

HEADLINE

Autumn 2021

US Rights List



RIGHTS TEAM

Rebecca Folland

**Rights Director - Hodder & Stoughton,
Headline, John Murray Press & Quercus
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RIVER SING ME HOME

ELEANOR SHEARER



Headline Review

Publication: February 2023

Editor: Sherise Hobbs

Length: 352

Rare. Moving. Powerful. This beautiful, page-turning and redemptive story of one woman's gripping journey across the Caribbean to find her stolen children marks the arrival of a remarkable new talent.

Her search begins with an ending...

The master of the Providence plantation in Barbados gathers his slaves and announces the King has decreed an end to slavery. As of the following day, the Emancipation Act of 1834 will come into effect. The cries of joy fall silent when he announces that they are no longer his slaves; they are now his apprentices. No one can leave. They must work for him for another six years. Freedom is just another name for the life they have always lived. So Rachel runs.

Away from Providence, she begins a desperate search to find her children – the five who survived birth and were sold. Do any of them still live? Rachel has to know. The gruelling, dangerous journey takes her from Barbados then, by river, deep into the forest of British Guiana and finally across the sea to Trinidad. She is driven on by the certainty that a mother cannot be truly free without knowing what has become of her children, even if the answer is more than she can bear. These are the stories of Mary Grace, Micah, Thomas Augustus, Cherry Jane and Mercy. But above all this is the story of Rachel and the extraordinary lengths to which a mother will go to find her children... and her freedom.

About the Author:

Eleanor Shearer is a mixed-race writer living in London. Her family are part of the Windrush generation and it was at an exhibition about the Windrush that Eleanor spotted a tiny footnote which stopped her in her tracks and became the beating heart of this extraordinary story. For her Masters degree in Politics at the University of Oxford, Eleanor studied the legacy of slavery and the case for reparations, and her fieldwork in St. Lucia and Barbados helped inspire her first novel. Eleanor Shearer is Jeanette Winterson's goddaughter. *River Sing Me Home* is her debut novel.

THE BOOK OF EVE

MEG CLOTHIER



Wildfire

Publication: March 2023

Editor: Serena Arthur

Length: 352

A gripping, lyrical novel about a mysterious manuscript that holds the power to bring women together when facing the oppressive power of men, inspired by mysterious Voynich manuscript. A wondrous novel reminiscent of *The Handmaid's Tale* and *The Name of the Rose*.

'I look down and see what Agatha sees. My ink-stained hands clutching a book while a woman lies dead beside me . . . then I do something I have not done in years. I pick up my skirts-and run.'

Beatrice is the librarian of Paradiso, the convent that has long been her home. Though she mostly prefers the company of manuscripts to people, she yearns for knowledge and so revels in the glimpse of the outside world that the books of the library offer - even if that world is one in which men hold ultimate power over the fate of women.

Then, late one night, the convent receives unexpected visitors, three travelling women - badly injured and desperate for help. The women succumb to their wounds, but not before one of them, speaking her last words in an alien tongue, presses an object into Beatrice's hands . . . an object whose shape she knows better than all else.

But this is a book unlike any other Beatrice has seen. The writing on the pages seems to move and shift before her very eyes - as though the words are alive, forming in the moment, as if unique and tailored to a particular reader. Could this strange manuscript hold the wisdom that could change everything for Beatrice, and for them all?

About the Author:

Meg Clothier studied Classics at Cambridge, sailed from England to Alaska and worked as a journalist in London and Moscow. She has published two historical novels, *The Girl King* (about Tamar, the Elizabeth I of the Caucasus) and *The Empress* (about a French princess caught up in the Fourth Crusade), and is currently writing a miscellany about the Great British seaside for Profile Books with her brother, Chris. She lives on the sunny side of the Quantock Hills with her husband, two children and an improbable amount of vegetables.

PSALMS FOR THE END OF THE WORLD

COLE HADDON

PSALMS FOR THE END OF THE WORLD

Cole Haddon



FINAL COVER TO BE REVEALED

'It takes everything in Jones not to go back to Gracie, to tell her the truth about the trick that's been played on her, what she really is and what he really is, and hope she can forgive him, because this is all his fault.'

It's 1962 and physics student Grace Pulansky believes she has met the man of her dreams, Robert Jones, while serving up slices of pecan pie at the local diner.

But then the FBI shows up, with their fedoras and off-the-rack business suits, and accuses him of being a bomb-planting mass-murderer. Gracie finds herself on the run with Jones across America's Southwest, in pursuit of the man responsible for the terrorist attacks - a man inexplicably able to anticipate Jones's every move.

