

Escape. Connect. Relate.

Bereavement, Grief & Loss

Bereavement is a period of sadness and loneliness that we experience from a loss. Typically, this loss is the death of a loved one; however, the loss can be due to other factors. It is a normal response for us to be sad or have difficulty adjusting when we lose someone.

Grief and mourning are both part of the bereavement process. Grief refers to our emotional response to loss. For example, someone may feel angry, sad or even guilty as a response to a parent's death. Grief can also lead to physical problems so as a consequence people can lose sleep, lose their appetite and end up being physically ill.





ECR Suggested Reads

Many of our suggested reads are available from your school library and from [Edinburgh Libraries](#). Some books may contain triggering or upsetting content. Please use the age ratings as guidance and ask your school librarian for help. Books are listed in alphabetical order by author's surname.



The House with Chicken Legs, by Sophie Anderson

Marinka dreams of a normal life, but her house has chicken legs and moves on without warning. For Marinka's grandmother is Baba Yaga, who guides spirits between this world and the next. Marinka longs to change her destiny and sets out to break free from her grandmother's footsteps, but her house has other ideas.

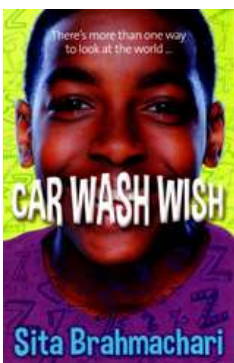
S1+



When Shadows Fall, by Sita Brahmachari

Kai, Orla and Zak grew up together. Laughter and friendship bind them together until Kai's family suffers a huge loss. Trying to cope with his own grief, while watching his family fall apart, Kai is drawn into a dangerous crowd. Excluded from school, it seems his path is set. Orla, Zak and new classmate Om are determined to help him. But are they too late?

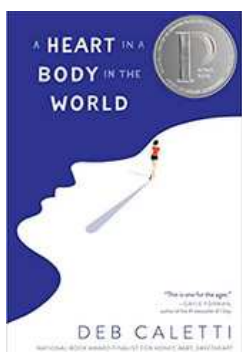
S3+, Loss of an infant



Car Wash Wish, by Sita Brahmachari

Hudson is a skilled reader of books, but not so much with people. Mum's new bloke Louis is keen to help, and in turn Hudson passes on what he learns to future sibling Zed (for zygote). This all comes in useful at granddad's funeral as Hudson deals with grief, his dad's feelings of guilt and his own.

S1+, Dyslexia Friendly



A Heart in a Body in the World, by Deb Caletti

When everything has been taken from you, what else is there to do but run? So that's what Annabelle does, but no matter how hard she tries, she can't outrun the tragedy from the past year. Annabelle becomes a reluctant activist as people connect her journey to the trauma from her past. Through many distractions, she just keeps running. Can she finally face what lies behind her and what is to come.

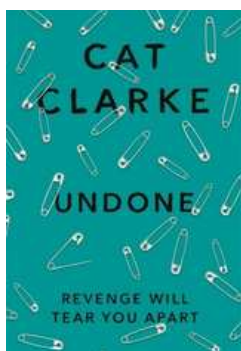
S3+



Out of the Blue, by Sophie Cameron

When angels start falling from the sky, it seems like the world is ending. As the world goes wild for angels, Jaya's father uproots the family intent on catching one alive. Jaya can't stand this obsession and, still reeling from her mother's recent death, she's determined to stay out of it. Then something happens: an angel lands right at Jaya's feet - and it's alive.

S1+

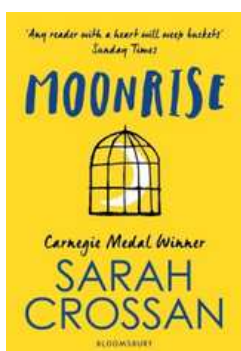


Undone, by Cat Clarke

Jem is in love with her best friend. It doesn't matter that Kai is gay, or that he'll never look at her the way she looks at him. Jem is okay with that. But when Kai is outed online, he does the unthinkable and commits suicide.

Before he died, Kai left her twelve letters—one for each month of the year—and those letters are all Jem has left. That, and revenge.

S3+, Loss of a Friend



Moonrise by Sarah Crossan

Seventeen year old Joe hasn't seen his brother in ten years. Ed didn't walk out on the family, not exactly. It's something more brutal. Ed's locked up, on death row. His execution date has been set. Joe is determined to spend those last weeks with his brother. This poignant novel asks big questions: What value do you place on life? What can you forgive? And just how do you say goodbye.

