

MRB's

empORIUM  
of READING \* DELIGHTS  
Christmas catalogue

2020

# MERRY CHRISTMAS

Merry Christmas! Goodness knows, we've all earned it. In a year of uncertainty, disruption, thwarted plans and worse, we bring you one reliable and joyous constant - our (biggest ever!) Mr B's Christmas catalogue.

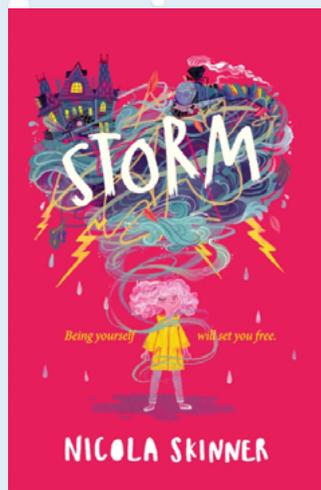
As ever, we have picked and reviewed every single one of the 101 featured books ourselves (not to mention a few games and other goodies) in an attempt to give you a bounty of gifting options for every imaginable reader. Oh, and throughout the Christmas Season we've knocked **10% OFF** all of these incredible books.

Needless to say we're also able to order any other book you might be after. Whether it's something specific or you need more recommendations then just pop into the shop (if you're able to do so) or get in touch:

Visit us at 13-15 John St, Bath, BA1 2JL or  
at [www.mrbsemporium.com](http://www.mrbsemporium.com)

Call us on 01225 331155 or email us at  
[books@mrbsemporium.com](mailto:books@mrbsemporium.com)

We would love to say a huge 'Thank You' to Flavia Sorrentino - who has illustrated our fantastic catalogue cover this year. Amongst other incredible work, she is the illustrator of 'Bloom' and 'Storm' by Nicola Skinner - two of our favourite children's books.



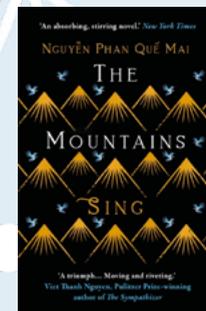
## STORM BY NICOLA SKINNER ILLUSTRATED BY FLAVIA SORRENTINO HB - £12.99 - HARPER COLLINS (CHILDREN'S 10+)

When you are born in the middle of a violent storm, you're bound to be left with a temper and a penchant for chaos. So, when Frances wakes up 100 years after a natural disaster has killed her entire village, she is hell-bent on haunting the visitors of the tourist attraction that her old life has become. Exploring themes of loss, grief, and friendship, 'Storm' compassionately explores the good and bad of being mad! This is a unique, often surprising read, that is as funny as it is moving: an absolute marvel of a book.

## FICTION: PEOPLE + PLACES

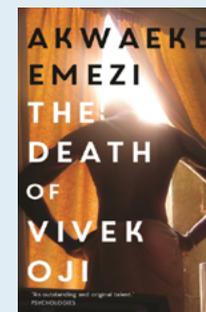
### THE MOUNTAINS SING BY NGUYEN PHAN QUE MAI HB - £14.99 - ONEWORLD (FICTION)

Vietnamese poet and author Nguyen Phan Que Mai has drawn on her own family experiences in this beautifully written, poignant novel. The turbulent political history of Vietnam in the 20th Century is seen through the eyes of three generations of the Tran family, whose destinies are tragically shaped by conflict. At its heart, the unshakeable humanity of Grandma Dieu Lan in the face of violence and adversity is truly humbling.



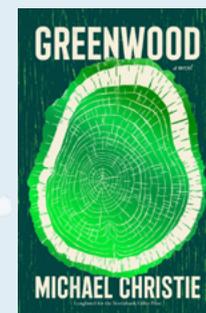
### THE DEATH OF VIVEK OJI BY AKWAEKE EMEZI HB - £12.99 - FABER (FICTION)

Working backwards from the moment Vivek's mother discovers his apparently murdered body on the doorstep of their home in south-eastern Nigeria, Emezi weaves a daring and dazzling tale that steadily pieces together the tragic misunderstandings which led to Vivek's death. Packed with vivid characters and rich friendships, this powerful story of finding self-expression amongst shifting gender identities is propelled forwards by sharp dialogue and the secrets that linger at its heart.



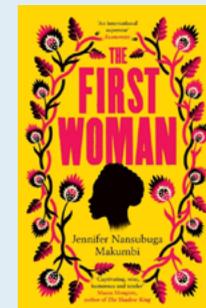
### GREENWOOD BY MICHAEL CHRISTIE HB - £16.99 - SCRIBE (FICTION)

It's 2030 and the world's last remaining redwood trees are the crowning glory of a tourist attraction on the Canadian coast. Jake Greenwood is a ranger charged with protecting these curiosities in a world ravaged by climate decay. Christie takes us through Jake's family history, exploring their secrets, assessing their pain and documenting their obsession with wood and trees. A searing Steinbeckian family drama that restores your faith in the power of big novels.



### THE FIRST WOMAN BY JENNIFER NANSUBUGA MAKUMBI HB - £16.99 - ONEWORLD (FICTION)

This novel follows Kirabo, a bright young girl growing up in a culture of powerful women, as she pursues the memory of the mother she has never known. Set against the backdrop of Idi Amin's bloody dictatorship, Kirabo pieces together the past to build a future for herself. This book showcases, through praxis as well as plot, the great importance of stories and their ability to preserve traditions, cultures and personal integrity.

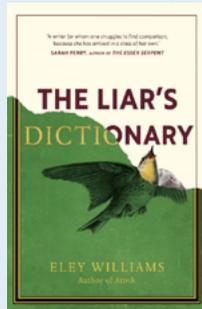


**PEW BY CATHERINE LACEY**  
**HB - £12.99 - GRANTA (FICTION)**



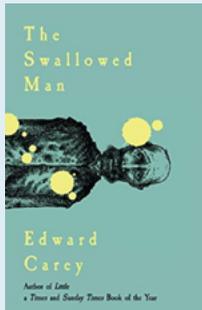
Pew is found asleep inside a church in a small town in America's Deep South. Mute, and of unspecified gender, age, and ethnicity, Pew is a blank canvas upon which the townspeople quickly set to work. Swiftly becoming a confessional figure for this seemingly devout community, Pew is subjected to secrets both banal and terrible. A sharp analysis of our increasing thirst to categorise and condemn others.

**THE LIAR'S DICTIONARY BY ELEY WILLIAMS**  
**HB - £14.99 - CORNERSTONE (FICTION)**



Mountweazel (n.) a made-up entry deliberately put in a dictionary to stop it being copied and stolen by rival dictionaries, e.g Winceworthliness (n.) the value of idle pursuit. In 1899, Winceworth the pathological liar is putting mountweazels into Swanby's New Encyclopaedic Dictionary. Today, Mallory the underpaid intern is taking them out again. 'The Liar's Dictionary' is a playful, rambling book about the flexibility of language, how we define ourselves, and the shenanigans of pelicans.

**THE SWALLOWED MAN BY EDWARD CAREY**  
**PB - £10.99 - GALLIC BOOKS (FICTION)**



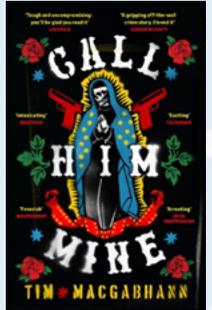
If you've watched or read the story of Pinocchio and wondered just what happened to Geppetto inside the belly of the sea beast that swallowed him.... Then this is the book for you! A wonderfully unique and creative story of one man's struggle for survival, his descent into literal darkness amidst a stink of rotten fish, and a tale of fatherly love and loss. Peppared with Carey's usual eerie drawings and works of sculpture, this story of solitude makes for the essential quarantine read if ever there was one!

**ON EARTH WE'RE BRIEFLY GORGEOUS**  
**BY OCEAN VUONG**  
**PB - £8.99 - VINTAGE (FICTION)**



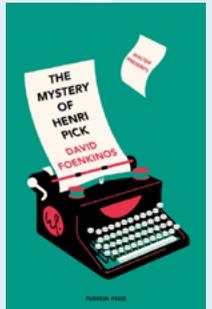
With great vulnerability, Ocean offers up his own history – a history punctuated by conflict and displacement following his family's immigration to the United States after the fall of Saigon. Ocean tells this story through a letter written to his illiterate mother. In this way, he provides rich texture to Vietnam subverting the contemporary understanding of it as a people defined by war and exposes the queer immigrant experience in the US.

**CALL HIM MINE BY TIM MACGABHANN**  
**PB - £8.99 - WEIDENFELD & NICOLSON (FICTION)**



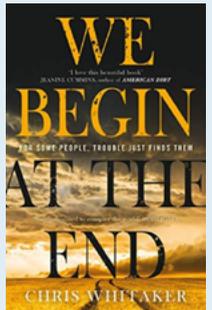
Irish journalist Andrew and his photographer boyfriend Carlos are working in a corrupt and dangerous Mexico City when they stumble upon a body even the local cops are too scared to go near. This seems to be the story they've been waiting for, until Carlos winds up dead. Grief-stricken Andrew needs answers – and revenge. This is a gritty contemporary crime novel with great characters and awesome set-pieces.

