

5 YEAR ANNIVERSARY SPECIAL

# Paperbound

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Issue 17 Autumn/Winter 25-26

## AUTHOR INTERVIEWS *with*

CURTIS JOBLING  
MARISA LINTON  
MANJEET MANN  
SARAH LIPPETT  
& ZIGGY HANAOR

## + ARTICLES AND SNEAK PEEKS FROM

GRAHAM CAWSE  
AMY MCCAW  
JACK MACKAY &  
POPPY T. PERRY

### STYLE TIPS

- 1
- 2
- 3

### FIND YOUR COLOUR



### My GOALS

### HOW TO BE WOW

- 1
- 2
- 3



# NEW

WRITING &  
ILLUSTRATIONS  
*From*

GAYNOR ANDREWS

STEPHANIE BUOSI

CARMEN CARREIRA

ERICA CHESTER

ANNA LLEWELLYN

REBECCA LOVEDAY

EMMA PHILLIPS

GRAHAM SEAL

ARASHI KIM



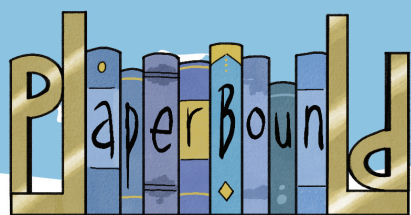
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Cover illustration by  
Stephanie Buosi

Find out more about all our  
illustrators on page 55

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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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# Letter from the Editors

## Dear Reader,

We are celebrating five years of  
PaperBound Magazine! Whether you've  
been with us since the beginning, or  
just discovered us recently, thank you  
so much for reading. We hope you enjoy  
the new issue.

As always it's packed full of new  
writing, illustrations, author  
interviews, articles and more. We can't  
thank our contributors enough for all  
their wonderful content in this new  
issue, and all the issues that have  
come before! Huge thanks to them and  
the publishers who put us in touch  
with such fantastic people!

Remember, our whole back catalogue is  
available to read for free on our  
website, along with some exclusive  
blog content.

Happy Reading!

Emily, Lucy and Rayan





# Contents

The Changes Issue

Illustration by  
Carmen Carreira

Find out more about all the  
illustrators you see in this  
issue on our Meet the  
Illustrators feature on  
page 55



Once downloaded, this contents page is interactive. To jump to a page just click on the article you want to read. To get back to the contents page, just tap the star at the top of the piece you're reading.

## New Writing and Illustrations

14 Mr Rebus  
by Erica Chester

20 Masquerade  
by Gaynor Andrews

32 What Is A Flag  
by Emma Phillips

38 Hedgehog Boy  
by Anna Llewellyn

44 The Secret Agents' Ball  
by Graham Seal

50 A Terrible Transformation  
by Rebecca Loveday

55 Meet the Illustrators  
Read all about this issue's  
illustrators: Stephanie Buosi,  
Arashi Kim and Carmen  
Carreira

## Author Interviews and Articles

Interviews from:

17 Curtis Jobling  
author of *Wyrdwood*

22 Sarah Lippett and Ziggy  
Hanaor  
author and illustrator of  
*Everything Amplified*

34 Manjeet Mann  
author of *Roar*

46 Marisa Linton  
author of *The Binding Spell*

and

36 A sneak peek from  
Graham Cawser's new poetry  
collection, *Wizards, Witches & Magical  
Glitches*

Plus articles from:

8 Gloam and the value of fear  
by author of *Gloam*, Jack Mackay

41 Chilling Book Recommendations  
from author of *They Own the Night*,  
Amy McCaw

52 Writing and Drawing Tips  
from author of *Dead Real*,  
Poppy T. Perry

## Regular Features

11 Middle Grade Book Reviews

25 Teen and YA Book Reviews

43 Printable Writing Prompt



CELEBRATING  
5 YEARS OF...

# PAPERBOUND MAGAZINE



paperbound

for

# Writing a Trilogy

By Holly Race

Author of the *Midnight Twists* Trilogy

 + Giveaway

shabetti  
by Carole Bromley

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TEAMED UP WITH ONE OF OUR REVIEWERS FROM THE AUTUMN  
 TO ASK AUTHOR A.F. HARROLD ALL ABOUT WRITING  
 AND LEAVE BEHIND.

YOU TELL US A LITTLE ABOUT THE WORLDS  
LEAVE BEHIND, AND THE INSPIRATION BEHIND  
DID IT START WITH A SETTING, A CHARACTER  
SOMETHING ELSE?

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**Night Climbing** by Catherine Oliver

from William Allingham's 'The Fairies' (matters to them)

After William Allingham's "The Fairies"  
(139 years after, not that time matters to them)

PAPERBOUND MAGAZINE CAUGHT UP WITH **NANCY SPRINGER**, AUTHOR OF THE BRILLIANT **ENOLA HOLMES MYSTERIES**, TO CHAT ABOUT WRITING, BOOKS, AND THE NETFLIX ADAPTATION OF THE CASE OF THE MISSING MARGARET.

THE ENOLA HOLMES MYSTERIES HAVE BEEN PUBLISHED IN THE UK THIS YEAR FOR THE FIRST TIME. COULD YOU TELL US A LITTLE ABOUT THE SERIES, AND THE INSPIRATION BEHIND IT?

36 I KNEW HIM (SHERLOCK HOLMES) WELL, LOVED HIM, AND CONSIDERED THAT HE BADLY NEEDED A FEMALE FAMILY MEMBER TO SET HIM STRAIGHT ABOUT A THING OR TWO CONCERNING WOMEN

about a thing or two concerning women. After I focused on Sherlock, the concept of his much younger sister came together very

**YOUR E  
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# GLOAM AND THE VALUE OF Fear

BY AUTHOR JACK MACKAY



I think everybody should read horror stories. Even if you're easily scared. Especially if you're easily scared.

When I was young, I was a scaredy cat myself. I must have spent countless nights keeping myself awake by imagining terrifying monsters in the hall just outside my bedroom and finding it impossible to forget what my mind had conjured. When I was eleven, an age at which a lot of young people are trying to 'toughen up' ready for secondary school and let go of the part of themselves that feels fear, I went into a panic when my friends suggested watching *Jaws* at a sleepover. (Incidentally, I was the one who

showed *Jaws* to my eleven-year-old brother. He fell asleep halfway through the movie. It's safe to say that he's braver than I was at that age.)

I'm twenty-two now, and I *love* scary stories. Haunted houses, zombie outbreaks, cheesy slashers – the horror genre is my bread and butter. But I do not love horror as a rebuke to my fearful younger self. I love horror precisely *because* it returns me to that primal realm of



youthful terror, hiding behind a cushion or under the bedcovers. Suddenly, I'm ten years old again. The reason horror is such an exciting genre for young people is because it feels like a challenge. Horror stories are meant to be scary – that's why they're so fun. But they're not just about being scary. They're about facing your fears, finding the thrill in them, and maybe even discovering something new about yourself as a result.

My debut horror novel, *Gloam*, is a horror story for children. My siblings were twelve and ten years old when I wrote it, and I wanted to write something that trusted them enough to scare them. But when you're an adult writing for children, you have to deliberately put yourself in a younger mindset. When writing horror, that means getting in touch with childhood fears I buried a long

time ago. I realised that the only way to write something that would scare my siblings was to write something that scared me too.

I spent much of my childhood in my grandparents' house in the Midlands: a huge, former stagecoach inn full of creaky floorboards and dark corridors. It was never scary in the daytime, but at night, the shadows got longer, and you could be forgiven for imagining that the growing darkness in the corners of the house, such as the space under your bed, could have something lurking within. Walking across the landing to the toilet at night was quite a stressful experience for a

young scaredy cat like me. That's the feeling I tried to instil in *Gloam*: the feeling of being alone in a big, dark house knowing that something unknown, unseen and *hungry* is hiding nearby. Other childhood episodes made it into the book. The wasp's nest in the garden treehouse was real, as my unfortunate five-year-old self discovered. And with these memories from my childhood came another, more adult feeling. When I wrote *Gloam*, my grandparents had just decided to sell their house. I understand why; they're getting older, and an ancient house with a big garden is just too much for them to handle anymore. But the idea of a stranger in that family space – the house which had always been uniquely ours –

"I realised that the only way to write something that would scare my siblings was to write something that scared me too."





disturbed me in exactly the way that the dark, or wasps, used to scare me as a kid. That feeling became the villain of *Gloam*, the monstrous babysitter Esme Laverne.

Whether you're a reader or a writer, unearthing these kinds of fears is rarely easy. I would be doing a disservice to the minds of young people if I pretended that these things – all-encompassing darkness, stinging insects, or being usurped from your family home – are anything *but* scary. But while we're reading, we're immersed in a place where we can tackle these frightening feelings head-on. Through the heroes of these stories, we learn that monsters can be

defeated. That's why horror is as much a home for children as it is for adults. It gives us power over our fear. And sometimes that's exactly what scaredy cats like me need. PB



*Gloam* is available now, published by Rock the Boat (cover artwork by Ben Joel Price)



## Jack Mackay

JACK MACKAY is a writer, theatre-maker and horror enthusiast. Though he's currently floating around somewhere near York, his heart is in the Midlands, in his grandparents' creaky old house where he grew up. He has written stories since he was four years old, but this is the first one that was any good. He also co-founded Griffonage Theatre, a York-based company with a taste for the madcap and macabre. He loves his family, his dog, The Texas Chain Saw Massacre and K-pop.

# ★ Book Middle Grade Review Corner ★

## THE BIRD THIEF

BY RACHEL KEATING

REVIEW BY PAPERBOUND



With themes of the natural world, friendship and OCD, *The Bird Thief* is perfect for nature lovers everywhere. It's a beautiful and gentle middle grade novel, with a sprinkling of magic.

When Erin goes on a caravan holiday in the Welsh countryside with her family, the last thing she expects is for an accident to leave her with special bird-like abilities. Flying, slowing down time and communicating with a bird comes as quite a surprise. But will she be able to use these new powers to battle both her internal and external struggles, and save everything and everyone she loves?

Author Rachel Keating is a previous PaperBound submission winner, and so it is wonderful to read her debut novel where her clear love for the natural world shines through.

*The Bird Thief* is published by Cadno (Graffeg) and out now

## GLOAM

BY JACK MACKAY

REVIEW BY PAPERBOUND

When your nine-year-old niece steals the book to read before you've finished, you know you're reading something special. And *Gloam* is certainly that. A creepy gothic atmospheric middle grade that's hard to put down (and hard to keep from thieving hands).

Gwen has relocated to the isolated Gloam Island with her stepdad and three younger siblings after the passing of her mother. She doesn't know how things could possibly get worse. But then she meets Esme Laverne.

Despite everyone's fondness for Esme, Gwen knows there's something not quite right about her new babysitter. The more Esme stays, the more horrors arrive: the house literally begins to rot, nightmarish monsters appear and soon Esme starts to show her true colours. Gwen must face her actual fears if she's going to protect her family and get rid of Esme for good.

*Gloam* is tense, unsettling, eerie and doesn't shy away from the horror. A deliciously dark and brilliantly written middle grade that both young and big kids are going to devour whole.

