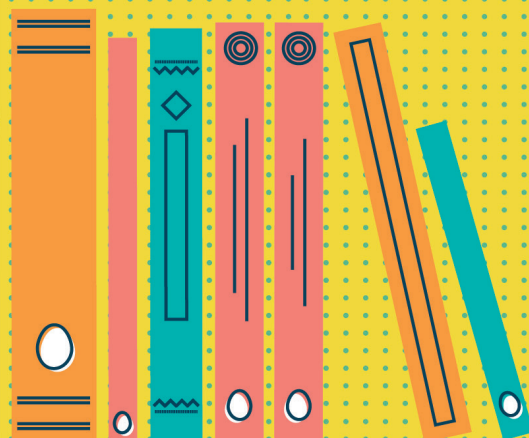


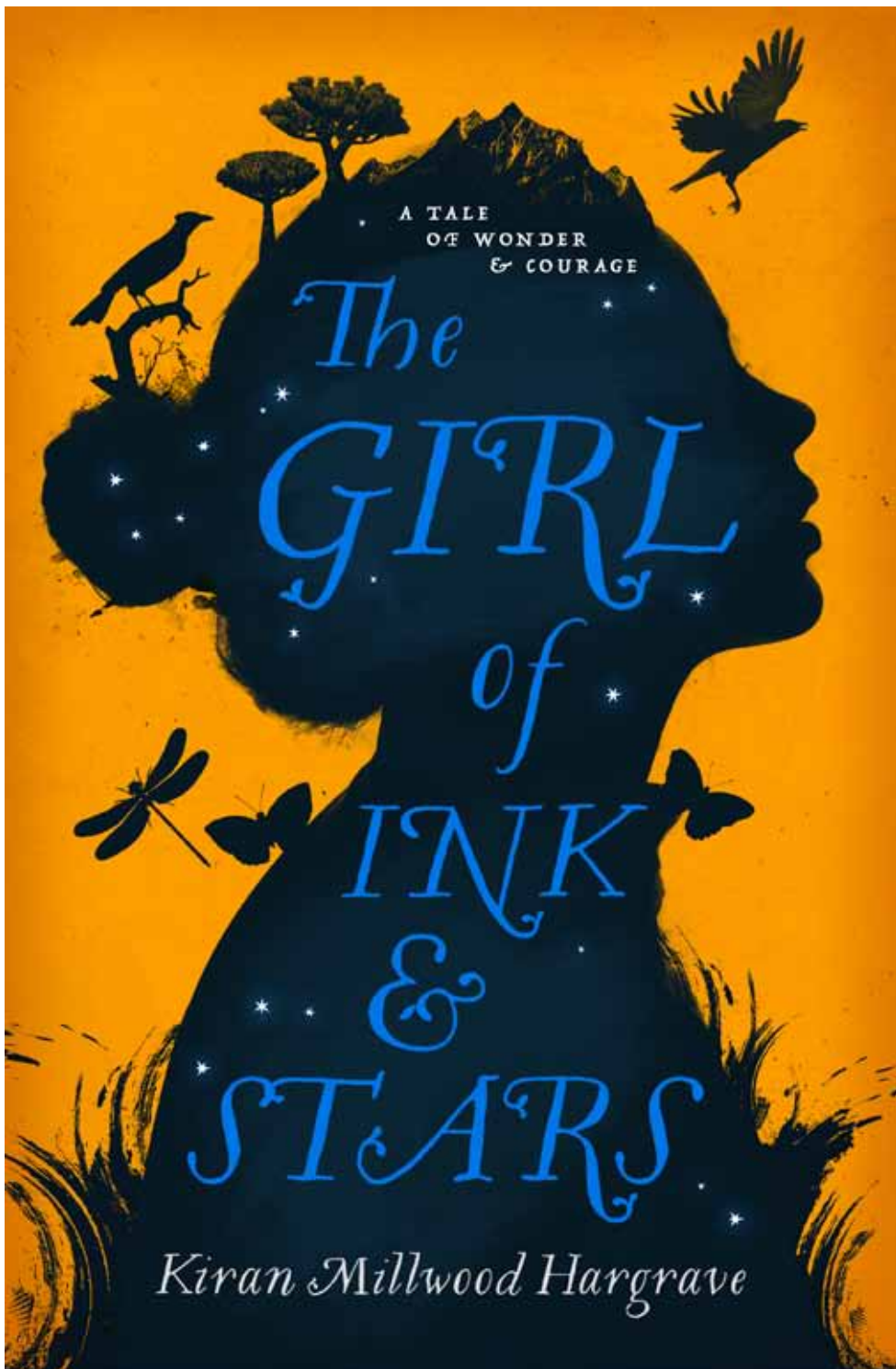
# Chicken House

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Publication Date 5th May 2016

# THE GIRL OF INK AND STARS

Kiran Millwood Hargrave

When Isabella's friend disappears, she volunteers to guide the search party. As a mapmaker's daughter, she's equipped with elaborate ink maps and knowledge of the stars, eager to navigate the island's forgotten heart. But beneath the mountains a legendary fire demon awakens, and her journey is fraught with danger ...

- A beautifully written and lyrical story of friendship, discovery, myths and magic - perfect for fans of Philip Pullman, Frances Hardinge or Katherine Rundell.
- Set in an extensive and stunningly-imagined parallel world imbued with magical realism.
- Author is an award-winning poet, with her first collection published at the age of just twenty.

Price:	£6.99	ISBN:	978-1-910002-74-2
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An extract from

# THE GIRL OF INK AND STARS

Kiran Millwood Hargrave

Around me, shutters were being drawn over windows, doors pulled closed despite the still cool morning air. My legs were used to the journey, but not at this pace and not when my lungs were squeezed tight with fear. When I did reach our door, I could barely breathe.

I stopped at the threshold even though the door was wide open. The same thing that had driven me up the hill was now holding me back.

'Da?'

Nothing. I stepped forward.

'Da!' The sunlight sent patterns whirling across my eyes in the gloom. I blinked them back.

He was not in the main room. It appeared the same as when I left; the bowl of burnt oats uneaten atop its bed of maps. The walls swayed lightly. Only the sky blue jug was gone, and peering into the kitchen I saw it had been washed and left to dry on the windowsill. My body uncoiled slightly. Da would just have forgotten to eat, or to tidy up anything except the precious jug.

I heard a rustle from the study and relief filled me like air. That was typical of Da, too busy with work to hear me. I drew in a shaky breath. He probably wouldn't even know what was going on outside. I crossed to the thick curtain and pulled it aside.

'Hello?'

I let the heavy material drop. The shutters were open, letting through a breeze that lightly lifted the papers covering Da's desk. This must have been what I heard, because his stool was empty. Staining the parchment on the desk was something dark and irregular.

I walked closer, my chest winding tight again. The stain rippled slightly in the breeze, and, unable to stop myself, I reached out to it. It was wet. I felt the room spooling away. My fingers were stained red.

My mind filled with dark, and was gone.

*We are all of us products of our surroundings.*

That was Da's voice.

*Each of us carries the map of our lives on our skin, in the way we walk.*

Why was he speaking like that, cold, slow?

*My limp shows that I am a stupid old man who can't stay out of trouble.*

Why couldn't I move? The ground was fire beneath my palms.

*My laughter lines show I have been loved. See here, how my blood runs not blue at my wrist, but black?*

Why could I hear myself laughing? My chest was pressed to the burning hot ground. I could barely inhale, let alone laugh. And why did I know exactly what he was going to say next?

*Really it's because of the thickness of my skin, but your mother always said it was ink. I am a cartographer through to my heart.*

Suddenly Da was ahead of me, through a dark channel of houses that swayed in the wind like trees. Now they were trees, and Da was reaching out.

*A cartographer through to my heart.*

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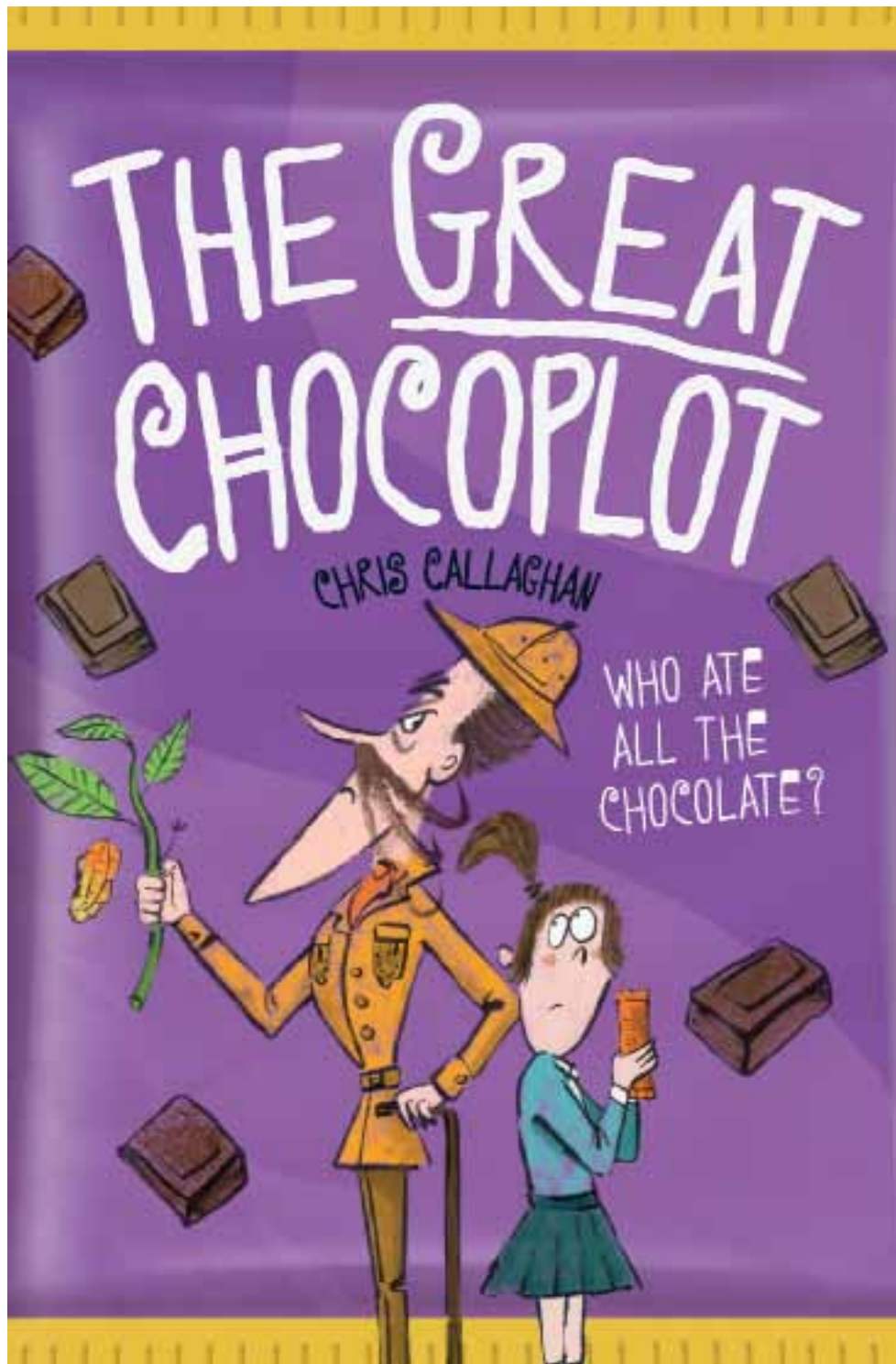


### KIRAN MILLWOOD HARGRAVE

Kiran was born in London in 1990 and studied at both Cambridge and Oxford University. She is an award-winning poet, with three collections published. She currently lives in Oxford. *The Girl of Ink and Stars* is her first novel.

