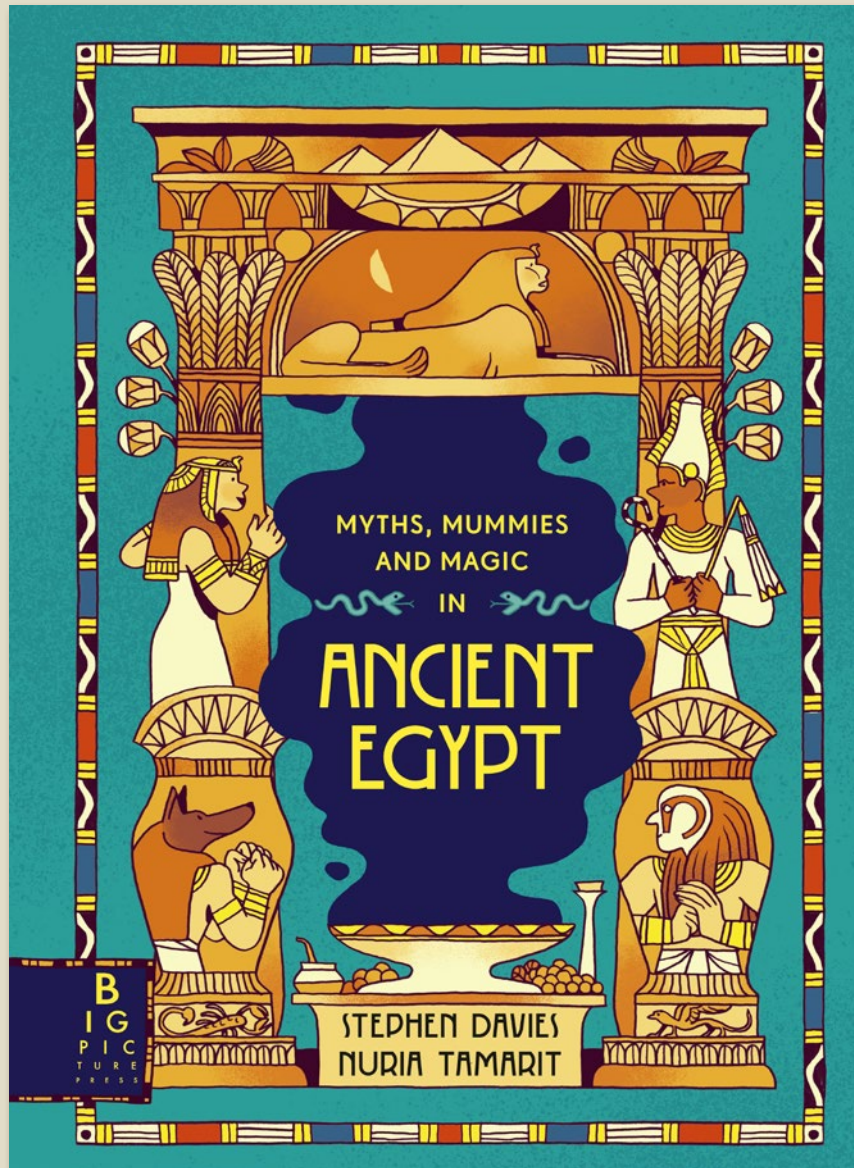




**Castillian and Catalan - FBF23 -
Middle Grade mono and graphic**

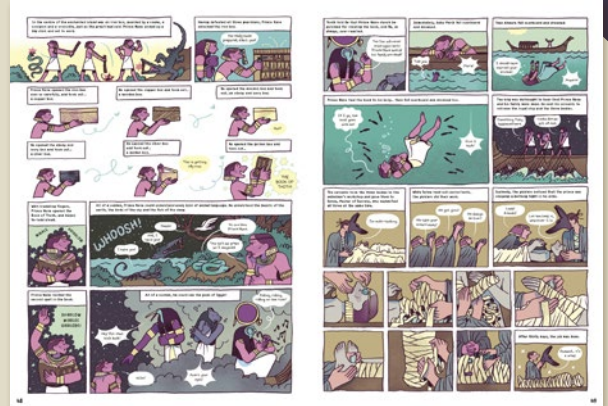
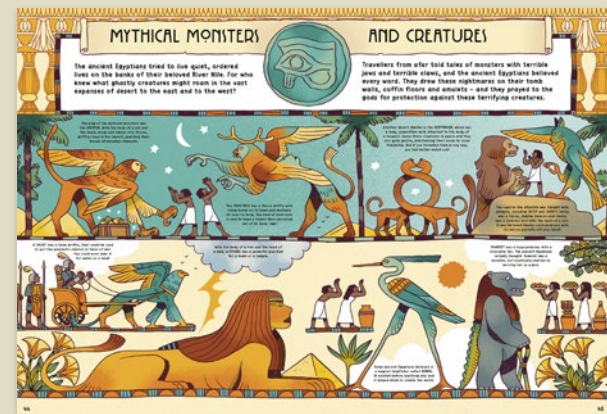
Myths, Mummies and Magic in Ancient Egypt



A vivid and contemporary retelling of the ancient Egyptian myths.

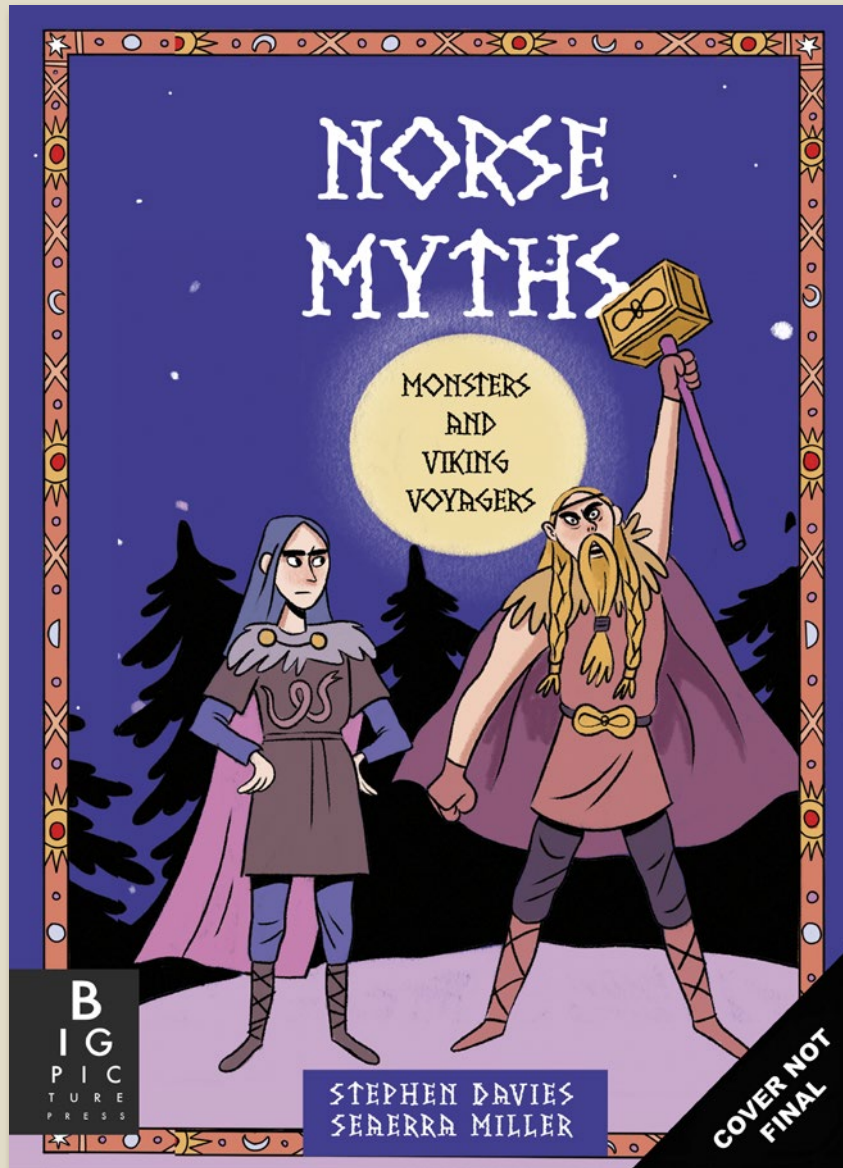
- Contents: Myths - The Creation Myth; Isis and Osiris; The Contendings of Horus and Seth; The Book of Toth; Prince Thutmose and the Sphinx; The Famine Stela; Cleopatra. Theme spreads - What are the Egyptian Myths?; Meet the Egyptian Gods; How the Myths Explained the World; Meet the Pharaohs; Mythical Creatures and Deadly Beasts; Mummification; Hieroglyphics; A Mythic Map of Ancient Egypt.
- Following on from the success of *Myths, Monsters and Mayhem in Ancient Greece* (which has sold over 35,000 copies worldwide as of July 2022)- this is the next title in a growing series for Big Picture Press

Myths, Mummies and Magic in Ancient Egypt



Pub Date	06/07/2023
Pub Price	£14.99
ISBN	9781800783232
H x W	297 x 216mm
Binding	Hardback
Age Range	7-9 years
Author	Stephen Davies Stephen Davies
Illustrator	Nria Tamarit
Extent	64pp
Word Count	12000 words
Rights Available	World

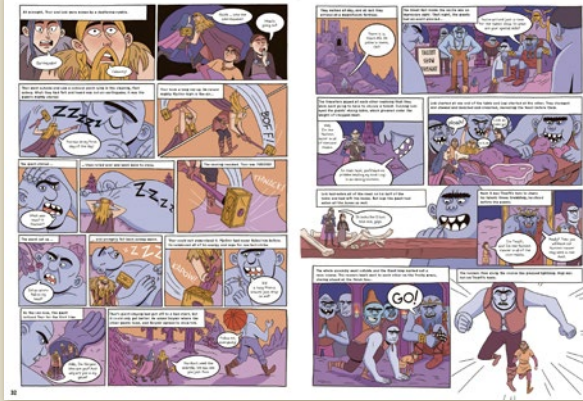
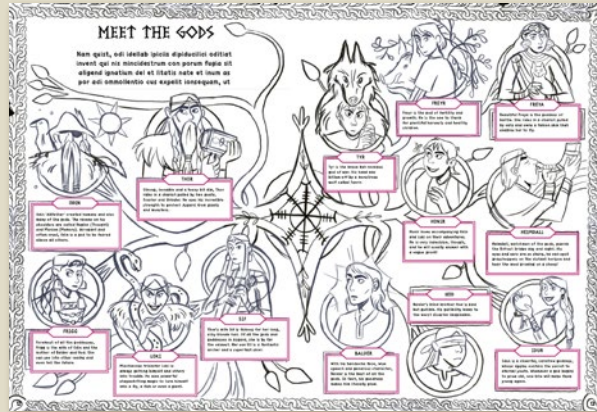
Norse Myths, Monsters and Viking Voyages



A vivid retelling of the Norse myths.