*Gloam* is published by Rock the Boat and out now





# THE GIRL WITH GILLS

BY BECCA ROGERS

REVIEW BY JAYNE LEADBETTER



Orphaned 13-year-old Effra lives with her seven-year-old brother, Fleet, in a cabin boat on the banks of the River Yore, whose muddy water has magical powers, both good and evil.

Effra and Fleet are from a bloodline of enigmatic larkers, strong swimmers with gills, that must be kept hidden behind a scarf from

the land 'lubbers,' and can't even attend school for living in fear of being snatched by lubbers, like their relatives, and never seen again.

Effra and Fleet spend their days searching the river banks for treasures, precious stones and bronze that were placed over thousands of years as offerings to the gods, which Effra then sells at the market for food to survive.

But when Effra saves a lubber, Bow, from drowning while stuck in a sinkhole, a strong bond and friendship is formed between the two. Fleet is captured by Rivermun, a sadistic larker whose gills have been sealed against his will by Mother River, for breaking the lore of the river.

The resilient and adventurous Effra must outsmart a Rat Queen with an army of rats and battle against the ferocious sea serpent, all the while avoiding being captured by Flynych, a lubber determined to catch a larker to prove they exist.

Together with Bow, her community of larkers, and a friendly rat called Clay, Effra shows that with determination and strength, she can outwit Rivermun, save her little brother, and return the river to peace once again.

This exciting twist-and-turn novel has you quite literally holding your breath, while Effra navigates one challenge after another, taking you on a wild adventure both above and below the water, into the depths of the mysterious river.

*The Girl with Gills* is published by Bloomsbury and out now

# THE MERRY CHRISTMAS MURDERS

BY ALEXANDRA BENEDICT

REVIEW BY LAURA JONES

It's December and Brooke Parkin is about to start a new school. Filled with the smell of competitive mince pies, Brooke soon realises the school isn't like any she's been to before and it's murder (not making friends) that she needs to be most worried about.



When one murder turns into two murders at school, Brooke and her new friends, the Neurokind Club, must learn to recognise their differences and combine their individual skill sets to identify the killer and stop more people from dying.

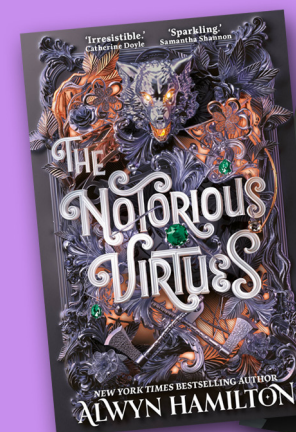
Written by best-selling adult crime fiction author, Alexandra Benedict, *The Merry Christmas Murders* is perfect for young readers looking to step lightly into the world of puzzles, mystery and crime. As the story unfolds, readers are set puzzles to solve and clues to explore whilst whittling down the lengthy list of murder suspects.

Perfect for fans of Robin Stevens' *Murder Most Unladylike Mysteries*, *The Merry Christmas Murders* positions a neurodiverse cast at the heart of the story and teaches readers, whether neurodiverse or not, to look at the world, and puzzles, in a different way and recognise that we all have strengths.

With Brooke's support dog, Buoy, an enthusiastic member of the puzzle-solving group, *The Merry Christmas Murders* achieves its goal of emulating *The Famous Five* or *Secret Seven* for a brand-new generation of readers.

*The Merry Christmas Murders* is published by Simon & Schuster and out now

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



# Check it out at paperboundmag.com





# MR. REBUS

by Erica Chester

CAN YOU SOLVE THE RIDDLES?

## ERICA CHESTER

Erica lives and writes in Sydney, Australia where she also teaches English and Literacy. She loves to play with words and can often be found scribbling lines on scraps of paper which then live in her car, drawers and handbag. Erica's poems for children have been published in journals and on websites including The School Magazine, The Dirigible Balloon, Australian Children's Poetry and others. You can follow her on Instagram @ericachester\_author.



Mr. Rebus is so YY  
He's much 2YY 4 me  
His name should be in KNEE

LIGHTS

Shining bright U C

It takes a while to work him out  
You might THINK

NIGHT

But, you will always know  
Just when you've got it ⇐ →

Don't strain your brain 2 hard  
You're not earning a grade  
He aims for fun and doesn't want  
You requiring → AID  
AID  
AID

He talks in riddles often  
And is just STOOD

MISS

I'd love to help you solve him  
(If only I could!)

Many experts try and try  
They even TRAVEL

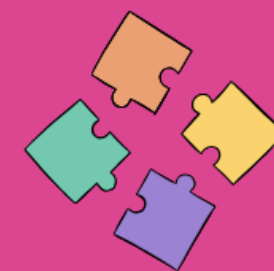
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They take a



Then charge him giant fees

But still no 1 can solve him  
Such a mysterious figure  
Yes, Mr. Rebus really is  
A riddle and enigma.



HAVE YOU SOLVED  
THE RIDDLES? TURN  
OVER FOR THE  
SOLUTIONS!



THE ANSWERS!

# MR. REBUS



Mr. Rebus is so wise  
He's much too wise for me  
His name should be in neon lights  
Shining bright, you see

It takes a while to work him out  
You might think overnight  
But, you will always know  
Just when you've got it right

Don't strain your brain too hard  
You're not earning a grade  
He aims for fun and doesn't want  
You requiring first aid

He talks in riddles often  
And is just misunderstood  
I'd love to help you solve him  
(If only I could!)

Many experts try and try  
They even travel overseas  
They take a trip around the world  
Then charge him giant fees

But still no one can solve him  
Such a mysterious figure  
Yes, Mr. Rebus really is  
A riddle and enigma.



## ★ AUTHOR INTERVIEW



# Curtis

WE CAUGHT UP WITH CURTIS JOBLING TO  
CHAT ABOUT HIS ATMOSPHERIC AND  
CHILLING NOVEL, WYRDDWOOD.

Jobling

COULD YOU GIVE US A BRIEF INTRODUCTION TO  
YOUR NEW NOVEL, WYRDDWOOD, AND THE  
INSPIRATION BEHIND IT?

*Wyrddwood* is perhaps best described as a  
folk horror for middle grade and young  
adult audiences, a Grimm Brothers fairy  
tale for the *Stranger Things* crowd.

Something strange is happening in  
Merryweather-by-the-Sea.


Whispers in the playground abound – a  
spring-heeled phantom haunts the edge of  
the Wyrddwood, the ancient forest which  
surrounds the sleepy coastal town. But the  
Twig Man is the least of Kiki Harper's  
concerns.

Returning home for the holidays, Kiki  
discovers a peculiar woman has moved into  
her family home, having stolen everybody's  
hearts. Who is the beautiful Fay – and  
could Kiki's family really be bewitched?



The story is inspired by my trips to the Isle  
of Man as a child – I always felt the island  
felt a little “lost in time”, quite magical  
compared to the mainland UK and Ireland.





WE ARE LED THROUGH THE STORY BY MULTIPLE CHARACTERS – THE RESIDENTS OF MERRYWEATHER. AS WE SEE THE TOWN THROUGH SO MANY PERSPECTIVES, WE GET A REAL SENSE OF PLACE. WAS THIS DIFFICULT TO ACHIEVE? AND DID YOU HAVE A FAVOURITE CHARACTER TO WRITE?

I wanted to populate Merryweather with a host of characters, young and old, that each felt like it had its own story to tell, and secret to stay hidden.

I lived for a while in a rural location in the UK, on the edge of the North Yorkshire Moors, a village with maybe a hundred houses. Some of those experiences undoubtedly bleed into *Wyrddwood*, where everyone knows each other's business.

Favourite character? Gosh, there are a few. I honestly can't pick one, but I do love the Campbells who live in the lighthouse – now there's a family who have a heck of a lot of secrets...

CAN YOU TELL US A LITTLE ABOUT CREATING AND DEVELOPING THE MYTHS AND LEGENDS THAT SURROUND MERRYWEATHER AND THE WYRDWOOD, AND THE 'OLD WAYS' THAT ARE MENTIONED IN THE BOOK?

There are elements of traditional folklore and legend in the books, but I've hopefully created my own mythology along the way. The Old Ways are the ceremonies and traditions that the first families honoured way back in the day when Merryweather was first founded. It's not too much of a spoiler to tell you that a pact was agreed between the humans and the Wyrds of the Woods. A long time has passed since that agreement was made though, and many of the locals in Merryweather have forgotten their oaths. However, the forest doesn't forget...

WYRDWOOD HAS BEEN COMPARED TO AUTHORS LIKE STEPHEN KING AND, WITH ITS CLEVER WEAVING NARRATIVES AND COMPELLING DARK ATMOSPHERE, WE CAN TOTALLY SEE WHY. HOW DO YOU FEEL ABOUT THIS COMPARISON, AND ARE THERE ANY OTHER AUTHORS YOU ADMIRE?

I guess the books of Stephen King have had an influence on me, as many of his stories take place in small towns in New England, such as Castle Rock and Derry, and Merryweather certainly shares that vibe. King is a master at creating living, breathing communities in his stories, characters who you may not like but you totally believe in. That's my challenge in *Wyrddwood*, and hopefully I've achieved it.

I'm a big fan of Mike Flanagan's *Midnight Mass* show, but again, that draws a heavy influence from King's *Salem's Lot*. I should probably add that *Wyrddwood* was first conceived over twenty years ago, when I first took a run at writing a novel. It didn't

get picked up back then, but it was a super lesson for me in what it took to write a novel. I subsequently worked on my craft, wrote a different novel (*Wereworld: Rise of the Wolf* which has recently been adapted into the

Wolf King animated series on Netflix), but my *Wyrddwood* story never went away.

It simmered. Stewed. Festered...

I returned to my old manuscript a couple of years ago with a fresh take and a lot more writing experience under my belt and let rip. It's been a delight to revisit Merryweather and tell this tale.

WHAT ARE YOUR TOP THREE WRITING TIPS FOR ANYONE INTERESTED IN WRITING HORROR, OR STORIES WITH A DARK EDGE?

I think you find your own way as an author, and it's directly informed by what you're exposed to. So definitely read, experience and enjoy the genre for starters – I loved watching Dr Who as a kid (scared me


witless), and would read whatever scary books I could find at my local library.

Keep a notebook to track your ideas, and get in the habit of writing frequently, even if it's only a little. Getting better at writing is like anything – practice makes perfect. The more you do it, the better you'll become.

And think about what scares or disturbs YOU. Put yourself in the role of the protagonist – or the victim – in your scary story. What is it that gives you the willies in the middle of the night? What's your worst nightmare? Pull that into your story, draw on experience and it will be that bit more believable – and frightening – for the reader.

ARE YOU ABLE TO SHARE WHAT YOU'RE CURRENTLY WORKING ON, OR ANY OTHER WRITING NEWS?

Well, I've just finished writing a historic fantasy horror (three genres there for the price of one!) set on the Shetland Islands at the times of the Vikings invasion of the British Isles. That will be the next novel to be published after *Wyrddwood*.

And presently? I'm working on another return visit to Merryweather-by-the-Sea. That's right – you haven't heard the last from the Wyrddwood... 

*Wyrddwood* is out now by Fox and Ink Books, and is available in all English speaking territories.

