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University of Southampton

Faculty of Humanities

School of English

Hiraeth (a novel): Representations of Care-Experience in Literature



Figure 1 Hiraeth Postcard by Marianne Thomas¹

by

Rosemary Canning

Thesis for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

December 2023

Orchid Number: 0009-0007-2413-0458

¹ The postcard was created by the author also known as Rosie Canning, this is discussed in more detail in the thesis chapter 'Postcards' on page 76.

University of Southampton

Abstract

Faculty of Arts and Humanities

School of English

Thesis for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

Hiraeth (a novel):

Representations of Care-Experience in Literature

by Rosemary Canning

This PhD thesis consists of two parts: 77,000-word autobiographical novel entitled *Hiraeth* and a 22,000-word critical commentary that discusses key themes: origins, care, belonging, and conversations. Using a care-experience lens, I reflect on the practice of writing a novel and the representation of care-experience in literature. *Hiraeth* seeks to challenge stereotypical portrayals of young people in care, foster empathy, and explore how my childhood experiences have shaped my creative process as both a reader and a writer.

The novel is set between 1974 and 1976 and is narrated in third-person limited. The prologue introduces Mair, a young, unmarried Welsh woman who, in April 1958, gives birth to a baby girl at the summit of Snowdon, only to be forced to give her up for adoption. The narrative then shifts to 1974, following sixteen-year-old Marianne as she leaves a children's home in Muswell Hill, where she has spent the last eight years. The creative practice also includes a collection of imagined postcards. Marianne's boyfriends represent the music genres of the time, and chapter titles are drawn from popular songs. Family figures are symbolically represented by cultural icons, further enriching the novel's exploration of identity and belonging.

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Research Thesis: Declaration of Authorship

Print name: Rosemary Canning

Title of thesis: Hiraeth (a novel): Representations of Care-Experience in Literature

I declare that this thesis and the work presented in it are my own and has been generated by me as the result of my own original research.

I confirm that:

1. This work was done wholly or mainly while in candidature for a research degree at this University;
2. Where any part of this thesis has previously been submitted for a degree or any other qualification at this University or any other institution, this has been clearly stated;
3. Where I have consulted the published work of others, this is always clearly attributed;
4. Where I have quoted from the work of others, the source is always given. With the exception of such quotations, this thesis is entirely my own work;
5. I have acknowledged all main sources of help;
6. Where the thesis is based on work done by myself jointly with others, I have made clear exactly what was done by others and what I have contributed myself;
7. None of this work has been published before submission

Acknowledgements

My heartfelt thanks to Ms. Rebecca Smith, my thesis supervisor at University of Southampton for her unwavering support, enthusiasm, and kindness for my project. My thanks for interesting conversations to Dr. Sujala Singh and Professor Emma Clery, who supervised the early part of the project. My appreciation to Professor Will May and Dr. Devorah Baum for an interesting, insightful and very useful MPhil Upgrade. Also, at University of Southampton I am thankful to Professor Stephanie Jones for fitting in time (despite being in Australia) to be my internal viva examiner. At Cardiff University, I am grateful to external examiner Professor Dawn Mannay, to both my appreciation for such an enjoyable viva and particularly the interest, insight and encouragement.

I am grateful to have received the Maureen Taylor Bursary which gave me financial support and belief in my creative project and my ability to succeed at doctoral level. I am also thankful to the Graduate School who were helpful whenever I sought advice or guidance and for funds from the Research Support Fund which enabled me to attend conferences and carry out research.

A special mention to Lemn Sissay whose early orphan work was an absolute inspiration. My thanks to dear friends: Dr. Dee Michell, Dr. Josie Pearse, Dr. Delyth Edwards, Dr. Mariela Neagu, Mr Jamie Crabb, and Dr. Aoife O'Higgins. My appreciation to Ms. Maria Oratis for unwavering autobiographical support.

Wholehearted thanks go to loyal reader friends: Ms. Lindsay Bamfield, Ms. Carol Sampson, Ms Vasundra Tailor, and Ms. Jane Teather, who read many versions of *Hiraeth* and stopped me killing one of my little darlings.

Thanks to my real darlings: daughter Victoria-Rose for her support and sensible advice and son Jamie for lovely lunches and a listening ear.

To Ms. Janet Critchell, my thanks for the teenage memories and remembered kindness of your mum.

Acknowledgements

Remembrance of Mr. Paul McCormack who always brought our conversations back to the PhD and how that was going.

Grateful thanks to those in the care-experience community, so many lovely people who gave me books, answered questions, took part, and supported my research journey.

Never last and never least, dear Mike who is my rock, thank you.

List of Definitions

In 2021, there were over 80,850² children living in care in England; this is an all-time high. They may live with foster carers, in children's homes, in secure units or in kinship care. A minority of children will go on to be adopted and will obtain a new legal identity.

'Care leaver' or 'care-experienced' [see Appendix A] are terms used to describe people who have been in the care of their local authority for more than 24 hours. Care leaver tends to apply to the under-25s and care-experienced to the over 25s. Care-experienced person is sometimes abbreviated as CEP.

I use 'orphan' in the same way as Josie Pearce, 'merely that the child has no parents present, not necessarily that the parents are dead.'³

'Foundling' is an historic term applied to children, usually babies, who have been abandoned by parents and discovered and cared for by others.

I include 'adoption' i.e. the legally taking of another's child and bringing them up as one's own, or the fact of being 'adopted.'

'Hiraeth' has no word in English. It is a Welsh word meaning homesickness for a home to which you cannot return, a home which maybe never was.

² Department for Education, *Children Looked after in England Including Adoptions* (2021) <<https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/children-looked-after-in-england-including-adoptions/2021>> [accessed 5 April 2022].

³ Josie Pearce, 'Backstory: Writing and Not-Writing on the Cusp of Life and Fiction' (unpublished Ph.D. Thesis, Cardiff University, 2012). p.12

Critical Commentary

1. Introduction

How have we not made the connection between the brilliance of these characters (fictional and non-fictional) and the child in care? The problem is not with the child in care but with our perceptions of them and the subsequent treatment of them as a problem to be solved rather than an opportunity for excellence. – ‘From Pip to Potter,’ Lemn Sissay⁴

Hiraeth began when having gained access to my social care files, I discovered words I had spoken at nine years old recorded by a social worker: ‘I want to write a story about myself.’ The concept evolved further in 1996 when giving a presentation to young girls who were about to leave care, I was dismayed that despite twenty years since leaving care myself, there was still very little support. The final inspiration came in 2012, whilst attending a Lemn Sissay event ‘From Pip to Potter.’⁵ Where he highlighted the stark contrast between society’s admiration for orphans in fiction with the treatment of real children in care.

There are two parts to this thesis: a creative project and commentary. The novel aims to introduce readers to Marianne’s world through a lens shaped by her care-experience. By doing this, it seeks to encourage understanding and empathy for young people leaving the care system.

I begin the commentary by discussing the backstory and origins of *Hiraeth*, the autobiographical novel. Chapter One of the commentary explores the representation of care-

⁴ Lemn Sissay, ‘From Pip To Potter,’ *From Pip to Potter: Celebrating the Place of Children in Care in Literature*, (2012) <<https://www.thereader.org.uk/from-pip-to-potter-at-the-southbank-centre/>> [accessed 5 June 2022]

⁵ Ibid.

experience in contemporary literature. Chapter Two looks briefly at belonging and Chapter Three discusses art and conversations.

My research, the novel project, is a work of autobiographical fiction grown from my own care-experience and using third person limited point of view. *Hiraeth* examines the everyday life of a sixteen-year-old girl leaving the care system in the mid-1970s. It tells of protagonist Marianne, an artist-in-waiting, who, by resilience and chance, finds acceptance, belonging, and a ‘good enough’ life.

The commentary explores contemporary representations of orphans (post 1970s), in a new sub-genre of the orphan field featuring care-experienced characters. I chose post 1970s as this coincides with changes that were happening at the time in the care system. In his email of September 7, 2022, Jim Goddard, retired academic and Chair of the Care Leavers Association, who spent his childhood in the care system, explained how large orphanages were replaced by smaller ‘family group homes’ and foster care, though it took decades for the shift to happen. And in 1980 there was a massive decline in residential care numbers (from 32,500 in 1980 to 11,500 by 1990).

This is reflected for example by Tracy Beaker in the children’s novel of the same name who lives in a smaller children’s home. Or Care Leaver Nikki in *Island* who has experience of adoption, foster care and residential placements. Sometimes these representations are portrayed as the mad, bad or sad care-character or the other extreme, super-hero.⁶

I use a care-experience lens to reflect on the protagonist’s journey, my own journey, and wider cultural representations in contemporary literature by analysing whether they reinforce or challenge stereotypes. By adopting a care-experienced lens, we can be sensitive to the perspective of those who have lived experience of the state or social care systems as children. A care-experience lens places care-experience at the heart of this commentary. In

⁶ This is not to undermine the positive role superheroes can have on a child in care.

this instance it is Marianne, the protagonist of *Hiraeth*, whose journey is seen from her perspective.

Where possible in the commentary, I privilege the voices of care-experienced scholars, writers, and artists. I want to illustrate the diverse scholarship of care-experienced researchers already in the field and whose work is created through their unique lens.

The episodic nature of the structure, varying chapter lengths, postcard slices of life reflect the lived experience of a child in care with limited structure and the often erratic, fractured nature of life both in and after leaving the system. Marianne invents her own ways of being, with hand-made postcards to her mother and friends, and artistic, therapeutic internal conversations that give her space to grow and understand herself.

Different generations will have different experiences. Every person's care-experience is unique and shaped by their individual histories and lived experience. There may be some core similarities but for example, the experience of someone who grew up in care during the 60s and 70s like Marianne, will be different, it is hoped, to the experience of a young person in care now.

Questions I asked myself at the beginning of the project included:

- Could I write a novel that both acknowledged and critiqued the care-experience of a young care leaver without resorting to stereotypical i.e. criminal; homeless; or prostitute representations?
- How much of my life as a child in care should I share?

I have also called on other significant theorists in the fields of psychology, child development, and trauma, as well as fiction and non-fiction writers some of whom who are not care-experienced but who have featured care-experienced characters in their stories.

2. Backstory

All stories have backstories, at least all stories worth knowing about, and all readers want to pry into those unlit spaces...Reading is a strong torch shining through the dark. - Sally Bayley⁷

I have always imagined that my mother, Mavis, must have been heartbroken to let me go and after I lost the ‘m’ for mother and became ‘other,’ the future became bleak. I was born in 1958 and put up for adoption, but my mother’s ‘bad blood’ saw me rejected, labelled and packaged into the care system.

This initial imagining of a heartbroken mother giving me up prompted the ‘Backstory’ of *Hiraeth* – my mother’s story, and thousands of women like her. Mair Thomas, the unmarried mother of protagonist Marianne gives birth at the top of Snowdon.

As a young adult, I was very aware of the serious stigma aimed toward unmarried, pregnant women during the fifties and sixties many of whom were coerced into giving up their babies. They were supposed to forget all about ‘it’ and get on with their lives. Kate Adie, who was adopted, writes of how:

For centuries, a combination of social prejudice and religious disapproval effectively banished some children from the family tree. Unwanted, illegitimate, abandoned, victims of dire poverty, such children were seen as a problem to be tidied away.⁸

The women mostly ended up in Mother and Baby Homes, which is what happened to my mother, Mavis - sent in the dead of night to Middlesex Hospital, next to Syon Park, miles away from home to give birth and from there to a Mother and Baby Home.

⁷ Sally Bayley. *Girl with Dove: A Life Built by Books*. London: William Collins, 2018. P.xi

⁸ Kate Adie. *London’s Forgotten Children: Thomas Coram and the Foundling Hospital*. (Cheltenham: The History Press, 2007), foreword.

Surprisingly, there were questions around whether mother and baby really needed to spend so much time together before a child was given up for adoption.⁹ This was despite Bowlby's 'Maternal Deprivation Hypothesis' that proposed a 'warm, intimate and continuous relationship with a mother (or mother-substitute)' as necessary for healthy psychological/emotional development¹⁰ or Winnicott's 'maternal care of the holding variety'¹¹ which helped facilitate a child's transition to autonomy. Bowlby and Winnicott's work came many years before Nancy Verrier's landmark text, *The Primal Wound*, which posits 'primal wound' theory when a mother and child are separated, in Verrier's instance by adoption, but the separation wound is likely similar for those babies separated and put into care.¹²

In the prologue of *Hiraeth*, Mair is sure her parents will be swayed by the same love she feels for her baby, but all they see is a daughter who has brought shame to their doorstep. In an early draft, like Mavis, Mair too was bundled into a car with her baby and taken to a hospital in Wrexham and from there to a Mother and Baby Home.

To enter a Mother and Baby Home like the one in my novel, pregnant women first had to undergo certain invasive medical tests - policies enforced by the British Medical Association (BMA). One of these tests was for gonorrhoea. Having these tests meant getting a medical certificate; without one, the young mother-to-be would not be allowed to enter the home. [See Appendix B]

According to a leading consultant Venereologist, and the Chief Medical Officer of Health at the time, gonorrhoea, was on the increase in the late 1950s.¹³ Even more worrying was the

⁹ Jill Nicholson. National Council for the Unmarried Mother and Her Child. *Mother and Baby Homes: A Survey of Homes for Unmarried Mothers*. National Institute for Social Work Training Series, No. 13. London: Allen & Unwin, 1968.

¹⁰ John Bowlby, and World Health Organization. 'Maternal care and mental health - a report prepared on behalf of the World Health Organization as a contribution to the United Nations programme for the welfare of homeless children.' World Health Organization, 1952. <https://apps.who.int/iris/handle/10665/40724>. [accessed 5 June 2022]

¹¹ Donald Winnicott. *Playing and Reality*. London: Taylor & Francis Ltd., 2005. pp. 1-34

¹² Nancy Verrier. *The Primal Wound: Understanding the Adopted Child*. UK ed. edition. British Association for Adoption and Fostering, 2009.

¹³ Figures for 1957-1958 in Ministry of Health File, showed very few unmarried mothers were infected. As an example, in 1958, figures from the Department of Public Health in Bristol, showed that of the total of new unmarried mothers, 178, who attended a 'special' diagnostic clinic, only two actually had gonorrhoea.

testing of new-born babies for sexual diseases.¹⁴ Just as the mother needed a medical certificate to enter the Mother and Baby Home, so the new-born needed a certificate to leave, not with its mother but with the new adoptive parents. Once adopted, records were closed and babies lost their name, birth family, heritage and any inheritance.

Today, there are some mothers still having their newborn baby or children removed, in some instances due to child protection issues. Mother and Child (MAC) project; is ‘an initiative testing the development and impact of taking a ‘legal rights-based approach’ to addressing the needs of ‘looked after’ / care leaver girls and young women who are mothers or mothers-to-be and are at risk of losing their own children to the care system. This group are 66 times more likely than non-care-experienced peers to have their children taken into care.’¹⁵

Lisa Morriss developed the concept of ‘haunted motherhood’ after her experiences as a researcher in the archives of the Family Court. She found herself haunted by the stories of birth mothers living apart from their children removed through state-ordered intervention. Especially upsetting were handwritten letters from mothers or grandmothers ‘begging the Family Court Judge to let their child return home to them. The photographs within the documents were particularly haunting’ too and depict how these mothers exist in a state of *haunted motherhood*.¹⁶

¹⁴ Rosie Canning, ‘Bad Blood,’ *Orphans and Care-experience in Literature* <<https://careleaversinfiction.wordpress.com/2023/01/02/bad-blood/>> [accessed Jan 2, 2023].

¹⁵ *Mother and Child Project* (2023) <<https://www.centralenglandlc.org.uk/mac-project-resources>> [accessed 16 December 2023].

¹⁶ Lisa Morriss, ‘Haunted Futures: The Stigma of Being a Mother Living Apart from Her Child(Ren) as a Result of State-Ordered Court Removal’ *The Sociological Review*, Vol 66, Issue 4, (2018), pp. 816–831 (p.819) <<https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/0038026118777448>> [accessed 24 February 2024].



Figure 2 Postcard Re-representation of a Mother's Tattoo¹⁷

Lisa Morriss also undertook a pilot project funded by the Sociological Review which explored the experiences of eight mothers living apart from their children and using a narrative approach and arts-based visual methodologies. The study focused on how these mothers used tattoos to memorialize their children, who are alive but absent due to state intervention 'My tattoos are my life. They're my life story. Some people write in a journal. I write on my skin.'¹⁸ These tattoos, inscribed with images and names, serve as indelible reminders of their loss and trauma, challenging the stigma and silencing they face. The research highlights the tattoos as both personal memorials and acts of resistance, asserting the mothers' enduring connection to their children and bringing their stories to light. 'The creation of spaces for the mothers to speak collectively – or individually in blogs – about their

¹⁷ An artist's interpretation of a tattoo created by a mum who had her child/children taken away due to state-ordered court removal.

¹⁸ Lisa Morriss, 'Marking motherhood on the body - the tattoos of mothers who live apart from their children', seminar (University of Manchester, 28 April 2021, with Siobhan Beckwith)

experiences can foster a maternal commons, challenging the isolation, shame and stigma of being a mother living apart from her children.’¹⁹

I reflected on the backstory of *Hiraeth* and how Marianne’s mother represented the thousands of unmarried mothers stigmatised during the fifties, sixties and seventies who were forced to give up their babies for adoption mostly without after-support or advice of alternative outcomes. The stigma of the last 70 years is currently being acknowledged through the activism of the adoption apology movement. March 2023 saw Scotland’s Formal Apology by the outgoing Scottish First Minister, Nicola Sturgeon who issued a heartfelt apology to all those affected by historical adoption practices.²⁰ This was followed by The Welsh Government; deputy minister for social services Julie Morgan who made a Public Formal Apology on 25th April 2023. The UK Government have so far refused to give a formal apology.

Being aware of the statistics of young pregnant girls in and leaving care,²¹ I was unsure whether to have Marianne pregnant as one of the points of my novel is to offer alternatives to Care Leaver stereotypes, but in the mid-seventies although the pill was by then widely available, it could still be difficult for younger girls to get it from their GP. In some instances, the family doctor knew parents (or staff in a children’s home) so getting a prescription for the pill was not as straightforward back then. It’s difficult nowadays to understand just how programmed many women were to believe that to have pre-marital sex was something ‘bad,’ especially Roman Catholics like Marianne. We see this in the way Marianne is spoken to by medical professionals. Even today, young girls in care who become pregnant are pasted onto a

¹⁹ Lisa Morriss, ‘Haunted Futures: The Stigma of Being a Mother Living Apart from Her Child(Ren) as a Result of State-Ordered Court Removal’ *The Sociological Review*, Vol 66, Issue 4, (2018), pp. 816–831 (p.828) <<https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/0038026118777448>> [accessed 24 February 2024].

²⁰ Nicola Sturgeon, *Nicola Sturgeon apology for Historical Adoption Practices*, online video recording, YouTube, Mar 23, 2023, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Bdd2_0AfMNg> [accessed 23 March 2023]

²¹ ‘Children Looked after in England Including Adoptions, Reporting Year 2022.’ [Accessed 11 August 2022] <https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/children-looked-after-in-england-including-adoptions/2022#explore-data-and-files>. [Spreadsheet: la_care_leavers_activity]

spreadsheet of Government statistics. Being pregnant is not portrayed as a positive thing and yet Louise Roberts' groundbreaking work around the potential issues of why/how young Care Leavers become parents in *The Children of Looked After Children* illustrates it is possible to include a more in-depth story rather than cold figures and to use this research as ways to change practice. Roberts also places the care of these young pregnant people firmly with corporate 'grandparents.'²² The 'stereotype' of young Care Leaver girls becoming pregnant although unwelcome has a semblance of reality – 'International evidence has long suggested young people in and leaving care are at risk of early pregnancy.'²³ Roberts goes on to recommend:

'The importance of non-judgemental approaches, open communication and a commitment to ensuring equality of experience and opportunity should be highlighted. The potential for local authorities to develop or commission training co-produced and/or delivered by care-experienced parents should be explored.'²⁴

If Roberts' and Morriss' suggestions are adopted, they will help contribute to changing the narrative around young Care Leaver pregnant women.

3. Origins

'*Hiraeth* has no word in English. It is a Welsh word meaning homesickness for a home to which you cannot return, a home which maybe never was.'²⁵

For the first eight years of my life, I moved between family houses, foster homes, and residential placements. At five years old, I used to walk to the library on my own which seems incredible now; there were alleyways to navigate and a main road to cross. I was fed

²² Louise Roberts, *The Children of Looked After Children*, (Bristol, Policy Press, 2021) p. 124

²³ Roberts, p. 123

²⁴ Roberts, p. 136

²⁵ Rosie Canning, 'Why Hiraeth?', *Orphans & Care-experience in Literature*

<<https://careleaversinfiction.wordpress.com/2014/12/28/why-hiraeth/>> [accessed 23 December 2016]

stories by librarians; it was a safe place where I belonged. The teacher who taught me to read was kind, her lifelong gift one of reading. As author Sally Bayley, who put herself into care aged fourteen, writes:

Reading is a form of escape, and an avid reader is an escape artist. I began my escape the moment I started to read. Aged four, I already had sentences stored up; I knew some words and I could put them together in a line.²⁶

Once at the library, one of the first books I read was about a smartly dressed boy who outsmarted a bunch of tigers by exchanging his brightly coloured clothes in return for his life.²⁷ As young as I was, I learnt that scary animals could be outwitted. I was analysing the narrative, taking from it lessons that would help me cope with the metaphorical tigers in my real life.

The origins of *Hiraeth* began in 1996, when I applied for and received some of my social care files from my time in the system. It was here I discovered words I had spoken at nine years old and recorded by a social worker: ‘I want to write a story about myself.’²⁸ I can imagine something had upset me; it was not the first time I had used words as a form of protest. A need to protest and write about injustice was something that had begun even earlier. At six and a half whilst staying with an aunt and uncle who had two younger children, my young cousin walked into the room wearing an old favourite green dress. The dress had been handmade by the eldest son of a foster mum where I had lived happily for two years, and it meant a huge amount. I asked for pen and paper and proceeded to write to my mother to ask why she had given it away. Not only could I write, but somehow, I knew writing a letter to my mother, even though she had been taken away (I later found out it was to a mental

²⁶ Sally Bayley. *Girl with Dove: A Life Built by Books*. London: William Collins, 2018. p.xii

²⁷ I apologise for the mention of Bannerville’s children’s book. Although this children’s book was described as depicting the first black hero in children’s books, the style and language has been criticised as racist. I am including this reference because it was the first book that I remember at five years old that gave me hope.

²⁸ Social Care Files, London Borough of Barnet, Children’s Department, Social Services Directorate, Town Hall, Friern Barnet, N11. 1994.

institution) gave me some sort of agency. My aunt, who up until then had found me the perfect playmate for her children, reduced weekly visits to monthly.

Author and poet, Malik Al Nasir remembers a similar thing. His golden seed was a promise he made to himself to write about the way he had been treated in the care system:

‘...that’s really where the story starts is me at ten years old in the care system suffering injustice and wanting to tell someone about it and thinking one day I would write a book.’²⁹

Malik went on to fulfil that promise with *Letters to Gil*. He wrote of how he met Poet Gil Heron-Scott at eighteen who became his mentor, saving Malik from an alternative life, one that would have ‘led to a small cell.’

In the introduction of *Letters to Gil*, Lemn Sissay, who spent his childhood in the system (as a baby, he was given away by a Social Worker to long-term foster parents. 12 years later, having only ever known his foster mum and dad, he was brutally returned to Wigan Social Services and spent time in several children’s homes) acknowledges that Malik’s memoir is part of a social movement by those ‘treated atrociously’ in the ‘care’ system who lived to tell ‘epic tales of betrayal and redemption.’³⁰

At eight years old, like Marianne, I too went to live in a small children’s home in Muswell Hill, North London and stayed there until I was just seventeen. Officially I was ‘in care’ until 18, but once I left, all care stopped. The only preparation I can remember for leaving the children’s home, was having to wash my underwear by hand in the kitchen sink which I found thoroughly embarrassing.

Marianne makes her own plans to leave ‘Saturn Road’ and at sixteen she goes to live in an attic room in the home of a children’s writer for cheap rent in exchange for babysitting duties.

²⁹ Rosie Canning, Care Exp Culture. ‘A Conversation With Malik Al Nasir.’ Care Experience & Culture <<https://www.careexperienceandculture.com/post/a-conversation-with-malik-al-nasir>> [Accessed 8 December 2023]

³⁰ Lemn Sissay. *Letters to Gil: A Luminous Memoir of Racism, Life in the Care System and the Power of Discovering Music under the Mentorship of Gil Scott-Heron*. (Glasgow: William Collins, 2021) foreword.

My opening chapter sees Marianne, the protagonist, sorting through books, deciding what to keep, give away, or return to the library. Books could be trusted. Even if a book was lost, it was possible to get another copy which meant they were constant. The narrator, style, voice, and narrative would remain the same, - unlike staff in a children's home or social workers who were forever changing. In *Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit*, protagonist Jeanette (based mainly on Jeanette Winterson's story of her adoption) acknowledges this: 'In the library I felt better, words you could trust and look at till you understood them, they couldn't change halfway through a sentence like people, so it was easier to spot a lie.'³¹

I deliberately made Marianne read books that portrayed orphans, abandoned children or children separated from parents and who have freedom to have adventures; characters she could identify with and importantly who were portrayed as strong individuals, overcoming whatever obstacles they faced, such as *Heidi* who oozed perseverance and joy; disagreeable Mary in *The Secret Garden* who found a new family and place to belong; or lonely, fostered, Anna who in *When Marnie Was There* learns about friendship.

Elements in the childhood books enable Marianne to see features of herself and create alternative fictional family narratives. Author Sarah Mokrzycki is a foster carer and has used children's books like *Harry Potter* as a 'bibliotherapeutic resource' with the children she fosters. She says: 'Relating to characters is what engages early readers and helps foster a lifelong love of reading. It connects children to the world around them and, vitally, it validates their own reality.'³² It validates this reality even more if the reader sees themselves reflected in the stories and this helps give them a sense of identity and belonging.

My early childhood reading prepared me for writing a novel about an orphan or child in care. Where would *Hiraeth* fit on a bookshelf? Children without parents are more likely to

³¹ Jeanette Winterson. *Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit*. 1st American ed. New York, N.Y: Atlantic Monthly Press, 1987.

³² S.J. Mokrzycki and Christopher E. Bell, 'The Magic of Harry Potter for Children in Care,' in *Transmedia Harry Potter: Essays on Storytelling Across Platforms* (McFarland, 2019). P.158

be fostered or adopted nowadays; children's homes are used as a 'last resort.'³³ Marianne is an orphan, but one who is post the happy-ever-after children's stories of the nineteenth and early twentieth century, and part of a new genre, care-experienced literature.

The year I applied for my files I was studying English Literature at Middlesex University as a mature student. A psychology student friend invited me to give a talk to a group of young girls leaving care. The girls told me that there was (still) no support in place for when they left care. I was shocked and angry that in 1996, twenty years since I had left the care system, it seemed nothing had changed. As author Jenni Fagan, who also spent her childhood in the system, puts it: 'My rage was wasp-deep and burrowing. I have always used the process of making art as a way to distil, understand and respond to hegemonic structures.'³⁴

I undertook a 'writing as protest' project, writing through the lens of care-experience and encouraged by a lecturer to continue writing once I had finished my degree. I hoped to demonstrate how 16–18-year-olds deserved and needed support when leaving care. I am still writing about this, but not as a polemic. In the mid-seventies, there was no thought of aligning care to any sort of corporate parental³⁵ responsibility. When I left the system in the seventies, I just about got by, but not without great mental and physical strain. At seventeen I weighed less than six stone. My nightly meals consisted of tea and custard creams. There was nobody to notice the weight loss, unlike when my character Marianne moves in with her best friend Helen and her mother comments, 'My God, Marianne you've lost weight...come in, out of

³³ Mary O'Hara. 'Children's Care Homes Are Seen as a Last Resort, but They Can Be a Safe Haven.' *The Guardian*, 2 June 2015, sec. Social Care Network. <<https://www.theguardian.com/social-care-network/2015/jun/02/childrens-care-homes-are-seen-as-a-last-resort-but-they-can-be-a-safe-haven>> [Accessed 2 June 2015]

³⁴ Jenni Fagan. 'Luckenbooth and The Metamorphosis of a Novel (Inspired by Kafka's The Metamorphosis),' 30 November 2020. <<https://doi.org/10.7488/era/1334>> [Accessed 6 December 2022].

³⁵ Section 22(3) of the Children Act 1989 sets out the general duty of the local authority looking after a child to safeguard and promote the welfare of the child. This duty underpins all activity by the local authority in relation to looked after children. This duty has become known as 'corporate parenting.' <<https://childlawadvice.org.uk/information-pages/local-authority-duties-to-looked-after-children>> [Accessed 4 October 2023]

the cold. We'll soon fatten you up.'³⁶ The narrator/reader witnesses a little more care for our protagonist than I had in the real-life story, a sort of re-mothering for seventeen-year-old Marianne.

In 2012, I was invited to '*From 'Pip to Potter'*' an event held in a small room upstairs at the Royal Festival Hall where Lemn Sissay spoke of how some of our best loved literary characters from Peter Pan³⁷ to Lyra in Philip Pullman's *His Dark Materials* trilogy are parentless children living away from home.³⁸ I remember feeling overwhelmed with joy at the time but later shocked at myself and questioning how even though orphan narratives had effectively propped me up throughout childhood, I had not made this connection. The event became a catalyst for events in my own life. That day I also met Josie Pearse who was doing a creative writing PhD at Cardiff and researching eighteenth and nineteenth century orphans in literature, as well as writing about her life as an adoptee, or rather re-writing her life.³⁹

I had been wanting to do a PhD in Creative Writing for some time. Meeting Josie and listening to Lemn, I knew it would be something about care-experience and literature.

The PhD origin story continued with many more serendipitous⁴⁰ moments. In 2013, a friend asked if I wanted to attend a Jane Austen-themed workshop run by Ms. Rebecca Smith, a lecturer at University of Southampton. I wondered how a Jane Austen event could help with my contemporary writing and yet once there I wrote the opening scene of a novel, I entitled *Homesick*. Ms. Smith and I had a conversation, she understood the passion behind my subject and spoke softly of 'injustice' seeming instinctively to understand what I hoped to do. 'It's

³⁶ Rosemary Canning, 'Hiraeth (a Novel): Representations of Care Experience in Literature' (unpublished PhD, University of Southampton, 2024). P. 176

³⁷ Peter Pan was first published as a book by Hodder & Stoughton, in 1911 in the UK.

³⁸ The trilogy *His Dark Materials*, are fantasy novels by Philip Pullman which consist of *Northern Lights* (1995; published as *The Golden Compass* in North America), *The Subtle Knife* (1997), and *The Amber Spyglass* (2000) and features Lyra Belacqua, an eleven-year-old orphan in a fictional University of Oxford. The professors and servants treat her as an adopted daughter.

³⁹ 3 Pearse.

⁴⁰ Rosie Canning, 'From Pip to Potter to Southampton,' unpublished paper delivered at The Centre for Modern and Contemporary Writing Annual Research Day 'Creativity and Serendipity' (University of Southampton, 16 January 2017)

such an important project,' she said. Many conversations later, I found myself at Southampton as a PhD student.

This introduction delves into my personal journey, starting with the discovery of a desire to write at a young age and experiences in the care system. It outlines the motivation behind the thesis, which consists of a creative project and commentary, aiming to explore representations of care-experience in literature and challenge stereotypes. The chapter also discusses the historical context of unmarried mothers in the mid 20th century and the stigma surrounding adoption.

Chapter One investigates a range of contemporary literature and how care-experienced characters are represented.

Chapter 1 Representations of Care-experience in Contemporary Literature

‘It was not care, it’s called care isn’t it, but care was the last thing that I received.’ –

Lemn Sissay⁴¹

This chapter mainly explores contemporary (post 1970s) representations of orphans, which I describe as a new sub-genre of the orphan character field – literature with care-experienced characters. That is characters who have been in the care of their local authority, ‘care-characters,’⁴² living away from their families either in foster care, children’s homes, secure units, kinship care, or who have been adopted, or a combination of these. Within this sub-genre are writers for example, Jenni Fagan, Alex Wheatle, Kirsty Capes, or Louise Allen who through the lens of their lived care-experience write fictional and autobiographical stories, and those who are not care-experienced, for example Jane Rogers, Sarah Stovell and Mark Hill.

Analysis of care-experienced characters in contemporary literature and particularly representation was limited with little scholarly work when I began this project, though this was not so much the case for adoption or orphans. Orphan heroes and heroines are familiar characters in children’s and adult literature. In *Orphan Texts: Victorian Orphans, Culture and Empire*, Laura Peters observes that in both literature and history this literary tradition is understudied.⁴³ Nina Auerbach’s article ‘Incarnations of the Orphan’ was for a ‘considerable time’ the only investigation of the literary orphan figure.⁴⁴ In her email of 24 March 2023 Dee Michell wrote that ‘Melanie Kimball argues orphans have long been used in folk tales. They

⁴¹ BBC News. “‘Care Is the Last Thing I Got’” <<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/av/uk-38593432>> [Accessed 8 December 2023]

⁴² My invention.

⁴³ Laura Peters, *Orphan Texts: Victorian Orphans, Culture and Empire*, Paperback edition (Manchester [United Kingdom]; New York: New York: Manchester University Press ; Distributed exclusively in the USA by St. Martin’s Press, 2013), p. 2.

⁴⁴ Marion Gymnic ‘and others’, ‘Introduction’, in *The Orphan in Fiction and Comics since the 19th Century*, ed. by Marion Gymnich, Barbara Pushmann-Nalenz, Gerold Sedlmayr, and Dirk Vanderbeke. (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars, 2018), pp.80-110

are “the eternal Other”, cut off [or cut out] from family.’⁴⁵ John Reed recognises that orphanhood is often reconciled through domestic marriage or family reunion⁴⁶ such as in *Jane Eyre* or *Oliver Twist*. William Floyd concentrates on non-traditional depictions of orphanhood and observes that the Victorian gothic orphan threatened domestic bliss. They are dangerous, seeking to fracture the institution of the family⁴⁷, for example the ‘villain’ Heathcliff in *Wuthering Heights*.⁴⁸ The Victorian period was considered ‘the most famous age for orphan stories’.⁴⁹ In the first half of the 20th century there was a lack of orphan figures in ‘highbrow’ literature, an interval of more than sixty years due in all likelihood to two world wars where real children were being orphaned and the fictional tropes perhaps lost their romantic status.⁵⁰

Even so, Marianne Novy, who was adopted in the United States, and who has long been trying to improve the general and scholarly understanding of adoption and who in 1999 co-founded the Alliance for the Study of Adoption and Culture (ASAC)—the only organization studying adoption including the humanities, writes ‘...few literary critics have previously considered literary representations of adoption. More have written about the orphan or the bastard...’⁵¹ and in particular concentrate on the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries. This is the case for representations of care-experience and though I would not exclude adoption, the fiction I am investigating tends to be a mixture of foster care, residential and in some instances a sprinkling of adoption, for example like Nikki from *Island* or Anais from *The Panopticon* both of whom were adopted a few times in their early years but eventually

⁴⁵ Dee Michell Melanie A. Kimball, ‘From Folktales to Fiction: Orphan Characters in Children’s Literature,’ *Library Trends*, 47 (1999), 558–78

⁴⁶ John Robert Reed, *Victorian Conventions*, 1. paperback ed (Athens, Ohio: Ohio Univ. Press, 1985).

⁴⁷ William David Floyd, *Street Urchins, Sociopaths and Degenerates: Orphans of Late-Victorian and Edwardian Fiction* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2014).

⁴⁸ Emily Brontë and Pauline Nestor, *Wuthering Heights*, Penguin Classics (London ; New York: Penguin Books, 2003).

⁴⁹ Susan Reynolds, ‘Dumbledore in the Watchtower: Harry Potter as a Neo-Victorian Narrative’, in *Harry Potter’s World Wide Influence*, ed. by Diana Patterson (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars, 2009), p.273.

⁵⁰ Barbara Puschmann-Nalenz, ‘The Gap or, the Dying Orphan’, in *The Orphan in Fiction and Comics since the 19th Century*, ed. by Marion Gymnich, Barbara Puschmann-Nalenz, Gerold Sedlmayr, and Dirk Vanderbeke. (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars, 2018), p.4

⁵¹ Marianne Novy, *Imagining Adoption: Essays on Literature and Culture* (University of Michigan Press, 2001) p. 3

returned, similarly in real life like Lemn Sissay and Jenni Fagan to the care system. There are exceptions, the avalanche of critical writing about Harry Potter and Tracy Beaker – though children's works, much of the research looking into literary orphans explores children's literature as well as old classics e.g. Dickens and the Brontës. I include Jeanette Winterson, who was adopted and wrote an autobiographical novel in 1988, *Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit* because she describes so well the life story of 'other'. She examines her adoption story and the writing of *Oranges*, in *Why Be Happy When You Could Be Normal?* As well as Winterson's reflection, there is a plethora of writing about her work which includes examining gender and sexuality, narrative technique, and diversity – but less about representation.

So, to be clear, yes there is scholarly work about literary orphans and adoption, however what is missing is the representation of care-experienced characters who are either in or have experienced a combination of foster care, residential, secure accommodation, or may have been adopted and it is this aspect that the commentary discusses.

Dennis Leoutsakas 'explores the complex relationship between fictional orphan stories and his own lived orphan experiences.'⁵² Adoption per se has attracted a huge amount of scholarly investigation particularly in the US.

Lemn Sissay has presented and written about literary orphans and real children in care; Dee Michell, who grew up in the Australian Foster Care System, has written about the history of foster care in Australia; and more recently Kirsty Capes who was in foster care, and as well as having two novels published, writes about female-centric care narratives.

The representation of contemporary care-experience in literature is often pathologized with the 'mad, bad or sad' Care Leaver or the other extreme, the super-hero. Cat Hugman,

⁵² Dennis Leoutsakas (2003) *The Orphan Tales: Real and imagined stories of parental loss*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of South Florida, Tampa, Florida.
<https://www.academia.edu/6742830/The_Orphan_Tales_Real_and_Imagined_Stories_of_Parental_Loss_Table_of_Contents> [accessed 10 March 2020]

who was in foster care from 14-16 years old, summarizes these representations in her PhD thesis:

The cultural, political and social representations of adults who grew up in state residential, foster or kinship care can be typified as the damaged victim, the exceptional, resilient hero or the delinquent.⁵³

I wondered where these initial representations of care-experienced people as stereotypically ‘bad’ or damaged originated from. Some of the earliest research examining real orphans and abandoned children in the mid 19th century explored perceptions and concerns about outcomes for young people leaving institutions - a subject of debate around institutionalised children’s needs and issues which continues to this day albeit via Social Care. Examples include reformers in the 19th Century such as Louisa Twining⁵⁴ and Jane Nassau Senior⁵⁵ who both visited and reported on girls brought up in Poor Law district schools and both went on to open homes for workhouse girls where they were given respite and trained in practical skills: housework, cookery, laundry, and needlework.

Much of Senior’s research highlighted the shortcomings⁵⁶ for children including health issues - children who left the care of pauper institutions were notoriously ‘of small stature’ and many had ‘sight problems and skin diseases.’⁵⁷ They ‘were also tainted by the stigma of pauperism...for poverty was believed to be both contagious and hereditary,’ and not only pauperism explains Harriet Ward. The general belief was that most district school children

⁵³ Cat Hugman. ‘What’s the Story? Sociological Explorations of the Life Course Narratives of Adults with Care Experience.’ (*Unpublished Doctoral Thesis, Northumbria University, 2016*), n.d.

⁵⁴ Louisa Twining, with friends would visit women in the workhouse for conversation and prayers. She went on to set up a home for workhouse girls sent out to service, so that they would not have to mix with women of ‘bad character.’ Oxford Dictionary of National Biography <<https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/38083>> [Accessed 8 January 2022]

⁵⁵ Jane Nassau Senior’s was Britain’s first female civil servant. She was appointed in 1873, as an assistant inspector of workhouses with a view to producing a ‘Report on the Education of Girls in Pauper Schools.’

⁵⁶ Even in nineteenth century, government did not want to hear about the shortcomings of the institution. Senior took matters into her own hands and with Caroline Emelia Stephen, a British philanthropist, and a writer on Quakerism, they set up the Metropolitan Association for Befriending Young Servants (MABYS) a voluntary organisation to support poor young women and girls in London and encourage them to become domestic servants. [ref below]

⁵⁷ . ‘UK Civil Service - Women - Jeanie Senior.’ <https://www.civilservant.org.uk/women-jeanie_senior.html> [Accessed 30 June 2022]

became criminals, prostitutes or adult paupers in later life.⁵⁸ An inkling of the stigma – a mixture of poverty and illegitimacy – that’s been directed at care-experienced people for almost 200 years.

Social historian, Annie Skinner (who was adopted), and writes about stigma notes that: ‘Whilst aspects of stigma are well documented in some areas such as mental health, education, race, and disability, in general terms the history of the stigma of children in care and its relevance today is under-explored.’⁵⁹ Annie goes on to explain that during the nineteenth century, toddlers and very young children appeared in court and were charged ‘...of being in the company of prostitutes, being neglected or abused, not having proper guardianship, larceny, stealing, or truanting, being out of control or committing an offence.’⁶⁰ Children were described as ‘human vermin,’ ‘dangerous,’ animals and much more and it is easy to see the stigma and roots of the criminalisation of children in care.

I conducted some primary data analysis of novels that feature care-experience. [See appendix C] In 2010, I began compiling lists of books whilst researching Bibliotherapy, ‘...the guided reading of written materials in gaining understanding or solving problems relevant to a person’s therapeutic needs.’⁶¹ I was experimenting with a different way to write autobiography: ‘Books that saved my life.’ Added to those lists were books featuring care-experience. As part of Greenacre Writers (a local writing organisation) I invited authors to either have their novel reviewed or take part in ‘A Conversation With...’⁶² Some of these authors either had experience of care or wrote fiction featuring care-characters or both. The lists grew and in 2020 along with books compiled by Dee Michell, they became part of the

⁵⁸ Harriet Ward. ‘Transitions to Adulthood from Care in Late 19th Century England.’ *Child & Family Social Work* 26, no. 2 (2021): 222–30. <https://doi.org/10.1111/cfs.12806>. [Accessed 30 June 2022]

⁵⁹ Annie Skinner. ‘Historical Perspectives on the Stigma of Children in Care.’ <https://www.careexperienceandculture.com/post/historical-perspectives-on-the-stigma-of-children-in-care> [Accessed 30 July 2023.] p.2

⁶⁰ Ibid., p.4

⁶¹ Richard J. Riordan, and Linda S. Wilson, ‘Bibliotherapy: Does It Work?’, *Journal of Counseling & Development*, 67.9 (1989), 506–8 <<https://doi.org/10.1002/j.1556-6676.1989.tb02131.x>>

⁶² Canning, Rosie, ‘Greenacre Writers: A Conversation With...’, *Greenacre Writers*, 2019 <<https://greenacrewriters.blogspot.com/2018/12/a-conversation-with.html>> [accessed 13 March 2024]

Care Experience and Culture Digital Archive, set up by us to begin addressing the invisibility and stigma associated with this marginalised group.

Of 313 books, fifteen are featured more fully in the critical commentary, for example, on page 31, I discuss my initial emotional response to *Island*, by Jane Rogers. It was whilst thinking about representation and care-experience that I recognised how Rogers appeared to play with the reader response - was Nikki murderer or heroine – which was important for the commentary. I included some Agatha Christie murder mystery novels because of the authors treatment of care-experienced characters. Sometimes Christie is sympathetic and sometimes quite brutal in her depictions of orphan murderers. This was real-life for Terence O'Neill whose tragic story featured as an avenging murderer in Christie's long-running play *The Mousetrap*. I included Jenni Fagan's novel *The Panopticon*, because of the portrayal of how some young people in care are subjected to a brutal system that does not care. Her narrative style, comparable to a machine gun, mirrors at times the violent and oppressive nature and brutality experienced by the protagonist.

I knew I would at some stage have to face my own personal firing squad, that of investigating the roots of the care-experience stereotype 'murderer' and how this label is perpetuated in literature, media and society. Alongside this, and as a mirror, there is also the gritty reality of Alex Wheatle's novels. And yet, Fagan and Wheatle create powerful friendships in their fiction which I investigate as an alternative mode of attachment. I did briefly feature other texts from the list such as memoir *51 Moves*, a tragic narrative that could help inform Social Care of the many missed intervention opportunities, in this case during the author's downward spiral, as well as *My Name Is Why*, and *Careless*. The derogatory use of language to describe characters with care-experience in *Two O'Clock Boy* and *The Home*, although shocking, was useful as representational examples of that trope.

In contemporary literature, the modern orphan aka care-experienced character is a relatively new representation,⁶³ for example Tracy in the children's novel *The Story of Tracy Beaker*,⁶⁴ (I mention this because of all the contemporary books about care-experience, this representation, as well as the subsequent television series, reinforced negative ideas of children in care and yet was hugely popular. The representation of orphans in large old orphanages (unless historical fiction) have been replaced by smaller children's homes, like the one Tracy is in, often inappropriately nicknamed the 'dumping ground,' or foster family settings.⁶⁵ Jim Goddard, explains:

...from about 1980 onwards there was a massive decline in residential care numbers (from 32,500 in 1980 to 11,500 by 1990), while foster care numbers remained steady (about 35,000) and thus fostering became, by default, the dominant form of care.⁶⁶

Saturn Road, where my protagonist Marianne lives, is one of these smaller children's home with up to four boys and four girls and six members of staff at any one time.

I had the impression from previous reading that the post-1970s representation of care-experience, particularly in crime dramas⁶⁷ was often negative. So, where better to start than with one of the Queens of Crime Fiction.

I began reading Agatha Christie when I left school in the mid-1970s and was always a huge fan. However, as part of my research I re-visited Christie's orphan representations and came to realise disappointingly that she often used 'criminal' stereotypes when writing her murder mysteries. In *Dead Man's Mirror*, *They Do It with Mirrors*, *Ordeal by Innocence* and *The Mirror Crack'd from Side to Side*, the orphans, fostered or adopted characters are suspected of murder. Miss Marple takes in young girls from St Faith's Orphanage near St

⁶³ There are stories of kids being in state foster care systems before the 1980s eg *Anne of Green Gables*.

⁶⁴ Jacqueline Wilson. *The Story of Tracy Beaker*. London: Doubleday, 1991.

⁶⁵ The shift to smaller homes had begun long before. Smaller homes and, in particular, family group homes (no more than twelve children) were recommended by the Curtis Committee in the 1940s. It took decades for the shift to happen, though. Inertia, sunk costs, lack of money, etc.

⁶⁶ Jim Goddard. 'Email to Rosie Canning,' 7 September 2022.

⁶⁷ For example *The Fall*. In the first series what propelled the killer was never made clear only a flimsy reference to growing up in care, a stereotypical, lazy explanation. See also <https://www.careexperienceandculture.com/post/what-about-the-84-by-josie-pearse>

Mary Mead and trains them. Once they are trained, they usually leave her employ hoping to experience something of the world, something more exciting, but instead end up working very long hours with often only one day off a year.

In *The Child She Bare* Hannah Brown, a foundling in the Foundling Hospital wrote of how they were trained for either service, the girls; or the navy, the boys; and how she was made to work for 16 hours a day with only one day off a year – not dissimilar to Christie's girls.

The Foundling Hospital and Miss Marple thought along similar lines - orphans, foundlings, the homeless and neglected were, if female, worthy only of domestic service. In *A Pocket full of Rye*,⁶⁸ orphan Gladys Martin is portrayed as a hapless, stupid girl. And when asked if she were pretty, Miss Marple responds '...not at all. Adenoids, and a good many spots. She was rather pathetically stupid, too...She was very keen on men, poor girl. But men didn't take much notice of her, and other girls rather made use of her.'⁶⁹

Miss Marple though does feel a sense of responsibility for these parentless girls and often acts as a sort of adopted aunt figure. Never more so than after the stout Gladys, with a homely face, is murdered.

Sometimes, Christie was inspired to write her murder mysteries based in part on real-life events.⁷⁰ *The Mousetrap* was originally based on a short story 'Three Blind Mice.' At its heart is the horrific abuse of two orphan boys, one of whom was killed by the foster parents who were supposed to protect and look after the boys whilst World War Two was raging throughout Europe. In 1945, Terence O'Neill and his brother, Dennis, were taken to a foster home on the Shropshire farm of Reginald and Esther Gough. Musgrove and Michell write that 'The boys had been starved, beaten, terrified and humiliated virtually on a daily basis and later that year, Dennis died at the age of 12 from injuries he had sustained.'⁷¹ There was an

⁶⁸ Agatha Christie. *A Pocket Full Of Rye*. Fontana, 1980.

⁶⁹ Ibid., P.82

⁷⁰ Worsley, Lucy. Agatha Christie: The Sunday Times Top 10 Bestseller. Hodder & Stoughton, 2022.

⁷¹ Nell Musgrove, and Deidre Michell. *The Slow Evolution of Foster Care in Australia: Just Like a Family?* (Cham: Springer International Publishing, 2018.) <<https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-93900-1>>

enquiry⁷² into to the abuse of the O'Neill boys, which had some influence on the 1948 Children's Act.

In his email of September 7, 2022, Jim Goddard described how the story of the O'Neill boys was so notorious that it aided the impact of the Curtis Report⁷³ [which led to the Act]. So influential was the case that it later led to the mistaken assumption, by some, that it had prompted the establishment of the Curtis Committee.'

It was to be over sixty years before Terence O'Neill felt able to write his memoir, *Someone to Love Us*, a traumatising read, which bears witness to what happened.

Christie read what happened to the O'Neill boys in a Sunday newspaper in 1966 and turned Terence, a bereaved child at the time, into a grown-up criminal stereotype. Audiences at the time would have been aware of the case.⁷⁴ When O'Neill discovered he had been put into *The Mousetrap*, he wrote:

Every audience is instructed not to give away the twist in the ending, but I am not breaking any rules by telling you that the plot is about me, as an adult, coming back to seek revenge for what happened in my childhood. As if I would do such a thing!⁷⁵

The play is still on in London and has been running for over seventy years, Michell questions: 'Why is a play that perpetrates a stereotype of a former foster child as a damaged, vengeful serial killer still running?'

Interestingly, Christie's brutal portrayal of the grown-up Terence in *Mrs McGinty's Dead* contrasts sharply with the sympathy and understanding she shows towards orphan Maureen Summerhayes, an orphan who was adopted as a child: 'I was an adopted child. My mother parted with me, and I had every advantage, as they call it. And it's always hurt –

⁷² Monckton, W. (1945), Report...on the Circumstances which led to the boarding out of Denis and Terence O'Neill at Bank Farm, Minsterley, and the steps taken to supervise their welfare. (Cmd 6636). London: HMSO. P.17-18

⁷³ M Curtis. (1946), *Report of the Care of Children Committee* (Cmd.6922), London: HMSO.

⁷⁴ Rosie Canning. 'The Mousetrap by Agatha Christie.' *Orphans & Care Eexperience in Literature* (blog), 26 April 2022. <<https://careleaversinfiction.wordpress.com/2022/04/26/the-mousetrap-by-agatha-christie/>> [Accessed 30 July 2022.]

⁷⁵ Terence O'Neill. *Someone to Love us: The Shocking True Story of Two Brothers Fostered into Brutality and Neglect*. London: HarperNonFiction, 2010. P.308

always – always – to know that you weren't really wanted, that your mother could let you go.⁷⁶ This sympathetic portrayal might have been influenced by what happened to Christie's mother, Clara Boehmer⁷⁷ who was adopted by an aunt and never got over it.

Agatha Christie was not always so sympathetic and many of her orphans or adopted characters were stereotypically portrayed as murderers – as happens in *Mrs McGinty*.⁷⁸ It's likely her mother's adoption experience influenced Christie's representations of orphans.

This recurring stereotype of orphans and adopted characters as inherently disturbed or dangerous is not unique to Christie's work. It reflects a broader pattern in crime fiction, where care-experienced characters are frequently depicted as unstable or violent. This trope has persisted across the genre, often reinforced by film and television adaptations. Although exploring this media is beyond the scope of this research, it's a widespread phenomenon that has shaped public perceptions of care-experienced individuals.

Josie Pearce who was in care before being adopted, uses her care-experience lens to highlight the stereotype that care-experienced individuals are often depicted as disturbed or dangerous. She explains how: '...since the twentieth century and television, our most common plotline is that because our parents were dead, dysfunctional, unable [...] we must be serial killers. I started counting eventually and by my reckoning 90% of TV serial killers were orphans.'⁷⁹

Although Pearce focuses on adoption, this stereotype also applies to the representation of those in state, foster, and kinship care. This was my own experience when watching and

⁷⁶ Agatha Christie. *Mrs McGinty's Dead*. New York: Pocket Books, 1970. P.134

⁷⁷ Christie's maternal grandmother Mary Ann Boehmer (nee West) became a young widow after her husband Frederick was thrown from a horse and died. Mary was badly off with four small children to support. Her elder sister married a well-off American and offered to adopt one of the children. Christie's grandmother chose to send the only girl, Clara.

⁷⁸ Robin Upward, the theatre director and murderer is the adopted son of Laura Upward and here is a double dose of labelling and stereotyping, Robin's birth mother was also a murderer. Two for the price of one?

⁷⁹ Josie Pearce, 'What about the 84%?' <https://www.careexperienceandculture.com/post/what-about-the-84-by-josie-pearce> [accessed 18 April 2022]

reading crime stories, and it was a key factor behind my ‘writing as protest’ and motivated me to pursue this PhD.⁸⁰

The stereotype of care experienced individuals as disturbed or dangerous is pervasive in crime fiction, but not all portrayals fall into this trap. Some authors, such as Kit de Waal, offer more complex and compassionate depictions. Although not care-experienced herself, de Waal's novel *My Name Is Leon*⁸¹ is a powerful and well written example of using the voice of a child in care, showing the value of sensitivity and understanding in representing such characters. De Waal's mother occasionally fostered children, which likely gave her insight into the challenges faced by children in care.

4. Misery Lit

During the 1990s a new genre emerged based on memoir and autobiography. In 2002, Liz Bury in *The Bookseller*⁸² coined the phrase, ‘Misery Lit.’ It referred to the rise of ‘Inspirational Memoirs,’ or ‘Painful Lives,’ as labelled on the shelves in Waterstones. The term ‘Misery Lit’ can also be taken as being offensive as it's often used in a derogatory way as if to demean the writing.

This genre provides a space for care-experienced people to write about their experiences of living in institutions, foster care or adoption. Indeed, one of the earliest in the genre was Richard Rhodes' *A Hole in the World*.⁸³ Here was a way for those with traumatic, interrupted childhoods to use their voice and discover a sense of agency. In 2006, the ‘misery memoir’⁸⁴ market doubled from £12m in 2005 to £24m, with up to ten new titles vying to be

⁸⁰ This was also a motivation shared with Michell and which formed the basis of the Care Experience & Culture archive.

⁸¹ Kit de Waal. Waal, Kit de. *My Name Is Leon*. 01 edition. UK etc.: Penguin, 2017.

⁸² Liz Bury. ‘theBookseller.Com,’ 22 February 2007.

<https://web.archive.org/web/20080804101600/http://www.thebookseller.com/in-depth/feature/34722-tugging-at-heart-strings.html>. [accessed 16 May 2019]

⁸³ Richard Rhodes. *A Hole in the World: An American Boyhood: An American Boyhood Tenth Anniversary Edition*. 10th Anniversary ed edition. University Press of Kansas, 2000.

