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# SKOOP BOOKS

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**BOOKTOK**  
**All You Need**  
**to Know**

**Nick**  
**Harkaway**  
**Le Carré's**  
**Son Has a**  
**New**  
**Release**

**Milk and**  
**Honey**  
**by Rupi Kaur**

• **Artificial**  
**Storytelling:**  
**The Use of AI**  
**in**  
**Children's**  
**Books**  
•

**All you need to know from london news,**  
**events, book releases and more!**





## CONTRIBUTORS



**Editor & Creative**  
**Beatrice**

Third-year journalism student at London Metropolitan University. She began her reporting career with Il Manifesto, covering stories from London. Now, she's focusing on environmental journalism.



**Editor & Reporter**  
**Edimar**

Third-year journalism student at London Metropolitan University, where he served as Sports Editor for the Holloway Express. Earned him a spot with the Sky News team during the general elections.



**Features Editor & Reporter**  
**Klaudia**

Highly driven by literature with an interest in fashion, Klaudia completed a work placement with a skincare beauty company, where she manage all their written materials.



**Editor & Reporter**  
**Ali Suker**

During his London Met work experience for the Camden New Journal and Westminster Extra, Ali gained valuable reporting skills.

# Latest top events!

## Books

**Sunday, February 16** - free  
Harrow women's Book Club  
The Palm House

**Sunday, February 16**  
Emily's Hampstead Heath Walking Book Club - February - Kitchen

**Tuesday, March 4**  
Queers for Books!  
An LGBTQ+ book club in SE London celebrating community, intersectionality and radical reading!

## Music

**Friday, February 14**  
Brat Pop - The Anti-Valentines Party  
This Valentine's, forget the flowers and chocolates

**Sunday, February 23**  
Free Event - Sunday Sessions: Jazz meets Classical with Ophelia Gordon

**Saturday, 8 February**  
Freaky Deaky: Pop, Rap & R&B  
Ready to get FREAKY - the Book Club

## Live Events

**Friday, february 7** -  
Immersive Treasure Hunt Adventure - City of London's Secrets

**Friday, 21 February**  
The Lord Of The Rings Quiz  
You Shall Not Pass.... Brixton Jamm

**Tuesday, March 18**  
Best of Irish Comedy - March 18th!  
The very best in Irish comedy return to Bethnal Green for special night of stand-up.

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# Saint Valentine's gift ideas

## For Book Lovers

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## Editor's Letter

Dear Readers,

We're beyond excited to welcome you to the very first issue of our magazine! This month, we're diving into the world of book lovers—yes, that means you! It's been quite the adventure here at the SKOOB newsroom, but we're thrilled to finally share the fruits of our labour with you. We truly hope you enjoy what we've created.

Our top priority has been bringing you the latest and greatest in the literary world. In this issue, you'll find a roundup of the hottest new releases of 2025.

Plus we have a lot more for you to enjoy.

So sit back, relax, and get ready to discover your next great read!

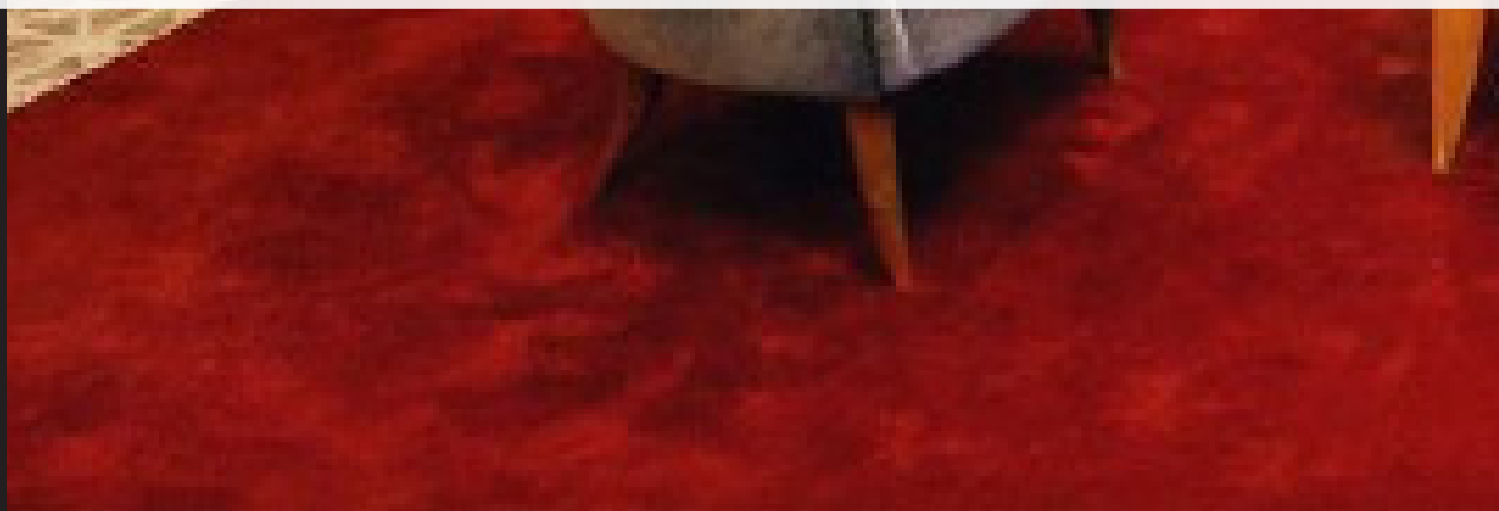
Happy reading,

Beatrice Morandi  
Editor-in-Chief





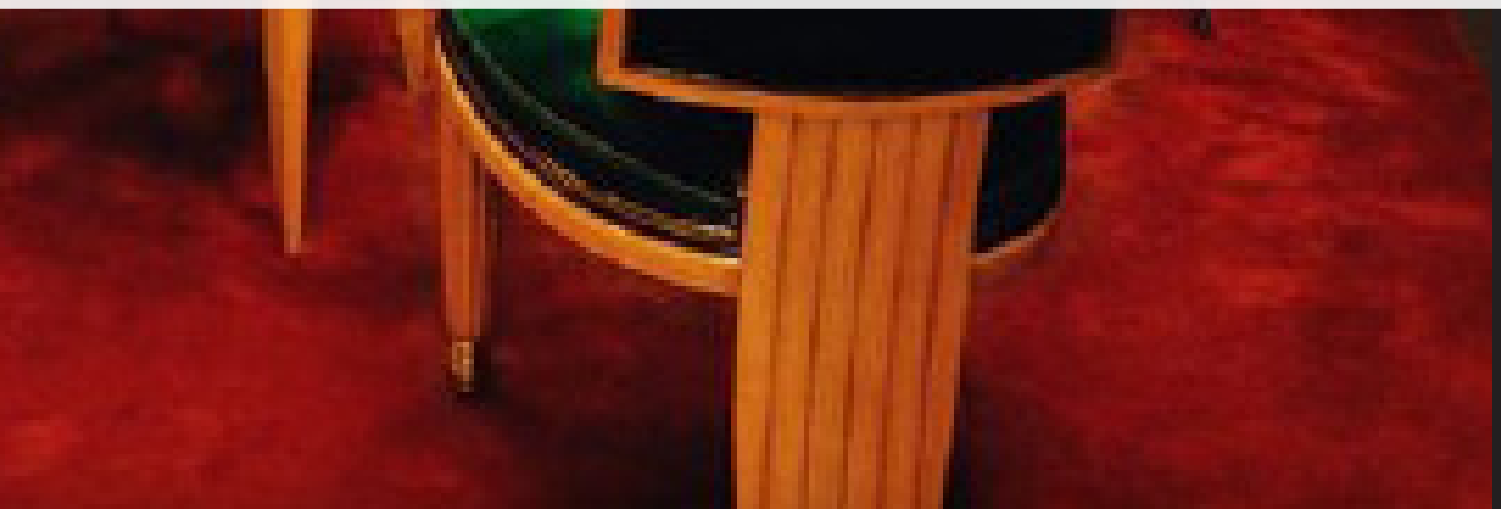
**NEWS**








- **The heart of cinema: why a strong script defines a great movie**
- **The love you least expect: Sarah Adams delivers in Beg, Borrow or Steal**
- **Artificial Storytelling: The Use of AI in Children's Books**
- **Five years since the passing of Sir. Roger Scruton: A legacy of thoughts**





# The heart of cinema strong script defines movie

By Beatrice Morandi

**S**torytelling in cinema is a craft that is built on knowledge and passion. That's why filmmakers, writers, and producers came together in the vibrant district of Shoreditch, North East London recently for an indie film networking seminar.


Convened by Cine Circle, the seminar-cum- film distribution event was held by Cine Circle and featured notable speakers such as producer, director, and writer Sachin Ladva, who

emphasised a crucial yet often overlooked element of filmmaking: the script.

"The script is the most important part of a movie from my experience," Ladva said. "If you look at Bollywood movies, the photography is often very basic, but their scripts make all the difference." His insights shed light on an industry that thrives on storytelling rather than high-end visual aesthetics. Bollywood, one of the largest film industries in the world, has

long been known for its compelling narratives that captivate audiences despite sometimes lacking the grand cinematography of Hollywood.

Budget constraints should never hinder a film's potential if the script is strong, Ladva said. "For me, you could have the worst low budget ever, but if a script is good, you're going to take your audience with you. It's not just about how it's written but also about the story behind it and how it's shaped."



# ema: why a ines a great

His words resonated deeply with the audience of independent filmmakers, many of whom struggle with limited financial resources but dream of crafting meaningful stories that leave an impact. Ladva's perspective reinforced the idea that a well-written script is the foundation upon which all other cinematic elements are built.

## **The Power of a Script in Defining a Movie**

The discussion on the importance of scripts did not end with Ladva's remarks. "Look inside Harry Potter—the script is what makes the magic, especially in the last movies when the characters are grown up and so is their audience," said David Rought, a filmmaker from Bristol.

Rought highlighted how the storytelling evolved throughout the series, adapting to the maturity of both the characters

and the viewers. "Sometimes you don't necessarily need an outstanding script, but a strong one helps define the lines of a good movie." While some films rely on action, visuals, or star power, the script remains the guiding force that shapes the story and characters in a way that connects with audiences on an emotional level, he said.

Whether it's the intricate storytelling in *The Godfather*, the heart-wrenching dialogues in *Schindler's List*, or the imaginative world-building in *Harry Potter*, every great movie begins with a compelling script.

The script is more than just words on a page, the filmmakers said, it is the vision, the soul, and the blueprint of a film. It shapes the characters, directs the plot, and ensures that audiences remain engaged from beginning to end. "If a script is good, you're going to take your audience with you," said Ladva.

### **Storytelling as the Core of Filmmaking**

The Shoreditch event also served as an opportunity for filmmakers to bring their ideas to life. The seminar concluded with an exciting pitch competition, giving participants the chance to present their film concepts to a panel of industry professionals.

The competition underscored the essence of independent filmmaking—creativity, determination,



The event organizers aimed to inspire emerging filmmakers to focus on crafting meaningful stories, regardless of the limitations they might face in terms of budget or technical resources.

**“If a script is good, you’re going to take your audience with you.”**

and a deep understanding of narrative structure. And the winner received a £3,000 grant to kickstart their next movie project, reinforcing the notion that great storytelling deserves investment and support.







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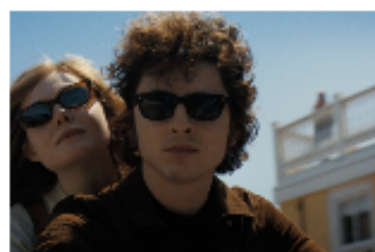
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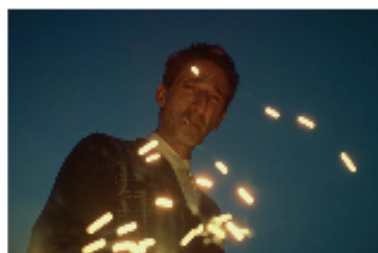
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**TALKS**

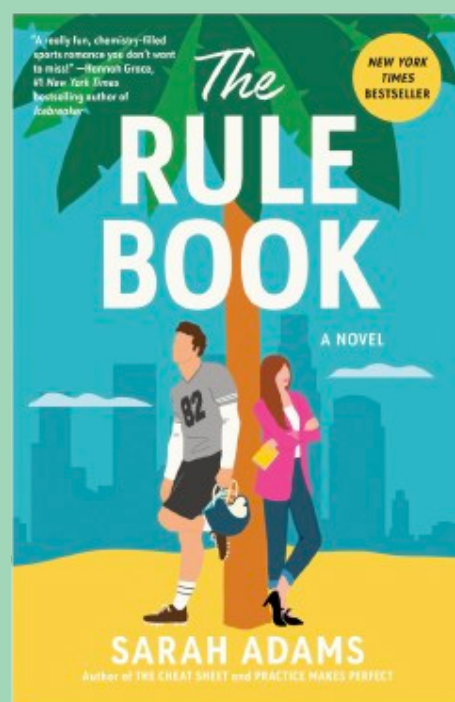
**THE MAINSTREAM ONES TO WATCH AWARDS AFTER PARTY**

FRI / FEB

# The love you least expect: Sarah Adams delivers in Beg, Borrow or Steal

*A heart-warming tale of love, rivalry, and personal growth set in the charming small-town world of Sarah Adams. This is a brand-new release that you should tick off your list before Valentine's Day*

*By Klaudia Hostynska*



Author Sarah Adams, born in Nashville and loved for her inspiring romantic comedies, has once again surprised readers with her latest publishing of the novel *Beg, Borrow or Steal*. Released on January 7, this book now marks the third addition to her “When in Rome” series, set in the cosy town of Rome, Kentucky.

Adams is a bestselling author of romance novels, raised in Nashville, she began writing while her daughter napped. She aims to create uplifting, feel-good novels which make the readers laugh, while she enjoys coffee, history and life with her family,

The story is about Emily Walker and Jack Bennett, two second-grade teachers who have been rivals since college.

Their relationship changes when Jack moves in next door to Emily, putting them in close contact and forcing them to rethink how they feel about each other.

The novel, published by xxx, dives into personal struggles, with Emily dealing with the loss of her parents and Jack facing difficulties in his relationship with his father, which adds depth to the romantic plot.

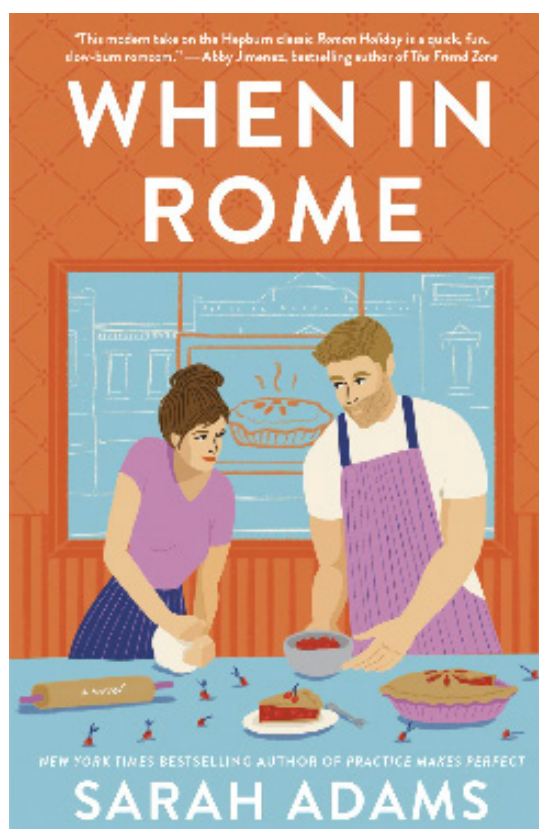
For many readers, this dynamic is what makes the book so compelling. “It was refreshing to see the characters deal with issues which reminded me of my own life and also finding love at the same time,” said Klara Junes, a 27-year-old stay-at-home mum from Bromley.

“I finished reading it in two hours. I love all of her books and this one kind of reminded me of me and my boyfriend at the beginning, we also weren’t very fond of each other.”

Adams masterfully employs the enemies-to-lovers and forced-proximity tropes, creating a story full of humour, chemistry, and emotion, which is a strong requirement for any

romance novel. “I often read romantic novels as I have no clue how to make relationships work anymore... I find it to be a comfort like I’m not the only one going through this, fiction or not I am in full belief that this is a real person, and I love and hate them accordingly,” said electrician Sarah Simonaitis, 37, from Sittingbourne.

Adams’ use of dual perspectives was also widely appreciated, offering readers a chance to see inside both Emily and Jack’s minds. “I loved getting into their heads,” said Klara, “It was so powerful how we got to know what they both thinking at the same time.”



The charm of Rome, Kentucky, the fictional small town where the story is set, itself adds an irresistible layer of warmth to the story, but for Shae Coon, 34, who’s a Dark Romance Author and owner of RawRiot Publishing, these types of romance novels are not very impressive. “As a publisher, I don’t think it’s necessary to add struggles into romance novels, most read these types of stories to get away from that part of their life,” says Shae.

**B**orn and raised in Nashville TN, Sarah Adams loves her family, warm days, and making people smile.

**Sarah has dreamed of being a writer since she was a girl, but finally wrote her first novel when her daughters were napping and she no longer had any excuses to put it off.**

**Sarah is a coffee addict, a British history nerd, a mom of two daughters, married to her best friend, and an indecisive introvert. Her hope is to always write stories that make you laugh, maybe even cry; but always leave you happier than when you started reading.**

Since its release, *Beg, Borrow, or Steal* already had received a number of reviews from critics and fans. "It's a mixed bag. I prefer the darker side of romance because it feels that there's more of an emotional rollercoaster, more in-depth characters and scenes," says Shae. Although, for people like Sarah, this kind of romantic novel is refreshing: "I often catch my cheeks aching from smiling at the thoughts and ideas."