Headline

**Publication: September
2022**

Editor: Toby Jones

Length: 480

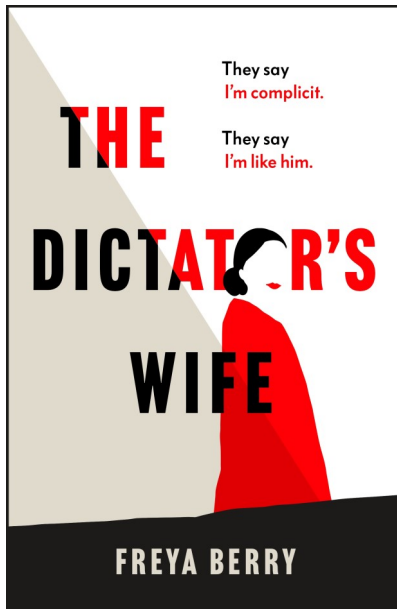
The discoveries awaiting them will undermine everything Gracie knows about the universe and reveal how dozens of lives - whether in ancient China or twenty-first-century Hollywood, pre-revolutionary France or a turbulent interplanetary future - are interconnected across space and time by love, grief, and quantum entanglement. Propulsive but profound, this inventive and exquisitely crafted novel is the perfect immersive read for fans of **David Mitchell, Emily St. John Mandel, Neil Gaiman and Margaret Atwood.**

About the Author:

Cole Haddon is an Australian-American film, television, and graphic novel writer. His first screenplay was commissioned by Warner Bros., and he has gone on to receive 25 more commissions from studios, networks, and production entities in the United States, United Kingdom, Australia, and across Europe. DRACULA, his first TV commission, was produced by NBC and Sky Living starring Jonathan Rhys Meyers.

THE DICTATOR'S WIFE

FREYA BERRY



Headline Review

Publication: February 2022

Editor: Sherise Hobbs

Length: 416

Rights Sold:

Portugal (Editorial Presença)

Russia (StorySide AB)

'I am not my husband. I am innocent. Do you believe me?'

'A remarkable new talent' ANTHONY HOROWITZ

The beautiful, enigmatic wife of a feared dictator stands trial for her late husband's crimes against the people. The world will finally know the truth. But whose?

'A gripping and moving debut from a talent to watch' HARLAN COBEN

'A darkly atmospheric, rich, compulsive and page-turning read' KATE HAMER

'One of the most original debuts I have read' DAISY GOODWIN

WOMAN

I learned early in life how to survive. A skill that became vital in my position.

WIFE

I was given no power, yet I was expected to hold my own with the most powerful man in the country.

MOTHER OF THE NATION

My people were my children. I stood between him and them.

I am not the person they say I am.

I am not my husband.

I am innocent.

Do you believe me?

Visceral and thought provoking, haunting and heartbreaking, *The Dictator's Wife* will hold you in its grip until its powerful conclusion and keep you turning the pages long into the night...

About the Author:

Freya Berry is twenty-nine, studied English Literature at Trinity College, Cambridge, and worked for several years as a financial and political journalist at Reuters and then the *Daily Mail*. Freya splits her time between London and the Welsh coast. *The Dictator's Wife* is her debut novel, inspired by the close observation of the wives of some of the world's most powerful leaders.

12 HOURS TO SAY I LOVE YOU

OLIVIA POULET AND LAURENCE DOBIESZ



Headline Review

Publication: February 2022

Editor: Sherise Hobbs

Length: 496

Rights Sold:

Germany (S. Fischer Verlag)

Portugal (Editorial Presença)

Romania (Nemira Publishing House)

TWO PEOPLE. ONE LOVE STORY. TWELVE HOURS TO TELL IT...

'Not just a beautifully tender love story but also a wonderful journey of exaltation, desperation and heartbreak - life-affirming' TOM ALLEN

Gripping, moving and beautifully observed, this is a love story told from both sides, with warmth, tenderness and heart. Pippa Gallagher is rushed in to hospital following a traffic accident.

As Pippa lies unconscious, she is aware of fragments. The day she met Steve Gallagher, her best friend and the man who would become the love of her life. The heartbreak she felt tonight as she got into her car, her eyes blurry from tears.

Meanwhile Steve sits at her bedside, his eyes fixed on her pale, still face. He has no idea where his wife was going when she crashed. No clue as to why she became distracted behind the wheel. All he knows is that she is his world. And that he wasn't there when she needed him most.