**THE MYSTERY OF HENRI PICK BY DAVID FOENKINOS**  
**PB - £9.99 - PUSHKIN PRESS (FICTION)**



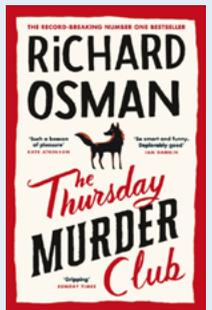
In a small town in Brittany, a library houses the unpublished manuscripts of generations of local writers. A young editor visiting on holiday finds a masterpiece among them – apparently written by Henri Pick, a deceased local pizzeria owner – and publishes it to great acclaim. But locals claim these can't be Pick's words – he never read a book in his life! A delightful and playful literary mystery, full of French whimsy.

**WE BEGIN AT THE END BY CHRIS WHITAKER**  
**PB - £8.99 - ZAFFRE (FICTION)**

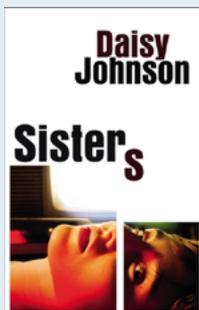


Vincent is fresh out of prison for his role in a girl's death thirty years ago and not everyone is pleased to see him. His best friend is now the local police chief. The dead girl's sister has never got over the events of that night. And her daughter has grown up in the shadow of the aunt she never knew. Fast-paced, gripping and utterly heart-breaking, for our money this is the thriller of the year.

**THE THURSDAY MURDER CLUB**  
**BY RICHARD OSMAN**  
**HB - £14.99 - VIKING (FICTION)**

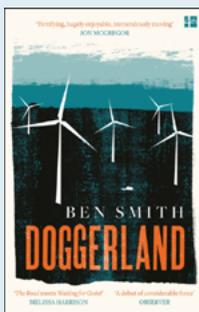


Cleverly plotted with trademark tongue-in-cheek humour, this is a thoroughly enjoyable romp. Set in a luxury retirement home, four bored residents go from investigating cold crimes on a Thursday afternoon to having a real life murder on their doorsteps. Out come the M&S biscuits and the suspiciously efficient 'old friends'. A murder is concerning for everyone who has a secret to hide... which is everyone, of course.



**SISTERS BY DAISY JOHNSON**  
HB - £14.99 - VINTAGE (FICTION)

July and September are sisters that share everything, a birthday, a phone, the sensations of pain and pleasure. This unsettling novel observes the sisters and their mother in the wake of an unknown incident from which they hide at 'Settle House', a dilapidated cottage on the Yorkshire moors. What follows is a hallucinatory tale of isolation, violence and a cankerous intimacy that can only lead to destruction.



**DOGGERLAND BY BEN SMITH**  
PB - £8.99 - FOURTH ESTATE (FICTION)

This novel imagines the world as a quiet dystopia, a future we could all be destined for. The Boy works on the rig; having taken the place that was left open when his father disappeared years before. Joined only by the Old Man, who spends his days dredging the ocean bed for the past, The Boy's hope begins to rust away. That is, until a discovery risks shattering all he believes. The story is told with such restraint and beauty that it drags at your heart and gut when things go south.



**THE MOST FUN WE EVER HAD BY CLAIRE LOMBARDO**  
PB - £8.99 - WEIDENFELD & NICOLSON (FICTION)

This expansive, absorbing American family saga follows the lives of the Sorenson family across the decades – four close but wildly different sisters, two parents, still madly in love after forty years, and the son the second sister gave up for adoption at birth, who suddenly re-enters the family's life. A detailed and meaty examination of parenthood, sisterhood, and the underlying tensions and jealousies which bubble under the surface of a seemingly perfect portrait of contemporary, all-American family life.



**THE VANISHING HALF BY BRIT BENNETT**  
HB - £14.99 - LITTLE, BROWN (FICTION)

Raised in a Louisianan town populated by light-skinned black families, twins Stella and Desiree take very different paths through life – Desiree stays in her community, living as a black woman in the South, whilst Stella attempts to 'pass' as a white woman, chasing a life of wealth and luxury. Spanning the 1940s-1980s, Bennett's multi-generational tale of race, identity, and equality is beautifully crafted, striking the perfect balance between tension and heartfelt emotion.

**A GAME OF BIRDS AND WOLVES BY SIMON PARKIN**  
PB - £10.99 - SCEPTRE (HISTORY)

By 1941, starvation was one of the greatest threats to Britain's survival as dependence on merchant shipping made us vulnerable to German U-boats. Among the innovations that would turn the tide was a board game invented by Gilbert Roberts and perfected by a team of Wrens - the women of the Royal Navy. Richly researched, and with a narrative flair as exciting as the finest thriller, this is a very human history of the Second World War.



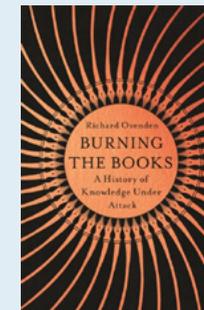
**BLITZ SPIRIT BY BECKY BROWN**  
HB - £16.99 - HODDER (HISTORY)

How well did British people cope in the throes of national disaster? A question that will soon have its heyday again, as it continues to do for scholars of the Blitz. Becky Brown has trawled the archives of the Mass Observation Archive to bring us a brilliantly textured account of individual lives during an unprecedented crisis. Including diarists from all walks of society, this compilation of heroic deeds, neighbourly complaints, and existential uncertainty is a tonic for these times.



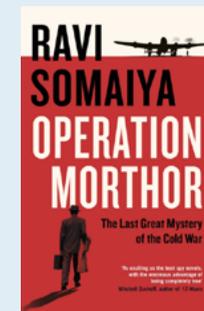
**BURNING THE BOOKS BY RICHARD OVENDEN**  
HB - £20 - JOHN MURRAY (HISTORY)

This isn't just a history of libraries; it's a celebration of knowledge and an ode to what's been lost. From Nazi Germany to the Library of Alexandria, Bodley's Librarian Richard Ovenden explores the heart-breaking history of the destruction of libraries. This is a fascinating, fact-packed and myth-busting book, asking contemporary questions about whether information can be owned, and whether it should be, through the lens of the whole history of books and book-keeping.

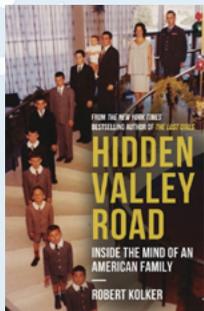


**OPERATION MORTHOR BY RAVI SOMAIYA**  
HB - £16.99 - VIKING (HISTORY)

It's 1961, and the Cold War is on fire in the Congo. Vying for influence are agents from the CIA, KGB and MI6, while a privately funded fascist army sews chaos and confusion. UN Secretary General Dag Hammarskjöld flies into the maelstrom to broker peace; but his plane never lands. Examining the Cold War's most intriguing unsolved mystery with fresh evidence and witness statements, Somaiya shines new light on a crime with far-reaching implications.



# MINDS + MEMORIES



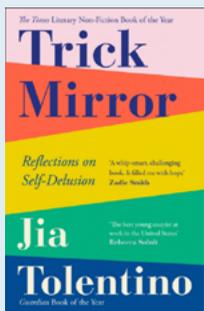
## HIDDEN VALLEY ROAD BY ROBERT KOLKER HB - £20 - QUERCUS (PSYCHOLOGY)

The Galvin's were full of hope for the children they were raising on Hidden Valley Road. Falconry, art, and 'limitless confidence' would lead to happy All-American lives. However, the dream was shattered when six of the family's twelve children were diagnosed with schizophrenia. Kolker details their case as one that would inform decades of genetic research, whilst compassionately uncovering the brutal reality of living with an unpredictable illness. This is a shocking and unforgettable read.



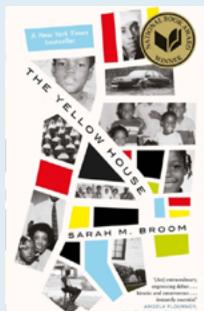
## IN THE DREAM HOUSE BY CARMEN MARIA MACHADO PB - £9.99 - PROFILE (MEMOIR)

This breath-taking new memoir encompasses a world of pain and rebirth, in which an abusive same-sex relationship is explored with unflinching honesty. From the ashes of her past and through the use of exquisite prose, Machado emerges as a woman re-formed, able to fill the cracks of history that have been left to fester and enlighten her readers with her clarity of thought and vicious assessment of queer history.



## TRICK MIRROR BY JIA TOLENTINO PB - £9.99 - FOURTH ESTATE (ESSAYS)

In this incisive and illuminating collection of essays, Tolentino examines topics ranging from reality TV to the cult of the difficult woman and the greatest scams in American history, through the prism of how these cultural and societal forces shape our awareness of ourselves. A sharply written and incredibly thoughtful collection of cultural criticism, it nails the zeitgeist of the 21st century and reads like listening to your cleverest friend.



## THE YELLOW HOUSE BY SARAH M. BROOM HB - £16.99 - CORSAIR (MEMOIR)

Broom explores the spatial politics of home through the life of 'The Yellow House', a shotgun house in New Orleans East that has accommodated generations of her family for the last hundred years. From detailed portraits of parents and siblings, to the mechanics of a Black working-class suburb before and after Hurricane Katrina, this warm and powerful memoir is a startling debut.

