

# Year 8 Suggested Reading

## Life Issues

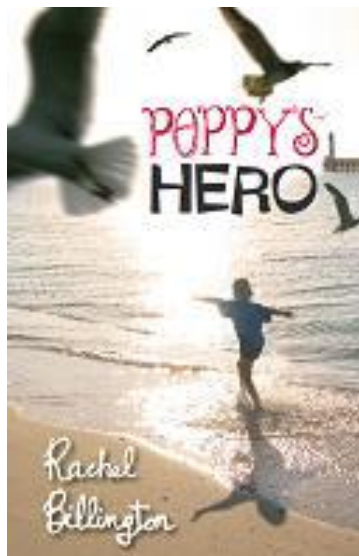
Scroll through the list to view a few of the titles suggested by our Librarians here in school for your year group.

## Poppy's Hero by Rachel Billington

When Poppy discovers that her father Frank is in prison, she is angry and bewildered. Seeing her wonderful, heroic father in a London prison looking pale, subdued and in prison clothes, she suddenly has a brilliant idea: to free her father. She and her friend Will invent all kinds of escape ideas for him — until she hears that he has been removed to a prison far away on an island, with five years to serve. But when the prison decides to stage a musical using professionals and prisoners, Frank is picked for the lead role. It is then that the questions begin . . .

The story of a feisty girl, and how she deals with the pain of her dad's downfall, has much to say about the harsh realities faced by the unlucky children of prisoners.

<http://www.rachelbillington.com/>



# Speak by Laurie H Anderson

The first ten lies they tell you in high school.

"Speak up for yourself--we want to know what you have to say." From the first moment of her freshman year at Merryweather High, Melinda knows this is a big fat lie, part of the nonsense of high school. She is friendless, outcast, because she busted an end-of-summer party by calling the cops, so now nobody will talk to her, let alone listen to her. As time passes, she becomes increasingly isolated and practically stops talking altogether. Only her art class offers any solace, and it is through her work on an art project that she is finally able to face what really happened at that terrible party: she was raped by an upperclassman, a guy who still attends Merryweather and is still a threat to her. Her healing process has just begun when she has another violent encounter with him. But this time Melinda fights back, refuses to be silent, and thereby achieves a measure of vindication. In Laurie Halse Anderson's powerful novel, an utterly believable heroine with a bitterly ironic voice delivers a blow to the hypocritical world of high school. She speaks for many a disenfranchised teenager while demonstrating the importance of speaking up for oneself.

Speak was a 1999 National Book Award Finalist for Young People's Literature.

<http://madwomanintheforest.com/youngadult-speak/>



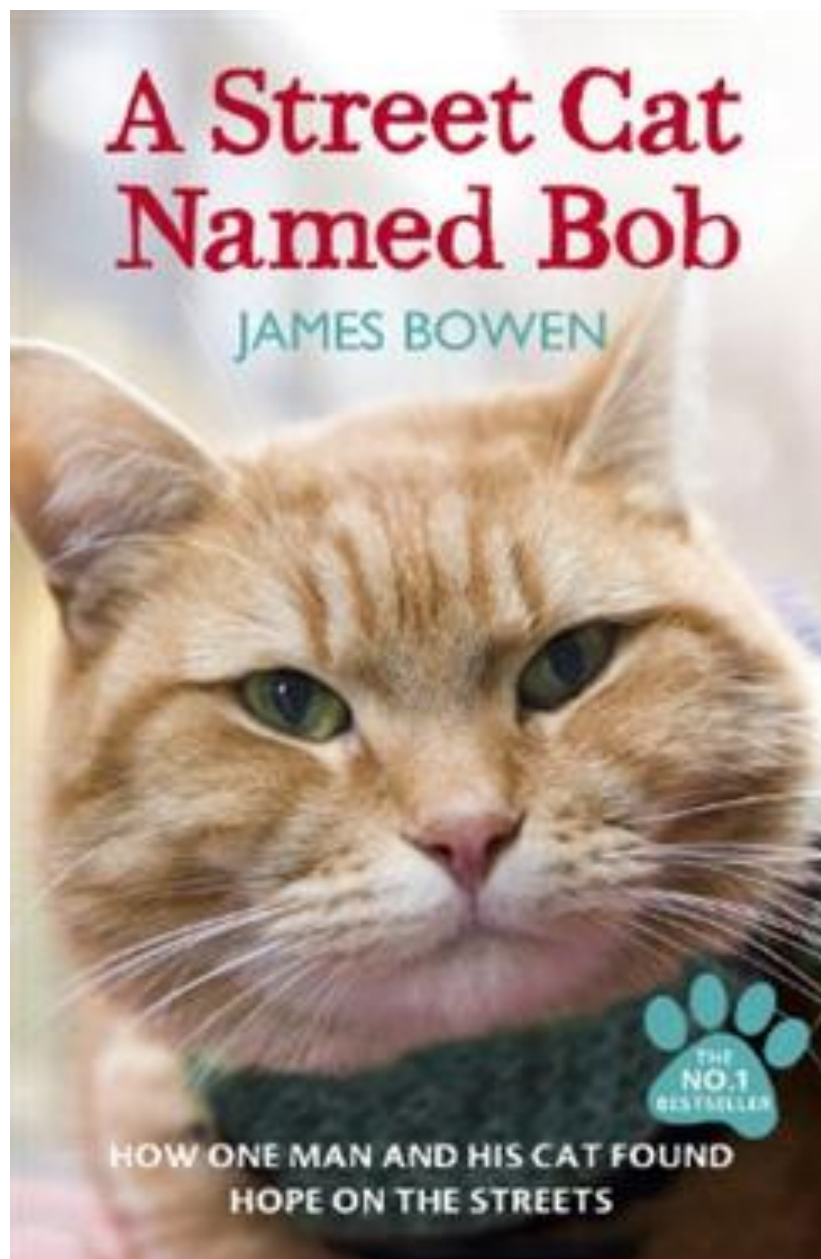
# A Street Cat Named Bob by James Bowen

When James Bowen found an injured, ginger street cat curled up in the hallway of his sheltered accommodation, he had no idea just how much his life was about to change. James was living hand to mouth on the streets of London and the last thing he needed was a pet.

Yet James couldn't resist helping the strikingly intelligent tom cat, whom he quickly christened Bob. He slowly nursed Bob back to health and then sent the cat on his way, imagining he would never see him again. But Bob had other ideas.

Soon the two were inseparable and their diverse, comic and occasionally dangerous adventures would transform both their lives, slowly healing the scars of each other's troubled pasts.