⁸⁴ Author Helen Forrester was credited with inventing the gritty genre of "misery memoir" after writing a best-selling account, *Twopence to Cross the Mersey* - the first in a series of memoirs in 1974 of her poverty-stricken

top of the ‘glums’ each month.⁸⁵ Although ‘Inspirational Memoirs’ may not be new,⁸⁶ it was the volume of stories that caught the public’s attention. These autobiographical stories are worthy of their own investigation.

My research shows that care-experienced writers are part of a social movement, as mentioned earlier by Sissay, and Michell, whose work includes the ‘More than our childhoods’ project⁸⁷ which aims to disrupt ‘deviant,’ ‘delinquent’ or ‘deficit’ narratives of care leavers with accounts of how care leavers have survived and contributed positively to their communities.

However, a worrying offshoot of the ‘misery memoir’ genre, sometimes called ‘trauma porn,’ includes foster carers who have published ‘tell all’ books. These ‘true-life’ memoir-style non-fiction books with their saucer-eyed photos of children on the covers, often relate horrific accounts of the foster children in their ‘care.’⁸⁸ Kirsty Capes, who grew up in foster care, writes of Kathy Glass’s *true fostering stories* ‘When progress is made...it is to demonstrate her own success as a foster carer, rather than the child’s ability to overcome trauma.’⁸⁹ It is also unclear how privacy issues of the children in the care of these authors is protected.

‘Misery’ narratives are confessional in form, but they bear witness-sometimes angrily-to the failures of family life, the abuse of children both in and out of care, and wider societal failures. Additionally, they empower writers whose voices have been silenced for many years, thus creating a significant movement.

upbringing in Depression-era Liverpool. ‘Helen Forrester.’ Accessed 29 July 2023.

<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/helen-forrester-99jsdx093kk>.

⁸⁵ Anthony Barnes, ‘Mis Lit,’ *The Independent*, 4 March 2007, p.13

⁸⁶ Barnardo’s have many autobiographies in their archive going back to the 1930s that fit this genre, for example: *Banana Boy* by author Frank Norman, a Barnardo’s Boy who was first published in 1958 and went on to write nineteen books and four plays

⁸⁷ More Than Our Childhoods. ‘More Than Our Childhoods.’ <https://www.morethanourchildhoods.org/>. [Accessed 22 July 2022.]

⁸⁸ Rosemary Canning. ‘A Miserable Childhood? Autobiographical Elements of Childhood in *Hiraeth* – a Practice Based Creative Writing PhD.’ Wolfson College, 2019.

⁸⁹ Kirsty Capes. ‘Don’t You Have a Mother Who Loves You?’ Ph.D Thesis, Brunel University London, 2019. p.369

My first serious experiment in writing was autobiography, a sticking to the facts almost obsessively without consideration of whether a reader would enjoy the story. It was Misery Lit before such a thing existed, drawn from my own lived experience in the care system.

In 2000 I applied for the then new Writing Masters⁹⁰ at Middlesex University and submitted part of an autobiography. For the Master's project, I had to write fiction and pursued a 'what if' scenario, a fictional what if I had stayed with my first foster mother⁹¹.

Hiraeth takes another 'what if' storyline and reimagines a different future for Marianne, one that explores her potential as an artist⁹² and for her to experience feelings of belonging in the 'house of happy endings.'⁹³ Jeanette Winterson, who was adopted, sums up the ambivalence of writing about the self:

Except that I did and didn't want it to be about me, because I had understood early that the only way for me to change my world was to read myself as a fiction as well as a fact. If you are the story, you can change the story...It's me and it's not me. It's early auto-fiction, and it's a way of experimenting with truth, not to distort it but to distill it.⁹⁴

During the first year of the Masters, Jane Rogers author of *Island*⁹⁵ that features a care-experienced character, visited the university to give a talk. I bought the book, read the first page, and was stunned:

When I was twenty-eight, I decided to kill my mother. Things were going wrong and I was looking to put them right. They went from bad to worse and I was unwilling, basically, to see the slide continue. I needed to take control. Nikki Black's my third

⁹⁰ In 2000, creative writing degrees had only just been introduced to the university curriculum.

⁹¹ Rosemary Canning, 'The Stolen Child' (Masters, Middlesex University, 2003).

⁹² At school the art teacher, who seemed to only encourage the middle-class pupils, was replaced for a few weeks by a young male teacher who encouraged me and told the rest of the class I had talent. It was a lovely moment, unfortunately he was not there long enough to encourage the next step, i.e. that of going to art college. I would not have even thought of going to college and it was never mentioned.

⁹³30, Canning, p.237

⁹⁴ Jeanette Winterson. 'Author.' Jeanette Winterson. <https://www.jeanettewinterson.com/author>. [Accessed 1 December 2022.]

⁹⁵ Jane Rogers, *Island* (London: Abacus, 2000).

name. The Cannings called me Lily. Sweet white name, little Lily Canning, little girl lost.⁹⁶

This opening paragraph resonated in three ways: firstly, my mother was dead and at the time I felt it was my fault; secondly the narrator had been in the care system; and thirdly the character's life had similarities to mine even the same surname. In my paranoia, I suspected Rogers had somehow got hold of my Social Care files! *Island* encompassed familiar loves: mystery, myth and fairy tales. It also illustrated the brutal inheritance of being a young person cast adrift and left to survive without support. Protagonist Nikki's trauma, manifests through a metaphor of flying: 'I've had time to see the pattern in my own life (flying swooping falling sinking; flying swooping falling sinking) and to realise that I am powerless to change it.'⁹⁷

For the first time I read of a character with a similar background to mine and I identified with her. This was not the orphan trope of my childhood. It was something quite new, care-experienced literature. This was an important moment in my reading history. Representation in literature of someone with a similar background, in this instance care-experience, helps a person realise they are not alone, and this can have a powerful impact. I gulped each page with the ferocity of a starving orphan. I was not put off by Nikki's 'swear' or aggressive voice because through my care-experience lens, I could see through the words to the real person and her vulnerability. Here was a traumatised individual, damaged by a state that was supposed to protect and care.

Rogers' publisher refused to publish the book unless she changed the voice of the protagonist. It's clear they could not see beyond a young person acting up. 'Why would anyone want to read about this horrible woman? So loyal was Rogers to her character, she changed publisher.'⁹⁸ Although not care-experienced, Rogers had worked in children's homes,

⁹⁶ 78, Rogers. p.1

⁹⁷ 78, Rogers. p.35

⁹⁸ Rosemary Canning, 'The Stolen Child' (Masters, Middlesex University, 2003). P.15

she understood what rejection, trauma and a transient lifestyle did to a child – this one, Nikki - adopted, dumped, and moved on many times. Rogers portrayed Nikki as a young woman with fluctuating Mental Health issues and obsessed with wanting to kill her mother. At the time, I believe I was so thankful to see my situation reflected in fiction that I did not think too deeply about the actual representation.

5. Criminalisation In Fiction

Early in the PhD journey by chance (or serendipitously) I happened upon Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's TED talk 'The Danger of a Single Story.'⁹⁹ Adichie speaks of how she wrote stories as a child of characters who were 'white and blue-eyed' and who 'drank a lot of ginger beer' because she was only exposed to 'foreign' characters. Leaving Nigeria and going to university in the United States she spoke of how her roommate had felt sorry for her because she too had a single story about Africa as one of catastrophe. I saw this talk through a care-experience lens and the 'single story' often told about children in care, one of stereotyping, stigma and criminalisation. 'Show a people as one thing, as only one thing, over and over again, and that is what they become.'¹⁰⁰ It was this view, Adichie's Single Story about stereotypes, that gave growth to the idea of a care-experienced lens which slowly evolved and began to change my perception of some of the fiction I had previously read.

Island opens with an article from a newspaper about a woman 'brutally murdered' who has been discovered by her 'lodger.'

⁹⁹ Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie. 'Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie: The Danger of a Single Story | TED Talk.' https://www.ted.com/talks/chimamanda_ngozi_adichie_the_danger_of_a_single_story/c. TED Talk 2019 [accessed 20 March 2015.]

¹⁰⁰ Rosie Canning. 'The Danger of the Single Story.' *Orphans & Care Experience in Literature* (blog), 27 March 2015. <https://careleaversinfiction.wordpress.com/2015/03/27/how-can-we-change-a-culture-of-denial-for-our-most-vulnerable-children/>. [Accessed 2 November 2022]

MURDER IN RUANISH

Mrs Phyllis MacLeod (50) was brutally murdered in her own home on Thursday night, in an apparently motiveless attack. She was discovered by her lodger, Miss Nikki Black, who called the police. On their arrival paramedics pronounced Mrs MacLeod dead: cause of death was blows to the head with a heavy object. Her son Calum (27), also from Ruanish, confirmed that no valuables were missing from the house.

'I have never seen anything so brutal as this senseless attack on a sick, defenceless lady,' said D. I. Sinclair. Mrs MacLeod's front door was found to be unlocked.

(Aysaar Reporter, 8 October 1997)

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Figure 3 Copy of a paragraph from the first page from 'Island' by Jane Rogers

Nikki is the lodger, who thinks a lot about murdering her mother. Placement of the newspaper article just before the start of the story is designed to influence the reader into believing Nikki is responsible for the murder. I first read this novel as a reader, but when re-reading as a researcher I found the care-experience lens coming into focus and with it, disappointment. From the first page Rogers criminalises Nikki, albeit playing with the reader but by the closing chapter, Nikki is imprisoned. She is a secret heroine of sorts when she takes the rap for her vulnerable brother who was the real killer and we the reader are complicit. This could, of course, be seen as a clever narrative twist which many murder mysteries have or it could be a statement that those in care, who are often criminalised, are really the unseen and unsung heroes and heroines of the system.

I read *Island* when I was forty-one and for the first time understood how isolated and othered in society I really was. Finding other care-experienced novelists helped. Jeanette Winterson recognised this too:

All of us, when in deep trauma, find we hesitate, we stammer; there are long pauses in our speech. The thing is stuck. We get our language back through the language of others. We can turn to the poem. We can open the book. Somebody has been there for

¹⁰¹ 78, Rogers, p.viii

us and deep-dived the words.¹⁰²

This was also the case in *The Panopticon*,¹⁰³ written by Jenni Fagan who spent her childhood in the Scottish care system. When we meet 15-year-old protagonist Anais Hendrix, a life-long veteran of the care system, she is handcuffed in the back of a police car with blood on her skirt. ‘Troublesome’ teenagers are held in a secure unit salvaged from its previous function as a jail. Anais tells the reader: ‘We’re just in training for the proper jail. Nobody talks about it, but it’s a statistical fact. That or on the game. Most of us are anyway – but not everybody. Some go to the nuthouse. Some just disappear.’¹⁰⁴ Fagan lets the reader know through her character that she is aware of the stereotypes and reality for some children leaving care. In her memoir, (that I was privileged to read) she says: ‘Throughout a childhood in care, I was morphed into believing I was some kind of monster - just by those stories, let alone others’ actions.’¹⁰⁵ In *The Panopticon*, Fagan uses dystopia. The first words she writes are, ‘I am an experiment’ which sets the tone for the novel. There is no privacy in the Panopticon, ‘inmates’ are watched twenty-four hours a day stripping autonomy and agency. Marie-Odile Pittin-Hedon, is not care-experienced, but she is one of the few scholars to discuss Fagan's work. She writes, ‘What is being examined is the oppressiveness of state power over the most fragile members of society.’¹⁰⁶ And Fagan shows this oppressiveness as fully blown paranoia. Anais, the protagonist refers to herself and her friends as ‘lifers,’ telling the reader the way it is. When a PhD student refers to them as ‘cared-for young people’ this is dismissed by the not cared for young people as blatantly ‘taking the piss.’¹⁰⁷

Stieg Larsson author of *The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo*¹⁰⁸—was in kinship care from a baby. Larsson’s book features another stereotype, that of an emotionally damaged

¹⁰² Jeanette Winterson. *Why Be Happy When You Could Be Normal?* London: Vintage, 2011.

¹⁰³ Jenni Fagan. *The Panopticon*, 2013.

¹⁰⁴ 86, Fagan, p.13

¹⁰⁵ Jenni Fagan, Dr. Ootlin: *A Memoir*. Hutchinson Heinemann, 2023. [proof copy]

¹⁰⁶ Pittin-Hedon, Marie-Odile. ‘Punishment and Crime in Jenni Fagan’s *The Panopticon*.’ In *Le Crime, Le Châtiment et Les Écossais*, edited by Jean Berton and Bill Findlay, 163–73. Presses universitaires de Franche-Comté, 2019. <https://doi.org/10.4000/books.pufc.38525>.

¹⁰⁷ 86, Fagan, p.172

¹⁰⁸ Stieg Larsson. *The Girl With the Dragon Tattoo*. MacLehose Press, 2015.

institutionalised Care Leaver portrayed as incapable of having intimate relationships. Lisbeth Salamander is depicted as a danger to herself and as having a history of violence since she was a child; she refuses to speak to authority figures (for very good reasons). The court psychiatrists feel she would be safer if institutionalised.

Sarah Stovell portrays her young people in care in a similar damaged way.

Categorised as a psychological thriller, the three girls in *The Home* are described as having violent and disturbing pasts. They have been given up on by foster carers and even ‘Santa can’t be bothered with kids in care.’ The descriptions of the young girls are overdone, for example Lara who has lived in many foster homes, ‘hisses like a cat’ if anyone came near her. Or ‘mad’ Hope who is arrested for murder. Helen, the woman who runs the home says ‘Catastrophe followed these children, or perhaps it was true to say catastrophe was a part of them. It was their foundation; their brains were wired for it. They could no more avoid it than other children could avoid love.’¹⁰⁹ This perspective displays two sets of children, those that are loved and those that are othered. It’s interesting how crime writers, who use this trope, imagine young care-experienced people to be. Every care-character in *The Home* has a miserable life with no hopeful outcome, portraying a system which only produces damaged stereotypes.

I explore this ‘damaged’ representation with Marianne, who is assessed at eight years old by a psychiatrist who decides she will be incapable of long-term intimate relationships (in this instance ‘intimate’ does not mean having a sexual relationship). It’s important to remember that these reports follow a child around the care system and could influence the way future staff and social workers treat a child. To challenge this stereotype, Marianne is portrayed as more than capable of having relationships with many staff, social workers, friends, and boyfriends.¹¹⁰ It is the staff and social workers who leave her.

¹⁰⁹ Sarah Stovell. *The Home*. Orenda Books, 2020. p.31

¹¹⁰ This is not to ignore that trauma can create difficulties with intimacy.

In an early draft of *Hiraeth*, I experimented with the idea of having Marianne's story alternate with short stories representing aspects of care including stereotypes. [See Appendix D] It could be that this would make an interesting collection of short stories.

Crime thriller *Two o'clock Boy* by Mark Hill,¹¹¹ features no less than seven Care Leavers all of whom are stereotypes,¹¹² characters include thieves, drug addicts, sex workers and murderers. This is a 'trope' used by many writers of crime fiction. Sarah Hilary, crime writer said, after attending a Care Experience and Culture event¹¹³ and learning more about the real lives of those with care-experience:

Crime fiction is packed with orphans, outcasts and the reinvented... But our plot device is someone else's reality; a recent interview with the Care Experience in [and] Culture project highlighted for me how often writers fall into the trap of creating Care Leavers who are either irredeemably damaged or possessed of super-powers.¹¹⁴

Kirsty Capes writes about growing up in foster care, and how even in the children's book *The Story of Tracy Beaker*, [See appendix E] Tracy is always trouble! Writing in her PhD, Capes explains:

'Tracy Beaker is the poster child for 'poor outcomes' [...] described by herself and the care professionals around her as 'difficult.' She tells 'fairy stories' and has a violent temper, which sometimes lands her in fights with the other children living at her residential children's home. She throws temper tantrums and must be physically removed to the Quiet Room.'¹¹⁵

¹¹¹ Mark Hill, *Two O'Clock Boy*, (London, Sphere, 2016)

¹¹² 'The Howard League | Care-experienced Young People's Interactions with the Police,' *The Howard League* <<https://howardleague.org/blog/Care-experienced-young-peoples-interactions-with-the-police/>> [accessed 20 May 2019].

¹¹³ 'Book Club with Sarah Hilary.' <https://www.careexperienceandculture.com/post/book-club-with-sarah-hilary>. [Accessed 31 January 2023]

¹¹⁴ Sarah Hilary. 'The Curious Fate of Care Leavers in Crime Fiction < CrimeReads.' <https://crimereads.com/the-curious-fate-of-care-leavers-in-crime-fiction/?fbclid=IwAR0shkGeKnVMABiMjS88nS7xnWRgyJNhNV702dT6cNVpdqu8UUZhWEX6bk4>. [Accessed 31 January 2023]

¹¹⁵ Capes, 72, p.328

Thankfully though not pinned down. This stereotype is present in *Hiraeth*, but to a lesser degree. When a girl in Marianne's class is being bullied, the headmistress accuses Marianne of being the ringleader—she was only eight years old at the time. (P. 315)

Author Alex Wheatle was in the care system all his childhood. He has written nine novels many of which feature care-characters. *Brixton Rock*,¹¹⁶ with its echoes of Graham Greene in title, plot and mood introduces mixed-heritage Brenton, who was brought up in a rural children's home without love and was inspired by Wheatle's personal experience. Brenton yearns for family, and when he finds his mother, discovers he has a sister too. Named Juliet, (a possible hint that their relationship is doomed) they fall in love – something that can happen when siblings who do not know each other meet for the first time.¹¹⁷

Protagonist Nikki Black in *Island* also discovers she has a sibling: 'So. Free gift. Surprise in every package. A brother. And not just any old brother, but a sex-offending retard. A special half-wit of a brother; was there no end to my mother's generosity?'¹¹⁸ They do not fall in love, but Calum does try to sexually assault her.¹¹⁹ Both Brenton and Nikki end up imprisoned, like Anais in *The Panopticon* – though this is a 'holding pen' for children in care, rather than a prison.

The Seven Sisters, also by Wheatle, is about a group of young friends who run away from their children's homes to a forest. Whilst there the horror of the daily abuse they endure, both physical and sexual is hinted at culminating in a psychological consequence, of manslaughter by one of the boys.

Interestingly, care-experienced authors Fagan and Wheatle are doing the portraying either by incarceration or manslaughter respectively. Anais in *The Panopticon* is being held because the police believe she assaulted a police officer – who is now in a coma. Just as

¹¹⁶ Alex Wheatle, *Brixton Rock*, New Ed edition (London: Arcadia Books, 2004).

¹¹⁷ 3, Pearse. p.26

¹¹⁸ 78, Rogers. p.59

¹¹⁹ 78, Rogers., p.172

children are in a system, so the characters are confined but this does not mean that ‘those stereotypes’ are not challenged, speaking about *The Panopticon* Fagan explains:

I wanted to show that at some point that very system creates a situation that is impossible for some people (most) to transcend. Not for nihilistic reasons, but because it is a very plain truth. Institutionalisation erodes autonomy. Is it possible to achieve autonomy when every message you had about you is negative?¹²⁰

Fagan makes an important point of how and why those with care-experience, sometimes end up incarcerated.

In *Seven Sisters*, and remembering this is a fictional murder, it could be possible that Carlton, the boy who attacks a member of staff somehow transcends years of abuse by attacking and killing his abuser in fiction and thereby using words and fiction as a form of protest to let readers know what happened to some children in some children’s homes. Twelve years after the book was published Wheatle spoke to the newspapers about being physically and sexually abused at Shirley Oaks in Surrey, run by Lambeth council, South London.¹²¹

Michell explores this moral dilemma when examining *Hunters*, a 2020 American drama series inspired by the work of actual Nazi hunters that features kinship care and a former Kindertransport character:

I’m uncomfortable with vigilantes since their behaviour ends up being criminal too. But then there was no justice for so many Jews and so many Nazis got away with their crimes. Back and forth I go, unable to settle on a position, I’m pro-vigilante one minute, and anti the next... There’s no justice for brutalised kids in care, either, so one survivor [in M.W Craven’s *The Puppet Show*] takes the matter into his own hands and burns the perpetrators alive.¹²²

¹²⁰ Jenni Fagan, Telephone Conversation, 6 December 2022. [shared with permissions]

¹²¹ Tom Pettifor. ‘Award Winning Author: I Was Abused at Council Care Home Linked to Ex-Labour Minister.’ The Mirror, 13 July 2014. <http://www.mirror.co.uk/news/uk-news/award-winning-author-abused-council-3852554>.

¹²² Dee Michell. ‘Care-experienced Characters on Screen | DrDee-ThinkingOutLoud.’ <https://drdee-drdeethinkingoutloud.blogspot.com/2020/04/care-experienced-characters-on-screen.html>. [accessed 9 April 2020.]

Anais does eventually escape the Panopticon and UK system, finding freedom by leaving the country and heading towards Paris. As did Fagan herself who found a literary home in amongst the bookshelves of *Shakespeare and Company*.¹²³ It was whilst Wheatle was in prison, after the 1981 Brixton Riots, that Simeon, an older inmate, became both mentor and father-figure and fed Wheatle black literature.¹²⁴ Wheatle discovered he ‘wasn’t alone in having a difficult start in life’ and was encouraged to start writing. In 2008, he was awarded an MBE for literature and the Guardian Children’s Fiction Award.

6. Real Life Criminalisation

As a PhD researcher I wanted to understand if there was any truth in the care-experienced stereotype as disturbed serial killer. I remember watching the first series of *The Fall* in 2013 which I spoke about at my first conference: ‘...what propelled the killer was never made clear beyond a reference to growing up in care, which I found to be a stereotypical and lazy ‘shorthand’ explanation.’¹²⁵

As Fagan rightly observes, (and something I struggle with) unfortunately research does show there to be disproportionate numbers of Care Leavers in the juvenile Criminal Justice System (CJS). For example, the National Audit Office, Department for Education, Care Leavers’ transition to adulthood, stated: ‘...in 2008, 49% of young men under the age of 21 who had come into contact with the criminal justice system (CJS) had care-experience.’¹²⁶ The reasons why and how this happens, the individual stories of these young people, is not included in the statistics. Also omitted is the everyday criminalisation that happens to some

¹²³ Literary Hub. ‘Jenni Fagan: “If a Poem Wants Written at 3 Am I Get Up.”,’ 3 April 2019. <https://lithub.com/jenni-fagan-if-a-poem-wants-written-at-3-am-i-get-up/>.

¹²⁴ Alex Wheatle. ‘I Felt so Alone and Rejected – until My Prison Cellmate Taught Me about Belonging.’ *The Guardian*, 29 December 2021, sec. Life and style. <https://www.theguardian.com/lifeandstyle/2021/dec/29/i-felt-so-alone-and-rejected-until-my-prison-cellmate-taught-me-about-belonging>. [accessed 29 December 2021]

¹²⁵ Canning, Rosie. ‘Keynote Speaker #1.’ *Orphans & Care-experience in Literature* (blog), 25 November 2015. <https://careleaversinfiction.wordpress.com/2015/11/25/keynote-speaker-1/>.

¹²⁶ Department for Education, Care Leavers’ Transition to Adulthood. < <https://www.nao.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/07/Care-leavers-transition-to-adulthood.pdf> > [9 January 2023]

children in residential and foster care settings often pre CJS and setting in motion and contributing to behavioural changes.¹²⁷

I began by investigating the historical stigma of children taken into care. In the 19th century, Annie Skinner, who was adopted, explains ‘Children could be admitted to care on a voluntary basis or taken into care by legal order. Those children taken by law were detained in specific accommodation, an industrial school, for the term of their committal. Children were convicted under criminal legislation.’¹²⁸

There is limited research into children in care written during the nineteenth century, Nassau’s research mentioned earlier is one such study - though annual reports by the NSPCC, Waifs and Strays (The Children’s Society),¹²⁹ Dr. Barnardo Homes and Dr. Stevenson’s homes (National Children’s Homes), were filed and researchers are able to retrospectively analyse these records. Knowledge of the links between trauma, Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), mental health problems and early mortality (see below) for children in or leaving care from that time were unknown. It’s only in the last twenty years that psychiatrists and researchers have begun to understand the long-term effects of trauma on children in care and care-experienced adults. Psychiatrist Bessel van der Kolk,¹³⁰ author of *The Body Keeps the Score*, was amongst the first to study traumatic experiences in children and adults in the 1980s.¹³¹

Contemporary works like *51 Moves*¹³² by Ben Ashcroft—who was in the care system as a child and moved many times, gives insight into how the emotional difficulties of how

¹²⁷ Fitzpatrick, Claire. ‘Achieving Justice for Children in Care and Care-Leavers,’ n.d., 11.

¹²⁸ Skinner, Annie. *Behind Closed Doors: Hidden Histories of Children Committed to Care in the Late Nineteenth Century*. 1st edition. Peter Lang Ltd, International Academic Publishers, 2021. p.1

¹²⁹ Waifs and Strays, *Hidden Lives Revealed A Virtual Archive - Children in Care 1881-1981* (Year that the site was published/last updated) <https://www.hiddenlives.org.uk/publications/annual_reports/index.html> [26 April 2024]

¹³⁰ Bessel van der Kolk began by studying soldiers who were returning from Vietnam and suffering from PTSD.

¹³¹ ‘He has translated emerging findings from neuroscience and attachment research to develop and study a range of treatments for traumatic stress in children and adults.’ Network, Attachment & Trauma. ‘Dr. Bessel van Der Kolk.’ *Attachment and Trauma Network* (blog), 5 November 2020. <https://www.attachmenttraumanetwork.org/dr-bessel-van-der-kolk/>. [accessed 22 October, 2021]

¹³² Ashcroft, Ben. *51 Moves*. Waterside Press, n.d.

losing family, a sense of belonging, many placements and being criminalised can lead in his case to a downward spiral including imprisonment, addictive behaviours, and severe mental illness from which he is still recovering.

Cat Hugman, who spent time in foster care, discusses this in her PhD: ‘Overall, the transitory experience could affect a person’s sense of belonging, as such nomadic moving makes it potentially difficult to maintain relationships that develop and the changes to personal disposition that might occur.’¹³³

In 2020, a large piece of research was undertaken by UCL, ‘...they tracked more than 350,000 people using official government data from between 1971 and 2013. They found that the likelihood of dying earlier was 351% more likely among those who had been in care increased over time, contrary to the general population which, during the same period, experienced a decline in mortality risk.’¹³⁴ Many young people, and particularly those who left the system in the sixties, seventies, eighties, disappeared into society. It is shocking that some of their life paths are only being discovered through early death.¹³⁵

To explore where the ‘serial killer’ and ‘murderer’ stereotype stemmed from, I initiated a conversation with the Ministry of Justice (MoJ) fully expecting to find years of statistics that would prove or disprove this stereotype. However, prior to 2015, there were not any records of whether prisoners had spent time in care. This led me to question if statistics were not available before 2015 to back up this stereotype, why were children in care and care-experienced adults being stigmatised in this way?

I did investigate the statistics that were available. I heard back from the MoJ who told me that by using the MoJ database to identify those offenders convicted of the offence of murder, where the offence was committed in 2015, they were able to share that:

¹³³ Cat L. Hugman. ‘What’s the Story? Sociological Explorations of the Life Course Narratives of Adults with Care-experience,’ (unpublished doctoral thesis, Northumberland University, 2016), p.148

¹³⁴ UCL. ‘Shedding New Light on the Adult Outcomes of People Who Were in Care as Children.’ Linking Our Lives, 20 July 2021. <https://blogs.ucl.ac.uk/linking-our-lives/2021/07/20/shedding-new-light-on-the-adult-outcomes-of-people-who-were-in-care-as-children/>.

¹³⁵ Within the care-experience community, it is common knowledge that too many have died young or have ongoing mental and physical health issues and it seems that the research is only just catching up.

- 10 answered that they had ‘care-experience.’
- 13 answered that they were a ‘Former relevant child (under 21)’ i.e. in care.
- 9 answered ‘Don’t know’
- 123 answered ‘No’
- 98 answers were blank.

This meant 9% of murderers had some care-experience.¹³⁶ This is not a complete picture as 98 responses were left blank. ‘Out of the 12 million children living in England, just under 400,000 (3%) are known to the social care system at any one time.’¹³⁷ Children in care make up 0.16% of the population so this is relatively high. However, 91% of murderers had no care-experience. [See Appendix F for total figures]

Recent figures (December 2022) for the under 24s from the National Audit Office make grim reading: ‘More than half (52%) of looked-after children born in the academic year ending 1994, who attended school in England, had a criminal conviction by the age of 24 compared with 13% of children who had not been in care. Imprisonment was a relatively unusual outcome, however 1 in 7 (15%) looked-after children had received an immediate custodial sentence by the age of 24 years; that is over 10 times the proportion of those who had not been in care.’¹³⁸

Table 1 Justice system outcomes by age 23/24 for individuals born in 1993/94 ¹³⁹

¹³⁶ Note: Limitations of data – answers were based on self-reporting plus figures for trials ongoing/yet to start were not included. Answers were selected from a drop-down list and there was no scope for free text to be entered.

¹³⁷ GOV.UK. ‘Main Findings: Children’s Social Care in England 2022.’ <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/childrens-social-care-data-in-england-2022/main-findings-childrens-social-care-in-england-2022>. [accessed 14 August 2023]

¹³⁸ ‘The Education Background of Looked-after Children Who Interact with the Criminal Justice System - Office for National Statistics.’ <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/educationandchildcare/articles/theeducationbackgroundoflookedafterchildrenwhointeractwiththecriminaljusticesystem/december2022>. [accessed 5 January 2023]

¹³⁹ ‘The Links between Young People Being Imprisoned, Pupil Background and School Quality - Office for National Statistics.’ <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/educationandchildcare/articles/thelinksbetweenyoungpeoplebeingimprisonedpupilbackgroundandschoolquality/2023-01-27>. [accessed 4 May 2023]

Highest level of sentence	Children Looked After	Rest of sample
No criminal convictions	5,980	586,490
Non-custodial sentence or caution	4,570	79,420
Custodial sentence	1,880	8,760

The total numbers from the dataset of children born in the academic year 1993-1994 equalled 687,100 and of those 12,420 were looked after children. The Office for National Statistics tell us this research is about ‘children’ i.e. under 18s, yet the cut-off age unusually in this report is 24, i.e. six years of adult figures. I asked Office for National Statistics (ONS) about this ‘This age range was chosen for the programme of analysis to acknowledge the fact that childhood experiences can continue to be influential in adulthood. [It] was the first time this analysis had been carried out, due to the data only recently being linked.’¹⁴⁰

Criminalisation of poor children is not a new thing. Over one hundred and thirty years ago, there is evidence of very small children in court, for example, in 1886, 10-year-old, Cecily appeared in court charged with being in the company of prostitutes under the Section 14 of the Industrial Schools Amendment Act 1880.¹⁴¹ Annie Skinner explains that children like Cecily ‘were committed because they had been neglected or abused, but in the process they were criminalized and incarcerated.’¹⁴² This criminalisation was not just happening in the UK. Some 80 years later, Dee Michell, who was in foster care during the sixties, writes about herself and her siblings and how ‘...the six of us children were charged in the Adelaide Juvenile Court with being neglected and were committed to homes...’¹⁴³ Cecily and Dee’s stories are a tiny example the many backstory elements to the historic criminalisation of children being taken into care and resulting stigmatisation that partly explain how and why care-experienced people are still seen as ‘criminal.’ We do not know what happened to

¹⁴⁰ The research team, ONS. ‘Email to Rosie Canning,’ 4 May 2023.

¹⁴¹ Skinner, Annie. *Behind Closed Doors: Hidden Histories of Children Committed to Care in the Late Nineteenth Century*. 1st edition. Peter Lang Ltd, International Academic Publishers, 2021. p.1

¹⁴² Skinner, Annie. *Behind Closed Doors: Hidden Histories of Children Committed to Care in the Late Nineteenth Century*. 1st edition. Peter Lang Ltd, International Academic Publishers, 2021. p.1

¹⁴³ Deidre Michell ‘Two Mothers,’ in *Recipes for Survival Stories of Hope and Healing by Survivors of the State Care System in Australia*, ed. by Deidre Michell and Priscilla Taylor (Elizabeth, S. Aust: People’s Voice Publishing, 2011) pp.33-42 (p.35).

Cecily, but we do know that Michell defied labelling and went on to become a Senior Lecturer at the University of Adelaide and an expert in displaced children.

There is no backstory to the published 2023 statistics, just cold figures and no mention of the disturbing practices of reporting children in care to police, for example for not wanting to go to bed. Academic, Claire Fitzpatrick, who spent time in care, writes about the criminalisation of children in care and notes: ‘Particular concern was expressed about the fact that magistrates are seeing looked after children in court for minor offences, such as breaking crockery, which would certainly not reach court if the children lived in conventional families.’¹⁴⁴



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Figure 4 A post on Twitter by Ben Ashcroft describing his experience.

This is echoed in the above tweet by Ben Ashcroft, and after reading his story *51 Moves*, it's possible to see how criminalisation begins and its after-effects itself creating trauma and post-traumatic stress disorders.

Kirsty Capes, who as mentioned, spent her childhood in foster care, has written about stereotypes and criminalisation. She explains how she:

¹⁴⁴ The Howard League for Penal reform. Howard League What is Justice? Working Papers 14/2014. 'Achieving Justice for Children in Care and Care-Leavers,' n.d. Claire Fitzpatrick, Lancaster University [Accessed 4 June 2023]

¹⁴⁵ Ben Ashcroft, 'One week after going into care I got my first criminal charge for a Section 5 public order offence. I refused to go to bed when asked. I was handcuffed, hit and then put in a cell in the dark with no light, mattress or cover. At 11 that was traumatising and brutal.' (Tweet @AshcroftBen, 4 April 2023)

...had grown up being told by the books I consumed that I was pre-determined to fail... I looked to popular culture for answers. I found that the mainstream stories about care-experienced adults relied on a series of harmful tropes. In TV, film, and books, I saw the same things over and over again: Care Leavers as murderers, rapists, addicts, criminals.¹⁴⁶

And yet, the percentage of children who go into care for bad behaviour is very low, as Fitzpatrick notes, ‘...a mere one percent of children enter care specifically because of their own behaviour.’¹⁴⁷ This is a huge margin, only 1% with ‘bad behaviour’ enter the system and yet as the December 2022 figures show, 52% are leaving the system with a criminal conviction by the age of 24. Josh McAlister, who chaired the independent review into the children's social care system, said in his maiden speech in Parliament ‘...the disadvantage faced by the care experience community in our country should be the civil rights issue of our time.’¹⁴⁸

Criminalisation is apparent both in narratives about the care system i.e. in memoir and autobiography from those who have been incarcerated, and in the wider culture, for example, petitions against planning applications for children’s homes, as well as (as mentioned) the many crime dramas that feature criminals with care-experience.

Although I mention earlier in this chapter (p. 40) that statistics did not include the back stories or how the criminalisation of some children in care begins, the Office for National Statistics (ONS) in response to a call from the Inclusive Data Taskforce¹⁴⁹ to do more to highlight the voices of children and young people, are now beginning to provide additional context. They are doing this by incorporating ‘...case study interviews with a headteacher and

¹⁴⁶ 96, Capes

¹⁴⁷ Dept of Ed, cited in Claire Fitzpatrick, ‘Reconsidering the care–crime connection in a climate of crisis,’ *Child and Family Law Quarterly*, vol. 32, no. 2, pp. 103-118.
<https://www.familylaw.co.uk/news_and_comment/reconsidering-the-care-crime-connection-in-a-climate-of-crisis>

¹⁴⁸ Josh MacAlister, ‘First speech as MP’, X, 23 July 2024
<<https://parliamentlive.tv/Download/Index/60c28316-32e0-4335-94b4-4f30d9785261...>> [accessed 23 July 2024]

¹⁴⁹ <https://uksa.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/publication/inclusive-data-taskforce-recommendations-report-leaving-no-one-behind-how-can-we-be-more-inclusive-in-our-data/pages/7/> [accessed 2 May 2024]

youth worker who provide their reflections on the challenges and the great successes of some of the young people they've worked with, including the need for a trauma-informed approach and the risk of exploitation...[and] to provide additional context beyond what can be conveyed by statistics alone.'¹⁵⁰

Representation matters. By moving beyond stereotypes and portraying multifaceted characters, care-experienced literature can enrich our understanding of the struggles and triumphs of those who have lived them and create a more inclusive literary landscape where all voices are heard, acknowledged, and celebrated, fostering a sense of belonging for the future.

7. Friendship as an Alternative to Care

None of the novels included in this commentary seem to feature real care or love from those looking after young people, the Corporate Parents. For example, in *The Panopticon*, Anais is orphaned personally and by the state, she is left to parent herself which leads her into some dangerous situations. Despite her treatment, Anais shows care and kindness through friendship which is reciprocated with some of the other 'inmates.' It is these friendships which 'hold' the characters in the novel.

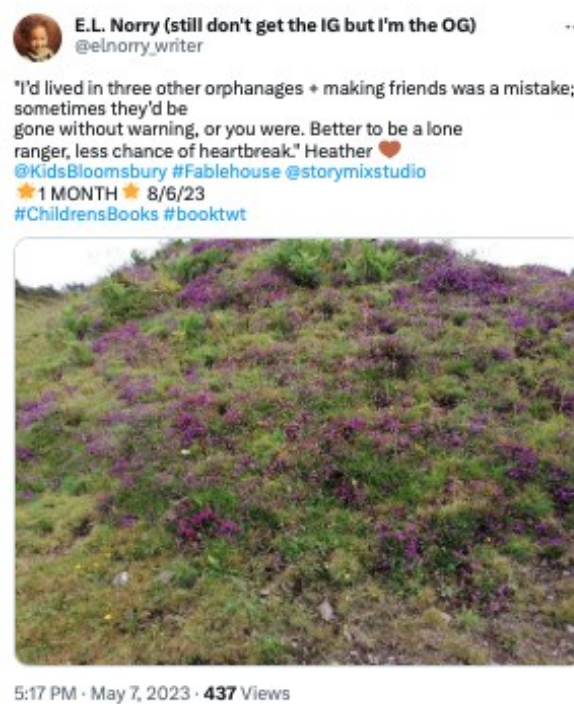
Friendships in care settings though can be difficult. In *Hiraeth* Marianne and Moira were friends from the first day she arrived until Moira disappeared three years later: '*I'm being adopted*, she told Marianne, and suddenly Moira's clothes were being packed and she was gone. When she asked for Moira's new address, she is told, *That's just not possible*. Marianne thought it something to do with her and hadn't asked again.'¹⁵¹

Friendship for children in care comes with a warning and expiry date, like the coming and goings of staff, so children come and go too – often never knowing how long they will stay in the latest 'placement.'

¹⁵⁰ The research team, ONS. 'Email to Rosie Canning,' 4 May 2023.

¹⁵¹ 30, Canning, p.174

E.L. Norry, grew up in residential homes and foster care, in the tweet below she quotes from her Young Adult novel 'Fable House' which features a children's home, about the dangers of friendship.



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Figure 5 A Tweet by E.L. Norry about friendship

In his memoir, *My Name Is Why* Sissay explains: 'Any one of us could disappear at any minute. We pressed our faces to the windows whenever a car arrived. Who's next? Who's disappearing next?'¹⁵³

For those in longer-term placements, maybe longer-lasting friendships are possible such as featured in *Careless*.¹⁵⁴ Originally called 'The Hatchling' in Capes' PhD, 'It is a story of unconditional love between two friends and offers an important reminder that while you may not be able to choose your family, you can always choose the other women in your life.'¹⁵⁵ When the protagonist, Bess discovers she is pregnant, the foster mother wants her to

¹⁵² E.L. Norry, 'I'd lived in three other orphanages + making friends was a mistake; sometimes they'd be gone without warning, or you were. Better to be a Lone Ranger, less chance of heartbreak' Heather (tweet @elnorry_writer, 7 May 2023).

¹⁵³ Lemn Sissay. *My Name Is Why*. Main edition. Edinburgh: Canongate Books Ltd, 2019. p.80

¹⁵⁴ Kirsty Capes. Capes, Kirsty. *Careless*. London: Orion, 2021.

¹⁵⁵ Capes, Kirsty. 'Don't You Have a Mother Who Loves You?' Ph.D Thesis, Brunel University London, 2019.

keep the baby. Bess though has an abortion and tells the foster mother she's not sorry. The foster mother responds by asking for Bess to be re-homed. Bess recognises that this is what conditional love looks like. She finds unconditional love with friend Eshal and writes: 'I think that those adolescent friendships are one of the strongest bonds we ever experience, especially between young women - they're almost obsessive, there's a romanticism about them.'¹⁵⁶

After completing an early draft of *Hiraeth*, Ms Smith, my supervisor and I had a conversation about friends. Should they feature more in *Hiraeth*? Perhaps a friend could provide the holding environment described by Winnicott as a crucial part of being cared for, held instead by a 'good enough' friend. I could see this was a good idea in Capes' novel. For many Care Leavers though, friendship is not always possible, apart from the pre-mentioned many moves which disrupt potential bonds, there are sometimes psychological difficulties.

In *The Secret Life of Dorothy Soames*, author Justine Cowan, whose mother was a foundling who entered the Foundling Hospital in 1932, says: 'My mother had no friends in her adult life, at least none that I knew of...no neighbours stopped by for a cup of tea, no girlfriends tagged along on shopping expeditions. Occasionally she would mention a woman's name, referring to her as a friend. It was rare that I would hear the same name twice.'¹⁵⁷

Jeanette Winterson, who was physically and psychologically abused by her adopted mother, made sure she rejected any possible friendships:

If someone liked me, I waited until she was off guard, and then I told her I didn't want to be her friend anymore. I watched the confusion and upset. The tears. Then I ran off, triumphantly in control, and very fast the triumph and the control leaked away, and then I cried and cried, because I had put myself on the outside again, on the doorstep again, where I didn't want to be.¹⁵⁸

¹⁵⁶ Book-ish. 'Kirsty Capes | Interview | Bookish Magazine.' <https://www.bookishmagazine.co.uk/news/kirsty-capes-interview-careless-love-me-love-me-not>. [accessed 18 September 2022]

¹⁵⁷ Cowan, Justine. *The Secret Life of Dorothy Soames: A Foundling's Story*. London: Virago, 2021. p.142

¹⁵⁸ Jeanette Winterson. *Why Be Happy When You Could Be Normal?* (London: Vintage, 2011), p. 7

There are similarities to this sabotage in a scene in *Hiraeth* where Marianne strikes out at Helen, her friend, when they are on holiday.¹⁵⁹ Marianne's inability to communicate means the slights and resentments that build up culminate in a lashing out. Although initially I wanted Marianne to manage without friendships, whilst writing the final draft and re-reading literature about attachment,¹⁶⁰ I realized for her to manage future relationships, her only intimate friendship was too important not to be repaired. I wrote a new chapter which saw Marianne and Helen meet up for lunch at Christmas and communicate about their past behavior.¹⁶¹

Researchers at the University of London revealed how children in the Foundling Hospital during the early twentieth century were isolated from the outside world, thinking this would encourage close friendships within the Hospital, but apparently this was rare. The UCL study attributed the lack of friendships to the sameness of the children's daily lives. However, according to Bowlby, cited in Cowan,¹⁶² the lack of attachment at a young age would affect the ability to form healthy relationships throughout life. Cowan writes:

For an infant, toddler, and young child, closeness to his or her mother is quite literally a matter of life or death. No primary caregiver means no food or shelter. But the repercussions of this biologically necessary attachment go deeper. If a child has a caregiver who is reliable and dependable, the world seems secure, and the child can thrive. Without that security and nurturing, a child cannot grow to trust others or form healthy relationships.¹⁶³

Cowan is writing about her mother's inability to form friendships due to the mother's mental health difficulties. This was also a problem for Marianne in *Hiraeth*. How would it be possible for Marianne to grow or learn about herself without attachment to parents or

¹⁵⁹ *Hiraeth*, p.105

¹⁶⁰ Stephanie Carty. 'Psychology of Character.' *Attachment Theory*. Online. 13 November 2020.

¹⁶¹ 30 Canning. *Hiraeth*. p.330

¹⁶² John Bowlby. *Attachment and Loss, Vol 1: Attachment*. (New York: Basic Books, 1969), cited in Justine Cowan. *The Secret Life of Dorothy Soames: A Foundling's Story*. (London: Virago, 2021), p.144

¹⁶³ Justine Cowan. *The Secret Life of Dorothy Soames: A Foundling's Story*. (London: Virago, 2021), p.144

consistent caregivers, or even permanent friends? She would need to have intimate relationships, become independent, and find a place to belong. It was a long list for a sixteen-year-old but, put simply, how was she to survive?

Strong friendships feature in Wheatle's *Seven Sisters*, set in the 1970s. Four friends run away from a children's home, where they have been physically and sexually abused. Carlton, one of the characters wonders who else was being abused by 'Uncle Thomas.'¹⁶⁴ Marianne has these same thoughts after she is told Just-Call-Me-Rob is arrested for abusing a child in another children's home.

Xana shook her head. 'Did he ever...you know?' She pointed her finger at Marianne.

'No!' She was never cuddled or even abused in Saturn Road. Was it something about her? Feeling disgusted, she pushed the thought away.¹⁶⁵

Even coarsely spoken Nikki in *Island* eventually finds herself caring about her brother - so much so, she protects him from being imprisoned.

As mentioned, Kirsty Capes' debut novel *Careless* which is set in the late nineties, follows protagonist Bess who is in foster care and finds out she's pregnant, Capes says: 'There's a real need for positive stories about care-leavers, children that aren't superheroes, just real children that become positive and high-functioning adults.'¹⁶⁶ A young pregnant person in care could be seen as a stereotype¹⁶⁷ but like Marianne, who chooses abortion as a way of caring about herself, so too does Bess even though for Bess caring about her future means losing her foster family and a home to live in. Marianne is homeless when she makes her decision, but afterwards quickly finds a live-in job as a mother's help. In the mid 70s, you could leave one job in the morning and have another by lunchtime.

¹⁶⁴ "Carlton was wondering if Glenroy had been touched by Uncle Thomas. He'd often thought about this at various times over the past seven years. He kept glancing over at him as the anger grew within." (Wheatle, "*The Seven Sisters*" 127)

¹⁶⁵ 30, Canning, p.400

¹⁶⁶ book-ish magazine. 'Kirsty Capes | Interview | Bookish Magazine.' Accessed 18 September 2022.

<https://www.bookishmagazine.co.uk/news/kirsty-capes-interview-careless-love-me-love-me-not>.

¹⁶⁷National - Activity of Care Leavers from "Children Looked after in England Including Adoptions", Permanent Data Table – Explore Education Statistics – GOV.UK.' Accessed 17 September 2021. <https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/data-tables/permalink/c7ed2287-9a04-4f4d-8c8e-57133b39cd9a>.

I wanted Marianne to overcome her difficulties and survive but initially not by making up with her friend Helen and having the friendship as the ‘holding environment.’ I have found from research, my own experience, and those with care-experience I have met over many years that autonomy and self-survival is something achievable in different ways for different people. Marianne has intimate relationships with ‘staff’ who work in the children’s home, the children who live there, as well as finding a sense of belonging - so much so, she turns down the chance to be fostered again.

After reading Dr Boddy’s diagnosis of herself when she is eight years old, Marianne wonders: ‘How was a child in care supposed to have ‘long-term intimate relationships’ when people just keep leaving?’

The way Marianne survives in this ever-changing environment is to create her own make-believe family with iconic figures from culture:

Father figures from films like Gregory Peck her favourite...characters from musicals like Stepmother Maria in *The Sound of Music*...or slipping into Dorothy Gale’s shoes to find her way home to Aunt Mabel...her literary family who had been with her since she could first read...Like Frances Hodgson Burnett, the narrator of *The Secret Garden* a bit like a friendly aunt, or C.S. Lewis, a grandfather figure...There was Maya Angelou, a great aunt and Agatha Christie, another great aunt. She was not so alone. And when she read, she was there inside the story with all her family.’¹⁶⁸

Whilst growing up, Jenni Fagan did something similar and says:

I sought out cultural mothers by the time I was in my teens. Their words, voices, art, raised me or at the very least offered solace Nina Simone, Maya Angelou, Dorothy Allison, Billie Holiday, Frida Kahlo, Tracey Emin, Louise Bourgeois, Patti Smith, Lydia Lunch ... I sought out cultural fathers or brothers in Viktor Frankl, Ice-T, Nick Cave, Kurt Cobain, George Orwell ... I didn’t have any family I’d ever met that I

¹⁶⁸ 30, Canning, p.133

could remember and so I turned to culture and asked it to raise me, to teach me, to – in my most isolated moments – let me have somewhere to rest, and return, and belong.¹⁶⁹

Marianne’s childhood has some elements of my own. There is no doubt that reading helped me (and Marianne) stay sane, to survive and ultimately give me (and Marianne) like Fagan, a place to belong.

This chapter explored Contemporary representations of care-experience in literature, focusing on characters who have been in the care of local authorities, termed ‘care-characters.’ It highlights both authors with care-experience and authors without who delve into this theme. It discusses historical perceptions of institutionalised children, the emergence of contemporary representations in literature, on the impact of genres like crime fiction and ‘Misery Lit.’ Overall, the chapter advocates for nuanced portrayals of care-experience in literature and challenges stereotypes surrounding it.

The next chapter examines the significance of having a secure understanding of one's personal biography and delves into themes of identity, attachment, and belonging, particularly in the context of care-experienced individuals. It explores the symbolism of black bags, the importance of accessing social care files, and the complexities of ‘home.’

¹⁶⁹ Fagan, Jenni. “‘This Book Kept Me Alive’: Jenni Fagan on Writing a Memoir of Her Childhood in Care.” *The Guardian*, 12 August 2023, sec. Books. <https://www.theguardian.com/books/2023/aug/12/jenni-fagan-ooutlin-a-memoir-childhood-in-care>.

Chapter 2 Black Bags

The question of ‘belonging’ has been the soundtrack to my life; where do I come from? Who do I belong to? Who do I matter to? Where shall I call home? – Lisa Cherry¹⁷⁰

8. Black Bags

In this third part of the Commentary, I explore the concept of identity in particular the importance of access to social care files as a way to compensate for lack of family history, as well as themes of attachment and belonging.

There is a history of giving black bags¹⁷¹ to children in care to pack up their belongings going back to the 1970s¹⁷² where it’s often foster carers or social workers doing the packing, not children themselves. Maxine Wrigley, who grew up in foster care and was National Co-ordinator at A National Voice in 2005 for ‘This is Not a Suitcase’ campaign said: ‘Bin bags are a simple issue and something that's quite easy to resolve. If you put young people's stuff in bin bags it has a great deal of meaning. It's disrespectful for corporate parents not to provide a suitcase.’¹⁷³ The act of putting a child’s belongings in a black bag is the antithesis of belonging, and when children keep being moved their sense of identity and belonging are affected.

In chapter one of *Hiraeth*, Marianne is offered a black bin bag for her belongings and refuses to use it, instead insisting the housefather climb into the attic and retrieve her battered,

¹⁷⁰ Lisa Cherry, ‘Belonging as an Intervention: An Opportunity to Consider the Adult That the Child Will Become.’ CETC, 11 May 2022. <https://www.cetc.org.au/belonging-as-an-intervention-an-opportunity-to-consider-the-adult-that-the-child-will-become/>. [accessed 2 May 2023]

¹⁷¹ Dave Linton, a Youth Worker was ‘heartbroken’ when he learnt that most children in care transported their belongings in a bin bag. In 2015, he founded *Madlug*, every time somebody buys one of their bags, Dave gives a bag to a child in care, to date 45,000 bags have been donated. His organisation is beginning to change the narrative.

¹⁷² Ad Lib was a group that became the forerunner of the Who Cares Movement which ran from 1975-78 and then became the National Association of Young in Care. These were young people led rights groups and among many issues they identified for change was “the bin bag move”.

¹⁷³ ‘Social Care News: Looked-after Children - Use of Bin Bags for Belongings to Stop | CYP Now.’. <https://www.cypnow.co.uk/other/article/social-care-news-looked-after-children-use-of-bin-bags-for-belongings-to-stop>. [Accessed 12 September 2022]

brown leather suitcase. ‘How embarrassing, carrying your personal and prized possessions in a sack meant for rubbish. Marianne had arrived with a suitcase and would be leaving with one.’¹⁷⁴ Marianne has a sense of self-worth even though in the 1970s children’s voices were muted.¹⁷⁵ Author Penny Parkes’¹⁷⁶ novel *Home*, shows protagonist Anna moving to yet another foster home and questioning the use of black bags: ‘There was no sign of the pretty overnight bag she’d so treasured, the one with the unicorns that sparkled different colours; now everything she owned was bundled into this one black bin-liner.’¹⁷⁷ The experience of constant moving transmutes into a grown-up ‘homeless’ Anna living vicariously through other people’s lives, looking after their homes and pets.

Marianne whilst not wanting black bags to carry her belongings, remembers when Housefather - Just-Call-Me-Rob - had thrown away black bags filled with her belongings that had been kept underneath her bed. ‘Sorry, he’d said. *How was I to know it contained photographs.*’[See P. 111]

Nowadays some children in care are given a life story book which is an object of both inheritance and narrative inheritance that can be kept and one day possibly passed on. This is standard practice for adopted children, though not for children in residential or foster care.

Debbie Watson writes of the importance of:

‘Cherished objects like baby clothes and old photos can be crucial to an adopted or looked-after child’s identity... Material objects can act as symbolic reminders of relationships... They are a well-established practice in the UK and often all that the child has by way of the personal, accurate and detailed information which is so crucial

¹⁷⁴ 30, Canning, p.8

¹⁷⁵ Charlotte Hardman’s ‘Can there be an anthropology of children?’ (qtd. in Schofield 16) says ‘...children in the early seventies were literally ‘muted’ because their perspectives on society were not heard by adults. Indeed, adults occupying positions of power and authority over children often silenced them.’

¹⁷⁶ Parkes is not Care-experienced.

¹⁷⁷ Parkes, Penny. *Home*. (London: Simon & Schuster UK., 2021), p. 89.

in helping them understand and accept their pasts and in forming a sense of their own identity.’¹⁷⁸

Yet often life story books are compiled for the child by a social worker, foster carer or other professional as part of the process of transition and sometimes it’s just not possible to collect belongings. ‘For many children, it is not the object per se that is important, but the memories, emotions and meanings attached to that object...’¹⁷⁹

A train ticket may have significance if it took a child to a meeting that was important to them, but a social worker, unless they ask, will not have this awareness. ‘Objects are important for the development of a sense of identity for [children in care] and to provide them with feelings of security, continuity and belonging.’¹⁸⁰ I have known albeit instinctively for most of my remembered life of the importance of objects from childhood that have emotional significance and memories. I was only eight when I first saw the pink cat. She was sitting on a table with her tail wrapped round her flank. Her little head was tilted to the right. One ear pointed straight up as though listening to the sound of the wind sighing through the trees or the beat of a butterfly’s wings. The left ear is chipped now, dropped by a friend. The pink cat was never quite the same after that. I also write about a pink cat in the novel.¹⁸¹ I still have her, she has become one of Marianne’s painted postcards [see p.175] and a family heirloom to be passed on to one of my children.¹⁸²

¹⁷⁸ Debbie Watson, ‘We Need to Help Children in Care Treasure the Objects That Tell Their Life Story,’ *The Guardian*, 9 April 2015 <<https://www.theguardian.com/social-care-network/2015/apr/09/cared-for-children-treasure-objects-trove>> [accessed 26 Feb 2022]

¹⁷⁹ Debbie Watson, Rachel Hahn, and Jo Staines, ‘Storying Special Objects: Material Culture, Narrative Identity and Life Story Work for Children in Care’, *Qualitative Social Work*, 19. 4 (2020), 701-718 (p. 706) <<https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/1473325019850616>> [accessed 26 February 2022]

¹⁸⁰ Watson, p. 702

¹⁸¹ Canning, p. 180

¹⁸² Delyth Edwards, and Rosie Canning, ‘The Story of the Pink Cat: An Exploration of the Ways Care-Experienced People Navigate Inheritance’, in *Inheritance Matters Kinship, Property, Law*, eds. by Suzanne Lenon and Daniel Monk (London: Bloomsbury, 2023) p. 144

9. Identity

The importance of children's identity is enshrined in Articles Seven and Eight of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. According to this, every child has the right to a name, nationality, the right to know his or her parents and to preserve these inherent elements of identity.¹⁸³

Narrative identity theorist Dan Adams claims those ‘who construct life stories that feature themes of personal agency and exploration, tend to enjoy higher levels of mental health, well-being, and maturity’ which is why it is important for Marianne to evolve with a coherent identity.¹⁸⁴ At the beginning of the novel, Marianne, like some children in care, does not understand why she has spent her childhood living in foster and children’s homes.

