

PaperBound

A writing magazine

For the young, and
the young at heart

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Issue 15 Autumn/Winter 2024-25

Author Interviews

with

HARI CONNER
SCARLETT DUNMORE
SKYE MCKENNA
ASHLEY THORPE
LUCY ANN UNWIN
AND
CATHERINE DOYLE



PLUS

WHY POEMS ARE LIKE PIZZAS
- POET **ATTIE LIME** SHARES
HER INSIGHTS INTO
WRITING POETRY

WRITING PROMPTS
BOOK REVIEWS
AND MORE

NEW

WRITING &
ILLUSTRATIONS

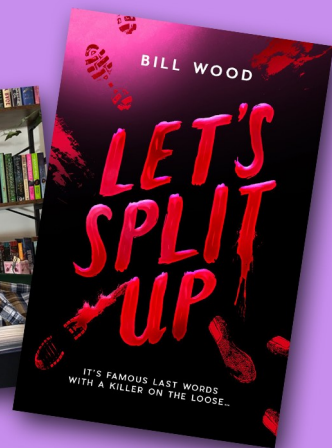
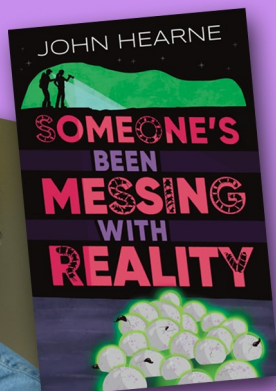
From

CAROLE BROMLEY CARMEN CARREIRA

SARAH CONNELL MEL CORRIGAN

RACHAEL ROBERTSON JACQUELINE SHIRTLIFF RHONA STEPHENS

Did you know PAPERBOUND MAGAZINE ALSO HAS A BLOG WITH EVEN MORE BOOKISH CONTENT?



Check it out at
paperboundmag.com





Find out more about our fantastic cover
illustrator, Rachael Robertson, on page 49

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PaperBound Magazine is an online magazine for the young, and the young at heart. It is dedicated to showcasing authors and illustrators of children's and young adult fiction. It strives to deliver inspiring content, new and exciting writing, book recommendations and top tips for aspiring young writers. PaperBound has been created by Emily, Lucy and Rayan who met while studying an MA in Writing for Young People at Bath Spa University.

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We occasionally dedicate a very small amount of space to advertising.

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Letter from the editors

Dear Readers,

Welcome to our **Chaos and Calm** issue! Thanks so much for choosing to read another issue of PaperBound, full of author interviews, articles, book reviews, writing and illustrations and more.

A huge thanks to all of our contributors, and the publishers and publicists who help put us in touch with the fantastic authors and books you see featured every issue.

If you like what you see here, don't forget you can find even more bookish content on our blog at www.paperboundmag.com, plus you can access all our back issues absolutely free! A great place to find some gift ideas!

If you'd like to be a part of a future issue, please get in touch. We're always on the look out for new writing and illustrations as well as interviews, articles and book reviews. Check out our website for more details.

Happy reading!

Emily, Lucy and Rayan

If you would like to contribute to a future issue, tell us what you thought of this one, or contact us about anything else, we'd love to hear from you.

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illustrated by the brilliant

**Carmen
Carreira**

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NEW WRITING

Alphabetti

by Carole Bromley



CAROLE BROMLEY


Carole Bromley lives in York, UK. Winner of the Caterpillar Prize, 2022, she has a children's collection, *Blast Off!* and has been published in anthologies from Macmillan and Nosy Crow and in *Tyger Tyger*, *The Toy*, *Paper Lanterns*, *Dirigible Balloon* and *Little Thoughts Press*.

www.carolebromleypoetry.co.uk

Follow Carole on Twitter/X @carolebromley1

AT L H T E P





IM BUILDING THIS POEM FROM SPAGHETTI
ONE LETTER AT A TIME
THE PASTAS SPREAD OUT ON THE TABLE
AND ITS ALL MINE

THE AS ARE NOT A PROBLEM
THERES PLENTY OF OS
BUT SHOULD YOU THINK OF A WORD WITH A Z IN
THERES VERY FEW OF THOSE

AND THERES NO PUNCTUATION IN THE PACKET
NO FULL STOP NO EXCLAMATION MARK
THIS POEM IS TAKING ME AGES
AND ITS VERY HARD WORK

IVE ONLY WRITTEN THESE FOUR STANZAS
WHEN MUM SAYS IT'S A WINNER
BUT CAN SHE PLEASE HAVE THE PASTA BACK
SO SHE CAN COOK THE DINNER



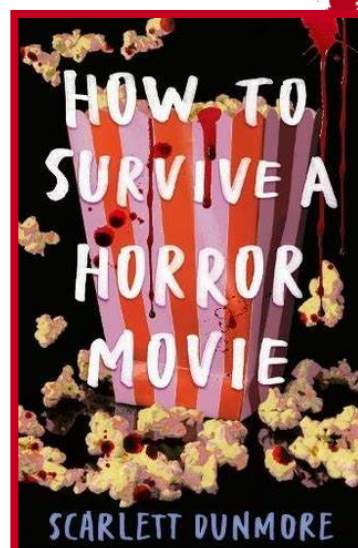
SCARLETT DUNMORE



WE SPOKE TO SCARLETT DUNMORE ABOUT HER NEW TWISTY YA THRILLER, *HOW TO SURVIVE A HORROR MOVIE*.

COULD YOU TELL US A LITTLE ABOUT YOUR DEBUT NOVEL, *HOW TO SURVIVE A HORROR MOVIE*?

Charley and her best friend Olive are horror film fans, and spend every weekend hosting their own ‘Slasher Saturday’ where they watch scary movies and eat popcorn. But after a dead body of a student is found on the cliffs, the two girls find themselves cast in their very own slasher flick! And as the body count starts rising, Charley and Olive need to use their expert knowledge of the horror genre to solve the murders and stop the Halloween serial killer!



THE SETTING OF THE BOOK IS SO EERILY ISOLATED AND PERFECT FOR A HORROR MOVIE/NOVEL. WHAT WAS THE INSPIRATION BEHIND IT?

I love eerie isolated settings in horror films, like schools or rural locations, so I decided to include both in my novel.

Isolated settings, where help is restricted, can make the chances of survival seem slim, therefore, boosting the suspense and tension.

Harrogate Boarding School for Girls is loosely inspired by recent visits to Trinity College in Dublin, Georgetown University in DC, and a cathedral by my house where I love to walk my dog.

WE ARE HUGE FANS OF HORROR MOVIES OVER AT PAPERBOUND, AND VERY MUCH ENJOYED THE FILM REFERENCES. WHAT MADE YOU WANT TO WRITE A BOOK BASED AROUND THIS, AND DID YOU HAVE TO WATCH/REWATCH ANY FILMS AS 'RESEARCH'?

I studied Film so I tend to think in a cinematic way, if that makes sense. Like you, I also love horror movies so writing a horror book was quite easy as I knew the tropes and genre conventions fairly well, but adding in some film references and making the characters aware, was a lot of fun for a former film student. I re-watched a lot of movies, which is the best kind of research! I'm currently watching more while I write the sequel.

WHAT IS YOUR FAVOURITE HORROR MOVIE (AN IMPOSSIBLE QUESTION! SORRY!), AND WHY?

I would say *Scream*, which you can probably tell. The *Scream* films are arguably the most memorable 'slasher flicks'.

I also really enjoy watching comedies too, like *Zombie-*

land, Shaun of the Dead and *Heathers*. I love that tongue-in-cheek humour when it comes to horror.

“ I LOVE THAT TONGUE-IN-CHEEK HUMOUR WHEN IT COMES TO HORROR. ”

THE BOOK FOLLOWS A CLASSIC SLASHER MOVIE FORMULA, BUT WITH AN EXTRA TWIST. THE INCLUSION OF THE GHOSTS IS SUCH A BRILLIANT, AND OFTEN COMICAL, ADDITION. WAS THIS AN IDEA YOU HAD FROM THE START, OR DID IT DEVELOP AS YOU WROTE? DID WRITING CHARACTERS THAT ONLY ONE PERSON CAN SEE RAISE ANY ISSUES WHEN WRITING?

I had the idea for the ghosts right at the start. I could imagine the character of Charley in my head, and her best friend too, and always pictured her being followed around campus by the ghosts of her dead classmates, in a comical way much like the 90's remake of *An American Werewolf in Paris*.

Originally, I had a bigger cast but I decided to scale back slightly so readers could connect more with fewer ghosts. It also meant my favourites, like Meghan, had more 'screen time'. The only tricky part was writing a back-and-forth dialogue between two living characters and several dead characters! I wanted all of them to have a part in the conversation, even if it was just a grunt or a moan.


CAN YOU SHARE A LITTLE ABOUT YOUR JOURNEY TO PUBLICATION? WHAT HAVE BEEN THE HIGHS AND LOWS?

My journey to publication began in 2020 during lockdown, when I first started writing this book. My agent really helped guide me during the early drafts of it, then we began submitting to publishers. We were really lucky to land with Little Tiger not long after.

I loved the writing process and really enjoyed letting the scenes play out, and weaving in more comical elements from the movies I drew inspiration from. In terms of lows, I found editing to be quite challenging. It's difficult letting go of parts of the novel, even knowing it's for the best. There were some earlier scenes that had to be cut as they weighed down the plot or slowed the pacing too much.

But overall, there have been minimal lows which is positive.

There's a promise of more books from this world. Can you tell us anything about that, or about anything else you're working on?

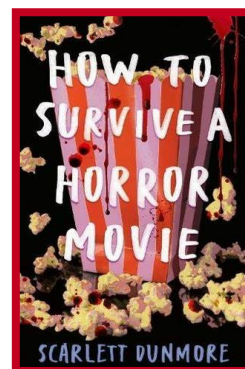
There will be a sequel coming next September 2025 where Charley will be trying to navigate a new life in a new town with her mum, whilst dealing with the trauma of her last Halloween. We'll meet some new characters and reference more horror films, of course, but this time there will be some witchy fun! Whilst the first book is a mash-up of *Scream* and *Mean Girls*, the sequel will be a mix of *Gilmore Girls* and *The Craft*! 

