

A stylized graphic of books and a pencil. On the left, there is a stack of three books. A pencil is positioned diagonally across the top of the stack. To the right of the stack, there are two more books standing upright. The entire graphic is rendered in white on a dark blue background.

# **THE PUBLISHING POST**

## **Issue 71**

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EDITOR'S NOTE

As someone who was looking to get into publishing, I always found it hard to consistently keep up with what was happening in the industry. Remembering to visit separate websites, news sources, job portals and keep up with changes was quite challenging. I also know it can be difficult to find information, learn about trends in the industry, or about the specifics of roles that are not editorial.

*The Publishing Post* intends to provide all of this information and more to anyone wanting to learn about, or join, the publishing industry. We want to cover as much as we can for those, like us, who want to absorb as much of the industry as they can. *The Publishing Post* is a free resource that is encouraging, honest and

accessible to every single person who is considering publishing as a career.

*The Publishing Post* stands by the fact that 2023 is a time for breaking down barriers and encouraging diversity in the publishing industry. Learning about and being included in the industry should be for everyone.

The magazine is created by publishing hopefuls, for publishing hopefuls. Each and every person who works on the magazine each issue is dedicated to producing and educating fellow hopefuls with content that is informative and interesting.

Lastly, I just want to say a massive thank you to every single person who has supported, shared and

shouted about *The Publishing Post* since our first issue. On behalf of the whole team, we are so incredibly grateful and could not be more proud of the success.

Editor in Chief, Chelsea Graham

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Catch up on our previous issues, highlighted articles and recommended events at [www.thepublishingpost.com](http://www.thepublishingpost.com)

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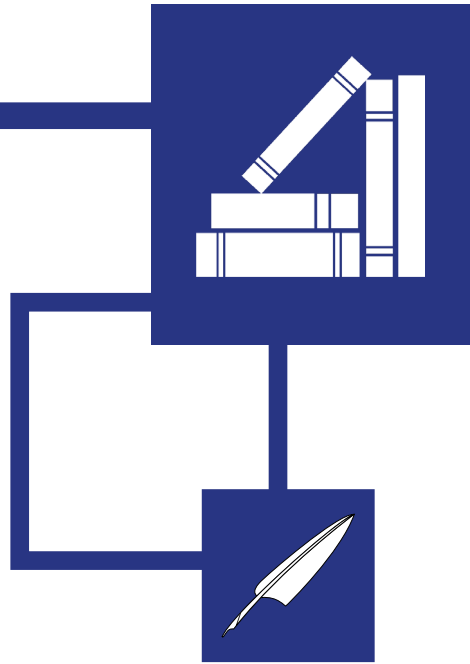
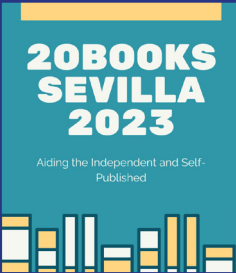
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# London Book Fair 2023 Round-Up

By MEGAN WHITLOCK  
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From sustainability to the cost of living, the 2023 London Book Fair came back with a bang to cover a wide range of pressing industry topics and news. The London Book Fair is one of the biggest annual events in the industry calendar, with the 2022 event seeing 15,000 attendees and exhibitors from over 100 countries (*The Bookseller*). With the 2023 event running from 18 to 20 April, initial reports suggest that this year the attendees have nearly doubled to 30,000 (*Publishing Perspectives*), indicating a return to the fair’s pre-pandemic levels. The fair’s new director, Gareth Rapley, who was announced in September 2022, shared in a statement recorded by *Publishing Perspectives* that the boost in attendees “is such a vote of confidence in the event and a testament to the special place it holds in the publishing calendar.”

Indeed, as well as being a place for key industry figures to network and exhibit, the

fair is also a hotspot for deal making, rights trading and collaboration. Notable speakers this year included the Mayor of London, Sadiq Khan, and bestseller Kate Mosse. Khan gave a keynote talk on what publishing can learn from other industries about sustainability, and promoted his book, *Breathe: Tackling the Climate Emergency*; Mosse particularly focused on global championship of women’s voices in the industry. In addition to an array of chief executives from organisations such as HarperCollins, Nosy Crow, Bonnier Books and the Publisher’s Association, there was also a guest spotlight on Ukraine and Ukrainian writers’ responses to the war, organised in partnership with the Ukrainian Book Institute.

There were plenty of events for publishing hopefuls, too, with the SYP (Society of Young Publishers) hosting panels covering the attractiveness of publishing as a workplace for future

generations and the price of publishing in relation to the impact of the cost of living crisis on the industry. There was also a panel on getting into publishing featuring the winners of this year’s publishing Trailblazer Awards, including *The Publishing Post*’s very own founder, Chelsea Graham!

The key topics picked up on throughout the book fair focused on the urgent need for publishing to adapt to the climate crisis, the rising costs of publishing in the current economic circumstances – and subsequent need for book price increases – and the rise of influencer marketing (and books), with several TikTok stars receiving book deals. Though it may be a while before the dust settles and some of the biggest deals that came from the 2023 fair can be dissected, one thing that’s certain is that post-COVID publishing is back with a boom.



# Widespread Condemnation of Arrest of French Publisher

By JULIA FITZPATRICK  
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Politicians, authors and publishers have condemned the arrest of a French publisher by UK counter-terrorism police. Ernest Moret was stopped by two police officers in St Pancras station on Monday 17 April. Moret, who is a Foreign Rights Manager for Paris-based publishing house Éditions La Fabrique, had travelled from Paris by train to attend the London Book Fair. He was questioned by police for six hours over his participation in French anti-government protests, before being arrested for alleged obstruction for refusing to disclose the passwords to his phone and computer. Moret was transferred to a police station in Islington, North London. He was released on bail the next day, but his phone and laptop remained in police custody.

Éditions La Fabrique is well-known for publishing activist works by left-wing authors, including a French translation of Andreas Malm’s book about direct action, *How to Blow up a Pipeline*. Stella

Magliani-Belkacem, the company’s Editorial Director, travelled to London with Moret. She told *The Guardian* that the police officers “said they had the right to ask him about demonstrations in France.” Demonstrations the previous month, which were attended by hundreds of thousands of people in France, were organised in protest of President Emmanuel Macron’s use of executive powers to push through an increase in the state pension age.

The arrest has been denounced by figures within the publishing industry. Malm suggested that “the French clearly outsourced the ongoing crackdown [over the pension protests] to the British state” and noted that “Brexit hasn’t stopped the police services from collaborating across borders.” A joint statement from Éditions La Fabrique and Verso Books called on “all defenders of basic democratic values to express in the strongest terms that we find this intolerable and

outrageous.” Karen Sullivan, the founder of Orenda Books, said that the incident would mean “that international publishers and authors – many of whom use their positions in the media spotlight to highlight societal issues – will think twice about visiting the UK.”

Moret’s treatment has also been condemned by twelve Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) in a letter sent to the Home Secretary, Suella Braverman. The MEPs wrote that it was “quite remarkably inappropriate” for British police to arrest someone for involvement with protests in France, and that their actions represented “outrageous and unjustifiable infringements of basic principles of the freedom of expression and an example of the abuse of anti-terrorism laws.”





# Latest Acquisitions & Adaptations

BY GEORGIE CUTLER, EVA LEE, EMMA LEASK, MOLLY PEARCE AND NIAMH PARR

## Acquisition News

### Walker Wins Auction for Davis-Featherstone's Oxford Thriller

Walker Books has won a five-way auction for two thrilling YA titles by Rachael Davis-Featherstone. The first book – *Oxford Slays* – is a dark academia murder mystery, recommended for fans of *Ace of Spades* and *The Secret History*. The story follows Eva and her best friend George as they attend an interview week at Oxford University. In a turn of events, Eva finds herself accused of her best friend's murder and must now find a way to prove her innocence whilst also fighting against an anonymous social media account that is threatening to ruin her. Gráinne Clear at Walker Books bought world rights (excluding North America) to the two titles in a six-figure deal from Jasmine Richards at Storymix. North American rights were bought by Sara Goodman at Wednesday Books in a deal conducted by Allison Hellegers at

Stimola Literary Studio on behalf of Storymix. The first of the two novels is set to be published in spring 2025.

### New spin-off trilogy and standalone from Maz Evans to be published by Chicken House

Maz Evans, author of the *Who Let The Gods Out?* series, has been acquired by Chicken House for a new series set twenty years after the original books. UK and Commonwealth rights to a further four books have been acquired in a six-figure deal. The first book in the series, entitled *Oh Maya Gods!*, introduces a new group of friends who will be battling against evil immortals. Currently expected to be released in paperback on 28 September 2023, the launch of the new series will be accompanied by a major marketing campaign which includes proofs for book bloggers, point-of-sale displays in bookshops and samples being made available for schools. The

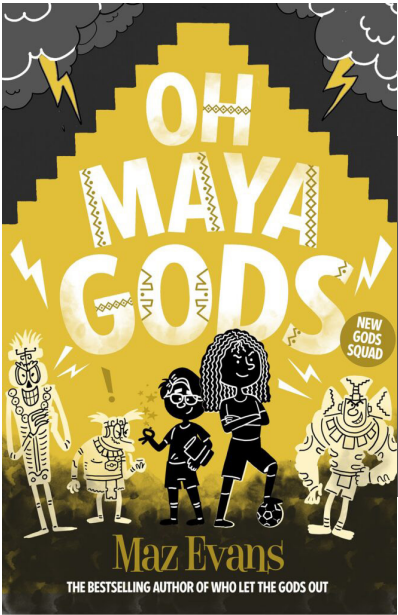


Photo credit: Chicken House

first book will see the main characters venturing to the underworld, where they'll encounter Kizin and his Lords and Ladies of Death in a bid to stop the chaos before the end of the world ensues. The next two books in this fun, fast-paced middle grade series are expected to be published in 2024.

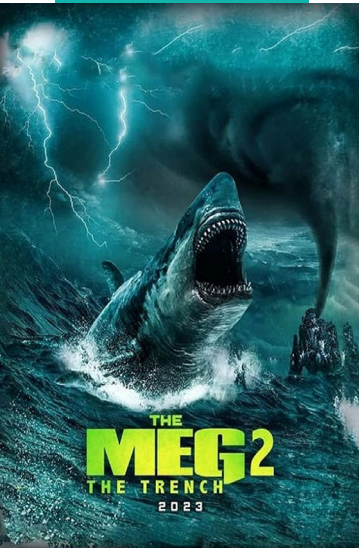
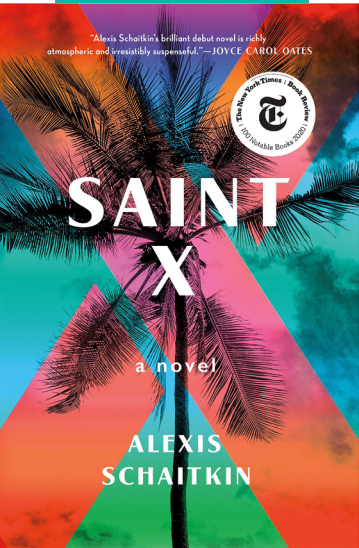
## From book to screen

### Psychological series Saint X out on Hulu

Hulu is back with another book-to-screen adaptation of Alexis Schaitkin's bestselling *Saint X*. The psychological series follows Claire's life after her sister vanishes from the Caribbean island of Saint X on a family vacation. After a long search for clues, two men are arrested and then released due to a lack of evidence. Fast forward a few years, Claire recognises one of the suspects and starts an investigation into her sister's death. This series is set to tell a story of grief, pain and anger through different timelines and stars Alycia Debnam-Carey, Kenlee Townsend, Josh Bonzie, West Duchovny, Jayden Elijah and Bre Francis. *Saint X* is out now on Hulu and will air a total of eight episodes with one episode a week.

### Bridgerton prequel coming to Netflix

This month, *Queen Charlotte: A Bridgerton Story*, a series set in the world of the Julia Quinn's *Bridgerton*, debuts on Netflix. After the success of the first season of *Bridgerton*, Netflix announced that a prequel series was being developed by Shonda Rhimes, focusing on a young Queen Charlotte. The series



sees younger versions of characters we've met in *Bridgerton*, including Lady Danbury and Violet, Dowager Viscountess Bridgerton. It stars India Amarteifio as the young Queen Charlotte, alongside Corey Mylchreest as the young King George III. Shonda Rhimes and Julia Quinn have teamed up to write a novel based on *Queen Charlotte: A Bridgerton Story* that was published 9 May 2023. You can learn more about the young queen by streaming the series on Netflix now.

### The MEG 2: The Trench coming to screen in summer 2023

*The Trench*, the 1999 sequel to Steve Alten's science fiction novel *MEG*, will be turned into an action-packed horror film this summer entitled *The MEG 2: The Trench*. The novel follows Jonas Taylor, a paleobiologist with a fascination for the Megalodon. After finding a pregnant Megalodon four years prior, he keeps its offspring in his struggling facility. Desperate, he turns to a billionaire for funding aid, subsequently finding out that the ocean may not be the scariest thing he has to face. The film will star action-legend Jason Statham as the lead role, with Cliff Curtis, Shuya Sophia Cai and Page Kenned as supporting roles. The *MEG 2: The Trench* will be released on 4 August 2023.



# 20Books Sevilla 2023

BY EMMA REGAN, JORDAN MAXWELL RIDGWAY, LAURA INGATE AND FRANKIE HARNETT

This year the 20Books conference was held in Sevilla, jointly organised by the CEO of Lantia, Enrique Parrilla, alongside the CEO of LMBPN publishing, Michael Anderle. Both CEOs also spoke at the event, with Anderle himself being an author of fantasy and sci-fi novels and the founder of the 20Books campaign. Anderle began writing in 2015 and gradually came up with the idea of the 20BooksTo50K conference as a way for self-published writers to network and access information on how to earn a living from writing books outside of garnering traditional publishing deals. Lantia is a self-publishing and print service based in Spain, whilst LMBPN is a Las-Vegas-based company. The event was attended by more than one hundred writers and presenters,

hailing from all over Europe and North America. Previous conferences have been held in Las Vegas, London and Adelaide.

The conference focused on the professional development of self-published and indie authors, covering topics such as using TikTok for promotion, how AI will change the world of publishing, how to develop characters and write for specific genres and much more. Some of those who spoke at the event are also involved with the [Alliance of Independent Authors](#), such as Joanna Penn and Orna Ross, the founder of the non-profit organisation.

The conference comes at an interesting time as a number of authors have found successful careers publishing their own books. Sean McLachlan, who

presented at the conference, was previously published by Osprey Publishing before moving into self-publishing mystery novels set in North Africa.

## Lantia

Companies like Lantia help authors to self-publish. Lantia is an innovative print-on-demand publisher, digital distributor, bookstore marketer and author crowd-funding platform. Their aim is to rewrite the rules of publishing. With offices in Seville, Spain and Houston, Texas, the company manages the catalogues of over 1,000 authors that became self-publishers. Lantia manages everything from cover design, layout and pre-press to print-on-demand and e-distribution, and from sales reporting to royalty management. Central to its operational ethos is flexibility in book production. Enrique Parrilla is the General Manager of Lantia; he states that “it was essential for us to improve the book printing process and considerably shorten the time to market, regardless of the number of books.”

## Key Discussions and Helpful Advice

The annual conference acts as an important opportunity for self-published and indie authors to network and share advice they would typically receive from a traditional publishing house. A panel of successful authors shared tips on writing profitable stories. Benedict Brown and Sean McLachlan highlighted character evolution as a central tenant of successful novels, encouraging authors to focus on developing interesting and distinctive characters to set their books apart. Panellists also placed a strong emphasis on writing within an established literary genre. Author of Regency romances, Bianca Blythe, stressed the importance of not blending genres from a marketing perspective, suggesting it confuses potential readers.

The conference also covered key discussions for publishers, such as a move towards direct sales within the industry. Orna Ross, founder of the Alliance of Independent Authors, implored indie authors to develop their own direct distribution processes,

suggesting a combination of email lists, social media and an individual website. Dan Wood, the Chief Operating Officer of Draft2Digital, commended a move towards direct sales to reduce Amazon’s monopoly on online book sales and allow writers a higher cut of sales.