There is a void for many children in care often due to missing family history. We discussed this ‘void’ during the Q&A for a panel at the Research Study Day ‘Creativity and Serendipity’¹⁸⁵ early on in the research journey; for example, of not having access to family history and heritage and how one overcomes that, an example being Anais in *The Panopticon* who makes up her birth origins with ‘The Birthday Game.’¹⁸⁶

When Marianne is given access to her files and discovers a journal from her mother, she begins to understand herself as a poet and artist. For many children in care, care leavers and care-experienced adults, these organisational records¹⁸⁷ are their personal histories taking the place of mnemonic materials - childhood photos and family stories - which help to create

¹⁸³ Mariela Neagu, and Judy Sebba. “Who Do They Think They Are: Making Sense of Self in Residential Care, Foster Care, and Adoption.” *Children and Youth Services Review*, vol. 105, 2019, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.childyouth.2019.104449>. p.1

¹⁸⁴ Dan P. McAdams. ‘Narrative Identity.’ *Current Directions in Psychological Science* 22, no. 3 (201306): 233–38. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0963721413475622>.

¹⁸⁵ Rosie Canning, ‘From Pip to Potter to Southampton,’ unpublished paper delivered at The Centre for Modern and Contemporary Writing Annual Research Day ‘Creativity and Serendipity’ (University of Southampton, 16 January 2017)

¹⁸⁶ 86, Fagan, p.1

¹⁸⁷ The background to a child in care is written reports, where the child is often seen as a problem to be solved. The files written by social workers preserve instances of behaviour in a way that a parent never would, pathologizing actions that would be considered normal in another context. Split second decisions, like smashing a plate in anger, become literally embodied in the record which then follows an individual for the rest of their lives. In addition, contributors agreed that there were things in their files that were either wrong or misleading or diverged from their own experience of events.

and reconstruct narratives about the past and inform identity. Jim Goddard, Chair of the Care Leaver Association, who spent his childhood in the care system, says: ‘This process can be important for a variety of reasons, such as the formation of a coherent adult identity and addressing issues of self-esteem.’¹⁸⁸ However, when Marianne was in care, this was not a right.

It is now, thanks to Graham Gaskin, a young man who despite being terribly abused¹⁸⁹ during his time in the care system, fought for access to his care records for eight years to help build his case. During that time, he “successfully argued that such information was necessary in order to understand his identity and childhood experiences.”¹⁹⁰ The European Court on Human Rights¹⁹¹ ruled that the ability to access your care records is a human right. And yet despite this ruling, many adults find when they finally do apply for their records, ‘...they may be fragmentary, contradictory and contrast sharply with a person’s existing memories. Photographs, school reports, swimming certificates and other personal documents only survive in about 10-20% of cases. In other words, care records often conceal or obscure as much as they reveal.’¹⁹²

For Kirsty Capes, it was a shock just how much of her life story was missing: ‘...there were sections of 10, 20, 30 pages that were entirely blank...I was dumbfounded: appalled by the level of censorship applied to my own history.’¹⁹³

¹⁸⁸ Jim, Goddard. ‘A Paper Childhood: The Social Services Care Files of Former Looked After Children in the UK.’ edited by Kate Milnes, Christine Horrocks, Nancy Kelly, Brian Roberts, and David Robinson, 111–18. Huddersfield: University of Huddersfield, 2006. p. 111

¹⁸⁹ Gaskin, Graham. *A Boy Called Graham: The Shocking True Story of My Forgotten Childhood*. Blake Publishing, 2005.

¹⁹⁰ Jim Goddard, Julia Feast, and Derek Kirton. ‘A Childhood on Paper: Managing Access to Child Care Files by Post-Care Adults.’ *Adoption & Fostering* 32, no. 2 (1 July 2008): 50–62. <https://doi.org/10.1177/030857590803200207>.

¹⁹¹ In *Gaskin v. UK* [12 EHHR 36; 7th July 1989], the European Court found that the Article 8 rights of the European Convention (the right to respect for one’s private and family life) had been breached by Liverpool City Council’s refusal to grant him access to his care records.

¹⁹² UCL. ‘Introducing the MIRRA Project.’ MIRRA: Memory - Identity - Rights in Records - Access, 12 June 2018. <https://blogs.ucl.ac.uk/mirra/2018/06/12/introducing-the-mirra-project/>.

¹⁹³ Capes, Kirsty. “‘The Secret of My Identity Devastated Me’: Could Official Records Reveal the Truth about My Childhood?” *The Guardian*, 15 May 2021, sec. Life and style. <https://www.theguardian.com/lifeandstyle/2021/may/15/the-secret-of-my-identity-devastated-me-could-official-records-reveal-the-truth-about-my-childhood>.

Jackie McCartney, who spent her childhood in care and was part of the MIRRA: Memory, Identity and Rights in Records project,¹⁹⁴ has spent the last six years trying to get access to her files and piece together her life history. When she finally received some of the files, most of the pages had been redacted. [See Appendix G]

She had seen a sentence which mentioned putting a scrapbook together: ‘Where is it? What was in it? These things need to be...Treated with respect and care.’

It can take years to make the decision to access records and the emotional cost of this undertaking should not be under-estimated. After the decision, begins the process which is often difficult. Some records have been destroyed or at least this is what people are sometimes told. Lemn Sissay was told this despite repeat applications over many years. Jacqueline McCartney was told Birmingham City Council did not have her files.

PhD Candidate, Lisa Cherry, who spent her teenage years in the care system and some years being homeless, refused to be defined by other people’s stories about her and ceremoniously took her files to somewhere by the sea and burnt them.

In that moment I realised that I did not want this pile of papers in my house anymore.

This collection of words was made up of incidents, issues, problems, rejections, perceptions, disappointments, behaviours. None of us should have a life reduced to that. There were no she’s beautiful, she shows great leadership qualities, she is kind, she is strong, she likes to dance, when she feels upset she needs a squeeze...Those words are not my story; they are the story of each one of the professionals who I came into contact with. .¹⁹⁵

Cherry trains social workers to keep trauma-informed records for the adult the child will become.

¹⁹⁴ MIRRA: Memory Identity Rights in Records Access was an AHRC funded participatory action research project based at UCL, working with Care Leavers on information rights in social care records.

¹⁹⁵ Lisa Cherry, ‘The Day I Burnt My Social Services Files.’ *Lisa Cherry*, 13 Oct. 2015, <https://www.lisacherry.co.uk/the-day-i-burnt-my-social-services-files/>. [accessed 13 October 2015]

Having a sense of who you are—your family history heritage— all contribute to a sense of belonging.

Artist and poet, Yusuf McCormack, who spent his childhood in a Catholic orphanage, said ‘Identity is something we all cling onto and hold dear to ourselves. It starts with your name, your ethnicity, your culture and evolves and grows...becoming part of you [but] children coming into care usually have only their name that belongs to them so to remove that too is to strip away every aspect of who they are. The child is no longer whole.’¹⁹⁶ Name changes do occasionally happen to children in care¹⁹⁷ and particularly those who are adopted as well as the enforced nomadic lifestyle which can see administrative mistakes happen, for many years I was given the wrong birthdate and subsequent birthdays.

In *The Panopticon*, protagonist Anais knows very little about her life history ‘...it is a lack of personal history which forces her ... to make up for the childhood memories she does not have by creating several sets of them to choose from...’¹⁹⁸ As mentioned, she creates her own identity by playing versions of the ‘Birthday Game’ that always begin with a birth:

Born in an igloo. Born in a castle. Born in a tepee while the moon rises and a midsummer powwow pounds the ground outside. Born in an asylum to the psychotically insane. Born on an adoption certificate on a perfectly mundane Tuesday. Born in Paris. Gay Paree? Birthplace of one beautiful baby girl, Anais? That’s the one, for three years now it’s been a clear winner – I’m almost beginning to believe it.¹⁹⁹

The Panopticon creates a narrative for the oppressed young people in its care whose voices are rarely heard. Anais tells her own story, and therefore brings herself into existence and by doing so has agency over her life.

¹⁹⁶ Paul Yusuf McCormack. *Marks of an Unwanted Rainbow*. ‘The Other Me.’ Kirwin Maclean Associates, 2022. p. 173

¹⁹⁷ 135, Sissay

¹⁹⁸ Marie-Odile Pittin-Hedon. ‘Punishment and crime in Jenni Fagan’s *The Panopticon*.’ Berton, Jean et Bill Findlay. *Crime, Punishment and the Scots*, Presses universitaires de Franche Comté, pp.163-174, 2019,

¹⁹⁹ 86, Fagan, p.31

Although Marianne has had many moves, residential and foster care homes, all which create a threat to her identity,²⁰⁰ she begins to understand what works for her when she says no to being fostered.²⁰¹ At this point in the backstory at eleven years old, Marianne has a home life, school life and school friends which are integral for a sense of belonging and she does not want to leave.

In real life, my heritage or family history came partly from books and reading about orphans and children with interrupted childhoods. There was always an orphan cousin to find on the library shelves who I could identify with.

Margaret Forster, who was not care-experienced, wrote about children either in care or adopted. *Shadow Baby* explores the social changes both attitudes and options for young unmarried women who found themselves pregnant at the end of the 19th Century and in the 1950s.²⁰² Evie, born in Carlisle in 1887, has wild hair and grows up in a children's home. Shona, born almost seventy years later, is adopted and grows up in comfort and security in Scotland, the only child of doting parents. Both girls were abandoned as babies by their mothers, and both are obsessed about finding them. They receive very different receptions due to the contrasting times. 'The shadow moved, the knocker rang out, the brass ring lifted and lowered three times, as always. She was so regular, the shadow. Twice more she did it, always three slow, deliberant knocks. Then she would go, the ritual complete.'²⁰³

I too was a shadow, outside my grandparents' front door hoping one day to be let in. Even though I visited occasionally, I did not feel part of the family. That though is the heritage of the care-experienced child, once removed how do you ever get back in?

²⁰⁰ Mariela Neagu and J. Sebba. 'Who Do They Think They Are: Making Sense of Self in Residential Care, Foster Care, and Adoption.' *Children and Youth Services Review* 105 (2019). <https://ora.ox.ac.uk/objects/uuid:687d36c5-e433-432e-9054-218efbd8fe67>.

²⁰¹ 30, Canning, p.108

²⁰² Margaret Forster, *Shadow Baby* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1996)

²⁰³ In 2018, I was invited by Margaret Forster's husband, Hunter Davies to use her writing studio once a week for about a year to work on my PhD novel and it is where I completed the first draft.

10. Home

The concept of home for many is a place of safety, acceptance and belonging, but for children in care who have lost their homes for reasons which may include bereavement, migration, neglect, or abuse, home is often a place of instability and impermanence – they are estranged from family, pets, familiar places and relationships. Home means many things to many different people; however, the underlying principle is that ‘home’ should be a familiar place and somewhere to belong.²⁰⁴

Delyth Edwards, a sociologist of care-experience, whose mother grew up in a Belfast orphanage says ‘In the current literature of care, home or the autobiography of home has not been studied from the viewpoint or situation of the orphan or the Care Leaver.’²⁰⁵ Delyth goes on to say that perhaps home ‘needs to be (re)theorised,’ and to look at this from the perspective of Care Leavers and their various homes. ‘As agentic beings my participants have remembered and displayed an identity that is dominated by a search for home, a space also denied them *because* of their identity.’²⁰⁶

When Marianne leaves school she also faces leaving home. Her friends are still living with their families and nowhere is this felt more than when she moves in with best friend, Helen. There she sees first-hand how Helen not only does not pay rent but her mother ‘slings her a few extra bob.’ ‘If she had more money or a mother like Helen’s that let her live rent-free and occasionally gave her fifty quid out of the blue, she might be able to afford more clothes too.’²⁰⁷ Marianne will have to pay rent wherever she lives, this is her future, and she is always skint. Marianne knows that she is meant to feel grateful when her friend rescues her from the bleakness of a relationship breakup, but when the friends go away for a weekend to Clacton-on-Sea, the final straw for Marianne is the boy she fancies at the disco, prefers Helen.

²⁰⁴ Christina A. Sieber. ‘The Meaning of Home. By M.A. - The Therapeutic Care Journal.’ <https://thetcj.org/in-residence-articles/meaning-home-christina-sieber-m>. [accessed 9 April 2022]

²⁰⁵ Edwards D. 2017. Cultural, Autobiographical and Absent Memories of Orphanhood. (Springer International Publishing) p.210

²⁰⁶ Ibid. p.210

²⁰⁷ Hiraeth p.202

Helen has it all, family, money, clothes, a home, and boys who always fancy her. Coupled with months of Helen's moodiness, Marianne lashes out. 'You fucking bitch,' she screamed, grabbing Helen's tightly permed curls. The drink making her much braver than she really was. 'I fucking hate you.'

She justifies her behaviour, but this does not last, and she is soon upset and wanting Helen's friendship back. However, the point of no return, which many children in foster care experience as relationships break down,²⁰⁸ has been reached. Helen and her mother stop speaking to Marianne and soon she must leave.

It is the temporariness of what are called 'placements' as well as trust and trauma-response-type behaviour that make belonging difficult. Children in care may also experience the repeated disruption and reconstitution of birth-family households, moving back and forth between birth families and foster families, or between various foster placements and sometimes experiencing greater instability than when living in their families.²⁰⁹ It's likely that many feel powerless over where they are placed leading to alienation from the new people around them.

Marianne is reminded of the temporariness of the children's home when at eleven years old, she was allowed to make her own decision about moving from the home to a foster family, the Christensen's. '*It's your chance, they all said, to have a real family.*'²¹⁰ Marianne though, was adamant. She did not want to be fostered again and anyway 'Sixteen was five very, very, long years away and [leaving] didn't seem real at the time.'

²⁰⁸ Konijn, Carolien, Cristina Colonnese, Leoniek Kroneman, Ramón J. L. Lindauer, and Geert-Jan J. M. Stams. 'Prevention of Instability in Foster Care: A Case File Review Study.' *Child & Youth Care Forum* 50, no. 3 (1 June 2021): 493–509. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10566-020-09584-z>.

²⁰⁹ Nina Biehal. 'Sense of Belonging: Meanings of Family and Home in Long-Term Foster Care | The British Journal of Social Work | Oxford Academic.' <https://academic.oup.com/bjsw/article-abstract/44/4/955/1634758>. [accessed 25 July 2023]

²¹⁰ 30, Canning, p.107

11. Attachment

Belonging is intrinsically connected to relationships and while it is very difficult to establish if belonging develops at the same time as attachments or attachments develop at the same time as belonging, those early attachment relationships are severed in some form or another. – Lisa Cherry²¹¹

The reader is not party to what happened after Marianne was separated from her mother. On her seventeenth birthday Marianne is ‘allowed’ to read her files and discovers she was adopted at six weeks old but that her adoptive parents were killed in a car crash and consequently at six months she was placed in a council residential nursery. Her files mention becoming attached to one of the nurses employed to look after the babies and becoming inconsolable when she went off duty. The nurse even took Marianne to her home in Norfolk for a weekend, but not long after this the nurse left. Marianne’s experience is not dissimilar to John Bowlby’s loss of a nursery nurse to whom he was attached and who also left the employ of his family.²¹² It was this loss which drove Bowlby’s attachment investigations.²¹³ He describes attachment theory as a way of conceptualising the human tendency to make strong emotional bonds with others. Early in life, these bonds provide infants with essential comfort and security. Primary attachment figures provide children with a secure base which enables them to have intimate relationships and explore the world.²¹⁴ ‘He did not *prove*, however, that only mothers who care for their children within the confines of the nuclear family can provide this care. Nor did he *prove* that early damage was irreversible.’²¹⁵

²¹¹ Lisa Cherry. ‘Belonging as an Intervention: An Opportunity to Consider the Adult That the Child Will Become,’ *CETC*, 2022 <<https://www.cetc.org.au/belonging-as-an-intervention-an-opportunity-to-consider-the-adult-that-the-child-will-become/>> [accessed 3 August 2023]

²¹² Dijken, Suzan Van. *John Bowlby: His Early Life - A Biographical Journey into the Roots of Attachment Theory*. London ; New York: Free Association Books, 1998.

²¹³ David Wastell and others, ‘Love Is a Wondrous State: Origins and Early Debates,’ in *Reassessing Attachment Theory in Child Welfare*, (Bristol University Press, 2019), 1–22, (p. 2) doi:[10.46692/9781447336938.002](https://doi.org/10.46692/9781447336938.002). [accessed 10 May 2024]

²¹⁴ John Bowlby, *Attachment*. Basic Books, 1969.

²¹⁵ Beverly Birns, ‘I. Attachment Theory Revisited: Challenging Conceptual and Methodological Sacred Cows,’ *Feminism & Psychology*, 9.1 (1999), 10–21 (p. 13).

Aged eight, Marianne is assessed by an eminent London psychiatrist, he concludes it is unlikely she would ever be able to have a long-term intimate relationship:

She hadn't known she was being assessed. All she could really remember were some mathematical puzzles and being asked about the seasons. She couldn't remember the word for autumn and yet she knew it. She knew all the seasons and loved spring and autumn. Was this all down to autumn? It was like she had been tricked into performing and maybe on a different day she would have performed differently. She felt cursed.²¹⁶

When Marianne reads this report in her files, she responds by writing a list of relationships with foster carers, social care workers, social workers, children in care and friends. She has a need to protest and uses writing to do this reminding herself that she is capable of relationships. Maybe attachment theory in social work is just another tool for othering if it's only being used in a negative way. At least it is '...recognised that some people who have received highly abusive care in childhood have developed into completely well-adjusted adults.'²¹⁷

Belonging as or to a person was a theme found in a research project I undertook whilst Research Assistant at Magdalen College, Oxford. 'Conversations for Care' was an interdisciplinary knowledge exchange project to encourage better engagement between research and practice about experiences of care. We hosted monthly discussions on Twitter at #CareConvos. We facilitated workshops for young people to tell us what was important for them. However, halfway through the project Covid-19 happened, quickly followed by Lockdown, so our plans had to change, and this led to the 'Care in the time of Covid' project.

²¹⁶ Canning, p. 370.

²¹⁷ David Wastell and others, 'Practising Attachment Theory in Child Welfare,' in *Reassessing Attachment Theory in Child Welfare*, (Bristol University Press, 2019), 63–82, (p. 65) doi:[10.46692/9781447336938.005](https://doi.org/10.46692/9781447336938.005). [accessed 10 May 2024]

‘Care in the time of Covid’²¹⁸ explored the day to day lives of care-experienced adults in the UK during COVID-19. We had various diary prompts throughout the project: ‘What does Home mean to you?’ was one. [See appendix H] For one participant, home for them started as a physical thing but during the pandemic it changed:



Figure 6 An Instagram post from ‘Care in the time of COVID’

²¹⁸ We had been planning face-to-face events with Care-experienced people and those that worked with children in care, but Covid-19 happened and we were faced with impending lockdowns. We wanted to know how the care community was coping during the pandemic and what helped them, as well as recording their experiences in history and giving Care-experienced people a creative outlet and platform. We invited people who had experience of care to complete a short survey about their lives during COVID-19 and to submit a diary entry. Diary entries were published on the project website and Instagram.

This participant could live anywhere but it was her relationship, and with it love, that gave her a sense of belonging. The responses to the ‘home’ question [See appendix H] helped me understand some of the issues and helped with focusing on belonging in the novel.

12. Hiraeth



Figure 7 View of Snowdon from Theresa's back garden²¹⁹

For Marianne, as already mentioned, it is hard to maintain attachments to people who disappear, but the memories held about the physical home is another form of attachment and with it creates a form of belonging, it's a big object. Later in the novel when she is homesick for the children's home, she realises she will never go back, and that Saturn Road was never really her home. It is too painful to see somebody else in her bed.²²⁰ *Hiraeth* has been in her heart since she was a baby. A mother represents home, belonging and love, this was something she had never had. In

²¹⁹ The painting was created by the author also known as Rosie Canning (see also p.75)

²²⁰ 30, Canning, p.147

the final scene of the novel, Brown Owl, a kind woman she meets walking up Snowdon, gives her a word for that longing:

“‘*Hiraeth*’. There’s no translation in English which suits me. It means a sort of longing, homesickness - particularly for Wales, sometimes for something that does not exist, but it fits with my longing for Graham; that was his name.’²²¹

When I chose *Hiraeth* as the title for the novel, I did so because it encompassed feelings I had experienced for many years around home and belonging. I adopted the word for the care-experienced community because for many of us, *Hiraeth* is part of who we are. For Marianne, *Hiraeth* is like an old remembered tune always playing in the background. ‘To feel *Hiraeth* is to experience a deep sense of incompleteness, a feeling of loss. There is an eternal tension between staying and leaving.’²²²

Sometimes the word ‘home’ makes me feel uncomfortable because home and the children’s home in my life were synonymous. In the 1970s, being in care was not something that was spoken about.²²³ A children’s home can never really be a family home; there are too many rules, regulations and changes for that. Also, the impermanence can bring with it an unwanted heritage – mental health issues are sometimes caused by the very organisation that is supposed to protect and create a safe environment. In 2017, the Care Leavers Association undertook extensive research and consultation nationally with Care Leavers of all ages: ‘55% of Care Leavers attributed their mental health issues to their care-experience.’²²⁴

Foster care is often temporary and that too is problematic, but it can also provide a family environment, which was the case for Kirsty Capes and her brother:

²²¹ 30, Canning, p.466

²²² ‘*Hiraeth*.’

<https://www.bbc.com/mediacentre/proginfo/2016/48/bbc.com/mediacentre/proginfo/2016/48/hiraeth/>. [accessed 7 May 2023]

²²³ This is not something new, in Hannah Brown’s anonymous memoir *The Child She Bare*, published in 1918, she wrote of how foundlings became a community in themselves and hid their identity, only speaking in secret of their pasts.

²²⁴ The Care Leavers Association. ‘Health Project,’ 18 June 2010. <https://www.careleavers.com/what-we-do/health-project/>. [accessed 14 September 2018]

It's no wonder that as soon as we were able, we both changed our name by deed poll to Capes...it was a declaration of being chosen: of our family choosing us, and of us choosing them. It was a symbol of belonging, shared identity and love; and to me that was the most powerful thing in the world.²²⁵

Some children of foster carers refuse to take part in events set up for children in care (for example by their local Virtual School), wanting nothing to do with those labels and insisting on calling their foster parents mum and dad, choosing to 'do' family themselves. In her study about achieving permanence for children in foster care, Nina Biehal wrote: 'Sarah had chosen to call her foster carer 'Mum' when very young, wishing to emphasise the normality of her [circumstances] in response to questions from other children.'²²⁶ What Biehal discovered was that some children, as well as considering foster placements as home, also maintained 'a sense of connection to their birth families' which she described as '...a set of spatial, social, psychological and temporal domains in which they feel a sense of belonging.'²²⁷

Home then is distant, not a real physical place, it exists in the imagination and yet, every child wants a home of their own, a place to belong, a place to feel safe. For some, care-experience is all about longing and yearning and somehow learning to live with a constant homesickness. This is *Hiraeth*.

13. Autobiography Into Fiction

I spent a lot of time thinking about the 'autobiographical' aspects and how much of myself to include in the novel. I had to learn to let go of my almost obsessive need to tell the

²²⁵ Kirsty Capes. 'After I Was Taken off My Parents, My Foster Carers Became the Family I Needed.' *Metro* (blog), 27 July 2022. <https://metro.co.uk/2022/07/27/after-i-was-taken-off-my-parents-my-foster-carers-became-my-family-17072304/>.

²²⁶ Biehal, Nina. "A Sense of Belonging: Meanings of Family and Home in Long-Term Foster Care." *The British Journal of Social Work*, vol. 44, no. 4, June 2014, pp. 955–71, <https://doi.org/10.1093/bjsw/bcs177>. p.965

²²⁷ Alison Dowling, Robyn Blunt. *Home*. London: Routledge, 2006. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203401354>. p.79

autobiographical truth. Creative writing academic Celia Hunt,²²⁸ who spent some time in kinship care, discusses the therapeutic value of creative writing and concludes:

...that starting to write by fictionalizing self-experience not only helped students to find a better working relationship between the creative and critical faculties in their writing process, but also had the potential for enhancing the flexibility of the psyche more generally, and that therefore this approach could be useful in a therapeutic context.²²⁹

Fictionalising also creates distance from the real events that took place. *Hiraeth* considers how a young Care Leaver copes without parents, family or home and the financial pressures and at times emotional chaos. The first draft was written instinctively as a piece of art, the crafting, without too much thought, to get the essence of the story onto the page. Although I include autobiographical elements, Marianne's story is very different to mine.

Early in the creative journey, one rainy afternoon, I was writing a scene influenced by my own experience. It was unsettling, yet I had the distinct impression of a narrator holding the hand of this sixteen-year-old character, letting her re-live her experiences in a safer space whilst having someone who cared about her, like for example a mother. Jeanette Winterson describes how writing can heal and give agency:

I had lines inside me, a string of guiding lights. I had language. Fiction and poetry are doses, medicines. What they heal is the rupture reality makes on the imagination. I had been damaged, and a very important part of me had been destroyed - that was my reality, the facts of my life. But on the other side of the facts was who I could be, how I could feel. And as long as I had words for that, images for that, stories for that, then I wasn't lost.²³⁰

I used elements of my own story for authenticity, for example, TC500 machines used

²²⁸ Celia Hunt, 'Therapeutic Effects of Writing Fictional Autobiography,' *Life Writing*, 7.3 (2010), 231–44 <<https://doi.org/10.1080/14484528.2010.514142>>.

²²⁹ 202, Hunt, p.231.

²³⁰ Winterson, Jeanette. *Why Be Happy When You Could Be Normal?* (London: Vintage, 2011)

at National Westminster Bank in the 1970s where I worked when I first left school.

Marianne's emotional journey though is her own. Celia Hunt describes one of her students' writing:

She has had to create the character of Jane out of an aspect of herself with a life of its own on the page. This is quite challenging as it involves identifying, and distancing herself from, this particular self-concept, letting go of conscious control of it and empathically 'living into' it in the form of a character, with all the imaginative engagement of feeling that empathy involves.²³¹

For Marianne, without parents to hold her, reading becomes like Winnicott's 'holding' environment – it is how she matures, she becomes the characters – the books are her family, their bright covers cheer her and the authorial voices remain constant. Marianne explains how there was something soothing about listening to a narrator²³² for example, in *The Lion, The Witch, and the Wardrobe* and with her Catholic upbringing, she is moved emotionally by Aslan's sacrifice though unaware this is an allegory of Christ's death. As a reader she feels safe with C.S. Lewis who became like a kindly godfather. She also learns about family and life through reading.

When Marnie Was There,²³³ is about Anna, a 10-year-old girl in foster care sent to a sleepy Norfolk village by the sea. The narrative explores the difficult emotions of a child losing her parents and feeling different due to this loss and having foster parents. Anna wears her 'ordinary face' so as not to be noticed. Through friendship with the mysterious Marnie, Anna eventually learns how to be a friend. Marnie is someone who does not judge - a reference to Anna's loss and foster care status. Marianne finds elements of herself in the novel. Books helped Marianne belong. Winterson describes this belonging:

²³¹ Hunt, C., *Therapeutic Dimensions of Autobiography in Creative Writing* (London: Jessica Kingsley 2008) p.75

²³² 30, Canning, p.109

²³³ 'When Marnie Was There by Robinson, Joan G: Hard Cover (1967) First Edition. | James M Pickard, ABA, ILAB, PBFA.' Accessed 8 December 2023. <https://www.abebooks.co.uk/first-edition/When-Marnie-Robinson-Joan-G-Collins/20873693665/bd>.

Books, for me, are a home. Books don't make a home – they are one, in the sense that just as you do with a door, you open a book, and you go inside. Inside there is a different kind of time and a different kind of space.²³⁴

Whether in the children's home or someplace else, and like the children entering Narnia, Marianne lives alternative lives through the characters in the stories she reads. Stories keep her safe, shore her up like the dam Mr and Mrs Beaver build in *The Lion, The Witch and the Wardrobe*.²³⁵

In *Mr Pip*,²³⁶ a novel about the power of narrative to transform lives, Matilda, who was a teenager at the time of the 1991 Bougainvillea conflict, describes how *Great Expectations* became an imaginary home for her and the other children on the island whilst war raged all around them. They meet Mr Dickens by listening to *Mr Pip*, an orphan himself read from the Dickens classic whilst their home is under siege. This 'imaginary home' is an escape, a refuge, 'It was sometime before he stopped, but when he looked up we sat stunned by the silence. The flow of words had ended. Slowly we stirred back into our bodies and our lives,' says Matilda.²³⁷ This is an apt description of how Marianne, too, disappears into texts and reappears in life. Readers attach to the characters and this imaginary world becomes home. One of the key practices of homemaking is the weaving or telling of stories; not only does *Mister Pip* depict how *Great Expectations* offers an imaginary home for its readers, but the act of storytelling itself is presented as stemming from a desire for home. This cultural ideal of home relates to a form of subjectivity that may be called the 'creative self.'²³⁸

Care-experience often means you do not have a home and even if you do it can still be

²³⁴ Jeanette Winterson. *Why Be Happy When You Could Be Normal?* (London: Vintage, 2011)

²³⁵ Peter, Susan, Edmund and Lucy Pevensie in *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*, are temporary orphans during the holidays without parents and thereby free to have adventures. They were evacuated from London to escape the bombing like many other children during WW2 - what I call an interrupted childhood.

²³⁶ Lloyd Jones. *Mister Pip: Lloyd Jones*. 1st edition. London: John Murray, 2008.

²³⁷ 210, Jones, p.17-18

²³⁸ Stella Butter. 'The Literary Making of Home(Land): Transnational Fictions of Home in Lloyd Jones' "Mister Pip".' *Anthropological Journal of European Cultures* 23, no. 2 (2014): 119–37.

difficult to belong which is why and how Marianne finds a sense of belonging through her childhood stories. The authorial voices stay with her whilst growing up, their narratives parenting her, protecting her until one day she can make her own family, a ‘found family’ which happens towards the end of the novel after she moves into the ‘house of happy endings.’ Authorial voices are part of a family package instinctively created by Marianne who without real parents attaches herself to cultural representations of familyhood. As well as narrators and characters from novels, there are film and tv depictions too, such as Dorothy in the Wizard of Oz who symbolises Marianne’s imaginary search for her first home with foster mother, Mabel and her two sons. The two sons continue to be part of Marianne’s life and embody Hoss and Little Jo in *Bonanza* which she watches every week. She was able to bask in their personalities and still feel held and loved. It’s not just real people that she finds a way to remember. Without parents, Marianne finds connections with film stars who act like father figures like Cary Grant or Gregory Peck. ‘Over the years her father had become Gregory Peck-Atticus Finch, defender of justice and when he cuddled Scout, she could almost imagine what that felt like.’²³⁹ It is with a mother, though, that Marianne longs for connection, and so she uses hand-made postcards as a way to have conversations with her mother. This in turn creates a narrative outside *Hiraeth*, the beginnings of a mother-daughter relationship.

This chapter examines the significance of having a secure understanding of one's personal biography and the obstacles faced by care-experienced individuals in accessing supporting materials like photographs and family history.

The next chapter features missing conversations, and the ways creative expression can be used to communicate and express oneself. The therapeutic benefits of expression are linked to Marianne’s growth as an artist and to care about herself.

²³⁹ 30, Canning, p.132

Chapter 3 Conversations



Figure 8 Second Star to the Right by Marianne Thomas²⁴⁰

"Art is only a way of expressing pain." – John Lennon (*Red Mole*, 1971)

Conversations are often used to bring each other up to date, to exchange thoughts and ideas and to listen. In care though, conversations are not always a positive thing. Louise Allen, who was adopted as a child and is now an artist and an author, has written about her abusive childhood and remembers how ‘All the conversations that were going on about me went on

²⁴⁰ The painting was created by the author also known as Rosie Canning (see also p.102)

behind closed doors. No one sat down with me and asked me anything. I had never told anyone about the madness at home as I simply thought I wouldn't be believed.'²⁴¹

There are many ways that these conversations about-you-without-you take place. This could be a meeting at council offices with people involved in a child's life, staff from where they are living, teachers, social workers, foster parents, and various officials. Meetings might take place where the child is living, set up by residential and visiting social workers.

Marianne remembers back to when a social worker tried to force her to have conversations about her feelings: 'Every week on a Monday for months. Miss Eckersley, *another* new social worker, expected Marianne to have a conversation about her feelings. Most of the time Marianne ignored her and read her book, *The Hobbit*. A strange selection said Miss Eckersley.'²⁴² And yet not so strange to Marianne, it is a book that gives a strong sense of home.

Then there are those missing conversations. Marianne does not know who her mother is, and she does not understand why she is in care. The white space between the prologue and the first chapter in *Hiraeth* could be representative of the gaps in the life history of Marianne and many children in the system who often have no idea why they are there.

Marianne has some understanding of what a mother is – from books she reads, films and from parents of friends. She finds an alternate way to communicate with an imaginary mother and those closest to her, by making and sending postcards, something she has done since the age of eight when she first arrived at the Saturn Road children's home.

Sometimes she imagines conversations with her mother which help create a sense of self and with it her own worldview. It is mostly through these written shorthand postcards that Marianne can use her imagination to explore her feelings through art in relative safety. Colour and shape can represent ideas and feelings without words - something children with communication difficulties can use. Marianne has an inner world but finds communication

²⁴¹ Louise Allen. *Thrown Away Child*. (London: Simon & Schuster, 2017), p.178

²⁴² 30, Canning, *Hiraeth* p.113

difficult unless it is through angry protest. Later in the novel, she begins to understand something about the process of artmaking. Art is also something that is accessible and that anyone can do.

Creativity was something encouraged by some of the staff in the children's home where I lived. For example, one member of staff made her own clothes, though in the seventies this was quite common, as was crocheting, knitting, string art, patchwork, weaving and many other creative forms. I remember being taught how to make a pair of trousers for my *Sindy* doll. It took me ages to understand how to put together two fronts and two backs, one for each leg (it's not as easy as it seems). A member of staff was for once patient and not their usual scowling self. They could be quite ferocious and scary, but it was through this creative relationship that something other than animosity formed. That member of staff did not want to be at Saturn Road any more than I thought I did. They had lost their job in another borough due to illness. I went on to do CSE needlework instead of art, thinking I was being sensible for choosing a subject that would help me in real life. The member of staff may have advised me, or she may have been gone by then, but those early needlework sessions introduced me to the peace of sewing and ensured a kinder remembrance of her.

14. Postcards

Just before the Upgrade in early 2020, I felt something was missing from the novel, something that would anchor the writing and add a creative element. I had been following a creative writing academic online, Kelcey Parker Ervick, and read about her new book, *The Bitter Life of Božena Němcová*,²⁴³ which is part biography, part memoir and part collage including postcards, found texts, and images. Serendipitously, I attended a *Writers in Conversation* event at Southampton featuring novelist Claire Fuller²⁴⁴. Within Fuller's novel

²⁴³ Kelcey Parker Ervick, *The Bitter Life of Božena Němcová: A Biographical Collage* (Brookline, MA: Rose Metal Press, 2016).

²⁴⁴ *Writers in Conversation with Claire Fuller*, 2017. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=W2coLns_czM. [accessed 19 January 2020].

Swimming Lessons,²⁴⁵ ‘found letters’ are used as a device. Letters from a ‘vanished’ wife are left in the collection of marginalia books that have been collected obsessively by the husband. These letters tell the story of the couple’s marriage. At the event, Fuller gave each person who bought her book a piece of ephemera, an old letter, postcard, or photo from a junk shop collection - a tangible thing brought from the fictional into the real world. Being able to slip from fiction to reality inspired my creative search and response.

From a very young age I have had a collection of ephemera: letters, postcards, exercise books and posters which despite moving pre / post-care I have somehow managed to keep. After reading *The Bitter Life of Božena Němcová*, and *Swimming Lessons*, I made a creative decision to give Marianne a collection of postcards. The essence of a postcard is a gesture of presence: “I am here” or “I am thinking of you”. This idea grew, she would also create her own postcards and send them to friends and an imaginary mother, and these would become a collection to go with the novel.



Figure 9 Hiraeth postcards exhibited at Care Experience Conference 2019.²⁴⁶

²⁴⁵ Claire Fuller, *Swimming Lessons* (London: Fig Tree, 2017).

²⁴⁶ Rosie Canning. ‘Reflections From The Care-experience Conference.’ *Orphans & Care-experience in Literature* (blog), 6 May 2019. https://careleaversinfiction.files.wordpress.com/2019/04/dsc_2875.jpeg [accessed 19 May 2020].

The postcard collection includes eighteen painted and eight printed postcards. To start thinking about a postcard collection, I put in earphones, played 1970s music on my mobile phone and went to Muswell Hill. I took photographs of stone walls in the area where Marianne had her first bedsit. Parts of this North London suburb are preserved²⁴⁷, wooden windows and front doors - original clinker walls.²⁴⁸ I looked for unusual patterns that Marianne could sketch and turn into postcards.



Figure 10 Photographs and patterns from Muswell Hill

²⁴⁷ *London Borough of Haringey* (2019) <<https://www.haringey.gov.uk/planning-and-building-control/planning/planning-policy/design-and-conservation/conservation-areas/list-conservation-areas-haringey>> [accessed 19 January 2019].

²⁴⁸ By-product of brick making in North London during the Georgian era were blackened, fused-together bricks called clinkers 'The Archer | Archive | September 2018' <<http://www.the-archer.co.uk/archive.php?year=2018&month=September>> [accessed 19 January 2019].

Initially I experimented on the computer with colour and artistic effects, these initial ideas were eventually discarded as I felt the finished artwork (see fig.12) was too modern for the 1970s contemporary look I was after.

I investigated colour and art from the 1930s and 1970s. I did this in a number of ways, both by using the Internet and various apps such as Pinterest where I collated various styles. I had already been using this account for 1970s - fashion, make-up and hairstyles as well as household design and furniture. The seventies were particularly colourful coming after the black and white post-war austerity of 1950s. Britain was headed towards a new decade. The second half of the sixties and the early seventies were all about colour and being creative, just think the 14-hour Technicolour Dream,²⁴⁹ flower power,²⁵⁰ and psychedelia.



Figure 11 1960s LP Covers

²⁴⁹ 29th April, 1967: A concert was held at Alexandra Palace, North London. The 14 Hour Technicolor Dream was

²⁵⁰ Coined in 1965 by acclaimed poet and voice of his generation Allen Ginsberg

Pink and orange were popular colours, and they often had an opposing duller colour which highlighted the brighter colours even more. I used a dull green border (Figure. 12) to give that effect.



Figure 12 A graphic and a pink postcard

After experimenting online, for the next postcard I used paints, crayons and looked for inspiration and colour ideas in my old children's books from the 1970s, and artist books from the 1930s and 1940s for examples of style and colour in particular soft greys and blues, forest green and dusky shades.²⁵¹

²⁵¹ '1930s Paint Colours' <<https://www.tikkurila.co.uk/inspiration/period-design/1930s-paint-colours>> [accessed 4 July 2024]



Figure 13 1970s Books/Art

I used artists materials and hand-drew images on postcards whilst trying to capture the era in my mind as well as the bright colours, there were also duller interpretations. (see below)



Figure 14 Collage using Paint & Crayons

On one of my visits to Muswell Hill, I found myself near Alexandra Palace, commonly known as Ally Pally, just as the daylight began to fade. In that twilight moment, I encountered a scene that stirred a deep sense of *Hiraeth*. In the near distance, through a small cluster of trees, I saw a window faintly illuminated, casting a warm glow amidst the approaching darkness. Inspired by this scene, I created a postcard (see figure 29) trying to capture the feeling of nostalgia and longing. It was an experiment in visualising the meaning of *Hiraeth*, always just out of reach, and not inspired by any artist or colour scheme. The soft light symbolising the longing for a home somewhere, that only exists in the heart. The same theme of yearning and the elusive nature of home for those with care-experience who have been moved about a lot, sharing homes with strangers, is mirrored in the abstract painting (Figure. 11) at the start of the novel, entitled ‘Homesick’ which explores the emotions and visual representations behind the concept of being homesick and the universal desire for home.

The postcards help Marianne write about her feelings even if she’s not aware of that. They give her a safe space to explore questions that are important to her in her own way and at her own pace. (Rather than being ‘captured’ in a room as a child by a social worker, where it was hoped she would ‘open up.’) Whilst creating these small works of art, she has internal conversations with herself and often by the end of the process things will have shifted.

The postcards also help Marianne make connections with other people, such as the nice old guy Mr Poste in the ‘house of happy endings,’ though sending a postcard to Jimmy works against her.

The therapeutic benefits of art²⁵² are well known. In Marianne’s case, art will be a vocational move to become an artist. Art gives her a place to explore, heal and forget. As Marianne lacks support or holding from anyone, she must somehow learn how to care about

²⁵² Using a qualitative systematic review which compared the effectiveness of art therapy with control for treating non-psychotic mental health disorders; art therapy was reported to have statistically significant positive effects compared with control in a number of studies. Lesley Uttley and others, *Clinical Effectiveness of Art Therapy: Quantitative Systematic Review, Systematic Review and Economic Modelling of the Clinical Effectiveness and Cost-Effectiveness of Art Therapy among People with Non-Psychotic Mental Health Disorders* (NIHR Journals Library, 2015) <<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK279641/>> [accessed 25 July 2022].

herself by understanding who she is and can be, and where her boundaries lie. Once achieved, she has tools with which to develop. Greg's grandmother, the artist next door will help her prepare a portfolio for art college.

Sending postcards help Marianne explore the silence in her life – the absent mother. As Marianne matures and gains the ability to process her emotions, she becomes increasingly aware of the constant image of a mother figure throughout her life. In sending these postcards, she is sending bits of herself, expressing inner thoughts, uncovering what drives her. This helps her to process her emotions and gain clarity about her own wellbeing.

Jimmy, her first boyfriend, does not understand the significance of the postcard she sends him after making love for the first time. He is irritated by this show of emotion from the normally unemotional and uncomplicated Marianne.²⁵³ She is living with the void of longing; longing for someone to care; longing for a response which never happens. It is only when painting that the idea suddenly comes to her that she can illustrate with colour that missingness. For example, 'Postcards to My Mother,' whereby Marianne writes to her, as a child writes to Father Christmas asking for presents, posting to a *Peter Pan* inspired address – words for an imaginary mother. Postcards are a way for her to have some control over the unknowingness, the void of who she is. Postcards are also economically accessible.

As the *Hiraeth* narrator explains:

'It meant that whoever sent [the postcard] had at that moment of writing, been thinking of Marianne. Sending her love. Seeing her face in their mind's eye.

Imagining her reading the message. They could be miles away, abroad, or at some English seaside town but they would be thinking of her.'

Which is of course a sort of 'holding.' Postcards create a conscious connection either from the person sending them or with the person receiving them. They know the sender has

²⁵³ 30, Canning, p.150

been thinking about them and taken time over it.²⁵⁴ It was normal practice in the seventies to send postcards and when friends went on holiday there was a sort of expectation of receiving one. An act of remembrance, and for a few moments Marianne could be wherever the friend was, living vicariously, experiencing a few moments of a family holiday.

She turns the yearning for a mother into art and words, an act that is important to her but also doomed to fail without an address. The younger version is able to hold onto magical hope like the Father Christmas mentioned earlier, but sixteen-year-old self knows better even though she still has the compulsion to do it. Communicating with an imaginary mother gives Marianne the chance for a short while to experience feelings of what it could be like to have one.

Writing to her mother was a bit like writing to Father Christmas. She thought of the postcard with the orange of the robins' breasts created with lentils – that had been over eight years ago, the first Christmas at Saturn Road, and the first postcard she had really posted in the post box on the corner of the road: *Mrs M for Mother, Second star to the right, The Universe.*

Dear Mummy wherever you are,
I wish you a very merry Christmas.
Love your daughter,
*Marianne.*²⁵⁵

Only a few words, but with no one else to communicate with, they illustrate a huge need. A key moment for Marianne happens when she moves into a new bedsit in a large house in Muswell Hill. A new friend Greg invites her to meet his grandmother a couple of doors away. Eileen is an artist who offers to paint Marianne. Apart from a physical representation, the portrait captures a sense of Marianne's gentleness and determination. It shows Marianne that

²⁵⁴ WalesOnline. 'Holiday Makers Sending Texts Not Postcards.' WalesOnline, 12 August 2005. <https://www.walesonline.co.uk/news/wales-news/holiday-makers-sending-texts-not-2383066>.

²⁵⁵ Rosemary Canning, 'Hiraeth (a Novel): Representations of Care-experience in Literature' (unpublished Unpublished PhD, University of Southampton, 2024). P.116

she is “seen” and that she really exists as well as giving her an idea of herself as ‘beautiful’ and there being a permanent record of her which after it is given as a gift becomes accessible, unlike Social Care files. Marianne observes: ‘She had felt different since Greg had hung it on the wall. More confident and she found herself really caring about the girl in the portrait. She wondered if she looked like her mother.’ This is a turning point for Marianne, not only is she seen by others, but she sees herself and more than this, she begins to care about the girl in the portrait. Greg tells her ‘You can be anybody you want to be’.

Marianne looks at the painting and realises the truth of this statement. She could and she would. She wanted a ‘good enough’ life for her and herself.’

At the top of Snowdon, Marianne recognises some of her past behaviours are not that healthy and this will change the future of her story. She will go to art college, a decision she makes at the top of the mountain – instinctively she knows art is good for her. She can explore her feelings through words and pictures, just like her mother had done before her.

I wanted to mention an artist in the journal belonging to Marianne's mother, Mair. I discovered Brenda Chamberlain at the National Library of Wales. Chamberlain produced postcards and Christmas cards as well as writing poetry. She was the first wife of the artist John Petts, with whom she founded the Caseg Press.

Aged 59, she took an overdose and subsequently died, as did Marianne's mother and sadly, my own. I knew nothing about this artist before I went to Wales, I was just looking for a Welsh female artist/poet of a particular age who could have perhaps influenced Marianne's mother. Chamberlain was often undecided which medium to use and often used words, paint, collage as did Mair and Marianne.

15. Portrait Of Care

During National Care Leavers Week 2020, I worked with the University of Southampton Widening Participation Department and created an online project, ‘A Portrait of Care’ using photographic self-portraiture. I hoped to de-stigmatise the experience of care in a creative

way—for example, you cannot tell from a photograph a person’s care-experience – this was a way to improve perceptions and general public awareness. The ‘living’ exhibition, ‘[A Portrait of Care.](#)’ coincided with and featured photographs of people of many age groups, from young to middle-aged and older contributors. Originally, I wanted to exhibit the portraits in a local gallery but because of the pandemic, I used Instagram which improved accessibility. i.e. rather than having to visit a gallery, anyone with access to a computer or mobile phone could take part. Anyone who wanted to take part was able to define themselves through their photos and brief messages, participants did not need to reveal details of their care status. As an added extra I also organised a free draw for ten winning participants to have their portrait painted. I wanted to involve care-experienced artists so the wider public could see how talented they are. I thought it would be a wonderful gift for those who were successful in the draw. The important thing was that the artists had freedom of composition to create a portrait of how they saw the winners.

(See appendix I.)



Figure 15 A Portrait of Care (Instagram)

Artists and designers made self-portraits as exercises in expression and character portrayal. Self-portraits can also tell a story (narrative). I hoped that for the winning participants in 'A Portrait of Care,' having their portrait drawn by an artist would give them a sense of themselves and express their depth of personality.

This chapter examines the theme of conversations in the care system, exploring how discussions about individuals often happen without their participation. It also shows Marianne's use of postcards to communicate with her absent mother and the therapeutic role of art in her life including the use of colour and design in the making of art. As well the chapter discusses the significance of a portrait painted by Greg's grandmother in affirming

Chapter 3

Marianne's identity. It touches on broader efforts to challenge stereotypes about care-experiences through creative expression, as seen in initiatives like "A Portrait of Care."

The next chapter concludes the commentary, emphasizing the need to challenge stereotypes and amplify care-experienced voices. It discusses the author's novel, societal attitudes towards the care system, and efforts to counteract stigma.

Chapter 4 Conclusion

When I started the PhD some years ago there was little scholarly work about the experience of care outside of social sciences, when I say care, I don't mean orphans - as much has been written about the literary orphan. When it comes to contemporary representation of state care-experience, there is now more but it focuses on limited stories for example children's novels *Tracy Beaker* which features life in a children's home and *Harry Potter* which illustrates foster care as well as fantasy. In adult representation, Jeanette Winterson is popular and more recently Jenni Fagan. However, more could be done around the area of representation. Portrayal is a powerful way to influence readers both by reinforcing old stereotypes and diversifying literature.

My novel, *Hiraeth*, is an essential contribution to this shift and draws from my personal care-experience, research, and activism. *Hiraeth* offers a fresh perspective. By presenting a protagonist, Marianne, who defies stereotypes of care leavers, the novel provides readers with a more realistic and relatable portrayal. I wanted to do what Jenni Fagan calls '...flipping the conventional polarity...so that the reader might experience marginalised points of view, or imaginatively inhabit the subjectivity of marginalised individuals...' ²⁵⁶

By using a care-experienced lens to analyse literature and citing works by scholars with care-experience, I am amplifying their voices and contributing to a more inclusive representation.

The novel explores themes of identity, belonging, and creative expression which can be transformative. Marianne's use of post cards helps her navigate life and contribute to her changing identity. *Hiraeth* challenges pathologising Care Leavers as damaged and shows the importance of pursuing creative outlets.

I addressed historical stigma of children in care noting how these stereotypes have

²⁵⁶ Jenni Fagan. Fagan, Jenni. 'Luckenbooth and The Metamorphosis of a Novel (Inspired by Kafka's The Metamorphosis),' 30 November 2020. <https://doi.org/10.7488/era/1334>.

persisted and influenced public opinion and policy. Although the recent Care Review's recommendation for Protected Status for care-experienced individuals is a step in the right direction, it needs more substantial action and support.

By researching my own life, finding the roots of *Hiraeth* when I read my Social Care files and reading of how as a little girl in care telling her Social Worker she wanted to write a story about her life, I came to realise that I had been using writing as protest from a very young age. Even then, I was understanding that to be in care meant often being othered but also seeing life from a unique lived perspective. This is the opposite of pathologizing. I see the individual as a whole person, rather than as someone who is defined by a label.

To leave care means becoming vulnerable to narratives in a new way. Nowadays, young Care Leavers face even more danger as government have recently approved unregulated accommodation.²⁵⁷ Since beginning the PhD there have been all sorts of cultural shifts in attitudes towards the care system and especially conversations via Social Media (see appendix J) where many people and organisations protest negative stereotypes and initiate campaigns. Are we in the midst of a quiet revolution? Yes, there is a social movement, but there is still a long way to go.

Marianne longs for a home and by the end of the novel is learning how to home-make for herself in the 'house of happy endings.' Narrative inheritance held her. Books held her, friendly narrators stood in as family. She sees herself through the orphans, abandoned children, or those with interrupted childhoods in books. Postcards create conversations with an imaginary mother and allow her to express her feelings. Marianne is learning to parent herself. And through art, this parenting progresses still further. Her portrait teaches her to care about herself; she has become tangible; she is real. She has an identity. Marianne cares about the girl in the painting and ultimately herself.

²⁵⁷ In unregulated accommodation, children are legally only able to receive 'support' and not 'care' as they would in foster family or a residential children's home.

Marianne's story is of someone finding a way to live a good enough life, not an ideal one, but one with sprinklings of hope.

Writing about some of my lived care-experience, analysing care-experienced literature, using a care-experience lens to reflect on what I have discovered, Marianne's journey has enabled me to begin to understand how I became the person I am and led me to question the influences on the journey of Care Leavers without supportive parents. Who will parent these children, hold them, how will they survive?

I wanted to use the novel to explore alternative ways of surviving the care system without family or friends, without anyone. Unfortunately, that is the stark reality for many young people abandoned by the state – some of whom do not survive and do not have a 'good enough' life.

Hiraeth challenges the idea that if you do not have parents and are put into care, you are damaged. I took everything away from Marianne so that she would find ways within herself to sculpt the beginnings of a 'good enough' life. She does not have parental figures, her 'best' friend abandons her when they fall out. She has to find ways to cope with heartbreak and she turns to the thing that has been constant, that has held her ever since she learnt to read – her stories, her alternate literary family and her postcards, her art, which are used as a therapeutic support, and while doing all of this she learns to form new, sustaining relationships.

Too often, a reader is expected to believe that because a character was in care, he or she becomes a criminal - a well-known trope in crime fiction creating harmful stereotypes and often used without foresight, forethought or good enough research. Narratives like this fail to capture the complex realities of these individuals' lives and reinforce the 'single story' rather than the 'life story' story.

For readers, it's not clear when opening a novel that features care-experience how the care-experienced character will be portrayed and through whose lens the story will unfold –

the narrative might be traumatising for a care-experienced reader. Representations are inconsistent: there are no guidelines or ground rules.

It is paramount that members of the care-experience community play a key role in shaping and informing fiction published into the mass market that includes care-experienced characters. Narratives of poor outcomes and harmful stereotypes that dominate popular culture and government statistics, need to be challenged. Care-experienced people need to see themselves represented positively in the literature they consume.

Representation matters. By moving beyond stereotypes and portraying multifaceted characters, care-experienced literature can enrich our understanding of the struggles and triumphs of those who have lived them and create a more inclusive literary landscape where all voices are heard, acknowledged, and celebrated, fostering a sense of belonging and hope for the future.

Hiraeth (a novel) by Rosie Canning

Hiraeth has no word in English. It is a Welsh word meaning homesickness for a home to which you cannot return, a home which maybe never was.

Redacted





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A horizontal bar chart titled "Percentage of respondents who believe that the current administration is responsible for the current state of the world, by age group." The x-axis represents the percentage, ranging from 0 to 100 in increments of 20. The y-axis lists age groups: 18-29, 30-49, 50-69, 70+, and Overall. Each age group has a corresponding blue bar. The overall average is represented by a red bar at the bottom.

