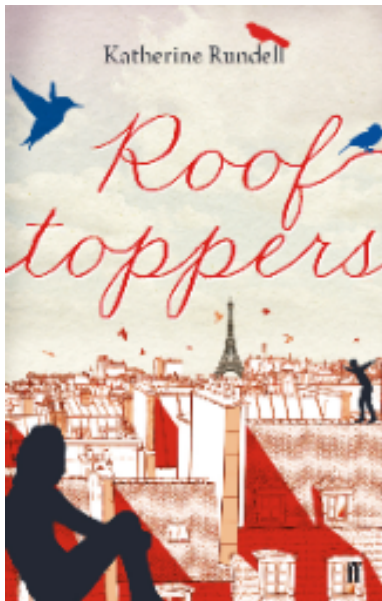


TALKING POINTS

CILIP Carnegie Medal Shortlist 2014



ROOFTOPPERS by Katherine Rundell

Before reading

What can you guess about the book from looking at the cover?

The setting

When do you think the book is set – nowadays, in the past, or in the future? Why?

Rooftoppers is set in two locations: London and Paris. How are these two places different in the book?

The story

Why does Sophie believe her mother is alive? Do you believe it, too, as you read?

Why is life on the rooftops so important to Sophie while she's in Paris?

How much do we learn about the rooftoppers and sky-treaders themselves, and their life stories that got them there?

Do you think the ending of the book is satisfying? What do you think happens next?

The characters

Sophie is "different" – the way she looks, the way she behaves, the things she likes, the kind of childhood she has; can you think of examples of things that make her different?

Think about these three characters:

- Miss Eliot
- Charles
- Matteo

How does the author introduce each of them?



What motivates each of them to treat Sophie in the way they do?

How the story is told

This is the first sentence of the book: “On the morning of its first birthday, a baby was found floating in a cello case in the middle of the English Channel.” Do you think it’s a good opening? Why, or why not?

How would you describe the *tone* of the book, the way it talks to you – is it funny? Descriptive? Friendly? Poetic?

Did you know that Katherine Rundell is a tightrope walker herself? Sophie’s first tightrope walk is one of the most magical moments of the book. How does the author make you feel the same excitement Sophie does?

Some themes

Charles says:

- “Never ignore a possible” and
- “Love is unpredictable.” and
- “Adults are taught not to believe anything unless it is boring or ugly.”

How do each of these relate to Sophie’s experiences in *Rooftoppers*?

Sophie isn’t the only character in the book who is seen as “different” – who else might that word be applied to?

This is a book about struggles between individuals and institutions – whose side do you think the author is on?

Music plays a big part in Sophie’s life and in this book – why?