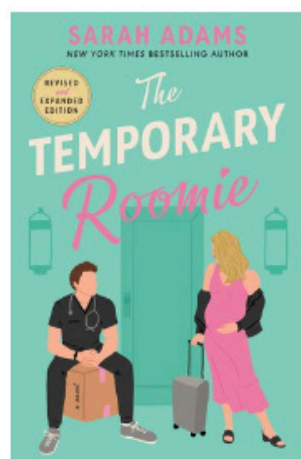
With the blend of playful dialogue and heartfelt moments, the book has quickly become a favourite among romance readers. As Adams is expanding her *When in Rome* series, fans await more stories of love and growth.

Whether you're a long-time romance fan or new to the genre, this book is a heart-warming must-read. Sarah Adams has successfully surprised her readers yet again with sharp banter, loveable characters and emotional depth in *Beg, Borrow, or Steal*.

As of now, there hasn't been an official announcement regarding the next book release, but fans are already looking forward to it. "I can't wait for what she writes next, I check her Instagram like crazy," says Klara.







# *Five years since the passing of Sir. Roger Scruton: A legacy of thoughts*

By Edimar Kampgen

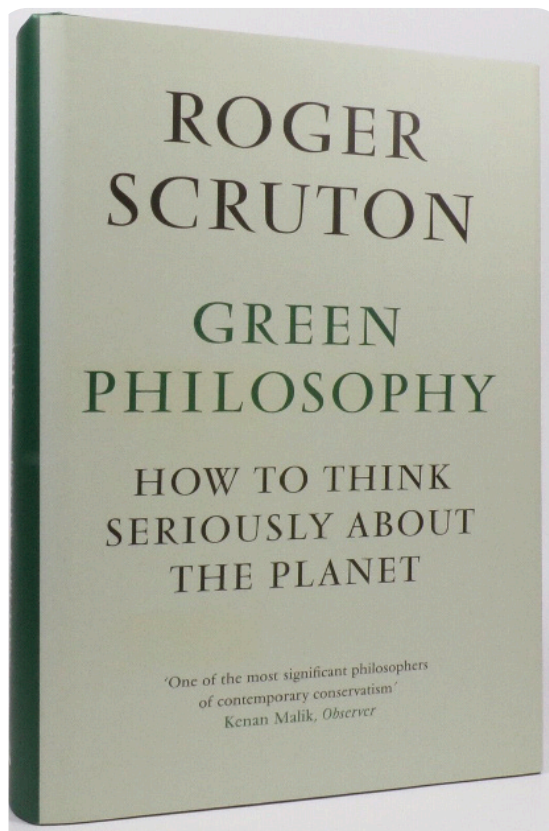
It has been five years since the world lost Sir Roger Scruton, the British philosopher, writer, and public intellectual whose work left an indelible mark on conservative thought, aesthetics, and political philosophy. Scruton, who passed away on 12 January 2020 at the age of 75, remains a figure of both admiration and contention, his ideas continuing to provoke debate and inspire reflection.

Born on 27 February 1944 in Buslingthorpe, Lincolnshire, Scruton grew up in a modest household. His father, Jack Scruton, was a teacher and a staunch socialist, while his mother, Beryl Claris Scruton, instilled in him a love of literature and music. Scruton's early years were marked by a sense of displacement, as his family moved frequently due to his father's work. This itinerant childhood, coupled with his later education at Cambridge, where he studied philosophy at Jesus College, shaped his intellectual journey.



## NEWS





Scruton's career was as prolific as it was varied. Over the course of his life, he authored more than 50 books, spanning topics as diverse as aesthetics, morality, religion, and politics.

His seminal works, such as *The Meaning of Conservatism* (1980) and *Beauty: A Very Short Introduction* (2009), established him as a leading voice in conservative philosophy. He was also a gifted novelist and composer, reflecting his deep engagement with the arts. In addition to his academic and literary pursuits, Scruton was an active public intellectual.

He contributed regularly to newspapers and magazines, including *The Times*, *The Telegraph*, and *The Spectator*. His articulate and often provocative commentary made him a prominent figure in Britain's cultural and political debates.

He was knighted in 2016 for his services to philosophy, teaching, and public education, a

recognition of his enduring influence.

Scruton's death in 2020 followed a battle with cancer. He passed away at his home in Brinkworth, Wiltshire, surrounded by his family.

His wife, Sophie Jeffreys, 52, whom he married in 1996, and their two children, Sam and Lucy, survive him. His death was met with an outpouring of tributes from colleagues, students, and admirers, who praised his intellectual rigor, generosity, and commitment to preserving the

cultural heritage he held dear.

Imogen Sinclair, 31, from Cheshire, Director of the New Social Covenant Unit, and who studied under the shadow of Scruton, reflects on his passing: "I knew Sir Roger was unwell and had made contact with him and Lady Scruton over the Summer and Winter of 2020. I was full of grief on the news of Sir Roger's death and offered these thoughts to UnHerd."

**As we mark the fifth anniversary of his passing,** Sir Roger Scruton's voice remains as relevant as ever. A foundation, idealized through discussions between Scruton and Fisher Derderian, 32, from Orange County, California, was launched on 26 August 2020, the same year as Scruton's death.

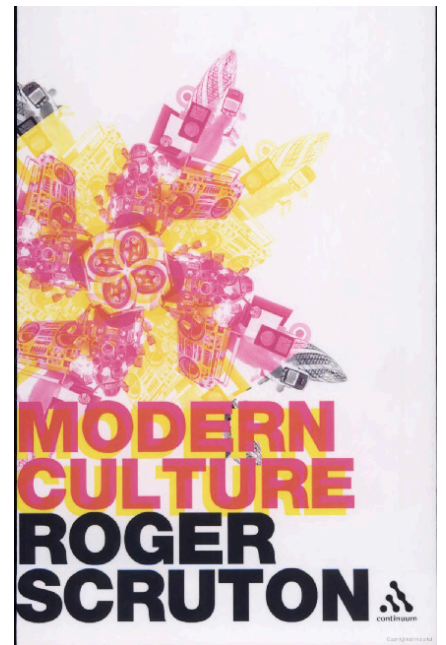
Derderian, former pupil from University of Buckingham, who serves as the organization's president, says that "be able to

honor Sir Roger with an institution befitting his legacy is a great dream." In addition, he is "pleased to have the opportunity to lead it."

The foundation stands as a testament to Scruton's enduring influence, ensuring that his ideas and values continue to inspire future generations.

In an era of fragmentation and uncertainty, his call to cherish and preserve the things that give life meaning—art, culture, and the bonds that unite us—resonates with renewed urgency.

As Sophie Scruton says, she is "delighted by the launch of the Roger Scruton Legacy Foundation."





“We must start from the sentiment that all mature people can readily share: the sentiment that good things are easily destroyed but not easily created.”

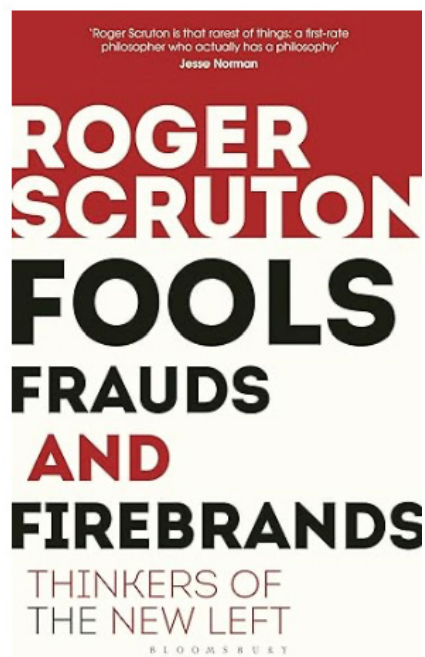
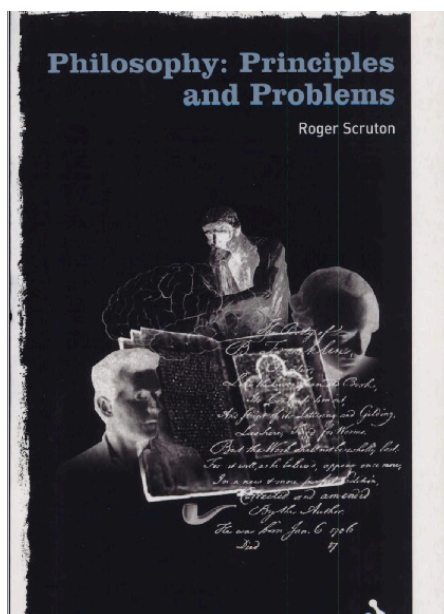
— SIR Roger Scruton —

The foundation stands as a testament to Scruton’s enduring influence, ensuring that his ideas and values continue to inspire future generations. In an era of fragmentation and uncertainty, his call to cherish and preserve the things that give life meaning—art, culture, and the bonds that unite us—resonates with renewed urgency. As Sophie Scruton says, she is “delighted by the launch of the Roger Scruton Legacy Foundation.”

Five years on, Scruton’s legacy remains a subject of lively discussion. His books continue to be read and debated, his ideas invoked in discussions about the future of conservatism and the role of tradition in a rapidly changing world. For some, he was a visionary who defended the values of Western civilization against the tides of relativism and nihilism.

**For others, he was a controversialist** whose views often clashed with the progressive currents of his time.

While his ideas resonated with many, they also drew criticism, particularly from those who viewed his conservatism as elitist or out of touch with contemporary realities. Whether one agrees with his conclusions or not, his insistence on the importance of beauty, community, and moral responsibility offers a compelling challenge to the prevailing orthodoxies of the present period in the history of the world.





# **Artificial Storytelling: The Use of AI in Children's Books**

**By Ali Suker**

**With the rapid development of artificial intelligence (AI), have you ever wondered how this may affect what your children read?**

There is no doubt that in recent years, artificial intelligence has significantly disrupted many different sectors, especially as they have become publicly accessible. The creative sector has seen AI such as Midjourney create stunning images purely from text inputs. AI chatbots such as ChatGPT have been used to reply to emails or even complete student assignments, causing the development of AI detectors to certify academic integrity. Music AI, which can copy the voice of anyone and produce music, and last but not least text-to-video AI such as InVideo AI.

So where do children and children's books come into the equation? It is not news that what children read is very important, as children are impressionable and easily influenced. Children's books not only entertain but also teach valuable life lessons. As there are many upsides and downsides, a significant debate has been sparked in the use of AI to author children's books.

Ammaar Reshi, a product designer in Silicon Valley, caused controversy online when he used AI to write a children's book in a single weekend. He used Midjourney to create pictures and ChatGPT to write 'Alice and Sparkle'.

Sam Bramwell, a 30-year-old youth worker, said: "It feels like a grey area... he didn't do anything wrong, but it feels wrong. My personal opinion, no he shouldn't have published the book, at most; he should've used ChatGPT to help him but not actually write it for him."

One of the most compelling arguments for the use of AI is the capacity to make storytelling more accessible. AI tools can generate fully formed stories, complete with illustrations, at a fraction of the cost and time it would take a human writer and illustrator. For aspiring authors who lack the resources to hire professional artists or editors, AI represents an affordable way to bring their creative visions to life. In addition, the AI tools do not have to be used to do everything but can aid the creative thinking process or help structure the book.

Of course, despite the possible potential, artificial intelligence does not have any emotion and may lack the depth a human touch can add. Since AI is trained on data, AI produced work may not be considered original and instead as plagiarism. Can an 'algorithm' truly capture the essence of human experience? Many ethical implications are also raised, if an AI is used to create a story: who owns the story legally, the company that created the AI, or the person who used the AI tool to create the story.

# *CHILDREN'S BOOKS not only ENTERTAIN but also teach VALUABLE LIFE LESSONS*





Lucy Kelsey, a 35-year-old mother of four, said: "It's not acceptable. AI should be left for work that requires machines. I don't agree with that at all because only people's creativity can be appreciated, not some lifeless robot. What will they start to teach my kids in school... fake books and not Shakespeare?"

**The Alan Turing Institute**, a government-funded artificial intelligence and data science institute in the UK, is currently conducting research on the impact of generative AI use on children, stating: "Children have particular needs and rights that must be accounted for when designing, developing, and rolling out new tech-

nologies, and more focus on children's rights is needed."

Artificial intelligence is only becoming more prevalent and does not look like it will go away anytime soon. There is already a lot of media and content online purely created by AI, indicating that such work will be common and has already found its place on the internet. Restrictions may be put into place concerning the use of AI for commercial and creative use. The way forward will likely consist of finding a balance to utilise the benefits AI brings rather than a replacement for human creativity.





# THE BRAVE BASILIKUM



Basilikum is a fearful little sprout of basil growing in Mr Gursoy's garden. Every day, Basilikum meets new garden animals and gets used to daily life in the vegetable garden, becoming a little bit braver day after day.

# Vancouver Furrytales

## Steve the Seagull



WRITTEN BY CHIARA BLARDONI

Illustrated by Valerio Barabino

***Steve The Seagull: Vancouver Furrytales Paperback – by Chiara Blardoni  
(Author), Valerio Barabino (Illustrator)  
Book 5 of 5: Vancouver Furrytales***

***Steve, a laid-back and clever seagull, calls the charming fishing village of Steveston home. Every day, Steve enjoys life in paradise, patrolling the harbour for fresh fish and sharing his findings with his cheeky seagull friends. From sneaky snacks at the fish market to treasure hunts along the sandy shores, Steve's days are filled with laughter, adventures, and tasty treats.***

***Join Steve as he navigates life by the sea, swooping down for snacks, strolling the beach with friends, and soaking in the sunset. A fun and lighthearted tale of friendship, food, and seaside mischief!***

# Vancouver Furrytales

## Bertie and Betty Beaver



WRITTEN BY CHIARA BLARDONI

Illustrated by Carla Chiaberta

**Bertie and Betty Beaver: Vancouver Furrytales Paperback – by Chiara Blardoni (Author), Carla Chiaberta (Illustrator)  
Book 1 of 5: Vancouver Furrytales**

**Welcome to the magical world of Burnaby Lake, where Bertie and Betty Beaver live surrounded by the beauty of nature! These two playful beaver siblings love to explore their cozy home and the shimmering waters around them. From splashing in the lake to playing hide and seek beneath giant water lilies, their adventures are full of wonder and fun.**

**But one sunny day, their excitement takes them a little too far from home, and they find themselves lost in the vastness of the lake. Just when they start to worry, a friendly stork comes to their rescue, helping them find their way back to their loving parents.**



# *Do Londoners Enjoy Reading?*

## **The City's Diverse Love Affair with Books**

**By Beatrice Morandi**



Welcome to Bard Books, Roman Road, East London. By Beatrice Morandi

When it comes to books, it's not always the plot that matters, or the character descriptions. For some readers, it's all about the smell.

"I like the smell of paper," says Francis Mang, a shopkeeper from West London. She has less time for reading due to her work commitments but prefers the sensory experience of a physical book as opposed to audiobooks or Kindles.

While buying actual books might be expensive, Mang says she pads out her library with charity shop finds. Her favorite read is 'Fresh Water for Flowers' by Valérie Perrin, a romantic novel that's won her over with its emotionally resonant story. Londoners are almost as well-known for their constant immersion in books as they are for their busy lives. On the Tube, in cafés, and in parks, you'll catch glimpses of readers engrossed in everything from contemporary bestsellers to timeless classics.





But how and what Londoners read, and what it reveals about them, is a fascinating story of a city's rich literary identity.

Some Londoners swipe through e-books on tablets or phones, while others treasure their paperbacks. These details hint at an interesting phenomenon: people's reading habits are often closely tied to who they are.

The type of reading materials we choose - fiction, nonfiction, or news - reflects different personality traits. Those who write notes in the margins, for instance, tend to be especially curious and introspective, according to a study from the University of Texas.

"Entertainment preferences are not determined exclusively by age, gender, or education, but also by psychological dispositions," the study said, suggesting that our choice of books or genres not only reveals aspects of our personalities but can also reinforce them.

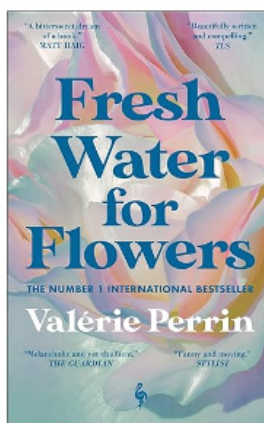
In London's eclectic book landscape, preferences are as diverse as the city itself. New customers come in daily to

Bard Books, an independent bookstore known for its eclectic selection and vibrant community events in Bow Church.

The shop's clientele are a mix of young professionals, local parents, and weekend visitors, with people coming from across the city to participate in events or work in the cozy space, says manager Kristin Griffin, 31.

"We get new customers in every day, but we also have a strong group of regulars," she explains, noting that the shop's coffee and wine bar also makes it a lively social hub.

The physical book is still a cherished item, though audiobooks are increasingly popular as supplements for readers on the go. "All of our customers value the physical book," she says. "But at the same time, a lot of them are also fitting in more reading with audiobooks."

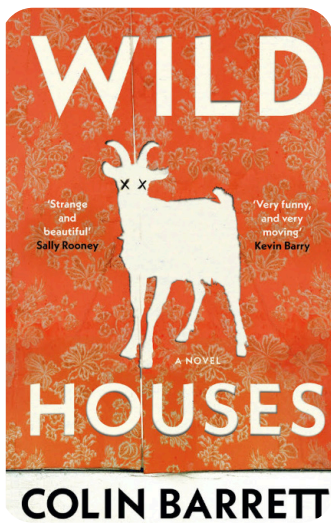


For Dominic Ren, a 64-year-old retiree from Dalston, reading has become a cherished activity. "I read around 50 books per year," he said, "and I use both paper and Kindle books." Currently, he's reading 'The Duino Elegies' by Rainer Maria Rilke—a mystical, poetic work that reflects his introspective nature.

Joe Clarke, a 62-year-old manufacturing engineer from East London, shares a similar love for print and digital books, though his approach is more minimalist. For him, a good read isn't necessarily about the storyline but "the flow and style of the author's writing". His favourite book is 'Wild Houses' by Colin Barrett, a literary thriller that speaks to his penchant for well-crafted narratives.

The University of Texas study also suggests that book choices are influenced by gender. Mang's preference for romance and heartfelt narratives contrasts with Clarke's taste for thrillers, highlighting a broader trend often observed in readers' choices. However, Griffin points out that in London, people are adventurous in their selections due to the city's diversity. "There is something for everyone here," she says.