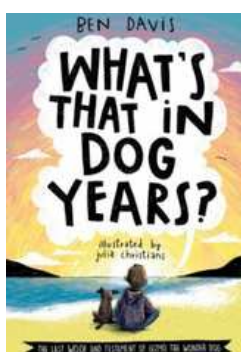
S3+ Loss of a Sibling, Verse Novel



One, by Sarah Crossan

Grace and Tippi are conjoined twins, defying the odds of survival for sixteen years. They would never imagine being apart. For them, that would be the real tragedy. But something is happening to them. Something they hoped would never happen. How long can they hide from the truth—how long before they must face the most impossible choice of their lives.

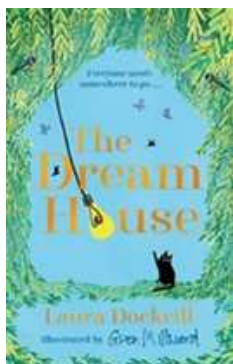
S3+, Loss of a Twin, Verse Novel



What's That in Dog Years, by Ben Davis

Gizmo has been my best friend since the day I was born - he's always been around. But now they're telling me he might not always be around which completely sucks. I'm determined that me and Gizmo will have lots more fun and adventures before he goes. Gizmo's bucket list is up and running.

S1+, Loss of a Pet



The Dream House by Laura Dockrill

Under the willow tree, waits the Dream House: Rex's special place to be free to dream, to play, to think, to be. A lot has changed since Rex last set foot inside. Rex has lost his dad and lost his happiness and even finds it hard to draw like he used to. What does Rex find when he finally steps into the Dream House?

S1+, Loss of a Parent



The List of Real Things by Sarah Moore Fitzgerald

A story about love, loss and believing in the magic of the imagination. Grace knows the difference between what's real and the strange ideas that float around in her little sister's mind. So when grief strikes again, Grace is determined not to let her sister's outlandish imagination spiral out of control. But the line between truth and fantasy is more complicated than it seems.

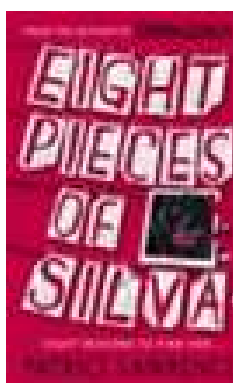
S1+, Loss of a Parent



The Afterwards, by A.F. Harrold

Ember and Ness are best friends. Ember can't imagine what life would be without Ness. Until Ness dies. Ember feels completely empty. How can this even be real? Then Ember finds a way into the afterworld. She knows there must be a way to bring Ness back, so she decides to find it. But the afterworld holds its own dangers. How far will Ember go to make things the way they were.

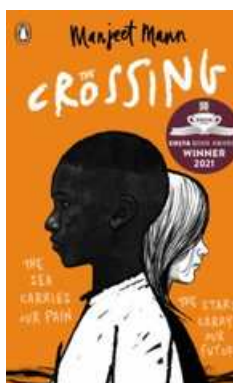
S1+, Loss of a Sibling



Eight Pieces of Silva, by Patrice Lawrence

Becks and Silva live under the same roof, but are so unlike. Becks likes superhero movies, girls and chatting. Silva likes her privacy; her bedroom is her oasis and none of her family are allowed inside. Then Silva goes missing and when Becks enters Silva's room finds 8 clues about Silva's secret life. Can Becks piece the jigsaw together and find her, before it's too late?

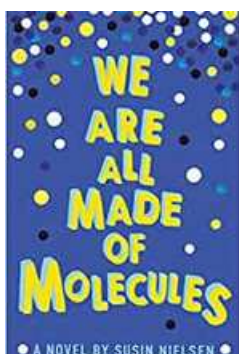
S1+, Loss of a Parent



The Crossing, by Manjeet Mann

Natalie's world is falling apart. She's just lost her mum and her brother marches the streets of Dover full of hate and anger. Sammy has fled his home and family in Eritrea for the chance of a new life in Europe. Every step he takes on his journey is a step into an unknown and unwelcoming future. A twist of fate brings them together and gives them both hope. But is hope enough to mend a broken world?

