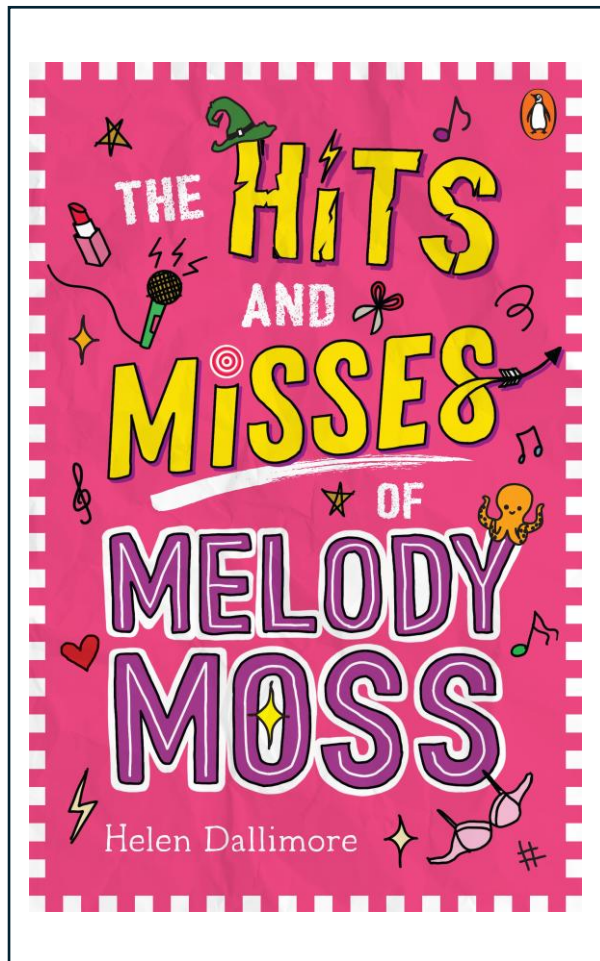




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PLOT SUMMARY

'Mum said when I turned twelve, things would start to change. I didn't think she meant EVERYTHING.'

Melody Moss is starting high school and EVERYTHING is going WRONG!

- Her BFF has forgotten the Forever bit and has found New Friends (aka The Clones).
- Her mum is taking food experimentation to a disgusting level.
- Her big sister pretends she doesn't even exist.
- Her dog farts ALL THE TIME.
- And, her new crush has pushed her firmly into the Friend Zone.

She's holding it together, but only just.

When a competition is announced to see who can write and direct the school musical, Melody JUMPS at the chance.

Will dancing octopuses (octopi?), a possibly life-threatening babysitting gig and a new friendship with a fellow musical-theatre tragic be just what Melody needs to get out of this mess?

RECOMMENDED FOR (ages 9+; years 4 to 8)

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KEY CURRICULUM AREAS

• Learning areas: English • General capabilities: Literacy; Critical and creative thinking; Ethical understanding

REASONS FOR STUDYING THIS BOOK

• Adventurous, funny new novel by Helen Dallimore. • This is a celebration of musical theatre, individuality and friendship.

THEMES

• Belonging and identity • Family and friends • Musical Theatre

PUBLICATION DETAILS

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The Hits and Misses of Melody Moss book 1

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Helen is an actor, singer, director and writer who has enjoyed a successful career in theatre, musical theatre, film and television both in Australia and in the UK. She famously originated the role of Glinda in the West End production of *Wicked* opposite Idina Menzel.

AUTHOR'S INSPIRATION

Melody Moss is not unlike the kind of girl that I was at her age. A bit awkward, a late bloomer, but despite it all a dry sense of humour and a lover of music and theatre.

Starting high school is a rite of passage and I wanted to diffuse it with lots of laughs. Melody is a comic heroine in the style of Bridget Jones or Lucille Ball, where every time she tries to fix a catastrophe, she somehow makes it worse. She also has a somewhat hubristic over-confidence, which means she has a lot further to fall, comedically.

I wanted to inject some magic-realism into the books, to give them a real sense of fun and even more potential peril. Melody's visiting 'friends' raise the stakes in terms of what could potentially go wrong for her.

