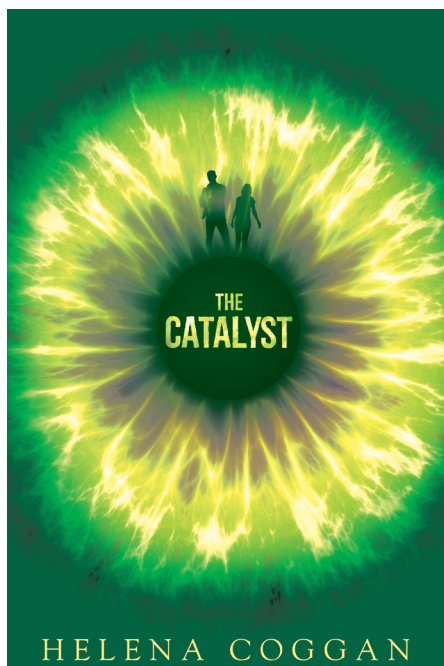


# THE CATALYST

## - About the Book -



HC: 978-0-7636-8972-8

Also available as an e-book and in audio

Eighteen years ago, a dimensional break ripped open the sky, drawing humans into an ancient conflict. Otherworldly souls rained down and fused with those of people, dividing the population into the green-eyed, magical Gifted and the dark-eyed, nonmagical Ashkind. A devastating war followed, and the Gifted have managed a fragile peace ever since, largely through a brutal law enforcement organization known as the Department. Fifteen-year-old Rose's father, David, has a leading role in the Department. Rose and David are Gifted, but they are also something else — something terrible. Their lives depend on keeping it secret. But when a mysterious murder threatens to tear Rose's world apart, forcing long-buried secrets into the open, her loyalties are put to the test. How much does Rose really know about her father's past? How far is the Department willing to go to maintain order? And, when the time comes, who will Rose choose to protect?

## - About the Author -

**Helena Coggan** wrote the first draft of *The Catalyst* when she was thirteen, and it has already been published in the U.K. to great acclaim. She has wanted to write stories since she was six, and before that, she wanted to live in one. She lives with her family in London.



Photo by Francesco Guidicini



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**- Discussion Questions -**

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1. Is David right when he talks about some people being pure evil? Why or why not?
2. *The Catalyst* makes an interesting comparison between those who commit evil acts willingly and those who have no choice. How much does intention matter?
3. Can you be evil without knowing it?
4. Do you think the Department was mistaken in allowing Rose to have such a big role when she is only a teenager?
5. Do you think it was foolish of Rose not to tell her father about her first encounter with Loren? How might things have gone differently if she had?
6. Many of the characters in the book are willing to do anything to protect someone they love. What do you think is the best example of this?
7. Imagine living with a secret as Rose and David do, constantly in fear of being found out. What do you think would be the most difficult part of day-to-day life?
8. Do you think Rose was too quick to go along with Loren's requests?
9. The point of view in the novel shifts from one character to another. Why do you think the author chose to include multiple perspectives?
10. How is the dynamic between the Gifted and the Ashkind familiar? Can you think of current or recent examples of society being so divided?
11. How did you react once Aaron's true character was revealed? Do you think it was an important lesson for Rose?
12. Although the book is about a dystopia, what are some elements of our world and of modern London that are present in the world of the novel? What effect do those details have on your reading of the book?
13. Extremist groups like the Gospel and the Regency may have legitimate criticisms of the government, but their approach to change is violent. Is the atmosphere of the novel one that would even have allowed for diplomacy, or were revolution and war inevitable — as David said, a reaction that “was always going to happen” (page 390)?
14. Rose and David's relationship is one of the central points of the novel. Why do you believe it is so strong? Do you think it will continue to be a crucial aspect of the story line in the next installment?
15. What was your reaction to the final scene? Do you think David could have killed Katya, or did he just knock her unconscious? What does this scene reveal about his character, and what do you think we can expect from David in the next book?
16. Characters in the novel have many different ideas about how to handle Tabitha and her powers. Do you agree with any of them? What do you think is the best way to deal with a young child with so little control over her magic?