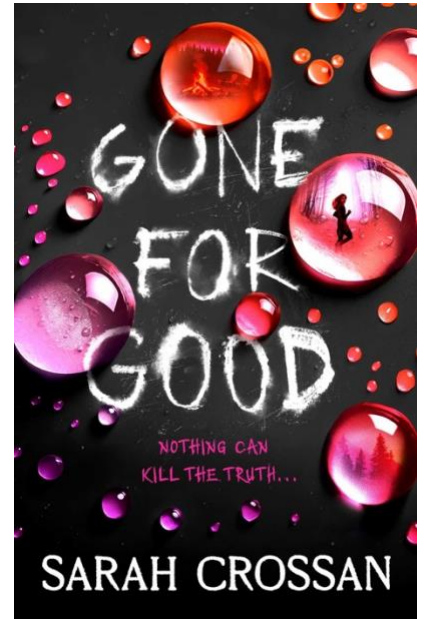


# GONE FOR GOOD BY SARAH CROSSAN

## About the book

Connie Ryder is taken from her home in the dead of night and sent to Silver Lake Academy – a remote, high-security facility for ‘troubled’ teens. At Silver Lake, the vulnerable and the violent are locked in together under a brutal regime that aims to improve their behaviour. But when Connie learns she’s been given the bed of a missing girl named Belle, she is drawn deep into a chilling web of secrets and lies...

**A sensational, immersive and hugely propulsive ‘missing girl’ thriller, set against the backdrop of America’s controversial Troubled Teen industry.**



## About the author

Sarah Crossan grew up in Dublin and emigrated to the U.K. when she was six years old, later studying at The University of Warwick and The University of Cambridge. She worked as an English teacher for ten years, in both England and the United States, before becoming a full-time writer in 2012.

Sarah’s books have won the CILIP Carnegie Medal, the CBI Book of the Year, the YA Book Prize, the CLIPPA Poetry Award, Books are my Bag and many other awards including the Dutch Dioraphte Literature Prize and the German Deutsche Jugendliteraturpreis.



Sarah writes for both adults and children and her novels have been translated into more than twenty-five languages. Her debut, *The Weight of Water*, has been adapted for the stage four times and her novel *Toffee* has been adapted twice. Many of her books are currently under option for film or TV, and she has been involved in writing the screenplays for several of these projects.

Sarah continues to work in schools with teenagers.

# KS3 Teacher Scheme of Work

**Text:** *Gone for Good* – Sarah Crossan

**Length:** 3 x 60-minute lessons

**Year group:** 8-9

**Themes:** Power, coercion, safeguarding, grief, identity, justice

## Safeguarding & Content Advisory for Teachers

This text includes:

- Death
- Institutional abuse
- Coercive control
- Trauma responses

Teachers should:

- Provide content warning
- Reinforce reporting pathways
- Avoid personal disclosure pressure
- Liaise with DSL if needed

## LESSON 1: BEING AN OUTSIDER & FINDING YOUR VOICE

### EXTRACT – Belle in the forest (Prologue)

Belle Jackson was lost.

No cell phone, no compass, no flashlight.

The night was closing in.

She had a habit of humming when nervous,  
though she didn't notice it herself.

Other kids would look up during tests,  
frown until she stopped distracting them with  
relentless noise

or the teacher tutted, reprimanding her.

And she *was* humming, as she stumbled through the  
forest,

long red hair damp against her sweater.

When the August sun set,

the temperature in the High Peaks dropped drastically,  
paid no heed to the sweat of the day.

But Belle was not wearing her warm coat,  
only a thin jacket that belonged to someone else.

She shivered. Hadn't been careful enough.

*Careless,*

that's what her mother would have said.

Belle's hiking boots rubbed her shins.

She had cold hands, numb fingertips.

Hunger set in, then a mild panic

that the scratching nearby was a wild animal.

'Damn,' she muttered. 'Damn-damn-damn.'

Should she hide or shout?

She couldn't remember the rule,

but knew *not* to run:

predators chase runners; it is an innate instinct.

Then again, the noise could be a person,

and surely the easiest way out of the darkness

was with a companion.