Age Group	Percentage
18-29	78
30-49	72
50-69	65
70+	58
Overall	68

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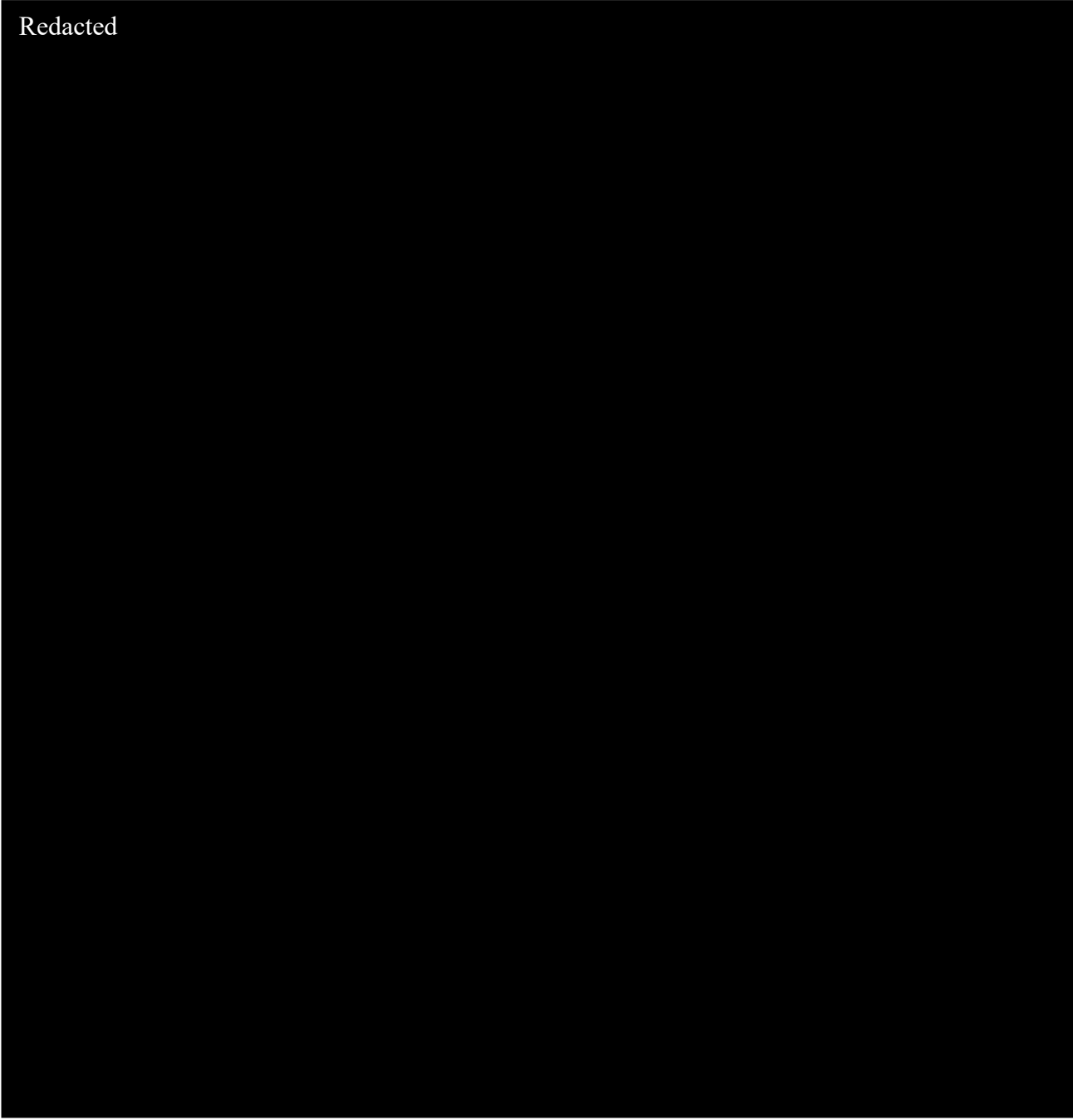
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Chapter Ten

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1	85%
2	100%
3	95%
4	90%
5	100%
6	98%
7	95%
8	25%

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Response	Percentage
Yes, the U.S. should take action to address climate change	85%
No, the U.S. should not take action to address climate change	15%

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Bar Index	Approximate Length (%)
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3	60
4	35
5	65
6	100
7	75
8	100
9	15
10	45
11	100
12	90
13	100
14	10
15	40
16	30
17	100
18	70
19	35
20	35
21	100
22	100
23	100
24	60

Marianne was wearing her new boucle-blue, maxi coat, she'd bought it at Chapel Market glad at last to be one of the in-crowd. They were all the rage. She'd been saving every week and Ann let her off a couple of quid from the rent which was how she could afford it.

Ray beeped outside. She looked through the curtains at his *Reliant Robin*. Paul was sitting in the front.

'You ready, Helen?' shouted Marianne, opening the front door.

'Coming!..'

'Have a nice time,' shouted Cheryl. Helen ignored her.

The girls sat in the back of the car.

'Is your mum okay now?' asked Marianne. 'I think she's still ignoring me.'

'Oh, she'll get over it. Mum's been getting the leccy on the cheap for years.'

Ray and Marianne opposite Helen and Paul, and they all played cards like old married couples. And although Marianne laughed and joked, her thoughts were often elsewhere...in South London waiting outside Jimmy's flat for him to come home.

A few days later Marianne's coat began to disintegrate. Ray realised he had a leaking battery in the back of his car. *My Dad's a tailor, he'll fix it.*

Thank you! Marianne imagined a brand-new coat, maybe an extra bit of boucle but seamlessly done.

Marianne was glad she'd captured Ray at last, but she'd noticed he was a bit tight with money. She couldn't help but remember Jimmy's generosity, he always bought the drinks. Her darling

Jimmy, her first love. It was lovely *not* to think about him, as when she did it usually left her almost in tears.

To Ray she said, 'We've been together seven weeks.'

He smiled and said, 'I've got something for you.' And reaching behind him handed over a brown paper parcel

Maybe she'd misjudged him.

'Open it,' he said.

She tore the paper open and recognized her boucle-blue coat. She held it up and her heart sunk. It was a mini version of the maxi. A jacket.

He gave her a hug, 'What do you think?'

'It's nice. Do thank your dad for me.'

'Let's celebrate,' he said. 'I've been saving for a flat for a few years now and the deal is nearly done. I'll take you there soon and show you around.'

Marianne forced herself to smile brightly, but really, she was devastated. She had saved up for three months for the coat, it was the first thing she'd bought for ages and now Ray's Dad had ruined it. Ray should really offer to buy another coat, but she didn't know how to bring the subject up especially as he was offering to share his flat with her. Or at least she thought that was what he meant. She took a huge gulp of vodka and felt it go to her head.

That evening she bought more drinks than usual. She noticed Ray never refused when she offered to buy one, which most men usually did.

She had kept him at arm's length; only allowing passionate kisses and on rare occasions a bit of groping which usually left her cold. That evening, Marianne got very, very drunk.

'Let's go back to your flat now,' she smiled and kissed him with passion.

His eyes lit up, 'Don't you change your mind again,' he said.

'No, I promise I won't.'

His flat was in St Neots. It was a long drive and by the time they got there, Marianne had sobered up. 'I don't want to do it now,' she said.

Ray slapped her face hard.

Marianne was so shocked she didn't know what to do. He grabbed her, pulling her into a bedroom and pushing her onto a bed. He pulled off her trousers and underwear. It was going to happen. Marianne began reciting the Lord's Prayer in her head, over and over until it was over.

He cupped her face and kissed her, 'That was good, wasn't it?.'

She turned her head, mumbling she was tired.

Listening as his breathing slowed down, she imagined fleeing the flat. But how would she get back to Helen's? It was miles away and she had no idea where she was. Tears flowed and she sobbed, remembering Jimmy, his gentleness and wishing he were there.

The phone rang.

Marianne just knew it would be Ray.

Helen answered it and nodded at Marianne.

Tell him I'm not here,' she whispered.

After Helen put the receiver back, she asked again. 'What happened.

Don't feel I got to the stage of him getting on my nerves exactly, more he made me....'

Helen stared, waiting.

Marianne turned her head and continued watching *Coronation Street*, 'I want to see who won the 'Personality of the Rovers' contest

A while later, a knock on the front door revealed Paul and Ray grinning on the doorstep.

Helen and Paul chatted for a bit until he proudly announced they'd got off with a couple of girls at the weekend. Helen slapped his face and left him standing there. Marianne slammed the door.

Paul is always flirting with other girls, the bastard.

An hour later the phone rang. It was Ray. Marianne was so angry, she shook her head

when Helen handed her the receiver. told him she wouldn't

be seeing him anymore.

'Let's go away for the weekend,' said Helen. 'And we'll meet some nice blokes out of

London. Plus we can celebrate your birthday.'

Redacted



Chapter Eleven

Sea Side Shuffle

Helen and Marianne booked a caravan for the weekend. 'Clacton here we come!'

They were both excited. It was Marianne's first grown-up holiday. And she was going with Helen, her best friend. They would have an amazing time. Meet good-looking boys, get off with them and fall in love.

Helen ironed every item of clothing and when she'd finished looked like the cat that got the cream, satisfied at the neat piles of trousers, jumpers, tops, and even flattened knickers on the bed.

Marianne's pile comprised two pairs of flares, a couple of t-shirts, her favourite, blue-checked cheesecloth shirt, a maroon waistcoat, a couple of pairs of old knickers, and a book, *The World is full of Married Men*, lent to her by Helen. She had one bra and was wearing it, a dirty grey colour.

If she had more money or a mother like Helen's who let her live rent-free and occasionally gave her fifty quid out of the blue, she might be able to afford more clothes too.

You'd think that Helen would offer to lend her some of her clothes, but oh no. As long as Helen had everything and looked amazing and the boys flirted with her, nothing else seemed to matter; she was never tongue-tied or embarrassed.

'Do you need to take so much?'

Helen ignored her, laughing and very carefully packed her suitcase. It was overflowing. 'Can I put two of my jumpers in your case?'

'I suppose so.'

'Can you sit on the top while I try and lock it.'

'You trying to say I'm fat?' They burst out laughing and Marianne jumped on top of the case while Helen pressed the locks until they clicked.

Marianne pulled her suitcase from under the bed and chucked in the two jumpers.

'Don't crease them.'

Marianne hoped they would crease.

'Should we take a coat? It might be windy by the sea?'

'I'd rather freeze than wear this!' Marianne held up the shortened bobbly maxi coat, 'It's more of a jacket now! Why does everything always happen to me?'

'Marianne, you're really clever and not everything happens to you. Just stop being a moany ol' cow.'

Marianne was stunned into silence, but the comment stuck in her head all the way to the seaside.

On their second night in Clacton, and Marianne's birthday, they entered the nightclub arm in arm. A seedy-looking place with a flickering blue light right on the seafront. They were London girls and soon dancing and chatting with anyone and everyone. Marianne thought Helen looked stunning, she wore her brown wavy hair parted in the middle held back with a clasp. She had a choker round her neck and her blue make up and plucked eyebrows were perfect.

There was one good looking bloke in the nightclub and they both wanted him. The nice-looking boy asked Helen to dance. She threw Marianne a smug look and turned back to the boy all smiles and flirting.

Just look at the slutty way she did that...smiling and puckering her lips almost kissing him already. All the thoughts that Marianne had been harbouring slowly worked their way from her stomach, rising in her throat and eventually spurting like pebble dash, all over Helen.

'You fucking bitch,' she screamed, grabbing Helen's hair. The drink making her much braver than she really was. 'I hate you.'

Helen stepped back, knocking Marianne's hand away. 'Just fuck off.'

Marianne stormed out of the nightclub and ran to the beach. The strangely warm air and lapping shore making it feel like she was on a stage somewhere. There was a bloke writing in the sand. They began talking. The night air mixed with alcohol made Marianne light-headed and daring.

‘Where are you staying?’ he asked

‘Just down the road in the caravan park.’

‘You’re very pretty.’

She laughed and said anything and everything that came into her head about Helen and what a slapper she was. Eventually she kissed him proving that she too could get a bloke. He wasn’t satisfied with just kissing though and began exploring her body with his sandy fingers. First, he put his hand up her shirt and under her bra. His hands were rough from the sand. He continued kissing her and after a while he undid her jeans and began inching his way inside. Marianne suddenly felt frightened. What was she doing with somebody she didn’t even know on a beach letting them touch her intimately? She felt overwhelmed wanting Helen, her friend and not a stranger. She threw him off her body and ran in the direction of the caravan park not stopping until she found their door.

Packing up their belongings the following morning, Marianne tried to pretend everything was okay making small talk using any excuse to ask a question, but Helen ignored her. She re-read her birthday card with its lots of love, ‘Thank you for my lovely book.’ She thought Helen might at least say something, but she just carried on packing.

Going Home by Danielle Steel, a book Marianne had wanted for ages.

Once they were on the train sitting opposite a good-looking soldier Helen seemed friendly again.

‘Do you fancy *The Royalty* on Saturday?’ she asked

‘Yeah, why not.’ Marianne knew it was all a ploy but played along.

Helen flirted outrageously, even sitting on the boy's knee, and before long snogging.

Marianne leant back against the seat, watching and not watching and in the end pulled *Going Home* out of her bag. She thought how easy Helen was with boys. Marianne had to be blind drunk to be that comfortable. She loved and envied her. Dreading their return to Helen's flat, she knew her awful behaviour would be discussed and dissected, and Helen, Cheryl and her mum would most likely ostracise her. She deserved it, almost looked forward to it, it felt a familiar place to be, to claw her way back from, a place where she knew the rules.

Helen and Marianne stopped travelling to work together and going out at weekends. As she thought, they all stopped speaking to her. Occasionally there were extremes from whispers to loud voices when they wanted Marianne to hear something. *Have you seen my gold necklace, Mum? The one with the heart that Dad got me?*

It was the final straw – that Helen, her best friend could think she had stolen it. After that

The Monday she started a new temp job in a veterinary supply place in North Finchley she bumped into Geraldine, an old school friend, at the bus top.

'Watcha,' she said. 'Wot you doing here?'

Geraldine always made her laugh. That night Marianne didn't go back to Helen's, didn't even let her know, and stayed with Geraldine. They laughed so much, Marianne forgot how upset she was and eventually told Geraldine everything. How Helen and the rest of the family were ignoring her, and how she couldn't wait to get out of there.

'There's a room here,' Geraldine offered. 'You could move in immediately.'

In a strange way, Marianne was glad that she had brought Helen and Cheryl together again. Some good had come from her awfulness. Blood ties which would always exclude Marianne. It would always be that way, no matter where she lived. But she would always be grateful to Helen for rescuing her at a time when Marianne's heart was smashed to bits and she would always love her. Love wasn't something they ever talked about, but for Marianne it was always there.

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scandalous romance with a married

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Marianne Thomas grew up in a dark, rambling children's home in the

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Kategorie	Prozent
18-24	100%
25-34	95%
35-44	85%
45-54	98%
55-64	99%
65-74	92%
75+	98%
Schokolade	100%

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A series of 18 horizontal black bars of varying lengths, representing a redacted list or table. The bars are arranged in a single column, with some being significantly longer than others, suggesting a list of items where the text has been obscured.

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The image consists of a single, uniform black rectangle that fills the entire frame. There are no discernible features, text, or patterns other than the solid black color.

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A series of horizontal black bars of varying lengths, stacked vertically. The bars are of different widths and are arranged in a way that suggests they might be representing data or a stylized text. The bars are solid black and are set against a white background. The lengths of the bars vary significantly, with some being very long and others being much shorter. The bars are stacked one on top of the other, with no gaps between them. The overall effect is a dense, vertical stack of horizontal lines.

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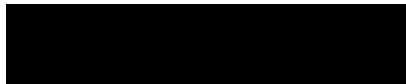
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[REDACTED] *'Marianne, Oh, Marianne'*

Oh, won't you marry me?

We can have a bamboo hut

With brandy in the tea...

Her cheeks were burning, and she felt him watching her as she struggled through the gate with her heavy sewing machine.

'Hey wait, I'll carry that.'

She rang the bell.

'Hi Norah,' he said. 'Where to?'

Norah smiled and stepped aside. 'Up the stairs, third door on the left.'

'Is that everything? Not much luggage for a young girl.'

She followed him up the stairs.

'Here we are,' he pushed open the door. 'Mmm, nice room. Where shall I put it?'

'By the window, thank you.'

'You'll need another table for the sewing machine,' said Norah, following them up the stairs. 'I have one downstairs, but the leg has come off.'

'I can fix that,' said Greg.

'I've also got some painting that needs doing.'

'I'll pop round tomorrow,' he smiled at Marianne.

She couldn't quite believe that this gorgeous young man in his blue flared jeans and matching jacket could possibly be interested in her. He was most likely just being polite.

Seeing the sun bright through the yellow flowered curtains in her new room the following morning, she felt sure it was going to be a lovely day. She had four free days before she started work at the New Opportunity Press. It was lovely to be back in Muswell Hill. She would go for a walk. In her mind's eye she saw herself leaving the house and bumping into Greg and him offering to take her to the pub for lunch. And later after lunch? A bit tipsy. Yes, he would kiss her. Marianne! She scolded herself. She must stop this. He probably had a girlfriend already. Why was it that any man who took an interest in her, meant she immediately fell in love? Apart from Wolfgang, yuk. She jumped up out of bed and began unpacking her books. *Destination Unknown*, another Agatha Christie lay on the floor where she had dropped it before falling asleep.

She heard a door open in the hallway. That must be the girl opposite. She popped her head round the corner and saw a girl about her age with short blonde hair and long legs, going into the bathroom.

She must have heard the door open and turned, 'Oh, hello. You must be Marianne. I'm Xana. Did you want to use the bathroom?'

'Yes.'

'I won't be long. Have to dash now but I'll see you tonight, if you're around.'

Marianne nodded and retreated into her room. Xana seemed so lovely, so grown up. She already wished she could be more like her and she bet she had a boyfriend.

Unpacking, sorting, putting things in drawers, hanging up her clothes. She had a small bag of food, some teabags, but no milk. Some potatoes, a few herbs. Salt and pepper. She would make potato stew.

There was a knock at the door.

'Are you okay for food?' It was Xana, 'Do you need milk or tea? '

'Milk please. Thank you.'

Xana returned with a couple of slices of bread, a knob of butter, an egg and some custard
creams.

'My favourite,' said Marianne.

'Mine too.'

They smiled.

'There's a birthday breakfast tomorrow for Mr Poste. Norah organises them for the
lodgers who live here - even Greg, the handyman. I'll knock for you. You can meet
everyone.'

And when Xana had gone, Marianne thought what a wonderful start to her new life even
if she were poor - she bet Xana had loads of food.

She still missed Jimmy, though he seemed so far away now. She'd never forget him;
he'd always be her first love.

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A series of horizontal black bars of varying lengths and positions, resembling a barcode or a stylized text representation. The bars are arranged in a vertical sequence, with some being longer than others and some having gaps between them. The overall effect is a high-contrast, abstract pattern.

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A horizontal bar chart with 18 bars of varying lengths, representing percentages. The bars are arranged in a single column. The lengths of the bars correspond to the following approximate percentages: 100%, 40%, 80%, 20%, 15%, 100%, 100%, 85%, 100%, 100%, 90%, 100%, 100%, 95%, 40%, 50%, 85%, 10%, 50%, 60%, 100%, 10%, 40%, 50%.

Category	Percentage
1	100%
2	40%
3	80%
4	20%
5	15%
6	100%
7	100%
8	85%
9	100%
10	100%
11	90%
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A horizontal bar chart titled "Percentage of respondents who believe the U.S. should take action to address climate change." The chart displays data for two main categories: "All respondents" and "U.S. adults", each further divided into "Men" and "Women". The x-axis represents the percentage, ranging from 0 to 100 in increments of 10. The y-axis lists the demographic groups. The bars are color-coded: blue for "All respondents", orange for "U.S. adults", green for "Men", and red for "Women".

Category	Gender	Percentage (%)
All respondents	Men	85
	Women	88
U.S. adults	Men	82
	Women	85

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A horizontal bar chart titled "Percentage of respondents who believe that the current administration is responsible for the current state of the world, by age group." The x-axis represents the percentage, ranging from 0 to 100 in increments of 10. The y-axis lists age groups: 18-29, 30-49, 50-69, and 70+. Each age group has four bars representing different levels of responsibility: "Not responsible at all", "Somewhat responsible", "Very responsible", and "Extremely responsible". The data shows that younger age groups (18-29 and 30-49) are more likely to believe the administration is responsible, while older age groups (50-69 and 70+) are more likely to believe it is not responsible at all.

Age Group	Not responsible at all	Somewhat responsible	Very responsible	Extremely responsible
18-29	10	20	30	40
30-49	15	25	35	25
50-69	40	30	20	10
70+	50	30	15	5

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The image consists of a series of horizontal black bars of varying lengths, arranged in a list-like structure. The bars are arranged in a way that suggests a redacted document, with some bars indented more than others. The bars are as follows:

- Bar 1: Full width
- Bar 2: Full width
- Bar 3: Indented
- Bar 4: Full width
- Bar 5: Indented
- Bar 6: Full width
- Bar 7: Indented
- Bar 8: Full width
- Bar 9: Indented
- Bar 10: Indented
- Bar 11: Indented
- Bar 12: Indented
- Bar 13: Indented
- Bar 14: Full width
- Bar 15: Indented
- Bar 16: Indented
- Bar 17: Indented

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A horizontal bar chart consisting of 15 black bars of varying lengths. The bars are arranged vertically, with some bars starting at the left margin and others indented. The lengths of the bars vary significantly, with some being very short and others nearly spanning the width of the chart area. The bars are solid black and have no labels or titles.

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This image consists of approximately 20 horizontal black bars of different lengths, stacked vertically. These bars represent redacted information from a document. The lengths vary significantly, with some bars spanning most of the width of the page and others being much shorter, indicating varying amounts of text were obscured at each point.

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A series of horizontal black bars of varying lengths, some solid and some with a dashed line, arranged in a vertical sequence. The bars are of different heights and are positioned at irregular intervals, creating a fragmented, abstract vertical composition. The bars vary in length, with some extending across most of the width and others being much shorter. Some bars are solid black, while others have a dashed line running through them. The overall effect is a rhythmic, vertical arrangement of geometric shapes.

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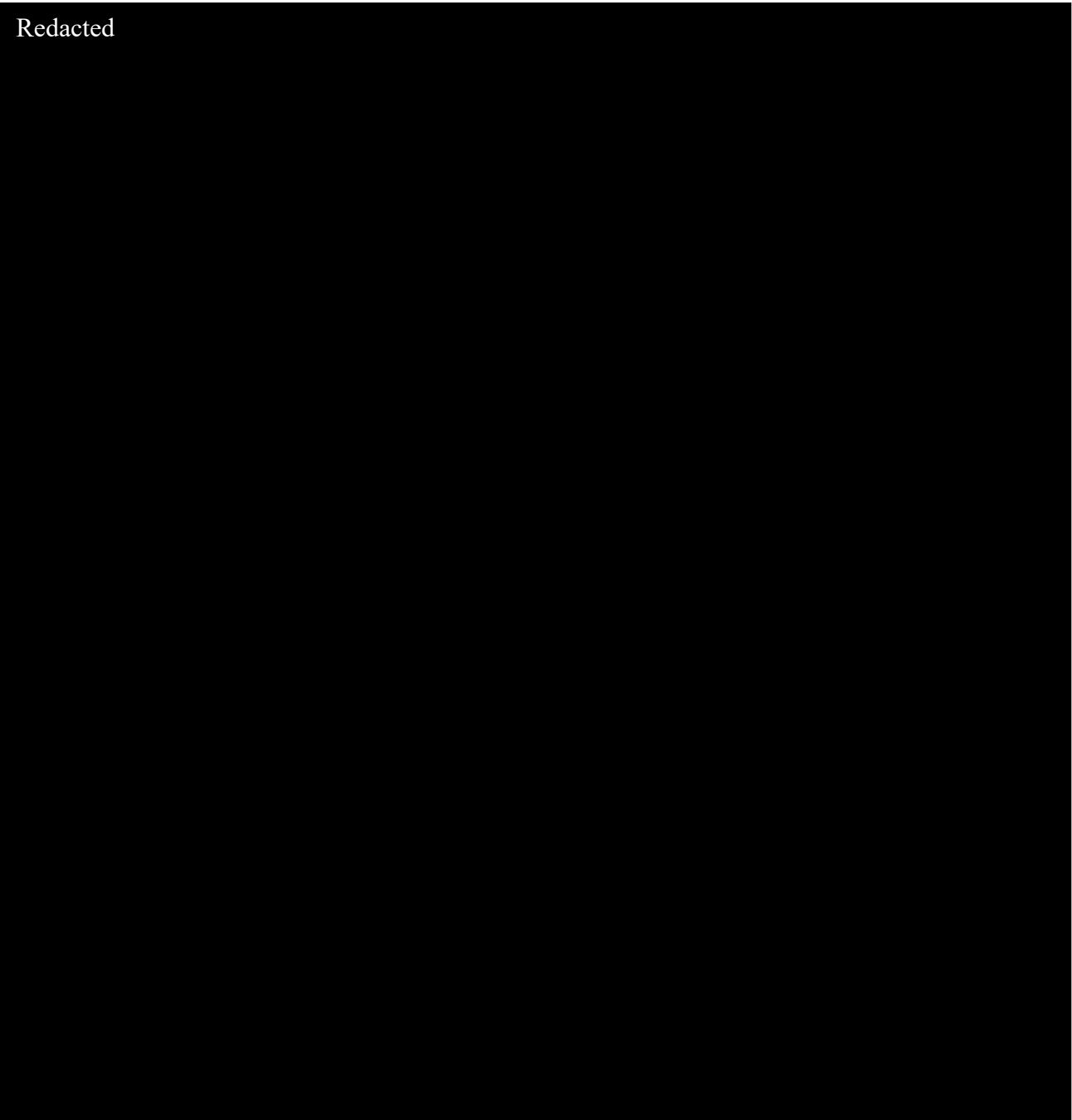
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A series of horizontal black bars of varying lengths, representing a redacted document. The bars are arranged in a list-like fashion, with some bars being longer than others, suggesting different levels of redaction or different sections of text. The bars are solid black and have no text or other markings on them.

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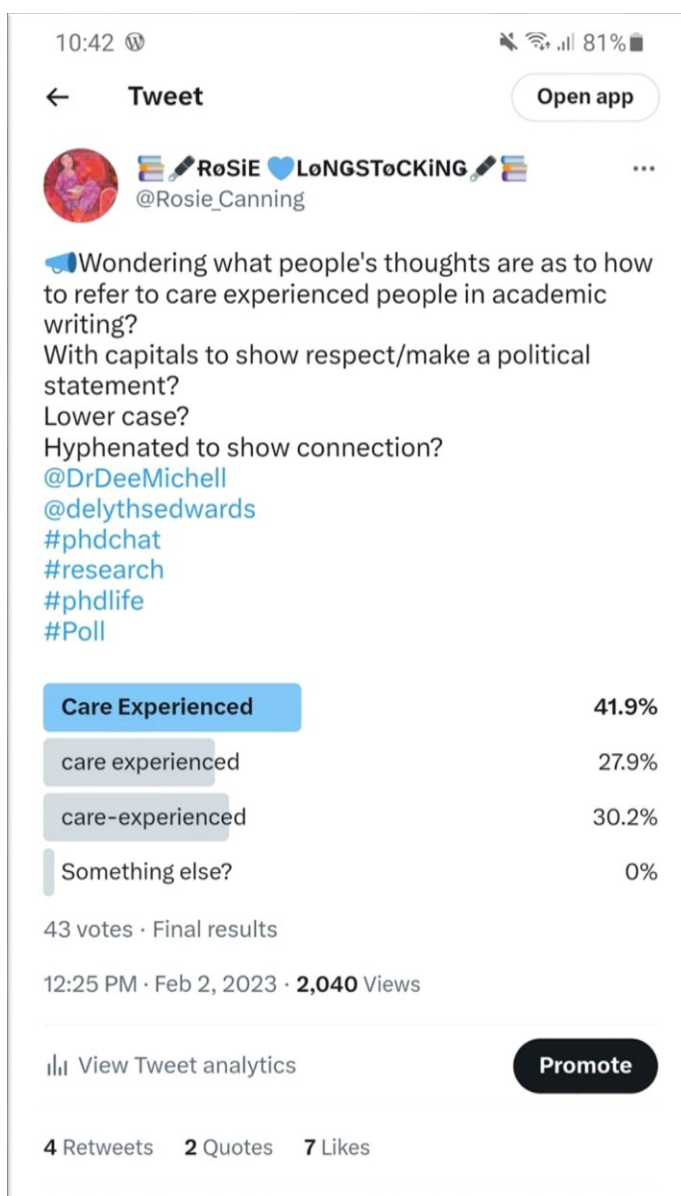
Appendix A Care Leaver and Care-experienced

Care Leaver

In his email of September 21, 2017 Mike Stein explained ‘The first time I heard the term [Care Leaver] used was in 1973 when I was involved in running a group for young people in care, the Leeds Ad-Lib group. In 2011 I wrote up the history of the rights movement and by the 1980's the terms 'Care Leaver' and 'leaving care' were being used by young people and social workers.’

Care-experienced

This tweet of February 2, 2023 on Twitter by the author carried out a poll to find out how care-experienced People wanted to be referenced in academic papers.



Appendix B Medical Certificate Mother and Baby Homes

CITY AND COUNTY OF BRISTOL
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH

CONFIDENTIAL

Admission to Mother and Baby Home

Medical Certificate

Name of Home.....

Name & address
of applicant.....

.....

.....

Probable date of
confinement

1. Is applicant free from:-

 (a) Syphilis
 Result of (i) Wasserman.....
 (ii) Kahn tests.....

 (b) Gonorrhoea

 (c) Other vaginal discharge.....

Result of routine smears

.....

Appendix C Primary data analysis of novels that feature care-experience

Category	Author	Title	Year	Description	Keywords	Publisher
Fiction by care-experienced authors	Henry Fielding	The history of Tom Jones	1749	The History of Tom Jones, a Foundling, often known simply as Tom Jones, is a comic novel by English playwright and novelist Henry Fielding. Tom is portrayed as a 'bastard' who will end up as a criminal. It is a Bildungsroman and a picaresque novel. It was first published on 28 February 1749 in London and is among the earliest English works to be classified as a novel.	England; Fiction; Illegitimacy; Fiction; Illegitimacy; Young men; England; Electronic books; Fiction; Young men	Wentworth Press
Fiction featuring care-experience	Jane Austen	Mansfield Park	1814	Jane Austen's 3rd novel, Mansfield Park (1814), is about a girl growing up in kinship care. Fanny Price is 10 when she is sent to live with a wealthy aunt and uncle. The Bertrams have 4 children, all older than Fanny. Only Fanny's cousin, Edmund, treat her kindly; her other cousins and aunt Norris are mean. Many readers find Fanny Price a difficult character to empathise one; she's described as "Jane Austen's least popular heroine." Tara Isabella Burton (2014) points out, however, that in reading Mansfield Park we need to pay attention to social class and how class privilege plays a key role in determining our expectations of what a 'good' heroine should be like.	kinship care	

Appendix C

Category	Author	Title	Year	Description	Keywords	Publisher
Fiction featuring care-experience	Mary Shelley	Frankenstein: or the modern Prometheus	1818	Frankenstein; or, The Modern Prometheus is an 1818 novel written by English author Mary Shelley. Charlotte Gordon (Introduction). Frankenstein tells the story of Victor Frankenstein, a young scientist who creates a sapient creature in an unorthodox scientific experiment. The monster is rejected by his 'father,' his maker and now orphaned left to roam the land. His feeling of abandonment compels him to seek revenge against his creator. The monster lives next to a family secretly helping them but when he reveals himself to them they are horrified. He gives up hope of ever being accepted by humans. After killing Victor's brother, he sees a likeness of Caroline Victor's mother. The Creature demands that Victor create a female companion like himself. He argues that as a living being, he has a right to happiness. The Creature promises that he and his mate will vanish into the South American wilderness, never to reappear, if Victor grants his request. Should Victor refuse, the Creature threatens to kill Victor's remaining friends and loved ones and not stop until he completely ruins him. Elizabeth Lavenza, an orphan, four to five years younger than Victor, whom the Frankenstein's adopted and Victor marries is killed by the monster on her wedding night. Victor dies shortly thereafter, telling Walton (the storyteller), in his last words, to seek "happiness in tranquillity and avoid ambition." Walton discovers the Creature on his ship, mourning over Victor's body. The Creature tells Walton that Victor's death has not brought him peace; rather, his crimes have made him even more miserable than Victor ever was. The Creature vows to kill himself so that no one else will ever know of his existence and Walton watches as the Creature drifts away on an ice raft, never to be seen again.	rejection; abandonment; monster; horror	Penguin

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Category	Author	Title	Year	Description	Keywords	Publisher
Children's Fiction	Charles Dickens	Oliver Twist	1838	The story of the orphan Oliver, who runs away from the workhouse only to be taken in by a den of thieves. A tale of childhood innocence beset by evil - arch-villain Fagin, menacing Bill Sikes and kindly prostitute Nancy. An indictment of a cruel society. Oliver is portrayed as the innocent victim whereas the street kids as criminals, enter the swaggering Artful Dodger.	orphan; cruelty; pickpocket; thieves	Penguin
Fiction by care-experienced authors	Charles Dickens et al.	Old Curiosity Shop	1840	13 year old Nell Trent, an orphan, is in kinship care with her grandfather; the two live together in the Old Curiosity Shop in London. Little Nell, a frail child quickly became one of Dickens' most celebrated characters, who so captured the imagination of his readers that while the novel was being serialised, many of them wrote to him about her fate.	England; Kinship Care; orphan	Wordsworth Editions Ltd
Fiction featuring care-experience	James Fenimore Cooper	Leatherstocking Tales	1841	The Leathinstocking Tales is a series of 5 novels featuring Natty Bumppo who is a white man raised by Delaware Indians and educated by members of a Protestant church, the Moravians. He is a courageous warrior with several nicknames, including Hawkeye. One of Cooper's stories featuring Natty Bumppo, "The Last of the Mohicans" has been adapted for film several times. Some historians believe that Nathaniel Shipman, who was a close friend of the Mohican Indians, was the inspiration for Natty Bumppo.		
Fiction featuring care-experience	Emily Bronte	Wuthering Heights	1847	Wuthering Heights is an 1847 novel by Emily Brontë, published under the pseudonym Ellis Bell. It concerns two families of the landed gentry living on the West Yorkshire moors, the Earnshaws and the Lintons, and their turbulent relationships with Earnshaw's adopted son, Heathcliff.	Fiction; Foundlings; Rural families; Yorkshire (England)	Multiple
Fiction by care-experienced authors	Charles Dickens et al.	David Copperfield: The Personal History of David Copperfield	1849	In David Copperfield - the novel Dickens described as his 'favourite child' - Dickens drew on his own experiences to create one of his most moving and enduringly popular works, filled with tragedy and comedy in equal measure. It is the story of a young man's adventures on his journey from an	Charles Dickens; orphan; novelist; writer; author	Penguin Classics

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Category	Author	Title	Year	Description	Keywords	Publisher
				unhappy childhood to the discovery of his vocation as a novelist.		
Fiction featuring care-experience	Susan Warner	The Wide, Wide World	1850	Often thought of as America's first bestselling book, The Wide, Wide World (1850) by Susan Warner features a child in kinship care. Ellen Montgomery is taken to Europe to live with an aunt because her mother is ill. The aunt, Fortune Emerson, is unkind. After a time Ellen is invited to stay with relatives in Scotland where she is treated more benevolently, but the relatives become possessive, wanting Ellen to renounce her American heritage and her religion. Ellen returns to American after she marries John Humphreys, the brother of a friend she met when living with Fortune Emerson.	kinship care; cruelty; possessiveness	
Fiction by care-experienced authors	Elizabeth Gaskell	Ruth	1853	Ruth is a novel by Elizabeth Gaskell, first published in three volumes in 1853. Ruth Hilton is an orphaned young seamstress who catches the eye of a gentleman, Henry Bellingham, who is captivated by her simplicity and beauty. When she loses her job and home, he offers her comfort and shelter, only to cruelly desert her soon after. Portrayed as a victim.	orphan; rejection; desertion; illegitimacy; stigma; governess	
Children's Fiction	Charles Dickens	Great Expectations	1861	As a small boy at Joe Gargery's forge, orphan Pip meets two people who will affect his whole life - an escaped convict he is forced to help, and the eccentric Miss Havesham, whose beautiful, cold-hearted ward Estella young Pip adores. But when a secret benefactor pays for him to go to London to become a gentleman, Pip never dreams he will meet the dreadful Magwitch again, nor just how wrong his expectations are. Great Expectations was Charles Dickens's thirteenth novel and his penultimate (completed) novel. A bildungsroman which depicts the personal growth and personal development of an orphan nicknamed Pip who is in kinship care, living with his sister in the marshes of Kent.	orphan; convict; benefactor	Penguin

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Category	Author	Title	Year	Description	Keywords	Publisher
				Great Expectations follows Pip's childhood and young adult years, a blacksmith's apprentice in a country village. He suddenly comes into a large fortune (his great expectations) from a mysterious benefactor and moves to London where he enters high society. He thinks he knows where the money has come from but he turns out to be sadly mistaken. The story also follows Pip's dealings with Estella, a young woman he adores but who cannot return his love.		
Children's Fiction	Louisa May Alcott	Little Women	1868	The classic story of the four March sisters - Meg, Jo, Beth and Amy who are living with their mother while their father is away fighting in the American Civil War. Laurie, or Theodore Laurence, is in kinship care. A neighbour and friend, he is a teenage boy who has been living with his wealthy grandfather since his parents died.	United States; Kinship Care	Scholastic
Children's Fiction	Johanna Spyri	Heidi	1880	Heidi is a work of fiction written in 1880 by Swiss author Johanna Spyri, originally published in two parts as Heidi's years of learning and travel (German: Heidi's Lehr- und Wanderjahre) and Heidi makes use of what she has learned. It is a novel about the events in the life of a young girl in kinship care with her grandfather, in the Swiss Alps. It was written as a book "for children and those who love children. "Heidi is one of the best-selling books ever written and is among the best-known works of Swiss literature.	Kinship Care; Orphan; Switzerland	CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform
Children's Fiction	Mark Twain	The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn	1885	Mark Twain's great American masterpiece, the tale of a boy's picaresque journey down the Mississippi on a raft conveyed the voice and experience of the American frontier as no other work had done before. When Huck escapes from his drunken father and the 'sivilizing' Widow Douglas with the runaway slave Jim, he embarks on a series of adventures that draw him to feuding families and the trickery of the unscrupulous 'Duke' and 'Dauphin.' Beneath the exploits, however, are more serious undercurrents - of slavery, adult control and, above all, of Huck's struggle between his	slavery; slave; friendship	Benediction Classics

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Category	Author	Title	Year	Description	Keywords	Publisher
				instinctive goodness and the corrupt values of society, which threaten his deep and enduring friendship with Jim.		
Fiction featuring care-experience	Oscar Wilde	The Picture of Dorian Gray	1890	The Picture of Dorian Gray is a Gothic and philosophical novel by Oscar Wilde, first published complete in the July 1890 issue of Lippincott's Monthly Magazine. Dorian was orphaned since birth due to the cruelty and manipulation of his grandfather (his mother's father). Dorian's grandfather, Lord Kelso, proves to be a mean and cruel old man through characterizations given by Dorian as well as third parties, such as Lord Henry's Uncle George. Fully aware of her father's role in the death of her husband, Dorian's mother, Margaret Devereux, never spoke to her father again and died within a year. Leaving behind her orphaned son to be raised in a hostile environment, under Lord Kelso's care. When a naïve young Dorian arrives in Victorian London, he is swept into a social whirlwind by the charismatic Lord Wotton, who introduces Dorian to the pleasures of the city. Henry's friend Basil Hallward paints a portrait of Dorian to capture the full power of his youthful beauty. When the portrait is unveiled, Dorian makes a flippant pledge: he would give anything to stay as he is in the picture - even his soul.	England; Kinship Care	Penguin
Fiction featuring care-experience	Jules Verne	The Extraordinary Adventures of Foundling Mick	1893	The Extraordinary Adventures of Foundling Mick by French novelist, Jules Verne (1828-1905), was first published in 1893, but then 'lost' until 2008. Set in 19th century Ireland, the story follows Mick from one bad 'placement' to another until he finds safe haven with a kind couple in Kerry and financial success in Dublin. Apparently, Verne never travelled to Ireland (although he visited Scotland) but he had considerable respect for the Irish.		

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Category	Author	Title	Year	Description	Keywords	Publisher
Children's Fiction	Rudyard Kipling	The Jungle Book	1894	The tales in the book (as well as those in The Second Jungle Book, which followed in 1895 and includes five further stories about Mowgli) are fables, using animals in an anthropomorphic manner to teach moral lessons. A major theme in the book is abandonment followed by fostering, as in the life of Mowgli, echoing Kipling's own childhood. Mowgli was lost by his parents as a baby in the Indian jungle during a tiger attack, he is adopted by the Wolf Mother, Raksha and Father Wolf, who call him Mowgli (frog) because of his lack of fur and his refusal to sit still. Shere Khan the tiger demands that they give him the baby but the wolves refuse. Mowgli grows up with the pack, hunting with his brother wolves. In the pack, Mowgli learns he can stare down any wolf, and his unique ability to remove the painful thorns from the paws of his brothers is deeply appreciated as well.		
Children's Fiction	L Frank Baum	The Wonderful Wizard of Oz	1900	Dorothy Gale is living in kinship care on a farm in Kansas. After a cyclone she and her dog, Toto, are propelled into the magical Land of Oz. Dorothy is told by the Good Witch of the North that the way home is via the yellow brick road to the Emerald City where she can ask the Wizard of Oz for help.	kinship care; witch; wizard; red shoes	George M. Hill Company
Children's Fiction	Frances Hodgson Burnett	A Little Princess	1905	When Sara Crewe is orphaned she is stripped of her lovely things and forced to work as a servant at the boarding school she once attended. A classic tale of courage and imagination.	England; Orphan; Boarding School; India	Penguin
Children's Fiction	Lucy Maud Montgomery	Anne of Green Gables	1908	First published in 1908, “Anne of Green Gables” is Lucy Maud Montgomery’s enduring children’s classic which chronicles the coming of age of a young orphan girl, from the fictional community of Bolingbroke, Nova Scotia. The story begins with her arrival at the Prince Edward Island farm of Miss Marilla Cuthbert and Mr. Matthew Cuthbert, siblings in their fifties and sixties, who had decided to adopt	Foster Care; Children's Home; Orphanage; Orphan; Canada; Teacher	BANTAM DELL

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Category	Author	Title	Year	Description	Keywords	Publisher
				a young boy to help on the farm. However, through a misunderstanding, the orphanage sends Anne Shirley instead. While the Cuthbert's are at first determined to return Anne to the orphanage, after a few days they decide instead to keep her. Set in the close knit farm community of Avonlea, based on the author's real life home on Prince Edward Island, "Anne of Green Gables" is at once both a comic and tragic tale. Read by millions, this novel begins a series of books that the author continued writing until the day she died.		
Children's Fiction	Frances Hodgson Burnett	The Secret Garden	1911	At the turn of the 20th century, Mary Lennox is a neglected and unloved 10-year-old girl, born in British India to wealthy British parents who never wanted her and tried to ignore the girl. She is cared for primarily by native servants, who allow her to become spoiled, demanding, and self-centered and this is the initial portrayal the reader sees. After a cholera epidemic kills Mary's parents, the few surviving servants flee the house without Mary. Mary is sent to Misselthwaite Manor, on the Yorkshire moors, to live with her uncle. There she discovers her sickly cousin Colin, who is equally obnoxious and imperious. Both love no one because they have never been loved. Mary finds a secret garden and with Colin and the help of the gardener they bring it back to its former glory.	England; Kinship Care; Orphan; American fiction; Fiction in English American writers, 1861-1900 Texts;	Puffin Books
Children's Fiction	J M Barrie	Peter Pan in Kensington Garden	1911	The story of Peter Pan had its genesis in the 1902 novel "the Little White Bird", the central chapters of which tell of a child "who escaped from being a human when he was seven days old and flew back to Kensington Gardens". Barrie developed this story both into a play (first performed in 1904 but not published until 1928) and this book of 1906.	Foster Care; England; Homeless	Random House Value Pub
Fiction featuring	Ethel Ewan Turner et al.	That girl	1912	The story of a foster child who is taken in by a family who care for her.	Foster Care; Orphans; Girls;	Ward, Lock

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Category	Author	Title	Year	Description	Keywords	Publisher
care-experience					Friendship; Juvenile fiction	
Children's Fiction	Eleanor H Porter	Pollyanna	1913	Classic children's book with sequels. Pollyanna is orphaned and lives with a stern aunt. (Very old fashioned now but a classic.)	orphan; aunt; farm	
Fiction by care-experienced authors	Lucy Maud Montgomery	Emily of New Moon	1923	Emily of New Moon is the first in a series of novels by Lucy Maud Montgomery about an orphan girl growing up on Prince Edward Island, Canada. First published in 1923, it is like the author's Anne of Green Gables series.	Canada; orphan; kinship care	
Children's Fiction	Noel Streatfeild	Ballet Shoes	1936	<p>Pauline, Petrova and Posy Fossil are sisters - with a difference. All three were adopted as babies by Great Uncle Matthew, an eccentric and rich explorer who then disappeared, leaving them in the care of his niece Sylvia. The girls grow up in comfort until their money begins to run out and nobody can find Great Uncle Matthew. Things look bleak until they hit on an inspired idea: Pauline, Petrova and Posy will take to the stage. But it's not long before the Fossils learn that being a star isn't as easy as they first thought...</p> <p>Noel Streatfeild once said that Ballet Shoes was 'really a fairy story with its feet half-way on the ground' - a magical description for a magical book.</p>	Adoption; England; Kinship Care	Puffin
Children's Fiction	Ludwig Bemelmans	Madeline	1939	"In an old house in Paris that was covered in vines, lived twelve little girls in two straight lines." Our first introduction to the twelve little girls and Miss Clavel. Something is not right with Madeline. She wakes up with a terrible pain one night - it's her appendix! She must go to hospital to have it taken out. Her friends are sad and miss her very much. But when they visit and find her surrounded by all her presents -	orphan; orphans; orphanage	Scholastic

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Category	Author	Title	Year	Description	Keywords	Publisher
				and, best of all, see her new scar - they all decide they want their appendixes out too!		
Children's Fiction	Astrid Ross Lindgren et al.	Pippi Longstocking	1945	Pippi is nine years old, lives alone with a horse and a money, and does exactly as she pleases. She has no mother and her father is king of a cannibal island, so she has learnt to look after herself. She gets up when she likes, never goes to school, talks a great deal, keeps a chest of gold coins under the bed, and is unexpectedly strong. The book is full of her marvellous escapades.	Homeless; orphan	OUP Oxford
Fiction featuring care-experience	Agatha Christie	Three Blind Mice	1952	Three Blind Mice and Other Stories is a collection of short stories written by Agatha Christie, first published in the US by Dodd, Mead and Company in 1950. Three Blind Mice took at its heart the true story of the horrific abuse of two young orphan boys, one of whom really was murdered by foster parents who were supposed to protect and look after them whilst WW2 was raging throughout Europe: 'Terence O'Neill and his brother, Dennis, were taken to a foster home in 1945 on the Shropshire, England farm of Reginald and Esther Gough. The two suffered from beating and neglect, and later that year, Dennis died at the age of 12 from injuries he had sustained.'	foster care; murder	
Fiction featuring care-experience	Ian Fleming	Casino Royale	1953	James Bond, a fictional character is orphaned at the age of 11 when his parents are killed in a mountain climbing accident in the Aiguilles Rouges near Chamonix. After the death of his parents, Bond goes to live with his aunt, Miss Charmian Bond, in the village of Pett Bottom, where he completes his early education. Casino Royale is the first novel by the British author Ian Fleming. Published in 1953, it is the first James Bond book, and it paved the way for a further eleven novels and two short story collections by Fleming, followed by numerous continuation Bond novels	orphan; hero; adventure	

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Category	Author	Title	Year	Description	Keywords	Publisher
				by other authors. Portrayed as a killer albeit one that is saving the world an inability to have intimate relationships.		
Fiction featuring care-experience	Kylie Tennant	The joyful condemned	1953	The Joyful Condemned is Kylie Tennant's first attempt at writing about the NSW child protection system. A longer version of the story was published as Tell Morning This, in 1967.	Foster Care; Residential Care; Australia; Children's Home; Kinship Care; Detention Centre	St. Martin's Press
Children's Fiction	G.M. Glaskin	A Walz Through the Hills	1961	Two children are orphaned while living in a country pub in the West Australian bush where their mother has been working. They set out to work over 130miles to Perth so they can sail to England and live with their grandparents.	orphans; Australia; kinship care; grandparents	
Children's Fiction	Roald Dahl	James and the Giant Peach	1961	James Henry Trotter is in kinship care with his two horrid aunts, Spiker and Sponge. He hasn't got a single friend in the whole wide world. That is not, until he meets the Old Green Grasshopper and the rest of the insects aboard a giant, magical peach!	Kinship Care; Orphan	Penguin
Fiction featuring care-experience	Victoria Holt	Kirkland Revels	1962	Kirkland Revels is a Gothic novel by Victoria Holt. Set in a 16th-century former abbey in Yorkshire, this melodrama deals with the life of a young unexpected bride. The novel follows its first-person narrator, Catherine Corder (later Rockwell) as she goes to live in her husband's manor house, Kirkland Revels, where he apparently commits suicide by jumping from a balcony. Catherine is not convinced that his death is suicide and sets out to prove that he was murdered. Her investigations uncover a range of family secrets. She discovers that her mother is not dead, as she supposed, but confined in a private asylum and is not her biological mother but rather her adoptive mother and her aunt. The local doctor, Deveril Smith, believes himself to be the unacknowledged, illegitimate son of Catherine's wealthy	Yorkshire; illegitimacy; adoption; asylum	

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Category	Author	Title	Year	Description	Keywords	Publisher
				father-in-law. Deveril feels that he should be the heir of Kirkland Revels, but is prevented from inheriting by his illegitimacy.		
Fiction by care-experienced authors	Sumner Locke Elliott	Careful, he might hear you	1963	A small boy is living in kinship care with one aunt after his mother dies in childbirth birth. This story is the tussle between two aunts for the custody of the child. Autobiographical	Kinship Care	Harper & Row
Fiction featuring care-experience	Kylie Tennant	Tell Morning This	1967	The story of young girls coping with the NSW child protection system.	Foster Care; Australia; Children's Home; Kinship Care; Detention Centre; Critique of Child Protection System	Angus & Robertson Ltd
Children's Fiction	Eleanor Gray Spence et al.	The Switherby pilgrims	1967	A young English lady moves her ten orphan charges to Australia where they carve out a new life for themselves in the austere bush country	Foster Care; Fiction; Australia; Orphans; Juvenile fiction; Race relations - Representation - Literature; Self-reliance in children	Oxford University Press
Children's Fiction	Eleanor Roberts Spence et al.	Jamberoo Road	1969	Five years ago, in 1825, Missabella and her ten orphans—the “Switherby Pilgrims”—had voyaged from England to New South Wales, in primitive Australia. Missabella, now, is determined to provide for the future of her orphans according to each one’s character. Not an easy task, with such a varied, ragtag, yet lovable set of personalities and backgrounds as they represent. Selina will train in Sydney to	Foster Care; Orphans; Fiction; Race relations – Representation; Children's stories,	Oxford University Press

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				be a milliner; Paul may become a midshipman; Francis loves to farm. But what will satisfy clever, independent Cassie, who has ambitions to be a writer? The “Jamberoo Road” leads her inland, to the discomforts and enticements of being governess in a wealthy colonial family. Cassie’s story, interwoven with that of all the other orphans’ and their former farmhand Eben’s, is both an account of personal growth and a vivid journey into early-day Australia.	Australian; 1788-1900; History	
Fiction featuring care-experience	Agatha Christie	Mrs McGinty's dead	1970	Mrs McGinty died from a brutal blow to the back of her head. Suspicion fell immediately on her shifty lodger, James Bentley, whose clothes revealed traces of the victim’s blood and hair. Yet something was amiss: Bentley just didn’t look like a murderer. Not obvious on first reading but there is a very interesting conversation between one of the minor characters, Maureen Summerhayes and Poirot. Maureen Summerhayes is the landlady of the dilapidated guesthouse Long Meadows in Broadhinny who is married to Major Johnnie Summerhayes. She was adopted. Mrs McGinty was her cleaner, and went to Long Meadows twice a week--on Mondays and on Thursdays. Maureen mentions a newspaper article about how adoption gave a child advantages. She says, 'I was an adopted child. My mother parted with me and I had every advantage, as they call it. And it's always hurt – always – always – to know that you weren't really wanted, that your mother could let you go.'	murder; Agatha Christie; orphan; adoption	Harper Collins
Fiction by care-experienced authors	Sumner Locke Elliott	Edens lost	1970	A family saga. 16 year old Angus Weekes goes to live with the St James family when his guardian dies.	Foster Care	M. Joseph
Fiction featuring	Victoria Holt	The Shadow of the Lynx	1971	Set in the Victorian era, this is the story of Nora Tamsin sent to boarding school. Nora is orphaned when her father dies in Australia searching for gold. This gives Nora a hatred of	orphan, gothic, Australia; gold	

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Category	Author	Title	Year	Description	Keywords	Publisher
care-experience				<p>gold. Now, she is to travel there to become the ward of her father's business partner Charles Herrick, who because of his startling eyes, is known as the Lynx. She is attracted to his son, Stirling, a handsome man who is kind to her. But the Lynx has other plans and his effect upon her is overwhelming.</p> <p>Holt does a great job of bringing us interesting characters. We see Australia as it was, the rough life on the edge of the bush. And we see the country life in an English mansion where secrets reside.</p> <p>This story takes you from England to Australia and back again with complex relationships. Those who end up together will surprise you. Treachery lurks in England and the White Ladies estate where the Lynx was sent away in shame that was not of his doing. He wants revenge and will do much to achieve it.</p>	rush; Victorian; England	
Fiction by care-experienced authors	Rita Mae Brown	Rubyfruit Jungle	1973	<p>Brown was born in 1944 in Hanover, Pennsylvania to an unmarried teenage mother and her mother's married boyfriend. Brown's birth mother left the newborn Brown at an orphanage. Her mother's cousin Julia Brown and her husband Ralph retrieved her from the orphanage, and raised her as their own in York, Pennsylvania, and later in Ft. Lauderdale, Florida.</p> <p>Rubyfruit Jungle is the first novel by Rita Mae Brown. Published in 1973, it was remarkable in its day for its explicit portrayal of lesbianism. The novel is a coming-of-age autobiographical account of Brown's youth and emergence as a lesbian author. The term "rubyfruit jungle" is a term used in the novel for the female genitals.</p> <p>Rita Mae Brown tells the story of Molly Bolt, the adoptive daughter of a dirt-poor Southern couple who boldly forges</p>	coming of age; lesbianism; Autobiographical fiction; LGBT; New York	Bantam

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Category	Author	Title	Year	Description	Keywords	Publisher
				her own path in America. With her startling beauty and crackling wit, Molly finds that women are drawn to her wherever she goes—and she refuses to apologize for loving them back. This literary milestone continues to resonate with its message about being true to yourself and, against the odds, living happily ever after. Winner of the Lambda Literary Pioneer Award Winner of the Lee Lynch Classic Book Award.		
Fiction featuring care-experience	Doris Lessing	The Memoirs of a Survivor	1974	<p>The Memoirs of a Survivor is a dystopian novel. A future modern city is falling apart and there are gangs of people trying to survive in the face of food shortages and swarms of rats.</p> <p>An unnamed narrator—middle-aged, well-educated—is watching this from inside her flat. One day a 12 year old girl, Emily Cartright, is left with her. Where the narrator is considering migrating too, now she feels compelled to stay. As she takes the task of caring for Emily seriously, Emily also provides the opportunity for the narrator to reflect on her own childhood and adolescence. In effect, the narrator comes to mother herself. Aside from Emily, there's a home for other children in the story, a home where Emily spends considerable time caring for children whose parents have died or abandoned them. Gerald—likely modelled on Roger Diski, Jenny's one time husband—a young man in his early 20s, has set this up.</p>		
Fiction featuring care-experience	Michel Deon	The Foundling Boy	1975	<p>The Foundling Boy was written by French author, Michel Deon, back in 1975 and not published in English until 2013 (translated by Julian Evans).</p> <p>The story, often likened to Henry Fielding's The History of Tom Jones (1749), follows Jean Arnaud from the time he's left as an infant on the doorstep of a gardener and his wife living on a country estate in Normandy, to when Jean's enlists at the outbreak of WWII.</p>		

