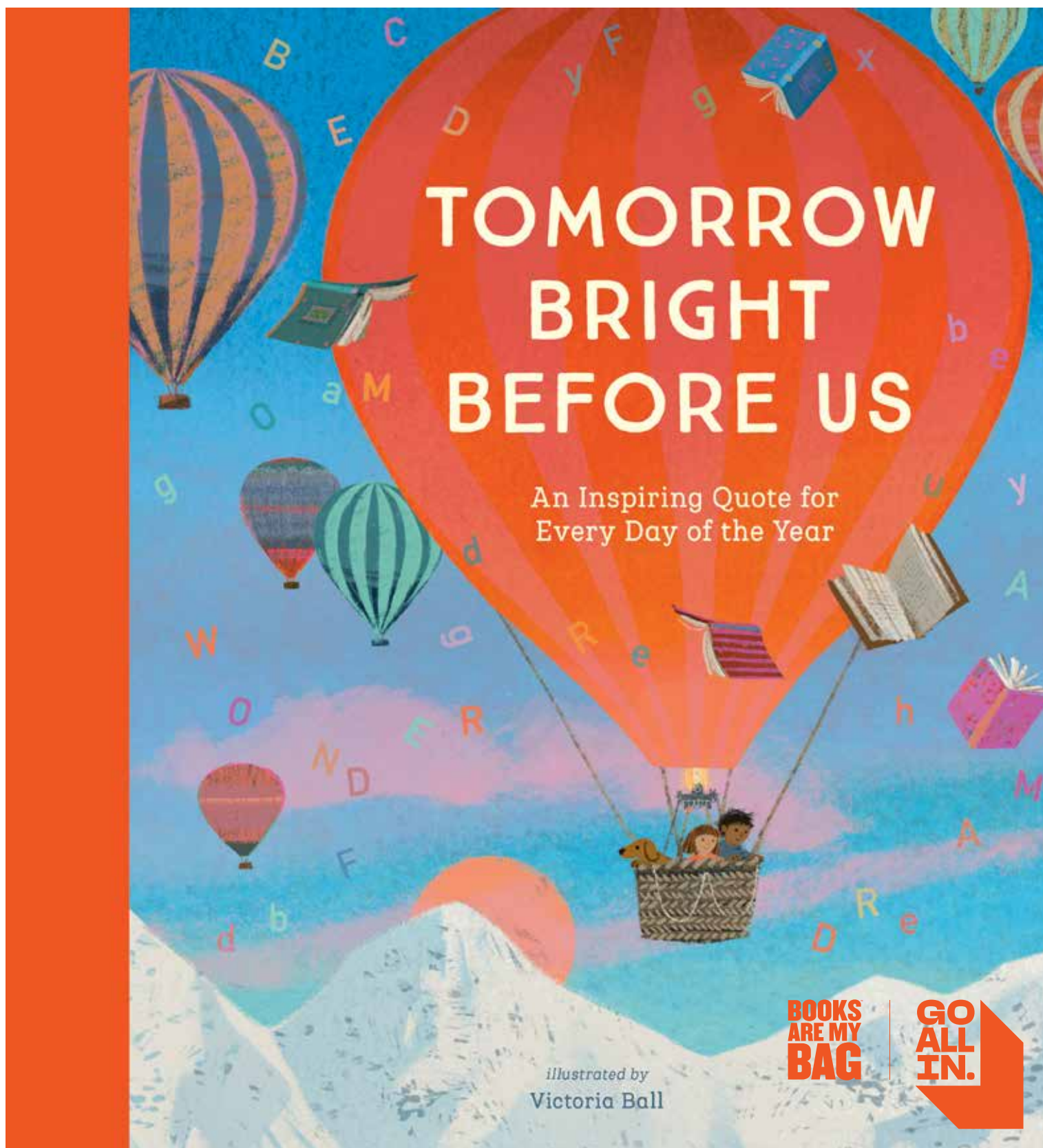


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ISSUE 160
SEPT/OCT 2026

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Booktime



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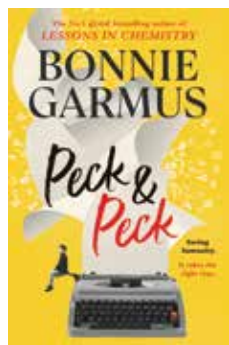
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Editor Ruth Hunter
Design jimmyscofield.com

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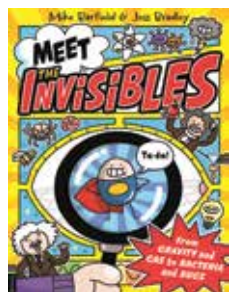
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Welcome to Booktime!

Welcome to September & October Booktime! In this bumper edition, we interview a wealth of authors about their books. Rebecca Spargo tells more about her novel which follows a mother who discover her son has been up to no good (see page 17); and Fiona Goggin about her novel set in Victorian London, featuring a young woman who is extraordinarily tall (see page 33). We interview Paul Brand about his book on the debates behind assisted dying (see page 14); Michael Lewis and David Musgrove about their history of the Bayeux Tapestry (see page 16); Brigid Lowe about her memoir of wild swimming in Scotland (see page 19); Maurits Chabot about his book of true stories featuring people from different sides of a divide coming together (see page 29); and Dr Miki Fujito about her guide to the Japanese practice of seijaku (see page 35).

For younger readers, we interview Steve Cole about his new story following a band of pets in a postapocalyptic world (see page 44); Jeffrey Brown about his funny tale about a lost brick (see page 45); Sally Nicholl about her YA novel following the daughter of an online influencer (see page 46); Sarah Massini about her picture book featuring a grumpy tiger (see page 49). We also hear from Victoria Ball on how she illustrated a new book of quotes (see page 47), Nour Ferwana on her book of traditional Palestine tales (see pages 52 & 53); Abi Elphinstone on her story about a magical snow leopard (see page 54); Harry Woodgate on his baking detective story (see pages 56 & 57); Sophie Anderson on her book of fairy tales (see pages 60 & 61); Katie and Kevin Tsang on their new adventure in Neverland (see pages 62 & 63); and Amy Wilson on her intriguing story set in a town of magic (see page 64). These books, and the many others in this edition, will see you into the autumn.

Ruth Hunter, Editor

We hope you enjoy this new edition of Booktime.

To enter our competitions online, please visit the webpage:

www.surveymonkey.com/r/BooktimeSeptember2026

Or write to us at the address below.

For any other queries, please email: **booktime@booksellers.org.uk**

**Booktime, The Booksellers Association,
6 Bell Yard, London, WC2A 2JR**

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Photo © Ruth Crafer

Seasonal Splendour

In this atmospheric memoir Kate Mosse, bestselling author of the *Labyrinth* trilogy and *The Joubert Family Chronicles*, turns her attention to the season of autumn, as she contemplates the natural world and her own memories.

This magical journey through the turning year captures the ever-changing colours of the autumn landscape, the crunch of leaves underfoot, the drift of migrating birds and the last warmth of the sun. Starting in her own garden, Kate leads us out to the misty Fishbourne marshes of her childhood, with their vast skies and wading birds, and into ancient yew forests/steeped in myth and mystery.

We travel across the harvest fields, follow the river bends of the Ouse and the Lavant, and join the crowds at Lewes on Bonfire Night, where the air crackles with flame and torchlight. Exploring nature, folklore, memory and history, *Autumn* is a love letter to Sussex and an atmospheric portrait of the season from one of our most celebrated writers.

This extract describes a trip to the Chanctonbury Ring:

It's late afternoon now and, having said goodbye to my daughter Martha and the grandchildren, I'm on the back road linking East Sussex to West. It's the route following the South Downs I always take: Lewes to Falmer, Falmer to Shoreham, Shoreham to Steyning, Washington, Amberley and Slindon, until finally I glimpse the spire of Chichester Cathedral welcoming me home.

I'm pleasantly tired and sticky. My white trainers are dusted brown and my t-shirt bears signs of our picnic lunch. In and out of the shadows I drive, beneath a canopy of green, the sun slatted through the branches. Brightly coloured purple flowers cluster at the side of the road. Are they Michaelmas daisies or some kind of late crocus? I don't know. I'm half listening to a man on the radio tell me of the exceptional leaf colour to come in October because of the long, hot summer.

Apparently, more sugar in the leaves will lead to even more intense reds, oranges and golds. I make a mental note to ask my arboriculturist son-in-law, Ollie, about this.

I'm not thinking about anything in particular when I pass the sign for Chanctonbury Ring and feel a jolt beneath my ribs. A memory of a school field trip, sometime in the 1970s. We'd stayed in a nearby youth hostel overnight and I'd hated it: the dormitory, the food, the not knowing what the rules were or what was expected of me. An unhappy

flashback, remembering that terrible childhood anguish of not fitting in, of not understanding how to be popular.

But the visit to Chanctonbury Ring itself was the beginning – or, perhaps, a reinforcing – of my passion for how landscape and folklore go hand in hand. Or, rather, how the natural world and the mythological nourish one another. My father had a book from Reader's Digest called *Folklore, Myths and Legends of Britain*. It was heavy, with a black textured cloth cover and the gold face of a Viking with his horned helmet. I read it endlessly: witches, giants, standing stones, ghosts and devils, stories from the length and breadth of the British Isles. There, in the section about southern England, was an entry for Chanctonbury Ring: 'This Iron Age hill-fort, surrounded by ramparts of eroded turf, is an eerie place...'

'Eerie', yes. Haunted, even.

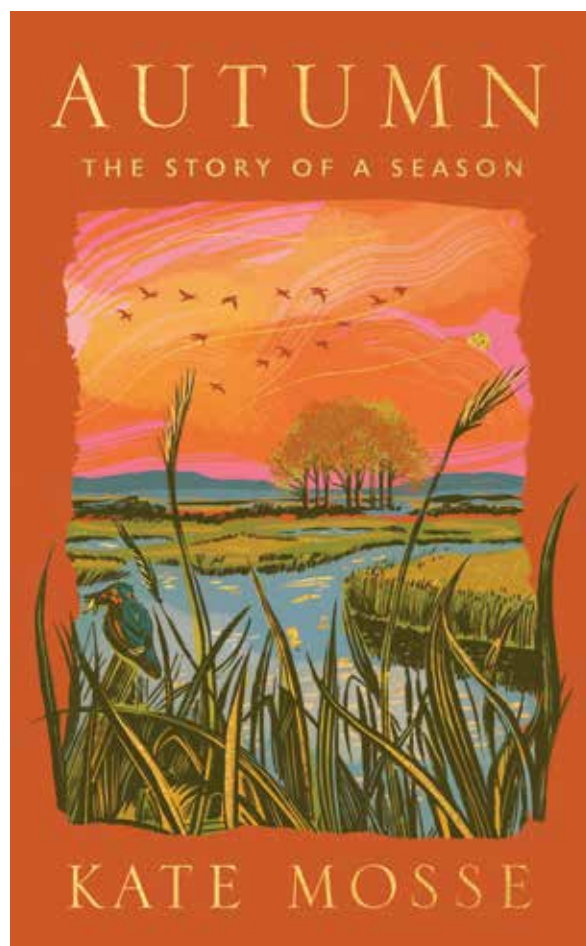
I hesitate, then turn off the main road. It's nearly the autumnal equinox, after all – that moment when day and night are pretty much equal and the sun is directly above the equator – so when better for a trip down memory lane to so ancient a site?

I bump along the one-lane track. It must be chaos in the height of summer – it's a key tourist site within the South Downs National Park – but now there's no one about and the going's easy enough. High banks on either side make a tunnel of the invasive conifers and the mature native oaks. The sunlight filters through their plaited branches across the narrow lane, setting shadows rippling like water.

“A beautifully written exploration of nature, memory and life itself. Wonderfully mellow, a golden read”

Matt Haig

Autumn: The Story of a Season
by Kate Mosse
Hodder Press • HB • £16.99
ISBN 9781399746991
Published 10th September



“Full of warmth and joy, and a love of people, places and nature. I adored this book.”

Caroline Quentin

The oak sentinels give way to a lighter mixture of beech, hawthorn and sycamore. There are a few houses along the track and, though it's idyllic now, I imagine it might feel bleak in the depths of winter.

The site is part of the Wiston Estate and managed by the National Trust, but this late in the afternoon, the car park is nearly empty. I get out and straight away can see Chanctonbury Ring on the brow of the barrow. It's a dense circle of beech trees set at the top of a symmetrical hill, the kind of hill a child might draw. The air is almost damp, humid after the heat of the day. It doesn't feel like England at all.

I look at the winding footpath of chalk and flint, which follows the line of older tracks long before maps and compasses and trig points. The climb from this side – the Steyning side – is steep, harder than the less punishing hike up and along the ridge from the east. I reckon it is a good two-hour round trip and, even if I pushed myself, I won't have time to get up and back before dusk.

Why a hill fort was first built here, we simply don't know. As some kind of lookout, perhaps, or a shrine? An enclosure for animals or a refuge? We also don't know why it fell into disrepair after the late Bronze Age, between 1000 and 700 BCE. It was occupied again during Roman times, when two temples were built inside the hill fort's interior, then it was abandoned again, this time for good, in the late fourth century CE.

The original circle of beech trees was planted around the footprint of the fort in 1760 by Charles Goring, the owner of

Wiston House. He lovingly watered the saplings (or, more likely, sent his servants to do so) until they took root and the 'ring' took shape. Goring's descendants still own the estate today and, since 2006, have created a highly successful winery in the folds of the Downs. Ollie describes beech trees as the 'drama queens' of the natural world, prone to feeling sorry for themselves and wilting if conditions aren't perfect: too much sun, too little rain, a hard frost. From a distance, these ones look robust enough.

“Profoundly captivating, a beautiful book that lingers in the mind.”

Elif Shafak

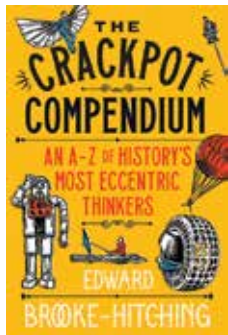
When I first came here in the 1970s, we climbed up to the ring of trees in a reluctant group. We complained of how far it was, moaned about how our legs were aching, talked about what we might be having for lunch when we got back to the youth hostel. But the moment we stepped inside Chanctonbury Ring itself, we fell silent. I can still remember the odd chill, as if daylight could not penetrate there, and how sound seemed to be muffled. How the real world seemed suddenly very far away. Dr Philip Gosse, who lived in Steyning in the 1930s, wrote: 'If you enter the dark wood you are conscious of something

behind you. When you stop, it stops; when you go on it follows.' Even fifty years later, that prickling of the short hairs on the back of my neck, that sense of being watched, has never left me.

But these are not the trees that spooked me back then. Chanctonbury Ring was decimated by the Great Storm of 1987, which hit Sussex on the night of 15th–16th October and destroyed huge swathes of ancient woodland. Local estimates have it that perhaps as much as 80 per cent of Sussex's woodland was lost, and the storm's highest winds in the UK – of 115 miles per hour – were recorded at Shoreham-by-Sea, a stone's throw away. All in all, some 15 million trees were felled in the south of England.

After the Great Storm, other beech trees were planted at Chanctonbury Ring to take their place – younger, newer, without the history of the past. Even so, the atmosphere remains eerie. It's long been held to be one of the most haunted places on the South Downs and that no birds sing within the circle of the trees. Other folklore claims the ghost of Julius Caesar and his army might be summoned and that the thudding of ghostly hooves has been heard at night. Particularly persistent is the legend that the Devil can be summoned by running seven times widdershins (anticlockwise) around the clump at midnight on Midsummer's Eve. When – if – he appears, he will offer you a bowl of porridge (or, sometimes, soup). If you accept, he will take your soul in return. Arthur Beckett recounts the legend in his 1909 book *The Spirit of the Downs*.

September & October's Choice



The Crackpot Compendium

by Edward Brooke-Hitching
Simon & Schuster
HB • £16.99
ISBN 9781398532427
Published 8th October

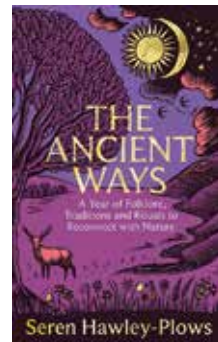
Filled to bursting with jaw-droppingly strange episodes from history, this book is a riotous tour of crackpot inventors, false prophets, quacks and pseudo-scientists, con-artists and impostors, and hundreds of other truly 'outside-the-box' thinkers. Discover stories of dinosaur espionage, earthquake-predicting plants and leech barometers, cat pianos and canine translation devices, immortal adventurers, cities spotted on the Moon and aliens living on the Sun!



The Buildings Archaeologist

by James Wright
The History Press
PB • £20.00
ISBN 9781837050932
Published 8th October

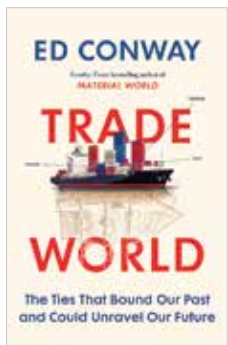
This book looks at the ways in which ancient buildings have been studied and conserved, the puzzling ways that some buildings became listed whereas others were overlooked, and how we can really understand the age and development of a structure. With over a quarter of a century of field experience, James Wright uses case studies drawn from his career to explain the fascinating, enigmatic, and frequently surprising world of buildings.



The Ancient Ways

by Seren Hawley-Plows
Bluebird • HB • £16.99
ISBN 9781035065998
Published 3rd September

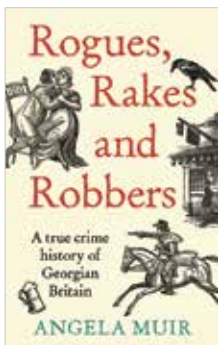
Told through the pagan wheel of the year, this book explores how nature changes throughout the seasons, looking at solstices, equinoxes, legends, and festivals and how these stories and traditions can help you deepen your connection with nature. Discover megalithic sacred sites where crowds still gather to see the sun rise and fall through doorways of the past. Meet Eostre, goddess of the spring or the Cailleach, queen of winter, and the Green Man, a personification of the wild.



Trade World

by Ed Conway
WH Allen
HB • £25.00
ISBN 9780753562277
Published 3rd September

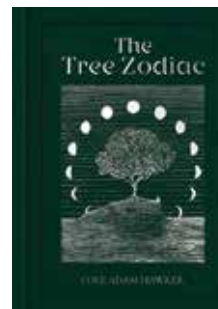
The story of trade is the story of humanity. From the copper in Mesopotamian ploughs to the silicon atoms within the chip inside your smartphone, intricate global trading networks have evolved over millennia to fulfil the distinctly human desire to buy and sell. Ed Conway tells this extraordinary story through these three commonplace products: bread, cloth and cars, taking us from policy treaties to ground level to show us the people who make and ship these products.



Rogues, Rakes and Robbers: A True Crime History of Georgian Britain

by Angela Muir
Calon • HB • £18.99
ISBN 9781837600700
Published 3rd September

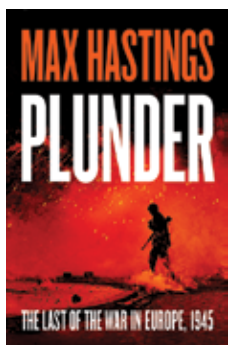
Exploring detailed accounts of historic crime is one of the best ways to catch a glimpse of a society and its culture decades and centuries later. This book allows you to uncover the tales of real-life murders, manslaughters, assaults and arson that took place in Georgian Wales and the borders, which together give us a window onto life for ordinary, common people – whose lives would otherwise be lost from the historical record.



The Tree Zodiac

by Luke Adam Hawker
Magic Cat
HB • £18.99
ISBN 9781911766544
Published 8th October

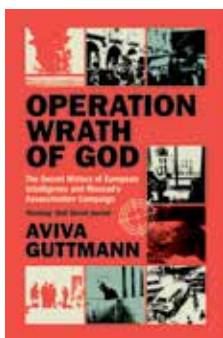
In this beautiful book, a mystical Zodiac unfolds, where thirteen lunar months are represented by thirteen symbolic trees, each imbued with its own distinctive personality and spirit. Acclaimed artist Luke Adam Hawker presents exquisite, luminously rendered etchings, reimagining these ancient tree signs for the modern reader. From Ash to Alder, Hazel to Holly, this richly illustrated guide invites you to discover your Celtic tree sign and reflect on your own character.



Plunder

by Max Hastings
William Collins
HB • £25.00
ISBN 9780008778231
Published 24th September

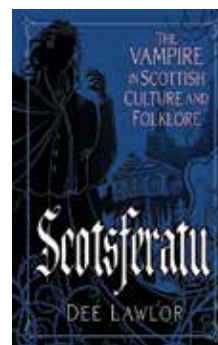
The last weeks of World War II on the Western Front in Europe witnessed extraordinary scenes of heroism, horror, melodrama and pathos. In this book, Max Hastings presents a cast of British, American and German people, in a series of great events in which some distinguished themselves through wonderful deeds, others through terrible crimes. The stories of the battles are mixed with the stories of these people – warlords, soldiers, slave labourers, prisoners, fugitives and victims.



Operation Wrath of God

by Aviva Guttman
Cambridge University Press • PB • £17.99
ISBN 9781009503037
Published 22nd October

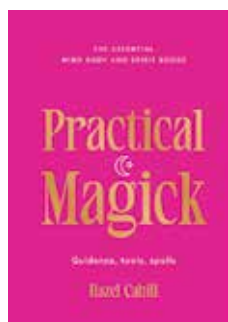
In this unprecedented history of intelligence cooperation during the Cold War, Aviva Guttman uncovers the key role of European intelligence agencies in facilitating Mossad's Operation Wrath of God. She reveals how, in the aftermath of the 1972 Munich Olympics Massacre, Palestinians suspected of involvement in terrorism were hunted and killed by Mossad with active European cooperation. It shows state relations were pursued independently of official foreign policy.



Scotsferatu: The Vampire in Scottish Culture and Folklore

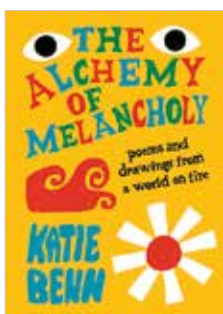
by Dee Lawlor
The History Press
PB • £12.99
ISBN 9781837052318
Published 24th September

This is a unique exploration and gathering of vampire mythology and folklore from around Scotland. We don't normally associate Scotland with vampires, but there is a rich history of folklore surrounding the undead. From the Pagan baobhan-sith of the Highlands, a 16th century stranger that was suspected of being a vampire in Galloway, to a vampire that was terrorising wildlife in Lochmaben in the 90s, the vampire is alive... or rather, undead... and well in Scottish history and culture.



Practical Magick: Guidance, Tools, Spells
by Hazel Cahill
Rockpool Publishing
HB • £9.99
ISBN 9781923208957
Published 10th September

A guide to spirituality and the new age. No matter where you are on your spiritual journey, this book will equip you with invaluable spiritual tools and offer empowering insights in the form of magical advice, deep wisdom, and inspiration to embrace your personal evolution. Explore divination practices such as tarot, pendulums and runes; the healing and spiritual properties of crystals; and the use of herbs in everyday magick.



The Alchemy of Melancholy: Poems from a World on Fire
by Katie Benn
DK • HB • £20.00
ISBN 9798217140169
Published 3rd September

This empowering collection of 90 carefully curated poems and drawings is for anyone who finds themselves overwhelmed with the state of humanity or who has ever felt the call of self-discovery in search of wholeness. Katie Benn's evocative words and imagery not only mirror the mental and emotional challenges of the individual in the thick of change, but also touch on the collective strain of our times and offer an opportunity for reflection.



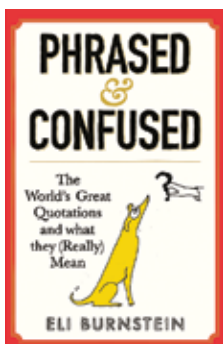
Murdle Heist
by G.T. Karber
Souvenir Press
PB • £10.99
ISBN 9781805222101
Published 8th October

You've solved the murders, you've uncovered the mysteries, you've caught the culprits... but can you pull off the perfect crime? In this brand-new adventure, join criminal mastermind Miss Ruby as she gathers a madcap crew and puts together a series of elaborate heists on her quest to become the world's greatest thief. Use your trusty deduction grids to figure out how to commit over fifty crimes and test your puzzling skills like never before!



Glamour Oracle
by Lisa Lister
Rockpool Publishing
Cards • £19.99
ISBN 9781922468253
Published 8th October

Blending the mystical with vintage charm, this deck of cards infuses glamour into the everyday through self-care, beauty rituals and intentional manifestation. The 36 cards and accompanying guidebook combine magic and aesthetics to reclaim glamour as an empowering spiritual force. This isn't about vanity: it's about channelling the divine by cultivating inner and outer radiance, and it is inspired by the vintage beauty of icons like Dita von Teese and Mae West.



Phrased & Confused
by Eli Burnstein & Liana Finck
Profile Books
HB • £14.99
ISBN 9781805226994
Published 1st October

Hell is other people. You are what you eat. Ignorance is bliss. Or is it? What do these timeless and iconic quotations *really* mean? Thankfully, in this book, language and philosophy obsessive Eli Burnstein is on hand to unpack forty-five of humanity's most iconic statements with lightness and wit. Each delightfully illustrated entry will improve your grasp of the meaning behind their riddlesome words, and deepen your appreciation for the big ideas they stand for.



How to Design a Universe
by Catherine Heymans
Bloomsbury Sigma
HB • £20.00
ISBN 9781399421447
Published 10th September

In this book, acclaimed astrophysicist Catherine Heymans takes you on a humorous and mind-bending journey through the science of reality itself. From the quantum quirks of subatomic particles to the cosmic mysteries of dark matter and the secrets of the human senses, Heymans explores whether humanity could ever create a virtual universe as rich and diverse as our own – and what that means for our sense of self, free will and consciousness.



Have It
by John Cooper Clarke
Picador • HB • £16.99
ISBN 9781037404191
Published 1st October

John Cooper Clarke may have an honorary doctorate and a poem on the English Literature GCSE syllabus, but don't let that fool you: the 'Poet Laureate of Punk' is still a bona fide iconoclast. In this collection of scathing new poems, the Bard of Salford puts his pen to work across a host of painfully funny critiques of modern life, in his inimitable style. "John Cooper Clarke is one of Britain's outstanding poets." Sir Paul McCartney



Grand: The Autobiography of Gromit
by Nick Park
Ebury Spotlight
HB • £22.00
ISBN 9781529990874
Published 22nd October

The world's most intelligent and well-read dog, the famously mute Gromit, finally breaks his silence, presenting his memoir to Nick Park, the four-time Oscar winner and creator of Wallace & Gromit. *Now, this is supposed to be Wallace's story. And maybe, at some point, he'll finish building the machine he was going to write this book with. Until then, this is my story. The tale of what goes on behind my eyes. And I really do know where all the bones are buried...*



The Flower Farmer's Year
by Georgie Newbery
Green Books
PB • £25.00
ISBN 9781399418744
Published 10th September

Fill your home with the colours and scents of flowers you've planted yourself, and enjoy the mindfulness, patience and creativity that growing them brings. In this book, artisan flower farmer, florist, and educator Georgie Newbery shares everything you need to know; from starting a cut-flower patch, optimising bed layout and choosing what to grow, to cutting, conditioning, and arranging your flowers. A year planner is also included to keep your land productive all year round.

Total Tastes

This new, refreshing cookbook enables you to incorporate nourishing pulses and grains into your diet. It features more than 80 recipes from Hodmedod's, a leading producer of wholefoods.

Deliciously versatile and naturally high in fibre and plant proteins, incorporating more pulses and wholegrains into our diets is one of the easiest ways to improve our health. Champions of high-quality, minimally processed ingredients, Hodmedod's share joyful and inventive recipes from around the world – from veg-friendly stews and flexitarian dals to comforting risottos, diverse doughs, dips, cakes, and sweet treats. With contributions from Henry Dimbleby, Joe Woodhouse, Amelia Christie-Miller, and Catherine Phipps, there's no better way to kickstart your wholegrain journey.

Here is a delicious recipe from the book:

Black Bean & Spelt Jambalaya

Serves 4

The jambalaya of Louisiana is a dish of the Americas, with roots in Africa and Europe. Eighteenth-century Spanish colonists wanted to eat paella but had to turn to tomatoes for colour and flavour as there was no saffron in Louisiana. Meanwhile, enslaved West Africans recreated the jollof rice of Senegal, a one-pot dish of rice and vegetables. In its Louisiana heartland, jambalaya is made with meat or fish, but Caribbean and modern vegetarian versions often use pulses instead. We've deviated further from true jambalaya by using pearled spelt in place of the rice.

2 tbsp neutral oil
1 onion, chopped
1 green or red (bell) pepper, diced
1 celery stick, diced
2 garlic cloves, chopped
1 tsp sweet paprika
1 tsp smoked paprika
1 tsp dried thyme
1 tsp dried oregano
½ tsp chilli (red pepper) flakes or cayenne pepper
400g (14oz) can of chopped tomatoes
125g (4½oz) dried black beans, soaked overnight
800ml (3⅓ cups) vegetable stock, plus extra



Photo © Joe Woodhouse

as needed
150g (5½oz) pearled spelt, rinsed
sea salt and freshly
ground black pepper to serve
chopped parsley
sliced spring onions (green onions)
hot sauce
lemon wedges

“A brilliant mix of the deeply authentic and the playfully original”

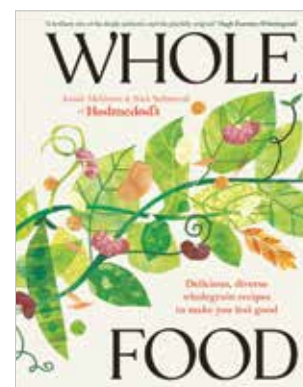
Hugh Fearnley-Whittingstall

Heat the oil in a large saucepan over a medium heat. Add the onion, pepper, and celery and cook for 12-14 minutes until soft and caramelized. Stir in the garlic and cook for 1 minute. Add the sweet paprika, smoked paprika, thyme, oregano, and chilli and cook for 30 seconds until fragrant.

Add the tomatoes and cook for 3-4 minutes to reduce and make them a little jammy. Stir through the beans and stock and simmer for 10 minutes before adding the spelt and simmering for a further

30-35 minutes until the beans and spelt are tender and the jambalaya is thick and glossy. Add a splash more stock if needed.

Remove from the heat, cover, and rest for 5-10 minutes. Taste and season well with salt and pepper. Scatter with parsley and spring onions and serve with hot sauce and lemon wedges.

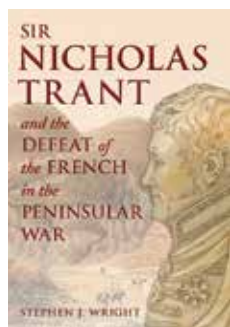


Whole Food

by Josiah Meldrum &
Nick Saltmarsh
DK • HB • £25.00
ISBN 9780241811177
Published 8th October

Past Times

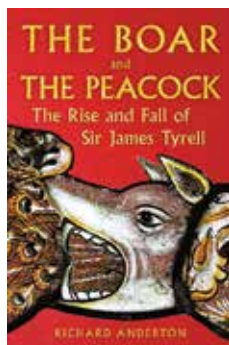
Rediscover your love of history and biography, with these new books from Amberley Publishing, a leading publisher of non-fiction titles.



Sir Nicholas Trant and the Defeat of the French in the Peninsula War

by Stephen J. Wright
Amberley Publishing
HB • £22.99
ISBN 9781398126077
Published 15th October

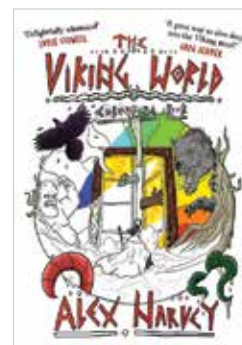
An illuminating biography of a forgotten hero of the Napoleonic wars, drawing on family archives for the first time. "A very good officer, but a drunken dog as ever lived." Such was the Duke of Wellington's alleged assessment of Sir Nicholas Trant. This book provides a complete reappraisal of Trant's career, putting the record straight. He is best remembered for his service in the Peninsula, where he acted as Wellington's liaison officer with the Portuguese.



The Boar and the Peacock: The Rise and Fall of Sir James Tyrell

by Richard Anderton
Amberley Publishing
HB • £22.99
ISBN 9781398132924
Published 15th November

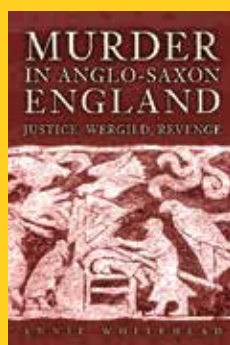
For centuries, Sir James Tyrell has been vilified for masterminding the murders of Edward V and his brother, Richard, duke of York, better known today as the Princes in the Tower. But who was this loyal servant of Richard III? And what, exactly, was his role in the tragic disappearance of the princes? Despite his central role in one of English history's most enduring mysteries, Sir James Tyrell has never been the subject of a biography where he is the principal subject – until now.



The Viking World: A Colouring Book

by Alex Harvey
Amberley Publishing
PB • £15.99
ISBN 9781398130197
Published 15th November

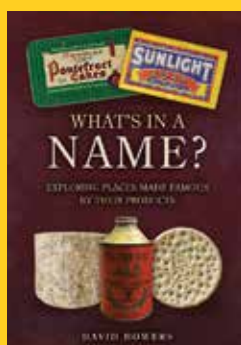
The Vikings continue to fascinate us like few others. Ask anybody about the Vikings and they will think of longboats, shield walls, fierce warriors, runic inscriptions and capricious gods. Their actions helped shape Europe as we know it, but their influence stretched much further out. In this book, Viking historian Alex Harvey employs his talents as an illustrator to present a selection of historically (and mythologically) accurate annotated outlines for creative colouring.



Murder in Anglo-Saxon England: Justice, Wergild, Revenge

by Annie Whitehead
Amberley Publishing
PB • £11.99
9781398133549
Published 15th October

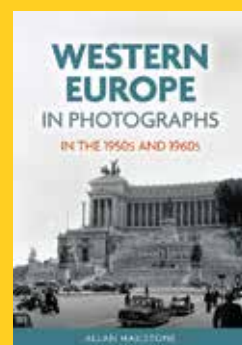
We all love a good murder story. Historian and author Annie Whitehead has collated around 100 cases in Anglo-Saxon England, from regicides to robberies gone wrong, and from personal feuds to state-sanctioned slaughter, examining their veracity and asking what, if anything, they can tell us about the motives of those who recorded them and about Anglo-Saxon governance and society. She also makes a few accusations herself – invoking the adage that there is no smoke without fire...



What's in a Name? Exploring Places Made Famous by their Products

by David Bowers
Amberley Publishing
PB • £15.99
9781398128859
Published 15th September

Do they still make Eccles cakes in Eccles and Bakewell tarts in Bakewell? How about all the other products named after places in the British Isles? Many of these are things you can eat: Arbroath Smokies and Melton Mowbray pork pies, for example, but there are also non-edible, manufactured, goods such as Harris tweed and BSA (Birmingham Small Arms) motor bikes. This book explores the origins and history of these products and their link with the place which has given them a name.



Western Europe in Photographs in the 1950s and 1960s

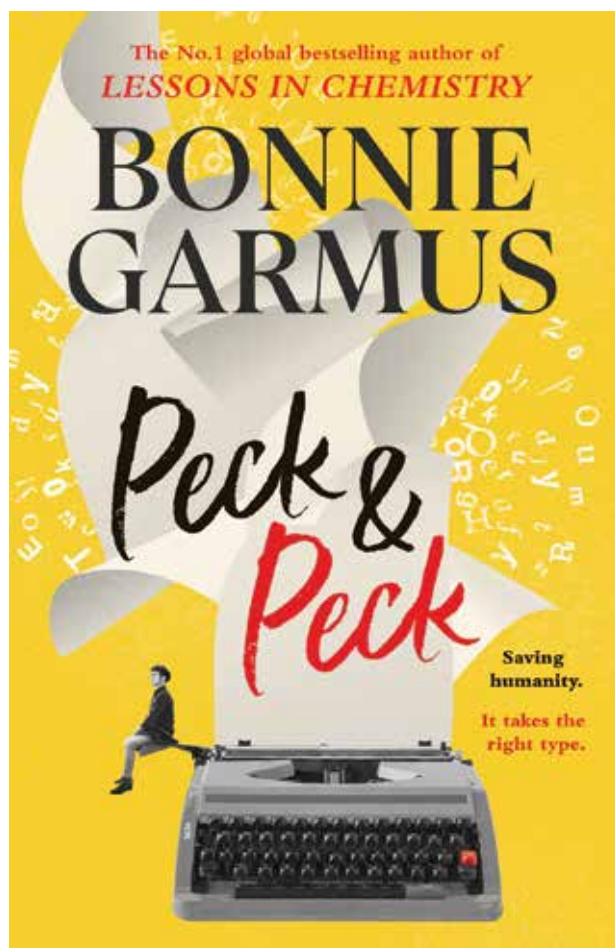
by Allan Hailstone
Amberley Publishing
PB • £15.99
9781398126534
Published 15th September

In the late 1950s and early 1960s photographer Allan Hailstone took a number of trips to France, Spain, Gibraltar, Germany (including Berlin), Belgium, the Netherlands, Luxembourg, Malta, Italy and Denmark to capture with his camera the world on the UK's doorstep. In these photographs a rapidly changing way of life in Western Europe is evocatively captured, as the continent moved from the aftermath of the Second World War, and the austerity caused by it, into the postwar boom.

Crossed Lines

In this new novel from the bestselling author of *Lessons In Chemistry*, a young man in 1980s New York finds his life is turned upside down when he is hired by the most prestigious, secretive and dysfunctional poetry journal in the world: *Peck & Peck*.

Peck & Peck
by Bonnie Garmus
Manilla Press • HB • £22.00
ISBN 9781786588814
Published 14th October



It's 1982, New York City. Crime is on the rise, muggings are in the streets, and Batter Gray, recent college graduate with a skill that no one wants – an 'ear' for poetry – is worried about his future. While all his friends have real jobs, he's folding T-shirts at the Gap. As for love? No. Not unless you count Sallie Mae, the student loan tyrant. He hears from Sallie all the time.

But when Batter gets a dream job at Peck & Peck, the most prestigious poetry quarterly in the world, his life moves into the literary fast lane. Soon Batter is knee-deep in the secret war between the two Editors in Chief, the famous Peck brothers – twins and enemies – as well as being privy to the private affairs of their thirty-nine editors, whose professed mission is the same: Find originality. Reward creativity. Burn the rest. And by 'burn', they mean incinerate. Because at Peck & Peck, 'good' isn't good enough, 'interesting' doesn't cut it, plagiarists aren't tolerated, and parolees run the mailroom. Hugely original, brilliantly funny and peopled with unforgettable characters, *Peck & Peck* is both a passionate ode to the written word and a heartwarming exploration of all that makes us human.

In this extract, Batter's parents discover that he wants to study poetry at college:

'Poetry?' my father said, shaking his rapidly graying head a few months later, when he got a courtesy call from my school's college counsellor letting him know I was planning to go to college and major in something without a future. 'We've talked

about this. I know you like your poetry books and I'm sure you'll read some new poems in freshman English, but no – non-one "goes into" poetry. That would be like "going into" macramé. You don't do that on purpose.'

'Batter,' my mother said, 'look at it this way. If poetry disappeared tomorrow, would the world end?'

I pictured the last flightless dodos being clubbed to death.

"Only Bonnie Garmus can write like this."

Meg Mason

"The perfect successor to Lessons In Chemistry."

Kristin Hannah

'It's just not serious,' my father said. He paused for a moment and gazed out the window. 'Well,' he said, in a conciliatory way, 'perhaps one could argue that "The Charge of the Light Brigade" is serious. It is about war. We already know war isn't a picnic, so move on, get to the point. If six hundred men rode directly into the Valley of Death – an idea that already smacks

of poor decision making – shouldn't our top priority be to determine how many are dead, alive, or wounded? What are the facts, Batter? I would have no objection if you wanted to be a journalist. What about a TV anchor?'