## CURTIS' WRITING PROMPT

You wake up in the dead of night to the sound of thumping.  
You screw your fists into your eyes, squinting through the gloom.  
There's a box, in the middle of the floor, shrouded by shadows.  
There's that sound again. Thump. Thump. Thump...  
What's in the box? What is causing the thumping?

## CURTIS JOBLING

Curtis Jobling is an acclaimed author, illustrator and animation creator, having designed and conceived BBC shows such as the BAFTA-winning *Bob the Builder* and *Raa Raa the Noisy Lion*. His books for older audiences include the *Wereworld* series of fantasy horror novels which have sold over a million copies worldwide. Now adapted into a major animated series. *Wolf King* can be seen on Netflix.



# MASQUERADE

by Gaynor Andrews

NEW WRITING ★



## GAYNOR ANDREWS

Gaynor's debut rhyming picture book, *Pandora and the Story Forge*, celebrates the power of words and the magic of stories. Her poetry has featured in the Caterpillar and Dirigible Balloon. Gaynor lives in the Scottish Highlands, with her family and a crazy cocker spaniel.

Find out more and follow Gaynor here:

[gaynorandrews.online/](http://gaynorandrews.online/)

Instagram: @gooseygandering

X/Twitter: @GooseyGandering

Bluesky: @gaynorandrew

We loved Gaynor's poem so much, she's this issue's submission winner.

Congratulations, Gaynor. A little prize will be on its way to you soon.



Winner!

There's gold in the water, burnished rays.  
Streetlights flare and torches blaze.  
There's a thrum of footsteps, twilight cries.  
A fiery glow as the daylight dies.  
Come into the streets, come one and all,  
Come, step this way to the Masquerade Ball.

Hold your mask to your face, wherever you go.  
The person behind it, they'll never know.

Silent, the gondola slides along  
Past faded buildings and laughing throng.  
There's a fracture of light, a sparkle of gems,  
A swish of silk, embroidered hems.  
A plume of feathers, a sumptuous gown.  
A gloved hand is taken, a shoe steps down.

Hold your mask to your face, wherever you go.  
The person behind it, they'll never know.

Traceries, arches, in ochre and rose,  
Slip by; in shadow the boat gently goes.  
At the steps of a palace, it slides to a rest  
And a fluttering fan dances deep in your chest.

The revellers gather. Such elegant poise,  
With their bustle and chatter, their confident noise.  
Take a deep breath. Head up. Stand tall.  
Look again at the guests of the Masquerade Ball.

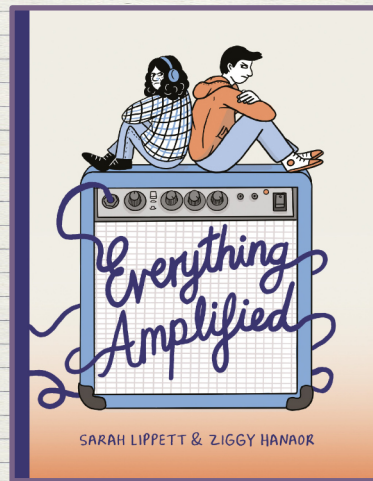
Holding masks to their faces, wherever they go.  
The person behind it, you'll never know.





Sarah  
Lippett

- Illustrator



Ziggy  
Hanaor

- Author -

COULD YOU BRIEFLY INTRODUCE US TO YOUR  
GRAPHIC NOVEL, EVERYTHING AMPLIFIED?

ZH: Everything Amplified is a YA graphic novel of twins, tunes and teenage turbulence. Fifteen-year-old Nel and her twin brother Ludo are total opposites in every way. Nel is introverted and into her music, whilst Ludo is popular, charming and a bit cruel. Nel must go on a journey to find the confidence to make her voice heard, whilst Ludo has to confront his own vulnerability.

SL: Couldn't have put it better.

JUST LIKE NEL LEARNING TO COLLABORATE  
WITH OTHERS TO MAKE MUSIC, YOU MUST HAVE  
SPENT A LOT OF TIME DISCUSSING THE STORY  
FOR IT TO COME TOGETHER AS BEAUTIFULLY AS  
IT HAS. HOW DID YOU FIND THE PLANNING  
STAGE OF EVERYTHING AMPLIFIED?

ZH: It was entirely collaborative! I wanted to work with Sarah for ages, and we talked about various ideas around music (Sarah was in a band and I've worked on a few music titles over the years). We started off

trying to make a non-fiction graphic novel about female musicians, but then we decided to frame it within a story structure. Very quickly, Nel and Ludo took on lives of their own and the non-fiction element faded into the background. We then bounced the story back and forth till we were happy with it, and Sarah could start the real work of illustrating it!

SL: Ziggy is such an enthusiastic and talented writer and I learned so much from her during the process. I've written and illustrated two other long graphic novels and have always found huge parts of the process tortuous but with Everything Amplified it was so joyful from beginning to end - I genuinely miss having the project to work on.

THE ART OF EVERYTHING AMPLIFIED IS  
INCREDIBLY EXPRESSIVE, AND THERE ARE A LOT  
OF SPREADS WITH NO DIALOGUE (OTHER THAN  
THE LYRICS) AND A LOT OF MOVEMENT TO  
CONVEY THE FEELING OF MUSIC. WERE THESE  
PARTS FUN TO ILLUSTRATE? WERE THERE ANY  
PARTICULARLY HARD BITS TO GET RIGHT?

ZH: I'm going to leave this one for Sarah to answer.

SL: It's the beauty of the visual language - I love how often illustration can so simply convey what words can't. I particularly enjoyed drawing the crowd and gig scenes, adding the detail of characters' expressions and motion. The double page spread where the band are all leaping into the air was a tricky one to

get right... I wanted to convey the beauty of playing music with other people and the feeling of how, for just a few minutes, being lost in your collaborative creativity shows the power of music!

I also found the scenes where Nel is climbing over the school toilet cubicle SO TRICKY.

I struggled with getting the angles and perspectives right every day for a week but I got there in the end. I'm still so proud of that sequence!

THERE ARE A LOT OF MUSICAL ARTISTS  
MENTIONED IN THE BOOK (WE LOVE THE  
OFFICIAL PLAYLIST LISTED AT THE END!). ARE  
ANY ARTISTS MENTIONED YOUR PERSONAL  
FAVOURITES? DO YOU HAVE THE SAME MUSIC  
TASTE AS NEL?

ZH: The playlist is just a fraction of the songs we wanted to include, and they're all amazing songs that I love. Springsteen is actually a personal favourite!

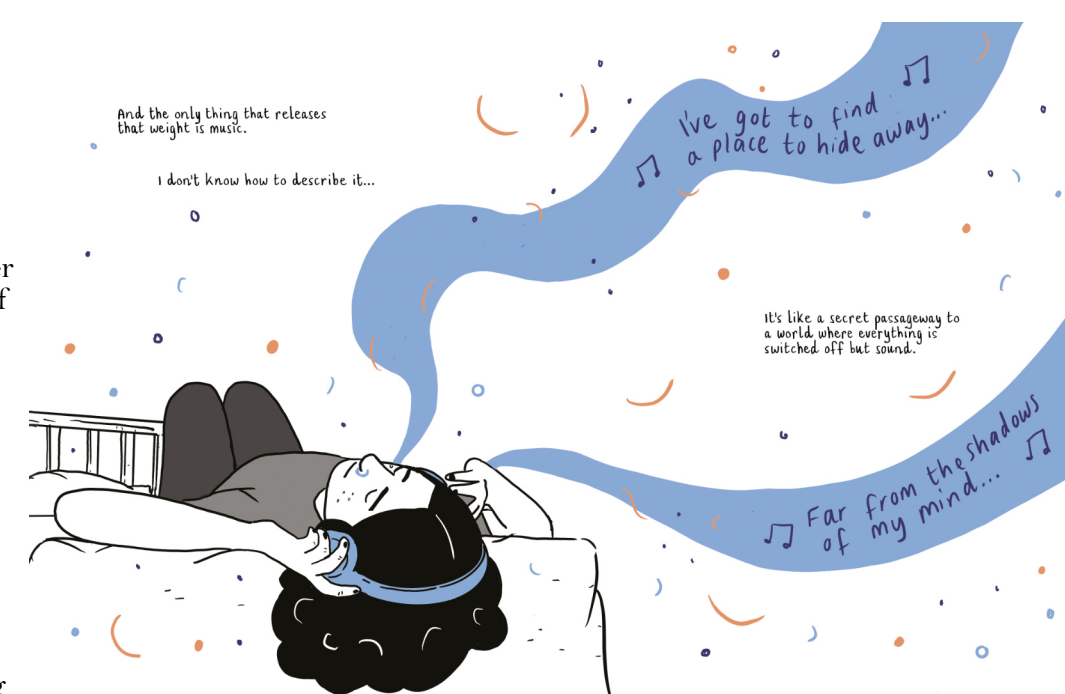
SL: I love them all. BUT Mazzy Star, Patti Smith and Sonic Youth have to be up there.

THE MESSAGE OF MUSIC BEING A COMFORT  
DURING DIFFICULT TEEN YEARS WAS INCREDIBLY  
MOVING, AND UNIVERSAL ACROSS GENERATIONS.  
DO YOU SEE YOURSELVES IN NEL? WERE EITHER  
OF YOU ALSO AN ANGSTY TEENAGER?

ZH: I was an angsty teenager, but nowhere near as bolshy and outspoken as Nel - that came later in life! There was an aspect of wish fulfilment for me in her character - what if I hadn't just taken the blows in silence? What if I had dared to actually say the snappy comeback?

SL: After reading the book, my mum said to me, 'You were a lot like Nel when you were a teenager, is she based a bit on you?'... So I guess I must have been?!

NEL'S RELATIONSHIPS WITH EVERYONE AROUND  
HER ARE EXTREMELY MESSY; WE LOVED SEEING  
HER GO THROUGH THE MOTIONS WITH BOTH  
HER FAMILY AND HER FRIENDS. THE



ROLLERCOASTER RELATIONSHIP WITH BEA WAS  
ESPECIALLY COMPELLING. DO EITHER OF YOU  
HAVE A SECONDARY CHARACTER YOU CONSIDER  
YOUR FAVOURITE?

ZH: I actually really like Josie. She's flawed and quite self-involved but she feels very three dimensional to me. She indulges her golden boy (and men generally) and feels uncomfortable with Nel's complexity and reluctance to do so.

I was really happy with the way the party scene came together - Josie's breakdown emphasises the importance of her sibling relationship, whilst Nel's crisis with Bea and Alec brings her towards a reconciliation with Ludo.

SL: Auntie Jan! - the unconventional relative that inspires and supports Nel. We all need those female creative role models when we're young to lead the way despite their flaws. I adore her sisterly relationship to Josie too.

I have a soft spot for Mr Graham, the music teacher, too - I made myself laugh drawing him playing bongos - he's championing the students but also a little out of touch living in his own bubble, but in a very charming way.

IF YOU WERE TO FORM A BAND, WHAT WOULD  
YOU PLAY AND WHAT WOULD YOU CALL THE ACT?