For the next twelve hours, Steve tells Pippa all the reasons he loves her.

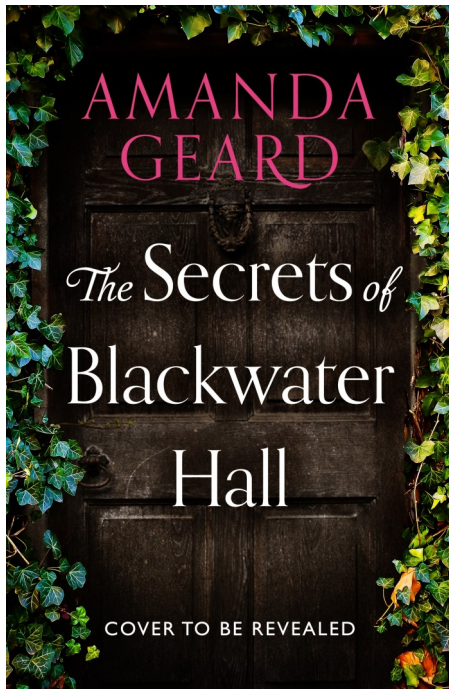
About the Author:

Olivia Poulet and Laurence Dobiesz are writers and actors based in London. Married for five years, they have written together for radio and screen. #blessed, a comedy drama love story, was written by them for radio, and broadcast on BBC Radio 4.

THE SECRETS OF BLACKWATER HALL

AMANDA GEARD

GENERATIONS COME AND GO, BUT SECRETS REMAIN . . .



My Dearest T,

Whatever you hear, do not believe it for a moment...

1940: In south-west Ireland, the young and beautiful Lady Charlotte Rathmore is pronounced dead after she mysteriously disappears by the lake of Blackwater Hall. In London, on the brink of the Blitz, Nancy Rathmore is grieving Charlotte's death when a letter arrives containing a secret that she is sworn to keep - one that will change her life for ever.

2019: Decades later, Ellie Fitzgerald is forced to leave Dublin disgraced and heartbroken. Abandoning journalism, she returns to rural Kerry to weather out the storm. But, when she discovers a faded letter, tucked inside the pages of an old book, she finds herself drawn in by a long-buried secret. And as Ellie begins to unravel the mystery, it becomes clear that the letter might hold the key to more than just Charlotte's disappearance.

Moving between 1940, 1958 and 2019, this is an unforgettable and spellbinding story of secrets, war, love and sacrifice. Perfect for fans of Kate Morton, Santa Montefiore and Louise Douglas.

About the Author:

Born in Australia, Amanda Geard has lived all over the world, from a houseboat in London to a Norwegian Island, before settling in County Kerry in Ireland. Her writing has appeared in *The Irish Times*, *The Journal*, *writing.ie*, *Nordic Reach* and *Vertical Magazine*. Her short story *Not Yet Recycled* won the New Irish Writing Award in October 2019.

Headline Review

Publication: May 2022

Editor: Sherise Hobbs

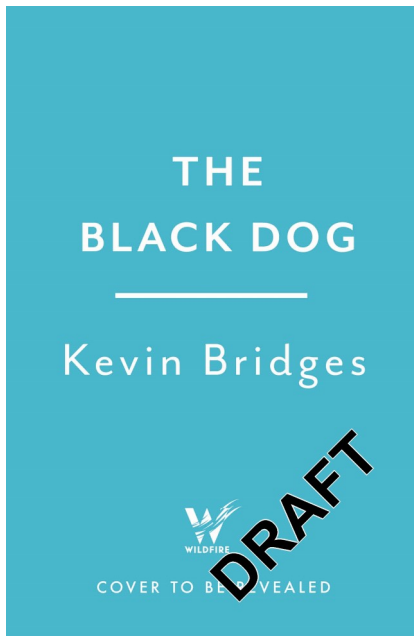
Length: 432

Rights Sold In:

Czech Republic (ALPRESS společnost s ručením omezeným)

THE BLACK DOG

KEVIN BRIDGES



Wildfire

Publication: September 2022

Editor: Alex Clarke

Length: 352

Declan dreams of becoming a writer. A dream that helps him escape the realities of his life - going through the motions at a college course and working part-time stacking supermarket shelves, whilst his friends settle into relationships and proper jobs. He has his Labrador for companionship though and his best friend turned mentor, a pseudo-intellectual who works as green keeper at the local municipal golf course. Following a drunken row with local gangsters, Declan's worries threaten to spiral out of control.