'But I'm good at poetry, Dad, and besides, poetry is part of the humanities – what you and Mom pursued. I thought you'd approve.' This was a complete lie, seeing as how my parents had been mentioning everything *but* the humanities for the past eight years.

'But history and typography aren't subjective. Poetry is. There's no way to check its authority.' My father rubbed the back of his neck. 'Anyway, do you really want to spend your life in a field where half the experts insist E.E. Cummings is brilliant, while other argue he's a hack who was too lazy to get his shift key fixed? And what about Plath? No one's going to claim that ended well.'

'I think what we're trying to say,' my mother interjected, 'is that just like no one deliberately selects a typeface that isn't readable unless they don't want anyone to be able to read what they've written, no one consults a poetry anthology for – well – anything, really. Things of substance require clarity. Besides, have you actually written any?'

When I didn't answer right away, my mother shook her head.

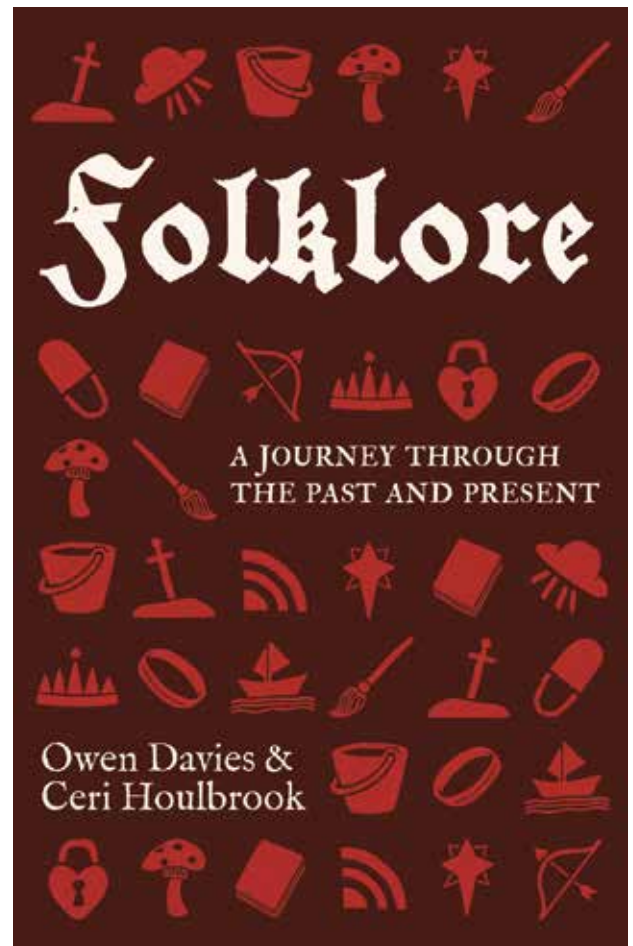
'Batter, honey,' she said, 'don't bother. When it comes to subjectivity, poetry is worse than figure skating. At the end of the day, you're never going to convince that Russian judge you deserve a ten.'

Lore of the Land

If you think folklore is a rigid, unchanging thing of the past, think again. In this fascinating book, Owen Davies and Ceri Houlbrook explore the long tradition of British folklore, how it has evolved and how it continues today.

Folklore: A Journey Through the Past and Present

by Owen Davies &
Ceri Houlbrook
Manchester University
Press • PB • £12.99
ISBN 9781526180407
Published 1st September



Owen Davies is Professor of Social History, and Ceri Houlbrook is Senior Lecturer in Folklore and History, at the University of Herfordshire. In the book, the authors investigate folklore in all its remarkable variations, from village rituals and fairy tales right through to UFO legends and internet fanfiction. Travelling through a landscape of witches, wizards and wicker men, they reveal how folklore has been written about in the past and show how it continues to be lived in the present.

Folklore is much more than the fossilised remains of a distant, rural past. It is and has always been ubiquitous, dynamic and political – a living tradition that draws from many sources and is forever being renewed, transformed and updated.

This extract looks at the tradition of the birthday cake:

People have long celebrated their birthdays, but in the distant past it was practice largely reserved for those of high rank. We find reference to birthday cakes in nineteenth century Britain, but only in relation to royalty or members of the aristocracy. Queen Victoria ‘always had a birthday cake’, reported one newspaper; ‘it is a triumph of the confectioners’ art’. In 1847 the Prince of Wales had a ‘splendid birth-day cake... On top of the cake, upon a crimson cushion, was the crown of his Royal Highness the Prince of Wales, surmounted by a plume of marabou feathers.’ A particularly elaborate confectionery creation is illustrated in an

1857 article on the festivities surrounding the coming age of a Mr J.H. Greville Smyth. The 'birthday cake' pictured in the newspaper looks more akin to a three-tiered landscaped garden, with foliage, dancing figures, and Grecian-urn planters.

*“The best introduction
to contemporary
British folklore.”*

History Today

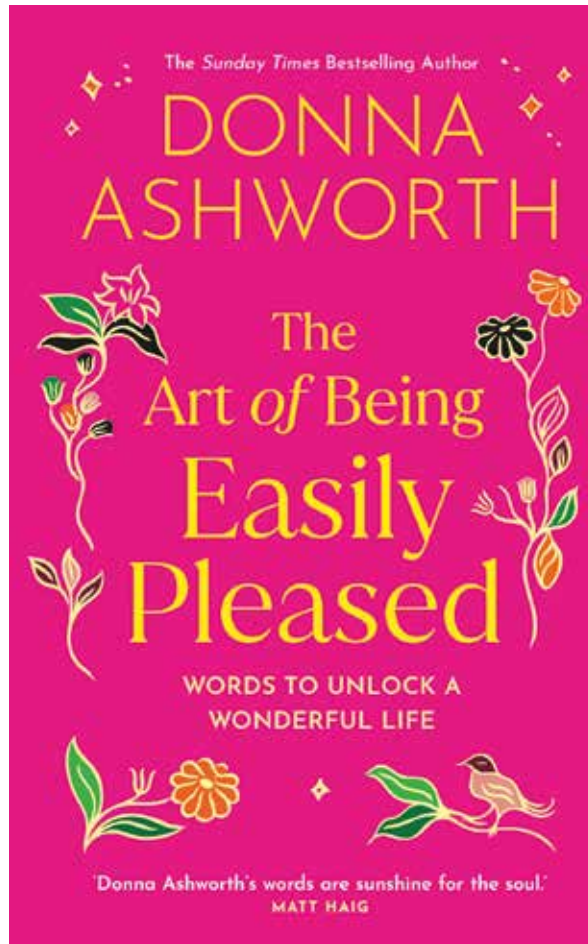
Many British people in this period, however, may have been unsure – and perhaps indifferent – about their actual birth dates. People may also have celebrated their saint's day (the saint they were named after) rather than the anniversary of their birth. Time and influences from the Continent changed this. It is during the nineteenth century that we begin to see the middle classes adopt the birthday celebration, and having your own chef prepare a saccharine masterpiece was no longer the only way to source a birthday cake. By the mid-nineteenth century, we begin to see confectioners advertising their birthday cakes in newspapers. And many families produced home-made cakes, particularly for the children of the household, as is evidenced in British fiction. In 1905, the author E. Nesbit described birthday celebrations in *The Railway Children*.

‘There was a cake on the table covered with white sugar, with “Dear Bobbile” on it in pink sweets.’

When did the birthday cake come to be decorated with candles? Our earliest British sources attribute the custom to Western Europe. 'Swiss superstitions', recorded in *The Folk-Lore Journal* in 1883, included a description of how a 'birthday-cake must have lighted candles arranged around it, one for every year of the little life. Birthday candles numbering the age of the celebrant seemed to have reached Britain by the start of the twentieth century. In 1926 a morose Eeyore was wishing for a birthday cake with three candles on it in *Winnie the Pooh*.

Enid Blyton describes several candled birthday cakes in her novels and short stories – for instance, in 1931: "There were seven coloured candles on the cake, one for each of Mollies years. "Won't they look lovely when they are lighted!" In some descriptions, it is blowing out the candles that grants the celebrant's wish. We see this in 'Ned's Birthday Wish', a poem published in a newspaper in 1909:

The birthday cake was beautiful,
A mountain high and white,
All trimmed with name and age in red,
And candles burning bright.
'Now, children, wish!' said mother dear,
'And blow the candles out!
I see Ned thinking hard,
What can it be about?'
'I wish – I wish –' said Ned, and
Another look to take,
'I wish,' he finished solemnly,
'It was a bigger cake!'



The Art of Being Easily Pleased: Words to Unlock a Wonderful Life

by Donna Ashworth
Hay House • HB • £14.99
ISBN 9781837826506
Published 27th October

Inspirational Reading

These two new books from Hay House will provide you with inspiration and advice on living a positive and fulfilled life. A beautiful collection of poetry and wisdom, and an insightful guide to authenticity and self-respect, they will help you every day.

This unique and exciting new collection from Donna Ashworth, the author of multiple *Sunday Times* bestselling poetry collections, will help you rediscover delight in the everyday and choose positivity, peace and presence, even in chaos. In a fresh format blending poems, essays, author-illustrated affirmations, personal stories, visualizations and meditative prompts, this book can be read from beginning to end or be opened at random to calm even the busiest of minds, shift perspective and remind you that joy is often just a moment away.

Through soulful reflections and honest insights from her own journey, Donna walks you through eight heart-led chapters which will encourage you to shift from perfectionism to presence; find delight in the ordinary every day; rewrite the stories you tell yourself; reclaim childlike wonder, even in difficult seasons; and choose joy on purpose – and let it change everything. *The Art of Being Easily Pleased* is a beautifully designed, giftable guide to living with acceptance, wonder, boldness and a heart open to the everyday miracles all around us.

This is the opening poem from the book:

Easily Pleased

You must be easily pleased to survive this world,
to thrive amidst its madness.

You must master the art
of delighting in the ordinary.
Learn to revel in the tiny wins,
the moments of peace,
and see each sunrise as the opening
to a sold-out show.

Let the big stuff, the tsunami waves,
crash out on the rocks,
whilst you paddle in the surf
with the sun or rain on your face.

Both feel just as good, if you would only let them.

You have to be easily pleased
to enjoy this world of ours
because the wondrousness
does not shout above the noise,

it babbles like a brook,
breezes like a spring wind
and washes in like breathy waves.

Listen. Look.

Be pleased, my friends, be pleased.

There is much to be pleased about.



YOU
RECLAIM
CAN'T
YOUR POWER
PLEASE
IN A WORLD
EVERYONE
OBSESSED WITH APPROVAL
VEX KING

**You Can't Please Everyone:
Reclaim Your Power in a World
Obsessed with Approval**

by Vex King
Hay House • PB • £14.99
ISBN 9781837825042
Published 6th October

Do you say yes when every part of you wants to say no? Do you overthink every message, keep the peace, carry other people's feelings and worry you're still not doing enough? Does life feel like a constant audition, where your worth depends on being who others want you to be? In this follow-up to the international bestseller *Good Vibes, Good Life*, Vex King shows how seeking approval leads you to abandon your centre – the place of self-trust, authenticity and inner peace.

People-pleasing can look like love, kindness or responsibility, but it often begins where self-love has been forgotten. At its heart is the fear that who you truly are might not be worthy of love, acceptance and belonging. This isn't about caring less. It's about loving yourself deeply enough to stop abandoning yourself, protect your peace and return to your centre. Blending lived experience, spiritual insight and practical tools, Vex reveals how to rebuild self-trust, build healthier relationships and make choices that align with your values.

In this extract, Vex writes about how we don't have to adhere to others' expectations of us:

The Price of Abandoning Yourself

While I was growing up in my community, there was a simple blueprint for success: become a doctor, dentist, accountant or lawyer. If you didn't pursue one of these prestigious professions, you were irrelevant. Your career wasn't only your own – it represented your family's pride, intelligence and worth, and to stray from the path was to disappoint not just individuals but an entire lineage of expectation.

This is the case in many other communities and cultures, too. So many of us learned early in life to perform; to impress, tick boxes and become 'good' instead of honest. We traded self-loyalty for external validation and told ourselves it was maturity. But this isn't a cultural problem – it's a human one.

We all inherit blueprints, timelines and rules about the person we should be and when to become them. For some of us, it shows up as pressure to be endlessly agreeable or strong. For others, it's the weight of fulfilling a family dream or maintaining an image to avoid disappointing those who once sacrificed everything for us. And increasingly, this pressure extends beyond the people we know. We begin performing for our society

and culture: for invisible audiences for strangers online for metrics, opinions and fleeting approval from people who don't know our name, heart or history.

It's an exhausting place to live from. You strive for praise yet still feel uneasy. You shape yourself to be acceptable, impressive, palatable. You meet one set of expectations, only to fall short of another. You please someone today and disappoint someone else tomorrow. And over time, you realize that no matter how carefully you edit yourself, *you simply can't please everyone.*

The price you're paying for this people-pleasing behaviour goes beyond moments of lost joy or fleeting stress. *It's costing you your life.* I know this sounds like an exaggeration, but when you live for other people's approval, you abandon far more than you realize. You turn away from your own values, purpose, path and intuition. You dim your talents, silence your voice and postpone the very dreams that make your life meaningful.

You exhaust your body through burnout. You lose touch with the relationships, opportunities and soul-aligned choices that were meant for the *real* you, not the version that you perform. In a sense, it's also costing the world the contribution that you could make. Ultimately, you sacrifice your happiness for other people's comfort. We'll always want love and a sense of belonging, but we don't need to abandon ourselves to have them.

To the End

In recent years, assisted dying has become a hotly debated issue, sitting at the intersection of medicine, morality and personal liberty. In *Fight to the Death*, journalist Paul Brand examines all both of the debate, meets a wide range of people affected by it, and tells their stories. We interviewed him to discover more.



How did you become involved in the assisted dying debate?

As a journalist, I can see momentum sweeping the world in favour of assisted dying, as country after country have legalised it. It has started lapping at the UK shores, because the Isle of Man recently legalised it, and so has Jersey. For a time it looked like England and Wales were likely to follow suit, and maybe Scotland as well. I became interested in it, because there are not many issues you cover as a journalist that are literally matters of life and death. There are so many moral complexities, I found it utterly fascinating. It's one of the most profound questions facing humanity – what does it mean to live and die well?

Do you think that it has become an issue recently, and has been legalised in so many places, because we are living longer?

I think it's a combination of long-term factors. Ageing societies are definitely a part of it. We are living longer, but we're not necessarily living better. There are other factors as well, like the decline of religious observance. Some of the barriers to assisted dying have fallen away in recent decades, as people feel less tied to the teachings of the church. Also, there is a rising tide of health consumerism – people are much more demanding about their own health and choices in healthcare. And, in lots of countries, there been a tipping point, where something politically happens, such as a change of government. All of a sudden, these facts come together to make a worldwide issue.

You are neutral in the book, presenting all sides of the argument and telling the stories of those involved. But you don't express your own opinion. Did you find that changed as you wrote the book?

I think it challenged my thinking. Taking the time to pause and think about situations in my own life that I hadn't really considered before, through the lens of assisted dying, was interesting. I talked to friends and family, some of whom are in the book. My godson has profound disabilities and it was quite an important moment, sitting down with his mum and talking to him about the value of his life and how society perceives him. It was a conversation we'd never really had the chance to have before. Some of the people I met around the world, and some of their situations, made me think that I genuinely don't know what I would do if I were in their shoes.

It's almost like a philosophical conundrum, but it's actually happening in the real world. Was it important to you to bring the theory into reality, with real people?

Yes, because what I was really keen to express in the book is that, no matter how you approach this debate, whichever side you're on, there is so much love and agony and empathy that goes into all of the decisions people are making. On covering assisted dying as a journalist, I've been quite frustrated by the anger of the conversation around it. And what I really wanted to do is write a respectful book, which invites people to witness and not judge, and come to their own considered view. We can discuss assisted dying in an abstract way, but until you apply it to individual lives, you don't fully contemplate the moral complexity of the issue.



Fight to the Death

by Paul Brand

August Books • HB • £20.00

ISBN 9781835985793

Published 1st October

Towards the end of the book, you write about how it has become an issue in the 'culture wars' – but do you see it as part of this polarisation?

I think, originally, it had nothing to do with the 'culture wars', but, like everything these days, in political discussion, it has become part of it. I am ashamed, sometimes, about our political debate, that we can't have respect for each other. People have weaved it into that narrative, knitting it together with other cultural issues about traditional values or liberal politics. It shouldn't be that sort of political football.

Are there any other writers that you enjoy reading?

Jon Ronson is one of my all-time favourites, because of his journalistic curiosity. He's got a lovely way of going out there and discovering things for himself. He finds out what the situation is, and then, rather than going in with a particular opinion, he does good old-fashioned journalism and writes about what he discovers.

What do independent bookshops mean to you?

As someone who loves reading, I love spending my time in independent bookshops. I love the fact that you can speak to people in those bookshops who understand all of the books that are within their store, and they can give you recommendations.

Family Life

This essential guide is full of advice for co-parents who are bringing up children together, but separately. It gives you the tools to raise a happy and supported family, in many different parenting situations.

Contrary to harmful stereotypes, research actually shows that children raised in cooperative co-parenting environments are more likely to feel secure and supported as they grow, despite the changes in family structure. *The Co-Parent* gives you the tools to help your family experience the positive aspects of co-parenting, while also navigating the more challenging parts. As a co-parent himself, Aaron Dale shares his own insights, interviews with experts, practical tips and moments of reflection in order to help you find your own way forward.

Wherever you are on your co-parenting journey, every page is packed with advice on resolving past conflict, setting boundaries, maintaining healthy communication, managing finances, dealing with new relationships, organising schedules, navigating special occasions and – where applicable – transitioning to a blended family.

This extract looks at splitting up and how it affects children:

Society often tells us that two parents are better than one and this narrative can weigh so heavily on us. We're conditioned to believe that there's no such thing as a perfect relationship, that things could always be worse, and because of this we settle for less than we deserve, fearing what might happen if we step into the unknown.

We can easily become entangled in financial obligations, too, such as shared debt and mortgages. It can feel like an impossible trap and for some of us, age adds another layer of uncertainty. The idea of beginning again when you've invested years into a relationship is frightening and you know that leaving means losing the stability you've fought so hard to maintain, especially for your child.

But let me tell you right now: none of these reasons are worth sacrificing your mental and emotional well-being for – not one of them. Your peace of mind,

your happiness and your sense of self are priceless. Leaving a toxic or unfulfilling relationship is not only about choosing yourself, but also about teaching your child what love and happiness truly look like.

A 2019 Sheffield University study looked at the experiences of over 27,800 households with child over a six-year period. It found no evidence of a negative impact on children's well-being from living in a single-parent household. In terms of self-reported life satisfaction, quality of peer relationships and positivity about family life, children from single-parent homes scored just as high – or even higher – than those from two-parent households. The key takeaway from this study is that what truly matters for a child's well-being wasn't the number of parents under one roof, but the quality of the relationships in that environment.

“Your peace of mind, your happiness and your sense of self are priceless.”

In my work with children, young people, and families, I have seen that structural changes in families are an increasingly common experience for young people, and in many cases, everyday disagreements between parents have little lasting impact on children. However, when a parental relationship becomes chronically conflictual, marked by ongoing hostility and emotional instability, the effects on children can be significant.

Research suggests that prolonged exposure to high levels of conflict can place a child's nervous system in a constant state of alert. When this happens, the parts of the brain responsible for survival become overactive, while those involved in thinking, reflecting and emotional regulation become less accessible. As a result, children may develop an overreactive stress response and show signs such as anxiety, impulsivity, aggression, disturbed sleep, difficulty concentrating, emotional numbness, dissociation and symptoms associated with trauma.

Living in an environment where tension

and unpredictability are ongoing can mean that a child feels constantly unsafe. When fear, sadness or confusion arise in relation to the very people who are meant to provide protection and care, this can deeply affect a child's sense of trust and security. Over time, they may develop complex emotional defences as a way of coping with a world that feels unreliable.

When children do not yet have the emotional capacity to understand or express these feelings, distress is often communicated through behaviour. They may act out, withdraw, or struggle in school and relationships, not because they are 'difficult', but because they are overwhelmed. These behaviours are often unconscious attempts to manage intense emotions and to signal a need for support.

Sadly, such behaviours can sometimes lead to negative responses from parents, teachers or other professionals who may not recognise them as expressions of distress. Instead of receiving understanding and care, the child may encounter criticism or punishment, which can reinforce feelings of shame, isolation, and misunderstanding.

You can have two parents living together in constant conflict, with a child stuck in the middle, dreading coming home, losing sleep, not eating properly, and feeling torn between mum and dad. That's not a healthy environment. If your relationship has become toxic, and has been for some time, I urge you to consider whether staying together is better for your child.

If you are feeling low, stressed out, worried, anxious... guess where that energy is being transferred? To your child. If you are feeling positive, happy, excited, good about yourself... guess what energy is getting transferred to your child?

Sometimes, separating and creating healthier environments in two homes is far more beneficial than keeping up appearances in one unhappy home. Your child wants to see you happy, but that may not be together, that may be on your own or even one day in a different relationship.



The Co-Parent: A Toolkit for Parenting Together, Apart

by Aaron Dale

Green Tree • PB • £16.99

ISBN 9781399427579

Published 10th September

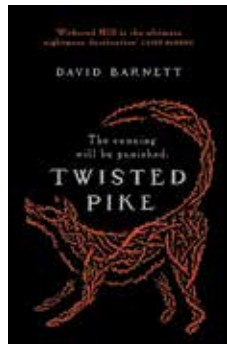
Horrifying Fiction



Folk Horror Folk Tales

by Bob Pegg
The History Press • HB • £14.99
ISBN 9781837050956
Published 3rd September

A book which frames traditional folk tales within the conventions of the folk horror genre. Before the Wicker Man and the Midsommar sacrifices... before the days of television and radio... before Count Dracula landed in Whitby and Victor Frankenstein stitched together a man from scavenged body parts... all around the world people gathered to be entertained by the blood-chilling tales of the storytellers. These tales reflect a universal appetite for the strange.



Twisted Pike

by David Barnett
Canelo • PB • £9.99
ISBN 9781835983164
Published 1st October

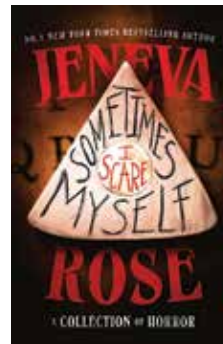
A new folk horror novel from the author of *Scratch Moss*. The isolated village of Withered Hill is rocked when a film crew arrives, planning to make a low-budget horror movie called *Twisted Pike*. In truth, the cameras are a front for something infinitely more sinister. Despite their misgivings, villagers allow the crew to stay but they're not there by accident. They are there to destroy this cursed place, and all who live there. An unmissable tale from the Children of the Night Award-winner.



The Horrors We Harbour

by Emily Cooper
Solstice Books • HB • £20.00
ISBN 9781398535831
Published 10th September

The beam from Guinevere's lighthouse fends off the horrors lurking in the ocean surrounding the isolated Ynys Halen. Guin has one job: keep the light on. So, when Guin slips up, monsters are free to ravage the island and terror ensues for all who live there. No longer confident that the lighthouse can protect them, the islanders are all too keen to return to the ritual sacrifices that once sated the sea. As punishment, first in the firing line is Guin's more-than-a-friend, Catrin Morgan...



Sometimes I Scare Myself

by Jeneva Rose
Simon & Schuster • HB • £16.99
ISBN 9781398568891
Published 24th September

Not all nightmares come from sleep. Some come from #1 *New York Times* bestselling author Jeneva Rose in her most unsettling book yet. A dinner party where a séance spirals out of control. A quiet house in which a new mother suspects something is wrong. A roadside stop with cursed items for sale. Three familiar setups. Three terrifying turns. Dark, twisty, and impossible to put down, this chilling collection proves that ordinary places can hide horrifying secrets.

Weaving Through History

Tying in with the exhibition at the British Museum, this book tells the story of the Bayeux Tapestry. We interviewed the authors Michael Lewis and David Musgrove to find out more.

What drew you to write about the Bayeux Tapestry?

We had known each other since 2008, when there was a conference (co-organised by Michael) at the British Museum. Ten years later, when the Tapestry's loan to the UK was announced (in 2018), we decided to write a book together. We felt there was a gap in the market for a popular book on the Bayeux Tapestry that talked people through its story and how scholars have interpreted its various aspects.

What does the tapestry tell us about life at the time it was created?

The Bayeux Tapestry was probably made in the 1070s, so is more or less contemporary with the events it describes (in text) and illustrates (in images). Even so, it reflects some aspects of the real world of the eleventh century – like clothing, arms and armour, and ships – but others – like buildings, some animals, and trees – are borrowed from art. It is therefore important for archaeologists and historians to quarry its details with care. Likewise, some aspects of its storytelling reflect other contemporary sources, but others do not.

How did you go about researching the history behind the Tapestry?

Having worked on the Tapestry for many years (it was the subject of Michael's PhD), we had a pretty good foundation to build on. Of course, we re-read old books and articles, as well as newer ones, but we also had great conversations. In terms of our working practice, we would meet, discuss a section of the Tapestry, and then Dave would draft something. It would then be handed to Michael, and then back and forth, drawing in new research and ideas.

Do you see the tapestry as a work of art, or a historical document?

It is both. As a work of art, it has so much detail to draw you in. You can spend loads of time just exploring one scene or certain aspects – in fact, Michael often tackles a topic in his research because it helps him explore a part forensically and in detail. Also fascinating are the artistic influences the Tapestry draws

upon. But it is also a historical document, and an important one at that. Interesting is its ambiguity in certain aspects that can only be fleshed out by other historical sources.

Which other authors inspire you in your work?

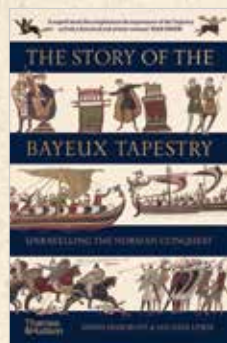
Michael very much looks to his PhD supervisor Richard Gameson, as well as Gale Owen-Crocker, as mentors. He has been fortunate to collaborate with both on books and articles, and both still provide support by reading things he writes.

What do independent bookshops mean to you?

We love visiting independent bookshops. They often have great variety in stock and are wonderful for browsing.

The Story of the Bayeux Tapestry

by Michael Lewis & David Musgrove
Thames & Hudson • PB • £12.99
ISBN 9780500299227
Out Now



Male Online

In this compelling debut novel, Amanda is appalled to discover that her 15-year-old son Nathan has been involved in online sexual bullying which led to the suicide of her neighbour, 15-year-old Maisie. What could she have done to prevent it, and what can she do now to steer Nathan away from misogyny? We interviewed the author Rebecca Spargo to discover more.

Photo © Nicola Light Photography



What inspired you to write *Such a Nice Boy*?

A few years ago, back in March 2021, a big story hit the news. A young woman called Soma Sara started posting on her Instagram, talking about rape culture in some of Britain's most prestigious private schools. She set up a platform, Everyone's Invited, asking anyone who'd been impacted by this issue to share their stories, and thousands did. It was horrifying because, as a woman, you like to think that things are getting better. So it was quite a shock to realise that for younger generations of women things are actually getting worse. It was quite clear that we just didn't have a clue what was really going on, what it was really like for them. There was then an Ofsted report which found it wasn't just in private schools, it was across the spectrum. I looked at all the mothers of boys that I knew and I'd think how devastated they would be if they found out that their

son was behaving like some of these boys were behaving. And that was the spark for the novel. The voice of the mother of the perpetrator was one we hadn't really heard from before. Someone who is conflicted between wanting to see boys face the consequences of their actions, and wanting to protect their son.

"Brilliant, sad and urgent."

Chloe Combi

There is also another story in the book, about Amanda's life when she was a teenager in 1990s, and the death of her friend Eloise. Do you see a parallel between the two stories?

Yes, there were two reasons to include that story. The first was to show why Amanda is the way she is, to show her background and why she acts as she does. The other was to show that things haven't really changed since then. It's the sort of thing that happens to women regularly but never makes the news.

Do you think that, until she discovers what her son Nathan is up to, Amanda gives him too much credit, and her daughter Cara not enough?

I think, because of what happened to Amanda and to her friend when she was younger, she has fixated on building her daughter up to be strong and able to withstand what she feared may one day happen to her. There was perhaps an air of complacency with her son because she thought she and her husband were modelling a good relationship. She thought that her son would just become a decent man. Back when she was young, the fear was that when your child becomes a teenager that they might fall in with a bad crowd, but now that crowd is on a computer or phone.

What do you think can be done to counter explicit images and misogynistic content online? Do you agree with a social media ban for young people?

Yes I do agree with a potential ban. I know that there will be kids who use social media today who will try and find a way around it, but it sets a change in the culture and gives parents the back-up to say 'no, this is illegal'. The fact that there are kids who will get around it isn't a reason not to impose it – there are kids that get around drinking alcohol and taking drugs when they're young too, but we've still made those illegal because the risk of harm is so high.

Towards the end of the book, Amanda says she's very glad that she isn't a teenager today. Do you agree with her?

Yes. I think back to myself as a teenager and I was quite anxious about a lot of

things. I can still remember mean things people said in passing in person. Imagine if you were now on social media and you were 12 or 13 years old, and people were making comments about the way you look. It would be devastating. So I'm very glad that I grew up without a phone. That I was able to go out and make mistakes without it being documented by everyone. And we didn't have the added social pressure of being online all the time.

Are there any other authors that inspire you in your writing?

The main one is Jodi Picoult. I think she's the master of dissecting a social issue. From a writing perspective, I remember the first time I read *Black Swan Green* by David Mitchell. I love the beauty of the way he puts words on the page. Another one is JK Rowling. I have read the *Harry Potter* books to my children, but I also read her before I had children, and I think that she's a genius plotter.

What do independent bookshops mean to you?

It's the passion for reading and books that the independent bookseller brings which is so good. An indie bookshop called Paper Moon opened about a year ago in Guildford, not too far from where I live. They quickly started organising community events, and a variety of clubs. A community of readers is wonderful, especially in an age where we're so chronically online.

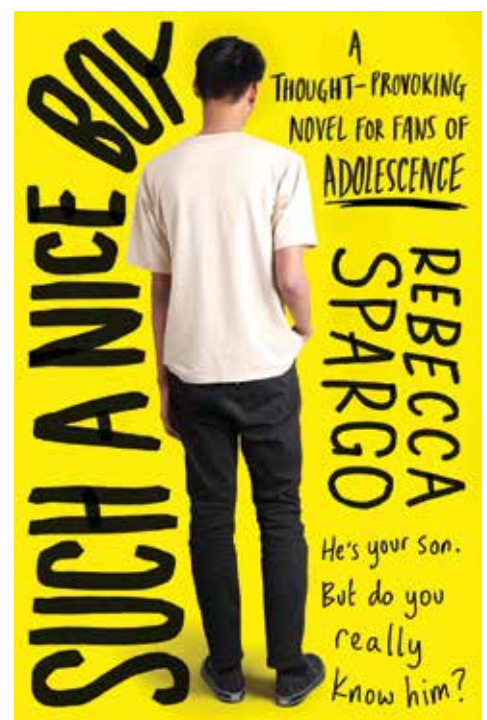
Such a Nice Boy

by Rebecca Spargo

Hera • PB • £9.99

ISBN 9780241820735

Published 8th October



Magic & Mystery

The Witches of Cambridge is the first book in a new series from the bestselling author of *Practical Magic*. Two brilliant young women in 1950s Cambridge, Massachusetts become immersed in a mysterious secret group of witches.

By the 1950s, Cambridge, Massachusetts feels far removed from the legendary witch trials that marked its early days as a colony. Ava, a bright young woman from a small town in Maine, arrives for her first year at Radcliffe College. There, she meets Lauren, her opposite in every way – the wild and brazen daughter of a wealthy and well-established Cambridge family. But the two have more in common than they think. Both are recruited by the Lilith Society, a secret organization of witches at Radcliffe dating back to colonial times. As they learn more about their legacy, Ava and Lauren form a close bond that is put to the test as they learn to navigate their new power, friendship, and love.

While Radcliffe seems like a safe haven, the shadow of McCarthyism looms large, an ever-present threat to the flourishing creative and intellectual life in Cambridge. And as girls from the Lilith Society begin to go missing, Ava and Lauren realize the witch trials of the past may not be as deeply buried as they once believed.

This extract looks at the life and history of Lauren Bell:

It was said that everyone had three fates. The one they were born with, the one they walked away from, and the one they made for themselves. Fate was a mystery, with unexpected twists and turns, yet there were those who were sure of what their futures would bring and Lauren Bell was among them. She was as obstinate as she was fierce, standoffish in a way that lonely people often are. Perhaps it was her

The Witches of Cambridge
by Alice Hoffman
Scribner • HB • £20.00
ISBN 9781398565296
Published 8th September
**Look out for a signed,
bookplated edition
while stocks last!**

loneliness that had caused her to plan out her future when she was a small child, no ifs, ands, or buts. The women in her family had always attended Radcliffe, and Lauren intended to do the same. She couldn't wait to become a member of the Lilith Society, a secret organization that had begun for women who has been chased out of the city of Boston long ago, those who need to find solace and shelter on the far side of the Charles River. They'd gathered together in a squat black house that was used for those in need, said to have been built by the very same woman who had built the Bells' house on Brattle Street.

Although Lauren wasn't a great beauty, she was something more, a true original, unlike anyone else, with a slender body and pale, almost white hair that nearly reached her waist. Her mouth was wide and turned down at the edges, and her dark, gold-flecked eyes could cut you down to size with a fleeting look. Those who dared to examine Lauren closely might notice both her perfect bone structure and her small, sharp teeth. Lauren had been a rebel from the start, even among the Bells. Her parents had done their best, tying a red string around her waist to keep her centred and down-to-earth, but Lauren's daring prevailed. She knew she was different, and was proud of it. Often, she took up a needle and pricked her finger just to see her own dark blood. That was how she discovered that she possessed magic.

***"Rich with history,
heartbreak and magic,"***

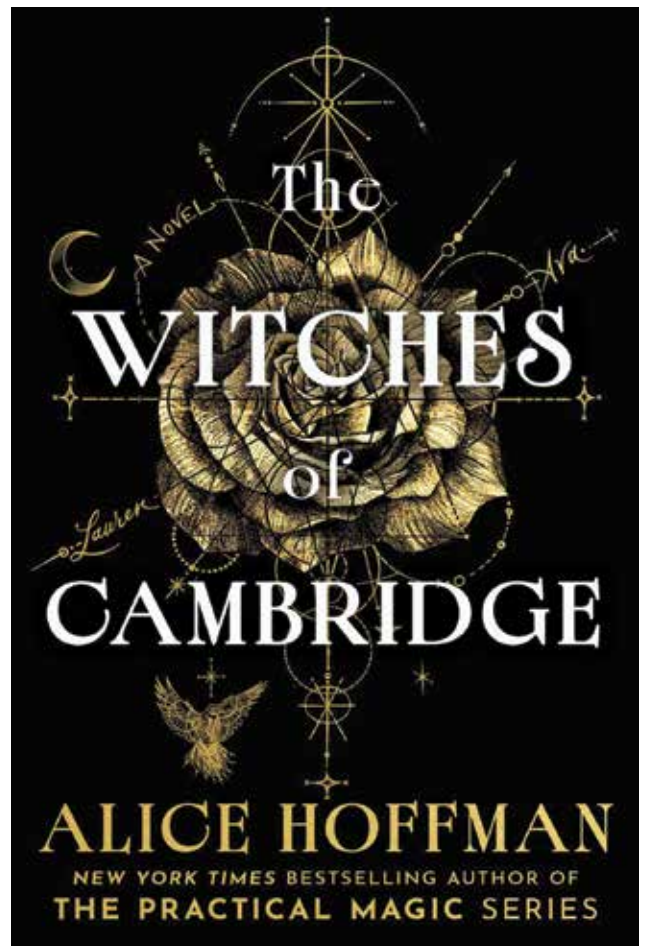
Leigh Bardugo

The Bell women had all been unusual, but they had never wanted their photographs taken or their stories told. It was rumored that their lives had sprung from tragedy, a long time ago, when their ancestors were among the first residents of Cambridge, but they grew like vines, flourishing despite the misfortune they'd known.

The family home on Brattle Street could be found only if you knew the way;

otherwise you would likely walk right past, as the postman did on a daily basis, so thoroughly bewildered that he took to setting the mail beneath the tall hedges, hoping for the best. Built more than two hundred years earlier, and always painted the same dark green, the house was tucked away behind some of the last elm trees in the Commonwealth, for most of those trees in North America had been ravaged by disease. Members of the Bell family were born with magic in their blood; it was as real as the eleventh finger on their left hands or their sharp teeth. It wasn't a choice to be different, it was a legacy and all of them, including Lauren, knew that it was safer not to reveal their true identities.

In the past, women who were suspected of witchery had been forced into swimming tests to see if they would drown, for witches were said to always float when dunked in water. In Scotland, in 1597, James VI published *Daemonologie*, a pamphlet insisting there was innate evil in witchcraft, and this small book had led to mass trials and executions. Magic had once been legal in England, considered a natural skill; it had often to do with crops, bees, cows, love, and healing, for every enchantment was a wish fulfilled. The Witchcraft Act of 1542 was England's first witchcraft law, announcing that witchery was a crime punishable by death, and then in 1563 Queen Elizabeth passed the act against *Conjuracons, Inchantments, and Witchcraftes*. That was when the fate of those who practiced magic changed and witch-hunters began to lurk on rural roads or in dodgy city streets where sewage ran black and rats gathered.



Cold Comfort

In *Shiver*, Brigid Lowe describes how, in the wake of turmoil and trauma, she moved to Scotland and set herself a mission: to swim in 1,000 of the country's lochs. We interviewed her to discover more about her book, which blends memoir, history, mythology and nature writing.

Photo © Ide Crawford



The book is about your experiences wild swimming in Scottish lochs. Did you always intend to write about those experiences?

No, I very much decided to write the book afterwards. I only came to creative writing very recently. I spent years and years as an academic. But when I experience stuff, I tend to try and find the right words for it in my head, even without any intention of writing it down. My mode of swimming is very much about just getting in and being, and I would try and understand the process in my own mind.

Did you write about your experiences after each swim, or was it all from memory?

Sometimes I would talk to my daughter. And if we were swimming together, we'd talk about it, we'd look at the light on the loch and its particular quality. We'd find words for it together, and remember back to the conversation we'd had. There were also a couple of people I was corresponding with at the time, and I would put some of it into writing in the course of that correspondence. But after about two thirds of the way through the experiences chronicled in the book, I did start to think that there was something in it.

The book is a memoir, but you also include history and mythology and literary references. Did you do a lot of research into that aspect of the book, or was it from your own knowledge?

I am the kind of traveller who enjoys my travelling much more if I know more about where I'm going. Every holiday I've ever been on has turned into a bit of a research project, and I find that it makes it so much more exciting, once you know the history, legends and the science of the place you're in. I didn't do any research for the book, because I'd already done it. That's just the way I go around in the world.

You write about traumatic experiences and near misses that you've had in the book, but also about how we need to take risks sometimes. Do you think that taking risks can be beneficial?

I think that, in contemporary experience, we've not quite figured out how to manage risk a lot of the time. It seems as though the main thing we're doing is getting rid of all risks. But if you get rid of all managed risk, you end up projecting it everywhere, and seeing everything as stressful. I do think that people are wired differently in terms of their tolerance. Some people live a steadier life where there are no thrills, and they prefer it that way. Personally, I can be pathologically risk-averse, but also pathologically risk-seeking. The loch, as a closed off bit of open water, embodies that balance, it's open to risk, but not too open. I'm not always sensible in the way that I manage it!

You do write a bit about your children, who are sometimes involved in your adventures. Did becoming a parent change your attitude to risk and life?

Yes. I think that, biologically, there is huge evidence that women's brains are rewired in the course of their first pregnancy towards a much greater sensitivity to risk. The stakes are suddenly raised. It takes a long time to be ready to take risks again.

Do you think that, as we have more heatwaves, more people will take up wild swimming?