ZH: Oh I've thought about this a lot. My band would be called Dollar Princess and, as I'm deeply unmusical, I'd just sing (though in my fantasies I'd play the trumpet).



SL: I play bass in a new band with my husband. We have been recording some songs...we might call ourselves Total Sportek but it's not been decided yet.

I used to play bass in a band called Fever Dream when I lived in London. We made two albums and an EP. Ziggy and I named the band that Nel goes to see at the start of the book after us and there are little nods to my band throughout the book.

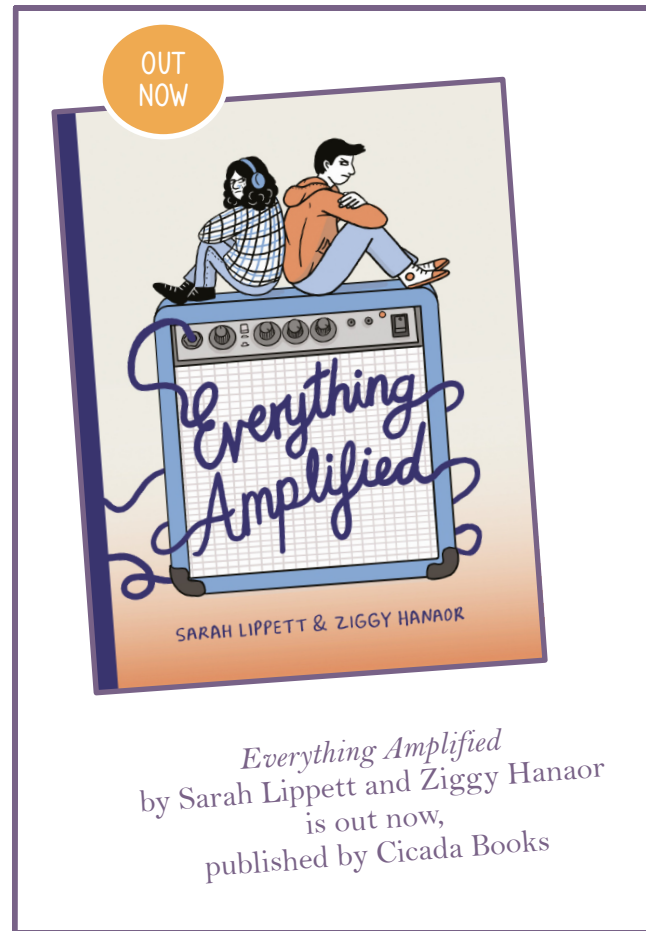
If you know, you know!

AS A MUSIC SUPERFAN, A LOT OF THE ARTISTS NEL LISTENS TO OR DISCOVERS DURING THE STORY ARE ALL ROCK SUPERSTARS OR GENRE PIONEERS. DO YOU THINK EVERYTHING AMPLIFIED WILL ENCOURAGE THE CURRENT GENERATION OF TEENS TO SEEK THEM OUT?

ZH: I hope so! Although I also think musical taste is, and should be, entirely personal. I really like contemporary pop, and I don't have any snobbery around what makes 'good' or 'iconic' music.

I hope people like the playlist, but I think the book works regardless!

SL: I already see teens wearing Nirvana and Sonic Youth t-shirts, and the Yeah Yeah Yeahs song 'Maps' is already a teen hit through TikTok. I hope they will seek the others out too! <sup>PB</sup>



*Everything Amplified*  
by Sarah Lippett and Ziggy Hanaor  
is out now,  
published by Cicada Books

Find out more about  
Sarah and Ziggy



### - Sarah Lippett -



Sarah Lippett is an Edinburgh-based graphic novelist, illustrator and author. Her first graphic novel, *Stan and Nan* (Jonathan Cape 2016) won the Quentin Blake Prize and was a Guardian bestseller.

Her second, *A Puff of Smoke* (Jonathan Cape, 2019) was a Guardian graphic novel of 2019. Sarah is one half of Onion Press and lectures in illustration at University of Edinburgh.

### - Ziggy Hanaor -

Ziggy Hanaor is writer and publisher living in London.

She is the author of V&A award-winning graphic novel *Alte Zachen* (2022), Carnegie-nominated *The Egg Incident* (2023) and *Life (As We Know It)* (2025), as well as picture books including *Alex and Alex* (2021) and *The Pocket Chaotic* (2020) - all Cicada.

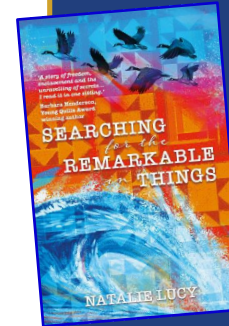


Image credits © Sarah Lippett and Ziggy Hanaor

# ★ Book Teen/YA Review ★ Corner

## SEARCHING FOR THE REMARKABLE IN THINGS

BY NATALIE LUCY  
REVIEW BY PAPERBOUND



Caught between the narratives of thirteen-year-old Clover and the mysterious letters she finds hidden beneath her mother's bed - after her mother has tragically passed away - this book explores the theme of inter-generational slavery and how seemingly long-ago history still shapes our lives today.

When Clover's mother dies, she's left with a box of secrets beneath her mother's bed, not to mention a father who just comes right back into her life, and endless amounts of questions. Suddenly, she's whisked away from Scotland to Cornwall, and wonders how much she really knew her mother at all.

When she uncovers the letters - and a mysterious patchwork quilt - things start to become clearer about her family, how they might have been involved with slavery in the American South, and Clover gets to know the voices of the women behind the letters.

As Clover starts to uncover more of her family's secrets, she meets a girl on the coast with secrets of her own. Can she help them both, or will her actions be too late?

Sensitively written, this powerful, heartbreaking novel is one we couldn't put down.

*Searching for the Remarkable in Things* is out now, published by ZunTold

## ROCK BAND: MUSIC AND MISFITS

BY LEAH OSAKWE  
REVIEW BY PAPERBOUND

Galaxy is destined for stardom, and she's always known it. So when a poster for a local school talent show appears, she knows she just *has* to enter!

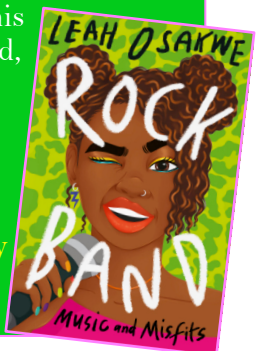
Meanwhile, at home, Dad has just lost his job which means money will be tight for a while until he can find something new - so the prize money for the talent show is exactly what Galaxy, and her family, needs.

But when she somehow winds up in her own rock band, where suddenly she isn't the one calling all the shots, not to mention having to share the band with her younger sister, Zaya, that road to stardom now seems a little bit rockier to navigate.

As Galaxy is confronted with how to juggle school, friendships, her family life *and* the band, she starts to wonder if she really has what it takes to become a star.

Perfect for fans of *Glow Up*, *Lara Bloom*, the *Geek Girl* series, and anyone who holds music close to their heart, this book is a wonderful teen read, and the first in Osakwe's series for teen readers.

*Rock Band: Music and Misfits* is out now and published by Little Tiger





# THINGS I LEARNED WHILE I WAS DEAD

BY KATHRYN CLARK

REVIEW BY PAPERBOUND



An inventive YA sci-fi thriller that will keep you reading late into the night.

Calico will do anything to save her sister Asha. Anything. But Asha is dead and there's only one thing left Calico can do. Cryogenics.

Calico agrees to join Asha in death until modern medicine can find a way to bring them both back. But when she wakes up, the world is no longer how Calico left it. Now in a low-tech, post-climate catastrophe, Calico is told she has to stay in a research facility for tests.

With whispers of sinister breeding programmes, and no idea what happened to her sister, Calico is desperate for answers. And we know Calico will do anything for her sister. Anything.

*Things I Learned While I Was Dead* is fast-paced and unputdownable; a brilliantly original concept, in a possible version of the future, that raises important questions. Although futuristic, this novel is incredibly relatable with a main character that feels emotionally real and that you root for from beginning to end. An absolute must-read.

*Things I Learned While I Was Dead* is published by Faber and out now

# SEVEN DEADLY THORNS

BY AMBER HAMILTON

REVIEW BY PAPERBOUND



Amber Hamilton brings us *Seven Deadly Thorns*, the addictive enemies-to-lovers romantasy with a dark academia twist.

The king has been murdered and, in a world where shadow magic has been deemed punishable by death or banishment, Viola Sinclair's powers are against her.

When the queen of Aragoa orders Viola to be assassinated at the hands of The Huntsman, Viola's hated classmate Prince Roze, it seems a race against time is on for the both of them because if Roze doesn't kill Viola in seven days, he will die instead.

With a high stakes romance and a goal that binds the pair together – to destroy the queen – readers are invited to step into a world where the two let down their walls and finally see each other for who they've really been all along, in a race to survive.

For fans of Lauren Roberts and Holly Black, *Seven Deadly Thorns* is one of the most compelling romantasies of the year.

*Seven Deadly Thorns* is published by Bloomsbury and out now

# FLOAT: VOLUME 1

BY KATE MARCHANT

ILLUSTRATED BY C.J. JOAQUIN

REVIEW BY PAPERBOUND



This swoon-worthy graphic novel, adapted from the original Wattpad sensation, is exactly what every teen romance should be.

When Waverly Lyons trades her life in Alaska and her divorced parents for the sun and sand of Florida, she doesn't really know what to expect when she turns up at her free-spirited aunt's house.

Pretty soon though, Waverly is chucked into the deep end to the world of what a teen summer looks like in Florida, full of sun, surf and sand - including forced proximity with seemingly arrogant (and gorgeous) boy next door, Blake.

As the pair spend more time together, however, their barriers fall away and Blake even offers Waverly the chance to face her fears of water and start swimming, privately, with him to try and fit in now she's staying for the summer.

Combined with anime-inspired illustrations, and charming storytelling that will have you racing to the end, *Float* is perfect for fans of Sarah Dessen, Jenny Han and Rainbow Rowell.

We can't wait to read the next instalment in this cute and fun graphic novel series.

*Float: Volume 1* is out now, published by Scholastic

# KEEP YOUR FRIENDS CLOSE

BY CYNTHIA MURPHY

MINI REVIEW BY LAUREN MARPLES



Set in the prestigious Morton Academy, protagonist Chloe Roberts learns to navigate changing friendships, relationships, and dramatic disappearances...

In the midst of investigating the disappearances of fellow Jewel and Bone society members, Chloe uncovers the dangers of knowing who to trust and share information with.

Is she keeping her friends close, or are her enemies closer than she realises?

With dramatic plot twists throughout the novel, you'll find it difficult to put down!

This novel is perfect for fans of Holly Jackson's *A Good Girl's Guide to Murder* series, Karen M. McManus' *One of Us is Lying* series, and *Mean Girls*.

*Keep Your Friends Close* is published by Penguin and out now.

# BURY YOUR FRIENDS

BY BENJAMIN DEAN

MINI-REVIEW BY PAPERBOUND



A twisty, gory YA thriller – slasher style! To celebrate graduating and the start of their successful futures, Noah and his nine friends are partying at Black Stone, a luxurious country estate.

But, before long, the group find themselves in a dangerous game, where the killer demands that one person is evicted from the house every hour to die.

