

Milton Keynes Indie Book Fair

Middleton Hall, centre:mk
Saturday 26 September 2026



MK Lit
Fest

Exhibitor Catalogue

S. A-Benstead

Adult Fiction: Historical Gothic Fiction



A writer of character driven gothic fiction and dark fairytales, focusing on trauma and mental health **S. A-Benstead** began writing as an emotional outlet, inspired by the characters of Charles Dickens and Emily Brontë, resulting in a moderate portfolio of poetry and her first full novel, ***Heads or Tails***. She studied English and Classical Studies at Royal Holloway University, and now lives in Surrey with her husband, dreaming of the day creating books becomes her life.

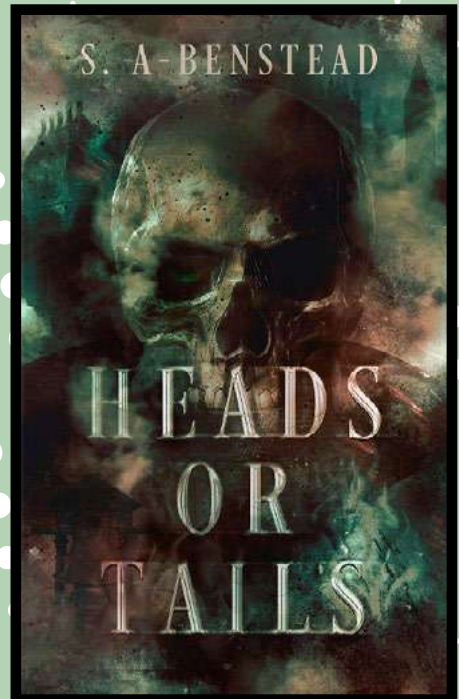
AUTHOR'S PICK

'If fate has a purpose for you, it's best not to deny her, only hope she shows grace.'

The allure of helping discover Darwin's 'missing link' – on an island thousands of miles from his more recent sins – seems like an opportunity too good for Nathaniel to pass up. But what he finds in Sumatra has him questioning a new reality, as well as what it truly means to survive.

Almost three years later, when Nathaniel returns to London, Charles VonTruton begins taking steps to counter the storm raging on the heels of his friend's silent homecoming. Yet when a body is pulled from the Thames, and Nathaniel's involvement brings him to the attention of Simon and The Yard, the three men are cast into a cycle of wills.

But not everything can be controlled, and not everyone can be saved. When prophecies are uncovered, and blood is spilled in the name of a Broken God, perhaps their fates were never truly their own.



C.C. Adams

Adult Fiction: Horror



Image Credit: Linda Wisdom

London native **C.C. Adams** is the horror/dark fiction author behind books such as ***But Worse Will Come***, ***Forfeit Tissue*** and ***Downwind, Alice***. A member of the Horror Writers Association, he still lives in the capital. This is where he lifts weights, cooks – and looks for the perfect quote to set off the next dark delicacy.

AUTHOR'S PICK

Meet Alice Morecambe.

After two years away, a chance encounter with her ex-boyfriend Kieran proves awkward and sours when Alice lashes out at him, before storming off. An unfortunate turn of events that would soon blow over, right?

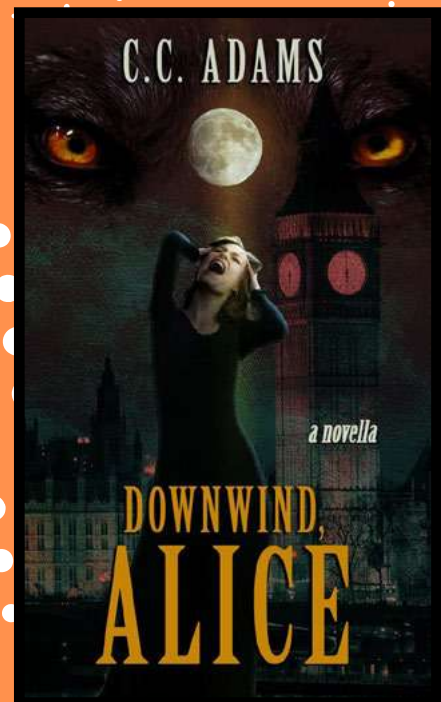
Wrong.

Because, unfortunately for Alice, Kieran is ... different now.

For the last couple of years, Kieran has kept a tight rein on more than his feelings – but now he's going to do more than tell Alice how he really feels.

He's going to show her.

And Alice won't know what's downwind until it's too late.



Ayla Ali

Adult Fiction: Psychological thriller



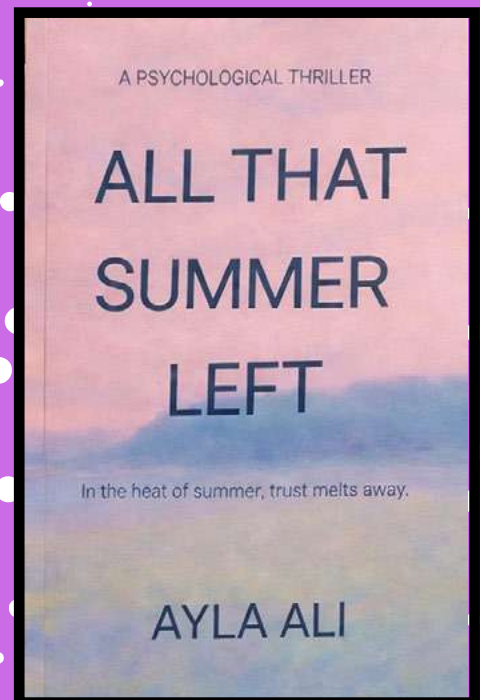
Ayla Ali is a passionate storyteller with a love for crime and psychological thrillers. With a background in textiles and design but turned corporate, she brings unique insight and vivid detail to every page. When not writing, Ayla enjoys going for coffee and getting lost in a book, always seeking inspiration in everyday moments.

Her books are known for intense plot twists and descriptive scenes, earning praise from readers around the world.

AUTHOR'S PICK

When a close-knit group of friends is torn apart by a violent school tragedy, a series of disturbing deaths unravels a web of hidden abuse, psychological manipulation, and buried trauma.

As DI Tee and DC Zak investigate, they uncover a chilling truth: the real danger isn't just the killer, it's what the survivors have become. ***All That Summer Left*** is a dark psychological thriller about pain, identity, and the cost of being unseen.



Bad Betty Press

Adult Fiction: Poetry



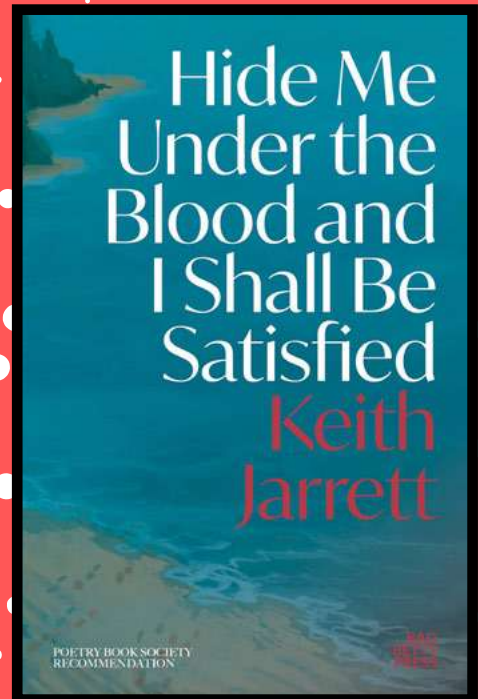
Image Credit: Tyrone Lewis

Bad Betty Press is an award-winning independent poetry publisher and curator of live literature events across the UK. Based in Nottingham, Bad Betty champions risk-taking poetry, supports poets' artistic development and celebrates underrepresented stories. Its books have been shortlisted for prizes including the Forward Prize, Jhalak Prize and Laurel Prize, and featured in the *Guardian*, *Poetry Review* and on BBC Radio. Bad Betty won the Michael Marks Publishers' Award in 2022 and is the parent of pamphlet imprint **Little Betty**.

PUBLISHER'S PICK

Keith Jarrett's dazzlingly lyrical new collection asks how we process violence when it's lionised in our language, on city street signs, in the edicts of a vengeful god. Its title borrowed from an unknown songwriter, this book is a palimpsest, layering known and unknown verses: those sung in Pentecostal churches or whispered in silent worship, texted to a 3am suitor or redacted from a eulogy.

These poems are requiem and carnival: for the dead, the buried, the erased, the forgotten. They are magnetic, musical, scorched in glitter, skanking on the offbeat. With courage, insight and mischief, Jarrett invites the reader to look sideways, to consider the absurd, messy and problematic with a playfulness that feels, in itself, slyly revolutionary.



Beneath the Dust Jacket

Adult Fiction Subscription Box: Thriller



Beneath the Dust Jacket is for those captivated by suspenseful, twisty stories and beautifully made books. A subscription box delivering special edition (sprayed edges and signed) books focusing on mystery, thriller and crime. Beneath the Dust Jacket began as a way to celebrate stories and to share them with readers who felt the same.

OUR PICK

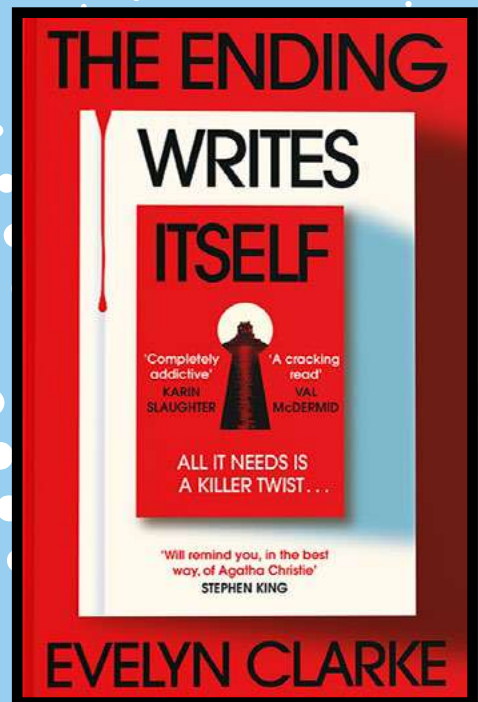
‘Secrets don’t stay secret for long in publishing.’

Six authors. One private island. Seventy-two hours to write the ending that will change their lives.

World-famous author Arthur Fletch is dead. His final novel, the most anticipated book in history, remains unfinished. But the ending won’t write itself. Fletch’s publisher, Merriweather Press, has invited six authors to Fletch’s private island in Scotland. Authors whose books have never had the big marketing budgets or publicity opportunities. In other words, midlist. And they’re about to be presented with the opportunity of a lifetime.

Whoever writes a worthy ending will receive one million dollars, and a further one million dollars for a new three-book contract. They have just seventy-two hours, with no access to the outside world, just a typewriter and a blank page. All they have to do is write...

Starting is often the hardest part. But getting to the end could be murder.



G Ali-Davey

Adult Fiction: Sports/Drama



G Ali-Davey is the author's pen-name. He is thirty-one years old and has been writing his whole life. He fell in love with basketball when he was eighteen, and his need to root for the underdog led him to the Minnesota Timberwolves. He is also a Milton Keynes Breakers fan. He is not a good basketball player. When he plays, however, he takes the 'scrappy three-point shooter' approach. So in other words – he fouls a lot, and misses a lot of shots.

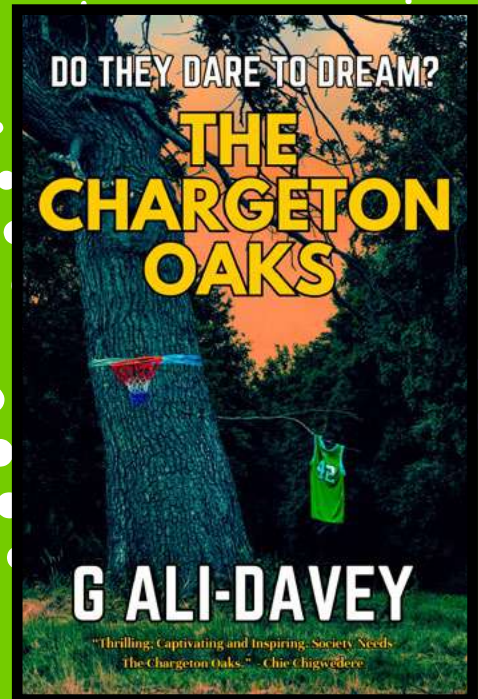
He doesn't just write fiction. A lot of his work involves telling the stories of professional basketball players in a classic interview format, and covering various roles in sports journalism.

AUTHOR'S PICK

In the gritty streets of Chargeton, a fictional London borough, hope emerges from an unlikely source: the Chargeton Oaks basketball team. Richard Furzton and his childhood friend Walton join Chargeton College in 2015, balancing their studies with their dreams of basketball careers. The Oaks are a mismatched group, struggling to overcome their differences and form a cohesive unit.

Amidst internal conflicts and external pressures, Coach Lake must lead a conflicted team through a journey of transformation. As they face tough opponents on the court, they also battle personal demons and the ever-present threat of local gang violence that looms in the shadows of London.

Can the Oaks put aside their differences and become a united team? And can they extinguish the dark shadows that threaten to smother them?



M.H. Appleton

Adult and YA Fiction: Thriller



M.H. Appleton is a Jamaican-born African currently residing in the United Kingdom. He has used his craving for something new and transformative to craft a story with a unique and timely plot that is long overdue.

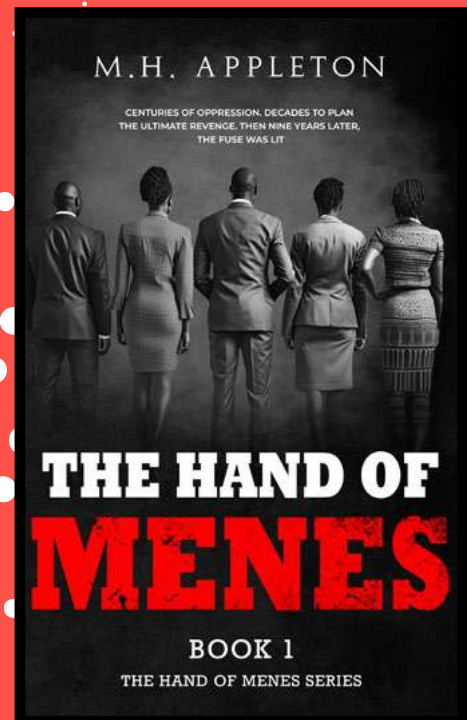
His debut novel, ***The Hand of Menes***, is his first instalment in The Hand of Menes series, which showcases the courage and resilience of a people as they fight to regain that which was stolen.

AUTHOR'S PICK

The Hand of Menes (T.H.O.M.), a warrior-class secret society of Askaris, was created by African nobility to unite Africa as one country and end the neo-colonisation of the continent.

When a rogue Askari assassinates three white men from powerful political families in New York, the murders catch the attention of the FBI, which makes the arrest of the assassin the top priority of its most skilled agent.

In a bid to safeguard its secrecy, T.H.O.M.'s leadership races against the FBI to annihilate the rogue Askari, setting in motion a series of events that will either destroy T.H.O.M or set the stage for the liberation of Africa from the devastating clutches of European and Chinese powers.



KM Bailey

Adult Fiction: Historical Fiction



KM Bailey trained as an actor, treading the boards for ten years, then worked in community theatre writing and directing plays. She now teaches in a rural primary school. Inspired by her grandfather she began writing at an early age.

Requiem, her first novel, is a work of historical fiction that explores the unseen wounds of war, examining the quiet devastations that linger, forbidden friendships and societal change in the aftermath of the Great War.

AUTHOR'S PICK

Set in rural Bedfordshire, ***Requiem*** tells the story of the working-class Baxter family whose lives are immeasurably altered by their parents' deaths during WW1. Told through the eyes of Baxter brothers Tom and Billy, and the local landowner's heir, Edward Mountfield, the drama centres around the precociously talented middle child Rose.

Rose is a vivacious, opinionated and intelligent girl who has dreams and aspirations beyond her humble origins; this, coupled with her uncommon skill in playing the piano, leads her to cross pathways with Lady Mountfield, Edward's mother and wife to Sir Peter, a bluff boar of a man whose world view is entrenched in the social mores of the time.

The two families' lives become increasingly intertwined and as characters battle with their own demons, many haunted by their experiences of the Great War, a force for harm sets in progress a course of events that will shatter the seeming quiet of this rural community.



R. A. Baldwin

Adult and YA Fiction: Literary Fantasy



Image Credit: randalplunkettphotography

R. A. Baldwin is of dual English-Finnish heritage and grew up on romances and fairy tales. He lives in the Surrey Hills, where he is inspired by the landscape to produce the stories and artwork of his imagined world.

AUTHOR'S PICK

Something watches Eölas in his dreams: a rotten man veiled in shadow. A silent voice speaks to him, freezing him with fear. His family insist that he pay his fancies no mind, nor should he give such life to shadows. But when Eölas discovers the apparition is no dream, and he seeks his mother and brother to demand answers, he finds they both are missing.

Desperate to find his family, Eölas embarks upon a journey that will lead him back to his forgotten home, to Northland, a land of perils worse than his haunting dreams. The darkened hills are stalked by more than men or beasts, and even there, in the far wilderness, the rotting spirit clinging to Eölas will not let him go.

THE CURSE OF NORTHLAND

VOLUME I

THE CHILDREN OF ILVENÓR

R. A. BALDWIN

Illustrated by Nial Adams & Seda Sokmen



Karen Banfield

Adult Fiction: General Fiction



Karen Banfield is a writer of plays and short stories. She's had seventeen plays performed with more booked at the Limelight Theatre, Aylesbury in 2027. She says short stories are perfect for finding a home for ideas that just keep popping into her head. She's had hers included in the 2023, 2025 and 2026 Mink Anthologies. Her two collections of short stories are ***A Little Crime at Bedtime*** and ***A Touch of Drama at Bedtime***.

AUTHOR'S PICK

Twenty-six short stories about life's daily dramas, for people who like a short read at bedtime.

Zoe brings home a birthday surprise, little realising the confession that Andy will then make.

Some crafty bidding at an auction is just the start of Lisa's revenge on behalf of her friend.

And what rule does Fiona break to make Ernest smile again?

Plus many more interesting characters with their stories to tell.



Russ Barr

Modern Fiction



Russ Barr writes character-led fiction with heart and soul, sometimes dark, sometimes funny, but always trying to scratch beneath the surface of the human condition.

His debut novel, *War Inc.*, is a darkly comic story about our insatiable appetite for content, and people who turn chaos into opportunity. He is also the author of the short story *Crybully*, published in 2024.

Russ is drawn to flawed characters, broken systems and the absurdity that often sits just beneath the surface of serious things.

AUTHOR'S PICK

London, 1995. Somewhere in the city, a ten-pound note is changing hands. And changing lives.

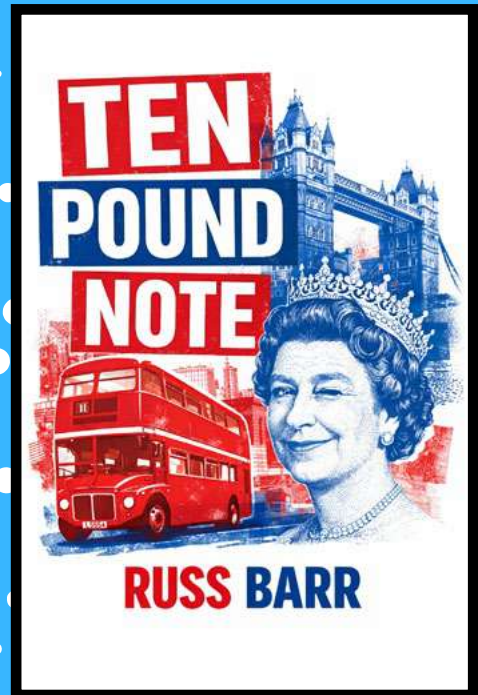
Fresh from the mint, the note is almost ordinary. Almost. A tiny printing anomaly has left the Queen appearing to wink, as if she knows something the rest of us do not.

Over the course of its journey, the tenner passes through thirteen lives: the lost, the lonely, the violent, the damaged and the desperate. A child in danger. A gangster with a secret. A drug dealer, a stripper, a crooked policeman, and others caught in the machinery of a city that rarely forgives weakness.

None of them keep the note for long. But each leaves a mark.

hat begins as a chain of chance encounters slowly reveals something darker, stranger and more human: a hidden connection between lives that should never have touched, and a path that may yet lead back to redemption.

Ten Pound Note is a gritty, darkly comic and compassionate novel about money, fate, survival and the stories we leave behind.