Moving to Scotland seems incredibly canny at this stage! In England, we've very, very bad at making open water available. But wild swimming, a cold dip, is very good in a heatwave. You're cooler for several hours afterwards. In England, if you get into water anywhere, people will generally be pretty disturbed by the idea. But if it does become more popular, people need to understand the risks to themselves and to the natural environment that they're immersing themselves in.

Are there any other authors who inspire you in your writing?

The Romantics saw nature as something you should really not miss out on. I do love Wordsworth and



Shiver: The Lessons of the Lochs

by Brigid Lowe

Elliott & Thompson

HB • £16.99

ISBN 9781783969562

Published 24th September

Coleridge. I think that there is a slight gender difference – they could go off on long walks because they were men, and they could leave their wives and children behind, unmentioned. So I'm also influenced by women writers such as Dorothy Wordsworth and, more recently, Nan Shepherd. Then you have Emily Brontë, who writes about landscape as a kind of threat. Nature is a great model in that way, it shows that joy and risk are not opposites, but often part of one spectrum feeding off one another.

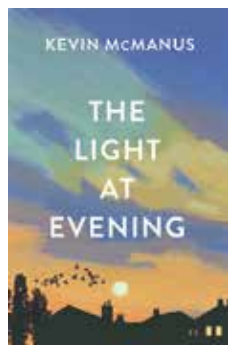
What do independent bookshops mean to you?

When my debut novel came out, I arranged my own tour of Welsh independent bookshops, and I had an amazing time. I'm from an academic background, so I'm used to entering rooms full of students who are sceptical. Turning up in indie bookshops, where the booksellers already know your work, was such a different experience. There was such openness to engaging with the book and the author, and that's the biggest gift an author can have.

Brigid Lowe is a Bookshop Day Ambassador. Bookshop Day is on Saturday 10th October.



Fiction



The Light at Evening
by Kevin McManus
The Book Social
PB • £9.99
ISBN 9781918291780
Published 10th
September

The story of a man caught between duty and dream, haunted by what was lost and what might still be found. In a quiet corner of rural Ireland, Ciarán lives as a unfulfilled poet and teacher. Struggling with the recent loss of his father, grief settles into his days, intertwined with the quiet responsibility of caring for his ageing mother and supporting his wife as she faces cancer. Then, in the stillness between dusk and night, something begins to change...



The Winter Guest
by Sarah Moss
Picador • HB • £12.99
ISBN 9781037412172
Published 1st October

A new short novel from the author of *Ghost Wall* and *The Fell*. On Christmas Eve, in a hotel on Ireland's west coast, a man and a woman meet for the first time. As a snowstorm gathers outside windows twinkling with fairy lights, they share a meal, pour wine, propose a toast. Janice and Gerry may be strangers to one another, but they each have a confession to make. As the blizzard howls, the night will take an unexpected turn, and their conversation will have consequences...



We Love You, Bunny
by Mona Awad
Scribner • PB • £9.99
ISBN 9781398535183
Published 8th
September

The highly-anticipated follow up to the viral sensation *Bunny*, this is a brilliantly written, laugh-out-loud funny, dark and delirious novel set in the Bunny-verse, now in paperback. *Frankenstein* by way of Heathers, it is a prequel and a sequel, and an wild and totally complete standalone novel. When this novel opens, Sam has just published her first novel to critical acclaim. But at a stop on her book tour, her one-time frenemies, kidnap her...



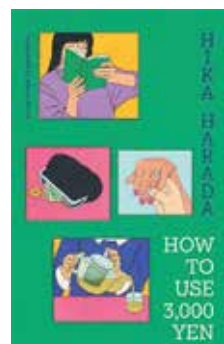
The Golden Hours
by Louisa Young
Mantle • HB • £20.00
ISBN 9781035068876
Published 3rd
September

A brand new novel continuing the late Elizabeth Jane Howard's bestselling *Cazalet Chronicles* series. It's December 1962, and the Cazalet family are gathering to celebrate Christmas. With the family's beloved Home Place long sold, Polly and Gerald have offered Fakenham Hall in Norfolk to parents, siblings, cousins and children. Cousins Polly, Louise and Clary, are struggling to balance the demands of midlife with their personal, secret desires.



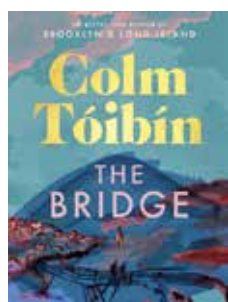
Female Life on Planet Earth
by Laleh Khadivi
Oneworld
HB • £16.99
ISBN 9781836432821
Published 24th
September

A witty and tender celebration of womanhood. Heti moves in a daze of grief after her mother dies, until her life is upended by the arrival of an unmarked package containing photos of her mother as a young woman in Iran, enveloped head to toe in a black veil, pointing a machine gun at a group of sobbing young women. Unable to confront the one person she most wants answers from, she turns to the women around her instead.



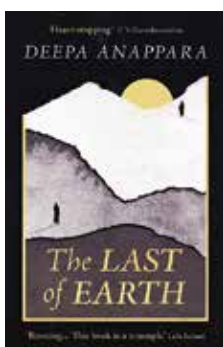
How to Use 3,000 Yen
by Hika Harada
Translated by Alison Watts
Scribner • PB • £14.99
ISBN 9781398525993
Published 10th
September

A new novel from the author of *Dinner at the Night Library*. Hika Harada weaves a warm, wise and deeply relatable story of three generations of women navigating love, work, family – and the quiet anxieties of money. From a young woman confronting the fragility of financial independence, to a mother managing a household on a single income, to a grandmother facing the uncertainty of old age, each must rethink what security, freedom and happiness really mean.



The Bridge
by Colm Tóibín
Picador • HB • £12.99
ISBN 9781037418525
Published 3rd
September

Miquel and his father are living an uneasy life together in his mother's house in the Pyrenees, where she had been returning to on the day she died. A new bridge, connecting the two valleys, is almost complete, which will end the valley's isolation and create an easier route to smuggle contraband deep into the mountains. Where Miquel's father imagines opportunity, Miquel foresees disaster and an exposure to the outside world.



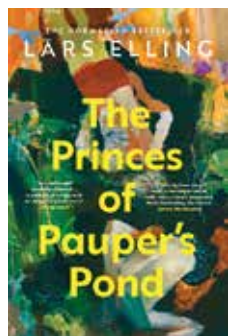
The Last of Earth
by Deepa Anappara
Oneworld • PB • £10.99
ISBN 9780861548606
Published 8th October

Now in paperback, this is a spellbinding story set in 1869 about two outsiders who venture into the Forbidden Kingdom of Tibet, both driven by a motive they are desperate to keep secret. Balam is a surveyor-spy, recruited to guide an English captain on a foolhardy mission. His path will soon cross with that of another unlikely explorer, Katherine. Fleeing a life of frustrated ambition, Katherine has a plan to secure her legacy as the first European woman to reach Lhasa.



Catherine: A Retelling of Wuthering Heights
by Essie Fox
Orenda Books
PB • £10.99
ISBN 9781917764667
Published 22nd
October

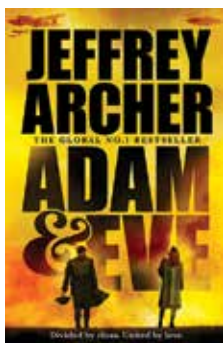
A reimagining of Emily Brontë's *Wuthering Heights*, told with beauty and intensity, that brings new life to a timeless classic and lays bare the dark heart of an immortal love. With a nature as wild as the moors she loves to roam, Catherine Earnshaw grows up alongside Heathcliff, a founding her father rescued from the streets of Liverpool. Their fierce, untamed bond deepens as they grow – until Mr Earnshaw's death leaves Hindley, Catherine's brutal brother, in control...



The Princes of Pauper's Pond

by Lars Elling
Translated by Don Bartlett
Orenda Books
HB • £18.99
ISBN 9781917764568
Published 24th September

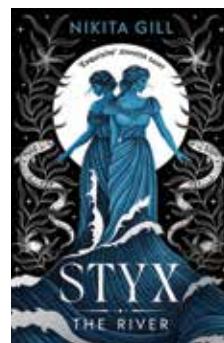
The wondrous, magical and deeply moving debut novel by one of Norway's finest artists, Lars Elling. In 1913, two brothers are sent into the forest to fend for themselves, forging a bond through hunger, freedom and endurance. Before the summer is over, a decision fractures that world, leaving a scar that will mark their family for generations. A tale about brotherhood and belonging, and those moments that can seal a family's fate.



Adam & Eve

by Jeffrey Archer
HarperCollins
HB • £22.00
ISBN 9780008640316
Published 6th October

The final novel from the bestselling author. 11th November 1918. As the Great War ends, two babies draw their first breath. Eve is the daughter of an Earl. Adam is, a shepherd's son. Yet from their first meeting they form an extraordinary bond that neither privilege nor prejudice can break. Then on a single September night in 1940, as Hitler prepares to invade the British Isles, their actions will change his mind, determining not just their own futures but the fate of a nation.



Styx: The River

by Nikita Gill
Solstice Books
HB • £20.00
ISBN 9781398537194
Published 1st September

A lyrical verse novel, the second in the Goddesses of the Underworld series, following Hekate. The firstborn child of Titans, Styx is revered as the first of her kind – until she is eclipsed and forgotten amid her scores of siblings, the Oceanids and the Potamoi. Styx finds solace and sisterhood in her cousin, Asteria. Together, they train in the arts of creation and magic, and they discover both the joy sparked by true love and the fierce resilience birthed from motherhood.



American Hagwon

by Min Jin Lee
4th Estate
HB • £25.00
ISBN 9780008823900
Published 29th September

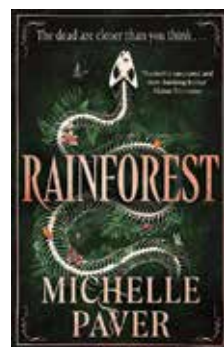
A new novel from the author of *Pachinko*. John and Helen Koh and their three children – Bo, DH and Mido – are building new lives in Korea when they find their worlds upended, first by a terrible betrayal and then by the 1997 Asian financial crisis. Striving to regain their footing, the Kohs set out to do whatever it takes to provide for their children's futures. They leave Seoul for Sydney and eventually settle in California, where new opportunities open for the Koh children.



Royal Witch

by Philippa Gregory
HarperCollins
HB • £25.00
ISBN 9780008745035
Published 20th October

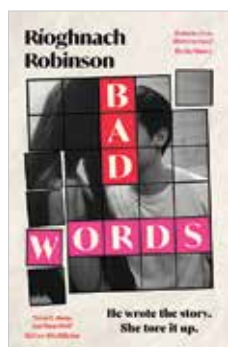
A new work of historical fiction from the author of *Boleyn Traitress*. 1420. Eleanor Cobham arrives at the court of Henry V. Pretty but not highborn, she hopes for little more than to marry well. England is in a golden age – but beneath the glittering surface, ancient rivalries fester and chaos lurks in the shadows. And chaos, Eleanor discovers, creates opportunities. Appointed lady-in-waiting to a Countess who commands her own army, she begins to see what a woman can truly become.



Rainforest

by Michelle Paver
Sphere • PB • £10.99
ISBN 9781398723221
Published 10th September

A terrifying supernatural tale from the author of *Dark Matter*, *Thin Air* and *Wakenhyrst*. Mexico, 1973. Simon Corbett has come to the jungle the way people do: to salvage a ruined career, and outrun a past he cannot face. But the forest is no refuge. As he ventures deeper, his days lose their edges. Something is leading him off course. Something older than the trees, and watching, and hungry. He came to the jungle to lose himself. He may get his wish.



Bad Words

by Rioghnach Robinson
HarperCollins
HB • £16.99
ISBN 9780008801755
Published 8th October

A debut novel about the media, romance and literary rivalry. When Selina Chan, New York's fiercest literary critic, slams Parker Navarro's latest novel, he is pushed to his breaking point. Once was painful enough. But this time, it's personal. What begins as a private feud quickly erupts into a viral online spectacle, captivating a bookish audience who are eager to fan the flames. But it's what's left unsaid that could ruin them both...



Untouchable

by Talia Hibbert
Sourcebooks Casablanca
PB • £9.99
ISBN 9781464298523
Published 13th October

A new romance in the *Ravenswood* series. Sensible, capable, and ruthlessly efficient, Hannah Kabbah is the perfect nanny... until a colossal mistake destroys her career and shatters her reputation. These days, no-one in town will hire her – except Nathaniel Davis, a brooding widower with a smile like sin and two kids he can't handle. Prim and proper Hannah is supposed to make Nate's life easier, but the more time he spends around his live-in nanny, the more she makes thing hard...



The Hobbit

by J.R.R. Tolkien
Illustrated by Tove Jansson
HarperCollins
HB • £25.00
ISBN 9780008843076
Published 22nd September

A landmark new 90th anniversary edition of the classic fantasy novel, featuring a wealth of charming illustrations from Tove Jansson, creator of the Moomins, published in English for the first time. Whisked away from his comfortable, unambitious life in his hobbit-hole in Bag End by Gandalf the wizard and a band of dwarves, Bilbo Baggins finds himself caught up in a plot to raid the treasure hoard of Smaug the Magnificent, a large and very dangerous dragon.

The Art of Freedom

This new book combines the fiction, essays and poetry of Booker Prize-winning author Sir Ben Okri with artworks made in collaboration with painter Rosemary Clunie. We interviewed Ben Okri to discover more.

How did *The True Artist Breaks Out of Jail* come about?

It began with our exhibition at the Bomb Factory in 2023. The show was something of a revelation. People were amazed by the effect of the paintings on the space. Roger Thorp of Thames & Hudson came to the show and saw the possibility of a book.

How would you describe the book – what is the ethos behind it?

We wanted to effect a controlled collision between the two great aesthetic forms of painting and literature. The book could be said to be the story of Prometheus as an artist stealing fire from the gods to effect his or her own liberation. It is the most layered book we could manage – artistic, political, environmental and mythical.

How did you work with the artist Rosemary Clunie on the book?

In the studio we are equal. There's a lovely tension between pure collaboration and individual freedom. This can only work with trust and respect and many years of knowing

one another. There has to be a mixture of civility and bravura. Collaboration is a holiday for the creative spirit.

What is the significance of the title of the book?

There are many kinds of jails – in our psyches, part of the traditions of our art, or the indirect ways society shapes us through its secret ideology. They have nothing to do with jails for criminals. But they are jails nevertheless. We can spend our whole lives in them without knowing it. To free ourselves and become our highest possibility is the work of a lifetime. The book is not just about the artist. We all have to steal fire for our own liberation.

Which other authors and artists inspire you in your work?

Too many to list here. They're not all conventional. Books, films, poems. Courageous people. Ancient storytellers. Unknown artists of old Africa

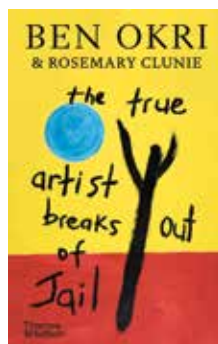
who made the works that changed the course of modern art. Music and dance, and walking. The endless fertility of conversation. Influences visible and invisible...

What do independent bookshops mean to you?

Independent bookshops are like artists of the book selling world. They often choose books big stores don't champion. You are more likely to find mind blowing books in them. When these books become successful, then big chains disseminate them. Often independent bookshops discover them first. Almost all true classics began as minority tastes.

The True Artist Breaks out of Jail

by Ben Okri & Rosemary Clunie
Thames & Hudson
HB • £16.99
ISBN 9780500028216
Published 3rd September



Art & Life

This timely book portrays a panoramic view of 1960s LA and Californian culture through the eyes of artist and subject: the youthful fascination of David Hockney and the knowing gaze of enigmatic socialite Betty Freeman.

In the summer of 1966, David Hockney paid a visit to a wealthy Los Angeles art collector. Her name was Betty Freeman. He had intended to paint her swimming pool, but was rapidly entranced by Freeman herself. Hockney, soon to embark on a series of Los Angeles paintings that would become icons of their time and place, immortalised Freeman in *Beverly Hills Housewife* (1966–67), a sunlit vision of the collector on the terrace of her modernist home. Evoking the light and easy glamour of 1960s Los Angeles, the painting is one of the artist's most seductive works, but it has always carried an air of mystery. Who was the woman in pink?

Like Hockney driving through the Hollywood Hills, James Cahill meanders – interweaving the artist's discovery of Los Angeles with Freeman's own evolution from aspiring pianist to photographer, philanthropist and collector – but never loses focus on the art. Oscillating between art history and anecdote, this is an eclectic study of an artist,

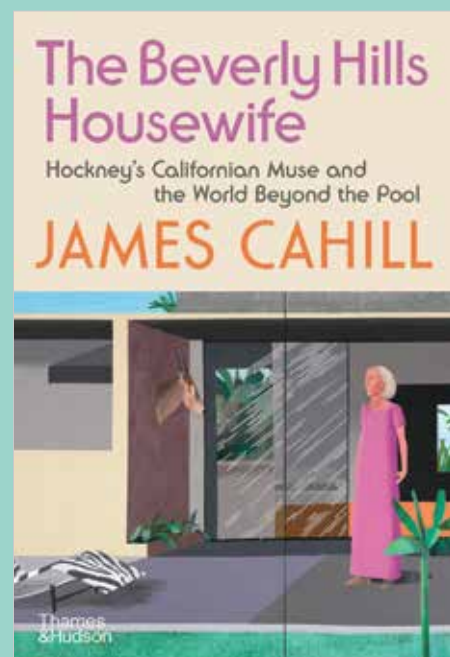
his enigmatic muse and the beginning of a friendship that would shape the course of each of their lives.

"I love this book. It is truly illuminating,"

Edmund de Waal

The Beverly Hills Housewife: Hockney's Californian Muse and the World Beyond the Pool

by James Cahill
Thames & Hudson • HB • £25.00
ISBN 9780500028810
Out Now



Summer in the City

In this new coming-of-age novel from the bestselling author of *Yellowface* and *Katabasis*, Lily Chen is a Yale student who spends the summer in Taipei, to learn the language and connect with the city and her fellow students. But things don't go exactly to plan...

Lily arrives in Taipei hungry: for family, for culture, for connection. But her summer of discovery quickly unravels. Her classes are gruelling, her roommate unbearable, and a reckless, deeply awkward trip to the hot springs with a guy she barely knows soon ignites vicious gossip.

Then her grandfather dies.

Grieving and adrift, Lily must confront her own questions about the culture she inherited but never fully understood. She embarks on a wryly funny, often devastating search for understanding: of herself, her family, and the meaning of home. All over one unforgettable summer in Taipei.

In this extract, Lily and her roommate Anna are disappointed with the apartment they've rented:

Lee, our landlord, was waiting for us outside a coffee shop, as promised. Our apartment was in the unmarked complex next door. He led us upstairs, and the moment he unlocked the door, we saw that we had made a terrible mistake.

Anna and I had chosen this short-term rental after weeks of reading travel blogs, fiddling with our budgets, and coming through apartment listings throughout the city. Our program offered several housing options, but those dorms were expensive and filled with foreign students. We had decided to live in a hip neighbourhood and save some money. We didn't want to come all the way to Taiwan just to be sequestered among Americans.

We saw now that the photos on the rental site had cleverly disguised a tiny studio as a spacious one-bedroom. The bed sat behind a lattice frame – that was the bedroom. The couch that had looked large enough for eight was actually just a two-seater, too short to sleep on unless you drew your knees up to your chest, and was wedged so close against the coffee table that even sitting, you had nowhere to put your legs. The bathroom was clean,

at least, but tiny. The showerhead was positioned directly over the toilet, and this was why the toilet paper dispenser was protected by a metal guard. 'Everything gets wet when you take a shower,' said Lee. 'I have some plastic bags if you need to keep any items dry.'

We were not to flush used toilet paper. Lee stressed this point again and again. The pipes were very old and easily clogged. This was true of most bathrooms in the city. Taiwan was not like America. If we flushed toilet paper, the toilet would clog up and might even flood the entire building. 'Please, please, please.' He put his hands together as if praying. 'Don't forget.'

"Her characters are complex and human; nothing feels contrived"

Time Magazine

The kitchenette and washer-dryer machine were tucked into a narrow outside terrace walled in by thick iron slats. This kept the cooking fumes from getting into the building. 'Don't close the door if you're alone,' he warned. 'It locks automatically, so you'll be stuck up here until someone on the street calls the police.'

Lee showed us how to connect to the Wi-Fi, where the trash bags were, where to fill our water bottles, and where to

dispose of our garbage. There were three waste compartments: trash, recycling, and used toilet paper. He asked if we had any questions, and we said no, and then he left.

Anna and I paced the room and consulted.

We were both a bit let down by Lee but didn't feel that we could demand a refund. He had been so nice to us over WhatsApp. He had checked in every day the week before our arrival and had even offered to arrange taxi transfers for us. He addressed us over text as either 'My dearly beloved guests' or 'Dearest Anna and Lily', and he ended every message with several heart emojis. At this point Lee felt like family.

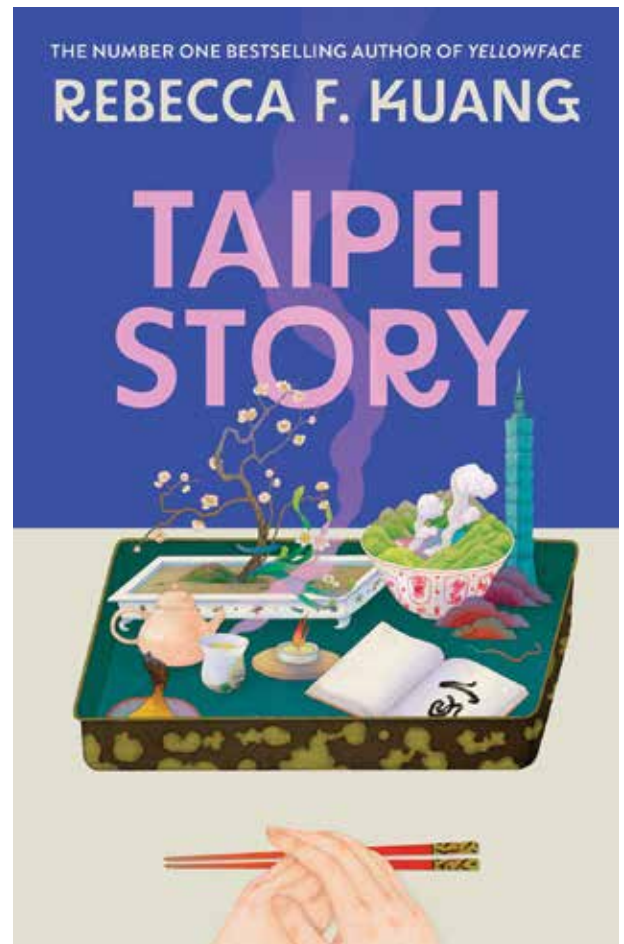
What to do? We had both spent the past year sleeping in long twin beds in close proximity to roommates we didn't particularly like, and that forced intimacy had made us more protective of our privacy. Sleeping in the same bed, walled in by the screen, showering over our toilet – it all seemed too much.

'I guess Asian cities just have less space,' Anna reasoned. 'It'd be like this anywhere.'

'And we won't be spending much time here,' I said.

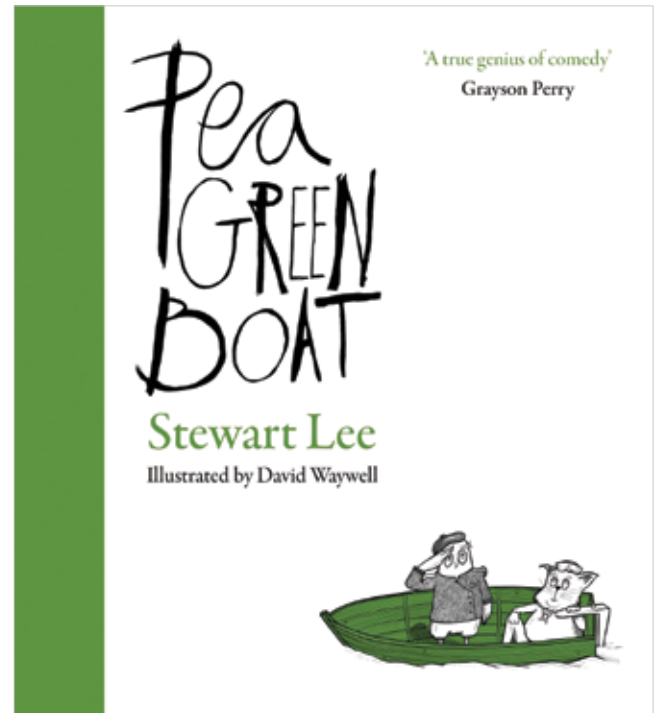
'Right, we just need a place to sleep.'

We decided we would try sleeping together in the bed, and if this bothered us, then one of us would move to the couch. We could then alternate who got the couch and the bed. We'd manage. This would help us build character. Our parents, attending university in China, had slept in tiny bunks in rooms that fit six, eight, ten. Our parents had survived *Communism*. Couldn't we be so resilient?



Setting Sail

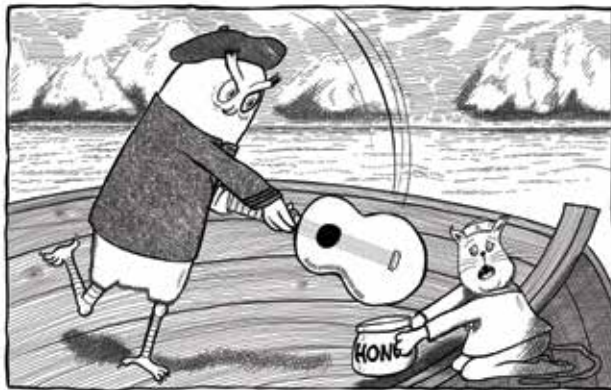
In this darkly humorous recreation of Edward Lear's classic nonsense poem *The Owl and the Pussycat*, acclaimed stand-up comedian Stewart Lee imagines what their voyage may really have been like, through the eyes of the Owl.



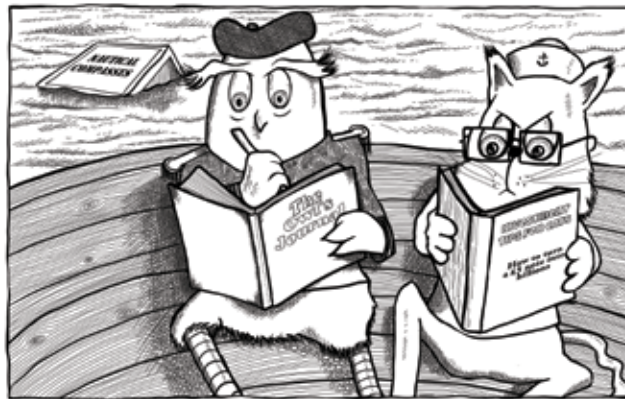
Based on the author's cult stage piece from 2001, *Pea Green Boat* is a dark, grotesque retelling in which Edward Lear's characters are revealed to be catastrophically poorly-equipped for maritime travel. Told through the increasingly deranged diary of the Owl, the real story is unmasked – he cannot open the honey jar due to his lack of opposable thumbs, he is terrified the cat will eat him in his sleep, and he struggles to play the guitar despite having no fingers. As hunger, exhaustion and poor navigation take their toll, it becomes clear that these two creatures should never have been put in a boat together. This strange and funny tale is brought to life by David Waywell's black and white line illustrations.

In this extract, the Owl assesses the situation:

Day 2



I became afflicted with a great hunger this morning and resolved to find some provisions. To my horror it appears that all we have been issued with is honey. In a jar. This presents problems as neither the Cat nor I have opposable thumbs. Although somehow I am able to play the small guitar. And write this.



It seems this voyage has been very badly planned indeed. We are at sea, without map or compass, with no knowledge of why we were set upon the waves, and no fixed destination in mind. We share nothing but suspicious glances. And we have nothing to eat but honey, beloved only by babies and by bees. And, wrapping a bundle of coppers, we have a five-pound note.

I can only assume those that set us on our way were Englishmen. It would be typical of their isolationist arrogance to assume their currency will be acceptable worldwide. Once I could have fluttered up off the deck, spread my wings and

raked fish out of the waves for the Cat and I to feast upon, but my feathers flutter ineffectually on my shattered limbs, and I hold out little hope for our survival. A shame. I've nearly learned how to play the E minor chord.

"Fearless ... It's austere stuff, Stewart Lee."

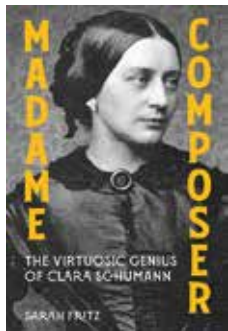
Alan Bennett

"Stewart never fails to astound me"

Harry Hill



Biography, Memoir & Politics



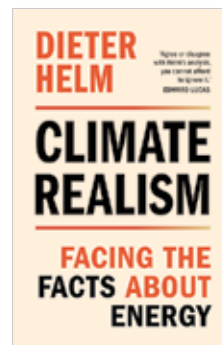
Madame Composer: The Virtuoso Genius of Clara Schumann
by Sarah Fritz
The History Press
HB • £25.00
ISBN 9781837051441
Published 29th October

Clara Schumann was a composer of enormous brilliance who battled society's and her own internalised misogyny. History has not been kind to Clara. She's often remembered in relation to the men in her life – wife of Robert Schumann, muse to Johannes Brahms. This new biography finally rights the historical wrong and tells her story in full for the first time, proving that without Clara Schumann, many of history's best-loved musical works would have been buried.



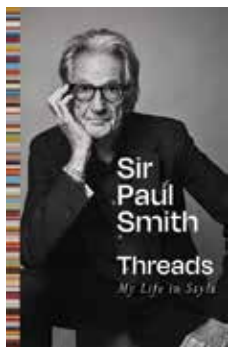
Man & Dog: A Love Story
by Tony Parsons
DK RED • HB • £20.00
ISBN 9780241807125
Published 10th September

A heart-warming and moving memoir from one of Britain's best-loved writers and journalists that will resonate with dog lovers everywhere. It all started when nine-year-old Jasmine wanted a dog and her parents, Tony and Yuriko, tried to fob her off with a rabbit. In the end, along came Stan, a bandy-legged bundle of joy, loyalty and bright red fur. And nothing like a rabbit. A poignant, funny and deeply human memoir about a special relationship with a four-legged friend.



Climate Realism
by Dieter Helm
Cambridge University Press • PB • £16.99
ISBN 9781009880619
Published 8th October

The only meaningful way to understand climate change is to begin with the facts. We need an honest assessment of what is working and what is not. The challenges are significant: carbon levels in the atmosphere are still rising, an energy transition has yet to begin, and global energy demand is expected to rise sharply. This book offers a radical reassessment of our current position and argues that we must face the real cost of pollution we create.



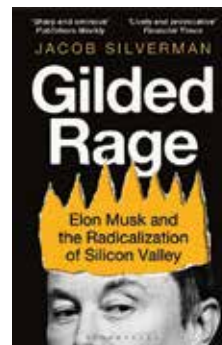
Threads: My Life in Style
by Sir Paul Smith
Macmillan
HB • £25.00
ISBN 9781035089840
Published 10th September

From a Nottingham alleyway to a global empire, this is the story of a truly unique British fashion icon. Sir Paul Smith's journey has been anything but conventional: from leaving school at fifteen with a dream of being a professional racing cyclist to a life-altering accident that would change everything. After meeting the love of his life and immersing himself in the exciting new world of the 1960s London art and fashion scene, he would go on to build a fashion empire.



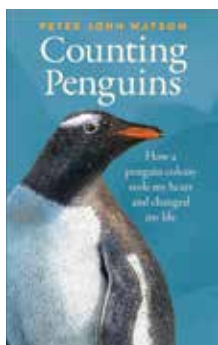
A Bigger Life
by Louise O'Neill
HQ • HB • £20.00
ISBN 9780008762506
Published 24th September

At 38, Louise O'Neill had the life she thought she wanted – until her long-term relationship ended, taking with it the home and sense of certainty she'd built. Heartbroken but defiant, she made a radical decision: to say yes to everything and to reclaim her life. What followed was a dating experiment that took her across Paris, London, New York, and beyond. Part memoir, part manifesto, this is a candid, courageous exploration of modern womanhood.



Gilded Rage
by Jacob Silverman
Bloomsbury Continuum
PB • £12.99
ISBN 9781399419970
Published 24th September

What happens if the world's richest men decide to dismantle democracy? In this book, Jacob Silverman takes us inside the high-stakes world of Silicon Valley. This is the story of the political awakening and radicalization of a cabal of tech billionaires, people who own the information infrastructure our societies rely on, and their descent into ideological extremism. These men have begun reshaping the world in their image – and it should terrify us all.



Counting Penguins
by Peter John Watson
DK RED • HB • £20.00
ISBN 9780241826522
Published 22nd October

Welcome to Port Lockroy – the world's southernmost post office, on a football-pitch-sized island off the Antarctic Peninsula, shared by a handful of humans and a thousand curious gentoo penguins. When travel writer Peter John Watson boards a ship bound for Antarctica, he has no idea how deeply life at the end of the world will change him. Between long shifts counting penguin chicks, he discovers a whimsical world where climate science, heritage and captivating wildlife converge.



The Future Starts With Us
by Gordon Brown
Simon & Schuster
HB • £25.00
ISBN 9781398514188
Published 3rd September

Every day we see evidence of the fracturing of the rules-based order. War, mass migration, economic disruption and climate collapse fill our screens. But why is it that millions across the world are turning to populist nationalist parties in search of solutions? Drawing on decades of experience at the heart of politics, alongside new research and polling of nearly 100,000 people across 45 countries, Gordon Brown reveals how global instability and civic decline are connected.



The Best Kind of American
by Kim Ghattas
Bloomsbury Continuum
HB • £25.00
ISBN 9781399419437
Published 22nd October

A work of true crime following one American family's search for the truth after a 1984 murder in war-torn Beirut, where the Iranian revolution collided with the Israeli invasion of Lebanon, setting off the geopolitical conflagration that burns to this day. Part nonfiction thriller, part illuminating exploration of the moment the conflict between the U.S. and Iran turned violent, this is a gripping story of survival and resilience, set at the intersection of geopolitics, hubris, and impunity.

**England's Bears: The Blood and
Glory of the House of Warwick**
by Aaron Manning
The History Press • HB • £25.00
ISBN 9781837051281
Published 8th October

People of the Past

These two books take us into the lives of people of the past, a sweeping history of an English royal house, and a detailed biography of escapologist Harry Houdini.

For 650 years, the House of Warwick shaped the political and cultural destiny of England and its neighbours: from the Black Dog to the Devil Warwick, the Kingmaker to the Dudleys, their remarkable power saw them rise from Midland warlords to (briefly) usurping the English Crown. Some ruled in the name of kings and queens, others incited civil war and rebellion in the name of God, toppling and making monarchies, and ruling over the Midlands like emperors.

Only in the eighteenth century did the overwhelmed family dispense of landed and political power in favour of the arts, transforming from a House of despots and brutes to that of dilettantes and bards. Rich in drama and intriguing original research, this sweeping narrative history discovers the real men and women of the House of Warwick, how they shaped the fate and fortunes of England, and their legacy over the Midlands today. At the heart of it all was their indomitable home Warwick Castle, where the relics of one thousand years of history survive, a last testament to the blood and glory of 'England's Bears'. *England's Bears* brings to life the world of a famous dynasty and its people, exploring how one family and their quest for power shaped the twists and turns of British history.

**This extract introduces us
to the House of Warwick:**

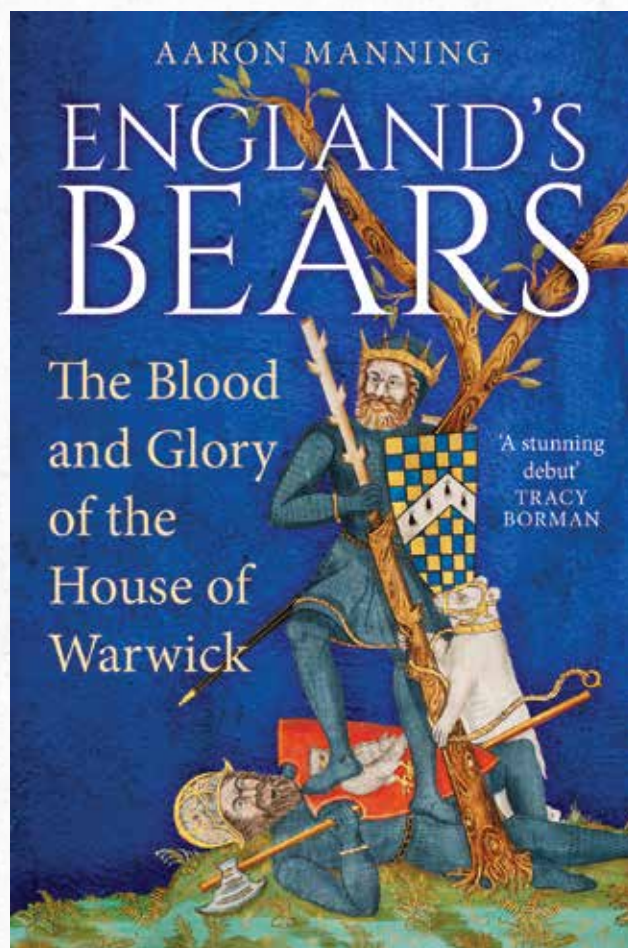
The House of Warwick is one you may have encountered but know little about. Who were the Warwicks? At their most basic, they were a family of extraordinary people who lived extraordinary lives, who achieved magnificent things, who acted cruelly to their enemies and each other, who made mistakes and suffered for it. They were also a noble dynasty of powerful elites, landowners and warmongers, tyrants and conquerors, counsellors and scholars. Arguably more than any other noble dynasty, save England's various royal houses, the Warwicks also percolated the mythic. From the twelfth century, they belonged to the world of King Arthur and his Knights of the Round Table. From the thirteenth, they counted a demigod and an English romance hero in their genealogies. By the fourteenth, they possessed the sword of the Trojan prince Hector, the shield of king of kings, Darius of Persia, and the helmet of brave King Alexander the Great – if you believe their legends.

"A stunning debut."

Tracy Borman

They were descendants of Emperor Charlemagne and King Godfrey of Jerusalem, of Elias the Swan Knight and Dubricius the Welsh saint. The name of Warwick, one of the oldest surviving noble patrimonies in Britain, has survived almost 1,000 years, not only because of its patriarchs and possessors, but because it exists in the dimension of the supernatural. Reading genealogies of the House of Warwick from Rous to the present, it's easy to get lost in the sublime and fantastical. It shouldn't be forgotten that the dynasty was a house of real men and women: thirty-six patriarchs and even more matriarchs across twenty-four generations who've left behind a remarkable imprint in the language and landscape, art and architecture, placenames and cultural hinterland of the Midlands.

You may have met them as supporting actors, chapter-fillers and footnotes in



popular history books of British history. Only a handful have ever garnered the interest of historians – like Warwick the Kingmaker, probably the most celebrated (and disparaged) of the dynasty.

Yet for 650 years the powerful House of Warwick shaped the political and cultural destiny of England, ruled a vast landed empire in the heart of the Midlands and, for the briefest possible moment, usurped the English Crown. Some won military glories for England's kings; others aggressively pursued regicide and rebellion. They made and unmade monarchies, ruled in the name of boy-kings and queens, and incited civil war in the name of God. Only in the eighteenth century, overwhelmed by political revolution and denigrated by their own incessant private scandal, did the family dispense of landed and political power in favour of the arts, transforming from a house of despots and brutes to one of dilettantes and bards.

They created beautiful treasures, inspired famous ballads, built amazing castles and churches, and left their mark in every century and every corner of the kingdom. Their family emblem is as famous today as their name, and is an apt representation of their house. The muzzled bear is wrapped in golden chains and braced to a long ragged staff. The bear is both graceful and fearsome. The ragged staff is a sign of pilgrimage and piety, and is also a weapon. The golden chains symbolise beauty and gentility, as well as control and subjugation. Whether glorifying their achievements or condemning their treachery and ambition, they were remembered by their contemporaries as the Bears of England.