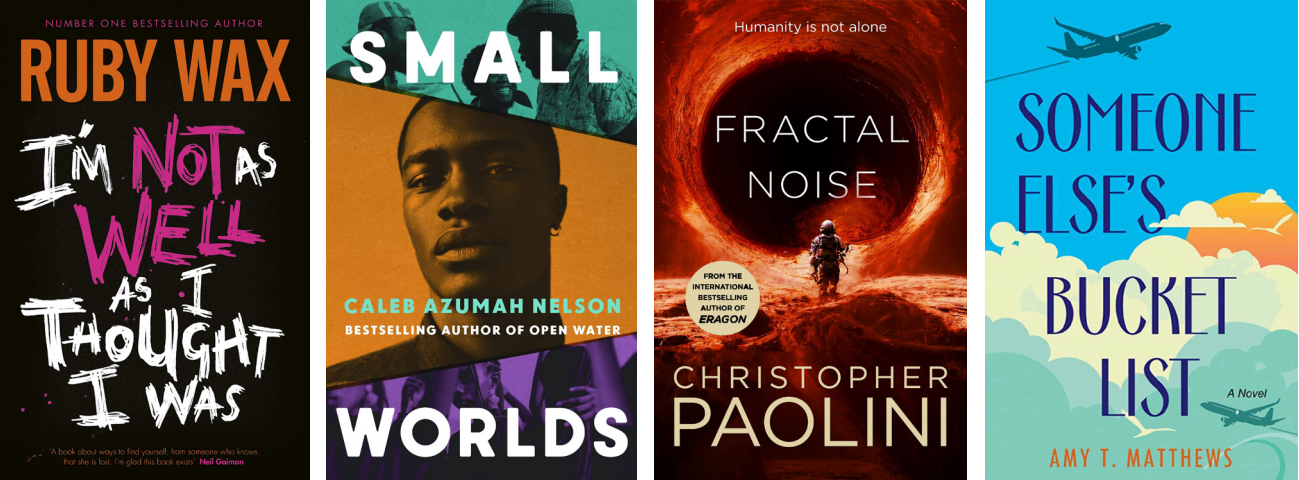
However, the dominant advice for authors and publishers surrounded the all-consuming rise of AI technology. Best encapsulated by one of the panellists, Joanna Penn, “when we say AI is the future, the future is right now.” Her advice encourages all members of the publishing industry to embrace the transformative technological phenomenon or else be threatened with the disruption of companies that failed to embrace the internet twenty years ago.

If you’re a self-published writer, or looking to start your journey into self-publishing and you want external support and guidance, visiting a self-publishing conference is highly beneficial for the broad range of advice and expertise you will gain through a short yet condensed manner. While 20Books Sevilla has already passed, we recommend

researching any future conferences happening in your local area.

The next biggest self-publishing conference outside of the US is The Self Publishing Show Live, which takes place in London, 20–21 June 2023. The event is sponsored by Amazon KDP and is expecting an attendance of 900 indie and self-published authors and industry players. There will also be an evening event, giving you the perfect chance to unwind and network. Tickets will cost £175 for a two-day pass, but if you cannot make those days, there will be a digital version of the conference taking place 3–4 August. For tickets and more information, click [here](#).





# Mental Health Awareness Week

BY ANNIE KU, ANNA ROBINSON, MAISY TWADDLE AND GEORGIA WELLS

## *I'm Not As Well As I Thought I Was* by Ruby Wax

11 May 2023, Penguin Books Ltd

In her new book, *I'm Not As Well As I Thought I Was*, Ruby Wax recounts how her 2022 globe-trotting search for meaning ended up with her in a mental health institution. The book was intended to be based on her extreme adventures in finding an antidote to the frazzled mind, but her outward journeys lead her to turn inward instead. Darkly humorous and refreshingly honest, Wax writes a guide on how to find meaning when

you are lost. By sharing her own experiences and pulling no punches, Wax's fearlessness and clear message that the mental health conversation needs to be reframed for the better is a great comfort to readers.

*I'm Not As Well As I Thought I Was* will also be on stage as Ruby Wax goes on tour later this year. Her outstanding work as a mental health campaigner, alongside her being a best-selling author, actress and comedian, marks this book as one of the most formidable reads this year.

## *Small Worlds* by Caleb Azumah Nelson

11 May 2023, Penguin Books Ltd

A powerful novel set across three summers and two countries, this novel is an intimate exploration of a father-son relationship, music and faith.

Set in London and Ghana, *Small Worlds* portrays Stephen. The only thing that can solve his problems is dancing; at church, with friends at a basement party, with his best friend Adeline in the living room, alone. Dancing is his faith and he believes in rhythm.

Dancing is an escape that Stephen can lose himself in. But, when the music fades, his relationships are strained. His father speaks of shame and sacrifice and his home no longer feels like a haven. Stephen must find a space for himself where he can feel free.

*Small Worlds* searches for a space for Stephen and asks the reader about the worlds we build for ourselves, where we can dance, love and live. How are these spaces made? And how do we begin to feel safe somewhere new?

Author Caleb Azumah Nelson has been hailed as an exciting and fresh new voice within British literature and received acclaim for his debut novel, *Open Water*.

## *Fractal Noise* by Christopher Paolini

16 May 2023, Pan MacMillan

The new thrilling prequel of space opera *To Sleep in a Sea of Stars* is the opportunity of a lifetime for crew members sent to examine an anomaly on the planet Talos VII. A pit has appeared with such perfect dimensions that it can only be the product of intelligent and conscious design. A small team is assembled to

learn more and their voyage will take them to the very edge of existence.

For some of the crew it is an adventure, for others it is a risk not worth taking. For xenobiologist Alex Crichton, the trek is a desperate attempt to find meaning in a cruel and uncaring universe. With each step that they take becoming more and more punishing than the last, no one is truly prepared for what they will uncover.

Meditative and gripping, *Fractal Noise* features an exciting sci-fi world.

## *Someone Else's Bucket List* by Amy T. Matthews

23 May 2023, Kensington Publishing

Jodie Boyd had always lived in the shadow of her older sister, Bree. Her sister was outgoing and loved life. She had travelled all across the globe and documented the whole experience on her successful Instagram account with over 1 million followers. However, illness does not pick and choose who it hits. The Boyds' world is completely rocked by the untimely death of Bree, following a short fight with Leukaemia. Not only are they

at an emotional loss, but financially too, weighed down by the huge medical debt left behind.

In her grief, Jodie goes to look through her sister's Instagram page in remembrance, only to be met with something far more surprising. A posthumous post, addressed to Jodie! In this post, Jodie is challenged to do things way beyond her comprehension to complete Bree's very public bucket list, from "perform a walk-on cameo in a Broadway musical" to "fly over Antarctica". She begins to doubt herself. That is until she sees the catch of the post – a corporate sponsor will cover the cost of all medical bills if she is able to complete it.

Jodie finds herself impossibly out of her depth, but ready to live life for her sister. The final item on the list is the most surprising of all – to fall in love. But as she comes out of her comfort zone, Jodie finds that this challenge is perhaps one of the easiest on the list.



# Recent Listens

BY CAMERON PHILLIPS, NURIA  
BERBEL TORRES, KATHRYN ALLEY  
AND SARUNICKA SATKURUPARAN  
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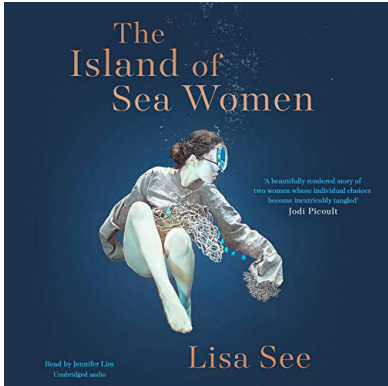
Recently, the Audiobook Team have been chatting about the latest audiobooks we’ve loved; we wanted to share our very favourites with you too.

**Cameron’s Pick:**  
*In The Aeroplane Over the Sea* by Kim Cooper and narrated by Donna Coney Island

I recently listened to Kim Cooper’s oral history of Neutral Milk Hotel’s landmark record, *In The Aeroplane Over the Sea*, narrated by Donna Coney Island. Whilst singer-songwriter Jeff Mangum’s magnum opus is very much lauded in the indie music scene, the band has become a meme online because of their lyrics and sound. It’s a great shame that the album has become seen this way online because, at its heart, it is unlike anything before or after. Inspired by Eastern folk, lo-fi and alternative music, Mangum paints a surreal collage of warped images dedicated to young love, religious fanaticism,

life and death, nostalgia, and yes, Anne Frank, who Mangum claimed to be haunted by after he read a copy of her diary.

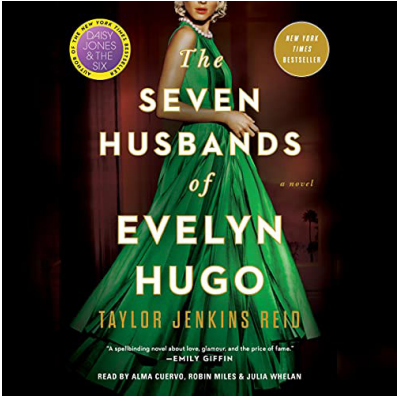
This record is very dear to me, both artistically and personally. From the opening of “King of Carrot Flowers Pt 1” to the ending of “Two Headed Boy Pt 2”, Neutral Milk Hotel takes you on a journey unlike any other. I hate how this album has become a meme, with internet hysteria arguably the cause of Mangum’s breakdown and total withdrawal from society after the album was released in 1998. Kim Cooper diligently recognises this, and Donna Island’s soothing narration takes care of the source material, respecting the artistic vision that Mangum was clearly going for.



**Nuria’s Pick:** *The Island of Sea Women* by Lisa See and narrated by Jennifer Lim

My most recent listen, *The Island of Sea Women*, is a mesmerising historical novel that tells the story of Mi-Ja and Young-Sook, two best friends who come from very different backgrounds. Set on the Korean island of Jeju, the two friends begin working for a female diving collective. As readers, we get to explore their close bond over many decades and hardships such as Japanese colonialism, World War II, the Korean War and beyond. However, their close bond is tested numerous times; their differences are too hard to ignore. Mi-Ja is the daughter of a Japanese collaborator, which forever marked her in the village. Young-Sook was born into a dynasty of *haenyeo* and will eventually inherit her mother’s position as a leader of the divers. Little do the young friends know that after hundreds of dives and years of friendship, forces outside of their control will push their relationship to the breaking point.

This is a beautiful audiobook that illuminates an unforgettable culture. It is a story of female friendship and what shapes them. Jennifer Lim does a wonderful job with the story, transporting the reader to the beautiful island of Jeju and taking you on the journey that is the lives of these two women.

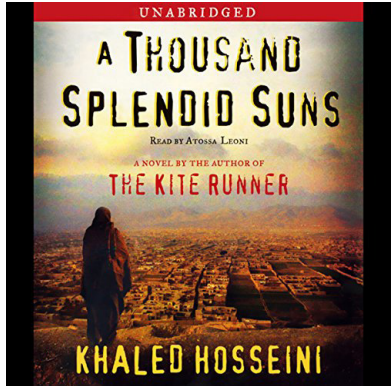


**Kathryn’s Pick:** *The Seven Husbands of Evelyn Hugo* by Taylor Jenkins Reid and narrated by Alma Cuervo, Julia Whelan and Robert Miles

My decision to listen to my most recent audiobook *The Seven Husbands of Evelyn Hugo*, was sparked by cast announcements for the upcoming movie adaptation. To me, nothing is better

than a spring afternoon with a refreshing drink and a moving listen, and Taylor Jenkins Reid’s audiobook fit this perfectly.

The heart-wrenching tale describes the life of a fictional Hollywood star as she reveals the truth behind the glamour, detailing the price of her fame. At seventy-nine, Evelyn Hugo gives an exclusive interview to a journalist that recounts her journey to the spotlight within Hollywood’s male-dominated entertainment industry. *The Seven Husbands of Evelyn Hugo* is a really emotional listen, with Cuervo’s narration beautifully recounting Evelyn’s failures and triumphs as she reflects on a challenging, lovely and full life. The narrative is reminiscent of actresses like Marilyn Monroe, illuminating the delicacy of our identity in public spheres, the



reality of human frailty and encouraging compassion as we engage in reflecting on our past.

**Sarunicka’s Pick:** *A Thousand Splendid Suns* by Khaled Hosseini and narrated by Atossa Leoni

I recently listened to Khaled Hosseini’s *A Thousand Splendid Suns*, narrated by Atossa Leoni. *A Thousand Splendid Suns* is the story of two women, Mariam and Laila, who form the unlikely of bonds as they are brought together by fate. Set throughout thirty years of war-stricken Kabul, Hosseini paints a picture of what life was like under the Russian and Taliban regimes. Devastating, evocative and compelling, this is a story of female friendship, heroic self-sacrifice and the salvation found in love.

The complexities of emotions in this book are truly commendable. Despite the turmoil these women face, the layer of enduring hope and resilience which is still prevalent in these characters makes the story all the more impactful.



# Egos, Liars and Bad Intentions in *Between Us* by Mhairi McFarlane

By VICTORIA BROMLEY, ELEANOR BOWSKILL, HANNAH McWHINNIE AND LILY BALDANZA

Witty, warm and compellingly sharp, Mhairi McFarlane’s *Between Us* explores the authenticity of friendships and relationships through the perspective of thirty-two-year-old teacher, Roisin. Whisked away on a whirlwind weekend trip, Roisin, her screenwriter boyfriend Joe and their group of friends slowly uncover hidden truths about each other, brewing a storm that may just change how these old friends see each other forever. Tackling important and relevant topics such as wealth, exploitation of power and finding your autonomous voice, *Between Us* finds the perfect balance of brutal realism and optimism.

McFarlane’s charming and relatable writing style allows her reader to quickly fall in love – or, at some points, *despise* – her characters, making each reader feel like the welcomed eighth member of the group. Both thrilling and uplifting, this story truly is a weekend to remember.

As *Between Us* is McFarlane’s ninth novel, she admitted that it is

“definitely harder” to come up with concepts for her books throughout her writing career. In a conversation with her editor, McFarlane said “there’s this terrible irony” that she gets “more confident with writing but the ideas are harder to come by.” Understandably, nine books in, McFarlane has “used up” most of her ideas and she believes this is most likely a result of the fact that she only writes within one genre. She won’t suddenly invent a “detective” or a “murder” in one of her books, so it’s difficult to break free from genre conventions. From the girl meets boy trope in her debut novel, *You Had Me at Hello*, to the fake dating in *If I Never Met You*, there seems to be more boundaries and constraints within writing romantic comedies. That being said, McFarlane said she’s always in pursuit of a new “challenge” and wants to find what she’s “not done before.” Her personal mantra is that “as long as I’m not bored, hopefully, I won’t bore you.”

Within the very crowded market of contemporary romance novels, writers often

need a good hook to entice their readers. However, McFarlane admitted that she doesn’t “think in terms of hooks” and is only concerned with what “interests and excites” her. As a writer, she’s in a position where she can leave the commercial side of things to the publisher to create a “snappy one-liner on the book jacket.” Not even sure how she “comes up with the ideas” for her novels, she just thinks to herself: “Where have I not been before?” and “What if?” then ventures in whatever direction it leads her.

Within *Between Us*, money is consistently brought up as a chasm between the friends, with Dev having copious amounts of money to throw around, as well as Joe with his newfound fame, whereas others in the group don’t have the same disposable income. McFarlane agreed that money can be a taboo subject and a “difficulty among friends” and that it’s important for friends to “listen to each other.” In relation to the novel, she reflected on where Roisin says to Dev that he needs to stop paying their way,

such as funding the flights to his exotic wedding, but he refuses to acknowledge their thoughts and feelings. While Dev’s generosity is an “asset to his personality,” he doesn’t know when to stop. As a large group that formed in their early twenties, they all go on to experience different levels of fame and success. Therefore, there is bound to be “a point when the bonds start straining” and for McFarlane, “money and careers” is perhaps the first “point of tension” within the group.

The romantic relationships within the novel are also under a fair amount of strain. In particular, Joe’s increasingly cold and crude attitude seems to have gone unnoticed, for the most part, until his recent career successes made his ruthless remarks all the more insufferable. It was difficult to decipher whether Roisin was caught off guard by this behaviour. McFarlane suspects that “her own ego” has led her to believe that she is a “good judge of character,” which she later projected onto her heroine. When Roisin asks herself if success has changed Joe, she concludes that “he was always that person” but when his “smartass underdog” shtick was a kind of “punching up,” it all sat better. McFarlane pointed out that once Joe had money “his cutting remarks looked that much worse” because they “came from a place of power.”

McFarlane also admitted she was worried that “someone like Roisin would’ve noticed” that he didn’t treat other people well because that is a “pretty unforgivable” thing to do. She went on to confess that the book doesn’t completely explain how Roisin tolerated that, but, in a way, leaving a gap for the reader’s imagination is “not the worst thing” in the world. In McFarlane’s mind, the expectation was that “had Roisin been daft enough to stay with Joe, had she not figured out what he was up

to, he would have left her for someone else within a short time.” She even goes as far as to acknowledge to herself that he feels “un-dumpable” because he is such a big catch. His whole thing with Roisin, McFarlane thought, was that if they were going to split up, he wanted to be the one to leave her, which does not fit the definition of passionate commitment. Of course, some of Roisin’s unease is a result of the issues that have gone unaddressed from her past



and as the book unfolds we begin to understand her reasons for this. However, McFarlane “did not conceive of Roisin as someone with poor mental health.” She explained that the mental health aspect, if there is one, relates to the “messages” Roisin receives from her self-conscience. McFarlane added that she liked using the self-conscience as a device, because “it felt real” and like “something that she understood.” Still, she often worried that “it felt a tad convenient” at times, the idea that the self-conscious is going, “hey, you need to look over here!”

