

Dear nobody

[Family](#), [Abortion](#)



The novel is split between two points of view, a first-person narrative presenting the events as Chris recalls them in retrospect, interspersed with a series of letters from Helen to their unborn child (Nobody), telling her side of the story as she experiences it. The framing sequence is set in autumn as Chris is on the verge of leaving for Newcastle University. A parcel of letters is delivered for him, and he recognizes Helen's handwriting. He begins to read the letters, all addressed to " Dear Nobody", and they remind him of the past nine months. The subsequent chapter headings are all the names of months, beginning with January. Helen and Chris make love for the first, and only, time. Chris is prompted to ask his father about his marriage breakdown, and decides to get in touch with his mother. Shortly afterwards Helen begins to fear she is pregnant. Chris is disturbed by her distant behaviour. In late February she finally tells him her suspicions, and writes her first letter to " Dear Nobody": " You're only a shadow. You're only a whisper... Leave me alone. Go away. Go away. Please, please, go away." Later when a pregnancy test proves positive, she tries to abort the pregnancy by going riding, risking her life in a wild gallop, to no avail. In April, Helen's mother finds out, and arranges for her to go to an abortion clinic. However, Helen decides to keep the baby. Mrs Garton refuses to have Chris in the house, but he and Helen continue to see each other. They visit Chris's mother in Carlisle. In June, Helen and Chris sit their A-levels. After they are over Helen tells Chris she has decided they should break up, believing it is best for both of them. Chris is bewildered, and feels bereft. To get away from all the memories in Sheffield, he goes to France with Tom. He meets a girl called Bryn, but cannot forget Helen. In September, Helen learns her mother's greatest

secret — that she is illegitimate, a great disgrace when she was growing up — and finally begins to understand her. When her contractions start, she has a sudden impulse to send her " Dear Nobody" letters to Chris. Chris finishes reading the letters, realizes the baby is coming and rushes to the hospital, where he meets his newborn daughter, Amy.