SCARLETT'S WRITING PROMPT

Create a character in a scene who finds themselves in a darkened room, with no way out. What can they hear/smell/touch if they reach their hands out? Why are they in there? What backstory could you drip feed to the reader as the character tries to escape? And, who or what do they not want to be locked in this room with?

SCARLETT DUNMORE

Scarlett studied English and Creative Writing, eventually finding a love for YA literature. When she's not writing, she can often be found watching scary films or exploring abandoned abbeys, old cemeteries and ruined castles in Scotland for inspiration.



How to Survive a Horror Movie is published by Little Tiger and out now!

MG Book Review Corner

PAPERBOUND FAVOURITE

A TWO-PLACED HEART

BY DOAN PHUONG NGUYEN

REVIEWED BY PAPERBOUND

MG

A truly gorgeous middle grade verse memoir with a passion for home and heritage at its heart.

When Bom has to leave Vietnam and move to Nashville, Tennessee in the states with her parents and younger sister, she misses the family they left behind and, just as much, she misses the life she's always known.

Never wanting to forget where she came from, she decides to write it all down and what unfolds is a beautiful memoir written in verse from one sister to another, in attempt to remember all the things that tie them to Vietnam, even if they can't live there anymore, spanning fitting into new communities, bullies at school, finding friends, and a gradual acceptance of self.

Told through Bom's eyes as she clickety-clacks everything down onto their father's typewriter, weaving themes of identity and displacement, family and sisterhood, this is a beautifully balanced book, told from the author's own perspective. A firm favourite at PaperBound HQ!

A TWO-PLACED HEART IS PUBLISHED BY TV BOOKS AND OUT NOW



REVENGE OF THE KILLER WORM BY KATHRYN FOXFIELD

MG

REVIEWED BY PAPERBOUND

Revenge of the Killer Worm is an exciting action-filled horror novel for middle grade readers, perfect for fans of *Goosebumps* and those wanting to add a few more jump-scares to their TBR pile.

Milo wants nothing more than to spend one last epic summer with his friends at their annual seaside group family holiday before he and his mum move away and he has to start at a dreaded new school. But when the monster in his and his friends' favourite video game at the arcade comes to life beneath the pier, their perfect summer turns into something far more serious—and deadly. Can they save everyone before the worst happens - and stay friends?

A wonderfully imaginative read filled with danger, bravery and friendship.

REVENGE OF THE KILLER WORM IS PUBLISHED BY SCHOLASTIC AND OUT NOW



RECENT RELEASE

MAGIC PICKLE AND THE ROOTS OF DOOM BY SCOTT MORSE

MG
GRAPHIC
NOVEL

REVIEWED BY WILL DOBSON @WYDOBSON1 (TWITTER/X)

This gloriously-coloured graphic novel from a Pixar story supervisor is filled with hilarious puns guaranteed to tickle readers pink as they follow the adventures of Magic Pickle and his nemesis, Square Root, who has a stinky garlic sidekick called Herb Cloverson.

After saving the world from The Brotherhood of Evil Produce, Magic Pickle is forced out of cold storage retirement when a villainous evil tuber threatens to destroy the planet. Reluctantly, Magic Pickle allies himself with fearless Jo Jo Wigman, a human girl in a unicorn onesie, who combines tech skills and boundless brio, and together they embark on an adventure to defeat the Roots of Doom.

The story barrels along quicker than Popeye popping a can of spinach, ac-celery-ating towards a feast-for-the-eyes battle between root vegetables and the eponymous kosher pickle. Who will triumph in the right for dill justice???

MAGIC PICKLE AND THE ROOTS OF DOOM IS PUBLISHED BY SCHOLASTIC AND OUT NOW



RECENT RELEASE

THE LONELY BELOW BY G. HARON DAVIS

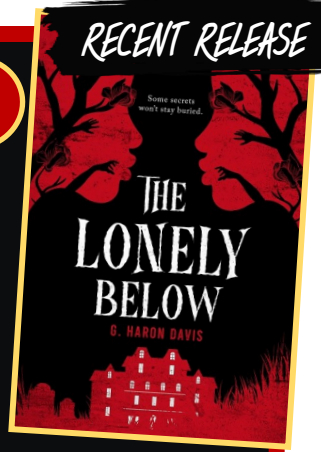
REVIEWED BY LAUREN MARPLES, AGE 17, CORNWALL

In this coming-of-age story, new girl Eva must navigate life and friendships while confronting supernatural forces at the mysterious Blythe Academy.

As our Black, autistic protagonist slowly unravels the Academy's dark secrets, readers will be immersed in the story, as desperate for answers as Eva is herself. Descriptions of the supernatural occurrences are eerie but familiar and handled in such a way the reader is left wondering whether the creaking floorboard in their own home is actually a ghostly presence.

The Lonely Below features an array of diverse characters and offers a fascinating perspective to a well-worn genre, becoming ultimately a story of identity as Eva comes to terms with both the real and the surreal.

THE LONELY BELOW IS PUBLISHED BY SCHOLASTIC AND OUT NOW



MG

MONSTER VS. BOY BY KAREN KROSSING

REVIEWED BY DIANE ENGLERT

Eleven-year-old Dawz has always believed there's a monster in his closet. Then while playing a game of hide and seek, he sees the small horned monster who nests there. The monster calls herself Mim and she's as terrified of Dawz as he is of her. Yet something draws them together and it might have to do with the disappearance of Dawz's mother.

Mim escapes out of the closet into the wide world, grabbing a pillow for a new nest and a book on cryptozoology. In a clash, she scratches Dawz. When scales sprout from the wound, Dawz fears he might be turning into a monster himself.

The brilliance of Karen Krossing's book is that monster and boy narrate their own chapters, which reveal the fear and distrust each feels for the other. The unknown is scary. To conquer their fear, both must confront and learn about the other.

The pulse-pounding hunt, first of monster then of boy, makes *Monster vs. Boy* hard to put down. Readers dread yet sympathise with Dawz and Mim and want each to find their place in the world, a place of acceptance and community.

Perfect for fans of Katherine Arden and Sarah Cannon's *Oddity*.

MONSTER VS. BOY IS PUBLISHED BY CHARLESBRIDGE PUBLISHING AND OUT NOW



MG

READER FAVOURITE



PIZZA PETE AND THE MISSING MAGIC BY CARRIE SELLON

ILLUSTRATED BY SARAH HORNE

REVIEWED BY PAPERBOUND MAGAZINE

If you're looking for another slice of Pizza Pete action, look no further! Pete is back with another fiery adventure! Fans of book one will not be disappointed in this fast-paced sequel — which can also easily be read as a standalone.

In *Pizza Pete and the Missing Magic*, Pete and his dad have returned home from a summer touring and selling pizzas in their pizza van. Not only is Pete worried about starting a new school year after so long away but, after a mysterious message arrives, it becomes clear that someone is after the magical potions Pete found in book one and will stop at nothing to get their hands on them. Will the potions fall into the wrong hands? And will Pete, Anna, and his new friends, have the courage to save the day?

This book is action-packed full of cheesy fun, adventure and, of course, plenty of magic. Shapeshifting, pizza-delivering drones, flying, and some wonderful friendships fill the pages of this fantastic sequel. *Pizza Pete and the Missing Magic* is an addictive read, complemented by some delicious illustrations from Sarah Horne that bring the story to stone-baked perfection. We absolutely love these zany adventures!

Roll on, book three!

PIZZA PETE AND THE MISSING MAGIC IS PUBLISHED BY GUPPY BOOKS AND OUT NOW



RECENT RELEASE

(CHECK OUT MORE OF OUR
TEEN / YOUNG ADULT REVIEWS ON PAGE 41)

ASHLEY THORPE



AUTHOR OF *THE BOY WHO BEAT THE GODS*, ASHLEY THORPE, SPOKE TO US ABOUT WRITING AND THE INSPIRATION BEHIND HIS DEBUT NOVEL.

CAN YOU TELL US A LITTLE ABOUT YOUR NOVEL, *THE BOY TO BEAT THE GODS*?

Sure! At its heart it's an epic adventure – rooted in lesser-known Yoruba mythology – with edge-of-your-seat action, but it's also about friendship, family, taking a stance against something you see is not right, and the power of collective action when uniting for a common good against the odds. It was important to me to have relatable characters readers would want to adventure with, and also to show positive masculinity where the heroes aren't afraid to hug each other, say they're scared or shed tears.

“REALLY, IT ALL STARTED WITH ONE IDEA: ONE KID VERSUS SEVERAL MALEVOLENT GODS...”

CAN YOU TELL US A LITTLE ABOUT THE INSPIRATION BEHIND THE STORY? HOW MUCH WAS BASED ON AFRICAN YORUBA BELIEFS PARALLELED WITH YOUR OWN IMAGINATION?

Really, it all started with one idea: one kid versus several malevolent gods, and the

kid needing to find creative ways to exploit their weaknesses. It was only once I started developing the idea that I realised this would be

the perfect opportunity to introduce readers to the pantheon of Orishas. The existing lore and characteristics of the true Orishas quite heavily informed their personalities and attributes in my book. The key difference, as I mention in my

author's notes, is that in my story the Orishas are the antagonists – feared rather than revered. And with that said, most everything else is from imagination rather than a belief system. However, I did research the place and time as far as possible: consulting old maps of pre-colonial Yorubaland (part of present-day Nigeria), art and sculptures, and many texts for authenticity.

KAYODE LIVES IN A TRIBE FULL OF STRONG WOMEN, FEMALE WARRIORS AND ELDERS; HIS DETERMINATION TO PROVE HIMSELF IS CLEAR FROM THE START. DO YOU THINK READERS CAN LEARN FROM HIM IN ANY WAY THROUGHOUT HIS JOURNEY?

Where at first Kayode is considered something of a troublemaker in his village, hopefully readers will see that he actually has a profound sense of justice. He's an empath and values not only his family but others, too, regardless of what tribe they're in. He's willing to stand up for what he believes is right, despite the danger to him personally. There's an old adage that it's better to die on your feet than to live on your knees, which sums up Kayode pretty well.

THE THEME OF FEAR AND ITS POWER TO MAKE PEOPLE DO DESPERATE – EVEN BAD – THINGS IS A HUGE ASPECT OF THIS BOOK. DO YOU THINK THIS REFLECTS THE WORLD IN SOME WAYS TODAY? WHAT DO YOU THINK READERS CAN TAKE FROM THIS?