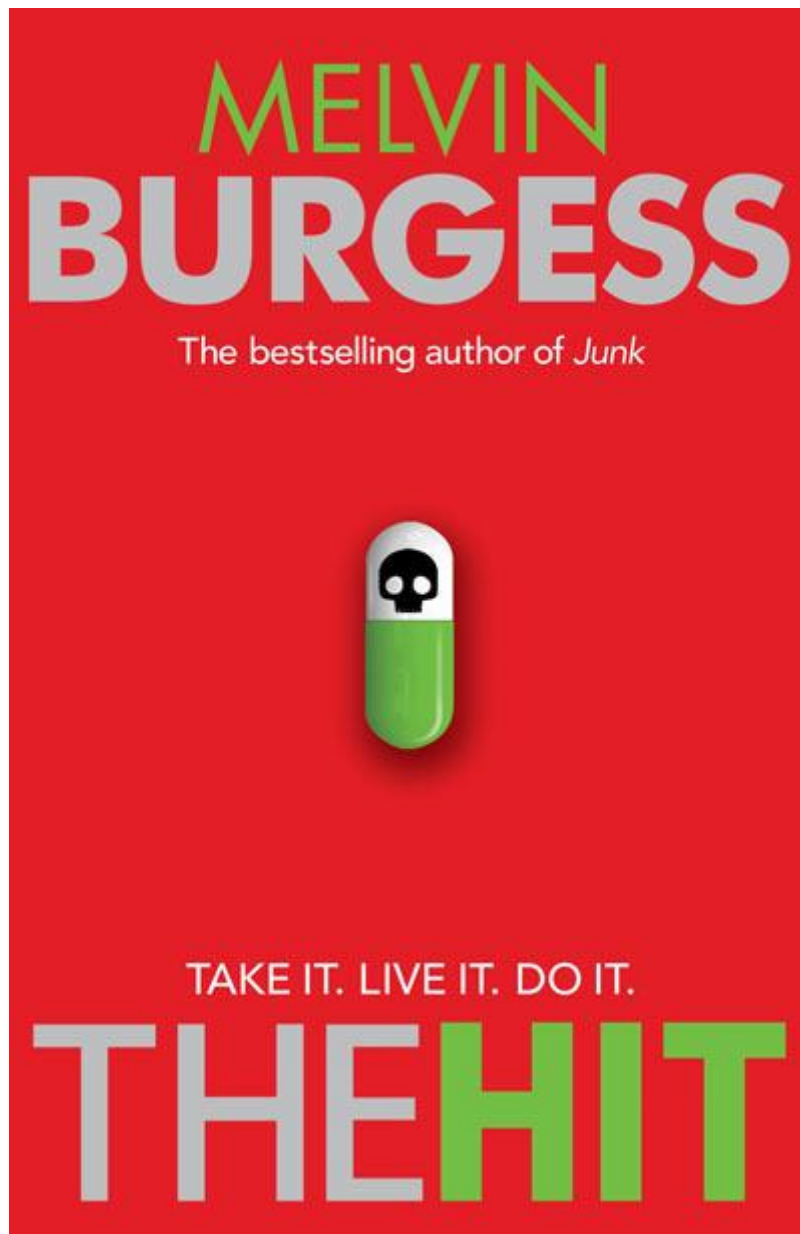
A Street Cat Named Bob is a moving and uplifting story that will touch the heart of anyone who reads it.



# The Hit by Melvin Burgess

A new drug is out. Everyone is talking about it. Death. Take it, and you have one amazing week to live. It's the ultimate high. At the ultimate price. Adam is tempted. Life is rubbish; his girlfriend's over him, his brother's gone. So what's he got to lose? Everything as it turns out. It's up to his girlfriend, Lizzie to show him.

<http://melvinburgess.net/>



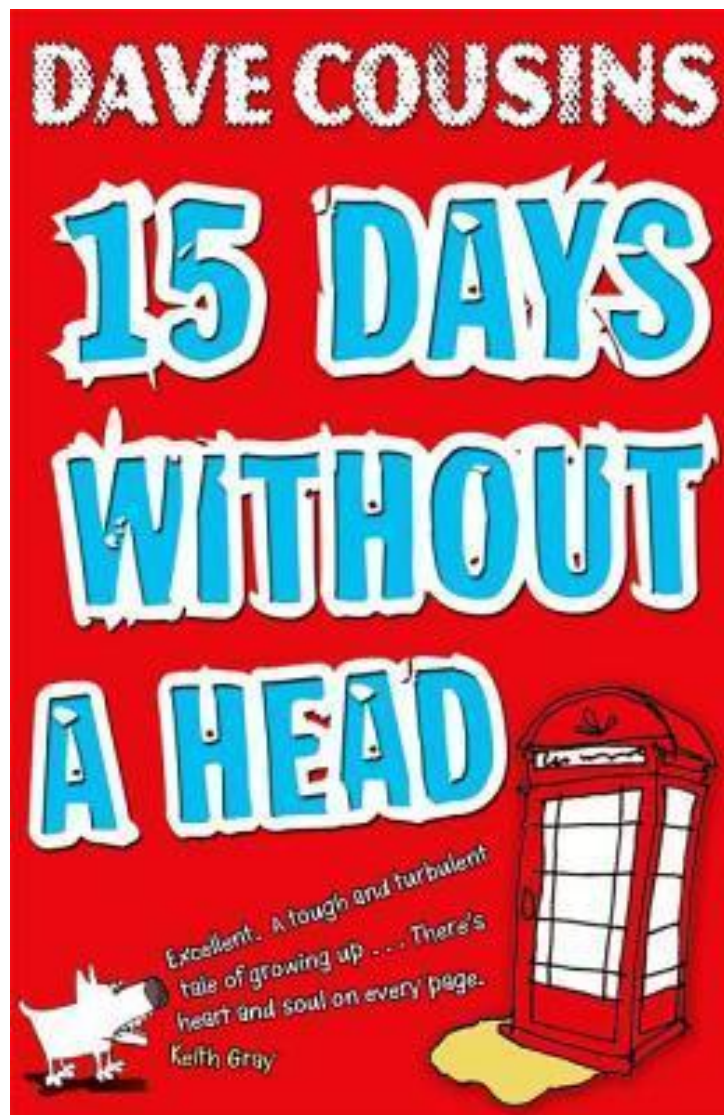
# Fifteen Days Without a Head

by Dave Cousins

Fifteen-year-old Laurence Roach just wants a normal life, but it's not easy when your mum is a depressed alcoholic, and your six-year-old brother thinks he's a dog.