In her head,

Belle made a list of potential dangers on the trail:

standing dead trees,

unexpected overlooks,

mudslides,

muzzleloaders,

rattlesnakes,

black bears,

hypothermia,

and men,

the ultimate apex-predators.

Belle was small for sixteen, but square-shouldered,  
undaunted.

She mowed lawns and pressure-washed her  
neighbours' decks

to make cash for the weekends.

So, she moved towards the sound.

Bold Belle Jackson.

Who was hoping only to be found.

Until she realised, too late, who had found her.

## Objectives

### English (KS3):

- Draw inferences about character from limited detail
- Analyse how language and structure create tension

### PSHE:

- Explore feelings of vulnerability and belonging
- Reflect on what it means to feel like an outsider

## Introduction (10–15 mins)

Begin by writing the word “**lost**” on the board.

Ask:

- What different meanings can “lost” have?
- Can someone be lost without being physically lost?
- Have you ever felt out of place somewhere?

Read the opening aloud slowly. Ask students to close their eyes and imagine the scene.

## Discussion Questions

1. What do we learn about Belle from just the first line?
2. Why do you think the author starts the novel this way?
3. What emotions does this create in the reader?
4. How might Belle be feeling at this moment?
5. How does the use of structure in the extract build tension?

Encourage students to support answers with reference to tone and structure.

## Activity – A Voice in the Dark

Students will write a short internal monologue from Belle’s perspective.

First, model ideas as a class:

- What might she be thinking?
- What might she regret?
- What might she hope for?

Provide sentence starters:

- “I shouldn’t have...”
- “If only...”
- “I can hear...”
- “I wish someone would...”

Students write 10–15 lines in first person.

Encourage:

- Short sentences for tension
- Sensory detail
- Emotional language

## Plenary Reflection

Ask:

- Did writing in Belle’s voice change how you feel about her?
- Why is giving someone a voice important?

Link to PSHE:

How can listening to someone’s voice prevent harm?

## LESSON 2: INSTITUTIONS, RULES & POWER

### EXTRACT

“Obedience is the key to all things.” (p. 35)

## Levels System (p.34)

### **SILVER LAKE ACADEMY - LEVEL SYSTEM**

Residents earn points for positive action. In this way, residents engage in our level system. Each level comes with specific privileges. However, negative action results in correction points and a series of corrections will result in Amendments and possible level relegation. Ascension or demotion within the system is at the sole discretion of the director.

**Amendments:** No privileges.

**Probation:** Inclusion within the academy's mainstream program.  
One ten-minute phone call to confirm safe arrival.

**Level 1:** As probation, plus communication with other residents permitted.  
One ten-minute phone call every two weeks.  
Looking through windows permitted.  
Break times permitted.

**Level 2:** As Level 1 plus care packages from home permitted.

**Level 3:** As Level 2 plus one ten-minute phone call every week.

**Level 4:** As Level 3 plus one luxury item from home (e.g. nail polish/analogue watch).

**Level 5:** As Level 4 plus hot tea after dinner permitted.

**Level 6:** As Level 5 plus front-of-line privileges in the cafeteria permitted.

**Graduation:** Residents return home.

## Objectives

### English (KS3):

- Analyse how setting conveys theme
- Explore the effect of formal/bureaucratic language

**PSHE:**

- Recognise misuse of power
- Discuss when rules become harmful

## Introduction (10 mins)

On the board, write two columns:

### **Good Rules | Unfair Rules**

Ask students to generate examples.

Then introduce Silver Lake Academy.

Ask:

- What is the purpose of rules?
- When might rules be used to control rather than protect?

## Teacher Input

Provide a neutral, factual overview:

The “troubled teen industry” refers to private residential programmes (often in the US) that claim to help young people with behavioural or emotional difficulties.

Explain that:

- Some are well-regulated and supportive
- Others have been criticised for unsafe practices
- There have been documentaries and legal cases investigating this

## Discussion Questions

1. Why does the academy value obedience so highly?
2. What does the word “Amendments” suggest?
3. How does this language feel - warm or cold?
4. Who benefits from strict obedience?
5. Who is silenced by it?

Encourage students to notice tone and word choice.

## Activity Option 1 – Structured Research Task

### Step 1: Group Roles

Divide students into small research teams.