Absolutely. Self-preservation is a natural human trait, as is our ability to justify bad actions to ourselves. Take the elders of

Ikire and the decisions they have to make, as an example. But through his youthful determination, it's Kayode who's actually able to teach the elders something. In a way, he puts them and the warriors to shame by exposing their desire for self-preservation. He's willing to put his own neck on the line to save people of the village in a way that they weren't. He's willing to take action based on what he believes in rather than just talk.

YOU HAVE A FANTASTIC ARRAY OF CHARACTERS IN THIS BOOK. WHO WAS YOUR FAVOURITE TO WRITE? DID YOU HAVE A FAVOURITE PART OF THE STORY TO WRITE TOO?

From the feedback I've been getting, I think my favourites are probably the same as many readers! It's Bami and Eko for me. I had great fun with how the two of them interact with the core group and the wider world. And what gave me the most joy was writing Team Kayode – all of those shared moments between Kayode, Eko, Tiwa and Bami. They came to life in ways I didn't always have planned.

WHAT WERE SOME OF YOUR FAVOURITE BOOKS GROWING UP, AND WHAT BOOKS WOULD YOU RECOMMEND TO READERS TODAY?

I loved Usborne *Puzzle Adventures*, which really felt like a full-circle moment when I signed with them. I was a rabid fan of '90s Scholastic series: *Goosebumps* and *Animorphs*. I was also a comics kid and had a Beano subscription. Shoutout to *Sonic the Comic* as well! Malorie Blackman was very important to me, as her books were the first time I truly saw myself in fiction. She also brought me back to enjoying reading

books again at sixth form when *Noughts and Crosses* was published. Before then I had a bit of a drop off, and Manga had taken over as my preferred reading.

As for current recommendations: at middle grade, A. M. Dassu's brilliant books such as *Fight Back*, Efua Traoré's *Children of the Quicksand*, Kimberly Whittam's *Quiet Storm*, Struan Murray's *Orphans of the Tide* trilogy. At YA anything by Danielle Jawando and my favourite debut this year is Nevin Holness's *King of Dead Things*.

DO YOU HAVE ANY TOP TIPS FOR ASPIRING WRITERS?

Read a lot of whatever age group you're writing for, and read widely. Read what's current or come out in the last few years rather than what you enjoyed as a child/young person. This will help you understand what publishers are buying and what the current publishing landscape is like. It doesn't mean you should follow trends or copy a style; it's just to inform you when it comes to understanding the market and how you'd pitch it to agents and publishers.

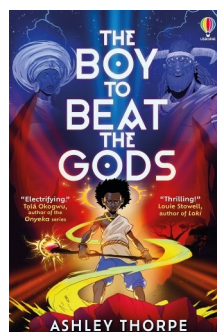
Writing can be a lonely journey so find a

support network of writers at the same stage as you – either in real life or online. Try and get beta-readers or critiques of your work from the right people. Again this could be a writers group or it could be from entering competitions or writing schemes.

Be disciplined. The key to getting things done is being consistent and finding a rhythm. Five hundred words a day for ten consecutive days is better than one sporadic two-thousand-word day with a drop off after. Find out when you write best. I'm an early bird for example so do my best writing in the mornings before work.

ARE YOU WORKING ON ANYTHING ELSE YOU CAN TELL US ABOUT?

My second book should be out next summer (2025). It's another standalone story that takes inspiration from my heritage only this time it's the Caribbean part. It's full of ancestral magic, spirits, feisty heroes and fearsome folklore villains. 15



The Boy to Beat the Gods is published by Usborne and out now!

ASHLEY THORPE

Ashley is a writer and creative, born and raised in Nottingham but making Manchester his home. He is an editor and storyliner at the inclusive fiction studio Storymix, where he helps other writers create epic stories. *The Boy to Beat the Gods*—his first book for readers aged 9 and above—takes inspiration from West African Yoruba mythology.



Portcreif, 1952

Estie toed the edge of the shallows and contemplated shoving Jago off the harbour wall. It would make a satisfying splash, she decided, and put an end to his triumphant crowing.

‘Fancy a dip, Estie?’

She glanced up despite herself, and even across the expanse of the bay she could make out the familiar flash of his sneer. She met it with her blackest stare. ‘You couldn’t keep up, Jago.’

A rattle of laughter pierced the evening haze, and her face flushed in irritation. She should have known better. Jago was fuelled by attention, and his cronies could always be relied upon to worship whatever he said. Flanking the wall like his soldiers, salt-stained shorts, stupid grins, and fishing-rods angled like muskets.

All it would take was one satisfying splash and then there’d be stillness. *Bye bye, Jago.*

She imagined herself giving him a cheery wave as he disappeared beneath the darkening waves.

‘Oh, come on, Wetty. Not going to wait for me?’

She clenched her teeth. *That was original.* She’d never wet herself or anything, but it was actually one of Jago’s more imaginative insults. Not that it even rhymed.

Jago Martin was only a week past his sixteenth but already six foot of lean muscle and frantic energy, strutting along the harbour like he owned the place.

Except he didn’t own it. It had been her place, long before any of the boys had

explored the bay. Then he'd taken it for his own and she'd hated him ever since. Hated his easy laughter and his sly jokes. Hated the rage he brought out in her. But worst of all, she hated the way he didn't even know the worth of what he'd taken.

She stepped out into the shallows and choked back a gasp as water slopped over her knees.

It had been her place long before any of them could remember. The very end of the harbour wall and a swallow's dive to the reef where lobsters edged over scallop beds, their claws as long as your hand. Where strands of amber kelp gave way to midnight waters - if you could hold your breath long enough.

A silent place. A magical place. *Her* place.

She splashed the water over her thighs and steadied her breathing. The waves were picking up, but she'd swam in worse. It wouldn't do to worry.

'Come on then Wetty, we're waiting.' She could picture the glint of vicious mischief dancing in his eyes. He didn't think she'd do it.

With the autumn swells picking up, it would take an ordinary boy ten minutes to cross the harbour to the deep waters, navigating the rolling fishing boats and the criss-cross of mooring lines. She hoicked up the strap on her swimsuit. Longer in the ridiculous hand-me-down monstrosity Dad had dragged from a box of mum's old things.

But she'd never be ordinary, he'd gifted her that too, and reminded her that clothes didn't matter. She strode out, feet slipping over the rocks, skin humming with cold. She wouldn't let them see her nerves.

She took a final breath and dove, and the water seized her like its own.

Her arms sliced through slate-grey and mottled green, arcing crystal-spray over her back, muffling the cacophony from the harbour wall. Proving she was stronger than them with each stroke.

Every day the same. Every day claiming her place, her limbs growing tanned and lean, as summer dragged into autumn. Every day searching out the solitude of the deeper water. Ruby red anemones shimmering like gems, spider-like urchins, a sand-eruption of hound shark skittering away, and all the while the weight of the ocean pressing in on her. Cocooning her in silence.

She pivoted under a sagging rope, then broke for breath, mouth guppying over the waves that pounded the harbour mouth. Just a little further and she'd be swallowed up in the stillness of the deep.

'Storm's coming, Wetty,' Jago leant over the harbour wall – gave a mocking salute.

A wave broke over her head as if in answer, and the lads trumpeted with

laughter as she spluttered for breath. The swell had risen from nowhere and the tide was rushing in. For the first time in years, uncertainty prickled the edges of her mind. All the stories that had been passed down by generations of villagers - stories that hadn't been meant for her - suddenly flooded her senses.

The boys were prancing along the edge of the wall above her, reading the fear in her expression.

'Hope she drowns,' someone jeered.

Now was the moment to turn back. It didn't matter what they thought. It didn't matter. But the waves were buffeting the harbour wall, and the boats were straining like wild horses, and she was struggling to make out a route.

There was a splash behind her, loud enough to drown out the jibes and she spun round, expecting a volley of rocks or coke bottles, or filthy bait slop.

'Here!' panicked voices tumbled from the wall. A boat lurched towards her and she darted sidelong like an eel.

'Jago.'

'Here!'

'He jumped.'

Voices poured over one another, but no-one was doing anything. 'He fell!'

She bicycled her legs, scanning the peaks, glimpsing the shore. Faces crowded the harbour edge. Panic twisted their pale expressions. No longer soldiers, just frightened boys.

'Where?' she screamed. *Why was no one helping?*

'There!'

A rod lurched to the surface a metre away, rejected momentarily by the sea's clutches, then dragged back under foaming peaks.

She waited for the hand, the grinning face erupting, gasping for breath. *A joke. It was just a joke.* But there was only the dancing water and the boats prancing upwards.

'Quick!'

And for a second she thought about doing nothing. *Save yourself.* The thought glinted at the corner of her mind, like the hate Jago had dragged from inside her. *I could leave him. I could do nothing.* The thought was tantalising.

But she couldn't... Could she?

Estie scissored down, feet piercing the air, then meeting coldness. Down and deeper down, hands tearing icy darkness, eyes stinging, legs trembling. Lungs screaming.

Then a tangle of fishing wire, and the wriggle of limbs, and heavy hands threatening to drown her in panic.

It was a minute to the surface. It could have been an hour. Then eight more, heaving all six foot of him back to the beach, grasping from rope to sodden rope to tow herself landwards, his body like ice under her arms.

They'd timed it. That's what they said afterwards, the boys crowding round, thumping her on the back, brine streaming from her nose and mouth, as if she was one of them.

'He's breathing. He's breathing.'

'He'd have died. He would have.'

Her bravery was all anyone could talk about for weeks after, following her down to the harbour, arms clamped around her shoulder. Retelling the stories a hundred ways until the waves were six foot high, and Jago had been unconscious, and someone's dad had definitely seen a shark.

A shark in Portcreif, she'd smiled despite herself.

And through it all Estie would keep walking, bare feet slapping damp harbour stones, all the way down to the furthest end, where no one would dare keep her from. Not now.

She hadn't been brave, she realised, as she climbed to the top of the wall, toes clenching the edge of the stone – a gesture as familiar as a handshake. She hadn't been scared for herself at all.

Then a leap into space, a twist and swallow's dive and her head careering into darkness and stillness.

She just couldn't imagine it being her place if he'd died there.