Houdini was quick to grasp the concept of 'entertainer as brand', where fame was an aim in itself. When others stole his act, he published a book of his 'handcuff secrets' and quickly moved on to more extravagant escapes. He arranged many escapes with local merchants in the towns he visited on tour, in early mass tie-in marketing, and set up challenges with newspapers. He created his own magazine; became the president of Martinka & Co., America's oldest magic tricks company; served nine successive terms as president of the Society of American Magicians; created his own unique escapes including the Chinese Water Torture and the Milk Can Escape; launched his own film career; and even became the first man to fly in an airplane in Australia.

His debunking of fraudulent spiritualists gave him yet another outlet to promote his own fame while pursuing a righteous crusade. Houdini pioneered almost every marketing concept of the 20th century, but didn't live beyond its first quarter, dying on 31 October 1926 in controversial circumstances. This new study, timed for the centenary of his death, explores his unique life and position as both escapologist and marketing extraordinaire.

This extract looks at how Harry Houdini's career developed:

The persona of 'Harry Houdini' was coming into focus. The former Erik Weiss could feel it, and he knew he had an opportunity not just to give into it but to mould it. He was an energetic little man, both on-and off-stage, and he rarely slept for more than four or five hours each night. His diet – made up of whatever food he could gather while on the road – was far from healthy, but Houdini's physical habits as an athlete kept him in good shape, and his later stage performance and escapology skills depended upon him being in good physical health.

His 1895 tour with the Welsh Brothers Circus kicked off in March, with Harry and Bess earning \$25 per week for their act. Twice-nightly, they started out simply enough with some basic conjuring tricks, a bit of light mind-reading (they employed the popular method of using code words to offer guidance) and Bess wrapping up the first part of the show with a song-and-dance number of the kind she'd previously performed with the Floral Sisters (despite his evident physical skills, Houdini was not a dancer). The grand finale was Metamorphosis, the quick-change trunk substitution trick which, if

carried out correctly, served to send away their audiences bamboozled. The chatter among those leaving the first show was enough to hype up those coming in for the second sitting, building the anticipation for something seemingly truly magical.

Even with this mainstream gig, Houdini was not too proud to do what needed to be done to entertain a crowd. Recalling his stint in Chicago as the 'Hindu fakir', he was sometimes required to don a primitive caveman outfit with a rat's nest of a wig to play the part of 'Projea', the so-called

"The persona of 'Harry Houdini' was coming into focus"

'Wild Man of Mexico'. He'd appear in a cage outside the venue, grunting and scratching, in the hope that this unique performance would be enough to attract passing punters inside to sample the wider delights the Welsh Brothers Circus offered.

It was around this time that Houdini developed another of his signature tricks, partly inspired by his Hindu fakir routine. He learned how to swallow and then regurgitate a handful of sewing needles, but when they came back up, they'd all be threaded together on a single thread. It was an obvious substitution trick (Houdini had the already-threaded version hidden in his throat, and he perfected the technique of swapping around with his tongue). It was a neat routine, but he did worry about the propriety of it, thinking it a little 'low rent' given his greater ambitions.

Although Houdini had been experimenting with handcuffs and locks since at least 1893, it wasn't until one of his final nights on the Welsh Brothers tour in November 1895 in Massachusetts that he introduced them into his main act. When it came time to perform Metamorphosis, he made a point of emphasising that the audience were about to

experience something unique that he was trying out for the very first time. Instead of being tied up with rope, his hands were secured with not one but two pairs of tempered steel police handcuffs. It was a fresh spin on the Houdinis' act, and one that would only grow over the years as soon as Houdini realised its dramatic effect on his audiences.

Houdini offered several 'origin stories' for his interest in locks and handcuffs. In 1906, speaking to the *Washington Times*, he said:

I started in show business when I was a youngster, but my mother took me out and apprenticed me to a locksmith. That is where I got my first knowledge of the weakness of locks. I discovered a method of opening them which I kept to myself.

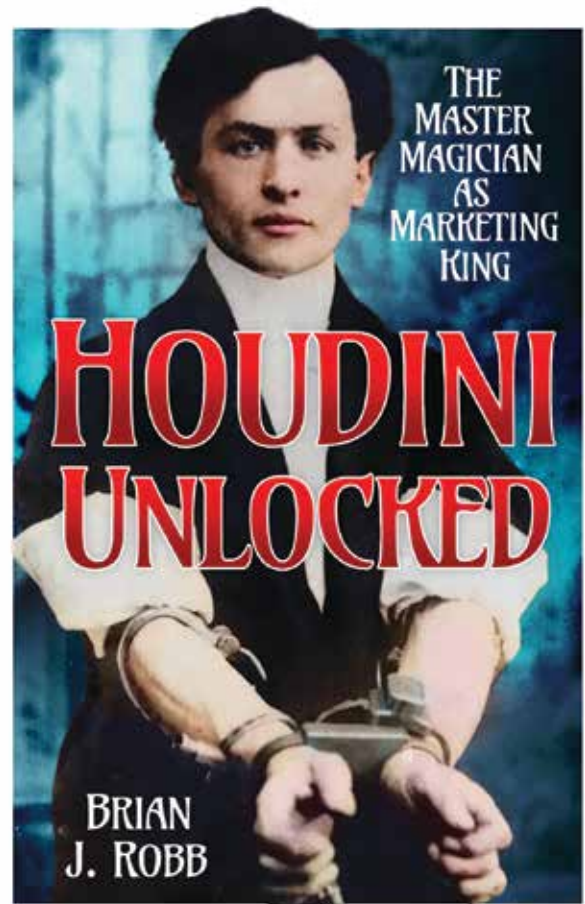
Houdini Unlocked: The Master Magician as Marketing King

by Brian J. Robb

The History Press • HB • £22.99

ISBN 9781837052042

Published 22nd October



Fantastic Worlds

With this new, relaxing colouring book you can return to the world of Rebecca Yarros's bestselling *Empyrean* series and recreate its iconic scenes!

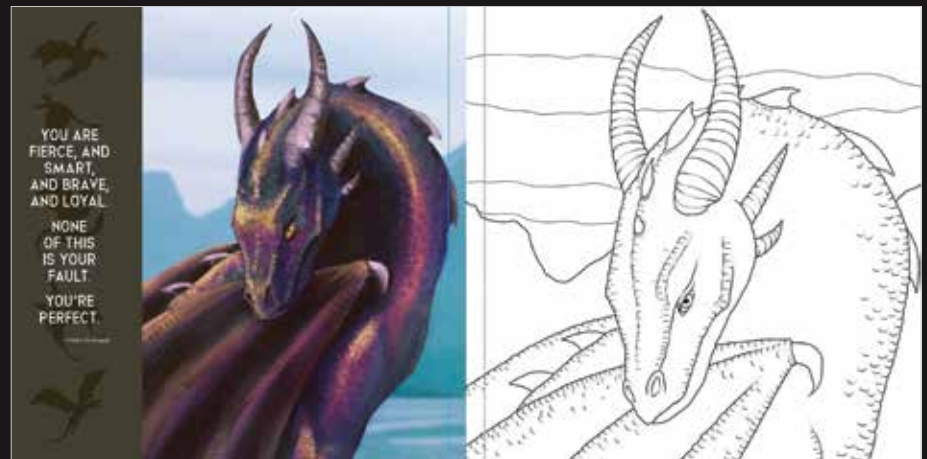
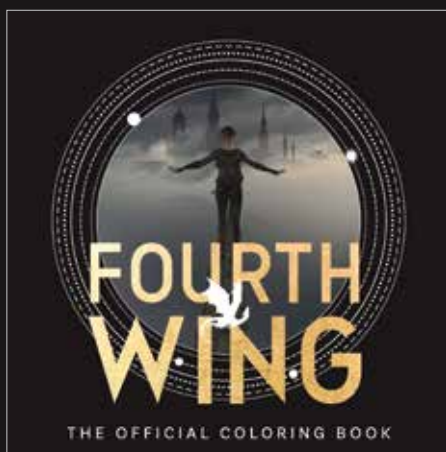


Onyx Storm: The Official Coloring Book
 Andrews McMeel
 PB • £14.99
 ISBN 9798881611590
 Published 22nd October

The battle has truly begun for Violet, Xaden, and their dragons. Experience it again through the artistry of devoted fan artists. Every page invites you to explore the breathtaking magic, romance, and danger that have captivated millions worldwide.

The book features art, characters, and quotes from *Fourth Wing*, *Iron Flame*, and *Onyx Storm*, all officially approved by the author and her team. There are 35 stunning illustrations to colour, each created by artists, with no AI-generated artwork. The high-quality paper is suitable for pencils, crayons and gel pens. Turn your love of the books into beautiful keepsakes, just add colour!

Look out for this other book in the series:



Fourth Wing: The Official Coloring Book
 Andrews McMeel
 PB • £14.99
 ISBN 9798881604165
 Out Now



Bridging the Gap

All over the world, there are divides: victims and perpetrators; cops and robbers; neo-Nazis and queer communities; Hutus and Tutsis. In this innovative new book, Dutch author Maurits Chabot tells seven remarkable true stories about people from either sides of these divides who have managed to forgive and find compassion for each other.



How did the book come about?

I was working as an opinion editor at *de Volkskrant*, a progressive Dutch newspaper. We tried to open up polarised debates by publishing different points of view, but I often found that people simply doubled down on their own arguments rather than trying to understand the other side.

I began to feel that I needed to find an antidote to my own work, a positive counterweight to the daily machinery of division. So I thought, what if I found the stories of people who had been on opposite sides of a conflict, and had been able to break the divide between them? I started looking for those stories of people. I wanted the book to include

both geopolitical differences, such as the Rwandan genocide, and personal conflicts, such as a kidnap and a fatal car crash. I tried to find something universal in those stories, and I wanted to let the stories speak for themselves. I didn't want to preach. What can come from rapprochement? I suppose the book is basically a plea, for empathy, and for asking questions. It is a plea to hold on to real connections between real people. These stories are from Africa, the Middle East, Europe and US, but they have a universal theme.

"I think there are many beautiful souls behind 'enemy lines', but we've all simply been kept apart."

Although it's all true, the book reads like fiction. How did you go about collecting the stories, and how did you decide how to present them?

I came up with a list of conflicts that were current, and searched for known stories of two people on either side. I would read whatever was available about them – but that was just the start. For example, in the case in Rwanda of Emmanuel Ndayisaba and Alice Mukarurinda, I read that he cut off her hand and was involved in killing her baby, but then, many years later, he asked her for forgiveness and they became friends. You can depict these facts, but you need to dig deeper to find an insight into how this change happened: I wanted to provide insight into the complexity of human relationships. How do people change, how do they change their attitude to their perceived enemy, and how do they change the way they see the world? In order to answer these questions, I had to speak to the people involved. I interviewed the people in the book over the course of two years, having extensive video calls. I want the reader to really understand them and their experiences, to see things from their point of view and realise how that point of view could change. The book is narrative non-fiction, it takes you into their lives.

Although many of the stories in the book are from before the advent of the internet and social media, do you think that social media has played a part in polarising people and dividing us?

Yes, I do. I think that there are many beautiful souls behind 'enemy lines', but we've all just been kept apart. I hope this book shows what can happen when you do meet someone you regard as an enemy. I believe that if more people were able to have honest, one-to-one conversations, the world would change. That may sound naïve or idealistic, but the stories in this book show that it can happen. It often begins simply, with questions: Why do you believe what you believe? What led

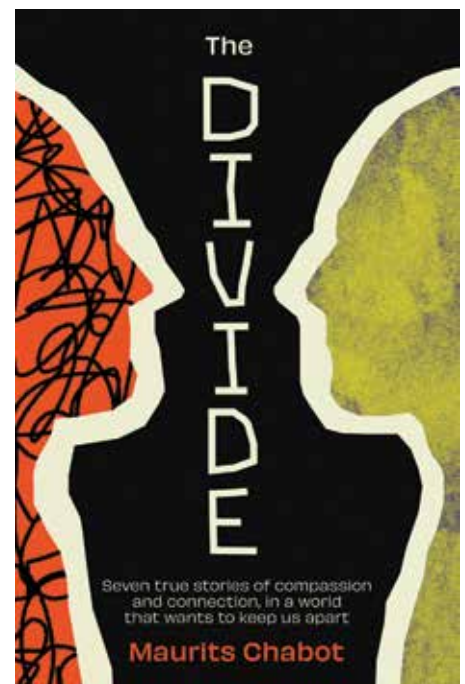
you to these convictions? And, in some of the cases in this book, what led you to commit such terrible crimes? Being able to tell your story, and to feel that it has truly been heard, is crucial. It may sound so small, but small acts of understanding can lead to something much larger.

Which other authors inspire you in your writing?

I love narrative non-fiction, writers such as Joan Didion, Calvin Trillin, Norman Mailer, Hunter S. Thompson and Tom Wolfe. They are giants. I admire their style, and the way they immerse themselves so completely in their subjects. I'm also a great admirer of Robert Caro. While working on his biography of Lyndon B. Johnson, and trying to understand the forces that shaped Johnson's character, he moved from New York to Texas and lived there for three years!

What do independent bookshops mean to you?

They're essential. I've just come from Paagman, the largest independent bookshop here in The Hague, it's like a second home to me. A good bookshop is an endlessly inspiring place. I love being surrounded by books that matter to me, and by books I have yet to discover. The best booksellers have an instinct for guiding you towards exactly the right one. I think a good bookshop can nudge readers and writers, and perhaps even the world itself, in the right direction.



The Divide: Seven True Stories of Compassion and Connection, in a World that Wants to Keep us Apart

by Maurits Chabot
August Books • HB • £20.00
ISBN 9781835984178
Published 8th October

Non-Fiction



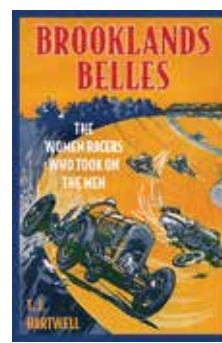
Hangxiety: How Alcohol Messes With Your Mind
by Millie Gooch
Hay House
HB • £16.99
ISBN 9781837826643
Published 8th September

For years, alcohol has been sold to us as relief – from stress, anxiety, heartbreak, even ourselves. But what if the very thing we're using to cope is quietly making our mental health worse? In this book, bestselling author and founder of Sober Girl Society Millie Gooch names the crushing wave of dread, panic and self-recrimination that can follow a heavy night's drinking – hangxiety – and finally brings alcohol into the mental health conversation.



Fergie: The Lost Tapes
by Wayne Barton
Bloomsbury Sport
HB • £22.00
ISBN 9781399420396
Published 24th September

Alex Ferguson came to Manchester United from Aberdeen; he overcame a tough start and created a dynasty where he won thirteen league titles and two European Cups, and was awarded a knighthood. Now this story is told with a difference. Based on 400 hours of exclusive audio from 1986 to 2013, contemporaneous and brand-new interviews with Ferguson and many of his players, the history is brought to life in a new way.



Brooklands Belles: The Women Racers Who Took on the Men
by T.J. Hartwell
The History Press
HB • £22.99
ISBN 9781837050604
Published 10th September

Opened in 1907, Brooklands was Britain's first motor-racing circuit. It became famous for its high speeds and the credo, 'The right crowd and no crowding'. The decade before the Second World War was the heyday for the remarkable women drivers who became known as the Brooklands Belles, a group of talented and determined women fearlessly challenging the rules of a fledgling male-dominated sport. This is their story.



Lessons from a Default Parent
by Lou Beckett
DK RED • PB • £10.99
ISBN 9780241773598
Published 24th September

School-run coordinator, party planner, clubs organiser, laundry sorter... and maybe even a 'real' job on top! Sound exhaustingly familiar? From assumptions surrounding who is going to stay at home with the kids to the never-ending list of school admin, being 'the default parent' rears its head in a plethora of ways. With heartfelt and hilarious advice, in this book Lou Beckett provides much-needed comfort. And this paperback edition features a bonus chapter.



The Stars of Football 2027: The World's Best Players
by Rodolphe Gaudin
Gelding Street Press
HB • £14.99
ISBN 9781922662392
Published 10th September

Celebrate the greatest footballers from the world game's current era. This fully illustrated book profiles over 90 players. It showcases the biggest names to grace the World Cup and other elite competitions. Learn about masters such as Messi and Ronaldo, and other heroes who continue to enhance their reputations, including Mbappe, Rodrygo, Raphinha and De Bruyne. Plus new stars such as Tyler Adams and Nestory Irankunda.



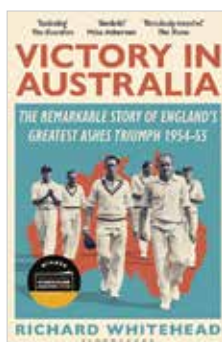
Birth of a Culture
by Grandmaster Flash & Scoop Jackson
Simon & Schuster
HB • £25.00
ISBN 9781398567511
Published 22nd September

Step into the vibrant streets of the 1970s Bronx and witness the exact moment a global movement began. When you read this book, you feel the pulse of the neighborhood parks, hear the scratch of the vinyl, and experience the raw energy of a community turning its daily struggles into a revolutionary art form. This is not just a collection of dates and facts. It is a deeply personal narrative that brings you into the rooms and onto the streets where music changed forever.



Games of My Life
by Alex Ferguson & Michael Moritz
Macmillan
HB • £40.00
ISBN 9781037402425
Published 8th October

Sir Alex Ferguson is widely regarded as the greatest football manager of all time. In this intimate and heartfelt memoir, he tells the unique stories of twenty-one defining matches in his career, revealing fresh insights into his incredible journey from working-class Glasgow to the summit of global football as manager of Manchester United. This book is a masterclass in leadership, persistence, and the power of teamwork, told through the drama of the beautiful game.



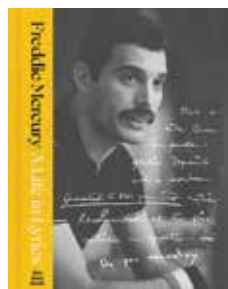
Victory in Australia
by Richard Whitehead
Bloomsbury Sport
PB • £12.99
ISBN 9781399415064
Published 8th September

This is the definitive account of an epic Ashes battle. The Ashes series of 1954-55 marked a watershed moment in the history of English cricket. Under the leadership of Len Hutton, the national team's first professional captain, one of the greatest group of players ever to represent England won an Ashes series in Australia for the first time in more than 20 years. It is a feat that has been repeated only four times in more than 70 years since. But the English team lost heavily in the first test...



Songs that Changed the World: Music of Resistance and Transformation
by Andrew Clarke
Gelding Street Press
Flexibound • £22.00
ISBN 9781922662361
Published 10th September

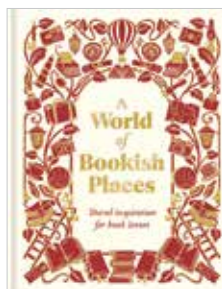
From Billie Holiday to Bruce Springsteen, Bob Marley, John Lennon or Lady Gaga, from 'Bella Ciao' to 'Alright': spanning more than half a century, continents and languages, music in the modern world has shaped moments and movements in ways few other art forms can. With music, there is no place we can't go. This book is about the moments when songs shifted thinking, spurred action, or gave people a voice they didn't know they had.



A Life in Lyrics

by Freddie Mercury & Mary Austin
HarperCollins
HB • £30.00
ISBN 9780008735388
Published 1st September

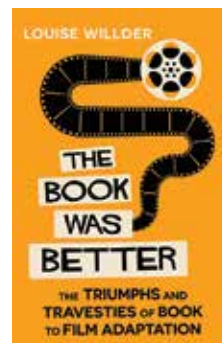
Freddie Mercury was one of the greatest showmen of the 20th century. When he passed away in 1991, he left to his former fiancée and dearest friend Mary Austin not only his house and possessions but also a creative archive spanning almost two decades. Accompanied by stories, memories, and anecdotes from his lifelong companion, and illustrated with photos from his personal collection, this is the definitive creative record of one of the greatest songwriters of all time.



A World of Bookish Places

DK Travel
HB • £25.00
ISBN 9780241823064
Published 3rd September

If you've ever planned a trip around a bookshop, sought out a hidden library or detoured for a literary landmark, this book is for you. Created by people who feel the same, it is a celebration of literary travel, written for book lovers who love to travel and travellers who love books. It includes 35 iconic literary cities, must-visit book nooks and landmarks, curated reading lists for each location, literary walking tours, features on book towns and regions, and more!



The Book Was Better

by Louise Willder
Oneworld
HB • £14.99
ISBN 9780861547722
Published 1st October

Is the book always better than the film? Yes, book lovers cry! Hollywood never gets it right – they gloss over crucial moments and the characters never look like they're supposed to. But then what about *Jaws* or *The Godfather*? In this rollicking adventure through the towering heights and unplumbed depths of book to screen adaptations, Louise Willder, uncovers what makes a good adaptation, how some can be so bad, and why we insist on telling the same stories over and over.



prettycityrome

by Siobhan Ferguson
The History Press
HB • £30.00
ISBN 9780750995245
Published 22nd October

A stunning photography, lifestyle and travel guide for Rome by acclaimed Instagrammer Siobhan Ferguson (@theprettypcities). Beyond its incredible historical significance, Rome is also one of the prettiest cities in the world, renowned for its ancient and Renaissance architecture and cobblestone streets. This book goes beyond the ancient monuments and takes a turn down the side streets to discover vintage stores, family-run pasticceri and boutique hotels.



The Cheese Lover's Guide

by Jenny Linford
DK • HB • £20.00
ISBN 9780241814635
Published 10th September

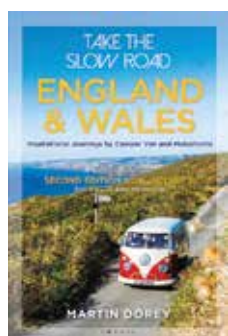
The ultimate guide to buying, tasting, and pairing the best cheese from around the world. One of the most ancient of food traditions, cheesemaking is found across the globe and is as reliant on process, ingredients, and terroir as fine wine. Taking you from dairy farm to cheeseboard, as well as exploring the history of cheesemaking, you can learn the key features of popular and less well-known cheeses and where they are made.



Based on a True Story: A Reading Journal

Sweet Hearts Press
PB • £12.99
ISBN 9781922468437
Published 10th September

A reading journal for memoir and biography readers who want a dedicated space to record and reflect on all the non-fiction books they love, hate, or love to hate. It includes entries to record each book you read, with ratings, thoughts, favourite quotes, and more; space to sketch your favourite covers of the year; fun exercises to explore your reading styles; 50 of the best memoirs, autobiographies, and biographies, and so much more!



Take the Slow Road: England & Wales

by Martin Dorey
Conway • PB • £25.00
ISBN 9781844867363
Published 24th September

A thoroughly updated edition of the ultimate guide to the most scenic routes for camper vans and motorhomes around the valleys, mountains and coastlines of England and Wales. Forget the jet set. There is another way to travel, see the world and truly be a part of it. Taking the slow road is about making time for people, places and nature. And the best way to do it? In your own home from home, of course – the humble camper van or motorhome.



A Gothic Cookbook

by Alessandra Pino, Ella Buchan & Lee Henry
The History Press
HB • £20.00
ISBN 9781837052295
Published 22nd October

A collection of more than 60 recipes inspired by 13 works of Gothic literature, illustrated by Lee Henry and with an introduction by Tom Parker-Bowles. To start, Mrs Dudley has prepared a spooky soufflé to whet the appetite in *The Haunting of Hill House*. For your main course, enjoy the potted sirloin of beef that comforts Arthur in *The Woman in Black*. Delight in *Jane Eyre's* fragrant seed cake for dessert, and wash it all down with a Fearless French 75.



WRAP: Happy Hour

Sweet Hearts Press
PB • £14.99
ISBN 9781922468468
Published 10th September

A trendy and cool collection of vibrant gift-wrapping sheets, stickers, tape and tags, designed to wrap gifts for friends and family. Gone are the days of drawers cluttered with half-used wrapping paper, broken tape dispensers and ribbon offcuts. This all-in-one gift-wrapping collection will meet all your present-dressing needs while fitting neatly on your bookshelf – or bar cart. Mixing cocktails can be complicated, but this collection isn't.

A Fond Farewell

Ted the Dog stole the show in his appearances on Paul Whitehouse and Bob Mortimer's *Gone Fishing* TV series. Now, in his third and final book, he explores ideas for the retirement he sadly didn't get to enjoy.

Dogs live far more "in the day" than people. Each new day is a new joy to us, a fresh beginning, full of hope and promise. Even, or especially as we get older, we need to seize every opportunity that comes our way. We have earned the right to be respected senior citizens – or top dogs. I had no intention of fading away quietly, once my time was up on the riverbanks, so I set about exploring new ways to find my happy ever after. I knew there was more to life than lounging in bed all day – as attractive as that sounds – and I wanted to make sure I had rinsed every drop of life the world has to offer and licked the metaphorical bowl clean! Take it from me – it sucks when you have to let go.'

In this, Ted's final tale, he explores various roles for his impending retirement, in public service, the military and the voluntary sector, finding some more suitable than others. He also makes one final, and rather startling discovery about his precious briefcase. Ted didn't quite get to enjoy his retirement, so honour his legacy and make sure you find your own happy ever after.

This extract is from the introduction:

Your sense of happiness from small everyday pleasures gets stronger with age. It's known as the 'positivity amplification effect' when older people feel bigger dopamine spikes than younger people from very simple things such as: petting a dog, sunlight streaming in through a window, finishing a good meal or a good book and finding a great parking spot.

Your brain rewires itself to reward the more mundane but oh so satisfying moments as you get older, things that would have just passed you by in your younger years, most probably while you

were in a drunken haze or trying to find a good parking spot.

I presume you noted what was on the top of that list – petting a dog. Although I take offence at that word – 'petting'. It's a bit too functional and makes me think of 'heavy petting', which was never allowed in the swimming pool and should be banned from any public place. I prefer a good ruffle and will also accept a paw shake. Just for future reference.

"Much of your stress is caused by your frantic pace of life"

The canine equivalent of the simple pleasures list is remarkably similar to yours: meeting another dog, sunlight streaming onto our bodies through a window, starting and finishing a good meal and napping in the perfect spot.

We're not so different really, are we? Except that as you get older, you tend to lose your hair, your fashion sense and some of your marbles, all of which we will discuss in more detail. None of this befalls us because we keep our hair, don't wear clothes and don't start off with as many marbles as you in the first place. This book is all about focusing on the positives of getting older and how to fully embrace this golden age, even look forward to it and certainly to make the very most of it.

Your brain starts to age when you are still in your twenties. It doesn't suddenly fall upon us. We all start to get older the minute we are born, so it really shouldn't come as a shock. But it does tend to creep up on us when we're not paying attention.

Have you noticed that some people age much quicker than others? I have. I mean, Bob and Paul – my fishing companions and co-stars – look pretty damn good for their age but some of the people we meet on our travels look positively knackered and do you know what causes that? Stress, that's what.

Look at Jeremy Clarkson; he's only 66 but all that shouting and farming and pubbing has put years on him.

Much of your stress is caused by your frantic pace of life and the constant drive to be top of your tree or king of your hill. Or to put it another way, being a bit of a show-off.

I can't help but notice you also do your absolute best to try to shorten your lives. Smoking, drinking, partying, driving snazzy cars and racing fast boats, throwing yourself out of planes or off cliffs, running across deserts and climbing up mountains... You really do give it your best shot to bring your lives to a premature and abrupt end.

If you manage to finally make it to the age of retirement, you have insurances and policies and savings and all sorts of paperwork with reams of small print that you'll never read, to make the autumn of your life more comfortable and secure.

What do we have? Just you.

Together we are going to slow down and I am going to show you how to be more dog – so we can both relish our senior years and milk them for everything they can offer.

Welcome to my retirement plan.

The chapters in this book will be counting down instead of up, rather like the passing of time and as a gentle reminder that the end is always closer than it appears.

Enjoy every minute...

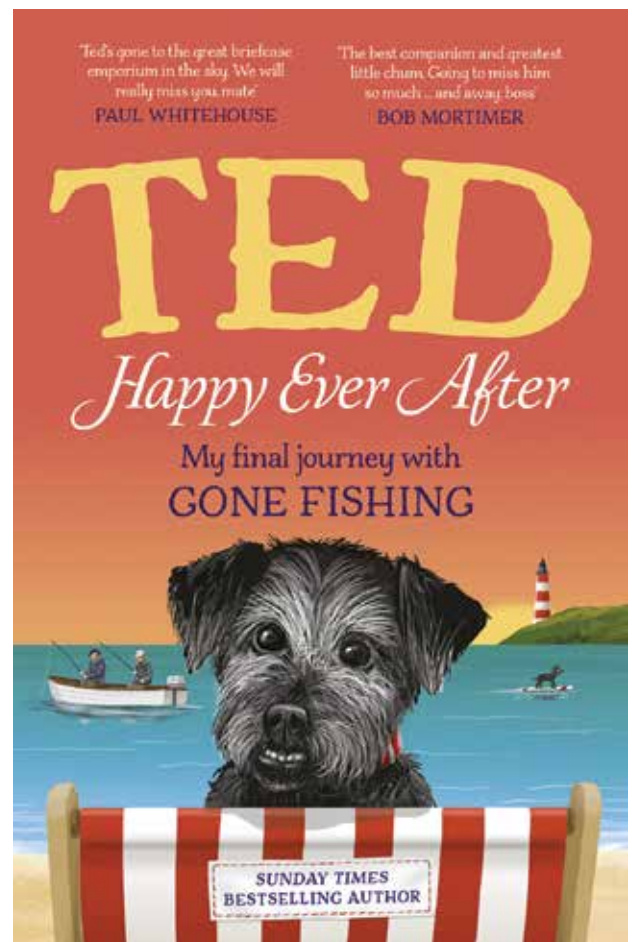
Happy Ever After: My Final Journey with *Gone Fishing*

by Ted the Dog

Ebury Spotlight • HB • £17.99

ISBN 9781529998740

Published 24th September



A Tall Tale

A powerful debut Gothic novel. At eighteen, Frances is almost seven feet tall. With bones worth their weight in silver, she scours Victorian London looking for love. We interviewed the author to discover her inspirations.



The Silver Bones of Frances Winter
by Fiona Goggin
Everything With Words
PB • £10.99
ISBN 9781911427483
Published 24th September

The Silver Bones of Frances Winter is your debut novel. Have you always wanted to be a writer, and what inspired you to write this particular story?

This particular story started life as an image in my mind of a mother and daughter, the daughter towering over the mother and their roles being mistaken when viewed from behind. Growing up, people were always commenting on my height, on how tall I was compared to the other women in my family. I was painfully shy as a child and hated being noticed. I suppose Frances is an exaggeration of this. We project roles onto each other by the assumptions we make based on how a person presents physically. I'm interested in how we internalise these roles that are projected onto us, and how, in some cases, we can become trapped by them. I've always wanted to be a writer. My hometown felt quite grey growing up, lots of concrete. My mum was a nurse then a carer and my dad was a postman. They worked really hard, but we didn't have a car or the money to go on day trips or holidays. I wrote stories to entertain myself and to create the different landscapes I think I so desperately craved.

In the book, Frances has a condition which causes her to grow unusually tall. Was this based on a real condition, and was she based on a real person?

The character of Frances came first, with her extraordinary height, and I realised I needed to find out what exactly was happening to her body. I researched gigantism and I read about real people with the condition. I was struck by the dichotomy between how society viewed individual people living with this condition versus who they deemed themselves to be.

Why did you set the book in London, and in the 19th century?

It had to be a big city as I wanted Frances

to feel the glare of a thousand pairs of eyes one minute, and then to feel entirely anonymous the next. I wanted Frances to interact with all kinds of people from all different classes. London made sense because I worked in Southwark for many years and I used to live in Greenwich. In terms of the 19th century, I was looking for an exaggerated version of femininity. The Victorian era, with its mania for tiny, corseted waists and dainty shoes, fit perfectly. Frances' idea of what a woman should be is based on her mother and sister, both perfect examples of Victorian femininity. The tiny waists and dainty feet are all physical signifiers of subservience. Yes, men looked for these attributes in a partner, but society also expected them of women as a whole. A woman like Frances, who is physically unable to conform, could be seen as a threat to the status quo. Her size, though not chosen, could be seen as a rebellion.

"A beautiful, empathetic novel."

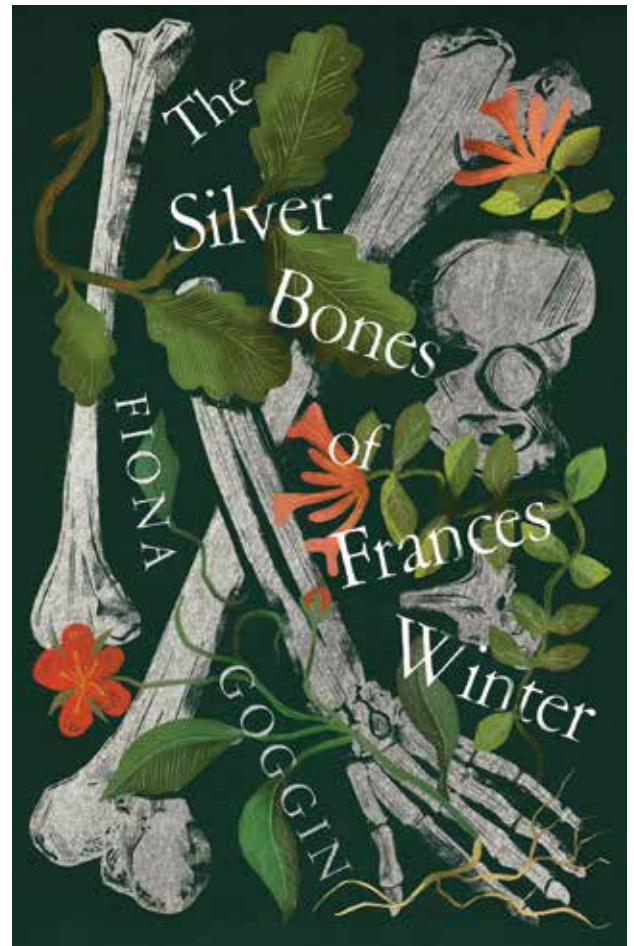
Emily Critchley

Frances decides to leave home and joins a 'theatre troupe' who turn out not to be what they seem. Do you feel that she had to leave home in order to find her own way in life?

Absolutely, and this goes back to the idea of feeling trapped by the roles that other people project onto you. You have to leave home to shed that costume, you have to be able to try on different versions of yourself before you can decide who you really are, or who it is you really want to be.

Later, she falls in with a group of pre-Raphaelite artists. Are you a fan of the pre-Raphaelites?

Yes, particularly the stories behind the



paintings, the darker themes of some of the poems they were influenced by. The loose hair and flowing dresses of many of the subjects represent a freer way of being for Frances compared to the more restricted, buttoned up atmosphere she's experienced growing up. The world of the pre-Raphaelites gives her room to breathe.

Frances discovers many secrets about her family and its past. Do you feel that we need to know where we're coming from in order to find our own voice?

I think we're all continuing a story, writing our own parts, and it probably makes for a deeper, richer narrative if you're working on a foundation based on truth, rather than the edited highlights, however painful those moments of revelation might feel at the time.

Which other authors inspire you in your work?

Sarah Waters is the obvious one. I dream of being able to weave period detail so seamlessly. Kate Atkinson, Angela Carter, Beryl Bainbridge. I never tire of reading their work and there is always something there to learn from as a writer. I think Clare Chambers is incredible. Her books read effortlessly and yet are so rich in character, emotional depth and domestic detail, which I absolutely love.

What do independent bookshops mean to you?

They're vital in terms of support and creating a sense of community. A good bookseller championing your work is invaluable. There's nothing like that organic, personal endorsement. My first stop in any new place is always the local bookshop. Book people are the best people.

Live Long and Prosper

In this new book, bestselling author and world renowned management professor, Lynda Gratton, offers a practical and deeply human guide to navigating the new reality of longer lives and shifting careers.

In a world of longer lives and constant change, work is no longer a single straight path. It is a fabric we weave – with threads of mastery, friendship, calm, intimacy, adventure, cooperation, knowing, and amplification. How we strengthen and reweave these threads will shape not just our working lives, but our happiness, health, and sense of purpose across a century.

Drawing on global research, expert voices, and the stories of four fictional characters at different life stages, Lynda Gratton shows how to: discover what each of the eight threads can make possible for you; strengthen the threads through reflection, action, and promises to your future self; and weave a working life that is resilient, meaningful, and uniquely yours. This is not a book about extending life for its own sake. It is a book about living wisely across time – finding joy in friendships, resilience in calm, creativity in adventure, and purpose in work.

This extract looks at personality traits:

In a 100-Year Life, your personality traits don't just shape how you work today, they influence how you adapt over time. Some traits, like curiosity or steadiness, can become powerful allies across a long, evolving working life. Others may need more conscious attention if they create patterns that no longer serve you as your context changes. In this chapter we will explore a model of personality, dive into how your personality leads you to make choices at work and discover that a tight fit between your personality and your work is not always advantageous.

I've chosen a story from my adolescence: I am around 13 years old. It's not a memory that I often think about, but when I wrote my stories in the summer of 2022, it was one of the first to surface out of my unconscious.

A Story of an Artichoke – Italy, August 1968
It is the longed-for summer holiday and my family embarks on the journey from the north of England through France to our destination – northern Italy and the

glorious, fragrant shores of Lake Como. Thoughts of lemons and ice cream fill my mind as we drive through France, bundled into our old estate car. But first, let me provide a little more context. By 'drive', I mean Dad navigates the 1,000 miles from Cockermouth, Cumbria, across the channel, through the expanse of France and finally into Italy. By 'bundle', I mean we four children – aged from 13 down to three – sit on wooden boxes in the rear of the car. Designed and made by Dad to accommodate the camping equipment, these boxes, arrayed with sleeping bags, are our seats for the journey.

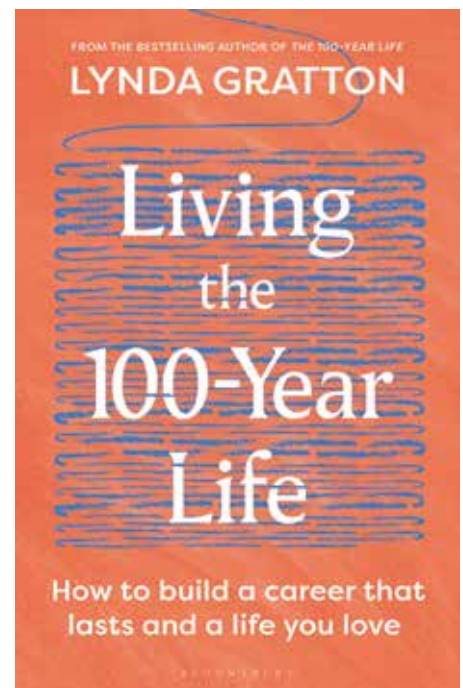
Money is tight. Dad has a reasonably paid job as a factory manager but every penny is counted and with Britain in a currency crisis, only a very limited amount of sterling can be brought, so my budget-conscious mum has packed any crevices with provisions.

At last, we reach the campsite on Lake Como, our final destination. Nestled beneath a grove of trees is a simple cafeteria. Although I know eating from the canteen is not on the agenda for our cash-strapped family, I stealthily take a look. Pride of place is a plate of cooked artichokes. I'd read about this vegetable in my mother's recently bought copy of Claudia Roden's *A Book of Middle East Cooking*. But this was my first sighting of a real artichoke, being more familiar with the seasonal vegetables of northern England – winter carrots and potatoes, and in summer, peas and endless courgettes.

“Each chapter is a treasure trove”

Carole Kauffman

I gaze at an artichoke. A particularly fine specimen, its large glistening green leaves are laid out in precise formation, the perfectly overlapping leaves form a glorious globe. At that moment, I want



**Living the 100-Year Life:
How to Build a Career that
Lasts and a Life you Love**
by Lynda Gratton
Bloomsbury Continuum
PB • £14.99
ISBN 9781399432955
Published 10th September

nothing more than to taste the artichoke.

