought to meet him wearing her fluorescent Assistance Dog vest. Having epilepsy feels like he has no control over his life anymore, so when Parker – face covered and in disguise – arrives in his bedroom at midnight to take Alaska back, there's something new to think about. But after spilling all his secrets to her, what'll happen if he uncovers her real identity?

Told in alternating chapters between the two characters, this is a heartfelt story about understanding others. It's a relatively short read, but Anna Woltz packs a lot in, including themes of bullying, trauma, and coping with life-altering situations, while the characters make unexpected discoveries about friendship – and a special discovery about Alaska too.



The Switch-Up Author: *Katy Cannon*

Willa and Alice meet for the first time in the unaccompanied minors lounge at LAX airport. They look so alike that they're mistaken for sisters, but in reality they're chalk and cheese: Willa is outgoing and precocious; Alice is quiet and serious.

They're both being sent away for the summer: Willa to Italy to stay with an aunt she's never met; Alice to London to stay with the girlfriend she didn't even know her dad had. Totally not how they thought they'd be spending their summers, and neither wants to go where they're going. When Alice suggests they swap places, she's joking – but Willa is 100% serious when she says yes. It'll be the adventure of a lifetime! Besides, no-one will ever find out... will they?

The perfect teen coming-of-age movie all wrapped up in a book. Each girl has a personal reason behind this dramatic decision and as we follow each of their stories, their different summers help them come to terms with the changes in their lives. It's lighthearted and fun whilst touching on themes of parental separation, grief, foster care and growing up. A highly relatable feel-good read about discovering the true meaning of family and friendship.



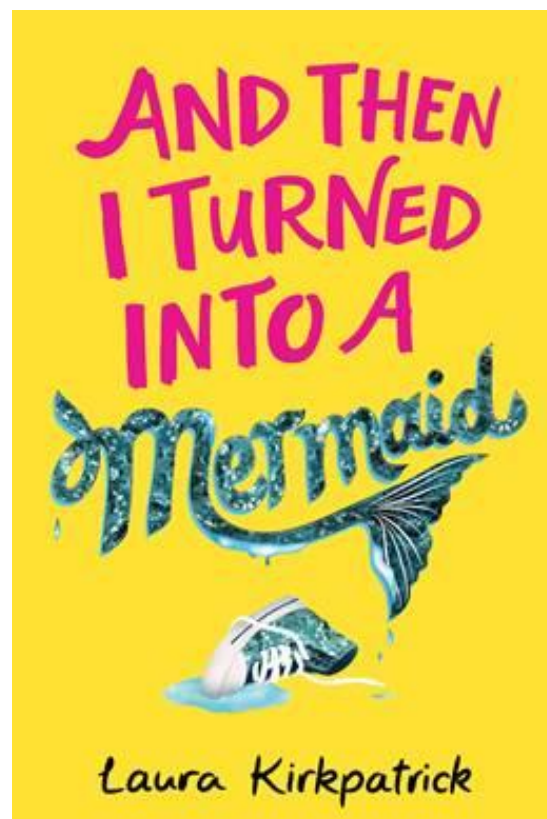
And Then I Turned into a Mermaid

Author: Laura Kirkpatrick

Molly Seabrook really just wants to be normal. And popular if possible. But when, at midnight on her thirteenth birthday, her mum and older sisters take her on a mysterious trip to the beach and reveal that she's half-mermaid, Molly knows with absolute certainty that normal is never going to happen.

Being a mermaid might sound pretty cool, but when you just want to fit in, transforming every time you go near the swimming pool is a pretty big challenge. Dealing with school and the popular crowd is hard enough without having to deal with a tail as well, especially when you're forbidden from telling anyone – even your best friend. Because if her family's secret was discovered, it would be disastrous for everyone.

A brilliantly insightful and super fun story about growing up, navigating friendships and first crushes, and figuring out how you fit in. Tail or no tail, Molly is undoubtedly a character that every teen girl (and anyone who once was a teen girl) can immediately relate to. From an embarrassing parent, confusing sisters and family drama to friendships on the brink and boy-related confusions, this book covers all the emotions but with a great sense of humour.