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Category	Author	Title	Year	Description	Keywords	Publisher
				By then, Jean - who has cycled his way around Europe and lived in London - has also found out who his birth mother is.		
Fiction by care-experienced authors	Paula Fox	The Widow's Children	1976	<p>The novel begins when Laura finds out her mother has died and concludes with the burial of the old woman. In between is a long night of a gathering to “see off” Laura and her husband Desmond before they embark on a voyage to Africa.</p> <p>The evening begins in Laura and Desmond’s hotel room as they have pre-dinner drinks and then moves to a restaurant. All are dependent on alcohol to get through the event, playing their various roles of the wag, the supplicant, the outrageous, and the drunk.</p> <p>Included in the gathering is Laura's 29 year old daughter, Clara. Clara didn't grow up with Laura, however, she grew up with Laura's mother, Alma, but Laura decides that Clara shouldn't be told about her grandmother's death.</p>		
Fiction by care-experienced authors	Monica Clare	Karobran: the story of an Aboriginal girl	1978	Novel based on the authors experiences growing up as an Aboriginal in the NSW white community	Foster Care; Australia; Children's Home; Stolen Generation; First Nations; Aboriginal	Alternative Publishing
Fiction featuring care-experience	Michelle Magorian	Goodnight Mister Tom (novel)	1981	Young Willie Beech is evacuated to the country as Britain stands on the brink of the Second World War. A sad, deprived child, he slowly begins to flourish under the care of old Tom Oakley - but his new-found happiness is shattered by a summons from his mother back in London. Winner of the Guardian Children's Fiction Award.	Foster Care; England; World War II	Puffin Modern Classics

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Category	Author	Title	Year	Description	Keywords	Publisher
Children's Fiction	Michelle Magorian	Goodnight Mister Tom	1981	The story of young Willie Beech, evacuated to the country as Britain stands on the brink of the Second World War.	Foster Care; World War II; England; Evacuation Juvenile fiction; Fiction	Puffin
Children's Fiction	Roald Dahl	The BFG (book)	1982	The BFG (short for The Big Friendly Giant) is a 1982 children's book written by British novelist Roald Dahl and illustrated by Quentin Blake. It is an expansion of a short story from Dahl's 1975 book Danny, the Champion of the World. Sophie is first seen in an orphanage, having trouble sleeping when she saw a large, black-cloaked figure in the streets. It spots Sophie and Sophie tries to run, but the figure sticks a large hand in and takes Sophie. The figure strides across England and many other countries when they arrive in Giant Country. The BFG tells the story of 8 year old orphan, Sophie, and the adventures she has with a giant man, or BFG.	England; Orphanage; Orphan	Puffin
Fiction by care-experienced authors	Walter Tevis	The Queen's Gambit:	1983	When she is sent to an orphanage at the age of eight, Beth Harmon soon discovers two ways to escape her surroundings, albeit fleetingly: playing chess and taking the little green pills given to her and the other children to keep them subdued. Before long, it becomes apparent that hers is a prodigious talent, and as she progresses to the top of the US chess rankings she is able to forge a new life for herself. But she can never quite overcome her urge to self-destruct. For Beth, there's more at stake than merely winning and losing.	United States; Orphanage; Hospital	W&N
Children's Fiction	Eleanor Spence	The Leftovers	1983	When the home in which they've been living is about to be closed to make way for a new road, four foster children write an advertisement for a real home with a proper family	Fiction; Australia; Orphans; Adoption and fostering;	Methuen Australia

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Category	Author	Title	Year	Description	Keywords	Publisher
					Foster care; Wards of state;	
Fiction by care-experienced authors	Angela Carter	Nights at the Circus	1984	Nights at the Circus (1984), winner of the 1984 James Tait Black Memorial Prize for fiction. The novel focuses on the life and exploits of orphan Sophie Fevvers, a woman who is – or so she would have people believe – a Cockney virgin, hatched from an egg laid by unknown parents and ready to develop fully fledged wings. At the time of the story, she has become a celebrated aerialiste, and she captivates the young journalist Jack Walser, who runs away with the circus and falls into a world that his journalistic exploits had not prepared him to encounter. Nights at the Circus was the first to bring Angela Carter widespread acclaim.		
Fiction featuring care-experience	Agatha Christie	They Do it with Mirrors	1985	Miss Marple senses danger when she visits a friend living in a Victorian mansion which doubles as a rehabilitation centre for 'delinquents.' Her fears are confirmed when a youth fires a revolver at the administrator, Lewis Serrocold. Neither is injured. But a mysterious visitor, Mr Gilbrandsen, is less fortunate – shot dead simultaneously in another part of the building. Also features an illegitimate child and adopted child. The novel's first proper film adaptation was the 1985 television film Murder with Mirrors with Sir John Mills as Lewis Serrocold, Bette Davis as Carrie Louise, Tim Roth as Edgar Lawson and Helen Hayes as Miss Marple.	murder mystery; novel; adoption; Agatha Christie	
Fiction by care-experienced authors	Jenny Diski	Nothing Natural	1986	Nothing Natural is the 1986 debut novel by Jenny Diski, initially published in hardback through Simon & Schuster. It follows a young woman who enters a sadomasochistic relationship with a charming and domineering man. The book, perceived as an S&M-book by the New Yorker, received some backlash upon its release, as critic Anthony Thwaite criticized it as being "the most revolting book I've ever read," and the feminist magazine Sisterwrite chose to		

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Category	Author	Title	Year	Description	Keywords	Publisher
				ban Diski from publishing with them. Rachel Kee is a depressed single mother who has been slowly withdrawing from the world around her. She's still suffering from the lasting effects of a disastrous childhood where her father abandoned his family, pushing Rachel's mother further into madness and prompting Rachel's removal and placement in a foster home. When she meets Joshua, she's almost instantly drawn to him. The two begin to indulge in a sadomasochistic relationship where Joshua will appear for a rough session of sex and then disappear for months on end. Eventually Rachel begins to question the relationship, especially after reading about the kidnapping and rape of a young girl, complete with a composite sketch that greatly resembles Joshua.		
Fiction by care-experienced authors	Jeanette Winterson	Oranges are not the only fruit	1987	<p>This is the story of Jeanette based on Winterson's own story of adoption. Brought up by an abusive mother as one of God's elect - zealous and passionate, Jeanette seems destined for life as a missionary, but then she falls for one of her converts.</p> <p>At sixteen, Jeanette decides to leave the church, her home and her family, for the young woman she loves. Innovative, punchy and tender, Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit is a few days ride into the bizarre outposts of religious excess and human obsession.</p>	Fiction; England; Bildungsroman; Lesbians; Teenage girls	Atlantic Monthly Press
Fiction by care-experienced authors	L M Montgomery	Anne of Green Gables	1987	Anne of Green Gables, children's novel by Canadian author Lucy Maud Montgomery, published in 1908. The work, a sentimental but charming coming-of-age story about a spirited and unconventional orphan girl who finds a home with elderly siblings, became a classic of children's literature and led to several sequels. The story begins with her arrival at the Prince Edward Island farm of Miss Marilla Cuthbert and Mr. Matthew Cuthbert, siblings in their fifties and sixties, who had decided to adopt a young boy to help on the	Foster Care; Children's Home; Orphan; Canada; Teacher	Multiple

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				farm. However, through a misunderstanding, the orphanage sends Anne Shirley instead. While the Cuthbert's are at first determined to return Anne to the orphanage, after a few days they decide instead to keep her.		
Fiction featuring care-experience	Nicholas	Paper Nautilus	1988	Jack Tregenza, chance survivor of WWII, has raised his niece Penny after the wartime death of his brother Peter. Penny grows up to marry the boy who has waited for her.	Australia; Kinship Care	Wakefield Press
Fiction by care-experienced authors	Sumner Locke Elliott	Water under the bridge	1989	A tapestry of surprise, bright dreams and foiled ambitions, which begins at the opening in 1932 of the Sydney Harbour Bridge. Archie Ewers, son of a laundress, finds ways of disrupting the comfortable lives of those who have rejected him over the years	Foster Care	Australian Large Print
Fiction by care-experienced authors	Sumner Locke Elliott	Fairyland	1991	This is the final novel written by Sumner Locke. Autobiographical, it is the story of an aspiring writer coming to terms with his sexuality during the repressive 1930s and 1940s in Australia	Fiction; 20th century; Authors, Australian; Elliott, Sumner Locke	Pan
Fiction featuring care-experience	Patrick McCabe	The Butcher Boy	1992	The Butcher Boy is a 1992 novel by Irish writer, Patrick McCabe. The Butcher Boy is also the story of a murder. The title refers to Francie Brady, a lower-class Irish lad who works in a slaughterhouse. Francie's psyche and behaviour have been devastated by a childhood with alcoholic and disturbed parents. He has spent time in a reform school and a madhouse. He returns to his little town and eventually exacts revenge on his parents, his town, and everybody who has darkened his life, by murdering Mrs. Nugent. The Nugents, as Moynahan explained, "epitomize the decent Irish middle-class family and Catholic values from which Francie is forever barred." Also, Mrs. Nugent had once humiliated Francie and his mother, calling them "pigs." Francie's tale "is startlingly original," commented Hynes. "McCabe has ...		

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Category	Author	Title	Year	Description	Keywords	Publisher
				<p>given us a protagonist who is nastier and scarier than any of the petty autocrats [of his small town]."</p> <p>It tells the story of Francis "Francie" Brady who ends up in an 'industrial school' where he is sexually abused by one of the priests. He is also befriended by a gardener.</p> <p>The title comes from Francie's work as a butcher and his dismembering of the body of a woman he murders.</p> <p>The Butcher Boy was adapted into an award winning film in 2007.</p>		
Fiction featuring care-experience	Patricia Grace	Cousins	1992	<p>Patricia Grace is a New Zealand writer. Her 3rd novel, Cousins, published in 1992, tells the story of 3 Maori cousins across different stages of their lives, and it tells the troubling and little known story of the removal of Maori children from their families by the state. One of the cousins grows up separated from her family - apart from one memorable summer - and the others keep looking for her as their get on with their adult lives. Cousins was adapted for a 2021 film of the same name.</p>	Maori; separation;	
Fiction featuring care-experience	Michael Connelly	The Black Echo	1992	<p>First in a series of 24 novels featuring Detective Hieronymus "Harry" Bosch. Bosch's mother was a prostitute in Hollywood who was murdered on October 28, 1961, when Bosch was 11 years old. His father, who he met later in life, was Mickey Haller Sr., a prominent defence attorney known for representing mobster Mickey Cohen, among other clients.</p> <p>Bosch spent his youth in various orphanages and youth halls, and with the occasional foster family. When he learned of his mother's murder, Bosch, then living at a youth hall, dived to the bottom of the pool, screamed until he ran out of air,</p>	orphanage, foster care, detective	

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				and then swam back to the surface. This event is referred to in several Bosch novels.		
Fiction featuring care-experience	Victoria Holt	The Black Opal	1993	<p>Abandoned as a baby, her exotic beauty prompted hushed whispers of gypsy blood. But lovely Carmel March remained shrouded in mystery....</p> <p>When tragedy struck her adopted home of Commonwood House, little Carmel had been bundled off to Australia. Returning to England as a young woman, she became haunted by questions from her past, as well as the shocking revelation that she had been rushed from a murder scene those many years ago.</p> <p>Yet she was convinced that the wrong man had been sentenced for the crime. Was the answer locked away in her childhood memory -- or in the dark, secretive behaviour of her old childhood friend, Lucian? And what fateful role did the opals -- always present at crucial moments of her life -- play? For only when she released the dark secrets imprisoned at Commonwood would she find the freedom to love....</p>	gypsy; adoption; Australia; murder; opals	
Fiction featuring care-experience	Melissa Barron	Agony of desertion (out of print)	1994	The true story of a mother's betrayal and the devastating effects it had on her five young children. They endured a mental institution, various hospitals and a convent described as a living hell because of the neglect of their mother. A final betrayal was yet to come, the agony of desertion. Out of print	Fiction; Ireland; Abandoned children; Barron, Melissa; Childhood and youth Fiction	T. Souleiman
Children's Fiction	Melvin Burgess	An Angel for May	1994	Tam is unhappy at home and often takes refuge in the ruins of Thowt It Farm. But then one day he is transported back to WWII. Alone and afraid, he makes friends with May, who has been rescued from a bombed-out house. The two help		

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				each other, but Tam decides to go back to his home as he misses his mother.		
Fiction featuring care-experience	Anne Michaels	Fugitive Pieces	1996	<p>Fugitive Pieces (1996) is an award winning novel by Canadian writer, Anne Michaels (b. 1958).</p> <p>The novel is in 2 parts, the 1st centred on Jakob Beer, a 7 year old Jewish boy who survives the Holocaust by hiding in the forest and being taken in by an archaeologist who gets the boy to safety in Greece.</p> <p>The 2nd part of the novel is the story of Ben, a Canadian professor born to survivors of the Holocaust. Ben becomes fascinated by Jakob's story.</p> <p>Fugitive Pieces was adapted for film in 2007.</p>		
Fiction featuring care-experience	Garry Disher	The Sunken Road	1996	<p>The Sunken Road is set in the mid-north of South Australia. It's the story of Anna and her family and friends - one of whom is Chester Flood.</p> <p>Chester's family is a large impoverished Catholic one, reason enough for the community to disparage them. The siblings are dispersed when their parents die; Chester ends up in the local convent which was previously a reformatory. As an adult, he does a stint in prison for the white-collar crime of fraud.</p>		
Fiction featuring care-experience	Martina Cole	The Runaway	1997	A thriller which features the character of Cathy Connor who is forced into social care where she is abused.	social care; abuse	Hatchette

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Category	Author	Title	Year	Description	Keywords	Publisher
Children's Fiction	J K Rowling	Harry Potter and the philosopher's stone	1997	Harry Potter is living in kinship care with his cruel aunt and uncle. They keep him in a room under the stairs. Harry has never even heard of Hogwarts when the letters start dropping on the doormat at number four, Privet Drive. Addressed in green ink on yellowish parchment with a purple seal, they are swiftly confiscated by his grisly aunt and uncle. Then, on Harry's eleventh birthday, a great beetle-eyed giant of a man called Rubeus Hagrid bursts in with some astonishing news: Harry Potter is a wizard, and he has a place at Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry.	Kinship Care; boarding school; orphan	Bloomsbury
Fiction featuring care-experience	Rachel Field	Calico Bush	1998	In 1743, thirteen-year-old Marguerite Ledoux travels to Maine as the indentured servant of a family that regards her as the lowest in the society. As the story proceeds, it becomes clear that Maggie is a heroine, not just enduring difficult living conditions but also saving members of the family when there is danger. Left orphaned and alone in a strange country, thirteen-year-old Marguerite Ledoux has no choice but to become a servant girl. She promises her services to the Sargent family for six long years in return for food and shelter. But life as a "bound-out girl" is full of more hardship than Maggie ever could have imagined. Living with the family in an isolated part of northern Maine, Maggie struggles through the harsh, hungry winter of 1743, the constant threat of Indian attacks, and worst of all, the loneliness she suffers knowing that her own family is lost forever. Will the Sargent's house ever feel like home?	United States; French; Indentured labour	Aladdin
Fiction by care-experienced authors	Jackie Kay	Trumpet	1998	Jackie Kay's debut novel, Trumpet, tells the story of fictional jazz artist, Joss Moody, a transgender man. It is not until his death that Joss' adopted son, Colman, finds out that Joss is a biological female. Disturbed by this, he seeks revenge by making a deal to write a 'tell all' book.		

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Category	Author	Title	Year	Description	Keywords	Publisher
Fiction featuring care-experience	Jane Rogers	Island	2000	Nikki Black, intent on punishing the mother who abandoned her at birth and left her to grow up in an uncaring care system. Nikki goes to the island with only one aim in mind: revenge. But her plans are confounded by the discovery that she has a brother. Not just any brother but a brother strangely possessed by their mother; a brother with a terrifying violent streak; an apparent simpleton whose head is filled with the stories of past islanders, Crofters, Vikings, Little People.	care system; adoption; foster care; abandonment; sibling; brother; love	Abacus
Fiction featuring care-experience	Margaret Forster	Shadow Baby	2000	Evie is born in Carlisle in 1887, and her earliest memories are only of being brought up by the woman called her grandmother. Evie and Shona, born almost seventy years apart, are women of very different personalities. And Hazel – unmarried and pregnant in the 1950s, her mother arranges for her to have her child in Norway, where it is adopted out and Hazel never wants to hear or think about it (and she considers the child an ‘it’) again. But as their stories unfold, it becomes apparent that they share much more than their yearning to find the mothers they never knew.	illegitimacy; adoption; 20th century; orphanage	Penguin
Fiction featuring care-experience	Janet Fitch	White Oleander	2000	White Oleander is a painfully beautiful first novel about a young girl growing up the hard way. It is a powerful story of mothers and daughters, their ambiguous alliances, their selfish love and cruel behaviour, and the search for love and identity. Astrid has been raised by her mother, a beautiful, headstrong poet. Astrid forgives her everything as her world revolves around this beautiful creature until Ingrid murders a former lover and is imprisoned for life. Astrid's fierce determination to survive foster care and be loved makes her an unforgettable figure.	Foster Care; Poetry; Prison; Abandoned children	Virago
Children's Fiction	Jamie Lee Curtis	Tell me again about the night I was born	2000	Children's picture book based on Jamie Lee Curtis' experience of adopting.	United States; Adoption	HarperCollins

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Category	Author	Title	Year	Description	Keywords	Publisher
Fiction by care-experienced authors	Maree Giles	Invisible thread	2001	A semi-autobiographical account of Maree Giles' time in the notorious Parramatta Girls' Home in New South Wales.	Australia; Children's Home; Detention Centre	Virago Press
Fiction by care-experienced authors	Philip Pullman	His dark materials / Philip Pullman.	2001	<p>Set against the dreaming spires of Jordan College and the dangerous wilderness of the frozen north, Philip Pullman's His Dark Materials trilogy offers an intoxicating blend of imagination, science, theology and adventure.</p> <p>Northern Lights: Lyra Belacqua lives half-wild and carefree among the scholars of Jordan College, with her daemon familiar always by her side. But the arrival of her fearsome uncle, Lord Asriel, draws her to the heart of a terrible struggle – a struggle born of Gobblers and stolen children, witch clans and armoured bears.</p> <p>The Subtle Knife: Lyra finds herself in a shimmering, haunted otherworld – Cittàgazze, where soul-eating Spectres stalk the streets and wingbeats of distant angels sound against the sky. But she is not without allies: twelve-year-old Will Parry, fleeing for his life after taking another's, has also stumbled into this strange new realm. On a perilous journey from world to world, Lyra and Will uncover a deadly secret: an object of extraordinary and devastating power. And with every step, they move closer to an even greater threat – and the shattering truth of their own destiny.</p> <p>The Amber Spyglass: Will and Lyra, whose fates are bound together by powers beyond their own worlds, have been violently separated. But they must find each other, for ahead of them lies the greatest war that has ever been – and a</p>	Fantasy fiction, English; Children's stories, English	Scholastic

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Category	Author	Title	Year	Description	Keywords	Publisher
				<p>journey to a dark place from which no one has ever returned</p> <p>...</p>		
Children's Fiction	Anita Heiss	Who Am I? The Diary of Mary Talence, Sydney 1937	2001	<p>Who Am I? is the fictional diary of a young Aboriginal girl, Mary Talence, a member of the Stolen Generation.</p> <p>The Sister in charge of Bomaderry Aboriginal Children's Home gave her a diary. Through its pages she describes her life – from her arrival there, aged five, through her struggle to understand why she was taken from her real mother, to her adoption at ten years of age by a white Catholic family in St Ives.</p> <p>Mary is increasingly confused and ashamed as she is taught that white skinned is good, black skinned is bad. She longs to understand why this is so but finds that almost any questions provoke anger and accusations of ingratitude from the Burkes, her white adoptive family.</p>		
Fiction featuring care-experience	John McGahern	That They May Face the Rising Sun	2002	<p>The last book written by Irish writer, John McGahern (1934-2006), includes a care-experienced character, Bill Edwards. "That They May Face the Rising Sun" (2002) tells the story of a year in the of Joe and Kate Rutledge who have moved from London to live a rural life in Ireland.</p> <p>One of the people they welcome into their home is Bill Edwards, an odd character. Everyone knows that Bill was in a Catholic children's home, that he was sent out to work on a farm at the age of 14 and that he ran away from that first 'placement' because of maltreatment.</p> <p>Joe has a chat with Bill one day about his experiences which is too much for Bill. "Stop torturing me" he cried out (p.13). By the end of the book, the local priest is organising a small apartment for Bill in the city.</p>	care-experience; Ireland; Catholic; children's home	

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Category	Author	Title	Year	Description	Keywords	Publisher
Fiction featuring care-experience	Jamaica Kincaid	Mr Potter	2002	Mr Potter (2002) by Jamaica Kincaid is the story of a man who grew up in foster care on the island of Antigua in the Caribbean. The story is told by one of Mr Potter's many unacknowledged girl children, Elaine Cynthia Potter, in a strange, repetitive, incantatory, and compelling manner. Roderick Potter (1922-1992) dies quite well off financially, having long been a chauffeur before he saved enough money to set himself up in business. According to his daughter, he couldn't read or write. It was Roderick's mother who put him into foster care with the Shepherds - before she drowned herself - and Mr Shepherd who taught Roderick how to drive.	foster care; Antigua; Caribbean; foster care	
Fiction featuring care-experience	Lian Hearn	Tales of the Otori	2002	Tales of the Otori is a series of historical fantasy novels featuring an orphan and adoptee, Otori Takeo, The series is set in medieval Japan and was written for young adults by English-born Australian writer, Gillian Rubenstein under the pen name Lian Hearn. Otori Takeo was born in a small village that is destroyed by warriors. Takeo is rescued by a warrior of the Otori Clan, Shigeu, who adopts the boy and trains him to become a warrior. Tales of the Otori is sometimes thought of as Australia's Game of Thrones.	orphan; fantasy; adoption; adoptee; Japan; warrior	
Fiction by care-experienced authors	Alex Wheatle	The Seven Sisters	2003	Inspired by personal experience, the Seven Sisters explores the lives of children in care. Glenroy, Bullett, Curvis and Carlton – the best of friends, as tight as blood brothers. They all live in Pinewood Oaks, a home for orphans and children in care, besides the great forest named after the legend of the Seven Sisters. At the home they are looked after by ‘Uncles’ and ‘Aunts,’ go to the local school and try to live like normal children. But, of course, they’re not. The four friends decide to run away from the horror of their everyday lives in a	children's home; abuse; runaways	Fourth Estate

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Category	Author	Title	Year	Description	Keywords	Publisher
				children's home in the English countryside. They head for the woods, their sense of freedom surprises them, and for the first time they feel the exhilaration of adolescence. Yet the forest slowly asserts its own power and what happens there will affect the four boys' lives forever.		
Fiction featuring care-experience	Daphne Du Maurier et al.	Jamaica Inn	2003	After the death of her mother, Mary Yellan crosses the windswept Cornish moors to Jamaica Inn, the home of her Aunt Patience. There she finds Patience a changed woman, downtrodden by her domineering, vicious husband Joss Merlyn. The inn is a front for a lawless gang of criminals, and Mary is unwillingly dragged into their dangerous world of smuggling and murder. Before long she will be forced to cross her own moral line to save herself...	orphan; Cornwall; England; criminals	Virago
Children's Fiction	Hilary McKay	Saffy's Angel	2003	The four Casson children, whose mother, Eve, is a fine-arts painter, have all been given the names of paint colours. Cadmium (Caddy), is the eldest; then Saffron (Saffy); Indigo, the only boy; and Rose, the youngest. When Saffy discovers quite by accident that she has been adopted, she is deeply upset, though the others assure her that it makes no difference at all. Saffy is the daughter of Eve's twin sister, who lived in Siena, Italy, and died in a car crash. Grandad brought Saffy, as a very small child, back from Siena.	Adoption; England; Kinship Care	Margaret K. McElderry Books
Fiction featuring care-experience	Michael Robotham	The Suspect	2004	Michael Robotham was inspired to write The Suspect because of a story Margaret Humphreys told him when he was working with her on Empty Cradles. She wondered if she was doing the 'right thing' by removing a newborn from his mother at birth. An 8-year-old boy, who adores his father, is no longer able to see him because an array of professionals decide—incorrectly—that the father has been sexually abusing his son. The father's life is ruined, and he kills himself.		

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Category	Author	Title	Year	Description	Keywords	Publisher
				When he becomes an adult, the boy is determined that those who caused this situation should pay for what happened. If he can't get to the person directly, he'll do so indirectly via loved ones.		
Fiction by care-experienced authors	Alex Wheatle	Brixton Rock	2004	Brenton Brown is a 16-year old mixed race youth who has lived in a children's home all his life. He has never met his mother and is haunted by her loss. The best thing happens: Brenton is reunited with his mother, Cynthia. And then the worst: he falls in love with his beautiful half-sister, Juliet. At the same time, Brenton meets his Nemesis in the shape of Terry Flynn, a South London gangster who scars him for life. Brenton vows to seek revenge leads to an explosive climax, set against the music, humour and Caribbean rhythms of life that survive within the troubled South London landscape of 198's Brixton.	children's home; incest	Arcadia Books
Fiction featuring care-experience	Margaret Forster	The Battle For Christabel	2004	Rowena wants a baby. What she doesn't want is the baby's father. Yet five years after the birth of Christabel, Rowena is dead, tragically killed in a climbing accident. The battle for Christabel has begun...With signature skill, Margaret Forster reveals the conflicting personal interests that lie behind each character's claim on the child. Drawn from the perspectives of social workers, grandparents, lovers and foster-mothers, this novel is a remarkable and heartfelt exploration of the complexities of motherhood.	adoption; social workers; foster care	Vintage
Fiction featuring care-experience	Kerry Greenwood	Queen of Flowers	2004	The circus is in town, and St Kilda is having its first Flower Festival, which includes a parade. Phryne Fisher is Queen of the Flowers. One of her flower maidens, however, is unstable and has vanished. And then her own adopted daughter Ruth goes missing, Phryne is determined that nothing will stand in the way of her retrieving her lost child. Miss Fisher gets a letter from Murdoch Foyle, he promises to tell Phryne what happened to her sister Janey if Phryne gets him out of jail.	adoption; murder; detective; flowers; foster care	

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Category	Author	Title	Year	Description	Keywords	Publisher
				Foyle is the murderer of Phryne’s younger sister, Janey, who disappeared when the girls were children and watching the circus. In prison for kidnapping for 14 years—but masterminds a prison escape. It turns out that Foyle was in foster care as a child and he has also been a respected university lecturer—not something usually associated with former foster kids. Foyle has become fixated with the story of an ancient Egyptian King Memses and believes he is the reborn king and kills 4 “goddesses”, one of which was Janey.		
Fiction by care-experienced authors	Stieg Larsson	The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo	2005	Lisbeth is a young woman who was fostered and is presently institutionalised. From early childhood she has had a history of violence and vindictive behaviour. At 12, she threw petrol over her father and set him alight after he had beaten her mother so severely it caused her brain damage. Lisbeth was declared a danger to herself and to others by the court at the age of 13 and was sent for treatment at a psychiatric clinic for children. She refused to speak to psychologists, police, teachers or social workers. She ran away from her first few foster families, proved to be uncooperative and disdainful of most authority figures, and frequently fought with others. After a particularly violent altercation with a man who had attacked her, the court psychiatrists felt she would be safer if she were institutionalised.		
Fiction featuring care-experience	Peter Temple	The Broken Shore	2005	Before the Jimmy Savile scandal broke, South African born Australian writer, Peter Temple, tells an eerily similar (fictional) story in the award-winning The Broken Shore (2005) Detective Cashin is investigating the murder of a prominent philanthropist and discovers the well regarded old man ran a charitable organisation to provide a cover for a group of paedophiles - including himself.		

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				The misnamed 'Moral Companions' would organise camps for boys in foster care and children's homes to give them "a bit of fun" (Temple, 320).		
Fiction featuring care-experience	Eleanor Spence	The Switherby Pilgrims	2005	In 1825, concerned for the future of her ten orphan charges in the grim factory towns of their native England, Miss Arabella Braithewaite, known to the children as Missabella, decides to take a land grant in Australia and makes the long, daunting journey with her wards to the austere bush country of New South Wales.	Foster Care; Australia; 19th century	Bethlehem Books
Children's Fiction	Robert Muchamore	The Cherub Series	2005	<p>The Cherub Series by English writer Robert Muchamore, is 17 books (15 million copies sold in 26 languages) about the fictional division of the British Security Service called CHERUB and employing mostly orphans.</p> <p>James Adams is the protagonist at the beginning of the series, and he's living in a children's home. He's recruited by CHERUB just as he's turning 12 and, after basic training, discovers his sister has been too.</p> <p>According to children's fiction specialist, Sarah Mokrzycki https://sarahjayne.net.au/, the Cherub Series is recommended reading for teenagers who have seen more of life than your average child.</p>		
Fiction featuring care-experience	Louise Penny	Still Life	2005	he discovery of a dead body in the woods on Thanksgiving Weekend brings Chief Inspector Armand Gamache and his colleagues from the Surete du Quebec to a small village in the Eastern Townships. Gamache cannot understand why anyone would want to deliberately kill well-loved artist Jane Neal, especially any of the residents of Three Pines - a place so free from crime it doesn't even have its own police force. Armand Garnache is the detective and according to the series was orphaned around age 12, but we don't know what		

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Category	Author	Title	Year	Description	Keywords	Publisher
				happened to him after the car accident that killed his parents. Very sympathetic look at the Residential Schools and First Nations Canadians (and the crimes committed against them).		
Fiction featuring care-experience	Lloyd Jones	Mister Pip	2006	<p>Mister Pip by NZ writer, Lloyd Jones, tells the story of a group of children on the Island of Bourganville being read Great Expectations by Charles Dickens. The initiative is that of the whole white man left on the Island, Mr Watts, who says that he was orphan as a child in New Zealand.</p> <p>Bourganville is in the middle of a civil war and the story helps the children to 'escape' their difficult circumstances, at least for a while every day.</p> <p>13-year-old Matilda is the protagonist and she describes her night time reflections on the day's readings and how her mother, a devout Christian, becomes disturbed by Matilda's fondness for the book.</p> <p>As a young adult, Matilda decides to investigate Dickens further for her PhD thesis, an investigation that, necessarily, involves a trip to England.</p>		
Fiction featuring care-experience	Karin Slaughter	Triptych	2006	Triptych is a 2006 thriller novel by American author Karin Slaughter. The first in her Atlanta series, the novel centers on Will Trent of the Georgia Bureau of Investigation. Will Trent was abandoned by his parents as a child, and had to grow up in the Atlanta foster care system, which has had a lasting effect on him. Despite being dyslexic, he has become a Special Agent in the Georgia Bureau of Investigation (GBI). Trent is highly observant, solving the highest proportion of cases in the GBI, which causes some envy.		

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Fiction featuring care-experience	Markus Zusak	The Book Thief (novel)	2007	Markus Zusak's unforgettable story is about the ability of books to feed the soul. When Death has a story to tell, you listen. It is 1939. Nazi Germany. The country is holding its breath. Death has never been busier, and will become busier still. Liesel Meminger is a foster girl living outside of Munich, who scratches out a meager existence for herself by stealing when she encounters something she can't resist—books. With the help of her accordion-playing foster father, she learns to read and shares her stolen books with her neighbours during bombing raids as well as with the Jewish man hidden in her basement. I	Foster Care; Second World War; Germany	Knopf Books for Young Readers
Children's Fiction	Michael Morpurgo	Alone On A Wide Wide Sea	2007	When six-year-old orphan Arthur Hobhouse is shipped to Australia after WWII he loses his sister, his country and everything he knows. Overcoming enormous hardships with fellow orphan Marty, Arthur is finally saved by the extraordinary people he meets and by his talent for boat-design and sailing.	Australia; England; Child migrant	HarperCollins
Fiction featuring care-experience	Tana French	In the Woods	2007	The first novel in the series is about the Irish detectives Rob Ryan and Cassie Maddox (raised in kinship care) and their investigation of the murder of a 12-year-old girl. The case, with possible links to Ryan's own past, adds another dimension to the novel. In 2008, it won the best debut crime novel category for the Edgar, Anthony, Barry and Macavity awards. The care-experienced characters are not in stereotypical roles of 'baddies' but are a complicated mix of intelligence, boldness and ongoing trauma.		
Fiction featuring care-experience	Michael Noonan	The December Boys	2007	When a group of close friends leaves the dusty outback orphanage where they've grown up for a summer holiday together at the coast, their future is full of possibilities. But the chance that one of them, just one, might gain a real family to live with calls everything they thought they knew about themselves and each other into question. Because the	Adoption; Australia; Orphanage	University of Queensland Press/Barnes and Noble

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Category	Author	Title	Year	Description	Keywords	Publisher
				future is as unknown as the ocean's depths. And family comes in many forms...		
Fiction featuring care-experience	Richard Flanagan	Wanting	2008	<p>The multi-award winning Wanting (2008) by Australian writer Richard Flanagan revolves around the story of John Franklin as Governor of Tasmania (then Van Diemen's Land) (1837-1843) adopting an orphaned Aboriginal Australian girl, Mathinna (b 1835 on Flinders Island).</p> <p>When Franklin is recalled to London, Mathinna is abandoned to the St John's Orphan School in Hobart.</p> <p>Flanagan was inspired to write about Mathina because he had seen a portrait of her storage and was curious about this intelligent and gifted girl who was "utterly destroyed by the intention of seeking to make her white"</p> <p>https://www.ourtasmania.com.au/people-mathinna.html</p>		
Children's Fiction	Jacqueline Sharratt Wilson et al.	Midnight	2008	Violet has always been in the shadow of her mesmerising, controlling brother Will, and when a shocking secret about Will's past is revealed (that he is adopted) things get even worse. Violet retreats further into her own fantasy world, built around the fairy characters created by her favourite author, Casper Dream. The arrival of a new girl at school, Jasmine, seems like it might change Violet's life for the better. But is Jasmine a true friend? And will Violet ever manage to break free of Will's spell?	Adoption	RHCP Digital
Fiction by care-experienced authors	Stieg Larsson	The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo	2008	<p>Forty years ago, Harriet Vanger disappeared from a family gathering on the island owned and inhabited by the powerful Vanger clan. Her body was never found, yet her uncle is convinced it was murder - and that the killer is a member of his own tightly knit but dysfunctional family.</p> <p>He employs disgraced financial journalist Mikael Blomkvist</p>	Ward of the state; Institution; rape; hacker; investigation; serial killer; sadism; tattoo	

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Category	Author	Title	Year	Description	Keywords	Publisher
				<p>and the tattooed, computer hacker Lisbeth Salander to investigate. When the pair link Harriet's disappearance to a number of grotesque murders from forty years ago, they begin to unravel a dark and appalling family history.</p> <p>But the Vangers are a secretive clan, and Blomkvist and Salander are about to find out just how far they are prepared to go to protect themselves.</p> <p>Stieg Larsson's groundbreaking Millenium trilogy is continued in <i>The Girl Who Played With Fire</i>, and <i>The Girl Who Kicked the Hornets' Nest</i>.</p>		
Fiction featuring care-experience	Ann Patchett	Run	2008	Since their mother's death, Tip and Teddy Doyle have been raised by their loving possessive and ambitious father. As the former mayor of Boston, Bernard Doyle wants to see his adoptive sons in politics, a dream the boys have never shared. But when an argument in a blinding New England snowstorm inadvertently causes an accident that involves a stranger and her child, all Bernard Doyle cares about is his ability to keep his children--all his children--safe.	United States; Adoption; African American	Harper Perennial
Children's Fiction	Neil Gaiman	The Graveyard Book	2008	Nobody Owens is a boy being raised in graveyard by ghosts. There are many adventures for Nobody, or Bod, in the graveyard, but danger if he leaves it - from the man who killed his family.		
Fiction featuring care-experience	David Lagercrantz	The Fall of Man in Wilmslow	2009	<p>Swedish writer David Lagercrantz is the author of 3 novels in the Millennium series - <i>The Girl in the Spider's Web</i>, <i>The Girl Who Takes an Eye for Eye</i> and <i>The Girl Who Lived Twice</i>.</p> <p>The Fall of Man in Wilmslow (2009) is an imagined account of a young Detective Constable Leonard Corell being tasked with investigating the death of Alan Turing on 7 June 1954.</p>		

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Category	Author	Title	Year	Description	Keywords	Publisher
				<p>Corell becomes fascinated and inspired by the life and character of Turing and uncovers his crucial work during WWII at Bletchley Park.</p> <p>The novel explores the idea of being 'different' enabling the development of different ideas, attitudes towards gay men at the time, and the hypocrisy of the secret service being willing to use Turing until they confirm he is gay.</p> <p>There is little on Alan Turing's extended time in foster care as an infant and small child and how that experience might have shaped the man.</p>		
Fiction featuring care-experience	Helen Fitzgerald	My Last Confession	2009	An important character in this novel is 28 year old adoptee, Amanda, whose birth mother is murdered shortly after the 2 women meet for the first time.		
Fiction featuring care-experience	Helen Fitzgerald	The Devil's Staircase	2009	In The Devil's Staircase (2009), there are 2 care-experienced characters who are central to the story. One has been deported from Australia to the UK for stealing cars and one is a serial killer.	Scotland; foster care	
Children's Fiction	Robert Muchamore	Henderson's Boys	2009	<p>Henderson's Boys is another series of young adult spy novels written by Robert Muchamore, this time about the beginning of CHERUB.</p> <p>Muchamore writes on his website:</p> <p>"The world of Henderson's Boys is rougher and more dangerous than CHERUB. Instead of drug dealers and terrorists the enemy is a brutal Nazi regime that will torture and kill young agents if they're captured. I hope you enjoy meeting Charles Henderson and the first CHERUB agents!"</p> <p>https://www.muchamore.com/hendersons-boys</p>		

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Fiction featuring care-experience	Siobhan Dowd	Solace of the Road	2009	<p>Memories of Mum are the only thing that make Holly Hogan happy. She hates her foster family with their too-nice ways and their false sympathy. And she hates her life, her stupid school and the way everyone is always on at her. Then she finds the wig, and everything changes. Wearing the long, flowing blonde locks she feels transformed. She's not Holly any more, she's Solace: the girl with the slinkster walk and the super-sharp talk. She's older, more confident - the kind of girl who can walk right out of her humdrum life, hitch to Ireland and find her mum. The kind of girl who can face the world head on.</p> <p>So begins a bittersweet, and sometimes hilarious journey as Solace swaggers and Holly tiptoes across England and through memory, discovering her true self, and unlocking the secrets of her past.</p>	foster care; journey	
Fiction featuring care-experience	Daniel Defoe	Moll Flanders	2010	Moll Flanders is a novel by Daniel Defoe, first published in 1722. It purports to be the true account of the life of the eponymous Moll, detailing her exploits from birth until old age. Presented as Moll's autobiography, and published anonymously, the novel, through its self-made protagonist, highlights the intricacies and double standards of Moll's contemporary society, and offers an irresistible and evocative insight into both the drawing rooms and seedy back alleys of seventeenth-century England.	England; Children of prisoners; Dewey: 823/.5; Fiction; British; Fiction; British; Children of prisoners; Women; England; Virginia; Electronic books; Fiction; Fiction; Women; Virginia	Multiple

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Category	Author	Title	Year	Description	Keywords	Publisher
Fiction featuring care-experience	Peter Temple	Truth	2010	Inspector Stephen Villani, who was with his brothers in kinship for a while as a child, is head of homicide in Melbourne, Australia. He has a full agenda: a murdered woman in a penthouse apartment, three men butchered in a sadistic rampage, a tattoofaced drug dealer corrupting his rebellious daughter, a crumbling marriage. With each twist and every turn of this taut crime novel, Villani is forced to question whom he can trust.	kinship care; Melbourne; crime novel; Australia	Farrar Straus & Giroux
Fiction featuring care-experience	Patrick Dennis	Auntie Mame: An Irreverent Escapade	2010	Patrick Dennis' mother died in childbirth. When Patrick is 10, his father dies, having arranged first for Patrick to live with his paternal auntie Mame.	United States; Kinship Care; Boarding School	Penguin Classics
Fiction featuring care-experience	Claire Keegan	Foster	2010	A small girl is sent to live with her mother's people on a farm in rural Ireland, without knowing when she will return home. In the strangers' house, she finds a warmth and affection she has not known before and slowly begins to blossom in their care. And then a secret is revealed, and suddenly, she realizes how fragile her idyll is. Winner of the Davy Byrnes Memorial Prize, Foster is now published in a revised and expanded version. Beautiful, sad and eerie, it is a story of astonishing emotional depth, showcasing Claire Keegan's great accomplishment and talent.	Ireland; foster care; kinship care; secret	
Fiction featuring care-experience	Dermot Bolger	A Second Life	2010	Following a car crash, for several seconds, Dublin photographer Sean Blake is clinically dead. He experiences the overwhelmingly powerful sensation of being drawn towards a blissful afterworld, to find his progress blocked by the haunting face of a man he only partially recognises. He plummets back to life into a world which, for him, has profoundly changed. The pieces of his life seem not to fit anymore as he struggles, deeply traumatized, to adjust to this gift of a second life. Yet this is not the first time that he has been given a second life.		

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				At the age of six weeks he was taken from his mother, when as a young girl in rural Ireland, she was forced to give up her baby for adoption. Beginning the quest for his own identity, and struggling against a wall of official silence and a complex sense of guilt, Sean determines to find his natural mother, while continuing to search for the face that has haunted him since the crash. This leads him on a strange and absorbing journey through his various pasts, into archives, memories, dreams and startling confessions.		
Fiction featuring care-experience	Kazuo Ishiguro	Never Let Me Go	2010	Kazuo Ishiguro imagines the lives of a group of students growing up in a darkly skewed version of contemporary England. Narrated by Kathy, now thirty-one, <i>Never Let Me Go</i> dramatises her attempts to come to terms with her childhood at the seemingly idyllic Hailsham School and with the fate that has always awaited her and her closest friends in the wider world. A story of love, friendship and memory, <i>Never Let Me Go</i> is charged throughout with a sense of the fragility of life.	orphan; orphans; science fiction; organ donation; love	Faber & Faber
Fiction featuring care-experience	Andrea Levy	Small Island	2010	Hortense Joseph - who was raised in kinship care - arrives in London from Jamaica in 1948 with her life in her suitcase, her heart broken, her resolve intact. Her husband, Gilbert Joseph, returns from the war expecting to be received as a hero, but finds his status as a black man in Britain to be second class. His white landlady, Queenie, raised as a farmer's daughter, befriends Gilbert, and later Hortense, with innocence and courage, until the unexpected arrival of her husband, Bernard, who returns from combat with issues of his own to resolve. Told in these four voices, <i>Small Island</i> is a courageous novel of tender emotion and sparkling wit, of crossings taken and passages lost, of shattering compassion and of reckless optimism in the face of insurmountable barriers---in short, an encapsulation of that most American of experiences: the immigrant's life.	Jamaica; Kinship Care; Black British	MACMILLAN USA

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Category	Author	Title	Year	Description	Keywords	Publisher
Children's Fiction	Jacqueline Wilson	Hetty Feather	2010	London, 1876. Hetty Feather is just a tiny baby when her mother leaves her at the Foundling Hospital. The Hospital cares for abandoned children - but Hetty must first live with a foster family until she is big enough to go to school. Hetty's happiness is threatened when she must return to the Foundling Hospital to begin her education. The new life of awful uniforms and terrible food is a struggle for her, and she desperately misses her beloved Jem. But now she has the chance to find her real mother. Could she really be the wonderful Madame Adeline? Or will Hetty find the truth is even more surprising? Featuring a brand-new feisty Victorian heroine in this historical novel, Hetty Feather, is compelling, moving and funny.	Foster Care; England; Foundlings; Historical Fiction	Penguin
Fiction featuring care-experience	P.D. James	Innocent Blood	2011	If you are a PD James fan, I should say up front that Innocent Blood is very different from the Adam Dalgliesh detective series. It is a psychological thriller, a slow-building mystery which starts with little steps then, as the odd details start to make sense, the tension builds. It is the story of a young woman who knows she is adopted, who exercises her right to know the names of her birth parents, and finds something she never in a million years expected.	adoption, birth parents, family	
Fiction featuring care-experience	James and Lance Morcan	The Ninth Orphan (The Orphan Trilogy Book 1)	2011	Lance and James Morcan are a writing team who have co-authored numerous novels and non-fiction books. Lance is a former journalist with experience in all media. Married, he resides in Papamoa, New Zealand. James is also an actor and has acting credits in film, television and stage. He resides in Sydney, Australia. Book One: THE NINTH ORPHAN Book Two: THE ORPHAN FACTORY Book Three: THE ORPHAN UPRISING Meet Number Nine - an orphan, a spy, a lover...a master of disguise, an assassin, a shapeshifter...a freedom fighter, a human chameleon, a reformed contract killer.		

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Category	Author	Title	Year	Description	Keywords	Publisher
				<p>He's all the above. He's none of the above.</p> <p>Nine is enslaved by the Omega Agency, a shadowy organization seeking to create a New World Order. When he tries to break free and live a normal life, Nine is hunted by his mentor and father figure, and by a female orphan he spent his childhood with. On the run, his life becomes entwined with his beautiful French-African hostage and a shocking past is revealed...A past that involves the mysterious Pedemont Orphanage in Chicago, Illinois.</p> <p>Standing in the way of Nine's freedom are his fellow orphans - all elite operatives like himself - who are under orders to terminate him. Nine finds himself in a seemingly infinite maze of cloak and dagger deception. Time and again, he must call on all his advanced training to survive.</p>		
Fiction featuring care-experience	Helen Fitzgerald	The Donor	2011	care-experienced people are crucial to the plot in The Donor (2011). Mum, who was in foster care, leaves her husband and twin daughters when the girls are three. She doesn't re-enter their lives for 13 years when dad is desperately seeking a kidney transplant donor. Mum is so ravished from using heroin for decades her kidney is not an option. She is not only drug addicted, she's also addicted to a fellow former foster kid, a violent man who beats her.	Scotland; foster care	
Fiction featuring care-experience	Andrea Levy	The Long Song	2011	This tale is set in Jamaica during the last turbulent years of slavery and the early years of freedom that followed. The Long Song is narrated by July, a former slave, and starts about 1831 the time of what was known as the Baptist revolt and goes to the end of slavery in the late 1830s. July is telling her story in old age whilst she is living with her son Thomas. The novel is the story of her early life on a plantation called Amity. July describes herself as a mulatto; her father was white, an overseer and raped her mother. She	Foster Care; Slavery; England; Jamaica; Foundlings	Tinder Press

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				was taken from her mother whilst still young to become the pet and then lady's maid to Caroline Mortimer, the vapid and foolish sister of the plantation owner.		
Fiction by care-experienced authors	Alex Wheatle	Brenton Brown	2011	Brenton Brown is a follow-up to Alex Wheatle's debut Brixton Rock, which was set in the early 1980s. We catch up with the characters of that book about 25 years later in contemporary Britain, and those who read the first book will enjoy seeing how things turned out, especially with the title character Brenton, who fell in love with his half-sister Juliet. Things get a lot messier in this book, despite their best efforts to avoid it, as the child they had together is now grown-up and wants to know who her real father is (they never told her), and Juliet's husband begins to suspect, and meanwhile Juliet is running for government and can't have any scandal coming out in public.	Fiction; Brothers and sisters; Racially mixed people	Arcadia Books ; Distributor in the USA and Canada, Dufour Editions
Fiction by care-experienced authors	Nina Bawden	The Outside Child	2011	Jane has always been happy living in kinship care with her two eccentric aunts and seeing her sailor father when his ship is in. But one day she notices a new picture in her father's cabin--a photograph of a small boy and girl. That is when she finds out for the first time that she has a half-brother and sister. Jane is determined to find out more about them, so she and her best friend Plato Jones set out on a mission to track them down. They track down her brother and sister to their home in the East End of London. There she finds still more surprises lie in store for her. Can Jane at last be part of a 'proper' family, or must she always remain the outside child? This is the story of a girl and her family and the secrets they keep from one another. Both funny and poignant, The Outside Child is a beautifully drawn study of adolescence from one of Britain's most skilled writers for children.	England; Kinship Care	Faber and Faber

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Category	Author	Title	Year	Description	Keywords	Publisher
Fiction featuring care-experience	W G Sebald	Austerlitz	2011	Austerlitz is the story of a man's search for the answer to his life's central riddle. A small child when he comes to England on a Kindertransport in the summer of 1939, one Jacques Austerlitz is told nothing of his real family by the Welsh Methodist minister and his wife who raise him. When he is a much older man, the fleeting memories return to him, and obeying an instinct he only dimly understands, he follows their trail back to the world he left behind a half century before. There, faced with the void at the heart of twentieth-century Europe, he struggles to rescue his heritage from oblivion.	Kindertransport ; orphan	Penguin
Fiction featuring care-experience	John Harding	Florence and Giles	2011	<p>1891. In a remote and crumbling New England mansion, 12-year-old orphan Florence is neglected by her guardian uncle and banned from reading. Left to her own devices she devours books in secret and talks to herself - and narrates this, her story - in a unique language of her own invention. By night, she sleepwalks the corridors like one of the old house's many ghosts and is troubled by a recurrent dream in which a mysterious woman appears to threaten her younger brother Giles. Sometimes Florence doesn't sleepwalk at all, but simply pretends to so she can roam at will and search the house for clues to her own baffling past.</p> <p>After the sudden violent death of the children's first governess, a second teacher, Miss Taylor, arrives, and immediately strange phenomena begin to occur. Florence becomes convinced that the new governess is a vengeful and malevolent spirit who means to do Giles harm. Against this powerful supernatural enemy, and without any adult to whom she can turn for help, Florence must use all her intelligence and ingenuity to both protect her little brother and preserve her private world.</p>	orphan; gothic; New England; ghosts; supernatural	

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Category	Author	Title	Year	Description	Keywords	Publisher
				Inspired by and in the tradition of Henry James' s The Turn of the Screw, Florence & Giles is a gripping gothic page-turner told in a startlingly different and wonderfully captivating narrative voice.		
Fiction featuring care-experience	Caitlin Davies	The Ghost of Lily Painter	2011	<p>The first time Annie Sweet sees 43 Stanley Road, the house is so perfect she almost feels as though it has chosen her. She longs to move in, but with her husband seeming more distant, and her daughter wrapped up in her friends and new school, Annie is left alone to mull over the past.</p> <p>Soon she becomes consumed by the house and everyone who has lived there before her, especially a young chorus girl called Lily Painter, a rising star of the music hall whose sparkling performances were the talk of the town.</p> <p>In Edwardian London, two notorious baby farmers, lured young unmarried mothers with the promise adopting their babies and offering them a better life.</p>	Edwardian; adoption; baby farmers; house	
Fiction featuring care-experience	Deborah Harkness	A Discovery of Witches	2011	Deborah Harkness' debut novel, A Discovery of Witches, is the story of Diana Bishop who was born to Rebecca Bishop and Stephen Proctor, both extremely powerful witches. From a very early age, she displayed signs of extraordinary power and ability, notably time-walking at the age of three. At the young age of seven, she was orphaned when both of her parents were killed while in Africa. Subsequently, she was raised by her aunt Sarah Bishop and Emily Mather, Sarah's partner. This terrible loss of her parents caused Diana to reject her magic altogether. Diana went on to obtain a bachelor's degree from a college in Maine and a graduate degree from Oxford. After she obtained her PhD, she became a professor of history at Yale.	kinship care; supernatural	

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Category	Author	Title	Year	Description	Keywords	Publisher
Fiction featuring care-experience	Sheridan Hay	The Secret of Lost Things	2011	At eighteen, Rosemary arrives in New York from Tasmania with little more than her love of books and an eagerness to explore the city she's read so much about. The moment she steps into the Arcade bookstore, she knows she has found a home. The gruff owner, Mr. Pike, gives her a job sorting through huge piles of books and helping the rest of the staff – a group as odd and idiosyncratic as the characters in a Dickens novel. There's Pearl, the loving, motherly transsexual who runs the cash register; Oscar, who shares his extensive, eclectic knowledge with Rosemary, but furiously rejects her attempts at a more personal relationship; and Arthur Pick, who supervises the art section and demonstrates a particular interest in photography books featuring naked men. The store manager Walter Geist is an albino, a lonely figure even within the world of the Arcade. When Walter's eyesight begins to fail, Rosemary becomes his assistant. And so it is Rosemary who first reads the letter from someone seeking to 'place' a lost manuscript by Herman Melville.	book shop; books; orphan	Harper Perennial
Fiction featuring care-experience	Boris Leonidovich Pasternak	Doctor Zhivago	2011	Set in Russia during the first half of the twentieth century during the most radical revolution of the age. Seen through the life of Yuri Zhivago, physician and poet, who must come to terms with the new world and his love for two women. As a young boy he was in kinship care with his uncle.	Love; Orphan; Russia; Russian Revolution	Vintage Classic
Children's Fiction	Paul Sambrooks	Dennis and the Big Decisions (2-5 years)	2011	This brightly illustrated picture book explains to young children who are living in foster care about why they have moved from their family, why they may have future moves, and who will make these decisions. It is the sequel to the ever-popular Dennis Duckling (BAAF 2009). The story follows Dennis, living in foster care, as important decisions are made about where he should live and who with. It looks at the range of adults who are involved in decision making, including social workers, foster carers, judges and birth parents, and emphasises how they all want		

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				<p>to make the right choice for Dennis.</p> <p>The story can help children who have to be separated from their birth parents to understand what is happening to them and why, what the future may hold, and how they can be involved in making big decisions no matter how old or young they are.</p> <p>It clearly explains that children are not responsible for making decisions, or resolving the difficulties that surround them, but that their wishes and feelings are vitally important and will be listened to.</p> <p>Dennis Duckling and the Big Decisions does not have a set ending. It is left to the child and reader to imagine what happens next, hopefully reflecting the plan for the individual child. The story can be revisited and expanded many times as plans progress and decisions about the child's future become clearer.</p>		
Children's Fiction	Sharon Diaz Creech et al.	The Wanderer	2011	Thirteen-year-old Sophie, who is adopted, sets sail for England from the US with her three uncles and two cousins. On the way, Sophie learns about how her parents died.	United States; Adoption; England; Kinship Care	HarperCollins
Fiction featuring care-experience	Adam Johnson	The Orphan Master's Son	2012	The protagonist in The Orphan Master's Son is an orphan who grows up to become a model citizen and who struggles with life in North Korea. Themes of propaganda, state power, identity and the low status of orphans are entwined through out. The novel was awarded the 2013 Pulitzer Prize for Fiction in 2013. Shortly after Jun Do's birth in a North Korean orphanage, his mother is carted off to Pyongyang, never to be seen again. His father (the eponymous orphan master) is unable or unwilling to show favoritism, so Jun Do is punished, starved and over-worked along with the other orphans. This is a dark, satirical novel about what happens when love is forbidden and a totalitarian regime attempts to take the place of family.	England; adoption; supernatural	