 @kiran\_mh





Publication Date 3rd March 2016

# THE GREAT CHOCOPLOT

Chris Callaghan

It's the end of chocolate - for good! At least, that's what they're saying on TV. Eleven-year-old Jelly is horrified, but a trail of clues leads to a posh chocolate shop and its suspicious owner, the dastardly Garibaldi Chocolati. Is it really the chocopocalypse, or is there a chocoplot afoot?

- An exciting adventure story for a 7+ audience from a debut author with a fantastic and original comic voice, ending with a life-affirming conclusion.
- Readers will relish the terrifying premise: what if all chocolate was to disappear?
- Features a truly ghastly villain - think 'evil mastermind meets Willy Wonka' - and a down-to-earth heroine with a sidekick grandma.

Price: **£6.99**  
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An extract from

# THE GREAT CHOCOPLOT

Chris Callaghan

Jelly stared into the shop window. Fairy lights and candles illuminated the display, and shining fabrics had been draped luxuriously around glittering purple and brown boxes. Some were open, displaying tiny, delicate dollops of dark chocolate. A sign, which had not been there yesterday, was stretched across the window: 'The End of Chocolate Is Upon You!' Just underneath it said 'no children', but Jelly thought he couldn't mean that. No children in a chocolate shop? Maybe it was a joke.

Jelly took a deep breath and pushed the door open. It buzzed loudly with an electronic noise as if someone was being electrocuted. She jumped, then felt a bit embarrassed.

The first thing she noticed was how cold and unwelcoming the shop was. And it smelled somehow a little bit rotten. It made her shiver.

Just as she was pondering whether to stay, a man popped up from behind a towering display of purple chocolate boxes. He had jet-black hair that flopped over his face, an elaborate moustache and a long pointy nose. He glowered at Jelly through narrow eyes.

'The sign says "no children",' he snapped.

Jelly couldn't make out his accent. It wasn't quite French, but then it wasn't quite anything. Jelly

suspected he was putting it on.

'I'm s-orry ... but I'm only here because ... I'd like some ... some ch-chocolate please,' she stammered nervously. 'It's for my gran.'

The man sighed. 'Well, obviously you're here to buy chocolate,' he hissed. 'This is a chocolate shop.'

'Yes ... obviously ...' Jelly said, laughing awkwardly. 'But what I wanted was ... ginger chocolate.'

'*Ginger chocolate?*' he spat, raising his thick eyebrows impossibly high.

As he stepped out from behind the large display, Jelly was surprised to see him wearing some sort of brown safari suit – the kind people wore on documentaries about endangered animals. It looked like it had been made out of Gran's caravan curtains. In his hands were a cup and saucer, and one of his little fingers was sticking out at a perfect right angle (which was how Mum drank her coffee whenever they visited posh Auntie Agatha). Jelly breathed in the distinctive aroma of hot chocolate, but it smelled a bit strong – bitter, almost – and the colour of it was almost black.

'I am Garibaldi Choccolati and I sell only the finest chocolate known to the human race,' he exclaimed, 'the finest and the *purest*. I take the greatest care to find premium quality products from original sources.'

He put down his cup, and pointed to a wall full of framed photos of himself in various exotic locations. In each, he was wearing the same immaculate brown safari suit and inspecting sacks full of beans or fields of cacao trees.

'I offer, not just the best chocolate in this town, but the best chocolate in the world,' he continued, 'and you want *ginger chocolate!*'

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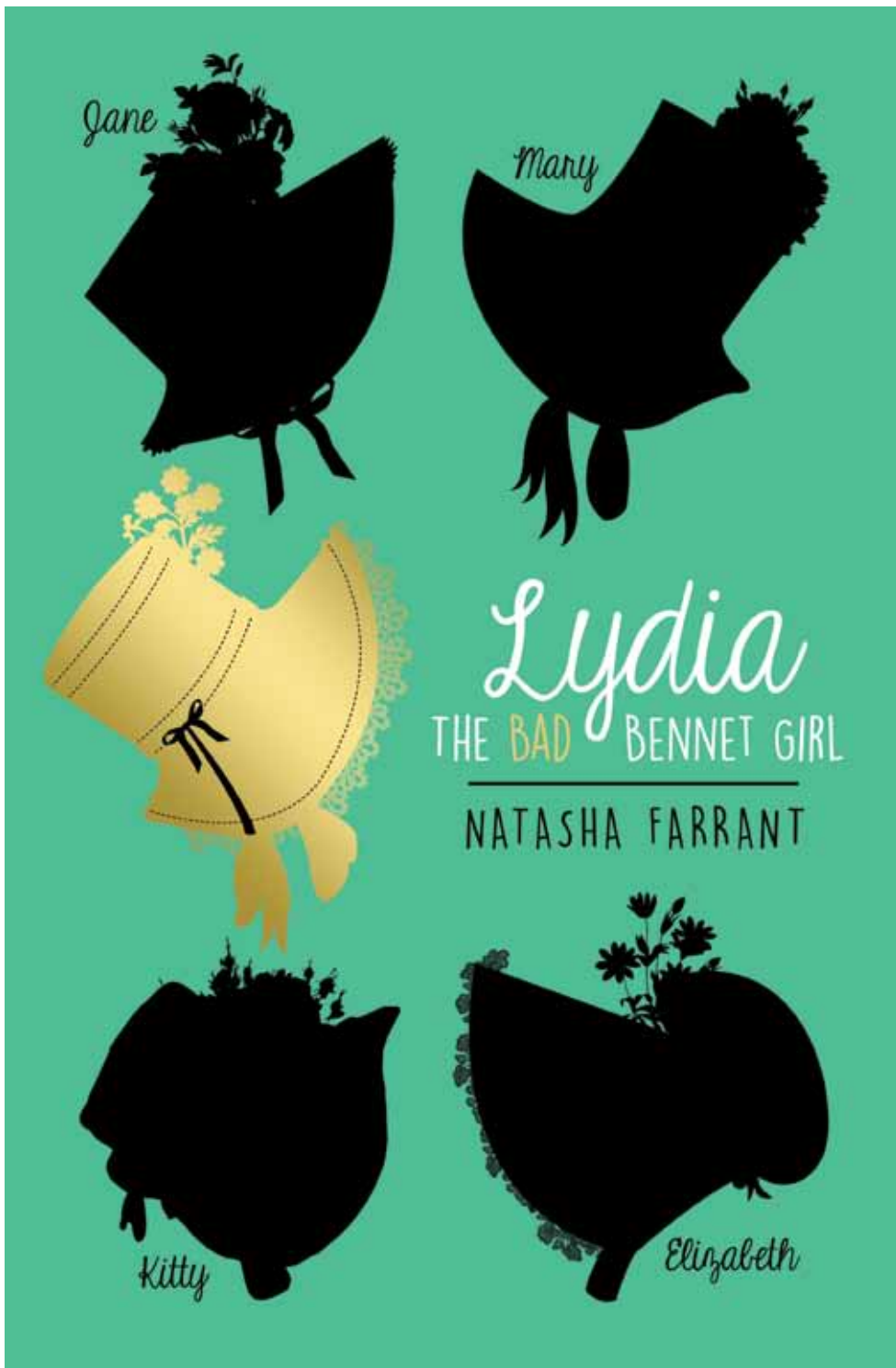
### CHRIS CALLAGHAN

Chris has had a varied career from Aircraft Mechanic in the Royal Air Force to Environmental Scientist. After writing *The Great Chocoplot* for his daughter as a Christmas present, he entered it into Chicken House's Open Coop. This is his first novel.

 @callaghansstuff







Publication Date 1st September 2016

# LYDIA: THE BAD BENNET GIRL

Natasha Farrant

Lydia can't stand her boring country life – but luckily adventure is just around the corner. Soon, she's swept off her feet by dashing Wickham, following his garrison to glamorous seaside Brighton. Here, a pair of aristocratic twins offer her the life she thinks she seeks. But can she find out what she really wants – and can she get it?

- A spirited, witty and fresh reimagining of Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*, from the perspective of the youngest and wildest Bennet sister, Lydia – a truly modern girl.
- A classic yet contemporary tale of love, scandal and growing up that will appeal to Austen fans and new teen audiences alike.
- From a Branford Boase-shortlisted author whose writing has been dubbed 'raucously funny' (*New York Times*) and 'warm and poignant' (*The Bookseller*); the perfect author to capture Lydia's rebellious spirit in first person.

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An extract from

# LYDIA: THE BAD BENNET GIRL

Natasha Farrant

They never tell you, when they forbid you from doing things, how wonderful those things actually are.

I went back into the water. The second time I was better prepared and found a branch to cling to. I floated, buoyed by the current. Bubbles rushed from my skin to the surface and my body burned with the cold. I let go, keeping my head above water, and splashed all of my limbs at once. I stood firm as the stream tried to sweep me away. I smacked the water with my open palms. I scooped it in my hands and flung it in the air. I dunked my head beneath the surface and shook myself like a wet dog when I came up. I began to sing, as loud as I could, a rude song I heard Thomas singing on the farm, before Hill realised I was listening and told him to sing hymns instead.

Someone giggled. I stopped singing. They were all lined up along the bank, every one of my sisters as well as Ed and John and little Henry who told me, as I stumbled out of the water, that he could see straight through my wet shift.

I got a beating for that – the one time, I think, Father has taken seriously anything I have done. It was Jane who told him. She didn't mean for him to

punish me, she said. She was just frightened.

'We all were – we thought that you would drown.'

'You were wild,' Lizzy said. 'Like an animal.'

'I would never behave as you did,' Mary sniffed.

'Your hair!' Kitty whispered as she tried to comb it. 'I don't think you'll ever get the knots out.'

But later, as we lay in the dark, she asked me how it felt to bathe so freely in the stream. Our bedroom door was open. Jane and Lizzy crept in, followed by Mary, and they all listened as I told them.

Goodness, this writing thing is strange. Once I start, it is as though my pen takes over with a mind quite its own. I don't know why it chose to write about that – the swimming, and the stream. Unless – it is something to do, I think, with my aunt, and her talk of soldiers, and officers, and the fact that I don't want to sit politely on a chair listening to her go on. I don't want to be told when I may or may not walk into town, or whom I may or may not talk to. I want to see it all – the camp, the fires, the men tending the horses. I want to smell the smoke and the hay and the sweat, and listen to tales of battles and far-away countries, and meet these gallant officers, not just pass them in the street.

'Soon,' Aunt promised, as she was leaving today.

A long way from Longbourn and Merryton, the stream flows into a river, and the river flows into the sea. I never swam again after that beating, but I haven't forgotten how it felt. The world looks different when you're in the water. Wild, like Lizzy said. Even now, when I stop to watch it, I wonder just how far away it could take me.