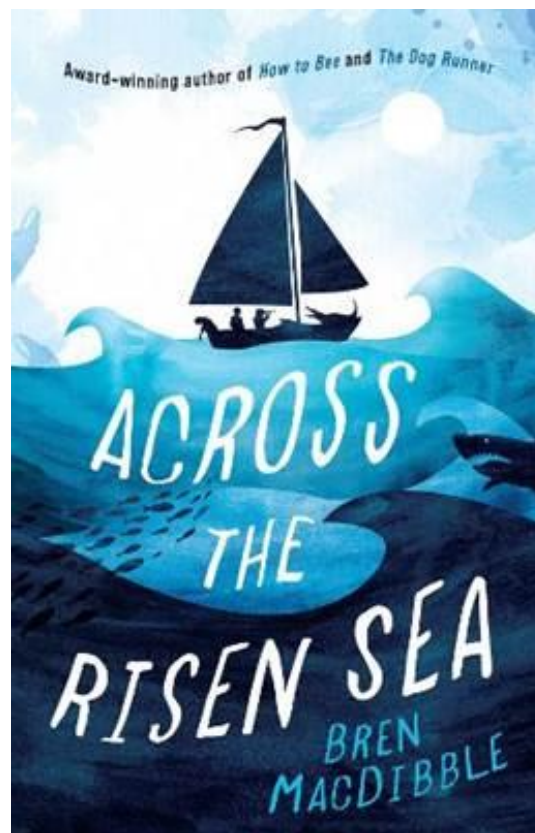
***Across the Risen Sea* Author: Ben MacDibble**

Set in a near-future where rising sea levels have decimated the land, Neoma and her best friend Jaguar live in a close-knit community on the Ockery Islands. They live simple lives, fishing and scavenging. But when the strangers arrive and install some strange tech on the hillside, ignoring the islanders' protests, everything changes.

Who are they? Where did they come from? And what are they doing?

The strangers' actions set in motion a deadly mystery that threatens the peaceful community. And when Jaguar is kidnapped as a result, Neoma embarks on a dangerous journey across the sea to find the mysterious Valley of the Sun, rescue Jaguar, and get answers. She'll have to tackle crocodiles, sharks, and a ruthless pirate to get there. – can she survive the dangers, evade capture and save her home?

Short chapters, plenty of action and the mystery at its heart make this a really exciting read. Neoma is a wild spark of a character but passionate and kind-hearted, and the story touches on deeper issues such as environmental protection, modern slavery, and themes of freedom and respect.



Star Switch Author: *Alesha Dixon*

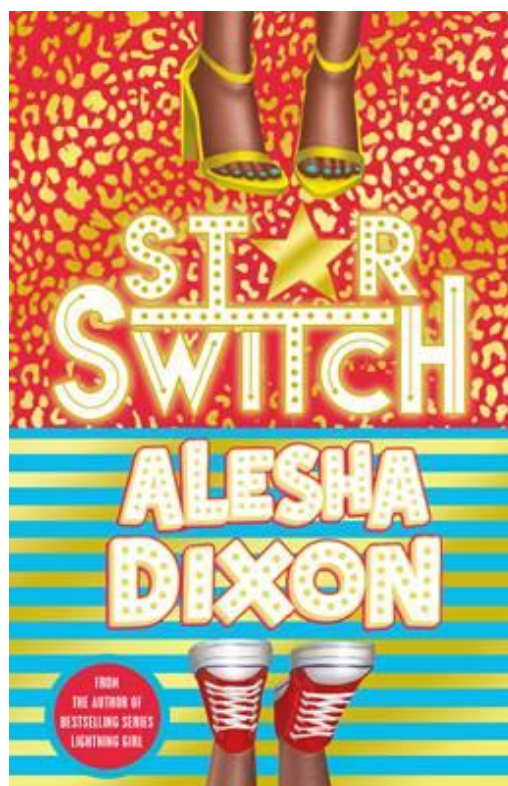
Naomi may be a famous popstar at just fifteen years old, but every minute of her life is micromanaged by her manager-slash-mum. She's tired, bored and acting out.

Ruby loves to sing and dance but is too shy to tell anyone other than her best friend about it. She's also Naomi's biggest fan and dreams of being her and being on stage.

