



The Accident Season

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Cara Morris is seventeen. She lives in Ireland with her mother, her older sister Alice, and Sam, the product of a now defunct relationship on the part of her mother. In October of every year the family experiences 'the accident season', in which every routine move seems to lead to a physical injury such as a broken bone.

Cara's school runs an unconventional operation known as the Secrets Booth. During the term pupils are invited to sit at an ancient typewriter and leave an anonymous record of some secret. At the end of term these typed secrets are assembled into an art installation. The pupil who manages this booth is named Elsie. After Cara sees Elsie just once, Elsie seems mysteriously to disappear from the school. Various questions now arise. What is the accident season? Does it have a reality? Or is it just a pattern imposed on a series of coincidental events? And what relationship does Elsie have with the Morris family? The last third of this book delivers a telling denouement. These pages make sense of the labyrinthine and amorphous passages that have preceded. Alas, the complexity and apparent disconnection of the build-up could easily deter a reader from continuing. To which genre does this book belong? Is this a thriller? Is it a psychological study? Cross-genre novels are notoriously difficult to write.

Too many books of this kind litter the early text with heavy-handed clues that make the denouement all too predictable. This book goes to the opposite extreme. Its denouement is unexpected, stunningly contrived and genuinely moving. But how many readers will struggle through to reach it?

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