"People are more willing to step out of their comfort zones when they feel that anything is acceptable."



In London, the pull of independent bookstores like Bard Books goes beyond the books themselves. These spaces offer a sense of curation and personal connection that larger chains may lack. “We have 100% control over which kinds of books we stock,” Griffin says, “and our customers know that the titles on our shelves have been thoughtfully chosen.”

While audiobooks continue to gain a lot of popularity, Griffin observes that this shift hasn’t affected physical book sales. Instead, audiobooks seem to encourage more reading. “People are reading more than ever and using audiobooks to read even more,” she says.

**So, do Londoners read more for leisure or for self-improvement?**

It’s difficult to separate the two, Griffin says. “I’d argue that reading of any kind counts as self-improvement.”

***“The power of books remains a beloved fixture in their lives”***

## BARD BOOKS

**INDEPENDENT BOOKSELLER + MORE**

**“Stores like Bard Books are examples of ‘third places’: much-loved local haunts that are neither home nor the workplace, but which we rely on for a sense of community and everyday socialising, with friends or strangers. Covid reminded many of us how much we take third places for granted, despite the fact they’re the lifeblood of our high streets and fundamental to our mental health.”**



# ***LETTER FROM A POET***



Alda Merini Italian Poet

**As for me, I used to be a bird**

Translated by Susan Stewart

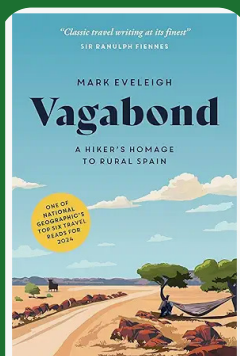
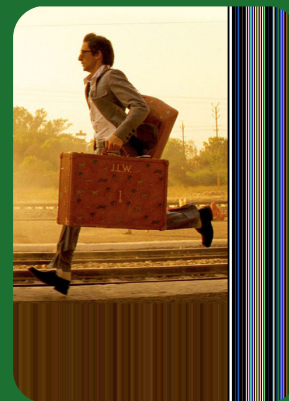
As for me, I used to be a bird  
with a gentle white womb,  
someone cut my throat  
just for a laugh  
I don't know.

As for me, I used to be a great albatross  
and whirled over the seas.  
Someone put an end to my journey,  
without any charity in the tone of it.  
But even stretched out on the ground  
I sing for you now  
my songs of love.



# TRAVEL BOOKS

## *NEW RELEASES*

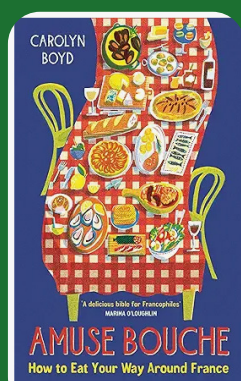
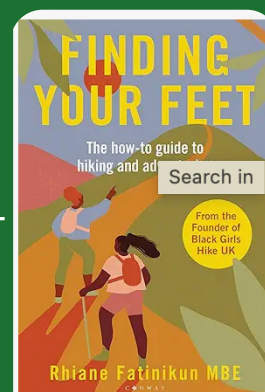


### Vagabond By Mark Eveleigh

Inspired by the figure of the Spanish vagabundo (drifter), the author sets off on a solo 1,225km hike from Gibraltar to Estaca de Bares – Spain's northernmost tip – in an uplifting paean to the freedom of the wanderer.

### Finding Your Feet By Rhiane Fatinikun

The founder of Black Girls Hike is behind this unique guide to exploring rural Britain, which is particularly pertinent to Black women and women who feel unsafe in remote areas. Alongside tips and hand-picked hikes, it includes eye-opening and inspiring accounts of the author's own experiences of hiking through Britain's wilds.

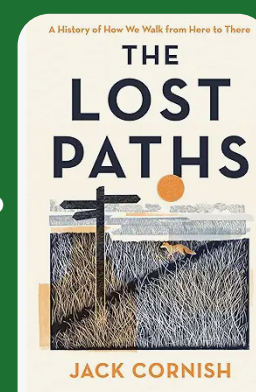


### Amuse Bouche By Carolyn Boyd

Francophile Carolyn Boyd shares the stories behind the country's most fascinating foods and ingredients, blending history and travel. It's the perfect pre-Olympics appetiser.

### The Lost Paths By Jack Cornish

By 2026, some 16,000km of forgotten footpaths around Britain stand to be lost. Jack Cornish's fascinating book sets out to ensure they aren't, and en route explains why Britain's history is buried in these historic rights of way.





# John le Carré's Son Confidently Upholds His Father's Legacy

By Beatrice Morandi

John le Carré captivated readers across England - and the world - with his masterful spy fiction starring iconic protagonist George Smiley. Every generation knows at least one of Smiley's unforgettable stories, and when le Carré died in 2020, it appeared that Smiley died with him.

## Or did he?

Earlier this month, Nick Harkaway, le Carré's son, gave a talk presenting his latest publication, *Karla's Choice*, a detective novel that reintroduces Smiley, the quintessential detective, in a tale that bridges the past and present.

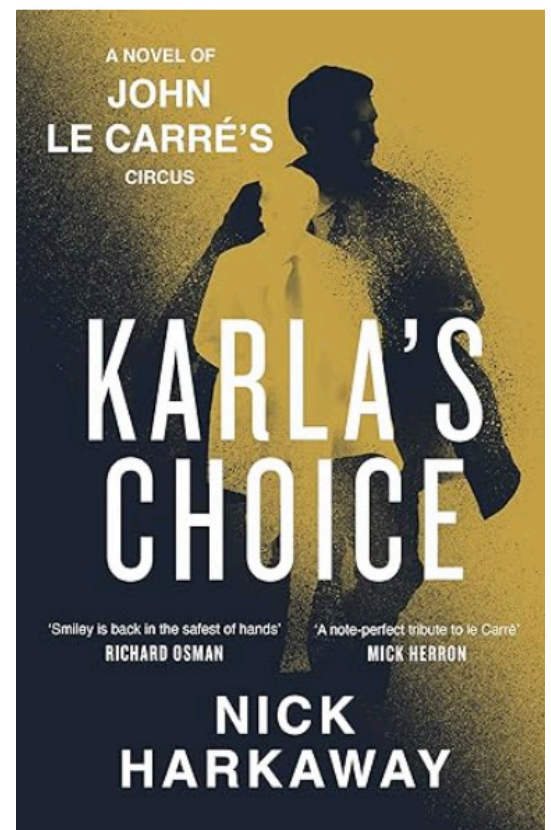
Le Carré was working on the novel when he died, and when Harkaway found the uncompleted manuscript amongst his father's papers, he and his family decided the novel should not perish with the author. Completed posthumously by Harkaway after his father's passing, the book has already garnered critical acclaim.

"Harkaway faithfully reproduces his father's rhythms, at the level of sentence and plot alike," read a Guardian review. This has set high expectations amongst readers and critics, prompting a book launch event presid-

ed over by the well-known author and human rights lawyer Philippe Sands.

At the launch event last month in Waterstones, Piccadilly, Jeff Quest, an avid le Carré fan, shared his thoughts: "Harkaway skillfully inhabits his father's world, avoiding parody or pastiche. His achievement in creating something new yet familiar is impressive."

During the event, Harkaway opened up about the emotional and creative challenges he faced after his father's death. "My whole family believed I was the only one capable of continuing his legacy. I felt the immense pressure of his towering figure, but as I started writing, I realized that he had been teaching me how to write, almost subconsciously, since I was a child." The audience laughed as Harkaway reminisced about growing up with his father. "I remember mornings when, after staying up all night writing, he would join my mother and me at the breakfast table and recite what he had written. I've been immersed in his world of storytelling from the very beginning." The discussion between Harkaway and Sands was engaging and lively



# John le Carré

**1931-2020**

**This famous British author is best known for his espionage novels, many of which were successfully adapted for film or television. A “sophisticated, morally ambiguous writer”, he is considered one of the greatest novelists of the postwar era.**

**During the 1950s and 1960s, le Carré worked for both the Security Service (MI5) and the Secret Intelligence Service (MI6).**

**Near the end of his life, the novelist became an Irish citizen.**



reflecting their long-standing camaraderie, as the two are longtime friends. At one point, Sands asked about the differences between Harkaway's own writing style and his father's. Harkaway responded thoughtfully: "The main difference, I think, is that I prefer to offer a hopeful ending. My father, on the other hand, often leaned towards darker, more ambiguous conclusions."

Harkaway also touched on the careful balance he struck while completing *Karla's Choice*. "The anxiety and pressure to honor his legacy were immense. I was meticulous about what to include and what to leave out.

Ultimately, I felt it was important to provide a sense of resolution, which feels right for both the story and the readers." There is an enduring appeal of spy fiction, and George Smiley holds a coveted place within it.

"Entirely unique," said Shane Whaley of the *Spybrary Podcast*. "John le Carré is so much more than a spy author, he is one of the most significant novelists of the last sixty years."

Whaley also drew literary parallels: "The atmosphere in le Carré's books is reminiscent of Dickens and Conan Doyle. That's how clever a writer he was. His books are multi-layered. Le

Carré's Cold War novels are masterpieces and will be read a hundred years from now."

George Smiley's journey began in 1961 with the publication of *Call for the Dead*, and over the decades, he has become a timeless figure in espionage fiction. At the event, Harkaway expressed his desire to expand upon his father's legacy: ...



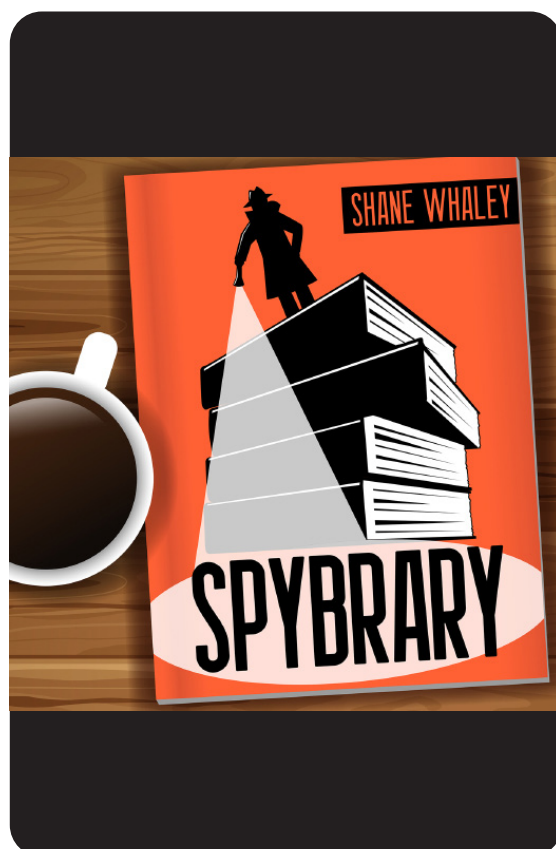
"I believe I can fill in the gaps between Smiley's earlier and later investigations. If all goes well, we might even publish two more books." This prospect was met with enthusiasm by fans, including Quest, who said, "I'd be thrilled to see two more books. When you love a character as much as Smiley, you cling to the hope that their story isn't over."

The legacy of John le Carré is undoubtedly in capable hands. Harkaway's skillful continuation of Smiley's saga ensures that new generations of readers will have the chance to explore this complex and compelling world.

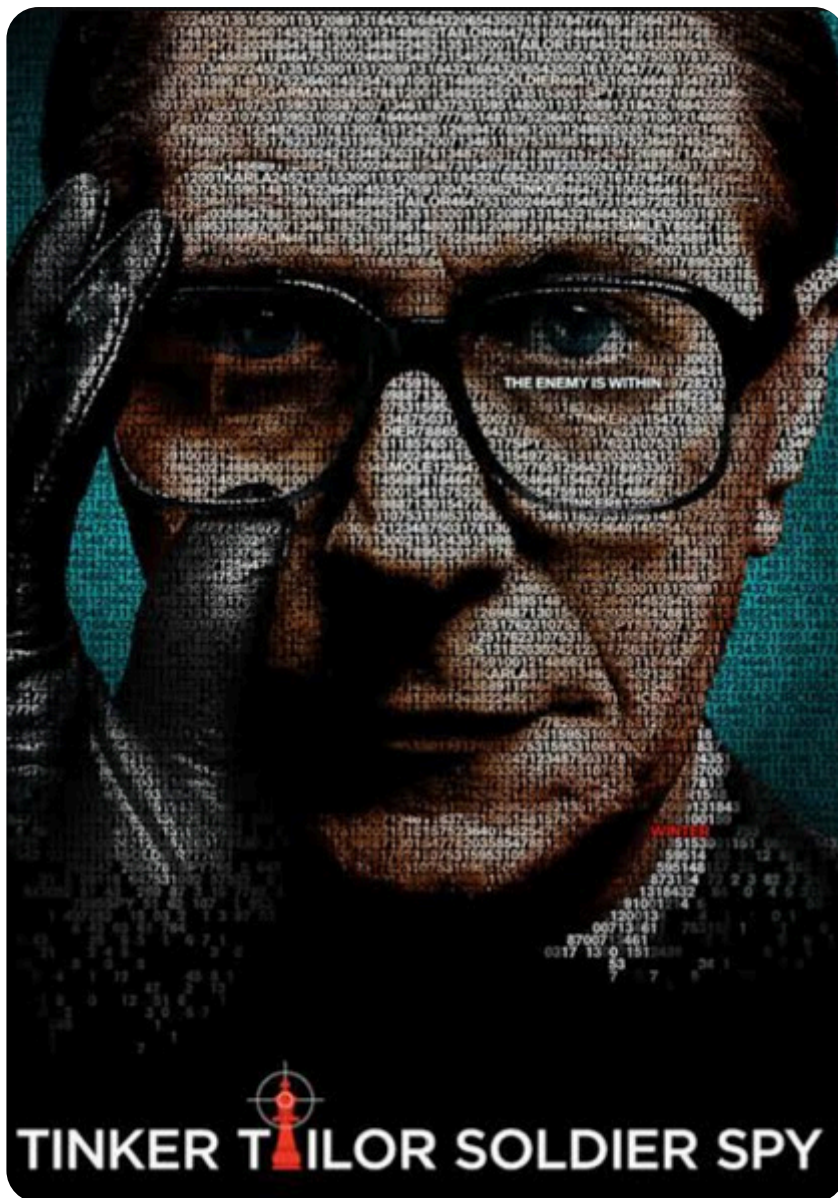
With Karla's Choice already receiving widespread praise and the possibility of more stories, George Smiley's understated yet powerful presence in spy fiction remains unshakable.

*"The anxiety and pressure to HONOUR HIS LEGACY were immense. I WAS METICULOUS about what to include, what to leave out."*

Shane Whaley, the host of the Spybrary Podcast, is a seasoned podcaster and a fervent enthusiast of spy books and espionage history. With a rich background in digital marketing and a passion for storytelling, Shane brings a unique blend of expertise and charisma to his interviews, unraveling the fascinating world of spy fiction and non-fiction. His insightful discussions make him a beloved figure among spy genre aficionados.







## Le Carré's Movie Adaptations

- The Constant Gardener*
- The Deadly Affair*
- The Little Drummer Girl*
- The Looking Glass War*
- A Most Wanted Man*
- A Murder of Quality*
- Our Kind of Traitor*
- The Russia House*
- The Spy Who Came in from the Cold*
- The Tailor of Panama*
- Tinker Tailor Soldier Spy*

## Tinker Tailor Soldier Spy, Plot:

In 1973, Control, who leads British intelligence (known as "The Circus"), sends field agent Jim Prideaux to Budapest. He is supposed to meet a Hungarian general who is thinking about defecting and has valuable information.

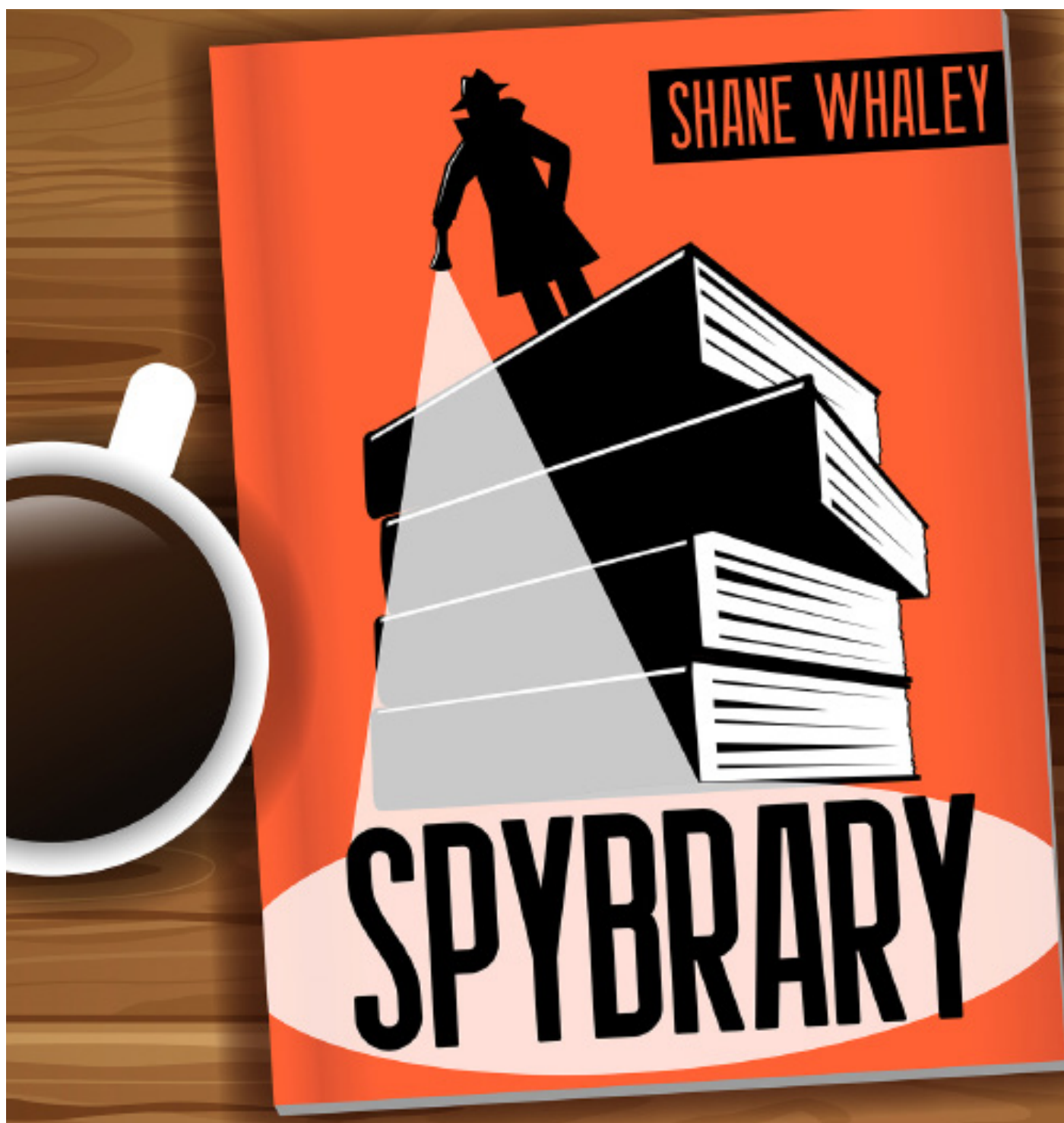
This general claims he can help identify a secret spy, or "mole," placed within the upper ranks of The Circus by a Soviet spy master named Karla.