When Mum fails to come home one night, Laurence tells nobody, terrified he and his brother will be taken into care if anyone finds out. Instead, he attempts to keep up the pretence that Mum is still around: dressing up in her clothes to trick the neighbours and spinning an increasingly complicated tangle of lies. After two weeks on their own, running out of food and money, and with suspicious adults closing in, Laurence finally discovers what happened to his mother. And that's when the trouble really starts . . .

A compelling thriller filled with some hilarious and surreal moments. Fifteen Days Without a Head is a tender, honest story about family, forgiveness and hope.

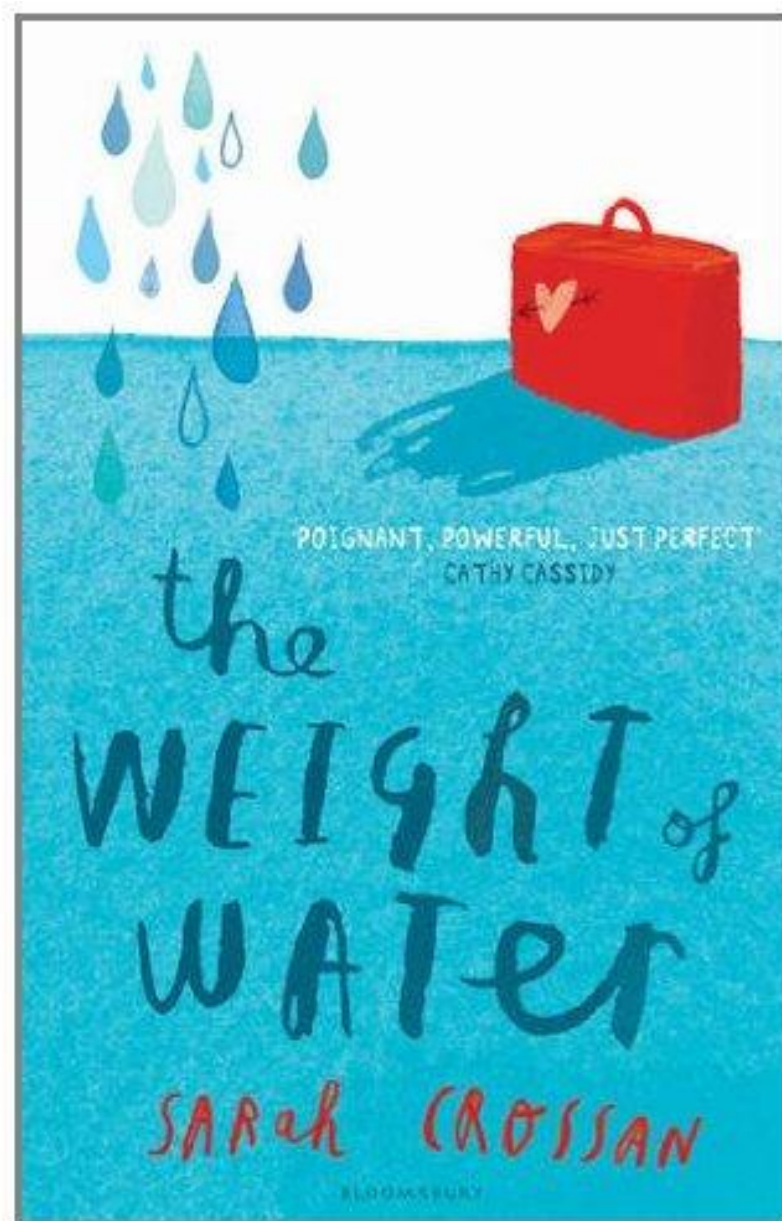


# The Weight of Water Sarah Crossan

Armed with a suitcase and an old laundry bag filled with clothes, Kasienska and her mother head for England. Life is lonely for Kasienska. At home her mother's heart is breaking and at school friends are scarce. But when someone special swims into her life, Kasienska learns that there might be more than one way for her to stay afloat.

The Weight of Water is a startlingly original piece of fiction; most simply a brilliant coming of age story, it also tackles the alienation experienced by many young immigrants. Moving, unsentimental and utterly page-turning, we meet and share the experiences of a remarkable girl who shows us how quiet courage prevails.

<http://www.sarahcrossan.com/books>

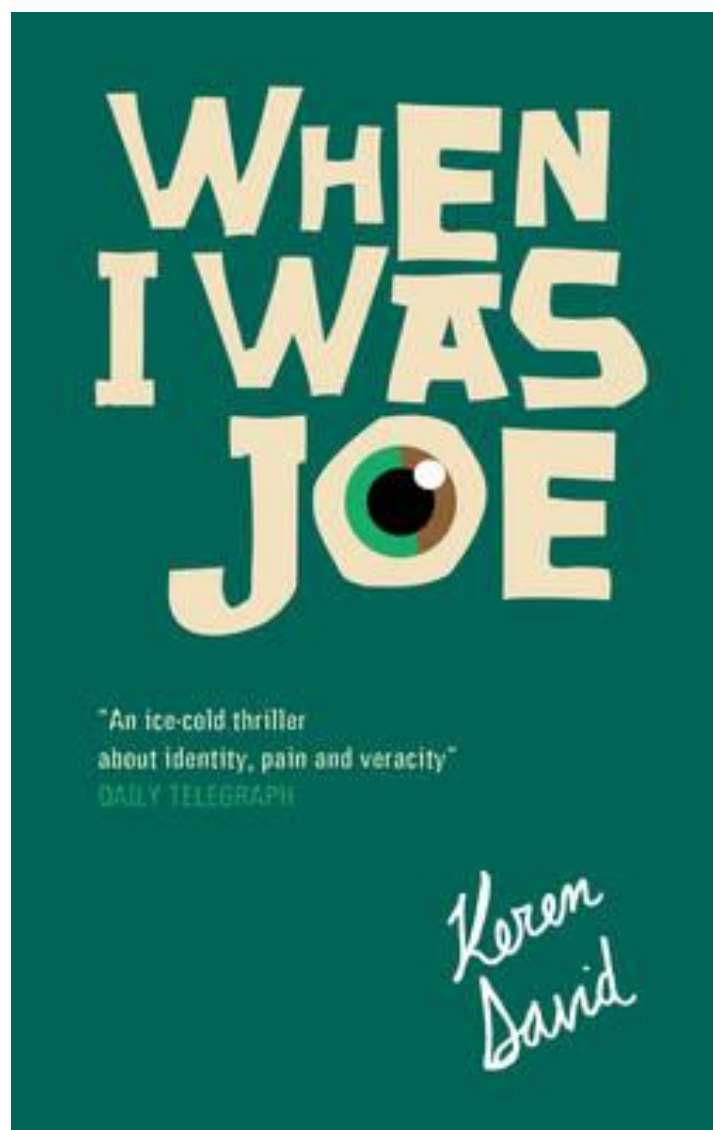


# When I was Joe (Trilogy) by Keren David

Shortlisted for the Branford Boase Award 2011. Highly Commended for the Teenage Book Prize 2010. An edgy and contemporary thriller about the life changing dangers of knife crime – and that's just for the witness. When Ty tells the police what he has seen, his life is changed forever. His enemies are ruthless and will stop at nothing to prevent Ty from testifying. Given a new look, new names and a new past, Ty and his mother make a fresh start. But forgetting Ty and remembering to be Joe is hard.