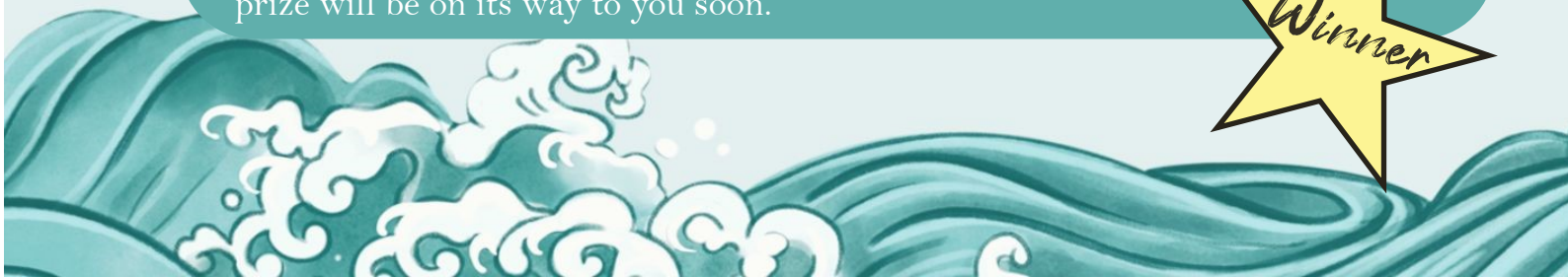
Because it was Estie's place. 

SARAH CONNELL

Sarah is a Dorset-based writer, whose work is inspired by the magic of the natural world. She studied English at Oxford University and her novels have been listed in various awards by Guppy Books, WriteMentor and IAmInPrint.

*

We absolutely loved Sarah's short story and have chosen it as this issue's submission winner. **Congratulations, Sarah!** A little prize will be on its way to you soon.





Hari Conner

HARI CONNER CHATTED TO US ABOUT THEIR NEW GRAPHIC NOVEL, *I SHALL NEVER FALL IN LOVE*, AND SHARED SOME OF THE FANTASTIC ILLUSTRATIONS WITH US.



COULD YOU TELL US A LITTLE ABOUT *I SHALL NEVER FALL IN LOVE*, AND THE INSPIRATION BEHIND IT?

It's a historical rom-com graphic novel. The plot is a mashup of different Jane Austen books and real queer history, and was very much inspired by an interest in those things!

On the simplest level, my original idea was 'what if a historical romance had characters like me and the people I grew up around' - then thinking about what interesting connections and themes rise from that.

YOU TOUCHED ON THE COSTUME DESIGN IN THE 'HISTORY TITBITS' SECTION OF THE BOOK. WAS THERE A CHARACTER YOU PARTICULARLY LOVED DRAWING? WAS IT EASY MATCHING THE DESIGNS WITH THE PERSONALITIES OF THE CHARACTERS?

I think with enough research, any historical dress becomes interesting because the reality is often so bizarre. But I'm always much more interested in drawing historical menswear, since it's much closer to what I would like wearing myself. So George-in-menswear ended up being the easiest and



most fun to draw!

Matching style to personalities is a lot of the fun of character design. It helps pin down who a character is to figure out their favourite colours or clothes, what they can afford, whether they tie their shoelaces, all that stuff. It was interesting looking up what more masculine-presenting people who lived as women wore. And I also basically went through lots of fashion plates from the time until I found something that leapt out, like ‘now THAT’S a Charlotte jacket.’



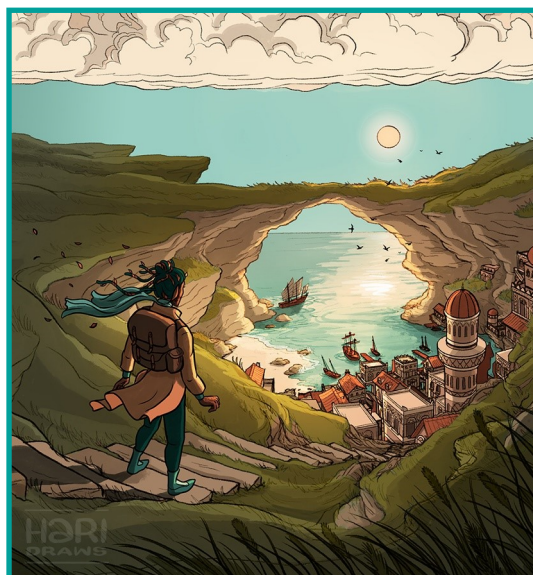
COMICS ARE A WONDERFUL MIX OF NARRATIVE AND VISUAL ART TO CONVEY A STORY, AS THE SOLE CREATOR OF *I SHALL NEVER FALL IN LOVE*, WAS IT THE PLOT/NARRATIVE OR THE CHARACTERS THAT CAME TO YOU FIRST?

I love book-length stories, and do tend to think in whole-story form. I rarely come up with characters without thinking about their plot and ending at the same time: where they end up, how they’ve changed, where we meet them.



YOU ARE ALSO KNOWN FOR YOUR AWARD-WINNING LONG-FORM WEBCOMIC *FINDING HOME*, WHICH IS ALSO INCREDIBLY BEAUTIFUL AND HEARTFELT. WAS *I SHALL NEVER FALL IN LOVE* ALWAYS INTENDED AS A GRAPHIC NOVEL? AND HOW DID THE CREATIVE PROCESS DIFFER COMPARED TO CREATING *FINDING HOME*?

Thank you so much. I actually always wanted to print *Finding Home* as a series of graphic novels too (although those were self-published and sold out a long time ago!) And I did always imagine ISNFIL as a graphic novel, partly because I hoped it could be traditionally published and get out to a wider audience of young people - since it’s the kind of book I really needed but never had when I was younger.



Finding Home definitely taught me how to work for print, drawing more efficiently in stages and batches, and with a (hired) editor. It was very good preparation, and meant I knew exactly how long ISNFIL would take to draw (almost two years, which is quite normal for a full-colour graphic novel). The only process difference was that ISNFIL got scripted more fully

and formally, with proper editor support right from the start.

IS THERE A PERIOD OF HISTORY YOU WOULD LOVE TO HAVE EXPERIENCED FOR YOURSELF?

I think being very disabled (as well as trans) makes it so hard to imagine - I wouldn't be alive without modern medicine, and even cobbled streets in Edinburgh now are terrible for my wheelchair.

But if I could just see it for an hour, maybe 1920s (or 1720s?) gay pubs, or a Shakespeare play as it was actually performed at the time.


WE KNOW AUTHORS AREN'T SUPPOSED TO HAVE FAVOURITES, BUT IS THERE A CHARACTER FROM *I SHALL NEVER FALL IN LOVE* YOU FEEL YOU COULD DEDICATE A WHOLE MINI-SERIES TO? (PERSONALLY, WE WOULD FIND IT HILARIOUS TO FOLLOW JOHN'S ESCAPADES AS A LAW STUDENT IN LONDON.)

Oh definitely, John (and George?) running around London up to shenanigans would be a lot of fun. Or intrigue-based drama of Sophie making her way up high society -

like she seems so sweet, but she's pulling all these strings behind the scenes and helping out women in trouble, maybe.

FINAL QUESTION, WHAT DO YOU HAVE PLANNED NEXT, IF YOU ARE ALLOWED TO SAY?

I have a few different things cooking. Having researched so much, I'd love to do one more graphic novel in a similar time period that's more gothic and dramatic, and explores some other parts of queer and trans history I didn't cover in this one.

I've also been working on queer stories in fantasy settings and more illustrated prose. Fantasy has always been my home genre - although it's usually all queer romance, and reviewers sometimes call my fantasy stories 'historical inspired', so it's probably all more similar than I think! 

I Shall Never Fall in Love is published by Simon & Schuster and out now!

HARI'S WRITING PROMPT

Take a 100+ year old story and reimagine it with your favourite modern tropes

HARI CONNER

Hari Conner is an award-winning author/illustrator who usually writes fantasy, historical and queer romance - sometimes at the same time. They've previously written and illustrated the now-complete webcomic *Finding Home*, and choose-your-own-path books including *Into the Tower*.

Hari grew up drawing comics in class in South London and now lives in Scotland, pursuing their quest to find wheelchair accessible forests.

You can find more about their work at <https://www.hari-illustration.com/> or @haridraws on social media



PRINTABLE WRITING PROMPTS AND ACTIVITIES



CHAOS

Choose one of the following settings:

- A busy airport
- A playground at lunchtime
- A 70% sale at a toyshop at Christmas
- A school bus in a traffic jam



Put a character in one of these settings and write about what happens while they are there. Are they stressed? Is it enjoyable? Who else is with them? Does anything exciting happen? Use senses to really get an idea of what the setting is like.

This image shows a blank sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

PRINTABLE WRITING PROMPTS AND ACTIVITIES

Check out these two 'Chaos and Calm' inspired illustrations
by Mel Corrigan.



Using the illustrations as a prompt, start writing and see where the story takes you...

What are their plans for the day? Does something happen to change these plans? Do they encounter a problem? What can they do to get out of it?

You could use one or both of the images. It's totally up to you.

Try including the senses to get a real feel for the calm or chaotic nature of your story.

We'd love to read what you come up with so send them along to paperboundmagazine@outlook.com.



Illustrations by the
brilliant
MEL CORRIGAN
Find out more about
Mel on page 49



This image shows a blank sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and extend across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

NO WORRIES

by Carole Bromley

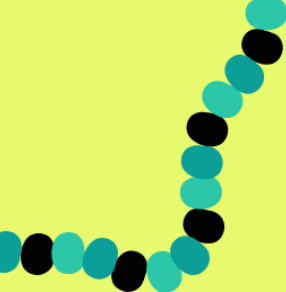
CAROLE BROMLEY

Carole Bromley lives in York, UK. Winner of the Caterpillar Prize, 2022, she has a children's collection, *Blast Off!* and has been published in anthologies from Macmillan and Nosy Crow and in Tyger Tyger, The Toy, Paper Lanterns, Dirigible Balloon and Little Thoughts Press.