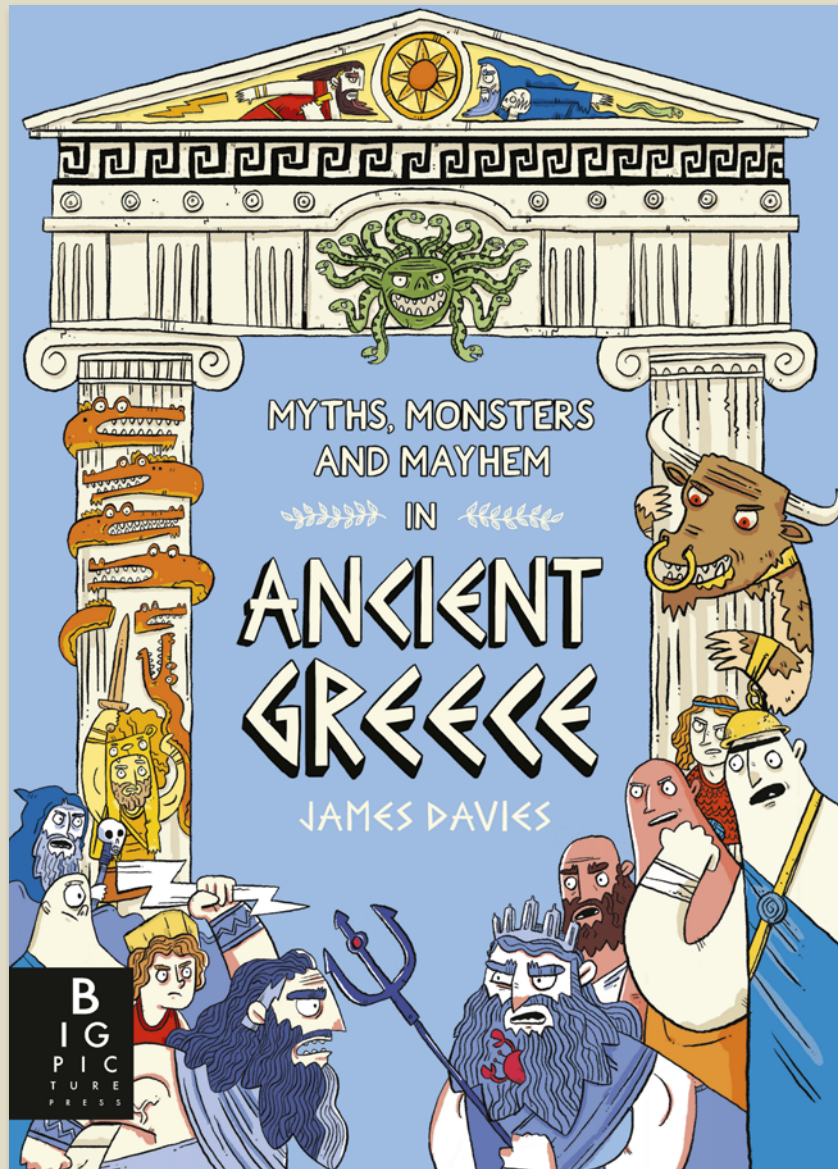
- Contents: Myths - The Creation Myth; The Theft of Idun's Apples; Treasures of the Gods; Thor's Journey to Utgard; The Deal of Balder; Ragnarok; Sigurd and Fafnir Theme spreads - What are the Norse Myths?; Meet the Norse Gods; How the Myths Explained the World; Meet the Vikings; Mythical Creatures and Deadly Beasts; The Afterlife; How the Norse Myths Came to us; A Mythic Map
- Following on from the success of *Myths, Monsters and Mayhem in Ancient Greece* (which has sold over 35,000 copies worldwide as of July 2022) - this is the next title in a growing series for Big Picture Press.
- These myths will be broken up with a series of 'theme' spreads, which will take a broader look at certain aspects of Norse mythology (mythical beasts and monsters, the gods etc.)

Norse Myths, Monsters and Viking Voyages



Pub Date	01/05/2025
Pub Price	£14.99
ISBN	9781800786745
H x W	297 x 216mm
Binding	Hardback
Age Range	7-9 years
Author	Stephen Davies
Illustrator	Seerra Miller
Extent	64pp
Word Count	12000 words
Files To Printer	09/12/2024
Freight On Board	27/02/2025
Rights Available	World

Myths, Monsters and Mayhem in Ancient Greece



A vivid and contemporary retelling of the Greek myths - now available in paperback.

- Contents: Pandora's Box; Theseus and the Minotaur; Perseus and Medusa; Orpheus and Eurydice; The Trojan Horse; What are the Greek Myths?; Meet the Greek Gods; How the Myths Explained the World; Mythical Creatures and Deadly Beasts; A Journey through the Greek Underworld
- These myths will be broken up with a series of 'theme' spreads, which will take a broader look at certain aspects of Greek mythology (mythical beasts and monsters, the gods, heroes etc.)

Myths, Monsters and Mayhem in Ancient Greece

WHAT ARE THE GREEK MYTHS?

The ancient Greeks were a civilization known for their heroic warriors, great artists and clever thinkers. They lived between 2000 BC - 400 AD in what is now mainland Greece and the Greek islands. Like many other ancient civilizations, the Greeks had a rich mythology. Their gods were almost like real people, with personalities, emotions, and even families. They were also very powerful. Some of the most famous Greek myths are the story of Prometheus, the Trojan War, and the story of Odysseus.

SO WHO WERE THE ANCIENT GREEKS?

The Greeks developed one of the world's earliest civilizations in the ancient world. They began writing through books and scrolls. Ancient Greece was a collection of many small kingdoms. It was a center of learning, art, and philosophy. The Greeks were very proud of their achievements. They were also very curious about the world around them. They explored and discovered new lands. The Greeks were also very religious. They believed in many gods and goddesses. They built temples and statues to honor them. The Greeks were also very brave. They fought many wars and won many battles. They were also very kind and helpful to each other. They were also very smart. They invented many things that we still use today.

CHAOS AND CREATION

Every culture has a creation story about how the world began, and the ancient Greeks were no different. Here is the old and exciting story of how the Greeks believed the world came into being.

Before we begin, there are some things you should know. First, the Greeks were very religious. They believed in many gods and goddesses. They were also very curious about the world around them. They explored and discovered new lands. The Greeks were also very religious. They believed in many gods and goddesses. They were also very curious about the world around them. They explored and discovered new lands.

MEET THE GREEK GODS

The ancient Greeks believed their gods controlled every aspect of their lives and they built many temples to honor them. They were also very curious about the world around them. They explored and discovered new lands. The Greeks were also very religious. They believed in many gods and goddesses. They were also very curious about the world around them. They explored and discovered new lands.

Zeus	Athena	Apollo	Ares	Hephaestus	Hermes
Zeus is the king of the gods and the god of lightning and thunder. He is often depicted with a lightning bolt and a beard.	Athena is the goddess of wisdom, war, and crafts. She is often depicted with an owl and a helmet.	Apollo is the god of the sun, music, and poetry. He is often depicted with a lyre and a bow.	Ares is the god of war and desire. He is often depicted with a spear and a helmet.	Hephaestus is the god of fire, metalworking, and craftsmanship. He is often depicted with a hammer and anvil.	Hermes is the god of commerce, travel, and thieves. He is often depicted with a winged helmet and a caduceus.

PANDORA'S BOX

In the beginning, the Earth was a beautiful, but very quiet place. The only sounds were the crashing of the waves and the wind whistling through the trees.

The only living creatures were the Titans, the children of the gods Gaia and Uranus.

From his home on Mount Olympus, Zeus watched over Earth. But Zeus was not content - he felt that something was missing. So he talked two Titan brothers called Prometheus and Epimetheus into creating living creatures to fill the land and the oceans.

In their workshop, the two Titans went wild. They created the strangest creatures they could imagine.

When their work was complete, and life breathed into their magnificent sculptures, the world was full of howling and stomping and biding. It was amazing.

Zeus was pleased with their work, but he had one final request. He wanted Epimetheus and Prometheus to create the most perfect, beautiful being. Naturally, it was to look like him.

At last, Prometheus completed his creation. He named it Pandora.

As a final touch, he reached up to the Sun, plucked down a flame and gave it to man.

With the power of fire, man could now heat and light. They could explore, hunt and cook.

For many years, harmony reigned on Earth. That is, until Prometheus suggested that mankind play a trick on the gods. Each year, mankind prepared a delicious feast to show their respect for the gods. Except this year, Prometheus had a different kind of feast in mind.

Instead of rich delicious meat, the feast was made up of some, gristle and guts. It was disgusting.

Zeus was furious. With a snap of his fingers, he punished every spark of fire on Earth.

Prometheus felt guilty that mankind had been punished for his trick. Sending as quickly as a Titan can, he jumped into Zeus's griffin chariot and stole the fire back.

At Zeus's call, three mighty eagles swooped down from the sky. They snatched over the helpless Prometheus.

Zeus's punishment was justice. Each day the eagle tore and Prometheus's liver. And each night, his liver grew back again. The pain was endless.

Epimetheus was very lonely without his brother. He wandered the Earth and tried to find a girl who would help him.

Zeus called Hephaestus, god of fire and sculpture, to create something very special. The first mortal woman.

He wanted Hephaestus to make the first woman the most charming and beautiful of all his creations.

But Zeus had more plans. By man's plans to punish Epimetheus and reward the trick.

YOU'LL SEE!

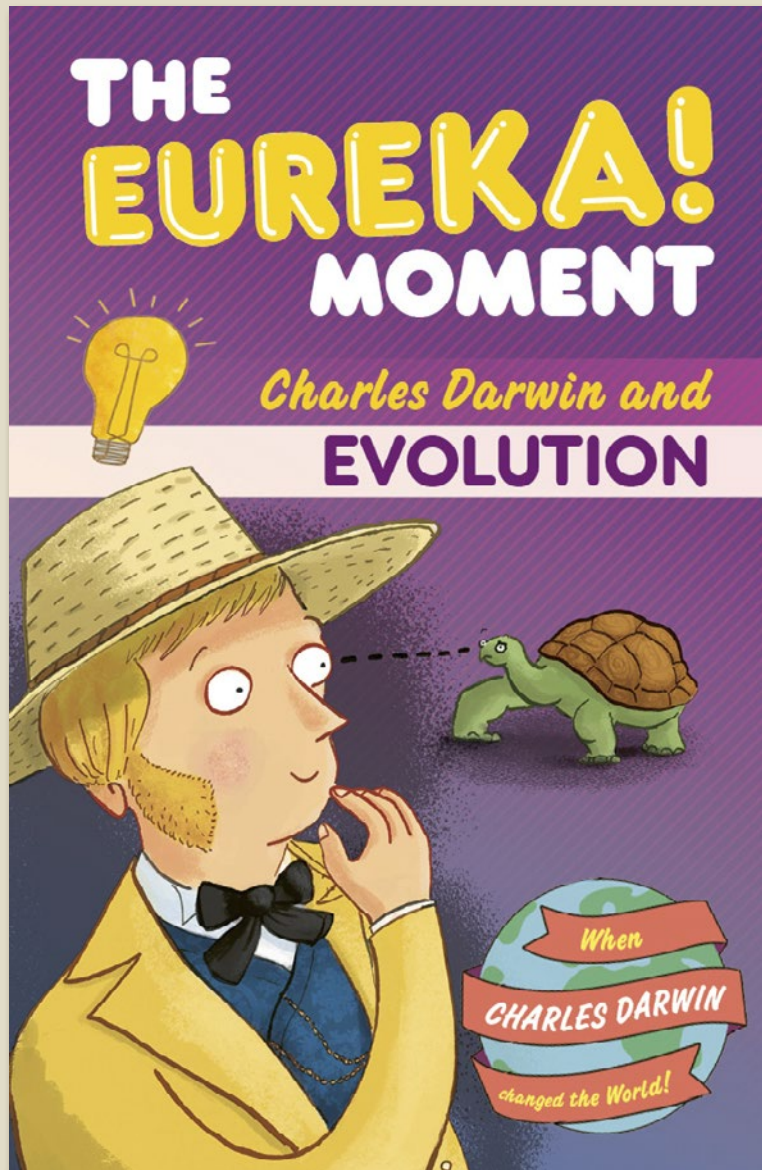
HEAVEN HAS DECISION!

HEAVEN HAS DECISION!