Kate Bateman

Adult Fiction: Historical romance

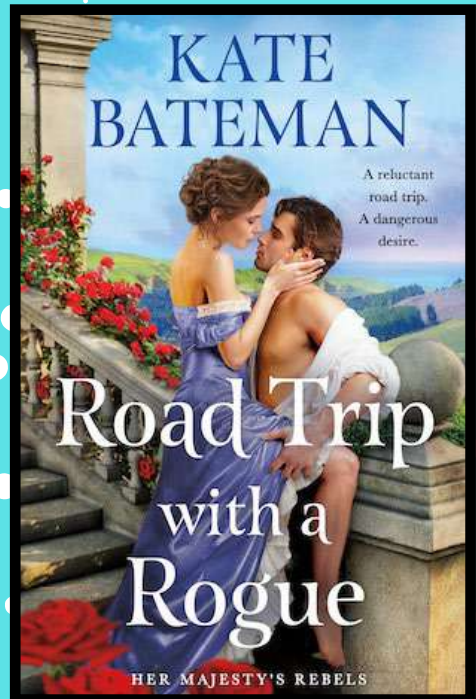


Kate Bateman / K.C. Bateman is a bestselling author of historical romances, including the **Secrets and Spies** series, **Bow Street Bachelors** series, **Ruthless Rivals** series, and **Her Majesty's Rebels** series. Her books have received multiple starred reviews from *Publishers Weekly* and *Library Journal*, and have been translated into multiple languages, including French, Italian, Brazilian, Japanese, German, Romanian, Czech and Croatian.

Her Renaissance romp, ***The Devil To Pay***, was a 2019 RITA® Finalist for Historical Romance.

AUTHOR'S PICK

Mistakenly holding up the coach of the man who broke her heart is bad enough, but having to endure his sinfully alluring company all the way to Scotland is Daisy Hamilton's worst nightmare . . . and her most secret desire.



Maaya Brooker

Adult Fiction: Domestic drama

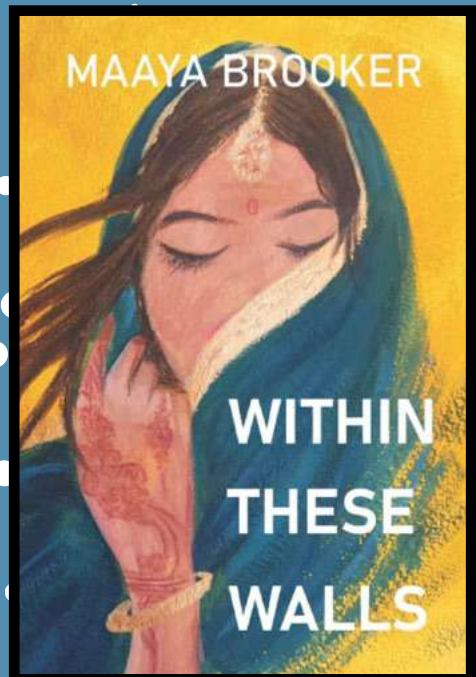


Maaya Brooker is a self-published author of children's horror adventure books and women's fiction. The children's books are for 8-12 year olds, with dyslexia-friendly font and based in Milton Keynes! All her books are written with female protagonists of colour and different ethnicities.

AUTHOR'S PICK

Anita, a confident, westernised Indian woman living in Milton Keynes, spends her days teasing her mother and laughing about marriage traditions with her sister. Until one day she finds her perfect match: a classically handsome Indian man called Khush. Instantly she falls for him, and although his love is intense, Anita knows her love is real.

Once married, however, her husband's true colours come through, and along with his family, Khush makes life difficult to endure, controlling her freedoms under the constraints of being a good Indian wife. Anita knows she must break free from this toxic relationship, but she struggles to shake off the shackles of tradition and leave her psychologically abusive and manipulating husband. Only when her son is taken as punishment does Anita fight harder than she has ever done before.



Chris M L Burleigh

Poetry



'Life is serious, but is not to be lived too seriously.' Serious or humorous, my poems are always good-natured. I write when I have something to say, and I feel I have found the right way to say it.

My three collections, ***Particles of Light***, ***Intersecting Lines*** and ***Reflections***, reflect my interest in people, love, the natural world, and the human condition. Each contains serious and light-hearted poems, with a section of wit and wordplay.

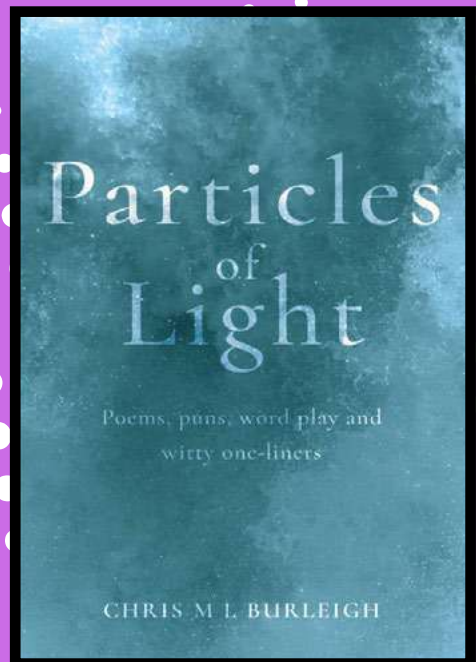
AUTHOR'S PICK

An exploration of words and meaning, and a celebration of sounds.

In this collection, the familiar is shown in unfamiliar ways. Our vanity and our fragility are exposed with generosity of spirit. This is a collection of poems with something for everyone.

Much in the collection is light-hearted and playful, although often with a more serious intent. The word play is wittier than stand-up, and more laugh-out-loud than past wits such as Wilde and Parker. There is little introspection – the reader effortlessly becomes both the 'I' and the 'eye'. This book is the authentic voice of an individual poet.

Feel the power of nature in 'The Shipwreck': 'Wounded wave, writhe wide / Back-curved crest / Furred then swirled...' and enjoy the wit as in 'Exotic Travel': 'Travel broadens / The bowel' or in 'Trojan Horse': 'Beware Geeks / Bearing gifs'.



J. Cabral-Jackson

YA Fiction: Fantasy



J. Cabral-Jackson is a St. Andrews Graduate and family doctor with a Masters in Creative Writing from the University of Manchester, studying under Professor Jeanette Winterson, Geoff Ryman and Ian McGuire. She was a finalist in the NYC Midnight Screenwriting Competition and Pulp Idol Novel Competition.

Her writing publications include *The Morality Test*, *The Boy With The Lungs Of A Lion* and *My Name is Vincent*, amongst others published by Sci-Fi Shorts.

AUTHOR'S PICK

Bain Rock is a 1980s fantasy with witchcraft and lore, political intrigue, found family and sweet lesbian romance.

June, 1984. On the remote island of Inea, the militia has outlawed all magic, and rival witch factions are at war.

As war brews between the Council of Witches and Dissenters, a suspicious fire forces Emma into hiding. A descendant of nineteen bloodlines of witches, Emma has yet to manifest any powers, but sets out to rescue her last living relative. The last person she expects to fall for is Nor, the daughter of her sworn enemy.

As Emma questions her sense of identity, belonging, and coming to terms with her feelings for Nor, she gets to the truth of her origins and uncovers a secret that threatens everything. Old enemies must work together to defeat a force the island has never seen, but how far is Emma willing to go?



T.G. Campbell

Adult Fiction: Crime Fiction with an Historical Setting



Image Credit: T.G. Campbell

T.G. Campbell was one of the first babies born in Milton Keynes Hospital and, aside from her time at university, has lived in MK all of her life. She published the first book in her series in 2016 and has the eighth coming out in August (TBC). She work part-time in local government but has also worked for charitable organisations assisting witnesses through the experience of giving evidence in court.

AUTHOR'S PICK

The Bow Street Society is a fictional group of amateur detectives, operating in Victorian London. Each of its civilian members has been enlisted for their unique skill or exceptional knowledge in a particular field derived from their usual occupation. Members are assigned to cases by the Society's clerk, Miss Trent, based upon these skills and fields of knowledge.

In ***The Case of the Curious Client***, the Bow Street Society is hired by Mr Thaddeus Dorsey to locate a missing friend he knows only as 'Palmer' after he fails to keep a late-night appointment with him. With their client's own credibility cast into doubt mere minutes after they meet him though, the Society are forced to consider whether they've been sent on a wild goose chase. That is, until events take a dark turn, and the Society have to race against time to not only solve the case, but also to save the very life of their client...

BOW STREET SOCIETY

The Case of The Curious Client



T.G. Campbell

Lizzie Cantopher

Children's and YA Fiction: Fable fairytale



Growing up in Northampton, **Lizzie Cantopher** faced challenges in school, often labelled as 'stupid' due to her struggles with traditional learning methods. She excelled at sport. But found writing and reading challenging. She loves books, though!

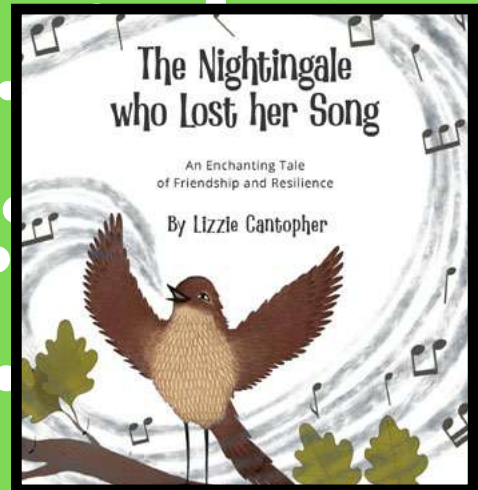
It wasn't until later that she discovered she was dyslexic, something she learned to keep hidden.

Despite these challenges, she navigated a successful career in nursing, raised her beautiful family, brought back Gold from the Commonwealth Archery Championships, pursued property investment, and found love with her partner, Annie. And eventually decided to write the book about her story, which ended up becoming the tale of the Nightingale.

AUTHOR'S PICK

In a world where melodies swirl on the wind, a nightingale loses her enchanting song to a fierce gale. Heartbroken and afraid, she embarks on a courageous journey to reclaim her voice – not alone, but with the steadfast support of her loyal friends: a gentle bear, a brave snake, and an honest crow. As they confront their fears and the powerful storm that threatens their harmony, they learn the true strength of friendship and the importance of asking for help. Will the nightingale's determined spirit help them overcome the tempest, or will her song be lost forever?

Perfect for readers of all ages, this enchanting tale of friendship and resilience highlights the importance of belief in oneself and the unbreakable bonds of friendship, reminding us that even the most impossible dreams can be realised when we stand together.



David Cartwright

YA Fiction: Science-Fantasy



David Cartwright grew up in the golden era of Saturday Morning Cartoons and ever-after has been a fan of fantasy, science-fiction and horror.

Stepping from turning the pages to taking up the pen, David now brings his own stories to the world, making the old new and putting his own trust on established genres.

AUTHOR'S PICK

Camelot 2050: Black Knight is the first instalment in a three-part story that rewrites the ending of the classic legend of King Arthur, and transports the reader to a near-future England ruled over by the ancestral line of Pendragon and the Knights of the Round Table.

Camelot has existed for fifteen hundred years. As the King's tournament approaches, Rosalyn, squire to Essex, prepares to show her mettle in the games. Unbenown to her, malign forces are moving against Camelot and all it stands for. The world of reason Rosalyn knows will soon be torn asunder and, if she or Camelot are to survive, the wonder of the past must be sought out and embraced.



<https://davidcartwriter.art.blog/>

David Cart-Writer @Facebook/Instagram/Bluesky

Moubani Roy Choudhury

Children's Fiction: Social and Emotional Learning



Moubani Roy Choudhury is a multilingual children's author and mum, dedicated to weaving cultural heritage into modern storytelling. She writes dual language Bengali-English books centred around the ideas of equality and representation. Raised in a traditional Bengali household in India, she remains deeply connected to her heritage and language. Now settled in Buckinghamshire, UK, she draws from her multilingual roots and her Indo-British family life to create stories that 'merge the best of both worlds.'

AUTHOR'S PICK

A celebration that travels across borders. This story explores how cultural traditions are carried with us, even when we live far from home, and how sharing and celebrating with others makes it even more meaningful. It offers a window into the celebration of Bengali New Year in a global context.

Moubani blends the art of storytelling to advocate for diversity, empathy, and emotional intelligence, crafting stories that fit the present and the future we want to build. Her work serves as a dual-purpose mirror and window: allowing children to see their own identities reflected while offering others a vibrant look into Bengali language and culture. She believes the stories we read to children quietly shape how they see the world. She hopes to see a world that is truly empathetic, curious, and inclusive, where diversity is embraced as a strength.



J.M. Cobley

Adult Fiction: Historical Literary Fiction



Image Credit: JM Cobley 2026

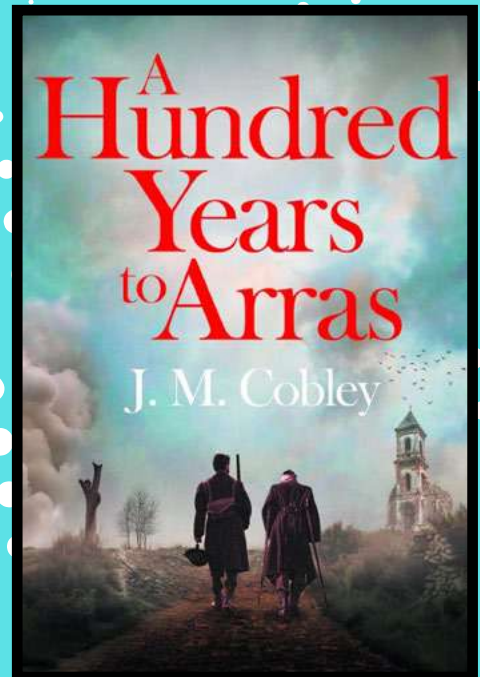
Jason Cobley was born in Devon to Welsh parents, and now lives in Warwickshire with his family. He has worked in education for most of his adult life and has written extensively for adults and children. ***A Hundred Years to Arras*** is his first novel. He is also known for his comics work for Commando and creator-owned projects such as **Amnesia Agents**.

AUTHOR'S PICK

A freezing Easter Monday in 1917. The Somerset Light Infantry is launched into the Battle of Arras. Three young friends fight for their lives and the chance to return home.

Robert is twenty-three years old, a farmer's boy from Somerset, who joins up against his father's wishes. Robert forms fast friendships with Stanley, who lied about his age to go to war, and Ernest, whose own slippery account betrays a life on the streets. Their friendship is forged through gas attacks, trench warfare, freezing in trenches, hunting rats, and chasing down kidnapped regimental dogs. Their life is one of mud and mayhem but also love and laughs.

This is the story of Robert's journey to Arras and back, his dreams and memories drawing him home. His story is that of the working-class Tommy, the story of thousands of young men who were caught in the collision between old rural values and the relentlessness of a new kind of war. It is a story that connects the past with the present through land, love and blood.



S. L. Coe

Adult Fiction: Pirate Adventure Fantasy Romance



S. L. Coe writes new adult pirate adventure fantasy romance full to the brim with adventure, bloodshed, sass, charisma, and sensual slow burn.

Her latest release and the first book in The Bard and His Captain series, ***Damn Those Inkpot Gods***, contains a male bard MC who has the heart of an angel but the tongue of a serpent, a female pirate captain MC who likes swordfighting a bit too much for someone of her title, a bit of filthy language, a lot of bloodshed and two very very spicy love scenes, if you catch her drift.

S. L. Coe also holds a BA and MA in English literature.

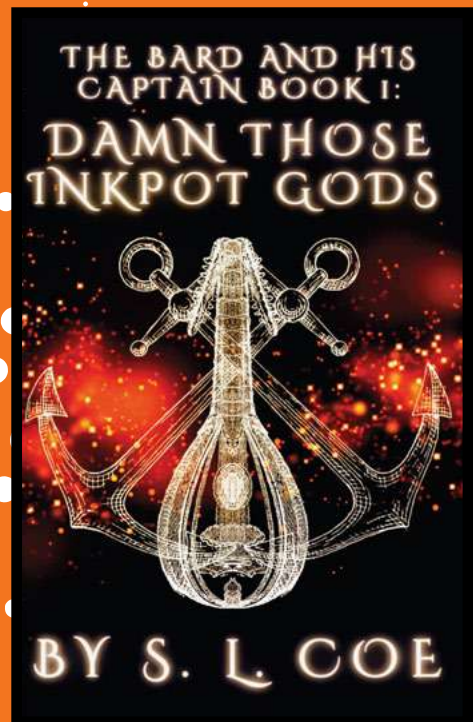
AUTHOR'S PICK

A quest and a curse never mix...and their story is no different.

When West-Draconda's infamous Elven Bard Julian Scott finds himself trapped upon a bandit's ship, all he can think about is returning to the Elven kingdom to bring an end to his vicious father's cruel rule over West Draconda.

Yet it is upon that ship that his adventure truly begins, for his cell mate is none other than notorious pirate Captain Willow Embers, who desperately yearns for a cure for her moonlit curse before Tome finds her on that twelfth moon.

And so together they plan to overthrow the bandits and find a way back to the elven kingdom and, eventually, her ship. But the question remains: will they be able to bring an end to his father's reign and her curse before that twelfth moon rises, or will their hearts collide and make everything so much worse?



Emma Coleman

Adult Fiction: Horror



Image Credit: Donna Scott

Emma Coleman is a horror writer from Northampton. Her novella *May Day* and short story collection, *The Glass House*, are published by NewCon Press.

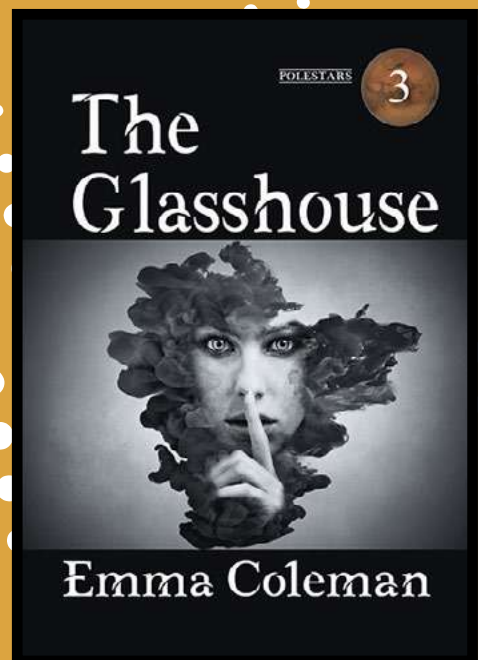
AUTHOR'S PICK

May Day: May is just seventeen when the factory goes up, killing her parents and her sister in their home. In a split second, she has been rendered an orphan.

The war is at its height and May has no option but to relocate to the country, moving in with her father's sister, a strict church-going woman who never did approve of May's mum nor her heathen ways. Despite Aunt Celia's disapproval, May continues to practice the superstitions her mum drummed into her.

Until the one time she doesn't; at which point something dark and deadly arises and proceeds to invade her life, determined to claim her as its own...

"A truly original tale of terror, founded on a vivid sense of period and place and in traditions that feel both occult and uncannily familiar." – Ramsey Campbell



Camille Cross

Adult Fiction: Romance, modern fiction



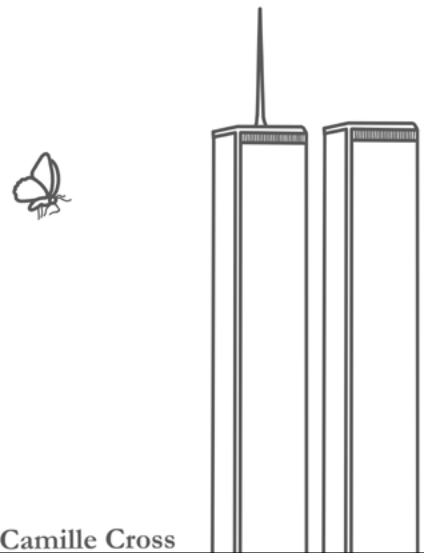
Camille Cross has self-published two novels, with a third due out in September. She has been writing a long time, and has a master's degree in scriptwriting.

AUTHOR'S PICK

When middle-aged Joni is introduced to 'Indigo Joe', the debut song from a new band topping the charts, by her music-loving son, she realises the lead singer is a boy who was in her class when she was a primary school teacher in her twenties.

Her mind turns to the time when troubled but gifted Jonah entered her classroom. It was September 2001, and his possible prediction of 9/11 left him as a boy she would never forget. Whilst in her class, he uncovers his potential, but it's intuitive Jonah who encourages her, set in her ways and alone, to seek the courage needed to find the happiness she has today.

INDIGO JOE



Tim Dalglish

Adult Non-fiction: Biography



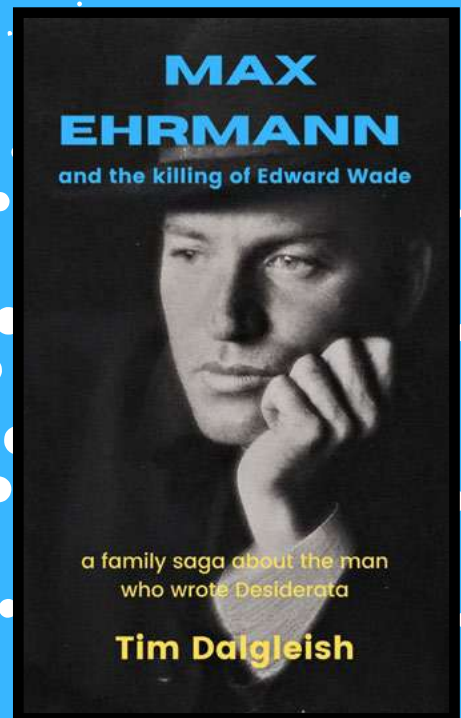
Tim Dalglish is an actor and author of over thirty books of biography, history, literary essays, poetry, plays and fiction, including *Playing Macbeth: An Actor's Journey into the Role*, *Three Hearts of the Octopus*, *The Stones of Mithras* and *The Guerilla Philosopher*. In the last three years, he has co-written three Greek tragedies, and his passion project *Max Ehrmann and the Killing of Edward Wade*, a groundbreaking investigation into the life of the poet who wrote 'Desiderata'.