James Cavani - Declan's idol and his hometown's claim to fame - is an acclaimed writer, director, and actor. But despite his success his background hasn't relinquished its hold of him, and he must return to a world he'd thought he'd left behind. Maybe it's all part of fate's plan to set both men on a different course . . .

Praise for Kevin Bridges:

'Britain's best stand up' The Sun

'Truthful, natural and hilarious' The Sunday Herald

'Gravelly deadpan manner that makes him seem wise beyond his years' The Guardian

About the Author:

Having started performing stand up in 2004 shortly after his 17th birthday, Kevin Bridges has ascended the ranks and is regarded as one of the UK's top comedians. He has made numerous Television appearances on shows including Live at the Apollo, The Jonathon Ross Show, Graham Norton Show and fronted his own BBC One series Kevin Bridges - what's the story. He has won multiple awards and performed four critically acclaimed, box office record-breaking tours. His most recent tour included a staggering 19 night run in his hometown of Glasgow's 12,000 capacity Hydro arena. He has released four chart-topping DVD's and his 2014 autobiography was a Sunday Times bestseller. In 2022 Kevin will return to the stage with his latest stand-up show coinciding with the release of his debut novel.

THE LAST MESSAGE

CATHERINE HOPE



Headline Eternal

Publication: May 2022

Editor: Kate Byrne

Length: 336

A message meant for another. A love meant only for her.

If you love **Holly Miller's *The Sight of You***, **Rebecca Serle's *In Five Years*** and **Nicholas Sparks**, you won't want to miss **the breathtaking love story of the year** that will grip your heart in every way.

This year I am sending my last message to you. I don't know if I'll ever be able to forgive myself, and I will never forget you, but I have to find a way let you go.

When **Lizzie** is woken in the night by a text message clearly not meant for her, she is intrigued and haunted by the words she sees. After losing her beloved twin brother, she knows something of grief and the struggle rebuild a life.

Nick, a widower for three years, is haunted by the disappearance and presumed death of his wife.

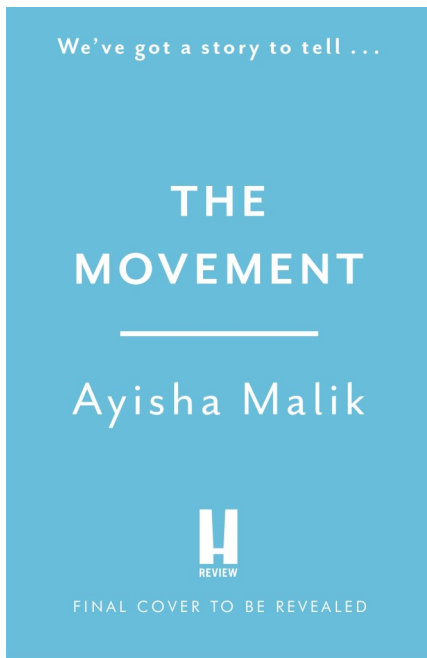
When these two lonely hearts are drawn together, an unexpectedly deep and powerful emotional connection is formed. Perhaps finally this is the chance for both of them to live again - if they can overcome scars of the past which have a longer reach than either could have imagined.

About the Author:

Catherine Hope's love of reading began at a young age. Her parents always had a book close by, although they read vastly different genres, which rubbed off on her as she devoured everything from romance to espionage. Catherine is excited for her debut release coming in early 2022 - ***The Last Message***, with Headline Eternal. When Catherine's not writing or thinking up fresh stories, she spends time with her family, friends, and menagerie of pets. But she's always ready to jet off to explore the world, where many of her experiences find their way into her books. Catherine lives in a small town in Ontario, Canada.

THE MOVEMENT

AYISHA MALIK



Headline Review

Publication: July 2022

Editor: Eleanor Dryden

Length: 400

It's time to take your power back.

But first you're going to have to pick a side . . .

Every time Sara Javed switches on her laptop, checks her phone or goes outside, people are shouting. Everyone seems to be angry about something and she just wishes that they would all shut up. Until she realises that perhaps she should take her own advice . . .

Her voluntary silence is first met with polite, if somewhat disconcerted, alarm. But as her silence inspires others, what Sara doesn't anticipate is inadvertently becoming the figurehead for what becomes a global phenomenon: 'The Silent Movement'. As outrage grows over the protest, and global structures start to shift, the lives of strangers and those closest to Sara start to unravel. Sara and two women inspired by her actions, Grace and Zainab, must reconsider what it means to them to have a voice - or face grave repercussions.