Not unreasonably, we are on a tight budget and there is no assurance I will enjoy the artichoke – my mother says no, she cannot buy it. Frustration and sadness overwhelm me. Part of my teenage brain whispers (as teenage brains are wont to do), this is my only chance ever to eat this extraordinary vegetable. It's a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity, taken from me by my tough-minded mother.

At that moment, faced with the frustration of the artichoke, I make three vows to myself, or more accurately to my future self: I will earn enough to choose what I eat, I will enjoy eating artichokes whenever I want to and I will never, ever go camping with my family again.

What did your story tell you about your personality? Can you see how these traits play forward to what you have become?

For me, the artichoke story captures the teenage mix of anguish and opportunities to be grasped. Of course, like many teenagers, I had periods of being insufferable and I can only imagine what my mother was feeling about her wilful daughter although she should have known that I might have had in mind Dad's mantra, 'never conform'. Yet I feel there is something else here, something peeking out that was then and was to become 'me'. It reveals a glimpse of 'me' – adventurous, curious, determined, annoying and independent.

As you think about the story that captures 'you', what five words define you? As we explore the threads of your working life, these descriptors will shape your choices and motivations.

Still Life

This beautiful book is a guide to the Japanese concept and practice of *seijaku*, which is all about finding inner calm within the chaos of life. We interviewed the author Dr Miki Fujito to discover more.



Seijaku: The Japanese Secret to Finding Stillness

by Dr Miki Fujito

Illustrated by Leanne Daphne

Michael O'Mara • HB • £14.99

ISBN 9781789298765

Published 10th September

How did the ethos of *seijaku* develop in Japan?

The ethos of *seijaku* developed through centuries of Japanese cultural and spiritual traditions that value harmony, simplicity, and awareness of the present moment. Influences from Zen Buddhism, the tea ceremony, traditional arts, and the appreciation of nature all contributed to this way of seeing the world. Japanese gardens, bonsai, and ikebana are examples of how stillness and beauty are expressed through simplicity, balance, and careful attention. In these traditions, silence is not understood as an absence of something. Instead, stillness creates a space where deeper awareness, reflection, and connection can emerge.

“Modern life often leaves very little room for stillness.”

What inspired you to write *Seijaku*?

I have always wanted to write a book about Japan and share something meaningful from Japanese culture with the world. When my publisher first approached me with the idea, I was surprised, but I immediately felt a connection with the title *Seijaku*. As a Japanese person who was also raised in an international environment, I have always been interested in how Japanese ideas and values are understood outside Japan. While concepts such as *ikigai* have become widely recognized around the world, I felt that *seijaku* was a lesser-known idea with a deep and universal message. I wanted to introduce *seijaku* not as a trend, but as a timeless part of Japanese culture, something that people everywhere can relate to and discover in their own lives.

What are the principles behind *Seijaku*?

The principles behind *seijaku* are based on the idea that true peace comes from within. At its core, *seijaku* is about creating space, space to pause, reconnect with ourselves, and become aware of the present moment. In a world filled with constant noise, distractions, and pressure to always improve, *seijaku* offers a different approach. It is not about achieving more or becoming a better version of yourself, but about recognizing the stillness that already exists within us. As a Japanese person and a medical doctor who studied and practised in Europe, I have seen how Japanese concepts can sometimes be transformed into something focused on optimization rather than their original meaning. During the pandemic, I experienced a period where, even as the world slowed down, my own mind remained busy and restless. That experience led me back to *seijaku*, a quiet and simple way to reconnect with ourselves and find calm, both inside and outside.

Why do you think *seijaku* is hard to find in modern life?

I explore this topic in much more detail in the book, but I believe one of the reasons *seijaku* is difficult to find today is that modern life often leaves very little room for stillness. Our environments are filled with constant stimulation, our bodies are often kept in a state of activity, our minds are crowded with thoughts, and our attention is constantly divided. The challenge is not that people have lost the ability to experience stillness. Rather, we live in a world that makes it increasingly difficult to access it. However, I do not believe *seijaku* has disappeared. It is something we already carry within us. The book explores how we can gently return to that state through small changes in our daily lives.

Do you think that *seijaku* is more beneficial for some people than others,

or can we all benefit from it?

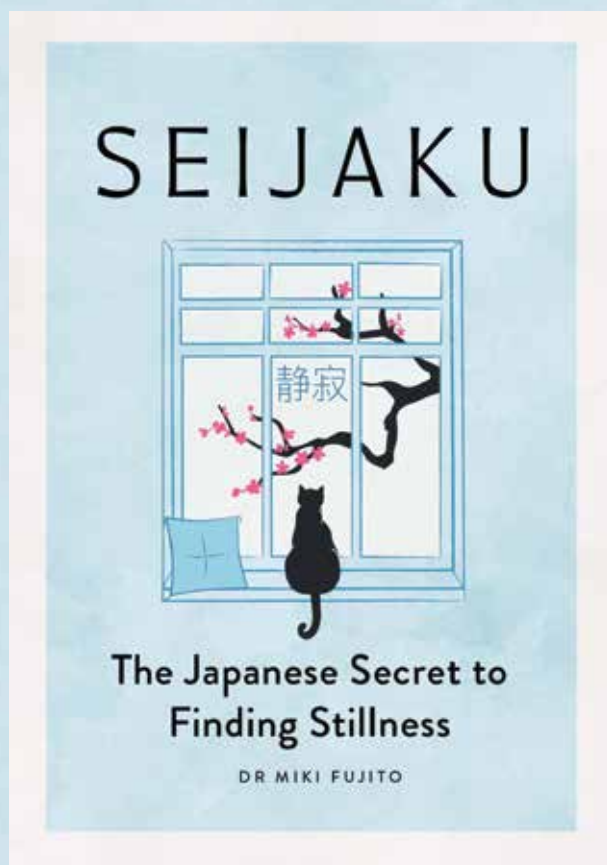
I believe everyone can benefit from *seijaku*. However, it may feel especially meaningful for people who are overwhelmed by responsibilities, information, and the speed of modern life. For those people, even small moments of stillness can create a sense of relief and help them reconnect with themselves.

Which other authors inspire you in your work?

I have been inspired by authors who have introduced Japanese concepts to a global audience. In particular, *Ikigai: The Japanese Secret to a Long and Happy Life* helped make the word *ikigai* widely known around the world. While I sometimes feel it is interesting that such a Japanese concept became internationally famous through authors who were not Japanese, I also appreciate the important role they played in sharing this idea with people around the world. I hope *Seijaku* can become another Japanese concept that helps people discover a different way of approaching life, one that reminds us of the importance of stillness, awareness, and inner peace.

What do independent bookshops mean to you?

Independent bookshops, to me, represent places where ideas and individuality are truly valued. As an author, I feel that independent bookshops are more than places that sell books. They are spaces where people take the time to understand the message behind a work, the words, ideas, and emotions that an author wants to share. In a world where many things are increasingly shaped by trends, algorithms, and mass production, I appreciate that independent bookshops continue to support unique voices and personal stories.



Miss Marple Returns



It's murder season in the Alps in *Sunday Times* No.1 bestseller Lucy Foley's brand new Miss Marple mystery. In a luxurious mountain resort in Switzerland, a guest of the Grand Alpine Hotel enters a gondola alive. But by the time he reaches the summit, he is dead. As a storm sets in and fellow guests become suspects, only one woman can solve the case. One Miss Marple.

"Lucy Foley is a master of her craft. She always leaves you guessing until the last page"

Freida McFadden

"Masterful, murderous fun... I couldn't have loved it more"

Chris Whitaker

"So clever and so much fun. Fans of the original Miss Marple and Lucy Foley will be delighted!"

Marian Keyes

"Foley channels the one-and-only Agatha Christie with precision and flair. I couldn't put it down!"

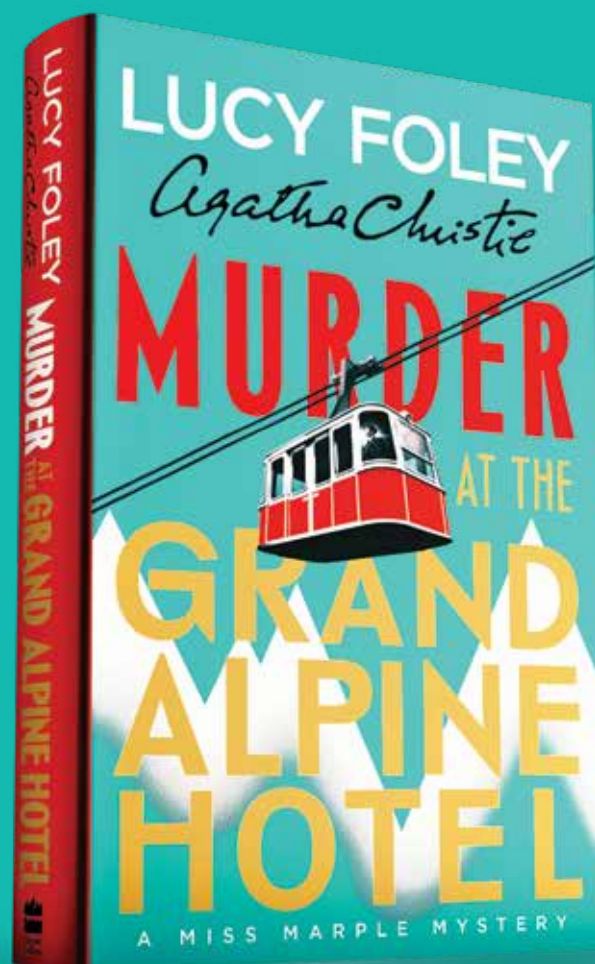
Bonnie Garmus

"Lucy Foley is such a clever writer"

Anthony Horowitz

"So clever, atmospheric, and thrilling! Foley has absolutely nailed Miss Marple"

Shari Lapena

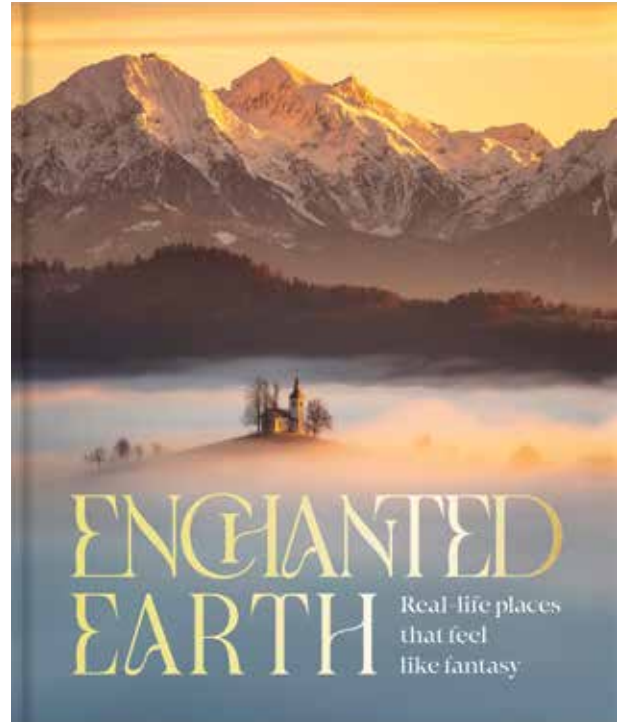


Murder at the Grand Alpine Hotel
by Lucy Foley
Writing as Agatha Christie
HarperCollins • HB • £22.00
ISBN 9780008694821
Published 22nd September

Wonderful Worlds

If you've ever wished you could step into a fae kingdom, wander a bewitched forest or lose yourself in a world of magic, this book is for you. *Enchanted Earth* is a stunning collection of real places that feel like fantasy, depicted in extraordinary photos.

Photo © Getty Images Smitt



Enchanted Earth

DK Travel • HB • £30.00

ISBN 9780241823057

Published 3rd September



Skógafoss, Southern Region, Iceland

A luxurious, large-format coffee-table book, with a gold foil cover, gilded edges, ribbon maker and thick, glossy pages, *Enchanted Earth* is curated by a team who have a love of escapism, storytelling and captivating worlds. From fairytale castles to glowing caves, celestial skies and volcanic landscapes, these photos will transport you into another world.

Photo © Getty Images serdjo

There are six immersive chapters grouped into realms that mirror the worlds of fantasy: Magical Realms of lakeside villages, rolling hills and palatial buildings; Celestial Realms of northern lights, starry skies and luminous waters; Frozen Realms of snow-covered cabins and glittering ice caves; Fiery Realms of steaming volcanoes and sun-baked deserts; Desolate Realms of windswept terrains and abandoned towns; and Shadow Realms of dark forests, shadowy libraries and hauntingly beautiful castles. A visual journey across continents, featuring iconic locations alongside hidden, lesser-known gems, this book is perfect for fans of fairytales, gothic fantasy and romantasy, and anyone who wants a little more magic on their coffee table.



Borgund Stave Church, Vestland, Norway

Ancient Forces

The Goddess Queen is the first novel for adults from the academic, broadcaster and author Alice Roberts. Set more than two thousand years ago, it tells the story of an unforgettable female Egyptian ruler.

The Roman Republic is crumbling, torn apart by rivalries. Egypt is a wellspring of wealth, but its rulers have squandered their advantage and ended up hopelessly indebted to the protection racket that called itself Rome. Now a woman, as Pharaoh, has a chance to reclaim what Egypt has lost. And a disgraced Roman commander has his chance to reclaim his sword and wield it to build an empire unlike anything the world had seen.

Their stories collide in a maelstrom of ancient history, high politics and power. This is the story of Cleopatra, the Egyptian queen who confronted and contested the power of Rome. And Antonius, the soldier who might be her salvation or her downfall. An ancient story with universal themes, *The Goddess Queen* is a powerful and memorable novel.

This extract sees Cleopatra become queen:

The ceremony in the great hall was over. She was Queen Cleopatra now, Pharaoh of all Egypt, a goddess in human form.

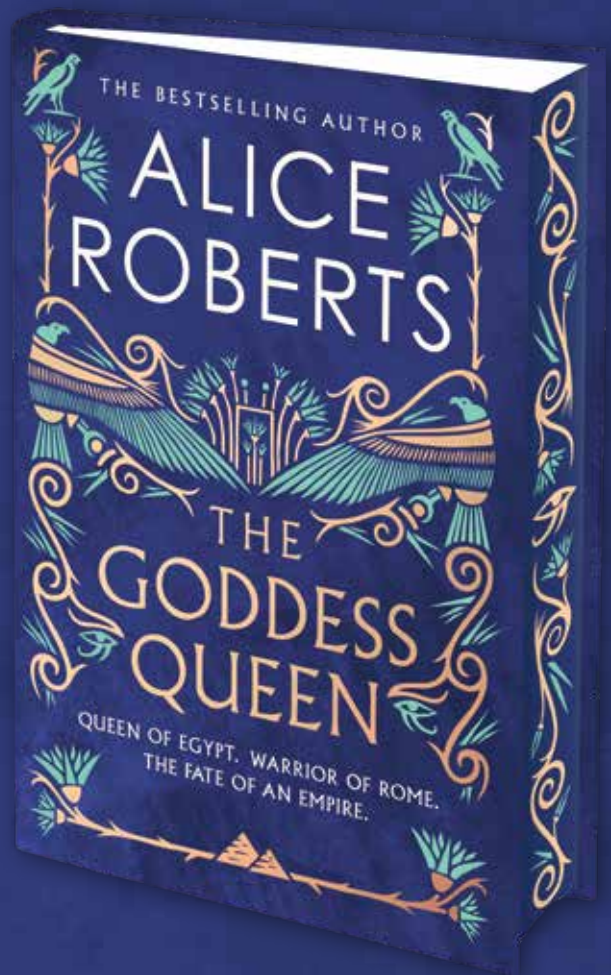
Now Psherenptah led Cleopatra and Ptolemy into the dimly lit, cave-like inner sanctum of the temple, to lay flowers, gold and frankincense at the feet of the ancient statue of Ptah. The figure glittered in the lamplight. It was twice the size of a human, almost grazing the ceiling of the chamber, and entirely golden, apart from a blue faience cap and piercing black eyes. This sparkling Ptah wore a robe of feathers, their details hammered into the gold and he held the Djed, an elaborate staff bearing crossbars symbolising stability, and topped with an ankh, for eternal life.

Finding confidence in her newly forged divinity, Cleopatra did something she'd always wanted to do. She reached out and touched the statue, her fingertips resting for a moment on the golden feathers over Ptah's knee. She heard her brother's gasp. Psherenptah said nothing. How could he? She was his Pharaoh now.

Those moments in the sanctum were a precious oasis of calm. The rest of the day was crammed with official engagements.

'I can only apologise,' Pothinus said in his wheedling way as they rejoined him

The Goddess Queen
by Alice Roberts
Gallery • HB • £22.00
ISBN 9781398563032
Published 1st September
Look out for a very limited, signed special edition!



in the great hall. He sounded completely unapologetic and she knew the packed itinerary was largely his handiwork. 'But you have responsibilities now.'

She didn't answer him, merely inclining her head. She knew her responsibilities full well. She'd been preparing for this her whole life.

"She'd been preparing for this her whole life."

The royal couple processed through the forest of painted pillars in the hypostyle hall, which glowed in deep blues, vibrant greens, ochre reds. They approached the western gate of the temple precinct, where the huge cedar doors between the twin towers were barred. Two guards escorted them through a small doorway in one of the towers, and up the stairs, until the pair stepped out onto the high platform above the great doors, framed by the tall towers. A huge crowd has assembled below to catch a glimpse of the Loving Siblings, of their new Pharaoh. A cheer went up. People were throwing flowers, though none reached the platform. But there was a ripple of unrest as well. At the edge of the crowd, Cleopatra spotted two soldiers dragging off a protestor. A palm-sized stone hit the tower to her left and ricocheted off, skittering to a stop at her feet. Ptolemy looked alarmed. Cleopatra remained motionless, smiling down at her people with what she hoped was an

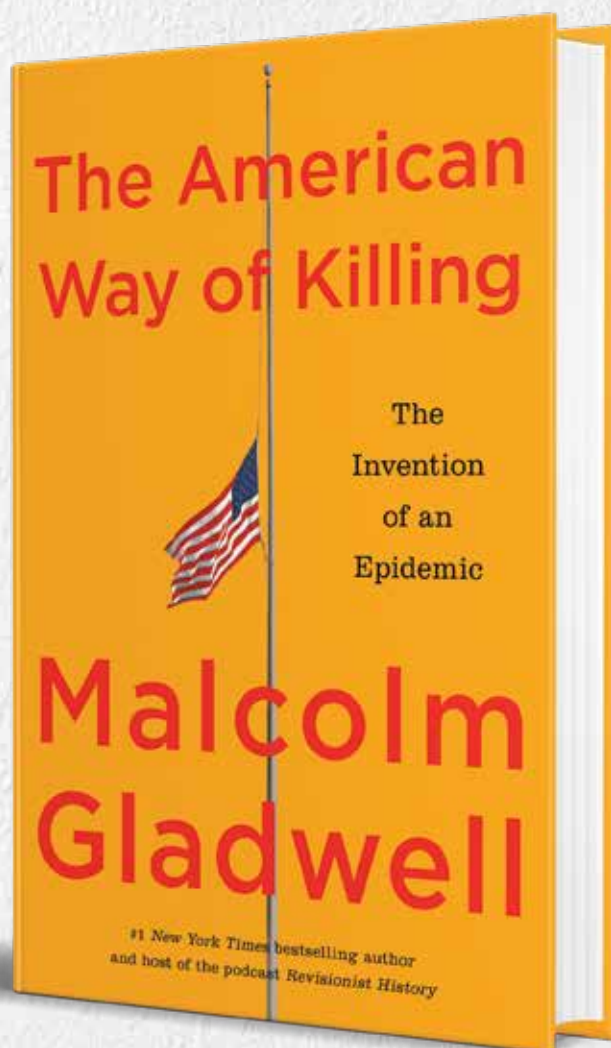
untroubled expression. But it was enough to make the guards decide that the public show was over, and they stepped out of the doorway – a clear signal for the royal couple to quit the stage. Cleopatra and Ptolemy both raised their arms in a gesture of blessing, then retreated into the cool of the interior of the pylon.

'They don't like you much,' whispered Ptolemy under his breath. Cleopatra ignored him.

They went on, surrounded now by a tight contingent of guards, to the Temple of Sekhmet. This was an appointment Cleopatra had insisted upon, despite Pothinus's protestations that it wasn't necessary, and that there really wasn't time to squeeze it in. Missing out such a powerful goddess on the day of her coronation might have suited Pothinus and Ptolemy, but Cleopatra wanted to drape herself in female power. She wanted the goddess of war – and her high priestess – on her side. While she would pray for peace in Egypt and in the House of Ptolemy, she knew she needed to be ready to fight. To be a pharaoh was to be a warrior.

Ptolemy was not welcome in the heart of this temple. He waited outside, while Cleopatra entered the sanctum, alone but for the priestess and the goddess. She reached out to touch this deity, too. She rested her own hand on the hand of the seated, lion-headed divine being, silently asking for her protection. *I need you with me, Sekhmet. She who is mighty.* She felt stronger just looking up at those feline eyes.

America's sharpest mind turns to America's deadliest crisis.



The American Way of Killing
by Malcolm Gladwell
Abacus • HB • £25.00
ISBN 9780349149288
Published 29th September

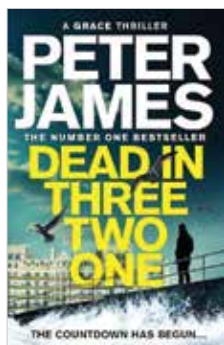
Malcolm Gladwell returns with a brilliant new work: an incisive investigation into gun violence, America's deadliest and most polarizing crisis. Look out for signed copies, available in independent bookshops while stocks last.

Fiction & Graphic Novels



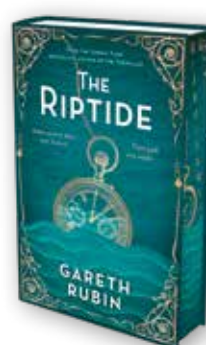
Tell Me Something True
by Michael Robotham
Sphere • HB • £22.00
ISBN 9781408722633
Published 29th September

Small towns are quick to anger and slow to forgive, but Arlo Hackett doesn't expect mercy when he emerges from a twelve-year prison sentence and makes his way back to Yulara, a waypoint on Australia's Great Southern Road. The last time Arlo was home, his brother Luke was charged with a terrible crime and Arlo was found guilty by association. His return to the former goldrush town is like cracking open a time capsule full of hatred and violence...



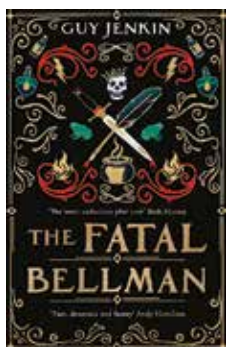
Dead in Three Two One
by Peter James
Macmillan
HB • £22.00
ISBN 9781529090116
Published 20th October

A new case for DS Roy Grace. Brighton Pride is the biggest date on the city's calendar with half a million people lost in the party. But, in the Royal Courteney Hotel, a nightmare is checking in. Dritan Dervishi, the consigliere for Albanian mob boss Roel Albazi, has arrived with a beautiful woman on his arm and a lethal secret in his suitcase. He has specifically requested Room 321 – a room with a perfect view of the sea, and a deadly proximity to a target he's been dreaming of for years...



The Riptide
by Gareth Rubin
Simon & Schuster
HB • £20.00
ISBN 9781398535435
Published 24th September
Look out for a special edition in indie bookshops!

A new novel from the author of *The Turnglass*. 1804, Isle of Ray, Essex. Lysander Rose has spent his life searching for the truth about his mother, abducted when he was just a baby. When the men who took her return for him, Lysander is forced to flee. But in his escape, he uncovers a clue that draws him into the orbit of a secretive organisation known only as the Circle, and he soon finds himself entangled in a world of murder, blackmail and political intrigue.



The Fatal Bellman
by Guy Jenkin
The Book Social
PB • £9.99
ISBN 9781918291865
Published 24th September

The hilarious sequel to the Wodehouse Prize nominated *Murder Most Foul*, from the award-winning actor, director and producer. It's 1605 and Will Shakespeare is now a wealthy writer. But when Ann Marlowe arrives at The Globe unexpectedly, fleeing from Canterbury, the pair find themselves once again enmeshed in a bloody conspiracy involving King James, Lord Cecil and various murderous thugs. The only way they can survive is by finding a murderer.



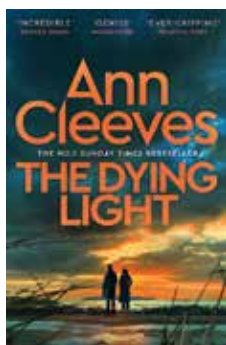
Kill Story
by J.D. Maduro
Canelo Crime
HB • £16.99
ISBN 9781835985212
Published 10th September

A darkly funny thriller. Twenty-three-year-old American ex-pat Sky Sullivan is an influence manager for Amsterdam's hottest startup, CoHab. She longs to impress her charismatic British founder, Silas, but when she's expected to cover up potential scandals, including at least one suspicious death, she realises something dark and awful lies at the heart of her workplace... A razor-sharp debut.



The Deadly Inheritance of Everest Macdonald
by A.J. West
Orenda Books
HB • £20.00
ISBN 9781917764636
Published 8th October

1917. As the Great War rages, Everest Macdonald is summoned to her father's deathbed and entrusted with a final urgent request: she must uncover the truth behind the murder of her uncle, the celebrated Victorian actor William Terriss. In 1897, Terriss was stabbed to death outside London's Adelphi Theatre. The murderer was swiftly arrested and confined to Broadmoor, the case declared closed. Yet years later, a sealed package of evidence casts doubt on the official verdict...



The Dying Light
by Ann Cleeves
Macmillan
HB • £22.00
ISBN 9781529077797
Published 8th October

A new mystery in the *Two Rivers* series. Detective Matthew Venn is called to investigate when the body of a young woman is found in the swimming pool of Tide House, a luxurious holiday home in North Devon. The girl's best friend has disappeared, and the property belongs to rising political star Paul Armstrong, leading to intense media scrutiny. As a scorching heatwave rages and further tragedy strikes, Venn and his team question a community brimming with secrets.



Ply
by Hernan Diaz
Picador • HB • £20.00
ISBN 9781037407161
Published 24th September

A new novel from the author of *Trust*. Centuries from now, an orphan adrift in an American city grows up to become a pincher. Stealing electricity from the grid to power the downtown music scene she adores is a risky occupation, and the city she moves through is dangerous. Someone is following her. Soon, the pincher is drawn into a paranoid maze where her closest friends and even her own identity are put into question, and the fabric of reality itself could change.



The Witch
by Freida McFadden
Poisoned Pen Press
HB • £22.00
ISBN 9781615958672
Published 6th October

A brand-new, haunting thriller from the author of *The Housemaid*. Some secrets don't die – they wait. When Julia Barlow loses her job and her apartment, she has nowhere left to go but Pemberton, her family's sprawling seventeenth-century estate in rural Massachusetts. Officially, she's there to check in on her ageing grandmother. Unofficially, she's hoping the old house will give her a place to disappear. Instead, Pemberton begins to unravel her.



Missing Molly
by Natalie Barelli
Poisoned Pen Press
PB • £9.99
ISBN 9781464280177
Published 27th
October

Rachel Holloway has built a quiet life in London. She has a daughter, a partner, and a steady job at the local paper. Then the paper launches a true crime podcast, and their first case is the disappearance of twelve-year-old Molly Forster, missing since her family's brutal murder twelve years ago. But Rachel knows exactly what happened to Molly. Because Rachel is Molly. She's spent years hiding from the killer who destroyed her family, and now her own podcast is about to expose her...



Sleepers in the Snow
by Joanne Harris
Gollancz • HB • £22.00
ISBN 9781399604796
Published 8th October

A beautiful yet haunting ghost story from the bestselling author of *Chocolat*. Kirkhill is a house with a new occupant – just moved in, fresh from a bitter divorce and looking for a fresh start. The moor is the perfect place for it: isolated, beautiful in the changing seasons, peaceful, and with just enough of the previous owner's belongings that it's a perfectly self-contained and cosy home. Only as the nights start to draw in, and the weather takes a turn, so does the house...



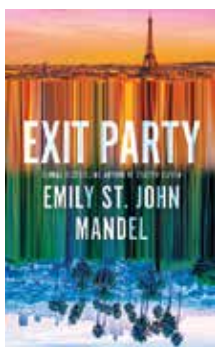
The Three Ravens Ghost Tales
by Eleanor Conlon & Martin Vaux
The History Press
HB • £19.99
ISBN 9781837052929
Published 17th
September

A new collection of 20 original ghost stories from the authors of *The Three Ravens Folk Tales* and the creators of the hit podcast. From a Medieval revenant seeking revenge to a Victorian dress that plagues its owner, the disturbing legend of the Hexham Heads to a dystopian future haunted by AI constructs, this book is made to unsettle. So, pull your bedclothes up tight and embrace a variety of chilling horrors to keep you awake, listening for footsteps in the dark ...



The Merge
by Grace Walker
Maggie • PB • £12.99
ISBN 9781836430506
Published 3rd
September

Laurie is sixty-five and living with Alzheimer's. Faced with the reality of losing her forever, her daughter Amelia signs them up to take part in the world's first experimental merging process for Alzheimer's patients, in which Laurie's ailing mind will be transferred into Amelia's healthy body and their consciousness will be blended as one. As they prepare to move to a luxurious rehabilitation centre for those who've merged, they begin to question if everything is really as it seems.



Exit Party
by Emily St. John Mandel
Picador • HB • £18.99
ISBN 9781035081288
Published 17th
September

A new mind-bending epic novel from the author of *Station Eleven*. 2031. America is at war with itself, but for the first time in weeks there is some hope: the Republic of California has been declared, the curfew in Los Angeles is lifted, and everyone in the city is going to a party. Ari, newly released from prison, arrives with her friend Gloria just as a fragile new era begins. But there are people at the party who shouldn't be there. Something is very wrong...



Books, Iced Coffee and a Side of Dragons
by Amanda Lovelace & Raquel Travé
Andrews McMeel
HB • £19.99
ISBN 9798881600860
Published 24th
September

A sapphic graphic novel romance. Welcome to Sea Witch Cove! Lucinda (call her Luci!) is the owner of Little Lighthouse Books, a bookstore in a defunct lighthouse in her small Jersey Shore town. Everything in her life would be perfect if only Aster, the trans woman who runs the coffee shop next door, would notice her. But with a little bit of luck – and the help of Dandelion, a tiny, curious wind dragon – this might be the summer that Aster and Luci finally find love.



Thistlebone: The Complete Collection
by T.C. Eglington & Simon Davis
2000 AD • PB • £29.99
ISBN 9781837868629
Published 8th October

A collection of the first three volumes of the folk horror graphic novel series. The secluded rural village of Harrowvale holds a dark past: years earlier, on a farm bordering the woods, a cult – led by the charismatic Jasper Hillman – sought to escape civilisation and find purity in the old ways, namely worshipping an ancient deity called Thistlebone. Now Avril Eason, who was kidnapped as a young girl by the cult many years ago, but managed to escape, returns to face her demons.



The Dark Judges: The Fall of Deadworld Omnibus
by Kek-W & Dave Kendall
2000 AD • HB • £39.99
ISBN 9781837868469
Published 24th
September

An omnibus collection of all of the *Fall of Deadworld* graphic novel stories from the first three volumes. On the planet Deadworld, the insane Judge Death and his lieutenants Fear, Fire and Mortis have deemed that as only the living could break the law, life itself should be a crime, and every living person is due their judgement. As the Dark Judges set out to bring extinction to their world, a small group of rebels led by Judge Fairfax launch a desperate effort to halt their plans.



Brass Sun Volume 1: The Wheel of Worlds
by Ian Edginton & I.N.J. Culbard
2000 AD • PB • £21.99
ISBN 9781837868568
Published 24th
September

A graphic novel sci-fi story. The Orrery is a fully functioning, life-sized clockwork solar system. Several planets attached to huge metal spars, orbit a great brass sun. For many years, these worlds have fought amongst each other. The sun has begun to wind down, and the outer worlds are starting to freeze, while the rest will inevitably follow. Wren, a young girl living in an outer world, is tasked by her scientist grandfather to find the lost pieces of a key that can restart the sun.

Ceremonies of the Heart

In this enchanting new book, we travel along with actor and podcaster Time Downie, as he explores the strange and beautiful places that have shaped British folklore.

Rituals: A Folk Journey Through the British Isles
by Tim Downie
Ebury Spotlight
HB • £22.00
ISBN 9781529980387
Published 29th October

Tim Downie's work as an actor includes roles in films such as *Outlander*, *Paddington* and *The Kings Speech*, as well as cult hits such as *Upstart Crow*, *Toast of London*, *Good Omens* and *Geek Girl*. He is also the co-host of the Folklands podcast, with fellow actor Justin Chubb. In *Rituals*, Tim brings to life the mystical stories that shape the character of our isles. Push through the bramble and briar to embark on a journey through the seasons, encountering wonders from clowns to coffins, horn dances to blazing tar barrels, punkies to soulcakers.

Filled with detailed insights into hidden mythic sites and stories from the incredible people that keep our folklore fires burning year after year, this book is an invitation to step outside and reconnect with the ebb and flow of the natural world. *Rituals* reveals how British folklore's rich tapestry breathes life and power into every season.

In this extract, Tim prepares to travel through autumn:

There's an air of eager hunger about these autumnal evenings. The night crackles and creaks out its course. Stars fizz in the static. The earth is reborn once again in a spray of glitter, and memories return to childhood. The only celebrations my family would ever do with any real passion were Halloween, Bonfire Night and Christmas. Nothing else seemed to matter.

My mother would decorate our small wooden dining table with orange and black crepe paper, laying out cobwebbed paper plates and cups, bowls of quivering jelly spiders and chocolate fingers displayed like broken hands. Jam-bloodied almond nails in bowls. Rags covering the mirrors, thick cobwebs draped over lamps and pictures.

I adored it: the silence, the darkness, the thrill of what may lurk in the shadows.

I just assumed everybody celebrated Halloween; it was quite a surprise to discover that we were possibly the only family in our village, known for its old Methodist traditions, that did. That only made our rituals seem more exciting, almost secret, furtive and ours alone. The thrill of ghost tales told after dark, the howl of the wild hunt overhead as we squealed in our beds – that excitement has never left me.

One thing our village did do very well, though, at least to my seven-year-old mind, was Bonfire Night. It was always bitterly cold, and the walk to the festivities through the sodium-lit backstreets, the sharp metallic taste of the coming winter in the air, always seemed dreamlike and intoxicating.

*“Welcome to the
fire lands of autumn,
a time of tricksters and
playful shades, omens
and prophesy”*

In the old school playground, we were allowed, as it was the eighties, to climb onto the metal climbing frame that stood on the tarmac like a dinosaur skeleton, slick with ice. From this vantage point we watched as the bonfire was lit and the darting shadows of local dads set off

the fireworks that boomed and crackled overhead. Our hands froze through our gloves clutching on for dear life to the cold metal. It's a memory I often wander into as I daydream of autumn. Even today it is vivid: the cold tang in the air, the sulphuric smell of fireworks and the deep woody scent of burning embers.

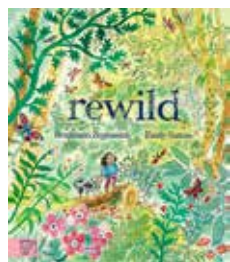
Welcome to the fire lands of autumn, a time of tricksters and playful shades, omens and prophesy. The season holds many mysteries, and as with a magician's trick, I don't want to know how they're done. I am very happy to be ignorant of the strings and sleights of hand, I want to be left in wonder, lost to the magic and brilliance of this season of fires, punkies, souling and flaming tar barrels. There's a lot happening in autumn, and I can't wait to get back on the road again.

The land has changed so much since I began my journey through the English ritual year, from the barren, frozen fields of winter that saw villages fight for the Hood, through to spring and the hunt for the wild Earl in the rich, dark woods of Devon, and then on into the burning hot days of summer, there to worship ancient sea gods and walk the tidal paths. Rituals I never dreamed I'd see, in places I never thought I'd visit. But each one unique and homemade, cherished and deeply loved.

Now, though, we must welcome in autumn. That will be done at the equinox, when I head to Avebury to greet the sun and watch it die behind the great stones, as the balance tips once more to darkness. For the wheel is always turning and after renewal comes death.



Books for Little Ones



Rewild

by Benjamin Zephaniah & Emily Sutton
Magic Cat
HB • £12.99
ISBN 9781917768634
Published 10th September
Age range: 0+

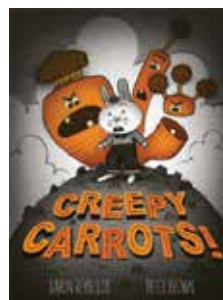
A powerful, uplifting book from the late Benjamin Zephaniah. In the beginning, the land was bare. Humanity rose, learned to speak, to farm, to build, to imagine. For a time, we lived in harmony with nature. But, as cities grew, nature was pushed aside. Forests fell, the air thickened, seas were plundered and money was mistaken for happiness. But this vast human story is not a tale of despair: at its heart is a turning point.



The Dictionary Story

by Oliver Jeffers & Sam Winston
Walker Books
PB • £10.99
ISBN 9781529532302
Published 8th October
Age range: 3+

An original gift book for all lovers of books and words. Dictionary wishes she could tell a story just like the other books. So one day she decides to bring her words to life. How exciting it is, she thinks, that an adventure is finally happening on her very own pages! But what will she do when everything gets out of control, all in a jumble, and her characters collide causing the most enormous tantrum to explode? This isn't what she wanted at all!



Creepy Carrots!

by Aaron Reynolds & Peter Brown
Simon & Schuster Children's • PB • £8.99
ISBN 9781398542433
Published 10th September
Age range: 3+

A hilarious, carrot-tastic book about the importance of respecting others that's perfect for Halloween, with comic-book style illustrations. Jasper Rabbit LOVES carrots, especially the carrots that grow in Crackenhopper Field. That's until the carrots start to follow him home... Can Jasper find a way to stop the creepy carrots getting out of the carrot patch, or will the carrots of Crackenhopper Field come up with a plan of their own?



That's Not My... Halloween

by Fiona Watt
Usborne • BB • £12.99
ISBN 9781835408438
Published 10th September
Age range: 0+

Turn the pages to discover the tactile patches in this delightful Halloween addition to the much-loved *That's not my...* series. From fluffy cats' tummies to soft bats' wings, there are lots of different touchy-feely textures to explore. With their bright, bold, eye-catching illustrations and fuzzy, furry, smooth and soft tactile patches on each page, babies and toddlers love these bestselling books.



Feeling Good

by Leslie Bricusse, Anthony Newley & Tim Hopgood
Oxford University Press • HB • £12.99
ISBN 9781382070041
Published 3rd September
Age range: 3+

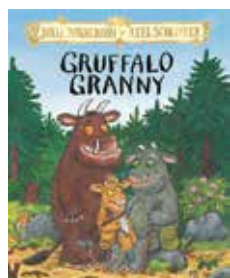
Swing high into the sky, swim with the fishes, climb the tallest trees, and discover all the joys of nature in the colourful pages of this book. Tim Hopgood's stunning artwork takes little ones on an adventure of the imagination as they listen to the lyrics of Nina Simone's best-loved song being read or sung. Families can read the book at story time or even use it as an alternative to lullabies!



Ghost, Ghoul, and Little Mouse

by Graham Howie
Oxford University Press • PB • £7.99
ISBN 9781382064040
Published 3rd September
Age range: 3+

Little Mouse lives all alone in a dark, creaking house. He'd love some friends to cook for and play games with, but when Ghost and Ghoul move in, they don't even notice him! They are too busy arguing over which of them should get to haunt the house. They decide to have a competition to decide which of them is the scariest-Ghost or Ghoul. But maybe Little Mouse has a trick or two of his own in this playful Halloween tale.



