

Words in Deep Blue by Cath Crowley



<https://www.amazon.com/Words-Deep-Blue-Cath-Crowley/dp/1101937645>

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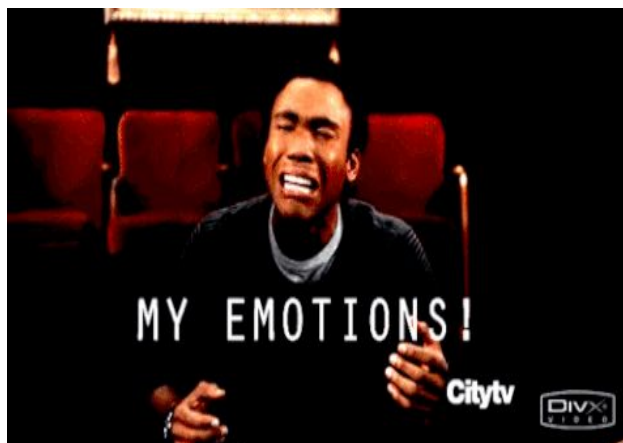
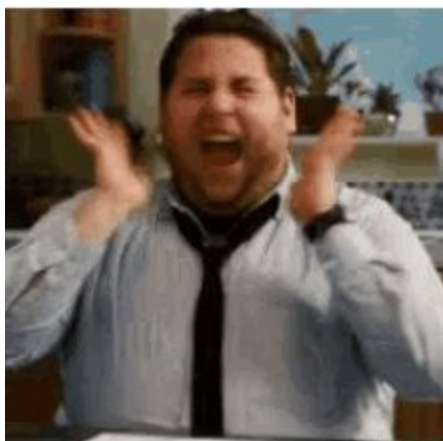
Cath Crowley

- <https://www.cathcrowleyauthor.com/about-1/>
- Young Adult fiction author from Melbourne, Australia who has been writing YA fiction since 2004
- Two-time winner of The Prime Minister's Literary Award, the CBCA Book of the Year 2018, and many, *many* more
- Teacher who has her own personal program of workshop classes called Word House for aspiring authors

Synopsis

Rachel has had a crush on her best friend Henry for what seems like forever. Before she moves away, she decides to leave him a confession letter inside of a book from his family's secondhand bookstore-- which Henry never responds to (ouch). When Rachel moves back years later, she is a completely different person, now consumed by grief due to the recent death of her brother, Cal. The two are paired together once again when Rachel is forced into a job at Henry's secondhand bookstore by her aunt, who is concerned for Rachel's wellbeing and future. Henry is different now, too, since his family is thinking of selling the bookshop and his girlfriend has dumped him. Rachel and Henry discover comfort in one another, while the weight of Rachel's unread and unacknowledged love letter begins to reveal itself bit by bit and mark the magic it was meant to weave.

Fun Fact This is genuinely how I felt while reading the book:



<https://media.giphy.com/media/vaPZEuVEEPHxK/giphy.gif>

<https://media.giphy.com/media/rzEC58zsf8Pu/giphy.gif>

Quotes

- “What have I lost? What have *I* lost? Only everything, you [Henry] complete moron. I’ve lost more than you, that’s for absolutely sure. I’ve lost Cal; I’ve lost the old Mum, the old me. I’ve lost an entire ocean. That’s 71 percent of the earth, that’s 99 percent of the biosphere” (116).
 - Significance: This quote emphasizes the severely traumatic wounds Rachel has received since Cal died. Cal’s death is the equivalent of Rachel’s entire world crumbling. She is no longer herself, and she no longer finds joy in the ocean or her aspirations in life. She has become dry, inside and out, much like her reference to Cal’s death feeling like she has lost “an entire ocean.”
- ““Dear Henry, ...words don’t stop us from dying. They don’t give us the dead back. Death is the biggest in the big scheme of things.’ ‘Dear Rachel, I think you’ve got your schemes the wrong way around. Life is the big scheme; death is the little one at the end”” (151).
 - Significance: This particular set of letter exchanges between Rachel and Henry highlights the dynamic of their friendship. Henry does not give up on Rachel, even if she has given up on herself and her faith in the universe. Henry does his best to pull Rachel out of her withdrawn and depressed state, while still respecting her right to grieve. The two clearly rely on one another for comfort, which helps strengthen their friendship and their eventual romance.
- “Words matter, in fact. ... If they were pointless, then they couldn’t start revolutions and they wouldn’t change history. If they were just words, we wouldn’t write songs or listen to them. We wouldn’t beg to be read to as kids. ...stories wouldn’t have been around since before we could write. We wouldn’t have learned to write. ...people wouldn’t fall in love because of them, feel bad because of them, ache because of them, and stop aching because of them” (210).
 - Significance: Henry hits a point that resonates with not only Rachel, but with anyone who doubts the power of words and the impact words

can hold on others. People rely on words to communicate, to organize and make lists, to express themselves, to establish rules, etc. Without words, the world would not be able to continue thriving, because the world is filled with people, and what connects everyone around the world is their stories.

Why Teens Should Read This

- The story touches upon issues that are not addressed enough/are difficult to acknowledge, such as death, fear of the future and the pressures teens experience from this fear. This can help young adults feel reassured.
 - Because it emphasizes the importance and the power of reading and words, how much words can impact someone's life, and how important it is to communicate what we wish to say to others clearly.
 - Because the novel is not told from just Rachel's or just Henry's perspective, readers can gain the understanding of how important it is to take into consideration both sides of a story
 - Encourages the importance of reading and how books are a gateway to self-discovery, acceptance, and knowledge
 - The love story presented does not unravel in a typical way, but rather through a realistic lens of many bumps and many character faults-- showing young adults that relationships and friendships require effort from both parties
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Text Complexity

- *Qualitative*

- Lexile: Ages 14-18. HL730L.
- ATOS: 4.3. Average Vocabulary Level: 2.4
- *Quantitative*
 - This novel resonated strongly with Exeter Quality #7: Themes that allow the possibility of emotional and intellectual growth through engagement with personal issues.
 - Rachel must endure a dilemma that stems beyond what a regular teenager may go through, in this case the death of her brother, and this central theme of death and acceptance can greatly help other young adults learn how to deal with such heavy issues.
- *Reader and Task*
 - Young readers or students can use this book to reflect upon their own actions when dealing with difficult issues in their lives, such as death or strained friendships. They can learn how to personally deal with such heavy issues, as well as how to guide or comfort their own peers or family members who may go through similar situations.

Adolescents in the Search for Meaning: Tapping the Powerful Resource of Story

- Chapter 4: Books About Real-Life Experiences (Making Life Choices, Facing Violence or Abuse, and Living through Family and Relationship Issues)
 - Throughout the novel, readers can see not only how Rachel grieves, but also her family members such as her Mum and her Aunt, and her own friends, as well
 - Rachel must learn to accept Cal's death, which is a difficult choice for anyone to make, especially at such a young age

- Henry and Rachel's relationship, both platonically and romantically, emphasize the importance of communication and how a lack of communication can sever or rekindle two people