About the Author:

Ayisha Malik's novels *Sofia Khan is Not Obligated*, *The Other Half of Happiness*, and *This Green and Pleasant Land* were met with great critical acclaim, and have been optioned for television. Ayisha was a WHSmith Fresh Talent Pick and *Sofia Khan* was the CityReads London Festival book, 2019. She is winner of The 2020 Diversity Book Awards and has been shortlisted for The Asian Woman of Achievement Award, Marie Claire's Future Shapers' Awards and the Hospital Club h100 Awards.

Her children's books include a re-telling of Jane Austen's *Mansfield Park* and *The Seven Sisters*. *Sofia Khan is Not Obligated* and *This Green and Pleasant* are optioned for television. She lives in South London.

THE VISA

LIZZIE O'HAGAN



Headline Review

Publication: March 2022

Editor: Jess Whitlum-Cooper

Length: 352

In this sweeping, romantic comedy, affairs are to be expected, and falling in love is betrayal... This topsy-turvy romcom is perfect for fans of Josie Silver, Beth O'Leary and Mhairi McFarlane.

For a commitment-phobe who's never taken a girl on a third date, Jack finds getting married to his old friend Maya pretty easy. He's a New Zealander in need of a visa to stay in the country, and she doesn't believe in marriage anyway. Simple.

Maya and Jack live in wedded, sex-less bliss, until one day Jack starts to get serious with someone else. . .

Suddenly Maya finds herself falling into a role she never thought she'd be: a wife - and a scorned one at that - who is falling uncontrollably, undeniably, and entirely inconveniently, in love with her own husband.

About the Author:

Lizzie O'Hagan studied Law before going into publishing, where she now works as a book editor at an independent press. She writes and paints in her spare time and can usually be found behind a laptop in one of Bermondsey Street's many coffee shops near her house share in London Bridge.

FLAMINGO

RACHEL ELLIOTT



Tinder Press

Publication: February 2022

Editor: Imogen Taylor

Length: 400

Rights Sold:

Germany (Mare Verlag)

A novel of love, homelessness, and learning to be fearless

In the garden, there were three flamingos. Not real flamingos, but real emblems, real gateways to a time when life was impossibly good. They were mascots, symbols of hope. Something for a boy to confide in.

First, there were the flamingos. And then there were two families. Sherry and Leslie and their daughters, Rae and Pauline - and Eve and her son Daniel.

Sherry loves her husband, Leslie. She also loves Eve. It couldn't have been a happier summer. But then Eve left and everything went grey. Now Daniel is all grown-up and broken. And when he turns up at Sherry's door, it's almost as if they've all come home again. But there's still one missing. Where is Eve? And what, exactly, is her story?

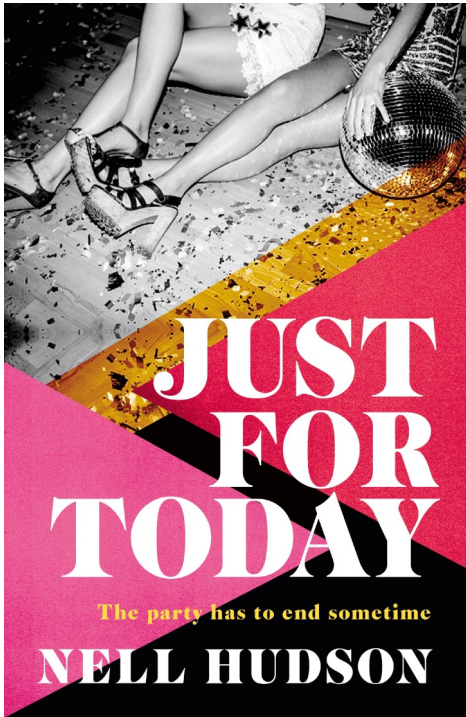
FLAMINGO is a novel about the power of love, welcome and acceptance. It's a celebration of kindness, of tenderness. Set in 2018 and the 80s, it's a song for the broken-hearted and the big-hearted, and is, ultimately, a novel grown from gratitude, and a book full of wild hope.

About the Author:

Rachel Elliott is the author of WHISPERS THROUGH A MEGAPHONE (Pushkin Press), long-listed for the Bailey's Women's Prize in 2016 and DO NOT FEED THE BEAR (2019, Tinder Press). She is also a psychotherapist.