AUTHOR'S PICK

You know the poem. You've heard it quoted by therapists and life coaches, even seen it tattooed on Johnny Depp's back in *Pirates of the Caribbean*. Part of 1960s' counterculture, it inspired everyone from Joan Crawford, Jack London and Richard Burton to Sylvia Plath, Gregory Peck, Ali McGraw, Pope John-Paul, Leonard Nimoy, Morgan Freeman, Tom Hiddleston and more. But who was Max Ehrmann?

Part of the answer, and interweaved with Max's story, is the tragic shooting, by the poet's brother, of a teamster. Was Emil Ehrmann innocent of murder? Who was the mysterious man in the brown suit who vanished after the killing?

The Ehrmann family saga reflects a troubled America of striking workers, biased media, social hierarchy and political corruption. Ehrmann was once compared to Emerson, Whitman, Edgar Allan Poe and Kahlil Gibran. His reputation should rest on more than one poem. The idea of 'Dreaming on the margin of a quiet river,' made Ehrmann's 'A Prayer,' wildly popular, resonating with former generations, as 'Desiderata' continues to inspire today.



Linda Dunscombe

Adult Fiction: Soap Opera - drama



Linda Dunscombe has written seventy-five episodes of a Soap Opera you can read: ***Jasmine Close*** follows residents as they move into a new housing estate in Milton Keynes. Each episode takes around twenty-five minutes to read, perfect for your lunch break, short commute or just to curl up on the sofa or read in bed.

She has also published crime and romance, as well as non-fiction and the award-winning ***Madam – Prostitutes, Punters and Puppets***. Her new novel is a fantasy based here in MK – did you know that magical creatures live at Willen Lake and Pixies ride around on the delivery robots?

AUTHOR'S PICK

Follow the lives – Experience the drama: The Soap Opera you can read.

Victoria works in the show-home and she likes to know what's going on. She's nosy, bossy, and caring, with a husband who keeps disappearing and a teenage daughter she's struggling to connect with.

Jenny is suffering from post-traumatic stress and the move to the new house in the new city will, according to her husband, Miles, make everything better.

Barry is the building site foreman whose schedule keeps being interrupted by the half-naked ladies in apartment two who keep diverting his men away from their work.

Steve severed his spine in a car accident and, fresh from the Spinal Injuries rehab unit, he's trying to find his place in a world that is much scarier in a wheelchair.

Sonia has a perfect family and a secret life, while Belle just wants to keep her children safe, and Natasha and Ed are adjusting to life with a new baby who cries all the time.

JASMINE CLOSE

FOLLOW THE LIVES - EXPERIENCE THE DRAMA



Series One – Episodes 1 – 25

Linda Dunscombe

Paul Eccentric

Adult Fiction: Steampunk

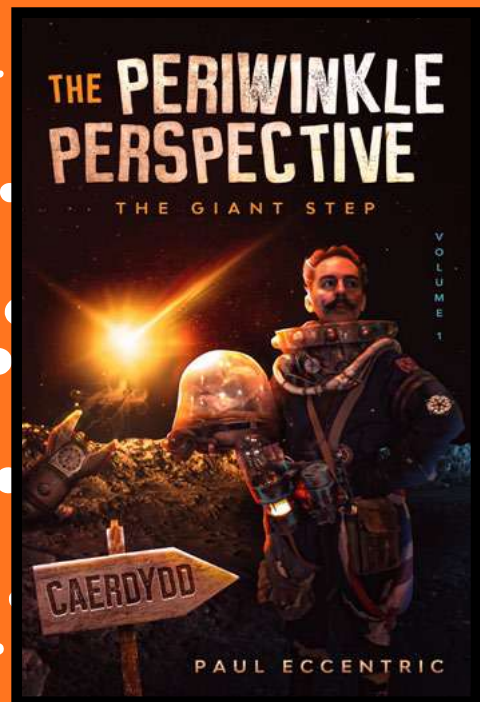


Paul Eccentric has been writing and performing for forty years. He's now enjoying writing in one of his favourite genres, that of Steampunk with his latest series, ***The Periwinkle Perspective***.

AUTHOR'S PICK

June 1897, and as part of Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee celebrations, her expanding Empire lays claim to another new territory: The Moon! Space Captain Gordon Periwinkle; the much-vaunted Gentleman Adventurer (and amateur taxidermist) becomes the first man to set foot on Earth's only natural satellite. Or so he believes... This is the story of the good Captain's attempt to get home, dodging an array of government assassins; nefarious foreign agents, and even Jack the bleedin' Ripper, all the while keeping one step ahead of his backstabbing, overachieving family.

With the help of Tiny: his trusty sherpa, and Professor Hamble Blaise: The Inventor Royal, they cobble together a plot to save both his life and his reputation, whilst bolstering the Queen's and her Empire's into the bargain. Better hold on tight, because right from the off "The Giant Step"; Paul Eccentric's first expedition into the visually stunning world of Victorian fantasy, drags you pell-mell down a gaslit path of twists and turns and perilous adventure. Comedic Steampunk for our time.



Sonia Elijah

Adult Non-fiction: Investigative Journalism



Sonia Elijah is an independent investigative journalist and former BBC researcher with a background in economics. Known for her meticulous, evidence-based reporting, she has conducted in-depth investigations into the COVID-19 response, including Pfizer-BioNTech trial documents, vaccine safety issues, excess deaths, regulatory failures, and institutional conflicts of interest. She challenges mainstream narratives through her Substack *Sonia Elijah Investigates* and podcast. **3/11 Viral Takeover** is her debut book.

AUTHOR'S PICK

On March 11, 2020, a Pandemic was Declared and Our World Changed Forever.

In **3/11 Viral Takeover**, investigative journalist **Sonia Elijah** delivers a forensic, evidence-based examination of the COVID-19 response that reshaped society. Drawing on thousands of pages of FOIA documents, leaked emails, scientific papers, whistleblower interviews, and exclusive reporting, this book exposes the coordinated narrative that justified unprecedented lockdowns, flawed testing protocols, rushed vaccine authorizations, and widespread censorship.

The investigation begins with the early suppression of alternative views and the influential papers that locked in the natural-origin story amid growing lab-related concerns. It reveals how unelected scientists and pharma-linked philanthropies took control of policy, while a single deeply flawed model drove global lockdowns in lockstep, inflicting catastrophic harms through school closures, care-home neglect, and suppressed ethics.

3/11 VIRAL TAKEOVER

On March 11, 2020, a Pandemic was Declared
and Our World Changed Forever

SONIA ELIJAH

Gareth Ellis

Adult Non-fiction: Self-help – Parenting



Gareth Ellis is a forty-year-old, happily married dad with two children. He has been writing professionally for eighteen years, as a journalist and copywriter; however, this is his first foray into book writing and self-publishing.

He lives and works in Milton Keynes and grew up in the area, leaving briefly to go to university in Surrey between 2004 and 2007. In terms of parenting, he is supported by a loving wife, Jessica, and his dad. Unfortunately, he lost his mum in July 2019, when his eldest child, Rupert, was just seven months old.

AUTHOR'S PICK

They say 'Kids don't come with a manual,' and nothing could be truer. I was a happy-go-lucky, working man, married to a loving wife, living my best life – until I became a first-time dad. But when do you feel like you're a dad, and how in the world do you change a nappy?

Rupert's arrival in 2018 turned my world upside down. Seven months later I lost my mum, and my world was again thrown into chaos. How do you look after a baby while planning a funeral for someone you've lost far too early?

Just as I grasped the whole parenting situation, and with Rupert just 18 months old, Emilia arrived – two months into the pandemic. Then redundancy struck. When Jessica went back to work, I became a stay-at-home dad, trying to grow a new business in the background. Enter a new world of learning routines, packing bags, and trying stay above water. The mental pressure of two children looking to you for everything takes its toll. Plus, the other parents' comments: 'On a day off?' or 'Good to see a dad looking after the kids.' Add the toxicity of social media, where people post only positives, and you see it's a recipe for disaster...or eventual triumph.



A.B. Esson / Ellis Greaves

Adult and YA Fiction: Mystery, Romance and Thriller



Melissa Hargreaves writes as both **A.B. Esson** and **Ellis Greaves**, creating emotionally rich romance and psychological suspense for adults, alongside mystery adventures for younger readers. With a background in psychology and education, her work explores relationships, identity, trust, neurodiversity, and resilience through character-driven storytelling. She is the founder of Trois Étoiles Press and regularly appears at literary festivals and book events across the UK.

AUTHOR'S PICK



Labore Hereditas Servatur. By labour, the legacy is preserved.

That is what Ashwyke tells you.

What Ashwyke doesn't tell you is that the East Wing has been sealed since 1891. The founder's portrait has been moved three times this term. And the school motto has a second meaning that nobody is supposed to find.

Maddie King found it.

Five students. One conspiracy. Over a hundred years of silence about to end.

Katie Farrow

Adult Fiction: Paranormal Romance

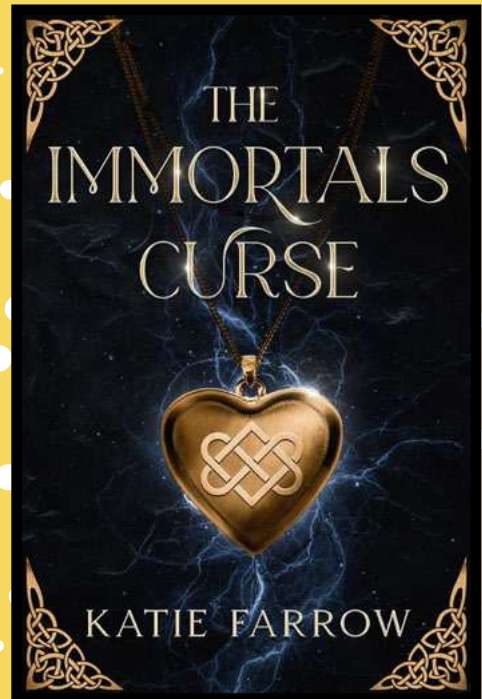


Katie Farrow is a thirty-nine-year-old neurodivergent indie author who writes Paranormal Romance and Romantasy, and loves reading books too.

AUTHOR'S PICK

A paranormal romance about two soulmates.

Nathaniel is a hybrid vampire-witch who has watched his soulmate Evelyn die eight times before she is reborn again. Now, the ninth time, is her last chance for them to break the curse. If she dies this time it's for good – and Nathaniel will lose his soul.



Toby Faulkner

YA (Young Adult) Fiction: Fantasy and sci-fi

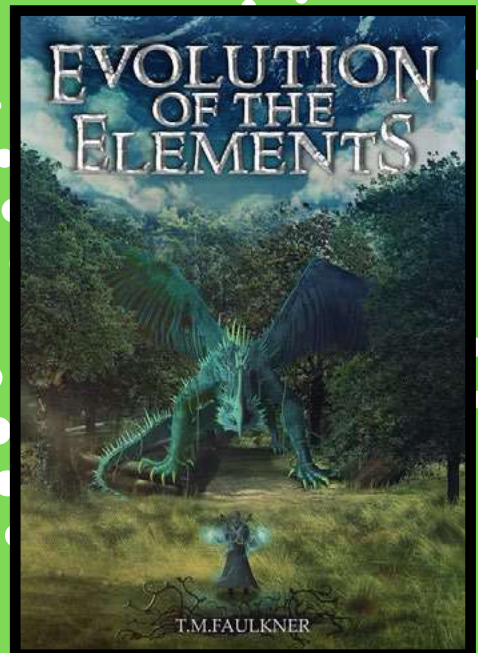


Toby Faulkner is a Fantasy and Sci-fi author, with a complete series published: ***Evolution of the Elements***. He is currently working on a fantasy series with dragons.

AUTHOR'S PICK

The Elements are phenomenal beings, each with unique and extraordinary powers. It is unknown why and how long they have been dormant from the dangerous worlds of Izara and Raziz, but now the time has come to be awakened.

In the wondrous City of Lementes, Jaykin, a deeply troubled young man, is searching for his father, who has disappeared in baffling circumstances. He nearly gives up hope until he secures the help of the mysterious Kanaren and his trusty companion, Q-Tech. As their adventure begins, Kanaren warns of an impending invasion, but no one in power will listen, and Jaykin discovers he has an innate and disturbing ability.



Ruth Finnegan

Adult Non-fiction: Cookery

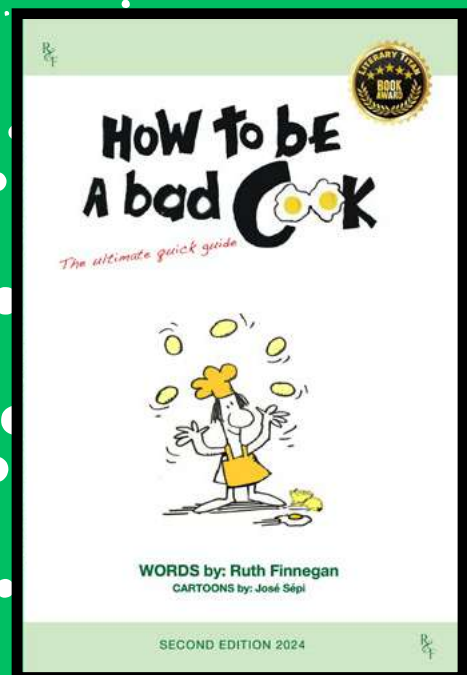


Ruth Finnegan (born 1933), Emeritus Professor of the Open University, is an anthropologist and novelist with broad interdisciplinary interests, especially in classical studies, literature, sociolinguistics, modes of thought, cultural history and, recently, spiritual paranormal experience or altered consciousness.

AUTHOR'S PICK

If you've ever called yourself a bad cook, this is your invitation to be bad – better. This book is not for already-good cooks (keep away!), or would-be chefs, or even those who adore cookery books. It's for self-proclaimed 'bad cooks' who may actually be halfway decent – but don't want to be tied down by time-consuming, pretentious, and detailed 'recipes'. So welcome, fellow bad cook. From basic nourishment to expressions of love and comfort, food is something we can't live without. But what about its preparation? Far more than the act of heating potentially edible material, cooking has stayed at the heart of countless cultures, epochs, and bookshelves since time began. But not all delight in the culinary arts...

For those who want enjoyable, nutritious, hot food no one can mess up: this one's for you. Filled to the brim with quirky cartoon illustrations and infused with anthropological titbits on cookery and the far-off origins of the food we unthinkingly consume today, this is not your usual cookbook.



Fly on the Wall Press

Adult Fiction: Historical Fiction



Fly on the Wall Press is an award-winning independent publisher based in Manchester, committed to curating upmarket fiction, each with a social message at their heart.

Founded in 2018 with a mission to amplify underrepresented voices and challenge conventional narratives, we've built a reputation for publishing books that spark conversation, inspire action, and push literary boundaries.

Our authors have been recognised in major literary prizes, including listings in the Women's Prize for Fiction, Sky Arts Award, the Laurel Prize; the Julie Suk Award, the Edge Hill Prize and the Saboteur Awards.

PUBLISHER'S PICK

Secrets, lies and love as the DDR collapses.

It is 1989, and in a small Baltic city in East Germany, the Deutsche Demokratische Republik, three young people from vastly different backgrounds become friends. Armando is a factory worker from Mozambique, Lolita is a medical student from India, and Theo is an East Berliner who dreams of being a writer.

When Armando and Lolita make a grisly discovery, they find themselves caught up in the politics of Theo's homeland more than ever before. While a quiet revolution sweeps through Eastern Europe, and the Berlin Wall teeters, the three find themselves entangled in a poignant love triangle which threatens their futures.

As the world order shifts, their three lives are bound together in a web of love, lies and fears, leaving each irrevocably changed.



Gail Gammell

Adult Fiction: Historical Romance



Gail Gammell is the author of several books. In addition to writing, she enjoys spending time with her grandchildren, her friends and her beautiful cavapoo, Bailey. An Irish-Canadian expat, she moved to the UK over a decade ago, while her grandkids were wee. Now that they're older, she has more time to write.

When asked what she misses most about Canada, she says it's her family and friends with whom she spent up to six decades. Plus some of the national foods... When asked if she's glad to be in England, she offers a resounding yes!

AUTHOR'S PICK

At the turn of the twentieth century, Montana, Kit Comstock returns as a prodigal son to his ancestral home on the day his father is buried. Surprised to find his recently deceased father has left a beautiful young widow, Sarah, and a young son, Robbie, he has no intention of staying. Sarah reveals she has been left with nothing in her late husband's will.

Until Kit's unexpected return, as if from the dead, the presumed heir to Elmcroft was younger dissolute son Richard, who has been the undoing of the once vast holdings of the Triple C. He has offered Sarah a home at Elmcroft but only as his wife, a condition abhorrent to her. Despite Kit's reluctance to stay, Sarah's desperation, and their immediate but unacknowledged mutual attraction move him to agree to a marriage of convenience with his stepmother, and to fight for his heritage, the wife he is falling in love with and her son, his little stepbrother.

Elmcroft

Comstock Legacy 1

Gail Gammell



Apple Gidley

Adult Fiction: Historical Fiction



Image Credit: Antonia Lance

A nomadic life has seen Anglo-Australian **Apple Gidley** live in twelve countries, the experiences of which are reflected in her writing, whether in memoir, contemporary fiction or her favoured genre, historical fiction.

She is the published author of seven books, the latest of which, ***Annie's Day***, won a silver medal in The Wishing Shelf Book Awards, and is an Editor's Choice in the *Historical Novels Review*.

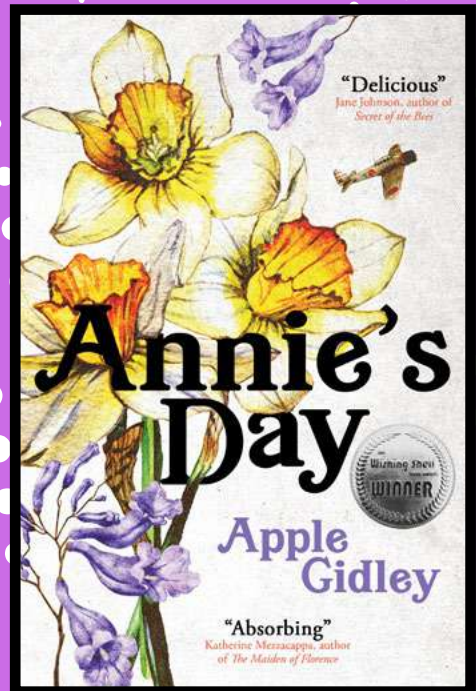
Gidley is working on her fifth historical novel.

AUTHOR'S PICK

As an Australian Army nurse, Annie endures the brutalities of World War II in Singapore and New Guinea. Later, seeking a change, she accepts a job with a British diplomatic family in Berlin, only to find herself caught up in the upheaval of the Blockade. Through it all, and despite the support of friends, the death of a man she barely knew leaves a wound that refuses to heal.

Years later, Annie is still haunted by what she'd lost – and what might have been. Her days are quite, but her memories loud. When a dying man's fear forces her to confront her own doubts, she forms an unexpected friendship that rekindles something she thought she'd lost: hope.

Annie's Day is a powerful story of love, war, and the quiet courage to start again.



Stacey Gittens

Children's Fiction: Picture Book



Born in Australia, **Stacey Gittens** performed on screen and stage before becoming a schoolteacher, children's author, and globetrotter. Now based in the UK and focusing on editing and design, she enjoys collaborating with creative people across the globe.

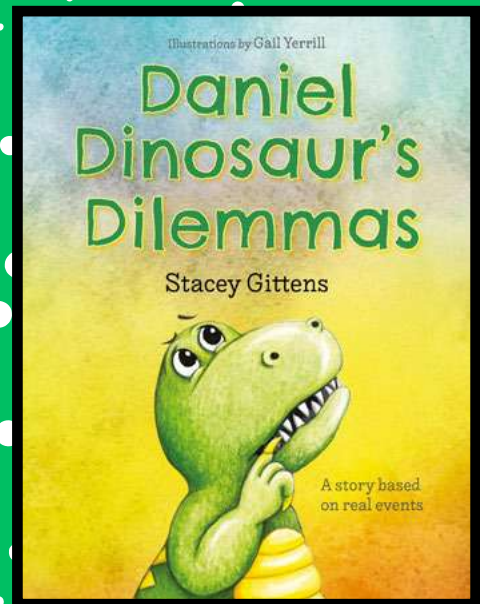
Stacey's three energetic sons fuel her mission to inspire and empower others. She is dedicated to elevating projects and believes that small changes can make a significant impact.

AUTHOR'S PICK

Daniel Dinosaur's Dilemmas is about a kind and friendly Tyrannosaurus rex who starts school during strange times. Daniel tries to hide his dinosaur traits to make friends, but his efforts to reassure others lead to a series of comical misunderstandings. Humorously, Daniel continues to be sent home from school, and his online learning is sure to entertain readers.

This keepsake edition communicates historic information about the COVID-19 pandemic so families can look back and remember that they can succeed, no matter what challenge arises. If we have faith and continue to use our God-given skills and talents, our communities will be stronger and blessed.

Special features include an emotion recognition chart alongside comprehension and discussion questions to aid home-school learning, self-acceptance, and social-communication skills.