# SNACKS + BACKPACKS

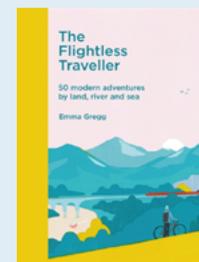
## SIGNS OF LIFE BY STEPHEN FABES HB - £18.99 - PROFILE (TRAVEL)

When doctor turned transcontinental pedaller Fabes stops for a bowl of chips an hour into his six-year trip, you wonder if his refusal to train was misguided. But he completes one epic leg after another, from Argentina to Alaska or Hong Kong to Calais, and his almost casual ability to endure becomes awe-inspiring. For six continents he shares hilarious anecdotes, random encounters, moments of danger and musings on the solitude of the open (and often steep) road.



## THE FLIGHTLESS TRAVELLER BY EMMA GREGG HB - £22 - QUERCUS (TRAVEL/ENVIRONMENT)

Whether you're combatting lockdown wanderlust with small staycations, or have started fervidly planning your next big trip, this book will be your guide to getting away ethically and sustainably. There's something in here for every budget and time frame – from city biking tours of Bristol, to an epic trek from London to Singapore. This is a travel book for people who want their next adventure to be about the journey, as well as the destination.



## ONE MORE CROISSANT FOR THE ROAD BY FELICITY CLOAKE

PB - £9.99 - MUDLARK (TRAVEL/FOOD)

This glorious slice of escapism follows Felicity Cloake (of Guardian food writer fame) on her two-wheeled expedition across France. The aim: finding the greatest croissant in the country. Cloake takes us through bustling French cities and unspoiled countryside, in a bid to eat her way around the nation. Loaded with charm and scattered throughout with Cloake's own recipes, this book will delight Francophiles, foodies, and cycling enthusiasts alike.



## IN PRAISE OF WALKING BY SHANE O'MARA PB - £8.99 - VINTAGE (SCIENCE/PSYCHOLOGY)

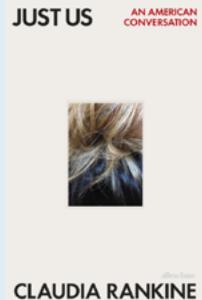
Walking seems such a simple action, but O'Mara, an eminent neuroscientist, rips open the illuminating story of this ingenious skill. From walking's origins under the sea, to the pure mechanics of putting one foot in front of the other, to the mental and physical miracles it works, O'Mara brings us its full history. As we become an increasingly sedentary species, this book gives us a necessary blueprint for getting back on our feet.





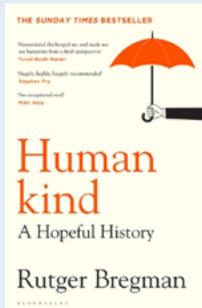
**A PROMISED LAND BY BARACK OBAMA**  
**HB - £35 - VIKING (MEMOIR)**

This monumental first instalment of Barack Obama's autobiography is a deeply personal account taking us from the start of his political career through his successful election campaign in 2008 and ends in 2011 with the death of Osama Bin Laden. Through Obama's eyes we see some incredible moments: from his inauguration to meetings with Putin, the financial crisis to family dinners at the White House. A compelling and hopeful political memoir when we need it most.



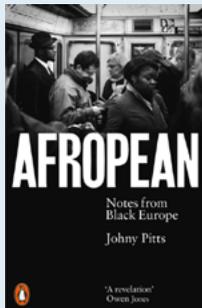
**JUST US BY CLAUDIA RANKINE**  
**HB - £25 - ALLEN LANE (POLITICS/EQUALITY)**

Mesmerising as an object and truly life-changing in content, 'Just Us' exists in a category all of its own. Allowing personal memories of encounters in everyday life (from airports to dinners with friends) to sit alongside the stories and words of others – in images and historical documents – Rankine creates a space of wisdom and respect, where we are each invited to ask ourselves how whiteness defines our lives, as it inevitably does.



**HUMANKIND BY RUTGER BREGMAN**  
**HB - £20 - BLOOMSBURY (PHILOSOPHY)**

Taking a round-about trip through pre-history, science, and psychology, stopping via the media, prison systems and WW2, Rutger Bregman challenges the age-old idea that all human beings are inherently selfish. Whether or not you take him up on his dare to abandon cynicism, 'Humankind' is a revisionist history that offers a fresh perspective on... well, everything! This one's a breath of fresh air for anyone ready for a healthy dose of optimism.

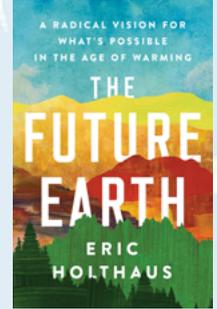


**AFROPEAN BY JOHNNY PITTS**  
**PB - £10.99 - PENGUIN (POLITICS/EQUALITY)**

This incredibly readable blend of history, politics and travel writing strikes the perfect balance between being academic and accessible. Pitts journeys from Moscow to Marseille, exploring the question of whether and how an 'Afropean' identity exists in Europe and unveiling sides of cities that go unseen to most tourists, addressing the often-missing history of their African communities. His research is brought to life by his witty, well-observed anecdotes and interviews with a cast of fascinating characters.

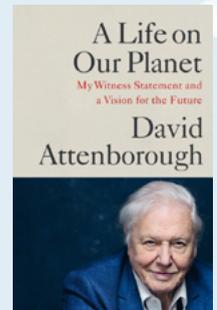
**THE FUTURE EARTH BY ERIC HOLTHAUS**  
**PB - £16.99 - HARPER ONE (ENVIRONMENT)**

We are becoming used to tales of climate catastrophes. What is far more unusual is a book that dares to plan a life-saving mission for us all, year by year. Dedicating his book to his children, in a spirit of hope as action, rather than passive optimism, Eric Holthaus charts the greatest change humanity has ever undertaken. This is the story of how, over the next three decades, we saved our home and ourselves.



**A LIFE ON OUR PLANET BY DAVID ATTENBOROUGH**  
**HB - £20 - EBURY (NATURE)**

A witness statement observing the way in which biodiversity has been reducing over the last generation. Demonstrating the decrease in remaining wilderness, as the world population has increased over the decades, it paints a stark image of just how our planet has been affected. But hope is not lost, and Attenborough shows that there is a way forward and the steps we, as a species, need to take before it is too late.



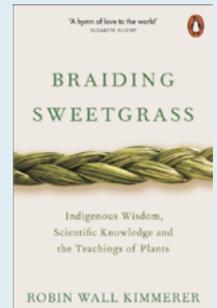
**ENTANGLED LIFE BY MERLIN SHELDRAKE**  
**HB - £20 - BODLEY HEAD (NATURE)**

Fungi supports and sustains almost all life on earth. It can digest plastic, manipulate animal behaviours, connect whole underground plant networks, and even make delicious bread. In 'Entangled Life' Sheldrake takes us on an illuminating journey into the weird, wonderful, and unknown world of fungi, which may just be the key to understanding both our planet and ourselves. A champignon book which will really grow on you.



**BRAIDING SWEETGRASS BY ROBIN WALL KIMMERER**  
**PB - £9.99 - PENGUIN (ECOLOGY/NATURE)**

Drawing on her career as a botanist, her indigenous wisdom as a member of the Citizen Potawatomi Nation, and her experiences of motherhood, Robin opens our eyes to our disconnection to the natural world around us. Plants and animals are our oldest teachers, and in order to preserve our environment we must build a reciprocal relationship, one where we think before we take, and give gratitude for every gift the earth has given us. An absolutely stunning read, to come back to again and again.



# WONDER + TUNDRA

The Last Planes of Siberia



Sophy Roberts

## THE LOST PIANOS OF SIBERIA BY SOPHY ROBERTS HB - £18.99 - DOUBLEDAY (CULTURAL HISTORY)

In 2015, Sophy Roberts was commissioned to procure a Siberian piano for a Mongolian concert pianist. The result is a quirky combination of travel and detective writing, guiding the reader through two centuries of Siberia's terrifying history. We learn how people and instruments were exiled to Siberia, and how they survived. This is a wonderfully entertaining, meandering narrative packed with memorable meetings, and fascinating snippets of European history.

## EAT THE BUDDHA BY BARBARA DEMICK HB - £18.99 - GRANTA (TRAVEL/HISTORY)

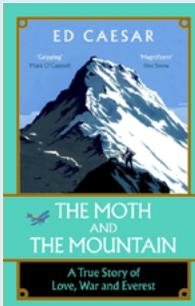
The legacy of China's claim to sovereignty over Tibet in the 1950's is explored through the personal testimonies of Tibetans from Ngaba (a province seen as the gateway to China). From the royal daughter of a deposed Mei King, to village farmers, students and Tibetan monks; Demick's interviews capture the culture of a vanished world and the inside stories of upheaval and protest under Mao's communist regime.

## OWLS OF THE EASTERN ICE BY JONATHAN C. SLAGHT HB - £20 - ALLEN LANE (NATURE)

The remote region of Primorye is a brutally harsh landscape of snow, ice, and thousands of miles of dense forest; it is also home to Blakiston's fish owl, the world's largest owl. Slaght's chance encounter with this beautiful, elusive creature led him to devote decades of his life to their preservation. This is his moving account of that obsession and a fierce rebuff of those intent on destroying the habitats these owls need to survive.