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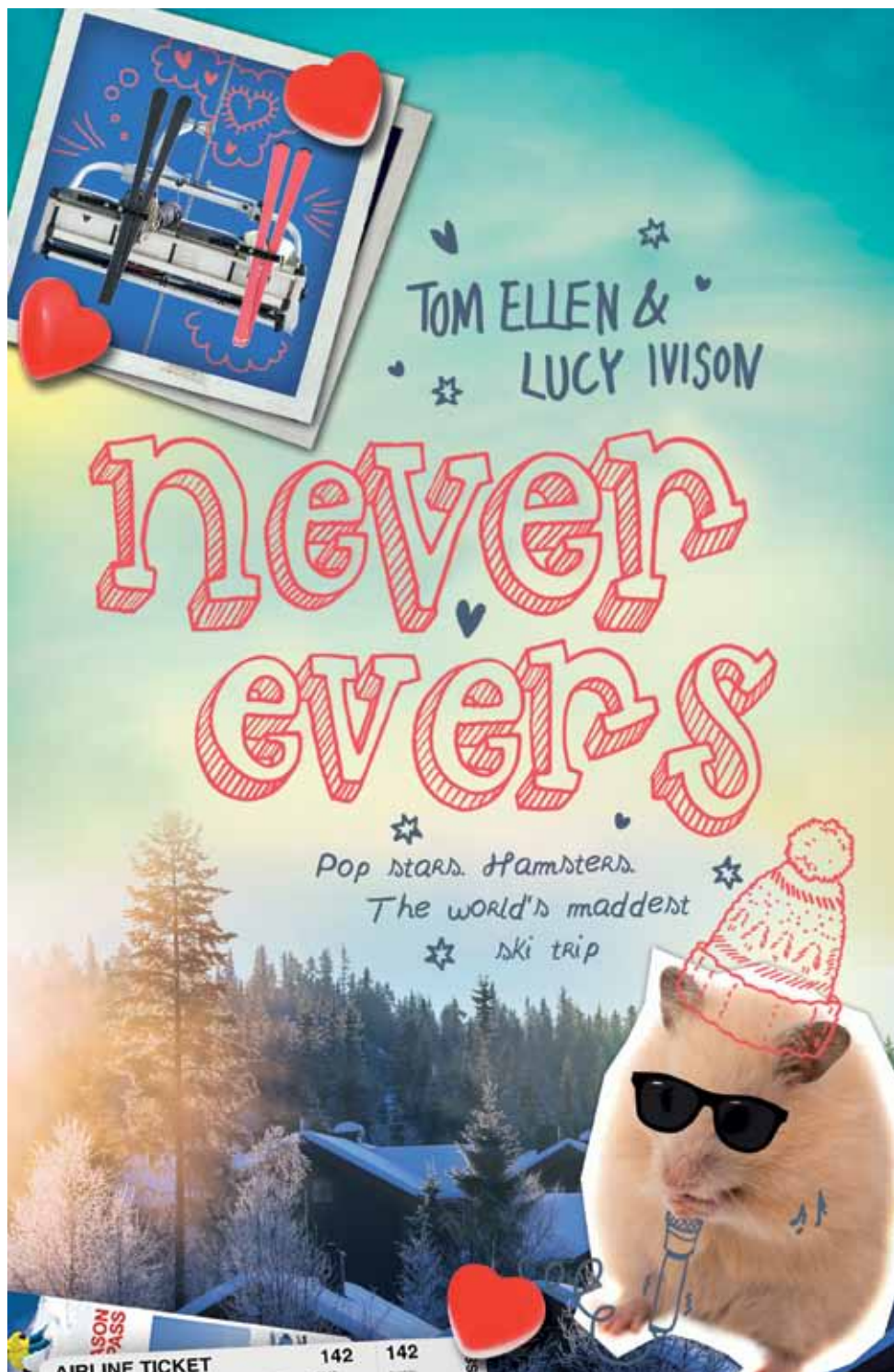


### NATASHA FARRANT

Natasha Farrant is the author of *The Things We Did For Love* and the *Bluebell Gadsby* series. Her books have been nominated for the Branford Boase Award, the Carnegie Medal, the Guardian book prize and the Queen of Teen. She lives in London.

 @natashafarrant1





Publication Date 7th January 2016

# NEVER EVERS

Tom Ellen & Lucy Ivison

The school ski trip isn't going to plan. Jack's bored; Mouse has fallen out with her friends. But when a French pop star – who Jack's a dead ringer for – arrives in the resort, the snowy slopes begin to get a bit more interesting ...

- From the authors of the acclaimed teen novel *Lobsters*, shortlisted for the inaugural YA Book Prize.
- A dual narrative exploring changing friendships and first experiences with the opposite sex, from both a boy's and a girl's perspective.
- Packed with first kisses, dorm-room gossip and friendships forged on the snowy slopes: hilarious and heart-warming.

## Praise for LOBSTERS:

'Frank, funny and honest' **THE OBSERVER**

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An extract from

# NEVER EVERS

Tom Ellen & Lucy Ivison

'Do you fancy anyone at the moment, Mouse?' Keira asked as we climbed the stairs to the deck.

I felt a bit embarrassed. Like I should have some story about a boy at ballet school. But I didn't. I don't even know if I've really ever fancied anyone. You were supposed to focus all your attention on ballet, so that's what I'd done. And that still hadn't saved me from being assessed out. It was pathetic, really. I'd dedicated everything to dancing, but I still hadn't been good enough. I shook my head.

'Maybe you'll find someone to fancy on this trip,' Connie said as we pushed a heavy door open and walked out onto the deck. The wind hit us really hard. My hair blew out in front of me and the salty spray showered my face. 'I've got quite high standards, too,' Connie shouted over the wind. 'I've only fancied one person in my life, and he doesn't even exist.' She looked dreamily out to sea. 'Oh, Ron Weasley ... you fictional ginger stud.'

'Well, I've only fancied one person, too!' said Keira, proudly. 'Jake's always been the man for me. And he very much does exist. Shame his sister's a bit of a b—' She broke off, looking at me. 'Sorry, Mouse, I know Scarlett's your friend.'

I shrugged to show it didn't matter. The thing was, I had no idea whether Scarlett was my friend

or not.

'Yeah, but you've got off with three other boys,' Connie reminded her, sternly. 'Crush-cheated on Jake. You must have fancied them?'

Keira wrinkled her nose. 'Urgh, no. I was just practising for when it happens with him.' She looked at me. 'Have you ever kissed anyone, Mouse?'

'No,' I said, quietly, trying not to draw attention to it. Maybe it was another thing everyone had done over the last two years.

'Don't worry,' smiled Connie. 'Neither have I.' Somehow Connie not having kissed anyone didn't make a difference to how I felt.

'You're not missing out on anything, to be honest,' sighed Keira. 'It's a bit of an anti-climax, really. You think it'll be this big, life-changing moment, but it's actually just Elliot Bennett slobbering all over you in the disabled loo.'

'That's probably not everyone's experience of a first kiss,' Connie said. 'Elliot Bennett doesn't even know that many people.'

'Whatever. Maybe we'll meet some French boys in the Alps. I bet French boys are ten times better kissers than English boys.'

'Well, obviously,' said Connie. 'That's why it's called "French kissing". You never hear about "English kissing", do you?'

Keira laughed. "'English kissing" is a thing, it's when a boy asks you to dance, then shoves his tongue down your throat and then goes and has a farting competition with his mates and never speaks to you again.'

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### TOM ELLEN & LUCY IVISON

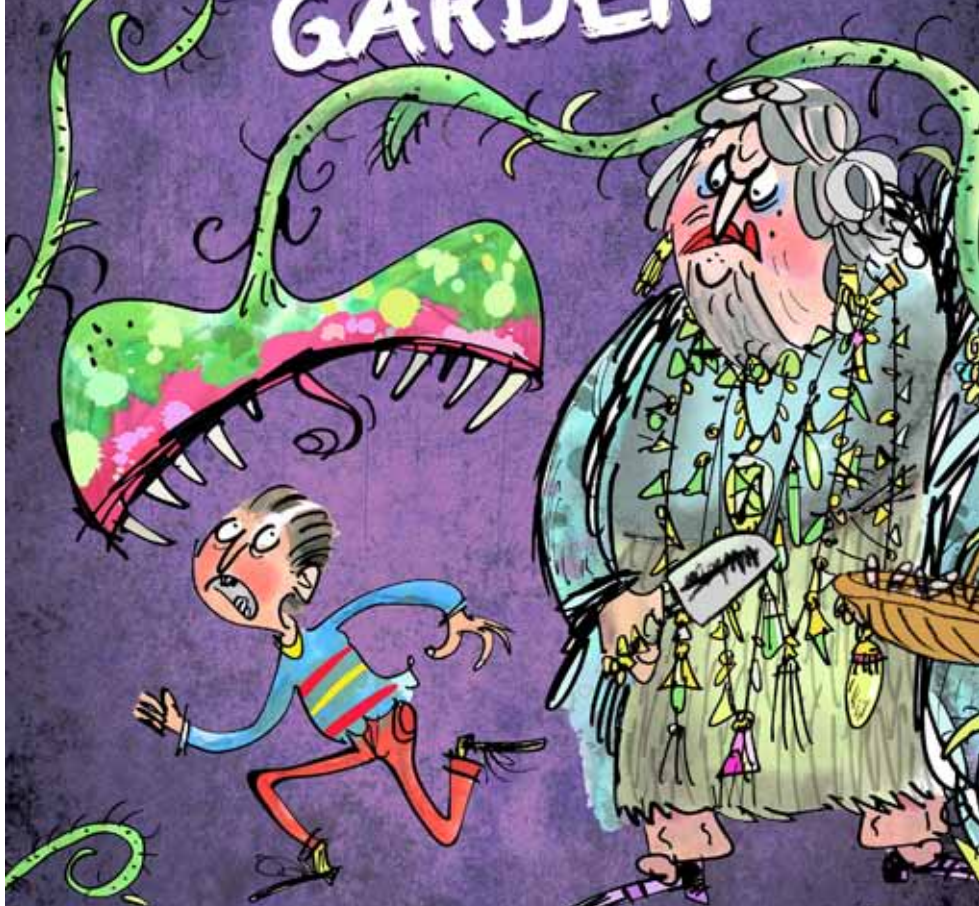
Tom Ellen and Lucy Ivison met in the sixth

form and have been friends ever since. Lucy runs online teen magazine *Whatever After*, as well as teaching in girls' schools across London. Tom is a journalist and has written for *ShortList*, *Time Out*, talkSPORT, *Vice*, ESPN and *Viz*.



What is the secret of Aunties Potting Shed? Dare you find out?

# The BONE GARDEN



VERONICA COSSANTELI

Publication Date 7th July 2016

## THE BONE GARDEN

Veronica Cossanteli

Orphaned Dan's new home is a crumbling castle. Here, horrible Aunt Eg reigns supreme, tending her mysterious graveyard garden. But why are Aunt Eg and her curious servants each missing a finger – and what are the hungry 'Cabbages' in the greenhouse? As Dan struggles to solve the mystery, he encounters a chilling question: what's the price of everlasting life?

- From the acclaimed author of *The Extincts*, optioned for film and published in ten territories worldwide.
- An atmospheric, scary and funny middle-grade mystery about a boy who discovers an intriguing family secret.
- Themes of family, history and what it means to grow up.

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An extract from

# THE BONE GARDEN

Veronica Cossanteli

When we clattered to a halt, I wasn't sorry to say goodbye to Old Nellie and get out. Martha had already tumbled down from her perch, all bubbly and pleased with herself because the Ancient Monkey had told her she was 'a natural' with the horses. People are always telling Martha how clever she is. It was a matter of time, I reckoned, before her head got so big it exploded.