PANDORA

Pub Date	11/04/2024
Pub Price	£9.99
ISBN	9781800787520
H x W	297 x 216mm
Binding	Paperback
Age Range	7-9 years
Author	James Davies
Illustrator	James Davies
Extent	64pp
Word Count	12000 words
Rights Available	World

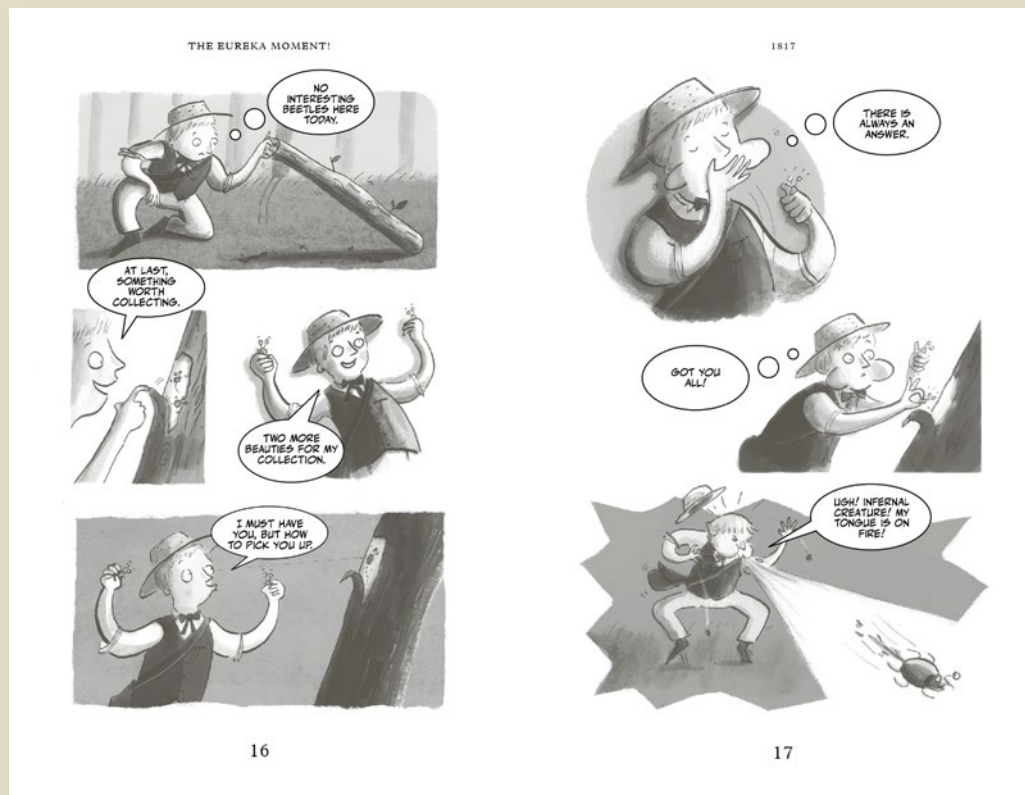
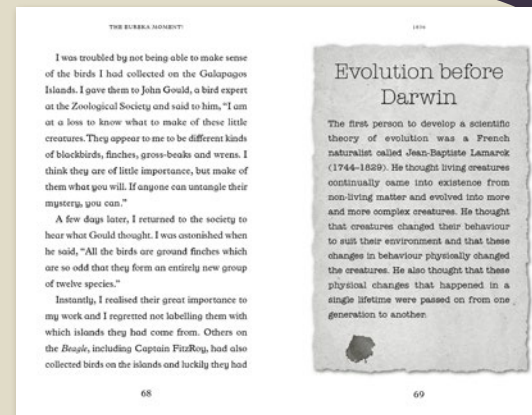
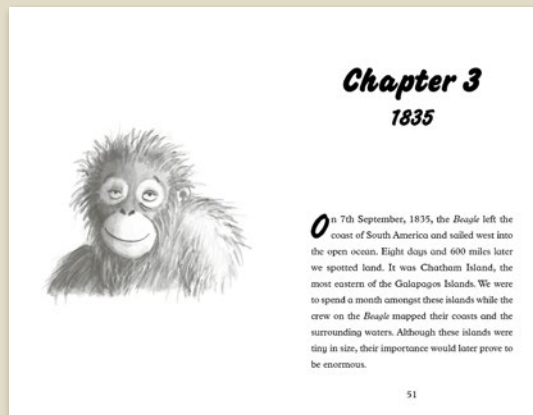
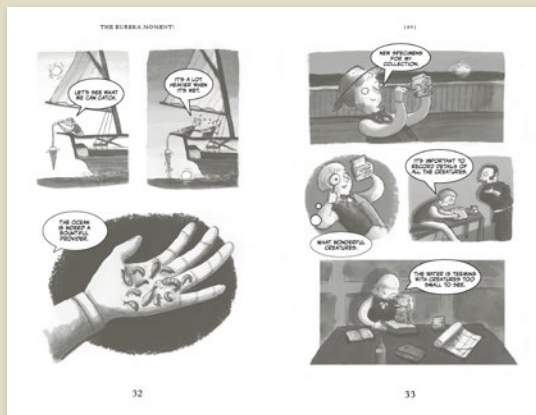
The Eureka! Moment: Evolution



Explore Charles Darwin's incredible 'Eureka' moment!

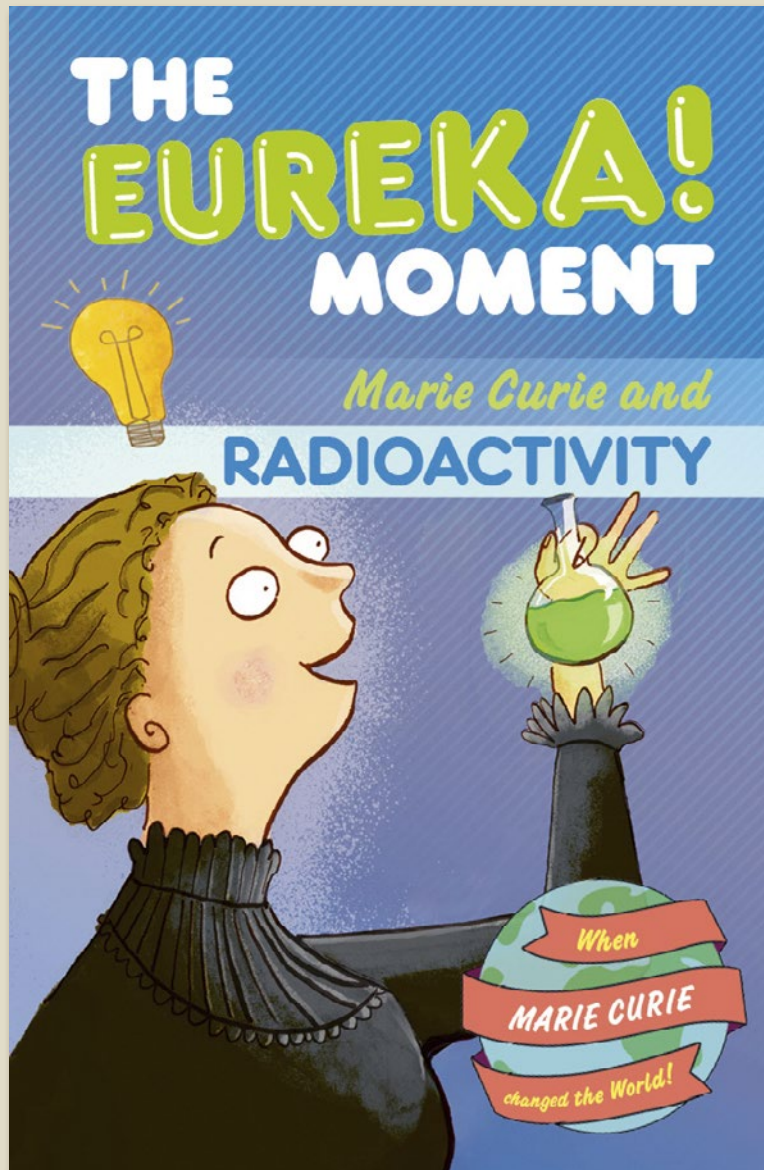
- Child-friendly narrative non-fiction curated to deepen children's knowledge of key moments in the history of science in an accessible, entertaining way.
- Short comic strips scattered throughout the narrative to help children visualise and engage with key events.
- This series introduces children to a myriad of inspirational individuals and the barriers they faced during their quest for knowledge, encouraging and inspiring young people to dare to think differently.
- Combines history and STEM focused learning. The perfect curriculum companion to children studying evolution, adaptation, animal biology, and survival of the fittest.
- Includes extra end matter, such as timeline and glossary, to help children to fully understand concepts and the historical context.

The Eureka! Moment: Evolution



Pub Date	29/02/2024
Pub Price	£5.99
ISBN	9781800788473
H x W	198 x 129mm
Binding	Paperback
Age Range	9-11 years
Author	Ian Graham
Illustrator	Annaliese Stoney
Extent	144pp
Word Count	15936 words
Rights Available	World

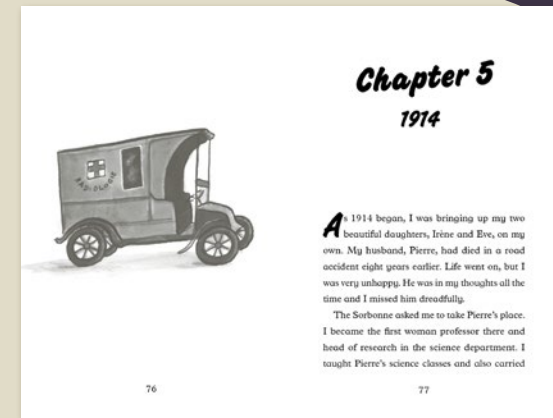
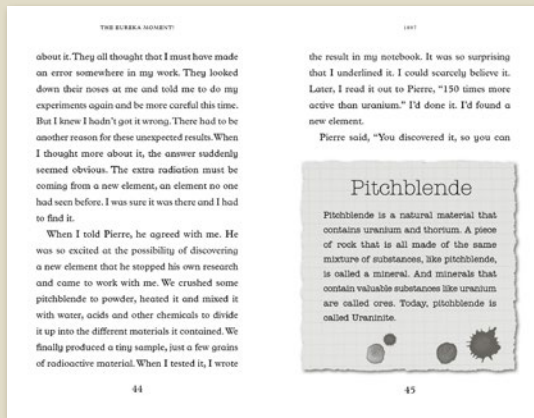
The Eureka! Moment: Radioactivity



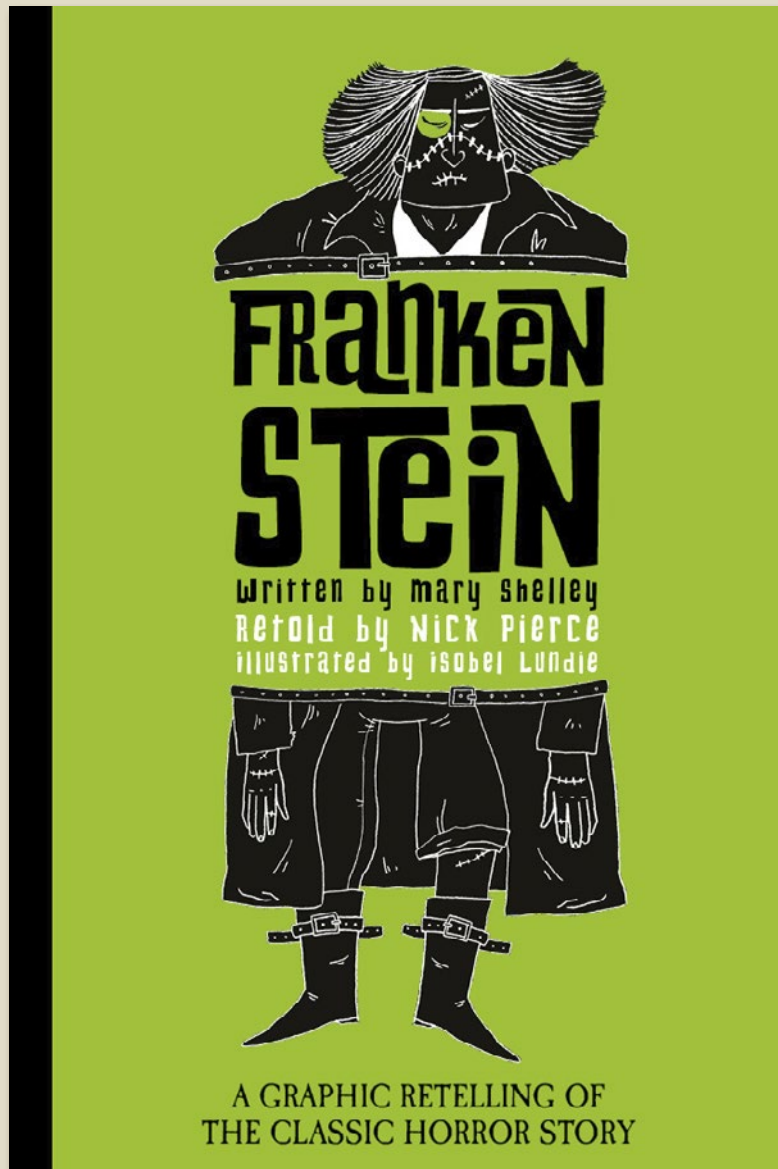
Explore Marie Curie's incredible 'Eureka' moment!