No one is safe, and no one can be trusted. Who will survive the night?

Spoilt teens, scandals, characters to root for, and characters to hate, this whodunit will have you guessing until the end.

*Bury Your Friends* is published by Simon and Schuster and out now



# HOW TO SURVIVE A HORROR SEQUEL

BY SCARLETT DUNMORE

REVIEW BY PAPERBOUND



The perfect novel for horror movie fans. Much like the first book, *How To Survive a Horror Sequel*, has more deaths, more ghosts, and more movie references for you to get your teeth into. Along with plenty more slasher references like *Scream*, this sequel also delves more into witch classics, like *The Craft*.

Charley, convinced that the Harrogate Killer is still alive, is on the move with her mum. But when their car breaks down, her mum suggests they settle down for a bit in a new town, nicknamed 'The Devil's Punchbowl'.

But of course, things never quite go to plan. Charley soon notices that their new home town has a lot more ghosts than usual, and that it might also have a few ... witches. And what if the Harrogate Killer finds her? Charley will have to summon up her final-girl energy once more to survive yet another horror movie.

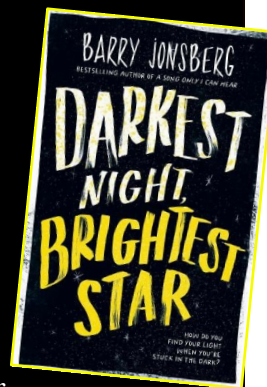
This novel grabs you from the very first chapter, and may be even better than book one! With plenty of twists, both shocking and tragic, *How to Survive a Horror Sequel* is a page-turning, thrilling read for horror fans everywhere.

*How to Survive a Horror Sequel* is published by Little Tiger and out now

# DARKEST NIGHT, BRIGHTEST STAR

BY BARRY JONSBURG

REVIEW BY LAURA JONES



*Darkest Night, Brightest Star* tells the story of Morgan Pickford as he navigates his teenage years, surrounded by a world full of noise and chaos.

Desperate to please his overbearing father, and abandoned by his mother when he was just two years old, Morgan strives to meet the unrealistic, and exceedingly high, expectations placed on him to become the type of man his father believes he should be.

But that all changes when Morgan makes friends with Gary, his mother reappears, and he meets an elderly lady in need of help.

Set against the backdrop of school, gardening and football, this gentle, but thought-provoking, novel is an exploration of toxic masculinity, friendship, resilience and equality.

*Darkest Night, Brightest Star* is a compelling story which will leave readers shocked and concerned, yet joyous and hopeful in equal measure as Morgan learns to step into his own sense of self and decide what kind of man he wants to be.

*Darkest Night, Brightest Star* is published by Allen & Unwin and out now

# SAD GIRL HOURS

BY ANNA ZOE QUIRKE

REVIEW BY CAT OULD

*Sad Girl Hours* by Anna Zoe Quirke is the story about two girls at university - Saffron who is struggling from Season Affective Disorder (SAD), and Nell who tries to help Saffron have the best autumn and winter seasons by showing her everything that she loves about them.



It's a story about love and friendship with a focus on mental health.

This book is perfect for anyone who wants a cute read about two girls who help each other and fall in love in the process. It has a beautiful representation of the LGBTQIA+ community, as well as mental health.

The story is told from a dual perspective so you get a good look into each girl's head and their struggles.

This book would be perfect for teenagers or young adults, especially those that like contemporary stories and stories that can be about friendship as well as romance as it emphasises how important both those kinds of relationships can be during time at university. If you're a fan of Ciara Smyth, you'd love this book.

*Sad Girl Hours* is published by Little Tiger and out now

# LET THEM STARE

BY JULIE MURPHY & JONATHAN VAN NESS

REVIEW BY PAPERBOUND

Sully is a non-binary teen bound for New York on a glitzy assistant internship - and the one thing for certain in their future? They are SO outta here!

But when plans go disastrously wrong and they somehow end up stuck in their too-small Pennsylvania hometown, it seems like there's no more glitzy future in sight. Like ever.

Determined to find a new way out, they stumble upon a vintage bag in the local thrift store and quickly form a plan to use it to the best of their advantage: it could be worth a fortune! The last thing Sully expects is for a gorgeous ghost to appear, complete with the most beautiful outfits and a drag stage presence to die for.

Bound on a journey to find out what happened to Rufus, and how he became a ghost, Sully spends the summer tracking down their haunted handbag's past - with messy friendships to untangle, a new romance to wrangle, and a local council mystery to solve.

Written with charm, wit, and a voice that feels insanely fresh, this book has an undeniable message at its heart: the queer community has always been around, no matter what era, and always will be.

*Let Them Stare* is published by Harper Collins and out now



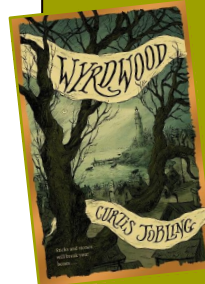


# WYRDWOOD

## BY CURTIS JOBLING

REVIEW BY PAPERBOUND

A gripping and atmospheric folk horror, *Wyrdwood* can be easily enjoyed by teens and adults alike and has quickly become one of our top reads of the year.



When teen Kiki comes home to Merryweather-by-sea for Christmas, she immediately knows something isn't right. Who is the new woman, Fay, living in her house, and why are her family besotted by her?

As we meet the rest of the town's inhabitants, we discover more strange occurrences: tired school children singing strange rhymes, bodies appearing and disappearing in the woods.

Fans of Stephen King will love this! With its isolated setting, old town myths and vast cast of characters, *Wyrdwood* is an addictive story you won't be able to put down, and a weirdly wonderful world that you'll want to stay tangled up in for as long as possible.

*Wyrdwood* is published by Fox and Ink Books, and out now

# EVERYTHING AMPLIFIED

## BY SARAH LIPPETT AND ZIGGY HANAOR

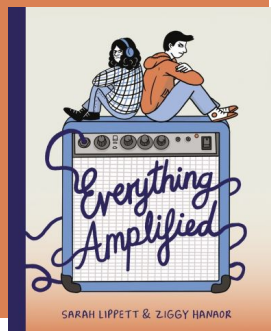
REVIEW BY PAPERBOUND

*Everything Amplified* is a gloriously energetic standalone graphic novel by Sarah Lippett and Ziggy Hanaor, depicting the angst-filled life of fifteen-year-old Nel.

Nel is a social outcast, a music lover, and is constantly compared to her seemingly perfect twin brother Ludo. Just when it feels like her life has no direction, Nel is inspired to pursue her music obsession into starting her own band, but being a teenager means nothing is without difficulty, and Nel has to work out how to manage her – and other people's – emotions if her dreams are to come true.

The graphic novel lovingly illustrates Nel's love of music and heightened emotions with fluid illustrations and dynamic colours. The mix of classic rock references and more obscure musical tastes as displayed by Nel are a great attention to detail by the creators. The punk attitude shown by Nel and friends also feels quintessentially British. *Everything Amplified* is a must-have to add to your YA graphic novel collection.

*Everything Amplified* is published by Cicada Books and is out now



# DIRK JONES IS NOT THE CHOSEN ONE

BY GATLIN PERRIN

REVIEW BY STEVE BLACKMAN

There you are, out for a quiet coffee, when BOOM, you're kidnapped by realm-hopping agents, dragged into a secret underground base, and given a boiler-suit that someone might have died in. It definitely smells like it.



That's Dirk Jones's new life, even though they're definitely not the Chosen One. Trouble is, a spider-limbed, sharp-toothed nightmare figure called Violent Jack – who keeps appearing from Dirk's wardrobe – wants to wear Dirk's skin (without Dirk in it) then bring about the end of the world.

Caught between truly creepy villains and unlikely heroes, and in their new role as kitchen assistant, Dirk somehow finds happiness. What would make them even happier, is if everyone stopped calling them him.

With its found family of chaotic but very loveable characters (even the strict one and the weird one), *Dirk Jones is NOT the Chosen One* is a propulsive, breathtaking, laugh-out-loud scramble to stop the apocalypse.

*Dirk Jones is NOT the Chosen One* is out now, published by Firefly Press

# BEAR

BY KIRI LIGHTFOOT

REVIEW BY CAT OULD



Bear written by Kiri Lightfoot tells the story of Jasper, a thirteen year old boy who thinks his name is too long, hates his mum's new boyfriend and his goldfish is dying. Jasper is plagued with nightmares of a dark bearlike figure always out to get him. This is a story about fear, anxiety and overcoming the darkness in life that plagues him both when he's asleep and when at school.

The most interesting thing about *Bear* is how the bear can represent how Jasper is feeling in moments of anger or when he is overwhelmed with the changes happening in his life. It's a brilliant representation of anxiety and how it can have a hold over someone especially when they're a young person dealing with the things that Jasper goes through in this novel.

The illustrations add so much to the story and are brilliantly designed by Pippa Keel Situ, they help add to the story not just because art is the subject where Jasper excels but also for a visual representation of the darkness that he's feeling throughout the novel and how he sees the world.

*Bear* would be perfect for teenagers, especially those going through anxiety themselves as it shows that it's something that people can experience at any age and the different things that come with it for a young person.

*Bear* is published by Allen & Unwin and out now

READERS, DO YOU HAVE A BOOK YOU'D LIKE TO SHOUT ABOUT?

PUBLISHERS & AUTHORS, WOULD YOU LIKE US TO REVIEW YOUR BOOK?

GET IN TOUCH TO SEE IF WE CAN FEATURE YOU IN THE NEXT ISSUE!  
PAPERBOUNDMAGAZINE@OUTLOOK.COM



# WHAT IS A FLAG?

by Emma Phillips

EMMA PHILLIPS

Emma Phillips lives by the M5 in Devon. Her poetry for young people has been published in Tyger, Tyger, The School Magazine and The Dirigible Balloon. She is addicted to crisps.



A flag is a welcome, a wave,  
a sea breeze, a tease of summer  
with chips, ice cream or sandcastles.

A flag is a win, a team, a dream,  
a 'we're all in this together';  
it's you and me, it's us forever.

A flag is a celebration.

A flag is not a poor excuse,  
a symbol of hate, racist abuse,  
a flag is not division.

A flag is music under the sun,  
festival tents in a field of thousands.

A flag is not a target on heads,  
a lack of compassion, a sense of dread,  
a flag doesn't make us less human.

A flag is joy, a marching band,  
the road less travelled, it's every man,  
a journey, not its outcome.

A flag is never a call to arms,  
turning a blind eye to those at harm.

A flag is a stick covered in fabric,  
not a wand to conjure up magic.

It is X marks the spot,  
a sideways kiss,  
a chance, a refuge, a home.



## ★ AUTHOR INTERVIEW



Questions by contributor  
Lauren Marples

# Manjeet Mann

WE CAUGHT UP WITH ROAR  
AUTHOR, MANJEET MANN, TO HEAR  
ALL ABOUT HER NEW VERSE NOVEL  
BASED IN INDIA AND THE ART OF  
STORYTELLING.



COULD YOU TELL US A LITTLE ABOUT THE  
INSPIRATION BEHIND YOUR NOVEL, ROAR?