Steven Gosling

Children's Fiction: Middle-Grade Comedy



Steven Gosling is an award-winning poet and author who lives in London with his two daughters. He has been writing stories for many years, but he first obtained success as a poet. He won several poetry prizes and had his poetry published.

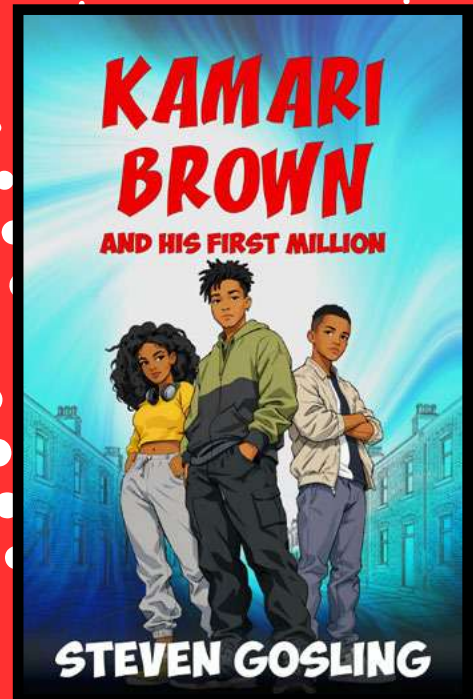
He decided to concentrate on stories when he couldn't find the right kind for his children, when they were growing up. Typically, he thought, if they didn't exist, he would create them.

AUTHOR'S PICK

Thirteen-year-old Kamari Brown tries to help his poor family out with get-rich schemes, but they get him more trouble than money. Until the track of a best-selling rapper gets mixed up with one of his songs and he becomes the hottest property in music. He gets interviews, photoshoots, and an invite to the greatest party ever.

Things go great until he finds out about the mix-up. Will other people find out? Will he own up? One thing's for sure; nothing will go as planned.

Kamari Brown and his First Million is a middle-grade/teen comedy with a diverse set of characters, exploring real-world issues, and the importance of honesty, friendship and family.



Alex Grant

Adult Fiction: Short story fiction



Alex Grant loves reading novels, but having grown up in the punk era, he also values writing that is sharp, direct, and entertaining. However, his stories are far from the literary equivalent of a simple three-chord thrash. Instead, they are layered and thought-provoking, inviting multiple readings to fully appreciate their depth and complexity.

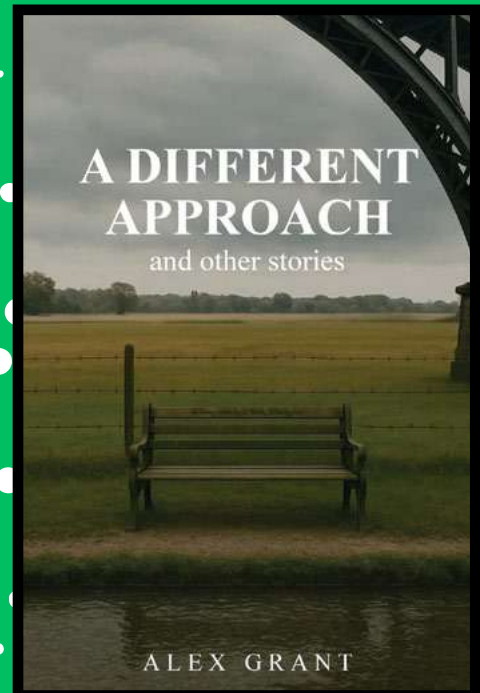
An economist by profession, his interests span the criminal justice system, the spiritual dimension of life, and playing bass guitar. He also enjoys the croquet game as quintessentially English as it is vicious.

AUTHOR'S PICK

What happens when the ordinary turns disturbingly extraordinary?

This darkly compelling collection of thought-provoking tales from author **Alex Grant** twists the familiar, challenges perception, and exposes the fine line between normality and madness. Each story explores the unsettling undercurrents of human nature and modern society. From moral experiments gone wrong to eerie childhood memories and the consequences of casual cruelty, Grant's writing balances sharp satire with haunting realism. These are not tales of monsters – but of people, choices, and systems pushed to their logical extremes.

Grant's stories are unnervingly plausible – anchored in everyday details yet spiralling into moral and psychological unease. Witty, unsettling, and profoundly human, he invites readers to question not just what happens – but *why*. If you enjoy the moral unease of *Black Mirror*, the dark irony of Roald Dahl's *Tales of the Unexpected*, or the quiet dread of Ian McEwan's early works, you'll be riveted by Alex Grant's unforgettable short fiction.



Blaid Gwyn

Adult Fiction: Fantasy

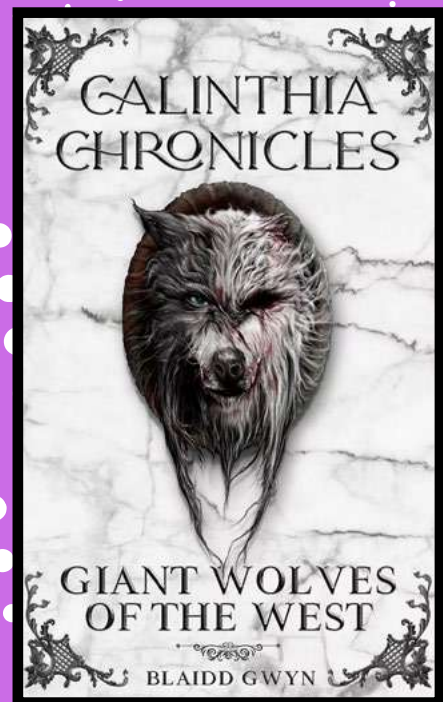


Blaid Gwyn is a fantasy author from Wales, a veteran and lover of all things fantasy.

AUTHOR'S PICK

Over a hundred years ago, one person's fear turned to hatred, soaking the lands with the blood of warriors, as well as innocents. Since then, an uneasy peace reigned over the West Plains. Now, civil war looms over the wolf clans once more, as a new threat has emerged from the shadows, seeking ultimate power by destroying everything in his path to achieve it.

With this risen evil, the wolves' traditions, culture and very existence are at risk. What will stop the ascent of this darkness – other than more death?



Ina Harrington

YA Fiction: Urban Fantasy, Paranormal Mystery, Horror



Ina Harrington writes immersive, character-driven urban fantasy, blending paranormal mystery and romance with a sharp edge of unsettling horror. Her work is dark, compelling, and guaranteed to keep you up at night.

AUTHOR'S PICK

Rose Walker has always been able to see the dead.

Determined to leave that part of her life behind, she accepts a scholarship to Banecroft University in England, far from her small, judgmental Colorado town. No one there knows about her gift – or the past she's desperate to forget.

But when Rose's roommate, Eleanor, dies under mysterious circumstances, her new beginning shatters. Haunted by Eleanor's ghost and missing memories from the night of her death, Rose doesn't know if her friend's spirit seeks answers – or revenge.

In this supernatural mystery of self-discovery, first love, and ancient magic, Rose must question everything she thought she knew about her abilities and herself, and face the hardest question of all: Was it my fault, again?



Chrissie Harrison

Adult Fiction: Romantic Comedy



Chrissie Harrison writes British romantic comedies and sports romcoms with a relatable rather than escapist feel. The stories are characterised by low spice, charm, wit and heart. You'll find strong women, nice guys, a twist on genre staples, and dialogue that crackles.

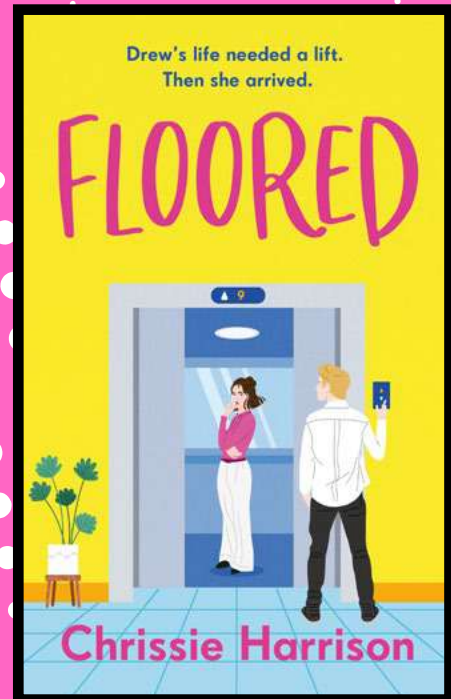
Chrissie's passion for movies creates books that you could imagine on the big screen, ideally adapted by favourite screenwriter Richard Curtis. Fingers crossed...!

AUTHOR'S PICK

Hannah and Drew work in the same office. Hannah and Drew use the same elevator. Hannah and Drew certainly aren't looking for love. They haven't even met. Yet something is happening...

Amiable TV production accountant Drew turned his back on dating after the death of his fiancée, an incident which cemented his longstanding elevatophobia. When Drew moves home and workplace, hoping for a fresh start, he hears a voice in the office lift telling him to 'be careful'. Is it his fevered imagination, the ghost of his fiancée, or someone playing a cruel prank? Quickly, he becomes desperate, foolish... and unexpectedly smitten.

Cute, sparky but shy Hannah wouldn't mind finding romance, but keeps choosing the wrong boyfriends. Her innate social anxiety, deepened by bad experiences with a preying boss, is a huge barrier to dating anyone new. To expose her boss' antics, she must be lucky and smart. However, talking to a sweet but hapless co-worker isn't the answer... is it?



Neil J Hart

YA Fiction: Dystopian Fantasy Adventure



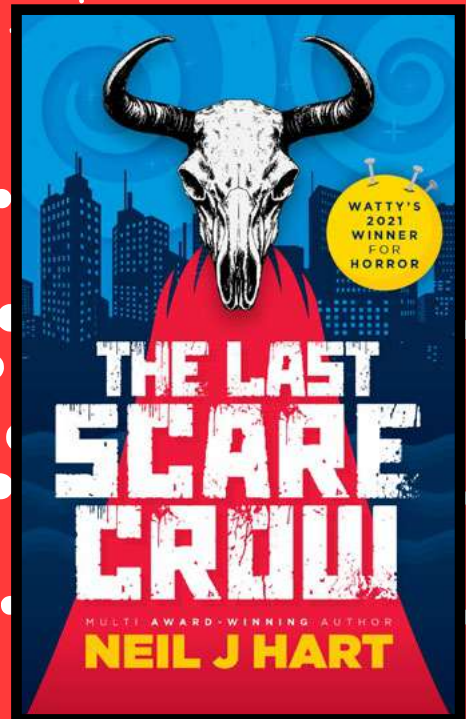
Neil J Hart is a multi awarding-winning author of fantasy, horror and sci-fi books packed with adventure, peril and heart. His favourite authors include Terry Pratchett, V.E. Schwab, Brandon Sanderson and Leigh Bardugo. He lives in Brighton, works as a graphic designer, fosters for Cats Protection, collects Tomb Raider memorabilia, and loves cheese and cucumber sandwiches.

AUTHOR'S PICK

Erin loved to build scarecrows. She made a dozen in all. Her Pa showed her how. But he's dead now. Everyone is dead. Well... almost.

The Many Years Storm flooded the world, swept Erin's brother out to sea, and turned her hilltop farm into a rapidly shrinking island. While hope remains, Erin must take her chances on the open ocean and find her brother. But she doesn't have the knowledge to build a raft and there's no one to ask except the last and most terrifying of all her scarecrows... Number Twelve!

Erin needs help. Scratch that. Erin needs a miracle.



Jon Harvey

Children's Fiction: Magical realism / Politics / Creativity



During his time as Mayor of Buckingham, **Jon Harvey** was invited to open a school library. He wanted to read the children a story about a Town Mayor but could not find one that worked for him. So he wrote one! Now, he visits schools, reading his story and encouraging the youngsters to write creatively and maybe one day, becoming local councillors themselves. If you were Town Mayor, what would you change about where you live?

AUTHOR'S PICK

Help!! What is Town Mayor Roxie to do when she loses something very precious to her and indeed, the whole town..? Just before she's ready to give up, along comes a small, magimistical bear called Strumbold...

This is the story of their adventure - about love, keeping promises and finding magic in everyday stuff. It's a book to be read out loud to the special (big and small) people in your life.

Amongst the kerfuffle, confusion and difficulties of living in our world today... this story will help you remember that there are still simple, important things like friendship, kindness, cake and a Festival of Teddy Bears.

THE MAYOR'S BEAR



JON HARVEY
ILLUSTRATIONS BY ELIZABETH GIBBS

Paul Hatcher

Adult, Children's and YA Fiction: Comedy



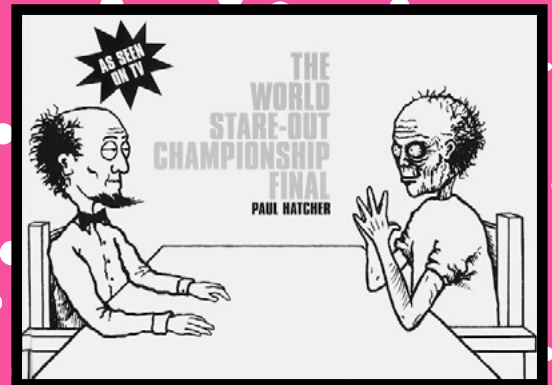
Paul Hatcher is best known as the author of ***The World Stare-Out Championship Final***, which featured on the BBC comedy sketch show *Big Train*. His short story 'AZAD' was runner-up in the 2025 Rachel Cook Prize (see the *Observer* article <https://bit.ly/3PA2l26>)

He is currently working on ***The Adventures of Gilbert & George***, a screwball comedy satire. He works part time in a warehouse to support himself, and spends his mornings writing and drawing.

AUTHOR'S PICK

The World Stare-Out Championship Final comprises full coverage of the year's biggest sporting event.

Can Alessandro Kampagnola unseat reigning World Champion Sigmund Spassky in the battle of the blinks?



Sam Higgins

Children's Fiction: Fantasy



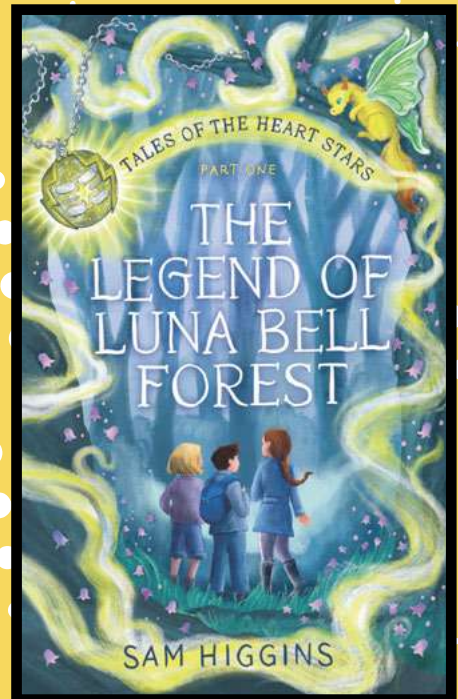
Sam Higgins is a new children's author, recently launching his debut children's fantasy series, **Tales of the Heart Stars**.

Sam grew up in Birmingham but now lives in a small village in Leicestershire, where he spends his days running around after his children, or his dog, Sully. By day, he is a video game producer, by night, he dabbles in writing fiction for children – inspired by seeing his children's love for the stories he makes up!

AUTHOR'S PICK

Sixela, Rebma and Anphie have barely ever seen the outside world away from their tropical island home, where they live with just their father. But that all changes the morning after Anphie's tenth birthday, when they embark on a thrilling adventure to uncover the secrets of their magical necklaces – the Heart Stars.

After travelling to Luna Bell Forest and learning of an imminent danger, they become wrapped up in a perilous journey to seek out a legend – is this the key to saving the forest? It doesn't take long, though, for them to realise that the secrets of their Heart Stars are much more powerful than they ever imagined...



Carolann Hinson

Children's: Picture Books 4-8 Years



Carolann Hinson is a children's author and illustrator, and the creator of the **Spadger** series. Passionate about helping children navigate life's challenges, she writes heartfelt stories that explore themes such as friendship, loss, resilience, and hope through a cast of lovable characters.

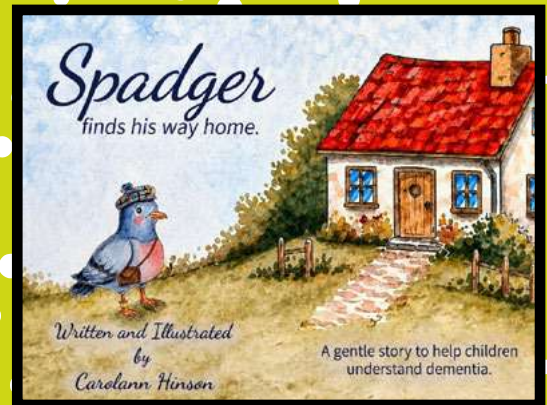
Her debut book, ***Spadger Finds His Way Home***, was inspired by the power of kindness and connection. Carolann's mission is to create stories that spark meaningful conversations between children and the adults who care for them.

AUTHOR'S PICK

Spadger is a kind-hearted homing pigeon who delivers letters to his friends and neighbours throughout the village. One day, he begins to find it more difficult to remember the addresses. Thankfully, his wonderful friends – Ozzy the dog, Sammy the bear, Peanut the elephant, Mya the doll and Jean the pigeon – each use their own unique strengths to help Spadger find his way home. Together, they discover that kindness, courage, and friendship can overcome even the biggest challenges.

Inspired by Carolann's father's journey with Alzheimer's, the **Spadger & Friends** series encourages meaningful conversations about empathy, compassion, and the importance of supporting one another. The characters are also available as beautifully crafted collectible plushies, allowing children to continue the adventure through imaginative play, comfort, and storytelling.

Filled with warmth, hope, and gentle humour, ***Spadger Finds His Way Home*** is a story to be treasured, shared, and returned to time and time again, reminding readers that no one has to find their way alone.



Michael Hiskins

Teen YA Fiction: Fantasy



Image Credit:

When **Michael Hiskins** was younger, writing was the furthest thing from his mind. Living with dyslexia, the idea of writing an entire novel felt impossible. Yet he always had a love for storytelling, so in his early twenties, I decided to challenge myself. It became one of the most difficult yet rewarding things he has ever accomplished, and what once seemed impossible has since become one of his greatest passions.

AUTHOR'S PICK

Grey Ragalow was a normal country boy living a normal country life. Until the day a small, scruffy stranger comes to his village and tells Grey that he has something that belongs to him – a small but powerful crystal. Once in his possession, Grey accidentally releases the trapped soul of an ancient god, who tells him that he must go on a quest to find the giant legendary jewel – The White Rock – and protect it from a forthcoming evil.

Now, along with his twin sister, Lyla and a new group of brave friends, Grey will embark on an unmissable adventure filled with magic spells, fearless knights, far-off lands and enough dragon fire to set your imagination ablaze.

WHITE ROCK

Grey and the Guardian Sword



Michael Hiskins

Sarah Hobbs

Adult Non-fiction (incl memoir or auto-fiction): Poetry

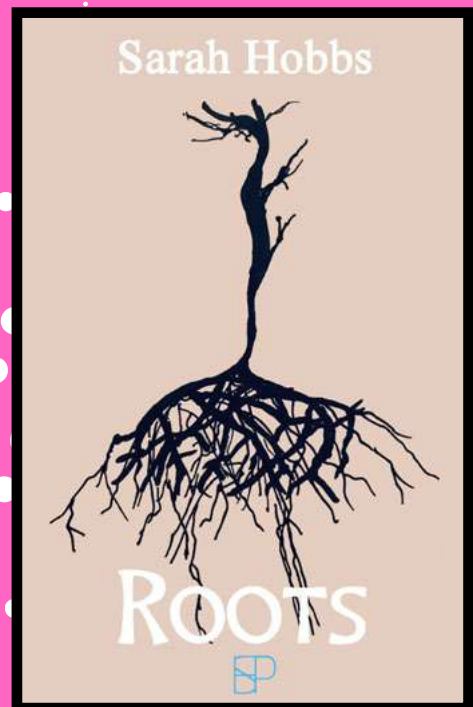


Image Credit:

Sarah Hobbs is a self-published poet born and raised in London and now residing in Milton Keynes. To date they have published five full collections, one pamphlet and one illustrated chapbook, as well as appearing in the anthology collection ***Sweet Beats for Keats***.

AUTHOR'S PICK

Memories and experiences make us into the people we are; holidays, family, nostalgia, etc., all in part themselves into who we become. This collection of poems are memories of mine and my family that have made me into who I am today.



Susannah Hockham

Adult Fiction: Romance



Self-confessed romantic and book lover Susannah Hockham is a mum of two and works in magazine publishing. As well as writing books, she also writes short stories for Woman's Weekly UK magazine. A Moment in the Maldives is her first novel.

AUTHOR'S PICK

A Moment in the Maldives.

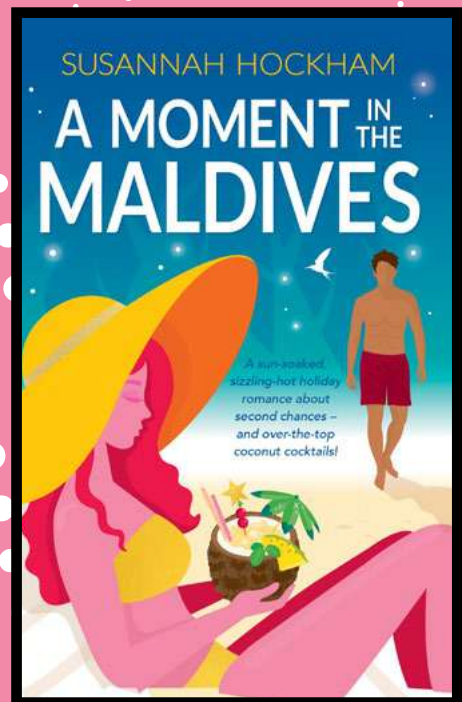
At your lowest ebb, you can either sink or swim...