Ty tells his story of familiar teenage experiences – school friendships, bullying, falling in love – against a terrifying background in which letting out the secret could mean the end. How Joe survives and grows and, in particular, how he befriends the lonely Claire whose self-harming is an equally important secret, is touching.

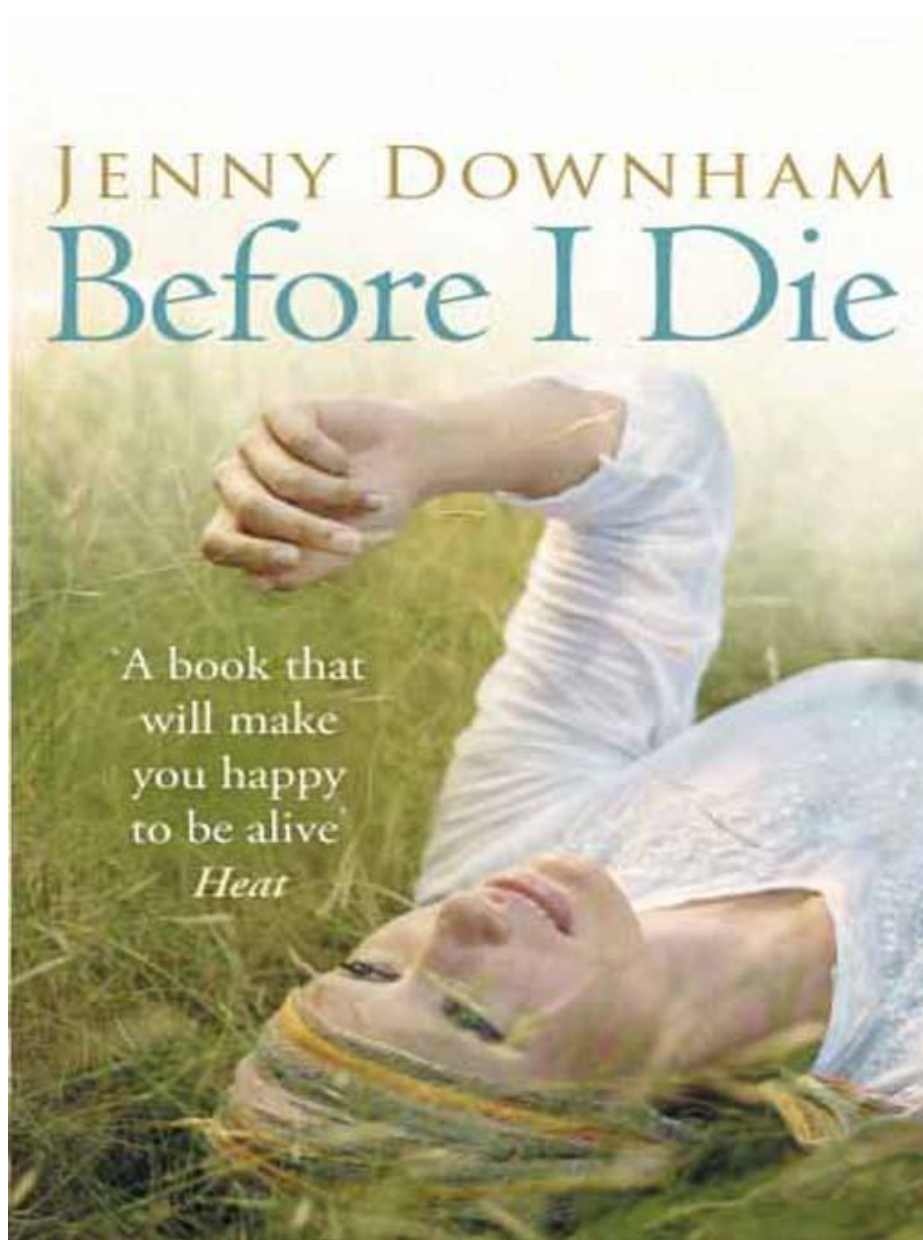
This is definitely a novel for 14+ and not younger.



# Before I Die by Jenny Downham

Tessa has just a few months to live. Fighting back against hospital visits, endless tests, drugs with excruciating side-effects, Tessa compiles a list. It's her 'To Do Before I Die list'. And number one is sex. Released from the constraints of 'normal' life, Tessa tastes new experiences to make her feel alive while her failing body struggles to keep up.

Tessa's feelings, her relationships with her father and brother, her estranged mother, her best friend, her new boyfriend, all are painfully crystallized in the precious weeks before Tessa's time finally runs out. "BEFORE I DIE" is a brilliantly-crafted novel, heartbreaking yet astonishingly life-affirming.