A few years ago, I stumbled across a UN report about witch-hunting in India, and it completely floored me. I'd always thought of witch trials as something out of history books, but here was proof it was still happening today. Since 2000, thousands of cases of violence have been recorded – most against Dalit women – and the real numbers are probably much higher. The more I read, the more I realised this wasn't just about superstition, but about caste prejudice, patriarchy, and the way society often looks the other way.

While researching, I also came across incredible stories of resistance – like Sampat Pal and her Gulabi Gang, women in pink saris who take on corrupt cops and abusive husbands, and Phoolan Devi, the so-called “Bandit Queen,” who rose from violence and oppression to become a member of Parliament. These stories, along with my love of *The Crucible*, started weaving together in my head until I knew I had to write something.

The result is a book that blends research, real-life inspiration, and a touch of magical realism to ask big questions about power, justice, and transformation.

THE ENTIRE STORY IS WRITTEN IN  
VERSE. DID ANYTHING INSPIRE YOU TO  
STRUCTURE THE NOVEL IN THIS WAY?

This is actually my third verse novel, and I kind of fell into the form by accident – but once I did, I knew it was where I belonged. Because I'm also an actress, playwright, and screenwriter, I've always been drawn to performance and the rhythm of language. Verse feels like the perfect bridge between all those worlds. It's lean and powerful – you can say so much by saying very little – and I love the way it leaves space for readers to bring their own emotions and experiences to the story.

For me, verse also feels incredibly immediate. It's like stepping straight into a character's head and heart without anything getting in the way. That intimacy is what makes the form so exciting, and why I keep returning to it.

IN THE AUTHOR'S NOTE AT THE END OF THE  
BOOK, YOU TELL US ABOUT THE RESEARCH YOU  
CARRIED OUT ON INDIA'S HISTORY WITH WITCH-  
HUNTING. ARE THERE ANY OTHER ASPECTS OF  
INDIAN HERITAGE/HISTORY THAT MIGHT INSPIRE  
YOU TO WRITE OTHER NOVELS IN THE FUTURE?

I mean, probably! I haven't hit on another idea set in India as yet, but watch this space.

“I'D ALWAYS THOUGHT OF WITCH  
TRIALS AS SOMETHING OUT OF  
HISTORY BOOKS, BUT HERE WAS  
PROOF IT WAS STILL  
HAPPENING TODAY”

CAN YOU TELL US MORE ABOUT YOUR  
INSPIRATION FOR ROAR'S PROTAGONIST, RIZU?

Rizu was inspired by real-life stories of women who've defied the odds. Originally, I thought she would be a Dalit girl accused of witchcraft, but after speaking with Dalit activists, I realised that wasn't my story to tell. Instead, I made her someone from a more privileged background who stumbles into this world and is forced to reckon with her place in it.

I wanted her to be a flawed heroine – one who begins sheltered and unaware, but through facing injustice learns to confront uncomfortable truths about power, identity, and responsibility.

Her transformation is about shedding that old version of herself and stepping into a braver, more authentic one – someone who finally finds her voice, and her roar.

THERE ARE MULTIPLE THEMES PRESENT IN THIS  
NOVEL: HISTORY, HERITAGE, CLASS, INJUSTICE,  
BRAVERY ... WHAT OVERALL MESSAGE WOULD  
YOU LIKE READERS TO TAKE AWAY WITH THEM?

Although *Roar* is set in India, its themes – history, class, injustice, bravery – are not limited to one country. They are very much alive and kicking in the West too. We can't kid ourselves into thinking we stand head and shoulders above anyone else when it comes to prejudice or inequality and there's a lot we can learn by looking beyond our own borders. The structures of power and privilege may look different depending on where you live – whether that's caste, race, class, or gender – but the impact is just as real. People are still being silenced, marginalised, and held back, and too often we all look the other way.

What I hope readers take away is that these struggles are universal and that they demand our attention. Change begins when we start paying attention, asking difficult questions, and refusing to stay silent. If *Roar* sparks even a small moment of recognition or action, then it's done its job, because we all have a 'roar' inside us, and now more than ever – it's time to use it.

THE TITLE, ROAR, ENCAPSULATES THE TRUE  
MEANING BEHIND RIZU'S JOURNEY. DID YOU  
HAVE ANY OTHER TITLES IN MIND BEFORE  
DECIDING ON THIS ONE?

There was only one other title, but it was

very short lived. “Run Through The  
Streets And Roar.” Bit long, don't you  
think? <sup>PB</sup>

ROAR IS PUBLISHED BY PENGUIN AND OUT NOW

## MANJEET MANN

Manjeet Mann is a multi-award-winning author, playwright, screenwriter, and actress.

Her debut YA novel *Run Rebel* earned multiple awards, including the CILIP Carnegie Shadows' Choice and UKLA Awards, and was a Guardian Best Book of 2020.

Her second novel, *The Crossing*, won the 2022 Costa Children's Book Award among others.

She also writes acclaimed picture books like *Small's Big Dream* and *Whirly Twirly Me*. She also adapted *Run Rebel* for the stage, winning Best Production at the 2025 Off West End Stage Awards.

## MANJEET'S WRITING PROMPT

Imagine your voice has superpowers!

One day, you discover that when you speak, something amazing happens—your words can make people feel brave, happy, or even powerful.

Write a story about the first time you use your super-voice. What do you say? How do people react? How does it make you feel? Does your voice sound different? Do you move differently?

## MANJEET'S FREE-WRITING EXERCISE

Set a timer for 10–15 minutes. Write continuously without worrying about spelling, grammar, or punctuation. Don't stop to edit – just let your ideas flow.

Focus on your feelings and imagination – what it's like to have a voice that can make a difference.

When the timer ends, read over your writing and notice any ideas or phrases you might want to explore more later.

I love free-writing and write my first drafts using this method. I believe it encourages writers to explore ideas freely and build confidence in their own voice – just like the theme of *Roar*.



# Vlad the Bad

by Graham Cawser



We're excited to share a sneak peek inside Graham Cawser's new poetry collection, *Wizards, Witches & Magical Glitches*. A whimsical and weird poetry collection with a spooky twist.

## GRAHAM CAWSER

Graham Cawser lives in Staffordshire. He writes mainly for children. He has had poetry published in several anthologies and magazines including, *Poems, Tales and Other English Words*, *The Ticket to Scary-ness on Poetry Express*, and *Dirigible Balloon*. He has had a children's novel, *The Heroes of Elwen* published in May 2025. His volume of children's poetry entitled *Wizards Witches and Magical Glitches*, was published in October 2025. Both books are available from the Ink Bookshop at [bigthinkingpublishing.com](http://bigthinkingpublishing.com)



Vlad the Bad  
Had a grin like a bat  
A deep purple cloak  
And a red cravat  
His hair slicked back  
His fangs were white  
And Vlad the Bad flew at night...

Vlad the Bad  
He slept all day  
In his castle crypt  
In the dark he lay  
Scarcely asleep  
As he lay on his own  
Dreaming of Gore, and his Transylvanian home...

Vlad was bad  
But Vlad was sad  
A fate worse than garlic  
No friends to be had  
The reason why  
He'd sucked them all dry  
He was lonesome, and prompted to cry...

Vlad the Sad  
Made a massive change  
His lifestyle and wardrobe  
All rearranged  
He gave up meat  
He's a daytime veggie  
And Vlad the Good, now has a pal called Reggie...





# Hedgehog Boy

by Anna Llewellyn

## ANNA LLEWELLYN

Anna Llewellyn is a British-American writer, painter/illustrator, and literary editor living in Queens, New York. Her art and writing for children have appeared in *Northern Gravy*, *Dirigible Balloon*, *The Toy Press*, *Little Thoughts Press*, and now *PaperBound Magazine*, and her children's plays have been produced across New York state. Her oil portraits have been shown at Vital Art Studios Gallery. She was the winner of the 2017 Rishi Piparaiya Prize for Humor Writing and a nominee for the 2022 New York Theater Festival's Best Short Play competition. Her art can be seen on Instagram and Bluesky at @anniellewe.



Illustration by  
ARASHI KIM  
Find out more about  
Arashi on our Meet  
the Illustrators page



It began when we were eight  
Eating double chocolate cake  
At her bowling birthday party  
Themed for hedgehogs.

It was not the cake's rich flavour,  
Or the cactus party favours,  
Or her sparkly silver jeans  
That took my heart.

But the party invitation  
(made from her own illustration),  
When I saw that bowling hedgehog  
I fell hard.

So for years I tried my hardest  
To enchant this lovely artist.  
I bought lots and clothes and trinkets  
Themed for hedgehogs.

Hedgehog folder, hedgehog lunch box,  
Hedgehog t-shirt, Hedgehog crew socks,  
Hedgehog key chain and wallpaper  
For my phone.

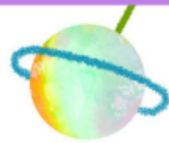
And to doubly impress her,  
I went to a posh hairdresser,  
Got my hair spiked tall and pointy  
Just like prickles.

Alas, she couldn't care less,  
Though I must say in all fairness,  
It was real hedgehogs she loved,  
Not hedgehog boys.

So I snuck out after dark  
And ran straight to Cricklade Park  
Which I didn't know was gone,  
Replaced by shops.

So instead I ran northwest  
Deep into Houston's Forest,  
Lay down on the mottled leaves  
And held quite still.





You might think I'd get fed up,  
Til a hedgehog did turn up,  
But as I waited something rather  
Strange occurred.

Those blinking stars and swishing  
trees,  
Though nothing fancy, captured me.  
I felt rather content  
To stay til morning.

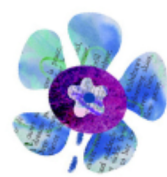
Just once I heard a snuffling,  
But now my plan was rather troubling  
I wished a hedgehog would steal *me*  
So I could stay.

When the sun rose the next day  
I ran to school eight miles away,  
Didn't care about the leaves  
Glued to my back.

I searched for her relentlessly,  
But in the end, she found me,  
She plucked a leaf that was impaled  
On my hair spike.

I said, "I've found a magic spot,  
Perfect for spotting hedgehogs.  
Would you like to come with me  
Before it's shops?"

It seems this question was enough,  
Better than buying that stuff,  
Cause that lovely artist glowed  
And said she'd go.



## ★ BOOK RECOMMENDATIONS



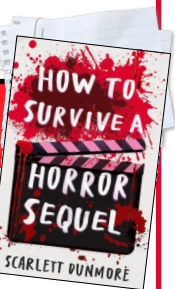
# AMY MCCAW'S

## CHILLING BOOK RECOMMENDATIONS



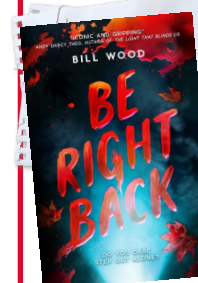
I love reading horror and thrillers all year round, but there's something especially fun about curling up with a creepy book when the dark nights are closing in. Here are some of my favourite new and upcoming YA book releases.

*How to Survive a Horror Sequel* by Scarlett Dunmore is a tremendously fun sequel set in a creepy village with lots of secrets. These books have a great cast of characters and I love not knowing who to trust!