But Naomi's and Ruby's lives are about to cross in the strangest of ways... Thanks to an unplanned encounter, an unusual book, and a magical jinx, Naomi accidentally ends up in Ruby's body and Ruby in Naomi's. Now Ruby really is going to get a taste of Naomi's starry lifestyle – but is it everything she dreamt it would be? Meanwhile, how will Naomi cope with school and teachers, not to mention Ruby's manic family?

Stepping into each other's shoes could open up all sorts of possibilities...

Star Switch is a super fun story about friendship, growing up, and two girls with very different personalities figuring out who they are and how to follow their dreams. A classic body swap story but done brilliantly. It's funny but also has bigger themes of understanding and finding self-confidence.



***The Haunting of Aveline Jones* Author: Phil Hickes**

The worst thing about seeing a ghost is that nobody believes you...

Aveline loves ghost stories. She's staying with her aunt in a stormy seaside town for October half-term and has found a book of local ghost stories in the town's second-hand bookstore. But as she reaches the end of the book she discovers the last story has been completely crossed out, making it unreadable. Why? And what was in the story?

Intrigued, Aveline begins researching the book's previous owner, whose name is written on the front page: Primrose Penberthy. She discovers that Primrose disappeared thirty years ago. On Halloween. As Aveline digs deeper to try and find out what happened to Primrose and to unlock the mystery of the crossed-out story, and as another Halloween approaches, she soon finds herself starring in her own real-life version of a ghost story...

Wonderfully gothic, this is a properly spine-chilling and atmospheric story that very effectively builds tension and the scare factor, whilst also being perfectly pitched to readers aged around 11-14. The mystery of Primrose's disappearance, Aveline's own sense of unease at being in unfamiliar surroundings and the question of the defaced ghost story make a page-turning combination.



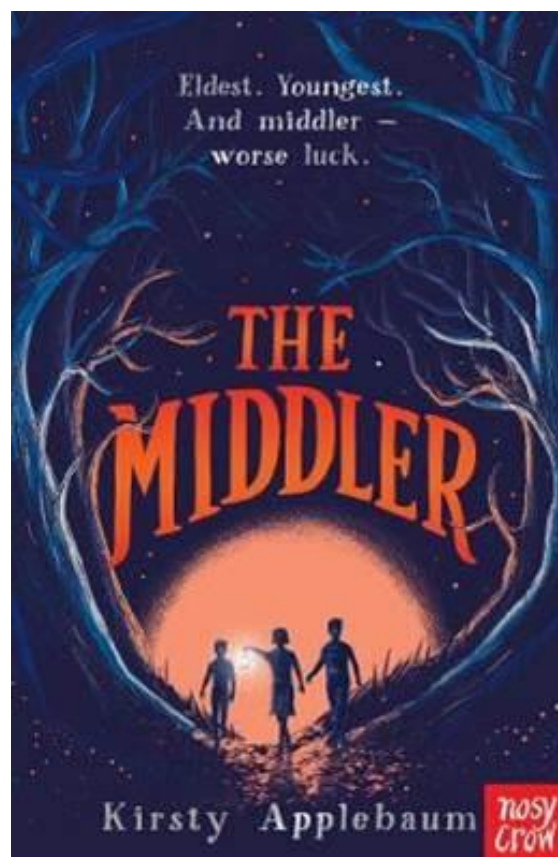
The Middler ***Author: Kirsty Applebaum***

In the town of Fennis Wick, there are two rules: eldests go to military camp when they turn 14, and you don't talk to wanderers: they're dirty, dangerous and deceitful, or so Maggie's been told.

Maggie is a middler – a middle child – and she's sick of it. Eldest children get all the good stuff: the parties, the prizes and the praise, while middle children grow up in the eldests' shadows. Maggie desperately wants a taste of being an eldest. So when she meets a wanderer, she reckons that if she can catch them that will make her a hero and people will finally listen to her. But Fennis Wick is hiding a terrible secret and everything Maggie thought she understood about the world is about to come crashing down.

Maggie's just a middler, though, so who's going to listen when she tries to tell the truth?