## THE MOTH AND THE MOUNTAIN BY ED CAESAR HB - £18.99 - VIKING (ADVENTURE)

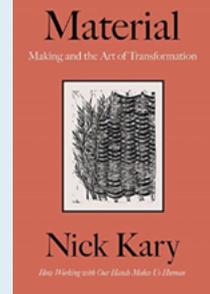
In this ultimate tale of foolhardy daring-do, we follow Maurice Wilson's effort to win the race to the summit of Everest by crash-landing his plane near its foot and scaling the remainder. Given his limited flying skills the first portion seemed plausible; his equally limited climbing prowess gave more cause for concern. A compelling action-packed insight into a forgotten mountaineering anti-hero and what drove him, and so many others, towards the top of the world.



# MAKES + FLAKES

## MATERIAL BY NICK KARY HB - £20 - CHELSEA GREEN (CREATIVITY)

Nick Kary has coaxed us lovingly back to our roots with this artful rumination on the earthly materials that have shaped the lives of creatives. Taking us along on his visits to artists devoting their lives to traditional crafts, and exploring his personal relationship between landscape, craft, and memory, this book is a beautifully textured manifesto for rediscovering the bond between matter and humanity.



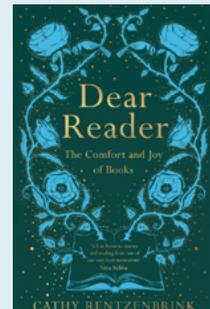
## FLAKE BY MATTHEW DOOLEY HB - £18.99 - JONATHAN CAPE (GRAPHIC NOVEL)

Howard is an ice cream seller trying to keep his van financially viable amid furious competition from the ice-cream cartel that dominates this small Northern town. But there is a twist to this story of battling ice cream men; Howard's nemesis is his half-brother Tony – and these two have a lot of history. Understated artwork and deadpan British humour – think 'The Office' or 'Detectorists' – make this the standout graphic novel of the year.



## DEAR READER BY CATHY RENTZENBRINK HB - £12.99 - PICADOR (BOOKS ABOUT BOOKS)

From a childhood filled with stories, to life as a bookseller and then writer, books have been the bedrock of everything in Rentzenbrink's life. Here she shares her love of the written word, her brilliant reading recommendations (from Harry Potter to Donna Tartt to Bill Bryson) and riffs on the power of books to change your life. This is the perfect Christmas gift for the book lover in your life.



## FLAVOUR BY YOTAM OTTOLENGHI HB - £27 - EBURY (FOOD)

A brand new Ottolenghi cookbook is a cause for celebration and this collection of vegetarian recipes is super-comprehensive and full of smart tips. Different cooking methods show how the same vegetable can take on a variety of textures and tastes, whilst Ottolenghi's trademark layering of flavours, further transforms the everyday into something special. 'Just pottering' in the kitchen is taken to another level – bring on the beetroot!



# VISTAS + VERTEBRAE

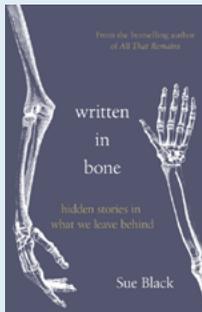
**SECRET BRITAIN BY MARY-ANN OCHOTA**  
**HB - £20 - FRANCES LINCOLN (ARCHAEOLOGY)**

Britain is full of sites of wonder and mysticism, but why do these places still resonate in our modern lives? Scouring over seventy of Britain's most intriguing archaeological mysteries, Mary-Ann Ochota takes us on a journey to discover the complexity of Britain's rich history. Containing gorgeous photographs of ancient sites and mystical objects - some well-known and others more covert - this trusty guide encourages us to look closer than ever before at our Secret Britain.



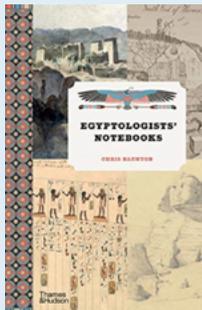
**WRITTEN IN BONE BY SUE BLACK**  
**HB - £18.99 - DOUBLEDAY (SCIENCE/HISTORY)**

This book is a fascinating and insightful exploration of the hundreds of bones that make up the human body, and their ability to map the lives we have led. Told with good humour and charm that by no means covers in the face of the more grisly details, this is an ideal read for those interested in forensics, anatomy or even a good bit of 'skeleton in the closet' crime fiction.



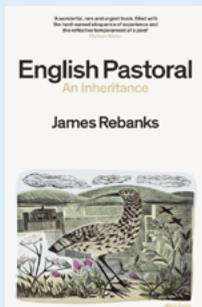
**EGYPTOLOGISTS' NOTEBOOKS BY CHRIS NAUNTON**  
**HB - £32 - THAMES & HUDSON (TRAVEL/HISTORY)**

This book reads like a love poem to the world of Egyptology, the illustrations are lavish, and the writing spiritedly evokes the excitement and occasional mania of those early pyramid-scaling, temple-excavating adventurers. Naunton's editorship is remarkable and broad, shedding light on characters that I had never come across, who recorded their discoveries with true brilliance. This is a must read for any seasoned armchair expert and is guaranteed to inspire any would be mummy aficionado.



**ENGLISH PASTORAL BY JAMES REBANKS**  
**HB - £20 - ALLEN LANE (NATURE)**

In 'A Shepherd's Life', James Rebanks beguiled everyone with his passion for farming. Now he steps in with an important and timely look at the future of the industry, based on the evolution of his own family farm. Survival and viability are pitted against responsible stewardship, and new technologies constantly challenge traditional methods. Ultimately, a love of the land along with a respect for heritage and integrity sing out from the page.

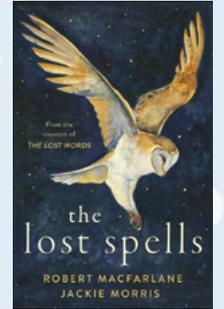


# SONNETS + SEASONS

**THE LOST SPELLS**

**BY ROBERT MACFARLANE AND JACKIE MORRIS**  
**HB - £14.99 - HAMISH HAMILTON (POETRY/NATURE)**

'The Lost Spells' is every bit as ethereal and lustrously illustrated as its predecessor 'The Lost Words'. This pocket-sized collection is brimming with poems that read like ancient lore: spells to see you through grief, incantations to protect you from harm, and charms to celebrate joyful moments. At its heart, this book is an ode to the winding paths of the wild and the creatures we find there - Macfarlane and Morris at their best.



**MY DARLING FROM THE LIONS BY RACHEL LONG**  
**PB - £10.99 - PICADOR (POETRY)**

Here's proof that poetry, at its very best, is as entertaining and funny as it is fearless and illuminating; and even more impressive when it manages both in a debut collection. From the complexities of cultural heritage (be it about hair or chosen partners), to a light-touch critique of racism targeting Meghan Markle, and full of incredibly vivid moments in between, these are poems which draw you in immediately, each telling a fully-formed story.



**A POEM FOR EVERY WINTER DAY**  
**EDITED BY ALLIE ESIRI**

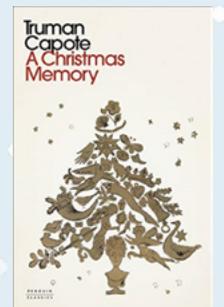
**PB - £14.99 - PAN MACMILLAN (POETRY)**

Curl up by the fire with a mug of something hot and lose yourself in this delightful collection of poems. Esiri's selections take us from the classics of Edgar Allan Poe and Thomas Hardy, through E.E. Cummings and Mary Oliver to more contemporary voices like Benjamin Zephaniah, George the Poet and Jackie Kay. This enchanting book will keep the whole family warm from Christmas, through New Year and all the way to Valentine's Day.



**A CHRISTMAS MEMORY BY TRUMAN CAPOTE**  
**HB - £10.99 - PENGUIN (FICTION)**

I discovered the title story of this collection in the back of my battered copy of 'Breakfast at Tiffany's' and immediately fell for its nostalgic, bittersweet tone. This autobiographical tale recounts one of Capote's early Christmases spent in the Deep South, hand-making presents and baking fruit cake with his elderly 'aunt' Sook. Other stories in the collection are by turns unsettling and hopeful, a festive cross-section of Capote's extensive and exceptional oeuvre.





# READING SUBSCRIPTIONS

Treat the book-lover in your life to a Mr B's Reading Subscription! A dedicated bibliotherapist from the Mr B's team will hand-pick a book a month chosen to suit the gift recipient's tastes and send it to their door in our gorgeous new subscription wrapping.

The subscription begins with a voucher inviting the recipient to get in touch so that we can discover their reading preferences. Once we know what your book-lover likes to read, we'll appoint one of our booksellers to be their bibliotherapist and pick them a great new book each month.

We offer 3, 6 or 11 month subscriptions. You can also choose between paperback or hardbacks and we deliver across the globe.



£45 FOR THREE PAPERBACKS TO THE UK

£85 FOR SIX PAPERBACKS TO THE UK

£145 FOR ELEVEN PAPERBACKS TO THE UK.

For more information and international postage prices visit:

[WWW.MRBSEMPORIUM.COM/GIFTS](http://WWW.MRBSEMPORIUM.COM/GIFTS)



# BOOKS: THE PERFECT GIFT

You don't need us to tell you that a well-chosen book can make the perfect gift. Whether the book-lovers in your life are seeking solace, escape, or laughter this year, we can help steer you to their perfect book-match in many different ways:

## THE RECOMMENDATION STATION

At the foot of our homepage ([www.mrbsemporium.com](http://www.mrbsemporium.com)) you can find our Recommendation Station - the ultimate anti-algorithm book choosing gizmo. Tell us what your giftee is in the mood for & what they've liked recently and a real bookseller will fire back 4 tailored recommendations.



