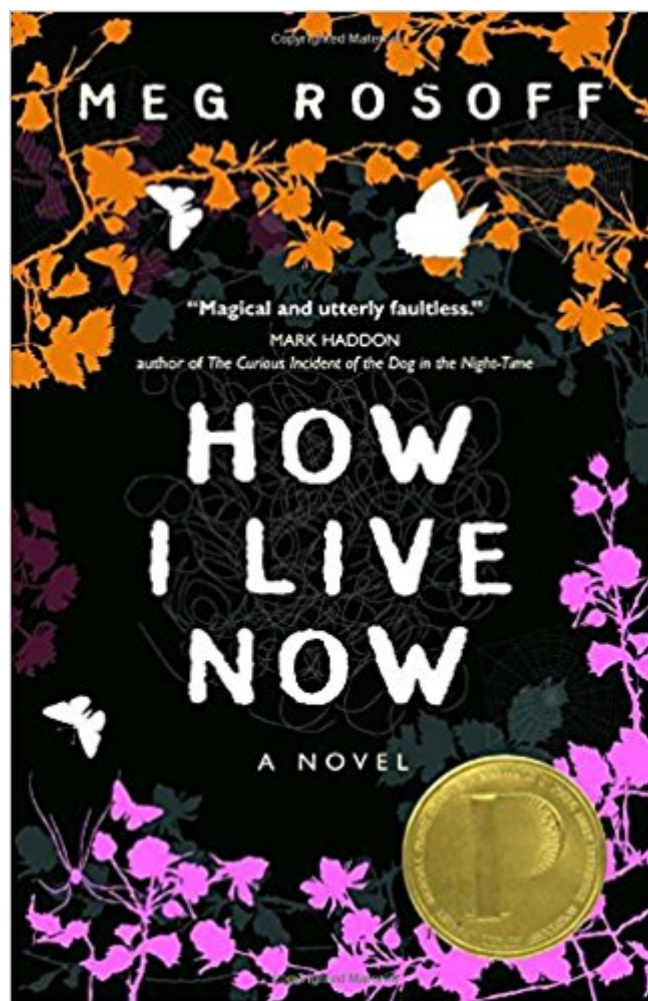


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How I Live Now



Synopsis

“Every war has turning points and every person too.” Fifteen-year-old Daisy is sent from Manhattan to England to visit her aunt and cousins she’s never met: three boys near her age, and their little sister. Her aunt goes away on business soon after Daisy arrives. The next day bombs go off as London is attacked and occupied by an unnamed enemy. As power fails, and systems fail, the farm becomes more isolated. Despite the war, it’s a kind of Eden, with no adults in charge and no rules, a place where Daisy’s uncanny bond with her cousins grows into something rare and extraordinary. But the war is everywhere, and Daisy and her cousins must lead each other into a world that is unknown in the scariest, most elemental way. A riveting and astonishing story.

Book Information

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Age Range: 12 - 17 years

Grade Level: 7 and up

Customer Reviews

Possibly one of the most talked about books of the year, Meg Rosoff’s novel for young adults is the winner of the Guardian Children’s Fiction Prize 2004. Heralded by some as the next best adult crossover novel since Mark Haddon’s *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time*, who himself has given the book a thunderously good quote, this author’s debut is undoubtedly stylish, readable and fascinating. Rosoff’s story begins in modern day London, slightly in the future, and as its heroine has a 15-year-old Manhattanite called Daisy. She’s picked up at the airport by Edmond,

her English cousin, a boy in whose life she is destined to become intricately entwined. Daisy stays at her Aunt Penn's country farmhouse for the summer with Edmond and her other cousins. They spend some idyllic weeks together--often alone with Aunt Penn away travelling in Norway. Daisy's cousins seem to have an almost telepathic bond, and Daisy is mesmerized by Edmond and soon falls in love with him. But their world changes forever when an unnamed aggressor invades England and begins a years-long occupation. Daisy and Edmond are separated when soldiers take over their home, and Daisy and Piper, her younger cousin, must travel to another place to work. Their experiences of occupation are never kind and Daisy's pain, living without Edmond, is tangible. Rosoff's writing style is both brilliant and frustrating. Her descriptions are wonderful, as is her ability to portray the emotions of her characters. However, her long sentences and total lack of punctuation for dialogue can be exhausting. Her narrative is deeply engaging and yet a bit unbelievable. The end of the book is dramatic, but too sudden. The book has a raw, unfinished feel about it, yet that somehow adds to the experience of reading it. (Age 14 and over) --John McLay --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

This riveting first novel paints a frighteningly realistic picture of a world war breaking out in the 21st century. Told from the point of view of 15-year-old Manhattan native Daisy, the novel follows her arrival and her stay with cousins on a remote farm in England. Soon after Daisy settles into their farmhouse, her Aunt Penn becomes stranded in Oslo and terrorists invade and occupy England. Daisy's candid, intelligent narrative draws readers into her very private world, which appears almost utopian at first with no adult supervision (especially by contrast with her home life with her widowed father and his new wife). The heroine finds herself falling in love with cousin Edmond, and the author credibly creates a world in which social taboos are temporarily erased. When soldiers usurp the farm, they send the girls off separately from the boys, and Daisy becomes determined to keep herself and her youngest cousin, Piper, alive. Like the ripple effects of paranoia and panic in society, the changes within Daisy do not occur all at once, but they have dramatic effects. In the span of a few months, she goes from a self-centered, disgruntled teen to a courageous survivor motivated by love and compassion. How she comes to understand the effects the war has had on others provides the greatest evidence of her growth, as well as her motivation to get through to those who seem lost to war's consequences. Teens may feel that they have experienced a war themselves as they vicariously witness Daisy's worst nightmares. Like the heroine, readers will emerge from the rubble much shaken, a little wiser and with perhaps a greater sense of humanity. Ages 12-up. (Aug.) Copyright 2004 Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.