- Child-friendly narrative non-fiction curated to deepen children's knowledge of key moments in the history of science in an accessible, entertaining manner.
- This series introduces children to a myriad of inspirational individuals and the barriers they faced during their quest for knowledge, encouraging and empowering young ones to follow their own research.
- Blends history and STEM-focused learning. The perfect curriculum companion, especially on the themes of radioactivity, medicine and scientific advances during WW1.
- Includes extra end matter, such as a timeline and glossary, to help children fully understand concepts and historical context.

The Eureka! Moment: Radioactivity



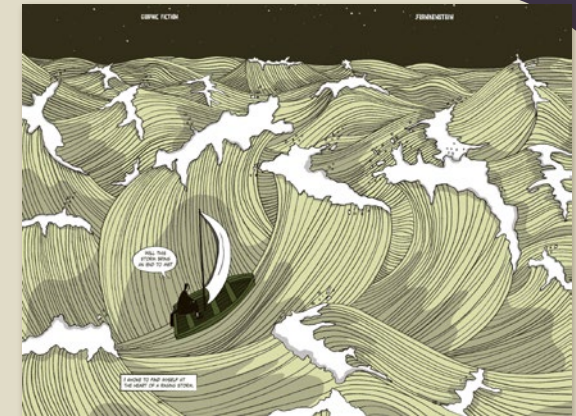
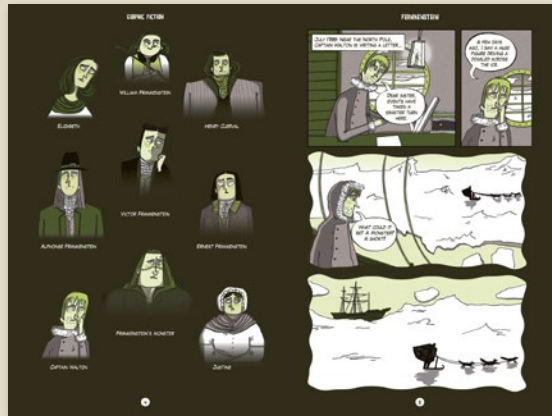
Pub Date	29/02/2024
Pub Price	£5.99
ISBN	9781800788527
H x W	198 x 129mm
Binding	Paperback
Age Range	9-11 years
Author	Ian Graham
Illustrator	Annaliese Stoney
Extent	144pp
Word Count	14683 words
Rights Available	World



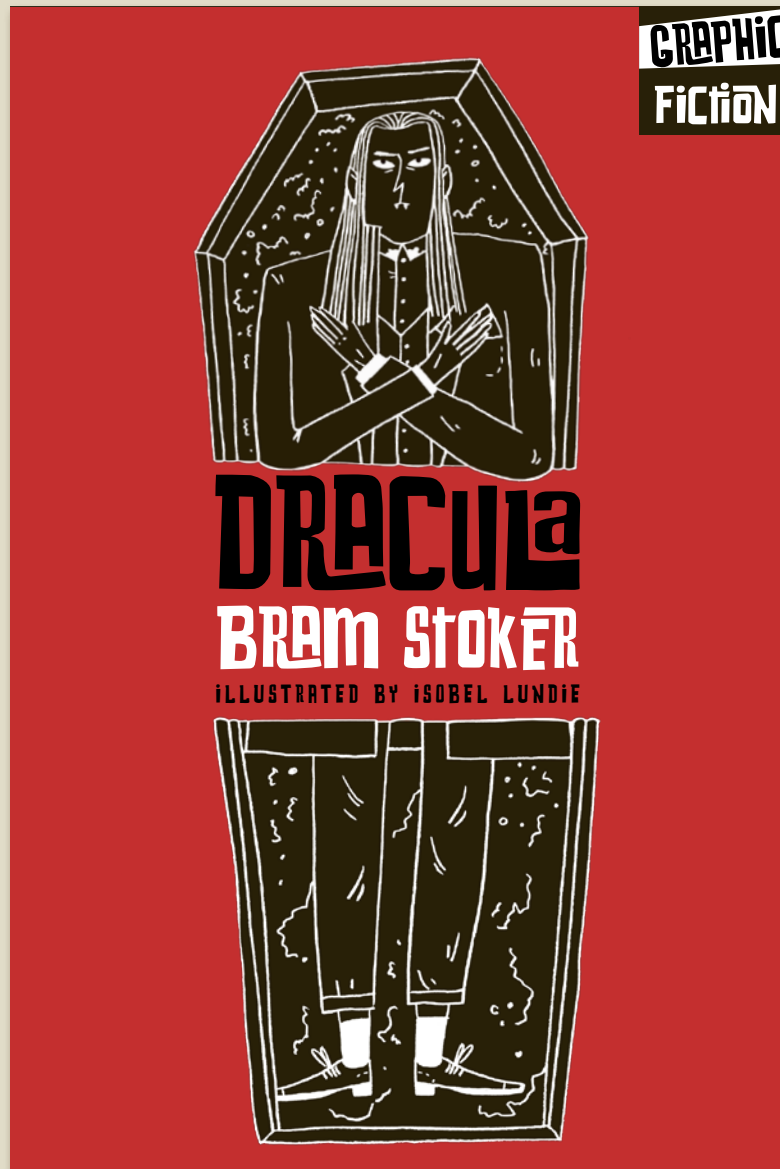
A graphic retelling of Mary Shelley's gothic masterpiece

- A contemporary twist on a 19th Century classic. This creepy graphic retelling is the perfect tool for engaging reluctant readers and introducing children to the literary canon.
- An excellent English Literature curriculum companion. The endmatter contains an educational author biography, history of the text and key theme analysis to further help children.
- A wonderful introduction to the horror genre. Young readers will be captivated by Isobel Lundie's beautiful, spooky illustrations.
- Utilises speech bubbles and easy-to-follow sequential ordering to make the story more accessible.
- Next title in the series: Dracula

Frankenstein



Pub Date	12/09/2024
Pub Price	£7.99
ISBN	9781800788800
H x W	210 x 140mm
Binding	Paperback
Age Range	9-11 years
Author	Mary Shelley
Illustrator	Isobel Lundie
Extent	64pp
Word Count	4316 words
Files To Printer	15/04/2024
Freight On Board	11/07/2024
Rights Available	World



Bram Stoker's legendary gothic masterpiece is bought back to life in this blood-sucking graphic retelling!

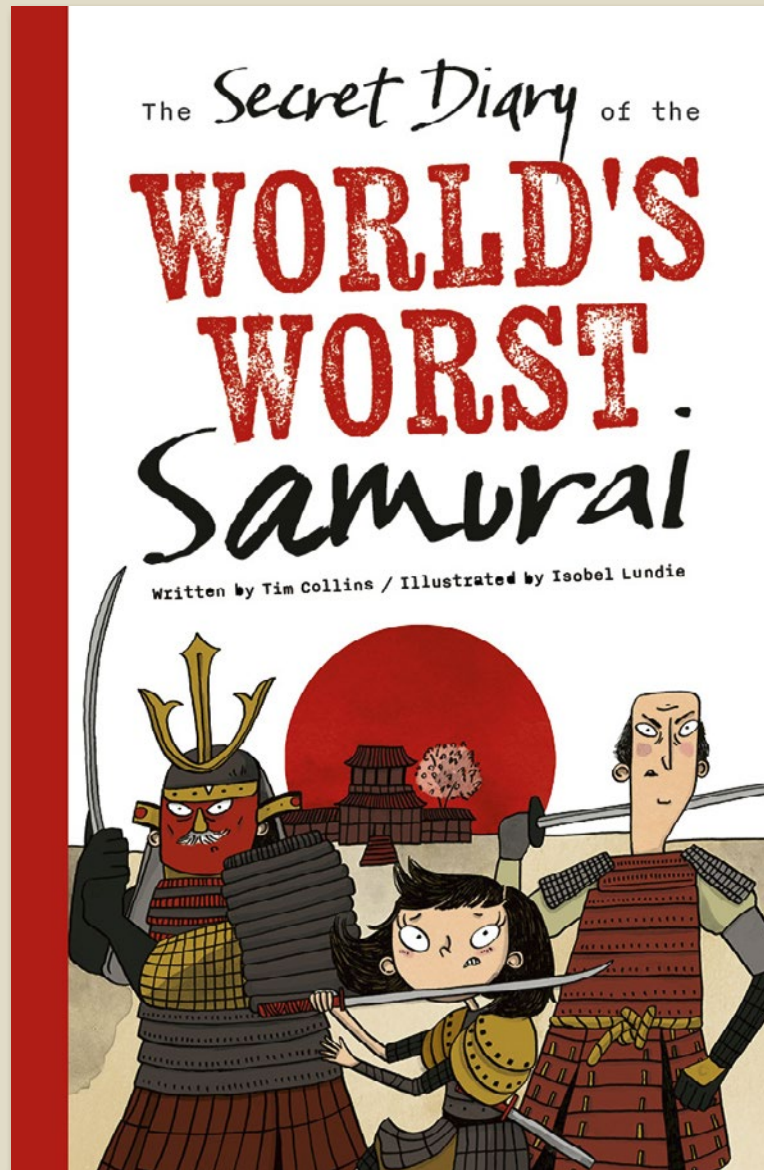
- A contemporary twist on a 19th Century classic. This creepy graphic retelling is the perfect tool for engaging reluctant readers and introducing children to the literary canon.
- An excellent English Literature curriculum companion. The endmatter contains an educational author biography, history of the text and key theme analysis to further help children.
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Dracula



Pub Date	12/09/2024
Pub Price	£7.99
ISBN	9781800788817
H x W	210 x 140mm
Binding	Paperback
Age Range	9-11 years
Author	Bram Stoker
Illustrator	Isobel Lundie
Extent	64pp
Word Count	3140 words
Translation Files	29/01/2024
Files To Printer	22/04/2024
Freight On Board	27/06/2024
Rights Available	World

World's Worst Samurai



A hilarious, fictional account of the world's unluckiest Samurai warrior

- A fantastically funny illustrated story that promotes an inspiring, positive female role model.
- Fascinating facts are interspersed throughout the fictional story, with 'get real' sections educating readers about the real-world contexts and histories of Japan and Samurai warriors.
- Engaging story about perseverance, believing in yourself and overcoming barriers.
- Endmatter includes a timeline and historical biographies of famous Samurai warriors to help engage children with the real-world historical context and encourage further research.

World's Worst Samurai



Yasutaro laughed, and I had to stop myself from throwing my bowl at him. I don't know much about the code of the samurai, but I'm guessing that attacking your own brother during a meal probably isn't part of it.

Mother told me to stop talking nonsense and get on with my chores.

I was expecting Father to say something similar, but he didn't. He froze with his rice bowl in his hand and peered at me in silence. Then he asked why I wanted to be a samurai.

I told him I was from a great samurai family, and it wasn't fair that Yasutaro got to be one and I didn't.

Father nodded and asked if I had any other reason.

I said I was better at fighting than Yasutaro, and if I could be sent to Yoshihiro I would emerge as the true warrior of our family.

Father nodded and asked if I had any other reason.

I said I was better at tactics than Yasutaro, and one day I could become a great commander and lead troops to glorious victories.

Father finished his rice in silence. When his bowl was empty, he said he refused to send me to samurai school.

I tried to keep my anger in, but it was no use. I said it was ridiculous that he wouldn't let me train just because I was a girl.

Father laughed. He said that wasn't the reason, and there were many stories about

female samurai who'd commanded armies of thousands. He said the reason he wouldn't send me was because I wasn't thinking like a true samurai should.

Mother repeated her demand for me to get back to my duties, but Father said I could be excused for one day. He told me to take the time to think and then answer the question again tomorrow morning.



GET REAL

Female samurai were rare, but some became legendary figures whose stories were repeated long after they died. An epic account of 12th century battles called The Tale of the Heike describes a female warrior called Tameo Goto. It says she was 'fit to confront a demon or a god' and 'worth a thousand warriors'.

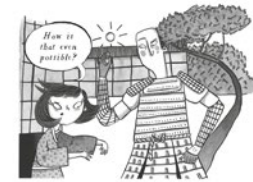
I would never have believed anyone could move that fast, never mind someone so thin and old.

Yoshihiro said we'd try it the other way around. He handed me the pebble and told me to stop him from grabbing it. I placed it in my palm and took a deep breath. This didn't sound too hard. All I'd have to do was clasp my hand as soon as I saw him move.