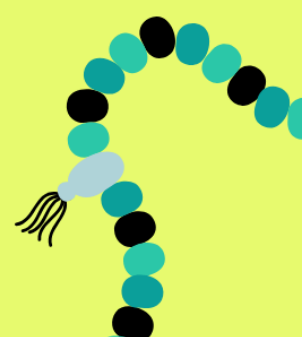
www.carolebromleypoetry.co.uk

Follow Carole on Twitter/X @carolebromley1





Chillax they tell me
like it was simple
I worry about everything:
exams, nits, a pimple.
I worry about friends,
the making and losing
about every decision -
I'm no good at choosing.
I worry about grandma
I worry about dad
I worry about mum,
about making her sad.
I worry my sister
will get into vaping,
I worry my guinea pig
will end up escaping,
I worry about eating
I worry about drink
I worry so much
I can't sleep, I can't think.
I worry all night
and I worry all day
and I just wish these worries
would all go away.
I worry about parties
and not being invited
I worry myself sick
even when I'm excited
and it's no good you saying
Don't worry! It's fine
It's not! I should know!
This worry is mine!
And it's no good you laughing
in the hope I'll join in
I'm too busy worrying
my team will not win.
I've heard about worry beads;
I'd love to try them.
Next time you're in Greece
please, please will you buy some!



Why poems are like pizzas

BY ATTIE LIME



Attie writes and performs poems for children, visiting schools and festivals with her Poetry

Parrot sidekick, Marjorie. Attie's first solo collection of poetry for children will be published by Otter-Barry Books in March 2025. She loves tea, cats, stationery, and words which taste nice.

WWW.ATTIELIME.CO.UK



I run a poetry group for children called Poetry Pizza. You might think that's a funny name for a creative writing group, and I suppose it is, but I had a very good reason for choosing it.



Take a moment to think about pizza. It's a circle, cut into sort-of triangle slices, with a handy crust to hold, right? But have you ever had a rectangular pizza? Pizza-bites at a party? French bread pizza? A Calzone pizza, folded up like a pasty? They're all called pizza, when we bite into them, they taste like pizza. So, what makes a pizza a pizza? For argument's sake, let's say that some kind of dough base, tomato sauce spread over it, then toppings, equals pizza.

But what about poems, and why am I going on about pizza? Well, I believe that it can help with poetry-writing to think about poems that way, too. Sometimes when we're asked to write a poem, we think of a traditional type of poem (I like to call them poemy-poems), which maybe has four or five verses (or stanzas), it probably rhymes, and is instantly recognisable as a poem. That can seem quite daunting. And depending on what type of poems you're used to reading, it might seem like a rather dull task, too. But what if we open our eyes to all those other pizzas out there (I mean poems – you're getting the drift now, right?). How can we write a poem which is different to a circle-shaped Margherita?



Poems which don't fit the poemy-poem description above, are still poems. Some of my favourites are Shape Poems, and if you haven't heard of Found Poems, they are such a lot of fun – look them up! They are called 'Found' Poems because they appear in surprising, everyday places, such as signs, letters, and even book spines. Poems can be micro (the very tiny ones), back-to-front, upside down, written from the bottom of the page going upwards, and can even include signs, symbols, and made-up words. Some use the white space on the page to represent something, or to make you read the words differently. Some can be read from start to finish and then from finish to start. Some have **just one word**! These are ALL poems. Not all poems rhyme, and many amazing poems are written in what's called free verse, which means they don't follow a set structure. I love free verse poems! Writing them makes me actually feel free and reading them can feel like listening to somebody talking or sharing a story.



So, if there are so many very different kinds of poem, what do they have in common? What makes a poem a poem?

In general, poems don't use whole sentences, have shorter lines than stories, and use words and sounds in special ways, like alliteration, assonance, metaphor, simile, and repetition. Poems are little pockets of magic; they can describe things beautifully with few words, and they have the power to make us feel every emotion under the sun.

Just as one person might choose to eat pizza with extra cheese, a stuffed crust, and seven toppings, another might choose a plain Margherita and be just as happy. On the Poetry Menu, there are myriad options, all tasting different, but with that distinct flavour that only a poem has. It is okay if you like to write and read rhyming poems best, it is okay if you love long narrative poems from another century, it is okay if you want to write funny poems, poems in the shape of squirrels, poems in an alien language, or poems upside down and inside out and full of marvellous wordy experiments! Anything goes.



Just think, once upon a time, someone had the crazy idea to put pineapple on a pizza, just to try it. And eggs. And anchovies! So, next time you're writing, why not try a poemy-poem, and then have a go at something different, because poems really are like pizzas, and you might just create something new and surprisingly delicious! 🍕

The Silence

by Jacqueline Shirtliff



JACQUELINE SHIRTLIFF

Jacqueline Shirtliff is a poet and primary school teacher on the Isle of Man. One of her favourite things is helping children to love poetry and reading and encouraging them to be writers themselves. She lives with her husband in a rose-covered cottage near the sea and enjoys gardening, crochet, and playing the tuba and violin, but not all at the same time! You can read some of her other poems in Little Thoughts Press, The Toy, Northern Gravy, The Dirigible Balloon, Tyger Tyger, back issues of The Caterpillar, Wings Wide Open (OUP 2024) and Heroes and Villains, Poems about Legends (Macmillan 2024)



In almost-silence all the school
has gathered, lined up in the hall,
the teachers standing, keeping guard.
And me? I have to say it's hard
to close my eyes and think of war
and soldiers, all those years before.

I ponder battles, bravery,
the barbed wire, trenches ... what's for tea.
Then suddenly it's there again,
that bird! Against the window pane!
The tapping beak; sharp, scratching claws;
black flapping wings; rude, raucous caws.

I try to block the frantic flaps,
the noisy, crude, insistent taps.
A stifled giggle, then a cough.
A loudly-whispered telling off.
But as our silence comes adrift,
amidst the noise I sense a shift.

I smell the mud, I taste the fear,
for now, with eyes squeezed shut I hear
not bird's wings window-battering
but harsh machine-gun stuttering.
A shell screams past and I am there.
A mine explodes and I am scared.

Then all around me, in our hall,
the wriggling stops and quiet falls.
No sniffing, coughing, shuffling feet,
no teachers' sighs or rustling sweets.
No sound. A hush; calm, peaceful, deep,
and, solemn suddenly, we keep
the silence.



AUTHOR INTERVIEW



SKYE MCKENNA

AUTHOR OF THE *HEDGEWITCH* SERIES, SKYE MCKENNA, SPOKE TO US ABOUT HER WITCHY SERIES AND HER LATEST BOOK *SEAWITCH*.

COULD YOU TELL US A LITTLE ABOUT THE EXCITING NEW ADDITION TO YOUR BRILLIANTLY WITCHY SERIES, *SEAWITCH*, AND THE INSPIRATION BEHIND IT?

In *Seawitch*, young witches, Cassie, Rue and Tabitha, set off to spend their summer holidays in the seaside village of Porthmorven. There, they must unravel the mysteries of Brimover Bay – *who* has been smuggling goods on the magical crossing tides? *What* happened to the three fishing boats that vanished in the bay? And *why* has the Seawitch shut herself up in her lighthouse home, refusing to speak to anyone?

The setting of *Seawitch* was inspired by my lifelong love for Cornwall and its folklore. Porthmorven is based on several real villages I've been lucky enough to visit and many of the magical beings come straight from Cornish legend.

THIS IS YOUR THIRD BOOK OF THE SERIES AND WE LOVE HOW MUCH THE THEME OF SEASONS AND THE ELEMENTS ARE INCLUDED THROUGHOUT THESE NOVELS. DID YOU FACE ANY CHALLENGES WHEN WRITING THIS BOOK COMPARED WITH THE PREVIOUS TWO?

I love all the festivals and traditions that make each season feel special. While *Hedgewitch* takes place around Midsummer and *Woodwitch* features Hallowe'en and Christmas, I wanted *Seawitch* to feel like a real summer holiday book – complete with dips in the sea and fish and chips! The challenge was in constructing a whole new world, away from the familiar magic of Hedgely – a new setting that was just as



mysterious and exciting to explore. There are also more characters – as Oak Patrol gains a new witch who is determined to do things differently.

THERE ARE SO MANY WONDERFUL MAGICAL BOOKS OUT THERE, FOR ALL AGES, BUT CASSIE'S ADVENTURES FEEL VERY FRESH AND FULL OF ENERGY. DID ANY OTHER WITCHY BOOKS INSPIRE YOU TO WRITE THE *HEDGEWITCH* SERIES, EITHER GROWING UP OR BOOKS THAT HAVE COME OUT IN RECENT YEARS?

I love books about witches! I grew up reading the *Worst Witch* books by Jill Murphy, and the wonderful *Carbonel* series by Barbara Sleigh. I also love the movie *Kiki's Delivery Service* about another young witch who finds a new home. I think readers who enjoy my books would also like the *Utterly Dark* series by Philip Reeve and the *Yesterday Crumb* books by Andy Sagar.


THIS BOOK SEES CASSIE AND HER FRIENDS LEAVE HEDGELY AND VENTURE TO CORNWALL TO SOLVE NEW PROBLEMS AND TACKLE (EVEN MORE!) CHALLENGES. HOW DID IT FEEL WRITING THE CHARACTERS YOU KNOW SO WELL IN A COMPLETELY DIFFERENT SETTING, AND DID YOU ALWAYS KNOW THIS WOULD HAPPEN?

I had always planned to send Cassie and her friends on an adventure away from home. I knew it would test her skills and expand her understanding of the magical world. It was a wonderful opportunity to explore a different environment and see how my woodland-witches would cope out of their element. I think it shows just how travel – even within our own country – can open our eyes to how other people live and help us discover a new side of ourselves.

HAVE YOU ALWAYS WANTED TO BE A WRITER, AND WHAT HAS YOUR JOURNEY TO PUBLICATION BEEN LIKE?

I've wanted to be a writer ever since I was a kid. However, I had to spend years and years practising before I felt I had something good enough to send to publishers. When I was finally ready, I was lucky to find some wonderful people who loved Cassie and her world and thought other readers might too. Being a published author has been an adventure in and of itself. When I started scribbling down stories, I never imagined I'd have to get up on stage and talk to hundreds of kids! I'm very grateful for the opportunities I've been given and know I still have a lot to learn about writing.

DO YOU HAVE ANY WRITING ADVICE FOR PEOPLE WHO WANT TO WRITE TOO?