Between tall stone pillars, the Hall's heavy wooden doors stood open. On either side, a stone lion reared up, mouth open in a silent roar, showing fierce rows of teeth. Cut into the lintel was an inscription. Time and weather had rubbed away at it, but you could still make out the words.

*Lion-toothed, sharp of claw,  
Bones rule, ever more.  
Here lives and breathes a true-born Bone,  
Or these walls crumble, stone by stone.*

It looked as if quite a bit of crumbling had happened already. One of the pillars was cracked through, two of the upstairs windows were missing their glass and a number of slates seemed to have slid off the roof and landed in the courtyard.

Footsteps sounded, and a woman's voice rang out, loud and rich and fruity.

'Have you brought the boy?'

'Ay, my lady,' replied the coachman. 'Young Master Dandelion and the little miss. And the big miss and a bird and a little squeaking wriggler, too. More of the gatehouse's come down,' he added. 'Grazed a wheel, coming through. 'Osses don't like it. Wreck and ruin, we're goin' to. Ruin and wreck.'

'Nonsense.' The voice had an edge to it, like glass splinters or uncooked gooseberries. 'Not any more. Now the Heir is here, all will be well. Where is he? *Bring me the boy!*'

'Ay, m'lady.' The old man gave me a shove between the shoulder blades and I fell, sprawling, into the shadows of Daundelyon Hall.

The floor was cold stone; the walls were dark panelled wood, hung with swords and shields, daggers and axes. Empty coffins stood propped against beams. A cannon crouched in a corner, next to a pile of cannonballs the size of Christmas puddings. Hanging in between the weapons, long-dead Bones stared down their oil-painted noses. Not a single one of them was smiling. They all had their lips squashed together as if they were trying not to burp.

'Why did nobody tell them to say *cheesy pizza?*' whispered Martha, behind me.

At the foot of a grand staircase stood a large woman with several chins and an iron-grey hair-do that looked as if it would clang if you tapped it. She clasped a small black-and-white dog with bulging eyes and bat-like, hairy ears.

'At last!' Flinging open her arms, she dropped the dog – it landed on the stone floor with a *sp/at* and a whimper – and came sailing towards us. 'Dearest boy!' she cried, completely ignoring Martha. 'At last – you have arrived!'

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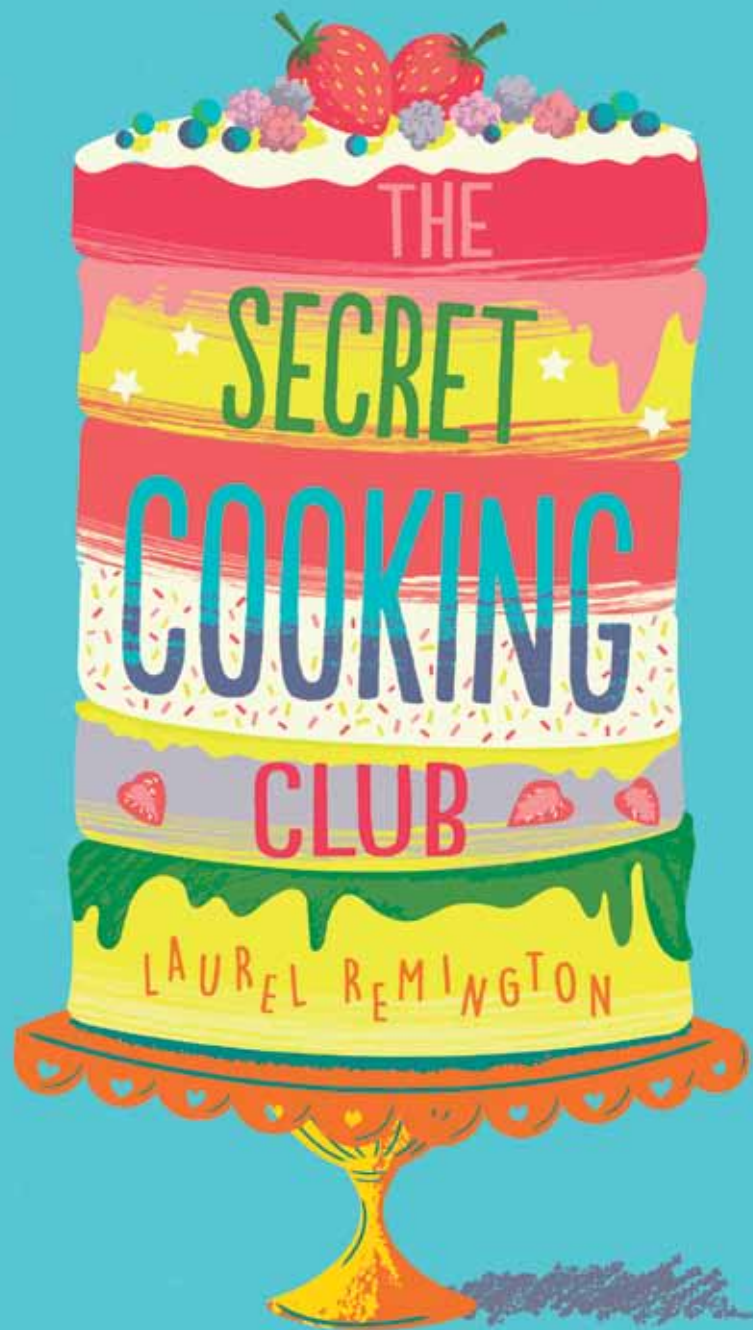
### VERONICA COSSANTELI

Veronica grew up in Hampshire and Hong Kong with an assortment of animals. She works in a primary school in Southampton, where she lives with three cats, two snakes, one guinea pig and a large number of lizards.

 @vcossanteli







Publication Date 2nd June 2016

# THE SECRET COOKING CLUB

Laurel Remington

Shy Scarlett is the star and victim of her mum's popular blog. When she discovers an empty kitchen next door, she begins to bake and her life changes for ever. The Secret Cooking Club is formed, but can Scarlett find the secret ingredients – to cake, family and friendship?

- Winner of the *Times*/Chicken House Children's Fiction Competition 2015.
- A touching story of friendship and family about a girl who discovers the secret ingredient to happiness through cooking.
- The mummy-blogger theme adds a contemporary, original and funny twist.
- Scheduled for summer 2016, tapping into the *Great British Bake Off* craze.

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An extract from

# THE SECRET COOKING CLUB

Laurel Remington

Making the sticky toffee pudding is lots of fun. Violet and I triple the recipe – so we have enough for us plus lots of ‘free samples’ for school. Luckily, Mrs Simpson has plenty of bowls and cake pans. We bake ourselves a little round pudding, and for school we use pans shaped like a sea-shell, a heart and a gingerbread man.

‘Look, it’s Georgie Porgie,’ I say when we take the dark brown treacly man out of the oven. We both laugh. While we’re waiting for the puddings to cool, we gorge ourselves on licking the bowls, our faces dripping with sticky batter. Next I make the syrup for over the puddings, stirring everything over the hob and breathing in the delicious-smelling steam. While I’m busy with the sauce, Violet finds a whole tin of baking decorations in one of the cupboards.

‘Let’s use these,’ she says.

I stand back and watch as she gets on with decorating the puddings. She outlines Georgie Porgie with little icing stars, and gives him a suit made of paper-thin gold leaf. It says on the package that you can eat it. She gives him eyes of chocolate buttons, and an icing nose and mouth. I can’t help laughing – I’ve never seen such a fancy sticky toffee pudding before, and Georgie Porgie looks nothing like Nick Farr. Violet laughs too, and gives him a purple head of candied violets for his hair. On

the heart-shaped pudding, she writes ‘The Secret Cooking Club’ in big, loopy icing letters. Finally, she’s done.

‘They look fab,’ I say, beaming. We cover the pans with cling film so that they’re ready to take to school tomorrow. Then we tuck in and eat the little one we’ve made for ourselves.

The pudding is warm and moist, and practically melts when I pour the sauce over it.

‘Umm,’ Violet purrs, taking a bite. ‘This is the best.’

I let the warmth of it settle on my tongue for a second before swallowing. It’s not too sweet, and not too tart – like Goldilocks’s porridge, it’s just right. I still can’t believe we made it ourselves. But we did!

‘We’ll need plastic bowls and spoons for school.’ I lick the syrup off my upper lip. ‘It’s pretty gooey.’

‘Yeah.’ She smiles. ‘We can get them at the newsagent’s on the way to school. Do you have any money?’

‘I guess I can get some from Mum’s purse.’

We clean everything up and put the pans of pudding in Mrs Simpson’s fridge. We agree that I’ll come and get them tomorrow before school.

It’s dark when we leave the house, and stepping outside is like plunging into a cold bath. Nothing seems real to me any more other than Rosemary’s Kitchen. For once, when I look at Violet, she’s not smiling. I’m glad that she seems to feel the same as me.

‘You okay getting home?’ I ask. We stand at the dim edge of a circle of streetlight.

Violet nods. ‘See you tomorrow.’ She turns and starts walking. I stand there watching her go until she turns the corner and disappears.

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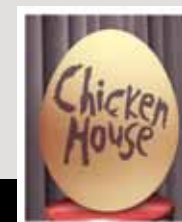
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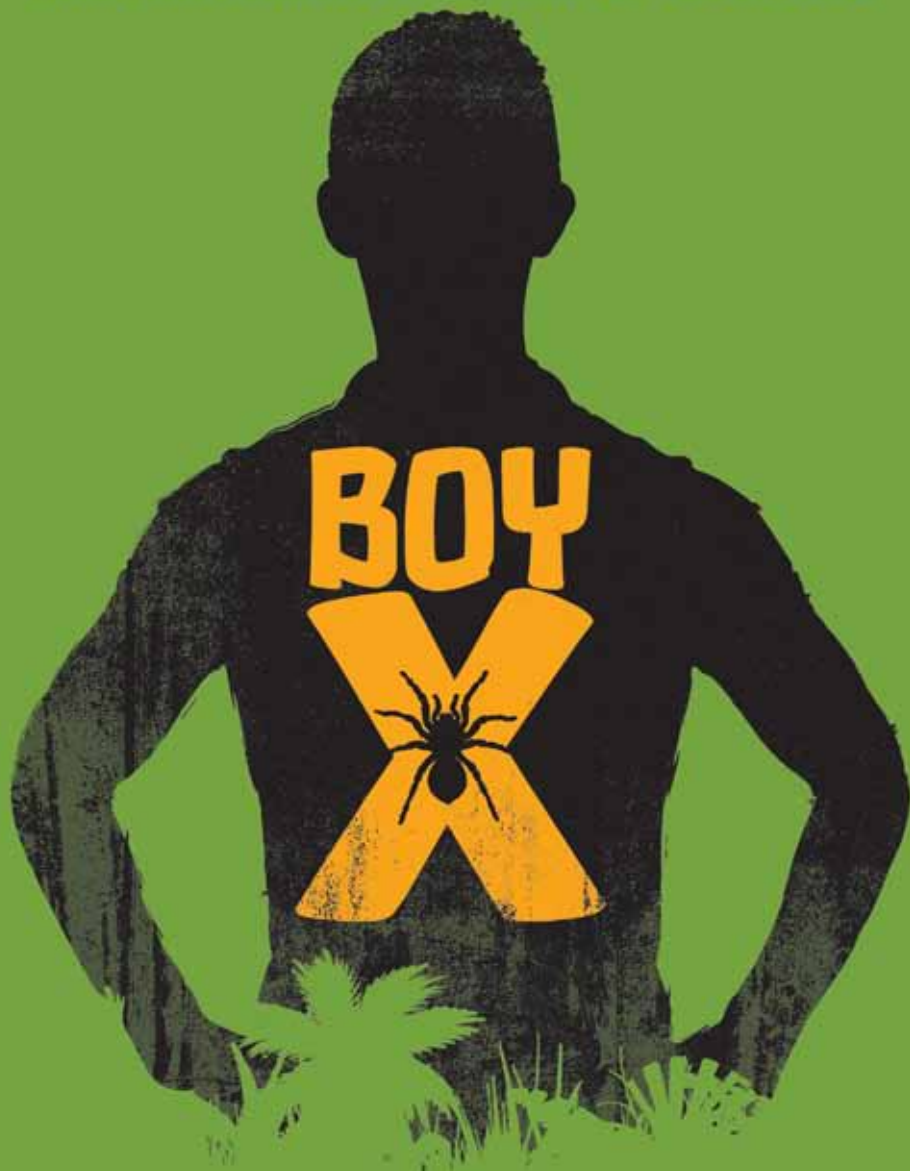
### LAUREL REMINGTON

Laurel Remington works as a lawyer for a renewable energy company. Her first novel, *The Secret Cooking Club*, won the *Times*/Chicken House Children’s Fiction Competition 2015. She lives in Surrey.

 @laurelremington



ASH McCARTHY. BORN TO SURVIVE



DAN SMITH

Publication Date 4th February 2016

# BOY X

Dan Smith

Kidnapped and taken to a remote tropical island, Ash faces a terrifying challenge: cross the deadly jungle and find a cure for his mother, who's been infected with a deadly disease. As he discovers his own unexpected survival skills, he begins to question everything he once knew – about his mother, his enemies and the jungle animals watching his every move.

- A real-life survival adventure set on a jungle island.
- The start of a new no-holds-barred action survival series: Bear Grylls meets *The Maze Runner*.
- From the award-winning author of acclaimed WW2 adventure novels *My Friend the Enemy* and *My Brother's Secret*.
- Dan Smith's most recent project, *Big Game*, is the novelisation of the hit movie starring Samuel L. Jackson – sold so far in 23 territories worldwide.

Price:	£6.99	ISBN:	978-1-909489-04-2
Pub Date:	4th February 2016	eBook ISBN:	978-1-910655-52-8
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Word count:	70,000 (words approx.)	Export:	Yes
Binding:	Paperback	Rights:	World

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An extract from

# BOY X

Dan Smith

On the other side of the fence, there were nothing but trees. But they weren't oak and sycamore and horse chestnut like the ones at home. They weren't the kind of trees that lined the grey, rain-soaked street he had been looking out on this morning.

These trees were thick and green and leafy. They grew close together and were topped with fronds and fans. Some had strange and grotesque roots, some had trunks spiked like medieval weapons, while others were fat, with contorted faces hidden in knotted bark. They sprouted unfamiliar fruits, and many were hanging with vines.

Ash couldn't believe what he was seeing. It looked like *jungle*, and even through the tinted glass of the dome, he could tell it was bright out there because light glittered among the leaves like jewels, and in the centre of the clearing, a large, black helicopter gleamed in the sun. It didn't make sense, but at least it gave him something else to think about – the awful grip of panic had begun to loosen because he couldn't take his eyes off the forest outside. Almost without thinking, he crossed the lobby and headed towards the exit.

No one challenged him. No one spoke. Nothing moved.

As he came closer, the sensors detected his presence and the doors swished open, letting in a blast of air that was so hot and humid it felt solid.

It took his breath away, rushing down into his lungs and making him gasp.

The world was alive out there; a massive contrast to the cool, white, silent interior of the building. Everything was amplified, as if someone had turned all the dials up inside Ash's head. There was a continuous chirping of insects, the bright and cheerful call of birds, the rustle of the breeze in the treetops. Ash could hear the ticking of the helicopter's engine, the creak of its parts, the hum of electricity from the chain-link fence, a high-pitched, irritating whine that veiled everything like a thin cotton sheet. And after all that white, colours exploded in his vision. They screamed at him. A million different shades of green, splashes of red, snatches of yellow and purple and pink. There was the smell of dark earth, too, the strong perfume of flowers, and the cloying scent of helicopter fuel.

Ash put his hands to his ears and closed his eyes, stumbling as the powerful jumble flooded his senses, filling his mind. It was like a TV on full volume, flicking from channel to channel, never pausing on anything for more than a split second. In blind confusion, he dropped to his knees and curled himself into a tight ball, grimacing, trying to clear his mind. He had to make it go away. He couldn't bear it. It was enough to drive him mad. He opened his mouth to scream, but as he did so, a single image jumped into his head.

Dad.

Dad was telling him not to be afraid. That he was strong.

'I *am* strong,' Ash spoke under his breath. 'I *can* do this.'

## RIGHTS INFORMATION

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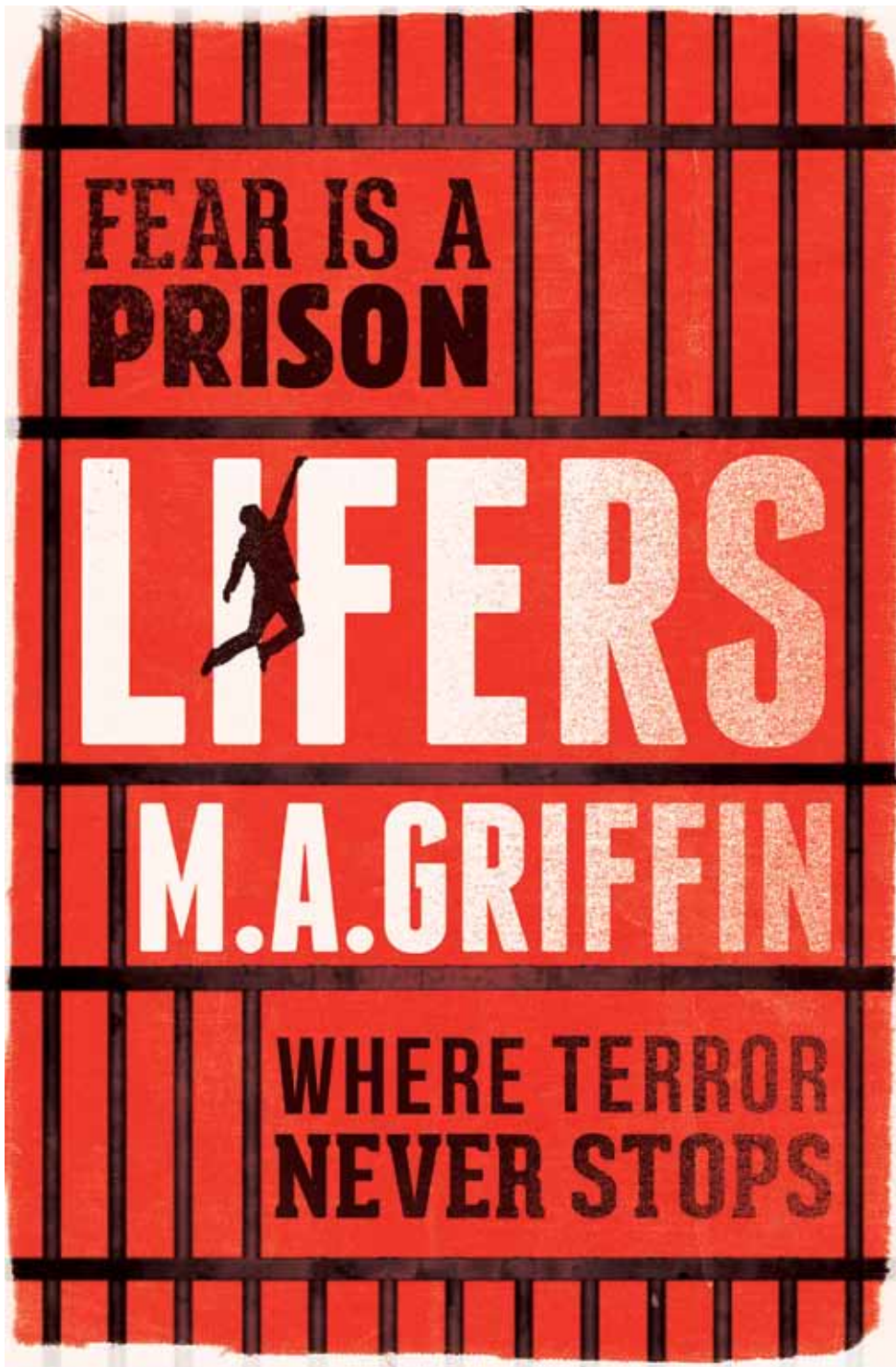


### DAN SMITH

Growing up, Dan Smith lived three lives: the day-to-day humdrum of boarding school, finding adventure in the padi fields of Asia and the jungles of Brazil, and in a world of his own, making up stories. He lives in Newcastle with his wife and two children.

 @dansmithauthor





Publication Date 7th April 2016

# LIFERS

Martin Griffin

Preston explores dark Manchester in the hunt for a missing friend. Deep in the bowels of a secret institute, he discovers a sinister machine. The world inside is a cavernous dimension filled with problematic teens. Friendships are forged, promises broken and lives lost in a reckless battle for freedom, revenge – and revolution.

- An atmospheric noir thriller set in a future Manchester, incorporating shocking and believable science-fiction elements.
- Packed full of high-octane adventure and tension, perfect for fans of *The Maze Runner* who crave a grittier real-world setting; shades of fellow Manchester-based author Melvin Burgess.
- Written under the name Fletcher Moss, Martin's first novel *The Poison Boy* won the 2012 *Times/Chicken House Children's Fiction Competition* and was shortlisted for the Branford Boase Award.

Price:	£7.99	ISBN:	978-1-910002-25-4
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Binding:	Paperback	Rights:	World



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An extract from

# LIFERS

Martin Griffin

His eyes adjusted to the gloom. There was the Lexus; three empty parking spaces around it. There were clipped hedges, a pool and an urn, steel planters with elegantly shaped trees in them. There were lights inlaid along the paths, half-lit like eyes. This wasn't a house. It was corporate. The windows were for offices, or labs, Preston thought. *What is this place - pharmaceuticals?* He made his way forward. The sound was louder.

*Chitter-chit-chit.*

The back of the building was four storeys of white render and steel, windows of mirrored glass. On the top floor, a light was on - a surprise in the early hours of a Monday morning - and Preston could see the silhouette of piled files, papers and a glowing desk lamp bent over as if in prayer. Someone was up there, working late. Small polished signs studded the outside of the building at shoulder height, like those brass plaques beside the doors of solicitors' offices. As he drew closer he saw each displayed an acronym - M.I.S.T.

His heart gave a jump. *Mist.* He'd seen that in Alice's notebook.

She'd been here.

The sound, eerie and unnerving, was getting louder. Preston padded down a gravel path, rain falling, the fans of garden ferns glistening in the moon. He turned back to take another look around.

Then he saw it.

A set of sunken steps dropped to a doorway set at cellar level; a steel fire-door with one of those bars across it that made it look like it was for escape only. Inside was dark, but it wasn't inside that Preston was looking at.

Preston was looking at the kid in the goggles.

Two steps up from the door, hunched in a crouch on his heels, was a boy dressed in black. It was his teeth Preston could hear, clattering in his mouth. He was suffering some sort of fit; shuddering there in his crouch position as if a current was being fed through him. His feet shifted and jerked in a way that looked like some invisible force was needling him from all sides, and he was recoiling from a thousand fearsome pin-pricks. His chin was pressed against his chest.

Preston dropped to a crouch and felt his blood ice up. He didn't doubt for a second he was seeing something unnatural. This wasn't some sort of epileptic fit; it was something more controlled. Then there was the sound coming from his mouth, the machine-gun rhythm of his teeth.

Preston staggered backwards, half-running until he felt himself thump against the perimeter of the sunken garden. He wanted to look away, but he found he couldn't; he had to watch as the kid twisted and shuddered.

It was slowing now. A moment later, he was still; curled up on his side. His teeth had stopped. Preston tried to swallow, but his throat had filled with sand. His heart felt close to bursting. *Had the kid passed out? Or had Preston just watched someone die?*

## RIGHTS INFORMATION

WORLD RIGHTS AVAILABLE.

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### MARTIN GRIFFIN



Martin Griffin studied English Literature at Manchester University. His first novel, *The Poison Boy*, was written under the name Fletcher Moss and won the 2012 *Times*/Chicken House Children's Fiction Competition. He lives in Manchester.

 @fletcherross





Publication Date 3rd March 2016

# BEETLE BOY

M.G. Leonard

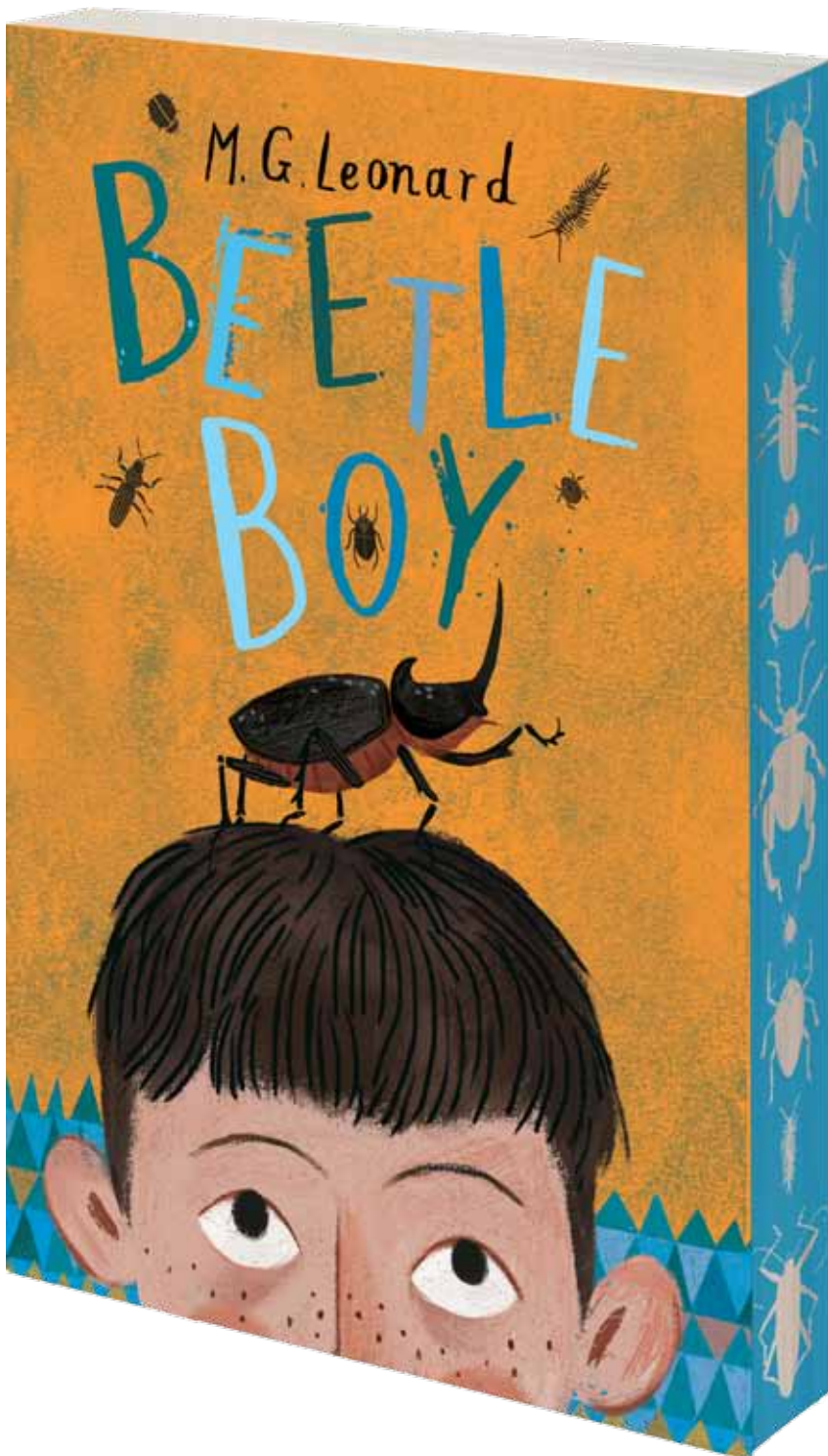
Darkus's dad has disappeared - but his new friend, a giant beetle called Baxter, is some consolation. Together, boy and beetle set out to solve the mystery of his father's disappearance. But Lucretia Cutter - a fashion designer with a penchant for beetle jewellery - is dead set against their success ...

- The first darkly hilarious novel in a new trilogy by an exciting debut author, who is also the Senior Digital Media Producer for the National Theatre.
- Featuring exotic beetles, a daring quest, a mixture of bold male and female characters and a truly venomous villain.
- Heartfelt themes underlie the adventure, as Darkus strives to find his missing dad and makes new meaningful relationships in the process.
- Billed as *One Hundred and One Dalmatians* meets *James and the Giant Peach*.

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Binding:	Paperback	Rights:	World



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An extract from

# BEETLE BOY

M.G. Leonard

Darkus looked down. The giant insect was sitting right at his feet, and before he could think about whether it was a good idea or not, he was reaching down to touch the tip of its horn. It was sharp.

'Whoa, you're cool!' he said, realizing his heart was thumping in his chest.

Mesmerized, Darkus watched the beetle scramble up from the road on to the pavement, its body glistening like wet oil. He found the way it crawled fascinating. He'd never thought about the way he walked – upright on two legs – and he wondered what it would be like to have six legs, and to move around so close to the ground. The beetle walked by lifting a tripod of three legs at a time – the front and rear legs of one side of its body together with the middle leg of the other.

When the insect reached his shoe, it started climbing, heading for his ankle – as if it was trying to get up his trouser leg too!

'Hey! Stop!' Darkus fell backwards, flicking out his foot and flinging the beetle away.

It landed on the pavement and paused, like it was thinking. Darkus was astonished to see it lifting its hard outer wings, and unfolding a second semi-transparent, rust-coloured pair. It flew straight back to him.. The giant beetle landed on his knee, clinging on to his trousers with its claws.

Darkus yelped and shook his leg again, rolling

back on to his elbows, but the beetle wouldn't let go.

Beside the bin next to him was a cardboard box. Darkus grabbed it and, sitting up, knocked the beetle into the box with the back of his hand. Embarrassed, he looked around to see if anyone had seen him flailing on the floor, but everyone was crowded around the unconscious man on the other side of the road, discussing what they should do with him.

Peering into the box, Darkus saw the beetle on its back, legs thrashing about frantically as it tried to get back on its feet. He immediately felt bad for hitting it. He reached in and flipped the poor creature the right way up.

'I'm so sorry. I hope I didn't hurt you,' Darkus said softly. 'It's just you gave me a bit of a fright.'

The beetle scrambled into the corner of the box, pulling at the walls of the temporary prison with its front legs.

'Calm down, little fella. I'm not going to hurt you.'

But the beetle kept tearing at the walls, so Darkus decided to set it free. Crouching down, he held the box on its side on the pavement. The beetle scurried out of the box, but instead of running away, it clambered on to Darkus's hand and stood still, looking up at him expectantly.

It took a second for Darkus to realize he was OK with the beetle being on him. The gentle scratch of its claws against his skin was almost pleasant. What surprised him was the weight of the insect – he'd assumed it would be light, but it felt solid and reassuring, like a pebble. He carefully lifted his hand. 'Hello there.'

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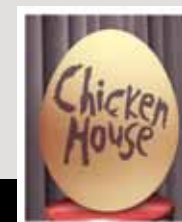
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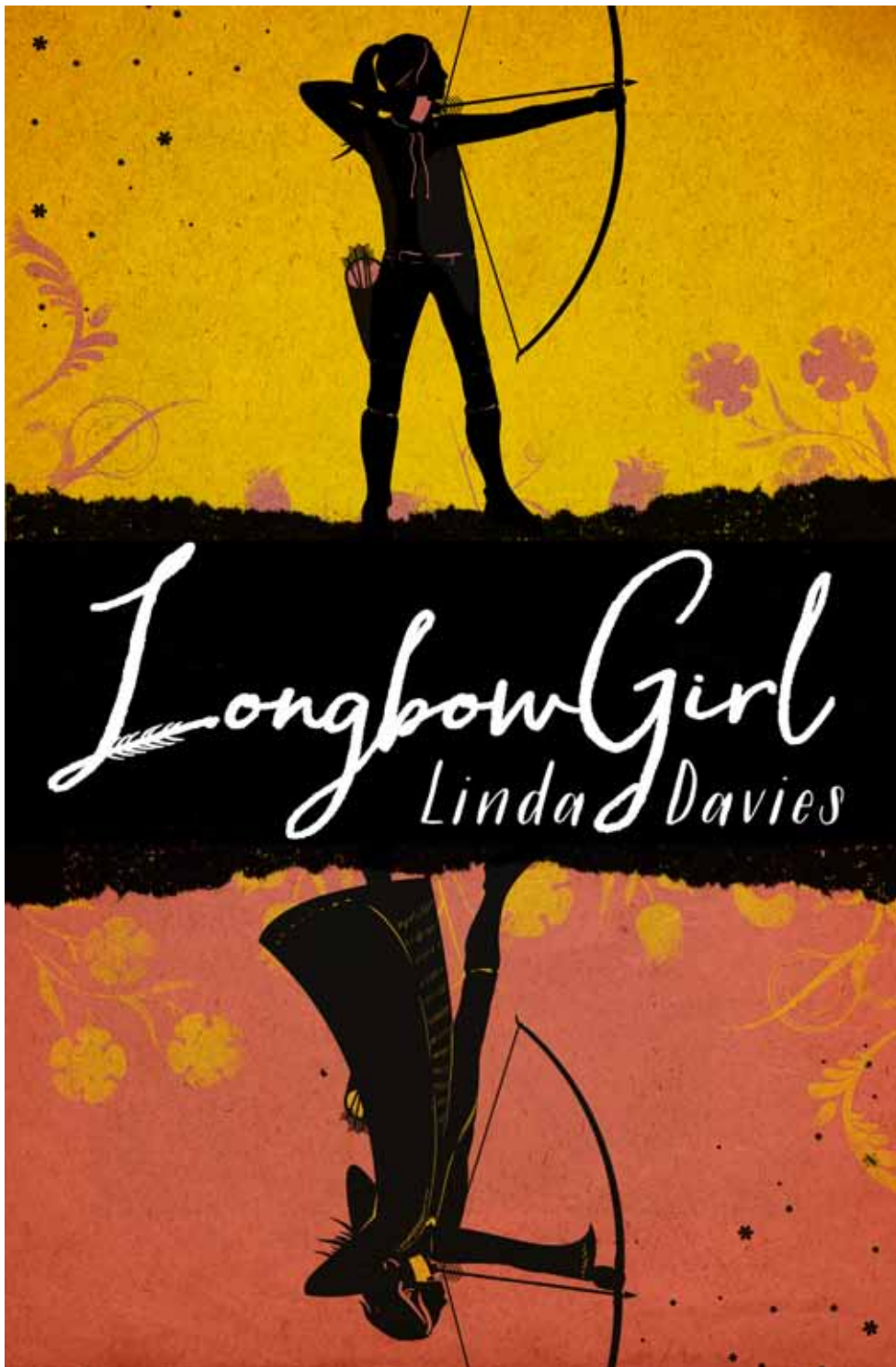


### M.G. LEONARD

M.G. Leonard has a degree in English Literature and an MA in Shakespeare Studies, and loves dark stories sprinkled with magical realism. She currently works for the National Theatre and lives in Brighton with her partner and two sons.

 @mglhnd





Publication Date 3rd September 2015

# LONGBOW GIRL

Linda Davies

While out riding, schoolgirl Merry Owen finds a chest containing an ancient Welsh text that leads her into a past filled with treasure, secrets and danger. But it's her skill with the Longbow, an old family tradition, that will save her future.

- From an extraordinary new British children's author and *New York Times* bestselling adult thriller writer.
- A thrilling and romantic time-slip adventure through the hills and valleys of mid-Wales.
- A perfect heroine for our time: independent, beautiful, powerful but flawed – a modern-day female warrior.
- A 21st-century tale of historical power no longer fought with the Longbow, but with money.

Price:	£6.99	ISBN:	978-1-910002-61-2
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Binding:	Paperback	Rights:	World



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An extract from

# LONGBOW GIRL

Linda Davies

Merry strode into the arena, grasping her Longbow, her arrow bag slung over her back. All her senses were heightened. She felt more alive than ever. There was more at stake than ever. Her life, the life and lands of those she loved. But she had one job, one focus. She could not think of what she might lose, just of what she needed to do. Of how she would do it. Nock, Mark, Draw, Loose. She'd trained for years. This was who she was.

She was aware of the wind blowing down from the Black Mountains, carrying with it the scent of new-grown summer grass. She was aware of voices rising in shock, in question, then falling away at a loud command. She was aware of a presence, huge, forbidding. The King. She

raised her head, eyed him full on. She wanted to spit in his face, to unleash an arrow at him, to scream at him; murderer, torturer, tyrant, but she did none of those things. Instead, she bowed low, so low the tendrils of her hair draped on the muddy grass. Then she straightened, whipped back her head so that her hair swung in an arc of gold.

'Who are you?' thundered the King. 'What do you do here with all the men?'

'I am Merry Owen, Your Majesty,' she answered in a loud, clear voice that carried to the depths of the watching crowds.

'I am the sister of Glyndwr Owen, separated at childhood, raised by a family who could afford to keep me. I heard about Your Majesty's challenge. I have come to honour the pledge made by my ancestor.' She felt the blood pounding in her veins. 'I am the Longbow Girl.'

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Photo by Tony Pick

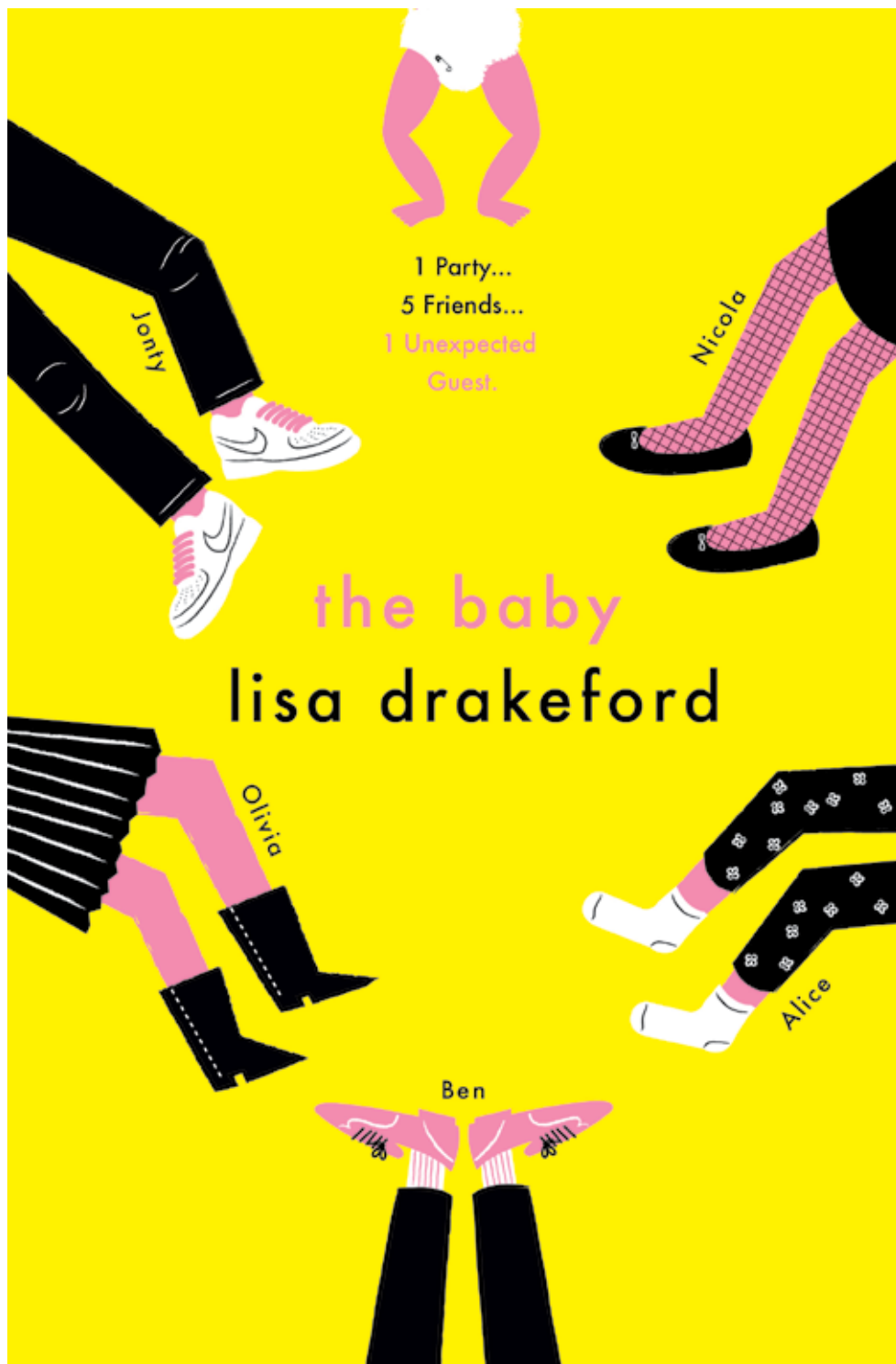


### LINDA DAVIES

Linda Davies grew up in the Welsh mountains and is herself an avid longbow girl and rider, having been given a longbow and a pony by her parents when she was eight. She has written five thrillers for adults, and lives with her husband and three children near the sea.

 @lindadaviesauth  
[longbowgirl.com](http://longbowgirl.com)





Publication Date 2nd July 2015

# THE BABY

Lisa Drakeford

Five friends are at a seventeenth birthday party when one of them gives birth unexpectedly in the bathroom. From that moment on the five find their lives are inextricably intertwined with the arrival of the baby, each of them dealing with not only their own feelings, but their secrets too.

- An outstanding debut from an author shortlisted for the *Times/Chicken House Children's Fiction Competition*.
- Championed by competition judge and critically acclaimed YA author Melvin Burgess.
- Told from the viewpoint of five involved characters - *The Slap* for teens.
- A bittersweet YA drama.

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eBook ISBN: **978-1-910002-24-7**  
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Rights: **World**

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An extract from

# THE BABY

Lisa Drakeford

They heave their bodies against the door at the same time and at last there's a splintering sound. After their second thrust, the thin wooden panel breaks free and the lock gives way. They jostle their way into the small, hot room and peer at the sight before them.

It's not one they're expecting.

It's Nicola. But not the Nicola they're used to seeing. This Nicola is on all fours, her head and shoulders over the bath. Her bum high. The moaning is louder and more painful than either of them had anticipated.

At first Olivia thinks she's being sick. Throwing up in her bath.

But there's something more animal-like in her position. This is so much more than a bout of drunken vomiting.

'Nic ... Nic, you OK?'

Nicola shakes her head. Her cheeks are flushed high and there's a slick of sweat on her skin. Her eyes reach her oldest friend. 'It hurts. It feels like I'm dying.'

Olivia kneels down next to the quivering figure. She places her hand on the small of Nicola's hot back. They're both shaking. 'Where, babe? Where does it hurt?'

The heat of the room is overwhelming. Nicola

moves her eyes from her friend and gestures to her stomach. And here, Olivia notices with a sharp thud, is a large dome-shaped bulge ...

'Oh my God.' She mutters under her breath. 'You're—'

But she's interrupted by Ben, who appears suddenly sober. 'I think we need an ambulance.'

Olivia kneels beside Nicola, her hand on the bow of her back, her eyes wide and unbelieving. One hundred questions sprint through her mind, racing after each other, chasing their answers, weaving knots. How can this be? How can her best friend be pregnant and she didn't know about it? Did Nicola even know? How the hell can she be about to give birth in the bathroom on a bath mat which was still damp from the shower she'd taken just a few hours earlier? Why hadn't Nicola told her? She hadn't even known that she was having sex. She swallows that thought and can't help feeling betrayed. Surely a real best friend would have discussed this with her?

But then she feels guilty because here's Nicola, on all fours against her bath looking like she's just about to die, and all Olivia can feel is betrayed. She shakes her shoulders and eyes Ben by the radiator, looking confused and ever so slightly green.

She gulps warm air from the overheated bathroom and speaks to Ben. 'Go and phone for one. Tell them ...' and here she grimaces and flicks her eyes over Nicola's bulge. 'Tell them she's having a baby.'

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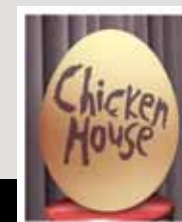
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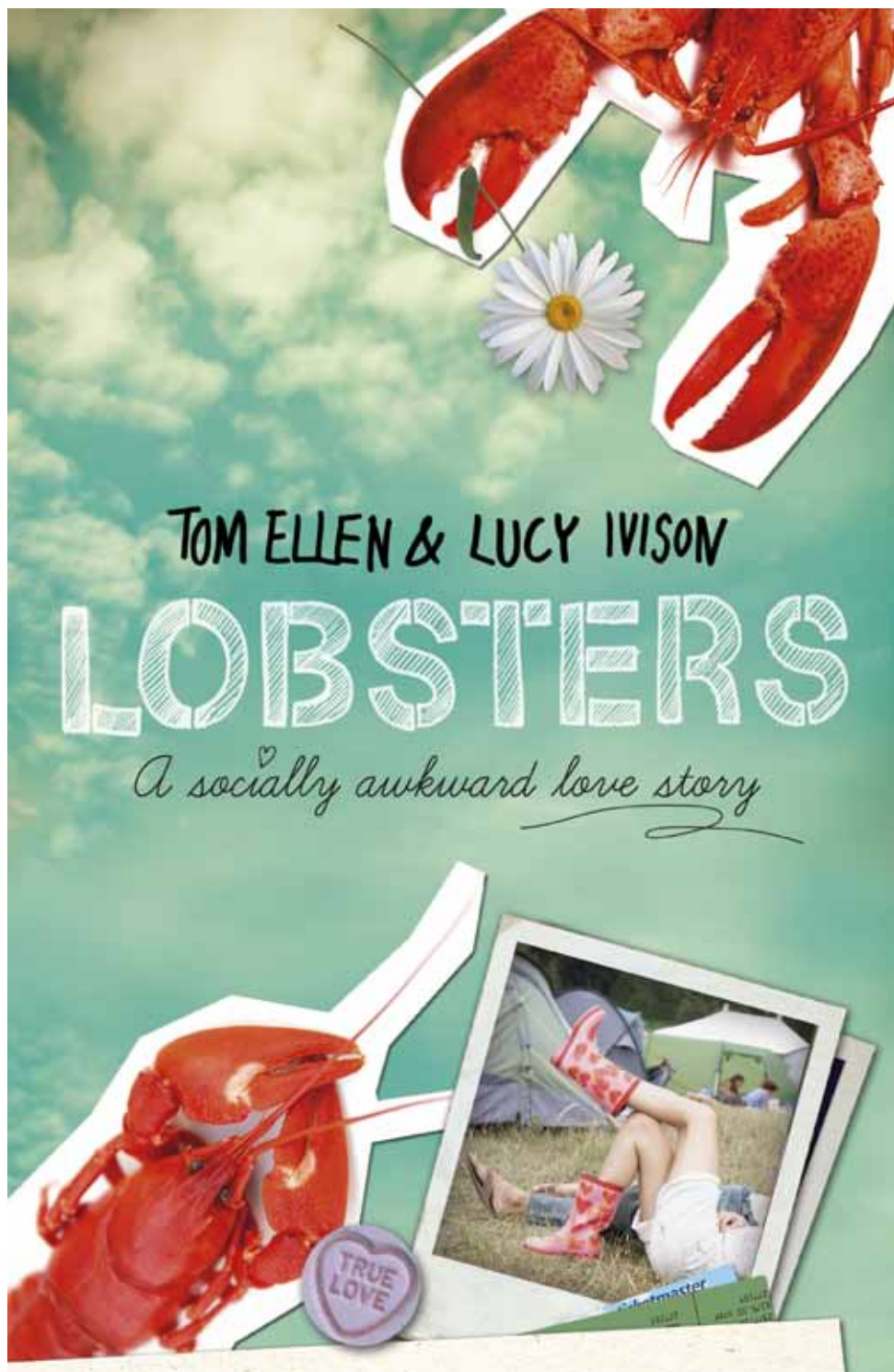
### LISA DRAKEFORD

Lisa Drakeford is a children's tutor. She used to be a librarian and became inspired by the brilliant YA novels filling the shelves. She attended a number of writing courses and won a place on the Writing East Midlands Mentoring Scheme. *The Baby* is the result.

 @lisadrakeford







Publication Date 5th June 2014

# LOBSTERS

Tom Ellen & Lucy Ivison

Like lobsters, Sam and Hannah are looking for 'the one' but they only have the holidays before uni to find each other. And instead of being epic, their summer is looking awkward, until fate lends a hand.

- *One Day* meets *Skins* and *The Inbetweeners*.
- Hilarious, romantic and unbelievably awkward, this story boils down to love.
- An epic search for fun, freedom, and 'The One' – lobster!
- Explores themes of adolescence, friendship, love and first sex.
- At once a hilarious, embarrassing yet shrewd insight into the highlights, pitfalls and vulnerabilities of life as a teenager.

*'Frank, funny and honest'* **THE OBSERVER**

Price:	<b>£7.99</b>	ISBN:	<b>978-1-909489-33-2</b>
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Binding:	<b>Paperback</b>	Rights:	<b>World</b>

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An extract from

# LOBSTERS

Tom Ellen & Lucy Ivison

‘Good,’ I said. ‘Neither of us has vomited at this party.’

‘Yet,’ he said, raising his finger and putting on a mock-stern face. ‘Neither of us has vomited at this party *yet*. There’s still plenty of time left. Don’t write us both off so easily.’

We laughed again. You don’t usually laugh two proper *actual* laughs within a few seconds of meeting someone. I looked at him closely. I had definitely never seen him before. Not at a party, not at school, not on Facebook. Not anywhere.

He was tall, really tall in fact. He looked as though he hadn’t quite grown into his height. As if he was a bit apologetic about people having to look up to speak to him. He put his hands in his pockets and slouched to try and minimize the issue. He had brown, curly hair that fell in front of his brown eyes. I noticed his trainers were really battered and had been bound together with gaffer tape. There was something gentle about him. He looked kind. And fit. Really fit. In a scruffy, cool sort of way.

He nodded towards the bathroom and said, ‘Well, I guess I should ... you know.’

I jumped out of the doorway. ‘Oh yeah, sorry. Of course.’

He smiled at me shyly then looked down and

ruffled his hair.

I didn’t want that to be it, I wanted to keep talking to him.

‘Watch out ... It’s quite ... intense in there,’ I said, because it was the only thing I could think of to say.

He stepped inside the bathroom and held the door open as he looked around. ‘Oh my god. Yeah. Seriously. It’s like a James Bond villain’s toilet.’

He was right. The entire room was painted dark purple, with little flecks of gold dotted about, and there was a massive mural of a stag on one of the walls. Stella’s mum got this woman in to paint it specially. The shower in the corner had no curtain or wall around it. You just showered in the room.

‘It’s called a wet room,’ I said, and blushed because the word ‘wet’ is rude when you say it within five feet of a boy.

‘It’s a bit like standing inside a blueberry,’ he added.

‘Yeah. It’s purple, though, not blue, so it’s more like standing inside a Ribena bottle.’

‘I love Ribena.’ He said it like he’d just remembered that Ribena existed.

‘Me too,’ I said. ‘Hot Ribena’s even better.’

‘Yes!’ His eyes widened like he was having a mini-epiphany.

‘Hot Ribena is amazing. I can’t believe I’ve met someone who knows about hot Ribena.’

We grinned at each other, and I felt that warm, tingly feeling you get when you find something in common with someone you like.

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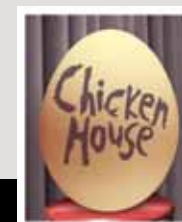
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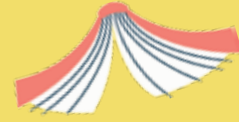


### TOM ELLEN & LUCY IVISON

Tom Ellen and Lucy Ivison met in the sixth

form and have been friends ever since. Lucy runs online teen magazine *Whatever After*, as well as teaching in girls’ schools across London. Tom is a journalist and has written for *ShortList*, *Time Out*, talkSPORT, *Vice*, ESPN and *Viz*. Their new book, *Never Evers*, is released January 2016.





## WHAT IS YOUR NEXT BESTSELLER GOING TO BE?

### A FUN, QUIRKY ADVENTURE? **BETLE BOY** BY M.G. LEONARD (10+)

Darkus's dad has disappeared – but his new friend, a giant beetle called Baxter, is some consolation. Together, boy and beetle set out to solve the mystery of his father's disappearance. But Lucretia Cutter – a fashion designer with a penchant for beetle jewellery – is dead set against their success ...

**Featuring exotic beetles, a daring quest, a mixture of bold male and female characters and a truly venomous villain.**

- Billed as *One Hundred and One Dalmatians* meets *James and the Giant Peach*.

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With his mother missing and his father dead, 12-year-old Flip's new home becomes the distant Dutch island of Mossum. Lost and lonely, menaced by the bullying Mesman Boys, his whole life changes the day he rescues a drowning stallion from the waves of the cold North Sea.

**Evocative 'classic' novel about a lonely boy, a girl and a horse.**

- Atmospheric, beautifully written and moving – and unusually set in the 1960s.

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### A DANGEROUS, GOTHIC ROMANCE? **DARKMERE** BY HELEN MASLIN (14+)

Kate and her friends are spending the summer at Darkmere Castle in Devon – which she thinks will be a perfect opportunity for her to get together with Leo. But instead, she's drawn into the dark story of a nineteenth-century girl who haunts the tunnels and towers of the house ... and whose curse now hangs over them all.

**When *Scooby Doo* met *Daphne du Maurier*: a brilliantly chilling, evocative and romantic YA, written by a multi-talented new writer.**

- A fresh and contemporary take on the popular gothic love story.

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## A FRESH NINJA ADVENTURE? **THE BLACK LOTUS** BY KIERAN FANNING (10+)

Ghost, Cormac and Kate are junior recruits of the Black Lotus, a school for ninjas. When a powerful weapon is stolen, the three must battle through sixteenth-century Japan and present-day New York to stop a power-hungry shogun from destroying the city.

**A fresh and exciting action-packed novel from a first-time author.**

- Perfect for fans of Chris Bradford and Anthony Horowitz.

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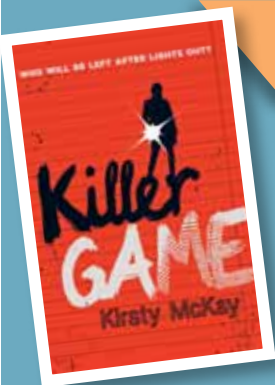
## A DARKLY FUNNY THRILLER? **KILLER GAME** BY KIRSTY MCKAY (12+)

Cate is looking forward to Killer Game – a school tradition of thrilling prank ‘killings’. But what happens when the Game becomes real and it seems that she’s the next target?

**A completely gripping, psychological whodunnit that will keep readers guessing to the very last page.**

- Told with Kirsty McKay’s trademark black humour and drama.

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## A THRILLING, ROMANTIC TIMESLIP? **Longbow Girl** BY LINDA DAVIES (10+)

While out riding, schoolgirl Merry Owen finds a chest containing an ancient Welsh text that leads her into a past filled with treasure, secrets and danger. But it’s her skill with the Longbow, an old family tradition, that will save her future.

**From an extraordinary new British children’s author and *New York Times* bestselling adult thriller writer.**

- A thrilling and romantic time-slip adventure through the hills and valleys of mid-Wales.

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## A WARM AND FUNNY TALE? **DARA PALMER'S MAJOR DRAMA** BY EMMA SHEVAH (10+)

Dara is a born actress, or so she thinks – but when she doesn’t get any part in the school play, she begins to think it’s because she doesn’t look like the other girls in her class. She was adopted as a baby from Cambodia. So irrepresible Dara comes up with a plan, and is determined to change not just the school, but the whole world too.

**A beautifully written, warm and funny story for girls aged 8-12, from the critically acclaimed author of *Dream On, Amber*.**

- Explores themes of adoption, determination and standing up to prejudice.

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