However, when Prideaux arrives, he realizes it's a trap and tries to escape, but he gets shot in the back. As a result, Control and his associate,

George Smiley, are forced to retire early. Control dies shortly after. The Minister appoints four senior officers from a different operation, known as Operation Witchcraft, to take over.

Sir Percy Alleline becomes the new chief, with Bill Haydon as his second-in-command, and Roy Bland and Toby Esterhase as his aides. Lacon contacts Smiley asking him to look into it.



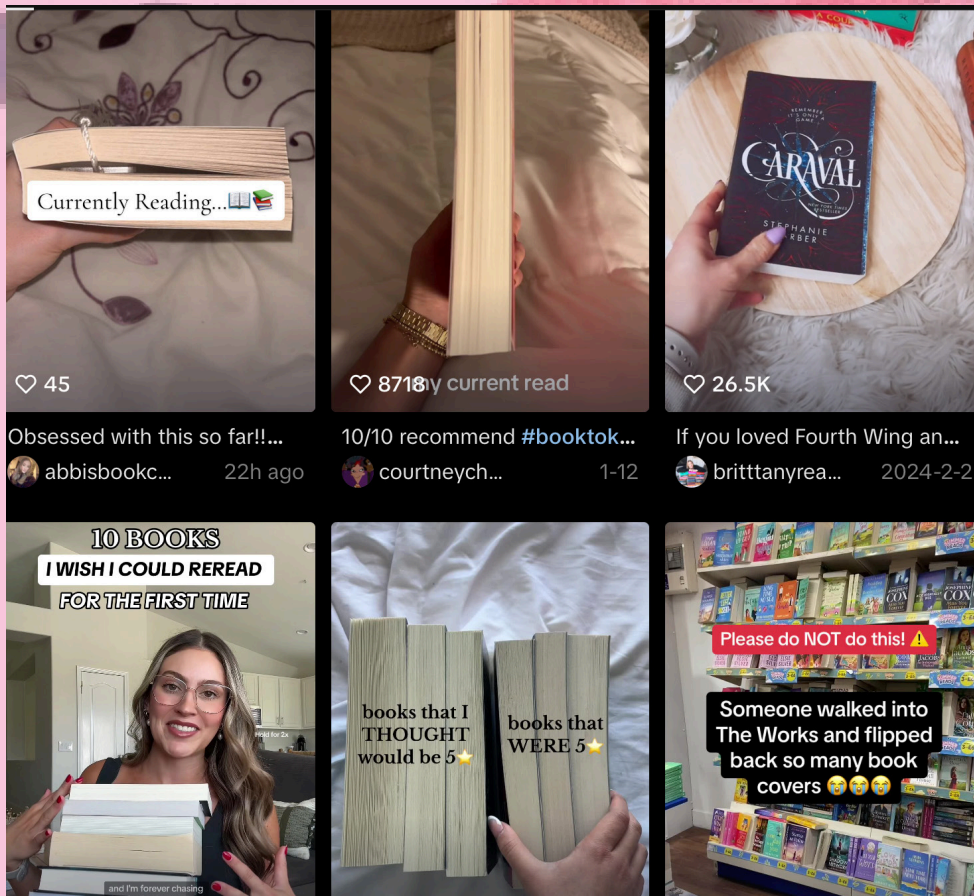


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# *Is the BookTok phenomenon empowering a new generation of readers?*

By Klaudia Hostynska

With over 150 billion views, BookTok has reignited a love for reading, driven book sales and created a global community of readers. But is this viral TikTok trend truly empowering a new generation, or is it just a passing trend?



I

n recent years, TikTok has become more than just a platform for funny short videos. It has been transformed into one of the world's main trend-setting space, influencing everything from fashion to food, home improvement and childcare.

One of the biggest successes on the platform has been BookTok, where a community of book enthusiasts has come together to share reviews, recommendations, and reactions to their favourite books. With the BookTok hashtag reaching over 150 billion views, this phenomenon has helped revive interest in reading, boosted book sales, and sparked numerous conversations.

"I first came across BookTok during lockdown or just after, there was so many reviews of books and what not and they all kept on popping up on my page," said Liv Mcdermott, 24, a nurse WHERE who has become a regular reader thanks to BookTok. The first book she has read was 'It ends with us' by Colleen Hoover.

"That's when I bought the first one and then I couldn't stop."

### **BookTok's influence**

Reports from publishers such as Penguin Random House and HarperCollins show sales of books popularised by BookTok have increased by more than 200% to 300%.

"People buy a lot from our TikTok station, since the BookTok trend started it's been one of our main sellers," said Jo Lilliodd, a sales assistant at WHS Smith in Sittingbourne.

*It Ends With Us* by Colleen Hoover, amongst other books, experienced surges climbing bestseller lists years

***"The book is a must-read. It broke my heart but it's just so empower-***

after their initial releases due to BookTok. People began posting their thoughts about the book and recommending it to other readers through their videos, some would also post videos such as 'Finish the Book with me' and would record themselves reading.

But is BookTok genuinely empowering a new generation of readers, or is it just another fleeting media trend?

The influence of BookTok comes from its appeal to Gen Z and Millennials, who make up over 60% of TikTok's user base. They also happen to be encouraging the platform's impact on reading habits.

The younger demographic gave new life into genres like romance, fantasy and young adult fiction, with BookTok

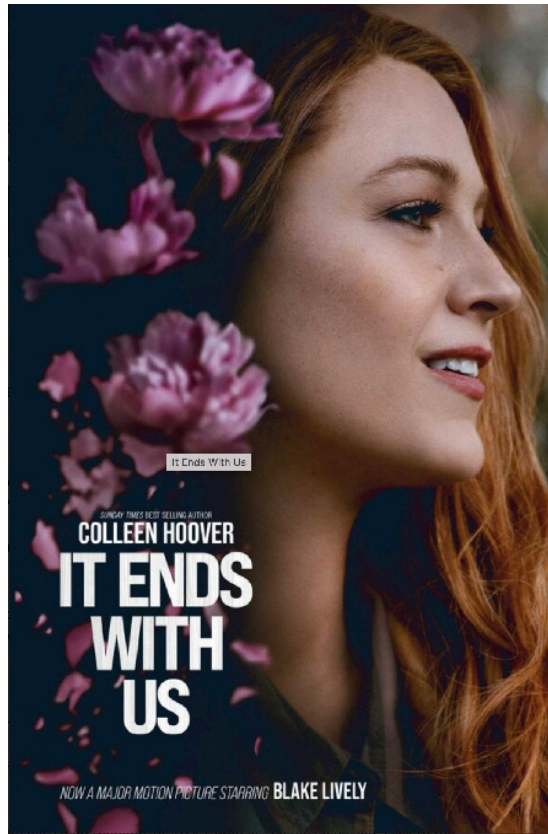
hashtags for these genres accumulating billions of views. As a result, publishers have noted a direct connection between BookTok popularity and sale spikes.

"I see a lot of my patients reading the books from TikTok. That's actually the main titles I see really, and I pay attention to it cause it helps me connect with them sometimes," said Liv.

### **Rising Interest in Reading for Younger Audiences**

A survey conducted on TikTok reported an increase in Gen Z's reading activity due to being exposed to BookTok and according to Nielsen BookData they buy an estimate of 61 million books since 2020 representing 18% of the overall book market.





“I feel hopeful that a new generation of young people has found a community in BookTok, where favourite stories can be shared,” says Hannah King, a senior English lecturer at London Metropolitan University.

people. “I see a lot of kids reading, definitely more than you would expect nowadays where you see them grow up way before they should,” said Liv.

“They really buy a lot, all of the books go quickly and we keep on restocking”, said Jo. However, National Literacy Trust statistics also show a report based on 71,351 responses, indicating that only 2 in 5 (43.4%) children and young people enjoyed reading in their free time, which is the lowest level since the question has first been asked in 2005.

### **Book Sales and Industry Impact**

According to BookScan, the books which have been published years ago now make up almost 70% of BookTok’s bestselling titles. Among last year’s breakouts are Rebecca Yarros, author of *Fourth Wing* which has sold almost 400,000 copies since its release in May. The book is about Violet Sorrengail’s survival in a brutal dragon rider academy, balancing danger, intrigue and forbidden romance.

BookTok seems to have positively changed reading habits and reshaped what it means to be a reader today, especially for young

SALES FOR  
BookTok  
tracked authors  
rose from  
13 MILLION  
COPIES IN 2020  
to 27 million  
copies in 2021.



The platform has already changed how readers connect with books and what kind of books they buy. As it grows with virtual book clubs and live chats it's deepening the experience. While challenges exist, it has already made a lasting impact and it may just redefine reading for the next generation entirely.



## ***It ends with Us***

### **1. Character Ages**

***Book:*** Lily and Ryle are depicted as being in their mid-20s.

***Movie:*** The characters are aged up to their 30s or older, with Blake Lively (Lily) and Justin Baldoni (Ryle) cast in the roles. Colleen Hoover explained this change was made to reflect the realism of Ryle's profession as a neurosurgeon, which typically requires years of training  
(THE DIRECT - PEOPLE.COM)

### **2. Story Development and Focus**

***Book:*** The novel is deeply introspective, with Lily's inner thoughts, diary entries, and reflections playing a critical role in understanding her relationship decisions and the impact of her past.

***Movie:*** While it aims to stay faithful to Lily's journey, the cinematic adaptation naturally places more emphasis on visual storytelling and dialogue, potentially minimizing internal monologues and diary excerpts  
(THE REVIEW GEEK - PEOPLE.COM).

### **3. Themes of Abuse**

***Book:*** Domestic violence is portrayed in graphic and raw detail, emphasizing the psychological complexity of leaving an abusive relationship.

***Movie:*** Early footage and commentary suggest that the film retains these themes but may present them with a slightly toned-down intensity for a broader audience while keeping the focus on Lily's resilience  
(PEOPLE.COM)

**ENOUGH.**

WE CAN STOP  
VIOLENCE AGAINST  
WOMEN AND GIRLS.

If you see it, call it out, show support or report.

# Renato Moicano's and the knockout impact on book sales by influencers

By Edimar Kampgen

## This phenomenon extends beyond sports



Sky News

**Renato Alves Carneiro**, known as “Moicano” in Portuguese due to his Mohawk hairstyle, is a renowned Brazilian **UFC fighter**. He continues to make waves both inside and outside the Octagon with his spectacular victories and thought-provoking post-fight speeches.

As Moicano's global fanbase expands, he almost has a second job: indirectly contributing to increased book sales for authors associated with the Austrian School of Economics. Although he hails from Brazil, Moicano's interest in these authors may stem from his right-leaning political views, and concerns about the direction of the United States under the Biden administration.

Who would expect an athlete to drive interest in economics literature? Yet, Moicano's endorsements of authors like Hans-Hermann Hoppe and Ludwig von Mises have defied expectations, proving the power of high-profile recommendations - whether on Twitter, television or during a publicized speech - in shaping public interest and driving sales across diverse fields.

During a live UFC 306 event at Paris' Accor Arena, where Moicano defeated Saint Denis Benoît by TKO in the second round, he endorsed Hans-Hermann Hoppe's “Democracy: The God that Failed.” Following Moicano's mention, sales surged by 300% - from 1,000 to 4,000 copies. After praising Ludwig von Mises' “Six Lessons of the Austrian Economic School”

at UFC 300 in Las Vegas, sales jumped by 200%, from 500 to 1,500 copies.

"If you want [to know] about politics and economy I advise you, read Hans-Hermann Hope, 'Democracy: 'The God that Failed.' And I hope that you understand that democracy is a fallacy," said Moicano in his live UFC 306 post-fight interview.

Moicano asserts that his recommendations are not driven by financial gain but rather to raise awareness and encourage his audience to explore perspectives that may help them better understand current events in the US and worldwide.

Pay-Per-View (PPV) packages for UFC 306 attracted an average of 750 million viewers. Depending on the athletes featured in UFC main events, viewership can soar as high as two million spectators.

Alan Philps, a renowned journalist, and author of "The Red Hotel: The Untold Story of Stalin's Propaganda War, experienced a similar surge in sales when his book was mentioned by actress Sarah Jessica Parker on her Instagram account. "...You know, a good title is always worth the wait." Parker, best known for her role in the Sex and the City series, has a significant following, and her endorsement led to copies of "The Red Hotel" being quickly sold out.

**Philps** says "The role of an influencer is more important in terms of selling books than the newspaper reviewers... None of their opinions are behind a paywall... Everyone can see them freely.

"Obviously, the people who listen to him, [Renato Moicano] are not usually reading serious nonfiction books unless they come from a source which they really respect."

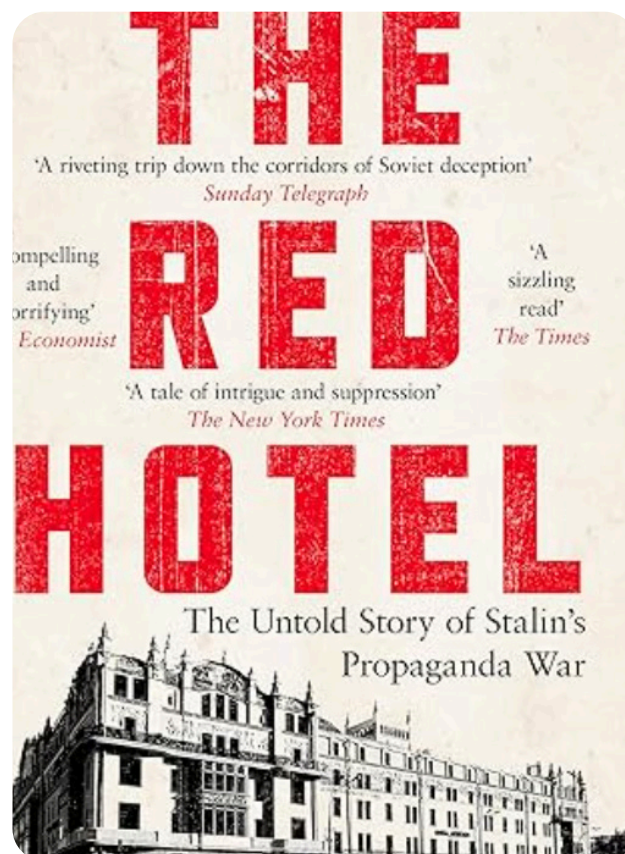
Justine Crow, owner

of Bookseller Crow, a book shop in Crystal Palace, acknowledges the significant role of influencers and personalities in boosting book sales. "...you can always tell when something has been mentioned, mainly on TikTok, but also on Instagram and other places; because when you go on to the supplier and you look for it, it is already out of stock, or they already only have a few copies left.

"If it is on TikTok, for instance, it does affect us... So, an old book that's been out for twenty years, if somebody refers to it as being something that was influential or inspirational in their life... it can come back."

The extent to which people may act upon these recommendations, however, can vary. For some, a shared interest or relatability factor may be required to feel compelled to purchase a recommended book. However, with influencers' ability to propel book sales and engage a global audience, the power of endorsements by Moicano, **Sarah Jessica Parker**, and others must not be underestimated. **Toby Hartley**, manager at Good Eating Company, and UFC follower, suggests that a strong connection to the public figure might be necessary to be swayed by their endorsement. "It is quite a difficult one, though, as I am not sure I would be influenced... Unless I am a super fan of the fighter," Hartley says.

For some, a **shared interest** or relatability factor may be required to feel compelled to purchase a recommended book. However, with influencers' ability to propel book sales and engage a global audience, the power of endorsements by Moicano, Sarah Jessica Parker, and others must not be underestimated.