JUST FOR TODAY

NELL HUDSON



Tinder Press

Publication: June 2022

Editor: Amy Perkins

Length: 400

Rights Sold:

Russia (Exem Licence)

The party has to end sometime.

It all starts on New Year's Eve. A night that has to be a success, whatever the cost. For Joni and her friends, it'll be a party that promises all the high stakes and glamour of any other, but by sunrise they'll be dealing with something darker than the usual post-party comedown.

Not that they let this stand in their way. For this is their year to revel in all that the playground of London has to offer: sneaking into places they shouldn't, breaking every rule, falling in love with the wrong people. All the while avoiding one undeniable truth: it's not if the party ends, it's how.

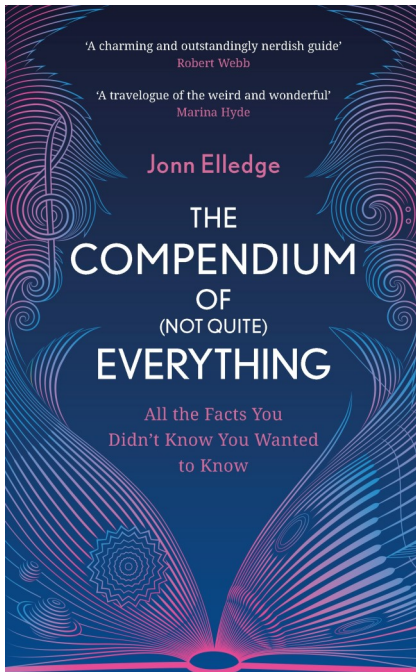
JUST FOR TODAY is a bittersweet evocation of the end of innocence, and an exhilarating celebration of having nothing to lose - until suddenly, you do.

About the Author:

Nell Hudson grew up on a farm in Worcestershire. She graduated from the Oxford School of Drama in 2012 and has been working as a professional actor ever since. Just For Today is her first novel.

THE COMPENDIUM OF (NOT QUITE) EVERYTHING

JONN ELLEDGE



Wildfire

Publication: September 2021

Editor: Alex Clarke

Length: 304

Rights Sold:

China (Ginkgo (Beijing) Book Co.)

Germany (Goldmann Verlag)

Poland (Insignis Media)

Bizarre, brilliant and filled with things you didn't know you didn't know - The Compendium of (Not Quite) Everything evokes a sense of wonder at the scale of this planet, and the universe in which it sits.

The Compendium of (Not Quite) Everything is a treasure trove of random knowledge. Covering everything from the furthest known galaxies to the murky origins of oyster ice cream, inside you will find a discussion of how one might determine the most average-sized country in the world; details of humanity's most ridiculous wars; and, at last, the answer to who would win in a fight between Harry Potter and Spider-Man.

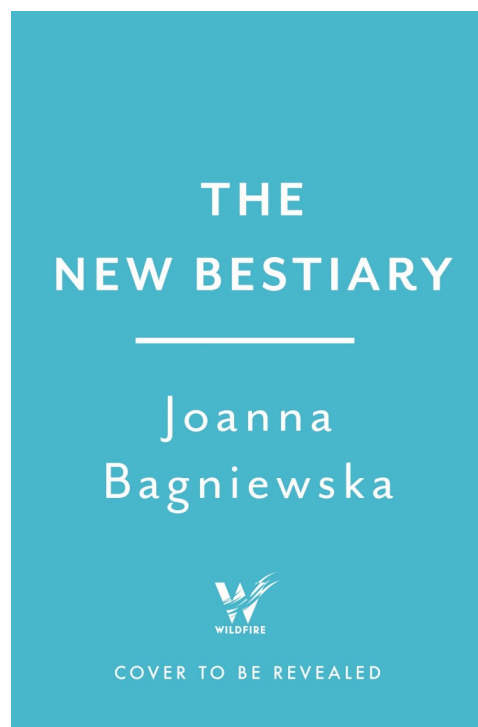
Bizarre, brilliant and filled with the unexpected, The Compendium covers the breadth and depth of human experience, weaving its way through words and numbers, science and the arts, the spiritual and the secular. It's a feast of facts for a hungry mind.

About the Author:

Jonn Elledge is a regular contributor to the Big Issue and the New Statesman, a less regular contributor to other titles such as the Guardian and Wired, and an almost constant contributor to the weekly Newsletter of (Not Quite) Everything. He was previously assistant editor of the New Statesman, where he was responsible for launching and editing the urbanism site CityMetric, hosting the Skylines podcast and writing a lot of angry columns about the housing crisis. He lives in the East End of London, where he has probably spent more time thinking about tube station naming conventions than is strictly speaking healthy.