Read widely and try out new genres and authors. Think about what makes you really love your favourites. Why do they stand out? Is it the characters? The language? The plot twists? The more you train yourself to pick up on these things, the more aware you will be of them in your own stories. If you find writing a whole novel daunting, start with short stories – they're the perfect way to practise and try out new ideas in only a few pages. 

SKYE MCKENNA

Skye McKenna grew up in a mining town in the Australian outback. Surrounded by the red dust of the Pilbara, she developed a healthy respect for wild things and wild places at a young age. *Seawitch* is the third title in the *Hedgewitch* series published by Hachette Children's Books.

NEW WRITING



Travel Diary

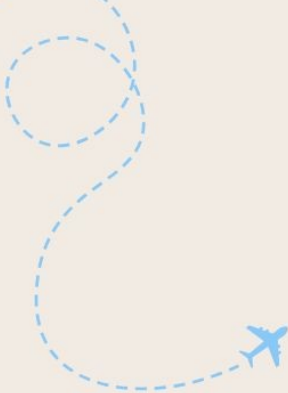
by Rhona
Stephens



RHONA STEPHENS



Rhona Stephens grew up in Northern Ireland and now lives in Scotland. She loves words and music, living in the country and visiting the coast, especially the north coast of Ireland. Her poems for children have appeared in *Tyger Tyger*, *The Toy*, *Parakeet*, *Dirigible Balloon* and *Charles Causley Trust*.



Busy airport, lengthy queue,
flight delay, broken loo.

Screaming baby on the plane;
turbulence... Again... Again...!!

Searing sunshine, smell of tar,
ranks of taxis, rows of cars.

Strange place, strange bed,
strange food, sore head.

Air conditioning on all night,
cicadas whine, mosquitos bite.

Rotting seaweed, gritty sand,
jellyfish too close to land.

Blue-green algae in the sea;
boring shops, shrimp for tea.

Plastic litter, crowded pool;
very noisy, can't keep cool.

Streaming eyes (allergies);
air pollution makes me wheeze.

Up at 2am for flight;
airline rep is not on site.

Airport crowded, baggage lost,
(Here tomorrow, fingers crossed).

Next year, let's stay home instead -
climate-friendly, comfy bed.

AUTHOR INTERVIEW

Catherine Doyle



AUTHOR CATHERINE DOYLE SPOKE TO US ABOUT HER
NEW YA ROMANTASY, *THE DAGGER AND THE FLAME*

COULD YOU INTRODUCE US TO YOUR NEW NOVEL, *THE DAGGER AND THE FLAME*?

The Dagger and the Flame is an epic enemies-to-lovers romantasy. It follows runaway Seraphine Marchant and assassin Ransom Hale as they engage in a high-stakes cat & mouse chase across the glittering rooftops and secret catacombs of the enchanted city of Fantome... until the night they come face to face and something vital sparks between them. It's deeper than attraction and stronger than vengeance... It's a kind of magic that's never been seen before. A kind of magic that could end up changing the face of Fantome forever. If only they would stop trying to kill each other long enough to figure it out!

“FANTOME IS MAGIC, AND RUN BY WARRING GUILDS: THE DAGGERS AND THE CLOAKS. THAT MEANS, AT NIGHT, THE CITY BARES ITS TEETH...!”

CAN YOU TELL US ABOUT YOUR WRITING JOURNEY SO FAR AND HOW IT HAS LED TO THIS BOOK? IS THERE ANYTHING DIFFERENT IN *THE DAGGER AND THE FLAME* FOR READERS TO LOOK FORWARD TO?

The Dagger and the Flame is my seventh novel for young adult readers, and it's really a love letter to everything I adore about the genre: forbidden romance, secret magic, beautiful settings, found family, and adorable canine side-kicks! It's the romantasy I've been

dreaming of writing for years and explores my all-time favourite trope: enemies-to-lovers (or what about enemies and lovers?!)

WE LOVED THE SETTING OF FANTOME. CAN YOU TELL US A BIT MORE ABOUT THE WORLDBUILDING, HOW YOU CREATED YOUR SETTING AND THE INSPIRATION BEHIND IT?

Fantome is loosely inspired by Paris, a place that's very dear to my heart. It offers the same old-world charm, deep sense of history and breath-taking architecture, but of course, Fantome is magic, and run by warring guilds: the Daggers and the Cloaks. That means, at night, the city bares its teeth...!

ONE OF OUR FAVOURITE THINGS IN THIS NOVEL IS THE MAGIC SYSTEM/THE SHADE. IT HAS SO MANY USES IN THE WORLD YOU'VE BUILT, CREATING LOTS OF POWERFUL ROLES AND OCCUPATIONS, BUT AT A COST. IT'S SUCH AN ORIGINAL INVENTION. CAN YOU TELL US A BIT MORE ABOUT IT, AND WHERE THE IDEA CAME FROM?

I love magic systems, and shadow magic, in particular. With Shade, I liked the idea of introducing a kind of dark magic that firstly, had a cost to the user, and secondly, could theoretically be used by anyone once they managed to get their hands on it. With the magic in this book being a forbidden substance, it then made it possible to build an entire secret trade around it. This made it feel fresh and unique to me, and also gave rise to the guilds who control Shade, which is such an important facet of the story.

THE DAGGER AND THE FLAME IS TOLD FROM BOTH SERAPHINE AND RANSOM'S POINT OF VIEW. DO YOU FIND ANYTHING TRICKY WHEN WRITING IN TWO POVS, AND DO YOU HAVE ANY ADVICE FOR WRITERS WHO WANT TO WRITE FROM MULTIPLE CHARACTERS' PERSPECTIVES?

From the outset, I knew this would be dual POV, because of the nature of the story. The only tricky part for me was playing favourites – I loved Ransom so much, I really beefed up his narrative and leaned into his backstory, which, in the end, made him feel more equal to Seraphine. As for advice, I would say, just make sure your characters sound distinct from each other. Keep an eye on their motivations and backstories to inform this.


CATHERINE'S WRITING PROMPT

Write an enemies-to-lovers scene in any setting you like, where two characters start off on the wrong foot, and end up coming around to each other!

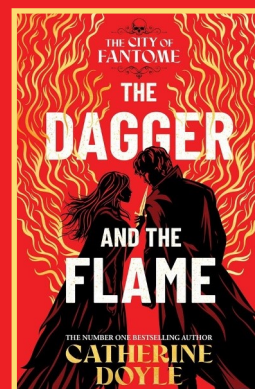
THERE ARE SO MANY GREAT CHARACTERS IN THIS BOOK. DID YOU HAVE A FAVOURITE WHEN YOU WERE WRITING IT? AND WHAT WAS IT ABOUT THEM THAT YOU LOVED?

On the Dagger side, I love Nadia, because she's such a badass, and yet loyal to the bone. On the Cloak side, I enjoy Val's sarcastic energy. My all-time favourite side-character has to be Pippin! That adorable little mutt has my heart!

THIS BOOK DEFINITELY LEAVES YOU WANTING MORE. CAN YOU TELL US ABOUT ANY OTHER BOOKS IN THIS WORLD THAT WE CAN LOOK FORWARD TO, OR ABOUT ANYTHING ELSE YOU'RE WORKING ON?

I'm currently writing the sequel and I can tell you there's more magic, more danger, more betrayal and more romance – we will get to see a lot more of the Kingdom of Valterre, too, which has been really fun to explore. 

The Dagger and the Flame, published by Simon & Schuster, is out now in many countries including the UK and Ireland, North America, Australia and New Zealand.



CATHERINE DOYLE

Catherine Doyle is an award-winning author of children's literature, including the best-selling *Storm Keeper* trilogy and the best-selling *Twin Crowns* series, co-authored with Katherine Webber. Catherine holds a first-class BA in Psychology and a first-class MA in Publishing. Her work has been published all around the world, and translated into over 25 languages. She currently lives in the West of Ireland.

YA Book Review Corner

DEATH AT MORNING HOUSE BY MAUREEN JOHNSON

REVIEWED BY PAPERBOUND

The next edge-of-your-seat YA thriller from Maureen Johnson. *Death at Morning House* is a standalone novel but features all the twisty plots and dual timelines we love from the *Truly Devious* author.

After an accidental fire sent Marlowe Wexler's job, and romance prospects, up in flames, she ends up as a tour guide at Morning House: a mansion in the Thousand Islands area that straddles the Canada-US border. But no one remembered to mention the dead person Marlowe's replacing. And then there's the other disturbing deaths that occurred on the island in the 1920s, right before it was abandoned.

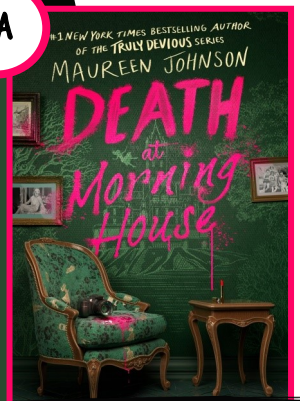
When the woman who brought her to the island goes missing too, Marlowe realises there's a terrible secret buried on the island, and she's reluctantly going to have to dig it up before the next dead body that turns up is hers.

Death at Morning House is a fair-play murder mystery with so many twists and turns, you'll be guessing to the end. This book doesn't shy away from difficult topics or issues of the past as it races full steam ahead to the explosive finale. Get your notebooks at the ready because this intricately plotted, dual timeline mystery is as gripping as it is surprising and you'll have so much fun trying to figure out the truth. Another addictive and fiery read from the queen of thrillers, Maureen Johnson.

Contains themes for older readers.

DEATH AT MORNING HOUSE IS PUBLISHED BY HARPERTEEN AND OUT NOW

YA



RECENT RELEASE



WINTOUR'S GAME BY BRIAN DUNGAN

REVIEWED BY STEVE BLACKMAN @66BLACKMAN (TWITTER/X)

With a click and a swish of night, Alex was in. And she had just two minutes to get out again. From its opening lines, *Wintour's Game* pulls us into the time-bending world of The Temporals, a secret society of people who can stop or manipulate time. Alex soon discovers that her ability to see glimpses of the near future – a great skill for a thief – means she's a Temporal too. With enigmatic teen millionaire Colman as her guide, she comes to understand her new world, and how it's hurtling towards the advent of a terrifying new weapon.