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How I Live Now is by far one of the strangest books I have ever read. It is also one of the best. With that being said, I could see why a vast majority of people would not like it. I found out about this book through the movie. I heard that Saoirse Ronan was going to be starring in it and I was immediately interested. This book deals with some hard topics that not many people like to talk about but that need to be discussed. Meg Rosoff manages to balance these complicated ideas without making them the center of attention. The plot of this book is surviving a World War and the characters trying to find their way back to each other. It just happens to include, anorexia, extreme PTSD, and incest between cousins. The writing style in this book is extremely different and a little hard to get into. There are no quotations marks, many run on sentences, and very little punctuation. Without spoiling it, the reasoning for this style of writing is explained near the end of the book and it makes the story that much better and even more heartbreaking. Even though the writing was strange, that didn't stop Meg from being able to write some beautiful passages and quotes through out the book. Most books about wars are action packed and fast paced because they usually take place in the worst part of the war. How I Live Now took place at the very beginning of it. It was a very slow build, which I loved, and the main characters were left unaffected for quite a while. It reminded me of if you were to read a book about the very start of a zombie apocalypse. It would take a very long time for the virus to start affecting everyone in the world. The characters in this book were all very distinct, different, and realistic. It was interesting to see how the four siblings, ranging from ages nine to sixteen, shared many of the same ideas and also disagreed on many. They each dealt with the war in four very different ways. Then, there was Daisy. She started as a negative, spoiled kid from New York and she had to learn how to fit in with a bunch of positive, nature loving siblings who lived in the country side of England. I have yet to watch the movie, but I would love to do so soon. I know that it is very different from the book when it comes to characters and character deaths, but I've heard many positive things about it. This book was absolutely incredible and probably one of my favorites of the year. It is definitely a book that I have thought about constantly since I finished it and I wish that more people, teens especially, would read it. I feel like it would be a good book to have on a required reading list for school. Violence: 4/5 Sex: 2/5 Language: 2/5

Quick Blurb: This story follows 15-year-old Daisy who is sent away from her life in Manhattan to live with extended family in a quiet farm in England. There are three cousin boys near her age as well as a younger sister. The day following Daisy's arrival, a bomb goes off in London, followed by an

unnamed enemy attacking and occupying the area. With the systems failing and the war raging in London, the farm quickly becomes this isolated kind of safe Eden for the children where there are no parents and no rules. But when the war finally starts catching up with them, the cousins are thrown into a survival story.

My Thoughts: This was an interesting and quick read. It did take me a little while to get into the writing, though. It's written in the stream of consciousness of this pretty high strung teenager. Consequently there's a lot of choppy sentences, but layered with those sentences are some really beautiful and profound thoughts from Daisy.

There's no punctuation for dialogue either, which takes a few pages to get used to as well. Once I got used to the voice, however, the style didn't bother me anymore and I was able to truly enjoy the story. This was a fascinating war/apocalyptic story because it didn't focus on the war. It was a refreshing take to have the POV be from someone not in the mist of the chaotic action and to see what a person's reaction to everything might be from afar. The story wasn't a fast-paced narrative where the characters were constantly in the thick of the action. It's a slow-paced survival story on the outskirts of this world war, which I found refreshingly appealing. You should check this out if you're a fan of survival/apocalyptic novels. You can check out more of my book reviews here: [...]

The only reason it gets 4 instead of 5 stars is the parents. Many YA novels do this and it's truly grating, parents are demonized or entirely absent so that we can have a story of only children. Some authors manage to make their case a realistic one and it works, not so much here. [Slight SPOILER, this is part of the premise and it's stated at the very beginning of the novel] I have trouble believing that a parent would send their child to a country that's on the brink of war, simply because they're troublesome. Aside from that, it really is a great book. It explores the bonds that are created between the protagonist and her cousins, the result is a beautiful tale of innocent full-hearted love in the face of war and tragedy. It doesn't linger too long on the war itself, we understand only what the characters understand, and it's not very much. What matters here is not the war but how it both brings the characters together, only to tear them apart. There's also an interesting element of interconnectivity between them that I found to be quite original and not at all gimmicky.

I first saw the movie on netflix with my sister the other day and thought "if the movie was that good the book must be better". The book didn't really have very much structure when it came to daisy's thoughts. Everything seemed like one long run-on sentence and didn't really do her justice. It made her seem a lot more normalized than how she was intended to be. I did like, somewhat, the

outcome for each character at the end of the book, as opposed to the movie. It better explains the characters relationships after the war. One thing I didn't understand was why the daisy in the "HILN" movie version was so nasty and bitchy to everyone around her and in the book she was much, much nicer. In this way I feel the movie did a better job of focusing on who daisy was, as opposed to her explaining who everyone else was and what they were like.

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