Marketing exec Cassie's summer hasn't exactly gone to plan. Jilted by her 'loving' fiancé in front of her family and friends, she can't get a refund on her expensive honeymoon to the Maldives. Trying to make the best of it, she decides to go on the week away solo.

Investment broker Tom has had an equally dire year. His perfect life imploded when he caught his girlfriend and best mate having a sleepover. In his bed. Needing to get away, he holes up in the Maldives to bury his head in work.

Finding themselves island neighbours, Cassie and Tom are both emotionally bruised, with romance the last thing on their minds. But fate has other ideas – and after an awkward first meeting, ripples of attraction between the pair turn into a passionate tidal wave. But this is just a holiday fling, right? No strings, no expectations and no problem when it's time to go home.

But a week is a long time in the Maldives...



Natalie Horner

Adult Fiction: Fantasy, Romantasy



Image Credit: MMPhotography

Natalie Horner is a South Yorkshire author who lives with her husband, son and a cat called Puss. Her debut romantasy, ***Wings - Book One: The Revelation's Prophecy***, was published in november and book two, ***Possessed***, is in the works.

AUTHOR'S PICK

Charlie Green prays for God to take away her abusive father so she can finally start living her life. But what she gets is far more than she bargained for.

After a string of brutal murders shakes her hometown of Echo Hill – and both her parents mysteriously vanish – Charlie is thrust into a world she never knew existed. Her guide? A fierce, enigmatic Guardian Angel named Michael, who leaves her questioning everything she thought she knew about heaven, hell, and herself.

When Lucifer sets his sights on her soul, Charlie and Michael must fight to survive against the forces of darkness – while resisting a bond that defies the laws of angels and humans and stretches across eternity.



Maria Iliffe-Wood

Adult Non-fiction: Inspirational Poetry



Image Credit: Fiona Millington

Maria Iliffe-Wood is a coach, author, and founder of IW Press. She has written four books, including ***Coaching Presence*** – on university reading lists from Cambridge to Toronto, and one of ICF Canada’s top five reads for coaches. Since founding IW Press in 2020, she has published fifteen books, including ***Perfect Unfolding***, an Editor’s Pick from *Publishers Weekly*. Maria brings over thirty years of coaching experience and a lifelong passion for writing to everything she publishes.

AUTHOR’S PICK

What if the answers to your questions about life aren’t in words, but in what the words awaken within you? In ***This One Life***, a profound and intimate collection of poetry inspired by *The Duino Elegies*, the author explores the deepest questions of existence: Who am I? Why am I here? Why do I feel the way I do? Is there a God? And if so, why is there so much hate and angst in the world?

As these poems unfolded, they revealed unexpected truths – insights into freedom, identity, love and the wisdom of the dying. The answers weren’t in the words themselves. They were in the emotions they stirred, offering healing, transformation, and personal revelation.

Readers describe *This One Life* as a book that doesn’t just speak to the mind, but to the soul. As one reviewer put it: ‘I thought I was learning about the author; the woman I got to know a little deeper was myself.’ – JB Hollows, Mentor, Author of *Wing of an Angel*

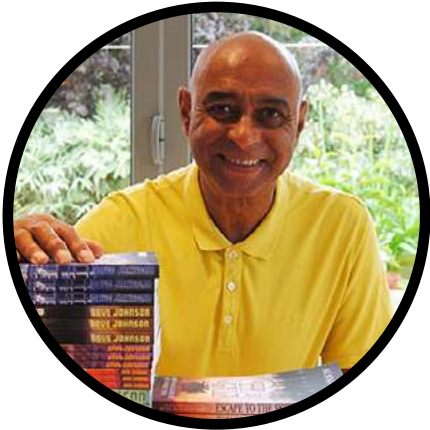
If you are drawn to poetry that illuminates the unseen, challenges the depths of your being, and lingers in your heart long after the final page, ***This One Life*** is for you. For seekers, dreamers, and those who long to understand life’s mysteries – this book is waiting for you.

THIS ONE LIFE

Maria Iliffe-Wood

Dave Johnson

Adult Fiction: Cosy Murder Mystery



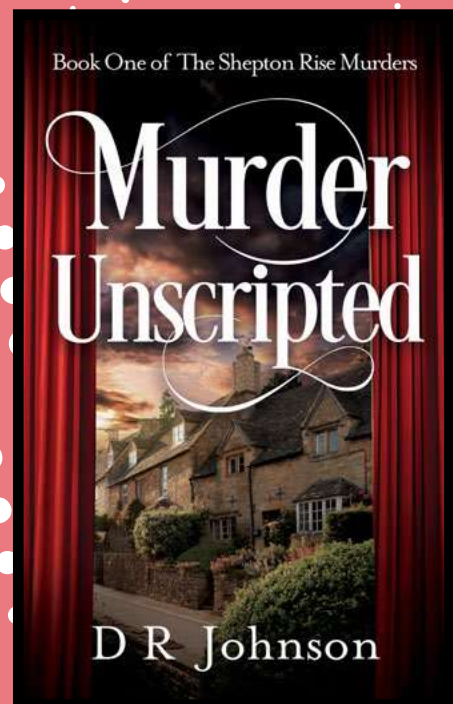
Dave Johnson writes the **Shepton Rise Murders**, a cosy mystery series set in the fictional market town of Shepton Rise, where gossip travels fast and murder never stays buried for long. Living in Rutland, England's smallest county, Dave draws inspiration from the charm and character of small-town life.

Before turning to crime fiction, he wrote historical adventures and steampunk tales, following careers in textile design and university lecturing. Four mysteries are already published, with more secrets waiting to unfold.

AUTHOR'S PICK

Theatrical agent Ginny Fellows prefers drama to stay on-screen, but when a suspicious accident rocks her quiet town, she's drawn into a real-life mystery. Her quirky clients – actors famous for their on-screen deaths – are eager to help, but Ginny's crippling panic attacks make sleuthing tricky.

Can she uncover the truth without leaving her home?
Murder Unscripted is a witty, charming whodunit perfect for fans of quirky mysteries and small-town secrets.



Martin Jones

Children's Fiction: Adventure story



Martin Jones is an independent author from Kent writing speculative fiction, children's literature and short stories – winner of the *Writers' Forum Magazine* short story competition.

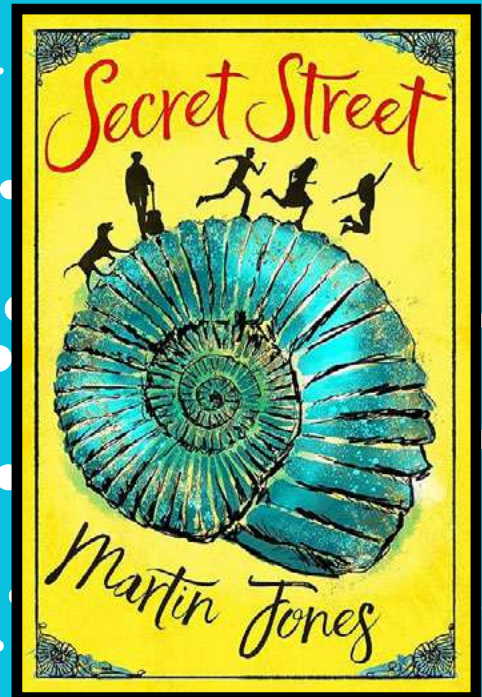
He has appeared with his books at literary festivals in Maidstone, Tunbridge Wells, Faversham and Cirencester. Maidstone Literary Festival has made him an honorary friend.

AUTHOR'S PICK

Rumours about Secret Street circulate the playground. For Paris, this place might as well be a wonderland down a rabbit hole.

Her unsuccessful search does result, however, in an unexpected fascination with geology. This takes her on an adventure, where she hides her interest from friends, goes on a disastrous pony trek, apparently saves the Earth from meteorites, and faces a clifftop crisis, which puts her in great danger.

Through all this, she begins to understand the epic stories to be found in the rocks beneath her feet, whilst also uncovering a few hidden secrets in her own life.



Della Judd

Adult Non-fiction: Memoir and History



Della Judd is an author and co-runs the family publishing business Synjon Books, which specialises in history and genealogy titles. Her recent work includes publishing her grandfather's Second World War diaries, while her latest First World War history was released in August 2026. She is also the author of a career coaching book inspired by the changing world of work after the pandemic.

AUTHOR'S PICK

Air Raids and RAF Days offers a vivid and deeply personal account of wartime London through the eyes of Londoner, John Teague. As bombs rained down during the Blitz, John, who was just seventeen when war broke out, documented the devastation in South London while helping to rehouse displaced families. His diary captures the resilience of his loved ones, the camaraderie of his colleagues, and his own frustrations as a young man yearning for education and a simpler life.

Determined to serve, he volunteered for the RAF, hoping to become a pilot. But when his eyesight fell short of the requirements, he trained as a wireless operator mechanic instead. Through his diaries and letters from home, John brings to life his RAF training in the UK, his postings across Europe, and the people he met along the way.

This memoir is a must-read for anyone interested in personal accounts of World War II, the RAF, and the resilience of ordinary Londoners during the Blitz.



AIR RAIDS AND RAF DAYS

First-hand Memories of the Blitz,
the War, and its Aftermath
Edited by Helen Allinson and Della Judd

Jennifer D. Knight

Adult and YA Fiction: Historical Fiction/Magic



Jennifer D. Knight is an author, educator and cultural storyteller whose work explores Black British and Caribbean history, memory, migration, folklore and identity. Through 22 House of Books, she creates books and creative projects that bring overlooked histories to life for young people, families, schools and communities. Her writing combines history, imagination and storytelling to help new generations connect with the people, traditions and stories that came before them.

AUTHOR'S PICK

The Stowaway, Book One of **The Windrush Chronicles**, is a gripping story following Yara, a young Jamaican woman navigating danger, secrets and uncertainty aboard the Empire Windrush. Set against the real historical events of the ship's 1948 journey from the Caribbean to Britain, the novel blends carefully researched history with magical realism, Caribbean folklore and mystery.

As the boundaries between the ordinary and the supernatural begin to blur, Yara's journey becomes one of survival, identity, belonging and discovery. Through her story, ***The Stowaway*** brings the experiences and atmosphere of the Windrush era to life for a new generation of readers, while celebrating Caribbean culture, resilience and the power of stories carried across generations.



M. A. Knights

Adult Fiction: Cosy fantasy / Paranormal



Hello. I'm **M. A. Knights**, an English writer, BookToker, and firm believer that magic is more useful than data.

After earning degrees in Countryside Conservation and Climate Change, I realised I am, in fact, not a scientist at all. Something to do with memory. Or numbers. Or both. Either way, I left the data crunching to braver minds and returned to the fantastical imaginings of my youth.

These days I write cosy fantasy and supernatural mysteries full of eccentric characters, improbable creatures, and just enough danger to keep things interesting, but never uncomfortable.

AUTHOR'S PICK

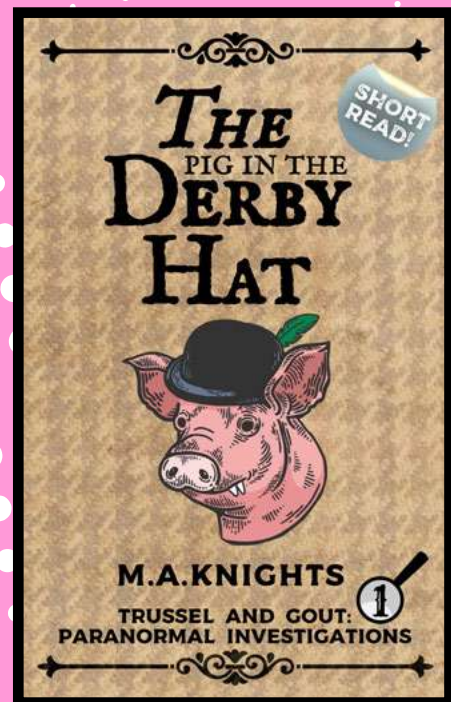
Clementine Trussel didn't go looking for the supernatural. It found her.

When a small pig wearing a derby hat falls out of her grandmother's upstairs window, Clementine is inclined to believe she's finally lost her grip on reality. But she is not the only witness. The other is a portly, tweed-clad stranger by the name of Theophilus Gout, who claims to be an expert in the paranormal.

There is something undeniably odd about Mr Gout, and when Clementine's grandmother falls dangerously ill, she finds herself uneasy about placing her trust in a stranger, particularly one who seems more interested in cakes than cures.

With her grandmother's life at stake, Clementine has little choice but to follow Mr Gout into a quiet, hidden world of peculiar magic lurking just beneath the surface of her ordinary hometown.

The Pig in the Derby Hat is the first instalment in **Trussel & Gout: Paranormal Investigations**, a cosy supernatural mystery series.



Tamaryn Kraleva-Greener

Children's Fiction: Illustrated Story



Tamaryn Kraleva-Greener has been writing and drawing characters since the age of ten. Her love of storytelling and wild imagination will have you entertained for hours on end. Her dyslexic thinking and creative spirit created the worlds of both the CwaZyBean Aliens and CwaZyHog – the first and second in-house projects under the CwaZyLeigh CreaTions brand.

She loves to paint, craft, go on adventures and exploring new places.

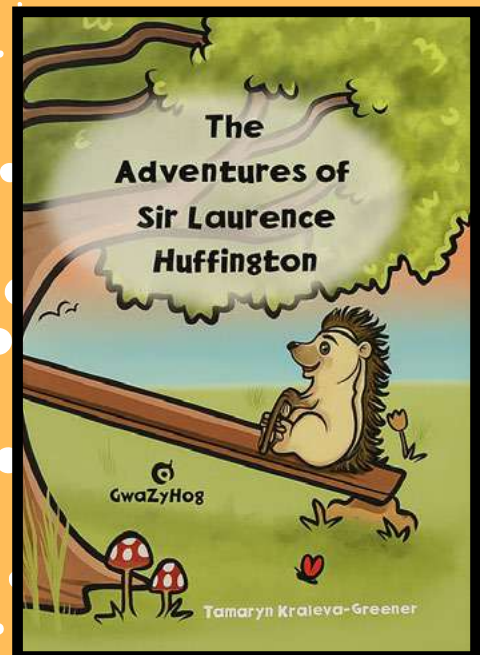
AUTHOR'S PICK

The Adventures of Sir Laurence Huffington is a heartwarming and imaginative tale that celebrates curiosity, friendship, and the wonder of the natural world. Join Sir Laurence Huffington, a thoughtful and adventurous hedgehog, as he embarks on a journey filled with unexpected discoveries, gentle humour, and memorable encounters.

Perfect for young readers and families to enjoy together, this beautifully illustrated story offers a refreshing alternative to traditional children's books. There are no villains to defeat or battles to win – instead, children are invited to explore a world where kindness, understanding, and curiosity lead the way.

And the adventure doesn't end when the story does. Flip the book over to discover The Huffington Files – a unique educational companion packed with facts, observations, sketches, and insights inspired by the story. Young explorers can learn about hedgehogs, wildlife, habitats, and the important differences between wild animals and pets.

Whether shared at bedtime, enjoyed independently, or explored in the classroom, ***The Adventures of Sir Laurence Huffington*** it is a delightful reading experience that inspires children to wonder, learn, and embrace what makes every creature – and every child – unique.



Jonas Lane

Adult Fiction: Historical Gothic Fiction



Jonas Lane is an acclaimed author and educator who is never happier than when he's telling a tall tale, whether it's to his readers or the children he visits in schools or teaches.

Jonas' books appeal to readers of all ages and genres, his audience being those who are still young at heart and hungry for both excitement and adventure.

Every novel Jonas has published has been rated as 5-star by reviewers across all platforms.

Jonas looks forward to meeting readers old and new to chat about all things fantastical and thrilling at the MK Indie Book Fair!

AUTHOR'S PICK

A group of gifted and talented youngsters are presented with the chance of a lifetime with a free scholarship and a place at one of England's finest and most exclusive – but reclusive – school academies...

A primeval order who hide amongst us, studying us, watching our every move, waiting for the perfect opportunity to reveal themselves and strike terror into our hearts when we least expect it...

A secret society, tasked with defending all of humankind, protecting the Earth from an enemy that quietly lurks in the shadows, determined to stop them from rising again to reclaim a world they believe to rightfully be theirs...

An ancient text, supposedly written by the devil himself, one which could threaten all of our futures as well as our very existence...

And a legendary and epic war, one which has been waged for thousands of years, protecting all of humanity from a terrible truth of mythical proportions...

Here be dragons...



Alexander Lane

Adult Fiction: Horror



Alexander Lane has almost died on several continents. When he's not writing, he's thinking about travelling around our planet or into the stars.

He'll be wondering whether scuba diving is as safe as it is incredible, planning his next trip to somewhere that's hopefully more fun than fatal, or dreaming of the many ways that space travel could be both wonderful and dangerous.

Alexander currently lives with his partner and their dog in Bedford, UK.

AUTHOR'S PICK

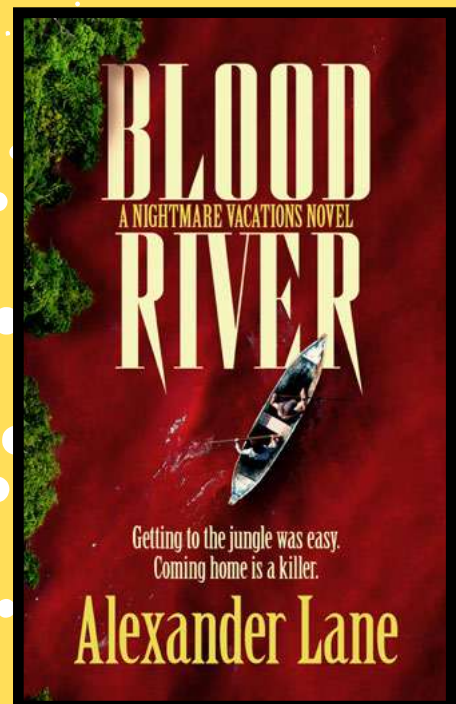
Getting to the jungle was easy. Coming home is a killer.

In the heart of Borneo, a group of dedicated volunteers embarks on a journey to save the endangered orangutans, but what began as a noble mission soon spirals into a nightmare.

The dark mystery of twelve missing volunteers is revealed by a collection of battered diaries.

Team leaders Tara and Rendy must protect their remote camp against ruthless outlaws, freak weather and failing supplies. They soon suspect that the greatest danger is among them: a lost soul with a savage bloodlust.

Blood River is a thrilling found-footage survival horror story with a hint of the supernatural.



Benjamin Langley

Adult Fiction: Crime and Mystery



Benjamin Langley is an author and print maker. His work has been described as quiet horror with a creeping dread. Much of his work is set in the Cambridgeshire Fens. He also runs LinocutHorror, creating linoprints of iconic images on well-loved novels.

AUTHOR'S PICK

One of Ingolstadt University's most notorious students was Victor Frankenstein. Now, with the university relocated to Munich, someone has found his notes and is using the secrets within to create their own monster. Sherlock Holmes is on the case!

Also featured are six other adventures which cross over with *The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*, *The Island of Dr Moreau*, *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* and more.

SHERLOCK HOLMES AND THE SHADOWS OF INGOLSTADT

AND OTHER ADVENTURES

BENJAMIN
LANGLEY

BenjaminLangley.co.uk

@benjamin_Langley_writer (Instagram) | @linocuthorror (TikTok)

Isla Lockwood

Adult Fiction: Romantasy



Image Credit: Dan Kenedy

Isla Lockwood is the indie author, fantasy pen name of internationally bestselling author C. L. Miller, whose murder mystery series **Antique Hunter's Guide To Murder** is published by Pan Macmillan UK and S&S US and translated into eighteen languages worldwide, and has sold TV rights.

Her debut romantasy novel, ***When the Sky Burns***, is the first book in the **Skyworld** series publishes in September: a seasonal fantasy world inspired by ancient Celtic traditions, dangerous magic and set over the Twelve Nights of Yule.

AUTHOR'S PICK

Enter a frozen world holding its breath... before everything burns.

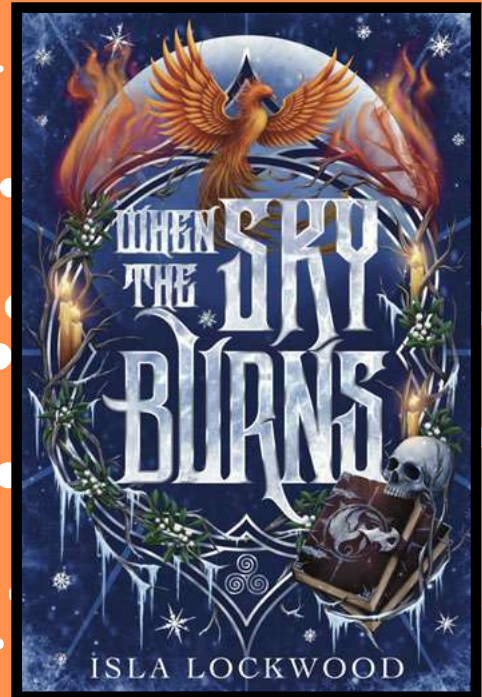
Twelve perilous nights of Yule. One ancient curse. Two men who sought to contain her. Until she became the weapon they feared.