Gruffalo Granny

by Julia Donaldson & Axel Scheffler
Macmillan Children's
HB • £14.99
ISBN 9781035065516
Published 10th September
Age range: 3+

The Gruffalo said to his daughter one day, "Your Gruffalo Granny is coming to stay." Return to the deep dark wood with the first new Gruffalo story in over 20 years and meet Gruffalo Granny as she visits the Gruffalo family. This fresh and exciting new Gruffalo adventure features the return of much-loved characters and is destined to become a classic. "I really hope that children – and adults too – will enjoy the new story," Julia Donaldson



South

by Rob Biddulph
HarperCollins Children's
HB • £12.99
ISBN 9780008627751
Published 10th September
Age range: 3+

Prepare to soar to faraway lands in this heartwarming tale of adventure and the power of family and finding our flock. When Pip's family fly south for the winter, they forget one thing: Pip. At first he's delighted at the freedom to do as he pleases, but he soon realises that being alone isn't quite the adventure he imagined... Filled with loveable characters, emotive storytelling and truly glorious artwork, Rob Biddulph returns with another unforgettable tale.



The Bat Who Didn't Like the Dark

by Steve Small
Simon & Schuster Children's
HB • £12.99
ISBN 9781398522305
Published 22nd October
Age range: 3+

There was once a bat who didn't like the dark but kept that fear deep inside. Then one night the lost bat meets an owl who guides the bat home. Along the way, they encounter the magical sights, sounds and fellow creatures of the night as the bat comes to see that sometimes it's in the darkest night that all the stars shine extra bright... The perfect companion to Steve Small's previous books *The Duck Who Didn't Like Water* and *The Hare who Wouldn't Share*.

Brave New World

In this fast-paced adventure story, Scamp is a Jack Russell living at a pet rescue centre when, one day, all the people disappear. Together with Patticake the sausage dog, Chandelier the cat, Falstaff the parrot, Punzel the rabbit and hamsters Nudge and Wink, can the pets make their way in the world and become real wild ones? We interviewed the author Steve Cole to find out more.

What inspired you to write *The Wild Ones*?

It was during lockdown in 2020. I was very grateful to have a dog, and I was reading a lot about people getting lockdown dogs. I thought, what will happen when everyone has to go back to work, when the world changes again? And what if those people going to work never came back? Lockdown was also an opportunity to watch TV series such as *The Waking Dead*, which is about a postapocalyptic world. I thought, pets are such innocents, what would happen if they were put in a scary world like that? They would have to become wilder.

Why did you choose a Jack Russell, Scamp, to be the main character?

It had to be a social dog, full of lots of energy. I was going to make it a cross breed, a mongrel, but I also wanted it to be recognisable, so that kids could picture it easily. I was also influenced by Eddie, the dog in the TV series *Frasier*. He's such a clever dog! And then, I also wanted a sausage dog, Patticake, who was good at digging. I needed an array of animal characters with an array of abilities and physical skills, or lack of skills.

[KIDS]

The pets must fend for themselves and become more wild – do you see this as a metaphor for growing up?

Yes, certainly. I was also thinking how, in today's world, in America and also here in the UK, it is getting harder to navigate our way, and know what is real and what is not. And if you are passive, you're not going to get on too well, so you have to find more agency. Grow a little wilder, don't just accept what you're told, find your own way through.

“Steve Cole is a master storyteller.”

Eoin Colfer

As you say, there are an array of animals in the books – do you have a favourite animal?

I think my favourite animal is the dog. I love cats too. I know there is a typical dog/cat divide, and I probably come down on the side of the dog. I've had dogs most of my life, and I love that brand of hopefulness and loyalty which they provide. They are such good companions, and help you to meet other people too.

The parrot Falstaff quotes a lot of Shakespeare. Did you have fun finding the right quotes for the right situations?

I did look through quotes and pick good ones out for certain times in the plot. But Falstaff doesn't always quote Shakespeare, she occasionally goes for other writers. I didn't want to alienate children with the quotes, but I did hope that they would maybe look them up and find out where they were from. Falstaff is a slightly cryptic character, because sometimes her quotes are not complete.

The threat in the book comes from strange creatures known as Things. What was the inspiration behind them?

The idea was that life had become difficult in the wider countryside for these animals to survive, so they've come into the more urban areas, which are deserted, to take what they can. They are like a spectre of what went before, a couple of generations on from whatever's happened to drive the people away. I didn't want to be too specific in the book about what's actually happened, but I think it's some kind of nuclear event. There are some subtle mentions of animal shelters filling up before the event, which suggests that people are moving away from the area. But other than that the reader can decide for themselves what happened.



And are there any other authors that inspire you in your writing?

I like authors like Piers Torday and Phil Earle, they are legends so I was delighted when they gave endorsements on the back of the book. For this book, I was also inspired by film *The Incredible Journey*. As a child I was struck by the idea that these two dogs and a cat would travel so far to reach their owners. And I also loved the TV series *The Littlest Hobo*.

What do independent bookshops mean to you?

They have really helped me in my long career. I think they're wonderful places to go, because they give real personal recommendations, and they are the hubs of the local community. And they are for everyone – I remember a child once asking me if you had to wear smart shoes in a bookshop. Because he'd never been in one and they were spoken about so reverently. I said no, you can wear what you like!

The Wild Ones

by Steve Cole

Illustrated by Johanna Tarkela

Scholastic • PB • £7.99

ISBN 9780702349157

Out Now

Age range: 8+



Brick by Brick

An awesome and funny new graphic novel, this book is set in the future and follows a boy who goes on a perilous search for a lost brick. We interviewed the author and illustrator Jeffrey Brown to discover more.



What inspired you to write comic book about a young boy searching for a lost brick?

When I first started talking to DK about the possibility of writing and drawing a LEGO book, the most immediate problem was an idea – which I didn't have. But I had been walking my dog, and because she's a bad dog constantly looking for things to eat off the ground, I have to watch the ground closely, and one thing I'd notice occasionally is a random LEGO brick, half buried in the grass or even sitting in the middle of the sidewalk. These three concepts started to come together in my mind – the lost bricks, a kid searching for their lost brick, and the juxtaposition of these plastic LEGO bricks overgrown with plants and sitting in nature. Over time I developed that into a bigger sort of post-apocalyptic world, with Nikolas and friends as the main characters, and the search for a lost brick as the anchoring storyline.

Are you a fan of LEGO building? What is it about LEGO which makes it so attractive to both children and adults?

I grew up with LEGO, and so when I had kids, it was the perfect excuse to get back into building. For me, one aspect is the meditative quality of putting a LEGO set together. I find it invariably soothing. I also tend to build with story in mind, so if I'm building something from my imagination, I'm activating my mind and coming up with ideas. What world does this thing exist in? Who are these minifigure characters? What are they up to? Playing has always involved a kind of storytelling for me, all the way back to childhood, and the ability to build elements of a story with LEGO bricks adds a dimension that a lot of toys lack.

In the book, people have forgotten how to build, create and mend things. Do you think that could happen, with the rise of AI?

I think it's already happened in various ways with various technologies over time. It's

natural for us to lose the ability to do certain things in exchange for saving time or energy through the use of technology. The question is where do we draw the line, and when do we recognise that the benefits of doing something faster, easier and cheaper may be outweighed by the cost of what we lose? Is it worth it to rely solely on a technology that increases profits if it causes us to lose our imagination, or our ability to harness our imagination? I think AI is largely being sold on the promise of making things cheaper, faster, and easier, but there is an assumption there that cheaper/faster/easier is inherently better, and I don't agree that's universally true. I think there's great value in being able to build something yourself.

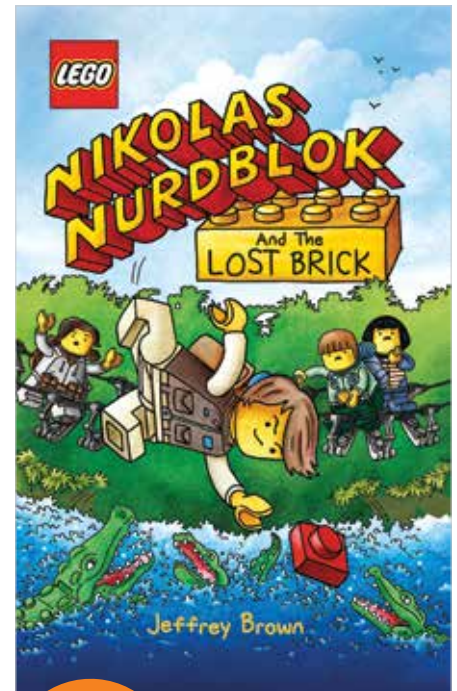
Nikolas has a strong belief in himself, even when things often go wrong for him. Do you think it's important to have that self-belief? Self-belief is certainly an important trait, I think – it's part of being resilient and not giving up just because something is difficult or challenging. Although Nikolas has the problem of his self-belief being disconnected from reality sometimes! So he still needs to learn to apply the other elements that make self-belief a super power, such as learning from your mistakes and realizing when a limit is set by your fears and when it's set by the laws of physics. He's still young, so he has time to get there.

The book is full of jokes and humour – do you think it's good to be funny when writing for children?

I don't think humour is necessarily a requirement when writing for children, but I do believe humour is found in almost every great book – for any age, of any form, and however serious the subject matter. Personally, everything I write and draw tends to have humour, even if it's a little dark, or even if I'm the only one who finds it funny. It's just what makes sense to me, and to kids. Maybe because I'm a bit of a child at heart still, I don't know!

When you create your books, which comes first: the characters, the pictures or the story?

That's a tough question, because in the moment I'm not really aware, and by the time an idea for a book gets to the point where I'm ready to really work on it, I've already got a good sense of story, characters, and visuals, and in my mind they seem to have arrived together all at once. I think it's really a back and forth, with maybe the general idea of a story being the initial spark. I might



LEGO: Nikolas Nurdblok and the Lost Brick

by Jeffrey Brown

DK flip • PB • £7.99

ISBN 9780241809563

Published 29th October

Age range: 7+

have some ideas of the overall idea, and then decide what characters would be good for that story. I might sketch a character, and that sketch might lead to who that character is. And as any author knows, sometimes the characters change the direction of the story just by being themselves, and it just goes round and round.

Which other authors and illustrators inspire you in your work?

There are too many to list! So I'll just mention a few that are first to pop in my mind. One is Swedish artist Linnea Sterte. I love her book *A Frog on the Fall*, and even have a throw blanket of the cover, which I used as my staging area when building some reference LEGO builds for my book. Which leads to another all-time favorite, Arnold Lobel's *Frog and Toad* books. Some of the most perfect books ever made. And just to stay on theme, another one of my favorite childhood books is Rosamond Dauer's *Bullfrog Builds a House*, illustrated by Byron Barton. All hugely inspiring creators, even if I didn't find the right spot in my LEGO book to include any frogs.

What do independent bookshops mean to you?

While the internet has been amazing in letting people discover and have access to things they may have missed otherwise, it has also contributed to a flattening of what gets attention and buried great things in a sea of noise. Independent bookshops are – as far as my experience goes – always run by people who have that combination of extensive knowledge and deep love of books, and are the place I can still count on to find those hidden gems. They're the place where you might find that one unexpected book that could change your life.

Under the Influence

In this gripping YA novel, Anna is used to her mum, an online influencer, making videos of her and her sister Josie. But as it becomes clear that Josie is being stalked, Anna starts to question whether she wants to continue to be featured in the videos. We interviewed the author Sally Nicholls to discover more.



Photo © Joe Ratzer

What inspired you to write *Dangerous Influence*?

I was thinking about what it would be like to be an influencer online, or the children of an influencer who put your photo and videos of you from an early age on the internet. And how that would affect a child once they became a teenager. It's that age when you're really conscious of all the things that are wrong with your body. I had the idea for the book about six years ago. Since then, people have become better about considering how having an online presence affects their children. Back before the internet, you would bring your boyfriend to meet your family, and your mum might get out some embarrassing baby pictures of you. But what if all your baby pictures are available to everyone?

Do you agree on a social media ban for children?

I think it's really complicated. I think we do need to think about the way people interact with teenagers on the internet. The book is more about children who are on the internet without their consent, from an early age. But if a child absolutely wants to be there, they can probably

circumnavigate a ban. I think a social media ban would be useful for parents, to give them the legitimacy to say no. I do agree with banning phones in school. I have witnessed my kids going to social events and everyone is there just looking at their phones!

Do you blame the mother in the book? She is exploiting her children in a lot of ways, but she's also trying to make a living.

One of the interesting things about being a writer is trying to see everybody's point of view. My books have never featured characters who are wholly good or bad. You can have sympathy even for the villains. She is a single mum and doesn't have a lot of money, and part of what she's doing is overcompensating for the experience of her own childhood. Her parents worked outside the home and she really struggled with that. So she wants to be present for her children. Creating content seems to her the most effective way she has of making money whilst still being at home. The real villains in the book are the people who are behaving inappropriately towards her daughter. But it is bad that she is putting her children on the internet without their consent. Quite a lot of children who have appeared in such videos have argued that it is like having a job, and that they should be paid for it, in the same way that child actors are paid. Nowadays some YouTubers are not featuring their children, or they blur out their faces, so that is an improvement.

I was struck by how Anna doesn't realise that her sister Josie doesn't like being in the videos either, until she asks her about it. Do you think that a lot of kids don't like to cause trouble by saying they don't want to be in online videos?

Yes, if that's what your family's always done, it seems normal to you. And also I think that we sometimes tell children stories about themselves which they take to heart. It's like if you have a child that doesn't like a certain food and you create a different meal for them every day, you can create an identity for them about being a fussy eater that perhaps isn't true, but that's the story you've told them about themselves. And the child might not want to break out of that identity.

How were you involved in making the book dyslexia-friendly and inclusive?

I've done quite a few books for Barrington Stoke now, and they give you a guide on ways to make the books accessible for all readers. You don't use attributed speech, and the characters all have just one name each. You write the book, and then it goes through a language edit, which flags all the text that they think might need to be rephrased.

Are there any other authors who inspire you in your writing?

I think Jacqueline Wilson is a genius. She writes quite a lot about that disconnection between a child and the family. This book was quite interesting to write, as at first I didn't think it was going to be about that so much, about being a child and having autonomy taken away from you.

What do independent bookshops mean to you?

I love them. I grew up in Stockton on Tees, which didn't have a bookshop at the time. But independent bookshops all offer something different. Some will do reading groups, some will do school visits. And they are passionate about books and reading. Not all bookshops are focussed on children, but the ones that are really care about children's literacy.

Dangerous Influence

by Sally Nicholls

Barrington Stoke • PB • £7.99

ISBN 9780008760472

Published 24th September

Age range: 13+

Reading age: 8+



Words of Hope

With a wise and wonderful quote for every day of the year, *Tomorrow Bright Before Us* is perfect for creative young minds. Discover brilliant words on every subject, from the beloved voices of inspirational writers, thinkers, scientists, leaders, artists and activists, combined with Victoria Ball's evocative illustrations of warmth, joy and hope. We interviewed Victoria to discover how she created the artwork.



[KIDS]

Tomorrow Bright Before Us: An Inspiring Quote for Every Day of the Year
Illustrated by Victoria Ball
Nosy Crow • HB • £25.00
ISBN 9781839942303
Published 10th September
Age range: 7+



How did your work on *Tomorrow Bright Before Us* come about?

Through my wonderful agents at Bright. I was thrilled at the prospect of working on a project with Nosy Crow, their publications are always so thoughtfully designed. It was originally going to be a much smaller book, but we pivoted early on to embark on this much larger scale project.

How did you get into being an illustrator?

I studied BA Illustration at Falmouth College of Art, graduating in 2002. I accepted my first proper illustration commission, for Children's ITV, on the day of my graduation! From there I moved to London and began illustrating in-house for a greetings card company three days per week, whilst also working on children's books, editorial work, packaging etc, though my agent at the time.

How did you go about creating the illustrations for each quote?

It was very much a collaborative process, between me and the brilliant designer and editors at Nosy Crow. The quotes were

grouped in terms of theme and we got our heads together about what might work illustratively. It was definitely an evolution, with some spreads taking on many guises before landing on the perfect fit. My process was very much to dive straight into the artwork, rather than creating a traditional pencil sketch first. I would then make adjustments from there, really to keep things fresh and to be able to get a feel for the flow of colour throughout the book.

"I tend to take inspiration from everyday life, nature, textiles and the visual world around me."

What is your process for illustrating – do you work on paper, on a computer or a mix of the two?

I created these illustrations in Procreate on an iPad Pro, using an Apple Pencil. For many years, though, I worked entirely by hand with paint and pencil, tracing roughs, painting and repainting, then scanning the finished artwork. That analogue process has really shaped the way I work digitally. I still approach the Apple Pencil as if it were a traditional drawing tool, building each illustration in much the same way I always have. Digital illustration is sometimes dismissed, as though the software does the work for you, but I don't see it that way at

all. To me, it's simply another medium, one that streamlines many of the practical stages involved in making a book. It allows me to focus more on the creative process without changing the way I think about drawing, composition, or painting.

Do you have a favourite quote from the book?

There are so many to choose from! I particularly love the quote from *Anne of Green Gables* by L.M. Montgomery. 'It's been my experience that you can nearly always enjoy things if you make up your mind firmly that you will.' The power of positive thought, so true.

Which other illustrators inspire you in your work?

I tend to take inspiration from everyday life, nature, textiles and the visual world around me. It's always inspiring to see other illustrators with a strong identity, there is so much wonderful illustration out there at our fingertips, but I think it's important to draw from your own experiences to develop and maintain your personal voice.

What do independent bookshops mean to you?

Like libraries, they're a bit of a sanctuary, aren't they? I love browsing the shelves in my local bookshop, they feel thoughtfully curated and often very supportive of local authors and illustrators. Being able to talk to your bookseller in a meaningful way about what might appeal to you, makes buying a new book feel as special as it should. They also support the local economy and high street, which is so important.

Moggy Misadventures



In this heartwarming picture book from the much-loved actor and comedian Rob Brydon, Crumble the cat embarks on a rescue mission to try and regain his lost mouse toy Fluffy. We interviewed the author to discover more.



Photo © Sophia Spring

What inspired you to write *The Cat in the Cupboard*?

As my five children were growing up, we were always reading books together and I'd often make up my own little rhymes for them to enjoy – through the day and also as they were settling down for bed. Sharing stories together in this way is something I have such fond memories of and is something that has followed me through my stage and TV career, too. It must have been around 25 years ago now, but I did a show called *Human Remains* where my character was a guy who often made-up songs. Making up these rhymes came quite naturally to me, and it's always been something I've thoroughly enjoyed – whether for my children or for myself – so much so that I found myself weaving them into my live shows too. I still say little rhymes to myself, mainly for my own amusement really.

We have a much-loved family cat called Crumble; he's a gorgeous ginger tom – he's probably around 12 or 13 years old now. He's a typical cat: he's aloof and disappears out of his cat flap for hours upon end, only to slink back in with a mischievous look on his face looking like he's been up to no good. Saying that, he's also like a dog in many ways – he'll

just come up to you, jump on your lap, and demand affection. I'm sure many cat owners have had similar thoughts, but I have often found myself wondering what adventures Crumble might go on: where does he go when he's not in the family home and what cast of characters does he encounter along the way?

In the book, Crumble has a cat-flap at the back of a cupboard – where did this idea come from?

In our house, Crumble doesn't have a conventional cat-flap set up. Of course, most households typically have a cat flap in the back door, but in our kitchen, the cat flap is situated on a side wall. A few years ago, we had some cupboards installed which posed a challenge for poor Crumble. We realised that we'd need a secondary interior cat flap to allow Crumble to move freely from the main kitchen, into the cupboard, and then out through the main cat flap to access the outside world. This worked well, but when we had friends round for dinner, they were often confused to see Crumble walk into the cupboard and then completely disappear into the garden.

One day, thinking of Crumble and his less than typical cat flap arrangement, I said aloud to myself 'The Cat in the Cupboard'. I couldn't get this rhyme out of my head: The Cat in the Cupboard, The Cat in the Cupboard, I said to myself over and over again. I thought what a lovely sound this line has. I found myself carrying on this rhyme, again purely for my own amusement, but I soon added to this. It became 'The Cat in the Cupboard is often discovered on top of an old pile of clothes'. I spent a while tinkering and finessing this rhythm, really getting a feel for the flow. Quickly, I found myself with a whole story mapped out, told in rhyme, which chronicled Crumble's adventures. Shaping what would become *The Cat in the Cupboard* felt like a natural and joyful next step, and I couldn't be happier with how the final book – my first children's book – came out.

Did you work closely with the illustrator Ellie Snowdon on the book, and what did you think of the depiction of yourself?

Ellie Snowdon is such a talented illustrator. It has been such a pleasure to see how she's brought Crumble and his world to life, and I've really enjoyed following her initial sketches through to the illustrations that can be found in the finished book. Right from the beginning,

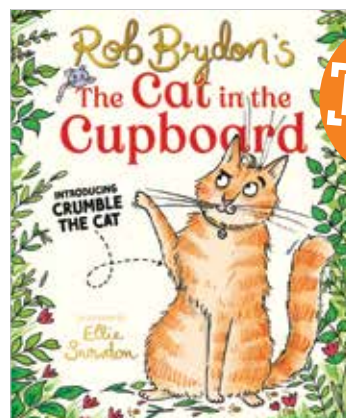
I loved Ellie's gorgeous colour palette and feel of texture – she brilliantly captured Crumble's cosy world. But above all, I loved how her characters were full of humour and expressive detail. In one illustration, Crumble can be curled up looking cute on a laundry pile, yet full of mischief in the next. It's the same for the villains of the story – Crumble's neighbours – two larger than life characters. Ellie visually brought them to life by adding so many funny little details, drama and vibrancy that the words alone can't convey. And yes, seeing myself and Crumble in the story was surreal – I think Ellie did a brilliant job of capturing us!

Which other authors do you enjoy?

I've just read John Lanchester *Look What You Made Me Do*. I had already read his other book *Capital* and loved it; this one is different but equally detailed. His levels of invention are quite extraordinary – as a writer you sit there thinking how the hell did he come up with that plot twist? Where did you get that idea from? I'm very pleased to have read this, because I don't read a lot of fiction and this is a great way back into it. I read so many picture books to my five children whilst they were growing up. They're adults now, but some of these stories have long stayed with me. I have such fond memories of reading Shirley Hughes' stories in particular; I loved the *Alfie* series as well as *Dogger*. There's something so incredible about how Shirley perfectly captured the childhood experience: her incredible little details, the children's range of expressions, and finding magic in the day-to-day routine. In recent years, I've also been very lucky to experience picture books in a different format when narrating the animations of Julia Donaldson's TV adaptations.

What do independent bookshops mean to you?

I am very lucky to live near so many independent bookshops in London. I'm always in awe of the booksellers' knowledge, and how they have an incredible ability to recommend the perfect book on any theme, mood or occasion. Their knowledge is vast, and their passion for books is contagious. I am really looking forward to connecting with independent bookshops around the launch of *The Cat in the Cupboard*. In publication week, I'll be working with the brilliant Booka and Lingham's on a family event in Wrexham, and I really look forward to dropping into as many independent bookshops as possible.



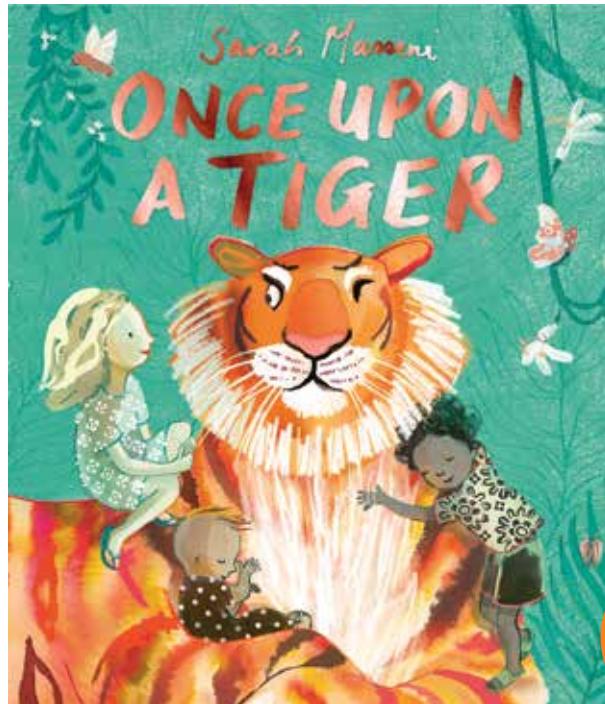
The Cat in the Cupboard

by Rob Brydon & Ellie Snowdon
Puffin • HB • £12.99
ISBN 9780241795156
Published 10th September
Age range: 5+

Stripes of Life

“That grumpiness in the tiger is a way of keeping everybody else at a distance.”

Photo © John Powell



Once Upon a Tiger

by Sarah Massini
Simon & Schuster Children's
HB • £14.99

ISBN 9781398544949

Published 10th September

Age range: 3+

Look out for a special edition available in independent bookshops, with a free print. While stocks last!



[KIDS]

This moving new picture book features a grumpy tiger who discovers not one, not two but three children on his back! What can the tiger and children teach each other about kindness and bravery? We interviewed the author and illustrator Sarah Massini to discover more.

What inspired you to create this particular story about a tiger and some children?

I've been an illustrator for a long time. And I always wanted to write my own story. I've got notebooks with ideas that go back years. I liked the idea of the phrase 'once upon' describing some children literally sitting on top of an animal. I signed up with a new agent who was very encouraging, and he swept all my commitments to one side, and gave me some time. It gave me the confidence to believe I could actually do it. I went through a variety of ideas that I had, and *Once Upon a Tiger* was the one he liked best. It started out being an elephant, but I abandoned the elephant because I really struggled with the scale differential. So I thought, what could it be? And a tiger was the obvious choice. I like the rhythm and rhyme of the book. I remember when my son was a toddler, and he had an animal poetry book. He loved to make the animal noises.

How different was it, writing as well as illustrating your own book, to illustrating for other authors?

When I was writing it, I was also thinking about the visuals, and this helped me to direct the story. I could see the townscape, and so I could direct the text in that way, for example. Quite often, when you're presented with a text you find yourself stuck. When you do both, you can rewrite the story and

redirect it to make the most of the visuals. This book exploded into a flow of creativity.

How do you create your images?

I start with a notebook where I scribble down lots and lots of ideas. And then I focus on a composition that I think will work really well. The next step is to do a thumbnail, and to get a sense of the colours. These colours set the palette for the whole book. I develop these illustrations, and the final artwork retains the original lines I drew, I like to keep that loose fluidity. I have a series of working documents, almost like pieces. I move them together, like a jigsaw puzzle. I use the line as a basic framework, and then pile bits of water, colour and texture and other pencil lines onto it. It's a very detailed and involved process.

The tiger is grumpy initially, but he learns to be kind. Do you think it's brave to be kind?

That grumpiness in the tiger is a way of keeping everybody else at a distance. He wants to do that so that they won't realise that he isn't brave. Through his actions, helping the children get back home, he realises that he is actually brave.

The tiger lives in the city for a while, but finds that he misses the wild. Do you think it's important to have some wildness in your life?

I realised, in writing the story, that I'm a bit like the tiger. Because I've always been afraid of writing my own story, and I thought I lacked the bravery to go ahead and do it. Stepping out of your comfort zone and stepping into the unknown is something that is good for you, and it can be productive. The tiger respects that the children need to be in their home, and they learn to respect that he needs to be in his own place. I also wanted to convey the idea that we need to look after animals in the wild, particularly tigers, as they are endangered.

Are there any other authors or illustrators who inspire you in your work?

There are so many. I like the work of Maurice Sendak, he inspired me to want to be a children's book illustrator. I also love David Roberts, he's wonderful and brilliant. And there's a Dutch illustrator called Mark Janssen, he's great with colour. I love colour in my work, and I think of his illustrations because he nails it every time.

What do independent bookshops mean to you?

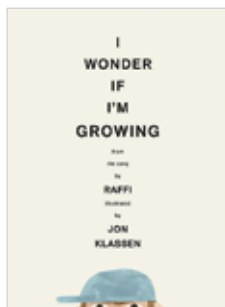
I'm really lucky – my local bookshop is Rother Books in Battle. They are very supportive, they will recommend my books as a local author. We are well served by bookshops in this area of East Sussex.

Picture & Illustrated Books



The House with Nobody In It
by Jon Klassen
Walker Books
BB • £8.99
ISBN 9781529535860
Published 10th September
Age range: 3+

A house-shaped, peep-through board book for young readers with a thrill for things that go bump in the night – while feeling safely tucked into their own house. Here are all the things in this house: a chair, a clock on the wall, a stool, a lamp. What's missing from this house? Somebody. This is the house with nobody in it. Well, there might be something...



I Wonder if I'm Growing
by Raffi & Jon Klassen
Walker Books
HB • £14.99
ISBN 9781529539363
Published 22nd October
Age range: 3+

A perfect picture book pairing from children's singer-songwriter Raffi and award-winning illustrator Jon Klassen. *I wonder if I'm growing*. A child is carrying this familiar childhood question with them during all the little moments of their day – waking up, looking out the window, in the mirror, at the breakfast table, in the car and in the bathtub – until that magic moment... HEY! He can reach the tap now! And finally, we can see this kid's mouth in the mirror – and the big smile that's on it.



Cackle Crackle: Letters from the Witch
by Annie Atkins & Taryn Knight
Magic Cat
HB • £17.99
ISBN 9781917768139
Out Now
Age range: 5+

This book follows five witches from across the globe as they prepare for the annual Big Witch Convention. Their work is interrupted, however, by gaggles of local children looking for help. How will the witches share their secrets, and will the children know if they're being tricked? Written in rhyming verse as a partner title to *Letters from the North Pole*, this spooky story includes ten pull-out paper props, featuring handwritten letters and spells straight from the witches' homes.



Davey's Daydreams
by Louise Gooding & Irina Avgustinovich
DK Children
PB • £7.99
ISBN 9780241811719
Published 1st October
Age range: 3+

Following the success of *Wonderfully Wired Brains* and *Minna's Masks*, this new book introduces a little boy with a vivid imagination. His daydreams aren't just flights of fancy; they are a key part of how he processes the world, and this heartwarming story celebrates these daydreams. The narrative gently introduces daydreaming as a common trait in many neurodiverse children.



Don't Feed the Troll
by Emily Gravett
Two Hoots
HB • £14.99
ISBN 9781035074440
Published 1st October
Age range: 3+

A new picture book from the creator of *Tidy*, *Meerkat Mail* and *The Odd Egg*. Everybody in faraway fairytale land is getting ready for a very special party. Except one tiny bridge troll, who is making his own fun – by being extremely rude. With every insult he hurls, with every ego he bruises, he gets bigger and bigger. How will Cinderella, the three little pigs and all the other fairytale friends defeat that naughty troll? An entertaining fairytale adventure with a happy ending!



The Polar Night Adventure
by Cecilia Blomdahl & Suzie Mason
DK Children
HB • £14.99
ISBN 9780241802120
Published 29th September
Age range: 5+

Will Grim find his way home? Discover the magic of Svalbard in this heartwarming Arctic adventure. As the last glimmers of light fade from the snow-covered peaks and polar night arrives, Grim the Finnish Lapphund finds himself lost in the vast Arctic. On this unexpected journey, he encounters mischievous arctic foxes, reindeer huddled in the snow, and bright-white beluga whales rising from the fjord. But danger lingers too...



13 Nights to Halloween!
Usborne • PB • £14.99
ISBN 9781836043836
Published 10th September
Age range: 3+

An innovative advent calendar-style book for Halloween fun. With 13 windows to open and a miniature book hidden behind each one, this creepy calendar is a magical way for children to count down to Halloween. There are 5 spooky story books, 2 colouring books, a sticker book, and 5 books with Halloween crafts to conjure up, each made using recycled or everyday items from around the house.



The Skull
by Jon Klassen
Walker Books
PB • £7.99
ISBN 9781529531053
Published 10th September
Age range: 5+

An eerie yet gentle Halloween story, now in paperback. On a dark night, a girl named Otilla stumbles across a lonely, abandoned house deep in the forest. Inside waits a skull – who has a secret of its own. Together, they face the shadows that arrive each night... and discover the strength that comes from courage and kindness. With Klassen's dry humour, beautiful illustrations and touch of spooky fun, this book is ideal for kids who like their stories mysterious but not too scary.



Adventuremice: Mini Mice Mayhem
by Philip Reeve & Sarah McIntyre
David Fickling Books
PB • £6.99
ISBN 9781788454032
Published 8th October
Age range: 5+

The ninth book in the popular *Adventuremice* series! The *Adventuremice* are visited by a class of cute but naughty mouselets and there's one almighty commotion in the offing. Charming chaos, sweet silliness and adorable anarchy are jam-packed into this warm, funny story full of adventure.

Dual Control



In this first in a funny new series from the author of *The Beast and the Bethany*, spoiled child Henrik Jekyll discovers that he's inherited a decaying manor in the dying town of Gothville. But when he creates a potion and drinks it, he finds an alter ego, Eddie Hyde, taking over... We interviewed Jack Meggitt-Phillips to find out more.

What drew you to write a children's book with a twist on the classic Robert Louis Stevenson story *The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*?

I've always been fascinated by the original story. I read somewhere that the definition of a classic book is that it always has something new to say. I think that is very true of this tale. I really wanted to bring it to a younger audience. I love writing the sort of books that I would have loved to read when I was a child. So this book brought those two things together – my obsession with the original, and my desire to create something I would have liked to read.

Henrik is an entitled, arrogant child – do you blame his parents, who compete to win his affection, for this?

Yes. I recently read *David Copperfield* and I like the way it begins in the past, with his birth. In my book, you can see why Henrik is such a spoiled child. Every time he walks into a room, his parents fight over his attention, and give him everything he wants.

Henrik creates an old potion which gives him an alter ego, Eddie Hyde, who starts to possess him. Do you think we all have a Hyde inside us?

The real genius of the original story is that it doesn't say that the man is secretly two people, it shows a man is really one person. I think that we all have those contradictions within us. If you try and capture what a real human looked like on the page, the personality would be so contradictory the reader would probably think that the author hasn't thought the character through properly! What I wanted to do in this book was have someone who wasn't thank nice to begin with, and who unleashes another side to himself. I was also thinking about those Victorian gothic stories such as *Frankenstein*, when it's the ones who are pushing science to its extreme who are the villains, not the creatures that they create.

Gabby is trying to revitalise the dying town of Gothville, but a lot of the townspeople are cynical and hate the Jekyll family. Do you think that such cynicism can lead to destruction?

The book is all about change. As a writer, I love writing about characters who go on a journey and change. I loved watching *Blackadder* as a child, I like the way the character was not good, but you enjoyed watching him get away with things. Henrik goes on a journey in the book, he transforms into Eddie, but he also has his first ever friendship with Gabby. This makes him not as selfish as he once was. And this journey is echoed in the people in the town. They are convinced that their lives are terrible because it's someone else's fault. But we all have a certain amount of agency in our lives to change for the better. If you feel grumpy, you can affect everyone around you. But if you are more positive and help people instead, it improves your life too.

“Children are crying out for funny stories”

The book is quite dark in places, but it's also funny and full of humour. How important do you think humour is in children's stories?

I love funny books. I do lots of bookshop and school visits and children are crying out for funny stories. And as a reader I love finding a story that makes me laugh. I think humour is quite contemporary and original. If you watch Shakespeare's dramas, they still hold up well, but if you watch comedies, they often need to be explained. I think funny books are very important, and key to encouraging children to read.

Will there be more adventures in this series?

Yes, the book is a standalone story, but at the end there is a stinger about how elements of the past might come to haunt a future book. I've just written the second book in the series. I love the characters so much, and the whole world of Gothville. I envision it as looking a little like a Tim Burton film. The side characters are all as interesting as the main characters.

Which other writers do you enjoy?

I love Lemony Snicket. I didn't get into reading as a child until my mother gave me *The Bad Beginning*. It threw the doors open to me, and showed me that reading could be dangerous and exhilarating. I also love Stephen Moffat's TV shows, such as *Sherlock* and his work on *Doctor Who*, I love that combination of scary and funny, with fantastic, twisty stories. I also love P.G. Wodehouse, his books make me laugh so much.

What do independent bookshops mean to you?

I owe them my career. My favourite thing as a writer is doing events, because I love meeting young readers and seeing different parts of the world. Independent bookshops engage with their communities in creative ways. They are the best lines of defence in ensuring that kids continue to read.



Jekyll Vs Hyde: The Potion of Doom

by Jack Meggitt-Phillips
Illustrated by Holly Swain
Farshore • PB • £7.99
ISBN 9780008776947
Published 24th September
Age range: 8+



Maria Isabel Sánchez Vegara



Nour Ferwana

Moonlit Tales

Under the Olive Moon is a remarkable collection of traditional children's stories from Palestine, written by Palestinian author and mother Nour Ferwana, in collaboration with Maria Isabel Sánchez Vegara, and illustrated by Raahat Kaduji. We interviewed Nour to discover how she wrote it.

How did *Under the Olive Moon* come about?

The book began in the middle of a very hard time for my family. We were living through the war in Gaza, trying to keep our two little girls safe, calm and hopeful. Like many parents here, I told them stories at night. Stories I had heard when I was a child, stories my family carried with me. Then I met Isa, and we began to write to each other. I shared with her some of the stories I was telling my daughters, and slowly the idea of the book was born. We wanted these Palestinian fables to travel beyond our tent, beyond Gaza, and reach children everywhere.

The stories included are traditional Palestinian tales, and you write in the book about how you tell them to your children during the ongoing war in Gaza. Do you think that stories are even more important for children in times of trouble?

Yes, I do. In times of trouble, children need food, water and safety. But they also need imagination, comfort and hope. Stories cannot stop the fear outside, but they can create a small safe place inside a child's heart. When I told my daughters a story, even for a few minutes, the tent became something else. It could become a garden, a village, the sea, or the moon. Stories reminded them that the world was not only made of danger and terror. It was also made of kindness, courage, beauty and love.

How did you work with the other collaborators on the book, Maria Isabel Sánchez Vegara and Raahat Kaduji?

Isa and I wrote to each other almost every

day, whenever the internet connection allowed it. I told her about my family, my daughters, our days in Gaza, and the stories I remembered. She listened with great care and helped shape them into a book for children, while keeping their spirit and meaning alive. We were also very lucky that Raahat had recently returned from a trip to Palestine when she joined the project. Although the Palestine she experienced was not the dreamlike Palestine of the tales, the landscapes, colours and people she encountered remained a powerful source of inspiration. When I first saw her illustrations, I felt she had captured not only the beauty of the stories, but also the warmth and spirit of the place they come from.

"I think stories can gently open a new window in the mind."

Do you have a favourite story from the book?

My favourite story is probably *A Journey in the Moon's Boat*. It tells of two sisters who climb aboard a silver boat and travel beyond the horizon to see places they have never seen before. I think I love it so much because it reminds me of my own daughters. Like the girls in the story, they are curious about the world and dream of seeing what lies beyond the rubble around them. At its heart, it is a story about freedom, wonder and hope – things every child deserves.

Each story has a message behind it – do you think it's important for stories to give us new perspective on the world?

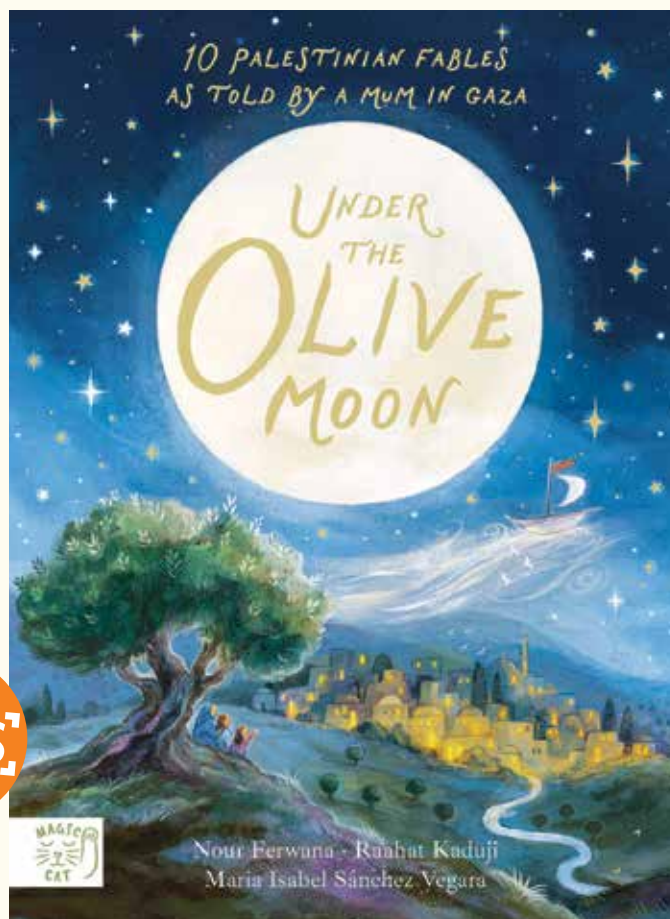
Yes. I think stories can gently open a new window in the mind. They help children understand things that are sometimes too big or difficult to explain directly. A story can show that courage does not always look loud, that sharing can make everyone stronger, or that hope can still appear in darkness. Children understand these messages deeply when they come through a tale, because they feel them before they analyse them.