THE NEW BESTIARY

JOANNA BAGNIEWSKA



Headline

Publication: September 2022

Editor: Alex Clarke

Length: 256

A carefully curated collection of some of the world's most weird and wonderful animals, in a beautifully illustrated modern version of a medieval bestiary.

The Modern Bestiary is a compendium of curious creatures. From the familiar to the improbable, the gross to the endearing, it includes both animals that have made headlines (pangolins, bats, giant hornets), and those you've probably never heard of, such as skin-eating caecilians, sea bunnies, or zombie worms - also known as bone-eating snot flowers.

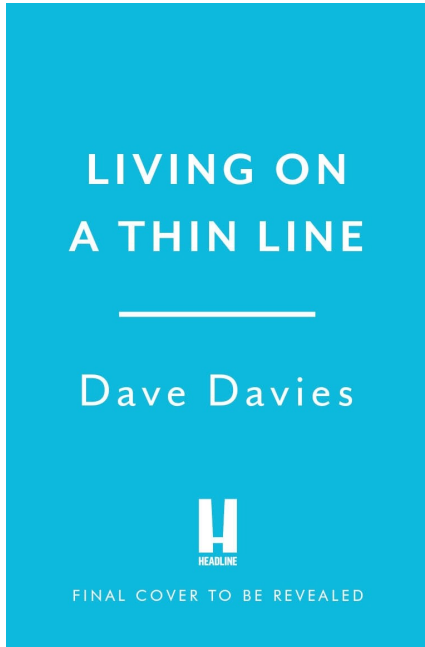
Along with stories of well-known species told from unexpected angles (rats who drive cars, elephants who self-medicate, or chickens with their remarkable 300-degree vision), it also includes stranger and lesser-known creatures, such as bum-breathing river turtles; gelada monkeys who 'tame' Ethiopian wolves in a dog-like way; or antechinuses, small marsupials who literally mate themselves to death. Then there are the 'aliens on Earth' - the incredible, the surreal, the magical. Unlike medieval bestiaries, this book has no need to include mythical creatures - animals such as tardigrades, sea slugs and anglerfish are so extraordinary they make unicorns look commonplace.

About the Author:

Dr Joanna Bagniewska is a zoologist and science communicator with a doctorate from the University of Oxford. Her academic interests include conservation biology, behavioural ecology and the intersection of technology and zoology. Joanna has worked on a range of species, from wombats and wallabies to mole-rats and jackals. She currently splits her time between lecturing/communication roles at Brunel University London and the University of Oxford. She is an accomplished science communicator, having won British Council's FameLab Poland and the Wellcome-funded 'I'm a scientist, get me out of here!' interactive programme, given a TEDx talk, and performed at science stand-up comedy events. She regularly writes popular science articles for various media in her native Poland, and has collaborated with the Discovery Channel on the How Do They Do It? series.

LIVING ON A THIN LINE

DAVE DAVIES



Headline

Publication: June 2022

Editor: Richard Roper

Length: 352

The autobiography of Dave Davies, legendary guitarist of The Kinks.

In 1997, a rejuvenated Dave Davies was back touring with his epoch-defining band The Kinks. But trouble was afoot, and that fractious state of relations between the Davies brothers can best be summed up by the extraordinary spectacle of Ray trampling on Dave's birthday cake during celebrations for Dave's 50th birthday - at the Clissold Arms in Muswell Hill, where a fledging version of The Kinks had played their first gig thirty-five years earlier.

Cut to June 2004. Shortly after an interview at the BBC about his latest solo album, *Bug*, Dave suffered a serious stroke. He would spend the next three months in hospital - an enforced stoppage, and the first time in forty years he'd had space to reassess his life and music.

In this brand new autobiography, Davies revisits the glory days of the band that spawned so much extraordinary music, and had such a profound influence on bands like The Clash, Van Halen, The Ramones, The Doors, Madness, The Jam, Pulp, Oasis and Blur. With time to reflect, Davies articulates more matured and reflective thoughts on the tumultuous times and the ups-and-downs of his relationship with Ray, as people pose that inevitable question: 'Will there ever be more music by The Kinks?'

About the Author:

Dave Davies is the lead guitarist and occasional vocalist for legendary rock band The Kinks. As a solo musician, he has recorded several albums and toured the world. In 2003 he was named as one of the 100 greatest guitarists of all time by *Rolling Stone* magazine.