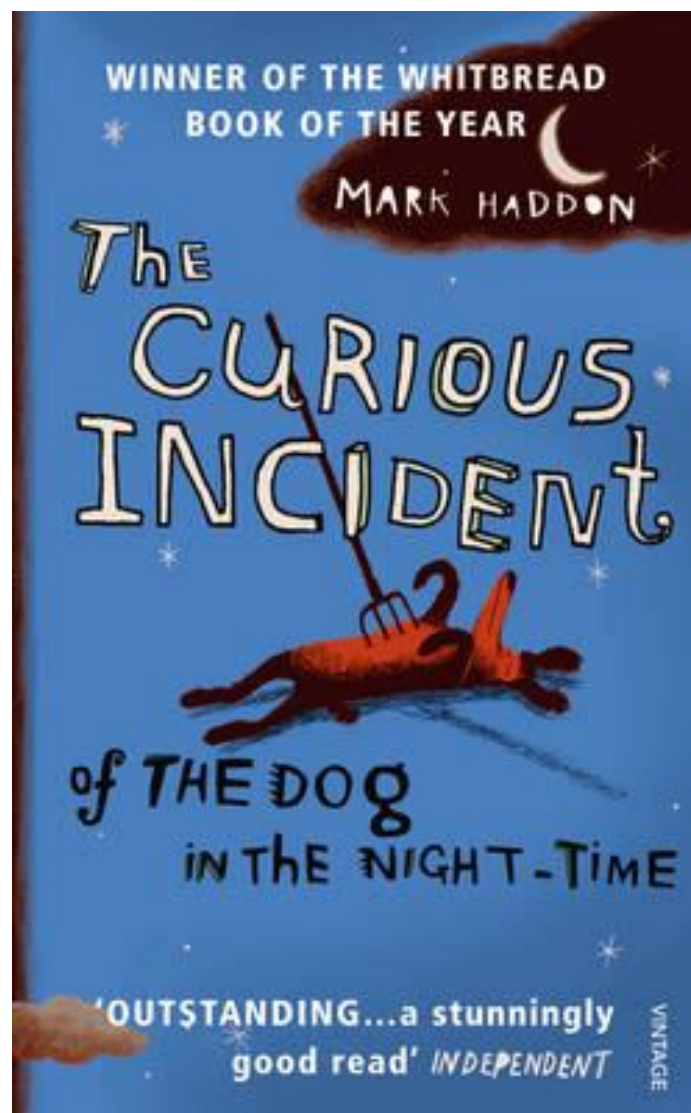




# The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time by Mark Haddon

Winner of the Whitbread Book of the Year 'Outstanding...a stunningly good read' Observer 'Mark Haddon's portrayal of an emotionally dissociated mind is a superb achievement.

The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time is a murder mystery novel like no other. The detective, and narrator, is Christopher Boone. Christopher is fifteen and has Asperger's Syndrome. He knows a very great deal about maths and very little about human beings. He loves lists, patterns and the truth. He hates the colours yellow and brown and being touched. He has never gone further than the end of the road on his own, but when he finds a neighbour's dog murdered he sets out on a terrifying journey which will turn his whole world upside down.



# Girl, Missing (Trilogy) by Sophie McKenzie

Girl, Missing is Sophie McKenzie's award-winning debut novel, first published in 2006. Fourteen-year-old Lauren has always known she was adopted but when a little research turns up the possibility that she was snatched from an American family as a baby, suddenly Lauren's life seems like a sham. How can she find her biological parents? And are her adoptive parents really responsible for kidnapping her? A holiday to America provides Lauren with the chance to run away to try and find the truth. But the circumstances of her disappearance are murky and Lauren's kidnapers are still at large and willing to do anything to keep her silent.

<http://www.sophiemckenziebooks.com/books/girl-missing-series>

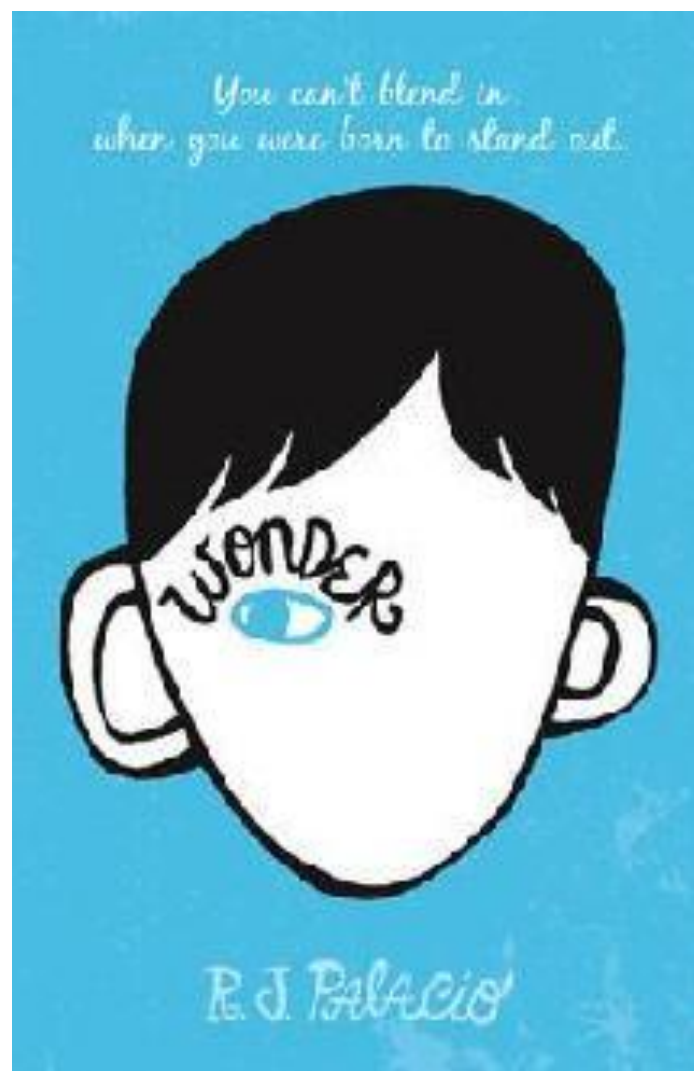


# Wonder by R J Palacio

Auggie wants to be an ordinary ten-year-old. He does ordinary things - eating ice cream, playing on his Xbox. He feels ordinary - inside. But ordinary kids don't make other ordinary kids run away screaming in playgrounds. Ordinary kids aren't stared at wherever they go.

Born with a terrible facial abnormality, Auggie has been home-schooled by his parents his whole life. Now, for the first time, he's being sent to a real school - and he's dreading it. All he wants is to be accepted - but can he convince his new classmates that he's just like them, underneath it all?