The phoenixes are dying. The kingdom that worshipped them has fallen. When rebel spy Aliwen steals a sentient grimoire, she uncovers a truth the witches buried. The curse that destroyed the phoenixes was never meant to be broken. But hidden within it is a single flaw.

Her.

On the run with the rebel leader who believes she holds the key to reclaim their kingdom — and hunted by an enemy Rider whose fire would destroy her with a single touch. Aliwen has the twelve nights of Yule to unravel the spell that reshaped kingdoms. Or burn with it.

When the Sky Burns is a dark romantic fantasy with cursed phoenix riders, sentient books, ancient magic, dangerous loyalties, and a slow-burn romance set across the twelve nights of Yule. Perfect for fans of *One Dark Window*, *Road of Bones* and *When the Moon Hatched*.



Auran Lyonheart

Adult and YA Fiction: Fantasy



Image Credit: Dan James Short

Auran Lyonheart is an emerging author establishing himself as a bright, distinctive and creative voice. Before writing fiction, he built a diverse career in music as the founder of the rock band Verax, and he continues to channel that sense of rhythm and intensity into his work.

Away from the page he is an iron-distance triathlete and marathon runner as well as a fine furniture maker – disciplines that shape his fascination with endurance, craft and the human will

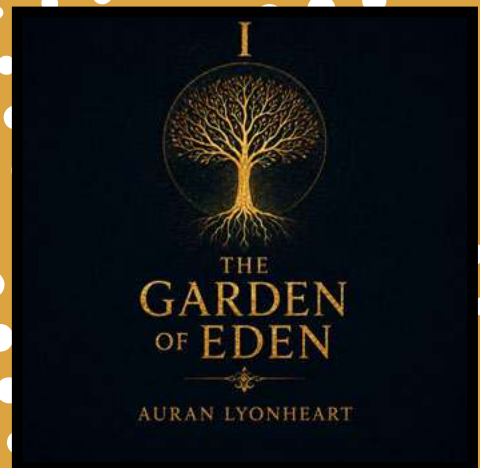
AUTHOR'S PICK

The Garden of Eden is a fast-paced fantasy adventure set in the modern world about power, family and loyalty, where the end of the world may be the beginning of something far more dangerous.

When a living Eden bears fruit that can turn mortals into mythical creatures, the world hungers for a taste... but every bite chains the eater to Eden's fate.

Eden, a mysterious guardian of the Tree of Life, and her granddaughter Ayra live hidden in the modern world, protecting the sacred fruit that can elevate mortals to Celestial status. When they share this forbidden gift with their neighbour – John Mendoza, an unbearably average forty-year-old man, and Tanya Devilliers, a destitute seventeen-year-old girl – everything changes.

As Tanya races toward the Pyramid of the Sun in Mexico, the ancient site where the transformation can be completed, Mendoza is guided by Dani, an immortal ice goddess with a high-profile yet mysterious past and a taste for chaos and men. They are hunted by Erik, a ruthless fire demon who seeks to dominate humankind as a God whilst the FBI hunts them as monsters.



Tana Macpherson-Smith

YA Fiction: Contemporary Fiction



Image Credit: Xanthe Elbrick

Tana Macpherson-Smith is an author, speaker, former teacher, and child and adolescent trauma-informed therapist whose work explores the emotional roots of human behaviour and mental health.

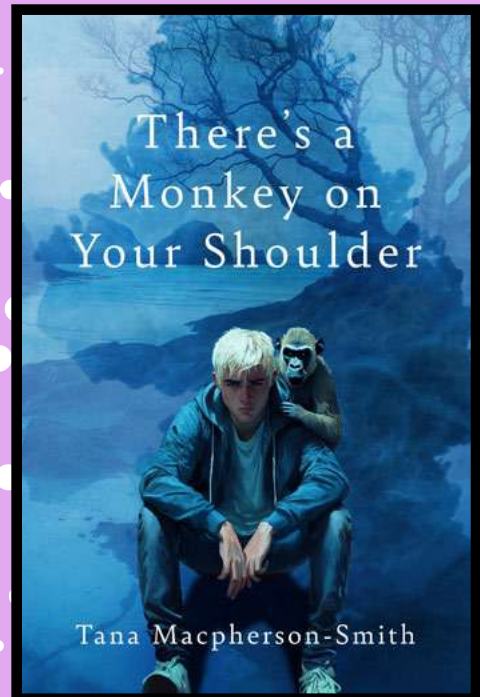
Through her writing, talks, and The Tapestry Framework, she is passionate about helping people understand how early experiences shape lives – and why prevention is the key to transforming the future of children's mental wellbeing.

AUTHOR'S PICK

Part gripping survival story, part guide to understanding the voice in your head, ***There's a Monkey on Your Shoulder*** explores what happens when a group of teens are forced to face their inner 'monkeys', the living symbols of the beliefs, doubts and fears that have shaped their lives.

Through the challenges faced by the teenagers, this novel gently unpacks the roots of emotional overwhelm and demystifies the inner critic. It offers a step-by-step toolkit for anyone looking to unlock creativity, reclaim their confidence and move forward with courage and genuine self-belief.

Whether you're a young person navigating the challenges of life, a parent supporting one, or simply someone still shaped by your own younger self – this story is for you.



www.tanamacpherson.com

<https://www.linkedin.com/in/tanamacphersonsmith/>

L.L. MacRae

Adult Fiction: Epic Fantasy



Image Credit: Lauren MacRae

L.L. MacRae is a British fantasy author of character-driven stories and epic adventure. Her books contain dragons, bucketloads of magic, and are fun and hopeful.

She's been a finalist and semi-finalist in SPFBO, published nineteen books, and two of her short stories have appeared in anthologies.

She lives in a village in the English countryside, has a degree in Psychology, and was a professional copywriter before going full-time as an author – swapping corporate copy for magic and dragons!

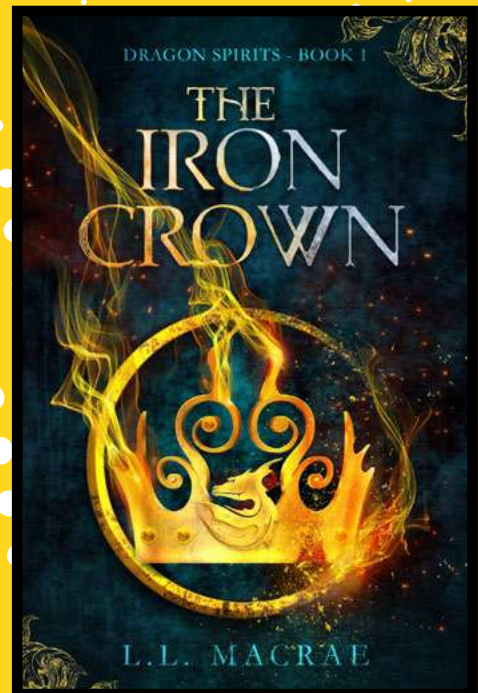
AUTHOR'S PICK

Fenn's first and only memory is of finding himself in the middle of a forest, face to face with a dragon spirit mocking him, all knowledge gone apart from his own name.

Lost and confused, his only hope for answers is Calidra – a woman living on the edge of the world with her partner. Forced to return home when her father dies, Calidra has put off facing her estranged mother for seven years, and she begrudgingly helps Fenn, forging papers for him so he can avoid the Queen's Inquisitors.

But her mother is the least of her worries when they discover an ancient enemy is rising again. It should be impossible with the Iron Crown in power – and Fenn is terrified he might unwittingly be playing a part in the war's resurgence.

Surrounded by vengeful spirits and powerful magic, Fenn's desperate attempt to find his way home might well alter the fate of Tassar, and every power in it.



Lorna Marlow

Adult Fiction: Romantic Suspense



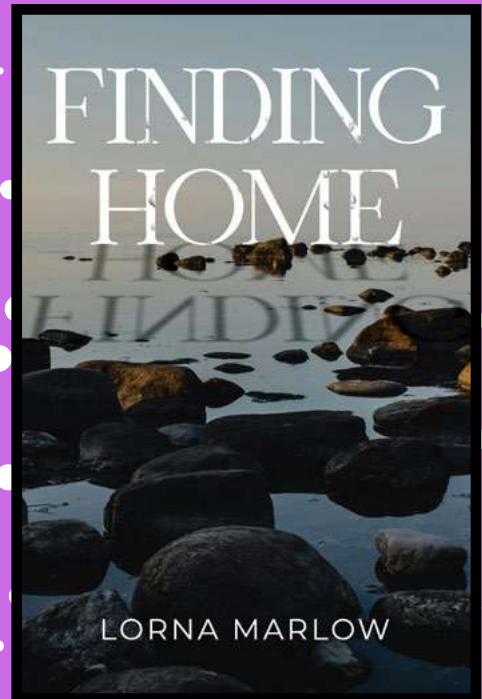
Northants-based **Lorna Marlow** is a writer of romantic suspense novels set in Cornwall. Her first novel, ***Finding Home*** was shortlisted for the RNA Debut Novel of the Year 2026. Her second novel, ***Sisters of the Tide***, is released in September 2026. She is always happiest by the sea or trying to tame her garden.

AUTHOR'S PICK

Lucy is trapped in a violent marriage until a surprise inheritance gives her the means to escape to Cornwall. At the far end of the country, she starts again and begins to unravel the mystery of her unknown benefactor, in whom she finds a kindred spirit and whose tragic past gives Lucy the strength to face her own.

But her new life is based on secrets and lies, and she is determined to keep everyone at a distance. This proves hard when she meets coastguard Jack, whose steady presence begins to break through her carefully built defences. But Lucy's growing feelings for Jack are shadowed by the secrets she still carries and the fear that her vindictive husband Simon will find her.

As danger threatens, Lucy must decide if she has the courage to finally fight for the future she deserves and a safe place to call home.



Samantha Mattocks

Children's Fiction: Fantasy



Image Credit: The Cat House

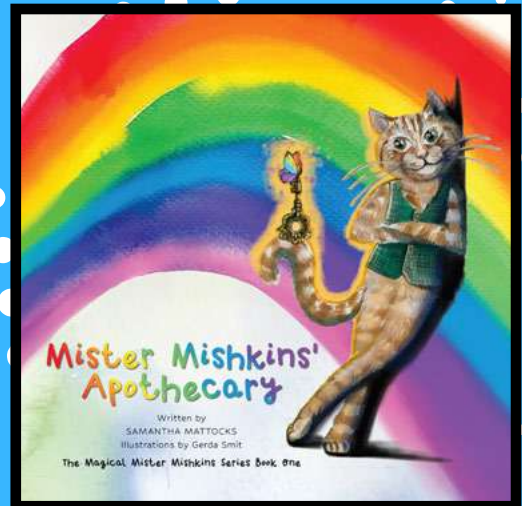
Samantha Mattocks is an award-winning author and journalist with a passion for the written word. Best known for her children's book series, ***The Magical Mister Mishkins*** and ***Nero the Hero***, Samantha's words have transported readers to another place – one filled with magic, inspiration, dreams, and more.

The author of eight books – one published under a pen name to protect the innocent – Samantha loves sharing her imagination with others and taking them to magical worlds.

AUTHOR'S PICK

Mister Mishkins is a magical cat who owns an Apothecary on Mosaic Street – a place that appears mysteriously in town overnight and is only visible to those in need. Whenever anyone enters the Apothecary, Mister Mishkins listens as they share their troubles and fears, before turning to the rows of wooden drawers where, hidden within, is an eclectic mix of cats. These cats take whoever needs them on a journey of transformation, replacing negative emotions with hope, optimism, and a small sprinkling of magic.

Author **Samantha Mattocks** has created a beautiful world filled with cats, rainbows and butterflies that take away the worries and fears common to so many of us. This fully illustrated first book in the **Magical Mister Mishkins** series is sure to become a family favourite.



samanthamattocks.com

facebook.com/samanthamattockswrites | instagram.com/samanthamattockswrites

Alastair McIver

Children's fiction (bilingual)



Alastair McIver's current writing is drawn from his experiences in central Asia, where he witnessed some of the injustices that beset a politically and socially challenged region.

Alastair was editor of *Tennis World* magazine for nearly two decades and has featured in many other publications as well as writing a book, ***Tennis Gallery***.

Alastair's first novel ***The Daily News – there is nothing hidden that will not be revealed***, published in October 2024, is inspired by his visits to the nomadic regions of central Asia, where he met with survivors of cultural misdemeanour

AUTHOR'S PICK

Eighteen years in a Moscow prison provides one Kyrgyz dissident, Feliks Ormanbekov, with the perfect opportunity to plot his political comeback. Once released, and against a background of drought and death in central and south Asia, his plan for regional power, using Kyrgyzstan's prime resource, water, as a bargaining tool, moves forward quickly.

Meanwhile, the Americans, in support of their own 'Peace and Stability' plans for Israel, are desperate to buy access into the dormant military base in the Kyrgyz capital, Bishkek. Their desperation sees them unwittingly coerced into bankrolling the corrupt Kyrgyz plan as part of a ten year military agreement for air space. With the agreement signed to international acclaim, Ormanbekov's plan is on course to succeed.

The unexpected murder of a Kyrgyz journalist, however, alerts media veteran Temir Batyrov and his graduate mentee, Roza Beshimov, to the possibilities of collusion and malpractice between the two governments. Circumstances escalate out of control when, in Ormanbekov's increasingly desperate drive for power, plans which would result in the mass killing of his own people, are uncovered. The Americans, fearful of exposure by an out of control central Asian dictator, decide to act, with disastrous consequences.



Sarah J Merrien

Children's Fiction: Children's Picture Book



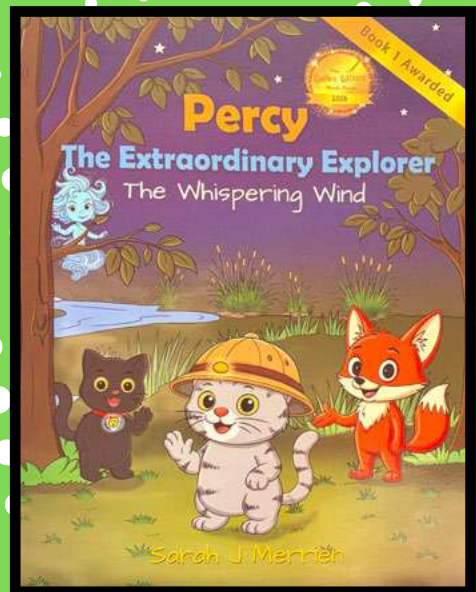
Image Credit: Sarah Merrien

Sarah J Merrien is the author of the **Percy the Extraordinary Explorer** series, perfect for bedtime reading. It was originally created by Sarah and told to her son ten years ago about their beloved family cat Percy, who would be out all night having amazing adventures!

AUTHOR'S PICK

A whisper on the wind.
A call for help.
Another extraordinary adventure begins.

Percy sets off on a magical new adventure with Finn and his sister Bella. Guided by a gentle voice on the wind, the friends journey through misty marshes, discovering that even the quietest whispers need the bravest hearts.



Donna Morfett

Adult Fiction: Crime



Donna Morfett grew up in a small town in Bedfordshire, where a love of reading took root early and never left. Books have been a constant companion throughout her life – a source of escape, comfort, and, in more recent years, a powerful tool for managing her mental health.

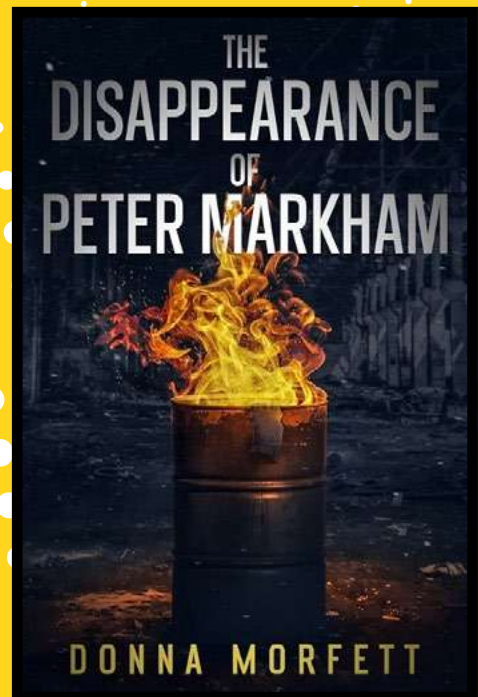
Her debut crime novel, ***The Disappearance of Peter Markham***, was published by Rampart Books in May 2024, introducing Detective Inspector Cora Snitton to the world. Following a successful re-release with a new edit and cover in 2025, the series continues with ***Masquerade of Murder***, released on 11th July 2025.

AUTHOR'S PICK

When Peter Markham goes missing the police are mystified. He seems the perfect family man. A peer of the local community.

When he's found horrifically murdered, the police soon learn that he wasn't all that he appeared.

DI Cora Snitton and her newly appointed DCs Luke and Darcey have their work cut out trying to catch this clever killer.



www.donnamorfettauthor.com

@lilmissmorfett – X | @donnasbookreviewsandinterviews – Insta | @donnamorfett – TikTok

Ondia Morris

Adult Non-fiction: Marriage / Relationship / Self-help



Ondia Morris is a British-Jamaican author whose love of books began early, nurtured by her dyslexic father, who taught himself to read using old newspapers and catalogues. Writing became her voice during difficult teenage years and grew from a hobby into a calling. She now writes multi-genre romance filled with hope and adventure, creating stories where people like me live and love boldly, face chaos, and still find their happy ending.

AUTHOR'S PICK

Marriage isn't always the fairy tale we imagined.

Somewhere between the wedding vows and everyday life, couples discover that love isn't just about romance – it's about communication, patience, and occasionally arguing about very small things...like broccoli.

In ***Surviving the Broccoli Fights***, this honest and humorous guide explores what marriage really looks like after the wedding day. Through personal stories, practical insights, and gentle humour, the book reflects on expectations, communication, and the everyday moments that shape long-term relationships.

Because lasting marriages aren't built on perfection. They're built by two imperfect people learning how to grow, listen, and face life together.

Surviving the *broccoli fights*



What nobody tells you about marriage,
expectations and sharing a life together

ONDIA MORRIS

Jay Mullins

Adult Fiction: Urban Fantasy



Image Credit: Lordt Photography

Jay Mullins fell into writing as a teenager but it wasn't until they hit their thirties that they started writing seriously. They have an historical tendency towards science fiction, and their first novel ***Posterity*** released in 2021. More recently they have started to dabble in other genres; their first romance novel, ***Keep It In The Family*** released in 2023 and their latest book ***The House of Mages*** is urban fantasy and published in October 2025.

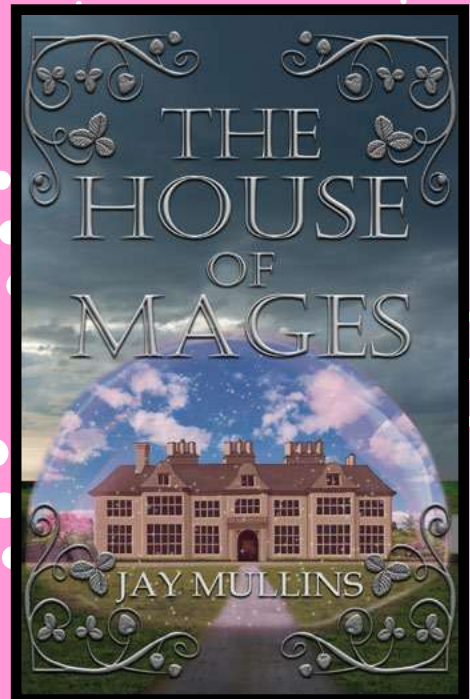
AUTHOR'S PICK

'Different is what we celebrate here; different is what gives us our power. Never be ashamed of what makes you strong.'

Carla is an ordinary commoner; a mediocre university student with plans to join the army and spend her life fighting back against the evils of magic. Layla is a Premier; an heiress in the highest tier of society, destined for a life of glamorous parties and backstabbing politics.

Two girls from opposite backgrounds – two unlikely best friends. Best friends who enjoy hanging out like friends do; going for lunch dates, watching scary movies, holding hands, kissing and cuddling... Wait, what? Enter The House, a not-so-ordinary school for the elite few who can use magic – aka the LGBTQ community.

As Carla begins to unravel the truth behind the government's facade, she also learns the truth about herself. It doesn't take her long to realise that with the right training and the backing of her new collective, she might just go from ordinary to extraordinary.



Rumbidzai Sharleen Mutopo

Children's Non-fiction: Finance Literacy



Rumbidzai Sharleen Mutopo is a children's financial literacy author, financial educator and founder of Harvest Family Finance. Passionate about empowering families through storytelling and practical money education, she creates engaging, relatable books that help children build confidence around earning, saving and making wise financial choices.

Her self-published titles include ***How Do I Grow My Money?***, ***How Do I Look After My Money?***, ***Where Does Money Come From?*** and ***Needs and Wants***. Through her writing, Rumbidzai is committed to helping raise a financially confident generation and creating lasting family legacy through education.

AUTHOR'S PICK

Where Does Money Come From?

A fun and colourful introduction to what money is, how we earn it, and why it matters. This story helps children understand the value of work, money, and making thoughtful choices.