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Fiction featuring care-experience	Vanessa Diffenbaugh	The Language of Flowers	2012	<p>The Victorians used flowers to express emotions: honeysuckle for devotion, azaleas for passion, and red roses for love. For Victoria Jones, flowers and their meanings are her only connection to the world – although for her, they are most useful in expressing feelings such as grief, mistrust and solitude.</p> <p>After a childhood in the foster care system, Victoria – now eighteen – has nowhere to go, and sleeps in a public park, where she plants a small garden of her own. When her talent is discovered by a local florist, she discovers her gift for helping others through the flowers she chooses for them. But it takes a meeting with a mysterious vendor at the flower market for her to realize what's been missing in her own life. As she starts to fall for him, though, she must confront a painful secret from her past – and decide whether it's worth risking everything for a second chance at happiness.</p>	United States; Foster Care; Group Home	Pan
Fiction featuring care-experience	Tiony Birch	Blood	2012	From the moment he saw her, wrapped in a blanket at the hospital, Jesse knew that he'd be the one to look after his little sister, Rachel. Jesse and Rachel live with their mother, but have been in foster care (where they were separated) and in kinship care with their grandfather (where they were settled and happy).	Australia; First Nations; Foster Care; Kinship Care	UQP Press
Fiction featuring care-experience	Jane Rogers	Separate Tracks	2012	The first novel from the acclaimed author of Mr. Wroe's Virgins and The Voyage Home. Orph is a strange, silent, friendless young man. Emma meets him when she comes to work at the children's home where he lives. She offers him a room in her student flat. But there, amid the love affairs and politics of university life, Orph's alienation only grows deeper, and his lonely course has the most desperate of consequences.	children's home; residential care; child care	Canongate Books

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Fiction by care-experienced authors	Lola Jaye	Being Lara: A Novel	2012	A poignant and provocative story of adoption, self-discovery, and the meaning of family, <i>Being Lara</i> by author Lola Jaye (<i>By the Time You Read This</i>) is an unforgettable tale of three women—British mother, Nigerian birth mother, and 30-year-old daughter—the choices they made, and the fragile bond they try to create across time and continents. Intelligent and touching, <i>Being Lara</i> is exquisite contemporary fiction with heart and soul that will resonate with readers of Cecilia Ahearn, Thrity Umrigar, and Shilpi Gowda.		
Fiction featuring care-experience	Laura Moriarty	The Chaperone	2012	The Chaperone is a novel about the woman who chaperoned ant Louise Brooks to New York City in 1922 and the summer that would change them both. Only a few years before becoming a famous silent-film star and an icon of her generation, a fifteen-year-old Louise Brooks leaves Wichita, Kansas, to study with the prestigious Denishawn School of Dancing in New York. Much to her annoyance, she is accompanied by a thirty-six-year-old chaperone, who is neither mother nor friend. Cora Carlisle, a complicated but traditional woman was once an orphan who was part of the Orphan Train, which placed children with midwestern families (who also happened to be strangers!). Cora was lucky, her foster family treated her well but some of the kids became the victims of terrible cruelty, and more hunger, and more neglect—it all depended on who adopted them off the train. Young Louise, already stunningly beautiful and sporting her famous black bob with blunt bangs, is known for her arrogance and her lack of respect for convention. Ultimately, the five weeks they spend together will transform their lives forever."		
Fiction featuring	Robert B Parker	Sixkill	2012	A bad-boy movie star named Jumbo pushes the limits of his reputation when he's accused of rape and murder. When the Boston PD calls on Spencer, he meets Jumbo's young	United States; First Nations	G.P. Putnam's Sons

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care-experience				bodyguard, Zebulon Sixkill, and the two form an unlikely alliance. It's a high profile case for Spenser, but the Hollywood secrets he uncovers are sordidly unsavory- and not just those of the accused... Zebulon Sixkill was in kinship care as a child, living with his grandfather after his father disappeared and his mother died when Z was 10.		
Fiction featuring care-experience	Margot Livesey	The Flight of Gemma Hardy	2012	The Flight of Gemma Hardy is a modern take on a classic story—Charlotte Brontë’s Jane Eyre—that will fascinate readers of the Gothic original and fans of modern literary fiction alike, with its lyrical prose, robust characters, and abundant compassion. Set in early 1960s Scotland, this breakout novel from award-winning author Margot Livesey is a tale of determination and spirit that, like The Three Weissmanns of Westport and A Thousand Acres, spins an unforgettable new story from threads of our shared, still-living literary past.	orphan	HarpPeren
Fiction by care-experienced authors	Leigh Bardugo	Shadow and Bone	2012	Shadow and Bone, written by Leigh Bardugo, is a fantasy adventure narrated by teenage orphan, Alina Starkov. This is the first book in the Grisha trilogy. The sequel, Siege and Storm, was published in 2013, and the final in the series, Ruin and Rising, was published in 2014.	Orphan; United States; fantasy	
Fiction featuring care-experience	Jon Bauer	Rocks in the Belly	2012	You're eight years old. An only child. You love your parents, but you're convinced you're not enough for your mother because she fosters other people's kids. You've learnt to cope, just about, with how this makes you feel -- but then a boy called Robert arrives, and he and your Mum seem to connect in a way you never have. You hate him for it. And her. And one day you do something bad to teach them both a lesson. At twenty-eight, you return home to face your mother, who is now chronically ill. Despite the intervening years, you haven't forgiven her - or yourself - for what happened. Ultimately, though, it's her forgiveness you crave,	Foster Care; Australia	Serpent's Tail

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Category	Author	Title	Year	Description	Keywords	Publisher
				even after all this time - because you need to know, finally, that you were enough for her.		
Fiction by care-experienced authors	Jenni Fagan	The Panopticon	2013	The Panopticon is a circular prison with cells so constructed that the prisoners can be always observed. Anais Hendricks, fifteen, is in the back of a police car, headed for the Panopticon, a home for chronic young offenders. She cannot remember the events that led her here, but across town a policewoman lies in a coma and there is blood on Anais' school uniform. Smart, funny and fierce, Anais is a counter-culture outlaw, a bohemian philosopher in sailor shorts and a pillbox hat. She is also a child who has been let down, or worse, by just about every adult she has ever met. The residents of the Panopticon form intense bonds, heightened by their place on the periphery, and Anais finds herself part of an ad hoc family there. Much more suspicious are the social workers, especially Helen, who is about to leave her job for an elephant sanctuary in India but is determined to force Anais to confront the circumstances of her birth before she goes. Looking up at the watchtower that looms over the residents, Anais knows her fate: she is part of an experiment, she always was, it's a given, a liberty - a fact. And the experiment is closing in.	Adoption; Foster Care; Children's Home; Scotland; Detention Centre; autobiographical	Hogarth
Fiction featuring care-experience	Christina Baker Kline	Orphan Train	2013	Between 1854 and 1929, so-called orphan trains ran regularly from the cities of the East Coast to the farmlands of the Midwest, carrying thousands of abandoned children whose fates would be determined by pure luck. Would they be adopted by a kind and loving family, or would they face a childhood and adolescence of hard labour and servitude? As a young Irish immigrant, Vivian Daly was one such child, sent by rail from New York City to an uncertain future a world away. Returning east later in life, Vivian leads a	orphan; train; community service; juvenile detention; foster homes; foster care	

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Category	Author	Title	Year	Description	Keywords	Publisher
				<p>quiet, peaceful existence on the coast of Maine, the memories of her upbringing rendered a hazy blur. But in her attic, hidden in trunks, are vestiges of a turbulent past.</p> <p>Seventeen-year-old Molly Ayer knows that a community service position helping an elderly woman clean out her home is the only thing keeping her out of juvenile hall. But as Molly helps Vivian sort through her keepsakes and possessions, she discovers that she and Vivian aren't as different as they appear. A Penobscot Indian who has spent her youth in and out of foster homes, Molly is also an outsider being raised by strangers, and she, too, has unanswered questions about the past.</p>		
Fiction featuring care-experience	Garry Disher	Bitter Wash Road	2013	Bitter Wash Road is the first of 3 books featuring Paul Hirschhausen, a detective who has been demoted and relocated to a small country town as punishment for testifying against corrupt colleagues. In this book, Hirschhausen uncovers a story of powerful men sexually abusing teenagers, including girls in the care of the South Australian state. The second in the series, Peace (2019), includes a young woman from Bitter Wash Road as part of the recurring cast of characters. Gemma was in foster care for a while but she now works languidly in the local store yet is brilliant in a crisis. The 3rd of the series, Consolation, also includes a child protection story, this one about a girl being locked in a caravan by her stepmother.		
Children's Fiction	Sally Nicholls	Close Your Pretty Eyes (11-13 years)	2013	Eleven-year-old Olivia has been in care since she was five, and is just beginning her sixteenth placement. Her new home is a secluded farmhouse, centuries old, where she slowly bonds with her foster family. But the house holds dark secrets. Olivia discovers that it was once a notorious baby farm, where unwanted children were left to die. She becomes convinced that the place is haunted. She is desperate to save		

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				her new family from the ghosts. The danger is real - but does it come from the twisted mind of a very disturbed child? A powerful and thrilling story from one of today's most exciting young writers.		
Fiction by care-experienced authors	J R R Tolkien	The Hobbit	2013	The Hobbit is the unforgettable story of Bilbo, a peace-loving hobbit, who embarks on a strange and magical adventure. A timeless classic. Frodo Baggins was born in the Shire on 22nd September 1368 (SR). He shares his birthday – though not date of birth – with his 'uncle' Bilbo Baggins (Master of Bag End in Hobbiton). He was orphaned at the age of 12, when his parents, Drogo and Primula Baggins, drowned in a boating accident on the Brandywine. Bilbo Baggins enjoys a quiet and contented life, with no desire to travel far from the comforts of home; then one day the wizard Gandalf and a band of dwarves arrive unexpectedly and enlist his services – as a burglar – on a dangerous expedition to raid the treasure-hoard of Smaug the dragon. Bilbo's life is never to be the same again.	hobbit; orphan	HarperCollins Children's Books
Fiction by care-experienced authors	Mason Valerie John	Borrowed Body	2013	"I could have been born and raised in Africa. But my Spirit was in too much of a rush to be reincarnated... At six weeks I was chucked out into the new year of 1965 which wasn't prepared to welcome an African baby, abandoned on a harsh English winter's day." So begins Pauline's spirited and moving story of her childhood and teenage years in and out of foster homes and back and forth to Dr. Barnardo's Village in Essex. The Barnardo's good times are shattered by the sudden visits of her mother, whom she calls Wunmi and with whom she goes to live in a London high-rise. Wunmi's method of refashioning Pauline into a dutiful African child is literally to knock the English out of her. Pauline tries other ways to survive—sniffing glue and shoplifting—until the harsh realities of detention centres and juvenile courts make Pauline think again...	Foster Care; Children's Home; England; African Canadian; autobiographical; Journalist; Nigerian British	Demeter Press

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Category	Author	Title	Year	Description	Keywords	Publisher
Fiction featuring care-experience	Elisabeth Gifford	Secrets of the Sea House	2013	<p>Scotland, 1860. Reverend Alexander Ferguson, naïve and newly-ordained, takes up his new parish, a poor, isolated patch on the Hebridean island of Harris. His time on the island will irrevocably change the course of his life, but the white house on the edge of the dunes keeps its silence long after Alexander departs.</p> <p>It will be more than a century before the Sea House reluctantly gives up its secrets. Ruth and Michael buy the grand but dilapidated building and begin to turn it into a home for the family they hope to have. But their dreams are marred by a shocking discovery. The tiny bones of a baby are buried beneath the house; the child's fragile legs are fused together - a mermaid child. Who buried the bones? And why? Ruth needs to solve the mystery of her new home - but the answers to her questions may lie in her own past. Ruth was put into care after her mother killed herself.</p> <p>Based on a real nineteenth-century letter to The Times in which a Scottish clergyman claimed to have seen a mermaid, Secrets of the Sea House is an epic, sweeping tale of loss and love, hope and redemption, and how we heal ourselves with the stories we tell.</p>		
Fiction featuring care-experience	Yvette Poshoglian	Escape from Cockatoo Island	2013	This is the story of eleven-year-old orphan, Olivia Markham. Olivia has been sent to Cockatoo Island, in the middle of Sydney Harbour. She is desperate to escape the island, but mostly, she wants to find her own family...		
Fiction featuring care-experience	Ransom Riggs	Miss Peregrine's Home for Peculiar Children	2013	A horrific family tragedy sends sixteen-year-old Jacob journeying to a remote island off the coast of Wales, where he discovers the crumbling ruins of an old orphanage that was home to children who were more than just peculiar, but possibly dangerous--and who may still be alive. Illustrated with vintage found photographs	Fiction; Grandfathers; Orphanages; Supernatural; Wales	Quirk Books

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Fiction featuring care-experience	Kay Langdale	Choose Me	2013	Billy is only nine years old. But he's already learned that when your mum dies, you get your own social worker. He's also learned that once you are ten, the odds of finding a family to adopt you don't look so good. That's the part he wasn't supposed to overhear. Miriam Riley is up against a deadline to give Billy the 'forever family' that every child deserves. Determined to cut through red tape, she finds three very different couples who might fit the bill, though prospective parents come with issues of their own. Through Billy's watchful eyes, the summer unfolds. What does he really need? Will anyone choose him?	foster care; social worker; adoption	Hodder Paperbacks
Fiction featuring care-experience	Kazuo Ishiguro	When We Were Orphans	2013	Christopher Banks, an English boy born in early-twentieth-century Shanghai, is orphaned at age nine when his mother and father both vanish under suspicious circumstances. Sent to live in England, he grows up to become a renowned detective and, more than twenty years later, returns to Shanghai, where the Sino-Japanese War is raging, to solve the mystery of the disappearances. Moving between inter-war London and Shanghai, When We Were Orphans is a remarkable story of memory, intrigue and the need to return.	orphans; China	Faber & Faber
Fiction featuring care-experience	Melvyn Bragg	Grace and Mary	2013	John visits his aging mother in her nursing home and tries to revive her ailing memory with the use of songs, photos and questions. Interwoven with John's visits to Mary is the story of Grace, a farm labourer's daughter, who fell pregnant in 1917 and gave birth to an illegitimate daughter – Mary, who she was forced to give her away at birth. He finds out about the history of childhood displacement in his family, with both his mother and his grandmother.	Foster Care; England; Kinship Care	Sceptre
Fiction featuring care-experience	Ace Atkins	Robert B. Parker's Lullaby	2013	When fourteen-year-old Mattie Sullivan - who is living in kinship care - asks Spenser to investigate her mother's murder, he's not convinced by her claim that the wrong man was convicted. Mattie is street-smart, wise beyond her years, and now left to care for her younger siblings and an	United States; Kinship Care; alcoholism; carer	G.P. Putnam's Sons

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				alcoholic grandmother in a dilapidated apartment in South Boston. But her need for closure and her determination to make things right hits Spenser where he lives. As Spenser becomes more involved, he thinks that Mattie may be onto something after all. And he's going to need the help of his friend Hawk to find peace for Mattie—a job that's more dangerous than he ever thought.		
Fiction featuring care-experience	Caitlin Davies	Family likeness	2013	<p>In a small Kent town in the 1950s, a bewildered little girl is growing up. Ostracised because of her colour, she tries her best to fit in, but nobody wants anything to do with her. A nanny climbs the steps of a smart London address. She's convinced that her connection to the family behind the door is more than professional.</p> <p>And on the walls of an English stately home, amongst the family portraits, hangs an eighteenth-century oil painting of a mysterious black woman in a silk gown.</p> <p>In ways both poignant and unexpected, the three lives are intertwined in a heartbreaking story of prejudice and motherless children, of chances missed, of war time secrets and the search for belonging...</p>	foster care; illegitimacy; discrimination; orphan; Dido Elizabeth Belle; mixed race	Windmill Books
Children's Fiction	Jacqueline Sharratt Wilson et al.	Dustbin Baby	2013	April knows she was abandoned in a rubbish bin as a newborn baby, fourteen years ago. Now she's happily settled with her foster mother, Marion - but there's a part of April that's desperate to know where she really came from, and who she really is. If only she could remember her real mother - or even find her . . .An engrossing, engaging and highly moving novel from the acclaimed bestseller Jacqueline Wilson.	Foster Care; Foundlings	CORGI CHILDREN
Fiction featuring	Ellen Marie Wiseman (2)	What She Left Behind	2014	The Willard Asylum for the Chronic Insane is the setting for What She Left Behind (2014). Willard closed in 199 and what most people know about the facility is that 429		

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care-experience				<p>suitcases were found in the attic during an inventory to determine what was worth keeping.</p> <p>The employee who found the suitcases called the New York State Museum and the museum's historians then "catalogued and wrapped every item in the suitcases which turned out to date from 1910 to 1965" (Purcell).</p> <p>What Wiseman does in What She Left Behind is tell 2 stories, one of which is about Clara Cartwright who is confined to Willard after her father can no longer afford to keep her at a private institution. Clara's suitcase is amongst those found in 1995 and it's Isabelle Stone, or Izzy—a 17-year-old in foster care because her mother killed her father—who takes an interest in Clara's story. As the novel unfolds, we find out why Clara—who is not insane—was locked up in Willard, what life was like for her there (including the various 'treatments' she was forced to undergo), and what happened to Clara's child.</p>		
Fiction featuring care-experience	Dominique Wilson	The Yellow Papers	2014	<p>The Yellow Papers (2014) is a novel by Australian writer Dominique Wilson which is bookended by the stories of care-experienced characters. At age 7 Chen Mu is sent from China to the US to study. 9 years later, Chen Mu, now a keen botanist, makes his way - accidentally - to Australia's 20 years.</p> <p>The story concludes with Huang Ho, who lives for a while with his grandmother in Hong Kong before she sends him to university in Adelaide, South Australia. Being a keen follower of Mao Zedong (1893-1976), he is anxious to get back to China.</p> <p>In between are the stories of other Australian and Chinese</p>		

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				nationals who become friends across a vast historical sweep of time.		
Fiction featuring care-experience	Sandra Danby	Ignoring Gravity	2014	<p>An Adoption Reunion Mystery (Identity Detective Book 1) Debut novel by Yorkshire author Sandra Danby, about an ordinary family with a secret. Rose is adopted and doesn't know it. The day she finds her mother's hidden diary is the day she starts to search for who she really is.</p> <p>A story about identity, adoption, family mystery and ultimately of love, the novel connects two pairs of sisters separated by a generation of secrets. As Rose untangles the truth from the lies, she begins to understand why she has always felt so different from her sister Lily.</p>	adoption; identity; mystery; diary	
Fiction featuring care-experience	Charlotte Bronte	Jane Eyre	2014	<p>Jane Eyre, novel by Charlotte Brontë, first published in 1847 as Jane Eyre: An Autobiography, with Currer Bell (Brontë's pseudonym) listed as the editor. Widely considered a classic, it gave new truthfulness to the Victorian novel with its realistic portrayal of the inner life of a woman, noting her struggles with her natural desires and social condition. A gothic novel, it opens with Jane, an orphaned, isolated ten-year-old, living with the Reed family that dislikes her. She is later sent to the austere Lowood Institution, a charity school, where she and the other girls are mistreated; "Lowood," as the name suggests, is the "low" point in Jane's young life. In the face of such adversity, however, she gathers strength and confidence. She grows in strength, excels at school, becomes a governess, and falls in love with Edward Rochester. After being deceived by him, Jane goes to Marsh End, where she regains her spirituality and discovers her own strength. By novel's end, Jane is a strong, independent woman. Charlotte Brontë's Jane Eyre still raises relevant questions to readers today. Jane Eyre is a Bildungsroman which follows the</p>	Charlotte Bronte; Jane Eyre; orphan; institution; governess; teacher; Bildungsroman; love	Multiple

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				experiences of its eponymous heroine, including her growth to adulthood and her love for Mr. Rochester, the brooding master of Thornfield Hall.		
Fiction featuring care-experience	Hannah Kent	Burial Rites	2014	Burial Rites is set in Iceland. In 1829 Agnes Magnúsdóttir is sentenced to death for her part in the murder of two men. As the story unfolds, we learn that Agnes was in foster care as child.	Foster Care; Villain; History; Fiction; Australian; Iceland; Murder; Women murderers	Pan Macmillan
Fiction featuring care-experience	Donna Tartt	The Goldfinch	2014	Aged thirteen, Theo Decker, son of a devoted mother and a reckless, largely absent father, survives an accident that otherwise tears his life apart. Alone and rudderless in New York, he is taken in by the family of a wealthy friend. He is tormented by an unbearable longing for his mother, and down the years clings to the thing that most reminds him of her: a small, strangely captivating painting that ultimately draws him into the criminal underworld. As he grows up, Theo learns to glide between the drawing rooms of the rich and the dusty antiques store where he works. He is alienated and in love - and his talisman, the painting, places him at the centre of a narrowing, ever more dangerous circle. The Goldfinch is a haunted odyssey through present-day America and a drama of enthralling power. Combining unforgettably vivid characters and thrilling suspense, it is a beautiful, addictive triumph - a sweeping story of loss and obsession, of survival and self-invention, of the deepest mysteries of love, identity and fate.	United States; Foster Care; Kinship Care	Abacus

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Fiction featuring care-experience	iony Birch	The Promise	2014	In this collection of 12 stories, Tony Birch includes one which features a care-experienced character, an Aboriginal Australian who was raised by his grandmother after his mother left. In The Promise, Luke is struggling with an alcohol addiction, his wife has left him and taken their children. Life looks more promising after a spiritual experience.	care-experience; Aboriginal Australian; kinship care	UQP Press
Fiction featuring care-experience	Michael Palmer	Political Suicide	2014	When high-society doctor Gary McHugh believes he will be arrested for murder, he turns to old friend Dr Lou Welcome for help. Lou Welcome's best friend and AA sponsor is a care-experienced character. Cap Duncan is a former professional boxer and now runs a gym, training Lou and Lou's 13 year old daughter, Emily. Cap doesn't feature heavily in the story but is there in pivotal moments.	United States; Orphan	Hachette
Fiction featuring care-experience	Frances Brody	Death of an Avid Reader	2014	Book 6 in the Kate Shackleton mysteries. Kate Shackleton's sterling reputation for courageous sleuthing attracts the attention of the venerable Lady Coulton. Hidden in her past is a daughter, born out of wedlock and given up to a different family. Now, Lady Coulton is determined to find her and puts Kate on the case.	England; Adopted	Piatkus
Children's Fiction	Jacqueline Wilson	The Illustrated Mum	2015	Dolphin adores her mother, Marigold who was in care as a child. She's got wonderful clothes, bright hair, and vivid tattoos all over her body—a colorful lady, to match her colorful life. But Dolphin's older sister, Star, is beginning to wonder if living with Marigold's fiery, unpredictable moods is the best thing for the girls.	Foster Care	Bolinda Audio
Fiction by care-experienced authors	Paula McLain	A Ticket to Ride	2015	"It was August. For years it was August . . . There was heat like wet gauze and a high, white sky and music coming from everywhere at once." In the long, hot Illinois summer of 1973, insecure, motherless Jamie falls under the dangerous spell of her older, more worldly cousin Fawn, who's come to stay with Jamie and her uncle as penance for committing an "unmentionable act." It is a time of awakenings and	orphan	Ecco Press

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				<p>corruptions, of tragedy and loss, as Jamie slowly discovers the extent to which Fawn will use anything and anyone to further her own ends—and recognizes, perhaps too late, her own complicity in the disaster that takes shape around them.</p>		
Fiction featuring care-experience	Ellen Marie Wiseman (3)	Coal River	2015	<p>In Coal River (2015) Wiseman investigates the practice of employing children to work in a coal mine. The protagonist is 19-year-old Emma Malloy who lived in the fictional Coal River, Pennsylvania for 4 months as a child. Her parents have recently died and she returns to Coal River, penniless, to live again with her mother's sister, Aunt Ida, and her Uncle Otis and cousin Percy. Emma's relatives are happy to have Emma stay if she works without pay and doesn't embarrass them by complaining about the many boys who have died or lost limbs working in the mine.</p> <p>Outraged by what she sees, Emma determines to do what she can. She steals from the company store (where the mining community is forced to shop at exorbitant prices) and gives the produce to mining families while also cancelling shoppers' debts. Emma also conspires with the delightful Clayton Nash (who takes in orphans) to expose the mining company for its illegal and dangerous practices.</p>		
Fiction featuring care-experience	David Lagercrantz	The Girl in the Spider's Web (novel)	2015	<p>The Girl in the Spider's Web is the 4th novel in the Millennium series (the 1st 3 were written by Stieg Larsson). It uses the characters of hacker Lisbeth Salander and journalist Mikael Blomkvist. The book was written in secrecy by David Lagercrantz who worked on a computer that didn't have an internet connection. Larsson's estate is controlled by Larsson's brother and father who hired Lagercrantz. In the novel, Lisbeth Salander becomes entangled with the Spider Society which is run by Lisbeth's sister, Camilla, who has taken over the criminal operation run by the girls' father. Lagercrantz has gone on to write 2</p>		

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				more books in the series - The Girl Who Takes an Eye for an Eye (2017) and The Girl Who Lived Twice (2019).		
Fiction featuring care-experience	Robert Seethaler	A Whole Life	2015	<p>Andreas Egger's first memory is of arriving in an Austrian mountain village in 1902 at about 4 years of age. His mother has died from tuberculosis and the only reason Andreas is allowed to stay with his uncle, farmer Hubert Kranzstocker, is because money comes with the boy.</p> <p>Andreas' second memory is of being 8 years of age and beaten so badly by his uncle that his thigh is broken. After the bonesetter comes, Andreas spends 6 weeks lying down in the attic on a straw mattress. He limps for the rest of his life.</p> <p>Andreas rebels against his uncle's violence and begins his adult life at 18 by taking on casual labouring jobs. Andreas goes on to survive the devastating loss of his wife, 8 years in a prison of war camp in Russia, and the swarm of tourists to the village.</p> <p>Towards the end of his life, Andreas concludes that he has led a good life.</p>		
Fiction featuring care-experience	Helen Fitzgerald	The Exit	2015	When Rose Price was 10, she was in foster care as an evacuee, along with her 7-year-old sister. Now struggling with dementia, Rose Price returns frequently to a traumatic event during that stay, but when she is lucid she tries to warn workers of criminal events happening in the nursing home—but she isn't believed.	Scotland; Second World War; foster care	
Fiction featuring care-experience	Tiony Birch	Ghost River	2015	Archie Kemp knows trouble when he sees it, and he sees it when 13-year-old Sonny Brewer moves in next door. At the beginning of the story Sonny is living with his alcoholic father. By the end of the story, Sonny is in kinship care with his uncle.	kinship care	UQP Press

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Children's Fiction	Ali Redford	The Boy Who Built a Wall Around Himself (4-9 years)	2015	<p>Boy built a wall to keep himself safe. Behind it he felt strong and more protected. Then Someone Kind came along. She bounced a ball, sang and painted on the other side of the wall, and Boy began to wonder if life on the other side might be better after all.</p> <p>Written for children aged 4 to 9, this gentle full-colour picture book uses a simple metaphor to explain how children who have had painful or traumatic experiences can build barriers between themselves and other people. It will help children explore their feelings and encourage communication.</p>		
Children's Fiction	Philip Pullman	The Ruby In The Smoke: 1 (A Sally Lockhart Mystery)	2015	<p>The first in the Sally Lockhart Mysteries. Sally is sixteen and uncommonly pretty. Her knowledge of English literature, French, history, art and music is non-existent, but she has a thorough grounding in military tactics, can run a business, ride like a Cossack and shoot straight with a pistol. When her dear father is drowned in suspicious circumstances in the South China Sea, Sally is left to fend for herself, an orphan and alone in the smoky fog of Victorian London. Though she doesn't know it, Sally is already in terrible danger. Soon the mystery and the danger will deepen - and at the rotten heart of it all lies the deadly secret of the ruby in the smoke...</p> <p>2:The Shadow in the North It is 1878. Following a fraudulent medium's ramblings, a Scottish magician's visions, and a transport ship's disappearance, Sally finds that she must seek help from old friends, and finds herself losing all she holds dear trying to uncover the truth behind the North Star, the Steam Gun, and the mysterious businessman Axel Bellmann.</p> <p>3:The Tiger in the Well Main article: The Tiger in the Well</p>	orphan; mystery	

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				<p>It is 1881. A trap has been sprung, a trap which has been in preparation for years. The barely human Tzaddik is behind this, and his demons are far greater than anything Sally Lockhart can muster. With the law, the Tzaddik's henchmen, and luck against her, she is forced to go undercover, leaving behind her family and friends as she is sucked into the well...</p> <p>4:The Tin Princess Main article: The Tin Princess It is 1882. Jim finds Adelaide, a girl who went missing as a poor urchin during Sally's first encounter with danger, and finds that she has married into the royal family of Razkavia, a small country near Germany. However, resentment is rife within the palace, and plots develop to dethrone the family and join Germany. Only the Eagle can stop them.</p>		
Fiction featuring care-experience	Sarah Hilary	Someone Else's Skin	2016	Introducing DI Marnie Rome, called to a women's refuge to take a routine witness statement, DI Marnie Rome instead walks in on an attempted murder. Trying to uncover the truth from layers of secrets, Marnie finds herself confronting her own demons. Because she, of all people, knows that it can be those closest to us we should fear the most. Five years ago, her family home was the scene of a shocking and bloody crime that left her parents dead and her foster brother in prison. Winner of the Theakston's 2015 Crime Novel of the Year, and a 2014 Richard and Judy Book Club pick.	foster care; foster brother; police investigation	Headline
Fiction featuring care-experience	Agatha Christie	Elephants Can Remember	2016	Hercule Poirot is determined to solve an old husband and wife double murder that is still an open verdict...Hercule Poirot stood on the cliff-top. Here, many years earlier, there had been a tragic accident. The bodies of General Alistair Ravenscroft and his wife Molly were found shot dead near their manor house in Overcliffe. Left behind are two orphaned children, including daughter Celia. Ten years later, Mrs. Ariadne Oliver, godmother to Celia, is approached at a literary luncheon by Mrs. Burton-Cox, to	orphan; murder; mystery; detective	HARPER COLLINS

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				whose adopted son Celia Ravenscroft is engaged and asked to investigate who had killed whom? Was it a suicide pact?		
Fiction featuring care-experience	Margaret Forster	How to Measure a Cow	2016	Tara Fraser has a secret. Desperate to escape herself and her past, she changes her name, packs up her London home and moves to a town in the North of England where she knows no one. But one of her new neighbours, Nancy, is intrigued by her. And as hard as Tara tries to distance herself, she starts to drop her guard. Tara is under no illusions about her own faults. She knows she has a temper and can lash out. Her foster parents had tried to give her all the love and attention she needed. But she had been a difficult child and a very problematic adolescent. Then a letter arrives. An old friend wants to meet up. Struggling to keep her old life at bay, Tara soon discovers the dangers of fighting the past.	foster care	Vintage Digital
Fiction by care-experienced authors	Susan Beale	The good guy	2016	The Good Guy is inspired by Susan Beale's life. Beale was adopted as a baby and only reconnected with her birth mother several years ago. The inspiration for the book came from her adoption files. The papers include interviews with her mother, grandmother and one with her birth father. As well as helping Susan understand why she was adopted, the papers paint a portrait of America on the cusp of the sexual revolution. It's a time of unprecedented prosperity and conformity. Young people enjoy new freedoms, but gender roles remain clearly defined and expectations of morality and purity are strictly, and sometimes cruelly, enforced. It's a world about to be shaken to its core. In the novel, Ted, a car-tyre salesman in 1960s suburban New England, is a dreamer who craves admiration. His wife, Abigail, longs for a life of the mind. Single-girl Penny just wants to be loved. When a chance encounter brings Ted and Penny together, he becomes enamoured and begins inventing a whole new life with her at its centre. But when this fantasy collides with	Fiction; Nineteen sixties; Triangles (Interpersonal relations)	John Murray

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				reality, the fallout threatens everything, and everyone, he holds dear.		
Fiction by care-experienced authors	Louise Beech	Mountain in My Shoe.	2016	After years of abuse, Bernadette makes the decision to leave her husband, only to find that he is missing ... along with a little boy she'd befriended years earlier. Also missing is his lifebook, the only thing that holds the answers. With the help of Conor's foster mum, Bernadette must face her own past, her husband's secrets and a future she never dared imagine to find them all. A psychological thriller and emotive examination of the meaning of family ... and just how far we're willing to go for the people we love.	abuse; foster care	Orenda Books Ltd
Fiction featuring care-experience	Julian Fellowes	Belgravia	2016	Belgravia is the story of two families, the Trenchards who have made their money through business and the Bellasis' who are an aristocratic British family. 26 years after the Trenchard's daughter, Sophia, dies giving birth to John Bellasis' son, the families unite and make a place for their grandson who has grown up in foster care.		
Fiction featuring care-experience	Charles Lambert	The Children's Home	2016	A beguiling and disarming novel about a mysterious group of children who appear to a disfigured recluse and his country doctor. Morgan Fletcher, the disfigured heir to a fortune of mysterious origins, lives on a sprawling estate, cut off from a threatening world. One day, his housekeeper, Engel, discovers a baby left on the doorstep. Soon more children arrive, among them stern, watchful David. With the help of Engel and town physician Doctor Crane, Morgan takes the children in, allowing them to explore the mansion ... and to begin to uncover the strange and disturbing secrets it holds.	orphans	Aardvark Bureau
Fiction featuring care-experience	Rebecca Mascull	Song of the Sea Maid	2016	In the 18th century, Dawney Price is an anomaly. An educated foundling, a woman of science in a time when such things are unheard-of, she overcomes her origins to become a natural philosopher. Against the conventions of the day,	Orphanage; Orphan	Hodder Paperbacks

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				and to the alarm of her male contemporaries, she sets sail to Portugal to develop her theories. There she makes some startling discoveries - not only in an ancient cave whose secrets hint at a previously undiscovered civilisation, but also in her own heart. The siren call of science is powerful, but as war approaches she finds herself pulled in another direction by feelings she cannot control.		
Fiction featuring care-experience	Graham Swift	Mothering Sunday (book)	2016	From the Booker Award winner: a luminous, profoundly moving work of fiction that begins with an afternoon tryst in 1924 between a servant girl and the young man of the neighbouring house, but then opens to reveal the whole life of a remarkable woman. Twenty-two-year-old Jane Fairchild, orphaned at birth, has worked as a maid at one English country estate since she was sixteen. And for almost all those years she has been the secret lover to Paul Sheringham, the scion of the estate next door. On an unseasonably warm March afternoon, Jane and Paul will make love for the last time--though not, as Jane believes, because Paul is about to be married--and the events of the day will alter Jane's life forever. As the narrative moves back and forth from 1924 to the end of the century, what we know and understand about Jane--about the way she loves, thinks, feels, sees, remembers--deepens with every beautifully wrought moment.	orphan; Mothering Sunday; orphanage; writer	Scribner
Fiction featuring care-experience	Victor Costa Hugo et al.	Les Misérables	2016	Les Misérables is a French historical novel by Victor Hugo, first published in 1862, and considered one of the greatest novels of the 19th century. The prevalence of orphans and unusual family structures in Les Misérables is the most obvious indicator that French society and politics in the period described have gone terribly wrong. Valjean, Fantine, Cosette, Marius, Gavroche, Pontmercy, and Gillenormand are all separated from their family or loved ones for economic or political reasons. Marius embodies the	orphan; orphans; historical novel; novel; France; French Revolution	Flammarion

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Category	Author	Title	Year	Description	Keywords	Publisher
				disastrous effects of politics on family structure, torn as he is between Gillenormand's monarchism and Pontmercy's embrace of Napoléon. Social instability and poverty, meanwhile, make orphans of Cosette, Valjean, Fantine, and Gavroche. Except for Gavroche, whose home life is so wretched that he is probably better off on his own, these characters are unhappy and lonely because they are separated from their parents and have no one to turn to when they most need help.		
Fiction featuring care-experience	Barry Crump	Wild Pork and Watercress	2016	This rattling good yarn has now been made into a major movie- Hunt For the Wilderpeople. When Social Welfare threatens to put Ricky into care, the overweight Maori boy and cantankerous Uncle Hec flee into the remote and rugged Ureweras. The impassable bush serves up perilous adventures, forcing the pair of misfits to use all their skills to survive hunger, wild pigs and the vagaries of the weather. Worse still are the authorities, determined to bring Ricky and Uncle Hec to justice. But despite the difficulties of life on the run, a bond of trust and love blossoms between the world-weary man and his withdrawn side-kick.	Social Welfare; love; on the run	Penguin
Fiction featuring care-experience	Louise Erdrich	The Round House	2016	A mother is brutally raped by a man on their North Dakota reservation where she lives with her husband and thirteen-year-old son, Joe. Traumatized and afraid, she takes to her bed and refuses to talk to anyone - including the police. While her husband, a tribal judge, endeavours to wrest justice from a situation that defies his keenest efforts, young Joe's world shifts on its child's axis. Confused, and nursing a complicated fury, Joe sets out to find answers that might put his mother's attacker behind bars - and make everything right again. Or so he hopes. An important aspect of The Round House is an adoption story, the story of a white woman who grows up in Native America after she is rejected at birth by her mother.	United States; Adoption; First Nations	Corsair

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Category	Author	Title	Year	Description	Keywords	Publisher
Fiction featuring care-experience	Mark Hill	Two O'Clock Boy	2017	Two O'Clock Boy features at least six care-experienced stereotypical characters: murderers; thieves; drug addicts. Connor Laird frightens people: he's intense, he's fearless, and he seems to be willing to do anything to protect himself and those he loves. He arrives in the Longacre Children's Home seemingly from nowhere, and instantly becomes hero and villain to every other child there. Thirty years later, someone is killing all of those who grew up in the Longacre, one by one. Each of them has secrets, not least investigating cop DI Ray Drake. One by one the mysteries of the past are revealed as Drake finds himself in a race against time before the killer gets to him. Who is killing to hide their secret?	stereotypes; care-experience; children's home; drugs	Sphere
Fiction featuring care-experience	Grace Lowrie	Safe With Me	2017	An emotional and evocative story about the deepest bonds of friendship. Abandoned as children, Kat and Jamie were inseparable growing up in foster care. But their bond couldn't protect them forever. From a troubled upbringing to working in a London greasy spoon, Kat's life has never been easy. On the surface Jamie is living the high-life, but appearances can be deceiving. When they unexpectedly reunite, their feelings become too intense to ignore. But as secrets come back to haunt them, are they destined to be separated once more?	abandonment; foster care	Accent Press
Fiction featuring care-experience	Sarah Hilary	Quieter Than Killing	2017	It's winter, the nights are dark and freezing, and a series of assaults is pulling DI Marnie Rome and DS Noah Jake out onto streets of London. When Marnie's family home is ransacked, there are signs that the burglary can have only been committed by someone who knows her. Someone out there is playing games. It is time for both Marnie and Noah to face the truth about the creeping, chilling reaches of a troubled upbringing. Five years ago, her family home was	foster care; foster brother; police investigation	Headline

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Category	Author	Title	Year	Description	Keywords	Publisher
				the scene of a shocking and bloody crime that left her parents dead and her foster brother in prison.		
Fiction featuring care-experience	Jenny Blackhurst	The Foster Child:	2017	When child psychologist Imogen Reid takes on the case of 11-year-old Ellie Atkinson, she refuses to listen to warnings that the girl is dangerous. Ellie was the only survivor of a fire that killed her family. Imogen is convinced she's just a sad and angry child struggling to cope with her loss. But Ellie's foster parents and teachers are starting to fear her. When she gets upset, bad things seem to happen. And as Imogen gets closer to Ellie, she may be putting herself in danger...	foster care	Headline
Fiction featuring care-experience	Luke Jennings	Codename Villanelle	2017	Codename Villanelle is a 2017 thriller novel by British author Luke Jennings. Villanelle is a Russian orphan who, after murdering the killers of her gangster father, is rescued from prison and trained as a hitwoman by a shadowy group called The Twelve. Codename Villanelle is the basis of the BBC America television series Killing Eve (2018–2022).	orphanage, orphan, killer	
Children's Fiction	Alex Wheatle	Uprising	2017	A thought provoking and inspiring story written for emerging readers, particularly those who are offenders or at risk. This is the gritty but inspiring true story of the award-winning author Alex Wheatle. Alex had a tough start in life. He was abandoned by his family as a young child and grew up in a care home. After being expelled from school as a teenager, he was sent to live in a hostel in Brixton. There, Alex found music and friends but he also got mixed up in drugs and violence. When he was sent to prison for taking part in the Brixton Uprising, Alex's future seemed hopeless. But then something happened to change his life...	Children's Home; Black British; Prison	Diffusion
Fiction featuring care-experience	Ellen Marie Wiseman	The Life She Was Given	2017	The Life She Was Given (2017) tells the story of 9-year-old Lily Blackwood who, in 1931 and after years of being confined to the attic at her home, Blackwood Manor, is sold to a circus. Lily has albinism and her mother is ashamed of	Circus; albino; rejection	

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Category	Author	Title	Year	Description	Keywords	Publisher
				her. For years, Lily works several acts—such as the Ice Princess from Another Planet and the Albino Medium—without pay for Barlow Brothers’ Circus. Lily’s story is interwoven with that of 18-year-old Julia Blackwood, also of Blackwood Manor, who is left the property after the death of her mother in 1956. Like Lily, Julia can’t abide the ill treatment of animals and she rejects some of the old money-making practices at Blackwood Manor, such as having foals taken immediately from their mothers and fed elsewhere.		
Fiction featuring care-experience	Paula Hawkins	Into the Water	2017	Into the Water (2017) by Paula Hawkins is a thriller. Nell Abbott's dead body has been retrieved from the river that runs through Beckford and Nell's sister, Jules, arrives from London to care for her 15-year-old niece, Lena Abbott. Earlier in the summer, a vulnerable teenage girl met the same fate. One man decides that it would be better for him to avoid prison for his crime otherwise his son would be put in care. “I've seen what happens to kids who grow up in care, there's not one of them that doesn't come out damaged and perverted.” An odd comment from a man "damaged and perverted" enough to kill a woman and who didn't grow up in care.	Kinship care; murder	
Fiction featuring care-experience	Pam Jenoff	The Orphan's Tale	2017	In Nazi-occupied Holland, seventeen-year-old Noa snatches a baby from a train bound for the concentration camps, fleeing with him into the snowy wilderness surrounding the train tracks. Passing through the woods is a German circus, led by the heroic Herr Neuhoff. They agree to take in Noa and the baby, on one condition: to earn her keep, Noa must master the flying trapeze – under the tutorage of mysterious aerialist, Astrid. Soaring high above the crowds, Noa and Astrid must learn to trust one another...or plummet. But	orphan; flying trapeze; circus; Nazi	HQ

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Category	Author	Title	Year	Description	Keywords	Publisher
				with the threat of war closing in, loyalty can become the most dangerous trait of all.		
Fiction featuring care-experience	Kate Hamer	The doll funeral	2017	<p>My name is Ruby. I live with Barbara and Mick. They're not my real parents, but they tell me what to do, and what to say. I'm supposed to say that the bruises on my arms and the black eye came from falling down the stairs.</p> <p>But there are things I won't say. I won't tell them I'm going to hunt for my real parents. I don't say a word about Shadow, who sits on the stairs, or the Wasp Lady I saw on the way to bed.</p> <p>I did tell Mick that I saw the woman in the buttercup dress, hanging upside down from her seat belt deep in the forest at the back of our house. I told him I saw death crawl out of her. He said he'd give me a medal for lying.</p> <p>I wasn't lying. I'm a hunter for lost souls and I'm going to be with my real family. And I'm not going to let Mick stop me.</p>	foster care; foster parents; abuse	
Fiction featuring care-experience	Kit de Waal	My Name Is Leon	2017	<p>It's 1981, a year of riots and royal weddings. The Dukes of Hazzard is on TV. Curly Wurlys are in the shops. And trying to find a place in it all is nine-year-old Leon. After his mother's breakdown, he and his little brother Jake are taken into care and live with foster carer Maureen. They've lost one home, but have they found another? Maureen feeds and looks after them. She has wild red hair and mutters swearwords under her breath when she thinks they can't hear. She claims everything will be okay. But will they ever see their mother again? Who are the couple who secretly visit Jake? Between the street violence and the street parties, Leon must find a way to reunite his family...</p>	mental health; breakdown; foster care; adoption; race; brothers	Penguin

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Category	Author	Title	Year	Description	Keywords	Publisher
Fiction featuring care-experience	Stephanie Butland	Lost for words	2017	Lost for Words features a care-experienced character who is intelligent, articulate, a lover of words and books and of course feisty, vulnerable and not a stereotype. Loveday Cardew prefers books to people. If you look closely, you might glimpse the first lines of the novels she loves most tattooed on her skin. But there are things she'll never show you. Fifteen years ago Loveday lost all she knew and loved in one unspeakable night that led to her being taken into foster care. Now, she finds refuge in the unique little York bookshop where she works. Everything is about to change for Loveday. Someone knows about her past. Someone is trying to send her a message. And she can't hide any longer.-	books; orphan; tattoo; foster care	Zaffre
Fiction featuring care-experience	Gail Honeyman	Eleanor Oliphant Is Completely Fine	2017	Smart, warm, uplifting, the story of an out-of-the-ordinary heroine whose deadpan weirdness and unconscious wit make for an irresistible journey as she realizes the only way to survive is to open her heart. Meet Eleanor Oliphant: she struggles with appropriate social skills and tends to say exactly what she's thinking. That, combined with her unusual appearance (scarred cheek, tendency to wear the same clothes year in, year out), means that Eleanor has become a creature of habit (to say the least) and a bit of a loner. Nothing is missing in her carefully timetabled life of avoiding social interactions, where weekends are punctuated by frozen pizza, vodka, and phone chats with Mummy. A mystery surrounds her past and the reader learns that she spent time in care. Everything changes when Eleanor meets Raymond, the bumbling and deeply unhygienic IT guy from her office. When she and Raymond together save Sammy, an elderly gentleman who has fallen on the sidewalk, the three become the kind of friends who rescue each other from the lives of isolation they have each been living. And it is	Fiction; Computer technicians; FICTION / Contemporary Women; FICTION / Literary; FICTION / Romance / Contemporary; Friendship; Glasgow (Scotland); Intergenerational relations; Love stories; Psychological fiction; Single	Pamela Dorman Books/Viking

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Category	Author	Title	Year	Description	Keywords	Publisher
				Raymond's big heart that will ultimately help Eleanor find the way to repair her own profoundly damaged one.	women; Social isolation	
Fiction featuring care-experience	Elizabeth Jane Howard	Cazalet Chronicle Collection	2017	The Cazalets Chronicles is a five-book series of novels that follows the secrets and yearnings of the Cazalet family of Home Place, Sussex through three decades of middle-class life. Beginning in 1937, through to the Fifties, the three generations of the family experience love, loss, and, ultimately, life-altering change. One of the characters in the first 2 books of the set, Sybil, wife of Hugh Cazalet, is care-experienced. We don't find that out until the 3rd book, Confusion, however, when we are told that Sybil's mother died when she was 3. The family were in India at the time and Sybil's father left the children - Sybil and her brother - to be raised by servants. 7 years later Sybil and her brother were taken to England and left in the care of an aunt, who "despatched them to boarding schools where both were profoundly homesick". Peripheral to the main story are a few other care experienced characters. In the first 2 books is the Babies' Home run by unmarried Rachel Cazalet, and in the 3rd book, the former lover of Nora's new husband, Tony, was a "Dr Barnardo's boy". Also in the 3rd book, the American woman Teddy Cazalet has fallen in love with was raised by an aunt. An ongoing discussion in the 1st 3 books is about the perils of boarding school, places of bullying and loneliness for many of the boy characters who've been subjected to this form of education.	care-experience; Barnardo; boarding school	Pan
Fiction featuring care-experience	Colson Whitehead	The Underground Railroad	2017	Winner of the Pulitzer Prize for Fiction 2017. Cora is an orphan character, abandoned by her mother and a slave on a cotton plantation in Georgia. All the slaves lead a hellish existence, but Cora has it worse than most; she is an outcast even among her fellow Africans and she is approaching womanhood, where it is clear even greater pain awaits.	United States; Slavery; Orphan; African American	Fleet

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Category	Author	Title	Year	Description	Keywords	Publisher
				When Caesar, a slave recently arrived from Virginia, tells her about the Underground Railroad, they take the perilous decision to escape to the North. In Whitehead's razor-sharp imagining of the antebellum South, the Underground Railroad has assumed a physical form: a dilapidated box car pulled along subterranean tracks by a steam locomotive, picking up fugitives wherever it can. Cora and Caesar's first stop is South Carolina, in a city that initially seems like a haven. But its placid surface masks an infernal scheme designed for its unknowing black inhabitants. And even worse: Ridgeway, the relentless slave catcher sent to find Cora, is close on their heels. Forced to flee again, Cora embarks on a harrowing flight, state by state, seeking true freedom. At each stop on her journey, Cora encounters a different world. As Whitehead brilliantly recreates the unique terrors for black people in the pre-Civil War era, his narrative seamlessly weaves the saga of America, from the brutal importation of Africans to the unfulfilled promises of the present day.		
Fiction featuring care-experience	Val McDermid	Insidious Intent	2017	Number one bestseller Val McDermid returns with a pulse-pounding, suspenseful novel featuring two of the most distinctive and iconic characters in crime fiction: Tony Hill and Carol Jordan. The story features a 14 year old boy who is living in foster care after the murder of his mother.	Foster Care; England	Hachette
Fiction featuring care-experience	Benjamin Ludwig	Ginny Moon	2017	Ginny is fourteen years old and has autism. She likes the colour red, making lists and knowing exactly what time it is. She doesn't like hugs, surprises or people telling lies. After years in foster care, she has finally found her forever family. She has a new house, new parents and even a new name. But Ginny also has a Big Secret Plan of Escape. Every day she wakes up at nine o'clock and eats nine grapes	autism; autistic; foster care	HarperCollins France

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Category	Author	Title	Year	Description	Keywords	Publisher
				for breakfast. Because when she was nine years old something terrible happened. Something only Ginny knows. And she's the only one who can put it right...		
Children's Fiction	Sophie Willan	Tales of the Weird, the Wild and the Wonderful	2017	Tales of the Weird, the Wild and the Wonderful is the first of its kind: a dazzling collection of short stories, jam-packed with rambunctious characters on daring adventures written exclusively by Care Leavers for children. Discover why Franny Georgette Tinkleboom has been travelling around the world in a van that has giant mouse ears... And why Spike, the most mischievous hedgehog in Rivington Pike, keeps wandering off into the dark night... And what happens when you drink a wicked orange potion like Alicia Moonfall... Includes a foreword by Lemn Sissay		
Children's Fiction	Gwynedd Vulliamy Rae et al.	Mostly Mary	2017	Mary Plain is an orphan who lives with her relatives at Berne Zoo, Switzerland. A delightful but rather unusual bear, with a huge personality and an appetite to match, you never quite know what escapades she'll get up to next!	Foster Care; England; Kinship Care; Orphan	Egmont UK
Children's Fiction	Sir Michael Foreman Morpurgo et al.	Lucky Button	2017	A moving historical story inspired by the Foundling Museum, written by acclaimed children's author Michael Morpurgo and illustrated by Michael Foreman. From award-winning master storyteller Michael Morpurgo, author of the acclaimed War Horse, comes a moving historical story inspired by the Foundling Museum. A lonely boy struggles to cope with school bullies and caring for his mother, until a mysterious encounter reveals life in the Foundling Hospital in the eighteenth century and unravels a touching tale about the power of music. Beautifully illustrated by Kate Greenaway Medal-winning illustrator.	Foundling; Foundling museum; Foundling Hospital; music	Walker Books
Children's Fiction	Benjamin Zephaniah	Refugee Boy	2017	Life is not safe for Alem. His father is Ethiopian, his mother Eritrean. Their countries are at war, and Alem is welcome in neither place. So Alem is excited to spend a holiday in London with his	refugee; foster care; social workers; care system	Bloomsbury Children's Books

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Category	Author	Title	Year	Description	Keywords	Publisher
				father - until he wakes up to find him gone. What seems like a betrayal is in fact an act of love, but now Alem is alone in a strange grey country. On his own, and in the hands of the social services and the Refugee Council, he lives from letter to letter, waiting to hear something from his father.		
Fiction by care-experienced authors	Lola Jaye	Orphan Sisters	2017	<p>Their Nigerian parents have emigrated to England in search of a better life for their family. Nineteen Fifties London is a great adventure to the girls but not always welcoming. There are signs in windows of lodging houses warning: 'no blacks, no dogs, no Irish.'</p> <p>When tragedy strikes and the girls lose their father, their mother is unable to cope. When she fails to recover from the surprise birth of another child all three girls are sent to an orphanage. Lana is determined to keep her sisters together but when baby Tina gets adopted, she must admit their family is about to be torn apart – perhaps for ever...</p>		
Fiction featuring care-experience	Sheena Kamal	Eyes Like Mine	2017	Research assistant to a small private investigation outfit in downtown Vancouver, mixed-race Nora Watts takes a 5 a.m. phone call. The grief of a couple in search of their missing daughter is unlikely to improve her lot, particularly when she is hit with the news that the missing girl is the child that she gave up for adoption fifteen years ago. Deciding to search for her daughter brings troubled Nora Watts into contact with a past that she's spent years trying to forget. It's an investigation that takes her on a harrowing journey of deception and violence - one that will eventually lead her to a final showdown with a figure from her own dark past. And all to save a girl she wishes had never been born.	adoption; foster care; rape	
Fiction featuring care-experience	Tony Birch	Common People	2017	In this unforgettable new collection, Tony Birch introduces a cast of characters from all walks of life. These remarkable and surprising stories capture common people caught up in the everyday business of living and the struggle to survive.	Residential Care; Australia; Kinship Care	University of Queensland Press

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Category	Author	Title	Year	Description	Keywords	Publisher
				From two single mothers on the most unlikely night shift to a homeless man unexpectedly faced with the miracle of a new life, Birch's stories are set in gritty urban refuges and battling regional communities. His deftly drawn characters find unexpected signs of hope in a world where beauty can be found on every street corner - a message on a T-shirt, a friend in a stray dog or a star in the night sky. Common People shines a light on human nature and how the ordinary kindness of strangers can have extraordinary results. Included in these stories are several care-experienced Characters, eg, Joe Roberts who was in a Children's Home, the narrator in 'Harmless' who was in kinship care; and the narrator of 'Colours' who lives with Aunt Beryl.		
Fiction featuring care-experience	Annemarie Neary	The Orphans	2018	Eight-year-old Jess and her little brother were playing at the water's edge when their parents vanished. For hours the children held hands and waited for them to return. But nobody ever came back. Years later, Jess has become a locker of doors. Now a lawyer and a mother, she is determined to protect the life she has built around her. But her brother Ro has grown unpredictable, elusive and obsessive. When new evidence suggests that their mother might be alive, Ro reappears, convinced that his sister knows more than she claims. And then bad things start to happen.	orphan; orphans	Windmill Books
Fiction featuring care-experience	Clare Fisher	All the Good Things	2018	What if you did a very bad thing... but that wasn't the end of the story? Twenty-one year old Beth is in prison. The thing she did is so bad she doesn't deserve ever to feel good again. But her counsellor, Erika, won't give up on her. She asks Beth to make a list of all the good things in her life. So Beth starts to write down her story, from sharing silences with Foster Dad No. 1, to flirting in the Odeon on Orange Wednesdays, to the very first time she sniffed her baby's head. But at the end of her story, Beth must confront the bad thing. What is the truth hiding behind her crime? And does	prison; foster care; baby; crime	Penguin

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Category	Author	Title	Year	Description	Keywords	Publisher
				anyone - even a 100% bad person - deserve a chance to be good?"		
Fiction by care-experienced authors	Sally Bayley	Girl with dove: a life built by books	2018	<p>Sally Bayley's early life was so blighted by neglect that she put herself into care aged 14 and didn't see her family for the next 12 years. In 1990, She was the first child to go to university from West Sussex County Council Care services. She studied at St Andrews university, and then went to America, where she taught aesthetic education in midwestern schools and universities and foundation arts courses to adults in inner city Ohio.</p> <p>Bayley is currently a Lecturer in English at Hertford College, Oxford. She also teaches on the Sarah Lawrence visiting programme at Wadham College, Oxford. From 2018-2020 she was a Royal Literary Fund Fellow at Oxford Brookes University. 'Girl with Dove' is part memoir, part fiction. Growing up in a dilapidated house by the sea where men were forbidden, Sally's childhood world was filled with mystery and intrigue. Hippies trailed through the kitchen looking for God – their leader was Aunt Di, who ruled the house with charismatic force. When Sally's baby brother vanishes from his pram, she becomes suspicious of the activities going on around her. What happened to Baby David and the woman called Poor Sue? And where did all the people singing and wailing prayers in the front room suddenly go?</p> <p>Girl with Dove combines the voices of literary characters with those of her real-life counterparts, Girl With Dove reads as a magical series of strange encounters, climaxing with a comic performance of Shakespeare in the children's home where Sally is eventually sent.</p>	Biography; Bayley, Sally; Books and reading; Childhood and youth; Girls	William Collins

