

CONTENT MAP – WHERE THE SENSITIVE MATERIAL SITS

For teachers & Designated Safeguarding Leads planning whole-novel study · not a student handout

The four extracts in the Activity Pack avoid everything below. This map is for teachers choosing to teach the *whole novel*: it shows where the difficult content falls so you can preview, plan, redact, or set alternative passages with confidence. It is a planning aid, not a verdict — *The Boy I Am* handles this material with care, and is taught in many schools from KS3 up. Chapter numbers are approximate to edition; always preview your own copy.

CONTENT	WHERE IT FALLS (APPROX.)	NOTE FOR PLANNING
Suicide & self-harm (the most sensitive thread)	Ch 20, 21, 23, 28 · echoes to 50	Sustained suicidal ideation; Ch 21 includes an active attempt during an assault, Ch 23 the resuscitation. No method/lethality detail beyond the narrative act. Preview carefully and pair with support signposting.
Sexual assault, coercion & grooming	Ch 6, 16, 31–32 · strongest: Ch 35	Groping of a minor; the "appointments" system's implied servitude; a knife-point threat. The stairwell scene (Ch 35) weaponises the language of consent. Adults groom minors into a plot. Handle with RSHE framing; not for younger readers.
Graphic violence & injury	Ch 18, 21, 29, 33, 44, 45–46, 56–58	A gang beating; the noose assault (broken nose, a castration threat); eye trauma; a self-treated wound; heavy bleeding through the climax.
Major character deaths	Ch 8 (recounted 25), 47, 48, 58	Deaths of significant characters, mostly by violence; a grenade; a shooting. Public "execution" imagery also recurs (Ch 6, 9).
Lobotomy / medical abuse / eugenics ("pinheading")	Ch 28–30, 42, 52, 54, 59	Forced "mind-wiping"; drugged, stripped, experimented-on boys returned "empty-eyed". Disturbing rather than gory.
Child abuse, corporal punishment & forced labour	Ch 5 · recurring	Apprenticeship from age five; a small child beaten and locked away; deliberate food deprivation; mutilation punishments referenced.
Body image, disordered eating & substance use	Ch 15, 20 · Ch 18, 40	Steroid use, cosmetic surgery, fasting and purging to compete; underage drinking with intoxication and vomiting.
Misogyny, abuse of power & weaponised "care"	throughout	Central to the world, and framed critically — a discussion strength, but sustained.
Sexual content	Ch 60	None explicit anywhere; a single chaste, consensual first kiss.

How to use this map. If you're teaching the extracts only (top of KS3 and up), you don't need it — they're clear of all the above. For whole-novel study (best KS4+), preview the flagged chapters, decide what to set, read aloud, redact or skip, and keep support signposting to hand. A short front-of-pack pointer and the support links live at the back of the Activity Pack. Follow your school's usual process and brief your DSL for whole-novel work.