## SURPRISE READS

Prefer to leave the picking entirely down to us? Then just select 'Surprise Reads' on our website, choose your favourite category and leave the rest to us!



## PODCASTS AND VIDEOS

For more bookish inspiration catch up with our recent podcast season and our YouTube author chat series 'Talking to Book People about Books (and Other Stuff)'.

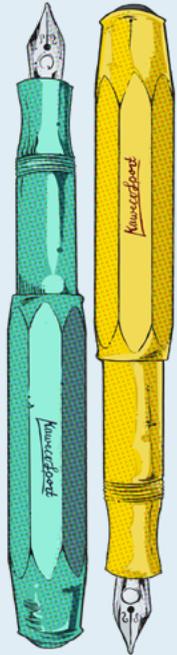
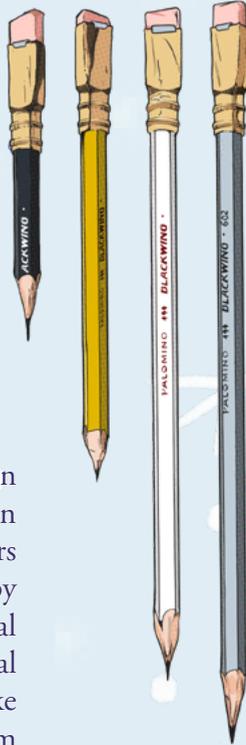
YOU CAN FIND ALL OF THE ABOVE AT  
[WWW.MRBSEMPORIUM.COM](http://WWW.MRBSEMPORIUM.COM) OR FIND OUT MORE  
BY CALLING US ON 01225 331155 OR EMAIL  
[BOOKS@MRBSEMPORIUM.COM](mailto:BOOKS@MRBSEMPORIUM.COM)

# STATIONERY + SHIRTS

WELCOME TO SOME OF OUR FAVOURITE STATIONERY (AND MR B'S TEES)

## BLACKWING PENCILS BOX OF 12 - £30

Beloved by John Steinbeck, Walt Disney and, crucially, Ed and the rest of the Mr B's team, the Palomino Blackwing combines Japanese graphite and American cedar to form perhaps the finest pencil ever made. Available in Firm (the classic Blackwing 602), Balanced or Soft leads, whether you write or sketch you'll never look back once you've used a Blackwing.



## KAWECO PENS £18.99 EACH

The most aesthetically pleasing and fun of all fountain pens, Kaweco has been going since 1883. The varieties, colours and materials can seem limitless (drop by or give us a call to discuss) but for brutal simplicity try a lightweight hexagonal Kaweco Sport whose colour list reads like an enticing ice cream menu – choose from mint, macchiato, navy, black, red, white, green, bordeaux, fox, grey or frosted mandarin, coconut, banana or lime.

## MR B'S T-SHIRTS £15 EACH

Our super-soft classic fit t-shirts are made from recycled materials and are available in navy or teal and in small, medium, large or extra-large (Bunny not included).

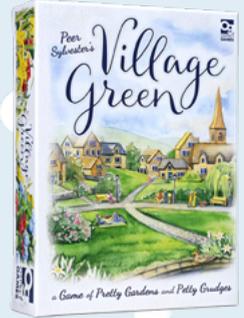


# BOARD GAMES

A FEW OF THE GAMES THAT HAVE ENTERTAINED US ON THOSE HOMEBOUND EVENINGS!

## VILLAGE GREEN £15.99

This might look like a quiet and unassuming card game, but at its heart lies a tasty little challenge! Create the most impressive display to impress the judges and outscore your gardening rivals. Each turn draw a card for you garden and place flowers, trees and ornaments in your lovingly curated space or go ahead and nominate your plot for prestigious awards.



## MYSTERIUM PARK £23.99

In this psychic sleuth simulator, players work together to try and solve the mystery of who murdered the ghost that haunts the old park. One player takes up the role of the ghost, offering clues via abstract 'vision cards', while everyone else plays amateur detective. There's shedloads of fun to be had in deducing what clues are trying to say in this brilliant and hilarious boardgame.



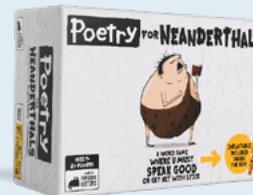
## THE CREW £13.50

In this trick-taking card game, players work together to complete missions by each winning specific types of trick. Easy? No! It's got my favourite game mechanic where you must do all this without speaking to each other! Trying to convey which cards you have and which ones you need all without talking makes for a perfect co-operative card game, where every success is joyously celebrated!



## POETRY FOR NEANDERTHALS £19.99

A funny, quick party game for all the family! Players earn points by getting their teammates to correctly guess words and phrases. The catch? You can only speak in single syllables while giving clues! If you get too exuberant with the size of your words, your opponents can hit you with the inflatable "NO!" stick and you lose points.





**ONCE UPON A DRAGON'S FIRE BY BEATRICE BLUE**  
**PB - £6.99 - FRANCES LINCOLN (CHILDREN'S 3+)**

In a small, frozen village, two children venture to the highest mountain to slay the dragon which keeps their home in eternal winter. But the dragon's heart is frozen from loneliness, and the children, realising this, revive him with their favourite stories. Warmed by their new friendship and the arrival of summer, the children soar through the town on the back of their winged companion ready to begin a new story.



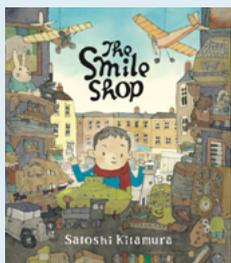
**I CAN CATCH A MONSTER**  
**BY BETHAN WOOLLVIN**  
**PB - £7.99 - TWO HOOTS (CHILDREN'S 2+)**

Bo lives in a great big castle in the forest and is tired of waiting around when her brothers go out hunting for monsters. One day she sets out on her own, but there's a problem: she doesn't know what monsters look like! Bo comes face to face with dragons and creatures of the deep, but maybe they're not the monsters she should be worried about... An empowering, modern fairytale where kindness ultimately triumphs.



**SPAGHETTI HUNTERS BY MORAG HOOD**  
**HB - £11.99 - TWO HOOTS (CHILDREN'S 2+)**

Equal parts silly and funny, 'The Spaghetti Hunters' is guaranteed to put a smile on anyone's face. Join Duck and Tiny Horse (the greatest spaghetti hunter in the world, no less), as they hunt for the most elusive of pastas. Armed with all the tools and tips of the trade it should be easy, right? With excellent comic timing and Hood's trademark dry humour, this book is a tasty treat.



**THE SMILE SHOP BY SATOSHI KITAMURA**  
**HB - £12.99 - SCALLYWAG PRESS (CHILDREN'S 3+)**

A little boy has saved up all his pocket money to buy one special thing from the marketplace. But what will he buy? Will it be the beautiful little boat? The brass horn, or the apple pie? However, when disaster strikes the little boy will discover that sometimes the best gifts are those that can't be bought with money. Filled with rich illustrations and charming characters, this book will bring a smile to everyone's face.

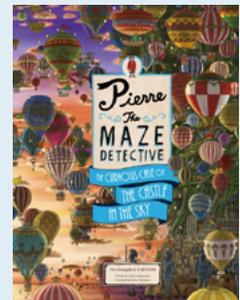
**GAMAYUN TALES I BY ALEXANDER UTKIN**  
**PB - £12.99 - NOBROW (CHILDREN'S GRAPHIC NOVEL)**

Steeped in Slavic folklore, this anthology features Alexander Utkin's beautifully coloured renderings of three Russian tales including 'Tyna and the Lake' and 'The Water Spirit'. Bird kings, jealous sisters, mystery boxes and magic houses grace the pages of this mythological masterpiece in ways previously unseen in English-language children's books. A beautiful gift that will captivate avid readers from middle grade to fully grown up.



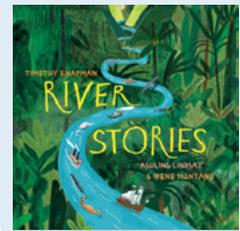
**PIERRE THE MAZE DETECTIVE: THE CURIOUS CASE OF THE CASTLE IN THE SKY BY HIRO KAMIGAKI**  
**HB - £14.99 - LAURENCE KING (CHILDREN'S 7+)**

A pleasingly and fiendishly tricky puzzle book with a difference. A big-format visual feast, with every page full of crafty detail and new challenges, from spotting hidden gems within the giant two-page spreads, to navigating tightly constructed mazes in search of the missing Maze Egg. Young sleuths will be dipping in and out of the labyrinthine canal city throughout the holidays - let the search begin!