EXIT STAGE LEFT

NICK DUERDEN



Headline

Publication: April 2022

Editor: Richard Roper

Length: 400

For fans of music books from David Hepworth, Pete Paphides, Bob Stanley and Craig Brown, as well as thought-provoking human interest stories like *Moondust* by Andrew Smith, and books by Jon Ronson, Louis Theroux and Stuart Maconie.

Nick Duerden has spent many years interviewing the most famous musicians on the planet. Without exception, they are at their most interesting when they've peaked, and when they are on their way down. In many ways, this is when these former idols are at their most heroic, too, because they reveal themselves not only to be humane and sensitive, but also still driven to create, to fulfil their lingering dreams, to refuse to live quietly.

Some sustain themselves on the nostalgia circuit. Others continue to beaver away in the studio, no longer Abbey Road so much as the garden shed. The desire for adulation is a light that never goes out. We live in a culture obsessed by the notion of fame - the heedless pursuit of it, the almost obligatory subsequent fallout. But what's it like to actually achieve it, and what's it like when fame abruptly passes, and shifts, as it does, onto someone else?

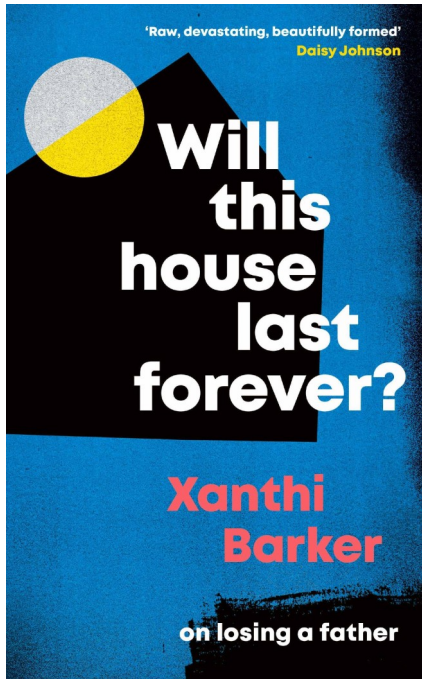
These are tales of heroin addiction, bankruptcy, depression, divorce - but also of optimism, a genuine love of the craft, humility and hope. Featuring brand new interviews with the likes of: Bob Geldof, Shaun Ryder, Robbie Williams, Roisin Murphy, Stewart Copeland, Billy Bragg, Wendy James, Alex Kapranos, Joan Armatrading, Leo Sayer, Gary Lightbody, Lisa Maffia, Tim Booth, Bill Drummond, Rufus Wainwright, David Gray, and Justin Hawkins.

About the Author:

Nick Duerden is a writer and freelance broadsheet journalist. He has written widely on the arts, family and health, and is the author of two novels, a memoir on fatherhood, and other non-fiction works.

WILL THIS HOUSE LAST FOREVER

XANTHI BARKER



Tinder Press

Publication: June 2021

Editor: Mary-Anne Harrington

Length: 368

'Completely original, raw and warm' Evening Standard Books of the Summer

'Poignant... written with intelligence and tears' Ben Okri

'Nuanced, absorbing and moving... extraordinary' Observer

'Raw, poetic, beautifully formed' Daisy Johnson

When Xanthi Barker's father died when she was in her mid twenties, she could make no sense of her grief for a man who had been absent for most of her life. Her father, poet Sebastian Barker, had left Xanthi, her mother and her brother to pursue writing and a new relationship, when Xanthi was a baby. Growing up she had always struggled to reconcile his extravagant affection - a rocking horse crafted from scavenged wood, the endless stream of poems and drawings and letters, conversations that spiralled from the structure of starlight to philosophy to Bruce Springsteen - with the fact that he could not be depended upon for more everyday things. Though theirs was a relationship defined by departures, he always returned, so why should this farewell be any different, or more final?

WILL THIS HOUSE LAST FOREVER? is a heartfelt and wholly original memoir about the pain of having to come to terms with a parent's mortality, the way grief so utterly defies logic, and about learning to see the flaws in those that we love, and let them go.

About the Author:

Xanthi Barker was born in London where she still lives. Her fiction has been published in Litro and MsLexia, and shortlisted for the Fish Prize. 'Paradoxical', the first chapter of WILL THIS HOUSE LAST FOREVER?, was highly commended in the 2018 Spread the Word Life Writing Prize. Her novelette ONE THING is published by Open Pen.