Which other authors do you enjoy?

I have always loved the poetry of Mahmoud Darwish. His writing is deeply connected to memory, belonging and home, and those ideas are very close to my heart. At the same time, I grew up surrounded by traditional Palestinian and Arab stories, the kind that are passed from parents and grandparents to children. Those stories have probably influenced me more than any book, because they carry memory, language and belonging.

What do independent bookshops mean to you?

To me, independent bookshops feel like small homes for stories. They are places where books are not just sold, but loved, recommended and shared from one person to another. For a book like *Under the Olive Moon*, that means so much. I hope independent bookshops can help these Palestinian stories find readers who will hold them gently, and understand that behind every tale there are real children, real families and real hope.



Under the Olive Moon
by Nour Ferwana & Maria
Isabel Sánchez Vegara
Illustrated by Raahat Kaduji
Magic Cat • HB • £16.99
ISBN 9781911766315
Published 15th October
Age range: 5+

Here is an extract from a story in the book:

A Journey in the Moon's Boat

*Sometimes, when our tummies rumble, we play a game:
we imagine where we would go if we could go anywhere.
Our old house, a fair by the sea, even places we've
never been before. And we always agree that wherever
it is, we'd go together on a silver boat.*

Long ago, people said the moon
had a small silver boat tied to its edge.

Most nights it rested there,
rocking gently in the dark.

But on rare nights, when the air was clear
and the stars were bright,
the boat would glide down to Earth.

One such night, two sisters
were sitting outside, watching the sky.



Image © Raahat Kaduji

Wild Spirit

[KIDS]

In this magical adventure story, Emmy has got lost in the wilderness in Mongolia, when she meets a stray snow leopard cub she calls Silver. Then she encounters a Mongolian boy called Tuli. Can the three find their way to the magical world of Whisperfell? We interviewed the author Abi Elphinstone to discover more.

Photo © Pui Shan Chan Jones



What inspired you to write *Goodnight Silver*?

A few years ago I was lucky enough to visit Mongolia. I went into the mountains, the realm of snow leopards, which is where the story is set. Here I rode with the Kazakh eagle hunters. They are amazing. They take golden eagle chicks and raise them. When the eagle is about a year old, they ride horseback with the eagle on their shoulder, and hunt for foxes and wolves. They use the golden eagles to dive from the top of mountains, on these animals, and they take furs from those animals to make their clothes to survive the winter. It's very different to our world, but it's a matter of survival. We camped beneath ice-bright stars, and heard the howls of distant worlds, and we ate Kurt, which is the older form of chewing gum. We drank fermented horse milk, which is like sipping liquid stilton infused with unwashed dog! It's a landscape where myth and reality collide. The Mongolian people believe if you honour the wild spirit dwelling there, they'll grant you safe passage through the mountains. They pour milk over mountain passes, and fix brightly coloured ribbons to trees, and have incredible epic songs, which they sing in the medium of throat-singing. Once you spend some time in a landscape like that, it really permeates your skin and makes you want to write about it. I think that, over here, many of us have lost our connection with the landscape around us. And so I wanted to write a story that was a blend of reality and myth.

In the wild, Emmy encounters a snow leopard cub which she calls Silver. Do you see snow leopards as almost being magical creatures?

Yes, I think it's because they're so elusive.

You hardly ever spot one in the wild. I have seen them in a wildlife park in Scotland. They have paws size of dinner plates, and each one has black and brown markings of a different shape. It's like looking at a jigsaw you're never going to complete. They have a tail as long as their body, and their eyes are a glassy blue. I remember what it felt like to be beheld by such a creature. It was a gaze that disarms you – fierce, graceful, beautiful and wild. No matter what humans invent or build, this is something more miraculous. When you encounter an animal like that, that is not only wild and vulnerable, but also elusive, you do start to think that maybe there is magic involved.

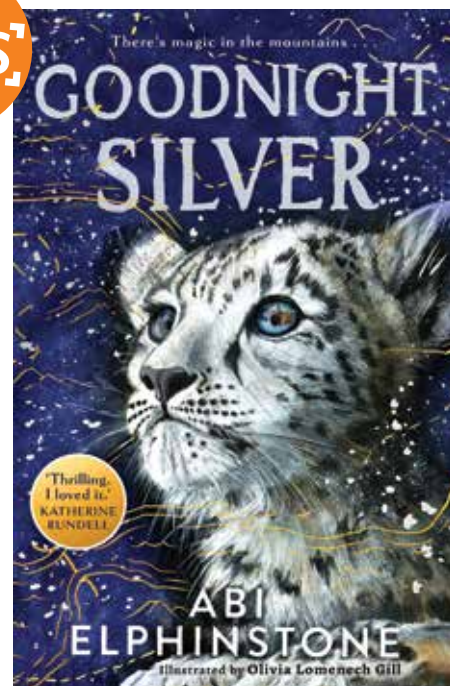
At the beginning of the book, Emmy declares herself to be a pessimist. Do you think that there are some upsides to being a pessimist?

One of my favourite lines to write was when Emmy says 'I'm a pessimist, which means that I believe that the worst will probably happen.' And the guide Chono says 'Pessimists should be careful with words like probably, they leave a bit too much room for hope'. I love that about children, that they can think that they are one thing, and then they go on an adventure and it shifts their thinking. I think that such adventures in the wild can dislodge you from a position that you felt very certain about.

"I wanted to write a story that was a blend of reality and myth."

Emmy meets a local boy, Tuli, who is a poet and a lot more hopeful. Do you see him as a counterbalance to Emmy?

Yes. I initially started with a small cast. I just had Emmy and the snow leopard Silver. But I love writing dialogue, and stories with pace and excitement and peril. And I really love to add a bit of humour. It's something I think Katherine Rundell nails in *Impossible Creatures*. I like a tale full of adventure and drama but also the ability to laugh, which we are in need of at the moment. So I added in Tuli as a contrast to Emmy. I thought it was really important to have a boy who was



Goodnight Silver

by Abi Elphinstone

Illustrated by Olivia Lomenech Gill

Simon & Schuster Children's

PB • £8.99

ISBN 9781398538016

Published 27th October

Age range: 8+

Look out for a special signed edition available in independent bookshops!

Mongolian, who was part of that culture. He's in love with two things which I think are a gateway to hope: nature and stories. He seeks out mysteries and miracles in the world, he's got a flock of goats named after famous poets, and rides a horse called Genghis Khan, who's old, overweight and chewing a carrot. When I wrote his scenes, I had a lot of Mary Oliver's poetry ringing in my ears.

I also liked the character of Tuli's grandma, Batba. Do you think that older people have more depth to them than children sometimes realise?

Yes, you might make assumptions about them, that they've lived the best part of their lives, but I think as a child and as an adult you can learn so much from older generations. They remember stories that we've forgotten. I kind of saw Batba as a bit like Mr Tom in *Goodnight, Mr Tom* by Michelle Magorian. An older figure who seems sad and stubborn, an adult transformed by a child's experiences.

What do independent bookshops mean to you?

I live in the middle of Scotland. On the east coast, there's a very small village called East Linton. There are not many shops there, but there is a butcher, and a very bad co-op, and a pharmacy. And there's a bookshop called Night Owl Books. It's run by a remarkable woman called Rebecca. She's done some remarkable things, she hosts author talks, visits schools in rural Scotland, and applies for countless grants to get authors into schools. Bookshops aren't just places that sell books, they bring communities together.

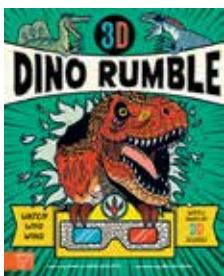
Young Reads & Non-Fiction



Unicorn Rescuers: Adventures in Witch Land

by Ana Punset & Diana Vicedo
Walker Books
PB • £7.99
ISBN 9781529531640
Published 10th September
Age range: 5+

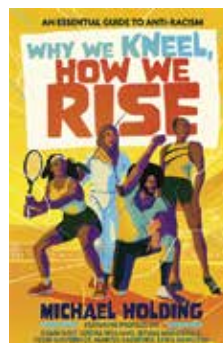
The second in a new full-colour series set in the magical Unicornia universe, featuring an exciting journey to Witch Land! Claudia, Pippa and Sara are off on another unicorn-rescuing mission – this time to Witch Land, where the witches are expert liars and time moves in mysterious ways. Worse still, nobody is allowed to fly! Can the Unicorn Rescuers save the day before their own unicorns fall under a spell? Follows the success of *Adventure in Mermaid Land*.



3D Dino Rumble

by Anne & Steve Brusatte & Ben Newman
Magic Cat
HB • £14.99
ISBN 9781917768290
Published 10th September
Age range: 7+

Welcome to the prehistoric battle royale! This book pits the toughest, fastest and most fearsome dinosaurs against one another – brought to life with jaw-dropping 3D action. We throw time and geography aside to stage dream match-ups. Stegosaurus and Tyrannosaurus rex lived 80 million years apart... but what if they'd met? Before each battle, study the stats and choose your champion. Turn the page, put on your 3D glasses and watch the clash unfold in comic strip form.



Why We Kneel, How We Rise
Children's Edition
by Michael Holding
Gallery Kids
PB • £8.99
ISBN 9781398542907
Published 10th September
Age range: 9+

A black-and-white illustrated children's adaptation of the bestselling and award-winning book. This essential adaptation takes kids through the history of racism and gives them tools to affect the future in a positive way. Featuring profiles of sports stars through the ages, including Usain Bolt, Marcus Rashford and Ibtihaj Muhammad, 'did you know' box-outs, and anecdote's from the author Michael Holding's own experience, this book is engaging, important and hopeful.



A Little Boy and His Bear

by Jane Riordan & Andrew Grey
Farshore • HB • £20.00
ISBN 9780008699109
Published 8th October
Age range: 5+

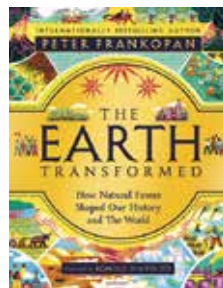
A special 100th anniversary collection of Winnie-the-Pooh stories. This gold-foiled jacketed hardback edition of the authorised story collection celebrates Winnie-the-Pooh's world and the beauty of the Hundred Acre Wood. The brand new stories are set after A.A. Milne and E.H. Shepard's timeless tales in *Winnie-the-Pooh* and *The House at Pooh Corner*. Everyone is invited, so join in with the tales of blustery kite flying, slippery stepping stones and, of course, a spectacular party!



The Week Junior: Real or Rubbish?

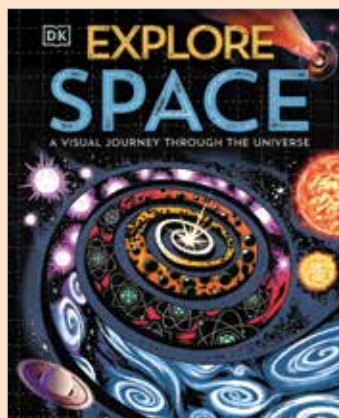
Bloomsbury Education
PB • £9.99
ISBN 9781801999052
Published 8th October
Age range: 8+

Are these stories fake news or the real deal? Test your instincts with some of the most unbelievable news stories on the planet in this fascinating book for curious children from multi-award-winning children's magazine *The Week Junior*. Perfect for developing critical thinking skills, encouraging reading for pleasure and engaging curious minds, this book is a must-have for a child's bookshelf. Each story, includes interesting facts and colourful images.



The Earth Transformed
Illustrated Edition
by Peter Frankopan & Rômolo D'Hipólito
Bloomsbury Children's
HB • £20.00
ISBN 9781526677129
Published 22nd October
Age range: 12+

A dazzling illustrated edition of the bestselling book. Featuring bold and captivating artwork from Rômolo D'Hipólito, the book guides younger readers on an extraordinary journey through the history of our world – like nothing they've ever seen before! Illuminating the way in which our planet's changing natural environment has shaped all aspects of our planet's story, this masterful retelling captures the impressive scale of Frankopan's original.



Explore Space: A Visual Journey Through the Universe

by Sophie Allan
DK Children • HB • £22.00
ISBN 9780241808849
Published 3rd September
Age range: 7+

Follow the routes of robotic explorers as they zoom through the solar system. Discover maps to guide you into the hidden interiors of the planets and to discover towering mountains and ice-spouting volcanoes. Explore the Moon's surface, the constellations, black holes, the power of the Sun, and much more. This unique book features an encyclopaedic range of out-of-this world subjects for children who want to find out everything there is to know about space.



Our Human Story In 100 Amazing Achievements

by Anna Ploszajski
DK Children
HB • £22.00
ISBN 9780241772263
Published 1st October
Age range: 9+

Join charismatic scientist Anna Ploszajski as she weaves 100 stories that reveal the essence of human achievement. From organizing ourselves into societies, with justice, education, and governments of many types, to creating art and music that can move us to tears, humans never stop experimenting. We have storytelling and humour; we have learned to build rockets and iPhones, bridges and skyscrapers. This book is a joyous celebration of everything that makes us amazing.



Sweet Story

This intriguing mystery novel is set in Marzipan, a town obsessed with baking. When Cinnamon Crumb is tasked by two rival superstar bakers in the town to spy on the other one, she finds herself in a sticky situation. But can she discover who is sabotaging the competition to win the coveted Twelve Tier Crown at the Great Cake Carnival? We interviewed the author and illustrator, Harry Woodgate, to discover more.

What inspired you to write a book about a girl who becomes a baking detective?

The short answer is that I love baking and I love mystery stories, so combining the two seemed like the perfect recipe. More specifically, I began writing *Cinnamon Crumb* in the middle of the pandemic, while navigating a period of severe burnout as well as a recent family bereavement. As such, my brain was craving joy, silliness and escapism, and when I stepped foot into the baking-obsessed town of Marzipan, I knew I'd found what I was looking for. I hope that when young readers join Cinnamon and her friends on their investigations, they feel the same – like the first sip of hot chocolate on a cold December morning. Also, I believe that one of the great appeals of mystery stories is that they're often about working to achieve justice through problem-solving, asking questions, standing up to authority and practicing empathy. That ethos is at the heart of Cinnamon's adventures, and I hope it reminds children that their voices, experiences and opinions are important and worthy of respect.

“Everyone needs a hefty dollop of Cinnamon Crumb in their lives.”

Jack Meggitt-Phillips

The book is set in a town, Marzipan, which is dedicated to baking, but the main character Cinnamon Crumb is not a good baker. Are you a fan of baking yourself?

Yes, I've loved baking ever since I was a child,

and I have lots of very happy memories of baking with my mum or my nan when I was younger (as well as going out for coffee and cake with them and other relatives!). As well as being great for relaxation and expressing your creativity, I think baking and sharing food can be such powerful ways of showing affection and bringing people together, which is why the idea of a town obsessed with baking seemed like such a joyful and welcoming thing to write about.

You've created picture books and illustrated other books in the past, but this is your first middle grade book – how different is it to write for older readers?

Structurally, the main difference between writing middle grade and picture books is that with the latter, the best storytelling happens in that invisible space between text and image, whereas with middle grade, the words and pictures tend to work a little more independently from one another. This is largely because picture books are such a contained format: when you only have 32 pages to tell a story, brevity and precision are essential. As such, it's been quite a novelty moving into longer prose fiction where there's more space for textual worldbuilding and narrative development. The other key difference, simply by virtue of the two formats being aimed at different age groups, is that the kinds of stories that resonate with middle grade readers are naturally different to those that entertain and engage younger children, so it's quite rewarding as a writer to be able to explore a whole new set of experiences, narratives and themes for a new demographic.

The book has a mystery at its heart – did you plan the plot out in advance?

I did plan out most of the plot before writing, however there are several twists that developed unexpectedly during the drafting process which utterly transformed the way I imagined the mystery would unfold. Having since written the second book in the series, *The Royal Biscuit Burglary*, I've learned that while it's essential to have a solid recipe to keep all the ingredients of your plot on track and avoid getting tangled up like a pretzel, every mystery needs a splash of surprise which you can only achieve by leaving space for discovery and improvisation.

Cinnamon is jealous of Amber and feels that her friendship with Rafi is under threat. Do you think that jealousies in friendships are as common as those in relationships?

I certainly think that jealousies in childhood friendships can be very common. When you're the age that Cinnamon is in the book, everything and everyone around you is in flux: you and your peers are developing your own interests and opinions, sometimes in different directions to one another; you're navigating changing social dynamics and dealing with various pressures from school to family to the onset of puberty, all of which can make it easy to feel insecure or to compare yourself with others. When you're also neurodivergent, many of those experiences can feel particularly challenging, which is a large part of why I wanted to explore the evolving dynamic between Cinnamon, Rafi and Amber. Although Cinnamon feels jealous to begin with, it's the respect and care that all three kids have for each other which ultimately forms the foundations of a strong friendship, and I hope this gives young readers the reassurance and confidence they need to navigate similar situations in their own lives.

Rafi's sibling Roman says at one point in the book that people are not like cakes, in that they don't always fit into boxes. Do you think that sometimes our expectations of people can cloud our understanding of them?

Absolutely, and I think Roman is particularly attuned to that as a non-binary individual navigating a gendered world. There are so many ways in which the assumptions we make about others can become a barrier to mutual understanding and respect, ranging from unintentional miscommunications between friends or siblings all the way through to bullies and bad-faith actors who exploit people's preconceptions on a much larger scale to spread fear, misinformation and division. At the heart of tackling both is empathy, but just as important for young readers, I think, is the notion that sometimes the expectations that hold us back the most are those we place upon ourselves, which is certainly something Cinnamon grapples with during the book.

As well as illustrations, you also include funny footnotes. Was it fun to play with the format?

Very much so! I love it when books play with structural elements to build narrative or characterisation, particularly when doing so introduces a level of metatextuality to the story. In children's literature especially, when done right I think those little nods to the reader can

really help young people feel included and invested in a book, not to mention offering plenty of opportunities for comedy. The other benefit of keeping Cinnamon's silly tangents about soufflé tsunamis and salad-flavoured sponge cakes to the footnotes is that those jokes don't interrupt the main narrative flow, which I hope aids comprehension for readers who are just starting out with longer chapter books.

"A deliciously fun, feel-good mystery, brimming with charm and heart."

Hannah Gold

Which other authors inspire you in your work?

I always struggle to answer this question because I don't tend to think about what anyone else is doing when I'm working on my own books! When I am inspired by another author or illustrator to utilise a specific structural, thematic, linguistic or visual element in my work, I always endeavour to do so in a way that feels distinct, authentic and in keeping with my own narrative voice. There are, however, countless authors and illustrators whose work I find deeply inspiring. My love of dip pen and ink illustration stems in part from a childhood reading books illustrated by Chris Riddell and Quentin Blake, who showed me what a fantastically expressive medium it is, equally suited to both loose, gestural artwork and precise, detailed imagery. Other illustrators working today whose work I greatly admire include Jamie Littler, Joe Todd-Stanton, Claire Powell, Alex T. Smith and Ramzee. In the world of children's and YA mystery fiction, I enjoy the inclusive, tightly plotted and emotionally resonant work of Beth Lincoln, Robin Stevens, Sharna Jackson, Ravena Guron and our current Children's Laureate Patrice Lawrence.

What do independent bookshops mean to you?

This goes for all kinds of independent businesses, but for a bookshop to be distinctly of a place and for a place can be uniquely powerful, I think, especially in the face of huge multinational corporations for whom local connection is less important.

Cinnamon Crumb Baking Detective: The Great Cake Caper

by Harry Woodgate
Usborne • PB • £7.99
ISBN 9781805075660
Published 10th September
Age range: 8+

In this extract Cinnamon Crumb contemplates the competition for the Twelve-Tiered Crown:

For as long as I could remember, I've imagined how it might feel to lift the trophy myself – to bake something not just worthy of the Crumb name but the Crown too. But that would be like expecting bread to rise without yeast: it'd never happen. You see, only two bakeries have won the Twelve-Tiered Crown in Marzipan's entire history: Madeleine Macaron's Mouthwatering Delights and Victoria Sponge's Tea Emporium.

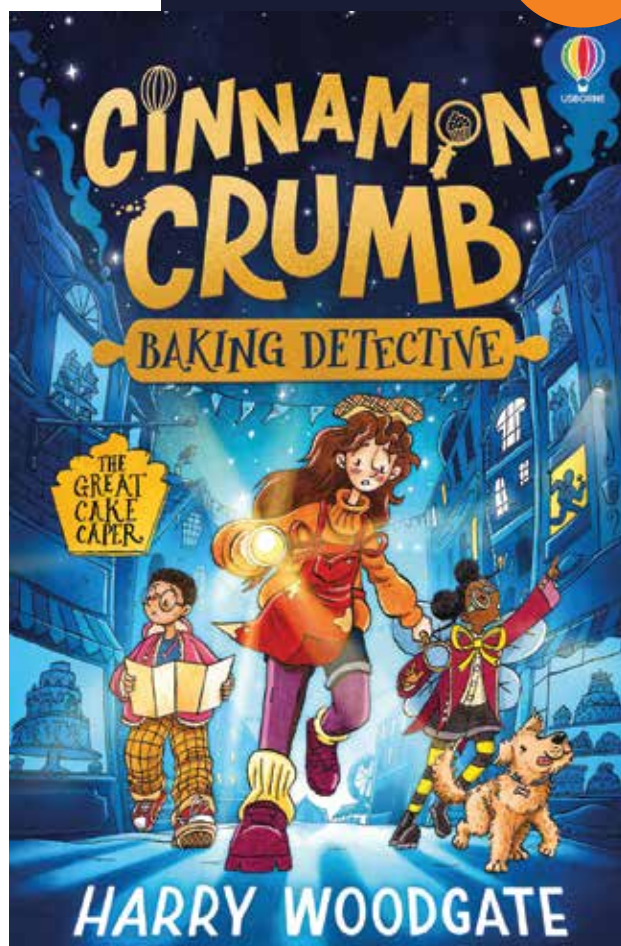
It's true: for almost a whole century, Maddie and Victoria, along with their parents before them, and their grandparents before them, and their great-grandparents before – you get the idea – have battled it out in a frenzied fight of flour and icing to seize the coveted prize. No other bakery has got a look-in.

On Choux Street, interviewers were already flocking like pigeons swarming a discarded baguette, eager to quiz the two famous chefs. In the windows of Tart's Tattlers newsagents, newspaper headlines predicted this year's winner. Stalls sold pin badges and scarves in support of Team Macaron and Team Sponge.

As you can imagine, excitement was coursing through the air like a sugar rush.

It was going to be very good day.

[KIDS]



Into the Story

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Have fun with Isadora Moon through a brand-new TV Tie-In range based on the top animated series, from the bestselling world of Harriet Muncaster.



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Oxford University Press • PB • £7.99
9781382084437
Published 3rd September
Age range: 4+



Isadora Moon: Fun With Pink Rabbit
Oxford University Press • PB • £7.99
9781382084949
Published 3rd September
Age range: 4+



Isadora Moon: How to Draw
Oxford University Press • PB • £7.99
9781382084475
Published 3rd September
Age range: 4+



Isadora Moon: Bumper Activity Book
Oxford University Press • PB • £9.99
9781382084048
Published 3rd September
Age range: 4+

Picture Books



Isadora Moon: Aunt Crystal's Magic
Oxford University Press • PB • £7.99
9781382084734
Published 3rd September
Age range: 4+



Isadora Moon: Dragon Migration
Oxford University Press • PB • £7.99
9781382084871
Published 3rd September
Age range: 4+



Isadora Moon: Too Many Mirabelles
Oxford University Press • PB • £7.99
9781382085052
Published 3rd September
Age range: 4+



Isadora Moon: Snow Dragon Trek
Oxford University Press • PB • £7.99
9781382085021
Published 3rd September
Age range: 4+

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Published 3rd September
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Isadora Moon: Unsleepover
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Published 3rd September
Age range: 5+



Isadora Moon: Grandpa Makes Magic
Oxford University Press • PB • £6.99
9781382084109
Published 3rd September
Age range: 5+



Isadora Moon: Three's a Crowd
Oxford University Press • PB • £6.99
9781382084130
Published 3rd September
Age range: 5+



Isadora Moon: Mermaid Sleepover
Oxford University Press • PB • £6.99
9781382084161
Published 3rd September
Age range: 5+



Isadora Moon: Fly, Isadora, Fly!
Oxford University Press • PB • £6.99
9781382084192
Published 3rd September
Age range: 5+

Celebrate with Isadora

**Isadora Moon & Friends
Story Collection**
by Harriet Muncaster
Oxford University Press
HB • £14.99
ISBN 9781382074803
Published 3rd September
Age range: 5+



[KIDS]

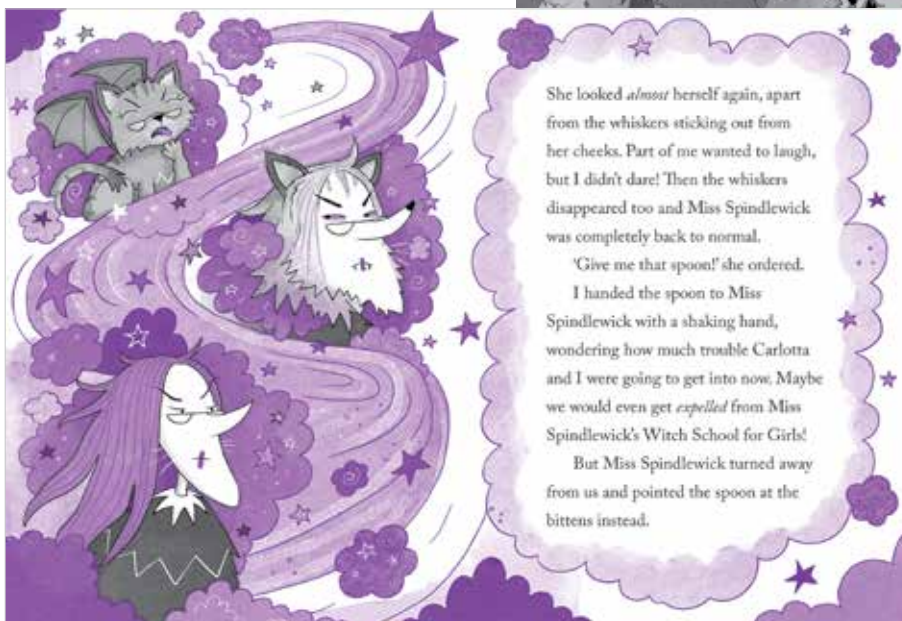
This special book of stories celebrates ten years of everyone's favourite half-fairy, half-vampire, in a gift edition with shiny silver foil and sprayed edges!

This collection brings together Isadora Moon, Mirabelle, and Emerald, each illustrated in their iconic two-colour style. Perfect for early readers who love chapter books filled with humour, friendship, and adventure. Join Isadora in *Isadora Moon and the Vampire Festival*, when Pink Rabbit goes missing at the annual vampire celebration, Isadora has to use special fairy magic to find him.

In *Mirabelle and the Bitten Catastrophe*, Mirabelle turns her whole class into bat-kittens with a disastrous potion! And in *Emerald the Rock Princess*, Emerald plans a show-stopping performance for King Auster's jubilee party. It includes a bonus activity section, packed with things for readers to make and do, making it a perfect birthday gift, holiday treat, or special keepsake for fans.



Hordes of vampires milled about beneath the full moon, chatting, laughing, and flashing their white fangs. I spotted a giant, black bouncy castle with big, dramatic turrets! I really wanted a go on the bouncy castle (and so did Pink Rabbit!), but I decided that I wouldn't go on it straight away. Mum and Dad had given me some spending money and I wanted to try and win a bat ornament for Dad first!



She looked *almost* herself again, apart from the whiskers sticking out from her cheeks. Part of me wanted to laugh, but I didn't dare! Then the whiskers disappeared too and Miss Spindlewick was completely back to normal.

'Give me that spoon!' she ordered.

I handed the spoon to Miss Spindlewick with a shaking hand, wondering how much trouble Carlotta and I were going to get into now. Maybe we would even get *expelled* from Miss Spindlewick's Witch School for Girls!

But Miss Spindlewick turned away from us and pointed the spoon at the bittens instead.

flapping their bat wings to flit back down to the floor, blinking their amethyst eyes, and slinking across the room on their velvety paws. One by one, they opened their mouths and reluctantly allowed Miss Spindlewick to pour the mixture down their throats. One by one, they changed back into witches, their hair windswept and noses slightly twitching.



Magical Stories

Journey through the seasons and celebrations of a child's year in this stunning collection of fairy tales from the bestselling, award-winning author of *The House with Chicken Legs*, Sophie Anderson. We interviewed Sophie to discover more about this compendium.



Photo © Seenicks Photography

What inspired you to write *A Year of Fairy Tales*?

There is something awe-inspiring about a big, beautiful book, especially if it is filled with exquisitely illustrated, magical fairy tales. The first books I fell in love with were like this, and I have always dreamed of being part of creating one – a fairy tale book with a classic, timeless feel, that has child characters in all the starring roles, yet will enchant readers of all ages and bring them together. I hope *A Year of Fairy Tales* becomes a treasured book, passed down over generations, just like the tales inside!

How did you go about retelling the tales with young people of today in mind?

Making children the heroes of the stories naturally centred them, their needs and dreams. So, for example, any themes of romantic love in older versions of the tales were organically replaced with themes of friendship and family. There are no marriages as happily-ever-afters in my retellings! I also looked for antiquated ideas and stereotypes in the older versions – stepmothers as villains, girls doing all the domestic chores, and boys doing all the rescuing for example, and carefully revised these. Finally, I gave a variety of children the opportunity to be the central character; to be brave, kind and good, to overcome adversity, seek assistance, save themselves, and help others.

How did you decide which tales to include, and which ones to pair with which month?

This took a great deal of time and thought! I created a spreadsheet of potential tales

arranged by season – *East of the Sun, West of the Moon* has strong winter imagery, for example, whilst *The Bird of the Golden Land* feels summery. For each of the fairy tales, I noted the role of the hero, who they might be, and the overall theme. Then I developed a shortlist that provided a wide range of heroes and themes and shared this list with my editors, along with a short synopsis for each tale, and we worked together to create the final plan... although, once I started writing, there were still a few changes along the way!

"I gave a variety of children the opportunity to be the central character"

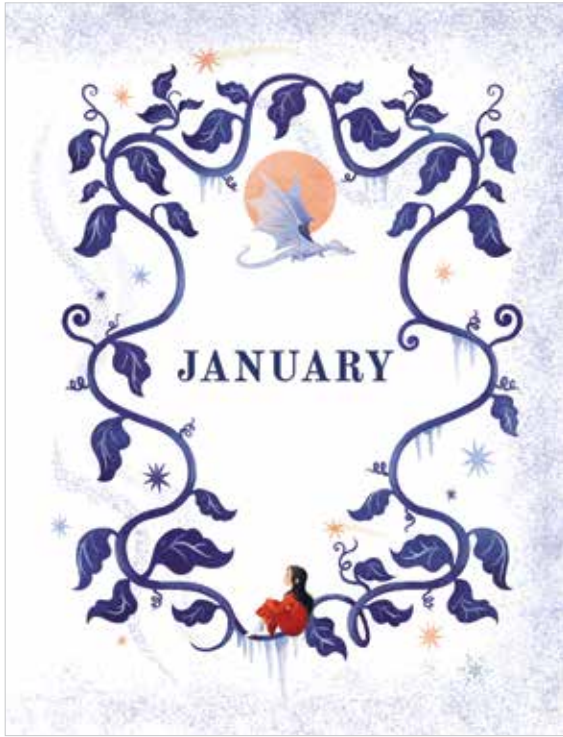
What is it about fairy tales that make them so universally popular, throughout the ages?

Fairy tales have been enchanting people for thousands of years. Perhaps because of their magic and wonder, the larger-than-life characters, the balance of light and dark, or the way that these tales explore big, universal ideas – joy and sorrow, love and loss, courage and fear, trust and betrayal, and so much more... These stories spark our imaginations, capture our hearts, and help us to make sense of the world. I believe they are a vital part of being human, and of understanding humanity.



What do you think we can learn from fairy tales?

The messages are as varied as the tales themselves and the people who enjoy them! Fairy tales are rich in symbolism and metaphor, and can be interpreted in seemingly endless ways. This is part of their magic – the way they can mean different things to different people at different times, and that their versatility means that everyone, of every age, can engage with them both



“Fairy tales have been enchanting people for thousands of years.”



The sun's light blazed out and Eli was surrounded by darkness glittering with stars. The Fox Prince, somewhere far below, disappeared from sight and Eli's heart thumped even louder as he realized that, once again, he was alone in the night.

The kite carried Eli further into the darkness and he shivered, scared and uncertain, but his heart lifted when he spotted the moon in the far reaches of the sky. *I'll find my father there*, he thought.

A glistening river of stars appeared and Eli sailed over it, holding tight to the kite. But then the kite stopped rising and hovered, still, in the sky. *What's happening?* Dimmy flooded through Eli as the kite began sinking, slowly at first, then faster and faster.

The kite spun as it fell, spiralling out of control, and Eli let out a scream of panic. He spotted an island of darkness in the middle of the stream of stars, and he swung his body towards it.

Eli landed on the island with a soft thud. But the kite splashed

intellectually and creativity. I especially love how fairy tales invite everyone into a playground of story. These tales have always been told, retold and reimagined, to become relevant and exciting to new audiences, and I believe this in itself carries a powerful – and empowering – message: that we can change and shape the stories we tell, and in doing so we change and shape ourselves, society and the world.

Do you have a favourite fairy tale from the book?

It's difficult to choose because I love them all for different reasons! My favourite fairy tale since I was a child was always *Vasilisa the Beautiful* though, so my retelling of this story – called *The Magic Doll* – has a special place in my heart. I stayed fairly close to earlier versions, although I changed the tasks that Baba Yaga sets, from ones involving cooking and cleaning, to more adventurous challenges, while aiming to keep the same wonderful messaging of gaining power to escape tyranny and growing from subservience to strength. I also had a huge amount of fun writing the last tale in the collection, *The Swan Sister*. This story is set in an enchanted winter market and I challenged

myself to include characters from each of the fairy tales in the collection – I wonder if readers will spot them all!

Did you work closely with the illustrator Elisa Paganelli?

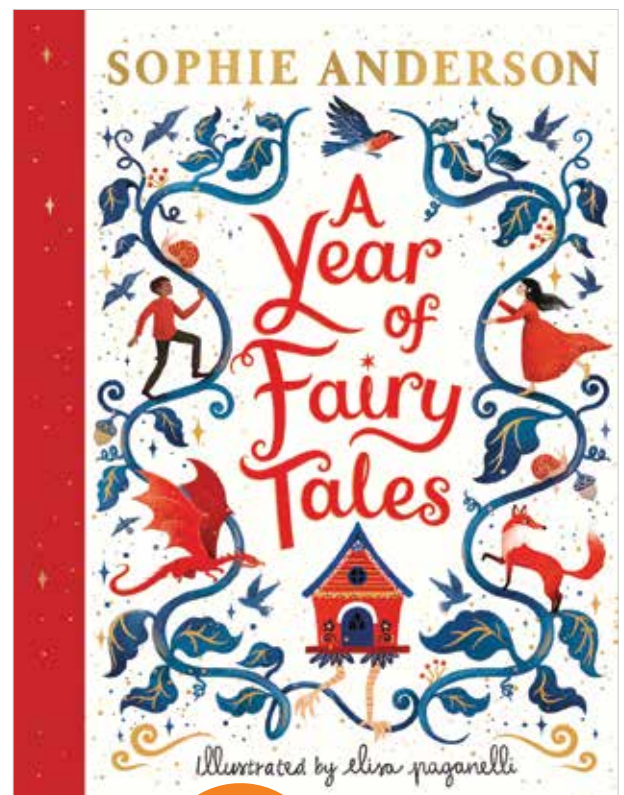
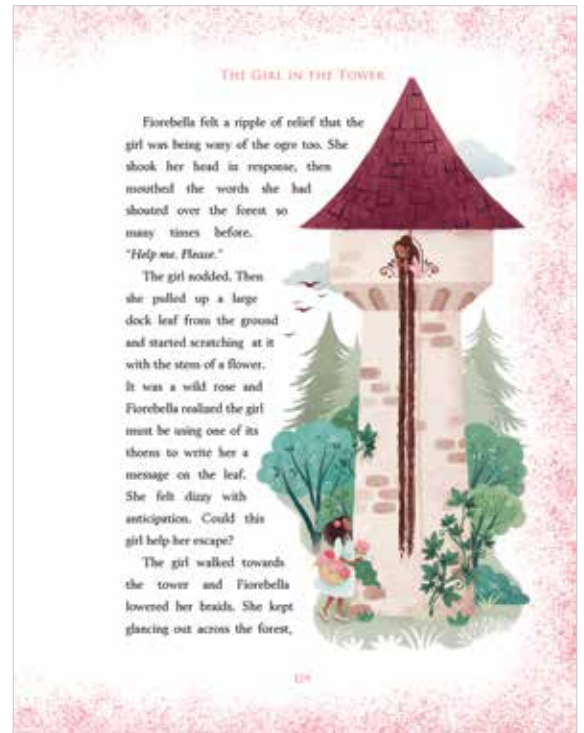
I can't take any credit for the beautiful illustrations and glorious design! I was sent the illustrations at various stages of development and given the opportunity to share my thoughts, but aside from the occasional comment relating to ensuring consistency with the text, all I ever had was the highest praise! Elisa Paganelli and the design team at Usborne are all so incredibly talented, dedicated and wondrous, they truly have created magic with this book.

Which other authors inspire you in your work?

In the back of *A Year of Fairy Tales* is a section called *About the Stories*, where I talk about the fairy tales that inspired my retellings. I am endlessly indebted to storytellers past, who carried these tales through generations, and to authors who published versions of the tales, sometimes with wonderful commentaries. These authors include (but are not limited to): Alexander Afanasyev, Peter Christen Asbjørnsen and Jørgen Moe, Giambattista Basile, Jeremiah Curtin, Linda Dégh, Clarissa Pinkola Estés, Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm, Joseph Jacobs, Liudvikas Adomas Jucevičius, Rabbi Nachman of Breslov, Charles Perrault, Neil Philip, Maria Tatar, Irina Zheleznova, Jack Zipes.

What do independent bookshops mean to you?

Like fairy tales, independent bookshops enchant, entertain, educate, inspire, reflect and serve the communities they are part of, and have the magical power to bring those communities together under the spell of a story!



A Year of Fairy Tales
by Sophie Anderson
Illustrated by Elisa Paganelli
Usborne • HB • £25.00
ISBN 9781836044048
Published 10th September
Age range: 8+

World of Imagination

In this thrilling new adventure story, Tom is ill in Great Ormond Street Hospital, when he, his friend Felix and a new friend Daisy are transported to the world of Neverland. They need Neverland, and Neverland needs them. But items keep going missing... who are *The Neverland Thieves*? We interviewed the authors, husband and wife team Katie and Kevin Tsang, to discover more.

What inspired you to write a new book set in Neverland, the world of *Peter Pan*?