McFarlane went on to point out that when it comes to her job, Roisin is “capable, stoic and well-intentioned.” But she added that “people who operate with good intentions and won’t lie don’t always know how to deal with someone who has bad intentions and will lie.” McFarlane keeps returning to this central theme of lying because it intrigues her so much. She explained, “I’m intrigued by why people do it and the psychological power play of lying.” In this sense, Joe gave her the perfect opportunity to explore his lies in more depth.

The exposé of Joe’s lies at the novel’s climax demonstrates not only Joe’s

despicable character, but also his abuse of power as a writer, opening up the ethical question: when is it acceptable to use other people’s experiences as inspiration and material for your creative work? When asked what her thoughts were on this process, McFarlane realised that she didn’t have a “one size fits all answer”, but assured that “if I’ve ever used anything, I’ve asked people.” In the process of fictionalising experience, “you change all the details and you embroider and you push those characters off into different directions,” often leading the writer to forget the source of their idea. But if these ideas are so explicitly recognisable, McFarlane explains that she will always “want their consent,” rather than giving them “a nasty shock.”

The friendship group, better known in the book as ‘The Brian Club,’ is tentatively held together by a (mostly) mutual feeling of nostalgia for the days when they met, all aged twenty-two, working in a Waterstones store. McFarlane recalled Roisin’s comment that “we can’t be twenty-two again, so the best thing to be is around all the people you knew when you were twenty-two,” suggesting that “fear of the unknown,” “loss of youth” and loss of the “simplicity

and optimism” of being in your early twenties unites the characters, but also hinders them from breaking free from their slowly fraying group. With her story set ten years after the group’s formation, making her characters thirty-two years old, McFarlane explained that she chose this age because “your early thirties are when you first encounter proper nostalgia and proper regret.”

Whilst Roisin is “*particularly* nostalgic about her friends”, the clear tensions in the group elaborate on how it is impossible to repeat the past. With Dev organising the weekend to prove that they’re “still a really tight gang,” existing “antipathy between Joe and Matt” and Gina’s realisation of her unreciprocated feelings for Matt being “unhealthy,” it is no surprise that Roisin “is starting to realise that they are fraying.” Yet McFarlane is particularly proud of how her book encourages the reader to neither “hang on” or “get rid of” the reader’s friendships from their early twenties. McFarlane ultimately emphasised that even in tricky situations such as this one, “some of those friendships” are obviously going to be “lifelong” and “really meaningful,” whilst the less “sustainable” friendships “don’t matter and they probably need to move on.”

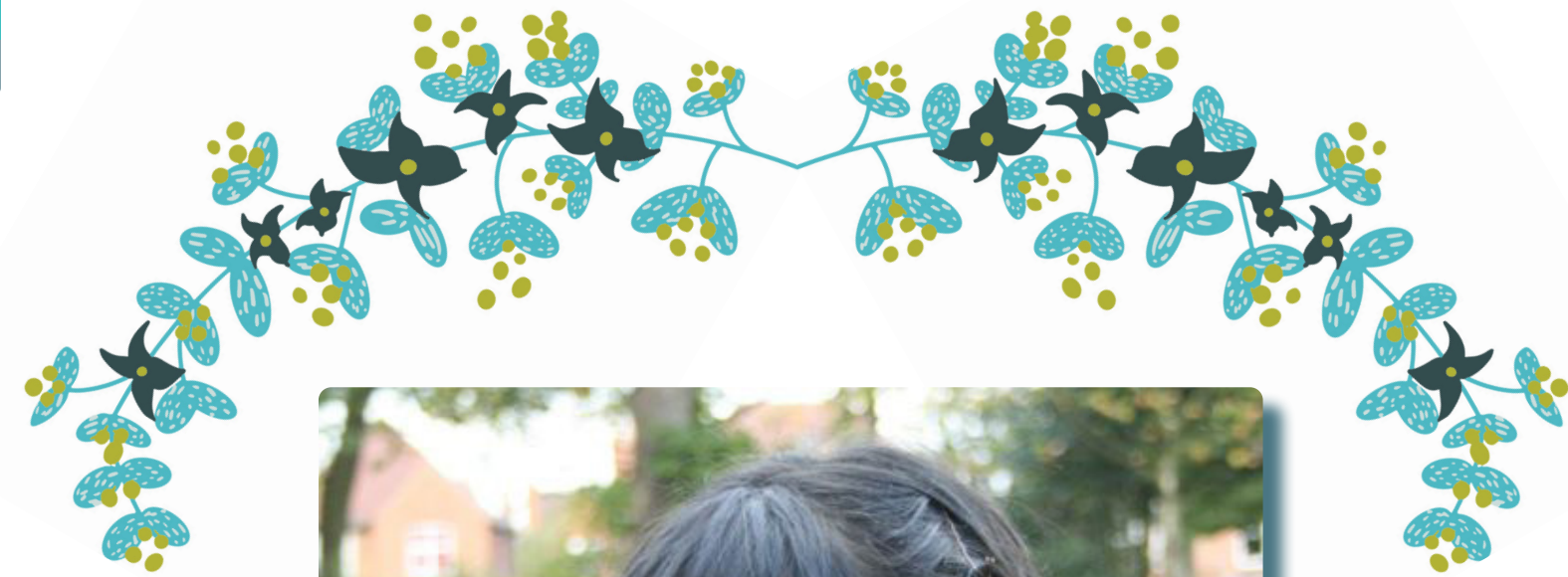


Photo credit: Harper Collins



# Highlights in the Charts

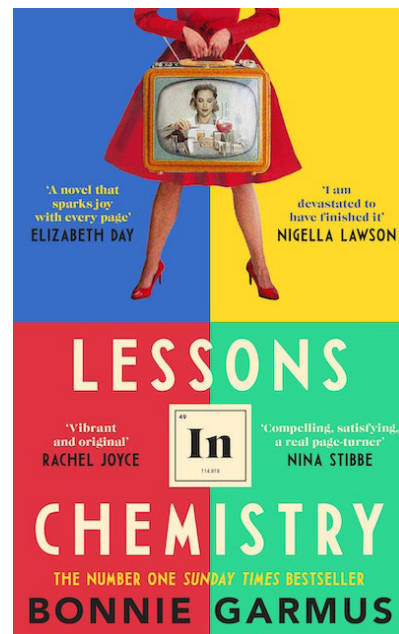
## ***Lessons in Chemistry*** by Bonnie Garmus

REVIEW BY JENNA TOMLINSON

It's brilliant to see not only a surge in spotlighted female writers recently, but also in female protagonists, such as Elizabeth Zott in Garmus' debut novel *Lessons in Chemistry*. Zott is one of the best representations of strong women in fiction, and the whole book is a fantastic commentary on just how far women's roles in society have come, whilst acknowledging how much more there is to do.

Set in late 1950s/early 60s America, Zott is a brilliant chemist trying to carve out her space and build a reputation in a male-dominated world. Formerly a Doctoral candidate, Zott's place on the programme was withdrawn after she was sexually assaulted by her advisor. Determined to continue her research, she takes a job at a research facility where she meets Calvin Evans, a fellow scientist quite unlike the misogynistic men of the era.

The novel alternates between time periods: we look back at Zott's career at the research facility in the late 50s and jolt forward to the early 60s, at which point she is a single mother and the reluctant presenter of a television show; Zott uses 'Supper at Six' to teach housewives mathematics and science in her own version of a cultural revolution. We see her life through her daughter Madeline, who is desperate to learn more about her



family history; the family dog Six-Thirty, on constant lookout for their safety; and Harriet Sloane, a kindly neighbour who supports Zott but faces her own difficulties as a woman and housewife.

Garmus' characters are well written and three-dimensional, so it isn't all saccharine sweet. The women are not all friends or even always kind to each other, and the men who engage in terrible behaviour don't all get their comeuppance. However, there is a sense of inspiration in the book's realism. I found myself deeply engaged in the lives of Zott and the other women, who slowly realise their potential and importance in society. The swell of confidence Zott offers her predominantly female audience, the vocabulary she arms them with and the fervour she cultivates is nothing short of rousing.

As one of the latest novels to be adapted into a TV series, *Lessons in Chemistry* is capturing a new audience whilst returning readers recap the story before the show airs. Revisiting this

book filled me with the same excitement I had the first time around, cheering for Zott and the women she meets, but also noticing subtle hints and reveals I missed before. At a time when women's rights around the world are questioned, Garmus has created a source of inspiration.

## ***It Starts with Us*** by Colleen Hoover

REVIEW BY MADDY MCMANUS

After taking BookTok and the book charts by storm, Colleen Hoover promised fans a new story about the lives and relationship of Lily Bloom and Atlas Corrigan, the triumphant characters from the popular novel *It Ends with Us*.

This story follows Lily, who is struggling with co-parenting and having her abusive ex-husband, Ryle, in her and her daughter's lives. Things are especially hard for her as she secretly begins dating the man Ryle hates most: Atlas.

Fans of *It Ends with Us* will love seeing the dating life of Lily and Atlas pick up again from where the first book



ended. After two years of separation, Lily immediately says yes when Atlas asks her out. However, her excitement is dampened by the presence of jealous and possessive Ryle, making some scenes difficult to read.

The highlight of Lily and Atlas' renewed relationship is that old diary entries are revealed, with more insight about the fateful night that heartbreakingly separated them. The story switches between their two points of view, offering more information about Atlas' past

and his perspective of their relationship when they were teenagers.

One of the weaker parts of this sequel was the storyline about one of Atlas' long-lost family members suddenly being found and becoming a big part of his life. It felt like a subplot for the sake of something interesting happening, rather than actually adding anything to the story.

*It Starts with Us* might seem like pure fan service, as some plot points were clearly laid out in the first book: Lily continues to fully remove herself from her abusive partner and the awful situation she was in, and she and Atlas pursue a relationship together. Perhaps this conclusion didn't need a whole sequel dedicated to it, especially six years after the original's publication. However, for the millions of fans Hoover has amassed on BookTok, this is a necessary read for their library.

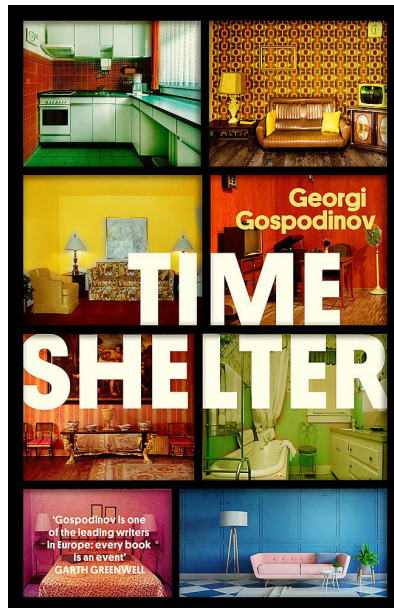


# The International Booker Prize 2023

BY ALICE REYNOLDS  
AND LUCY CLARK

On 18 April, the International Booker Prize longlist was announced in March. This important event in the year for translated works of fiction celebrates both inspiring authors from around the world and the vital work of translators. The winner, announced this year on 23 May, will receive £50,000 which is divided equally between the author and the translator (or between multiple translators). Yet even the longlist speaks to the important themes in writing this year and gives a platform to original writing and translation talent.

This year's shortlist of six books is very exciting. *Still Born* by Guadalupe Nettel, translated by Rosalind Harvey; *Boulder* by Eva Baltasar, translated by Julia Sanches; *Whale* by Cheon Myeong-kwan, translated by Chi-Young Kim; *The Gospel According to the New World* by Maryse Condé, translated by Richard Philcox; *Standing Heavy* by GauZ',



translated by Frank Wynne; *Time Shelter* by Georgi Gospodinov, translated by Angela Rodel.

It boasts more representation than years before as each of the six books on the shortlist originated in a different country – Bulgaria, Côte d'Ivoire, France, Mexico, South Korea and Spain which together span four continents. The translators too represent five countries – Brazil, Ireland, South Korea, the United Kingdom and the

United States. Moreover, two of the novels have been translated from Bulgarian and Catalan for the first time.

The judging panel is also star-studded in the translated works industry. It is chaired by the prize-winning French-Moroccan novelist, Leïla Slimani. Other judges include Uilleam Blacker, one of Britain's leading literary translators from Ukraine; Tan Twan Eng, the Booker-shortlisted Malaysian novelist; Parul Sehgal, staff writer and critic at the *New Yorker*; and Frederick Studemann, Literary Editor of the *Financial Times*.

Leïla Slimani, Chair of the International Booker Prize 2023 judges, highlights the importance of bringing the list to readers. She believes “what is extraordinary about literature is that when a novel is successful, it works with anyone, anywhere.” She says she’s “very happy to offer this list to readers – a list of remarkable variety, where they will find poetry, fantasy, eroticism and metaphysics.” Like always, the books,

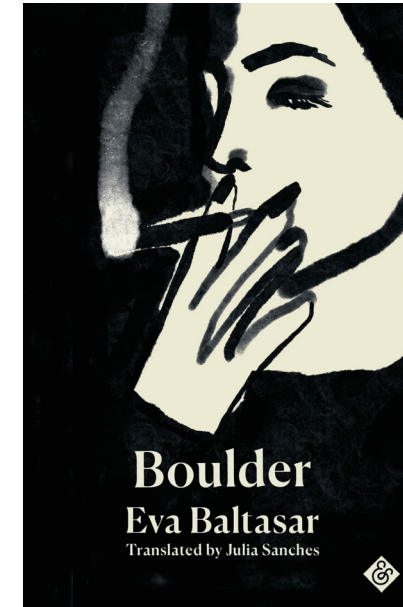
authors and translators the prize celebrates offer readers a window onto the world from global viewpoints and the opportunity to experience the lives of people from different cultures.

So too, Fiammetta Rocco, Administrator of the International Booker Prize, speaks of the trends in translated fiction. She adds that interestingly “just under half the translated fiction sold in Britain is bought by people under 35.” She holds this as “part of a far wider cultural trend in which more and more films, TV series and music originating in languages other than English have become part of the global mainstream.” This shows a positive and promising future for translated books.

***Boulder* by Eva Baltasar, (Catalan) translated by Julia Sanches**

*Boulder* is both the title of this book and the nickname given to the central character (and narrator), encapsulating the solitude that seemingly defines the female protagonist. However, while working on a merchant ship, Boulder meets Samsa and they fall instantly in lust. Tension arises between the couple following a move to Reykjavík where Samsa is eager to establish a life and

family by having a baby, yet Boulder is less keen but still unable to say no. Boulder is therefore confronted with the decision of choosing love or freedom.



Through the characters of Boulder and Samsa, Baltasar depicts a modern love story that “slices open the dilemmas of exchanging independence for intimacy.” *Boulder* presents queer love, desire and sexuality through the narrator's unique voice and the contradictions and limitations of motherhood. As Baltasar put it “loneliness can be hard, but it also frees you up.”

***Time Shelter* by Georgi Gospodinov, (Bulgarian) translated by Angela Rodel**

*Time Shelter* tells the story of Gaustine who opens a “clinic for the past” in which different decades are recreated on each floor in minute detail with the aim of treating Alzheimer's sufferers. However, as the clinic grows in popularity, those in good health increasingly seek out the clinic in order to escape the horrors of the present day and find comfort in the past. Yet the dangers of dwelling in the past become apparent when the idea is hijacked by politicians across Europe and soon “referendums on the past” are held to decide what particular past a country's future will look like.

“The idea of going from the clinics of the past, which deal with patients'/residents' private pasts, to European referendums on the past was the basic framework for the plot from the outset” says Gospodinov. Written between the Brexit referendum and the Russian invasion of Ukraine, this book reveals the possible “weaponisation of nostalgia” that is in fact taken advantage of in present day. It is in this way that Gospodinov is able to shock the reader as they come to recognise that the funny and absurd future in this novel is in fact rather frighteningly close to home.



# Late-Night Shopping

BY HOLLY PRESSWELL, CHRISTIANA JASUTAN AND TAMARA YAMAMOTO

Do you ever find yourself craving a good read in the evening but have nothing left at home to read? Or you just really want to go to a bookshop but it is past 5pm after you finish work and there are no bookshops open? Or maybe you want to be surrounded by books before your night out? Look no further, as we have hand picked some of the best bookstores to browse at night across the UK for you!