<http://rjpalacio.com/>

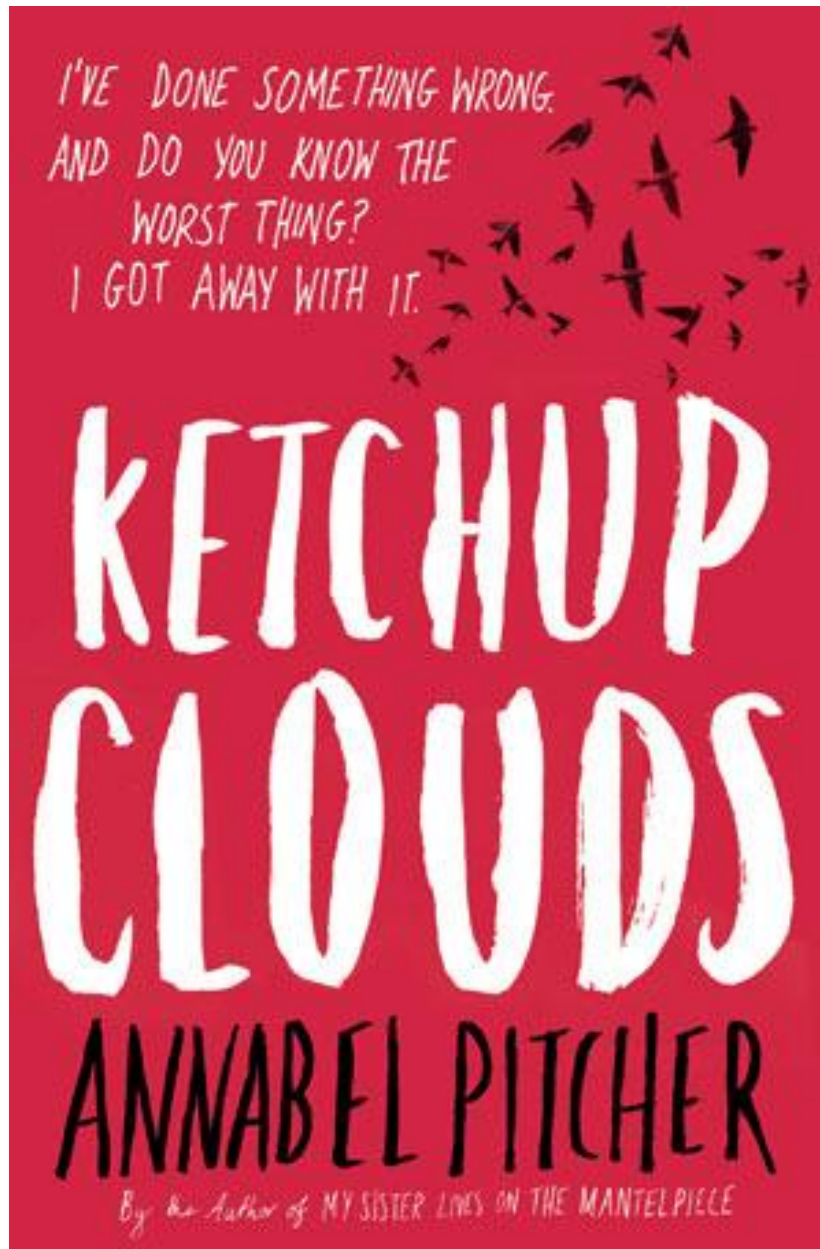


# Ketchup Clouds By Annabel Pitcher

Fifteen-year-old Zoe has a secret - a dark and terrible secret that she can't confess to anyone she knows. But then one day she hears of a criminal, Stuart Harris, locked up on death row in Texas. Like Zoe, Stuart is no stranger to secrets. Or lies. Or murder.

Full of heartache yet humour, Zoe tells her story in the only way she can - in letters to the man in prison in America. Armed with a pen, Zoe takes a deep breath, eats a jam sandwich, and begins her tale of love and betrayal.

<http://www.annabelpitcher.com/>



# My Sister Lives on the Mantelpiece

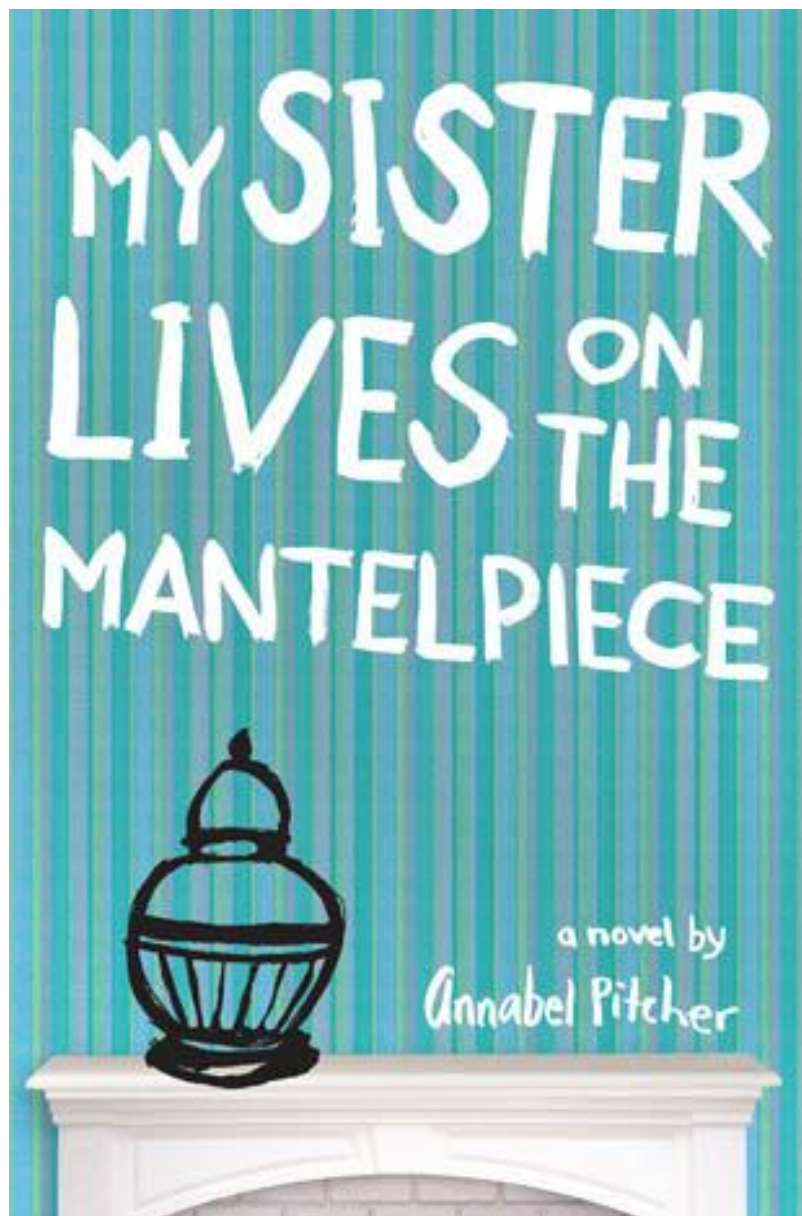
By Annabel Pitcher

Ten-year-old Jamie hasn't cried since it happened. He knows he should have – Jasmine cried, Mum cried, Dad still cries. Roger didn't, but then he is just a cat and didn't know Rose that well, really.