# ***The Author***

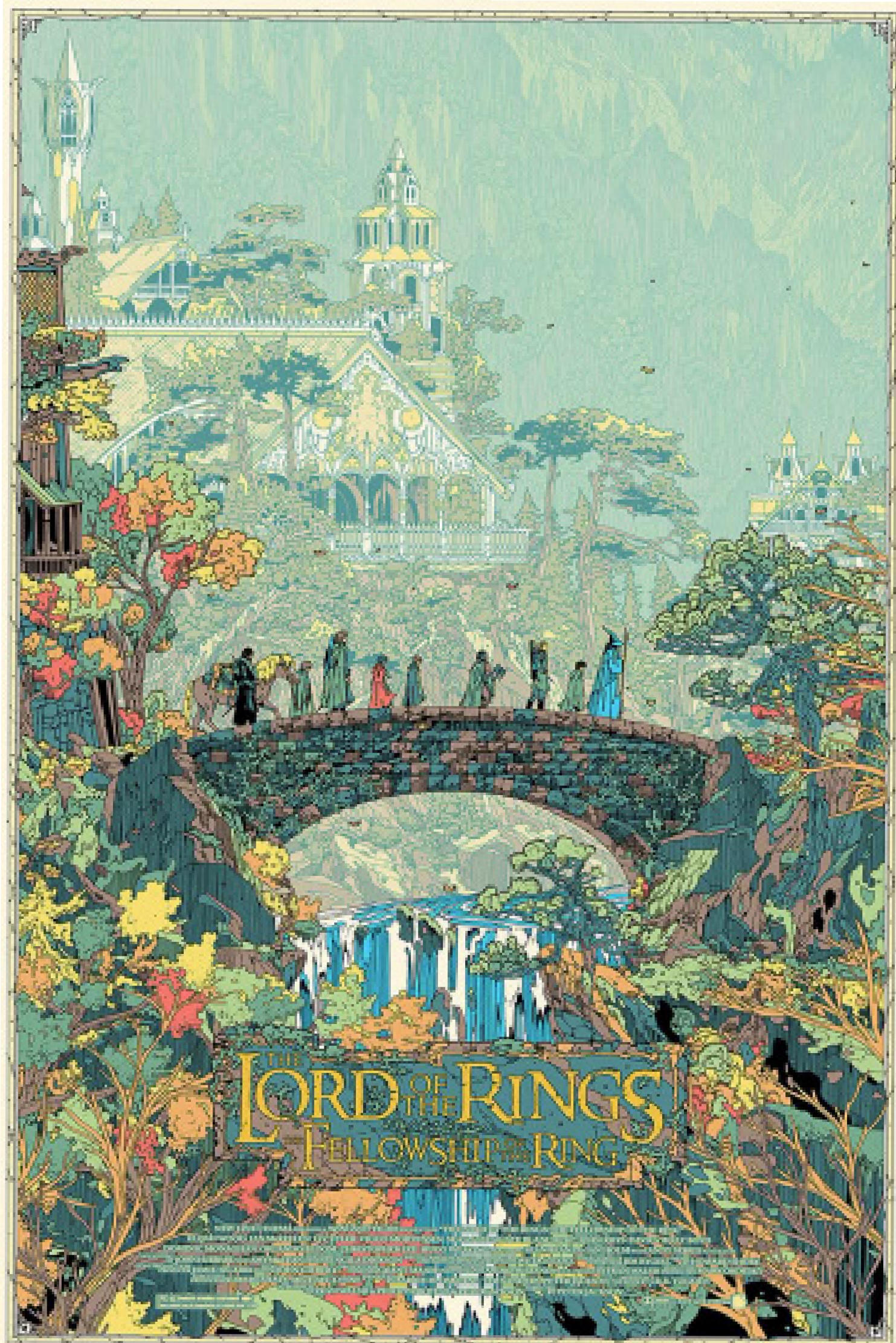
**Alan Philps is a writer, editor and journalist. He has held senior editorial roles with several newspapers and magazines, including as a correspondent for Reuters, then The Sunday Times Correspondent, Foreign Editor for the Daily Telegraph, Contributing Editor for The National and most recently as Editor of The World Today. He is co-author, with John Lahutsky, of 'The Boy from Baby House 10'. Prior to his journalistic career, Philps studied Arabic and Persian at the University of Oxford.**

## Every book on Sarah Jessica Parker's summer reading list



By Sarah Gil  
12th Jul 2023





# The impact of film adaptations on saga novels

## Sales and library circulation trends

By Beatrice Morandi



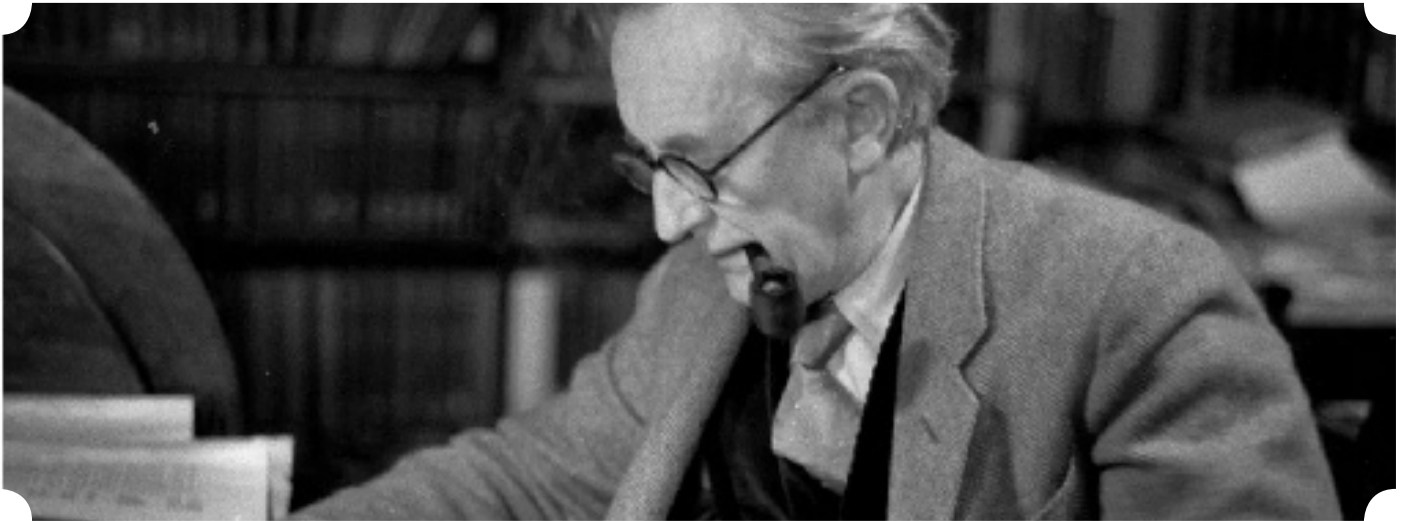
For years, book lovers have debated which is superior: the book or its movie adaptation. While some readers prefer the detailed narratives of books, others are drawn to the visual storytelling of films.

Beyond personal preferences, movie adaptations have a tangible effect on book sales and library circulation. When a book series is adapted into a movie, there is a significant impact on its sales and library engagement. Movie adaptations impacted book sales dramatically, according to a study conducted by BookNet Canada, with sales for film-adapted books increasing on average by 20% overall over a 24-week period (12 weeks pre- and post-release).

During the first week after a movie's release, however, book sales surged by 307%, compared to 12 weeks pre-release. The most significant jump was a 90% increase from one week before to one week after the film's premiere.

This demonstrates that movie releases generate immediate interest in the books they are based on. After the first week, sales gradually declined by 70%.





**J.R.R. Tolkien's writing was driven by his invented languages, names, and linguistic aesthetics. His varied prose style and use of non-narrative materials helped create his Middle-earth world.**

Unlike bookstores, libraries have a fixed number of copies, meaning circulation numbers are constrained by availability. Library loans remained stable, increasing only 13% over the 24 weeks. A significant spike of 35% occurred between weeks five and six after a film's release, with holds peaking in the tenth week. This suggests that library patrons seek out books after the initial post-release excitement fades.

#### **Book vs. Movie: What Attracts Readers?**

SKOOB conducted a survey to explore preferences between saga books and saga movies. Of 25 respondents, 10 preferred books, 12 favoured movies, and 3 enjoyed both equally. Popular saga books among respondents included Harry Potter, The Lord of the Rings, Twilight, Percy Jackson, and Game of Thrones.

According to our survey, respondents were drawn to sagas for different reasons:

- **28%** valued emotional connection.
- **25%** each were drawn to characters and plot development.
- **22%** favoured world-building.

Character development played a crucial role for readers, with 65% rating it as "extremely important." For those who preferred saga movies, The Lord of the Rings, Harry Potter, The Hunger Games, and Star Wars were favourites. The primary appeal was their ability to bring magical worlds to life and create visually engaging narratives. However, movie adaptations don't always satisfy book readers. While some respondents enjoyed seeing beloved characters on screen, others felt adaptations often lose essential details or make too many changes. "I'm a book reader, but sometimes I prefer to watch the movies first," said Salma Begum, 34, a teacher from north London.

"With Harry Potter, I read the books first and then accepted to watch the movies, and I have to say that there's no comparison. The books have something more magic than Harry Potter's movies. Harry is described as a totally different person than he is in the movie, and Ginny Weasley as well."

Jhon Camacho, 24, a fantasy book lover, expressed a different opinion: "I loved the movie adaptation of 100 Years of Solitude from Gabriel Garcia Marquez. Also, many people say The Hobbit is nothing comparable to The Lord of the Rings, but I loved understanding what happened before the beginning."



“With Harry Potter, I read the books first and then accepted to watch the movies, there’s no comparison.”

My love  
~Meleth nín~

*mēlēth nín*  
@Land\_of\_elvish

## The Pandemic’s Impact on Book and Movie Trends

The COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 and 2021 affected bookstores, libraries, and movie theaters, influencing book sales and circulation trends. The impact on film-adapted books varied between the two years:

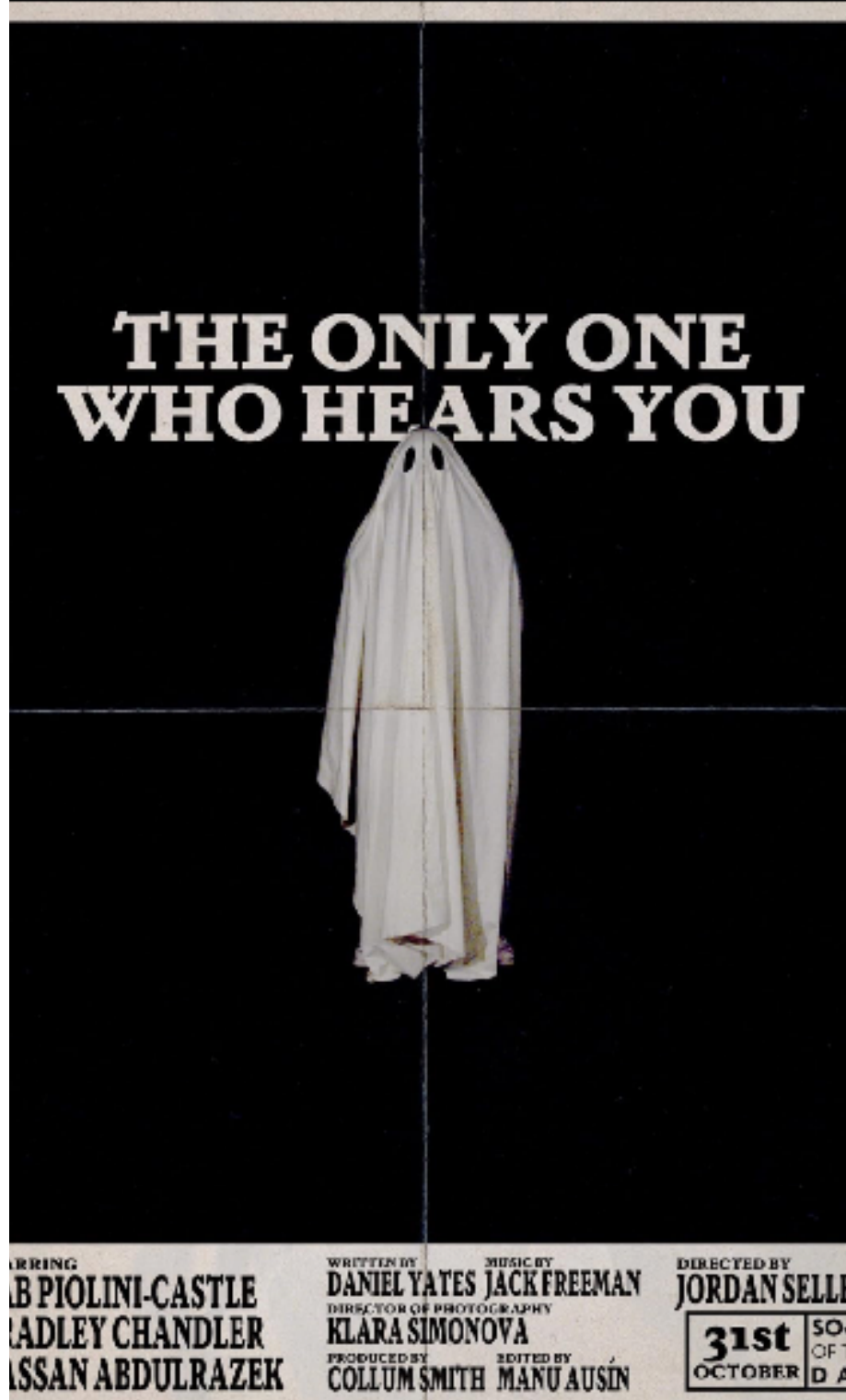
**Sales Trends:** According to a report from BookNet Canada, in 2020, book sales peaked in the first week after a movie’s release, with a 52% increase compared to the week before. In 2021, the peak was more dramatic, with a 127% surge. The greater increase in 2021 likely resulted from relaxed bookstore restrictions compared to 2020.

**Library Trends:** Library holds in 2020 increased steadily over 25 weeks, reaching a 53% rise. In contrast, 2021 saw a dramatic 110% increase between weeks five and six

post-release, culminating in a 133% rise overall.

The adaptation of saga books into films significantly boosts book sales and library interest. While sales increase sharply right after a film’s release, library holds continue to rise weeks later. This demonstrates that adaptations introduce books to new audiences, prolonging their cultural relevance.

Ultimately, whether one prefers books or movies, adaptations bridge the gap between the two, giving readers and viewers multiple ways to experience their favourite stories.



# **Daniel Yates - a filmmaker's journey through genre and storytelling**

By Beatrice Morandi





**D**aniel Yates may not think of himself as being on a filmmaking journey, but his body of work suggests otherwise.

A director who has worked across multiple genres—from horror to crime drama to supernatural thrillers—Yates brings a unique blend of authenticity, emotion, and visual storytelling to each of his projects.

Whether delving into the psychological horrors of *The Madness of Humpty Dumpty* or exploring the intersection of crime and family in *Mother Mafia*, his approach remains deeply human, ensuring that his characters and narratives resonate with audiences.

Reflecting on his earliest inspirations, Yates admits that pinpointing the film that

set him on his path is difficult.

*Drive* and *Chronicle* played a role, but over time, his passion for filmmaking simply became a natural part of who he is. “If deciding that this is what I wanted to do is the ‘start of my journey,’ then I suppose it was then,” he muses.

Each of Yates’ films carries a distinct identity, yet they all share a grounded sense of realism, no matter how fantastical the premise. This is evident in *Salem Witch Doll*, a film that weaves supernatural elements into historical fiction.

The project was a commission rather than an original concept, but Yates approached it with the philosophy that great folk horror treats supernatural elements as integral to the story rather than mere

contrivances. “The horror is as true as the history. That is why it is scary,” he explains.

### **Balancing Darkness and Humanity**

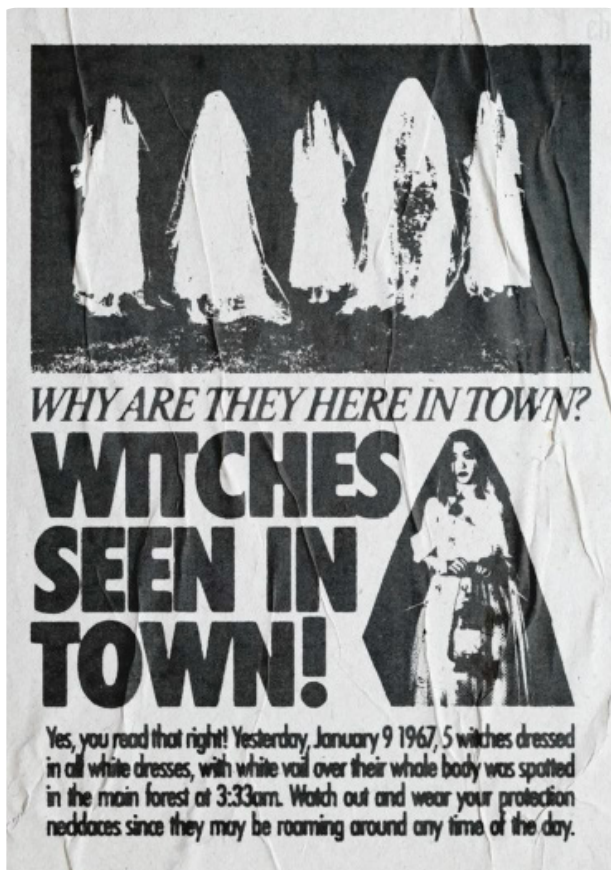
Crime and horror often examine the darker aspects of human nature, but Yates ensures that his stories retain an emotional core. *Mother Mafia* merges the crime genre with family drama, a balance Yates attributes to staying true to the characters’ experiences.

“Crime stories are personal stories, and so are family stories. You find a character, try and stay true to their imagined life experience, and the tones sort themselves,” he says. “As long as life has drama and humour, so does cinema.”

Yates’ psychological horror film *The Madness of Humpty Dumpty* thrives on tension and atmosphere. He believes that creating fear involves scaring oneself first: “If you intellectualize it, you lose it.” This instinctive method effectively taps into universal anxieties, enhancing the impact of his films.

### **Crafting Cinematic Visuals**

Yates’ films are rich in both story and visuals. He collaborates closely with cinematographers and the art department to enhance the narrative through imagery. “I watch a lot of films and love their visuals. I review my script, reflect on its emotional impact, and share related films with my director of photography to shape the visual style.”



"I don't believe that any movie can be comparable to the books from which it was made. I believe that what makes a book into a movie unfortunately is not always the story, but also the high demand and sales that the book is doing," Busseni says. "I have read many books that are suitable for a movie adaptation, but none have ever been taken into consideration."