This is a wonderfully conceived and slickly executed dystopian novel set in a seemingly idyllic town, but with an undercurrent of secrets to send a shiver down the spine. Maggie is a boiling pot of adolescent emotions, whose jealousy of the eldests leads her to make some challenging choices which have far-reaching consequences.



When Life Gives You Mangoes

Author: *Kareen Getten*

Something happened last summer – something big – but Clara cannot remember what. She’s fallen out with her best friend Gaynah because of it, and Clara feels like she’s a problem that everyone is trying to fix.

As a new summer stretches out before her, Clara cannot help questioning the things she thought she knew about the adults and the world around her. And when magnetic, outgoing Rudy arrives and shakes things up, Clara begins to unlock her buried memories. Can she work out what happened last summer and why Gaynah is so angry at her? But if she does, what will that mean for Clara?

In the small community of Sycamore Hill, where Clara lives, everyone knows everyone else’s business, but there are plenty of things nobody will talk about. Is it really true that no one here has any secrets?

This is a beautifully-written story of small towns and the eternally shifting sands of friendship and family. It’s impossible not to feel everything Clara feels, while the storytelling is mysterious, poetic and dream-like at times. And then there’s the dramatic and surprising twist that will send readers back to the start of the book to enjoy it all over again.



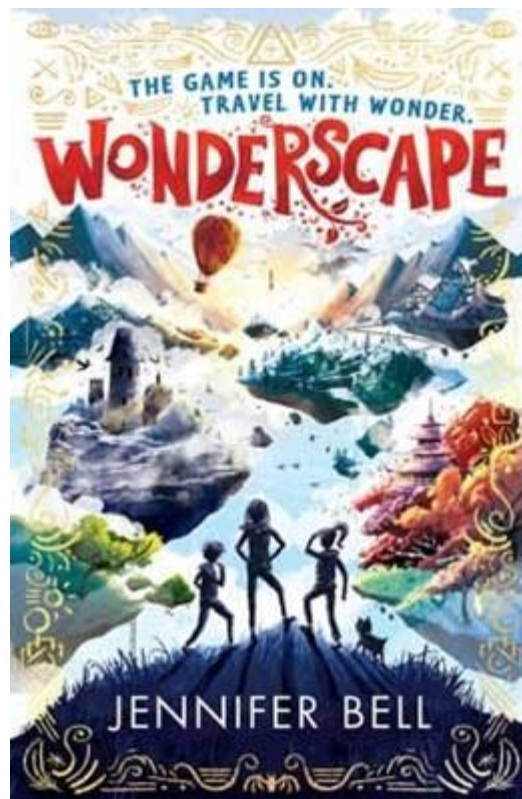
***Wonderscape* Author: Jennifer Bell**

When Arthur, Ren and Cecily enter an abandoned house to rescue a trapped dog, they unknowingly step through a portal into both the future and a galactic ‘in reality’ adventure game called Wonderscape.

But what now? To get home, they need to find one of the game’s creators, Milo Hertz, who has a special time-key that will open the gateway back to 2021. That means navigating the Wonderscape, solving the game’s puzzles and completing the challenges. But there are bigger problems: firstly, Milo’s been missing for three years. And secondly, they only have 57 hours to find him before a game reset turns them into slime...

Wonderscape is an expertly crafted, breakneck speed adventure with a videogame-like structure: codes to crack, loot to collect and different levels – or ‘realms’ – to explore. Combine this with the mystery of Milo’s disappearance, the time-sensitive nature of the heroes’ quest, and the discovery of some much darker goings-on within the Wonderscape, for a page-turning, fun and highly imaginative read.

As they progress through the game, Arthur, Ren and Cecily must each face their greatest fears but, equally, each discover their unique strengths and build what will surely be a long-lasting friendship.



***The Bone Sparrow* Author: Zana Fraillon**

Subhi is a refugee who has spent all ten years of his life in a detention centre. Jimmie is a girl who lives on the Outside. Nine year old Subhi's voice comes through strongly from the very first page. He's imagining a beautiful ocean so intently he can almost hear the waves. His big sister, Queeny, can't hear them but his mother, Maá, can. Subhi calls it his 'Night Sea,' and believes it washes up treasures. Before long we realise that Subhi has never seen or heard the ocean for real – because he has spent his entire life behind a fence.