I loved writing these characters, and I hope that young readers find them funny and engaging and can laugh along with all of Melody's messy situations.

Pre-reading Questions

1. Look at the cover of *The Hits and Misses of Melody Moss*. Based on the title and the illustrations, what do you think the book is about?
2. Now, read the blurb and add to your ideas about what the story might be about and the concepts it might explore. What elements capture your interest?
3. Have a go at writing a paragraph about what you think will happen in the story. Then, once you

have finished reading the book, re-read your paragraph and see if you were close. You might like to swap your answer with the person next to you and see what they thought would happen too. Which version do you like better?

Writing Style

In *The Hits and Misses of Melody Moss*, Helen Dallimore conveys Melody's story through Melody's diary entries and text messages to her friends. This narrative style helps create a more intimate and personal connection between the reader and the characters within the story. Its immersive quality also allows readers to gain better insight into the minds of characters.

Questions and activities

1. *The Hits and Misses of Melody Moss* is written as a series of diary entries. Does this writing style make you feel closer to Melody? Why / why not?

Pick a specific example where you feel like you can understand Melody's thoughts and feelings through her diary entries.
2. Why do you think the author decided to write the novel in the form of diary entries and text messages? Can you think of another book that is written in a different format?
3. Select one of the diary entries. Read through your selected entry and write down all the ways it adds something to the story. Do you get to know more about the plot? Does it show us about the character's feelings? Does it give the reader a different viewpoint into one of the character relationships?

Questions and activities

1. How does *The Hits and Misses of Melody Moss* use space and formatting to convey Melody's thoughts and feelings?
2. What are some of the key themes this book explores? Can you list some examples where these themes are displayed?



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3. *The Hits and Misses of Melody Moss* is written in the form of a diary and text messages. How does this layout help to convey Melody's individuality and internal dialogue?

KEY STUDY TOPICS

Personal Identity

Questions and activities

1. Can you quote some of the language that Melody uses to encourage individuality, either with herself or with Victor?
2. How do the people around Melody support her and encourage her to be herself?
3. Are there times when Melody's sense of identity is threatened? Can you list a couple of quotes?
4. Can you think of a similar time you have felt like Melody? What did you do?

Relationships

The Hits and Misses of Melody Moss explores a number of relationships, and how each one contributes to helping her through tough times.

Questions and activities

1. What kind of relationships are displayed in *The Hits and Misses of Melody Moss*? Can you list any characters in the book, and how they impact Melody's life?
2. How does Melody rely on her family in difficult times? What does her family say or do to put her at ease?
3. What does friendship mean to you and why is it important? List your favourite qualities about your friends. You might want to share this with them and ask them to do the same for you.

Musical Theatre

Helen Dallimore is an actress who has been cast in musical theatre productions such as Glinda in *Wicked*. Her passion for musical theatre is reflected in her writing of the character Melody.

Questions and activities

1. Melody has a passion for musical theatre, and references a number of musicals. Do you recognise any mentioned? Which ones?
2. Melody sees musical theatre characters in times of stress. Why do you think this happens for her?
3. Melody connects to her friends through music and finds meaning in her life through relating to characters in musicals. What do you connect with your friends through?

KEY QUOTES

1. 'Yeah, I noticed. Don't get me wrong, I think most people are really annoying, but I do get lonely sometimes. My big sister mostly ignores me. I was besties with Abby, but she ditched me because I talk about musicals too much. I guess I'm pretty uncool.'

'But that makes you a person of integrity,' said Victor.

'What do you mean?'

'You don't pretend to be something you're not. Most people are trying to impress.' He shrugged. 'You're just you.'
2. 'I think it would be better if we just ... gave each other a bit of space for the start of school, Melody.'

I couldn't understand what she was saying. Like, I knew what all the words meant individually, but all together, they made no sense.

This isn't happening.

'What do you mean?' I asked. 'Don't you want to be friends anymore?'

She glanced around for a second, as though she was embarrassed to even be talking to me. 'This is a



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chance to make new friends, Melody. Maybe start hanging out with some other people for a change.'