## Topping & Company Booksellers – based in Bath BA1 1NG and Edinburgh EH7 5JH

These independent bookshops are open till 9pm every day of the week. Found in the heart of Bath and Edinburgh, in beautiful historical buildings, they really have it all. Spread across three floors, they have every type of book you can imagine from fiction to children's and history to fashion. Hidden amongst the nooks and crannies of the bookshelves are reading corners, some containing sofas for the ultimate comfort and others tables and chairs. So if you do not fancy reading at home, you can always come along and find refuge inside the store. Top tip – if you ask the staff

nicely, they supply tea and coffee for a small charge which you can enjoy while you read!

the warehouse are given a second chance here. So if you fancy something a little different, that is not your



Image Credit: Mark Wray Architects

## The Last Bookshop – 60 Park Street Bristol, BS1 5JN

This bookstore found in Bristol is open until 7pm on weekends and 6:30pm week days. This store is owned by Bill & Ben Books, an independent book selling operation, selling second hand books at a very reasonable price. They work by recycling the returns and samples of the publishing world. All the books that are overstock and left in

typical mainstream read then this is the shop to browse to find some hidden gems.

## Voce Books – 54-57 Allison Street, Birmingham, B5 5TH

Voce Books is located at The Warehouse and opens until 7pm on Wednesdays – Saturdays and until 4pm on Sundays. Situated at the heart of Digbeth, Birmingham, it stands near bars, pubs and restaurants, and is the perfect place to visit before a night out

with your friends. As an independent bookshop, Voce Books focuses on uplifting independent publishers, stocking diverse titles on fiction, translations, poetry, culture and politics, magazines, art and zines. This bookshop is also situated next to a coffee shop and would be the perfect place to visit during the day.



Image Credit: Voce Books

## BookBar – 166 Blackstock Road, London, N5 1HA

We know we have been recommending BookBar a lot, but we just have to for this list of late-night bookshops! This bookshop opens until 9pm on Wednesdays – Saturdays and until 6pm on Sundays and Tuesdays. Not just a regular bookshop, BookBar is mainly a social place where you can meet people and talk about your favourite books over a glass of wine (or coffee and tea). They host events in the bookshop, including book

launches, wine tasting and even “Books and Bangers” (DJ night in the bookshop). This bookshop is truly unique and a must-visit if you are going bookshop hopping in London.

## The Common Press – 118 Bethnal Grn Rd, London E2 6DG

The Common Press bookshop is the newest queer and intersectional bookshop located in the exciting, edgy and bustling streets of Shoreditch. It is open from 10am to 10pm every day of the week except on Monday. The interior of the shop is wonderful, and you will find the largest and greatest selection of diverse books in a wide variety of genres; from fiction by Black authors and essential climate activism books to LGBTQ+ books for both children and adults. Once you walk in, you will feel right at home and can explore all that they have to offer while drinking a nice hot cup of tea or coffee.

## Foyles – 107 Charing Cross Rd, London WC2H 0DT

The iconic flagship on Charing Cross Road, Foyles is a huge, multi-genre bookstore spread over six different floors, offering a wide and versatile selection of books with thousands of different genres. It is a wonderful place for book lovers, and anyone who goes is sure to find something that catches their eye as “If Foyles don’t have it, no-one does.” There is a wonderful jazz cafe inside, where you can sit, eat, read and relax. You can sample their menu of seasonal, fresh food that is all made on-site. At the very top floor of the bookshop, the Auditorium, is where Foyles hosts its year-round programme of literary events and introduces new writers as well as hosting jazz gigs, workshops and more. Please check out their website [here](#) for more information. It is open from 9am to 9pm every day except on Sundays when it closes at 6pm.





# Shuffling of the Shelves:

## May 2023 Part 1

BY HANNAH MOORE, MELISSA TRAN, LUCY SHARDLOW AND MAIREAD ZIELINSKI

With the days getting warmer and the evenings longer, spring really has arrived. What better way to celebrate than with some fantastic new reads that you can dive straight into?

### WHSmith

The WHSmith chart is showcasing the best of the recently released non-fiction titles. At number two is *Feed Your Family for Under a Fiver* by Mitch Lane, better known as Meals by Mitch on TikTok. We are seeing a rise in quick and cheap recipe books in the charts, with this book focusing on “quality budget recipes” and “helping families up and down the country to cope with the cost-of-living crisis.” At number three is *Love, Lists and Labels* by Jemma Solomon, where she reveals her secret

to overcoming anxiety: just a bit of organisation! In this book, the ‘Label Lady’ tells the story of how she turned her love for organisation into a business and how you can improve yours and your family’s life with lists, labels and planning. This book is available to pre-order and is surely going to be a popular title with it already ranking third in the charts.

### Waterstones

Remaining in the Waterstones chart this week is *The Bookseller of Inverness* by S.G. MacLean, which was the Waterstones Book of the Month in March 2023. The novel is a gripping historical thriller that takes place post the 1746 battle of Culloden and follows Iain MacGillivray, who was left for dead in the battle, yet remains alive six

years later by pretending to be deceased. He is now bookselling, living a calm life, but this all changes when a strange man starts hanging around his bookshop, who ends up murdered on the shop floor. Full of mystery, suspense and intrigue, *The Bookseller of Inverness* is the perfect thrilling read. Also remaining in the Waterstones charts are some long standing favourites, including *Lessons in Chemistry* by Bonnie Garmus at number one and *Cleopatra and Frankenstein* by Coco Mellors at number three.

### Amazon

At number one in the Amazon Movers and Shakers chart is an incredibly honest memoir written by singer-songwriter Madison Beer: *The Half of It*. Chronicling the past decade

of her life in the spotlight, Madison reveals the ups, downs and everything in-between. Not only is this a revealing book about the star who shot to fame at twelve-years-old, but it really hits the nail on the head when it comes to social media; that no matter how close the internet makes us feel to people, we really do not know the half of it. At number three, we have a BBC Radio Two Book Club Pick: *Tell Me How This Ends* by Jo Leavers. When Henrietta meets the eccentric Annie, she cannot help but find herself drawn in. Could unlocking Annie’s story be the key to Henrietta rewriting the most devastating passages of her own life?

### Social Media

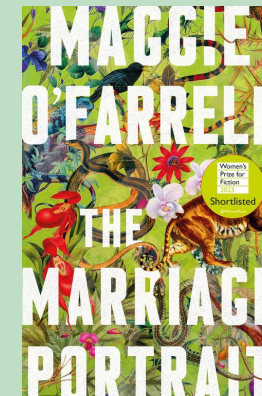
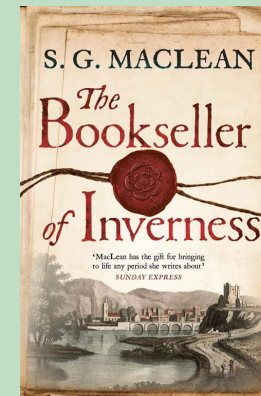
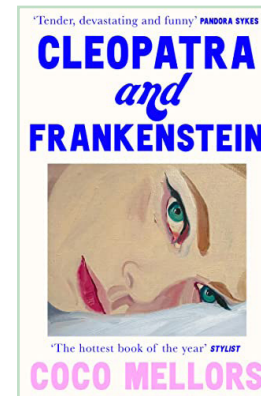
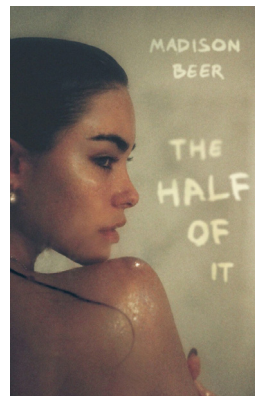
Trending on social media this week, particularly on Bookstagram, is *The Marriage Portrait* by Maggie O’Farrell. This is following the release of the Women’s Prize for Fiction 2023 shortlist, on which this book features. *The Marriage Portrait* has previously been shortlisted

for The British Book Awards 2023 Fiction Book of the Year and for the Waterstones Book of the Year 2022. O’Farrell’s novel is eye-catching with a stunning hardback cover that draws readers in, especially on visual social media platforms such as Bookstagram and BookTok. The novel is set during the Italian Renaissance in 1561 and follows Lucrezia, Duchess of Ferrara, who suspects her husband has taken her to the countryside in order to kill her. Having been sheltered for her entire sixteen years of life, Lucrezia has been thrown into the world of court expectations, heir preservation and dynasty that she now must navigate, all with the looming fear of her husband in the background. *The Marriage Portrait* is a beautifully written novel that is very much worthy of the shortlist nomination that has put it back on the book-related social media radar.

### Noteworthy

This issue’s noteworthy author is Marian Keyes,

with her latest novel *Again, Rachel* having leaped to the number one spot in the UK Official Top 50 charts after its release in February this year. As a bestselling author, Keyes already has an extensive back catalogue of twenty-two books, including sixteen fiction novels, five non-fiction and a short story. *Again, Rachel* is a sequel to her earlier hit, *Rachel’s Holiday*, originally published a quarter of a century ago in 1997. It begins two decades after the original story left off and explores the ways Rachel’s life has changed in the intervening years. With *Rachel’s Holiday* having sold over 1.5 million copies to date, establishing a large and dedicated fanbase for Keyes, it’s no surprise that its sequel has garnered so much popularity. This is well deserved though, as *Again, Rachel* is an expertly crafted tragic comedy that will have you laughing and crying in equal measure as it examines grief, regret and ultimately forgiveness; of others and of yourself.





# The Role of Bloggers and Reviewers in Children’s Literature

BY HOLLY ALLWRIGHT, NICOLE HAYNES, EMMA ROGERS AND EKTA RAJAGOPALAN

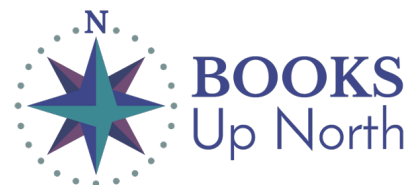
Today’s consumer can easily find a wealth of information related to any genre, author or style of book with the click of a button. We find reviewers and bloggers on every platform and it is easy to understand the value of them when they cover literature consumed by adults, but what is the purpose of these platforms that highlight the younger end of the spectrum?

For starters, they can provide an educational resource for teachers, parents and librarians looking to keep up with the current trends in literature. And for those verbose and slightly older children, they might just stumble across a book that could inspire them enough to put down their screens. We have compiled below some of our favourite voices within the blogosphere.

## Books Up North

When it comes to reviewing children’s books, where better to get your information than from the mouths of the kids themselves. The Kid’s Review section of the *Books Up North* website is divided

into three sections: one to six years, seven to eleven years and twelve plus years, with the youngest section being aided by the helpful hand of an adult. With insights such as “when I am bigger I want to use lots of things and tools to make an invention like Fili does” by three-year-old Adam about *The Invention* by Julia Hubery and James Munro, who could ask for a better way to understand the minds of our youngest readers.



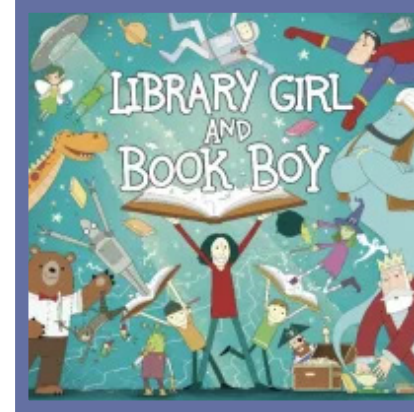
## Library Girl and Book Boy

Mum Jo’s cheerful website embodies the idea of sharing the joy of reading. A passionate reader herself, she believes that there is a book for everyone if you can just find the perfect one. With a vast collection of reviews, discussions and blog tours of children’s books for all ages and abilities,

her website is a gem. Recently she participated in the blog tour of Fiona Woodcock’s new book *Silver Linings*, fostering a beautiful discussion of the strength of a positive mindset. The real importance of *Library Girl and Book Boy* however, is the vast range of content that she covers. With whole tabs of her page dedicated to books on hard hitting topics such as bereavement, mental health and refugees, it is an invaluable resource.

## The LitBuzz Book Hive

*LitBuzz* was created in 2015 by Meg to showcase brand new authors and their books! *LitBuzz* has a focus on young adult novels and they review books from a variety of genres, from romance to dystopian and historical to non-fiction on their website, as well as their social media channels and podcasts. Most recently, blogger Kristen reviewed *The Witch and The Vampire* by Francesca Flores. *LitBuzz* is not just for reviews – they also offer seminar courses for book lovers who want to create their own blogs to become micro-influencers.



## Nothing But Picture Books

*Nothing But Picture Books* is formed of a group of book lovers passionate about sharing the world of picture books! They believe in the power of picture books to entertain, educate, inspire and provide concise and straightforward reviews with a conversational tone. This is the perfect blog for parents, librarians or teachers looking for books to read to their little ones. If you need any more convincing to check out NBPB, they were also named Top Book Reviewer 2022 by Reedsy!

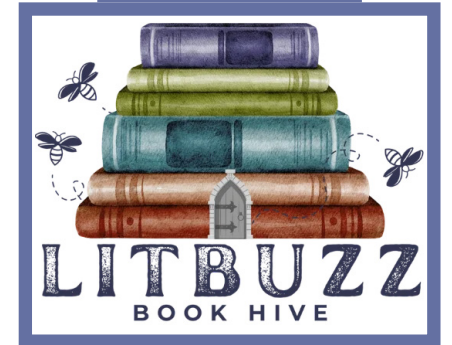
## Kids Lit Book Cafe

*Kids Lit Book Cafe* is a platform dedicated to not only reviewing books, but also improving their sales via various marketing techniques. Their goal is to provide both parents and children with the very best hand-picked fiction books



written by authors who have unique stories to tell. They love and encourage children’s books with quality illustrations which help enhance children’s imagination and curiosity. They also review non-fiction books for parents such as self-help books that give knowledge and guidance on parenting, in addition to non-fiction books for children.

Along with professional reviews, their up-to-date marketing strategies are designed to increase book sales, author awareness and high online visibility. Through various social media platforms and sister sites, their marketing teams execute “targeted” campaigns, ensuring the books reach not only children, but their parents and a wider reading audience. They review and market all ages and genres of children’s books – picture books, middle-grade, pre-teen, teen, comics – to name a few.



## Beyond the Bookends

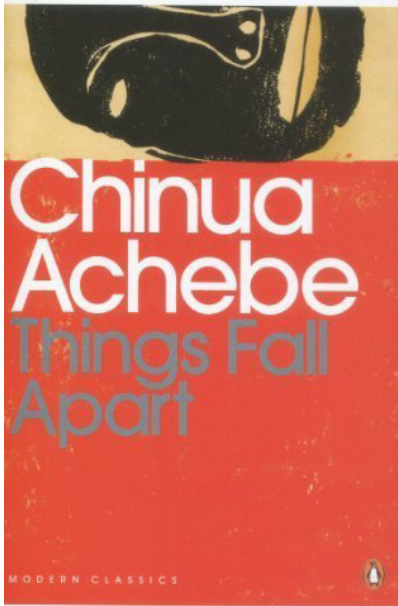
*Beyond the Bookends* was created by two mothers, Jackie and Kirsten, who are poles apart from each other but share two similarities: their love for books and motherhood. Playdates happening at bookstores led to business meetings and now these two women run a successful blog for modern mothers.

Whether it’s hosting a book club or educating mothers on ‘reading readiness’, these two Philadelphia-based women have it all covered. Their children’s section covers a wide spectrum from baby books (age zero to two) to middle-grade books (age ten to three), with a special section for ‘Young Adult’ and ‘School Hub’ – a section that deals with everything school related from lunch prep books to best teachers in literature.

# Classic Historical Fiction

BY MEGAN POWELL, MAGALI PREL AND YAGMUR DUR  
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Most often, classic literature can read like an historical fiction novel. With the transportation and exploration of centuries ago, a past long developed, we get a sense of classical escapism. But this genre is not just popular now, it emerged close to the start of canonical literature. Therefore, this feature is going to explore classic examples of historical fiction.



This will provide a sense of what readers of the time were interested in and how they matched their ideas of escapism. It is interesting to see how similar the formula of historical fiction is, and why it is no surprise that this genre has stood the test of time and is often reproduced.

### *Things Fall Apart* by Chinua Achebe

*Things Fall Apart* tells the story of Okonkwo, a leader in an Igbo village in 1890s Nigeria, during both pre-colonial and British colonialist life. This book narrates Okonkwo struggling with his own sense of identity as well as the effects of British colonialism. Achebe wrote this novel as a response to biased portrayals of Africa by European writers (i.e. Joseph Conrad and his portrayal of Africa in *Heart of Darkness*). Growing up, Achebe was exposed to literature written by Europeans about Africa, but which constructed a very orientalist view of the

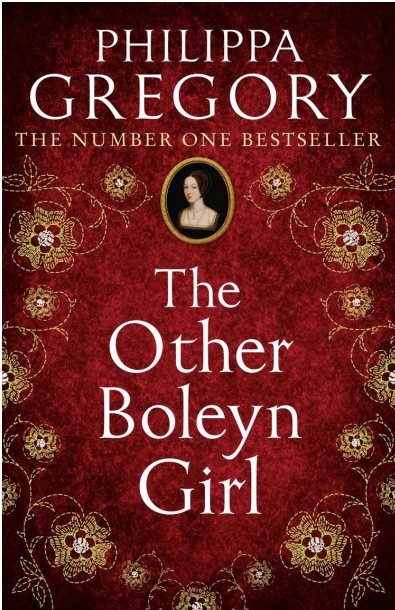
continent, as seen in Joyce Cary's *Mister Johnson*. These novels presented the people of Africa as one-dimensional, brutal savages.

