

MY NAME
is
MiNA

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Hodder
Children's
Books

My name is Mina and I love the night. Anything seems possible at night when the rest of the world has gone to sleep. It's dark and silent in the house, but if I listen close, I hear the beat beat beat of my heart. I hear the creak and crack of the house. I hear my mum breathing gently in her sleep in the room next door.

I slip out of bed and sit at the table by the window. I tug the curtain open. There's a full moon in the middle of the sky. It bathes the world in its silvery light. It shines on Falconer Road and on the houses and the streets beyond, and on the city roofs and spires and on the distant mountains and moors. It shines into the room and on to me.

Some say that you should turn your face from the light of the moon. They say it makes you mad.

I turn my face towards it and I laugh.

Make me mad, I whisper. Go on, make Mina mad.

I laugh again.

Some people think that she's already mad, I think.

I look into the night. I see owls and bats that fly and ²flicker across the moon. Somewhere out there, ³whisper the cat is slipping through the shadows. I close my eyes and it's like those creatures are moving inside me, almost like I'm a kind of weird creature myself, a girl whose name is Mina but more than just a girl whose name is Mina.

There's an empty notebook lying on the table in the moonlight. It's been there for an age. I keep on saying that I'll write a journal. So I'll start right here, right now. I open the book and write the very first words:

**MY NAME IS MINA
AND I LOVE THE NIGHT.**

Then what shall I write? I can't just write that this happened then this happened then this happened to boring infinitum. I'll let my journal grow just like the mind does, just like a tree or a beast does, just like life does. Why should a book tell a tale in a dull straight line?

Words should wander and meander. They should fly like owls and flicker like bats and slip like cats. They should murmur and scream and dance and sing.

Sometimes there should be no words at all.
Just silence.

Just clean white space.

Some pages will be like a sky with a single bird in it. Some will be like a sky with a swirling swarm of starlings in it. My sentences will be a clutch, a collection, a pattern, a swarm, a shoal, a mosaic. They will be a circus, a menagerie, a tree, a nest. Because my mind is not in order. My mind is not straight lines. My mind is a clutter and a mess. It is my mind, but it is also very like other minds. And like all minds, like every mind that there