The propulsive plot of *Wintour's Game* whisks us at dizzying speed through the streets and districts of London, and along the way we meet a demi-monde of deftly drawn characters. Some are loveable, some are horrific, but most – like real life – are somewhere in between.

Among the many successes of this story, the greatest is Alex herself. We're treated to her sass and whip-smart dialogue as we follow her journey from thief-for-hire to skilled Temporal. She must learn to strengthen her abilities and – in depending on new friends – change the habits of a lifetime. But her greatest discovery will be the truths about herself.

Author Brian Dungan's expertise as a cameraman in film and TV is obvious in the crafting of this story. It's visual and cinematic, with characters, locations and explosive set-pieces worthy of the big screen. I can't wait for the adaptation.

WINTOUR'S GAME IS OUT NOW AND PUBLISHED BY LITTLE TIGER



RECENT RELEASE

THE BYCATCH PRINCIPLE BY KATH MORGAN

REVIEWED BY MAISIE FISH, CORNWALL

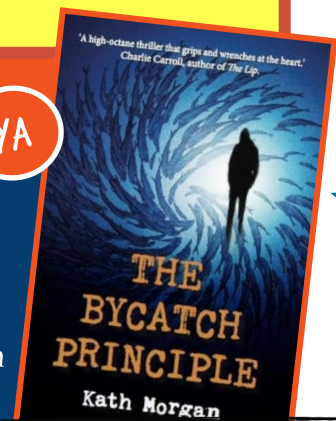
TIKTOK @THEBOOKCORNER2

The Bycatch Principle is full of thrilling suspense and enchanting Cornish descriptions. I was kept guessing right up until the last page with main character, David, as he discovers who he is, while bringing the reader along with him.

This story is beautifully told, showing everyone it is never too late to change your narrative. In this gripping novel, we see David narrowly surviving a failed murder attempt by doctors at the mysterious unit where he has been held captive for the last six years. We're left thinking: why was he put here? Who has been lying to him about his past? And how is he going to escape this nightmare?

I loved finding out all the horrors hidden between these pages in this captivating YA thriller.

THE BYCATCH PRINCIPLE IS PUBLISHED BY HERMITAGE PRESS AND OUT NOW



READER FAVOURITE

HOW TO SURVIVE A HORROR MOVIE BY SCARLETT DUNMORE

YA

REVIEWED BY PAPERBOUND

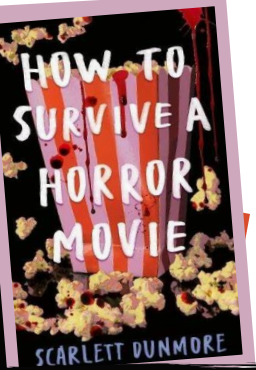
How to Survive a Horror Movie is a new YA thriller/slasher with a refreshing supernatural twist.

Charley is a fairly new student at a girl's boarding school on a remote island. But Charley has luckily met Olive, her new best (and only) friend. They are both true horror movie enthusiasts and so, when students start dying one-by-one in grisly deaths, they're the only two that really know the rules. Enter spooky twist – the dead girls come back as ghosts and only Charley can see them, with often humorous results! Will they help or hinder Charley and Olive on their hunt for the killer?

If you're a fan of slasher movies, like *Scream* or *Halloween*, this one is definitely for you. There are lots of film references, tropes and horror rules to spot as well as several twisty revelations along the way. With promises of more thrills to come in book two, we can't wait to read what comes next!

HOW TO SURVIVE A HORROR MOVIE IS OUT NOW AND PUBLISHED BY LITTLE TIGER

CONTAINS THEMES SUITABLE FOR OLDER READERS



RECENT RELEASE

THE DARK WITHIN US BY JESS POPPLEWELL

YA

REVIEWED BY PAPERBOUND

The Dark Within Us is an addictive supernatural YA, where we travel through a Dante's *Inferno* inspired version of Hell.

Jenny's felt like something's been missing for a long time. It doesn't help that she's currently living on her aunt's sofa, and all her belongings fit into a bin bag. So, when she meets demon Luc and he tells her that her soul is missing, it all sort of fits. Luc persuades Jenny to venture into Hell with him to find her soul. But is he telling her everything, and can Jenny really find what she's looking for in one of the darkest places she's ever been?

This book is wonderfully written. Despite its supernatural genre, Jenny is such a realistic character and is dealing with situations many young people today might find themselves in. On top of that, there are a plethora of other quirky characters to meet along the way. The twins, Chloe-Lee and Joey, are especially wonderfully creepy.

A thrilling and hooky read with a character you root for from the start.

THE DARK WITHIN US IS OUT NOW AND PUBLISHED BY CHICKEN HOUSE

CONTAINS THEMES FOR OLDER READERS



RECENT RELEASE

THE DAGGER AND THE FLAME BY CATHERINE DOYLE

REVIEWED BY PAPERBOUND

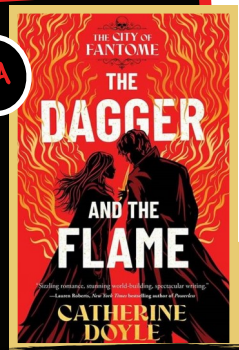
★ *The Dagger and the Flame* is the brand new romantasy from author Catherine Doyle, perfect for older YA and cross-over readers.

Set in the dark and dangerous city of Fantome, shade-magic is controlled by two rival orders – the Cloaks and the Daggers: thieves and assassins. When Seraphine's mother is murdered by a Dagger, she runs to the Cloaks for refuge and to plan her revenge, but she now has a Dagger on her tail: Ransom Hale. However, there's more to Seraphine than meets the eye, and Ransom's job won't be easy. On top of that, there are new monsters in town, the like of which no-one has ever seen before. Despite being mortal enemies, a spark has been lit between Seraphine and Ransom, one that could prove deadly.

★ Rival guilds, morally-grey protagonists, enemies to lovers, an original and wonderfully crafted setting and magic system, and more to come! *The Dagger and the Flame* promises to be an original and fascinating new series to delve into.

★ *THE DAGGER AND THE FLAME* IS OUT NOW AND PUBLISHED BY SIMON AND SCHUSTER

★ CONTAINS SCENES AND THEMES FOR MATURE READERS



RECENT RELEASE

THE DEEP DARK BY MOLLY KNOX OSTERTAG

REVIEWED BY PAPERBOUND

★ *The Deep Dark* is a beautifully heart-wrenching graphic novel full of emotion and compelling, complex characters. On the cusp of adulthood and caring for her sick Abuela, Mags has a dark family secret that she's had to keep hidden her whole life. But when an old friend rolls back into town, their fates intertwine again.

Ostertag's signature style fills the world with interesting character designs and environments that make you feel like you are there in the dry, American desert. The use of colour in happy moments and memories, in contrast to the general monochrome tone, shines a light on the main character's emotional journey in a way only achievable through the medium of graphic novel illustration.

★ With a neat, tightly-woven story, moments that make you stop and think, and blood-pumping tension towards the end, *The Deep Dark* is a wonderful standalone graphic novel for older teens. Perfect for fans of *On a Sunbeam* by Tillie Walden and *Squire* by Nadia Shamas and Sara Alfageeh.

★ *THE DEEP DARK* IS PUBLISHED BY SCHOLASTIC AND OUT NOW

YA GRAPHIC NOVEL



RECENT RELEASE

DESERT ECHOES BY ABDI NAZEMIAN

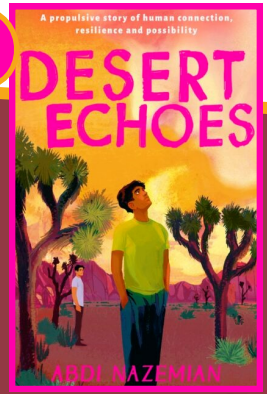
REVIEWED BY LAURA JONES

Rugged rocks, desert landscapes and solitude: Joshua Tree National Park is the haunting backdrop for this contemporary tale of love, loss, friendship and family. When 15-year-old Kam falls for Ash, an intriguing creative with a habit for disappearing for days at a time, his friends and family struggle to accept the growing relationship. Despite their worries, Kam joins Ash and his family on a camping trip to Joshua Tree, but tragedy strikes when the boys take a walk into the unknown late at night.

Desert Echoes is an exploration of grief and turmoil, discovery and acceptance, as Kam faces life without Ash. Through the use of alternating timelines, Nazemian balances the pain of his character's loss with a journey of self-discovery and new possibilities. It is a moving and compelling story perfect for fans of Cynthia So's *If You Still Recognise Me* and Meg Rosoff's *The Great Godden*. Easy to read, but hard to put down, *Desert Echoes* is a relatable story of human connection and inner strength.

Note: This book deals with mature issues and themes

DESERT ECHOES IS PUBLISHED BY LITTLE TIGER AND IS OUT NOW



RECENT RELEASE

IF YOU'RE AN AUTHOR OR PUBLISHER AND WOULD LIKE US TO REVIEW ONE OF YOUR BOOKS, GET IN TOUCH
AT PAPERBOUNDMAGAZINE@OUTLOOK.COM

OR IF YOU'D LIKE TO REVIEW A BOOK FOR US, CHECK OUT THE GUIDELINES ON OUR WEBSITE:

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HAPPY READING!



LUCY ANN UNWIN

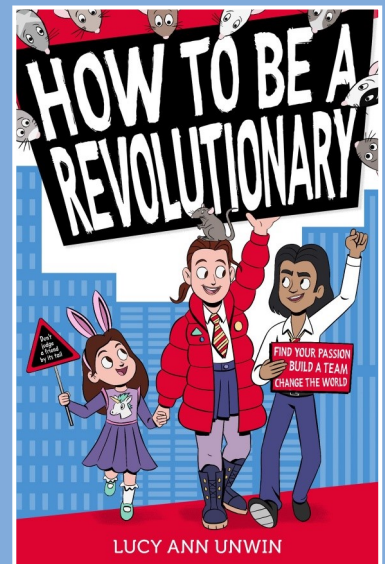
WE CAUGHT UP WITH LUCY ANN UNWIN TO CHAT ABOUT HER NEW BOOK *HOW TO BE A REVOLUTIONARY*

WE ABSOLUTELY LOVED YOUR NEW BOOK, *HOW TO BE A REVOLUTIONARY* – FROM THE CHARACTERS (ESPECIALLY THE RATS) TO THE THEMES OF INSPIRING CHANGE. CAN YOU TELL US A LITTLE ABOUT THIS NOVEL AND WHERE THE INSPIRATION CAME FROM TO WRITE IT?