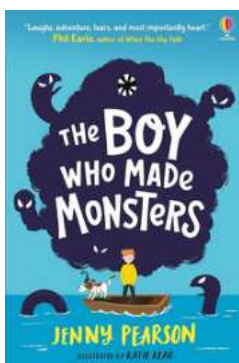
S1+, Loss of a Parent, Verse novel



We Are All Made of Molecules, by Susin Nielsen

Stewart is academically brilliant but socially clueless. Ashley is the undisputed “It” girl in her class, but her grades stink. Their worlds collide when Stewart and his dad move in with Ashley and her mom. Stewart is trying to be happy about it, but Ashley is horrified. They are complete opposites. And yet, they have one thing in common: they—like everyone else—are made of molecules.

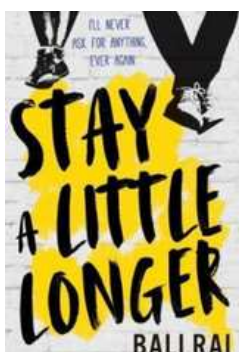
S1+



The Boy Who Made Monsters, by Jenny Pearson

Benji believes in things other people think are impossible, like that he and his brother will be happy living with their uncle, and that the Loch Lochy monster is real, and that his parents will come home one day. So when he finds out that Uncle Hamish's holiday business is struggling, together with his new friends, Murdy and Mr Dog, he sets off to prove that the Loch Lochy monster exists, and bring tourists flooding in. But Benji might have to confront different monsters to the one he expects.

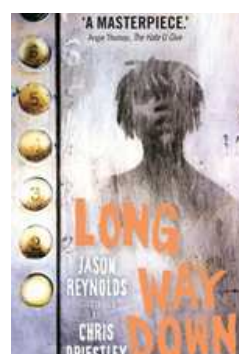
S1+



Stay a Little Longer, by Bali Rai

Aman's dad is gone, leaving her feeling lost and alone. She struggles to talk about it. When a lovely man called Gurnam moves in to her street and saves Aman from some local bullies, he and Aman quickly become friends, perhaps even like family. But Gurnam has his own sadness. One that's far bigger than Aman can understand, and it's tearing his life apart.

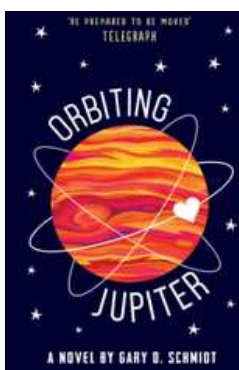
S3+, Dyslexia Friendly



Long Way Down, by Jason Reynolds

An ode to Put the Damn Guns Down, this is New York Times bestseller Jason Reynolds's fiercely stunning novel that takes place in sixty potent seconds—the time it takes a kid to decide whether or not he's going to murder the guy who killed his brother.

S3+, Loss of a Sibling, Verse Novel



Orbiting Jupiter, by Gary D Schmitt

When Jack meets his new foster brother, he already knows three things about him: Joseph almost killed a teacher, He was incarcerated at a place called Stone Mountain. He has a daughter. Her name is Jupiter. And he has never seen her.

What Jack doesn't know, at first, is how desperate Joseph is to find his baby girl. Or how urgently Jack will want to help.

S1+, Loss of a Girlfriend



The Million Pieces of Neena Gill, by Emma Smith-Barton

Neena's always been a good girl. But ever since her brother Akash left her, she's been slowly falling apart - and uncovering a new version of herself who is freer, but altogether more dangerous. As her behaviour spirals more and more out of control, Neena's grip on her sanity begins to weaken too. When her parents announce life-changing bombshells, she finally reaches breaking point.

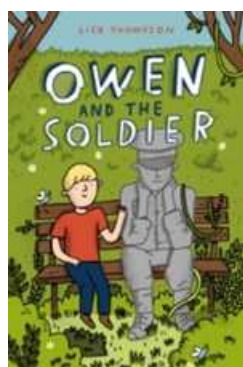
S3+, Loss of a Sibling



Scars Like Wings, by Erin Stewart

Ava Lee has lost everything there is to lose: A year after the fire that destroyed her world, her aunt and uncle have decided she should go back to high school. Be "normal" again. When Ava meets a fellow survivor named Piper, she begins to feel like maybe she doesn't have to face the nightmare alone. Yet Piper is fighting her own battle, and soon Ava must decide if she's going to fade back into her scars . . . or let the people by her side help her fly.