*Lie or Die: Blood Moon* by A J Clack is another brilliant sequel that ups the stakes from the first book to chilling effect. This one is atmospheric, gory and twisty!

In *We Three Witches*, Rosie Talbot takes us on an atmospheric ghostly tour of York in this prequel to *Sixteen Souls*. Full of romance, chills and gorgeous writing, it also packs a seriously emotional punch.



Bill Wood follows up his slasher *Let's Split Up* with *Be Right Back*, a gory, action-packed homage to horror movies and books with a found family at its heart.

Cynthia Murphy's deliciously dark prequel to *Win Lose Kill Die*, *Keep Your Friends Close*, is a dark academia with a fast-placed plot and a nostalgic 90s setting.





# PRINTABLE WRITING PROMPT

As this issue is all about *changes* - *come as you aren't*, let's write about a supernatural fancy dress party.

Create a character using one of the purple boxes. Now choose another box to decide what they'll be dressing up as.

Write the party scene, where no one is as they seem...

FAIRY

ZOMBIE

GHOST

VAMPIRE

WITCH

WEREWOLF

HUMAN



## Amy McCaw

Amy McCaw is a YA author and YouTuber. She's the author of the award-winning *Mina and the Undead* series, YA murder mysteries set in 1995 New Orleans, and *They Own the Night* set in 1980s Edinburgh. She also co-curated the *A Taste of Darkness* horror anthology with Maria Kuzniar, which has recently been named as one of Waterstones' best paperbacks of 2023.

Amy is a passionate advocate for YA books and runs a popular online YA book club.

SWEET DREAMS!



# THE Secret Agents' BALL

by Graham Seal



## GRAHAM SEAL

Graham Seal lives on the western edge of Australia where he writes mostly humorous verse for children and adults. He is published in Tyger Tyger, The Dirigible Balloon, The Toy, Little Thoughts, Parakeet, Scary-ness Poetry Express, and elsewhere.

You can read more of his poems at  
Ragged Rascal Rhymes:  
[raggedrascal.blogspot.com/](http://raggedrascal.blogspot.com/)



I received an invitation to the secret agents' ball  
in a classified location that wasn't there at all.  
I would have to go covertly, wearing a disguise,  
hiding my identity from all the other spies.

The clandestine operation was strictly need to know,  
involving deep investigation to find out where to go.  
Finally, I cracked the code and revealed the right address,  
the trail led to a safe house that no one would suspect.

We checked our weapons at the door and had a patting down,  
ensuring no one wore a wire recording secret sound.  
The dancers were all masked, of course, so we remained unknown,  
a safeguard to be confident our covers were not blown.

When the ball was over the spies vanished from the scene,  
'Event Redacted' from the files like it had never been.  
I hope I am invited to next year's secret ball,  
Because I know I'll have a good time - though I won't be there at all.





## AUTHOR INTERVIEW



Marisa Linton joins us to chat about her gorgeous YA novel debut, *The Binding Spell*, the perfect read to greet the coming winter season - which was also the winner of the Chicken House award.

# MARISA LINTON



*The Binding Spell* is published by Chicken House and out now

CAN YOU TELL US ABOUT YOUR NOVEL, *THE BINDING SPELL*, AND HOW YOU CAME TO WRITE THIS STORY?

*The Binding Spell* began as a story I wrote for my daughters when they were small. It was inspired by the kind of classic fantasy I'd loved when I was a kid, people like Alan Garner, J.R.R. Tolkien, C.S Lewis and Ursula Le Guin.

When I finished it, I put it aside, thinking it unpublishable. But something kept drawing me back. Several years ago, I took it up again. By that time my kids had grown – and so the book's characters did too. They became very twenty-first century teenagers, moving through a world that had grown very dark, tense and dangerous.

In 2023, *The Binding Spell* (under its original title, *The Pouka King*) won the Times/Chicken House prize. It's a huge competition that gets around a 1,000 entrants annually, and the winner is published by Chicken House. That was an incredible moment for me. Even more amazing, now the book is published and 'out there', is how enthusiastic readers have been, letting me know how much they love it. It seems to speak to people from a wide range of ages and backgrounds – from the 13-year-old boy who wrote, 'the characters

are realistic and talk like real teens', to the 75 year old who declared she wouldn't normally read young adult or fantasy, but found it 'riveting and addictive'.

POUKA HILL FEELS VERY DISTINCTIVE AS A PLACE IN THIS BOOK. WERE YOU INSPIRED BY ANY EXISTING WELSH SETTINGS WHEN IT CAME TO CRAFTING THIS PART OF THE STORY?

Though *The Binding Spell* is set in England, the location is close to the Welsh border and Bannau Brycheiniog (the Brecon Beacons). It's a beautiful landscape full of folklore and the remains of the ancient past.

Pouka Hill is an imaginary place, but I like to get ideas for the places I invent from actual locations I've been able to see with my own eyes, because it makes everything feel more grounded when I come to write.

There were lots of real places that inspired Pouka Hill. One is Bryn Celli Dhu, a remote and atmospheric prehistoric mound on Anglesey. Even the name – 'the mound in the dark grove' – is so evocative, like a living poem. Another neolithic site is Arthur's Stone, actually in Herefordshire, but close to the Welsh border and with a spectacular view of the countryside around.

The whole of the British Isles is so rich in prehistoric sites. Another location that inspired Pouka Hill for me with its sheer scale and fantastic construction is La Hougue Bie, a prehistoric mound on Jersey. You can't enter any of these ancient sacred places without feeling the past all around you.

MORGAN IS ONE OF TWO ELDEST SIBLINGS WHO HAS A LOT OF RESPONSIBILITY ON HER SHOULDERS, TAKING CARE OF HER YOUNGER BROTHER AND SISTER, STEMMING FROM A RECENT TRAGEDY IN HER FAMILY.

DID WRITING ABOUT A BIG FAMILY NAVIGATING GRIEF COME WITH ITS OWN RESPONSIBILITY, AND HOW DID YOU STRIVE TO CREATE AUTHENTICITY FOR EACH CHARACTER?

Like most writers, I used partly my own life, and the lives of people I've known, but the story itself comes out of my own head.

I experienced a lot of family tragedy as a youngster, including the loss of my mum, and had to navigate bereavement, grief, and being a – very resentful – young carer, though in my case it was my dad I was trying to look after. I didn't have younger siblings, but I did go on to have children of my own, so could imagine how being a 'mum substitute' would feel for Morgan.

Everyone who has seen their own childhood ripped apart too soon will have their own story to tell, their own experiences and their own reactions, which may well be different to mine, so yes, I do feel a sense of responsibility about it.

I have to admit, my own reaction to loss and family breakdown was much more like the self-destructive nihilist, Johnny, than Morgan who tries to be the responsible one. I took my experiences and transfigured them into something else. It's a very different story.

The best way to create authenticity for

the characters was to really think through their individual motivations, and how things seemed to them. Then play out their dialogue in my head, try and hear how they would speak, how their voices sound.

You need to let them have strong emotions that come from their motivations. And not be afraid to show your characters in conflict with one another, because when they argue they show who they really are, and the stuff they care about.

After that, if you can get the motivations and the voices right, then adding little details, specific personal stuff, not generic and predictable, can help make characters come alive.

THIS BOOK FEATURES A TURBULENT COMING-OF-AGE LOVE STORY THAT HAS SO MANY UPS AND DOWNS FROM START TO FINISH. WHAT WAS THE MOST ENJOYABLE PART OF WRITING MORGAN AND JOE'S RELATIONSHIP?

Morgan's 17, and as the story starts she feels lonely, and that her own needs are being neglected in the midst of her complicated and chaotic family set up. So it felt natural for her to yearn to find someone who would make her feel seen and understood, and for her feelings to be really intense.

But I didn't want her to be obsessed with a relationship to the exclusion of other parts of her life, and her sense of her own identity and who she is. I felt a big responsibility about that.

It was important to me for Morgan to realise that life is about so much more than a boy, and that the boy she likes may not be the person she thought, or wanted him to be. In some ways, their relationship is a retelling of the old 'beauty and the beast' tale, but not one that follows a predictable path. So that

**" You need to let [your characters] have strong emotions that come from their motivations. And not be afraid to show your characters in conflict with one another, because when they argue they show who they really are. "**



relationship is – yes – very turbulent and takes some unexpected turns.

Some of the most enjoyable parts for me to write were where Morgan turns the tables on the boy she'd thought she cared about. A certain scene upstairs in a country pub. And another fateful encounter that takes place as the villagers rehearse their Halloween rituals. He may be smart, and have all this prior knowledge, and age-old power, but she proves herself smarter and outwits him. She's very much her own person, and makes up her own mind. She won't lose her autonomy, and she's not going to submit. Not ever. If they're going to be together it will be on her terms.

HUGE THEMES IN THIS NOVEL ARE THINGS LIKE MYTH, MAGIC, FAMILY, AND HOW WE TREAT THE DEAD. DO ANY VIEWS ON ARCHAEOLOGY AND ITS RELATIONSHIP ON HOW WE TREAT THE DEAD REMAIN IMPORTANT, OR CONFLICTING, TO YOU AS AN AUTHOR?

In earlier times archaeologists and historians didn't show much respect for the dead, especially for the remains of people from different cultures or who were deemed 'primitive'. Thankfully that's

changed a lot in recent years. There's much more sensitivity now about how human remains and artefacts used in grave burials are displayed in museums. But there are still huge problems about it.

The way people in the past buried their dead, and the things that they buried with them were all part of complex rituals and rites of mourning. To rip their bones from the earth where they were intended to rest, and to subject them to scientific study or put them on display for the gaze of the public that may know nothing about them or their culture – that's going to be problematic.

I feel in two minds about it myself. As a historian I'm curious about the past. Seeing objects that mattered to people long ago

can help us understand the past, and be more sensitive to different cultures and attitudes.

For us, knowing about the past can deepen our own humanity by increasing our knowledge of other lives, other ways. But it still feels on a very human level quite sacrilegious, taking away the privacy and the dignity of the dead. Would we ourselves want our remains, or those of the people we've loved, to be treated that way?

There's also the problem of deterioration and destruction. By excavating a site, archaeologists are dismantling and, to some extent, destroying it. There is an obligation to record what is found at the site and to preserve the objects that are removed. For that reason, archaeologists now plan ahead carefully, and are much more cautious about where and how they excavate.

WE LOVE THE IDEA OF HOW TRANSFORMATION TAKES ON MANY GUISES IN THE BINDING SPELL, AND HOW SOME SCENES ARE SET AROUND

HALLOWEEN WHEN THE VEIL BETWEEN THE TWO WORLDS IS AT ITS THINNEST. WHAT ELEMENTS OF THIS WERE YOUR FAVOURITE TO WRITE?

Halloween, or as it was once known in the ancient Celtic world,

Samhain, is a climactic time of the year. The point at which we enter the dark half of the year. This is echoed in The Binding Spell where the scenes around Samhain form the climax to the book.

In retrospect, it becomes clear that everything has been building up to this moment when the veil between our world and the other world is at its thinnest. All the unease that's been building through the story breaks out into intense danger for Morgan and the people she loves.