Each group researches one focus area:

1. Why parents choose these programmes
2. How the programmes describe themselves
3. Criticisms and investigations
4. Legal regulation and safeguarding
5. Survivor testimonies (age-appropriate summaries only)

### Step 2: Research Questions

Students answer:

- What does the institution claim to provide?
- What rules or methods are used?
- Who monitors or regulates them?
- What concerns have been raised?
- Who benefits financially?

Encourage balanced thinking.

### Step 3: Comparison Discussion

As a class, compare:

- Fictional institutional control (from the novel)
- Real-world institutional control

Ask:

- What similarities do you notice?
- What differences matter?
- What safeguards should always exist?

## Activity Option 2 – Designing a “Safe School”

In groups, students design two posters:

## Poster A: Silver Lake Rules

Based on the extract, create a poster advertising Silver Lake.

Include:

- Slogans
- Values
- Expectations

## Poster B: A Truly Safe School

Design a school based on:

- Trust
- Listening
- Support

Students must explain:

- What makes their second school safer?
- What changes from Silver Lake?

## Extension Task – Designing Ethical Safeguards

Students create a “Bill of Rights” for young people in residential care.

Include rights such as:

- Right to contact family
- Right to independent oversight
- Right to report concerns
- Right to emotional support

Groups present and justify their rights.

## Plenary Reflection

Students complete:

“One warning about unchecked institutional power is...”

Optional exit question:

“How can we ensure systems protect people rather than harm them?”

## Teacher Reflection

This lesson builds:

- Media literacy
- Safeguarding awareness
- Ethical reasoning
- Research skills

## LESSON 3: FRIENDSHIP, COURAGE & CHANGE

### EXTRACT (p. 384)

*Good girls rarely make history.*

Belle followed the rules.

They broke her anyway.

But thanks to Belle,

they didn't break me, too.

Can you miss a person you never knew?

## Objectives

### English (KS3):

- Analyse character development
- Interpret theme and authorial message

### PSHE:

- Explore courage and standing up for others
- Identify qualities of positive friendship

## Introduction (10 mins)

Write the quote on the board:

“Good girls rarely make history.”

Ask:

- What does this mean?
- Who decides what “good” means?
- Can being “good” sometimes mean staying silent?

## Discussion Questions

1. How has Connie changed from the start of the novel?
2. What risks does she take?
3. What does Belle represent by the end?
4. Is this a hopeful ending?
5. What message do you think the author wants readers to take away?

## Activity – Building Bridges

Students complete four prompts:

1. A brave person is someone who...
2. I know someone is brave when they...
3. In the story, Connie shows bravery by...
4. Belle shows bravery by...

Encourage textual evidence in responses.

Optional extension:

Students perform a short dramatic reading of the final pages, experimenting with tone (defiant, hopeful, reflective).

## Final Reflection

Ask students to complete:

“This story shows that speaking up is important because...”

Encourage links between:

- Literature
- Real-world safeguarding
- Personal courage

## Curriculum Links (KS3)

Aligned with National Curriculum objectives for:

### English – Reading Comprehension

- Drawing inferences
- Identifying themes
- Evaluating language choices

### English – Writing

- Writing from a character’s perspective

- Adapting tone and structure

### Spoken Language

- Participating in discussion and debate

### PSHE (Friendships & Safety)

- R11: What constitutes a healthy friendship
- Recognising unsafe environments
- Understanding voice and reporting concerns

## General Discussion Notes

1. *"Belle Jackson was lost."* (p. 9). What does it really mean to belong somewhere, and how do we recognise when someone feels like an outsider?
2. *Obedience is the key to all things.*" (p. 35). When does authority become harmful rather than protective?
3. Why might institutions prioritise reputation over individual wellbeing?
4. What makes it difficult for people to speak up when something feels wrong?
5. How does silence protect some people while harming others?
6. *"I didn't mean to hurt you."* (p. 368). Does intention matter when harm is caused? Where should responsibility lie?
7. Can good intentions still lead to serious damage? How should that be judged?
8. *"Some days I believe I am only half alive."* (p. 61). How does grief affect behaviour, decision-making and identity?
9. What is the difference between resilience and suppression of emotion?

10. What makes a friendship healthy, and how can loyalty sometimes become unhealthy?
11. How does fear influence the choices people make?