Everyone kept saying it would get better with time, but that's just one of those lies that grown-ups tell in awkward situations. Five years on, it's worse than ever: Dad drinks, Mum's gone and Jamie's left with questions that he must answer for himself.

This is his story, an unflinchingly real yet heart-warming account of a young boy's struggle to make sense of the loss that tore his family apart.

<http://www.annabelpitcher.com/>



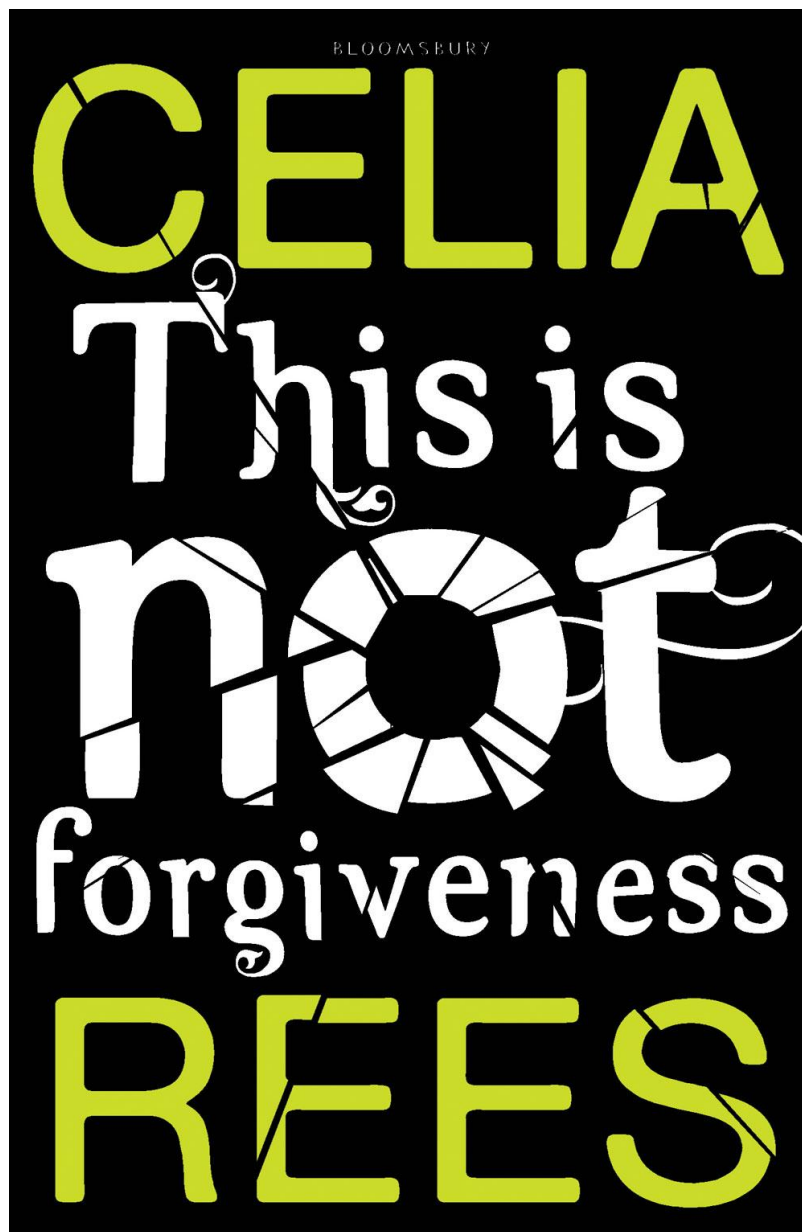
# This is not Forgiveness by Celia Rees

Everyone says that Caro is bad . . . but Jamie can't help himself. He thinks of her night and day and can't believe that she wants to be his girlfriend. Gorgeous, impulsive and unconventional, she is totally different to all the other girls he knows. His sister, Martha, hates her. Jamie doesn't know why, but there's no way he's going to take any notice of her warnings to stay away from Caro.

But as Jamie falls deeper and deeper under her spell, he realises there is more to Caro - much more. There are the times when she disappears and doesn't get in touch, the small scars on her wrists, her talk about revolutions and taking action, not to mention the rumours he hears about the other men in her life.

And then always in the background there is Rob, Jamie's older brother, back from Afghanistan and traumatised after having his leg smashed to bits there. Jamie wants to help him, but Rob seems to be living in a world of his own and is increasingly difficult to reach.

With Caro, the summer should have been perfect . . . but that isn't how things work out in real life, and Jamie is going to find out the hard way.