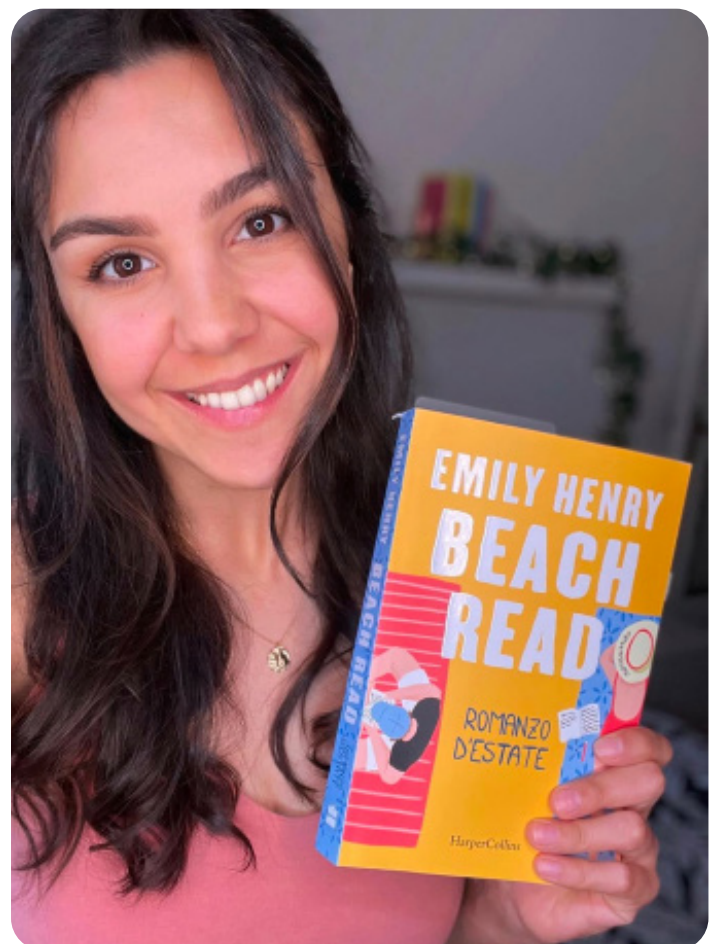
Thomas Brandes, a former student of London Metropolitan University in Journalism, Film, and TV Studies, remarked, "Film adaptations of book series often fall short, failing to capture the depth of world-building and character development in the original texts. However, they can draw attention to these deserving books and spark interest in reading. They also help preserve legendary stories that might otherwise be forgotten."

His approach to historical or thematic authenticity is refreshingly candid. When asked about the research involved in period-inspired narratives like *Salem Witch Doll*, he jokes, "Less than you would think. But shh. Don't tell anyone."

Whether it's an isolated ghost story in *The Only One Who Hears You* or a supernatural thriller, he believes that storytelling always comes back to human emotion. "All stories are about humans in some way or another. You make your characters have real issues—heartbreak, loss, excitement, ambition. If these are at the core of your characters, you can put them on Mars, and the audience will still get it."

Yates, reflecting on his directing experience, humorously advises, "Always shoot the wide first." He stresses the importance of maintaining vision on set, where differing opinions abound. "Listen to ideas and let the best one win, but remember what your film is. Only you truly know that."

While Yates has yet to adapt a book into a film, Italian book influencer Aurora Busseni has strong opinions on the subject. She argues that many book-to-film adaptations are driven by market demand rather than storytelling potential.



# The Longest Shadow

STARRING **DANIEL YATES** WRITTEN AND DIRECTED BY **JORDAN SELLERS & MANU AUSIN** EDITED BY **MANU AUSIN** PRODUCED BY **COLLUM SMITH**  
FEATURING THE VOICES OF **JORDAN SELLERS, MANU AUSIN & LOUIE MILLEDGE** DIRECTION OF PHOTOGRAPHY **KLARA SIMONOVA**

**COMING SOON** **SOAP OF THE DAY**





# **The Art and Impact of Book Covers: A story behind first impressions**

**A book cover is more than just the visual; it's a story's first impression, drawing readers in and hinting at the journey within. From bold images to subtle designs, we take a look at how covers captivate, influence, and connect with readers, even in the digital era.**

**By Klaudia Hostynska**

**A**t first glance, a book cover may seem like simple packaging for the words inside. But for a dedicated reader, Emily Francis, 28, it's more than just a mere 'wrapping'. "It's the first impression, books are like people, if I don't like the look of you, then I wouldn't necessarily be keen on getting to know you," says Emily, explaining how she chooses her books.

"Before I get to see the first words, I see the cover, which makes it equally – if not more, important as the rest of the book."

Emily isn't alone in her thinking, for many readers, the book cover isn't just an afterthought, it is the introduction that promises what's to come. "The cover is the first impression a reader gets of a book, and it can be crucial in their decision to buy it" said Karolayne Natal, 26, who is an independent Book Cover Designer.

But capturing the essence of a 300-page novel in one image is not so easy, "Initially, the author sends me a briefing with the information I request prior to designing the cover, I then aim to visually represent the elements which capture the book's essence such as plot, target audience or a symbolic scene and important objects" says Karolyane.

### **The History of Cover Art**

The book covers did not exist as a way of advertising a book until the late 19th century. Domestika mentions how in 1820s steam-powered presses were introduced, making books cheaper to make, therefore it made sense to produce cheap covers using mechanical binding. With techniques from poster artists, graphic design started to develop as a professional practice and was adapted in the book industry.

Over the decades, covers continued to evolve, mirroring the aesthetic and cultural trends of different times and countries. "Whenever I go on holiday, I like to visit some bookshops, every country has a different cover for the same book, it's exciting and strange to me" said Emily, "even when you look at old

library books, things have changed so much over time" she adds.

### **Covers in the Digital Era**

With the rise of digital reading, the role of book covers has shifted yet again. They now need to stand out not only on the shelves but also as tiny thumbnails in online shops.

"This means they have to be simpler and more straightforward, with typography that stays legible on small screens, we are now designing for two different worlds" says Karolyane.

Some publishers even began re-covering classic novels and modern books to make them more appealing to today's audience, "I see a lot of covers changing, I feel like because of BookTok and social media in general, they have to make them more aesthetically pleasing for pictures, since you know, everyone's an influencer these days," said Emily.







ing, “I’ve noticed a return to minimalism, with covers focusing more on strong typography and simple yet expressive illustrations” says Karolyane. Yet the core purpose of those, remains the same: to connect and invite readers into a new world.

For now, readers like Emily Francis continue to judge a book by its cover, which could potentially increase more as the digital era evolves. But for designers such as Karolyane, each new cover comes with its set of challenges which they treat as a form of art, and a chance to make the first impression count.

When it comes to personal preference, Karolyane enjoys to work with physical covers even with the advanced technology: “I can explore more details, textures and complex visual elements because the larger size allows for that,” she says.

### ***The Lasting Impact***

“It’s not that I wouldn’t buy a book because of it’s cover, the same way you shouldn’t judge it by it, but it gives me that extra joy when choosing, I love picking up a pretty book knowing it’s going to look nice on

my shelf and that’s why personally I prefer print, so I guess I am judging them a little bit” says Emily.

The role of book covers is likely to keep evol-





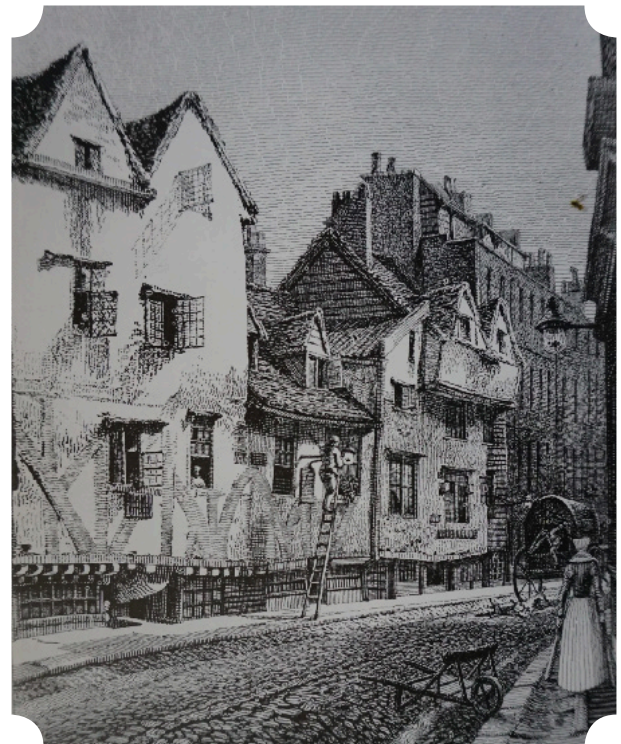
# ***J.T. Smith's Ancient Topography of London***

*by The Historier*



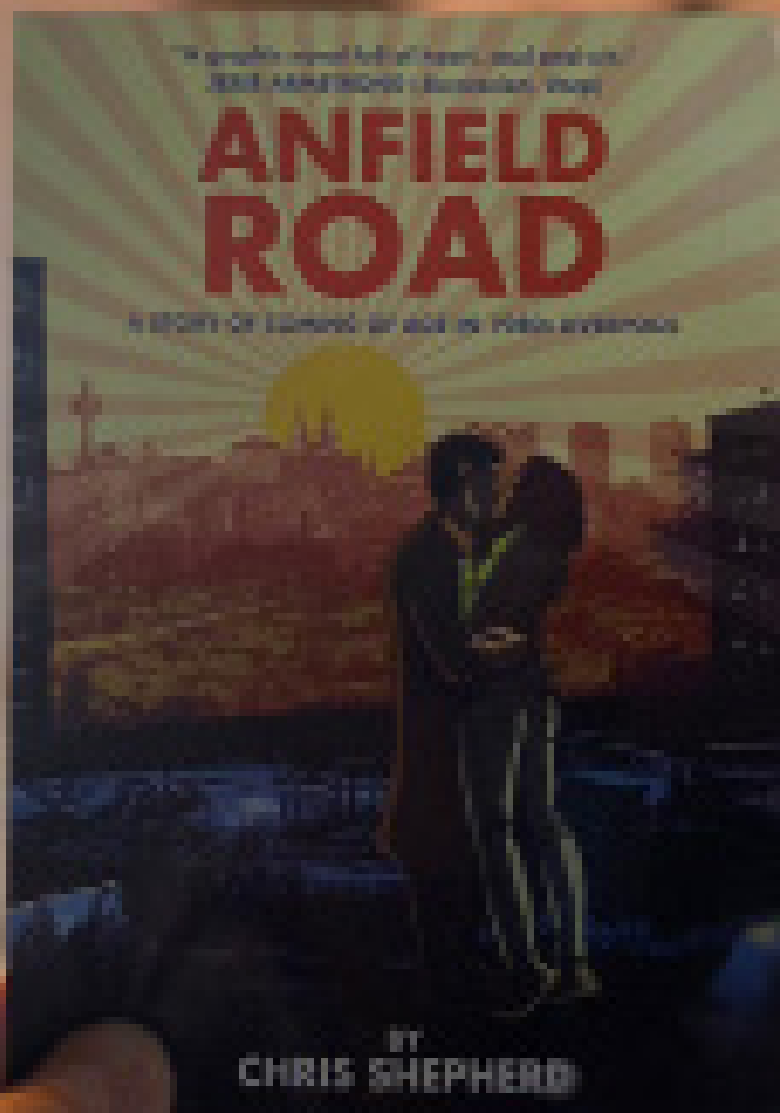
above date was discovered by the Doctor upon a board from one of the houses when they were repaired, about 25 years ago. the floors off the shops are nearly two feet lower than the present street; and one of the inhabitants informed me, that formerly they were ascended by steps, and that he believes the grounds to have been raised about four feet. Mr. Johnson who, at present, inhabits the 4th of these houses, has assured me that, to a certainty, there is chestnut in his house, and as he is a Turner of every sort of wood, his opinion is of much weight." 1599 is when Shakespeare was living just around the corner in Noble Street with Christopher and Mary Mountjoy.

Not all of London was destroyed by the Fire in 1666. It is often said that London was raised to the ground, but there were areas on the fringes of the City, such as Smithfield, that the Fire didn't reach. London was rebuilt, and new building designs and materials used. Out with the old timber framed structures with wattle and daub walls, and in with the fire-resistant brick-built buildings. 18th century London saw a boom in economy and in building, tearing down the ancient and building new fashionable, taller, large-windowed residences. By the early 1800s some older parts of the medieval and Tudor London still existed. These were in threat of destruction, not long for this life, and ready to be replaced by the fashionable, tall modern, brick-built structures. "The house is represented in the opposite plate display a ruder mode of domestic building, And, perhaps a greater quantity of heavier timber, than any now remaining in London. the walls are lays and plaster; the timber, oak and chestnut; the rooms are small, with low ceilings; their staircases perpendicular and narrow; the windows irregular in their forms, and ill placed." "I could not discover that these houses have ever been decorated. Fortunately that is the date 1599 touch in one of the beams at the back of the 4th house, by order of the late reverend doctor Edwards, vicar of Saint Bartholomew the great, to which parish these houses belong. The



# ***Anfield road has a crow on the hill of Pleasure- Land***

***By Edimar Kampgen***



# I

n the freezing night of November 14th, I made my way to the Bookseller Crow on the Hill in Crystal Palace for a live event featuring author Chris Shepherd and his fresh release, *Anfield Road*. Initially, I was hesitant about the event's success, as I arrived to find only a handful of people in attendance: the couple who own the bookstore, Keiran Goddard, Shepherd, and writer-in-residence Karen McLeod.

I considered returning home, but the arrival of two elderly ladies and a couple convinced me to take a chance. Inside, the atmosphere was intimate and friendly, making me feel more at ease with my decision to stay. I introduced myself to Shepherd and suddenly I realized the place was a full house.

As the event began, double BAFTA-nominated television/film writer, graphic novelist, and director Chris Shepherd, along with moderator Keiran Goddard, author of *"I See Buildings, Fall Like Lightning"*—a tale of working-class friendship—took the stage to discuss Shepherd's first graphic novel, *Anfield Road*.

Shepherd acknowledged that his passion for storytelling has been a constant in his career, saying, "I think the one thing I have always been a storyteller...I always think of the story first." He also expressed frustration over unreleased feature film scripts, which ultimately motivated him to pursue a graphic novel, "I ended up then thinking, well, why don't I just draw it, I can not only write but I can draw as well."

Shepherd described the novel as a "northern fantasy," drawing upon his youth for inspiration. He emphasized that while the story is fictional, it embodies a universal experience: the desire to explore life beyond one's hometown.

Shepherd's love for Liverpool is evident throughout the graphic novel, not only in the narrative but also in the artistic representation of the city. Despite the darker aspects of the story, Liverpool is portrayed beautifully,

as seen through the eyes of the protagonist, Conor, who is an illustrator himself.

In *Anfield Road*, the protagonist, Connor, finds himself on the cusp of adulthood, navigating the complexities of first love while preparing to leave his hometown. Shepherd elaborated on the character of Mary, Connor's mother, revealing that her life's disappointments, particularly her daughter's decision to run off with a waiter from an Indian restaurant, have significantly shaped her personality. This event contributed to Connor's fear of sharing details of his own life, such as his relationship with a Black girlfriend.



Photo by Edimar Kempgen



Set in 1989, the novel also addresses the Hillsborough disaster, which Shepherd emphasized had a profound impact on Liverpool. He shared his belief that in the wake of this tragedy, the city's sense of community strengthened and continues to grow.

Despite his own lack of interest in football, Shepherd was able to capture the intensity of the emotions surrounding the disaster in his graphic novel.

The two songs that were cleared to represent for use in the book were "You'll Never Walk Alone" and "Bat Out of Hell" by Meatloaf. Shepherd originally included just the musical notes for Meatloaf's song, but his publisher was determined to obtain the rights to use the lyrics as they suited the mood of a particular scene.

Conversation touched on the impact of Thatcher's policies on Liverpool, as well as the broader socio-economic changes that took place during this time when industries were forced to close. "...I was always, like, quite obsessed about that as a kid, thinking about, like, the before and after..." says Shepherd.

Goddard added that "...when they shut down a lot of the industries there, [Corby] they told the people of the town, 'that don't worry,' all of your jobs are going to be at this new thing that

we are opening, called 'PleasureLand,' and it's going to be the biggest amusement park in the whole of the UK." Obviously, "PleasureLand never got built."

The book includes subtle nods to the politics of the time, such as the recurring motif of anti-Nazi league badges. Shepherd explained that he wanted to capture the political atmosphere through elements like graffiti with slogans like "Maggie out."

As the discussion came to an end, I could not help but notice a certain irony in the atmosphere. Just as the character Maggie had made her departure in Shepherd's graphic novel, I found myself preparing to leave the Bookseller Crow, feeling a strange hidden political connection to the novel.