I told him to go ahead. His hand moved in a rapid blur, and my fingers slapped into an empty palm.

We tried again. I snapped my fingers shut sooner this time, but they still closed on thin air.

I asked Yoshihiro to give me one more chance. He agreed, and this time I smacked my hand shut even faster.



I gasped. There was something inside my hand. On just the first day of training I'd beaten his test. Here was proof that I was destined to be a great warrior.

I opened my hand. In the centre was a small pebble that had been painted red. For a moment, I wondered how it could have changed colour. Then Yoshihiro opened his own hand to

Chapter I

Japan, 1582



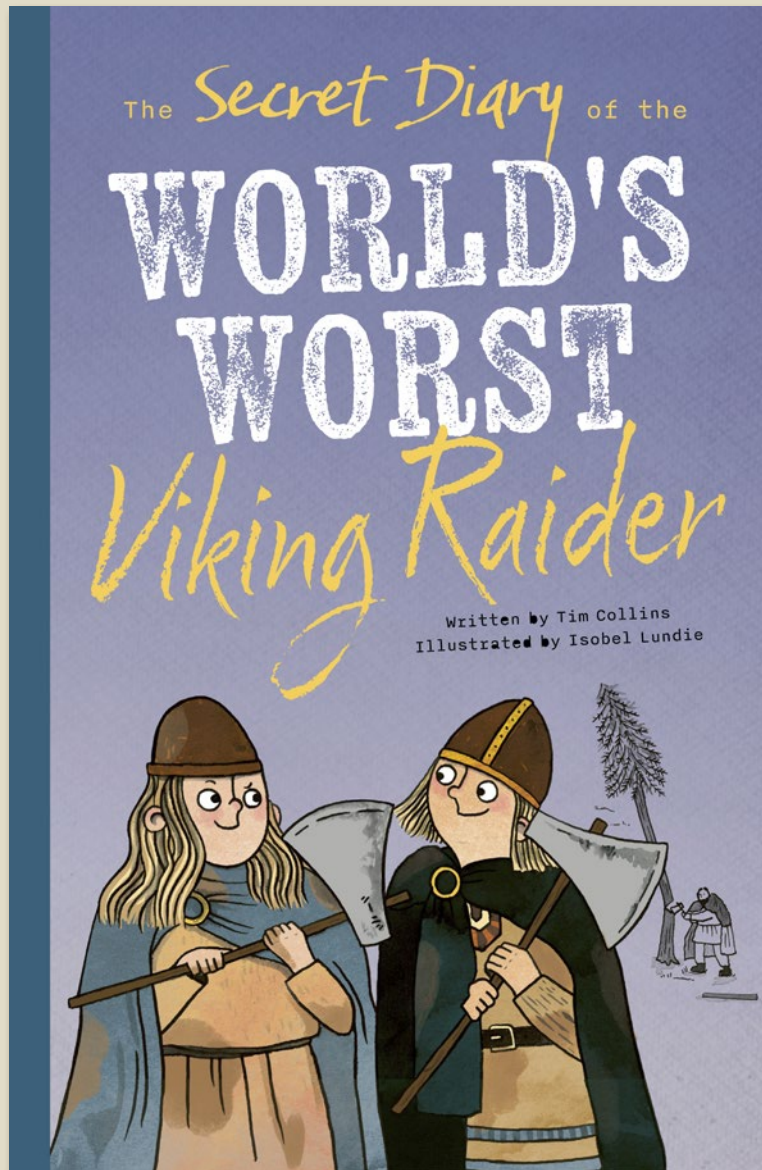
Day One

Mother thinks I'm practising my writing. I do it every day and she never reads it. So while I kneel here in my silk robe, dabbing my brush onto the paper like an obedient daughter, I'm going to reveal my true destiny.

I, Suki Akiyama, am going to become a samurai warrior. My father is one, and my brother is training to become one. It's in my blood.

Pub Date	01/10/2020
Pub Price	£6.99
ISBN	9781800788886
H x W	198 x 129mm
Binding	Paperback
Age Range	7-9 years
Author	Tim Collins
Illustrator	Isobel Lundie
Extent	216pp
Word Count	20307 words
Rights Available	World

World's Worst Viking Raider



An illustrated fictional account of the world's unluckiest Viking!

- Humorous, engaging and easy-to-read chapter book about perseverance, courage and overcoming barriers, ideal for history and adventure lovers 7+.
- A fantastically funny fictional story in a factual setting.
- Fascinating facts are interspersed throughout with 'get real' sections educating readers about the real-world contexts and histories of the Viking world.
- Endmatter includes a timeline and historical biographies to help engage readers with this specific time period and encourage further research.

World's Worst Viking Raider

I raced up to him and announced that I was a fearless raider who wanted to join his crew. Unfortunately, he didn't hear, and kept shouting at his men.

I tapped him on the shoulder so I could say it again. It turned out not to be a great idea to surprise a grizzled old raider. He shoved me to the muddy floor, drew his sword and pressed it to my throat. It was so sharp that a single burp could have killed me. I was glad I hadn't eaten too much porridge that morning.

I begged him not to kill me, and told him that he could have anything he wanted if he let me live, including my collection of carved Thor and Loki figures.

He nodded, tucked his sword back into its sheath and asked me what I wanted from him.

I told him I was a fearsome warrior and wanted to join his crew.

Looking back, I can see that might not have been the best time to make the announcement.



GET REAL

One of the reasons the Vikings were so successful as traders and raiders was their longships. They were narrow enough to travel down rivers, and light enough to be rolled over the ground on logs. Some believe they had dragon heads carved at the front to frighten people as they approached.

Eighth Day

The raiders moored their ship in the harbour yesterday morning and spent the rest of the day putting up their tents and trading their plundered goods for weapons, clothes, wheat and dried fish. Our village leader, Birger, has said he's happy for them to stay and share our



Ninth Day

I've found out what the raiders are planning. A trader has told them about a small village on the east coast of England, which has lots of valuable treasure and hardly anyone capable of defending it. They're going to sail across the sea, take all the valuable stuff from it and come back here.

That sounds perfect. I could go with them, join in with the raid and come right back. The English village is an easy target, and I'll be with some very experienced fighters, so I'll be in no danger. I'll get some excellent raiding experience and I won't be away long. There's no way Mum and Dad can object to that.

Later

Dad and Mum have objected. They think it will be too dangerous, even though I've explained that it won't be. I've warned them that I'm going to keep asking until they agree, but they don't think I actually mean it. They'll find out.



and hacking through wood, flesh, bone and whatever stands in the way of my plunder.

At least I would if I had an axe. Dad won't let me have one in case I cut myself.



Third Day

Forget what I said. I do have an axe now. Sort of.

I met my best friend Astrid to play at raiding, and she brought one from her dad's workshop. He's the best blacksmith in our village, and he makes amazing shields and weapons.

We went to the forest north of our village and took turns playing with the axe. I pretended I was in a raid and all the trees were terrified locals. I ran towards them, roaring and swinging my axe, then I planted it right into



Pub Date	28/06/2021
Pub Price	£7.99
ISBN	9781800788893
H x W	198 x 129 mm
Binding	Paperback
Age Range	7-9 years
Author	Tim Collins
Illustrator	Isobel Lundie
Extent	208pp
Word Count	20919 words
Rights Available	World

Ghost Stories



Ten spooky spine-tingling short stories!

- An entertaining, child-friendly introduction to ghost stories and the conventions of the horror genre. Perfect for children studying this in English.
- Shortlisted for the Leicester Libraries Our Best Book Award 2020.
- Kids will feel chills and thrills as they read about such things as haunted houses that burst into flames, ghosts frightening and friendly, a skull that won't stay buried, and a terrifying clown.
- A spooky halloween gift.

Ghost Stories

SHIVERS

off his hiking boots. He fell onto the grass with a groan. "I never want to go on a hike again. Never. They said the Bronze Award expedition would be a piece of cake. I'm dying for a piece of cake right now. My feet are killing me. I give up - where are we?"

Sacha gulped from her water bottle. She sank to her knees, sitting on her mud-caked boots. "I haven't got a clue. Right now, I don't care."

Liam hit into a mini Mars Bar then handed her the rest. "Make the most of this last bite. No more left after this."

Sacha passed him the bottle. "Just a few sips. There's hardly any left."

Clouds cast deepening shadows over the hills. A large bird of prey rose in the sky and soared above the moor.

"This map doesn't make sense. I'm sure we turned left at the church in the village." Liam traced his finger over the map. "It doesn't agree

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GHOST STORIES

with my phone, either. The GPS is useless. The signal's no good out here in the middle of nowhere. It keeps cutting out."

"My battery's virtually given up the ghost. Just like me," Sacha sighed before adding wearily, "I think we should go back. We know there's a pub a few miles back. I'd kill for a plate of hot chips." She looked up. "There's a huge bird up there. It must be a vulture waiting for us to die of thirst."

Liam turned the map round. "Unless that clump of trees in this bit of green on the map and on my phone." He swore when he lost the signal again.

Sacha laughed. "Let's face it, you haven't got a clue."

He kept looking at the map. "There's a red triangle thing marked here. It's a youth hostel. We can't be far off. Let's go there. Hostels are cheap. It's only a couple of miles."

Sacha got to her feet. "If you say so. It'll be

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SHIVERS

dark soon." She stared up at the circling bird with a growing sense of doom, as Liam put on his rucksack with a renewed burst of enthusiasm. "We'll be in the dry before the rain starts."

They linked arms and began walking towards the setting sun - towards the bird of prey and the dead of night.

The first drops of rain began to fall as Sacha pulled on the hood of her raincoat.

"How much further, Liam? My blisters say it's bed time."

"Not far. I'll be able to tell when we get to the top of this hill. We'll see down into the next valley. I should get a better phone signal up there."

Sacha snorted. "It'll be dark by the time we get to the top."

Thunder clouds blotted out the rising moon and rolled across the moor as a shriek filled the darkening sky. Liam and Sacha stopped to look

40

GHOST STORIES

up. A black shape swooped over their heads. "Scary!" Sacha frowned. "That bird is like an omen. An omen of doom!"

Their boots squelched through mud. "Not long," Liam called. "We'll soon be at the top." A flash of lightning snaked across the sky and a loud crack rumbled over the moor. "It's like something from a horror movie," Sacha panted. The rain swept across in silvery squalls. At the top of the hill Liam pointed into the next valley. "That must be the hostel. Down there. With the tall chimney and smoke."

"I don't like the look of it," Sacha murmured. "It won't take us long," Liam said, ignoring her. The air was now very still. As they walked down towards the hostel, a strange silence fell.

There was no rain here and everything was deathly still - apart from a bird hovering above the smoke that rose towards the pale moon peeping through parting clouds.

41

SHIVERS

A sign by a set of black iron gates said 'Youth Hostel, Members Only'. Just beyond stood a stark Gothic mansion surrounded by bent and twisted tree trunks.

Apart from a faint glow from one of the large upstairs windows, the house was in eerie darkness.

"I told you we'd find it," Liam said, smiling. Sacha wasn't so sure. "It doesn't look very nice," she said.

Liam ignored her and added, "I've got cash. They'll let us stay the night."

Clanging through the gate, they walked along the path, up some crumbling steps and to the porch. A pair of boots caked in dried mud lay on the top step. Liam slammed his fist on the heavy door and a hollow thud echoed before the door swung open. A dimly lit hallway with dark oak panels stretched in front of them. The smell of soot drifted out over the porch. A thin, bent man

42

GHOST STORIES

in black stood in front of them. He had a hooked nose and small beady eyes. "Yes? What is it?" he croaked. His eyes stared like a bird's.

"Can we stay the night?" Liam said. "I can pay with a card or cash."

The man blinked. The light from a single bulb cast his shadow over the front steps. He had a shadow like a vulture's.

"Members only," he said. "You'll have to join."

"How much?"

"We've got rules," the man continued, not listening. "No matches. No paraffin. No time."

Sacha squeezed Liam's hand. She could smell drink on the man's breath.

"Are you the warden?" Liam asked.

The man ignored him. "It's late. It's only because of the clocks I can bend the rules tonight. We're full. One of you will have to sleep in the attic. The other in the boiler room."