M.D. Ndogo

Adult Fiction: Islamic Historical Fiction



M.D. Ndogo is a debut novelist who brings the history of the Silk Road to vivid life. After three decades in the corporate world, he is finally combining his lifelong passions for history and writing. His historical fiction explores faith, culture, and the resilience of the human spirit at the crossroads where civilisations met and mingled.

Ink and Gold: Daughter of Samarkand is his first novel and the beginning of a journey to illuminate the forgotten characters and evocative world of the medieval Silk Road.

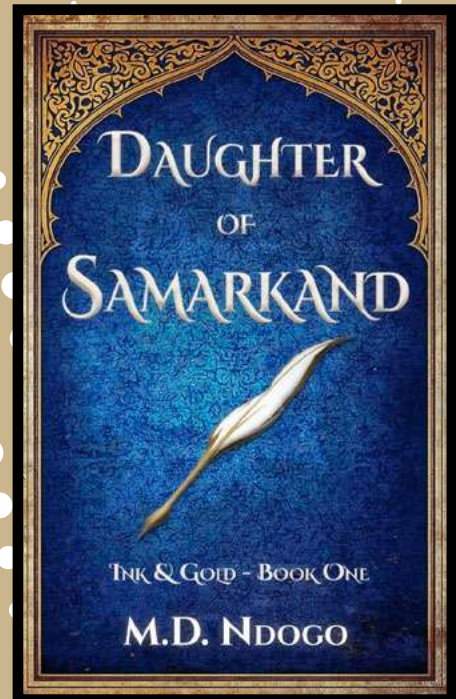
AUTHOR'S PICK

Set against the vibrant backdrop of 9th-century Samarkand and Bukhara, ***Daughter of Samarkand*** brings to life an era when scholars from across the known world gathered to preserve and expand human knowledge and when a young woman's art becomes her greatest weapon for survival.

In the golden age of the Silk Road, seventeen-year-old Thuraya bint Yusuf harbours a dangerous secret. While the world sees only the dutiful daughter of Samarkand's most respected calligrapher, she is actually a gifted illuminator, working in shadows to master arts forbidden to women.

When a prestigious commission from Baghdad's House of Wisdom arrives, Thuraya sees her chance to step into the light but betrayal lurks closer than she thinks, forcing her into a desperate gamble that will either secure her future or destroy everything she holds dear.

As political tensions rise across the Islamic world, Thuraya discovers that the greatest treasures of the Silk Road aren't silk or spices, they're knowledge, friendship, and the courage to forge your own destiny.



Miriam O'Boye

Adult Fiction: Romance



Miriam O'Boye is a romance author who writes love stories with heart, humour, and a touch of serendipity. Her debut series, **The Serendipity Series**, begins with ***We've Met Before***, a story full of unexpected reunions and undeniable chemistry.

When she's not writing, she's usually reading something that pulls at her emotion: heartfelt romances, gripping fantasies, and stories that stay with her long after she's finished the last page.

She's based in the UK, and she loves sharing stories, connecting with readers, and building worlds that feel a little like magic and a little like home.

AUTHOR'S PICK

Monica never expected a holiday fling to turn into anything more, but when she returns to work, she discovers that her new boss is none other than Chase, the guy she shared a passionate night with on her trip. As their professional relationship grows, so does the tension between them, blurring the lines between business and pleasure.

With sparks flying and emotions running high, Monica must navigate her feelings for Chase while keeping her career intact. But can she resist the irresistible pull of the man she never thought she'd see again?



Nadia Partyka

YA Fiction: Magical Realism



So far, **Nadia Partyka** hasn't yet done her GCSEs, but she has two published books in her **Time and Time Again** series (***Amethyst*** and ***Emerald***), multiple features in poetry and short story anthologies, and has a never-ending TBR. She hasn't yet lived enough life to fully develop her personality, but it's probably somewhere among her weird crafts, love for learning and hope for a creative future.

AUTHOR'S PICK

In his past, Max made a deadly mistake. Now it's coming back to haunt him, and Time will stop at nothing to repair his domain. But Max won't be alone for long, as a new girl at school, the confident and mysterious Amethyst, enters his life with a grin on her face.

Together, their lives descend into chaos. Their only hope? Creating a Time Machine. To do so, they'll have to work quickly and put their differences aside to team up. Their safety, and all of humanity's, relies on their mismatched collaboration. But time travel is fickle, so who knows what will happen?



Christine Pattle

Adult Fiction: Police procedural



Christine Pattle writes crime thrillers, including the **Hampshire Crime** series of police procedurals and the **Murder Mile** series of mystery thrillers. She has written fifteen books to date but has a million stories in her head, all dying to get out.

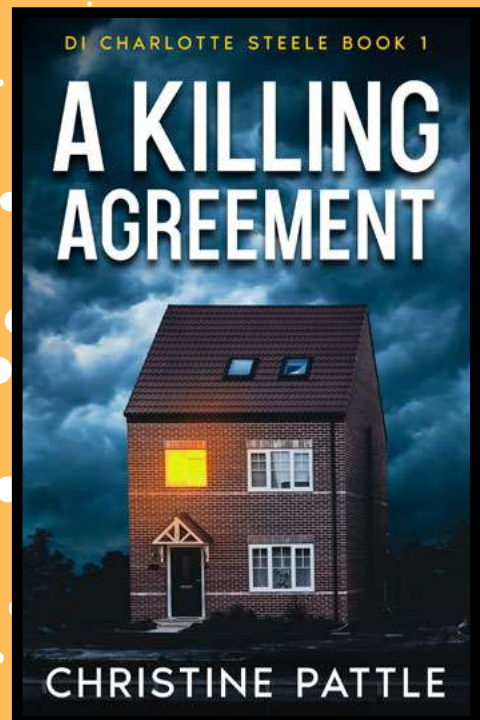
AUTHOR'S PICK

They thought the house was empty...until they found a body.

On her first day as a detective inspector, Charlie Steele is handed a case that doesn't sit right: a senior council official found dead in a vacant property, the scene clumsily staged to suggest suicide. The woman was at the centre of a controversial housing deal, fuelling tension between the council and a private company with everything to gain. At home, her marriage was falling apart, with her husband planning a new life with his pregnant girlfriend.

As Charlie pushes the investigation forward, uncomfortable parallels with her own past begin to surface. Then a second body is discovered, another death made to look like suicide, but this time the staging is different.

Pressure mounts. Leads falter. And with her boss threatening to replace her, Charlie is running out of time to prove herself. And the next scene is already being set.



www.christinepattleauthor.com

www.facebook.com/ChristinePattleAuthor | www.instagram.com/christine_pattleauthor

Alan Porter

Adult Non-Fiction: Sport/Family Memoir



The Weekend Warrior is budding author **Alan Porter**'s first book, self published, which was completed during Covid while shielding on chemotherapy.

AUTHOR'S PICK

A British American Football story every NFL fan will understand.

Set against the backdrop of the 2004 British American Football season, an ageing player in the twilight of his career attempts to juggle work, family and the sport he loves in his quest to fulfil a long-cherished ambition to be a winner.

One man. One season. Two lives to hold together. Will he succeed?



Martyn Pritchard

Adult Fiction: Thriller, Medical Drama, Medical Fraud.



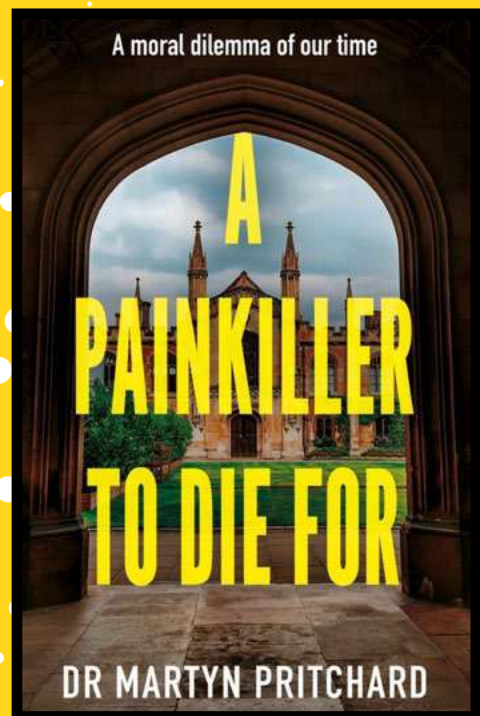
Dr Martyn Pritchard is currently moving towards retirement following on from a thirty-five-year long career in drug discovery research focusing on neuroscience. He is the author of two published novels, ***A Painkiller to Die For*** and ***A Practical Arrangement*** with a third, ***The Wife Who Walked Away***, due for publication in the autumn. A fourth book is currently with the editor. His books cover genres including crime, medical/scientific fraud and domestic noir.

AUTHOR'S PICK

It was difficult for Will Jéavons to imagine just how his life could possibly get any better. Having overcome a traumatic childhood, he had gone on to study molecular pharmacology and win tenure as a lecturer at his beloved Cambridge University. But his life was soon to become better still: the CEO of a biotech company. Will's unique research led to the discovery of a non-addictive drug for chronic pain. A remarkable solution for the opioid epidemic which had claimed the life of his mother.

Will's flourishing company was subsequently acquired, and this was when he first met Celeste Simmonds. The beguiling Celeste would steer Will away from his earlier hedonistic, womanising lifestyle. However, the only way he could ensure the success of his drug was to bury key safety data which could have led to the clinical trials being terminated.

Clinical trials which resulted in the husband of Lydia Goldberg falling into a deep coma. It was Lydia's scientific training which led her to discover Will's fraudulent cover-up. She was determined to seek vengeance and concocted an elaborate honeytrap and a decision for Will to make. A career ending confession or being submitted to a life-threatening game of Russian roulette.



Paul B. Rainey

Adult Non-fiction (incl memoir or auto-fiction): Memoir ish



Image Credit: Paul B Rainey

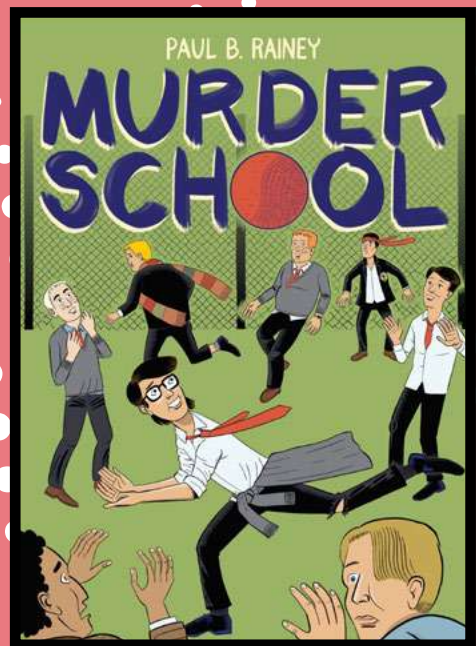
Paul B. Rainey is the graphic novelist creator of ***Murder School***, ***Why Don't You Love Me?*** and ***There's No Time Like the Present***. He is also an occasional contributor to *VIZ*.

AUTHOR'S PICK

A memoir of British middle school bullying and one precocious comic nerd's fight to make it through while remaining as invisible as possible.

Paul B. Rainey takes a look back at his middle school education and the indignities suffered: a mix of stalled friendships, pitched battles with martinets, and exasperated pleading with intractable parents. Playground games take on outsized importance as Paul and his friends seek respite from a particularly abusive science teacher. Paul jockeyes to hold his place in the complicated hierarchy of school bullying.

Rainey takes a classic 'school daze' tale, both wistful and hilarious, and manages to turn it on its head with a couple of his now famous twists. Find out the truth behind ***The Murder School*** and the effect it's had on Rainey well into middle-age.



Geoffrey Ring

Adult and YA Non-fiction: Faith



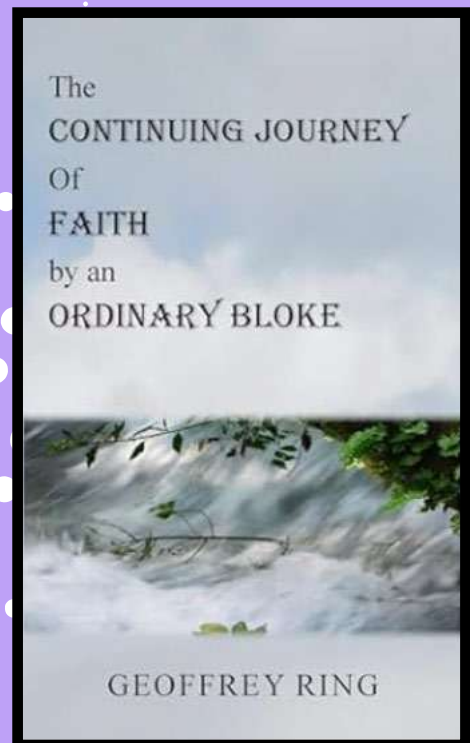
Geoffrey Ring was born in East London in 1948 and grew up with his parents and two brothers in Winchmore Hill. He attended St Paul's C of E Primary School and, having failed his 11+, moved on to Winchmore Secondary Modern School. Here he studied for his O and A Level GCEs before taking up a place at City University to read Civil Engineering. A career with Consulting Engineers, Contractors but primarily Local Government served him well and now retired he lives with his wife in Buckinghamshire.

AUTHOR'S PICK

In **Geoffrey Ring's** latest book, he continues his personal journey of faith. Like the first two, it is a unique perspective from someone who isn't ordained, has had no formal theological training, does not profess to be an ecclesiastical expert but, as the title suggests, is just an ordinary bloke.

It follows his journey from where he left off, and highlights a few more of the difficult episodes he survived through faith. It won't give you all the answers, but it is an invitation to join him on his journey in trying to find them.

Whether you are a follower of Christianity, someone who was a follower of Christianity, or someone curious about some of the basic tenets of Christianity this book is for you.



The Roaring Lion Newcastle

Adult Fiction: Literary Fiction



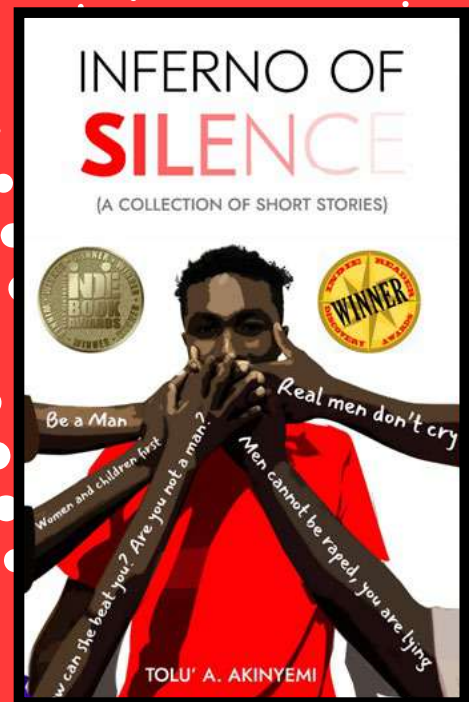
The Roaring Lion Newcastle is a fiercely independent publishing house amplifying subversive, sharp, and necessary voices. We publish work that disrupts, questions, and refuses the quiet.

Our team is small, radical, and fuelled by care and craft.

PUBLISHER'S PICK

The first collection of short stories by this multitalented author entwines everyday events that are articulated in excellent storytelling. The title story 'Inferno of Silence' portrays men's societal challenges and the unspoken truths and burdens that men bear, while 'Black lives Matter' shows the firsthand trauma of a man facing racism as a footballer plying his trade in Europe.

Stories range from 'Return Journey' where we encounter a techpreneur/Poet/Serial Womanizer confronting consequences of his past actions, to 'Blinded by Silence', where a couple united by love must face a political upheaval changing their fortune. These are completed with stories of relationships: 'Trouble in Umudike' – about family wealth and marriage; 'Everybody don Kolomental' where the main character deals with mental health issues; and 'In the Trap of Seers' when one's life is on auto-reverse with the death of her confidante, her mother, as she takes us through her ordeal and journey to redemption. This is a broad and very inclusive collection.



<https://theroaringlionnewcastle.com>

Instagram, Facebook & TikTok: @theroaringlionnewcastle

Philip Robertson

Adult Fiction: Victorian Historical Fantasy



Philip Robertson lives in London, where he teaches by day and writes by night. ***Marked by Time*** is his first novel and the opening volume of **Saeculum**, a trilogy of literary historical fantasy.

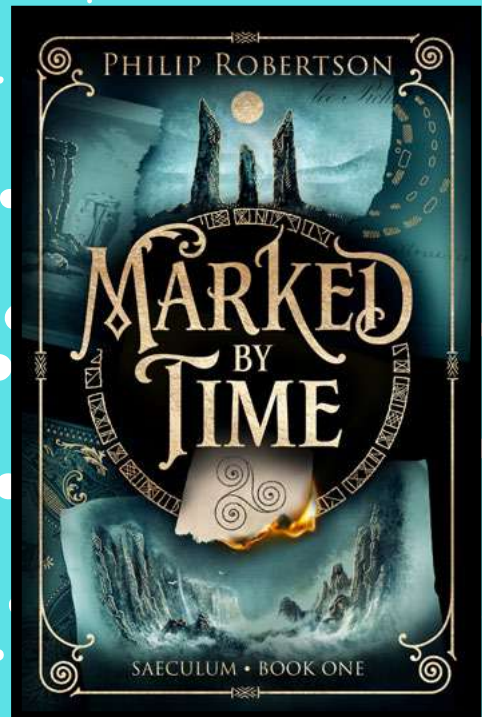
AUTHOR'S PICK

Morgan Llewellyn is fifty-three years old. He also remembers the Great Fire. He rowed survivors across the Thames while the city burned.

London, 1893. When a desperate aristocrat begs the private enquiry agent to find his missing son, the case looks ordinary enough – until Henry Whetham's body is pulled from the river with three spirals carved into his skin. The police are content to call it an accident. Morgan knows better. He has seen that symbol before, and the memory is older than the city.

Alongside Isabelle Foster – a medical student fighting for her place in a man's world, and far too clever to be lied to for long – he follows Henry's trail through stolen papers, ransacked archives, and a secret society of wealthy men hunting something they believe has slept beneath Britain since the Neolithic. They are not wrong. And they are closer to finding it than they know.

From the fog-bound streets of London to the storm-lashed stones of Orkney, Morgan must decide how much of himself he is willing to reveal in order to stop them – because Henry Whetham was not killed for what he knew. He was killed for what he almost understood.



Liisa Sabah

Adult and YA Fiction: Fantasy Adventure



Liisa Sabah is the author of **The Five-fold Chronicles** fantasy series and book one, **The Cocoon Within**, is her debut novel. Liisa loves writing epic fantasy adventure stories, with tropes of friendship, ancient artifacts, chosen one, found family, mystery, transformation and good vs evil. She published book two last year and expects to launch the third by the end of summer 2026.

Liisa works full time in a corporate leadership role, and in her spare time journals and writes stories fuelled by her vivid imagination and inspiration from the world around her. Half Finnish and half Ghanaian by heritage, she has a passion for travel, too much coffee and animals, especially those roaring big cats...lions!

AUTHOR'S PICK

Ever since finding the book in the attic, strange things have been happening to seventeen-year-old Ariana. She dare not tell her beloved grandfather, 'Granpey', for fear of making him worry. After all, he is more like a father, having raised her single-handedly since her parents died in a car crash when she was just a few years old.

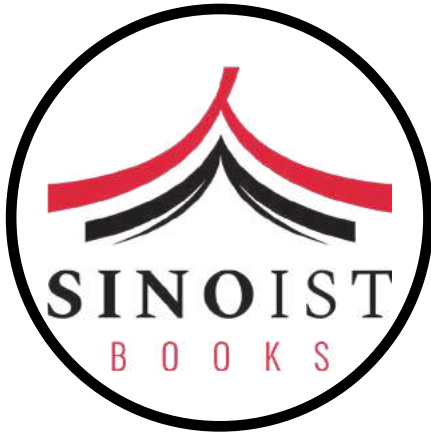
The only person Ariana can tell is her best friend and confidant, Jack. Surprising romantic sparks are beginning to emerge in their friendship, but Ariana can't be sure, as Jack has always had a schoolboy crush on the stunningly beautiful Jessica.

As Ariana grapples with strange visions and appearances, one thing becomes apparent: she isn't the only one who sees them. Finding the book has triggered events which lead Jack, Ariana, and her unlikely newfound friend, Jessica, through a portal into a new and magnificent world, where her arch enemy, the all-powerful Destroyer, thwarts her every move. Ariana's little rescue dog, Leo, is a Godsend and she can't help but believe that his arrival is no coincidence. But what is in store for the friends as they launch into an adventure with a seemingly impossible goal?