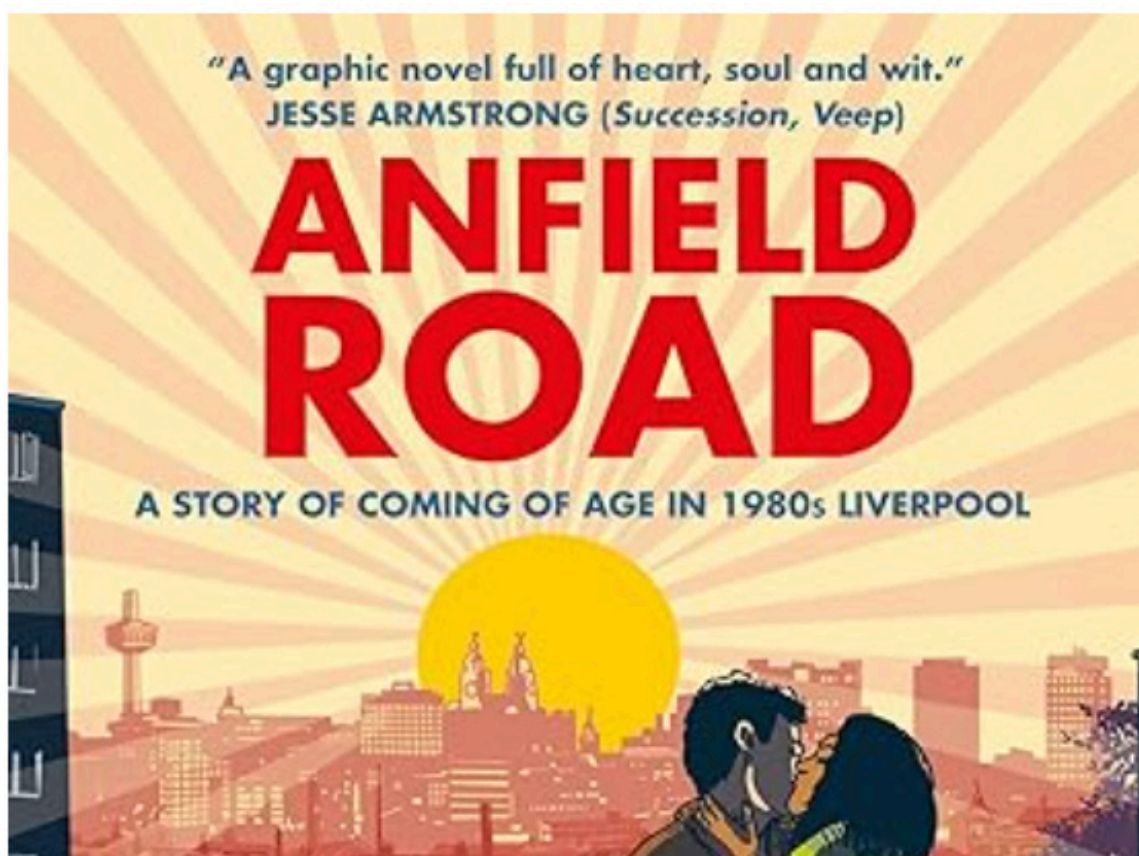


Photo by Edimar Kempgen

# 10 Years of Milk and Honey: Rupi Kaur's London Book Signing

By Ali Suker

On the evening of November 13, 2024, Gower Street in London was buzzing as world-renowned poet Rupi Kaur hosted a book signing event at Waterstones. The line outside stretched far around the corner. Fans and poetry lovers were dressed warmly, in scarves and hats, prepared for the long wait to meet the influential poet. The event marked the 10th anniversary of her first book, "milk and honey," which was first self-published in 2014. Tickets were sold for £20 and provided each ticket holder with a special 10th anniversary collector's edition, which included an exclusive new chapter consisting of forty new poems and twenty new illustrations, handwritten diary entries by Rupi Kaur, behind-the-scenes photos, and a new introduction.

Milk and Honey is a collection of unique poetry by Indian/Canadian author Rupi Kaur. The book covers sensitive themes of feminism, relationships, and survival, delving into Kaur's personal experiences, femininity, love, abuse, violence, and loss. Kaur initially gained traction for her poetry on Instagram and due to her use of social media to gather an audience, critics have described her work as "instapoetry". Amassing over 40 million followers on Instagram, the poet, artist, and illustrator, Kaur is considered the queen of Instapoetry.

The long queue consisting of various demographics finally started to move as Kaur and her team settled and finished preparing inside the 5 floor Waterstones, which offers 5 miles of new and second-hand books. The emotion was palpable, fans grinning as they greet Kaur and briefly chatting with her as she signs their name into the special edition book. An Assistant quickly snaps pictures or records the interaction on the fans phone, the atmosphere is intense as time is of the essence with such a vast number of people waiting patiently for their turn.

Outside in the queue, a woman was crying and being consoled by her friend. Riya Malik, a 27-year-old digital and social media marketing manager said: "I'm overwhelmed at the moment, there are family issues, and my 'boyfriend' is basically breaking up with me. I don't want to go in like this, it might not look it but I'm very excited and happy to see her. I've never read a book so relatable, and me and Rupi share the same South Asian background. She understands us."





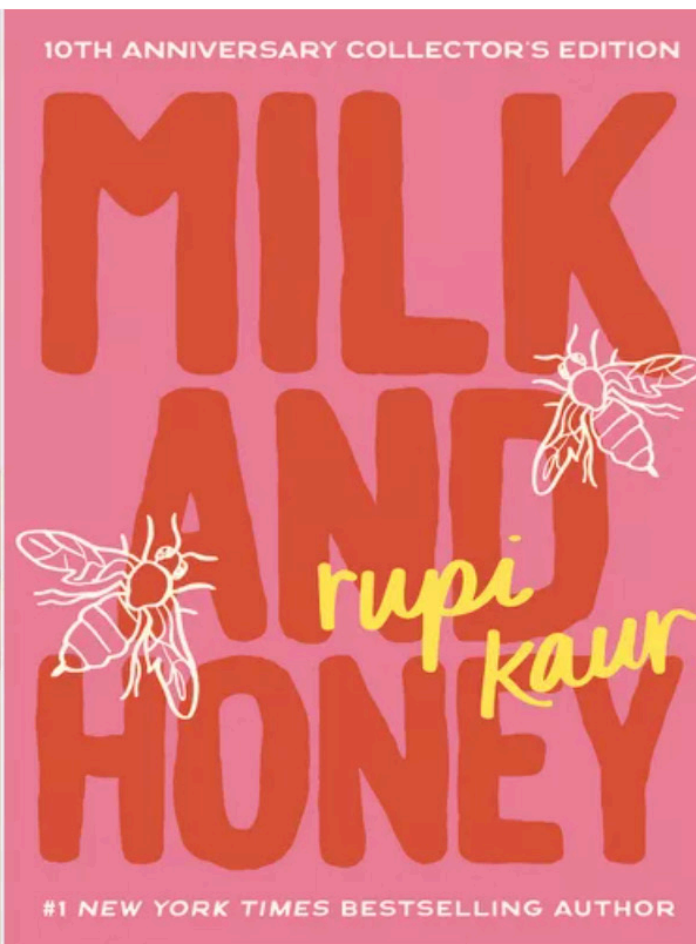
Rupi Kaur's importance and influence is evident, she drives a powerful, new style of poetry, introducing it to a fresh young generation. Milk and Honey has sold over 11 million copies all over the world and has been translated to over 40 languages.

The line kept moving and people were exiting the Waterstones holding their signed pink copies. Sofia Kravchenko, a 22-year-old Ukrainian aspiring poet and writer said: "I have been asking people in the queue what they like about her or her poetry so that I understand what people like. I have my own event tomorrow and she is the reason I'm trying so hard. She inspires me to write about things that move me too, so I have written some poetry about my brother who is in the war and I'm fighting to bring him to the UK so he can be safe. I brought "The Sun and Her Flowers" as well for her to sign, it's my favourite book from her."

Commemorating a decade of 'Milk and Honey' was more than just a book signing. As the queue shortened, the admiration the fans displayed for Rupi Kaur highlighted the evening and portrayed each interaction, even though brief, with significance that evoked a deep resonance and personal connection her readers feel with her work. The diversity of the attendees, the different backgrounds and genders, shows that no matter how different each reader is, they all found her words powerful. Kaur's ability to draw out such connections and emotions, cements her as a defining voice in modern poetry and literature.







Women read more:  
Exploring the reading  
habits of men and women  
in the UK

By Ali Suker

Next month the UK and the rest of the world will celebrate World Book Day, but more women will celebrate than men as recent data from a YouGov survey revealed the striking disparities between those who devour books daily and those who barely turn a page. The data shows that 27% of women read daily compared to a measly 13% of men.

With the rise of social media, endless scrolling, and continuous consumption of media, the act of reading is becoming far less common. Infinite digital distractions can be blamed which in turn has shown to decrease attention span, leisurely reading could be more difficult to pick up within the digital age.

The generational divide is evident. Among those over 55, a remarkable 34% read daily, a figure that drops significantly to just 7% among 18 to 24 year olds. Perhaps even more surprising is that 22% of men admit they never read at all, compared to just 12% of women. What causes this imbalance? Whatever it may be, women continue to turn pages more frequently than their male counterparts.

Lillian Rodis, a 37 year old Londoner said: I think biologically it's just one of those things. When boys are young, they're told to go outside and play, and we girls weren't encouraged to do that. So, we'd stay home and read more or play with dolls which probably ended up sticking."

The survey also showed where men and women prefer to read. 43% of women prefer to read before bed compared to just 30%. The only place men beat them in is reading while commuting, it turns out 13% of men prefer to read on the go in comparison to 9% of women.

Richard Choga, a 24 year old accountant intern said: "I force myself to read just because of the health benefits. Two years ago, I noticed myself having a worse memory and literally becoming dumber. I blame social media and believe everyone should read and do what's good for their brain."

Richard hit the nail on the head with the health benefits of reading. According to healthline, reading strengthens the brain by increasing brain connectivity, specifically in the part that responds to physical sensations and pain. A study in 2013 by Rush University Medical Center showed that people who participate in mentally stimulating activities, do not develop similar brain conditions such as plaque and lesions as seen in dementia patients. Unbelievably, even the simple act of just reading can lengthen your life span according to a study conducted by Yale university.

## *The act of reading is becoming far less common*



Pic By Pintarest



# T

he study followed 3,635 adults over a time frame of 12 years and found that those who read books lived on average two years longer than those who did not. Women have always been known to live longer than men, maybe the secret has been reading this whole time. The numbers do not lie, and they paint a concerning picture of reading habits in the UK. The question remains, how can the downward spiral of reading habits be changed?

Other than childhood habits, technology and social media have played a major role in reducing daily and general reading habits among all demographics. Digital platforms like TikTok, Instagram, and YouTube offer an infinite stream of bite sized content that requires little sustained attention.

Possible ways to counter this issue could be to initialise mandatory book clubs in schools to

*Whatever it  
may be, women  
continue to turn  
pages more fre-  
quently than their  
male counter-  
parts*

settle the habit into the next generation. Another factor that may be a deterrent is a societal perception or stigma especially felt by young boys to see reading as a negative thing.

For the next generations it is in the parents and school's hands, but for this generation it is up to each individual to take action and feed their brain.



# **Who wrote your favourite book?**

## ***A look into ghostwriting***

By Ali Suker

***Have you ever picked up a book, glanced at the author's name in bold letters, and wondered if they actually wrote it? The answer might surprise you.***

Ghostwriting is when a book is written by someone other than the credited author. It has long been a stealthy force in the publishing industry. From political and celebrity memoirs, autobiographies, and fiction novels, ghostwriters are the hidden creatives behind countless books. But is this practice a betrayal of readers, or simply an accepted part of the literary world?

The ghostwriting service market is expected to almost double in value by 2030 according to ReportPrime. The ghostwriting service market was valued at 1.22 billion and is estimated to be worth 2.23 by 2030.

In modern times, branding is everything. Writing a book has become a passage for politicians, business moguls, celebrities, and social media influencers to reveal their stories and display their creative writing skills while also earning money from the book sales. Yet, many of these high profile figures simply do not have the time or the writing to simply produce a good book.







# *I found out most celebrity books aren't written by the actual person*

That is where ghostwriting comes in, skilled professionals who capture their clients' voices, shape their experiences into a compelling story, and then disappear into the background.

Even in the genre of fiction, ghostwriting is not unheard of. Popular series like Nancy Drew and The Hardy Boys were produced by different ghostwriters under pen name. Both book series were published by Stratemeyer Syndicate, a publishing company that used different ghostwriters for different books and published them under the same pen name to give the illusion that there is only one author. James Patterson, prolific American author with well-known books such as 'Along came a spider', and 'Women's Murder Club', openly collaborates with a team of "co-authors" to maintain his staggering literary output. He was criticised by Stephen King in 2009, describing him as a terrible write yet very successful. In 2013, the Daily Express published a bold headline about Patterson, "James Patterson, the Best Seller Who Doesn't Write His Own Books". In these cases, the art of writing is turned into a money printing machine by people who have the money to pay ghostwriters.

Sukayna Hamadi, a 21-year-old avid reader and student at Kingston University said: "There's got to be a law that ghostwriters should also be named on the cover because sometimes I want to read a book to see the writing of the author. When I read Becoming by Michelle Obama, I thought she wrote it until I found out most celebrity books aren't written by the actual person."

There are also cases where an author's name continues to appear on books long after their death. Tom Clancy, for example, has had multiple novels published under his brand long after his death.

If authors and publishers want to reach full transparency with their readers and audience, and to avoid any confusion on who actually wrote the book, the covers should include credit to any ghostwrites if one was used.

Susanne Chapman, a 45 year old Uxbridge local who organises a weekly book club in her neighbourhood said: "It's probably got to do with anonymity. Ghostwriting is a job, but I can see how there can be some concerns. I wouldn't give it another thought personally, I care more about whether I'm enjoying the story or not."

There likely will never be a change in transparency with ghostwriting, it will depend upon each publisher and author who decide what will be best for the book, whether in what method will make them the most money, or what their readers will appreciate the most.



Saoirse Ronan in Little Women

# Random Fact

By Danielle Butler

The earliest forms of ghostwriting date back to ancient *Greece and Rome*, where scribes were hired to write speeches and letters for public figures. In the Middle Ages, monks were often hired to copy manuscripts by hand, which was a form of ghostwriting. However, the concept of *ghostwriting* as we know it today did not emerge until the 18th century.

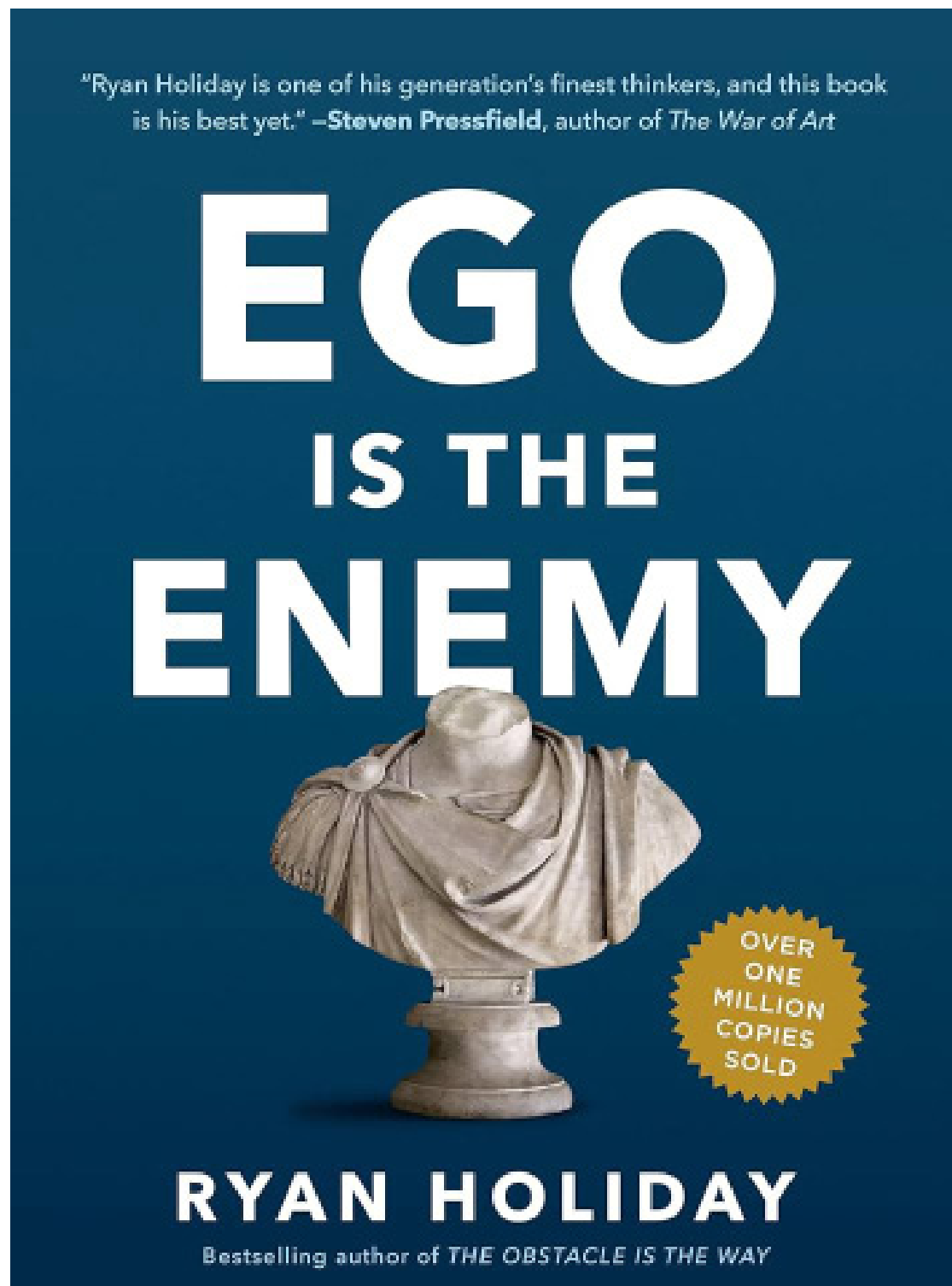
In the *1700s*, the literary world was undergoing a significant shift. The rise of the novel and the demand for new works meant that authors were under pressure to produce more content. However, many writers found that they could not keep up with the demand and turned to ghostwriters to help them complete their work. The most famous example of this is Samuel Johnson, who used a team of ghostwriters to help him produce his dictionary.

During the 19th century, ghostwriting became more prevalent as the publishing industry grew. Magazine editors and book publishers often hired writers to produce content under a pseudonym or the name of a popular author. For example, the writer Carolyn Keene was actually a pseudonym for a series of ghostwriters who wrote the Nancy Drew mystery novels.



# ***From Books to Business: The story of Visar Kojeli***

**By Klaudia Hostynska**



***At 32, Visar Kojeli is not your typical restaurateur. Last year, he challenged himself to open his first restaurant - without any prior culinary experience. Today, the business is flourishing, coming on the tail of his thriving chain of six car washes. His secret? Books.***

Like many people looking to improve their lives, Kojeli moved to the UK in search of opportunity. Originally from Albania, he soon found himself working long hours in unfulfilling jobs. "I read my first book when I was 18, and it was a good one because it was about spiritual mindset," Kojeli recalled. "From then on I started reading all the time."

The first book started a thirst for knowledge for Kojeli, which later contributed to shaping his life and career as well as opening his restaurant, Yammas in southeast London, which specialises in Greek food (his business partner is Greek-Albanian).

"When I came to the UK, I eventually got fed up with work, and I wanted to try something different, which led me to read a lot of books about business, mindset and self-development. This then led me to building a way of thinking about earning money through value, not through time," Kojeli said.

Kojeli now reads about 20 books per year, and he credits his achievements to his reading habits. He never went to university and does not believe that traditional higher education is a requirement for success. Instead, he has built his career on self-education.