We have both been fans of all things *Peter Pan* since we were children – the play, the book, the film, the characters, and of course Neverland. When we first met in our early twenties, we often dressed up as characters from *Peter Pan* for various costume parties and when we had our own children it was a joy to introduce them to the world of *Peter Pan*, and of course continue the tradition of dressing as characters from the story! As children's authors, Neverland is one of the most inspiring and iconic fictional worlds and even before we wrote *The Neverland Thieves*, Neverland very much influenced our writing. To be able to officially play in Neverland and be part of the *Peter Pan* legacy, all while supporting Great Ormond Street Hospital Charity, has been such a gift to us as authors. It was an absolute joy to write a book set in Neverland, to put our own spin on it and add new characters and even new locations to the map, all while honouring the original story. This is our eighteenth published book together, and the one we are the most proud of.

What is it about *Peter Pan* which makes it so enduringly popular?

When we were preparing to write *The Neverland Thieves*, we researched and read many editions and versions of *Peter Pan*. Of course we started with the unabridged original, but we also looked at everything from picture book editions in board book format to illustrated editions over the years. We wanted to capture elements of what made the original so popular and beloved but also update our story for modern audiences and add our own imagination and ideas. Neverland has always been representative of childhood dreams and imagination – and while in the original it specifically is meant to be the Darling children's imagination brought to life, we loved building on that – using the original Neverland that everyone knows and loves, but adding on elements

from our own imagination. Our hope is that readers will be inspired to imagine what their own Neverland might look like, and build on even further from what we've done! Neverland is also about wish fulfilment – being able to fly, discovering fairies, going on daring adventures!

“A magnificent adventure full of heart and hope”

Anna James

How do you work together writing books, and do you ever have disagreements about where the story should go?

We have had a lot of practice over the years figuring out how to best collaborate and write together! Together we've written six books in the *Sam Wu* series, three *Space Blasters* books, five *Dragon Realm* books, one World Book Day spinoff, and two *Dragon Force* books – with the final one coming soon! In a way, it felt like all of these books were helping prepare us to write *The Neverland Thieves*. *Sam Wu* is very character-driven and funny, the *Dragon* books are very adventure heavy and pacy, and for *The Neverland Thieves*, we wanted to write something that was an exciting adventure but with a focus on the characters and their emotional journey. Our process is to do a big brainstorm, where there are no bad ideas, and then pare back from there. Then we do a detailed outline, and divide that into a chapter breakdown, and then we split up the chapters between us. We usually will start writing a book side-by-side to make sure we are on the same page for the voice, and then we edit each other throughout the drafting to make sure that voice stays cohesive. Kevin is stronger at writing action scenes or big set pieces, and Katie loves to write dialogue

and jokes and emotional moments, as well as food scenes. Katie is bossier, but Kevin is more stubborn, so we definitely have arguments sometimes – but we truly believe that the best ideas in our books are the ones that come from when we combine our ideas together. We are currently working on the next Neverland-set book, which introduces new children characters along with our established Neverland set cast, and are having a blast drafting it.

In the book, Tom is in Great Ormond Street Hospital, and royalties from the sale of the book will support Great Ormond Street Hospital Charity. How did this partnership with the hospital come about?

In 1929, the author JM Barrie gifted the rights to *Peter Pan* to Great Ormond Street Hospital. Now, almost one hundred years later, the hospital wants to celebrate this special link and history between Neverland and GOSH and keep the magic of Neverland alive for children today. We were hugely honoured when Great Ormond Street Hospital Charity approached us about writing a new series set in Neverland --- being able to play in Neverland and support GOSH Charity is such a privilege. In preparation to write the book, we visited GOSH to see firsthand the amazing work that the charity supports, as well as to get inspiration for the hospital set scenes. All of the locations within Great Ormond Street Hospital that feature in this story are based on real places in the hospital. It was important to us to ground our story with real places in GOSH before we took off on our flight to Neverland. The garden, the xylophone bench and the chapel within the heart of the hospital that is open to anyone of any faith, all exist. At the front of the chapel there are two unusual statues – a little golden bat and a tiny golden dragon – and we knew we had to put them in our Neverland. Knowing every print copy sold of *The Neverland Thieves* in the UK will directly support GOSH Charity means so much and makes this book extra-special to us.



Tom and Felix's friendship has changed with Tom's illness. Do you think that it's important that children who are ill can still take part in life and adventures?

To us, Tom and Felix's friendship is the emotional heart of this story. We really wanted to capture what it would be like for both of them with Tom in hospital. Felix is trying his best to be there for his friend, but ultimately he can never fully understand, and on the other side of the coin, Tom needs Felix's friendship more than ever, even if he doesn't want to admit it. What they need from their Neverland adventure is to strengthen their friendship and remember that they are both there for each other. We absolutely believe that children who are ill or unable to leave hospital can still take part in adventures – and books are one of the best ways to do this. Great Ormond Street Hospital Charity also does so much work to help children in hospital have a better quality of life, and still have fun even while going through such enormous difficulty.

Tom is always up for taking risks, whereas Felix is more cautious. Do you think that they balance each other well?

We hope that they balance each other! Tom has been through so much with his illness, and it has made him almost fearless in a way, whereas Felix is more cautious by nature, and almost as a reaction to his best friend getting sick. And even though Felix is slightly more cautious, the two boys definitely egg each other and encourage each other to go on adventures and get into mischief!

Daisy wants to be a doctor like her mother. Do you think it's her instinct to help others which propels her in the adventure?

We loved writing Daisy's character arc! When we were plotting the book, Tom and Felix came first as characters, but we knew we wanted to have another character for them to interact with and who would be just as key to the story. Having Daisy be the daughter of a doctor meant that she would be familiar with the hospital, and gave her a reason to be there. We also wanted to do a twist on the original story trope of the Lost Boys needing a 'mother' with Neverland needing a 'doctor' and Daisy being able to lean into that because she wants to be a doctor like her mother. She wants to help people, but

she also likes to be in charge and in control, and by establishing herself as a 'doctor' she's able to do this. And what she needs from Neverland is to find friends and also feel more confident.

In Neverland, the various factions – the pirates, the mermaids, the fairies and the Lost Boys and Lost Girls – do not trust each other. Do you think that it's good to trust others?

It was SO fun writing the different factions across Neverland! We knew we had to include the original groups and we had the best time creating our own mermaids, fairies, pirates, and Lost Boys and Lost Girls. Coming up with those characters – their names, backstories, personalities – was such a joy. The mostly friendly rivalry between the groups is such a key part of the original story, so we wanted to play with that. But we do think ultimately they should learn to trust each other a little more, and this is something we explore in the story.

"A glorious new tale based on a beloved classic."

Cerrie Burnell

Which other authors inspire you in your work?

Of course JM Barrie is our biggest inspiration for this book – and we are enormously grateful that he created the world of Neverland and so generously gifted the rights to Great Ormond Street Hospital Charity. Katie is often inspired by Madeline L'Engle, who wrote *A Wrinkle in Time* which is one of her all-time favorite books. Madeline L'Engle writes complex child characters and explores big ideas in her books all wrapped up in exciting adventures. We are also inspired by iconic and beloved authors like Kate De Camillo, Louis Sachar, and R.L. Stine. Other modern writers who inspire us are our amazing author colleagues and

contemporaries like Catherine Doyle, Kiran Milwood Hargrave, Robin Stevens, Nadia Shireen, Anna James and Katherine Rundell.

What do independent bookshops mean to you?

We love independent bookshops! In addition to being an amazing place to buy books, they add so much to a community and enrich the neighbourhood they are in. We are so grateful for our own local independent bookshops in North London (special shoutout to Children's Bookshop in Muswell Hill and Pickled Pepper in Crouch End) who not only have fantastic children's book selections but offer amazing events and activities for children. We often take our daughters to independent bookshops not only to let them pick out books but for storytimes, author signings, craft workshops, and seasonal activities and one of our favourite things to do when visiting a new city is to go buy books at the local independent bookshop. We are absolutely thrilled that we have a Independent Bookshop Special Edition of *The Neverland Thieves* – and it is so beautiful!

The Neverland Thieves

by Katie & Kevin Tsang

Illustrated by Kristina Kister

Simon & Schuster Children's

HB • £14.99

ISBN 9781398563629

Published 24th September

Age range: 9+

Look out for a special edition available in independent bookshops!

[KIDS]



Royalties from the sale of *The Neverland Thieves* support Great Ormond Street Hospital Charity. GOSH Charity funds groundbreaking research into children's health, cutting-edge medical equipment, child-centred medical facilities and support services for seriously ill children and their families.

A Charming Town

[KIDS]

In this first in a new fantasy series, Fray has hidden magic, and is forced back to Hexton, the magical town his family were banished from many years ago. Can he live up to his magical legacy? We interviewed the author Amy Wilson to find out her inspirations.



the same road, but our homes and our family stories are all hugely different. It's not always so easy to communicate our inner feelings, or the complexities of our situations, and that's why books and reading are so important.

What inspired you to write *The Hexton Chronicles: The Trouble with Magic*?

Fray came to me, as most of my characters do, though free writing. He was unusual for me in that he was completely alone, setting out on his adventure, and I was excited to see where we'd go! When I was a child, I often escaped to magic in my own imagination and so making Hexton a real place where Fray could go to experience that magic felt natural. The Croxometer that is so important to Fray was inspired by a Chronometer that was in my father's family, that became the only thing of his to remain with me, so I wanted to bring that in, but it's a heavy ship's clock and very cumbersome, so I reimagined it as a type of magical pocket watch!

Fray finds himself returning to Hexton where magic once reigned but is no longer as prevalent. Do you think it's important to know about old skills and traditions?

Absolutely. We still need those skills and traditions, and the people who can teach them – and we need to value them properly.

Fray believes his parents were heroes, but discovers others believe they were villains. Do you think that children are often burdened by the attitude others have to their family?

I think that can absolutely be the case. Also, I think that when we meet other people, we don't know their stories. There can be an assumption that we are all travelling along

The magic different people have in Hexton is linked to different elements. If you had magic, what kind do you think it would be?

I hope that it would be something earthy and creative, perhaps a little like Tenovus – but also, I have incredibly fidgety feet and so I think some sort of flight would be lovely!

Do you see the magic in Hexton as similar to the internet in some ways? Or does it work against technology?

Oo, that's not a parallel I'd thought of! I think magic is energy, perhaps like a personal storm around you, that you can harness to make exciting things happen – but because of the nature of it, I think it would disturb the electricity, and therefore make technology unreliable.

“I think that when we meet other people, we don't know their stories”

Teasel tells Fray that 'family is what you make it'. Do you think that sometimes our friends can be closer than our family?

I think that depends upon your family. When I was growing up, I found the time I spent with friends easier than being at home. I think I was very lucky in the friends I had, that they provided for me a safe space where I could be just who I was. I guess that's what home means, and wherever you find it, it's a good place to be.



The Hexton Chronicles: The Trouble with Magic

by Amy Wilson

Illustrated by

Eric Deschamps

Nosy Crow • PB • £7.99

ISBN 9781805135647

Published 10th September

Age range: 9+

The book is the first in a series. Do you have the rest of the series planned out?

I have ideas for some of the characters, and how things will play out. When I write, though, sometimes they have other ideas, and I feel that it's important to listen to what instinctively comes along, so let's just say it's an adventure!

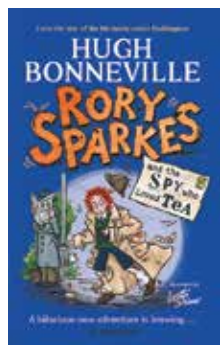
Which other authors inspire you in your work?

So many, and in so many different ways! My first author love was Diana Wynne Jones – her book *The Magicians of Caprona* was given to me when I was eleven, just after my father had died, and it transported me to a magical place, just when I needed it most. I also love work by Kit de Waal, Mary Oliver, Robin Hobb, Sophie Anderson, Patrice Lawrence, SF Said and Katya Balen, to name a few!

What do independent bookshops mean to you?

They're a bit like homes along the high street, full of wonder and passion for books – I'm very lucky there are so many in Bristol and Bath.

Children's Fiction



Rory Sparkes and the Spy who Loved Tea
by Hugh Bonneville & Loretta Schauer
Bloomsbury Children's
HB • £14.99
ISBN 9781526686046
Published 8th October
Age range: 7+

The second book in the series from beloved actor Hugh Bonneville. Rory Sparkes' latest adventure sees him caught in a web of spies. When a new family moved in opposite Rory he thought they were perfectly normal, even if their daughter did willingly befriend his annoying older sister, Clare. But now it seems they might be hiding something huge, and Rory's about to discover a covert conspiracy threatening all of Britain.



The Library of Lost Stories
by Eloise Williams
Firefly Press
PB • £8.99
ISBN 9781917718349
Published 3rd September
Age range: 8+

It's Christmas 1976 in a small town in South Wales, and eleven-year-old Noni and her dad are hiding from the bailiffs, behind the sofa. There's no money left and Noni's dad – who used to fix all the town's broken things – seems to be the most broken thing of all. When Noni meets new friend Rebecca and borrows a library book, she realises that fixing the town's old mobile library might be the thing to bring a spark back to her dad's eyes...



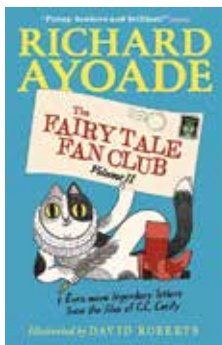
Graveyard Gladiators
by David Owen & Shane Houston
Usborne • PB • £8.99
ISBN 9781836045052
Published 8th October
Age range: 8+

A fast-paced, high-stakes adventure about heroes beating impossible odds, from the author of the *Alex Neptune* series. Once a year, monsters and the undead rise up from the Underworld and battle each other in the Graveyard Games to win a star prize. Tonight, that prize is... Jude's dad. But not if Jude can win him back. With the help of new friend and monster-wrestling expert Posie, plus top trainer (and zombie) Mickey, can Jude become the top Graveyard Gladiator?



Cosmic Cadets and the Wormhole Witch
by Ryan Crawford & Rochelle Falconer
Oxford University Press • PB • £7.99
ISBN 9781382054386
Published 1st October
Age range: 7+

Gloria cannot wait to attend her first Cosmic Gala – it's the fanciest party EVER, and it will be filled with all the most famous crusaders in the galaxy. But Captain Tinsela is having a FASHION EMERGENCY – her gala outfit has been stolen! Gloria and her best friend Razz have a new mission: to find the dress and bring it back in time for the party. Can Gloria and Razz put aside their own differences and bust their most glamorous moves to save the day together?



The Fairy Tale Fan Club Volume II
by Richard Ayoade & David Roberts
Walker Books
HB • £12.99
ISBN 9781529525656
Published 10th September
Age range: 8+

Read the fan mail sent to much-loved Fairy Tale characters and their responses that reveal whether they truly did live Happily Ever After, once their tales reached The End, in this hilarious gift book by comedian, actor, writer, director Richard Ayoade and the globally bestselling illustrator, David Roberts. (Spoiler: Robin Hood and Maid Marian now run an outward-bound centre, Puss in Boots now goes by P to the B and Goldie's locks are grey...)



The Wildcat and the Gathering Storm
by Lui Sit & David Dean
Macmillan Children's
PB • £8.99
ISBN 9781035040346
Published 10th September
Age range: 9+

The second book in the illustrated adventure series. After successfully taking an endangered wildcat back home to Linger Island, Puffin discovers that she is now guardian of a new baby kuri wildcat! Kuri kitten, Noma, is wilful, excitable and just discovering her mythical powers. Just as Puffin gets a handle on her new responsibilities, her scientist mother gets into trouble during a research trip – and Puffin, her best friend Lance and Noma have to rush to rescue her.



Buck & Ears Pirate Detectives: Revenge of the Ghost Ship
by Jennifer Bell & Sarah Horne
Walker Books
PB • £7.99
ISBN 9781529519532
Published 8th October
Age range: 7+

A new case for the pirate detectives – spot the clues and don't laugh too hard as you race to unravel a mystery. Buck & Ears are running out of money. They need a new case – fast! When they discover the legendary theatre critic, Mr Gator, frozen stiff in a rowing boat on the Jelly Sea, they set out to discover who's responsible. But Mr Gator has many enemies. Is this down to a disgruntled opera singer... or has the legend of the ghost ship, *The Flying Phantom*, come true?



The Rambler's Curse
by Mikey Please
HarperCollins Children's
HB • £14.99
ISBN 9780008830205
Published 8th October
Age range: 8+

The first book in a brand new trilogy, set in the world of the award-winning *The Café at the Edge of the Woods*. Everything is going wonderfully for Rene and Glumfoot until one day disaster strikes – a creature most foul and dangerous stumbles across the café during a storm: a human! And after Glumfoot discovers that humans have also been venturing into the enchanted world of Wandthorn Woods, he and Rene must set out on a mission to stop them.



The Haunting of Old Splinter
by Jack Mackay
Rock the Boat
PB • £8.99
ISBN 9781836432319
Published 17th September
Age range: 9+

Peter and his half-brother Adrian live in the shadow of Old Splinter – the ruined mansion on the hill, where legends of ancient relics and dark magic swirl. And the cracks are starting to show in their once-happy family. Faced with the daunting task of renovating the place, Peter's stepdad is at his wits' end, and the boys feel powerless to help. Then Peter unearths a horrifying secret in the walls of the mansion and the brothers realise there's some truth to the terrifying tales...

Crying Out Loud

In this new YA thriller, a small town in America is beset by an outbreak of girls screaming. From the author of *You Could Be Pretty* and *The Yearbook*, it's full of mystery and secrets.

Everything was perfect in the small town of Maple Lakes... until the cheerleaders started screaming. Clover wishes something would happen in her boring high school – so she can spend more time with her crush Brody, covering it for the school newspaper. She's a talented a photographer and he has aspirations to become an ace reporter. But she never wished for this...

When cheerleader Abigail starts screaming in the middle of an exam, people laugh. But as more girls start breaking into uncontrollable screaming fits, it's clear something is seriously wrong. The authorities don't have a clue what's happening – so it's up to Clover and Brody to investigate. What they discover is a darkness beneath the perfect veneer of Maple Lakes – and it is spreading fast. With a propelling narrative and intriguing characters, *And Then We Screamed* is perfect for fans of e. lockhart and Kathleen Glasgown.

In this extract, Clover is taking a French exam, when a scream breaks out:

The room's ripped apart by the most horrifying scream.

A scream like someone is being murdered. It strangles the room. I jolt in my chair, clutching my thumping heart. And, there, right in the middle of the hall, is Abigail Maiden, sitting straight at her desk, her mouth open. Her eyes are glazed over, unblinking, and she's screaming, and she's screaming, and she's screaming.

She won't stop.

Mr Giles dashes over. 'Abigail, Abigail?' he calls out, but she can't seem to hear him. Her eyes stare straight ahead, her screams getting louder. He puts both hands on Abi's shoulders, 'Stop it, Abi,' he shouts. 'Stop it.'

Abigail startles and the whole hall jumps with her. I grab my clover necklace and rub it. Then she stops, blinking like she's coming out of a coma, and immediately starts crying.

'What's happening?' she calls out.

My eyes find Avery's across the confused gym. Her pale face is whiter than I've ever seen it. She mouths 'What the hell?' Travis stands up between us.

'Sit down, Travis,' Mr Giles barks. 'Abigail, it's all right, come with me.' He offers his hand and she takes it, stumbling up from her desk. 'I said, sit down, Travis.'

But Travis is still up. 'Baby, are you okay?'

"Clever, gripping and deeply moving,"

Louise O'Neill

'She's fine. These are still conditions. I mean it, Travis. Sit. Now.'

Abigail's weeping softly and doesn't even acknowledge her boyfriend. She buries herself into Mr Giles's sweater-vest and he pats her awkwardly.

'Follow me, it's all right, it's all right.'

He starts to lead her out of the gym. 'Everyone back to your papers,' he instructs. But what he's asked of us is impossible. I can still hear Abigail's scream in my spine. Travis stays standing, his fists clenched, staring at the door, until another teacher tells him to sit, and he finally sort of slumps uselessly back onto his seat. Abi's empty chair almost throbs in the middle of the room and we all stare at it.

Someone starts snort-laughing and it spreads like smoke.

'What was that?' someone calls out.

'Shh,' Mrs Greaves, a drama teacher, says.

But she's ignored. The whispers get louder, a girl next to me laughs and mutters, 'OMG,' and a few people join in, while my pencil shakes in my hand.

'Settle down now,' Mrs Greaves calls out over the gym, though she looks equally freaked out. 'Everyone, come on. You have twenty-five minutes left.'

We settle, but nobody writes anything. We all just make eyes at one

another and keep twisting around to look at the door. But Abigail doesn't return. Every few minutes, someone starts giggling or whispering 'She's on drugs' but I can't seem to find it funny. The ghost of Abigail's scream haunts the air. I feel it in my blood, though that doesn't make sense. I clench my fist and shake it out to quell the peculiar prickling in my hand.

My midterm is forgotten. The scream's still in my head, like the vibrations of a gong waiting to still. And, despite the unease lacing itself through my body, I have one happier thought.

I need to tell Brody immediately.

And Then We Screamed

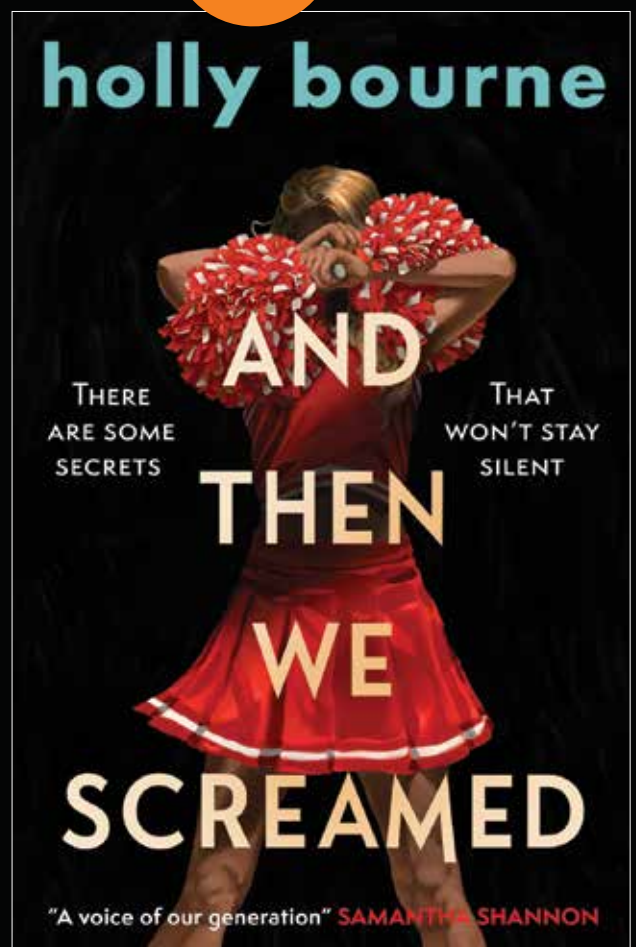
by Holly Bourne

Usborne • PB • £8.99

ISBN 9781836040729

Published 10th September

Age range: 14+



Out of Sight

In this fun and inspiring book, you can learn all about these those things in the world that we can't see, from the tiny organisms thriving all around us to the invisible energy waves sending signals to our gadgets. We interviewed the author Mike Barfield to find out more.



What inspired you to write *Meet the Invisibles*?

Well, I like a challenge, and what could be a greater challenge than creating a hilarious, highly illustrated book about things that are actually invisible?! This includes not just living things too small to be seen with the naked eye, but also sounds, smells, radiation, atoms, molecules and even the invisible building blocks of the universe which scientists are still investigating. It took a bit of thinking about, which led to me using a friendly flea and a talking grain of rice as guides to the sizes of these invisible things. What other book – or author – will give you that?!

Did you work closely with the illustrator Jess Bradley?

Great question! This will be the sixth book that Jess and I will have worked on together, after winning the Blue Peter Book Award with our very first title for Buster back in 2021. Despite this success, Jess and I have actually only met once in person, as she lives down in Devon and I'm up in North Yorkshire. I'm also a cartoonist and illustrator, so I write and rough out the spreads and they get sent on to her by the bods at Buster for Jess to work her magic. It may sound a curious system, but it clearly works well. One of my other illustrators lives in Australia – as far away from me as you could possibly get!

The book is all about the small things we cannot see, but which are a big part of

our lives. Do you have a favourite surprising fact from the book?

Researching the books I write is a real pleasure. I love digging up fab facts and nuggets of information that I hope my readers will feel an irresistible urge to relay to their friends and family. In *Meet the Invisibles*, these include the shocking fact that a spoonful of human poo (a disgusting thought in itself!) can contain as many as 1000 billion bacteria – all of them too small to be seen. Oh, and also that some hawks – unlike humans – have eyes that can register ultraviolet light. This means they can detect shiny trails of wee made by mice and lie in wait for their prey to pass by!

The book is also full of humour – how important do you think humour is when writing for children?

I think the jokes are vital to my work and its appeal to readers. I grew up in a world full of funny British comics, of which sadly *The Beano* and *The Phoenix* are about the only remaining examples. Those childhood comics shaped my sense of humour, and to get to write and create my own funny comic strips today is a real privilege. The pages I produce start with shedloads of research, but then I plan how to take a funny angle on the information, and pay off the spread with a fact-packed punchline. I like to describe what I do as, 'smuggling in facts under the cover of daftness'.

“Researching the books I write is a real pleasure.”

Do you think that there might be more 'invisible' things in the world that we don't know anything about currently?

If you read the book, you'll find out there actually are such things, and they make up almost the entire universe! Space boffins



Meet the Invisibles

by Mike Barfield
Illustrated by Jess Bradley
Buster Books • PB • £10.99
ISBN 9781837250707
Published 10th September
Age range: 8+

call them 'dark matter' and 'dark energy', but they don't know much about them... yet. You could say the scientists are 'in the dark' themselves! Personally, I think there might also be an invisible 'Fun Force'. It is generated when someone starts laughing and then radiates out in waves that set off other people in the vicinity laughing too.

Which other authors inspire you in your work?

Well, it's not just authors but illustrators too. Children's non-fiction has never been so beautifully and brilliantly edited and illustrated as it is today. My own books benefit immensely from superb design teams and great graphics from artists like Jess Bradley. As I mentioned earlier, I draw (pun intended!) on classic comic artists of the past, but I am also a huge fan of the fun and sheer energy of Dav Pilkey's books, to name just one favourite. His ability to blend so much silliness with a message of empathy and humanity is quite an achievement.

What do independent bookshops mean to you?

Indie bookshops are bastions of civilisation. They don't appear by accident. They are driven by the passion of people with a love of books who want to share that with others. Finding that a town has an independent bookshop is always a good indicator of it being a Happy Place. Add in a public library, and a second-hand bookshop too, and I will be happily invisible for hours!

A Visceral History

[KIDS]

DK

Blood, Guts, and Nasty Cuts is a whistle-stop tour of the grisly, glorious, and ingeniously inventive history of medicine, all the way from the ancient world right up to the twenty-first century. We interviewed the author Dr Alanna Skuse to discover more.



Photo © Darkride Creations

What inspired you to write a children's history of medicine?

I give a lot of talks about the history of medicine, and the best questions usually come from children! Children are much more able to understand historical nuance than we sometimes give them credit for, and this is a topic that has often been oversimplified. It's not as straightforward as 'old medicine bad, new medicine good'.

Did you work closely with the illustrator, Oyemathias?

Most of Oyemathias' work was drafted after I'd thought of the main stories I wanted to present for each era or topic. Then, once they sent back a rough draft, I adjusted the text to fit. Sometimes there was a specific image in mind, like the WW1 'hospital train', that we really wanted to include, and then the text followed that. But the overall process was remarkably smooth – DK have such experience with illustrated books that it made things pretty easy.

What do you think is the biggest myth about medical history?

When we look at some of the weirder things that people believed about medicine in the past, it's very easy to label them as ignorant. But even things which seem wrongheaded, like bloodletting, usually had an internal logic that was based on the best available information at that time. The other big myth is that patients were bullied by their doctors. For most of history, the patients called the shots – it's only in the past couple of centuries that we've begun to treat the doctor as God!

Did you do a lot of research for the book, and was there anything which really surprised you in your research?

Many parts of the book drew on my existing knowledge, especially for the medieval period and Renaissance. However, a lot of the global medicine stories – South America, India, China and so on – were new to me. It was good to see how those medical systems often connected with what I already knew. For example, the Ayurvedic system of medicine shares a lot with Ancient Greek ideas of 'the humours', which in turn influenced Renaissance doctors.

You've also written books for adults – how different is it writing for children?

The main challenge in writing for children is that the book is much shorter! As an academic, you always want to include all the details, but I had to be ruthless about picking out the most interesting stories and making every word count.

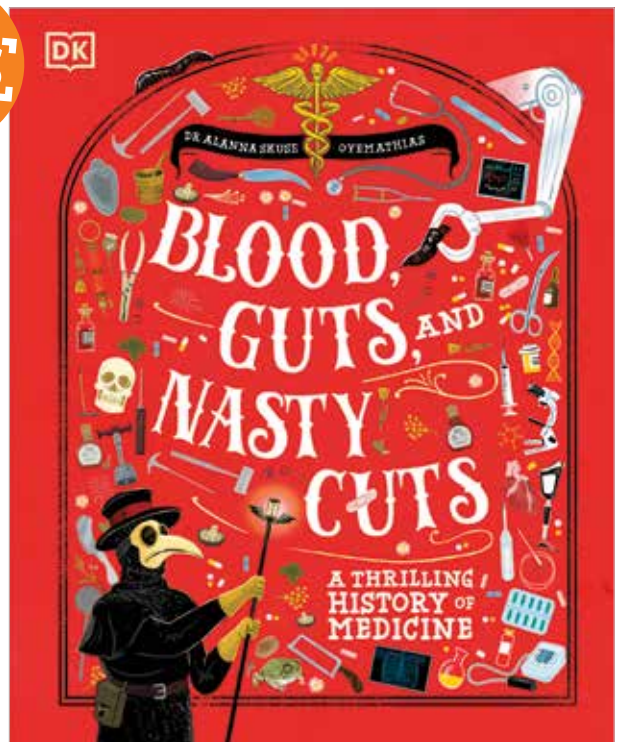
"For most of history, the patients called the shots"

When you consider the history of medicine, does it make you glad that you live in this point in history?

Very! The obvious thing is anaesthesia – accounts of surgery before it are really blood-curdling. But there's a lot of less spectacular stuff too, like dental hygiene, that makes a huge difference to our quality of life. We can hardly imagine now what it would be like to have something as simple as a headache, and just not have any means to feel better.

What do you think the future holds for medicine?

Just as anaesthesia or antibiotics would have seemed almost inconceivable to medieval people, the medical advances of the next few



Blood, Guts, and Nasty Cuts

by Dr Alanna Skuse
Illustrated by Oyemathias
DK Children • HB • £14.99
ISBN 9780241777558
Published 3rd September
Age range: 9+

hundred years are probably ones we haven't even dreamt of yet. In the medium term, I think that preventive medicine will become much more of a priority. We're already seeing this with the use of GLPs for weight loss. But much will depend on how governments tackle health inequality. There's one future in which world health continues to steadily improve, and another – very near at hand – in which average healthy lifespan declines, while the mega-rich are able to live much longer lives.

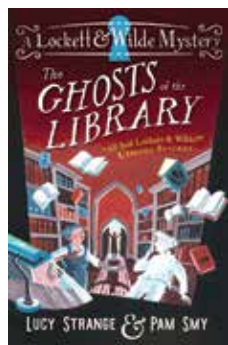
Which other authors and illustrators inspire you in your work?

When I think back to my childhood reading, I was obsessed with illustrated DK books about castles and horses, and later with the Louise Rennison books, as well as Jostein Gaarder's *Sophie's World*. I still read a lot of non-fiction, especially when I'm starting a new project. Lindsey Fitzharris's books inspired me to write about the history of medicine, and I'm a fan of illustrator Allie Brosh, whose book *Hyperbole and a Half* is simultaneously very funny and an incredibly astute take on the experience of depression.

What do independent bookshops mean to you?

A few times a year, some friends and I will have a treat day of going to Oxford or Bath and trawling the independent bookshops there, with a stop for lunch. They offer an experience that you can't get in the big chain shops. Since I've started writing for popular audiences, indie bookshops are also incredibly important for meeting audiences. I hardly ever turn down an invitation to speak at a bookshop, because it's the most fun kind of work!

Older & Young Adult Books



The Ghosts of the Library

by Lucy Strange & Pam Smy
Walker Books
PB • £8.99
ISBN 9781529516029
Published 22nd October
Age range: 9+

The third classic gothic mystery starring supernatural sleuths Lockett & Wilde. Winter is closing in. During the long, dark London evenings, Matilda and her ghostly companion, Edgar, puzzle over the mystery surrounding the wisp who haunts her aunt's theatre. By day Matilda attends Euthalia's, where she enjoys the companionship of her friend Florence and helping in the library. But there's a spiritual presence among the stacks and another mystery to solve...



Marionetta

by Miriam Bonastre Tur
Rock the Boat
PB • £12.99
ISBN 9781836433224
Published 8th October
Age range: 12+

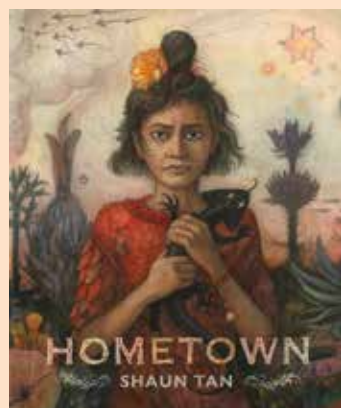
From the creator of *Hooky*, this is a dark fantasy graphic novel series about a teenage girl who is magically resurrected into a traveling circus by a sinister deity. Julia Lazarrett is happy with her honest, predictable life. But when her best friend Kamille convinces her to visit a travelling circus, they both get more than what they bargained for. Thrust into a world full of secrets, magic and death, Julia is forced to strike an impossible deal in order to survive.



Nightcurse

by Emma Hinds
Usborne • PB • £9.99
ISBN 9781836048435
Published 8th October
Age range: 14+

Discover the truth about living for ever in this queer enemies-to-lovers romantasy with a magical mystery at its heart. Emrys Swift is so dead. 157 years' worth of dead, to be exact. And eternity feels even longer when you're cursed to be seventeen forever, hidden from the world in a magical library, and desperate to remember how you died. But when ancient spellbooks go missing, Emrys must join forces with shapeshifter Aubrey Vale to solve the mystery.



Hometown

by Shuan Tan
Walker Studio
HB • £25.00
ISBN 9781529536393
Published 8th October
Age range: 10+

A girl lives with her family, friends and neighbours in her hometown. Every so often, she can't help wondering if there might be more out there for her. But life is good. When a strange human boy lands in her hometown and insists she return to her 'real home' with him, the girl must make a choice. Where does she truly belong? A beautifully illustrated, thoughtful and funny story about finding your place in the world, from the creator of *The Arrival*.



Winterveil

by Ava Reid
Electric Monkey
HB • £16.99
ISBN 9780008827960
Published 24th September
Age range: 14+

There is no application process for Valeran Academy, but it boasts the brightest – and precociously criminal – students in the nation. A disgraced politician from a powerful American dynasty. A coldly brilliant strategist who will sacrifice anything to win. A former pageant queen with a talent that could change the world. A prodigious female soldier with an enigmatic past – and a dangerous secret. These four are drawn together for a mysterious mission...



Complete Norse Myths

by Anna Milbourne, Mairi Mackinnon & Nathan Collins
Usborne • HB • £20.00
ISBN 9781836042341
Published 10th September
Age range: 11+

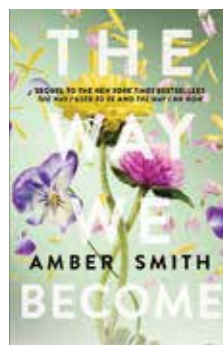
From Loki the trickster god, Thor the thunder god with his famous magic hammer, and Freyja with her falcon-feather cloak, to stories about dwarfs, dragons and a cursed gold ring, this collection covers the WHOLE of Norse mythology. A handsome volume for any family bookshelf, this book contains all the best-known stories and characters as well as lesser-known gods and heroes, as well as stunning maps of both the real Viking world and the mythological world of their gods.



Dreamweaving

by O.O. Sangoyomi
Rock the Boat
PB • £9.99
ISBN 9781836432616
Published 15th October
Age range: 14+

Welcome to Tanglewood, where prestige has a price... Deja Freeman has always been told she could never be a weaver. But magic runs in her blood. When she enrolls at the prestigious Tanglewood Preparatory School, she finds herself walking the same hallowed halls that claimed her mother. Popular and driven, Tobi Ekundayo has her sight set on becoming Junior Class President. Even if it means confronting the institutional prejudice that seeks to exclude girls like her.



The Way We Become

by Amber Smith
Rock the Boat
PB • £9.99
ISBN 9781836432050
Published 8th October
Age range: 14+

The third book in the series which began with *The Way I Used to Be*. When Eden was raped by her brother's friend Kevin, it was almost impossible to tell her family, let alone report to the police. But when Kevin's own sister, Amanda, and his ex-girlfriend Gen also came forward, the girls found strength in their solidarity and did everything in their power to pursue justice. Now, in the wake of the jury's decision, they are expected to move on while still grappling with the grief.

"I MIGHT CHOOSE
SILLY JOKES OR
SPOOKY GHOSTS"



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as well as the fun of reading it.

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tokens

We have a National Book Token worth £25 to give away to one lucky winner! National Book Tokens can be spent in hundreds of bookshops across the UK, on any book of your choice. Find out more at nationalbooktokens.com. For the chance of winning, just answer these questions, tying in with *Tomorrow Bright Before Us* illustrated by Victoria Ball (see page 47):



- ❶ Which author wrote the 2022 bestselling novel *Tomorrow and Tomorrow and Tomorrow*?
- ❷ Which American author wrote the 1979 novel *So Long, See You Tomorrow*?
- ❸ *Dead Tomorrow* by Peter James features which fictional Brighton detective?
- ❹ Which Australian author wrote the young adult novel *Tomorrow, When the War Began*?
- ❺ Which award-winning science fiction author wrote the 2021 novel *Tomorrow*?
- ❻ Who wrote the 2023 thriller *Bright Young Women*?
- ❼ Which American author wrote the novel *Bright Lights, Big City*?
- ❽ In the novel *Remarkably Bright Creatures* by Shelby Van Pelt, what kind of creature is the character Marcellus?
- ❾ The 2003 film *Bright Young Things* was based on which 1930 novel by Evelyn Waugh?
- ❿ *All Things Bright and Beautiful* is a classic memoir by which Yorkshire vet?

Competition Terms & Conditions

No purchase necessary. Closing date for all entries is Monday 9th November 2026. Please include your name and full postal address on each entry. Responsibility will not be accepted for damaged, lost or delayed entries and the judges' decision is final. Entries are limited to one per person and one per household. Employees and member bookshops of the Booksellers Association are prohibited from entering. Winners will be chosen at random and notified by Booktime. We will print the winners' names in a future edition of Booktime.

WIN!

To enter any of our competitions, visit the following web page:

www.surveymonkey.com/r/BooktimeSeptember2026

Or write to us at:

Booktime,
The Booksellers Association,
6 Bell Yard,
London,
WC2A 2JR

Closing date:
Monday 9th November 2026

Winners & Answers

January & February 2026

The winners of the competitions

were: Julie Jarman, Tweekesbury; Clive Weatherley, Bishop's Stortford; Lara Cross, Bristol; Jacqueline Chell, Sheffield; Emily Ghassempour, Hebden Bridge; Christine Lewis, Cardiff; Malgozata Robertson, Aberdeen; Mrs J. Woodland, Hertford; Paul Harrison, Middlesbrough; Doreen McFetridge, Antrim. The answers were: *The Persians* Competition: Valiat; Puzzletime Book Quiz: 1. Ann Liang; 2. Lanling Xiaoxiao Sheng; 3. *Journey to the West*; 4. Li Qingzhao; 5. Anchee Min; 6. Shelley Parker-Chan; 7. Lewis F. McIntyre; 8. Edward Rutherford; 9. Lisa See; 10. R.F. Kuang



Turn to page 62 to read our interview with Katie and Kevin Tsang, about their exciting new adventure set in the classic world of Neverland.