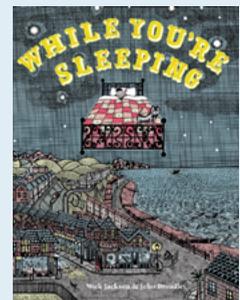
**RIVER STORIES BY TIMOTHY KNAPMAN**  
**ILLUSTRATED BY ASHLING LINDSAY & IRENE MONTANO**  
**HB - £12.99 - EGMONT (CHILDREN'S 5+)**

A beautifully illustrated trip around the world exploring five of its greatest rivers. The Nile, the Mississippi, the Amazon, the Yangtze and the Rhine each magnificently folds out to reveal dozens of facts about the wildlife, people, history and myths along its journey from source to sea. Discover which woods may have inspired Grimm's fairytales, the name of the world's highest train station, and which river gave birth to the Delta blues!

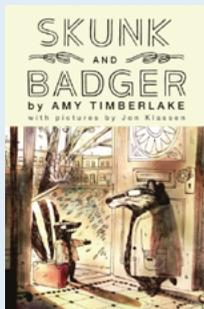


**WHILE YOU'RE SLEEPING**  
**BY MICK JACKSON AND JOHN BROADLEY**  
**HB - £12.99 - PAVILION (CHILDREN'S 3+)**

All sorts happen when we're sleeping! From busy bakers baking and foxes scavenging, to kids playing on the other side of the world, the breadth of night-time activity that goes on as you snooze is luminously captured by Mick Jackson's melodic prose and John Broadley's dreamy illustrations. I'm reminded again of the power of children's books to turn the mundane into the magical: never has a well-stocked 24/7 looked so appealing.



# CROCS + CRITTERS



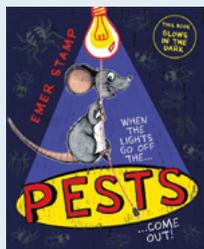
**SKUNK AND BADGER BY AMY TIMBERLAKE  
ILLUSTRATED BY JON KLASSEN  
HB - £12.99 - HARPERCOLLINS (CHILDREN'S 6+)**

No one likes skunks, but there's little Badger can do about it when his new roommate turns out to be – you guessed it – Skunk. Can this odd couple put their prejudices aside and form a lasting friendship? Timberlake's sweet, funny and very moving story is perfectly complemented by illustrations from the brilliant Jon Klassen. A delightful tale, great for fans of Winnie The Pooh and Wallace and Gromet.



**INVESTIGATORS BY JOHN PATRICK GREEN  
HB - £9.99 - MACMILLAN (CHILDREN'S 5+)**

Mango and Brash are the InvestiGators, a pair of agents who use Very Exciting Spy Technology – and their unique travel methods of flushing themselves down the loo – to solve crimes. Here, they have two mysteries to crack; a local baker who has gone missing and a mysterious explosion at the local science laboratory. A laugh-out-loud funny new series that's perfect for fans of 'Dog Man'.



**PESTS BY EMER STAMP  
PB - £6.99 - HODDER (CHILDREN'S 5+)**

Stix the mouse lives behind a washing machine at 3 Peewit Mansions and his grandma keeps him safe with all her rules. Stix is bored. But he is delighted when he finds there's a school in the basement full of other creatures just like him. Can Stix have the fun adventure he's been looking for before the homeowners spot him and call Nuke-a-Pest?! A sweet, funny children's adventure packed with loveable characters.



**THE WILD WAY HOME BY SOPHIE KIRTLEY  
PB - £6.99 - BLOOMSBURY (CHILDREN'S 7+)**

When his brother is born with problems in his heart, Charlie runs away from the hospital and into an ancient forest. There he finds a boy lying face down in the river, hurt but still alive. Upon leaving to get help, Charlie finds that the strange and wild forest has led him straight into the Stone Age, and Harby the ancient boy needs his help! An exciting adventure with nature and history at its heart.

# TRIPS + TREES

**WHEN STARS ARE SCATTERED  
BY VICTORIA JAMIESON & OMAR MOHAMED  
WITH ILLUSTRATION BY IMAN GEDDY  
PB - £9.99 - FABER (CHILDREN'S GRAPHIC NOVEL)**

This is the true story of Omar and his brother Hassam, Somali refugees who are staying in the Kenyan refugee camp of Dadaab after losing their family in the civil war. It's a beautifully moving insight into life in a refugee camp; of the day to day lives of Omar and his friends, over more than a decade. A story of resilience and responsibility, and the power of hope.



**FIG SWIMS THE WORLD BY LOU ABERCROMBIE  
PB - 7.99 - STRIPES (CHILDREN'S 10+)**

Fig is a 14-year-old girl who is sick of having her horrible and demanding mother, Mubla, boss her about and make her New Year's resolutions for her. This year Fig decides to make her own dramatic resolution; to swim the world (once she's learned to swim)! With help from friends, old and new, Fig plans her 20 swims across the globe. A fantastic emotional read about friendship, family, challenging yourself and travelling the world.



**OCTOBER, OCTOBER BY KATYA BALEN  
ILLUSTRATED BY ANGELA HARDING  
HB - £12.99 - BLOOMSBURY (CHILDREN'S 10+)**

October and her Dad have always lived in the woods. That is, until her eleventh birthday when her Mum returns, October rescues a baby owl, and her father falls out of the biggest tree in the forest. Forced to move to London with a mother she barely knows, October is sure she'll hate it. But with new friends and new surroundings, October soon realises that she can spread her wings wherever she may be.



**CLEAN GETAWAY BY NIC STONE  
PB - £6.99 - KNIGHTS OF MEDIA (CHILDREN'S 10+)**

Scoob has been grounded by his father. So, when his eccentric grandmother shows up with a brand-new camper van and invites him to come on a road trip, he jumps at the chance for freedom. As grandson and grandmother flee the law and chase redemption, the reader is pulled along on a tour of the American Civil Rights movement. This is a story as hilarious as it is moving; both entertaining and relevant.



# MAGIC + MAYHEM



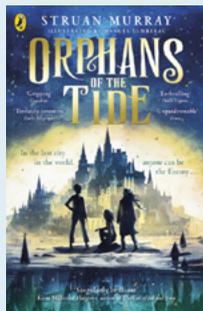
**THE HOUSE ON HOARDER HILL**  
 BY KELLY NGAÏ & MIKKI LISH  
 PB - £6.99 - CHICKEN HOUSE (CHILDREN'S 9+)

Dumped with their grumpy grandfather for the Christmas holidays, Hedy and Spencer set out to solve the mystery of their grandmother's decades-old disappearance. This is a superbly spooky detective story, packed with magic and humour and a fantastic cast of characters including mischievous ghosts, walking gargoyles, and a talking bear-skin rug called Doug.



**WONDERSCAPE BY JENNIFER BELL**  
 PB - £7.99 - WALKER BOOKS (CHILDREN'S 9+)

When unlikely friends Arthur, Ren, and Cecily investigate a gnome related explosion on their way to school, they find themselves propelled into the year 2473, on a boat commandeered by Isaac Newton. What follows is a high-tech, thrilling adventure in the Wonderscape, in which our heroes must try to find a way home in a game against the clock. An action packed feel-good read brimming with mystery, comedy and excitement.



**ORPHANS OF THE TIDE BY STRUAN MURRAY**  
 ILLUSTRATED BY MANUEL SUMBERAC  
 PB - £7.99 - PUFFIN (CHILDREN'S 10+)

At the borders of the last city on Earth, a beached whale is found on the roof of a half-flooded church, and inside the whale is a boy, miraculously alive, cutting his way out of its stomach. So begin the rumours that the boy is the Enemy, the fabled God who drowned the world, returning to wreak havoc. Only Ellie, a fearless young inventor, believes otherwise. Can she prove he is innocent before danger strikes?



**THE GOOD HAWK BY JOSEPH ELLIOTT**  
 PB - £7.99 - WALKER BOOKS (CHILDREN'S 11+)

Set in the mythical world of ancient Scotland, we follow Agatha, a fifteen-year-old Hawk responsible for guarding her clan's family home, and Jaime, a nervous angler who hates the sea. When their clan is captured, it's up to Agatha and Jaime to travel across their haunted land ravaged by living shadows to find them and bring them home. A dark and thrilling start to this Fantasy trilogy.

# REBELS + ROYALS

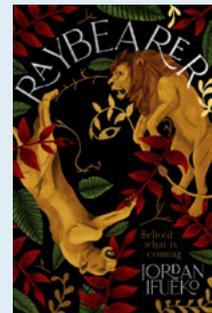
**CLAP WHEN YOU LAND BY ELIZABETH ACEVEDO**  
 PB - £7.99 - HOT KEY BOOKS (TEEN 13+)

In New York City, Yahaira is called into the principal's office and told her father has died in a plane crash. Across the ocean in the Dominican Republic, Camino receives the same news. The girls will soon discover that their fallen hero is the same man, and that their grief is no longer theirs alone. This is a beautiful story about loss, identity, and newfound family through free verse poetry.



**RAYBEARER BY JORDAN IFUEKO**  
 PB - £7.99 - HOT KEY BOOKS (TEEN 13+)

Tarisai was born with the power to see the history of a person's life simply by touching them. Raised in isolation since birth, all changes when at the age of sixteen, she is commissioned to infiltrate the royal family's inner circle and murder a prince. A pacy plot matched with a complex tapestry of political intrigue, set in a brilliantly realised fantasy world inspired by African history, culture and mythology.