"I worked in a couple of restaurants so far and I have to say, he is not your typical boss. The words he throws at you sometimes, you question if you even know English properly," said Zilan Shore, 21, who works as a waitress at Yammas.

One book which impacted Visar Kojeli specifically is *Ego is the Enemy* by Ryan Holiday. "It puts a perspective onto how selfish we are and how much of our ego stands in our way to achieving greater things, this was what let me see the bigger picture when I started opening my businesses," he says.

He also recommends *The Richest Man in Babylon* by George S. Clason, "I read it, at possibly one of the worst times in my life, I was £50,000 in debt, barely making £300 a week. The book explained what to do and how to manage everything, so based on it, I made a structured plan for myself," said Kojeli.



***Visar Kojeli***



“He is always so calm, lovely to be around, he seems unserious at times but honestly he’s a very wise person,” said Zilan Shore.

Visar Kojeli’s journey is evidence to the transformative power of books. They guided him through financial hardship, helped him build a business empire, and taught him to lead with empathy and strategy. In a world where formal education is often considered the only path to success, his story proves that if you’re driven by curiosity and discipline, you can be just as powerful.



Kojeli’s restaurant isn’t just a business to him; it’s a testament to the power of knowledge. “I use a lot of knowledge from books that I acquired over the years, me and my manager never had an argument, from books I learned communication skills and how to be very tolerant,” he says.

“The books, especially the two that I have mentioned, put me into a perspective that instead of reacting and saying something harsh, I listen to the person and think deeply first, finding the best way to respond.”

For Kojeli empathy is key, as he believes that during a debate you should always put yourself into the perspective of the other person. But despite his love for books, these days his busy schedule doesn’t always allow him the time to sit down and read.

Kojeli has adapted by listening to audio books while travelling between business meetings, “By the time I get to the destination, I have listened to half a book,” he says.

His employees also have taken notice of his unique approach, “Visar always pushes us to learn and grow, I went to him with a couple of personal situations, and he always gives you this great advice that gets you thinking,” said Rizzwan Mirsa, 26, who works as a chef in Yammas.

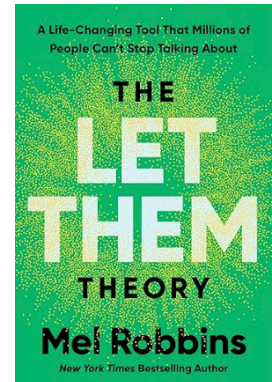
“FROM BOOKS I  
learned  
COMMUNICATION  
skills and  
how to be  
very  
TOLERANT”



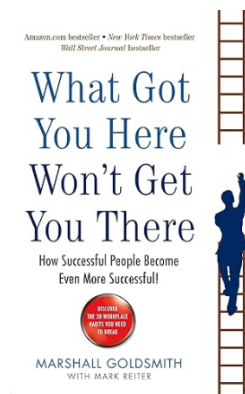


# ***THE BOOKS YOU SHOULD READ TO EMPOWER YOURSELF***

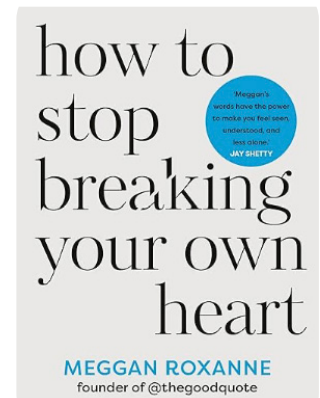
- **The Let Them Theory: A Life-Changing Tool That Millions of People Can't Stop Talking About**



- **What Got You Here Won't Get You There: How successful people become even more successful**



- **How to Stop Breaking Your Own Heart: THE SUNDAY TIMES BESTSELLER. Stop People-Pleasing, Set Boundaries, and Heal from Self-Sabotage**



101  
ESSAYS  
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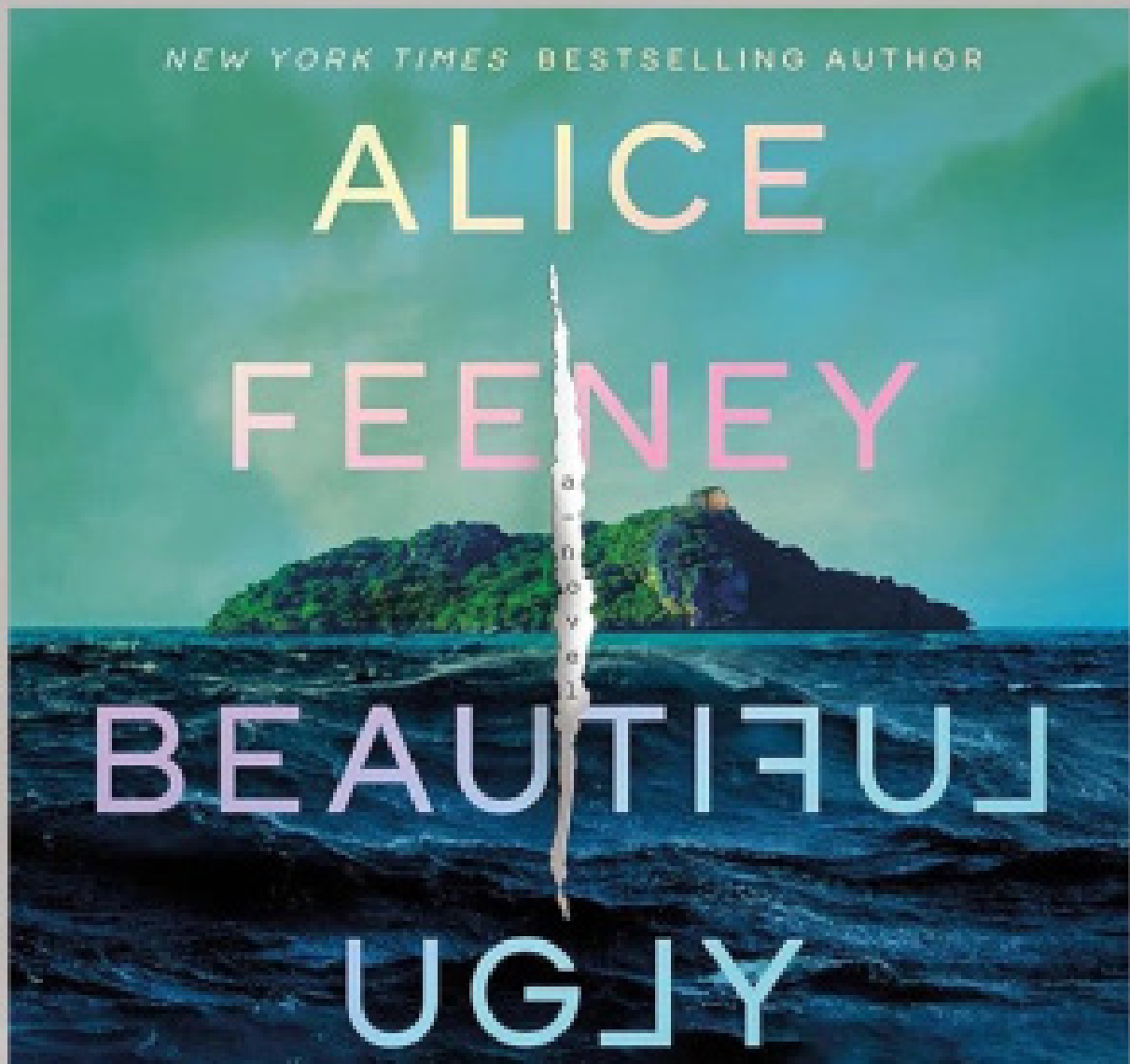
BRIANNA WIEST

- **101 Essays That Will Change The Way You Think, the global bestseller and social media phenomenon, is a collection of author Brianna Wiest's most beloved pieces of writing.**

# Alice Feeney's in a

Alice Feeney, bestselling author of gripping psychological thrillers, delivers a story with unexpected storyline twists. She has captivated readers from all around the world.

By Klaudia Hostynska



# a coma – or is she?

thrillers, is known for her dark and clever plots and unexpected  
the world – and tonight was no exception



*“SHE’S ONE  
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**T**he air buzzed with anticipation at the largest bookstore in Europe, Waterstones in Piccadilly Circus, as fans gathered to celebrate the launch of Alice Feeney's latest thriller, *Beautiful Ugly*. The room was packed with readers as well as upcoming writers who wished they could be like Alice one day. Everyone was holding copies of her latest book ready to be signed, eager to hear from the mind behind some of the most gripping psychological thrillers of recent years.

Alice Feeney entered the room to warm applause, bringing in gentle humour and understated charm. Dressed in a bodycon black dress and a black cardigan with white details, her approachable personality immediately set the tone for the rest of the evening. "She's speaking so softly, and she's just so funny, nothing like I imagined a thriller writer to be," said Billie Krostov, a 23-year-old psychology student.

Feeney started off by sharing her decade-long journey to becoming a published writer. "For 10 years I was a secret writer," she confessed, "I would write on my way to work and in my little shed at home, and I would send my books off to publishers to receive tons and tons of rejections."

It was a humbling admission to the room, but the way in which her words floundered inspired audible murmurs of admiration within the crowd. She explained that everything changed when she

wrote *Sometimes I Lie*, which introduced readers to a character named Amber Reynolds, a 35-year-old woman hospitalised in a coma. "Once I got the dream agent, it meant I could write my stories all day, every day," said Feeney in a soft voice but with unmistakable pride.

The room was filled with heartfelt laughter once Feeney recalled the first headline she ever received following the success of *Sometimes I Lie*. "I got my first headline," she began, pausing for comedic effect, "but the newspaper got things in a muddle. They said, 'Alice Feeney is in a coma.'" The room erupted, even Feeney had to pause and laugh for a minute.

"I dreamed for ten years to get published," Feeney continued, once the laughter subsided.

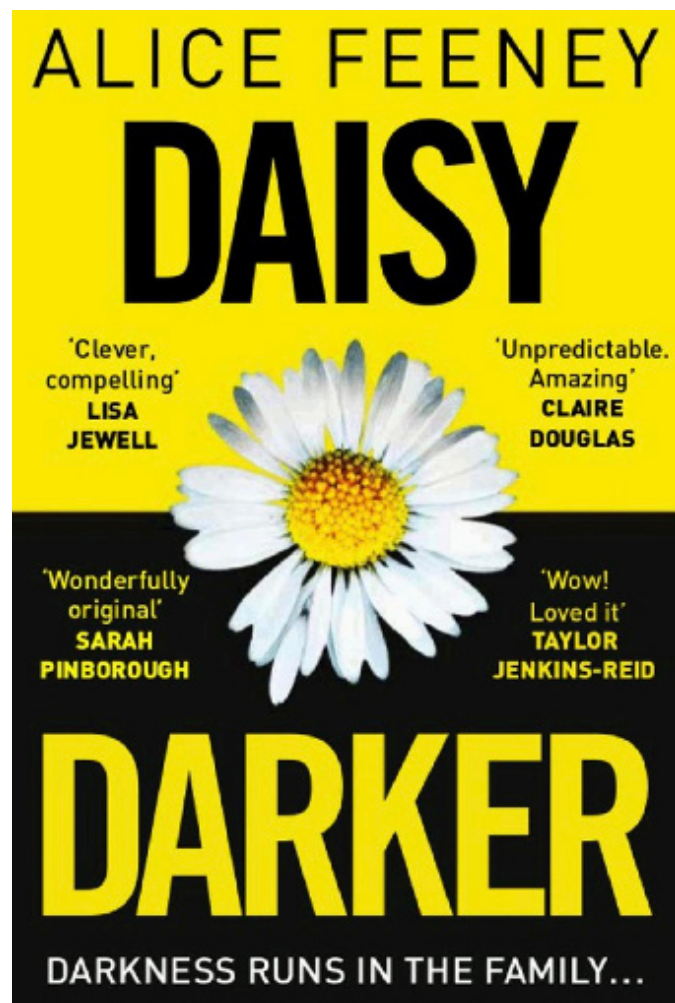
"So, as I am reading this article I myself started thinking 'AM I?! Maybe I'm dreaming all this stuff that my books are finally out in the world.'"

Feeney's humour and humility were obvious throughout the evening. She shared how she had left her job at the BBC, where she originally worked as a journalist for 16 years, before becoming a full-time novelist. She also shared her writing struggles, exposing her humanity to the room, which raised questions from many individuals who also enjoy writing, but cannot seem to find the time. Feeney said: "It requires a lot of discipline, set yourself 20 minutes every day and believe me you will get there."

“She’s one of those authors that makes you think for long after you finished the book, I took a day off work tomorrow to get to read *Beautiful Ugly*. Even with my future degree I still gasp every time one of her plot twists is revealed,” said Billie.

The evening followed by a lively Q&A session, and, not long after, the awaited book signing. Readers were called up row-by-row clutching their copies of hardback *Beautiful Ugly*. The night turned even more exciting since Feeney let her readers in on a little secret, “I’ve published six books now, and I have everything planned already up until book thirteen”.

For fans of Alice Feeney, it was an evening they will cherish for a long time. As they spilled out from the room, some onto the streets of Piccadilly, and some towards the section with her previous books buzzing from the experience, one thing was clear: the world of psychological thrillers is more intriguing with Alice Feeney.



# Preserving language, re

# England

## The story of ABCDE Escolinha of Portuguese

By Edimar Moreira Kampgen



# Roots, and identity in

In 2015, three Brazilian mums living in Woking, Surrey, came together to solve a problem that many immigrants families face: how to preserve their native language and culture in a foreign environment.

On 15 March of that year, Hellen Candey, 45, and Karina March, 42, and Alexandra Ribeiro Magula held their first meeting and planned a Festa Junina, a traditional Brazilian Midsummer-type celebration, to raise funds.

With the money collected, they hoped to rent a space and open the ABCDE Escolinha de Português (Portuguese), a Portuguese-speaking Saturday school for children aged two to thirteen, originally accommodating 25 - 28 children.

From the beginning, the trio wanted to create something unique. "As mums, we decided we wanted our children to have this," says Candey, referring to a school that would help children learn their mother tongue.

The Escolinha integrates cultural celebrations into its curriculum to make learning fun and meaningful. "We're always celebrating – Festa Junina, Christmas, Carnival – because we believe children learn through culture," March says.

The school is not an ordinary one, March points out. "We are not a traditional school where we only teach. For us, celebrating our culture and our events is one of the most important things."

Of course, Escolinha de Português teaches grammar, but children also learn about their Brazilian roots and their national traditions a

part of the curriculum. "They already have a tiring week at school. If they come on Saturday just to learn grammar, it is not fun," said March.

For both teachers, Hellen, and Karina, when children embrace the community, they feel like "they belong," says March.

The Escolinha emphasises the importance of language for cultural identity but approaches bilingualism with flexibility. "We encourage our children to speak Portuguese all the time," March says. "But if they cannot find a word, it is fine to ask in English. It is better to participate in English than not at all. We always repeat in Portuguese to reinforce it."

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March speaks from personal experience, raising her children in a bilingual home where she speaks Portuguese, while her husband speaks English. “Our common language is English. It is hard for families to balance, and we are not here to judge. But preserving your heritage helps maintain cultural identity. It is the feijoada (pork and bean stew) we love, the football on Sundays, the Brigadeiro (Brazilian chocolate truffle) at parties – these things connect us to our roots.”

In 2019, the founders joined PolhUK, a non-profit organisation that unites around 10 Brazilian language schools in the UK. “We’re all volunteers, and we have monthly meetings,” Candey says. “We work with the Brazilian consulate and embassy to offer teacher training and support new schools. It is about keeping the language alive and supporting the community,” she said.

Through partnerships with the consulate, PolhUK has organised courses to help teachers improve their skills in teaching Portuguese as a heritage language. “We work hard, and we welcome new Brazilian schools that are starting. We give them support to open and grow.”

Despite their hard work, the founders remain humble about the impact of the Escolinha. “Language schools are like a drop in the ocean,” March says. “They help a lot by bringing new vocabulary and subjects that might not come up at home. But parents have to do their part. Schools alone are not enough,” says her.

Candey also talks the importance of parents’ involvement. “It is hard to get parents to understand that one language does not interfere with the other – it helps. But they have to do their job at home. Otherwise, the child will not speak Portuguese.”

Lots of parents drop their kids off at school and think they will learn Portuguese for two hours on Saturdays. But if they do not speak Portu-

guese at home, the child will not learn, she adds. “We cannot do miracles.”

But Candey remains hopeful about the future. “We work with the Brazilian consulate all the time to keep Portuguese alive. It is hard, but it is worth it.”

Today, the Escolinha de Português is more than a school – it is a community hub where

Brazilian traditions are celebrated, and children reconnect with their roots. “This cultural identity is what makes us unique,” March says. “It connects us to Brazil and preserves our traditions. It is very important,” says her.

For Hellen Candey, March, and Alex, their work is a labour of love. Through their efforts, a new generation of children in Surrey is growing up fluent not only in Portuguese but also in

the culture that defines their heritage. For the families involved, the Escolinha of Portugues represents much more than language; it is a bridge back home.



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***“SPRING AND ALL”***  
***POETRY FOR THE CHANGING***  
***SEASON***

***A BIRD, CAME DOWN THE WALK -***  
***BY EMILY DICKINSON***

A Bird, came down the Walk -  
He did not know I saw -  
He bit an Angle Worm in halves  
And ate the fellow, raw,

And then, he drank a Dew  
From a convenient Grass -  
And then hopped sidewise to the Wall  
To let a Beetle pass -

He glanced with rapid eyes,  
That hurried all abroad -  
They looked like frightened Beads, I thought,  
He stirred his Velvet Head. -

Like one in danger, Cautious,  
I offered him a Crumb,  
And he unrolled his feathers,  
And rowed him softer Home -

Than Oars divide the Ocean,  
Too silver for a seam,  
Or Butterflies, off Banks of Noon,  
Leap, plashless as they swim.

# DID YOU KNOW?

THERE'S A HIDDEN JAZZ CLUB IN THE  
HEART OF BOW CHURCH



## CREDITS:

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