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Category	Author	Title	Year	Description	Keywords	Publisher
Fiction by care-experienced authors	Jae-Dee Collier	Jae-Dee Survives the Home of Many Mothers:	2018	A Fictional Story Inspired by a Memoir. Jae-Dee is only three years old when she's abandoned by her parents into an all-girls orphanage and raised by Catholic nuns. A curious, cheeky, intelligent, and sometimes defiant child, she's forced to adapt to a life of abandonment, loss, and grief. In Jae-Dee Survives the Home of Many Mothers, she tells of her life experiences from the voice of her inner-child until she grows older and strong enough to express her life in a more mature and perceptively insightful manner. A fictional story inspired by real-life events, Jae-Dee shares her feelings of anxiety, loneliness, and chronic bed-wetting that stem from her abandonment, neglect, and abuse. Jae-Dee's parents suffered from alcoholism and drug abuse as well as financial and social poverty. But when her parents relinquish her, Jae-Dee is raised by Sister Grace, a Catholic Sister of Mercy and surrogate mother from hell, whose hatred and inability to demonstrate compassion or nurturing toward her wards is strongly depicted in her strong and sadistic character. Jae-Dee calls attention to the effects of this childhood trauma, and she shares how she developed skills to overcome those challenges. In addition, Jae-Dee Survives the Home of Many Mothers captures the cultural history of post-war families and offers reflections of the South Australian social welfare system during the 1950s to mid-1960s.	Australia; Children's Home	Balboa Press AU
Fiction by care-experienced authors	David Jackson	Oi: Snowball Meets Some Very Toxic People	2018	This autobiographical novel is based on the personal voyage into the 1960-80s childcare system as experienced first-hand by the author. Described as a brutally horrific system, that made countless victims of the very children it was designed to protect. These brutally horrific regimes, founded upon extraordinary levels of inhumanity, cruelty, violence, fear, and intimidation, brought children to their knees, brutalised, cowed and often in fear for their very existence. It was a stark, depressive, and oppressively dysfunctional system,	Foster Care; Abuse; Children's Home; Orphanage; local authority; Abused children; system	UK Book Publishing

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Category	Author	Title	Year	Description	Keywords	Publisher
				that imposed perpetual physical suffering and mental hardship, upon its most vulnerable charges. This was the environment that the ‘Unfortunates’ found themselves embedded in during the 1960s.		
Fiction featuring care-experience	Christian White	The Nowhere Child	2018	<p>The Nowhere Child (2018) is Australian writer Christian White's award winning debut novel.</p> <p>At the centre of the story is Melbourne woman and photographer, Kimberly Leamy, who at the opening of the story is told that she is Sammy Went, a child who was kidnapped 28 years earlier.</p> <p>Kimberly travels to the US to solve the mystery of why she ended up in Melbourne and along the way encounters snake wielding religious fanatics.</p>		
Fiction featuring care-experience	Brandon Hobson	Where The Dead Sit Talking	2018	With his single mother in jail, Sequoyah, a fifteen-year-old Cherokee boy, is placed in foster care with the Troutt family. Literally and figuratively scarred by his mother’s years of substance abuse, Sequoyah keeps mostly to himself, living with his emotions pressed deep below the surface. At least until he meets seventeen-year-old Rosemary, a troubled artist who also lives with the family.	Native American; foster care	
Fiction featuring care-experience	Josephine Wilson	Extinctions	2018	Winner of the prestigious Miles Franklin Award. Extinction is explored through themes of ageing, adoption, aboriginality and extinct species. Professor Frederick Lothian, retired engineer, world expert on concrete and connoisseur of modernist design, has quarantined himself from life by moving to a retirement village. Surrounded and obstructed by the debris of his life, he is determined to be miserable, but is tired of his existence and of the life he has chosen. When a series of unfortunate incidents forces him and his neighbour, Jan, together, he begins to realise the damage done by the accumulation of a lifetime's secrets and lies, and to	Adoption; Australia; Kinship Care; First Nations	Profile Books Ltd

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Category	Author	Title	Year	Description	Keywords	Publisher
				comprehend his own shortcomings. Finally, Frederick Lothian has the opportunity to build something meaningful for the ones he loves. Humorous, poignant and galvanising, this is a novel about all kinds of extinction - natural, racial, national and personal - and what we can do to prevent them.		
Fiction featuring care-experience	Jo Nesbo	Macbeth	2018	Shakespeare's dark and tragic play retold and set in the 1970s. Jo Nesbo has imagined Macbeth has spending his childhood in an orphanage where he was sexually abused. The character of Duff (originally Macduff) has also been reimagined by Nesbo as living in an orphanage where he is Macbeth's best friend.	Orphanage; Scotland	Penguin
Children's Fiction	Patrice Karst	The Invisible String (3-6 years)	2018	<p>Parents, educators, therapists, and social workers alike have declared The Invisible String the perfect tool for coping with all kinds of separation anxiety, loss, and grief. In this relatable and reassuring contemporary classic, a mother tells her two children that they're all connected by an invisible string. "That's impossible!" the children insist, but still they want to know more: "What kind of string?" The answer is the simple truth that binds us all: An Invisible String made of love. Even though you can't see it with your eyes, you can feel it deep in your heart, and know that you are always connected to the ones you love. Does everybody have an Invisible String? How far does it reach? Does it ever go away? This heartwarming picture book for all ages explores questions about the intangible yet unbreakable connections between us, and opens up deeper conversations about love.</p> <p>Recommended and adopted by parenting blogs, bereavement support groups, hospice centers, foster care and social service agencies, military library services, church groups, and educators, The Invisible String offers a very simple approach to overcoming loneliness, separation, or loss with an imaginative twist that children easily understand and</p>		

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Category	Author	Title	Year	Description	Keywords	Publisher
				embrace, and delivers a particularly compelling message in today's uncertain times. This special paperback edition includes vibrant new illustrations and an introduction from the author.		
Children's Fiction	Bridget Blankley	The Ghosts and Jamal	2018	<p>The Ghosts and Jamal is an intriguing story, touching on religion, terrorism and Nigeria's internal conflicts, following a young orphan who is negotiating an unforgiving society. Waking up in the aftermath of a terrorist attack, 13-year-old Jamal tries to piece together what has happened whilst simultaneously trying to evade capture by the attackers. It soon becomes clear that he has been living in a separate outhouse from his family on account of the bad spirits or rather his epilepsy that plagues him.</p> <p>As he wanders around his family's compound, he comes across red canisters leaking yellow gas, which he works out were the weapon that killed his family. With his family dead, he begins to search for his grandfather who he hardly knows; when his grandfather turns him away Jamal keeps walking. On the way he meets prejudice, exploitation and friendship, before finally discovering that it is people, not ghosts, that have killed his family, and they have plans to keep on killing. Young Adult fiction.</p>		
Children's Fiction	Lemony Snicket	The Bad Beginning (A Series of Unfortunate Events)	2018	The novel tells the story of three children, Violet, Klaus, and Sunny Baudelaire, who become orphans following a fire and are sent to live with Count Olaf, who attempts to steal their inheritance. Violet, Klaus, and Sunny Baudelaire are intelligent children. They are charming, and resourceful, and have pleasant facial features. Unfortunately, they are exceptionally unlucky.	orphan; orphans; inheritance	Harper Collins
Children's Fiction	Storgy Kids	What Mummies Are Made Of by Stephanie Hutton	2018	STORGY Kids is an online magazine for children and young people. They publish the best short stories we can find for 8 to 12-year-old readers, whilst also providing a space for	Foster Care; England	Storgy Ltd

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Category	Author	Title	Year	Description	Keywords	Publisher
				Young Adult fiction too, as well as book reviews and interviews with authors. Stephanie Hutton's short story explores 'What Mummies Are Made Of' by some children in care.		
Fiction by care-experienced authors	Eleni Hale	Stone Girl	2018	An unspeakable event changes everything for Sophie. No more Mum, school or bed of her own. She's made a ward of the state and grows up in a volatile world where kids make their own rules, adults don't count and the only constant is change. Until one day she meets Gwen, Matty and Spiral. Spiral is the most furious, beautiful boy Sophie has ever known. And as their bond tightens she finally begins to confront what happened in her past. I'm at the police station. There's blood splattered across my face and clothes. In this tiny room with walls the colour of winter sky I hug a black backpack full of treasures. Only one thing is certain . . . no one can ever forgive me for what I've done. Winner of the Readings YA Book Prize, 2019 Voted the Best Young Adult Book of the year by Readings customers Voted Favourite YA Read of the year by Kids' Book Review Voted in the top 100 great reads by Australian women Shortlisted for New South Wales Premier's Literary Awards Ethel Turner Prize for Young People's Literature, 2019Contains mature content. Suitable for older readers.	Foster Care; Residential Care; Australia; Young Adult	Penguin
Fiction featuring care-experience	Lisa Wingate	Before We Were Yours	2018	Memphis, Tennessee, 1939. Twelve-year-old Rill Foss and her four younger siblings live a magical life aboard their family's Mississippi River shantyboat. But when their father must rush their mother to the hospital one stormy night, Rill is left in charge, until strangers arrive in force. Wrenched from all that is familiar and thrown into a Tennessee Children's Home Society orphanage, the Foss children are assured that they will soon be returned to their parents - but they quickly realize the dark truth...	Mississippi; shantyboat; orphanage; stolen; South Carolina; US; adoption; kidnapped	

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Category	Author	Title	Year	Description	Keywords	Publisher
				<p>Aiken, South Carolina, present day</p> <p>Born into wealth and privilege, Avery Stafford seems to have it all: a successful career, a handsome fiancé, and a lavish wedding on the horizon. But when Avery returns home to help her father weather a health crisis, a chance encounter leaves her with uncomfortable questions and compels her to take a journey through her family's long-hidden history, on a path that will ultimately lead either to devastation or to redemption.</p> <p>Based on one of America's most notorious real-life scandals, in which Georgia Tann, director of a Memphis-based adoption organization, kidnapped and sold poor children to wealthy families all over the country, <i>Before We Were Yours</i> is a riveting, wrenching and ultimately uplifting global bestseller.</p>		
Fiction featuring care-experience	Michael Robotham 2018	The Other Wife	2018	<p>There are two care-experienced characters in <i>The Other Wife</i>. There's the woman who shows up when Joe O'Loughlin's father is in hospital, claiming to be his wife. Turns out the respectable doctor, William O'Loughlin, has 2 families: the one Joe is a member of and a secret one with Olivia. Olivia has lived in England since she was 13 (she's from Romania) and her tennis coach cum guardian raped her repeatedly.</p> <p>Apart from the ruckus around her marriage with the paedophile tennis coach, Olivia's adult life has been a mostly quiet one.</p> <p>Olivia is in contrast to 23-year-old Micah Beauchamp, who was raised in kinship care, sexually abused by a neighbour for 7 years and then at age 13 set that neighbour's house on fire (another vigilante!) for which, of course, he was</p>		

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				<p>punished by 3 months in detention. The paedophile lost fingers in the fire but there's no indication he was state sanctioned for the abuse.</p> <p>Micah is out of control but then so is his best mate, Ewan, Olivia's son from her marriage to the paedophile who was raised by Olivia and the good doctor.</p> <p>The above are suspects in the attempted murder of William O'Loughlin but it took some fine upstanding non-care-experienced citizens to carry that out.</p>		
Fiction featuring care-experience	Miranda Gold	Starlings	2018	Struggling to bear the legacy of her grandparents' experience of the Holocaust and her mother's desperate fragility, Sally seeks to reconnect with her brother Steven. Once close, Steven seems a stranger to her now that he has left London for Brighton. The echoes of their history once bound them but it is an inheritance Steven can no longer share. Starlings reaches back through three generations of inherited trauma, exploring how the impact of untold stories ricochets down the years. As Sally winds her way back to catch the moment when Steven slipped away, she collects the fractured words and sliding memories that might piece together her grandparents' journeys. Having always looked through the eyes of ghosts she cannot appease, she at last comes to hear what speechless mouths might have said: perhaps Before may be somewhere we can never truly leave behind and After simply the place we must try to make our home.	Holocaust	Sphinx
Fiction featuring care-experience	Annie Horner	No One Was Watching	2018	No One Was Watching, is a work of fiction. These stories, although informed by factual events, do not intend to speak for people who endured living in out-of-home 'care' during part or all their childhood but instead provide an alternative, imaginative entrée into this once-hidden Australian history. No One Was Watching is a creative response to a seminal	Foster Care; Australia; Children's Home; out of home care	Ginninderra Press

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Category	Author	Title	Year	Description	Keywords	Publisher
				Senate report of 2004 entitled Forgotten Australians. Just as earlier reports had revealed serious abuses perpetrated against Indigenous children and the unaccompanied children sent as migrants from Britain and Malta, this report found that the same types of violations were committed against institutionalised Australian-born, non-Indigenous children. The men and women who experienced such childhoods self-identify as 'forgotten Australians,' 'care-leavers,' 'care-survivors,' 'Homies' or 'Wardies.'		
Fiction featuring care-experience	Robert Lukins	The Everlasting Sunday	2018	England, 1962. Seventeen-year-old Radford arrives at Goodwin Manor, a home for boys who have 'been found by trouble.' Watched over by the enigmatic Teddy. Life at the Manor offers a fragile peace at best, as the coldest winter in three centuries sets in. Radford learns that the boys are to care for each other, since their families and the law have been unable to do so. But will this be enough when tragedy strikes? At once both beautiful and brutal, The Everlasting Sunday is an unforgettable debut novel about growing up, growing wild and the shifting nature of friendship.	Residential Care; England; 20th century	University of Queensland Press
Fiction featuring care-experience	Melissa Lucashenko	Too Much Lip	2018	A dark and funny new novel from the multi-award-winning author of Mullumbimby. One of the principal characters in Too Much Lip is a kinship carer for 2 children. The children, who had previously lived with their grandmother, would have been taken by the "Childstealers" if Michael Salter, aka Black Superman, hadn't stepped in.	Australia; Kinship Care; First Nations	UQP Press
Fiction featuring care-experience	Delia Owens	Where the Crawdads Sing	2018	For years, rumours of the "Marsh Girl" have haunted Barkley Cove, a quiet town on the North Carolina coast. So in late 1969, when handsome Chase Andrews is found dead, the locals immediately suspect Kya Clark, the so-called Marsh Girl. But Kya is not what they say. Sensitive and intelligent, she has survived for years alone in the marsh that she calls home, finding friends in the gulls and lessons in the sand. Then the time comes when she yearns to be touched	United States; Orphan	G.P. Putnam's Sons

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Category	Author	Title	Year	Description	Keywords	Publisher
				and loved. When two young men from town become intrigued by her wild beauty, Kya opens herself to a new life--until the unthinkable happens. Where the Crawdads Sing is at once an exquisite ode to the natural world, a heartbreaking coming-of-age story, and a surprising tale of possible murder. Owens reminds us that we are forever shaped by the children we once were, and that we are all subject to the beautiful and violent secrets that nature keeps.		
Fiction featuring care-experience	Becky Manawatu	Auē	2019	<p>Auē (2019) by New Zealand writer Becky Manawatu begins with 8-year-old Arama being delivered to his new home with Aunt Kat and awful Uncle Stu.</p> <p>It's his 17-year-old brother, Taukiri, who is dropping Ari off.</p> <p>Taukiri, we find out, is disappointed in himself because he's abandoned his brother. He, too, is grieving the loss of his parents, and is homeless. Auē—which is a Maori word meaning “to cry, howl, groan, wail, bawl”—is Becky Manawatu’s first novel. It has won several awards, including the 2020 Jann Medicott Acorn Prize for Fiction, and was New Zealand’s best selling novel in 2020 and 2021.</p>		
Fiction featuring care-experience	Tara June Winch	The Yield	2019	<p>Award-winning Australian Wiradjuri writer, Tara June Winch (b. 1983) has written a moving novel - The Yield - about the ongoing impact of colonisation on First Nations People.</p> <p>Central to the story is August Gondiwindi, a young woman who returns to Australia from London on the death of her grandfather, Albert Gondiwindi.</p> <p>August Gondiwindi grew up in the kinship care of Albert and grandmother Elsie in the fictional town of Massacre Plains.</p>		

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Category	Author	Title	Year	Description	Keywords	Publisher
				<p>Prior to his death, Albert Gondiwindi was writing a dictionary of Aboriginal words. Albert grew up in a Boys Home.</p> <p>The Yield is beautifully written and a stunning reclamation of Aboriginal language.</p>		
Fiction featuring care-experience	Elizabeth Stead	The Aunt's House	2019	<p>The protagonist of Elizabeth Stead's The Aunts' House (2019) is 11 year old orphan, Angel Martin.</p> <p>When the story opens - it's 1942 - Angel's mother has just died and 'bequeathed' her daughter to 'Missus Potts' who runs a boarding house where a melange of Dickensian type characters live and where the food is bad even for wartime Sydney.</p> <p>Angel Martin is a delightful character. She is feisty, forthright, resourceful, intelligent, determined.</p> <p>She needs to be too, as there are aunts who'd prefer not to acknowledge Angel's existence, men who molest her, and Missus Potts who insists the child earns her keep.</p> <p>There are, also, however, kind and caring characters too, including a porter at the Art Gallery and tram drivers.</p>		
Fiction featuring care-experience	Elizabeth Brooks	The Orphan of Salt Winds	2019	<p>Virginia begins the novel as a ten-year-old orphan, alone in a puzzling and difficult adult world. Having grown up in a children's institution, without the safety-buffer of familial love, she is unable to take anything for granted. She sees her newly adopted home, Salt Winds, with a vision that is both anxiously perceptive and childishly skewed. England, 1939. Ten-year-old Virginia Wrathmell arrives at Salt Winds, a secluded house on the edge of a marsh, to meet her adoptive</p>	orphan; institution; WWII	

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Category	Author	Title	Year	Description	Keywords	Publisher
				parents?practical, dependable Clem and glamorous, mercurial Lorna. The marsh, with its deceptive tides, is a beautiful but threatening place. Virginia's new parents' marriage is full of secrets and tensions she doesn't quite understand, and their wealthy neighbor, Max Deering, drops by too often, taking an unwholesome interest in the family's affairs. Only Clem offers a true sense of home. War feels far away among the birds and shifting sands? Until the day a German fighter plane crashes into the marsh, and Clem ventures out to rescue the airman. What happens next sets into motion a crime so devastating it will haunt Virginia for the rest of her life. Seventy-five years later, she finds herself drawn back to the marsh, and to a teenage girl who appears there, nearly frozen and burdened by her own secrets. In her, Virginia might have a chance at retribution and a way to right a grave mistake she made as a child.		
Fiction featuring care-experience	Markus Zusak	Bridge of Clay	2019	The Dunbar boys bring each other up in a house run by their own rules. A family of ramshackle tragedy - their mother is dead, their father has fled - they love and fight, and learn to reckon with the adult world. It is Clay, the quiet one, who will build a bridge; for his family, for his past, for his sins. He builds a bridge to transcend humanness. To survive. A miracle and nothing less.	Australia; Kinship Care	Picador Australia
Fiction featuring care-experience	Tony Birch	The White Girl	2019	Odette Brown has lived her whole life on the fringes of a small country town. After her daughter disappeared and left her with her granddaughter Sissy to raise on her own, Odette has managed to stay under the radar of the welfare authorities who are removing fair-skinned Aboriginal children from their families. When a new policeman arrives in town, determined to enforce the law, Odette must risk everything to save Sissy and protect everything she loves. In The White Girl, Miles-Franklin-shortlisted author Tony Birch shines a spotlight on the 1960s and the devastating	Australia; Kinship Care; Stolen Generation; First Nations	University of Queensland Press

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Category	Author	Title	Year	Description	Keywords	Publisher
				government policy of taking Indigenous children from their families.		
Children's Fiction	Jacqueline Sharratt Wilson et al.	My Mum Tracy Beaker	2019	<p>Her characters don't need a cape, or a special power to be a hero to generations of children; just huge imaginations, a bit of fierceness and a big heart. And there is no hero fiercer or more iconic than Tracy.</p> <p>Now meet Tracy's daughter, Jess in this heart-warming tale of unconventional families and unconditional love.</p> <p>Jess and Tracy Beaker are the perfect team. They do everything together. Jess thinks Tracy is the best mum ever, even when she shouts at her teachers! Tracy has made the perfect home for Jess, leaving The Dumping Ground far behind her. Yes, it's tiny, a bit mouldy and the Duke Estate is a bit scary. But it's their happy home.</p> <p>Until Sean Godfrey, Tracy's rich boyfriend, whisks them away to a whirlwind life of fast cars and celebrity stardom.</p> <p>Will Jess's brilliant mum turn into a new person altogether?</p> <p>And will Tracy realise that her childhood dream might not be what she needs after all?</p>	Adoption; Foster Care; Children's Home; England	Yearling
Fiction by care-experienced authors	Nikki Barthelmess	The Quiet You Carry	2019	<p>Victoria Parker knew her dad's behaviour toward her was a little unusual, but she convinced herself everything was fine—until she found herself locked out of the house at 3:00 a.m., surrounded by flashing police lights. Now, dumped into a crowded, chaotic foster home, Victoria has to tiptoe around her domineering foster mother, get through senior year at a new school, and somehow salvage her college dreams . . . all while keeping her past hidden. But some</p>	United States; Foster Care	Flux

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				secrets won't stay buried—especially when unwanted memories make Victoria freeze up at random moments and nightmares disrupt her sleep. Even worse, she can't stop worrying about her stepsister Sarah, left behind with her father. All she wants is to move forward, but how do you focus on the future when the past won't leave you alone?		
Fiction featuring care-experience	Octavia E. Butler	Parable of the Sower	2019	<p>Octavia Butler (1947–2006) was the renowned author of numerous ground-breaking novels, including <i>Kindred</i>, <i>Wild Seed</i>, and <i>Parable of the Sower</i>. Recipient of the Locus, Hugo and Nebula awards, and a PEN Lifetime Achievement Award for her body of work, in 1995 she became the first science-fiction writer to receive the MacArthur Fellowship ‘Genius Grant.’ A pioneer of her genre, Octavia’s dystopian novels explore myriad themes of Black injustice, women’s rights, global warming and political disparity, and her work is taught in over two hundred colleges and universities nationwide.</p> <p>In <i>Parable of the Sower</i>: America is a place of chaos, where violence rules and only the rich and powerful are safe. Lauren Olamina, a young woman with the extraordinary power to feel the pain of others as her own, records everything she sees of this broken world in her journal.</p> <p>Then, one terrible night, everything alters beyond recognition, and Lauren must make her voice heard for the sake of those she loves.</p> <p>Soon, her vision becomes reality and her dreams of a better way to live gain the power to change humanity forever.</p> <p>“While I was working off my punishment, I began to hear whispers that I was, indeed, adopted, and that I was the</p>		

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Category	Author	Title	Year	Description	Keywords	Publisher
				<p>daughter not of rich, important, beautiful people but of the worst heathen devils—murderers, thieves, and perverters of God’s word. The kids started it. There were plenty of kids around who were known to be adopted, so it was commonplace to ridicule them and make up lies about how evil their real parents were. And if you weren’t adopted, and someone got mad at you, they might call you a heathen bastard whether you were or not."</p> <p>The follow-up book is Parable of the Talents: winner of the Nebula Award.</p>		
Fiction featuring care-experience	E.C.R. Lorac	Murder in the Mill-Race: A Devon Mystery	2019	Edith Caroline Rivett Lorac was a prolific crime fiction author from the 1930s to the 1950s, and a member of the prestigious Detection Club. In this story, the body of Sister Monica who runs a children's home is found. The police think the death might not be an accidental drowning as Sister Monica was fond of abusing power.		
Fiction featuring care-experience	Curdella Forbes	A Tall History of Sugar	2019	<p>A haunting epic following an unusual couple's mysterious love affair from childhood to adulthood, across rural Jamaica, Kingston and England. Discovered amidst a tangle of sea grape trees by the childless Rachel Fisher, baby Moshe's provenance is a thing of myth and mystery; his unusual appearance, with blueish, translucent skin and duo-toned hair, only serves to compound his mystique.</p> <p>Beginning in the late 1950s, four years before Jamaica's independence from colonial rule, and ending in the era of Brexit and Donald Trump, A Tall History of Sugar's epic love story sweeps between a rural Jamaica, scarred by the legacies of colonialism, and an England increasingly riven by race riots and class division.</p>	Foster Care; England; Jamaica; Foster	Canongate Trade
Fiction featuring	Christine Leunens	Caging Skies	2019	This extraordinary novel is seen through the eyes of Johannes, an avid member of the Hitler Youth in the 1940s. After he is severely injured in a raid, he discovers his parents	Foster Care; World War II; Germany	John Murray

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care-experience				are hiding a Jewish girl called Elsa behind a false wall in their large house in Vienna. His initial horror turns to interest, then love and obsession. After the disappearance of his parents, Johannes finds he is the only one aware of Elsa's existence in the house, the only one responsible for her survival. Both manipulating and manipulated, Johannes dreads the end of the war: with it will come the prospect of losing Elsa and their relationship, which ranges through passion and obsession, dependence and indifference, love and hate. This gripping, masterful work examines truth and lies at both political and personal levels, laying bare the darkest corners of the human soul.		
Fiction featuring care-experience	Ann Patchett	The Dutch House	2019	A richly moving story that explores the indelible bond between two siblings, the house of their childhood, and a past that will not let them go. The Dutch House belongs to a tradition in both fairy tales and American fiction of motherless children (sometimes raised by their father, often with the aid of an aunt or trusty hired help) Two siblings, Maeve and Danny Conroy, bond tightly after their mother leaves home when they're 10 and 3. Home is the eponymous Dutch House, a 1922 mansion outside Philadelphia that their father, Cyril, a real estate mogul, bought fully furnished in an estate sale as a surprise for his wife in 1946, when Maeve was 5. The story is told by Cyril's son Danny, as he and his older sister, the brilliantly acerbic and self-assured Maeve, are exiled from the house where they grew up by their stepmother. The two wealthy siblings are thrown back into the poverty their parents had escaped from and find that all they have to count on is one another. It is this unshakeable bond between them that both saves their lives and thwarts their futures. Set over the course of five decades, The Dutch House is a dark fairy tale about two smart people who cannot overcome their past.	United States; Siblings; Kinship Care	Harper

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Fiction featuring care-experience	Favel Parrett	There Was Still Love	2019	The story is set in 1980. In Prague, Ludek is being raised by his grandmother and in Melbourne, Mala is being raised by her grandparents. The grandmothers are sisters, but the cousins haven't met.	Australia; Kinship Care; Czechoslovakia	Hachette Australia
Fiction featuring care-experience	Val McDermid	How the Dead Speak	2019	The next heart-pounding Tony Hill and Carol Jordan thriller from number one bestseller and queen of crime, Val McDermid. The story includes the death and illegal burial of 40 girls living in a convent home, and serial killer is a care-experienced Person.	Foster Care; Children's Home; England	Hachette
Fiction featuring care-experience	A J Finn	The Woman in the Window	2019	What is real? What is imagined? Who is in danger? Who is in control? In this thriller, no one—and nothing—is what it seems. Twisty and powerful, ingenious and moving, The Woman in the Window is a smart, sophisticated novel of psychological suspense that recalls the best of Hitchcock and features an adopted teenage boy.	adoption	William Morrow Paperbacks
Children's Fiction	Onjali Q. Rauf	The Star Outside My Window (8-11 years)	2019	<p>I've always wanted to be a Star Hunter. But I don't want to be the kind that looks for old stars that have already been burning for millions of years. I want to find the brand new ones - the ones that have only just been born and are searching for the people they've left behind...'</p> <p>Following the disappearance of her mum, 10-year-old Aniyah suddenly finds herself living in foster care. With her life in disarray, she knows just one thing for sure: her mum isn't gone for ever. Because people with the brightest hearts never truly leave. They become stars.</p> <p>So when a new star is spotted acting strangely in the sky, Aniyah is sure it's her mum, and she embarks on the adventure of a lifetime to make sure everyone else knows too -- an adventure that involves breaking into the Royal Observatory of London, a mischievous scurry of squirrels and the biggest star in Hollywood...</p>		

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				Told through the innocent voice of a child, this is a story that explores the subtle faces and endless impacts of domestic violence, and celebrates the power of hope and resilience, from Onjali Rauf, the award-winning author of <i>The Boy at the Back of the Class</i> .		
Children's Fiction	Sandy Stark-McGinnis	Extraordinary Birds (8-12 years)	2019	<p>Eleven-year-old December knows everything about birds, and everything about getting kicked out of foster homes. All she has of her biological mum is the book she left behind, <i>The Complete Guide to Birds, Volume One</i>, and a photo with a message: 'In flight is where you'll find me.' December knows she's truly a bird, just waiting for the day she transforms and flies away to reunite with her mum. The scar on her back must be where her wings have started to blossom - she just needs to practise and to find the right tree. She has no choice; it's the only story that makes sense.</p> <p>When she's placed with Eleanor, a new foster mum who runs a taxidermy business and volunteers at a wildlife rescue, December begins to see herself and what home means in a new light. But the story she tells herself about her past is what's kept December going this long, and she doesn't know if she can let go of it ... even if changing her story might mean that she can finally find a place where she belongs.</p>		
Children's Fiction	Nicky Brookes	My Forever Family: from fostering to adoption	2019	Suitable for children from 4 to 10 years old, this story follows Oliver as goes through the process of being in foster care and then being adopted. The book is written by a foster carer who thought this was a gap for the young foster children in her care.		
Children's Fiction	Jacqueline Sharratt Wilson et al.	We Are The Beaker Girls	2019	Jess Beaker is having an amazing summer at her new seaside home! Jess and her mum Tracy who grew up in care have left the Duke Estate behind them, and have moved to Cooksea. They have new friends, their dog Alfie, and they're	children's home; residential care; mother	Doubleday Childrens

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				running an antiques shop called... The Dumping Ground! But as lovely as it is to live by the sea, trouble still seems to be following the Beaker Girls. Horrible Sean is back on the scene, a local kid is picking on Jess, and their beloved Cam isn't just round the corner any more. Can the Beaker Girls make a success of their new life? Tracy won't go rushing back to that awful boyfriend ... will she?		
Children's Fiction	Alex Wheatle	Home Girl	2019	Home Girl is the story of Naomi, a teenage girl growing up fast in the foster care system. It is a wholly modern story which sheds a much-needed light on what can be an unsettling life--and the consequences that follow when children are treated like pawns on a family chessboard. Home Girl is fast-paced and funny, tender, tragic, and full of courage--just like Naomi.	Foster Care; England	Black Sheep
Children's Fiction	Sharon Creech	Walk Two Moons	2019	Thirteen-year-old Salamanca Tree Hiddle, proud of her country roots and the "Indian-ness in her blood," travels from Ohio to Idaho with her eccentric grandparents. Along the way, she tells them of the story of Phoebe Winterbottom, who received mysterious messages, who met a "potential lunatic," and whose mother disappeared. As Sal entertains her grandparents with Phoebe's outrageous story, her own story begins to unfold—the story of a thirteen-year-old girl whose only wish is to be reunited with her missing mother.	United States; Kinship Care; First Nations	HarperCollins
Fiction featuring care-experience	Michael Robotham (2019)	Good Girl, Bad Girl	2019	Good Girl, Bad Girl is the first in Michael Robotham's Cyrus Haven series. Cyrus Haven was in kinship care with his grandparents from the age of 13, after his family was killed by Cyrus' older brother. At the opening to Good Girl, Bad Girl, Haven is introduced to Evie Cormac who's living in Langford Hall, "a secure children's home" or youth detention centre in Nottingham. The resident social worker, a friend of Haven's from university called Guthry, thinks Haven might be able to help Evie, since they have in common a loss of family.		

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Category	Author	Title	Year	Description	Keywords	Publisher
				Evie has lots of other traumas too. Like having lived in a house with a dead body for months, and then going into the foster care system. Cyrus thinks he can help Evie, although he recognises she has considerable unpacked trauma. Cyrus also discovers that Evie has an uncanny ability to detect the lies that people tell.		
Fiction featuring care-experience	Sheila O'Connor	Evidence of V	2019	A Novel in Fragments, Facts, and Fictions. American novelist Sheila O'Connor tells the story of V, a talented fifteen-year-old singer in 1930s Minneapolis who aspires to be a star. Drawing on the little-known American practice of incarcerating adolescent girls for "immorality" in the first half of the twentieth century, O'Connor follows young V from her early work as a nightclub entertainer to her subsequent six-year state school sentence for an unplanned pregnancy. As V struggles to survive within a system only nominally committed to rescue and reform, she endures injustices that will change the course of her life and the lives of her descendants.		
Fiction featuring care-experience	Helen Fitzgerald	Worst Case Scenario	2019	There is some discussion about child protection in Worst Case Scenario as Helen Fitzgerald is exploring the life of a seasoned social worker who once worked in that area. Mentioned in passing is Vanessa, a young care-experienced woman Mary knew as a baby and who was going on to college at 18 (p. 66) having been adopted as a child. The other care-experienced Person in the story is John Paul O'Donnell, a drug-addicted young man Mary takes advantage of.	Scotland; kinship care; foster care; adoption	
Fiction featuring care-experience	Sarah Hopkins	The Subjects	2019	Daniel is a sixteen-year-old drug dealer and he's going to jail. Then, suddenly, he's not. A courtroom intervention. A long car ride to a big country house. Other 'gifted delinquents'- the elusive, devastating Rachel, and Alex, so tightly wound he seems about to shatter. So where are they?	Foster Care; Residential Care; Australia; drugs	Text Publishing

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				It's not a school, despite the 'lessons' with the headsets and changing images. It's not a psych unit-not if the absence of medication means anything. It's not a jail, because Daniel's free to leave. Or that's what they tell him. He knows he and the others are part of an experiment. But he doesn't know who's running it or what they're trying to prove. And he has no idea what they're doing to him.		
Fiction featuring care-experience	Lissa Evans	Crooked Heart	2019	When Noel Bostock - aged ten, no family - is evacuated from London to escape the Blitz, he winds up in St Albans with Vera Sedge - thirty-six, drowning in debts. Always desperate for money, she's unscrupulous about how she gets it. The war's thrown up all manner of new opportunities but what Vee needs is a cool head and the ability to make a plan. On her own, she's a disaster. With Noel, she's a team. Together they cook up an idea. But there are plenty of other people making money out of the war and some of them are dangerous. Noel may have been moved to safety, but he isn't actually safe at all . .	Foster Care; England; Second World War	Black Swan
Fiction featuring care-experience	Jokha Alharthi	Celestial Bodies	2019	Set in the village of al-Awafi in Oman, we encounter three sisters: Mayya, who marries Abdallah after a heartbreak; Asma, who marries from a sense of duty; and Khawla, who rejects all offers while waiting for her beloved, who has emigrated to Canada. These three women and their families witness Oman evolve from a traditional, slave-owning society slowly redefining itself after the colonial era, to the crossroads of its complex present. Celestial Bodies tell of Oman's evolution through the prism of one family's losses and loves. One of the characters, Salima, was in kinship care as a child. She lived with her uncle until she was 13, with her mother visiting occasionally. Salima returned to live with her mother at 13 but was promptly married off by her uncle.	Canada; slavery; child bride	Sandstone Press

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Category	Author	Title	Year	Description	Keywords	Publisher
Fiction featuring care-experience	Trent Dalton	Boy Swallows Universe	2019	Brisbane, 1983: A lost father, a mute brother, a mum in jail, a heroin dealer for a stepfather and a notorious crim for a babysitter. It's not as if 13 year old Eli Bell's life isn't complicated enough already. The 'notorious crim' in the story, Slim Halliday, grew up in children's homes. He spent time in prison as an adult, including 27 years for murder. Slim babysits Eli and his brother every Saturday and becomes Eli's best friend.	Australia; Children's Home	Harper Collins
Fiction featuring care-experience	Emma Donoghue	Akin	2020	Akin explores kinship care. Noah Selvaggio is a retired chemistry professor and widower living on the Upper West Side, but born in the South of France. He is days away from his first visit back to Nice since he was a child, bringing with him a handful of puzzling photos he's discovered from his mother's wartime years. But he receives a call from social services: Noah is the closest available relative of an eleven-year-old great-nephew he's never met, who urgently needs someone to look after him. Out of a feeling of obligation, Noah agrees to take Michael along on his trip. The unlikely duo, suffering from jet lag and culture shock, bicker about everything from steak frites to screen time. But Noah gradually comes to appreciate the boy's truculent wit, and Michael's ease with tech and sharp eye help Noah unearth troubling details about their family's past.	United States; Kinship Care; Italy	Back Bay Books
Fiction featuring care-experience	Sarah Stovell	The Home	2020	All the stereotypes: murderers, every type of abuse, prostitution, paedophilia, self-harm, damaged, suicide, drugs, angry. When the body of a pregnant fifteen-year-old is discovered in a churchyard on Christmas morning, the community is shocked, but unsurprised. For Hope lived in The Home, the residence of three young girls, whose violent and disturbing pasts have seen them cloistered away...As a police investigation gets underway, the lives of Hope, Lara and Annie are examined, and the staff who work at the home are	Secure children's home; abuse; teenage pregnancy; prostitution; drugs; suicide	Orenda Books Ltd

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Category	Author	Title	Year	Description	Keywords	Publisher
				interviewed, leading to shocking and distressing revelations ... and clear evidence that someone is seeking revenge.		
Fiction featuring care-experience	Jo Nesbo	The Kingdom	2020	<p>The gripping new standalone thriller from multi-million copy bestseller, Jo Nesbo. When Roy and Carl's parents die suddenly, sixteen-year-old Roy is left as protector to his impulsive younger brother. But when Carl decides to travel the world in search of his fortune, Roy stays behind in their sleepy village, satisfied with his peaceful life as a mechanic. Some years later, Carl returns with his charismatic new wife, Shannon - an architect. an architect - full of exciting plans to build a hotel on their family land. But it's only a matter of time before what begins as a jubilant homecoming sparks off a series of events that threaten to derail everything Roy holds dear and family loyalty is stretched to violent ends.</p> <p>And a lifetime of secrets.</p>	Orphan; Norway	Penguin
Fiction featuring care-experience	Sharon Bairden	Sins of the Father	2020	<p>Lucas Findlay thinks he has struck gold when he marries Rebecca (who grew up in state care), but she married him for one reason only - to destroy him. Trauma runs deep When her past comes back to haunt her, Rebecca begins to disconnect from herself and the world around her. As secrets are unearthed, she begins to fear for her sanity ... and her life. Truth will out. With her world unravelling around her, Rebecca clings to her determination to make Lucas pay, whatever the cost. Forgive his sins But someone must pay for the sins of the father...</p>	Foster Care; Scotland; Britain	Red Dog Press
Fiction by care-experienced authors	Nikki Barthelmess	Quiet No More	2020	<p>After surviving sexual assault by her father and six months in foster care, college freshman Victoria Parker is trying to move on with her life. She's focusing on the positives—attending college, living on her own, repairing old relationships and making new ones, and getting involved with an abuse survivors activist group on campus. But</p>	United States; Sexual Abuse; Foster Care	North Star Editions

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Category	Author	Title	Year	Description	Keywords	Publisher
				everything's thrown into disarray when a strange woman shows up, claiming to be Victoria's aunt and asking Victoria to lie about what happened to her. With her father's sentencing in a few months, Victoria's nervous about having to share the truth of what happened with a judge. She's not even sure if she has the strength to go through with it. But when her fellow club members begin pressuring her to speak out, Victoria has to decide how to share her story while remaining true to herself.		
Fiction by care-experienced authors	Kirsty Capes	Careless	2020	Sometimes it's easy to fall between the cracks... At 3.04pm on a hot, sticky day in June, Bess finds out that she's pregnant. She could tell her social worker Henry, but he's useless. She should tell her foster mother, Lisa, but she won't understand. She really ought to tell Boy, but she hasn't spoken to him in weeks. Bess knows more than anyone that love doesn't come without conditions. But this isn't a love story...	Foster care; care-experience; pregnancy	Orion Books
Fiction featuring care-experience	Ellen Marie Wiseman	The Orphan Collector	2020	The Orphan Collector by Ellen Marie Wiseman is set in Philadelphia during the 1918 Spanish flu pandemic, 13-year-old German migrant Pia Lange is left with her 4-month old twin brothers after her mother suddenly dies. The chronically shy child manages as best she can until she runs out of food. She then leaves the tiny boys on their own while she scouts neighbouring apartments, without much luck. Venturing outside and into a wealthier area, Pia collapses on the pavement, waking up 6 days later in a church-hospital. A few days later still—when she is finally recovered—Pia is dropped off at an orphanage where she's put to work looking after babies, all the time feeling anxious and guilty about leaving her brothers and wondering if they're still alive.		
Fiction featuring	Craig Silvey	Honeybee	2020	Craig Silvey's Honeybee (2020) is the story about how a time in informal foster care is transformative for 14 year old Sam Watson.		

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Category	Author	Title	Year	Description	Keywords	Publisher
care-experience				<p>Sam Watson is saved from a fatal jump by an elderly man who also wants to kill himself.</p> <p>Vic takes Sam home and the friendships Sam makes while living with Vic provide the acceptance and nurturing that enable Sam to deal with past trauma and embrace their identity as trans.</p>		
Fiction featuring care-experience	Stacey Halls	The Foundling (2020)	2020	<p>The Foundling (2020) by Stacey Halls is the story of Bess Bright who gives up her 'illegitimate' baby daughter to the Foundling Hospital in 1748.</p> <p>When Bess goes to reclaim her daughter 6 years later, she is shocked to discovered the child has been claimed by someone else.</p>	illegitimate; foundling; Foundling Hospital	
Fiction featuring care-experience	Thomas Keneally	The Dickens Boy	2020	<p>Thomas Keneally's book, The Dickens Boy, is a fictionalised account of Edward Dickens (1852-1902), Charles Dickens' youngest child. At 16 Edward was sent off by his father to Australia, to "apply himself".</p> <p>When Edward, or Plorn as he was nicknamed by his father, arrives in Australia he has help from George Rusden, then clerk of the Victorian Parliament—who had earlier helped out Alfred Dickens (1845-1912) on his arrival in Australia—to get a position as a stockman with the Bonney brothers at Momba Station, NSW.</p> <p>Edward then narrates his story of the first 2 years in Australia, riding long distances to see his brother, organising local cricket matches, mustering sheep, learning about Aboriginal culture. Keneally presents Plorn as a delightful young man; he's resourceful, principled, and kind. Being so far from his parents, Edward feels orphaned. But he's not and</p>		

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Category	Author	Title	Year	Description	Keywords	Publisher
				<p>his older brother, Alfred, has been in Australia for a couple of years.</p> <p>There are, however, 2 orphan characters who become friends with Edward: Tom Larkin and Maurice McArden.</p> <p>Tom Larkin's convict mother died in childbirth and his father, also a convict, died only a few years later.</p> <p>Maurice McArden's parents are artists who often leave their son with an uncle, Eustace Fremmel, while they're off on jaunts through Europe. When the artists die, 13 year old Maurice stays on with Eustace, but is sent off to NSW at the age of 15 to live with another uncle, Amos Fremmel.</p>		
Fiction featuring care-experience	Pip Williams	The Dictionary of Lost Words	2020	<p>The Dictionary of Lost Words is the story of Esme Nicoll who lives with her single dad, Harry, in Oxford. Harry is a lexicographer working on the Oxford Dictionary (begun in 1879, not finished until 1928). Esme hangs out in the Scriptorium where Harry works; she collects and hides words she finds offensive and as she grows up, she collects words used by women that others find offensive.</p> <p>There is an important orphan character who features throughout The Dictionary of Lost Words. Lizzy Lester has been a domestic servant since she was 11 when her mother died and her many siblings disappeared. She's 8 years older than Esme and often looks after her for Harry. Eventually, the women become friends. There's a story of adoption too.</p>		
Fiction featuring care-experience	J.P. Pomare	In The Clearing	2020	<p>The story of Freya who was in foster care from the age of 15 after she was removed from a charismatic and fantastical woman, Andriene, who is determined to collect 12 children as her disciples.</p>		

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Category	Author	Title	Year	Description	Keywords	Publisher
Fiction featuring care-experience	Zidou (Author), Arno Monin (Artist)	The Adoption	2020	<p>When aging Gabriel's son and daughter adopts an orphaned girl from Peru, Gabriel doesn't know what to think of this foreign child who isn't of his own blood. Besides, he was barely much of a father to his own son... how is he going to take to being a grandfather? The story is made up of moments of sharing between the grandfather and the granddaughter, as well as various interactions around this dilemma with his wife, his lifelong friends, and his own son himself. But when surprise twists complicate matters, true feelings blossom and Life takes on a whole new palette.</p> <p>A comic book filled with love in which we discover this old man gradually becoming a grandfather and allowing himself to be tamed by an absolutely adorable little girl.</p>	Orphan; North Korea	
Fiction featuring care-experience	Karen Brooks	The Chocolate Maker's Wife	2020	<p>When Rosamund Tompkins enters the world she is so different, with her darkling eyes and strange laughter, that the midwives are afraid, believing her a changeling. But Rosamund's life is set to be anything but enchanted. In 1600s England, Rosamund Tompkins is the “illegitimate” daughter of a nobleman working as a servant in a country inn. Her stepfather and brothers are abusive, and she works under him at the inn. It is only when she is married off to a nobleman that her life undergoes a wondrous transformation. Clever, quick and irrepressible, Rosamund soon becomes the darling of the haut ton, and presides over her luxurious chocolate house where the rich go to be seen and indulge in their favourite pastime, drinking the sweet and heady drink to which they've become oddly addicted. But in the shadows a web of conspiracy is spinning. The return of a man from the past brings Rosamund into mortal peril and up to the brink of destruction. As she fights for her life and those she loves through the ravages of the Plague and London's Great Fire, Rosamund begins to realise she will be forced to make a</p>	Slavery; England; Kinship Care; 17th Century; Historical Fiction	HQ Fiction - AU

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Category	Author	Title	Year	Description	Keywords	Publisher
				choice: walk away from all she knows and has grown to love with her soul intact, or make a deal with the devil...		
Fiction featuring care-experience	Kate Grenville	A Room Made of Leaves	2020	What if Elizabeth Macarthur—wife of the notorious John Macarthur, wool baron in the earliest days of Sydney—had written a shockingly frank secret memoir? And what if novelist Kate Grenville had miraculously found and published it? That’s the starting point for A Room Made of Leaves, a playful dance of possibilities between the real and the invented. Marriage to a ruthless bully, the impulses of her heart, the search for power in a society that gave women none: this Elizabeth Macarthur manages her complicated life with spirit and passion, cunning and sly wit. Her memoir lets us hear—at last!—what one of those seemingly demure women from history might really have thought. At the centre of A Room Made of Leaves is one of the most toxic issues of our own age: the seductive appeal of false stories. This book may be set in the past, but it’s just as much about the present, where secrets and lies have the dangerous power to shape reality. Kate Grenville’s return to the territory of The Secret River is historical fiction turned inside out, a stunning sleight of hand by one of our most original writers.		Text Publishing
Fiction featuring care-experience	Colson Whitehead	The Nickel Boys	2020	Winner of the Pulitzer Prize for Fiction 2020. The story of two boys sentenced to a hellish reform school in 1960s Florida. Elwood Curtis has taken the words of Dr Martin Luther King to heart: he is as good as anyone. Abandoned by his parents, brought up by his loving, strict and clear-sighted grandmother, Elwood is about to enroll in the local black college. But given the time and the place, one innocent mistake is enough to destroy his future, and so Elwood arrives at The Nickel Academy, which claims to provide 'physical, intellectual and moral training' which will equip its inmates to become 'honourable and honest men.' In reality,	United States; Residential Care; Kinship Care; African American	Fleet

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				the Nickel Academy is a chamber of horrors, where physical, emotional and sexual abuse is rife, where corrupt officials and tradesmen do a brisk trade in supplies intended for the school, and where any boy who resists is likely to disappear 'out back.' Stunned to find himself in this vicious environment, Elwood tries to hold on to Dr King's ringing assertion, 'Throw us in jail, and we will still love you.' The tension between Elwood's idealism and friend Turner's scepticism leads to a decision which will have decades-long repercussions. Based on the history of a real reform school in Florida that operated for one hundred and eleven years and warped and destroyed the lives of thousands of children, The Nickel Boys is a devastating, driven narrative by a great American novelist whose work is essential to understanding the current reality of the United States.		
Fiction featuring care-experience	Bernardine Evaristo	Girl, Woman, Other	2020	Winner of the Booker Prize 2019. Grace is a Victorian orphan dreaming of the mysterious African father she will never meet. Winsome is a young Windrush bride, recently arrived from Barbados. Amma is the fierce queen of her 1980s squatters' palace. Morgan, who used to be Megan, is blowing up on social media, the newest activist-influencer on the block. Twelve very different people, mostly black and female, more than a hundred years of change, and one sweeping, vibrant, glorious portrait of contemporary Britain. Bernardine Evaristo presents a gloriously new kind of history for this old country- ever-dynamic, ever-expanding and utterly irresistible. Amongst the characters are some who were in 'care.' Dominique's partner of 3 years, Nzinga, was in the American foster care system; Bummi was in kinship care as was Lennox; Grace was in a Girls' Home; and Penelope was adopted.	United States; Foster Care; British; Residential Care; Kinship Care	Penguin

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Fiction featuring care-experience	Trent Dalton	All Our Shimmering Skies	2020	Darwin, 1942, and as Japanese bombs rain down, orphan Molly Hook is looking to the skies and running for her life. Inside a duffel bag she carries a stone heart, alongside a map to lead her to Longcoat Bob, the deep-country sorcerer who she believes put a curse on her family. By her side are the most unlikely travelling companions: Greta, a razor-tongued actress, and Yukio, a fallen Japanese fighter pilot.	Australia; Orphan	HarperCollins - AU
Fiction featuring care-experience	Michael Christie	Greenwood	2020	<p>2038. On a remote island off the Pacific coast of British Columbia stands the Greenwood Arboreal Cathedral, one of the world's last forests. Wealthy tourists flock from all corners of the dust-choked globe to see the spectacle and remember what once was. But even as they breathe in the fresh air and pose for photographs amidst the greenery, guide Jake knows that the forest is dying, though her bosses won't admit it.</p> <p>1908. Two passenger locomotives meet head-on. The only survivors are two young boys, who take refuge in a trapper's cabin in a forest on the edge of town. In twenty-six years, one of them, now a recluse, will find an abandoned baby — another child of Greenwood — setting off a series of events that will change the course of his life, and the lives of those around him.</p> <p>Structured like the rings of a tree, this remarkable novel moves from the future to the present to the past, and back again, to tell the story of one family and their enduring connection to the place that brought them together.</p>	Adoption; Foster Care; Canada	Scribe
Fiction featuring care-experience	Dawn French	Because of You	2020	The old millennium turns into the new. In the same hospital, two very different women give birth to two very similar daughters. Hope leaves with a beautiful baby girl. Anna leaves with empty arms. Seventeen years later, the gods who keep watch over broken-hearted mothers wreak mighty	mothers; babies	Michael Joseph

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Category	Author	Title	Year	Description	Keywords	Publisher
				revenge, and the truth starts rolling, terrible and deep, toward them all. The power of mother-love will be tested to its limits.		
Fiction featuring care-experience	Donatella Di Pietrantonio	A Girl Returned	2020	Without warning or a word of explanation, an unnamed 13-year-old girl is sent away from the family she has always thought of as hers to live with her birth family: a large, chaotic assortment of individuals whom she has never met and who seem anything but welcoming. Thus begins a new life, one of struggle, conflict, especially between the young girl and her mother, and deprivation. But in her relationship with Adriana and Vincenzo, two of her newly acquired siblings, she will find the strength to start again and to build a new and enduring sense of self. Told with an immediacy and a rare expressive intensity that has earned it countless adoring readers and one of Italy's most prestigious literary prizes, Translated by Ann Goldstein, translator of the works of Elena Ferrante. Set against the stark, beautiful landscape of Abruzzo in central Italy, this is a compelling story about mothers and daughters, about responsibility, siblings, and caregiving, pitch-perfect in Ann Goldstein's English translation.	adoption; birth family; mothers; daughters	Europa Editions
Children's Fiction	Matilda Woods	Otto Tattercoat and the Forest of Lost Things	2020	These are the rules that guide Nim's life as she and her rat, Nibbles, live on the streets and the rooftops of the only place she's ever called home. So when a new boy named Otto comes to town and gets caught up in the devious plottings of a former Tattercoat who's fallen from grace, Nim takes it upon herself to come to Otto's rescue.	Foster care	Penguin Random House
Fiction by care-experienced authors	Charles Dickens	Oliver Twist	2020	Oliver Twist, or The Parish Boy's Progress, is the second novel by Charles Dickens, and was first published as a serial 1837–9. The story is of the orphan Oliver Twist, who starts his life in a workhouse and is then apprenticed with an undertaker. He escapes from there and travels to London where he meets the Artful Dodger, a member of a gang of	orphan; cruelty; pickpocket; thieves	CreateSpace

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Category	Author	Title	Year	Description	Keywords	Publisher
				juvenile pickpockets, which is led by the elderly criminal Fagin.		
	Liz Moore	Long Bright River	2020	<p>At the heart of Long Bright River, there are two sisters, Mickey and Kacey orphaned when they were young, losing their mother to an overdose death. Their father has not been present in their lives. They have been raised by their grandmother, Gee, who barely was able to provide for their needs, shelter and food, while working several jobs. There wasn't much love or personal attention shown to the girls and therefore they were extremely close while growing up.</p> <p>Things changed dramatically in high school as Kacey started using drugs. The sisters grew apart, Mickey choosing a career as a policewoman and Kacey working temporary jobs to fund her drug habit. Mickey has tried to keep an eye on her sister as she was usually in the area that she was patrolling in Kensington.</p> <p>There is a serial killer targeting young women. Mickey becomes desperate to find her sister, fearing that she will be the next target. She has vanished and no one seems to know where she is. She becomes desperate and risks the loss of her job and more as she digs deeper into Kacey's life in the last few months and trying to find the killer.</p>	sisters, orphans, addiction, policewoman, serial killer	
Fiction featuring care-experience	M.W. Craven	Born in a Burial Gown	2020	The only witness to the dumping of a body is care-experienced character Darren Ackers, a drug addict. Without him it is likely the killer would never have been caught.		
Fiction featuring care-experience	Michael Robotham (2020)	When She Was Good	2020	When She Was Good in the 2nd in Michael Robotham Cyrus Haven series. In this story, Cyrus finds out who abducted and assaulted Evie prior to her going into state care. Some of the 'baddies' in the story have a care-experience background.		