Sacha pulled a face. "I don't like the sound of

43

SHIVERS

if she'll appear. You see, you shared Cornerstone Cottage with Mrs Coombs. She can be quite unpredictable but at least you survived a full week. Some don't. Apparently, she was the dairy maid long ago... before she passed away while knitting in her rocking chair in the back room. All very mysterious. They say she was found with a row of insect bites in the shape of a letter C on her neck."

36

GHOST STORIES



WHEN THE CLOCK STOPS

When they wander from the expedition party, fifteen-year-olds Liam and Sacha are alone on the moors. Lost. At first, it's no big deal, as the map shows a hostel isn't too far away. But they haven't bargained on what is waiting in the darkness, and on what will happen on the night the clocks go back...

Liam threw down his rucksack and pulled

37

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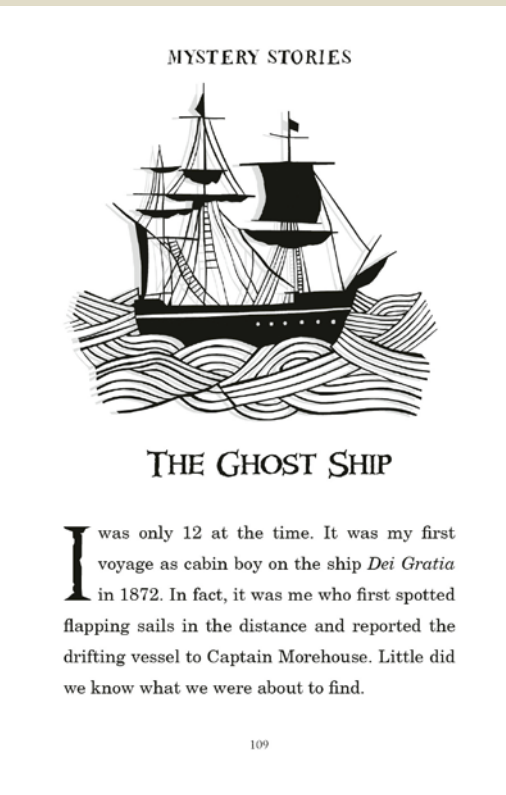
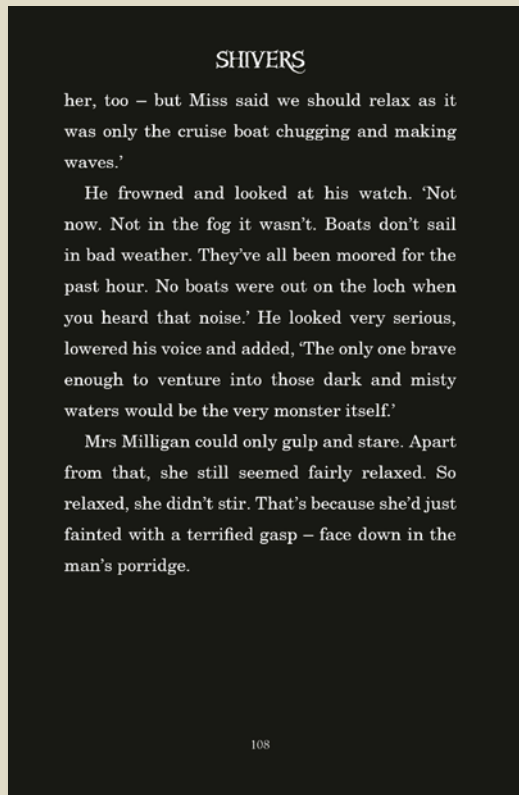
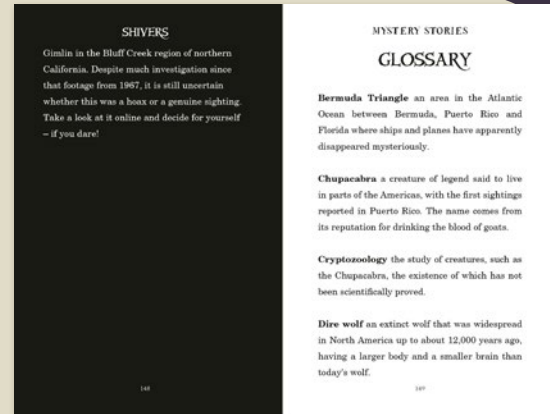
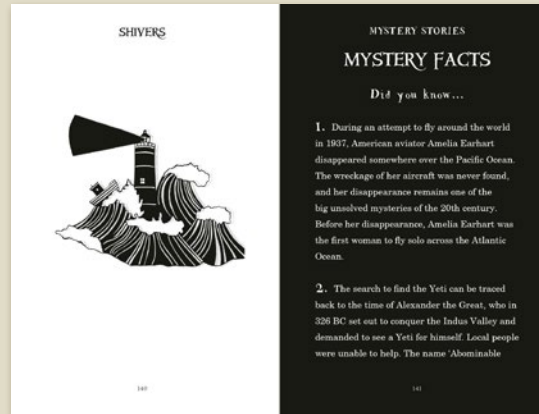
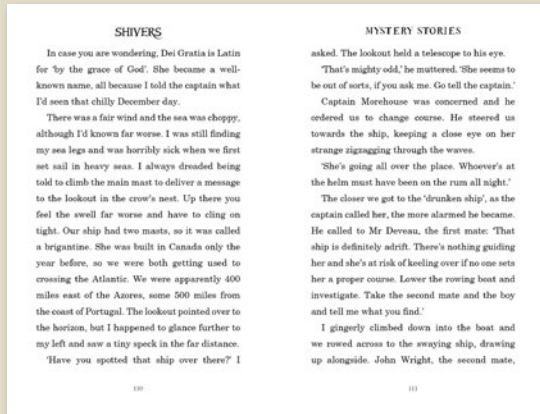
Mystery Stories



Ten mysterious, spooky short stories

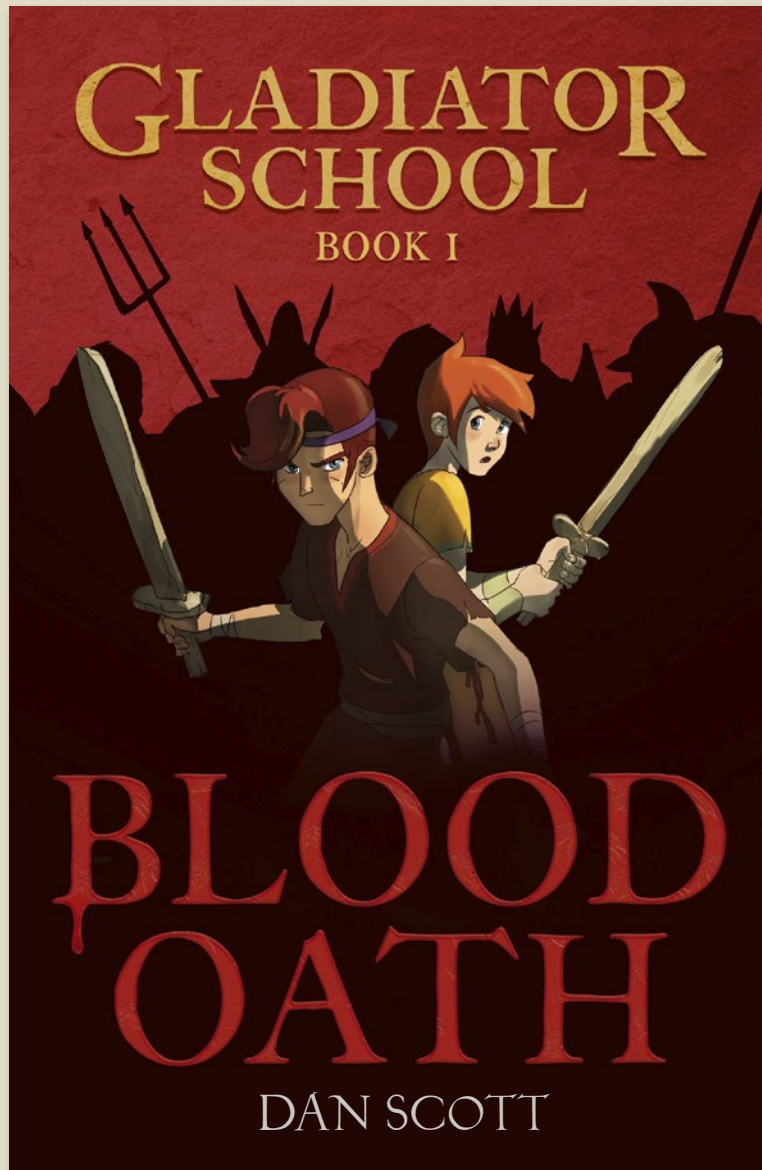
- A wonderful, entertaining introduction to the horror genre and short story writing, perfect for children studying this in English.
- Perfect spooky gift for children to read one story each night in the build up to Halloween.
- Encourages independent reading and exploration of new genres.

Mystery Stories



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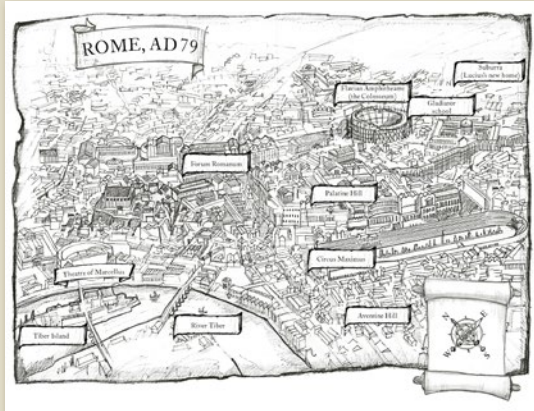
Gladiator School 1: Blood Oath



A tale of blood, sweat, sand and sacrifice, set in the gladiator arenas of Ancient Rome

- An epic fictional story set in a historical context, perfect for lovers of the ancient world.
- Fast-paced, action-packed and full of unexpected twists and turns. Great for reluctant readers searching for an exciting adventure story to keep them entertained.
- Contains additional notes throughout to define key Roman words, helping children to learn more about ancient society and immerse themselves in the time period.

Gladiator School 1: Blood Oath



close to her, Valeria, who was made of sterner stuff, had wriggled free and stared at the soldiers in round-eyed wonder.

Lucius's older brother had found plenty to say. Quintus, named after his father, was never lost for words. He had followed the soldiers through the villa as they searched for his father, warning them of the dire punishments that would fall on their heads when his father returned, threatening them with curses and finally invoking the household gods to protect the family against the intruders.

But, throughout it all, Lucius had stayed in the atrium, his back pressed against the cool marble walls. The statues were still wearing their crowns of flowers and leaves. Less than a day had passed since they had celebrated their mother's birthday. And now his world was crumbling around his ears.

'Where is he, boy?'

A soldier was standing in front of him, demanding an answer.

'The Senate?' snarled Quintus from the doorway to the atrium. 'The Forum?' Where else would you expect one of Rome's most respected senators to be at this time of day?'

'He's not there,' Lucius said.

His voice sounded creaky and unfamiliar. 'His name is Valeria, not Valeria,' asked Quintus.

** From the marketplace of ancient Rome, which was also the place for business meetings and political transactions.*

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He sounded irritable and indignant. *How funny, thought Lucius. Quin always knows everything. How come he doesn't know this?*

'Explain yourself!' snapped out the soldier, who was evidently losing patience fast.

'Look,' said Lucius.

Finally Quintus followed the direction of his brother's gaze and his eyes fell on the altar. Lucius saw Quin's posture change. His shoulders sagged, his face registered confusion and disbelief.

'The dog's gone,' he said.

Of the three statues that represented their household gods, the wooden dog had always been their father's favourite. It had stood on the hearth altar for as long as Lucius could remember. Aquila had said that it represented the faithfulness of true friends. He would never take the statue on a normal working day. But it would always travel with him when he made a journey.

'He's taken the statue?' demanded the soldier.

Lucius nodded.

The soldier's mouth set into a grim line. 'Right,' he said.

He called his men and ordered them to his side.

'You're going?' Quin asked.

'Yes,' said the soldier. 'We'll leave you to your shame.'

** What he supposed to mean? Quin had recovered from his initial shock and was trenchant again.*

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be many weeks – perhaps months – of this ahead of him.

Quin had always seemed strong and powerful. But now, standing barefoot in the middle of the arena, wearing nothing but a kiltsloth, he looked like a child. Blood and sweat were smeared across his back and shoulders.

