



The Truth about Celia Frost

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Celia Frost's life is pretty wretched: she suffers from a rare condition that prevents her blood from clotting. This, combined with her unusual looks ? she's tall with a shock of red hair ? has made her the subject of bullying in every one of the many schools she's attended.

The tension is high already then when, just pages in, a particularly nasty piece of bullying leaves Celia bleeding heavily.

The slash of the blade has no lasting physical effect on Celia, but nonetheless changes her life forever. As her mother whisks her away to start life over in a new town, yet again, Celia begins to realise that her whole life has been a lie; that her mother has been deceiving her all her life.

Dumped in the misnamed Bluebell Estate, Celia tries to take control of her events. She makes friends with Sol, a boy from the neighbouring block. He teaches her to swim; she rides a bike. But the sense of paranoia and threat is ever present and, when it finally emerges, the truth about Celia Frost is stranger than she, or the reader, could ever have imagined. Our perception of her mother will change again as the story develops in constantly unexpected ways.

Paula Rawsthorne's excellent debut is original and gripping and the tension is palpable throughout. A succession of vivid and well drawn scenes holds the reader's attention and throws light on the action, both what has gone before, and what is to come. As well as being a compulsive thriller, this novel is also a skilful coming-of-age novel. The relationship between Celia and her mother is real and affecting and often makes for uncomfortable reading.

Both parts of the story build to a thoroughly satisfying climax and resolution, with final twists to surprise.

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