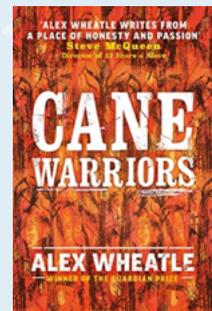
**THE MONTAGUE TWINS**  
 BY NATHAN PAGE & DREW SHANNON  
 PB - £13.99 - PENGUIN RANDOM HOUSE USA  
 (TEEN GRAPHIC NOVEL 12+)

This graphic novel follows an oddly gifted trio of teen investigators with paranormal family secrets aplenty, as they tackle a case of murderous witchcraft in 1950's America. I loved this clever and beautifully drawn mash-up of the genuinely spooky with more than a hint of social commentary on intolerance and identity. Think 'Scooby-Doo' crossed with 'Rebel Without A Cause', which makes for a wise-cracking detective romp.



**CANE WARRIORS BY ALEX WHEATLE**  
 HB - £10.99 - ANDERSEN PRESS (TEEN 13+)

Moa is a fourteen-year-old boy enslaved on Jamaica's notorious Frontier sugar plantation. Life is cruel in the fields, but there are winds of rebellion blowing through the island and Moa is to play a key role in the uprising that is on the horizon. This brilliant, timely novel is based on Tacky's War, a brutal slave rebellion in Jamaica in 1760, and brings to life an important but long-forgotten event in Caribbean history.



This year has been difficult for the book industry, but especially so for the small indispensable indie publishers that need our support more than ever. Here is a selection of some of our favourite small presses in 2020.

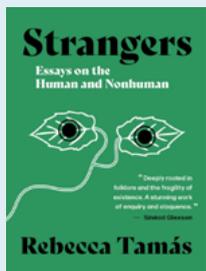
**Influx Press have been working tirelessly since 2012 to bring us exciting and invigorating modern fiction which seeks to interrogate the publishing scene.**



**BETWEEN BEIRUT AND THE MOON BY NAJI BAKHTI**  
PB - £9.99 - INFLUX PRESS (FICTION)

This novel follows Adam, a boy living in Beirut who dreams of becoming an astronaut in a world of cynics - "there is no such thing as an Arab on the moon" - as he navigates a life replete with bomb strikes and loss. Infused with the kind of humour reserved only for impossible circumstances, this is a story of youth and family caught in the jaws of conflict, written with honesty and with great care.

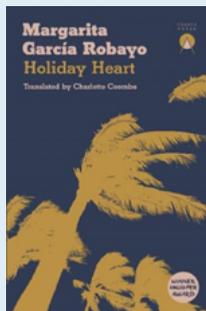
**Makina Books have a revitalising vision which seeks out and celebrates all forms of storytelling from poets, photographers, novelists, and essayists alike.**



**STRANGERS BY REBECCA TAMÁS**  
PB - 12.99 - MAKINA BOOKS (ESSAYS)

Tamás brings her poet's precision to a collection brimming with intelligence. By foregrounding the responsibility we bear towards human and non-human alike, Tamás explores grief, pain, hospitality, environmentalism, and much more. She recalibrates our assumptions and re-situates our role in this bustling world. These essays are perception altering, imagination nurturing, and dare I say it, hope inspiring. 'Strangers' suggests that visions for a different world are still within reach.

**Edinburgh based Charco Press publish with a specific focus on bringing the very best Latin American literature to English speaking readers.**



**HOLIDAY HEART BY MARGARITA GARCIA ROBAYO**  
PB - £9.99 - CHARCO PRESS (FICTION)

After Pablo—a Colombian immigrant and disgruntled academic—suffers a heart defect brought on by substance abuse, his wife Lucia leaves for Miami with their two children. As Lucia's previous life dissolves in the Miami landscape, and her children become unrecognisable, Robayo explores the impact of the environments we are born into, the ones we create, and the instability of 'home'. Fluctuating between lyrical and claustrophobic, this novel enmeshes the reader within the unravelling of love.

**AMY'S 2020 FAVE: HAMNET BY MAGGIE O'FARRELL**  
HB - £20 - HEADLINE (FICTION)

Maggie O'Farrell has brilliantly imagined the life and death of William Shakespeare's young son Hamnet, and the impact of his passing on a well-known career and a lesser known marriage. This luminous tale alternates between 1596, just before Hamnet's death, and 1599 when Shakespeare wrote his longest tragedy, 'Hamlet'. I adored O'Farrell's exploration of the couple's early married life and a glimpse into the world of Agnes Shakespeare, a fierce and fascinating woman.



**LUCINDA'S 2020 FAVE: BREASTS AND EGGS**  
BY MIEKO KAWAKAMI  
PB - £14.99 - PICADOR (FICTION)

A quirky, frank, and often funny exploration of how society places unfair judgements and demands on women. Natsume is a struggling writer, living alone in Tokyo and unsure where her life is going. When older sister Makiko and niece Midoriko come to stay, things get complicated. Single mum Makiko believes breast augmentation is the only way to prolong her earning potential as a bar hostess – to the horror of her adolescent daughter. Expect searing character insights, ethical dilemmas and the odd curio about medical interventions.



**ED'S 2020 FAVE: FIGURES IN A LANDSCAPE**  
BY BARRY ENGLAND  
PB - £8.99 - VINTAGE (FICTION)

This doom-laden novel follows two escaped prisoners of war as they attempt to evade the guards that are remorselessly hunting them. Barry England deftly fleshes out the characters of our heroes as they make their crazed dash across enemy territory over perilous terrain. This reissue is as close to perfect as any book I have read for ages, a lost classic that I couldn't put down and that deserves to be discovered by everyone.



**HENRY'S 2020 FAVE: THE LEFT-HANDED BOOKSELLERS**  
OF LONDON BY GARTH NIX  
HB - £18.99 - GOLLANCZ (FICTION)

Moving to London to study art (and to continue the search for the father she has never met), Susan Arkshaw soon runs into the booksellers: guardians charged with keeping the magic of the Old world in check. What ensues is a tremendous romp through 1980's London, intertwining a holy-grail-esque quest with British folklore and the wonderfully eccentric world of bookselling. Nix has created a break-neck adventure that doesn't stop until the final page.

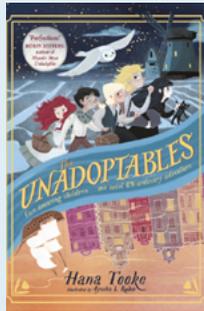


# RAVES + FAVES



## KATE'S 2020 FAVE: INVISIBLE MAN BY RALPH ELLISON PB - £9.99 - PENGUIN (FICTION)

'The Invisible Man' follows a nameless protagonist through a life driven by the pursuit of black excellence. From high hopes pupil in a prestigious institution to leader of a burgeoning social movement in Harlem, Ellison details the pernicious impact of bigotry on both victim and perpetrator. The juxtaposition of lyrical prose and stark dialogue amounts to a hypnotic page turner that you will struggle to put down.



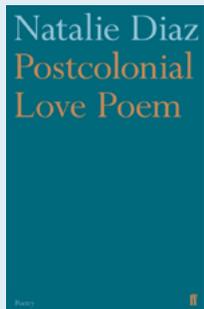
## HANNAH'S 2020 FAVE: THE UNADOPTABLES BY HANA TOOKE, ILLUSTRATED BY AYESHA L.RUBIO HB - £12.99 - PUFFIN (CHILDREN'S 8+)

The Unadoptables is the unbiological family of misfits that you want to be part of. And yes they are a family, even if they aren't bonded by blood. This romp of a middle grade novel has heart, has brains, has ingenuity and daring and love. Each and every character is wonderful and unique and made me want to be their best friend. Set in 1800's Amsterdam, filled with genius children on a mission to find the right family, this is the story that you will never want to leave!



## GEMMA'S 2020 FAVE: WHY I'M NO LONGER TALKING TO WHITE PEOPLE ABOUT RACE BY RENI EDDO-LODGE PB - £8.99 - BLOOMSBURY (EQUALITY)

Before 2020 I thought I wasn't racist, and that was all there was to it. However, the George Floyd case and subsequent Black Lives Matter protests encouraged me to learn a little more, and I'm so glad I did. Eddo-Lodge deftly exposes Britain's eradicated Black history, rampant white washing in fourth-wave feminism, the link between race and class, and the distinction between being 'not racist' and 'anti-racist'. Believe me, this book is for you.



## JESS' 2020 FAVE: POSTCOLONIAL LOVE POEM BY NATALIE DIAZ PB - £10.99 - FABER (POETRY)

It's easy to think of 'postcolonial' as what's left after colonialism, but it could also mean – and how powerful this would be – what lies beyond: an alternative. Honouring her Mojave heritage, its understanding of humans as part of land and water, mixing its language with the Spanish of her Mexican family, Diaz has created a dance of a book like nothing I've ever read: tender, fierce and sprung from an awe-inspiring intelligence.

# RAVES + FAVES

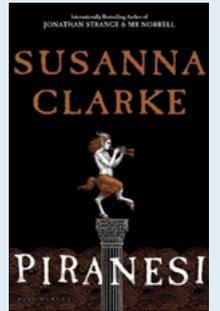
## JULIETTE'S 2020 FAVE: EVERYTHING SAD IS UNTRUE BY DANIEL NAYERI HB - £12.99 - LEVINE QUERIDO (TEEN/MEMOIR)

I was utterly charmed by this wise, warm and witty memoir. Having fled Iran, Daniel and his family attempt to start a new life in Oklahoma. Told by his 13-year-old self, Daniel draws on shards of memories to paint this tale of wealthy Iranians turned penniless refugees – via saffron fields, Dubai princes, stony-faced officials and secret police. However, despite his movie-worthy life, to his classmates, Daniel is the poor, funny smelling boy who eats weird food. A moving story for all ages.