Subhi was born in an Australian immigration detention centre after his mother and sister fled their home country. Life behind the fence is tough, and sometimes seems to have more of the fear and violence they were trying to escape. One night when he can't sleep and is wandering the camp, Subhi comes across a young girl – she has shoes, a backpack, a torch – she is from Outside.

Beautiful, vivid, and deeply moving, *The Bone Sparrow* is an important, timely story of survival and bravery, perfect for fans of *The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas*. Author Zana Fraillon, who lives in Melbourne, says in her Author's Note that while *The Bone Sparrow* is fictional, it is “based on an all true reality.” Although the characters, events and places are made up “the policies which have put people like Subhi and his family in detention, and the conditions described, are not.”

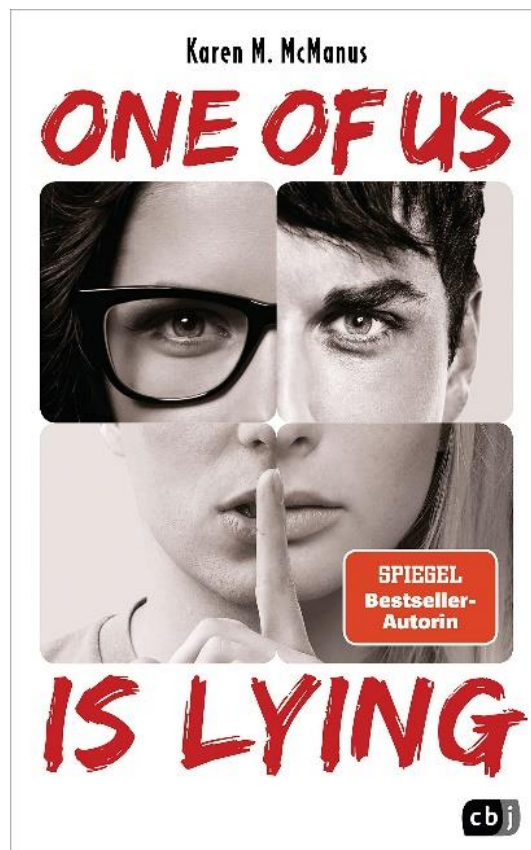


One of Us is Lying

Author: Karen McManus

One of Us is Lying follows the gripping story of Bronwyn, Addy, Nate, and Cooper as suspects in the murder of Simon Kelleher. At Bayview High, Bronwyn, Simon, Nate, Cooper, and Addy attend detention with teacher Mr. Avery after he found mobile phones in each of their school bags, against the high school's no-phone policy. However, each of the students claims that the phones are not theirs and that someone played a prank on them. They hear a collision in the school parking lot, and Mr. Avery leaves to investigate. Simon—creator of the 'About That' gossip app in which the personal lives of students at Bayview High are posted for the rest of the school to see—begins a speech about the stereotypical personalities of the other four students and how he, through his app, is the omniscient narrator. He drinks water from a plastic cup and suffers a fatal allergic reaction due to his peanut allergy. The others attempt to help, but it is too late and Simon dies in the hospital.

Each of the high school students have secrets that they would do anything to protect, so how far would they go to make sure they're kept out of the spotlight? This teen thriller explores themes of loyalty, growing up and responsibility.