Other novice gladiators were watching from the side steps, and Lucius had ventured out of the back rooms of the school to see how Quin was getting on. Now he wished that he had'n't bothered.

'No sword, no shield, no armour,' he muttered. 'It's not fair.'

'They have to learn to fight with no kit at first,' said a voice behind him. 'The weapons come later.'

Lucius spun around and saw a slave girl standing there. Her thick, black hair hung in two heavy plaits around her oval face. Lucius didn't know what to say. A month ago he would have smiled and thanked her. He would have known his own status. Now, working in the gladiator school, he didn't even feel like himself any more. He certainly didn't feel like talking. He turned back to the arena, where Quin was on his back again.

One of the watching gladiators turned to Lucius. His lips parted in a black-toothed grin.

'Your brother's not even out of his swaddling clothes,' he said, spitting onto the sand. 'We eat his sort for breakfast.'

** Lucius (ah-hah, heh-heh) is a novice gladiator.*

12

Clearly this gladiator was already answer and fighting for money. Lucius didn't know but, as he heard another cry of pain from Quin, his throat burred. He would be sick if he kept on watching. He had to get out. Luckily, he had an excuse to leave: his uncle had asked him to deliver a message to someone in the Forum.

The sweltering streets of Rome seemed less busy than usual. Lucius weaved his way towards the Forum, the cries of street sellers ringing in his ears as he dashed through the throng of carts and chariots. The acid smell of urine and excrement stung his throat. He stumbled over a litter of piglets trotting across his path and the owner yelled at him: 'Out of the way, boy!'

'Sorry,' Lucius murmured, wincing to the side of the street, where a meat vendor who was selling piles of fresh red hams was splattering everyone in the vicinity with blood.

He hadn't been paying much attention to his route until now. He knew the streets so well that his feet would carry him to the marketplace while his mind was still in the arena with his brother. But now he realised that he was standing on the street where their old home was. The shops set into the villa walls were selling the same cloth and clay pots of olive oil as always. Everything looked just as it had been in the old days.

13



PROLOGUE

TRAITOR!

ROME
JULY AD 79



THE MAIN CHARACTERS

- Lucius, a Roman boy
- Quintus, his older brother
- Aquila, their father
- Ravilla, their uncle
- Caecilia, their mother
- Valeria, their sister
- Isidora, Lucius's friend, a slave
- Rufus, a slave
- Crassus, a trainer of gladiators

Lucius stared at the household gods. Everyone else seemed able to shout and cry and wail and rage, but Lucius couldn't even open his mouth. From the moment the soldiers had burst in to arrest his father and found him missing, Lucius's eyes had been glued to the little wooden statues.

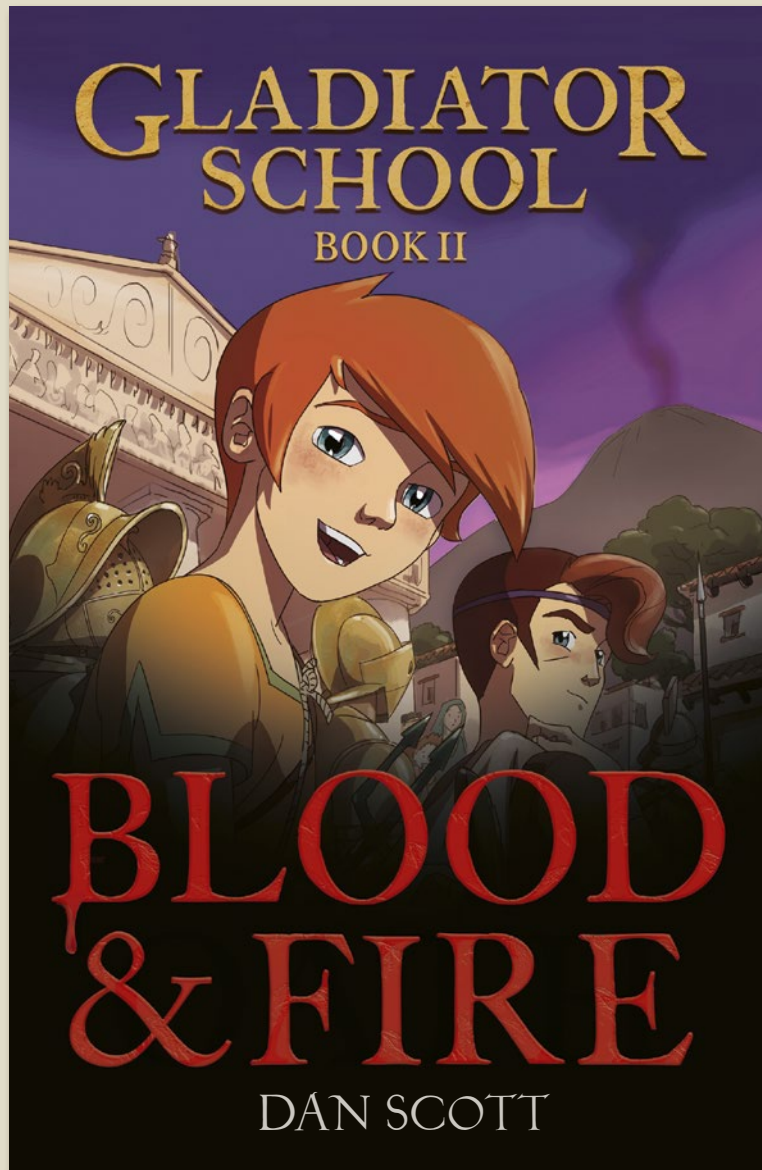
The soldiers had stormed through the villa, overturning furniture, rattling their swords and yelling, 'We arrest you, Quintus Valerius Aquila; in the name of the Emperor, show yourself!'

His mother had collapsed, trembling, onto the couch in the atrium,* clasping Lucius's sister Valeria

* atrium: the entrance hall of a Roman villa.

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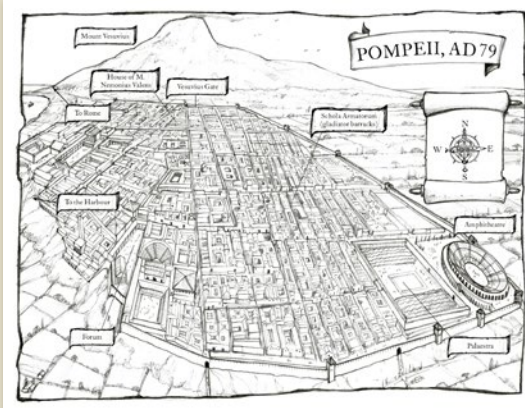
Gladiator School 2: Blood & Fire



The second in the Gladiator School series - an epic ancient tale of blood, sweat and sacrifice.

- An epic fictional story set in a real-life historical context. Perfect for lovers of the ancient world or those studying the Ancient Romans in school.
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- Contains additional notes throughout to define key Roman terms, helping children to learn more about ancient society and immerse themselves in the time period.

Gladiator School 2: Blood & Fire



CHAPTER 1

POMPEII, 19 AUGUST AD 79
120 hours before the eruption of Vesuvius

The midday sun beat down on Lucius as he pursued Quintus through the streets of Pompeii. He glimpsed his brother's tall, athletic figure up ahead, snatching along through the crowds heading west towards the Forum. Lucius would have preferred to walk side by side with Quintus through this unfamiliar city, but seemed he would not be welcomed.

Sounds of cooking meat from the fast-food shops mingled with the stench wafting over from the fish-sauce factories near the harbour. Lucius's ears echoed with the voices of fruit sellers and wine merchants and the pipes and drums of bakers. The noise and

* Forum: the main marketplace, which was also the place for business meetings and judicial decisions.

GLADIATOR SCHOOLS

squalor reminded him of Subura, the area where he now lived in Rome. Yet Pompeii seemed to carry an entire air of sorrow. The shadow-filled alleys, the hard faces of the young men, the cold-eyed stare of a beggar woman – they all spelled danger to Lucius. Maybe it was his imagination, but Pompeii seemed like a city brimming with desperate and unscrupulous people who'd murder you for the price of a loaf of bread. He was glad he'd decided to follow Quintus. Somehow, he felt his brother needed watching in a place like this. Of course, Quintus was a gladiator and very capable of looking after himself – yet Lucius knew he could be hot-headed at times, and in these strange and scary streets he might very easily get himself into trouble.

From a nearby side street, Lucius heard a cry of pain. His natural caution made him want to hurry on past, but then he saw Quintus turn and enter the alley. Heistarily, Lucius followed, rubbing the ring on his forefinger for luck. It was his only memento of his father, and had become his talisman. Concealing himself behind a pile of amphorae*, Lucius saw Quintus approach a group of rough-looking young men. They were jeering and pushing around a lad of about their own age. From his smart, formal toga, now bespattered with mud, Lucius could tell the victim was a young man of status, though this did not seem to count for much among his tormentors.

* amphorae (singular amphora): earthenware storage jars.

BLOOD & FIRE

His sense of fairness clearly offended, Quintus impulsively strode into the middle and pushed aside one of the bullies, who had been holding the victim in a neck lock. The bully squeaked in surprise and fell to the ground. His friends immediately cheered in around Quintus, their faces turning to snarls of anger.

There were six of them – three armed with sticks against the unarmed Quintus. Lucius growled. He steeled himself, knowing he would have to go and help his brother. With his slender build, Lucius wasn't made for physical violence. He cursed their fate for bringing them here to Pompeii.

It was ten days since Crassus, the lanista of the gladiator school, had made the announcement. The school had received a great honour, he said: it had been chosen to represent Rome at the forthcoming games in Pompeii. A total of thirty gladiators would be going, including Quintus. And Lucius had been dismayed to learn that he too was among those selected to go. It was a seven-day march to Pompeii, and there would be a further week spent in the city. Taking the return march into account, that meant that Lucius would be gone from Rome for three whole weeks – time he had been hoping to spend searching for his father. What if Aquila tried to contact him during that time? It seemed that fate had once again intervened to prevent them from meeting.



THE MAIN CHARACTERS

- Lucius, a Roman boy
- Quintus, his older brother
- Aquila, their father
- Ravilla, their uncle
- Caecilia, their mother
- Valeria, their sister
- Isidora, Lucius's friend, an Egyptian slave
- Crassus, a lanista (trainer of gladiators)
- Valens, editor (sponsor) of the games at Pompeii
- Atia, a seer
- Eprius, a young patrician (nobleman) of Pompeii

PROLOGUE

FIRST BLOOD

ROME
10 August AD 79



'Games given by Gaius Valerius Ravilla,' Lucius read aloud. 'Forty gladiators will fight. Perfumed water will be scattered.' His finger hovered over his brother's name.

'Quintus, Retiarius, tiro, will battle Burbo, Secutor.* Burbo has won ten bouts.'

'You've read it at least twenty times,' said Isidora, sounding rather impatient. 'You can't change the words by staring at them, you know.'