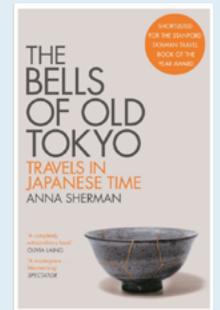
## EMMA'S 2020 FAVE: PIRANESI BY SUSANNA CLARKE HB - £14.99 - BLOOMSBURY (FICTION)

Piranesi's house is a labyrinth and he's never made it to the end. He keeps a careful record of its countless halls, thousands of statues, and the ocean tides thundering up the staircases. Twice a week he sees his friend, the Other, but mostly he is alone, apart from the Dead. Then messages begin to appear, and there is someone new in the House. Where did they come from and how did they get in? There are many secrets to uncover in this extraordinary puzzle of a book. The absolute best kind of storytelling.



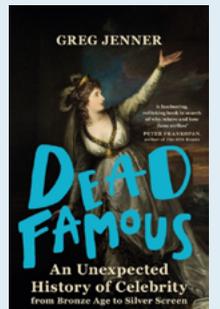
## LAURA'S 2020 FAVE: THE BELLS OF OLD TOKYO BY ANNA SHERMAN PB - £9.99 - PICADOR (TRAVEL/MEMOIR)

Sherman's search for connection between past and present amid Tokyo's constellation of districts, her hunt for the time-telling bells which once rang out routinely, is in no way a guidebook, but rather a search for the city. It recounts personal stories inseparable from momentous events, highlights spaces now empty or changed, and delights in fine coffee. A gentle meditation on our own permanence, and that of the environments we build around us.



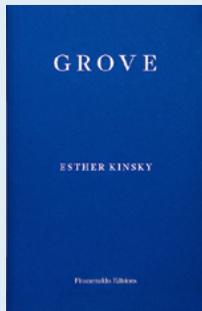
## LOTTIE'S 2020 FAVE: DEAD FAMOUS BY GREG JENNER HB - £18.99 - WEIDENFELD & NICOLSON (HISTORY)

From the self-professed 'chief nerd' behind Horrible Histories, 'Dead Famous' – which is very much for grown-ups – is both fascinating and witty. Jenner explores the 300-year history of 'fame' through the lives of people who have achieved stardom. Smattered with chortle-inducing anecdotes about celebs, from Britney Spears to Byron (and a few who've fallen into obscurity), this book will have you giggling, and then turning to the nearest person and saying "Did you know..?"





## RAVES + FAVES



### CALLUM'S 2020 FAVE: GROVE BY ESTHER KINSKY PB - £12.99 - FITZCARRALDO EDITIONS (FICTION)

Esther Kinsky's unnamed narrator finds herself in Olevano, a small village south-east of Rome, a destination she and her partner had planned to visit before his untimely death. Navigating terrain that is both geographically and emotionally unrecognisable, our protagonist re-contextualises her grief through mosaics of observation, both past and present. This beautiful novel transforms memory and landscape into weather, as Kinsky's narrator passes through Rome in a manner reminiscent of W.G. Sebald.



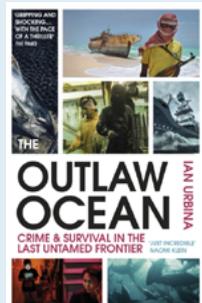
### TOM M'S 2020 FAVE: MAYFLIES BY ANDREW O'HAGAN HB - £14.99 - FABER (FICTION)

Mayflies opens in 1986 as friends Tully and James prepare for a trip to a music festival in Manchester. Proudly working-class, the pair share a love of films, books and socialism – and a hatred of Thatcher. Cut to thirty years later and things have changed – Tully calls James and he's got bad news. A beautiful, tender novel of friendship and the passing of time that is full of life and etched in nostalgia.



### NICOLE'S 2020 FAVE: WRITERS & LOVERS BY LILY KING HB - £14.99 - PICADOR (FICTION)

Casey is thirty-one, reeling from the recent death of her mother and doggedly finishing her first novel while trying to make ends meet waitressing in an upmarket Massachusetts restaurant. Into this mix enter two charming men – renowned local author and sensible dad Oscar, and boyish starving artist Silas. At a crossroads between two possible futures, her struggle to come to terms with her grief and balance the demands of art and life is explored in King's luminous, intelligent prose.



### TESS' 2020 FAVE: OUTLAW OCEAN BY IAN URBINA PB - £9.99 - VINTAGE (TRUE CRIME)

From thrilling pursuits of pirate ships on the high seas to terrifying missions into international waters to prevent illegal whaling and to free indentured workers, Urbina upends everything you knew about the lives of humans and creatures out on the briny deep. This book is an exhilarating and essential array of tales investigating how people manipulate the law to enslave and kill, but also to save and dignify the extraordinary life on our planet.

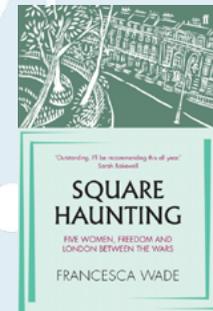
## RAVES + FAVES



### SAM'S 2020 FAVE: SQUARE HAUNTING BY FRANCESCA WADE

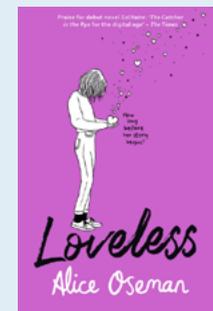
HB - £20 - FABER (BIOGRAPHY/HISTORY)

This group biography follows five female academics, all residents of Bloomsbury's Mecklenburgh Square at various points of the interwar period and the Blitz. Enlightening and entertaining, 'Square Haunting' introduced me to writers I'd never heard of, and others I thought I knew well. A perfect combination of characterful literary biography and British social history, this is essential reading for anybody interested in women's fight for intellectual freedom and a room of one's own.



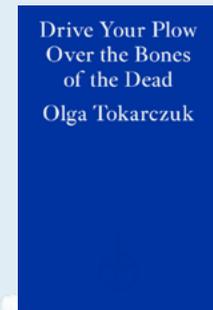
### RHIAN'S 2020 FAVE: LOVELESS BY ALICE OSEMAN PB - £8.99 - HARPERCOLLINS (TEEN 14+)

Loveless made me want to give up bookselling so I could invent a time machine to go back and give this book to my teenage self. Georgia's trials and tribulations with university, friendship and sexuality made me giggle and sob like a child. I read it all in one evening. Beautiful, touching, heart-breaking, hilarious, and most of all, long overdue. Alice Oseman is a gift to YA readers everywhere.



### TOM H'S 2020 FAVE: DRIVE YOUR PLOW OVER THE BONES OF THE DEAD BY OLGA TOKARCZUK PB - £8.99 - FITZCARRALDO EDITIONS (FICTION)

Set in a snowy hamlet on the fringes of a Polish community, Janina Duszejko is awoken in the middle of the night to the news that her neighbour's been found dead. This dark and icy murder mystery develops into something rather unexpected though, and our hero completely steals the limelight with her charm and eccentricities – I was surprised at how often it had me giggling! It's poignant, witty, brilliantly written and in spite of its title is full of life.



### NIC'S 2020 FAVE: TO COOK A BEAR BY MIKAEL NIEMI HB - £18.99 - MACLEHOSE PRESS (FICTION)

In 1850's Sweden, beyond the Arctic circle, a community oscillates between fear of God and love of liquor. The influence of the village's revivalist pastor begins to diminish as he turns amateur investigator after a milkmaid is apparently killed by a bear. With his Sherlockesque eye for detail, and amidst increasingly twitchy parishioners, Laestadius searches for the truth aided by his adopted Sami boy, the awkward and impressionable Jussi. A richly atmospheric novel brimming with tension.





# MERRY CHRISTMAS



WE HOPE THAT YOU HAVE ENJOYED OUR 2020 CHRISTMAS CATALOGUE. DON'T FORGET THERE IS **10% OFF ALL OF THESE TITLES** FROM NOW UNTIL CHRISTMAS DAY!

**THIS CATALOGUE WAS CREATED BY AMY COLES AND TESSIMO THOMPSON WITH REVIEWS WRITTEN BY THE ENTIRE MR B'S TEAM. THANKS ONCE AGAIN TO FLAVIA SORRENTINO FOR CREATING OUR BEAUTIFUL COVER AND CENTRE-PAGE SPREAD.**

We are proud to support our charity of 2020, The Friends of St Michael's Girls Primary School Busembatia Uganda. This incredible organisation helps more than 600 girls in a rural area receive an education that would otherwise be unreachable. If you'd like to support them or find out more please visit - [www.fsmu.co.uk](http://www.fsmu.co.uk)



Finally, a Thank You. To you all – your loyal custom is appreciated more this year than ever before and we hope that you stay safe and in good health throughout the remainder of 2020 and that 2021 brings you all more reasons to smile, more certainty and more incredible books!

**Mr B's Emporium of Reading Delights**

**13 -15 John Street, Bath, BA1 2JL**

**[www.mrbsemporium.com](http://www.mrbsemporium.com)**

**01225 331155 | [books@mrbsemporium.com](mailto:books@mrbsemporium.com)**