Nigeria was colonised by the British from 1884 to 1960. As the British settled in Nigeria, their wish to convert Nigerian communities to Christianity was prominent. Missionaries were sent over to convert the local population to Christianity, though many refused to convert. However, those who had no current power in their tribal order decided to convert to Christianity. In the novel, the missionaries who come to the village convert only the weaker tribesmen. Missionaries would convince these tribesmen that their tribe worshipped “false gods” who did not have the ability to punish them. Achebe himself was influenced by Western culture, having grown up under British colonisation, but refused to change his Igbo name Chinua to Albert.

### *The Other Boleyn Girl* by Philippa Gregory

The historical novel *The Other Boleyn Girl* was written by historical fiction novelist Philippa Gregory and is loosely based on real life events, but mainly tells the story of the fictionalised life of Mary Boleyn (a 16<sup>th</sup> century aristocrat, mistress to King Henry VIII as well as the sister of Anne Boleyn). The novel first gives the reader a glimpse of Mary's affair with the King, and then her life as the “other Boleyn girl” as her sister Anne Boleyn rises to power by becoming King Henry VIII's wife and the Queen of England.

Throughout the novel, Philippa Gregory explores many themes such as family, love, sex, sexuality, women's social role in the



16<sup>th</sup> century, ambition, social hierarchy and personal freedom. Readers will often find that our protagonist Mary, struggling between her desire to live a quiet life, embraces her new-found role within motherhood and the responsibility she bears to her family and their ambition to establish themselves as one of the most powerful families in England. Through Mary's struggle and Anne's relentless pursuit of becoming the Queen, Gregory shows us that the life of a noblewoman in the 16<sup>th</sup> century was mostly of little freedom. Women were expected to do men's bidding to strengthen their power and position in society, and perhaps give up and lock away their ambitions and desires in order to achieve this.

### *Romola* by George Eliot

Mary Ann Evans', a.k.a. George Eliot, historical novel *Romola* was published in 1862. Set in the city of Florence during the Renaissance, the titular character is married to Tito and daughter of a blind scholar. Her relationship with Tito is tumultuous as he deceives Romola by having a previous marital binding with Tessa, a young girl from Florence. Despite their marriage, Tito treats Tessa as the second wife as he continues his marriage with Romola, but he comes to appreciate Tessa's company



the most. As the historical consequences of the Italian Renaissance continue, Tito becomes embroiled in unscrupulous politics, which makes Romola want to escape both Tito and Florence. She wants to escape as Tito is challenging her values but is convinced to return for her marriage's sake. The love is gone, and Romola learns about his secret marriage with Tessa.

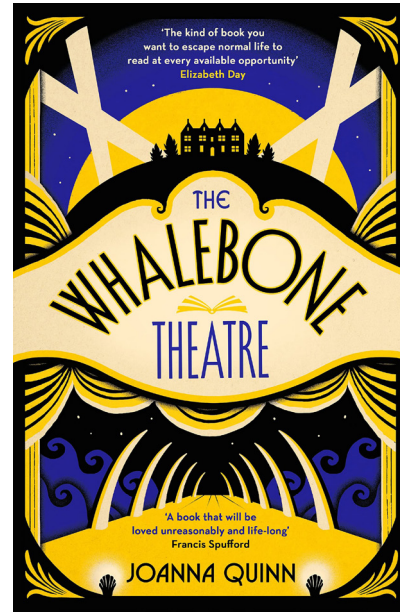
As the politics increase and supporters of the Medici family are killed, Romola leaves the city and learns of Tito's murder. By chance her boat drifts to a village where she helps survivors of the plague, which inspires a new purpose for Romola. Back in Florence she finds Tessa and helps raise her two children imparting wisdom onto the son about her experiences.



# The British Book Awards 2023: A Cover Evaluation

BY MEGAN COOTE, JULIETTE TULLOCH, ABBIE WRIGHT AND LAURA WALLACE

For this issue we have decided to choose our favourite book covers in each category of the British Books Awards 2023 shortlists. The awards showcase the best in British novels and we will be highlighting some of their wonderful designs.



## *The Whalebone Theatre* by Joanna Quinn

Our favourite cover design in the Debut Fiction Book of the Year 2023 is the cover of *The Whalebone Theatre*. The book is written by Joanna Quinn and is described as both a country house novel and a war novel. The design of the cover has taken inspiration from the set of *Before the Dawn* by Kate Bush and has a bold and eye-catching design. The Art Deco style with geometric lines, simple shapes and vivid colours is in keeping with the art style of the setting of this historical fiction. The typeface is also characteristic of this time period.

The cover uses black, yellow and blue as the palette for the cover which creates a dramatic and striking overall look. Spotlights and whalebones are cleverly

incorporated into the geometric design to create the desired style and point to their significance in the book and its title. The cover is arranged carefully with decorative artistic touches, again reminiscent of the Art Deco era, to create a beautiful and enticing cover.

## *As Long As The Lemon Trees Grow* by Zoulfa Katouh

A stand-out design from the Discover Category is the cover for the YA speculative contemporary novel *As Long As The Lemon Trees Grow* by debut Syrian-Canadian author Zoulfa Katouh. The Discover Category was created to amplify stories written by traditionally underrepresented authors and the intricate blue and yellow design was created by illustrator David Curtis. The book is set in war-torn Syria and follows Salama as

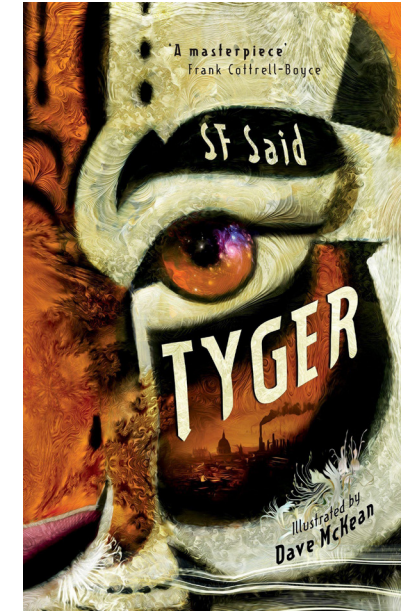
she decides whether or not to flee her native country. From the soft lemon yellow to the lemon tree in the centre, the cover design features lemons heavily. Lemons have important symbolism throughout the novel and in Syria. Specifically in Homs where the book is set, they are a symbol of hope and resistance – hence the importance of including them on the cover and making the lemon tree the focal feature. Stood underneath the lemon tree, against the yellow background, are two silhouettes of a woman and a man. Presumably these represent the female protagonist, Salama, and Kenan, the boy she was supposed to marry before the revolution began. In the book Salama is torn between her choice to leave or stay in Syria and Kenan complicates her decision further. So her being stood with Kenan with the city



in the distance represents this choice. The top corners feature an intricate pattern which appears to be inspired by Girih – a traditional decorative Islamic geometric pattern – another tie to Syrian culture which helps to bring the whole design together.

## *Tyger* by SF Said

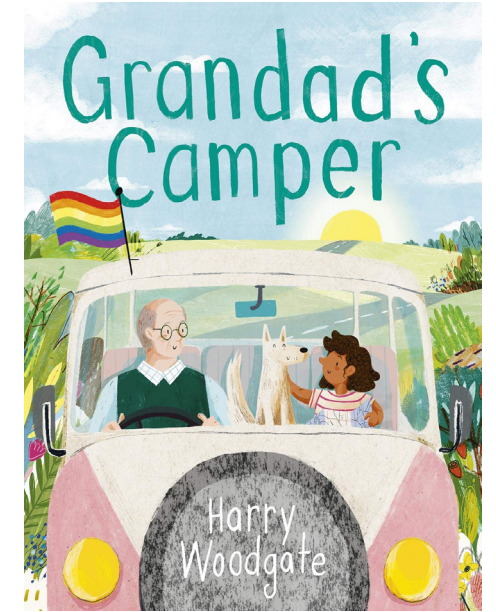
A favourite of ours from the children's fiction category is the beautiful cover of *Tyger*. The story centres on a dystopian future which can be saved by a magical creature found in a rubbish dump in London. The cover, illustrated by Dave McKean, features bold colours and text which is perfect for reaching a younger audience. The whole of the cover is taken up by the image of the creature described in the novel, with the bold patterns of the fur and the galaxy-coloured eyes of the animal



highlighting the mystical quality that it may possess in the novel. As well as this, the images of London in the *Tyger*'s fur adds an extra layer of detail from the story onto the cover, which already paints a picture to the children looking for their next reading adventure. The decision to keep the colour palette simple by mainly using orange, white and black ensures the cover is not too cluttered while still containing all of the relevant information for the reader. Ultimately, the cover is bold, beautiful and perfectly fits into the story it wishes to tell.

## *Grandad's Camper* by Harry Woodgate

In the Illustrated Children's category, Harry Woodgate's *Grandad's Camper* stands out with its cover design's attention to detail. This debut story follows Grandad and their Granddaughter as they



reminisce about Gramps and their time travelling around the world. This poignant picture book explores themes of love, grief and joy in its intricate illustrations and narrative. The cover features a pride flag and textured design that bring depth to the world around them. Woodgate was shortlisted for the V&A Illustration Awards and *Grandad's Camper* won the Waterstones Children's Book Awards in 2022.

Woodgate has also created a sequel, *Grandad's Pride*, and they have created other notable works such as *My Small World: Dinosaurs and Little Glow*. It's clear that Woodgate illustrates fun and moving works that are inclusive and much needed within children's publishing. You can view more of Woodgate's works on their website.



# Spotlight On: Charco Press

BY MOLLIE GREGORY-CLARK, PRIYANKA JOSHI AND ISOBEL JONES

Charco Press, based in Edinburgh, is an independent publisher dedicated to bringing contemporary Latin American literature to the forefront. Established in 2017 by Carolina Orloff and Samuel McDowell, Charco Press acts as a bridge connecting the readers of the English-speaking world to Latin American literature.

Determined to transform the current literary scene and represent literature that has been overlooked, Charcoal Press use of contemporary translators has brought them notable success, including three International Booker Prize nominations.

Among other honours, Charcoal Pr has published the 2021 Premio Valle Inclán winner, *A Musical Offering* translated by Fionn Petch, and the 2019 Jabuti Award winner, *Resistance* by Julián Fuks. Moreover, the Press was voted Scotland Small Press of the Year at the Nibbies (British Book Awards) in 2021 and 2019, and has been nominated for Publisher of the Year at the Scottish National Literary Awards.

## New Releases

### *The Remains* - Margo Glantz

Following the sudden death of renowned pianist and composer Juan, his ex-wife, Nora Garcia, a cellist, returns to the Mexican village of her past for the funeral, recounting the art and music of their life together. Scenes from the past begin to circulate in her mind, creating a story described as a symphony in words. Filled with motifs, repetition and contrapuntal notes, shifting between Nora's life with Juan and the present day *The Remains* is a novel about love, loss and the ways that music and art can create our identities.

### *You Shall Leave Your Land* - Renato Cisneros

In this captivating sequel to his award-winning memoir, Peruvian author Renato Cisneros explores his family's past in the early 1820s, starting with his great-great-grandmothers secret relationship with a priest and the toll this secrecy took on

their seven children. With Peru's changing political landscape becoming a paramount influence on the family's lives, Renato Cisneros writes an engaging account of a powerful family within this extraordinary work of autofiction.

### *A Little Luck* - Claudia Pineiro

Finalist for the 2022 International Booker Prize *A Little Luck* follows Mary Lohan's return to the Buenos Aires suburb she escaped from twenty years prior following a dreadful incident, leaving her son behind. Upon her return, she is not the same. She does not look the same, sound the same or even have the same name, yet the past soon begins to show itself in this fascinating, emotive fiction. In this highly accomplished and original novel, Pineiro skilfully explores loss and the search for home, the weight of lies and tragedies that can follow a single event.

### *Two Sherpas* - Sebastian Martinez Daniell

In this unpredictable mixture of matters of life and death, two Sherpas look over the mountain edge at the unmoving body of an English climber attempting to climb

Mount Everest. Wondering what to do next, Daniell takes us into the minds of the Sherpas, their histories and aspirations. Masterfully translated by Jennifer Croft, *Two Sherpas* is a profound, simple and beautiful novel with so much to explore.

## Notable Releases

### *The Adventures of China Iron* - Gabriela Cabezón Cámara

It's 1872 and China Iron, the teenage wife of Argentina's most canonical literary figure, Martín Fierro, wants to tell her side of the country's foundational fiction. In this queer, feminist, post-colonial re-imagining of José Hernández' epic poem, Cabezón Cámara gives voice to those who were originally excluded from Argentina's nation-building narratives, re-framing history as she writes. Join China – and her companion-turned-lover, Liz – on her exhilarating journey of sexual liberation and self-discovery as she explores the ruggedly beautiful landscapes and indigenous territories of the Argentine Pampas.

### *Homesick* - Jennifer Croft

This poignant auto-fictional memoir from the award-winning translator, Jennifer Croft, is the perfect read for language lovers. Interspersed

with ruminations on the origins and power of words, *Homesick* provides snapshots into the early life of our protagonist, Amy, a gifted linguist and the protective older sister of Zoe, who suffers with a debilitating illness. The girls' sisterly bond is explored through their unique form of mutual understanding – common experiences, shared references, particular turns-of-phrase – ultimately transforming the narrative into a celebration of the richness of language and the transformative effect it can have on our understanding of ourselves and our relationships to others.

### *Resistance* - Julián Fuks

A complex meditation on memory, belonging, and silenced histories, *Resistance* is narrated by Julián Fuks' auto-fictional alter-ego, Sebastián, a child of political refugees whose liberal parents fled the Argentine dictatorship for Brazil in 1974. Before their departure to São Paulo, Sebastián's parents adopted his older brother – a boy whose origins remain a mystery to his adoptive family and who, with age, becomes increasingly withdrawn from family life. The chasm of silence that opens up between Sebastián's family members in relation

to their traumatic memories causes him to wonder: How should one cope with a reluctance to talk about the past? What does it mean, as a child of exile, to be intimately connected to a country in which you've never lived? And, perhaps most hauntingly, could his brother possibly be the child of disappeared political opponents?



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BLOOMSBURY

# Job Opportunities

By SHERIDAN PENA, AIMEE WHITTLE AND JOANNE BOUSTEAD

50<sup>th</sup> SEARCH PRESS LIMITED  
The world's finest art and craft books

T B P

## Export Sales & Operations assistant at Faber & Faber

**Closing Date:** 11 May 2023  
**Salary:** £27,700  
**Location:** London

Looking to get into publishing? Have you considered going into sales?

The Sales department at Faber is looking to recruit an Export Sales and Operations Assistant to work as part of the sales team in support of Faber and the Independent Alliance – of which they are a part – across all international territories.

If successful, you will be liaising closely with the international account managers, export agents and multiple warehouses to ensure that all customer needs are met.

Responsibilities include: preparing sales packs and sales figures; monitoring accounts and processing orders; preparing for meetings and following up on action points and liaising closely with the third-party Alliance publishers. You will also be attending book fairs and supporting the team with organising the company presence at major book fairs.

This is an excellent opportunity for anyone who wants to learn about one of the most diverse and fast growing areas of publishing.

The ideal candidate will be a book lover with proven administration skills, excellent organisational and interpersonal skills, a good eye for detail and strong numeracy skills. Previous publishing experience is not essential, but you'll want to have a good working knowledge of Google mail, Excel and Word.

If this sounds like it could be for you, then please find more information [here](#).

## Production Assistant, Adult (Trade and Special Interest) Division at Bloomsbury

**Closing Date:** 14 May 2023  
**Salary:** £25,000  
**Location:** London (hybrid work option available with Monday and Tuesday office days)

For those interested in the production aspect of publishing, check out this open Production Assistant position at Bloomsbury!

Bloomsbury does wish for interested candidates to have completed a publishing course that included a print

production component. They are also looking for someone with strong organisation skills, an eye for detail, good time management and someone familiar with Microsoft Word and Excel.

This role would include duties such as managing the creation of eBooks, processing reprints, providing accurate costing for reprints and offering general administrative support as needed. The Production Assistant will report to the Mono Production Manager.

Click [here](#) for more information.