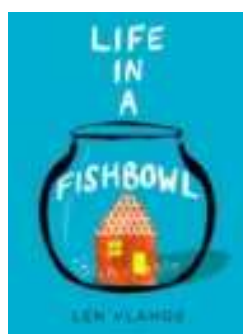
S1+, loss of Family



Owen and the soldier, by Lisa Thompson

A crumbling stone soldier sits on a bench in the park. Only Owen understands how important he is. At home, Owen and his mum are struggling and there's nobody he can talk to. Hidden away in the park, Owen feels free to be himself. When the war-weary soldier is listening, his worries slip away. But nobody else cares about the soldier, and the council want to tear him down. Owen's the only one who can save him, but can he find the courage to speak up?

S1+, Dyslexia Friendly



Life in a Fishbowl, by Len Vlahos

Jackie's life was normal. Until her dad received a terminal cancer diagnosis. Then he did what anyone faced with mountains of medical bills and a family to support would do: he sold his life to the highest bidder - a TV station. Suddenly everyone wants a piece of Jackie's family. Jackie's life spirals out of control just as her dad's starts to run out, while everyone is tuning in to watch her family fall apart ...

S1+, Terminal illness of a Parent



The Boy Who Sailed the Ocean in an Armchair, by Lara Williamson

All Becket wants is for his family to be whole again. But standing in his way are two things: 1) his dad, his brother and him seem to have run away from home in the middle of the night and 2) Becket's mum died before he got the chance to say goodbye to her. Arming himself with an armchair of stories, a snail named Brian and 1000 paper cranes, Becket ploughs on, determined to make his wish come true.

S1+



Information Books



You Will Be Okay: find strength, stay hopeful and get to grips with grief, by Julie Stokes

The death of a parent, sibling or friend is one of the most traumatic experiences for a young person and it can be hard to know how to talk to them about it. In this guide readers will find stories of other people who have been through grief, will learn how to flex their 'grief muscles' and work through practical exercises, providing readers helpful ways to manage their grief so they can begin to move forward with life.

S1+

Picture Books and Graphic Novels



Ocean Meets Sky, by Eric and Terry Fan

Finn lives by the sea and the sea lives by him. Every time he looks out his window it's a constant reminder of the stories his grandfather told him about the place where the ocean meets the sky. Finn's grandfather is gone now but Finn knows the perfect way to honor him. He'll build his own ship and sail out to find this magical place himself.

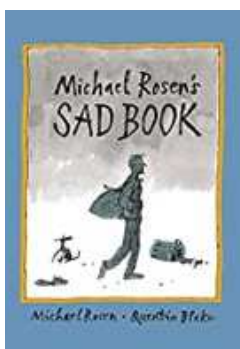
Junior, Loss of a Grandparent, Picture Book



Mum's Jumper, by Jayde Perkin

If mum has gone, how do you carry on? Missing her feels like a dark cloud that follows you around, or like swimming to a shore that never comes nearer. But memories are like a jumper that you can cuddle and wear. And Mum's Jumper might be a way to keep her close. A simple, heartfelt and ultimately uplifting book for anyone coping with loss.

Junior, Loss of a Parent, Picture Book



Michael Rosen's Sad Book, by Michael Rosen

Sad things happen to everyone, and sometimes people feel sad for no reason at all. What makes Michael Rosen sad is thinking about his son, Eddie, who died suddenly at the age of eighteen. In this book the author writes about his sadness, how it affects him, and some of the things he does to cope with it.

S1+, Loss of a child, Picture Book



Resources

Disclaimer: the ECR team does not take credit for these links, which are all offered and maintained by external providers

Child Bereavement UK supports and educates professionals when a baby or child of any age dies or is dying, or when a child is facing bereavement

www.childbereavementuk.org

Cruse Bereavement Care is here to support you after the death of somebody close

<https://www.cruse.org.uk>

Hope Again- a website for young people going through a bereavement, where you can find information, read about other people's experiences, and add your own

<https://www.hopeagain.org.uk>

Richmond's Hope- Making a difference to the lives of bereaved children and young people. Hope provides support for children and young people from 4 - 18

<https://www.richmondshope.org.uk>

Winston's wish a bereavement charity that offers practical support and guidance to families and professionals and anyone concerned about a grieving child

<https://www.winstonswish.org>