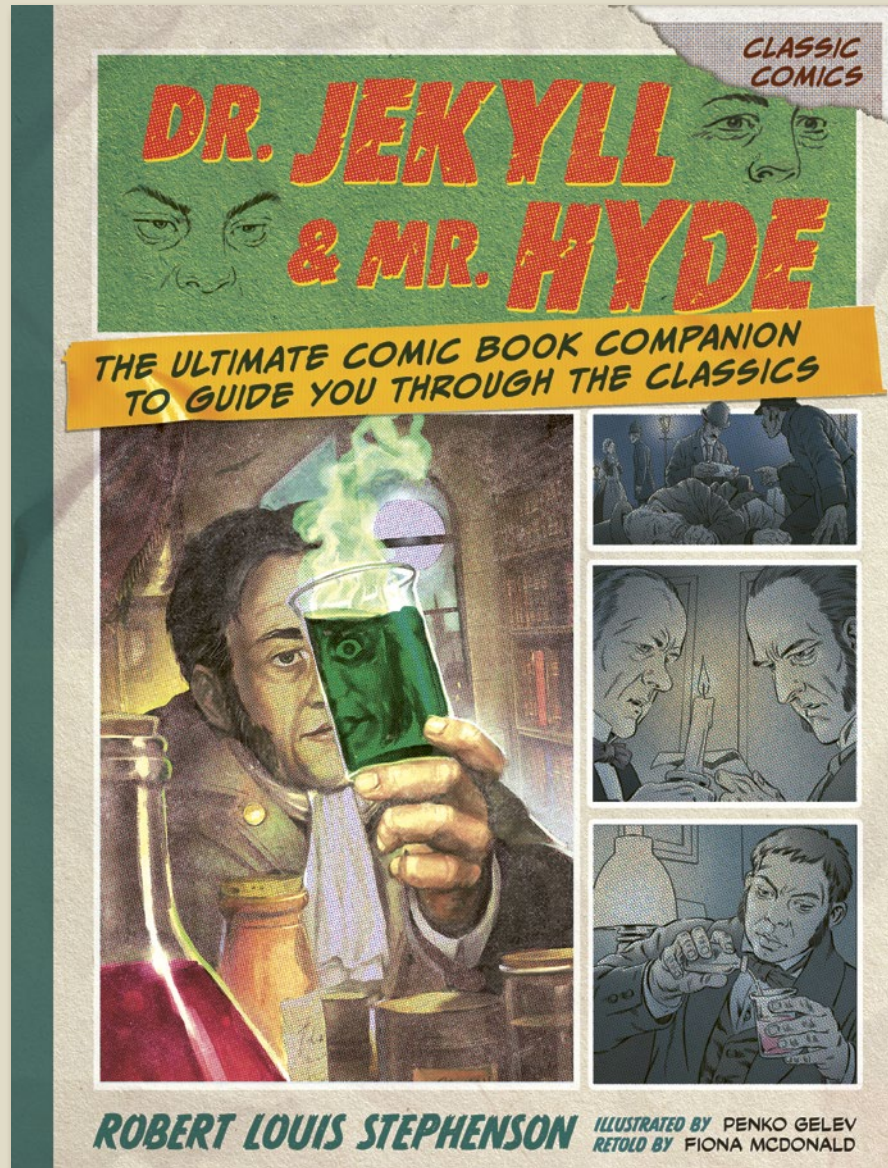
Lucius dropped the programme back into his bag and rubbed his eyes. He hadn't had much sleep.

* Retiarius: a gladiator who fights with net (rete) and trident; tiro: a gladiator fighting in public for the first time; Secutor: a gladiator who wears an enclosed, egg-shaped helmet and fights with a short sword (gladius); his name means 'Chaser'.

7

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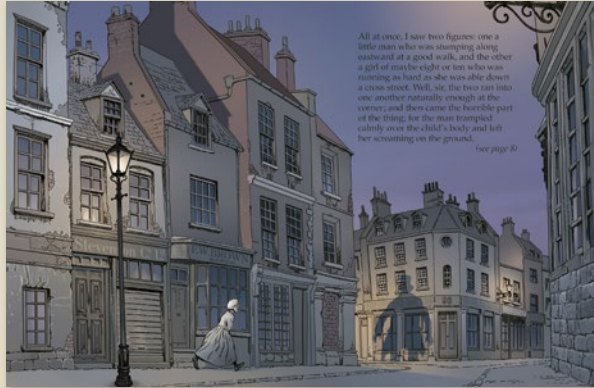
Classic Comics: Dr. Jekyll & Mr. Hyde



The ultimate comic book companion to guide you through the Victorian classic, *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*

- The highly visual nature of comic book storytelling is the perfect way to encourage reluctant readers who are challenged or intimidated by reading to improve their literacy skills.
- Small amounts of text and easy-to-follow sequential ordering of the picture strips help make Shakespeare more accessible.
- Perfect curriculum companion to students studying Jekyll and Hyde at school, with an additional glossary to help dissect any tricky jargon or Victorian terms.

Classic Comics: Dr. Jekyll & Mr. Hyde



A STRANGE STORY

MR ENFIELD BEGINS HIS TALE.

I BEGAN TO LONG FOR THE SIGHT OF A POLICEMAN.

IT WAS VERY LATE ONE NIGHT, MR ENFIELD WAS WALKING HOME THROUGH DARK, SILENT STREETS. THE WHOLE CITY SEEMED DESERTED. WAS NOBODY ELSE AWAKE?

SUDDENLY TWO FIGURES APPEARED AT A STREET CORNER.

APPROACHING FROM DIFFERENT DIRECTIONS, THEY COULD NOT SEE ONE ANOTHER.

THEY COLLIDED... THE GIRL FELL... THE MAN TRAMPLED OVER HER... AND CALMLY WALKED AWAY!

AAARGH!

AAARGH!

AAARGH!

HAALOH!

THE CHILD IS NOT MUCH THE WORSE.

OUTRAGED BY WHAT HE HAD SEEN, ENFIELD CHASED THE ATTACKER. HE SOON CAUGHT HIM, BUT THE MAN SEEMED COMPLETELY UNCONCERNED BY WHAT HE HAD DONE.

AN ANGRY CROWD GATHERED ROUND THE TERRIFIED GIRL. SHE WAS BADLY SHAKEN, BUT STILL BREATHING. A DOCTOR ARRIVED, AND SAID THAT SHE'D SURVIVE. EVEN THE DOCTOR LOOKED ANGRY ENOUGH TO KILL THE MAN.

A STRANGE STORY

NAME YOUR PRICE!

HE WILL MAKE SUCH A SCANDAL AS TO MAKE YOUR NAME STINK!

TOGETHER, ENFIELD AND THE DOCTOR CONFRONTED THE ATTACKER. THEY THREATENED TO DISGRACE HIM UNLESS HE OFFERED MONEY TO THE POOR GIBBY FAMILY.

GULLEN AND EMBERING, THE ATTACKER AGREED TO DAY HE WAS NOT SORRY - HE ONLY WANTED TO AVOID BAD PUBLICITY.

SET YOUR WIND AT REST.

THE WHOLE BUSINESS LOOKS APOCCYFAL!

IT WAS THE SAME DOOR THAT THE TWO FRIENDS ARE LOOKING AT NOW!

THE ATTACKER RETURNED WITH A CHECKER FOR £500 - HOW COULD THE STRANGER HAVE GOT HOLD OF THE MARRIED GUY'S THE CHECKER FORGED, OR STOLEN?

THE ATTACKER SAID HE WOULD PROVE THAT THE CHECKER WAS NOT A FORGERY. HE WOULD WAIT WITH MR ENFIELD UNTIL THE BANK WAS OPEN. THEN THEY WOULD SEE!

THE CHECKER IS GENUINE!

AS HE HAD PROMISED, THE ATTACKER WALKED TO THE BANK WITH MR ENFIELD, THE DOCTOR AND THE INJURED GIRL'S FATHER.

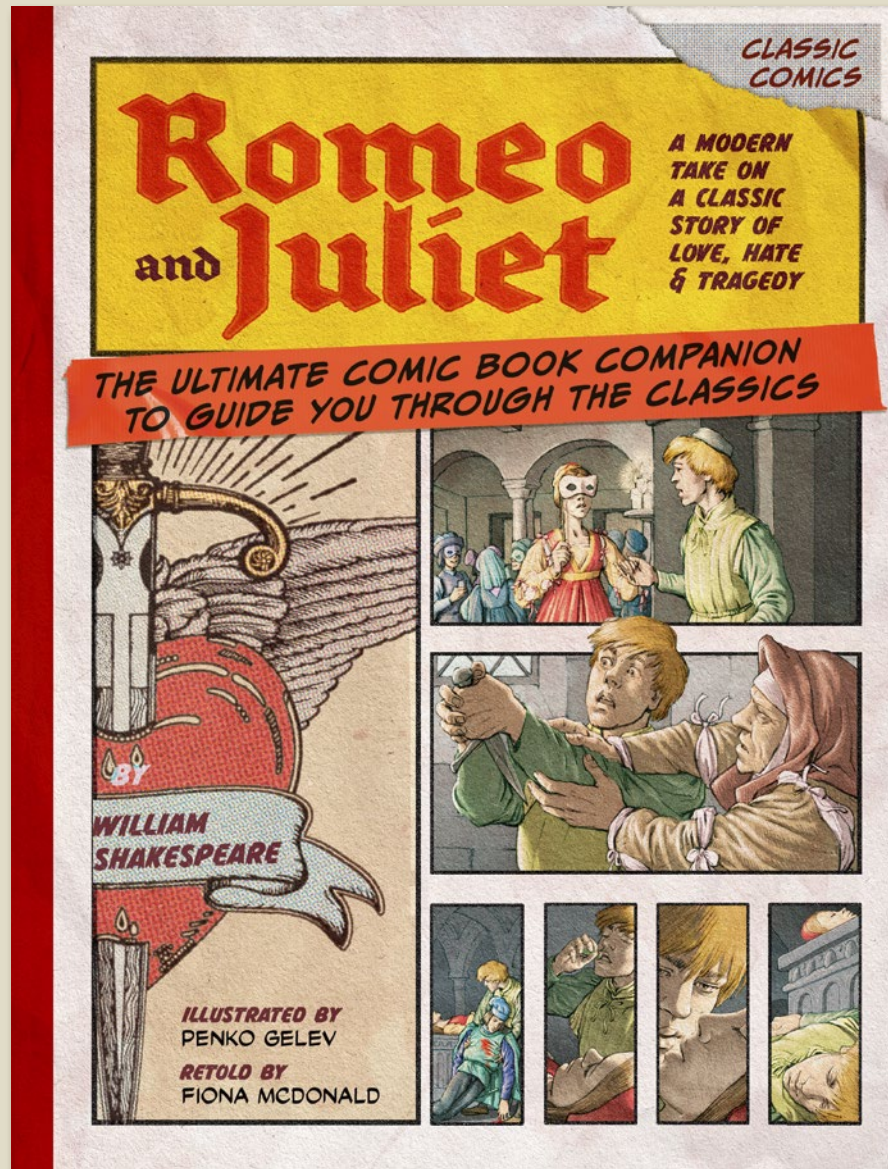
TOGETHER, THEY HANDED THE CHECKER TO A BANK CLERK. HE LOOKED AT IT VERY CAREFULLY, AND EXAMINED THE SIGNATURE.

AS MR LITTBROEN LISTENS TO THIS STORY, HE SHAKES HIS HEAD AND FROWNS. WHAT'S WORRYING HIM?

1. CHECKER: A PRINTED FORM GIVING ONE PERSON PERMISSION TO TAKE MONEY OUT OF ANOTHER PERSON'S BANK ACCOUNT. IT IS ONLY VALID IF IT HAS BEEN SIGNED BY THE ACCOUNT HOLDER.
2. £500: WORTH ABOUT £5,000 TODAY.
3. APOCCYFAL: NOT TRUE.

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Classic Comics: Romeo and Juliet



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Classic Comics: Romeo and Juliet

THE PRINCE'S WARNING

THE PRINCE'S WARNING

1. Mercutio and Benvolio are talking. 2. Mercutio says 'The day is hot, the Capulets abroad, and, if we meet, we shall not scape a brawl.' 3. Benvolio says 'I am not for an angry word.' 4. Mercutio says 'You art as hot a Jack in thy mood as any in Italy.' 5. Benvolio says 'I like such a fellow?' 6. Mercutio says 'By my head, here come the Capulets.' 7. Benvolio says 'Mercutio, thou consortest with Romeo?' 8. Mercutio says 'Consort? What dost thou make us minstrels? Here's my fiddlers' hole; here's that shall make you dance.' 9. Benvolio says 'Tybalt approaches Mercutio and Benvolio - he knows they are friends with Romeo.' 10. Mercutio says 'Tybalt is still furious that Romeo attended Capulet's feast and is looking to fight a duel with Romeo.' 11. Mercutio says 'Tybalt, you consortest with Romeo?' 12. Mercutio says 'Consort? What dost thou make us minstrels? Here's my fiddlers' hole; here's that shall make you dance.' 13. Benvolio says 'Tybalt approaches Mercutio and Benvolio - he knows they are friends with Romeo.' 14. Mercutio says 'Tybalt is still furious that Romeo attended Capulet's feast and is looking to fight a duel with Romeo.' 15. Mercutio says 'Tybalt, you consortest with Romeo?' 16. Mercutio says 'Consort? What dost thou make us minstrels? Here's my fiddlers' hole; here's that shall make you dance.'

AN INVITATION TO THE FEAST

AN INVITATION TO THE FEAST

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TROUBLE IN THE AIR

TROUBLE IN THE AIR

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