The Accident Season

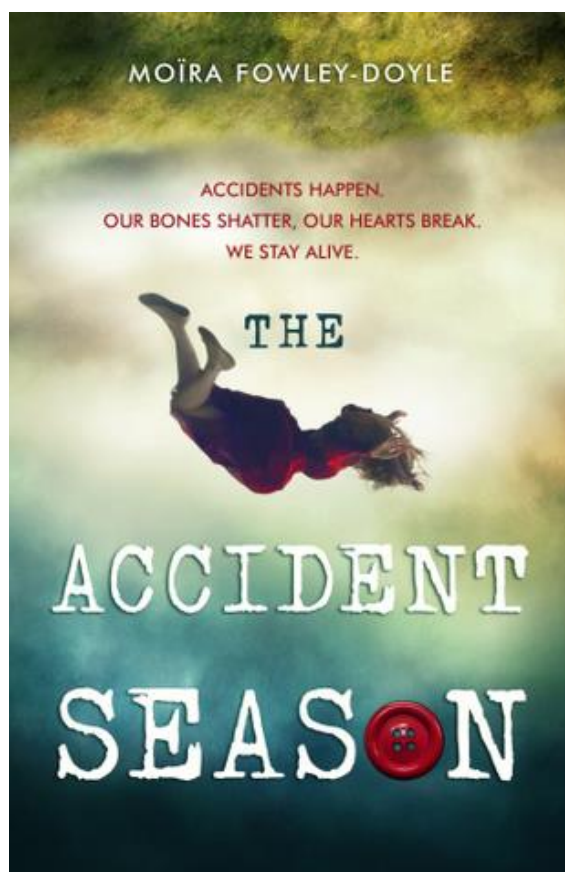
Author: Moira Fowley Doyle

A bewitching, dark and beautiful debut novel about a girl living in the shadow of a mysterious curse. It's the accident season, the same time every year. Bones break, skin tears, bruises bloom. The accident season has been part of seventeen-year-old Cara's life for as long as she can remember. The end of October has always been the beginning of the Accident Season for seventeen-year-old Cara and her family: cuts, falls and broken bones, even if the table edges are taped with padding and the knives are hidden in a drawer.

Cara's sister is involved in an abusive relationship, of which she doesn't seem to be able to break free. And Cara is trying to figure out why her old friend Elsie keeps showing up in all of Cara's photos.

Two weeks before the end of October, Cara and her friends decide to hold a Halloween party at a mysterious, deserted house. But the closer that they head to the party, the stranger things get - until Cara's family are faced with truths that might tear down the walls of their shaky defences against the past.

A spooky and psychological modern classic with a twist, this is definitely not one to be missed.



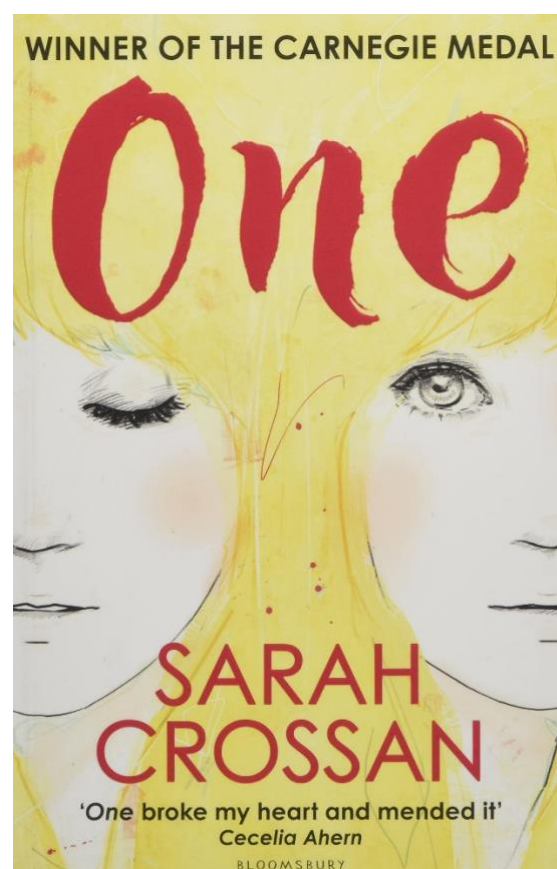
One ***Author; Sarah Crossan***

Grace and Tippi. Tippi and Grace. Two sisters. Two hearts. Two dreams. Two lives. But one body.

Grace and Tippi are conjoined twins, joined at the waist, defying the odds of survival for sixteen years. They share everything, and they are everything to each other. They would never imagine being apart. For them, that would be the real tragedy. Their upper bodies remain separate, but their lower bodies begin to merge at the intestines so they share a pair of legs between them. This makes things which most of us find simple – walking, playing sports – a real challenge.

But something is happening to them. Something they hoped would never happen. And Grace doesn't want to admit it. Not even to Tippi.

How long can they hide from the truth—how long before they must face the most impossible choice of their lives?



Other Recommendations:



