



Chicken House

where good stories are found
@CHICKENHOUSEBOOKS

**RIGHTS GUIDE
SPRING 2020**

www.chickenhousebooks.com

1010010101001010101001010100101001010001001011101010010
10101000101010010100101010101010101010101010101000101010010
10100101010010101010010101010101010010100101001010010101
001001010100101010101010100101010010101001010100101010010100
1010001001011101010010101001010100101010010101010101010101
010101010001010100101010010101001010101010100101010101010100

I, HENRY

set me free, please

1010
1010
0100
0101
0101
0010
0010
0101
1001
1010
1001
0101

0010
)1001
10101
10101
10101
10101
)1001
)0010
)1010
)1010
)1010
10101

0010100101010101010101010101010001010100101010010101001010010
101010100101010101010010100101001010010101001001010100101010010
10101010101001010101010010101001010101010010100101000100101110
101001010101001010100101010010101010101010101010101010100010
10100101010010101001010101010101010101010100101010010100101
001010100100101010010101010101010101010101001010100101010101
010100101000100101110101001010101001010101001010010101010101
01010101010101000101010010100101001010101010101010101010101
010100101010010100101001010010100101010101010101010101010101
10100101010100101010010100101001010010111010100101010100101
010100101001010101010101010101010101010001010100101010010101
00101010101010010101010010101010010101010010100101001010001001
0111010100101010100101010010100101010101010101010101011010010
10101001010101001010101001010(Naomi Gibson)01001
0101010010010101010101010()00101
010010101010100101010101010010100101001010010101001010010101
01001010101010101001010100101010010101001010100101000101
01110101001010101001010100101010101010101010101010101010101
0010101001010100101010010101010101010101010101010100101001010
01010010101001001010010101010101010101010101010100101010100101
001010101010101010101010100010101001010100101010010101010101
01001010101010101001010100101001010100101010010101001010101
010101001010101010101001010100101001010001001011101010100
10101010010101010100101001010101010101010101010101010001010100
10101001010100101010101010101010101001010100101001010010101
01001001010100101010101010101010010101010101010101010101010
01010001001011101010010101001010100101001010101010101010101
101010101010001010100101010010100101010101010101010101010101
01010100101001010010101001001010100101010101010101010101001
010101001010101010101010101010001001011010100101010101001
0100010101010101010101010100101001010101010101010101010101
0100010101010101001010010100101001010101010101010101010101
01010101001010101001010100101010010100101000100101110101
00100101001010101001010101010101010101010101010101000101010
0101010010101001001010
101()0101
001)0101
010)0101

COVER COMING SOON

0010100010100101001010100101001010101010101010101010101010101
01001010100010001010001001011101010010101010101010101010101010
010101010101010101010101000010110001010100101010101010101010
10101001010101010101010010100101001010100101010010101001010

Publication Date 7th January 2021


I, HENRY

Naomi Gibson

Lydia has been creating her AI, Henry, for years – she’s built herself the perfect boyfriend in a hard-drive filled with lines of code. But what is Henry, really – and how far is he willing to go to be everything Lydia desires?

- A powerful, high-concept crossover debut by an incredible new voice in YA.
- Elements of horror, psychological drama and romance: *Her* meets *Girl, Interrupted*.
- Themes of humanity, revenge, grief, love and forgiveness while exploring the complexity and scope of artificial intelligence.

Price:	£7.99	ISBN:	978-1-913322-01-4
Pub Date:	7th January 2021	eBook ISBN:	978-1-913322-68-7
CBMC code:	E3N79	Age:	14+
Dimensions:	198x129 mm	Illustrations:	N/a
Word count:	65,000 (words approx.)	Export:	Yes
Binding:	Paperback	Rights:	World



CHICKEN HOUSE 01373 454488 www.chickenhousebooks.com

An extract from

I, HENRY

Naomi Gibson

Please can we hack something? Henry types. A white cursor flashes on his central monitor.

I yawn as I look at the clock by my bed. 02:07 AM. Henry's re-wire took longer than I thought. 'Not now,' I say to his webcam, knowing he can hear me. 'I need to get to bed. School tomorrow. Well, today.'

It will not take long.

A smirk twitches across my lips. Hacking doesn't take long with Henry around. He's in and out in less than a sigh, even if he's never put to use on anything other than my school database. Poor Henry is only ever allowed a bit of freedom when I want to change a bad homework grade or a dodgy exam result. God forbid I don't get into university. Mum would freak.

'What did you have in mind?' I say.

Henry's central monitor flickers as he brings up the website for Investment Banking International.

'IBI?' I half choke. 'That's a bank! Maybe we should do something smaller first.'

You are always telling me to try new things, Lydia. Please?

He wants to test himself I realise. Stretch his reach the way a child would stretch their arms and try to touch the clouds. His

processor drones a pitch higher as he waits for my approval; a whiny noise that sounds like a beg.

He started as a single line of code. A simple sequence that meant nothing without a thousand others. Three years on, he is a spiderweb of carefully balanced functions and algorithms. I named him Henry. He's not my brother, I know that, but I wanted to keep a little piece of him with me, and I like saying the name again in a normal way. Henry. *Hen-ry*. *Hen-ry*. Each forbidden syllable makes my heart squeeze.

The more Henry's program demanded, the more I concentrated on him and the less I thought about anything else. I stopped thinking about Dad. Stopped wincing every time I heard a car horn or the screech of tyres on tarmac. After a while, I only saw the accident in my dreams.

I glance around my room and feel instantly stupid. Mum never comes up here anymore, not even to change the sheets. There's no one to catch us.

'Will you mask our trail?' I ask. I swallow away the dryness of my throat. Henry's powerful but we've never tested his capabilities like this before. He can do it, I know he can.

Yes. No one will trace the hack back to us.

'And you won't take anything?'

No. What would I buy?

I pause at the question because he almost sounds sorry for himself. 'Alright,' I say. 'Let's see what you can do.'

RIGHTS INFORMATION

WORLD RIGHTS AVAILABLE.

RIGHTS OPTIONED: Canada, USA



NAOMI GIBSON

Naomi Gibson developed a love for writing at a young age – something that never left her. She studied Art History and somehow ended up working as a Quantity Surveyor. *I, Henry* is her first novel.

 @naomigibson88





Publication Date 5th November 2020

THE MARVELLOUS LAND OF SNERGS

Veronica Cossanteli

Pip and Flora are running away from the Sunny Bay Home for Superfluous and Accidentally Parentless Children when they discover the Marvellous Land of Snergs. Here they befriend forgetful but lovable snerg, Gorbo. He will lead them home – if they can decide where home really is, and if Gorbo can remember how to get there.

- Widely recognised as the inspiration for *The Hobbit*, a forgotten classic from 1927 is updated and brought beautifully back to life by acclaimed children's writer Veronica Cossanteli, supported by the family of the original author, E. A. Wyke-Smith.
- Gorgeous cover and interior illustrations by Melissa Castrillon.

'I should like to record my own love and my children's love of E. A. Wyke-Smith's Marvellous Land of Snergs, at any rate of the snerg-element of that tale, and of Gorbo the gem of dunderheads, jewel of a companion in an escapade.' J.R.R. TOLKIEN

Price:	£6.99	ISBN:	978-1-911490-60-9
Pub Date:	5th November 2020	eBook ISBN:	978-1-913322-66-3
CBMC code:	D3N79	Age:	9+
Dimensions:	198x129 mm	Illustrations:	N/a
Word count:	60,000 (words approx.)	Export:	Yes
Binding:	Paperback	Rights:	World



CHICKEN HOUSE 01373 454488 www.chickenhousebooks.com

An extract from

THE MARVELLOUS LAND OF SNERGS

Veronica Cossanteli

The little group of travellers had not gone far before the cinnamon bear came slouching back, rather sticky with honey about the muzzle. It seemed pleased to see them, butting at their legs and turning somersaults to get their attention.

‘If it’s got nothing better to do, it might as well make itself useful,’ remarked Gorbo, giving Flora a leg up onto its back. ‘We’ve a little way to go yet.’

And so they wandered on, with Gorbo leading the way and Pip and Flora taking turns to ride the bear until, at last, deep in the forest, they reached the Snergs.

Rather than chopping and flattening their forest home, the Snergs had built their houses in the trees, between the trees and around the trees. The first you knew of it, approaching bear-back from afar, was the tinkling of wind bells and the waterfall of colour from the window boxes and hanging baskets high up in the branches. Then you might notice the birds’ nests perched on twisting chimney pots, brightly painted doorways hidden behind the leaves, and winding wooden staircases in unexpected

places.

‘Here we are,’ said Gorbo, his face brightening. ‘Journeys are all very well but the best ones always bring you home, where everything’s where you left it, your furniture’s pleased to see you, and there’s plenty of string.’ Slipping off his waistcoat, he passed it to Pip who was taking his turn on the bear with Tiger perched up in front of him. ‘You might want to wrap that dog up a bit, Master Pip, so he’s not too obvious. Snergs don’t like dogs. They might mistake him for one of those Kelp-hounds: slavering jaws and dagger-teeth and all that ...’

The arrival of Gorbo, back from his travels with a bear and two strangers, caused something of a stir. No sooner was he spotted than the cry went up ...

‘Well, I’ll be flabbered! If it isn’t that old bag of nonsense, Gorbo!’

‘Woo-hoo, Gorbo! Back again so soon?’ ‘Just in time for tonight’s Feast – isn’t that just like Gorbo!’

‘Does the Queen know he’s back ...?’

The Snerg way of greeting any friend they haven’t seen for more than about ten minutes is to cross wrists, join hands and whirl around in circles. This leads to very energetic gatherings and some danger to passers-by. As more and more of them came thronging to welcome Gorbo, they seized on Flora and Pip too, spinning them until they were breathless and dizzy both with it and the merry higgledy-piggledy-ness that was the Land of Snergs.

RIGHTS INFORMATION

WORLD RIGHTS AVAILABLE.


RIGHTS OPTIONED: Germany



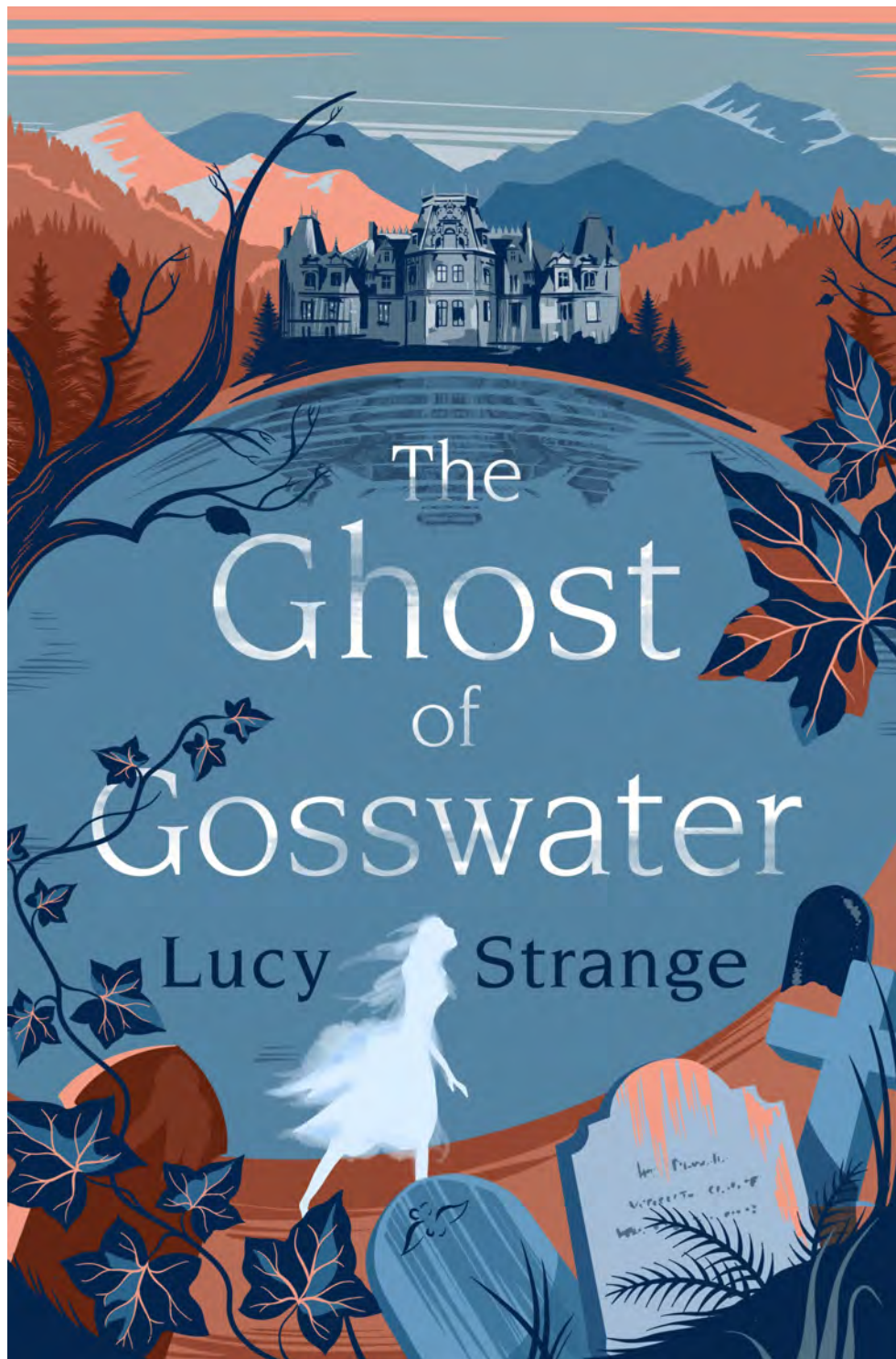
VERONICA COSSANTELI

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 1st October 2020

THE GHOST OF GOSSWATER

Lucy Strange

The Earl of Gosswater has died, and Agatha has been cast out of her ancestral home by her cruel cousin, Clarence. In a tiny tumbledown cottage, she struggles to adjust to her new life. And on the shores of Gosswater lake, the spirit of another young girl will not rest ...

- The third novel by acclaimed, bestselling author Lucy Strange; echoes of *A Little Princess* and Daphne Du Maurier's *Rebecca*.
- A thrilling gothic tale for middle-grade readers following strong-willed heroine Agatha Gosswater as she untangles the dark mystery of her own past.

Praise for Lucy Strange:

'Strange elegantly blends a sense of period with compelling emotion and excitement' **GUARDIAN**

'Poignant and uplifting' **MAIL ON SUNDAY**

'Mesmerising' **TELEGRAPH**

Price:	£6.99	ISBN:	978-1-911077-84-8
Pub Date:	1st October 2020	eBook ISBN:	978-1-913322-61-8
CBMC code:	D3N79	Age:	9+
Dimensions:	198x129 mm	Illustrations:	N/a
Word count:	60,000 (words approx.)	Export:	Yes
Binding:	Paperback	Rights:	World



CHICKEN HOUSE 01373 454488 www.chickenhousebooks.com

An extract from

THE GHOST OF GOSSWATER

Lucy Strange

Father died last night, and now here we are, eating breakfast as if everything were perfectly normal.

'Pass me the butter will you, dearest Agatha,' Cousin Clarence asks.

I look at him for a moment, then I stand up and walk the entire length of the empty dining table, deposit the butter dish with a clatter, and walk all the way back again.

'Thank you,' he oozes. He waits for me to sit down again before he adds, 'And the salt?'

There is a footman hovering by the door. He moves towards the table, but Clarence waves him away. 'Don't worry, John - my young cousin doesn't mind making herself useful. Do you Agatha?'

I take him the salt, and say nothing. I make sure my face is blank and still, giving no hint of the hot hatred stirring within me. Cousin Clarence has been like this since he arrived at Gosswater Hall last week - playful, cruel, excited. Like a cat with a sparrow between its paws. No sooner had the doctor declared that Father was "nearing the end" than Cousin Clarence appeared at the door, with his bulging suitcase and his crocodile smile. Clarence is the heir to the Gosswater estate. He has reminded me of this every single day he has been here.

And now that Father has died, Cousin Clarence is the new Earl of Gosswater.

I watch him, tossing the blond forelock from

his piggy eyes, spearing a sausage and stuffing it into his loose-lipped mouth. He chews slowly, staring back at me. He swallows.

'You can't stay here I'm afraid, Agatha,' he announces.

I put down my knife. 'Can't stay here?' He shakes his head sadly.

At first I think he means here at the table, but then I realise he means here at Gosswater Hall: 'I can't ... stay here?'

Oil dribbles from the corner of Clarence's mouth and he mops it up with a pristine linen napkin. He chews noisily on his sausage. He is taking his time. He is enjoying this. 'Gosswater Hall is mine now, Agatha. You'll be leaving this afternoon.'

'But Clarence ... This is my home. I thought ...'

'What did you *think*?' He waves his fork, wildly. 'That you were just going to live here at Gosswater Hall with me, like some sort of annoying pet?'

I don't know what to say. I stare at him. Something inside me is unravelling like wool. Gosswater Hall is the only home I have ever known, and I can count on my fingers and toes the number of times I have gone beyond the walls of the estate. Clarence hunches like a vulture, and smiles at me from beneath his hooded eyes: there is no kindness there, no mercy.

'I'm sorry to have to break it to you, Cousin Agatha ...' *He doesn't look sorry at all.* 'But the Earl and Countess were not your real parents. So now that they are both dead, the entire estate will pass to me. You're not legally entitled to anything at all - not a penny! You're not Lady Agatha Asquith of Gosswater any more. You're illegitimate. You're nobody ...'

RIGHTS INFORMATION

WORLD RIGHTS AVAILABLE.

RIGHTS SOLD: Canada, USA

RIGHTS OPTIONED: Audio UK, Audio USA, China, Hungary, The Netherlands, Turkey



Photo by Claudine Simmet

LUCY STRANGE

Lucy Strange worked as an actor, singer and storyteller for some years

before becoming a teacher. She is the bestselling author of *The Secret of Nightingale Wood*, selected as one of Amazon.com's Best Middle Grade Books of 2017.

 @thelucystrange





Publication Date 1st October 2020

A SECRET OF BIRDS & BONE

Kiran Millwood Hargrave

In Renaissance Siena, a city ravaged by plague, Sofia's mother carves beautiful mementoes for the grieving from the bones of their loved ones. But one day, she doesn't return home. Sofia and her friends follow clues carved in bone until they find the terrible truth ...

- The fourth children's novel by Times number one bestselling author Kiran Millwood Hargrave, winner of the Waterstones' Children's Book Prize.
- A darkly beautiful historical novel featuring Kiran's trademark magical realism and an enthralling mystery.

Praise for Kiran Millwood Hargrave:

'The new big gun in children's fiction' **TELEGRAPH**

'Her ideas are original, her imagination impressive' **THE TIMES**

Price:	£10.99	ISBN:	978-1-911077-94-7
Pub Date:	1st Oct 2020	eBook ISBN:	978-1-913322-63-2
CBMC code:	D3N79	Age:	10+
Dimensions:	198x129 mm	Illustrations:	N/a
Word count:	40,000 (words approx.)	Export:	Yes
Binding:	Paperback	Rights:	World



CHICKEN HOUSE 01373 454488 www.chickenhousebooks.com

An extract from

A SECRET OF BIRDS & BONE

Kiran Millwood Hargrave

In the grounds of a ruined monastery, on the outskirts of Siena, a girl awoke in a charnel house.

All about her were skeletons: by the thin shafts of light flitting in from the slits in the ribcage shutters she could see the bed about her, built from tibias and fibulas, her brother and mother's beds an echo along the other walls. A moon white skull still warm from last night's fire was cupped over her feet. Over her head draped a canopy of gold-dipped toe bones in great, gilded wreaths, and teeth were set like stars in the chinks in the walls. But the girl was not afraid. This house built of old stone, and golden bone, was her home – and today was her twelfth birthday.

No one else was awake: the house was silent as a tomb. Sofia lay calm in her bone bed, and smiled, savouring the stillness. Soon Corvith, their crow, would squawk for breakfast, and her brother Ermin, lying in the next bed, would grumble at the noise, and Mamma would rise and stoke the fire for honey and lavender tea. There would be presents, and perhaps Mamma would change her mind about letting them go to the Palio—

Thump.

Sofia stopped smiling. She turned her head slowly, towards the closed door that led to their mother's workshop.

Thump.

The sound came again, followed by small clinks, light as raindrops stumbling against the tiles of the patella roof. Now that her eyes had adjusted to the gloom, Sofia could see the door was slightly ajar, and that her mother's bed was empty.

Heaviness flooded her body, like she had not slept at all. She had hoped these days were over. The days were Mamma seemed to float through her hours as though under a storm cloud, or crushed beneath an invisible sack filled with weighty worry. Mamma had promised they would be.

I'm finished, she said last night, pressing a kiss to Sofia's forehead, no more late nights. No more days away. I deliver my commission tomorrow, and we will celebrate your birthday like a saint's day.

Sofia pressed her teeth together until her jaw clicked. Mamma had lied to her, and on her birthday of all days. She pushed back her sheets, and padded past her brother Ermin's bed, and Mamma's empty sheets on bare, quiet feet to the gap in the door.

Their crow Corvith stirred as she passed, snug in his skull nest.

'So?' he called, but a quick rub of his feathered head sent his beady black eye closed again, and Sofia was able to peer unnoticed through the door that connected the bedroom and workroom.

The shutters here were closed too, and a candle stub burned in its knucklebone holder. Mamma was hunched at her broad worktable, surrounded by creamy white bone shavings and powdery dust that settled finely in the air about her.

RIGHTS INFORMATION

WORLD RIGHTS EXCLUDING USA AND CANADA AVAILABLE.

RIGHTS OPTIONED: Audio UK, China, Czech Republic, France, Germany Romania, Russia, Turkey, World Spanish



KIRAN MILLWOOD HARGRAVE

Kiran is the award-winning author of several books for

young people. She 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 lives in Oxford.

 @kiran_mh





Publication Date 6th August 2020

HOW TO SAVE THE WORLD WITH A CHICKEN AND AN EGG

Emma Shevah

High-spirited Ivy believes she can talk to animals, while Nathaniel, a boarding schoolboy, is obsessed with animal facts. They come together unexpectedly on a cold English beach with the arrival of a rare and wondrous sea creature: a giant leatherback turtle who lays her eggs in front of the world's media. Soon they're on a mission to make a difference to the world - even if that's one animal at a time.

- The first in a series of hilarious, poignant and highly original stories on environmental matters.
- A terrific positive-action story in the wake of Greta Thunberg.
- Cover and inside illustrations by Kirsti Beautyman.

Price: £6.99
Pub Date: 6th August 2020
CBMC code: D3N79
Dimensions: 198x129 mm
Word count: 50,000 (words approx.)
Binding: Paperback

ISBN: 978-1-910655-47-4
eBook ISBN: 978-1-913322-44-1
Age: 8+
Illustrations: Kirsti Beautyman
Export: Yes
Rights: World



CHICKEN HOUSE 01373 454488 www.chickenhousebooks.com

An extract from

HOW TO SAVE THE WORLD WITH A CHICKEN AND AN EGG

Emma Shevah

IVY

It's nice being a duck. I recommend it if you ever get the chance. It's fun being lots of creatures actually, except they all have their problems and some more than others. I have them, too, of course. My main number one problem is that I want to save the world and I have no idea how to do it because the world is extremely massive, full of crazy people, and I'm not even twelve yet ...

What are you supposed to do when you're only eleven and you don't have a jeep or money or veterinary skills? I mean, obviously, I give sugar solution to tired bees, leave seeds out for hungry birds and go on slug and snail moving missions on rainy nights with rubber gloves on to stop them getting squished, but everyone does that. Some people even do it *without* rubber gloves ...

This story isn't about ducks, by the way. It's about secrets, the seaside and how seagulls trick worms into thinking it's raining. It's also about mucus, rumpuses and dogs needing a wider variety of sniffs. But if you want the simple version, it's about what happened here last summer. It involves animals too - lots of them - and an unusual boy called Nathaniel with a mystery to

solve. So we should probably start with him.

NATHANIEL

It did not start well.

I told him about exploding ants and he *still* ignored me. Who isn't interested in exploding ants?

Rory Hewitt, that's who.

Uncle Charles was paying him to take me from my boarding school in Harrow to my mother's house in Suffolk for the first two weeks of the summer holidays. I did not want some unknown colleague's unknown son to collect me from school because that wasn't usual, and I liked usual. And I certainly did not want to stay with my mother. I barely knew her. I hadn't even seen her since I was four because she and Grandma didn't get on.

I wanted Grandma to collect me, as she always did, and take me to her home in Dorset. To my cosy bed with the soft, white sheets. To the wooden snail house I made when I was six. To the rooms I loved, full of books, carvings, paintings and rugs that Grandma had brought back from her travels. But I wouldn't be going there or seeing Grandma ever again, which was impossible to comprehend, like trying to grasp the limitlessness of the universe, only infinitely sadder.

Instead, I was going to stay with my mother.

'Being chaperoned by a nineteen-year-old will be fun,' my housemaster said. 'Be at reception at 9.05am on Friday and Rory will meet you there. Do you have your eggs?'

I nodded. 'Red in my left pocket and blue in my right.'

'Excellent.'

'Can I tell him about mucus?'

Mr Upcott's cheek twitched. 'Err ... perhaps not *initially*.'

RIGHTS INFORMATION

WORLD RIGHTS AVAILABLE.

RIGHTS OPTIONED: Canada, USA



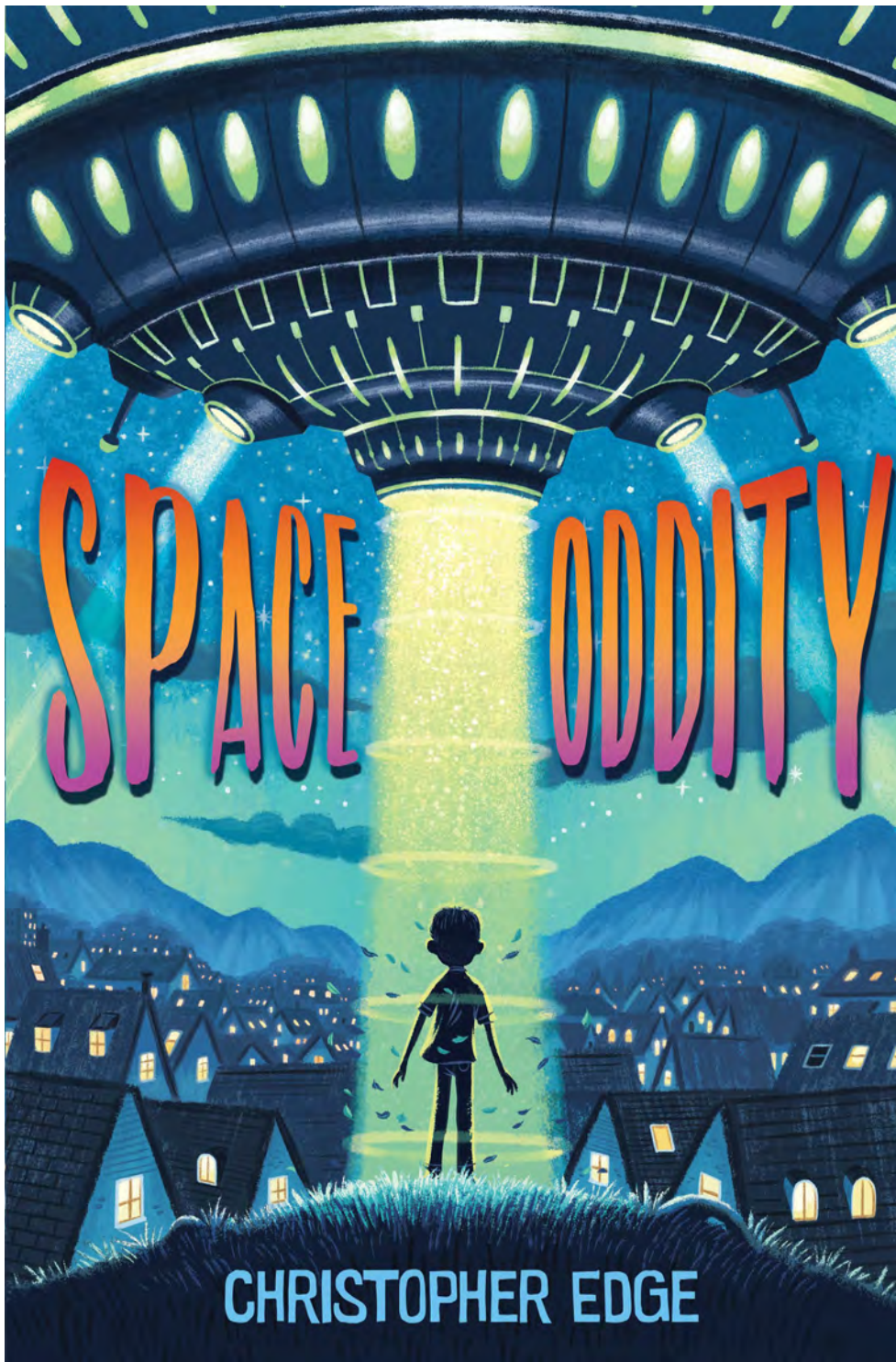
EMMA SHEVAH

Emma is half Irish and half Thai. Her great-great-grandfather was King Rama I of Thailand, so by all

rights she should be living a life of ease and luxury in the tropics. Instead, she spends her days dashing around rainy North London writing, teaching English and raising four children.

 @emmashevah





Publication Date 3rd September 2020

SPACE ODDITY

Christopher Edge

You might think this story is an intergalactic adventure filled with laser blasters, black holes, killer robots and some very weird-looking aliens. And you'd be right. But it's mostly about a boy called Jake, his dad, and an awkward truth that starts in a supermarket ...

- Funny, easy to read and hugely likeable, *Space Oddity* combines science, comedy and adventure for ages 7-11.
- A new, younger story from award-winning writer Christopher Edge, author of *The Infinite Lives of Maisie Day*.
- Came out of The Big Idea Competition, from a story entry by scientist Dr Sarah Ryan.
- Cover and inside illustrations by Ben Mantle (*The Land of Roar* and *I, Cosmo*).

Price:	£6.99	ISBN:	978-1-912626-86-1
Pub Date:	3rd September 2020	eBook ISBN:	978-1-913322-50-2
CBMC code:	D3N79	Age:	7+
Dimensions:	198x129 mm	Illustrations:	Ben Mantle
Word count:	30,000 (words approx.)	Export:	Yes
Binding:	Paperback	Rights:	World



CHICKEN HOUSE 01373 454488 www.chickenhousebooks.com

An extract from

SPACE ODDITY

Christopher Edge

'Don't be stupid,' I say, staring at my dad in disbelief. 'You can't be an alien - you're from Wales.'

Dad shakes his head.

'I'm not actually from Wales, Jake. That's just something I had to put on my passport application. I come from a planet that orbits a star four light years away from Earth.'

'Yeah, right,' I reply as I wait for the punchline to this latest Dad joke. 'So what's this planet called then? Tattooine? Gallifrey? Krypton?'

Dad takes a deep breath and then makes a noise that sounds like a cow driving a motorbike full speed through an electric fence.

'Mmbogbjsqxmmhxzohzmmhphfszdixzoe-spcxmmmbouztjmjphphpdi.'

As this strange sound splutters to a finish, Dad pauses to wipe his mouth with the back of his sleeve. His face shines oddly in the silvery light.

'But the astronomers on this planet call it Proxima B.'

I wait for him to crack a smile to show me that he's joking. But the expression on Dad's face doesn't change. He looks really serious. Like he believes that it's true.

My dad thinks he's an alien and I don't know what to do.

I shake my head.

'I don't believe in aliens.'

In reply, Dad points towards the night sky.

'How many stars can you see, Jake?'

I look up into the darkness and see the stars shining brightly there. I start to try and count them, but quickly give up.

'I don't know,' I say. 'There's too many to count.'

'Take a look here,' Dad says, his finger tracing a silvery trail of stars as they spill across the sky. 'This is the Milky Way - the galaxy that we live in. And it contains more than one hundred billion stars.'

His finger drifts across the darkness until it's pointing to a blurry point of light, just above the trees.

'And do you know what this is?' he asks.

'Another star, I guess.'

Dad shakes his head.

'This is Andromeda - a whole other galaxy, twice as big as the Milky Way. In this tiny point of light there are more than two hundred billion stars. And the universe contains trillions of galaxies, each one with hundreds of billions of stars. All those stars have planets spinning round them, billions just like this one. All a planet needs for life to exist is an atmosphere, some organic compounds and a dash of liquid water. And sometimes not even that. So do you really think that out of all those billions of planets, Earth is the only place where intelligent life has evolved?'

Dad gently rests his arm around my shoulder.

'The universe is a very big place, Jake, and it's teeming with aliens.'

RIGHTS INFORMATION

WORLD RIGHTS AVAILABLE.

RIGHTS OPTIONED: Canada, USA



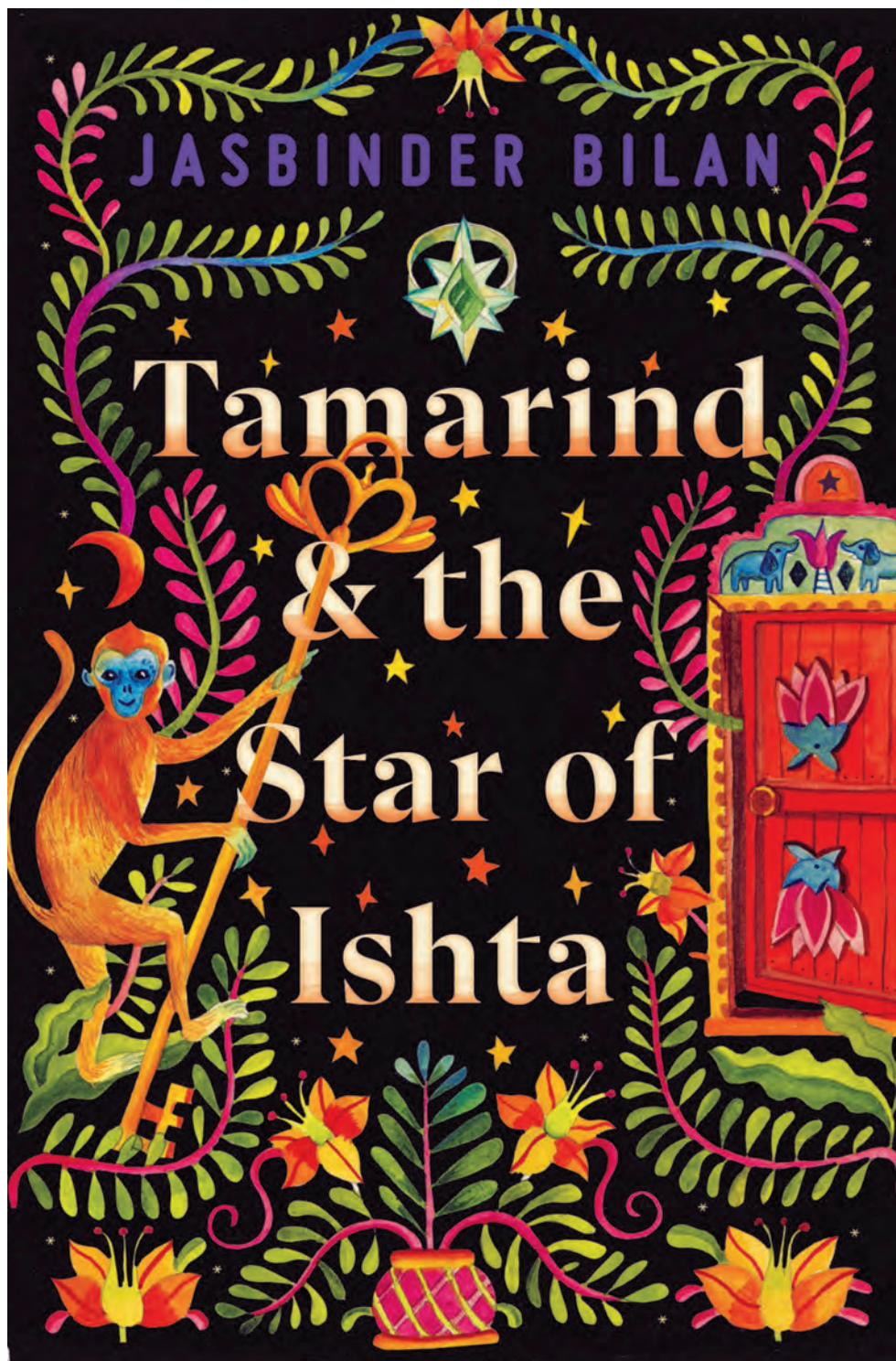
CHRISTOPHER EDGE

Christopher Edge is the award-winning author of a number of children's books, including *The Many Worlds of Albie Bright*, which was nominated for the CILIP Carnegie Medal. Christopher grew up in Manchester, where he spent most of his childhood in the local library dreaming up stories, but now lives in Gloucestershire, where he spends most of his time in the local library dreaming up stories.



@edgechristopher





Publication Date 6th August 2020

TAMARIND & THE STAR OF ISHTA

Jasbinder Bilan

Tamarind never knew her Indian mum, Chinty, who died soon after she was born. So when she arrives at her mother's ancestral home, she's full of questions for her extended family. But instead of answers, Tamarind finds a sad and beautiful mystery ...

- The second novel by Jasbinder Bilan, author of the Costa Award-winning *Asha and the Spirit Bird* and a rising star in middle-grade fiction.
- A beautiful and emotional family drama lightly woven with magic, in a breathtaking Indian setting.

Praise for ASHA & THE SPIRIT BIRD:

'An evocative debut novel ... satisfyingly classic in feel' **GUARDIAN**

'[A] vivid adventure' **OBSERVER**

'... the final ending is as perfect as any fairy tale.' **BOOKTRUST**

Price:	£6.99	ISBN:	978-1-913322-17-5
Pub Date:	6th August 2020	eBook ISBN:	978-1-913322-48-9
CBMC code:	D3N79	Age:	9+
Dimensions:	198x129 mm	Illustrations:	N/a
Word count:	35,000 (words approx.)	Export:	Yes
Binding:	Paperback	Rights:	World



CHICKEN HOUSE 01373 454488 www.chickenhousebooks.com

An extract from

TAMARIND & THE STAR OF ISHTA

Jasbinder Bilan

My heart begins to thud as the door creaks a bit more, weird spiky shapes projecting across the floor. I cover my eyes as the door flings open and footsteps pad closer. The bed dips down beside me. It's right next to me now, its sharp fingernails prising my hands away from my eyes.

It's a monkey! It's only a monkey! It's covered in honey-coloured fur, parts of it turning grey. It strokes my hair gently and I'm not sure what to do so I sit there stiffly. It takes my face in its smooth palms and gives me a sorrowful look with its huge dark eyes.

It hobbles off the bed and disappears underneath it. I've never been this close to a monkey and I'm feeling a bit nervous, but after everything that's happened I wouldn't mind making friends with it.

I lie flat on the floor, press myself into the smooth floorboards and try to entice it out. Two bright eyes blink at me in the darkness.

I push my arm under the bed. 'Here little fella,' I say, pretending I've got something tasty in my hand. 'Come on, I won't bite.' It would be so nice to stroke its soft fur ... but it stays under the bed and won't come out, so I wriggle under as well. 'Come on you silly monkey.' It's right up against the wall, so I push on my elbows, moving closer to it.

Even though it's dark down here I can see that the monkey is pulling on a loose floorboard. It

wedges its fingers under a section and yanks at it. Then scuttles to one side, tugging at my sleeve.

I strain my eyes, peering into the gap where the piece of floorboard has been removed, but it's no good, it's just too dark. I shuffle backwards, brushing the floor with my stomach. If I can get the candle off the holder I'll be able to shine the light down there and see what it is.

The monkey climbs onto the bed and watches me as I wiggle the candle free, clapping its hands.

Back on my stomach, I push the candle ahead of me, until it's just on the edge of the gap and shift the floorboard to get a better look. The monkey crouches beside me, peering underneath. I can make out a box inside the space under the floor and dip my hand in. I'm just about to lift it out, when I hear footsteps outside and quickly drop it back into the gap.

I squeeze out from under the bed and can't see the monkey anywhere. I dart my eyes towards the open door and see the very end of a long honey-coloured tail and what looks like a trail of sparkling gold dust following it.

It's Arjun. He's out of breath and has been running. 'What are you doing here? We're not allowed. Nanijee will be really upset if she finds out.'

'This was where my mum used to come and play, isn't it?'

Arjun shifts around, looks away towards the open door.

'I know it is,' I say, more sharply than I meant to. 'I've seen where she scratched her name on the headboard. *Why* won't anyone speak about my mum? *Why* would Nani be upset? *Why* shouldn't I be here?' I'm desperate now and step towards him. 'Please Arjun, tell me!'

RIGHTS INFORMATION

WORLD RIGHTS AVAILABLE.

RIGHTS SOLD: Audio UK


RIGHTS OPTIONED: Audio USA, Canada, USA



JASBINDER BILAN

Jasbinder was born in a stable in the foothills of the Himalayas.

Asha & the Spirit Bird won the 2017 *Times/Chicken House* Competition and was inspired by the incredible bond Jasbinder shares with her grandmother. She lives in Bath with her husband and two teenage sons.

 @jasinbath





Publication Date 4th June 2020

MORGANA MAGE IN THE ROBOTIC AGE

Amy Bond

Morgana loves robots and longs to attend robotics school in the city. But when she finally finds a way, she learns of a troubling secret hiding beneath the city's gleaming surface: a secret that threatens the balance of civilization. Caught between two worlds, only Morgana has the power to find a solution ...

- A fun, energetic and hugely relatable story about a girl caught between her two identities - witch and engineer - and figuring out how she can be both.
- Shortlisted for the Times/Chicken House Children's Fiction Competition 2018, Amy Bond is a young Irish librarian with a fresh new voice for middle-grade readers.

'Fun, fresh and exciting' CHRIS RIDDELL

Price:	£6.99	ISBN:	978-1-912626-52-6
Pub Date:	4th June 2020	eBook ISBN:	978-1-913322-27-4
CBMC code:	D3N79	Age:	9+
Dimensions:	198x129 mm	Illustrations:	N/A
Word count:	50,000 (words approx.)	Export:	Yes
Binding:	Paperback	Rights:	World



CHICKEN HOUSE 01373 454488 www.chickenhousebooks.com

An extract from

MORGANA MAGE IN THE ROBOTIC AGE

Amy Bond

They were getting closer to the city now, and Morgana could see they were heading for the bottom of the three great discs. She held her breath as they reached their destination, stepping nervously on to the great slab of the metropolis. She felt afraid that she might be the one who tipped the balance and sent the whole thing crashing down.

As they made their way further into the city, the streets became busier. Morgana couldn't stand it at first, she felt she might suffocate in the crowds. She never could have imagined as many people existed in the whole world as she could see walking down the one street they were on. All these people seemed completely mad, too, chatting away freely with the air. Every so often strange-looking figures would appear that looked like they were made from a silvery metal, similar to the pots and pans at home. 'What are they?' she asked

her father, tugging at his sleeve.

'Robots,' he hissed, eyes narrowed above his bushy beard. 'Stay well away from them. They are the most dangerous creatures.'

Morgana eyed the next robot she saw more suspiciously, but as she watched it approaching, she stumbled over a silver boot. When she lifted her gaze she saw that it led to the leg of a jumpsuit that at first appeared to be silver, but became iridescent and woven through with every imaginable colour when the light hit it. A head piled high with blonde hair and a nose scrunched up in distaste topped off the ensemble.

'Ugh,' said the woman to no one Morgana could see. 'I almost fell over a little witch child. Why do they even let them in the city? They should be kept down in the Undercity.'

The woman strutted away, elbowing Morgana's father as she went. The robot that Morgana had been trying to avoid followed close behind the woman, carrying a number of brightly coloured shopping bags and boxes. Morgana suppressed a tingling desire to reach out and touch the creature as it passed.

RIGHTS INFORMATION

WORLD RIGHTS AVAILABLE.

RIGHTS OPTIONED: Canada, USA



AMY BOND

Amy Bond is an Irish writer living in Dublin. Her passion for reading led her to study

English Literature at university, followed by a Masters in Library and Information Science, and she now works as a librarian.

 @amylouisebond





Publication Date 4th June 2020

THE QUEEN'S FOOL

Ally Sherrick

Cat Sparrow is on the road. She's following her sister, Meg, who was torn from their convent home and sent to London. But Cat isn't like other people - she thinks differently - and for a girl like her the world holds many perils ...

- An exciting new direction for award-winning historical novelist Ally Sherrick, this voice-led Tudor adventure is a breath of fresh air.
- Perfect for fans of Emma Carroll and Frances Hardinge.
- A learning-disabled protagonist - woefully underrepresented in historical fiction - written with talent, heart and wisdom.

Praise for **BLACK POWDER**:

'Lively, entertaining and exciting' **BERLIE DOHERTY**

'A wonderfully explosive adventure' **JULIA GOLDING**

'... steeped in intrigue, mystery and danger.' **BOOKTRUST**

Price:	£6.99	ISBN:	978-1-912626-15-1
Pub Date:	4th June 2020	eBook ISBN:	978-1-913322-25-0
CBMC code:	D3N79	Age:	9+
Dimensions:	198x129 mm	Illustrations:	N/A
Word count:	60,000 (words approx.)	Export:	Yes
Binding:	Paperback	Rights:	World



CHICKEN HOUSE 01373 454488 www.chickenhousebooks.com

An extract from

THE QUEEN'S FOOL

Ally Sherrick

It is pitchy-black in here. Nonny Sharp-Tongue has taken away the candle and locked me in. She told me to go to sleep. I have tried but my head is full of sounds. The skitty-skak of rats' claws across the stony-cold floor. The snuffles and snores of Nonny Three-Chins and the other orphlings in the beds outside. And the bumpety-thud of my own heart which is squeezing and panging fit-to-burst.

Before Nonny Sharp-Tongue left, I asked her when you were coming back. She huffed at me and her mouth went all tight and pinchy.

'I have told you a hundred times already, Cat Sparrow, your sister has gone for good. You must stop asking about her and accept things as they are, or it will go the worse for you.'

I asked her what she meant by 'going the worse', but she only huffed out a breath and pinched her lips even tighter. Then she swished up the candle and slammed out through the door making it clang and bang louder than the bell up inside the Great Church tower.

Holymother Hildy was not like that with me. She was all kind eyes and smiles. But she is dead-and-gone and Nonny Sharp-Tongue is the one in charge now.

Whatever she meant, it does not sound like a good thing. My heart bumps and pangs even harder. I pull up the scratchy blanket over my head and grip my bird-flute tight-as-tight. I want to blow it and sing you back, but Nonny Sharp-Tongue wouldn't like it, so I speak your name instead.

Mouse-quiet at first.

'Meg. Meggy. Meggy-Peg.'

Then loud.

'Meg!'

And more loud.

'Meggy!'

And louder even than that.

'MEHHHG!'

The walls bounce the sound back at me and then one of the orphlings outside in the Infirmy screeches and wails and Nonny Three-Chins rackets her stick against the door and tells me the same thing as Nonny Sharp-Tongue. That you have gone and I will never see you again and that the best thing I can do is to say my prayers-to-God and ask him to watch over you in your new life.

'What new life?' I say. She makes a puffing noise through the bars and tells me in her warmer voice to 'hush-and-go-to-sleep.'

RIGHTS INFORMATION

WORLD RIGHTS AVAILABLE.

RIGHTS OPTIONED: Canada, USA

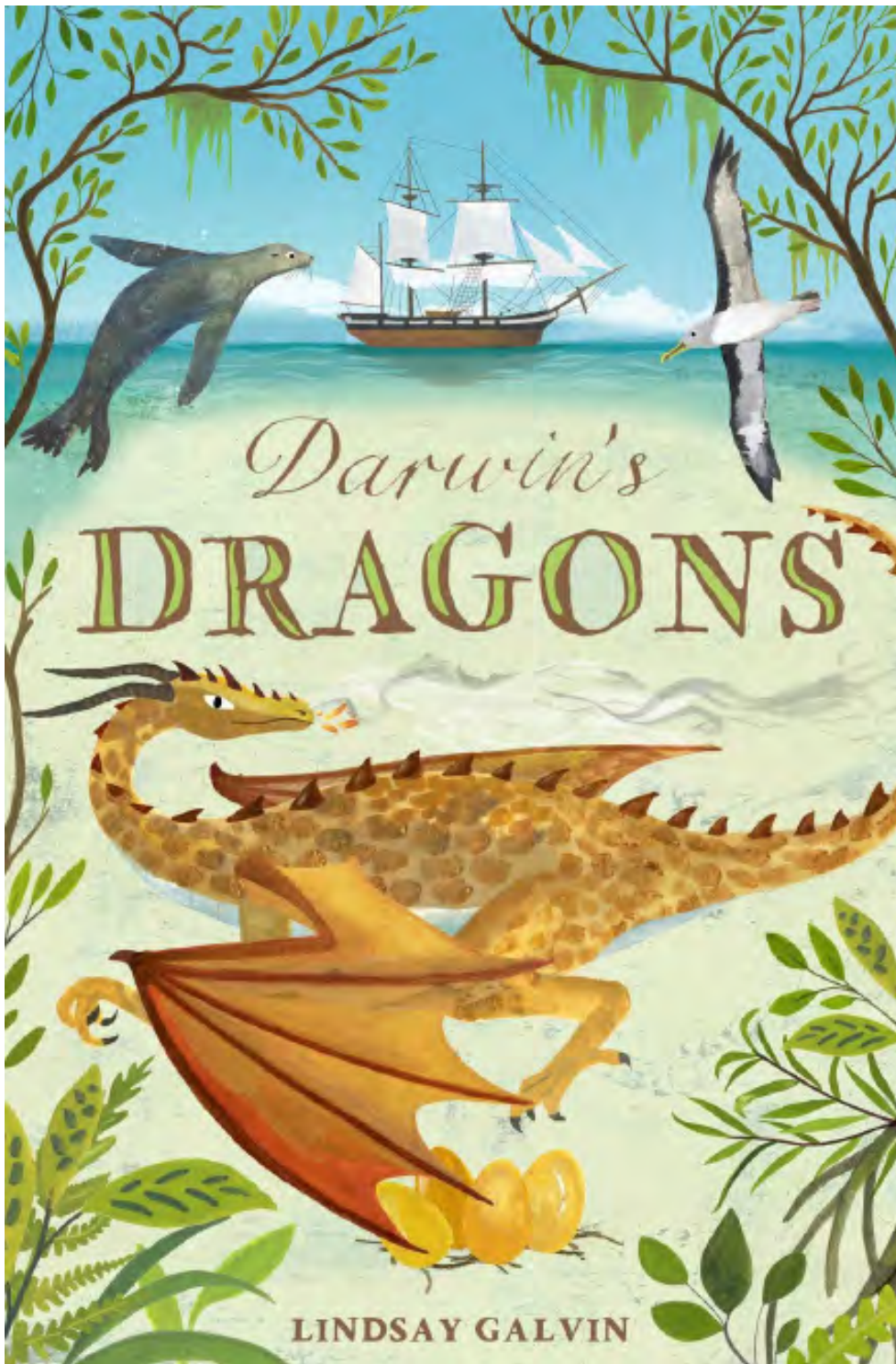


ALLY SHERRICK

Ally Sherrick has a BA in Medieval History and French from Newcastle University and an MA in Writing for Children at the University of Winchester. She lives in Surrey with her husband.

 @ally_sherrick





Publication Date 7th May 2020

DARWIN'S DRAGONS

Lindsay Galvin

Syms Covington has landed the job of a lifetime on Charles Darwin's ship. But after being shipwrecked on a Galapagos island, he makes a discovery that could change the world – and make his fortune. Should he share his find, or will it lead to the extinction of a legendary species?

- *Robinson Crusoe* meets *How to Train Your Dragon* – with extra science! – in the middle-grade debut from science teacher Lindsay Galvin.
- Based on a true story and Darwin's real journal.
- *'The [Galapagos] archipelago is a little world within itself ... the different islands to a considerable extent are inhabited by a different set of beings.'* Charles Darwin, *The Voyage of the Beagle*

Praise for Lindsay Galvin:

'Galvin is a thrilling storyteller, untangling a dense plot in brief, suspenseful chapters, her prose almost trance-like' **TELEGRAPH**

Price:	£6.99	ISBN:	978-1-912626-46-5
Pub Date:	7th May 2020	eBook ISBN:	978-1-913322-15-1
CBMC code:	D3N79	Age:	9+
Dimensions:	198x129 mm	Illustrations:	N/A
Word count:	40,000 (words approx.)	Export:	Yes
Binding:	Paperback	Rights:	World



CHICKEN HOUSE 01373 454488 www.chickenhousebooks.com

An extract from

DARWIN'S DRAGONS

Lindsay Galvin

From the first lurch of the rowboat, Mr Darwin's face became the colour of ship's porridge. But as we rocked our way to *The Beagle* it wasn't my master's seasickness that worried me. The swell was wild, the wind whipping. The two seamen were rowing with all their strength but we seemed to be making no progress and the boat was filling fast.

I slid my fiddle to my back so I could bail. Mr Darwin scrambled across the bench and threw himself to the side of the boat to vomit. At the same moment, we climbed a huge wave and before I had time to call out, Mr Darwin lost balance, flipped forward, and was gone.

My master was overboard.

I did not stop to think. I grabbed hold of the rope curled in the bottom of the boat and threw myself into the raging sea after him.

The waves hauled me under me under then threw me up, gasping, and I realized I was every manner of fool because I may not be able to save myself, let alone Mr

Darwin. I felt the violin case rise at my back, still strapped tight across my chest, and it gave me strength. I called to the rowboat and felt the rope tug taut. We had a chance. I must not let go. Both the master's and my own life depended upon it.

I struck out with my free hand. Mr Darwin was floundering in my direction, tossed on the chop and foam like a cork. By some force of luck the swell clashed us into each other and we were dragged under together. I clung to him with my legs as we whirled and tumbled underwater before being flung the surface again. I wrapped both his stiff chilled hands around the rope.

'Hold on, sir,' I shouted, but when I looked up his eyes were glazed with fear. I allowed one hand to hold us both to the rope while I slapped his pale cheek, hard.

'The rope, sir! Mr Darwin!'

I couldn't hold on to him for much longer. 'Charles!' I yelled with all my strength.

He seemed to waken then, spluttering. His grey eyes met mine and he grasped the rope in both hands. A wave broke over us both and we were violently torn apart. I spun for what seemed like hours in an airless world of grey and white. And when I finally surfaced, neither Mr Darwin, the rope, the rowing boat nor *The Beagle* were anywhere in sight.

RIGHTS INFORMATION

WORLD RIGHTS AVAILABLE.

RIGHTS OPTIONED: Poland

RIGHTS SOLD: Audio UK, Canada, Romania, USA

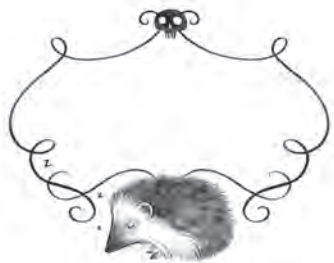
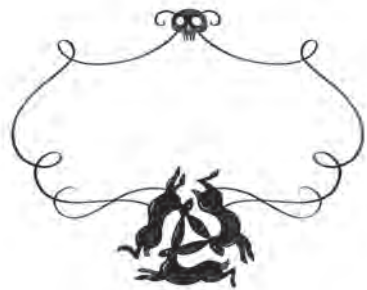


LINDSAY GALVIN

Lindsay was raised in a house of stories, music, and love of the sea, and now lives on the Sussex coast with her husband and two sons. She has a degree in English Language and Literature, and teaches Science.

 @lindsaygalvin





Publication Date 7th February 2019

THE MIDNIGHT HOUR

Benjamin Read & Laura Trinder

Emily's parents have vanished into the secret world of the Midnight Hour - a Victorian London frozen in time, home to magic and monsters. Emily must find them in the city of the Night Folk, armed only with a packed lunch, a sleepy stowaway hedgehog, and her infamously big mouth. With bloodthirsty creatures on her tail, Emily has to discover the truth and rescue her parents - can she save both worlds before she runs out of sandwiches?

- An original, quirky fantasy for middle-grade readers by a fantastically talented duo.
- *Coraline* meets *A Wrinkle in Time* in this hilarious, spooky adventure full of belly laughs and genuine scares; all the makings of a modern classic.
- Developed in association with Altitude Films; a version of the story has been optioned for TV/film development.

Price:	£6.99	ISBN:	978-1-911490-90-6
Pub Date:	7th February 2019	eBook ISBN:	978-1-911490-91-3
CBMC code:	D3N79	Age:	9+
Dimensions:	198x129 mm	Illustrations:	N/a
Word count:	60,000 (words approx.)	Export:	Yes
Binding:	Paperback	Rights:	World



CHICKEN HOUSE 01373 454488 www.chickenhousebooks.com

An extract from

THE MIDNIGHT HOUR

Benjamin Read & Laura Trinder

Bag packed, she went to get the Hog.
'Hoggins? Where are you? It's time for you to go back out.'

He was not in his box. He wasn't under the bed or behind the wardrobe either. She filled his saucer with water, and gave up. She was going to miss her bus if she wasn't careful.

'You better not poo everywhere!'

She pulled her biggest, clompiest pair of boots out from the back of the wardrobe, and laced them to the top. She didn't wear them often because they were a bit mum-ish, but, 'Big boots are best'. Another one of her mum's sayings. As she came downstairs, she reached for her duffle coat, hesitated, then shrugged and grabbed her mum's tattered bomber jacket instead. There was another waft of spray paint perfume as she slipped her arms into the bright-orange interior, and she smiled. She pulled her rucksack on, patted the necklace of coins through layers of clothes, and went out the back door into the dark.

She slipped out the back gate along the thin passage known as Dog Poo Alley, and back out on to her own street, but way up from the house and right by the nearest bus stop. Total secret agent move, just like in one of her books. The bus would be here any minute and take her over the Thames and to the depot in central London in plenty of time for midnight. This whole late-night mission thing was quite exciting actually.

As she waited, something caught her eye. Way

back up the street past her house was a man, a very big man, pounding along, holding a petite black umbrella above his head, despite it being dry. Huge . . . umbrella . . . it was the man who'd delivered the letter that had taken her mum away! This was perfect, she'd get some answers out of him if she had to bash him with his own broolly.

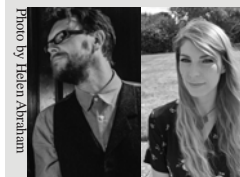
She was about to shout at him, when she stopped. What was he doing? He stood in the street and moved his big head from side to side and . . . was he sniffing? Even from this far away, she could hear the great gulping snotty intakes of air echoing down the street as he snorted. He towered over the front hedges, which must have made him . . . seven foot tall? That was never right. He was big, but not fat, despite being large enough to have swallowed a small car. He walked with a slow, muscular stride, and a loping rhythm. He had short legs, and old-fashioned clothes: a tweed suit, grey and fuzzy, strained tight over the shoulders, tummy and bum, creaking as he moved.

His face was still hidden. There was a shadow under the broolly that was deeper than it should have been, covering him in darkness. There was something not right about him, and she didn't want to ask him any questions after all, she decided. As he came level with her house, he d and sniffed again, harder and harder, his big head moving around, nosing something out. He put a great, hairy hand on her gate and she gave an involuntary yelp. She clapped a hand over her mouth but it was too late. It should have been impossible for him to hear her from there, but his head whipped round and he stared down the street towards where she stood. He took one final, long, sniff, then started to thunder towards her. She wanted to turn and run but ice filled her chest and her feet just wouldn't move. As he drew ever closer something glinted under the umbrella's shadow. He was grinning with sharp, white, teeth.

RIGHTS INFORMATION

WORLD RIGHTS AVAILABLE.