Ah thank you, that's so lovely to hear! The inspiration was very specific: the 2019 General Election! In the weeks leading up to it, I spent a lot of time in a house very much like the one in *How To Be A Revolutionary*... me and a lot of other adults were streaming in and out, collecting our leaflets and making our plans...but when I went to the loo I noticed a toddler toilet seat and little steps in the bathroom. I wondered what it would be like to be a kid living in this house temporarily taken over by a political campaign, and where were they? If there were older kids, were they hiding and spying on us? How much did they

understand about what was going on in their house?

That was the spark for the book: 11 year old Natalie and her little sister Lily live in a campaign house and spy on the action downstairs. Nat decides SHE wants to change the world too, so persuades one of the campaigners (or 'Revolutionaries' as her mum calls them) to take her under his wing. He sets her tasks, like: 'smile at ten strangers' or 'forgive someone something' and tells her to find her passion and build a team, then she can change the world. Nat decides her passion is to challenge



people's prejudice about her favourite animal: rats. Then basically lots of rat chaos ensues!

NAT AND HER SISTER, LILY, HAVE TWO VERY FLAWED PARENTS WHO MIGHT NOT ALWAYS DO THE RIGHT THING, BUT EACH TRY THEIR BEST. HOW IMPORTANT WAS IT FOR YOU TO WRITE A FAMILY DYNAMIC LIKE THIS FOR MIDDLE GRADE READERS?

So important! I really, really wanted to write some parents that are a bit rubbish, but not evil. For many reasons really. Firstly, I'm a pretty flawed parent myself! We try our best as parents but it's HARD and we inevitably don't always get it right. And that's in the easiest of circumstances before life starts throwing its curveballs! Also, I don't think kids expect or need their parents to be perfect, but it would be nice if they knew they weren't alone! I think it's important for them to see characters in the books they read that also have parents that aren't always the wholesome archetype! And to maybe even start to understand why.

LILY CAN BE WISER THAN HER YEARS – SOMETIMES EVEN WISER THAN ADULTS – AT SEVERAL POINTS IN THIS NOVEL. IS SHE INSPIRED BY ANYONE IN PARTICULAR? AND DO YOU HAVE A FAVOURITE CHARACTER OF THIS BOOK?

Ah, I do love Lily and she IS very wise. I really like how her age allows her to see some naive truths: she sees things for how they are, without loading them with her own desires and expectations too much. She is a little bit inspired by my youngest daughter — all snuffly and adorable — and the relationship between her and Nat is

very much taken from my own girls. Nat looks after Lily a lot and it brings out the best side of her, but she would be lost without her little sister! I think Avinash is my favourite character, though. I like his deadpan stoicism and deep down kindness!

ONE OF NAT'S FAVOURITE AUTHORS IS JACQUELINE WILSON. DO YOU SHARE THIS TRAIT TOO, AND WAS THIS AN IMPORTANT PART OF HER CHARACTER, CONSIDERING THE EVENTS OF THE NOVEL?

I don't think anyone gets close to Dame Jacqueline when it comes to exploring a variety of lived experiences and not-so-perfect families — I remember being totally blown away when I first read *The Illustrated Mum*, it really opened the door to what children's fiction could do! In *How To Be A Revolutionary*, I mainly wanted to show Nat taking comfort from seeing different kinds of families in fiction.

NAT IS FIERCELY RESILIENT IN THE FACE OF CHALLENGING CIRCUMSTANCES AND SHOWS READERS THAT ALL YOU HAVE TO DO TO SPARK CHANGE IS START SMALL. WHAT DO YOU HOPE READERS CAN TAKE FROM THIS?

Exactly that! Small is amazing! I think a lot of kids hitting the 9-12 age bracket now grew up on the likes of the *Little People*, *Big Dreams* books and I LOVE those books but I've noticed in my own kids that they feel like if they haven't invented a nifty machine to reverse climate change, or started a policy-altering viral social media campaign already, then they're failures before they hit their teen years! We all know young people with a lot of anxiety about the big things in the world that they

feel powerless to change too. (I can relate!) So I'm really hoping readers take with them that having that passion and desire to spark change is brilliant, but it's not their responsibility to fix the big things, that's on the grown ups! The smallest bit of kindness — like smiling at a stranger — can ripple out and change the world, and that's enough!

WE ABSOLUTELY LOVE THE THEME OF ACTIVISM IN THIS BOOK, PARTICULARLY WHEN IT COMES TO TAKING CARE OF ANIMALS (LIKE THE *OCTOPUS, DADU AND ME*!). DO YOU HAVE ANY OF YOUR OWN RATS, OR A FAVOURITE ANIMAL THAT YOU THINK IS NOT APPRECIATED AS IT SHOULD BE?

Sadly, I don't have rats (except in the compost bin! 🐹) I'm allergic to all things furry so have to live out my pet fantasies in print! As a child I had — the eminently hypo-allergenic — stick insects! My friends took quite a bit of persuading to see their cute side too!!

DO YOU HAVE ANY TOP TIPS FOR ASPIRING YOUNG WRITERS?

Lean in to the fun and don't put too much

pressure on yourself! My older daughter writes a lot, and she has such a good time making Pinterest mood boards, world-building maps, character personality charts etc. It means when she's in the mood to write she can write, but when she's not she can just have some fun in a world created entirely to her own taste. It shouldn't be a chore, make it fun for yourself!

WE LOVE YOUR BOOKS! ARE YOU WORKING ON ANYTHING NEW YOU CAN TELL US ABOUT?

Well, I've been spending a lot of time on a science non-fiction project that I'm very excited about — working in a brilliant team for that one, so I look forward to telling you more! That should be with us next spring, hopefully. In terms of fiction, I have too many half-written books, I need to knuckle down and finish one! The ones I'm most excited about at the moment are a book about a shy boy who secretly changes the lives of his peers by leaving advice around school on Post-It notes, and a book about grief for teens that's a bit different for me as it's a new age range and also features a near-future world populated by ghosts! 🧛

How To Be A Revolutionary is published by UCLan and out now

LUCY ANN UNWIN

Lucy's debut *The Octopus, Dadu and Me* was published in 2023 and shortlisted for multiple awards, including The Brilliant Book Award. An ex-BBC Music Journalist, she's lived all over the UK as well as in Chile for a year and San Francisco for three. She has now settled on the Sussex clifftops with her husband and two daughters.

More info at her website: www.lucyannunwin.com

MEET THE ★ ILLUSTRATORS

Mel Corrigan

Mel Corrigan is an illustrator with an architect-trained eye for detail. She is passionate about capturing the playfulness and imagination of children. Mel finds inspiration in the little things - the everyday joys and interactions that colour our days. She lives in Melbourne, with her husband, two daughters, and their pet rabbit. In her spare time, Mel enjoys going for bush walks with her family, and loves any excuse for an ice-cream. Mel illustrated *Deva the Bengal Boat Cat* 2023, *Mrs. Best's Special Class* (available in USA) 2024 and her Sweet Summer Days artwork was published in *Our Australian Heart* anthology picture book 2023. Mel's next picture book *I'm Not an Owl* is due for release in April 2025.

Mel illustrated a writing prompt in this issue.

<https://www.melcorrigan.com.au/>

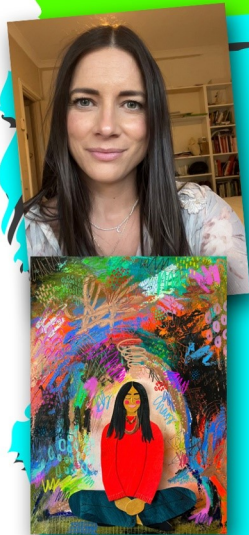
Instagram: @mel.corrigan



Photo by Emma Clifford

Rachael Robertson

Rachael Robertson is an educator, author, illustrator and artist based in Perth, Western Australia. She is passionate about engaging children in quality literature and beautiful art. Rachael has published two books as the author/illustrator (*My Amazing Animal Alphabet Alliteration Book* and *Little Llama's Big Question*), and illustrated a board book about creating beautiful art, titled *What Is It?* Rachael has had her artwork grace the cover of *Our Australian Heart* by Just Write for Kids. She predominantly uses painted paper collage to create her artwork, however enjoys mixing traditional methods with digital artwork. Rachael is a primary school teacher who has taught both in the classroom and as an art specialist. She lives with her husband, three young children, and dog Coco. Creating is her happiness and joy. Rachael created the image on this issue's front cover.

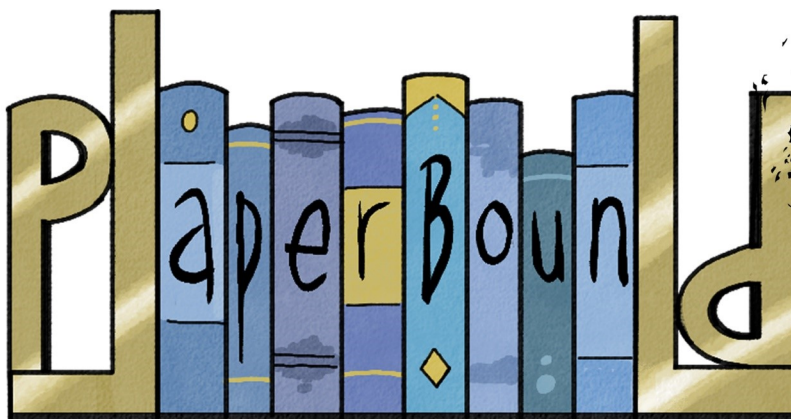


Carmen Carreira

Carmen Carreira is an illustrator who has previously worked for publishers including the National Trust and Country Living. Her work is inspired mostly by the beautiful countryside and wildlife around her home studio in Central Bedfordshire. As well as producing book art Carmen creates one-off commissions for collectors of her work and sells in galleries around the UK. When she's not sketching or painting Carmen is a busy mum to 3 young boys. Carmen illustrated the contents page in this issue.



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for the young, and the young at heart

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