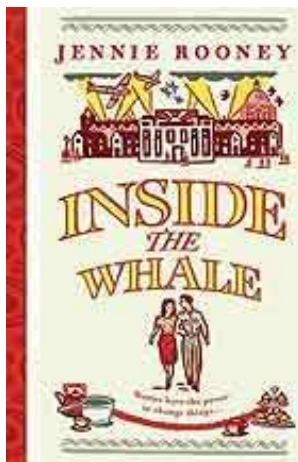


Inside the whale by Jennie Rooney



An initially comic novel featuring two characters separated by fate -in this case the second world war - quickly turns into a moving story of thwarted circumstances and belated wisdom. In the summer of 1939 Stevie and Michael are lovers until Michael joins the Royal Signals, disappears to Africa and doesn't return. Fifty years later and Stevie cannot mourn the recent death of her husband or reveal a lifetime's secret to her daughter and granddaughter. Meanwhile, Michael lies in a south London hospital. Unable to speak, he writes down his story for a sympathetic nursing assistant. Rooney confidently moves between two narrators and shifting times, vividly recreating Blitz-torn London and the Africa of the same period.