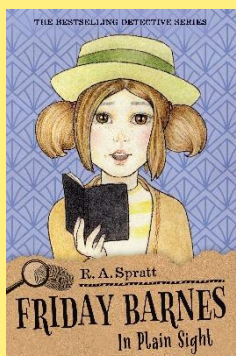
The Hits and Misses of Melody Moss explores and number of relationships, and how each one contributes to helping her through tough times.

3. 'It's true, I've been obsessed with musicals ever since I was seven, when my mum took me to see my first live theatre show *Annie*, and my entire life suddenly made sense.'



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Further reading from Penguin Random House

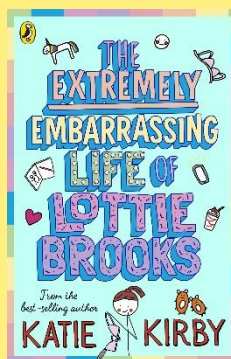


Friday Barnes 13: In Plain Sight
by R.A. Spratt

When Princess Ingrid is kidnapped, along with her fiancé, Binky Pelly, it's all over the international news. The King of Norway is distraught. The people of Norway are bewildered. And Ingrid's bodyguard is fired. So, he calls on his least favourite Interpol agent for help – Friday Barnes.

The trail soon leads them to New York City, where finding a princess is harder than finding a tiara in a haystack. Can Friday unravel the mystery of the disappearing lovebirds? And when a Manhattan rockstar's book of handwritten lyrics goes missing, it's up to Friday to restore this priceless artefact to its rightful home.

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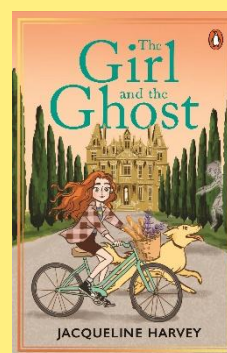
The Extremely Embarrassing Life of Lottie Brooks
by Katie Kirby

The first book in the hilarious new series for children by the bestselling creator of Hurrah For Gin.

Lottie Brooks is 11 $\frac{3}{4}$ and her life is already officially over - not only is she about to start high school without any friends or glamorous swooshy hair, she's just discovered she's too flat-chested to wear A BRA! She might as well give up now and go into hibernation with her hamsters Sir Barnaby Squeakington and Fuzzball the Third.

Lottie navigates the many perils of growing up in this fantastically funny new illustrated series for a 9-12 audience, filled with friendship, embarrassing moments and plenty of lots.

Teachers' Resources available.



The Girl and the Ghost
by Jacqueline Harvey

When almost-thirteen-year-old Josephine Eloise Thomas moves from Sydney to a chateau in the southwest of France, she expects many things – adventures, inspiration for the stories she loves to write and maybe finding out more about her French mother, who tragically died when she was a toddler. What she doesn't expect is to find a beautiful gold locket with the ghost of Louis XVII trapped inside!

After being accidentally released into the twenty-first century, the young prince proves to be annoying, strange and obviously from another time. He also believes that Josephine is not who she says she is.

Then, there's Gabriel. The grandson of the local baker – French, beautiful, an artist and definitely not a ghost.

When Josephine and Gabriel venture to the shadowy Chateau Du Lac next door to her home, the secrets become more sinister. With Louis's help, can Josephine and Gabriel discover what her neighbours are really up to and solve the mystery of Louis and the locket too?.

Teachers' Resources available.



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Order form

TITLE	AUTHOR	ISBN	SCHOOL YEAR	RRP	QTY	TOTAL
<i>The Hits and Misses of Melody Moss</i>	Helen Dallimore	9781761354175	4-8	\$16.99		
<i>Friday Barnes 13: In Plain Sight</i>	R.A. Spratt	9781761349713	5+	\$16.99		
<i>The Extremely Embarrassing Life of Lottie Brooks</i>	Katie Kirby	9780241460887	4-7	\$16.99		
<i>The Girl and the Ghost</i>	Jacqueline Harvey	9781761349409	4-8	\$16.99		
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