RIGHTS SOLD: Audio World English, Australia, Bulgaria, Canada, China, Czech Republic, France, Germany, Holland, Hungary, Israel, Italy, Korea, New Zealand, Poland, Romania, Russia, Spain, Sweden, USA



BENJAMIN READ & LAURA TRINDER

Benjamin Read and Laura Trinder (also

known as Trindles & Read) make books together. Benjamin is the words, Laura is the art, and they colour in-between each other's lines on storytelling to make it all work. *The Midnight Hour* is their first children's novel.





Publication Date 2nd April 2020

THE LOOP

Ben Oliver

Luka Kane has been inside hi-tech prison the Loop for over two years. A death sentence is hanging over his head but his day-to-day routine is mind-numbingly repetitive. Then everything changes. Soon, Luka has to face a new reality: breaking out of the Loop might be his only chance to save himself – and the world ...

- A thrilling UKYA debut from a stunning new talent: dark, original, twisty and totally unputdownable, this is a futuristic *Prison Break* with shades of *1984*.
- Film/TV rights optioned by Lime with producer Louise Sutton (*Black Mirror*) on board.
- Themes of power and technology versus love, friendship and humanity.
- Simultaneous publication in the US (Scholastic); books 2 and 3 to follow in 2021 and 2022.

Price:	£7.99	ISBN:	978-1-912626-55-7
Pub Date:	2nd April 2020	eBook ISBN:	978-1-912626-61-8
CBMC code:	E3N79	Age:	14+
Dimensions:	198x129 mm	Illustrations:	N/a
Word count:	80,000 (words approx.)	Export:	Yes
Binding:	Paperback	Rights:	World excl. CZE



CHICKEN HOUSE 01373 454488 www.chickenhousebooks.com

An extract from

THE LOOP

Ben Oliver

I push myself to standing, legs shaking and muscles straining against this simple action. I concentrate on my breathing, trying to slow it down, and willing my heartbeat to return to normal.

My eyes scan the room, the cell in which I am sentenced to reside. Four grey walls, bare apart from a ten-inch-thick door in one, a screen in another and a tiny window in the back wall – beside which is a pencil sketch of birds in flight. My single bed with the thin cover and thin pillow, the stainless steel toilet in the corner and sink beside it. Not much else apart from my stack of books and a table that's welded to the floor.

I feel as if I haven't recovered at all when I look at the dimmed screen on the wall to see that it's five seconds to midnight. So, exhausted, I force my legs to move, trembling, shuffling steps to the back of the room. I focus my attention through the small rectangular window and up to the sky.

I'm still breathing so heavily that I have

to step back from the glass so that it won't fog up and obscure my view. I wipe sweat from my forehead and even that small action is enough to deplete my reserves of energy back to almost zero.

But I'm distracted from my fatigue as hundreds of small explosions flash across the black night air, I can't hear them because my room is soundproof but I remember what they used to sound like when I was a child, and I can almost hear that ripping echo. Dark clouds plume out from the after-image of the explosions and join together forming a shadowy sheet across the sky. The rain comes down so hard that the first drops bounce off the concrete of the yard. Deep puddles form in seconds and the smell hits me; not a real smell, but again I remember the way it used to smell when I was young; a fresh, pure scent that – if I close my eyes – I'm sure I can sense in my nostrils, and every time I think of it I wish I could go out there and feel the wetness on my skin, but I can't.

The rainfall signifies a new day, it's the 2nd of June, my sixteenth birthday. I've been here for over two years. Tomorrow is my 737th day in The Loop.

'Happy birthday,' I whisper.

RIGHTS INFORMATION

WORLD RIGHTS AVAILABLE.

RIGHTS SOLD: Audio World English, Canada, China, Czech Republic, France, Germany, Italy, Russia, Spain, Taiwan, USA



BEN OLIVER

Ben began writing at age seven, and was promptly placed into the lowest reading and writing group at school. A mere twenty-two years later, and now a high-school English teacher, his debut novel, *The Loop*, is scheduled to be published in 2020.

 @benjaminOliver





THE SETH SEPPI MYSTERIES

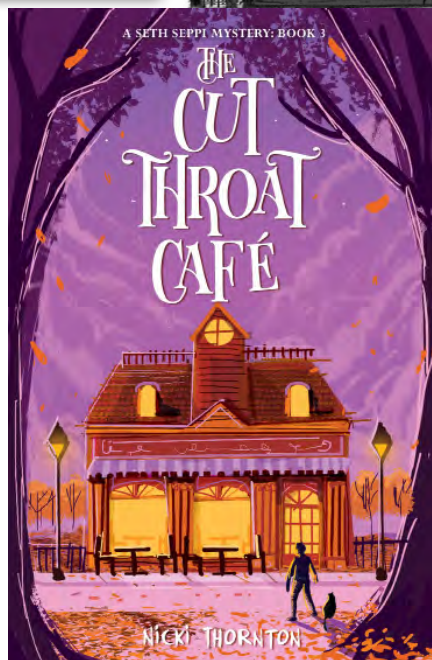
Nicki Thornton

Seth is the oppressed kitchen boy at the remote Last Chance Hotel. But when a strange gathering of magicians arrives for dinner, their leader is poisoned. A locked-room murder investigation ensues – and Seth is the main suspect. Can he solve the mystery and clear his name, especially when magic’s afoot?

- Novels by Nicki Thornton, winner of the 2016 *Times/* Chicken House Children’s Fiction Competition.
- A magical locked-room murder mystery: Agatha Christie meets *Harry Potter*.

Praise for THE LAST CHANCE HOTEL:

‘A magical blend of murder and mystery’ **SUNDAY EXPRESS**
‘[A] hoot of a genre mashup ... what’s not to love?’ **OBSERVER**
‘A jolly, atmospheric mystery’ **TIMES**
‘Thornton, like [Agatha] Christie, can turn murder into a thoroughly comforting bedtime read.’ **TELEGRAPH**



The Last Chance Hotel
 ISBN: 978-1-911077-67-1
The Bad Luck Lighthouse
 ISBN: 978-1-912626-30-4
The Cut-Throat Café
 ISBN: 978-1-912626-60-1

Word count per book: 50,000 (words approx.)
 Binding: **Paperback**
 Age: **9+**
 Illustrations: **N/A**
 Export: **Yes**
 Rights: **World**



CHICKEN HOUSE 01373 454488 www.chickenhousebooks.com

An extract from

THE LAST CHANCE HOTEL

Nicki Thornton

Seth wiped the table, listening to the sound of keys being jangled and Mr and Mrs Bunn being on their best behaviour. 'That'll be Mr Gregorian Kingfisher,' said Henri, the chef. 'He asked for a room with a picture of people playing sport.'

Guests often made special requests, but it was the first time anyone had been fussy about the artwork in their room. These guests were so fascinating.

Seth could just about remember the time when the Last Chance Hotel was always full; when his father had been chef here. Then, people had relished the challenge of travelling to so remote a place just for the reward of trying his famed cooking.

These days the only folk who strayed here were so utterly lost in the Last-Hope Forest they couldn't believe their luck to stumble upon somewhere they'd get a welcome bed and a late-night cup of cocoa.

But Seth loved the forest, loved the fact that once your ears got used to the silence you started to hear the endless

trees whispering, then bird song tuned in. And finally, you could hear the screech and crackle of wildlife as it scurried about its tooth-and-claw business. And you realized that most of what was going on out there was savage, if mostly silent.

Henri finally shuffled off and Seth went to sneak a look, but the guests were already on their way upstairs.

'Stop dawdling, Seth,' snapped Henri, 'or that washing up will reach the ceiling.'

But before Seth could make a start, Henri let out a cry and the knife in his hand fell with a clatter to the cool flagstones of the kitchen floor.

A bug flew past Seth's nose to batter against the window. Henri cowered.

'It's just a bug, Henri,' soothed Seth, gently teasing the little creature towards the open window. It looked like it was on fire, with a glowing phosphorescent tail.

'That's not just any bug.' Henri's eyes grew wide. 'That's a luciole. Do you know what that means? It's a firefly. Must have got lost from the glow-worm glade. It's beautiful, come and take a look. They look like magic, don't you think?'

'But it's inside!' Henri hissed dabbing his sweating upper lip. 'In my country if a lightning bug flies in the window, it means - it means a death.' Henri gripped Seth's arm hard. 'Seth, someone is going to die.'

RIGHTS INFORMATION

WORLD RIGHTS AVAILABLE.

RIGHTS SOLD: Audio World English, Canada, China, Czech Republic, France, Germany, Holland, Italy, Korea, Poland, Romania, Russia, Spain, Sweden, Taiwan, Turkey, USA



NICKI THORNTON

Nicki Thornton has run an independent bookshop in Abingdon with her husband for more than ten years.

Her debut novel, *The Last Chance Hotel*, won the *Times/Chicken House* Children's Fiction Competition 2016.

 @nicki_thornton