## Editorial Assistant at Search Press

**Closing Date:** 15 May 2023  
**Salary:** £18,000–£22,000  
**Location:** Tunbridge Wells

Search Press, a publishing house specialising in art and craft books, has a vacancy in their editorial department.

The Editorial Assistant will be responsible for helping to create digital books, proofreading and copywriting, overseeing corrections on reprints, managing the company's bibliographic data software called Stison, performing

office administrative tasks and project managing their own titles.

The ideal candidate will have a skillset that includes excellent organisation, great written and verbal communication, attention to detail, and being able to familiarise oneself with new software quickly and seamlessly.

For more information, check out this [link](#).

## Team Assistant, Account Management (entry-level) at The Blair Partnership

**Closing Date:** 17 May 2023  
**Salary:** £20,000–£30,000  
**Location:** Greater London

Check out this exciting entry-level opportunity to support Pottermore Publishing's accounts team, all while immersing yourself in the magical world of Harry Potter!

Pottermore Publishing is the global digital publisher of the Harry Potter and Fantastic Beasts series, as well as other audiobooks and eBooks from the Wizarding World™. They operate under the same roof as The Blair Partnership, working as close colleagues with a shared culture.

As an assistant to the Accounts Team, you would be focused on maintaining regular communication with partners and providing organisational, administrative and operational support for the Accounts Team. The job will involve some administrative duties for the Publishing Director as well as collaborating with teams across Pottermore Publishing and The Blair Partnership.

The ideal candidate will have an interest in publishing and/or sales and account management, strong teamworking skills and the ability to maintain good working relationships. You must be detail-oriented, organised, confident, self-motivated and inquisitive. You should be articulate and a good communicator, as well as able to work discretely and confidentially. Make sure you are proficient in using MS Office to include Word, Excel and PowerPoint. Remember to brush up on your literacy and numerical skills before applying! Find out more [here](#).

## International Publishing Assistant, Wizarding World at The Blair Partnership

**Closing Date:** 26 May 2023  
**Salary:** £20,000–£30,000  
**Location:** London

Another brilliant entry-level opportunity has arisen at The Blair Partnership! As International Publishing Assistant, you will take a dive into the translation rights of all Wizarding World titles.

Working across all aspects of publishing, you will provide administrative support on a day-to-day basis for the International Publishing team and collaborate with international partners on editorial, marketing and sales.

With the opportunity to develop your skills and take on further responsibilities, the ideal candidate will have a desire to pursue a career in a sales and licensing role, as well as have a willingness to learn. You should be organised, proficient in Microsoft Office, and possess excellent communication skills. A knowledge of the Wizarding World would be beneficial for this role.

You can find more information about the role [here](#).



# LGBTQIA+ Anthologies for Your Reading List

BY CARLY BENNETT, RHYS WRIGHT, BECCA BINNIE AND ROSIE GREEN

Through collecting different works, anthologies can be fascinating reads that teach readers about themes or topics. Below we have included some notable LGBTQIA+ representative anthologies that look to enlighten and inspire. These moving and poignant works of all formats tell of real-life experiences and historical circumstances.

***Fat and Queer: An Anthology of Queer and Trans Bodies and Lives* edited by Miguel M. Morales, Bruce Owens Grimm and Tiff Joshua TJ Ferentini**

Centring the intersection of fatness and queerness, *Fat and Queer* is a multi-form anthology that ranges easily from poetry and prose and covers a hugely diverse plethora of lived experiences. Contributors include Carmen Maria Machado, Dan Vera, Aubrey Gordon and more, delving into everything from race to attraction, from self-love to ageing, all coming back to the focal point of navigating the world as a person who is body fat and queer.

There is some truly beautiful poetry within the anthology, with Jay Audrey's *Seven Nights of Noodles* and Sherre Vernon's *About my Breasts, Since you Asked* standing out as two highlights. *Soft Butch* by Nora E. Derrington and M.P. Armstrong's *She Doesn't Need Any More Dresses* are two of the prose entries that stayed in my mind long after reading, though there is so much more to enjoy than just these four stories. If you're fat and queer and have been searching for a glimpse of representation then you'll find it here on each and every page. While I would urge readers to check the trigger warnings before diving in, this collection is comforting from the outset, brimming over with love and solidarity for a lived experience that is so rarely represented in queer literature.

***The Stonewall Reader* edited by Jason Baumann**

The contentious history of the Stonewall riots often brings up questions of who was really there, what precisely happened and how, as well as who's been excluded from the narrative

and what prior histories were overwritten so that Stonewall could be branded the birth of the queer liberation movement. *The Stonewall Reader* allows us to answer these questions for ourselves through an anthology of first-hand accounts taken mostly from the New York Public Library's LGBTQIA+ archives.

*The Stonewall Reader* is composed of interviews, memoirs, reportage, manifestos and various other historical artefacts from before, during and after Stonewall, ranging from figures as well-known as Audre Lorde and Marsha P. Johnson to lesser-known figures and oral histories. If you're interested in discovering things you never knew about LGBTQIA+ history both before and after Stonewall, this anthology is a must-read. It brings together writings from authors across gender identities, sexual orientations, races and beliefs to chart an evolution of queer identity forever changed by Stonewall.

***The Love That Dares: Letters of LGBTQ+ Love & Friendship Through History* by Barbara Vesey and Rachel Smith**

Published in January 2022 by Octopus Publishing, this anthology collates letters of LGBTQIA+ love and friendship throughout history. The book brings together correspondence from some of the twentieth century's key creative figures.

A letter can carry love through many centuries and these letters speak volumes about the persistence of courage and devotion. As a beautiful celebration of LGBTQIA+ love and friendship, the letters reveal how relationships thrived in sealed envelopes whilst society was ignorant.

Letters written by John Cage, Benjamin Britten, Walt Whitman, Eleanor Roosevelt, Vita Sackville-West and more give the reader an insight into the real and glorious life

of fame and fortune. Aside from the famous names, the letters also belong to lesser-known writers; this gives the reader a glimpse of love outside of the spotlight.

Engaging introductions give the letters historical context to show LGBTQIA+ love has always flourished despite barriers and obstacles. This anthology of letters is enlightening, touching and fascinating – definitely worth checking out!

***Proud* edited by Juno Dawson**

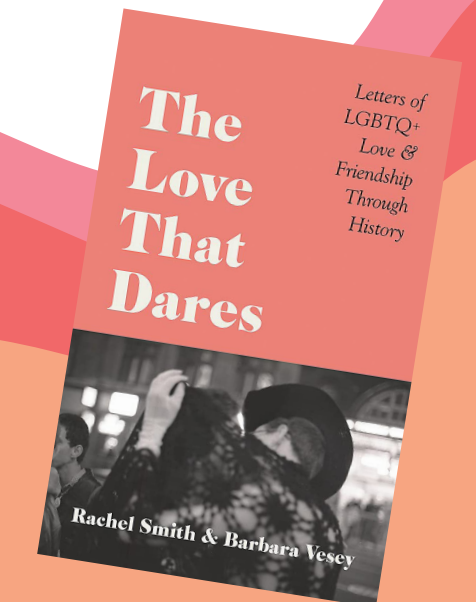
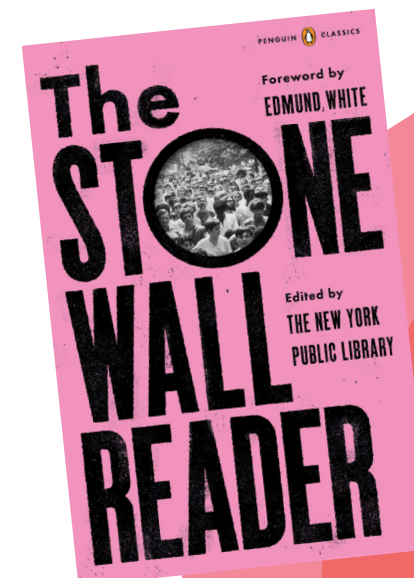
This YA anthology of LGBTQIA+ poetry and prose covers various genres from enchanting fantasy worlds to delightfully cliché romcoms in its exploration of queer relationships and pride. It features contributions from both well-known and debut writers and each piece is complemented by gorgeous illustrations from a diverse range of artists.

Its tone ranges from charmingly funny as Simon James Green's protagonist

finds his coming out upstaged by gay penguins, to hopeful in Fox Benwell's story about a Dungeons and Dragons party bringing their heroism to the real world, winding through a spectrum of queer teen emotions in between to close with Dean Atta's beautiful poem about there being no wrong way to come out.

With stories about all kinds of love, from the nervousness of first crushes to the devotion of young love, the understanding of friendships and solidarity of a community together, the anthology will be a comfort to anyone feeling lonely in their identity.

While the collection encompasses different genres, mediums and identities, at the heart of each contribution is a joyful celebration of queer love – whether in romance, friendship or community – which come together in a hopeful and heartfelt anthology that will make any queer teen, or adult, feel proud.



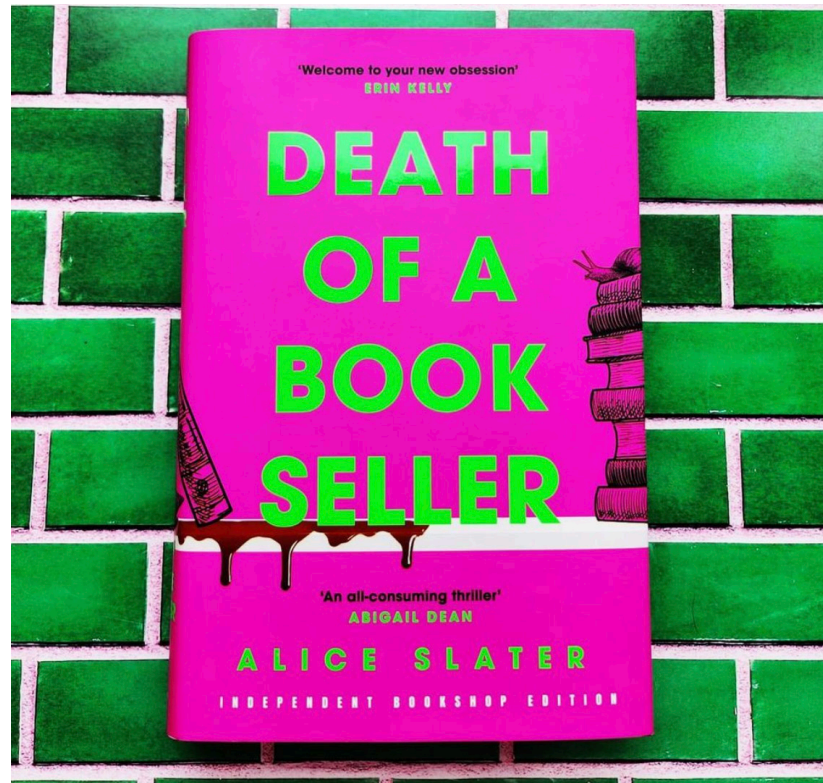
# Campaign Spotlight: Death of a Bookseller by Alice Slater

AMY GREENSMITH, DANIELLE HERNANDEZ, EMILY LAVIN AND GEORGIA REES

## Introduction

Alice Slater – former bookseller and host of *What Page Are You On?* podcast – has burst onto the contemporary fiction scene with her debut novel *Death of a Bookseller*. Published by Hodder & Stoughton, the thriller follows Roach, a socially isolated bookseller with a penchant for true crime and all things morbid. Although content with her life of solitude, Roach cannot help but become enamoured with Laura – a new hire at the bookshop. Roach’s fascination is spurred by a suspicion that Laura’s sunny exterior masks a darker and more sinister disposition. As Roach’s fascination turns to menacing obsession, the thriller reaches its boiling point.

Prior to its release on 27 April 2023, *Death of a Bookseller* had been lauded by early reviewers for its skilful examination of social isolation, morbid obsession and dark inner lives.



The marketing campaign for *Death of a Bookseller* includes active social media promotion and an extensive tour of both major and independent bookstores throughout the UK. Moreover, bookstores across the country are awash with eye-catching neon displays promoting the new novel. This article will explore all avenues of *Death of a Bookseller*’s marketing campaign.

## Social Media

A large part of the *Death of a Bookseller* marketing campaign has taken place online, with author Alice Slater being particularly active across her social media platforms. The tagline “horrible little book” has been used often in PR packages and on posts across socials, cleverly summing up Slater’s debut in three simple words. The

vivid pink and green of the UK cover – incidentally representing the characters Roach and Laura – has been splashed across our timelines with ads, merchandise and PR goodies all sticking to the colour palette. Slater first revealed the eye catching cover, designed by Lewis Csizmazia, on Halloween – 31 October 2022 – choosing the spookiest and most true-crime day of the year. Playing into the characters’ propensity for a night out, Slater also posted themed character cocktails to her TikTok account, with Laura’s featuring rose petal vodka and rose syrup to reflect her rose-scented perfume, and Roach’s being just a can of Strongbow Dark Fruits – her drink of choice.

As a treat for the indie bookshop customers, the publishers released a limited run of reverse colourway pink and green covers, featuring special endpapers and each coming numbered and signed. Each indie book came alongside a pin-on snail badge representing ‘Bleep,’ Roach’s pet snail, and also the snails that have infested Laura’s flat. To incentivise pre-orders, Hodder & Stoughton created a competition whereby customers who pre-ordered the book had the opportunity to win a Kindle Scribe worth £350. The marketing team

also created an online interactive quiz linked to their Twitter where users could find out if they were a Roach or a Laura, and were in with a chance to win a National Book Token if they posted their results to Twitter.

## Book Events

In the week leading up to publication, Alice Slater joined The Book Fairies (a campaign launched in 2017 to share great reads by hiding books across the globe for lucky readers to find) to leave a trail of books across the UK. Copies were hidden in many locations referenced in *Death of a Bookseller*, creating a literary scavenger hunt, from the Devonshire Arms in Camden to several places in Walthamstow – including a graveyard! The Book Fairies are a great way to create buzz for upcoming releases and give readers a chance to find a copy for themselves.

Alongside the book trail, the marketing team at Hodder Fiction have devised a packed book tour for Alice Slater all over the UK. Beginning her series of promotional appearances, Slater was joined by fellow author Bethany Rutter (*Welcome to Your Life*) to

discuss her debut novel, at a sold-out event at Daunt Books Summertown, ahead of publication. The tour will continue with Waterstones Gower Street hosting the book’s launch (another sold-out event), as well as a sentimental visit to Waterstones Deansgate where the author began her career as a bookseller. Slater will also appear at Edinburgh’s Portobello Bookshop, with Kirsty Logan (*Now She is Witch*) – an event that offers the opportunity to attend via livestream – and The West Kirby Bookshop, with Simon Savidge (*Savidge Reads*), which includes a copy of the book, a goodie bundle and cocktails inspired by the novel.

Perhaps the most exciting event on this book tour is Slater’s final appearance at Phlox Books, London. The independent bookshop, closely located to the main settings of the book – Leytonstone, Walthamstow and Waltham Forest – promises a book event unlike any other. Phlox has organised a night that consists of author conversation, audience questions, a pub quiz, Cluedo and (most importantly) cocktails!



# Not to be Overlooked

BY NATALIA ALVAREZ AND GURNISH KAUR

Not to be Overlooked introduces a variety of wonderful but lesser-known books to assist readers in finding their next great reads. This week’s column covers a review of *A Tidy Ending* by Joanna Cannon and *Love Marriage* by Monica Ali.

## A Tidy Ending by Joanna Cannon

From bestselling author of *The Trouble With Goats and Sheep* and *Three Things About Elise* comes Joanna Cannon’s third novel, *A Tidy Ending*. This is a captivating murder mystery released 2 August 2022 through Scribner that focuses on the life of unreliable narrator, forty-two-year-old Linda Hammett. This was my first time reading a novel by Joanna Cannon and I have to say it did not disappoint.

Throughout this novel, we follow Linda as she and her husband Terry navigate moving to a new town and easing into a new life in

their English housing estate. For those on the outside, they seem like perfectly ordinary individuals, however when mail from a previous resident named Rebecca Finch starts appearing, Linda takes it upon herself to find this woman and see if the glamorous life depicted in the catalogues Rebecca subscribes to align with the woman herself. This occurs while women in and around the estate start to go missing and are eventually found murdered. In Linda’s mind, everyone is a suspect. This is due in large to the unhappy and traumatic events that take place in Linda’s childhood. She shows herself to be friendless, socially inexperienced and overall unfulfilled. This leads Linda to live a rather boring life up until this point: revolving around working part-time at a local charity shop, cooking and keeping her house tidy and visiting her mother. As things get messier and messier in Linda’s life, she clings to what she knows as her search for Rebecca

grows into an obsession and the bodies continue to pile up. These events force Linda to confront her own past traumas that have followed her into adulthood, creating a woman who is constantly uncertain, fearful of germs and quotes her ageing mother far too often.