Sinoist Books

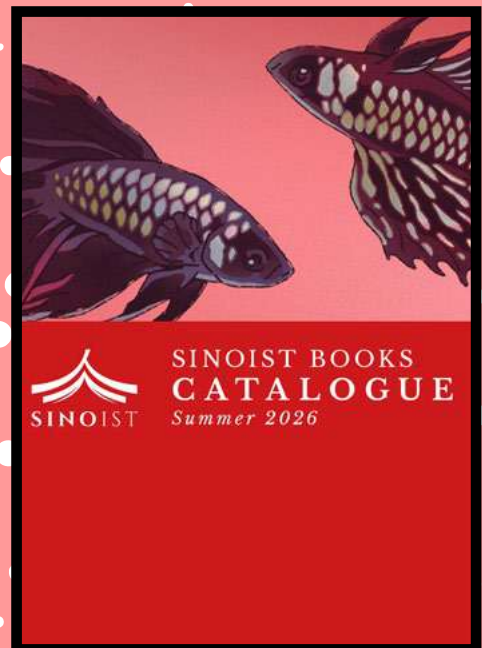
Adult Fiction: Chinese Literature in Translation



Sinoist Books is a publisher of diverse narratives from Sinophone communities around the world, from mainland China to diaspora writers. We publish modern classics from some of the best-known authors within China, as well as up-and-coming novelists emerging onto the global literary scene for the first time. We publish literary fiction, genre-bending historical and crime fiction, as well as a small range of children's literature.

Our books confront the omissions of historical narratives, precarity in a rapidly changing world, and contradictions within questions of culture and identity.

PUBLISHER'S PICK



Ainkaran Sivaaji

Children's Fiction: Picture Book



Ainkaran Sivaaji is a children's book author, award-winning violinist, singer, dancer and orator. An alumnus of the University of Manchester, his interests span history, literature, spirituality, theatre, dance and music composition/performance.

A trained stage performer from the age of five, Ainkaran has been engaging national audiences since an award-winning performance at the Brent Festival of Music and Dance in 1994. His dynamic range as a performer-composer brings an authenticity and versatility to his stories. Ainkaran's new writing rests on hypotheses that his discoveries on ancient civilisations propose, which he hopes can help shape healthier hearts and minds.

AUTHOR'S PICK

Velan is worried about his father's health. Lately, he struggles with even simple tasks. Today is the eighteenth day of the big festival, and his appa insists on participating in the grand fire-walking ceremony, the theemithi.

Appa tries to reassure Velan that he can walk across the fiery coals, but Velan isn't convinced. On the way to the temple, Velan wonders if Appa will be able to cross safely. What if he stumbles and hurts himself? At the theemithi, as Velan's fears come true, a brave new fire walker emerges.

Set in a small Tamil fishing village in Sri Lanka, this picture book is a testament to the power of faith and love as a child copes with their parent's chronic illness.



The Slab Press

Adult Fiction: Science-fiction



Image Credit: Donna Scott

The Slab is an independent publishing press, specialising in genre anthologies, established in 2023 by award-winning editor, **Donna Scott**.

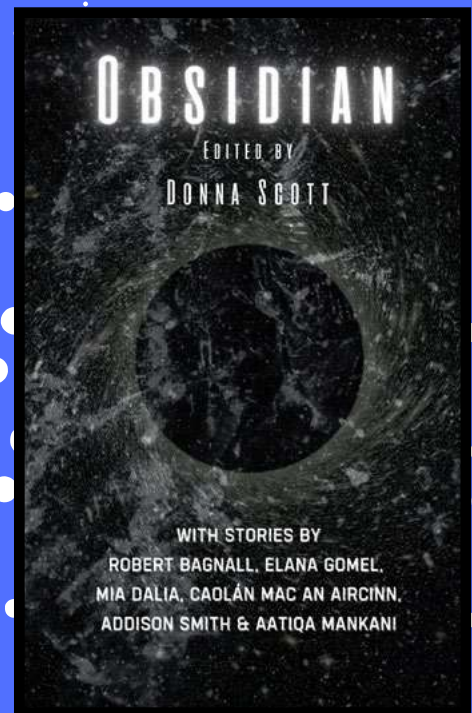
AUTHOR'S PICK

As part of the **Minerals** science-fiction series, The Slab Press brings you **Obsidian** – dark tales of space and isolation.

This anthology brings together five novelettes and one novella from six exciting, new, international voices.

Obsidian, the black mineral formed by volcanic lava is sharp and brittle. The alchemist and occultist John Dee once used an obsidian mirror to scry prophecies, and so its darkness is double-edged.

These stories examine the harshness of space travel, the way it alienates and isolates, and its shattering effects on the human psyche. Featuring stories from **Robert Bagnall**, **Mia Dalia**, **Elena Gommel**, **Caolán Mac an Aircinn**, **Aatiqa Mankani**, and **Addison Smith**. What would you do when faced with the obsidian depths of space?



Nick Snape

Adult Fiction: Dark Fantasy



Nick Snape has been steeped in science fiction and fantasy his entire life. Lost in his imagination, he became a teacher by accident, and after retiring, took up the pen.

Nick's books feature everything from heart-pounding, fast-paced action to thoughtful, character-driven twists on fantasy and sci-fi. Genetics to artificial intelligence, artifice dragons to soul-eating enemies, nothing is off the menu.

AUTHOR'S PICK

Where arcane magic and steampunk meet, lies are buried deep...

'What a ride! Power-packed world-building with layers of deception, half-forgotten myths, and unorthodox characters.' – SFFInsiders.com

A broken ranger.

The fierce warrior he loves.

A puppet queen and the High Lord of the Seven Houses who pulls her strings.

And lies written in blood to hide a dreadful past.

Laoch and the dishonoured warrior Sura are thrown into a world of spirit-magic, gods' weapons and a secret history, unravelling all they thought they knew to reveal a deadly secret buried in lies - one even the gods feared.

A dark fantasy that blends arcane science, steampunk, and magic, ***A Dragon of the Veil*** is the first book in the **Warriors of Spirit and Bone** series.



<https://www.nicksnape.com/>

X: @SnapeNick Instagram | Threads: @nick.snape.author

Jonathan Stanyer

Adult Fiction: Crime

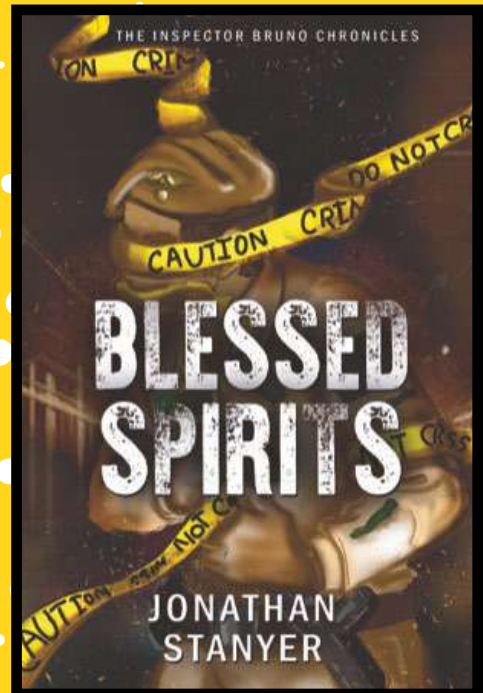


Jonathan Stanyer is a writer of crime fiction with an Italian twist, and a volume of true ghost stories.

AUTHOR'S PICK

A mummified body is discovered in a basement of an apartment block in an old Italian hill town. How will top Italian detective Inspector Jordi Bruno handle the case?

As he delves into the events leading up to the crime, he uncovers old secrets and present-day suspicions.



Leslie Tate

Adult Non-fiction: Hybrid Life-Writing and Fiction



Leslie Tate is a University of East Anglia writing graduate and the non-binary author of four hybrid novels who leads the indie group STILL WE RISE and interviews guests weekly on Radio Dacorum. Leslie's books deal with gender difference and 'otherness' in childhood, modern relationships and direct experience of climate protest and arrest. They are lyrical, character-driven and passionate. Leslie played lead role in an indie film of his/her book ***Heaven's Rage***.

AUTHOR'S PICK

In ***Ways to be Equally Human*** Leslie Tate tells the inside story of coming out as a non-binary person, from being 'othered' in gendered toilets to stepping up on stage and radio and taking action with Extinction Rebellion.

Leslie's poetic life-fiction takes us on a journey through crazy childhood dreams and gender dysphoria into personal growth. Full of lyrical writing, humour and quirky insights, this is a book for lovers of language, nonconformists and passionate thinkers. It's a clear-eyed account of how we live today, including computer stress, noisy neighbours, guided meditation and the spirit of rebellion inside the machine.

Ways to be Equally Human is also a love hymn to Leslie's partner and the planet.

Ways to be Equally Human

LESLIE TATE



Laura Townshend

Children's Fiction: Picture Book



Laura Townshend is a children's author who lives in Buckinghamshire with her husband, son, and rescue dog. She's been writing stories since childhood and won her first writing competition at age seven. She's a lot older than seven now, and has over fifteen years' experience as a copywriter. She also works as a voiceover artist, specialising in audio description.

Laura loves film, theatre, arts and crafts, sea glass hunting, commas (and brackets), and a nice cup of tea.

AUTHOR'S PICK

Fox and his friends are very hungry because a terrifying creature called the Fozgrak has been stealing their food.

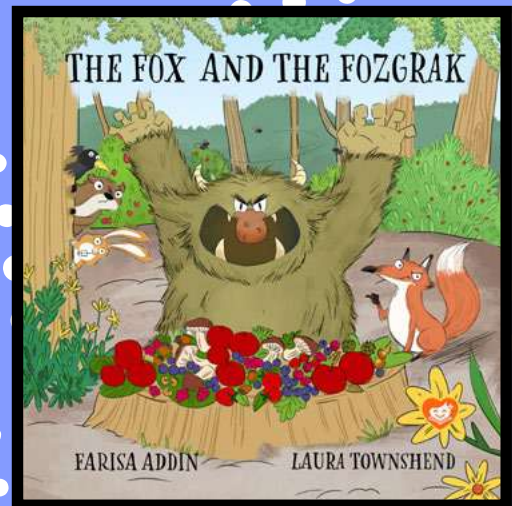
'Fozgrak see and Fozgrak want.

Fozgrak get it, ready or not!'

Luckily, Fox hatches a clever plan to rid the forest of the Fozgrak once and for all.

They just need it to work...

This charming traditional trickster tale celebrates overcoming a bully by working together.



Alison Thompson

Children's fiction (bilingual)



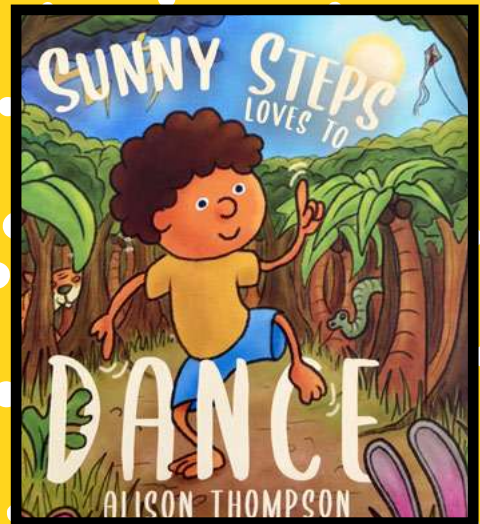
Alison Thompson trained at London Contemporary Dance School and California Institute of The Arts. She's worked with some of the UK's leading Contemporary Dance companies and she created Sunny Steps, a dance and movement class for toddlers.

Sunny Steps Loves To Dance is based on the themes in these classes and echoes how she started the idea for the class. Her second book, ***Sunny Steps Loves To Dance Under The Sea*** is out this July.

AUTHOR'S PICK

From elephants to autumn leaves, this is a dancing adventure with lots of twists and turns.

Join Sunny Steps and his Daddy as they dance out of their playroom and into a wonderful world of imagination. Read along and join in the fun!



Nicki Thornton

Adult Fiction: Crime



Nicki's a lifelong reader, with a particular love of crime fiction and many years running a bookshop made her decide a bookshop is the perfect place to set a murder mystery series.

Nicki remains a huge supporter of anything that promotes reading for pleasure. She also reads way too much and you can find out what she's reading and share the ups and downs of her writing life in her regular newsletter.

Nicki speaks regularly in bookshops, literary festivals, libraries and schools, about her own writing and her love of mystery writing in general.

AUTHOR'S PICK

Who Shot Jackson Brodie?

An unsolved cold case. An impossible crime. A village full of secrets

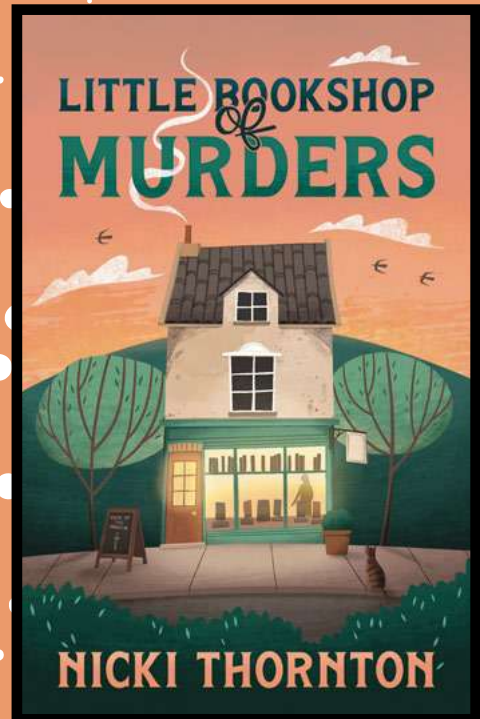
When an ex-police officer-turned-author asks for support for his true-crime memoir, Keera Munroe hopes it will bring much needed sales to her little bookshop business.

But some locals are horrified when they learn Mitch Ravenscroft's biography features an unsolved murder in their own idyllic village.

Keera's crime-fiction bookgroup seizes the chance to solve a real-life crime. But soon it's clear someone will stop at nothing to prevent the truth being exposed.

Why were a couple shot dead on the first night they moved to Crossways?

Once again Keera asks herself if it isn't true that the loveliest places hide the darkest secrets as she's plunged right in the heart of uncovering truths



nickithornton.co.uk

[instagram.com/nicki_thornton](https://www.instagram.com/nicki_thornton) | [facebook.com/nickithorntonauthor](https://www.facebook.com/nickithorntonauthor)

Gemma Walker

Adult Fiction: Crime Thriller, LGBT



Gemma Walker is an author and playwright from the West Midlands, England. ***The Judge, the Jailer and the Thief***, a heist thriller, is her first novel, and ***Sad Eyes on Happy Faces*** is her first play.

Her books are fast-paced, emotionally fuelled, character-driven crime thrillers that revolve around strong female characters and the situations they find themselves in. Her main character is always a lesbian, as she is an advocate for representation in stories that aren't strictly about sexuality. She wishes to publish exciting, thought-provoking page-turners that captivate and keep the reader hooked in genres that have typically been male based.

AUTHOR'S PICK

Perfect for readers of fast-paced crime thrillers, intricate heists, morally grey characters and a twist you won't see coming.

Alex has a plan for a heist. She's had it for years and after her release from prison, it's the perfect time to carry it out. There's a secret vault on the top floor of the most prestigious building in the city and she knows how to crack it, but it has to be now...

She must rebuild relationships with the team she lost while she was inside and convince them to help, all whilst being chased by a disgraced cop whose case from years before is being scrutinised as the now notorious thief he put away, who always maintained his innocence, died in prison on the same day Alex was released.

The barrister of the historic case is now an ambitious high court judge who attempts to side-step the scrutiny, as she supports her long-term girlfriend, the architect of the prestigious building, as she prepares to host the 20th anniversary celebration of it being built.

All three of them will cross paths, uncover truths about what happened all that time ago, and find out if it will impact Alex's plan, and the outcome of her carefully crafted, meticulous heist.



Kirstie Watson

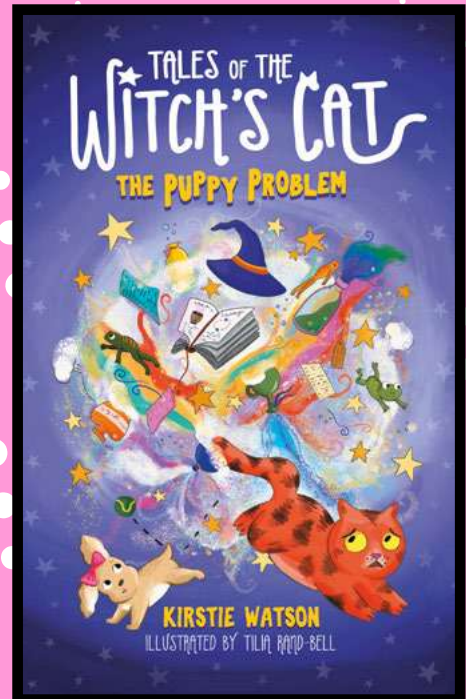
Children's Fiction: Picture book



Kirstie Watson is an award-winning children's author-publisher of the popular **Witch's Cat** series, loved by young readers worldwide and translated into multiple languages.

Her titles include ***The Witch's Cat and The Cooking Catastrophe***, ***The Witch's Cat and The Broomstick Blunder*** (Purple Dragonfly Books Award, 1st Place, 2022), and ***The Witch's Cat and The Trouble With Tidying Up*** (The Selfies Book Awards 2024 – Highly Commended). Her funny, engaging stories promote resilience, perseverance, and self-belief.

AUTHOR'S PICK



The Witch's Cat wants to make a friend... using magic! There's just one problem. When he uses magic, things usually (always) go wrong, and that's why he really needs your HELP!

Join Cat in this funny, interactive adventure, where the reader is invited to help find ingredients, mix a magic potion and lend a paw when things inevitably go wrong.

Perfect for ages 1-5.

Trudy West

Children's Fiction: Children's picture book



Trudy West is a self-published children's author from Milton Keynes, UK, with a passion for inspiring a lifelong love of reading in children of all ages.

Her 5-star debut picture book, ***Mrs Bripp: The Cat Who Doesn't Meow***, captures the hearts of young readers with its rhythmic charm and relatable animal antics. Following this success, Trudy released her second charming picture book, ***The Tail of Tatty-Mouse***. This heartwarming, rhyming tale celebrates love, friendship, and the comfort of a well-loved childhood toy.

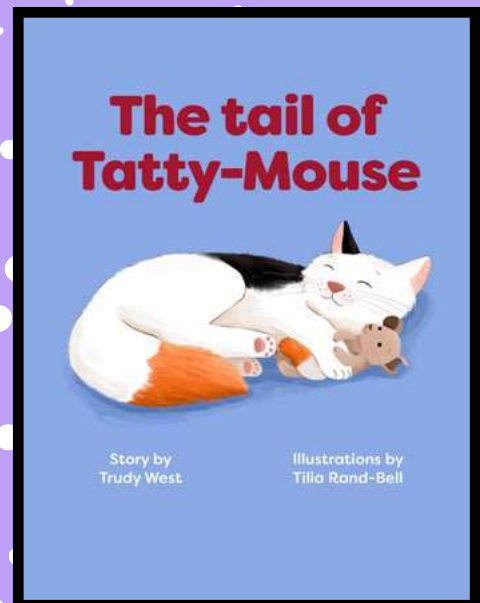
Across all her stories, Trudy focuses on themes that spark curiosity, comfort, and imagination in early readers.

AUTHOR'S PICK

Meet Tatty-Mouse. He wasn't always tatty, but being Sanna's favourite toy is a tough job! From losing his tail to misplacing an ear, Tatty-Mouse has been chewed, clawed, and loved to bits.

But when Tatty-Mouse goes missing, Sanna's world is turned upside down. Can a frantic search and a little help from a friend reunite Sanna with her most treasured possession?

The Tail of Tatty-Mouse is a heartwarming rhyming story for little ones and cat lovers alike. It celebrates the beauty of being 'perfectly imperfect', proving that in the eyes of those who truly love us, we are always purr-fect.



Willow Woods

Adult Fiction: Fantasy



Purveyor of sorcery, vampires and rebellion through fantasy fiction, **Willow Woods** is the author of fantasy and the novels *Where I Belong* (2018) and *The Shadow Courtesan* (2019).

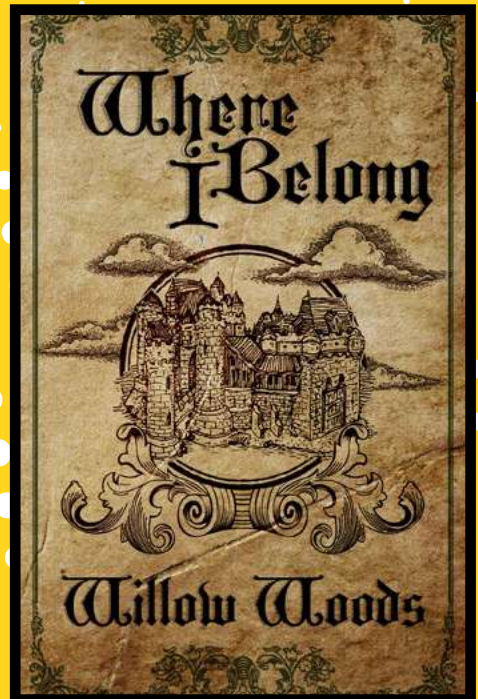
Willow lives in North London with her husband and their three cats. In her spare time she enjoys historical reenactment, putting her history degree to use, gaming and archery.

AUTHOR'S PICK

Explore Jadeus and the kingdom of Saphyre, a realm rich with magic and corruption.

Alexandra is a young woman intent on forging her own destiny. But the Princess of Karstares is not free to marry for love and her relationship with a lowly knight is doomed from the start. When her betrothal to the King of Saphyre is announced, Alexandra becomes desperate to make her own life.

After a spell goes awry, Alexandra finds herself married to the tyrannical Carlyle with no memory of her past or even her magical ability. With no idea of who she is, Alexandra finds herself thrust into the heart of a five-hundred-year-old rebellion led by a man who claims to be Saphyre's rightful king.





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