

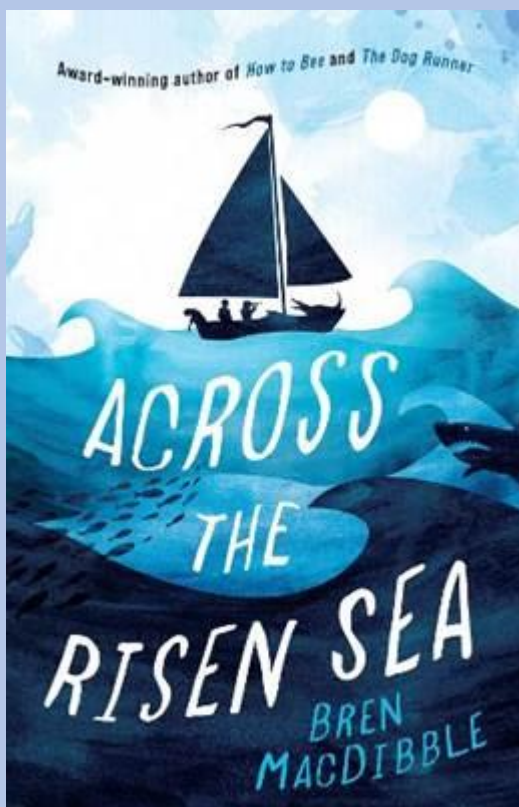
## Across the Risen Sea by Ben MacDibble

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.



### Themes:

- ✓ Adventure
- ✓ Mystery
- ✓ Around the world
- ✓ Environment
- ✓ Friendship
- ✓ Politics/human rights
- ✓ Best New Books
- ✓ Dystopia

## Star Switch by Alesha Dixon

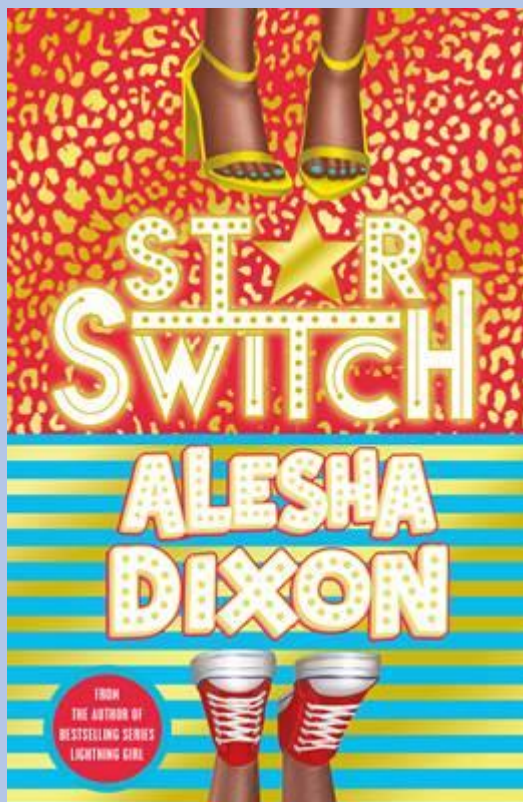
Naomi may be a famous popstar at just fifteen years old, but every minute of her life is micromanaged by her manager-slash-mum. She's tired, bored and acting out.

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, with very relatable



### Themes:

- ✓ Coming-of-age
- ✓ humour
- ✓ Family
- ✓ Friendship
- ✓ Music
- ✓ School
- ✓ Everyday life
- ✓ Diversity

# The Haunting of Aveline Jones

by Phil Hicke

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.



## Themes:

- ✓ Ghost story
- ✓ Horror
- ✓ Mystery
- ✓ Fear
- ✓ Friendship
- ✓ Diaries and journals

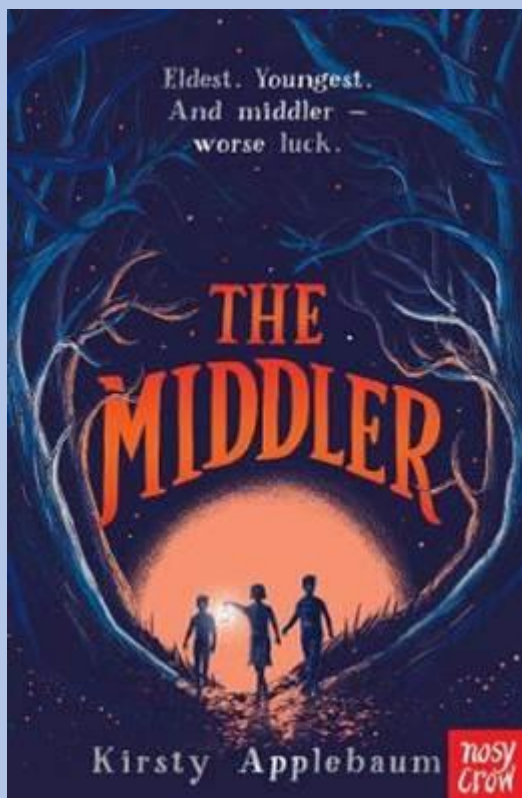
# The Middler by Kirsty Applebaum

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.



## Themes:

- ✓ Adventure
- ✓ Coming-of-age
- ✓ Mystery
- ✓ Crime
- ✓ Family
- ✓ Friendship
- ✓ Politics/human rights
- ✓ Siblings
- ✓ Dystopia

# When Life Gives You Mangoes

by 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.



## Themes:

- ✓ Mystery
- ✓ Around the world
- ✓ Bereavement
- ✓ Bullying
- ✓ Family
- ✓ Friendship
- ✓ Magic
- ✓ Social issues
- ✓ Diversity

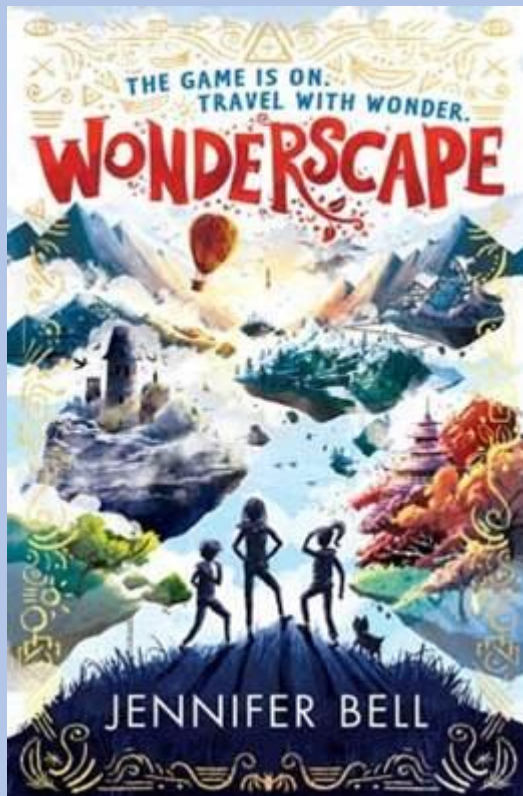
## Wonderscape by Jennifer Bell

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.



### Themes:

- ✓ Adventure
- ✓ Imagination
- ✓ Games
- ✓ Fantasy
- ✓ Mystery
- ✓ Science fiction
- ✓ Friendship