*A Tidy Ending* is a darkly comedic novel that introduces readers to an unreliable narrator who is continuously changing from one minute to the next, keeping readers constantly on their toes and second guessing every event that takes place. I would recommend this novel to anyone in need of a fun, quirky murder mystery. This is a story that promises to keep you on the edge of your seat from beginning to end. I greatly enjoyed this read and cannot wait to see what Joanna Cannon does next.

## Love Marriage by Monica Ali

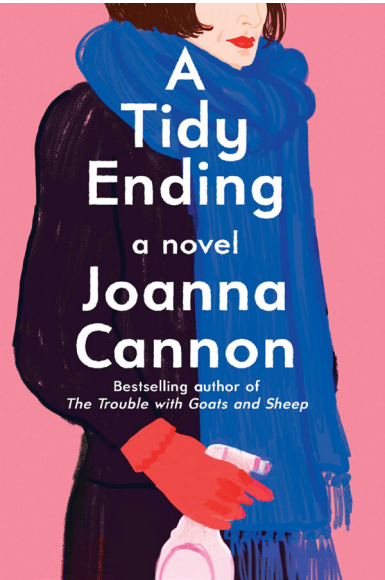
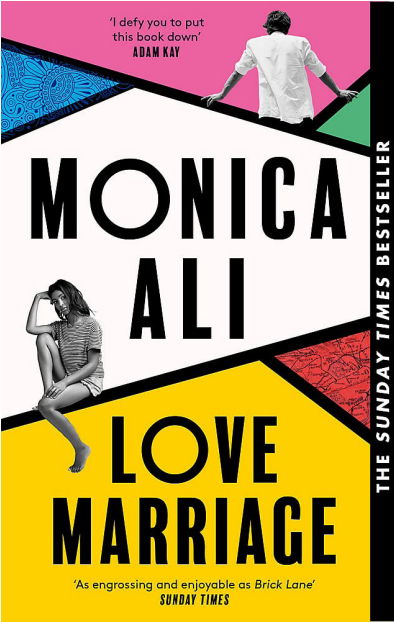
From her bestselling debut novel, *Brick Lane* (published in 2003) to *Love Marriage* (published in 2022), Monica Ali has continued to deliver detailed and accessible South Asian characters. *Love Marriage* has been reviewed as the “best book of 2022 so far” in *The New Yorker* and Monica Ali herself has been awarded the Man Booker Prize for fiction. It is an understatement that Monica Ali’s storytelling has widened the pool for South Asian writers in the literary field.

To many, falling in love and proceeding to marriage is simply “marriage” – tying the knot. But for many even the act of marriage has its complexities. “Love marriage” is a term used across many cultures to describe a marriage driven solely by the couple, who have found each other and are in love. As the novel opens, we are introduced to the protagonist Yasmin, who is taking her love marriage to the next step. Introducing her parents to her fiancé’s outspoken, feminist mother. Harriet is a courageous activist, author and the soon-to-be mother-in-law to Yasmin.

Ali sets the foundation of the novel through two central families. The Ghoramis and the Sangsters. The story moves through Yasmin’s lens: we observe Yasmin steering her career, her rocky engagement and the responsibility of the eldest Indian daughter. As Yasmin navigates her love marriage and new relationships, betrayal, secrets and hidden trauma unravels in front of her.

The novel is structured with great thought, giving readers glimpses of Yasmin’s relationships as the chapters alternate seamlessly. The tapestry of Yasmin’s thoughts and feelings created by the chapters mirrors Ali’s layered commentary on religion, politics and family dynamics.

Yasmin is a British Indian trainee doctor who has fallen in love with fellow medic, Joe. The culture clash of Joe and Yasmin’s families is playfully written yet has complete truth behind it. What happens when you fall in love with someone outside your faith and culture? Everyone’s story is different and so is Yasmin and Joe’s love marriage.



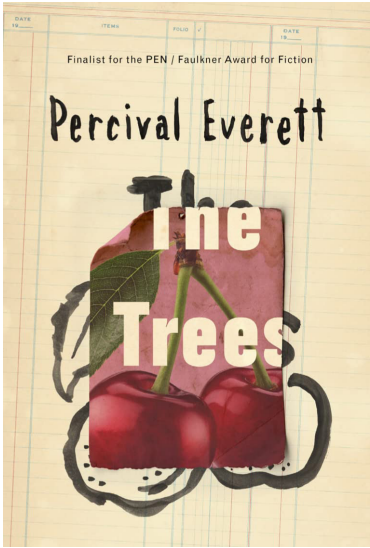
# Dublin Literary Award: Shortlist Announced

BY BRODIE MCKENZIE, ANNA-MARIA POKU, GRACE BRIGGS-JONES AND CLARA GARNIER-BARSANTI  
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The Dublin Literary Award has announced the shortlist for its twenty-eighth year and we can't wait to share our thoughts on the nominees with you!

This award is presented annually for novels written in English or translated into English. The award gives a platform to excellent world literature and is solely sponsored by Dublin City Council and administered by Dublin City Libraries. Nominations are submitted by libraries in major cities all over the world, making the award very unique and exciting.

The winning author of books written in English can expect a cash prize of €100,000, or for translated novels €75,000 goes to the author with the remaining €25,000 being awarded to the translator – how incredible is that? The winner also receives a trophy provided by Dublin City Council.



Percival Everett's *The Trees*, which was also shortlisted for the 2022 Booker Prize, is a page-turning, nail-biting crime novel that opens with a string of brutal murders in the town of Money, Mississippi. The murders each compose a small piece of a larger puzzle, because at the scene of each crime is a second dead body: a corpse resembling a young Black man named Emmett Till, who was lynched several decades before. We think *The Trees* is undoubtedly a novel which shall boast a lasting importance, taking direct aim at police violence and racism – two concepts which, as

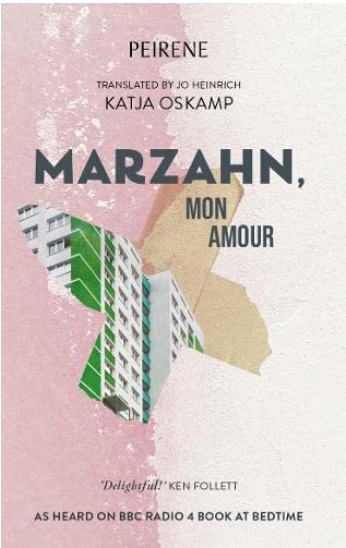
is becoming increasingly evident, often go hand-in-hand.

Also on the shortlist is *Love Novel* by Ivana Sajko, translated by Mima Simić. The novel, said to be a brutally honest tale of a marriage in peril following a new child and economic uncertainty, is a searing look at the kind of resentment that forms when a love goes stale. The main characters are not particularly sympathetic – she is a washed-up actress and he is a struggling novelist. Through the lens of a complicated but realistic couple and ultimately, while this is an uncomfortable read, it is a necessary one. The story with its ironic title, is the first of V&Q's new English language imprint to be translated from a language other than German.

*Marzahn, Mon Amour* by Katja Oskamp, translated by Jo Heinrich is the next book on the shortlist. Part memoir, part collective history, this clever novel follows a woman in the thick of the “invisible” middle aged years who abandons

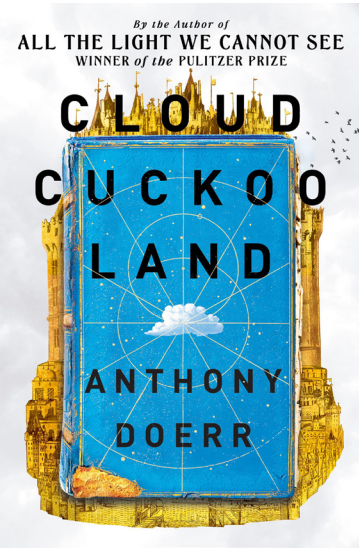
her failing writing career to retrain as a chiropodist in an East Berlin suburb. At the foot of her chair, she listens to her patients' stories with empathy and curiosity. Each story stands alone but together, they paint a unique portrait of community. Oskamp's novel is a timely and poignant reflection on life and our ability to form connections and relate with others even in the most unlikely of circumstances. A must read.

A virtuosic novel of profound power and sensitivity, Kim Thúy's award winning novel *Em*, translated by Sheila Fischman, has found itself on the shortlist. A thoroughly personal book, Thúy entrusts readers enough to share not only the pervasive love she feels but also the rage and the horror at what she and so many other children of the Vietnam War had to



live through. Through the linked destinies of characters connected by birth and fate, Thúy shows how human lives are shaped by both unspeakable trauma and also the beautiful sacrifices of those who made sure at least some of the children survived. Written in Thúy's trademark style, this is a must read.

From the acclaimed author Anthony Doerr, *Cloud Cuckoo Land* is a luminous feat of imagination. This novel traces five unforgettable characters through three distinct time periods, all connected by a prize copy of a mysterious ancient text. Dreamers and misfits, on the cusp of adulthood, struggling to survive and finding resourcefulness and hope in the midst of peril, a single copy of the story of Aethon provides solace, mystery and the most profound human



connection to the characters. Doerr's novel is a must read and holds a deserving place on the shortlist.

The last candidate, longlisted for the International Booker Prize in 2022, brings us into the underworld of Mexico with a piercing narration. *Paradaís* written by Fernanda Melchor and translated by Sophie Hughes is a beautiful piece of writing, showing rather than judging the fight between the 1% and those under their service, where the only way out is through the narcos in an environment full of violence. It's compelling and can be triggering, but books are windows to realities: to anyone at ease, it is a must read.

If you head to the Dublin Literary Award website there are beautiful excerpts of each book on the shortlist, really showing why these novels have made the list. The winner will be announced on Thursday 25 May 2023 and we know it is going to be tough to choose just one! We send a big congratulations to everyone on the shortlist – each and every book deserves to be recognised for what they bring to the literary scene.



# Upcoming Publishing Events

BY SOPHIE DICKINSON, ERIN EVETT AND MARIA SADEK

## Rebecca F. Kuang “Yellowface” with Sharlene Teo

26 May, 7:00–8:00 p.m.  
Blackwell’s Bookshop,  
Oxford

Rebecca F. Kuang is the award winning *New York Times* number one bestselling author of *The Poppy War* trilogy and *Babel: An Arcane History*. Her new novel *Yellowface* focuses on integrity in the publishing industry after an author steals a dead author’s manuscript and publishes it under her name, and the consequences which follow this. Kaung will be discussing the novel and copies will be available to purchase on the evening. For more information and tickets, [click here](#).

## The British Book Awards Ceremony

15 May, 5:00 p.m.  
to 01:00 a.m.  
JW Marriott Grosvenor  
House, London / Online

The British Book Awards is back for 2023! This year has some amazing nominations across various categories, with both books and trade nominations to be shown throughout the night.



They will also be hosting a livestream of the awards ceremony for those who aren’t attending in person. For more information on the nominees for books, [click here](#), and for trade, [click here](#). For more information about the livestream as it becomes available, [click here](#).

## Fowey Festival of Arts and Literature

12–20 May

2023 marks the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Fowey Festival of Arts and Literature, and they are celebrating with an exciting range of events with some famous faces. Whether you’re interested in politics, history, music or fiction, there truly is something for everyone. For more information and to book your tickets and see a complete list of events, click [here](#).

A select few events are:

### Lennie Goodings – Virago at 50

13 May, 4:00–5:00 p.m.  
Fowey Town Hall, Fowey

Join Lennie Goodings as she discusses her memoir *A Bite of the Apple* and her journey to becoming the chair of the feminist publisher Virago Books. As a ground-breaking literary editor, she has worked with some of the most renowned female authors of our day, including Maya Angelou and Margaret Attwood. If you are interested in writing, editing or the inner workings of publishing houses, this will be the perfect event for you. To book tickets, click [here](#).

### Daphne du Maurier’s Fowey – Guided Walk

14 May, 10:30–12:30 p.m.  
Finish Town Quay, Fowey

If you prefer to learn about the lives of your favourite authors, don’t miss out

on the opportunity to take a guided walk through Daphne du Maurier’s life in Fowey and learn about the inspirations behind her captivating novels. To book tickets, click [here](#).

### Fern Britton – The Good Servant

16 May, 8:00–9:00 p.m.  
Fowey Town Hall, Fowey

Meet Fern Britton, author of ten *Sunday Times* best-selling novels, who is also known for her work in broadcasting and presenting. She will be in conversation with Daphne Skinnard, Assistant Editor on BBC Radio Cornwall, about her new book *The Good Servant*, which focuses on the life of Marion Crawford, known as Crawfie, the governess to the royal princesses, Elizabeth and Margaret. To book tickets, click [here](#).

### Iain Dale – On This Day in Politics – Britain’s Political History in 365 Days

19 May, 6:00–7:00 p.m.  
Fowey Parish Church, Fowey

Meet Iain Dale, acclaimed political journalist, as he discusses his new, informative book *On This Day in Politics*. Dale does not hold back his opinions on all the key moments you need to know about in British political history on every day from 01 January to 31 December. To book tickets and learn more about this new book and British political history, click [here](#).



Photo Credit: Adam Kay

### An Evening with Adam Kay

18 May, 7:30 p.m.  
Dulwich College, London

Don’t miss this exciting opportunity to meet best-selling author of *This is Going to Hurt*, Adam Kay, as he discusses what’s happened since he made the decision to leave the medical field. In his new book *Undoctored*, Kay looks back over his career as a doctor, the scars it left him with and how he is embracing these memories and taking them with him as he moves forward. A much-anticipated follow-up to his debut novel, which became the best-selling UK narrative non-fiction book of the twenty-first century, *Undoctored* and this event should not be missed! To book tickets or find out more information, click [here](#).

### Violent Phenomena: In Conversation with Sawad Hussain and Ayesha M. Siddiqi

19 May, 8:00 p.m.  
Medawar Building,  
UCL, London

Those interested in translated literature should not miss this opportunity to join translators and writers Sawad Hussain and Ayesha M. Siddiqi as they discuss their new collection of translated essays, *Violent Phenomena*. Hosted by UCL but open to all, this free event will discuss colonial legacies of literature and translation whilst looking at how translators and writers can share their ideas in a way that disrupts colonial translation practices. They will be in conversation with Lucelle Pardoe, a PhD candidate in translation studies, and there will be refreshments and the chance to purchase the book on the evening, with discounts for students. Tickets can be reserved for this insightful and thought-provoking event by clicking [here](#).



Photo Credit: Sawad Hussain and Ayesha M. Siddiqi



# Celebrating Eurovision: A Tour Around Europe

BY AMY WRIGHT, LAUREN JONES AND ZOE DOYLE

This issue we are heading to explore the diverse and colourful Europe as we gear up for Eurovision. Eurovision is the longest-running annual international televised music competition that leans into a kitschy style and celebration of culture and tradition across Europe. Each year, the performances are bigger, bolder and wilder than the last, with each act bringing something special to the stage. This year promises to follow suit with some great music, costumes and performances. To celebrate, we are sharing some book recommendations set in Europe or written by European authors.

## ***Threads That Bind*** by Kika Hatzopoulou

Greek mythology retellings have been extremely popular in publishing, with bestsellers such as *The Song of Achilles* and *Ariadne* exploring the stories of various heroes and heroines from Ancient Greece mythology. However, very few of these books have been written by Greek authors. *Threads That*



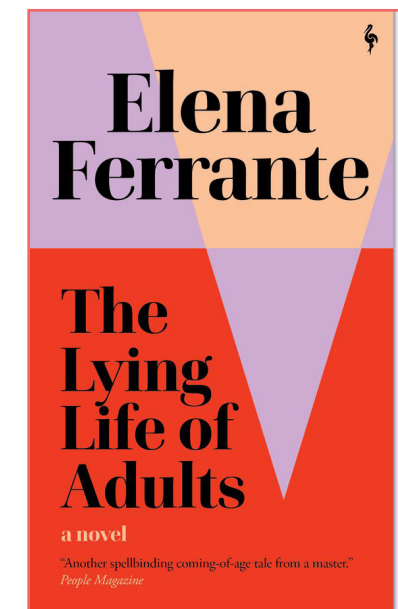
*Bind*, however, is the YA debut novel by Greek writer Kika Hatzopoulou which is inspired by the Fates, the weaving goddesses of destiny. A descendant of the Fates, Io can see people's fate threads and can cut them, severing their people's ties to things they love and even their life. She uses her abilities as a private investigator in the half-sunken city of Alante where she discovers a sinister mystery – someone is abducting women, maiming their life-threads

and unleashing wraiths upon the city. She sets out to find the culprit, teaming up with Edei, a boy with whom she shares a strong fated connection. As she uncovers secrets buried deep in the underbelly of the city and picks the mystery apart, it becomes clear that there is a conspiracy involving some of the most powerful people in the city – including her estranged older sister who seems to be entangled with Io's main suspect. The novel will be released on the 30 May 2023 and promises to be a refreshing blend of Greek mythology mixed with romance, gritty noir and an intriguing mystery.