I really enjoyed writing all those scenes. I can't say too much about them, because of not wanting to spoil the plot twists. But basically all the things that Morgan has believed all the way through stand revealed in a new light. It's about everything finally

"... the story that I started with The Binding Spell is far from over. I'm not done with these characters by a long way."

making sense for her, just at the point when it's all a bit late, and there's something very satisfying about writing that.

IS HALLOWEEN YOUR FAVOURITE SEASONAL HOLIDAY?

Halloween as it's celebrated now, with trick or treating, fancy dress, and sweets for kids is just a dim echo of what it once meant for our ancestors, when changes in the seasons, the climate, the balance of dark and light in the day, were pivotal to their lives, and their survival though the dark times and privations of winter.

It's great to see that a lot of people in the UK – and beyond – are reconnecting with the old festivals and their ritual meanings. If you go along to one of the many reenactments of ancient festivals you can feel a part of something with a deep and mystic meaning that is rooted in the natural world. Something beyond modern consumerism and capitalism. And much more significant on a profound level.

CAN YOU TELL US WHAT'S NEXT FOR YOUR WRITING, AND IF YOU HAVE ANY NEW BOOKS COMING OUT THAT OUR READERS CAN LOOK FORWARD TO?

My first historical fantasy aimed at adults is out in October 2025. It's called Circle of Shadows and it's being published by Hodderscape. It's a dark academia gothic tale, about a group of occult detectives, led by a determined young woman, set in Edwardian England, the era of Sherlock Holmes. I'm really excited for people to get to see that.

Meanwhile, the story that I started with The Binding Spell is far from over. I'm not done with these characters by a long way and hope to get the green light to share their further adventures. The sequels will really expand their world as they find that the dangers facing them are far from resolved. We see the return of old villains, and the emergence of new ones. All the stakes are raised, and the ending far from certain.<sup>18</sup>

MARISA LINTON



Marisa Linton is an author, historian and professor emerita. She is one of the world's leading experts on the French Revolution, and taught history for many years at Kingston University, specialising in witchcraft and magical beliefs. She also works as a historical adviser, including for the TV series Dangerous Liaisons, where she was part of the writers' room.

She now writes fantasy for young adults that draws on her love for ancient Celtic Britain, folklore and fascination with magic, ghost stories and the supernatural.

Born in Barnes, in south-west London, into an Italian/English family, she has lived for many years in Brighton where she has raised her three children.



MARISA'S WRITING PROMPT:

YOU MEET THE POUKA KING IN THE DEEP, DARK WOOD. IS HE WHAT HE SEEMS?  
WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

We'd love to see what you come up with! Please send your writing to [paperboundmagazine@outlook.com](mailto:paperboundmagazine@outlook.com)




# A Terrible Transformation

by Rebecca  
Loveday

## REBECCA LOVEDAY

Rebecca is a poet and nursery practitioner who writes for children, grown-ups and everyone in between. She is a regular performer on spoken word stages and her poems appear in various magazines, online journals and local publications – most recently in The Toy magazine and the Portsmouth F.C. Matchday Programme.



an adorable human child  
to my horror she became  
flighty and furry-bellied  
soon she was no longer  
singing nursery rhymes  
instead, she began hauntingly  
chirping at ear-tingling pitches  
she abandoned her habit of  
horizontal, duvet-wrapped dreaming  
and found a weird new resting style  
hanging like a fattened chrysalis  
shockingly, she lost her love for  
cheerios and cheese toasties  
and now eagerly crunched on  
blood-stuffed live mosquitoes  
she forgot the innocent joy of  
running, skipping and jumping in puddles  
but found a creepy new interest in  
fluttering her leathery wings  
she used to be like me  
but there was nothing we could do  
my sister belonged to the night

*Now read from the poem from the bottom up  
(upside-down, or the right way up, if you are a bat!)*







# WRITING & DRAWING TIPS

BY POPPY  
T. PERRY

BY POPPY  
T. PERRY

*Hello there,*

I hope this finds you having an awesome day.

**I've compiled some of my top tips that can be applied to both writing AND drawing!**

**Please note:** If they work for you too, hurray! If not, no worries. There's no right or wrong way to create, the whole process is as beautifully unique as you are.

**Tip 1:**

**Little and often is better than big chunks done rarely.**

I find big gaps between writing or drawing allows self-doubt to sneak in and grow to a terrifying size. It has a nasty habit of getting more loomy and sinister with each day that slips by.

Even if you're super busy, see if you can bust out a one/two minute doodle or scribble down half a page of notes on your current writing project while eating your breakfast or during your morning loo trip. This should be enough to keep self-doubt at bay and to keep you progressing and improving.



*Tip 2:*

**Fear of the blank page is REAL!!! So... mess it up!**

You can't make something from nothing. But you can make anything from something!

When starting a writing project, jot down every thought you have on the subject onto the page. Same for a drawing, throw down some rough expressive lines in a faint pencil or try different colours. Our brains are incredible! They want to solve problems, so as soon as you have something down, your brain will try to help you make sense of it.

I start everything extra messy. The more I can convince myself it isn't going to be a final piece the freer I am to create. Take photos, scan or trace from your drawing or writing to build it into work you're happy with. Feel free to chop bits out and stick bits in. Remember to save all the different versions, you never know which bit might be useful later!



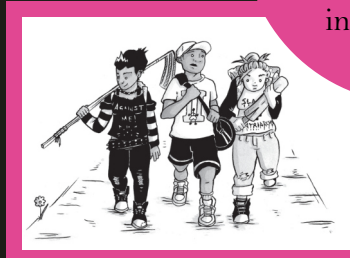
### Tip 3:

**Draw and write from life. (It helps you experience the world in a different way!)**

It's true! People who look at the world wondering how they can recreate it in artwork or in story see the world differently to someone who's simply moving through.

Carry a small rough sketchbook with you everywhere. When you spot something interesting, take a moment to sketch it. Same with writing, jot down interesting phrases you hear, snippets of conversation, small descriptions or interesting names.

These books are just for you. They don't need to be social-media-ready master pieces, they're something you can go back to anytime for inspiration. AND just think, every time you get this book out, you're practising and developing your craft. Go you!!!







## Tip 4:

Make the art you want to see in the world.

There is only one you in the world. Only one person moving through life the way that you are, seeing exactly what you see, thinking what you think. Only you can tell your stories or make your artwork! Isn't that amazing?!

I'd recommend creating work that makes your heart sing. Then, if one day someone wants to pay you for your work, they'll be paying you to do something you love! Win!!!

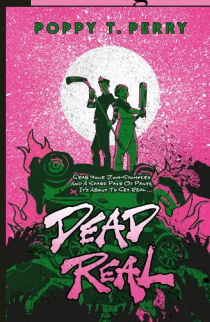
**My journey:** It took me a long time to work out what I wanted to do, then it took me even longer to get my work noticed. All of the tips above helped me to keep creating, always learning and improving with every line written or drawn.

I had oodles of knock backs, but I loved what I was doing and I knew if I kept putting my work out there, it might find someone who loved it as much as I did. That's how I found my agent and then the publishers who have helped *Dead Real*, my debut, become an illustrated young adult book exploding with zombies, a shark and a group of completely awesome characters I've loved making!

Now that it's out in the world, I'm so excited to share my writing and artwork with more people.

Wishing you all the best with your craft,

Poppy x



Poppy T. Perry (she/her) is a magnet to anything fast-paced and playful. She collects chaos like a magpie collects shiny things. This creates a fun, chaotic energy that is a key element in her storytelling. When not writing, Poppy can be found reading YA novels, comics, or drawing while listening to REALLY LOUD MUSIC. Poppy has come out as queer more times than she cares to remember but found she kept being shoved back into the closet. Each time she had to build up the courage to climb out again, and it was exhausting. The last time Poppy came out, she took an axe to her own personal closet and smashed it to splinters before setting it alight, just for good measure. The resulting desire to break down heteronormative worldviews and help others find the confidence to live their best life is at the heart of her work. Poppy lives as a landlocked mermaid in the West Midlands, taking every opportunity to run away to the coast. She also works as a consulting artist and art technician at a sixth-form college, where she loves helping young creatives.



*Dead Real* is published by Fox and Ink and is out now.

# ★ MEET THE ILLUSTRATORS ★

## Stephanie Buosi

Stephanie is a Canadian illustrator and graphic designer who loves drawing animals, fantasy creatures, and kids on adventures. She's an environmentalist, and in her spare time volunteers with Turtle Protectors in Toronto, assisting mama turtles throughout the nesting season.

When she's not doodling in her sketchbooks, you can find her outside among the trees, or escaping into new fantasy worlds with a good book and a cup of tea.

Stephanie illustrated the cover of this issue. The image was inspired by Stephanie's memories of herself as a teenager, trying to come up with her own "style." She tried so many different things that never really fit, but she had to go through the trials (and unfortunately a lot of baby blue eye shadow) to get closer to finding what worked.

See more of her work at [www.stephaniebuosi.com](http://www.stephaniebuosi.com)

@stephaniebuosi.com on BlueSky and @stebuosi\_ on Instagram



## Arashi Kim

Arashi Kim is currently studying arts-based therapies at university in her hometown (Milan, Italy). Over the last years she's taken classes on illustration, watercolour, letterpress, engraving, wordless picture books and other creative subjects. She's been into picture books since she discovered the amazing works by Anthony Browne, Shaun Tan, Levi Pinfold and others many years ago in Birmingham's and Dublin's bookshops.

You can find her online at [arashikim.myportfolio.com](http://arashikim.myportfolio.com)

Arashi illustrated 'Hedgehog Boy' in this issue.



## Carmen Carreira

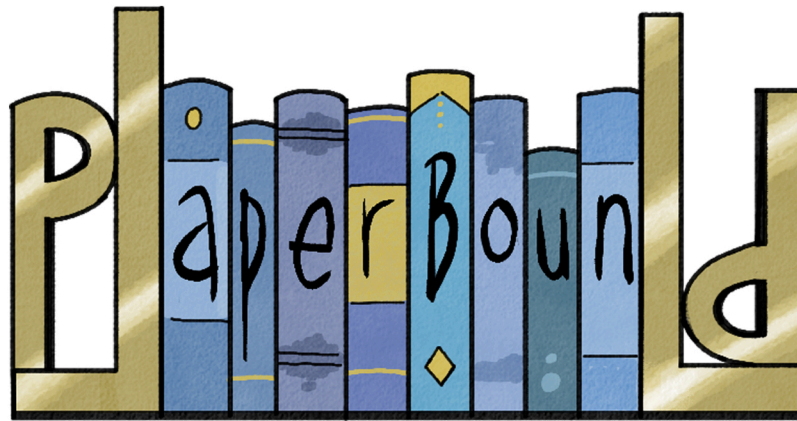
Carmen Carreira is an artist/illustrator with a particular interest in wildlife illustration and the natural world. After graduating in illustration, Carmen produced book art for publishers including Random House, Country Living and the National Trust. Carmen has exhibited her original artwork at galleries, produced one-off commissions for collectors, illustrated for magazines and even participated in a high street mural project for her local Town Council. She's currently Artist in Residence at Ascott House National Trust in Buckinghamshire, where's she's enjoying drawing all the flora and fauna to be found on the estate.

Carmen illustrated the contents page in this issue.





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