

## **Absurdity and Reality in YA Fiction**

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### **Process**

Before starting a novel, Skuse makes detailed character studies (including written notes, sketches of characters, collages and layouts of cover images and moments from the story) in order to gain a deep understanding of the characters in the story. Through this knowledge, when unexpected events or encounters emerge through the writing of the novel, Skuse can understand how her characters will behave or react to events, and how these occurrences might change them.

In addition to making character studies, Skuse also visits locations to take photographs and record her impressions of the buildings and places that will feature in the novel.

Chance encounters can be important too. Newspaper articles and a photograph of a dog's discovery of animal remains in the woods provided inspiration for *Monster*, while watching a production of *Hamlet* provided a vital component of *The Deviants'* narrative.

The process of writing the novel is an opportunity for research, exploration and discovery. Through this process, Skuse reveals the themes of each novel and uncovers new understandings and revelations about her characters.