## ***The Lying Life of Adults*** by Elena Ferrante. Translated by Ann Goldstein

Elena Ferrante is an Italian novelist and *The Lying Life of Adults*, along with some of Ferrante's other works, is set in Naples. In this coming-of-age novel, the protagonist, Giovanna, overhears her father expressing concern that Giovanna is beginning

to look more and more like his estranged sister Vittoria. Giovanna is confused as to why her family despises her Aunt Vittoria and wants to uncover the truth behind this mysterious hatred that she has little understanding of. She therefore decides to search for her estranged aunt on the other side of the city. We follow Giovanna as she navigates life in the city as a young adult, whilst also uncovering family secrets, gaining new experiences and coming to the realisation that



adults, including parents, aren't as perfect as we may believe they are as a child. Set in the early 1990s, this is a story about growing up and the journey into adulthood from the perspective of a

teenager, exploring themes of identity, class and the complexities of family relationships. Ferrante's descriptions of the two sides of the city give an insight into the political, cultural and economic differences found in Naples. Now with an adaptation on Netflix, this Neapolitan tale is certainly a unique story that will keep you engaged and make you think.

## ***Daughters*** by Lucy Fricke, translated by Sinéad Crowe

Lucy Fricke's story *Daughters* follows best friends Betty and Martha as they roadtrip through Europe, trying to make sense of where their lives have taken them. As they reflect on their



fractured and complicated relationships with their fathers and how this has shaped them, it is their friendship that holds them together. Fricke writes this friendship beautifully – it's the kind of friendship that lasts a lifetime, where you just 'click' and know that you'd do crazy things for each other.

Fricke also deftly tackles heavy universal themes such as bereavement, complex relationships and trauma, but delicately and carefully weaves these themes into the narrative. The result is two fragile and very human heroines, who are perfect protagonists for this unexpected adventure.

The insight into everyday Europe is a true highlight of this novel. Sinéad Crowe has done a masterful job of translating all kinds of cultural references, imagery and humour that contribute to the richness of the narrative. Although this novel engages with some heavy topics, it is also witty and side-splittingly hilarious at times, which makes for an enjoyable and meaningful read – definitely an excellent example of why you should give translated fiction a chance!



# BookTok: Setting the Standards for What Makes a ‘Good’ Reader?

BY MAISIE CLARKE, BRITTANY HOLNESS AND BIANCA SCASSERRA

At the Trends Team, we love scrolling through BookTok, finding what our favourite influencers are reading and discovering some new recommendations. However, we have noticed that this need to consume others' reading habits may have negative consequences. Therefore, our article this week will pose the question: does BookTok create an impossible criteria for readers to strive towards?

Blogs and websites like Goodreads have always been reliable methods for book recommendations. BookTok has adopted a similar role, becoming a source for readers to find their next book. While those platforms prior to social media were paramount in helping readers find a new book, the current consumption of books far outstrips the past. This is likely due to the distinct possibility that every post can result in creators and the books mentioned going viral. These influencers, in addition to recommending books, post content like the large number of books



they read, or their libraries filled with aesthetic books organised to showcase their collection. In most cases, the BookTokers are currently working full-time as content creators, explaining how they are able to consume so many titles. It is often not realistic for the casual reader to mimic this and the issue stems from the increased pressure to purchase these recommended books. It is not surprising that social media platforms like TikTok have been credited with the surge in book purchases; there's an increased pressure to not only read more but to purchase physical copies of these books. While these posts are likely just for fun,

they can make other book lovers feel unaccomplished when they are unable to match the pace of a majority of their favourite influencers. Similarly, in an attempt to match this pace, they will continue to purchase books which lead to overconsumption in this market, making this hobby become more expensive.

The growth of BookTok and its influence on the reading community has touched differing genres, extending from fantasy to romance books, ready to be discussed or kept as an aesthetic accessory to viewers sharing this passion. It acts as a champion for authors of marginalised backgrounds, pushing them in front of readers' eyes. Despite that, some have questioned whether the short length of many of these viral videos can accurately represent the contents of the books they are showing. They require little critical thinking, thus leaving the viewer susceptible to making an uninformed purchase. The traditional act of choosing

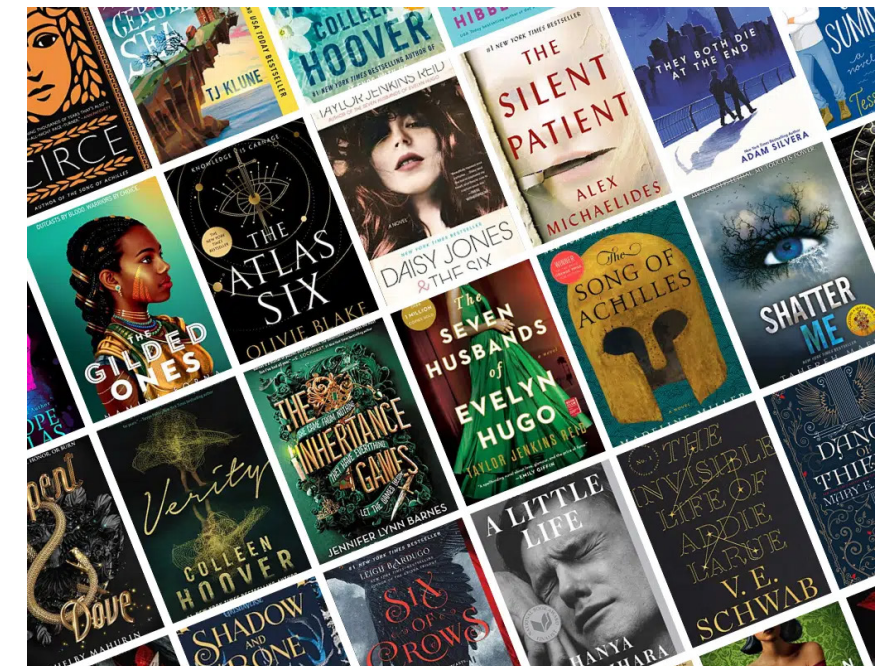
a book that intrigues you is muddled by the increasing pressure to follow the latest trends. We foster an abstract relationship with these influencers, placing some level of trust in their recommendations. However, reviews manufactured by monetary gain and influence are unreliable. Whilst these videos could certainly be a force for good, the desire to keep up with the latest trends on BookTok could be more of a curse than a blessing, leading readers to purchase books they would normally have little interest in, or do not intend to read at all. Trend is now the greatest incentive for readers to pursue rather than an actual interest in the content of the book..

Furthermore, does TikTok present the ultimatum of buying or borrowing? Undeniably, every reader loves bookshops; places filled from ceiling to floor with the latest releases, respected classics, hardbacks, paperbacks, fiction, nonfiction and maybe even a cafe if you're lucky! However, this does not mean that buying from bookshops is accessible or necessary; this is where the beauty of charity shops and libraries step in. Reading can be an expensive hobby but through these alternatives to buying, the doors are open for more readers. However, with the rise of BookTok, do readers feel the pressure to choose the former, less attainable option? For example, it can

be seen how aesthetic videos of book hauls of beautiful hardbacks and library tours filled with gorgeous Penguin Clothbound Classics present a desired standard for the reader. These videos reflect many readers' dream of an overflowing book collection of only the best titles and covers, suggesting that this is the ultimate version of an 'accomplished reader.' Unfortunately, for many this is not an attainable reality. Due to this pressure of a specific standard, it can be argued that BookTok adds to the overconsumption of books, pressuring readers to buy over borrow, fuelling an already damaging phenomenon. Nevertheless, BookTok can still turn the tide. The platform has the influence to be able to encourage viewers to take advantage of their local library and to choose

second-hand over brand new, an action which we hope many creators promote.

Overall, BookTok greatly influences readers positively and sometimes negatively. We hope that we have put into words what some may be feeling concerning the pressures the app can present in terms of overconsumption. However, whether you read one book a year from a genre you love, borrowed from a library, or if you hit your sizable reading goals each year, read diversely and buy from bookshops, you are still a valid reader as there is no criteria for a hobby done for fun.



# Upskilling Tips: Publishing in Wales

BY MEGHAN CAPPER, SUKHPREET CHANA, MISHA MANANI AND JOE PILBROW

Despite its small size, Wales boasts a rich literary history, with the likes of Dylan Thomas, Gwyn Thomas and Rhys Davies leading the way and providing inspiration for a new generation of Welsh writers. As a result, Welsh publishing is thriving. There are a host of established independent publishers based in Wales, with new ones popping up all the time. Whether you're a publishing hopeful living in Bangor or Bridgend, read on to find out about the best work experience opportunities, useful organisations to join and top tips for getting your publishing career started in Wales!

## Work Experience and Internship Opportunities

- **Firefly Press:** This is an award-winning children's publisher that publishes everything from picture books to young adult novels. The team consists of ten people in editorial, sales, marketing and design. They don't have internships at the moment, but you can send an email to the general enquiries

inbox, [hello@fireflypress.co.uk](mailto:hello@fireflypress.co.uk), asking if they have any intern positions available.

- **University of Wales Press (UWP):** This is an academic publisher, similar to Oxford University Press (OUP) and Cambridge University Press (CUP). They publish journals and books related to European studies, politics and Welsh and Celtic history. For work experience opportunities, contact [press@press.wales.ac.uk](mailto:press@press.wales.ac.uk)
- **Parthian Books:** This independent publisher of fiction, non-fiction, translation and poetry has been around for almost thirty years. Their aims are to become champions of Welsh literature and highlight fresh new voices on the book scene. Until they open up for internships again, [read the blog](#) created by previous interns to see what they learnt.
- **Occasional Volunteering Work:** [The Books Council in Wales](#) (see below) collates a list of people who are willing to do administrative

work from time to time. If you are keen, send an email to [castellbrychan@books.wales](mailto:castellbrychan@books.wales).

## Organisations and Resources

- **Creative Publishing Wales:** This agency supports various creative industries in Wales. Publishing is the heart of their culture, which defines their passion. [Rebecca Roberts](#), an award-winning author, tells her story about publishing many novels in both English and Welsh.
- **Society of Young Publishers (SYP) Wales:** Established in 2023, the Welsh branch of the SYP was created by volunteers to accommodate aspiring publishers and create learning opportunities to support those starting out. The society covers everything from literary fiction to the essentials of Welsh children's books. The SYP Wales panel highlights the importance



of Welsh-focused literature and the scope of online events drawing in a wider audience. Check out their [Twitter](#) and [YouTube](#).

- **Books Council of Wales:** This is a charity organisation that promotes reading and literature for enjoyment purposes. They cater to different services in publishing, such as editing, design, marketing and distribution. The organisation also offers a grant scheme to publishers and booksellers through publishing organisations and supporting writers. Check out their [Instagram](#), [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#).
- **Literature Wales:** This organisation develops, shapes and empowers lives through books by providing funds that assist literary projects. Whether it's to enhance your skills or explore your talents further, Literature Wales inspires people to connect with society and fulfil their aspirations.



## Top Tips

- **Join literary agencies in Wales:** Consider reaching out to local literary agencies for reader roles, work experience and internships for insight into the duties of an agent. Agencies play a crucial role in all things author-related, such as pitching clients, negotiating publishing deals, signing contracts and reading manuscripts, all of which are essential in the journey to publication. Wales Literary Agency and MDMLA are two agencies you can reach out to in order to get started.
- **Gain experience with book retailers:** Bookseller roles are an excellent way to gain knowledge of the book market and current reader trends. Many bookshops also hold author talks and events, which are great for meeting people in the book trade and for staying up to date with new talent. Here's a list of some indie bookshops to check out: Book-ish (Crickhowell), Browsers Bookshop (Porthmadog), Seaways (Pembrokeshire), Cover to Cover (Swansea), Griffin Books (Penarth).
- **Network:** Building connections is vital in the publishing world, so it is important to take

any opportunity to talk to industry professionals. Specifically, getting advice from fellow Welsh publishers may help you identify similar paths into the industry. Start conversations by attending SYP Wales socials and careers events, as well as searching on LinkedIn.

- **Remote working:** If you live in an area where the publishing world is difficult to access, building experience remotely is a great option. There are many freelance proofreading, editorial and reader roles available online. You could even consider starting a blog to demonstrate your knowledge of the book market or join *The Publishing Post* to write industry-based articles from home!

Thank you for reading issue seventy-one! Join us again for issue seventy-two, where we will cover Upskilling Dictionary: Rights.





# Not Quite A Literary Affair: What I Learned at London Book Fair 2023



BY NATALIE BECKETT  
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I didn’t have much time to prepare for my first London Book Fair (LBF), so sitting on the overground on my way to Kensington Olympia, my imagination wondered. Will there be free books at the door? Will I stumble across any famous authors? Perhaps I’ll end up in a great literary debate? When I arrive, I quickly realised that LBF is less a literary affair, and more a rat race for translation rights, book deals and subpar coffee.

That’s not to say LBF is without charm. The amazing range of literary-themed tote bags hanging over shoulders is unparalleled. The bustling pathways lined with giant-sized covers of upcoming releases and bestsellers from the big five made me feel like I’d finally made it: I’m officially working in publishing. However, whether or not the publishing industry is an “attractive workplace for the generation of tomorrow,” as one seminar was titled, is still very much

up for debate. The root of this discussion was best summed up by the panel chair, Samantha Missingham, who commented:

“... in real terms salaries have not gone up since the last millennium” – Samantha Missingham, Founder of The Empowered Author.

Of course, it’s not all bad, and organisations such as Inspired Search & Selection, the Society of Young Publishers, *The Publishing Post*, Young Authors Publishing (for any aspiring US authors) and BookCareers.com are all making strides towards publishing becoming a more accessible and realistic career path for young people.

On the topic of money, the “overdue” rise in book prices was also a trending headline at this year’s fair after HarperCollins’ president and CEO Brian Murray mentioned it during a Q&A. This got me thinking about how LBF provides an annual reflection on the state of the industry, so I asked my boss, who’s

worked as an editor in the industry for over twenty years, what her impressions of LBF were the first time she went. I was comforted to discover she was as flummoxed by the fair’s “hustle” as I was.

“I was overwhelmed by my first London Book Fair experience as a junior editor. So many stands, so many excited agents, tremendous hustle and an air of great creativity. I’ll never forget setting foot in the Agents’ Centre for the first time: rows and rows of small tables as far as the eye could see! Then, there was very little focus on inclusion and it’s wonderful to see how the industry is now more focused on representing everyone.” – Imogen Cooper, Founder of The Golden Egg Academy.

While the publishing industry still has a long way to go, “this marked shift” dominated the 2023 seminar programme. In a talk called, *Celebrating Inclusivity and Representation in the Book and Publishing*

World, interesting points were made about the industry’s obligation to be uncompromising on books that champion diversity and inclusion when selling rights to international markets. Meanwhile, in a panel titled, *Inclusivity and Accessibility are we Nearly There?*, the European Accessibility Act (coming into effect in June 2025) shaped the conversation. In other good news for diversity and inclusion and aspiring authors, a new award for debut writers over the age of fifty was launched by Jenny Brown Associates during the fair.

Although diversity and inclusion was high on the agenda, sustainability took the award for the most focus. As noted by [The Guardian](#), “Mayor of London Sadiq Khan was the most high-profile advocate of doing more to tackle climate change” in the industry. While I don’t doubt Mr Khan’s dedication to the cause, I couldn’t help but laugh that his sustainability-themed

speech also happened to provide the perfect backdrop for plugging his own new book, *Breathe: Tackling the Climate Emergency*.

Unsurprisingly, social media was also a popular talking point, embodied by a TikTok stand that played clips of viral Booktokers and authors like “booktok sensation” Laura Stevens, one of countless YA authors whose career has been propelled forward by the app. In events like, *Making your WIP Stand Out: Tips from Industry Experts and Preparing for Publication*, there was also an emphasis on the value of debut authors having an existing fanbase online, even if that means using Twitter or other social media.

Another question seminars sought to answer in the *Tech Theatre*: is ChatGBT a force for good or evil within the publishing industry? In an event on day three titled, *ChatGBP: What it is and What it Means for Content Creators*, Style Factory Founder Chris Singleton

put a positive spin on the contentious topic and encouraged everyone to use it as a tool for research, idea generation, marketing and PR and editing, amongst other things. A sentiment, I imagine, most are happy to go along with for the time being.

On a brighter note, *How Have Books Become a Key Focus for Streamers and Broadcasters in the Global Marketplace?* easily took first place for most cinematically topical seminar at LBF as sentences like “we’re living in a post-*Bridgerton* era,” and we want “highly commercial escapism like *Emily in Paris*” were thrown around by panelists. There was also a mutual agreement that books remain essential to developing great film and TV. A position that we as publishers all know to be true, but nevertheless is always nice to hear from those guarding the Netflix gates.

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