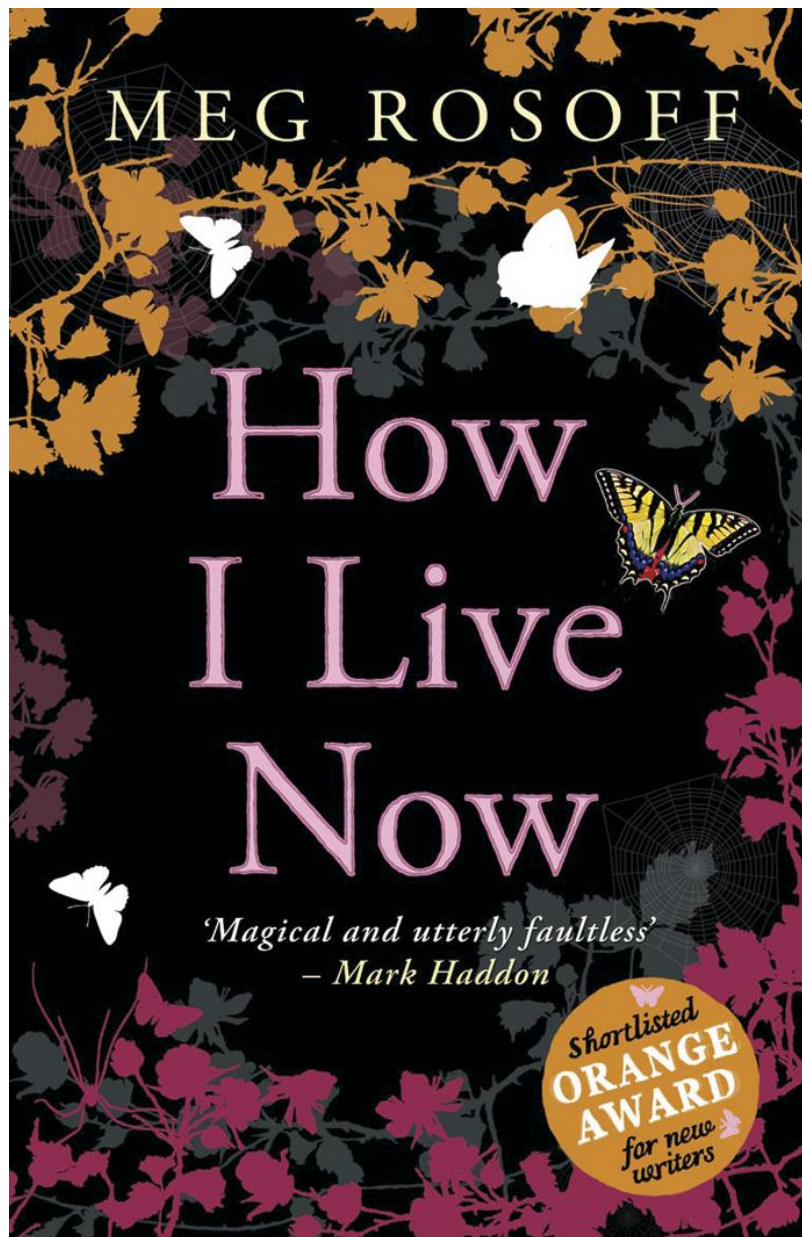
# How I Live Now by Meg Rosoff

How I Live Now is the powerful and engaging story of Daisy, the precocious New Yorker and her English cousin Edmond, torn apart as war breaks out in London, from the multi award-winning Meg Rosoff.

Fifteen-year-old Daisy thinks she knows all about love. Her mother died giving birth to her, and now her dad has sent her away for the summer, to live in the English countryside with cousins she's never even met.

There she'll discover what real love is: something violent, mysterious and wonderful. There her world will be turned upside down and a perfect summer will explode into a million bewildering pieces.

<http://www.megrosoff.co.uk/>



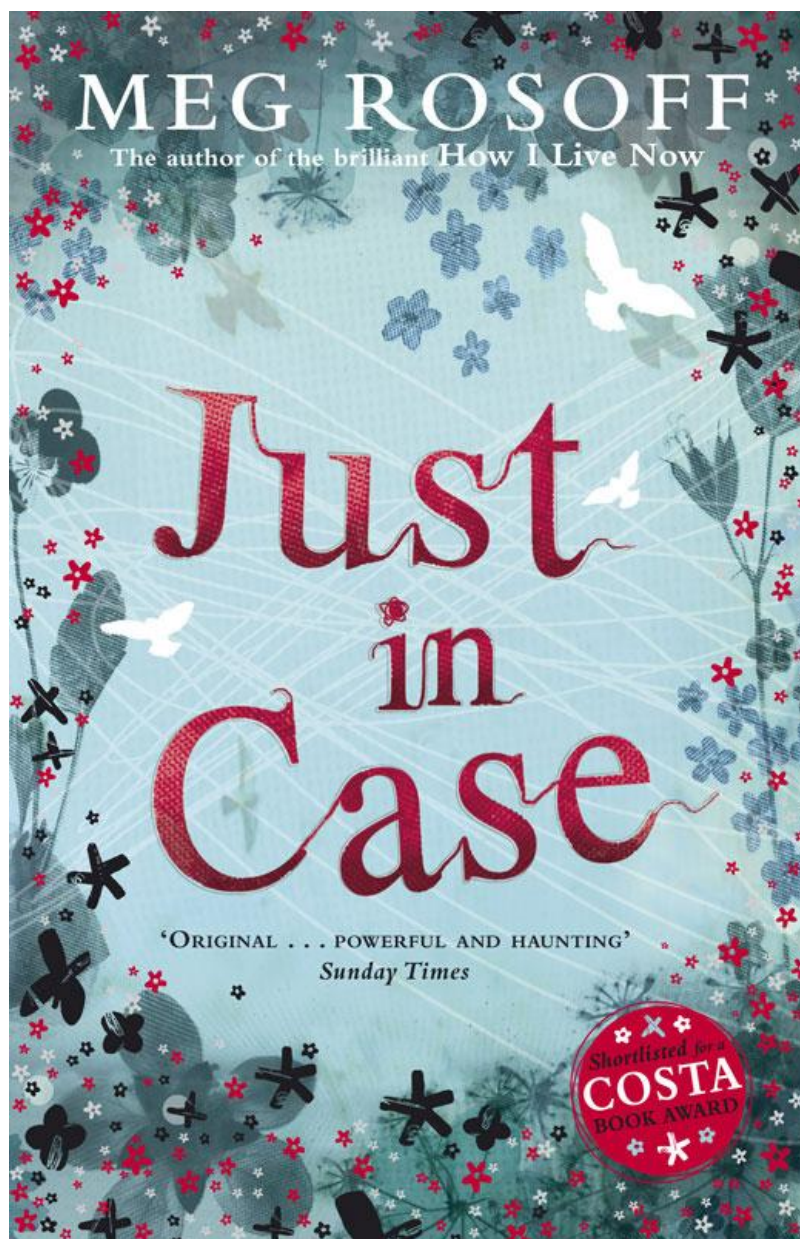
# Just in Case by Meg Rosoff

Every minute of every day, a million things happen . . .

The day David Case saves his brother's life, his whole world changes. Suddenly, every moment is fizzing with what-if's, and it's up to David to outwit fate. Or try to. He changes his name and the way he looks. He leaves home and finds himself caught up in a series of strange and extraordinary adventures. He even falls in love.

But is David really in control of his life? And if he isn't - who is?

<http://www.megrosoff.co.uk/>





# A Boy and a Bear in a Boat

by Dave Shelton

Funny, tender and memorable, *A Boy and a Bear in a Boat* is a charming story about friendship that children aged 7 and over will instantly fall for. Winner of 2013's Branford Boase Award for an author and editor's debut novel for young readers, this charming and unique tale sees a boy and a bear head out to sea in their vessel, the *Harriet*, equipped only with a suitcase, comic book and ukulele. The journey shouldn't take long but things don't go to plan and soon the duo are faced with turbulent storms, a terrifying sea monster and the remains of a dangerous sandwich... Will they be able to survive? Written and illustrated by Dave Shelton, this is a charming book that explores how you can sometimes find the most unexpected joys in the most unlikely of places.