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Category	Author	Title	Year	Description	Keywords	Publisher
				There's a care-experienced character who's convicted of kidnapping kids, another one whose chauffeuring job includes taking a child from paedophile to paedophile (but who comes good in the end), and the ring-leader paedophile was orphaned in high school.		
Fiction by care-experienced authors	Richard Wright	Man Who Lived Underground	2021	The Man Who Lived Underground was first submitted to Richard Wright's publisher in 1941, but was rejected, perhaps, one person suggests, because its "depiction of police brutality was "unbearable"". It is being published in 2021, and tells the story of an African American man who is coerced into confessing a crime he did not commit and then escapes to live underground in the sewer system.		
Fiction featuring care-experience	Alan Johnson	The late Train to Gipsy Hill	2021	<p>As a teenager, Alan Johnson (b. 1950) wanted to become a writer, but he ended up as a member of the British parliament.</p> <p>He finally took up writing after he retired from politics, publishing his first memoir to critical acclaim in 2014. In this he talks about being raised by his single mum, and after she dies when he is 13, by his older sister.</p> <p>Alan Johnson's first work of fiction, is a thriller The Late Train to Gipsy Hill, published in 2021.</p> <p>Appropriately, the hero is a young man raised by a single mother.</p> <p>There is, too, a character who was raised in care - in Russia.</p> <p>Unfortunately, (because its a stereotype) Miranchuk is a thug, a clever man who loves violence and who has recently made a commitment to join the 3rd of the 3 key Russian organisations, the Krovnnye Bratya or an organised crime</p>		

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Category	Author	Title	Year	Description	Keywords	Publisher
				group (the other options are the military and the secret service) which, writes, Johnson, all interconnected anyway. The Late Train to Gipsy Hill is a timely - because of the invasion of Ukraine - thriller, fast paced and well written.		
Fiction featuring care-experience	Rose Tremain	Lily: A Tale of Revenge	2021	Lily tells the story of a foundling left in 1850 at the London Foundling Hospital. The baby is saved from wolves by a young police officer, Sam Trench. Named Lily Mortimer for a Foundling Hospital benefactor, the baby is then taken to a family at Rookery Farm in Suffolk where she is well cared for by her foster parents and foster siblings and the small child contributes as best she can to the work of the farm. Foster mother, Nellie Buck, is delighted to have a girl and teaches her needlework, a useful skill that the protagonist, 16-year-old and independent Lily, employs in her job as a wig maker at Belle Prettywood's Wig Emporium. When she is returned to the Foundling Hospital at the age of 6, Lily misses her foster family greatly and arranges with a young friend, Bridget—both girls are now 7 years of age—to run away.	foundling, orphan, asylum; Foundling Hospital	
Fiction featuring care-experience	Aimee Bender	The Butterfly Lampshade	2021	When Francie is 8 years old, her mother is institutionalised and Francie is sent to live with relatives. 20 years later she maintains a relationship with the family who raised her and, sometimes, with her mother. She also begins to revisit what happened when she was 8.		
Fiction featuring care-experience	Sarah Hilary	Fragile	2021	Fragile (2021) by Sarah Hilary features characters from a children's home. Nell Ballard is now homeless, running from her past and carrying a secret she longs to set down. In Starling Villas, she becomes servant to an eccentric recluse. Robin Wilder lives by an exacting set of rules, expecting the same from Nell, who fears his retribution should she let standards slip. Just as she begins to find her balance in the	children's home; foster care; love;	

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				<p>house, Robin's former wife sweeps in. Carolyn Wilder has no intention of allowing Nell to become comfortable in her new home. But who is underestimating whom? And who truly holds the power in Starling Villas? As events overtake the household, old wounds reopen and the past rushes in to exact its own terrible price.</p> <p>Fragile is a modern Gothic psychological thriller with a contemporary twist on the classic novel Rebecca</p>		
Children's Fiction	Rebecca Normal	The Sound of Everything	2021	<p>Shipped from foster home to foster home, frequently betrayed, and having “never had a dad that I could call Daddy”, it's no wonder Kadie (aka Goldilocks) has trust issues. The only thing she's sure of in this world is music - listening to it, and creating it. It's the “only thing that keeps my head straight.” To protect herself, she's set out three rules: “1. Don't count on anyone. 2. Act. Always act. 3. Be prepared to lose everything.”</p> <p>Constantly in trouble at school, though told she has potential, Kadie bonds with a boy called Lips, aka Dayan, the name he reserves for use by special people, of which Kadie is one. Dayan records with his AMD mandem (Amalgamandem) and she's happy to be invited to hang out with them, while remaining ever-mindful of the fickleness of group dynamics: “one day you're in the group, the next you're invisible.” But, just as things start to take an upturn, everything explodes in the aftermath of hideous online trolling and trouble with her foster sister.</p>	foster care; troll; trolling; friendship; music; relationships	
Fiction by care-experienced authors	Jenni Fagan	Luckenbooth	2021	Luckenbooth is historical fiction. Set in Edinburgh and across 9 decades, the story begins with Jessie Macrae leaving home, on an island in the North Sea, and arriving in Edinburgh where she becomes a surrogate for a shady character and his wife. Over the next nine decades, the novel tells the story of those who live in Luckenbooth Close.		

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Category	Author	Title	Year	Description	Keywords	Publisher
Fiction by care-experienced authors	Paula McLain	When the Stars Go Dark	2021	A detective hiding away from the world. A series of disappearances that reach into her past. Can solving them help her heal? Anna Hart is a seasoned missing persons detective in San Francisco with far too much knowledge of the darkest side of human nature. When tragedy strikes her personal life, Anna, desperate and numb, flees to the Northern California village of Mendocino to grieve. She lived there as a child with her beloved foster parents, and now she believes it might be the only place left for her. Yet the day she arrives, she learns that a local teenage girl has gone missing. The crime feels frighteningly reminiscent of the most crucial time in Anna's childhood, when the unsolved murder of a young girl touched Mendocino and changed the community forever. Weaving together actual cases of missing persons, trauma theory, and a hint of the metaphysical, this propulsive and deeply affecting novel tells a story of fate, necessary redemption, and what it takes, when the worst happens, to reclaim our lives--and our faith in one another.	foster care; murder	Random House Large Print Publishing
Fiction featuring care-experience	Jennifer Down	Bodies of Light	2021	This is the story of a woman who begins her life as Maggie Sullivan in the state care system of Victoria, South Australia and, when the story concludes she is middle aged Holly living in the United States. Between Maggie and Holly She is Josephine/Jo/Josie who has fled Australia and taken up residence in New Zealand - until she meets a good American man and follows him to the States.		
Fiction featuring care-experience	TJ Klune	The House in the Cerulean Sea	2021	The House in the Cerulean Sea, Klune's first stand-alone novel published with the Macmillan Tor imprint, was partially inspired by the Sixties Scoop, where the Canadian government removed Indigenous children from their homes and placed them with unrelated white, middle-class families. Seeing the similarities of this event take place in the current-day Southern United States, Klune felt a need to write a	orphanage; records; magical	

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Category	Author	Title	Year	Description	Keywords	Publisher
				story celebrating children's differences and to show the positive effects of giving children a safe and supportive place to be themselves. Linus Baker is a 40-year-old man who lives with his devious cat Calliope, and who works as a case-worker for the Department in Charge of Magical Youth (DICOMY). He spends his work days overseeing the care of magical children in orphanages, and his nights listening to his old records. When Extremely Upper Management calls him, he is given a Classified Level 4 (he had only been given a Classified Level 3 once, which was an unfortunate incident), in what will probably be his most challenging task ever; taking a trip to the Marsyas Orphanage, where six extraordinary children are kept by an equally extraordinary caretaker, Arthur Parnassus.		
Fiction featuring care-experience	Katherena Vermette	The Strangers	2021	<p>Cedar has nearly forgotten what her family looks like. Phoenix has nearly forgotten what freedom feels like. And Elsie has nearly given up hope. Nearly.</p> <p>After time spent in foster homes, Cedar goes to live with her estranged father. Although she grapples with the pain of being separated from her mother, Elsie, and sister, Phoenix, she's hoping for a new chapter in her life, only to find herself once again in a strange house surrounded by strangers. From a youth detention centre, Phoenix gives birth to a baby she'll never get to raise and tries to forgive herself for all the harm she's caused (while wondering if she even should). Elsie, struggling with addiction and determined to turn her life around, is buoyed by the idea of being reunited with her daughters and strives to be someone they can depend on, unlike her own distant mother. These are the Strangers, each haunted in her own way. Between flickering moments of warmth and support, the women diverge and reconnect, fighting to survive in a fractured system that</p>		

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Category	Author	Title	Year	Description	Keywords	Publisher
				pretends to offer success but expects them to fail. Facing the distinct blade of racism from those they trusted most, they urge one another to move through the darkness, all the while wondering if they'll ever emerge safely on the other side.		
Fiction featuring care-experience	Daniel Ingram-Brown	Bea's Witch	2021	Beatrice Crosse is nearly 12 years ago. She was adopted from the care system but is not happy and she runs away from home, only to encounter a witch who offers her treasure.	Scotland; foster care	
Fiction featuring care-experience	Jane Routley	Shadow in the Empire of Light	2021	Shine's life is usually dull: an orphan without magic in a family of powerful mages, she's left to run the family estate with only an eccentric aunt and telepathic cat for company. But when the family descend on the house for the annual Fertility Festival, Shine is plunged into dark intrigue; stolen letters, a fugitive spy, and family drama mix with murder, sex and secrets, and Shine is forced to decide both her loyalties and future...	Kinship Care; Orphan	Solaris
Fiction featuring care-experience	LP McMahan	As Swallows Fly	2021	When Malika, a young orphan in rural Pakistan, is savagely attacked, her face is left disfigured and her self-esteem destroyed. Haunted by the assault, she hides from the world, finding solace in her mathematical theories. A few years later, her intellectual brilliance is discovered and she leaves conflict-stricken Pakistan for a better education in Melbourne, where she finds herself placed with Kate—a successful plastic surgeon facing emotional insecurities of her own. Malika and Kate's lives slowly intertwine as they find within each other what each has lacked alone. At first, Kate's skills appear to offer a simple solution to Malika's anguish, but when tragedy strikes, the price of beauty is found to be much higher than either of them could have known.	Australia; Orphan; Pakistan	Ventura Press

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Category	Author	Title	Year	Description	Keywords	Publisher
				As Swallows Fly is a poignant portrayal of survival, identity and empowerment in a culture dominated by the pursuit of perfection. In a captivating and unforgettable debut, McMahon asks what might be possible if we have the courage to be flawed.		
Fiction featuring care-experience	Angela Slatter	All the Murmuring Bones	2021	Orphaned as a young child, Mirin O'Malley has been brought up by her grandparents on their isolated, rambling estate Hob's Hallow. Long ago her family...	Australia; Kinship Care; Orphan	Titan
Fiction featuring care-experience	Rebecca Smith	The Ash Museum	2021	<p>1944. The Battle of Kohima. James Ash dies leaving behind two families: his 'wife' Josmi and two children, Jay and Molly, and his parents and sister in England who know nothing about his Indian family.</p> <p>After the death of James, the English family step in and send Jay and Molly to boarding school in England. Josmi dies and the children never see their mother again. Later in the novel as teenagers they come to London to live with Jucinda who is a friend of their aunt.</p> <p>2012. Emmie is raising her own daughter, Jasmine, in a world she wants to be very different from the racist England of her childhood. Her father, Jay, doesn't even have a photograph of the mother he lost and still refuses to discuss his life in India. Emmie, whose mother dies when she was young, finds comfort in the local museum – a treasure trove of another family's stories and artefacts.</p> <p>Little does Emmie know that with each generation, her own story holds secrets and fascinations that she could only dream of.</p>	intergenerational loss; orphans; kinship care; India; boarding school; museum; artifacts; racism	Legend Press

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Category	Author	Title	Year	Description	Keywords	Publisher
				Through ten decades and across three continents, The Ash Museum is an intergenerational story of loss, migration and the search for somewhere to feel at home.		
Children's Fiction	Katrina Nannestad	We Are Wolves	2021	<p>We Are Wolves (2021) by Australian children's writer, Katrina Nannestad, is the extraordinary story of 3 children left to fend for themselves at the end of WWII.</p> <p>The story begins in October 1944 in East Prussia. The children's father has been constricted but soon the Russian army breaks through the German lines and the rest of the family - 11 year old Liesl, 7 year old Otto, and toddler Mia plus their mother and grandparents abandon the farm.</p> <p>It's not long before the children are on their own and having a range of 'adventures' including meeting up with other orphaned German children known as "wolf children".</p>		
Children's Fiction	Holly Marlow	Delly Duck (4-8 years)	2021	When Delly Duck lays an egg, she is excited for it to hatch. But she doesn't really know how to keep an egg safe, or how to look after her chick when he hatches. See how a concerned goose tries to help Delly to learn how to care for her chick, in this touching adoption story.		
Children's Fiction	Lauren Kerstein	Home For a While (4-8 years)	2021	Natalia Moore (illustrator). Calvin is in foster care, and he wants to trust someone, anyone, but is afraid to open his heart. He has lived in a lot of houses, but he still hasn't found his home. When he moves in with Maggie, she shows him respect, offers him kindness, and makes him see things in himself that he's never noticed before. Maybe this isn't just another house, maybe this is a place Calvin can call home, for a while.		
Children's Fiction	Yvette Poshoglian	Escape from Cockatoo Island	2021	Eleven-year-old orphan, Olivia Markham, has been sent to Cockatoo Island, in the middle of Sydney Harbour. She is desperate to escape the island, but mostly, she wants to find her own family.	Australia; Orphan; Juvenile fiction	

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Category	Author	Title	Year	Description	Keywords	Publisher
	Sebastian Barry	A Thousand Moons	2021	Even when you come out of bloodshed and disaster in the end you have got to learn to live... Winona is a young Lakota orphan adopted by former soldiers Thomas McNulty and John Cole. Living with Thomas and John on the farm they work in 1870s Tennessee, she is educated and loved, forging a life for herself beyond the violence and dispossession of her past. But the fragile harmony of her unlikely family unit, in the aftermath of the Civil War, is soon threatened by a further traumatic event, one which Winona struggles to confront, let alone understand.	orphan, Tennessee, farm, Civil War	
Fiction by care-experienced authors	Lola Jaye	The Attic Child	2022	1907: Twelve-year-old Celestine spends most of his time locked in an attic room of a large house by the sea. Taken from his homeland and treated as an unpaid servant, he dreams of his family in Africa even if, as the years pass, he struggles to remember his mother's face, and sometimes his real name . . . Decades later, Lowra, a young orphan girl born into wealth and privilege, will find herself banished to the same attic. Lying under the floorboards of the room is an old porcelain doll, an unusual beaded claw necklace and, most curiously, a sentence etched on the wall behind an old cupboard, written in an unidentifiable language. Artefacts that will offer her a strange kind of comfort, and lead her to believe that she was not the first child to be imprisoned there . . .		
Fiction featuring care-experience	Val McDermid	1989	2022	Val McDermid's 1989 (2022) has Allie Burns investigate mischief by Big Pharma in the context of the AIDS crisis. Tucked into the background is the WWII story of a Jewish baby being given away to a Polish couple to save the child's life. In 1989, that baby's son wants to find out more about his		

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Category	Author	Title	Year	Description	Keywords	Publisher
				Jewish heritage and in the process a media Moghul's 'dark secret' is exposed.		
Fiction featuring care-experience	Ann Leary	The Foundling (2022)	2022	<p>It's 1927 and eighteen-year-old Mary Engle is hired to work as a secretary at a remote but scenic institution for mentally disabled women called the Nettleton State Village for Feeble-minded Women of Childbearing Age. She's immediately in awe of her employer—brilliant, genteel Dr. Agnes Vogel.</p> <p>Dr. Vogel had been the only woman in her class in medical school. As a young psychiatrist she was an outspoken crusader for women's suffrage. Now, at age forty, Dr. Vogel runs one of the largest and most self-sufficient public asylums for women in the country. Mary deeply admires how dedicated the doctor is to the poor and vulnerable women under her care.</p> <p>Soon after she's hired, Mary learns that a girl from her childhood orphanage is one of the inmates. Mary remembers Lillian as a beautiful free spirit with a sometimes-tempestuous side. Could she be mentally disabled? When Lillian begs Mary to help her escape, alleging the asylum is not what it seems, Mary is faced with a terrible choice. Should she trust her troubled friend with whom she shares a dark childhood secret? Mary's decision triggers a hair-raising sequence of events with life-altering consequences for all.</p> <p>Inspired by a true story about the author's grandmother, The Foundling offers a rare look at a shocking chapter of American history.</p>	Foundling, orphan, asylum	

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Category	Author	Title	Year	Description	Keywords	Publisher
Fiction by care-experienced authors	Louise Beech	Nothing Else	2022	<p>Louise Beech's 8th novel created in lockdown, inspired by her own childhood care records, by the love she has for her sisters, and by the music she heard as a child when her father played. Heather Harris is a piano teacher and professional musician, whose quiet life revolves around music, whose memories centre on a single song that haunts her. A song she longs to perform again. A song she wrote as a child, to drown out the violence in their home. A song she played with her little sister, Harriet.</p> <p>But Harriet is gone ... she disappeared when their parents died, and Heather never saw her again.</p> <p>When Heather is offered an opportunity to play piano on a cruise ship, she leaps at the chance. She'll read her recently released childhood care records by day – searching for clues to her sister's disappearance – and play piano by night ... coming to terms with the truth about a past she's done everything to forget.</p> <p>An exquisitely moving novel about surviving devastating trauma, about the unbreakable bond between sisters, Nothing Else is also a story of courage and love, and the power of music to transcend – and change – everything.</p>		
Fiction featuring care-experience	Anna Spargo-Ryan	Foundling	2022	<p>The Saturday Paper is an Australian weekly newspaper which publishes short stories.</p> <p>On 9 July 2022 it published a piece by writer & PhD Candidate, Anna Spargo-Ryan, called Foundling.</p> <p>It's a sad story, about a 7 month old baby who doesn't get much needed medical attention because adults are too busy not wanting to take responsibility for the life that's just been</p>		

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Category	Author	Title	Year	Description	Keywords	Publisher
				found. https://www.thesaturdaypaper.com.au/culture/fiction/2022/07/16/foundling#hrd		
Fiction featuring care-experience	Paterson Joseph	The Secret Diaries of Charles Ignacius Sancho	2022	The Secret Diaries of Charles Ignacius Sancho is Paterson Joseph's debut novel. and tells the story of the first Black man in England who could vote - because he owned property. Charles Ignatius Sancho (c1729-1780) who was born on a slave ship in the Atlantic, orphaned at the age of 2, and then 'gifted' to 3 sisters in Greenwich, England. Sancho lived with the sisters for 18 years then ran away. He was taken in by John Montagu who educated the young man. Sancho ended up becoming a shopkeeper and involved in the abolitionist movement. He wrote essays, at least one book and 2 plays, and he composed music.		
Fiction featuring care-experience	Ellen Marie Wiseman (5)	The Lost Girls of Willowbrook	2022	The now infamous Willowbrook State School on Staten Island, New York is the venue for The Lost Girls of Willowbrook (2022). Wiseman tells the story of Willowbrook by having 16-year-old Sage Winters head there in December 1971 in search of her twin sister who has been reported missing. Once Sage arrives, everyone thinks she is Rosemary, and so Sage experiences what life at Willowbrook would have been like for Rosemary—the regular doses of sedatives given out to everyone on her ward; the isolation cell or ‘pit’ used as punishment; the ward full of girls and young women rocking all day; the violence of inmates towards themselves, the staff, and each other; and the violence of staff toward inmates. She also learns about the experiments that had been conducted there, children “intentionally given hepatitis in an attempt to track the development of the viral infection” between 1956 and 1970.		

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Category	Author	Title	Year	Description	Keywords	Publisher
Fiction featuring care-experience	Lloyd Jones	The Fish	2022	<p>The Fish (2022) by New Zealand writer Lloyd Jones is set in the conservative middle of the 20th century, 2 teenage girls are pregnant. One, Carla, is sent off to Sydney and doesn't have the baby. The other is banished to a caravan and gives birth to what the grandparents and uncle call "The Fish" but who is christened Colin Montgomery.</p> <p>The Fish's mother, as the unnamed narrator's sister is called throughout the story, finds it increasingly difficult to care for her baby. She is sent to a mental health facility, then stays for a while with her parents, then she disappears.</p> <p>Care of Colin falls to the grandparents and uncle. On the one hand, they seem ashamed of the child. On the other, they care for him unstintingly.</p>		
Fiction featuring care-experience	Michael Robotham (2022)	Lying Beside You	2022	<p>Michael Robotham Lying Beside You (2022) is the 3rd in the Michael Robotham Cyrus Haven series. Cyrus Haven is a forensic psychologist who was in kinship care with his grandparents after his older brother murdered his parents and twin sisters.</p> <p>In Good Girl, Bad Girl (2019) he is introduced to Evie Cormac who has been in foster care and is now living in a youth detention centre.</p> <p>The sequel, When She Was Good (2020), included a care-experienced characters who runs a paedophile ring and another is an enabler who transports children from paedophile to paedophile.</p> <p>With Lying Beside You there are a range of dodgy characters (including a cop and a forensic scientist) in addition to a vengeful serial kidnapper, none of whom have</p>		

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Category	Author	Title	Year	Description	Keywords	Publisher
				been in informal care or the formal care system. Evie, now living in Cyrus' home, helps to solve the crime.		
Fiction featuring care-experience	Dominique Wilson	Orphan Rock	2022	<p>Orphan Rock is a historical novel with 2 women at the centre who first meet as small girls in the Protestant Orphan School (Paramatta NSW 1850-1886).</p> <p>Bessie is a toddler when she arrives at the Orphan School but she's removed by her new step-father when she's about 9 years old.</p> <p>Lottie is older than Bessie and looks after the younger girl. We don't know why Lottie is in the Orphanage, ie, whether she's been abandoned, removed by the state or orphaned.</p> <p>Bessie is the protagonist for 2/3s of the novel, followed by Kathleen, Bessie's daughter. Lottie is more in the background, but playing a crucial role.</p> <p>The women experience financial hardship, loss and grief, much of which is caused by what is happening in Sydney at the time. They also have times of respectability and financial success.</p> <p>Dominique Wilson demonstrates a commitment in her story to the characters most marginalised in colonial Sydney (and even now), characters who are capable and resilient but whose lives are precarious.</p>		
Fiction featuring care-experience	Alex Wheatle MBE	Kemosha of the Caribbean	2022	Kemosha and her brother have lived their whole lives in slavery. Sold away to work in lawless Port Royal, Kemosha takes her chance to escape brutal treatment. With fortune on her side, Kemosha befriends Ravenhide, a man with a mysterious past who teaches her the art of sword fighting,	slavery; slaves; orphan	

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Category	Author	Title	Year	Description	Keywords	Publisher
				and introduces her to the beautiful runaway Isabella. Yet Kemosha's greatest test yet is upon the deck of the Satisfaction: the notorious Captain Morgan's ship. His next adventure on the high seas could be the making of Kemosha – and her one chance to earn enough pieces of eight to buy the freedom of her brother...		
Fiction featuring care-experience	Omar Sakr	Son of Sin	2022	Son of Sin tells the story of Jamal who is coming to terms with being a queer Arab-Australian Muslim. He is growing up in an Australia where Islamophobia is rife and in a Muslim community that considers homosexuality as haram, a sin. Jamal lives with his mother and his brother, Moses, but for the first 7 years of his life he lived with an aunty, thinking the aunty was his mother.		
Fiction featuring care-experience	Louisa May Alcott	The Inheritance	1849 (first pub 1997)	A wealthy English family, the Hamilton's, adopt an orphan who was born in Italy. A long lost letter reveals that she is related to the Hamilton's and has inherited the estate on which she has been living and working as a companion to the Hamilton's daughter.		

Appendix D Example of short story from an early draft of *Hiraeth*

Sure-Footed. Manchester, 2014

My name's Somondre Alexander Maitrall. I was told Somondre means stable, sure-footed, hardworking and that's me. It's an African-American name but I'm English. No idea why mum called me that.

Alexander got two meanings, the urban one: "Very, very, good-looking gentleman that has great taste in women, so if you got a friend named Alexander count yourself one of the luckiest people in the world!"

That's most definitely me; you know how lucky you are.

The other meaning is from the Greek. Eight popes and three Russian emperors have been named Alexander.

Now though, this Alexander is fucked. Was almost brought to court cos of my council tax. Didn't have a clue what I was doing. Worked in a warehouse from October to January, getting like £3 something an hour; when I hit 17, it went up to £5.13. Then in January I got laid off. Since then, I've had no income whatsoever. I managed to stretch my last week's pay, then got some overtime before I left. Now that's run out and I've got letters saying bills are due.

My support worker's no help and I feel like saying: "Why you here? If you're not gonna help me, you might as well fuck off." One minute everything's being done for you, the next you're out on your own.

You can teach young kids how to cook, but no-one can prepare them for what it's like to be home alone with no-one to talk to. The loneliness – like a grey fog that wraps itself around my head, that's when I miss my bruv the most. That's when....'

Talking 'bout all this shit makes me think and I don't wanna do that. Bout my bruv in prison, makes me mad. He went to school one morning and hasn't been back since. We was separated and it's been hard to stay in touch. You know what I'm saying...no one really knew where he was going.

Me though, I'm sure-footed and determined. That's defi-nite. And last night I was the king! Last night millions of people watched me on TV, talking 'bout leaving care. Care was all right you know. There was a good understanding between staff and kids. You got out what you put in. Even though you could be a dick, some of the staff would see that you were finding your feet and that. Obviously, there were some staff who were arseholes, but the staff that cared actually did care, a lot.

Not the first time I've been interviewed.

First time was after we beat dem Beasteaters. Mr Dornay put me forward for martial arts when I kept fighting in school. Mr Dornay's alright. I got to go to basketball camp on the Isle of Man, twice, and I went on a trip to France. Mainly, I concentrate on boxing as something to get my mind off everything, with my dream of going pro now I'm a cage fighter.

I always liked fighting even from a young age. That's 'cos I was never academically smart, but I could always handle myself and I could take a punch.

My dyslexia's pretty bad and stops me doing certain things, like if I go out for a meal; I have to ask my friends like what does that say. Even though I'm an upbeat person, the whole dyslexia thing makes me feel low, makes me feel like what's the point. But I know I can succeed, if I work hard enough.

See, there's two sorts of boxers: those with glass jaws, and those with granite chins. If you've got a glass jaw, you go down easily and can't take a big punch. If you've got a granite chin, like I have, you're immovable. It doesn't matter how skilled you are, or how hard you

train, if you aren't tough enough, you won't win. It's the reason a lot of fighters who have success at the Olympics can't replicate it when they go pro – they just aren't tough enough.

I'm about thirteen and a half stone, but for a fight I need to be just under twelve. You can be as fit as you like, and look in amazing shape, but boxing is weight-governed. You need to do all the training so your body burns the muscle, avoid sugar, fat, eating late – basically anything that might up your body mass. It's hard to make that deadline before a fight.

But I'm gonna prove to everybody who says I'm gonna be a drug dealer or end up in prison – I gonna prove them wrong and show that just cos I had a shit upbringing doesn't mean I can't change it - even if it kills me.

Appendix E Tracy Beaker Discussion

After the publication of Jacqueline Wilson's new children's novel *My Mum Tracy Beaker*, I initiated a conversation via social media as to whether grown up Tracy ending up a single mum on a housing estate and unemployed, was feeding into just another stereotype. Kirsty Capes and I were asked to be on a media panel led by Kenny Murray, Public Affairs Co-ordinator for Who Cares? Scotland. Following this conversation, we received the early manuscript of Wilson's latest novel *We Are the Beaker Girls*, (2019) and contributed to a discussion on representation 'Tracy Beaker did a lot of good stuff for wider representation, but she was also a child that lied, she perpetuated the idea that children in care aren't to be trusted, that they're inherently difficult...' Wilson took note of our comments and revised the text, which is less stereotypical and has now been published. Fiction, real life, Care-experience fused together as those with lived experience were consulted, heard, and learnt from.

Appendix F Correspondence with the Ministry of Justice

Correspondence with the Ministry of Justice re homicide in the UK and limitations due to MoJ financial constraints:



Rosie Canning
rc11g14@soton.ac.uk

Data Access & Compliance Unit
Ministry of Justice
102 Petty France
London
SW1H 9AJ

data.access@justice.gsi.gov.uk

28 March 2017

Dear Dr Canning

Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) Request – 110644

Thank you for your requests dated 3 March 2017 and 10 March 2017 in which you asked for the following information from the Ministry of Justice (MoJ):

I'm wondering if you can advise.

I'm a doctoral researcher at Southampton University examining the representation of care leavers in fiction.

Just to clarify I was a care leaver myself and I'm really interested in why crime writers often use care leavers in murder dramas. In order to understand, I have to investigate the facts.

I'm trying to get a breakdown of homicide in the UK over the last ten years. Are such figures available and how would I go about getting them?

and

I'm trying to get a breakdown of homicide in the UK over the last ten years and if any of those homicides were committed by care leavers.

For example in the National Audit Office, Department for Education, Care leavers' transition to adulthood, it states: 'in 2008, 49% of young men under the age of 21 who had come into contact with the criminal justice system had a care experience;'

These figures seem to suggest that there are records of young men in the criminal justice system that have been in care. I would like, if possible, a further breakdown of the sort of crimes committed.

Are such figures available? If your department does not have these figures, can you advise who I should contact?

Your requests have been handled under the FOIA, and, owing to the similar subject matter, have been aggregated together.

I can confirm the MoJ holds some of the information you have requested. However, to provide as the request currently stands would exceed the cost limit set out in the FOIA.

Section 12(1) of the FOIA means public authorities are not obliged to comply with a request for information if it estimates the cost of complying would exceed the appropriate limit. The appropriate limit for central government is set at £600. This represents the estimated cost of one person spending 3.5 working days determining whether the department holds the information, and locating, retrieving and extracting the information. Centrally held information

referring to cases prior to 2015 does not include information as to whether or not an individual has been through the care system.

We believe that the cost of contacting the courts for those found guilty or the prisons for those received into prison for homicide offences in England and Wales in order to establish whether or not an offender has been in care for the period from 2007 to 2016 would exceed the appropriate limit. Consequently, we are not obliged to comply with your request.

Although we cannot answer your request at the moment, we may be able to answer a refined request within the cost limit. You may wish to consider, for example, reducing the scope of your request to a single year, or a single court. Please be aware that we cannot guarantee at this stage that a refined request will fall within the FOIA cost limit, or that other exemptions will not apply.

For guidance on how to structure successful requests please refer to the ICO website on the following link: <http://ico.org.uk/for-the-public/official-information>

http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2004/3244/pdfs/uksi_20043244_en.pdf

Also, please note that statistics reported to Justice Statistics Analytical Services cover England and Wales only. If you wish to receive statistics on court proceedings in Scotland or Northern Ireland, these are under the remit of the Scottish Government and the Department of Justice Northern Ireland. They can be contacted via the below links:

<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/About/Information/FOI>

<http://www.dojni.gov.uk/index/foi.htm>

Appeal Rights

If you are not satisfied with this response you have the right to request an internal review by responding in writing to one of the addresses below within two months of the date of this response.

data.access@justice.gsi.gov.uk

Data Access and Compliance Unit, Ministry of Justice, 10.38, 102 Petty France, London, SW1H 9AJ

You do have the right to ask the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) to investigate any aspect of your complaint. However, please note that the ICO is likely to expect internal complaints procedures to have been exhausted before beginning their investigation.

Yours sincerely

David Carmichael
Justice Statistics Analytical Services

 Ministry of Justice Dr Canning jc11g14@soton.ac.uk	Data Access & Compliance Unit Ministry of Justice 102 Petty France London SW1H 9AJ data.access@justice.gsi.gov.uk 15 December 2017
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Dear Dr Canning

Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) Request – 171119004

Thank you for your request dated 19th November 2017 in which you asked for the following information from the Ministry of Justice (MoJ):

Is it possible to receive information about offences in England and Wales during 2015, and specifically whether any of those offences were committed by offenders who were care leavers? I've already had information about homicides so this would be all other offences.

Your request has been handled under the FOIA.

I can confirm that the MoJ holds the information that you have [requested](#) and I have provided it below.

Using our database to identify those offenders who have been convicted of all other offences other than murder, and where the offence was committed in 2015 – [this criteria](#) returned 968 offenders. This data does not include any offenders where their trials are ongoing/yet to start in relation to offences committed in 2015. Please see the breakdown below of those 968 offenders:

Care experience	- 594
Former relevant child (Under 21)	- 250
Former relevant child (Under 25)	- 48
Person qualifying for assistance and advice	- 76
Total	- 968

In your first request, only information on those prisoners convicted of homicide in 2015 was required, which meant that once their NOMS numbers from Prison-NOMIS were obtained, we could feed these into the OASys database to obtain the care leaver details from the Basic Custody Screening (BCS) for each prisoner's most recent BCS.

However, when looking at all other offences, many prisoners convicted of offences committed in 2015 may have been in and out of prison several times since, so we would have needed to match the offence dates to the BCS completion dates to select the correct

BCS, however the BCS does not store the offence date so we could not match these using the databases.

Instead, we have used the care leaver alerts from Prison-NOMIS with the following caveats:

- 1) Some Prisoners may be counted twice or more as they can have / had multiple Alert entries over bookings and multiple alert codes used.
- 2) Offence Dates are not mandatory within Prison-NOMIS

Appeal Rights

If you are not satisfied with this [response](#) you have the right to request an internal review by responding in writing to one of the addresses below within two months of the date of this response.


data.access@justice.gsi.gov.uk

Data Access and Compliance Unit, Ministry of Justice, 10.38, 102 Petty France, London, SW1H 9AJ

You do have the right to ask the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) to investigate any aspect of your complaint. However, please note that the ICO is likely to expect internal complaints procedures to have been exhausted before beginning their investigation.

Yours sincerely

Matt Fitzgibbon
Digital and Change (HMPPS)
MOJ Digital and Technology

 <p>Ministry of Justice</p> <p>Dr Canning rc11g14@soton.ac.uk</p>	<p>Data Access & Compliance Unit Ministry of Justice 102 Petty France London SW1H 9AJ</p> <p>data.access@justice.gsi.gov.uk</p> <p>27 April 2017</p>
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Dear Dr Canning

Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) Request – 111158

Thank you for your request dated 30 March 2017 in which you asked for the following information from the Ministry of Justice (MoJ):

Is it possible to receive information about homicide in England and Wales during 2015, and specifically whether any of those homicides were committed by offenders who were care leavers?

Your request has been handled under the FOIA.

I can confirm that the MoJ holds the information that you have requested and I have provided it below.

Using our database to identify those offenders who have been convicted of the offence of murder, where the offence was committed in 2015 – this criteria returned 253 offenders. This data does not include any offenders where their trials are ongoing/yet to start in relation to offences committed in 2015. Of the 253 offenders their answers to the Basic Custody Screening on reception (Has the offender been in the care of local authority children's services at any time) we as follows:

10 answered that they had 'Care Experience'
13 answered that they were a 'Former relevant child (under 21)'
9 answered 'Don't know'
123 answered 'No'
98 answers were blank.

These answers are selected from a drop down list and there is no scope for free text to be entered in answer to this question

Appeal Rights

If you are not satisfied with this response you have the right to request an internal review by responding in writing to one of the addresses below within two months of the date of this response.

data.access@justice.gsi.gov.uk

Data Access and Compliance Unit, Ministry of Justice, 10.38, 102 Petty France, London, SW1H 9AJ

You do have the right to ask the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) to investigate any aspect of your complaint. However, please note that the ICO is likely to expect internal complaints procedures to have been exhausted before beginning their investigation.

Yours sincerely

Matt Fitzgibbon
Digital and Change (HMPPS)
MOJ Digital and Technology

Appendix G Jackie McCartney's Redacted files



Appendix H Care in the Time of Covid Research Project.

Example of a diary prompt, ‘What does Home mean to you?’

Before COVID-19 I would have stated that my quaint, cosy 1 bedroom apartment in Nottingham was my home...Then COVID happened. Unfortunately, when the quarantine was announced I was out of the England. Trains stopped running to where I was. With no transport I was unable to get home till train services returned. Leading me to spend 87 days in a cottage...I was far away from ‘home.’ My comfort zone snatched from me. I wasn’t alone, my partner and one of his work collages were there also...It wasn’t easy and many tears fell, but I accepted his love and fell deeper in love with him.

So today Thursday the 18th of June 2020, 21:19, if a stranger in the street were to ask me “what is your definition of home?”, my response would be him. There is no Margret Thatcher endorsed help to buy home, mansion, farm or ranch that could replicate the sense of home I get when I am in his presents. He is my home. Wherever we are is our home. I hope one day we will settle and adopt. Then that home, (preferably an East Village apartment in NYC), will become our family home. For those who only read the abstract and conclusions of articles, this is for you. This is my story of love. Nottingham is my literal home, (till uni ends). But my partner is my spiritual home and the love of my life.

CARE in the time of COVID



Would you like to share your experiences of COVID-19?

If you have experience of being in care in the UK and are over the age of 18, send us a diary entry:

- Written (200 to 600 words), audio or video (3 to 5 minutes)
- Music, a song, poetry or spoken word you have written
- Art you have created (please accompany this by a short explanation)

The #CareConvos team will provide weekly prompts inspired by historical diaries.

A selection of diary entries will be published on social media.

We are inviting people to complete a short survey about their mental health status and coping strategies. You will not be asked about your care experience.

All those who complete the survey and submit a diary entry will receive a £15 voucher.

To submit a diary entry this week, tell us about one of the following:

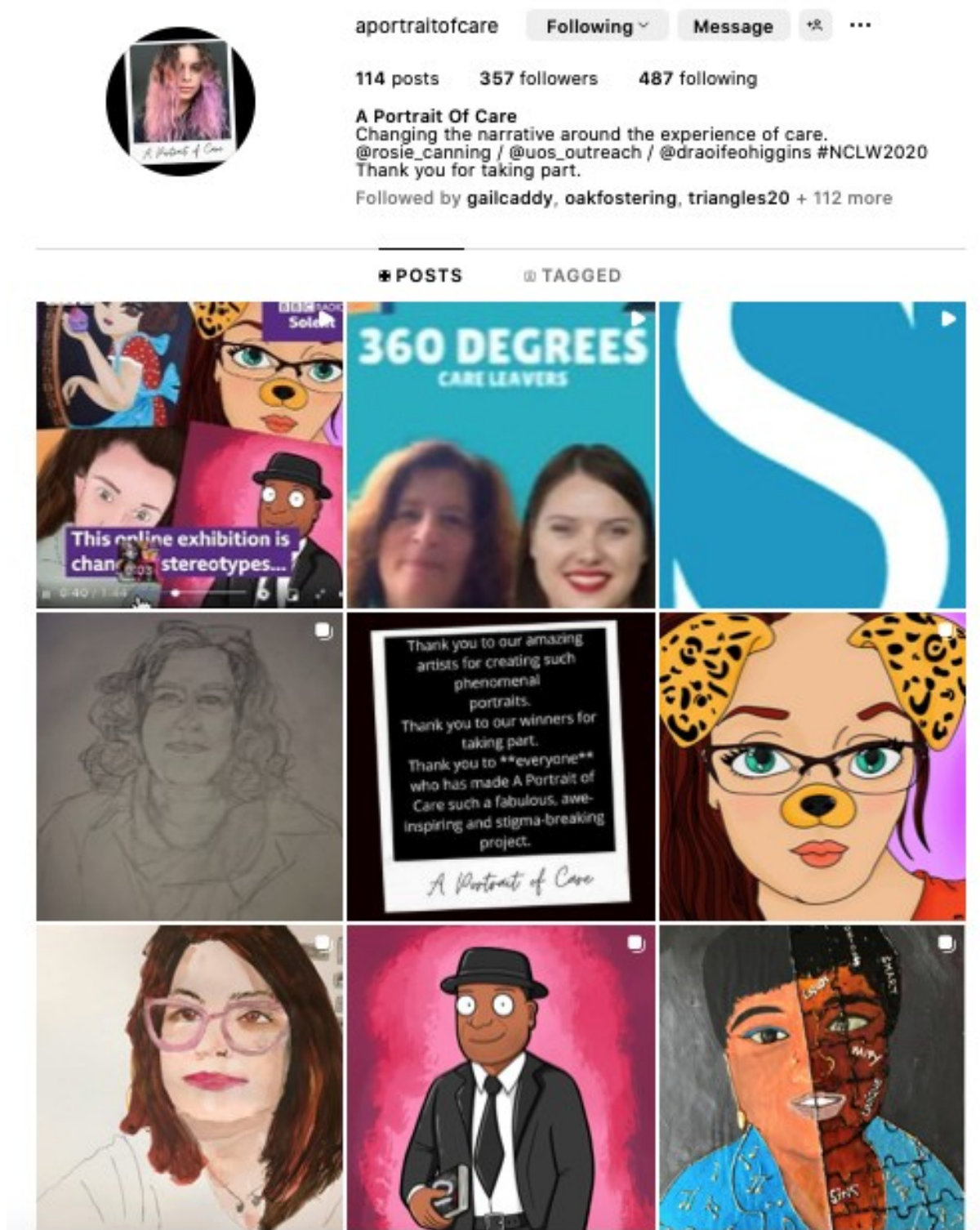
- Tell us about your day to day experiences of COVID-19.
- How do you feel about 2021?
- What difference has Covid-19 made to your education?
- How have your feelings changed between the start of lockdown and now?

You can submit multiple entries, but vouchers are only available for two entries per month.

To take part or find out more:

- Twitter page (@CareandCOVID);
- Instagram (@careinthetimeofcovid); or
- Contact Aoife by email: aoife.ohiggins@magd.ox.ac.uk.

Appendix I A Portrait of Care Instagram page

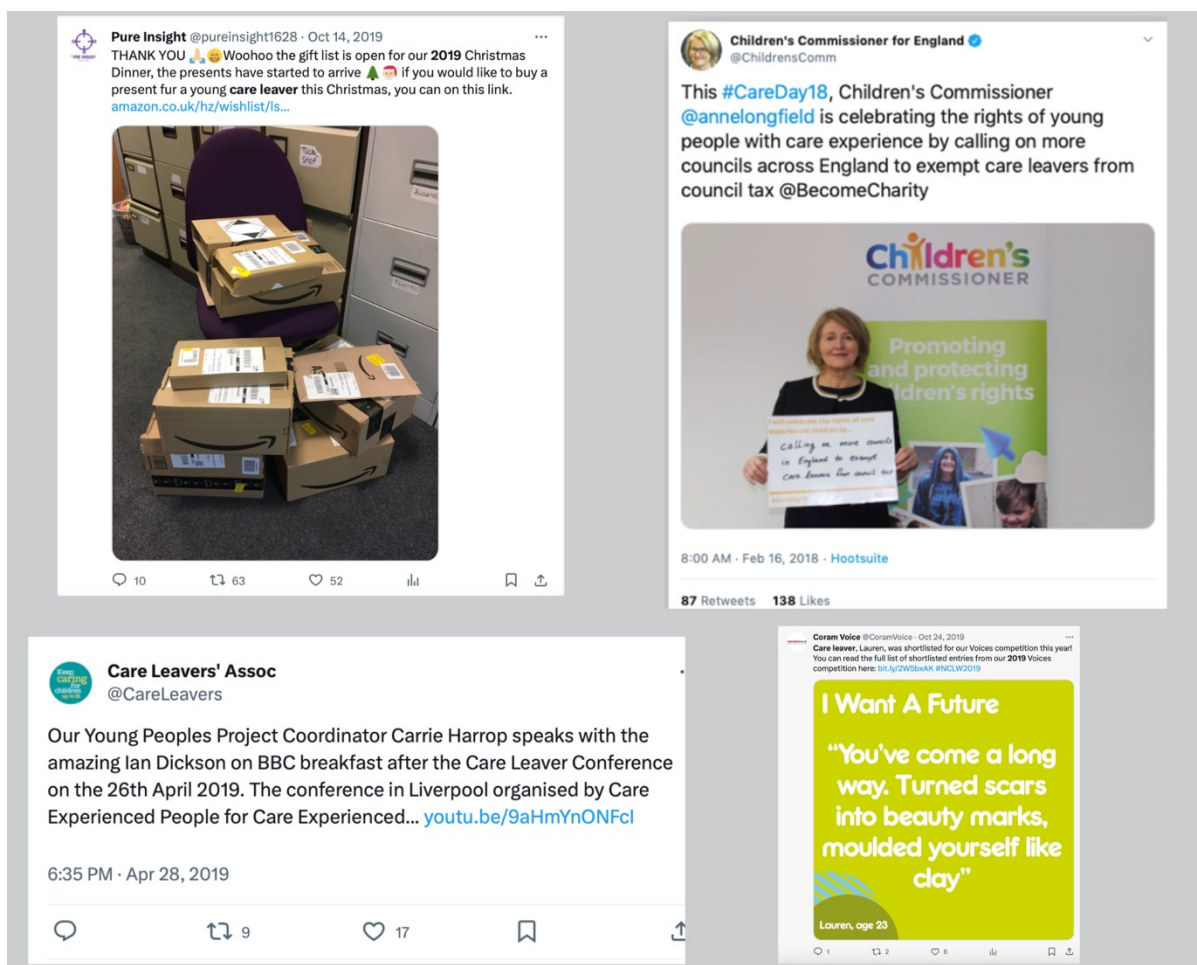


‘A Portrait Of Care (@aportraitofcare) • Instagram Photos and Videos.’
<<https://www.instagram.com/aportraitofcare/>> [Accessed 31 July 2022]

Following on from this, during National Care Leavers Week October in 2023, the University of Southampton Widening Participation department and myself launched a live exhibition at the John Hansard Gallery.



Appendix J Examples of activism on Social Media



Appendix K Projects, Conferences, Articles and Chapters 2015-2024

Projects:

- Foundling Museum currently working on an exhibit about an amazing foundling who wrote about Loss, Stigma and Shame and was published at the turn of the 20th Century.
- Care-experience & Culture, a digital archive, the first of its kind that features care-experienced literature, spoken word, academic material, sport and Film/TV with initial funding from The Welland Trust.
- Conversations for care was a knowledge exchange project set up to engage people in the care community through #CareConvos, monthly Twitter chats and outreach activities at the University of Oxford.
- Care in the time of Covid was a project that explored the day to day lives of care-experienced adults in the UK during COVID-19. We wanted to know how the care community was coping and what helps them. We also wanted to record their experiences in history.
- Dr. Delyth Edwards and I developed questions inspired by data from a care experienced study, to direct informal educators in museums, heritage, and science communication.
- A Portrait of Care was a collaboration with University of Southampton, Widening Participation department and Dr Aoife O'Higgins. It was an online exhibition via Instagram using self-portraiture to combat the negative stereotypes people have about children in care.
- Art Exhibition at Care-experienced Conference board member and curator with Yusuf McCormack (1963-2021) and Rod Kippen. Photography, painting, sculpture, mixed media, poetry, written work and other mediums were exhibited at the Care-experienced Conference 2019.
- Your Life Your Story 2017 & 2018 organised a writing event inviting writers and artists to run workshops which took place during Care Leavers Week.
- Every Child Leaving Care Matters set up the social media campaign and petition.
- Friern Barnet Library set up social media campaign, supporting community/occupiers to re-open library.

Conferences/Talks:

- A Portrait of Care. John Hansard Gallery, University of Southampton. 15 November 2023
- Qualitative methods in studies of identities and attachment: mothers and children's perspectives. Department of Education, University of Oxford. 31 October 2023 'Voices from the silent cradles. Life histories of Romania's looked after children' by Mariela Neagu.
- London Foundling Hospital History: An Online Conference. 23-24 June 2023 – 'What Hannah Did Next.'
- Keynote Virtual School Cheshire West & Chester Council: *Books, Reading and Libraries*. 16 March 2023
- Compassion and Care – Emotions and Experience in the Care of Children through History. The John Rylands Research Institute and Library, University of Manchester, Deansgate, M13 9PP. 23-24 March 2023 – 'The Home.'
- Storytelling: Intangible Inheritances Oxford Brookes University, 20-21 June 2022 – 'Inheritance and Care-experience.'
- Care-experience & Culture Book Club – Memoir & Autobiography

- Podcast – Trauma, Resonance, Resilience Feb 2021. Dee Michell and Rosie Canning join Lisa Cherry to talk about a new Digital Archive called Care-experience and Culture.
- Interview during National Care Leavers Week Oct 2020 about Portrait of Care with University of Southampton, Media Department.
- Podcast – with Emily Harrison, University of Southampton 360 Degrees about NCLW Oct 2020.
- Interview with BBC Radio Solent Oct 2020 about A Portrait of Care.
- Oxford Children’s Rights Network, Nov 2019, Bonavero Institute of Human Rights, University of Oxford – ‘Pursuing Recognition for Care-experience People: Lessons from the Care-Experienced Conference 2019’
- The Adoption and Fostering Podcast, Oct 2019. Episode 74 – The Care-experienced Conference.
- Care-experience Conference, April 2019, Liverpool Hope University – ‘PhD Journey -Creativity and Serendipity’ and PhD Poster ‘Hiraeth.’
- English: Shared Futures, July 2017, Newcastle University – ‘Shared Responsibility: Auto/Biography and the Ethics of Representation.’
- Tenth Annual GradNet Conference: “Myth vs. Reality”, March 2017, University of Southampton – ‘The Danger of the Single Story.’
- Creativity and Serendipity, January 2017, University of Southampton – ‘From Pip to Potter to Southampton.’
- Handle with Therapeutic Care, October 2016, The Consortium for Therapeutic Communities and The Care Leavers Foundation – ‘Care Leavers in Fiction.’
- BSA Auto/Biography, The Presentation of the Self, July 2016, Wolfson College, Oxford – ‘Orphans and Care Leavers in Fiction.’
- Agency – Creating Empowerment through therapeutic childcare and education, November 2015, Glyndŵr University – ‘The impact of living in care on the construction of coherent narratives of identity and how this is represented in contemporary fiction.’
- Flying on the Ground, New Beginnings Conference, October 2014, Brathay Trust – ‘Hiraeth – Finding a Fictional Home.’

Articles/chapters:

- Article: Taylor, J., Pooley, S., Canning, R., O’Higgins, A., Bowes L., (2023). “The perceived impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the mental health of care-experienced people”, Manuscript in preparation.
- A Portrait of Care: People who grew up in care retell their stories through art in Southampton
- Chapter: ‘The Pink Cat: An exploration of the ways Care-experienced People Navigate Inheritance.’ forthcoming in *Inheritance Matters: Kinship, Property, Law* (Hart Bloomsbury; 21 Sep 2023)
- ‘Rosie Canning & Dee Michell: In Conversation.’ [*Fostering Families Magazine*](#) Summer Issue: 2023.
- Children’s Commissioner for England. A digital archive of care-experienced people in fiction, on screen and in real life
- Chapter ‘The Stories in my Story’ published in *Brightness of Stars: Stories from Care-experienced Adults to Inspire Change* – (Lisa Cherry, Routledge; 3rd edition 2022)
- A Portrait of Care: Combating the negative stereotypes people have about children in care
- A Portrait of Care: Exhibition breaks down stereotypes and stigma of being in care.

Appendix K

- Care Convo: A new online project engages the care community on a range of topics
- The Care-experience Conference. Write up from a talk at the Oxford Children's Rights Network at the Bonavero Institute of Human Rights
- Your Life, Your Story: *The Therapeutic Care Journal*
- Diverse Author Day on Twitter: Words of Colour
- Chapter 'Like a Duck to Water' published in Steering the Mothership – (Ed. Lisa Cherry) Spring Publishing, 2014
- Various articles published for Every Child Leaving Care Matters
- Friern Barnet Library: Reopened by the Community *Big Issue*
- Numerous articles published in *The Greenacre Times*, a small community magazine.
- A good day cycling: Mass Observation Communities Online

Appendix L Synopsis: *Hiraeth*

Prologue 1958:

A young woman walks to the summit of Snowdon and gives birth to a daughter inside the café just as the clocks go forward.

Autumn 1974:

Sixteen-year-old, **Marianne Thomas** is packing, ready to leave the children's home where she has lived for the past eight years. **Marianne** paints postcards and gives them to people instead of birthday or Christmas cards. She once posted a card to her mother: *Mrs M for Mother, Second star to the right, The Universe.*

Rob Housefather (married to **Rachel**), and **Jimmy**, **Marianne's** boyfriend help her move to a house in Muswell Hill Broadway, where she will be living in an attic room in part exchange for babysitting duties. The day she moves out of the children's home, the London Hilton is bombed by the IRA.

Jimmy is her first boyfriend, but once she moves, he rarely visits. **Marianne** reads horror stories until the early hours and oversleeps. As the weeks pass, she gets behind with the rent and is given a warning at work about her lateness. Things climax; **Marianne** loses her job, her boyfriend and her home.

She is relieved when **Helen**, her best friend invites her live at her house. **Helen** should have been on the train that crashed at Moorgate. **Marianne** spends a frantic morning trying to get hold of her. The young girls go on holiday and fall out. When a gold heart necklace goes missing, the family stop talking to **Marianne**. Another friend, **Geraldine** invites Marianne to stay in a flat-share.

They arrange a huge party, and **Marianne** meets **Karl** who is in the army. She becomes pregnant and **Karl** disappears. The landlord kicks them out of the flat and **Marianne** stays with **Geraldine's** mum who helps her arrange an abortion.

Finding herself homeless, **Marianne** takes a job as a Mothers Help in Hampstead. When the **Hausers** go away for the summer, she throws a party. The following day, a neighbour mentions there has been a burglary. **Wolfgang**, a house-guest makes passes at **Marianne**. She discovers she hates housework, opera music and **Wolfgang**.

She heads back to Muswell Hill and another bedsit. Two doors away **Greg**, helps carry her bags. She lands an interesting job designing pages for *Prestel*, a trial for an interactive videotext system. **Norah**, the landlady holds birthday breakfasts and says it is the house of happy endings. **Marianne** gets to know the other occupants and forms a relationship with **Xana**, another young girl in the house. **Marianne** occasionally meets up with her Social Worker and they go to the Wimpy Bar in Muswell Hill Broadway.

At the new job, **Marianne** gets to know **Phil** who plays in a band. He introduces **Marianne** to Pub Rock and takes her to see the Sex Pistols' first gig at St Martin's School of Art. **Marianne** and **Phil** get sick from his mother's cooking. **Phil** is always busy either with the band or helping friends. When a bomb goes off in the pub where **Phil** is playing, **Marianne** distraught rushes to his house. When he finally turns up in the morning, he is angry. Admits he wasn't at the gig and rushes off to see if his mates are okay. Later that evening he accuses **Marianne** of having an affair.

At Christmas, **Marianne** is on her own. **Phil** has gone up north to visit family. She spends time with **Greg**, who invites her to meet his grandmother. **Eleanor** is an artist. Eleanor offers to do a painting of **Marianne**.

The Landlady organises a Christmas breakfast. **Marianne** joins **Mr Poste** for lunch and they have sardines on toast. She gives him a Christmas postcard. He gives her one of his wife's paintings.

Phil returns home and they go out for New Year's Eve. **Marianne** dresses like a punk.

In the New Year, Mr Poste takes **Marianne** to the National Gallery.

Phil and **Marianne** argue. She thinks she is pregnant. **Phil** encourages her to have an abortion.

A phone call from the children's home reveals **Rob** has been arrested for sexually abusing one of the boys. **Marianne**'s world collapses. One of the boys from the home sees **Marianne** on the Broadway and tells her he was abused by **Rob**.

After falling out with **Phil**, **Marianne** is making her way home in the early hours. She senses someone following her. It is Greg, who invites her back to his trendy flat. While in the toilet her period starts, and she realises the relationship with **Phil** is over.

She has a last meeting with her social worker and is allowed to read her files where she discovers her mother, unable to get over giving up Aneira-**Marianne** for adoption, killed herself. There is a beautiful handmade journal dedicated to **Marianne**; she 'steals' it from her files.

Just after her 18th birthday, **Marianne** travels to Wales retracing her mother's steps to the top of Snowdon. She paints postcards and sends them to the people in Wellfield and Greg. Whilst walking up Snowdon, she meets Brown Owl and discovers she too had a baby adopted. They make a pact to meet again. **Marianne** takes time alone and realises that she and her mother are connected through language and societies stigma. She also realises she has inherited her mother's artistic talent and decides to go to art college.

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