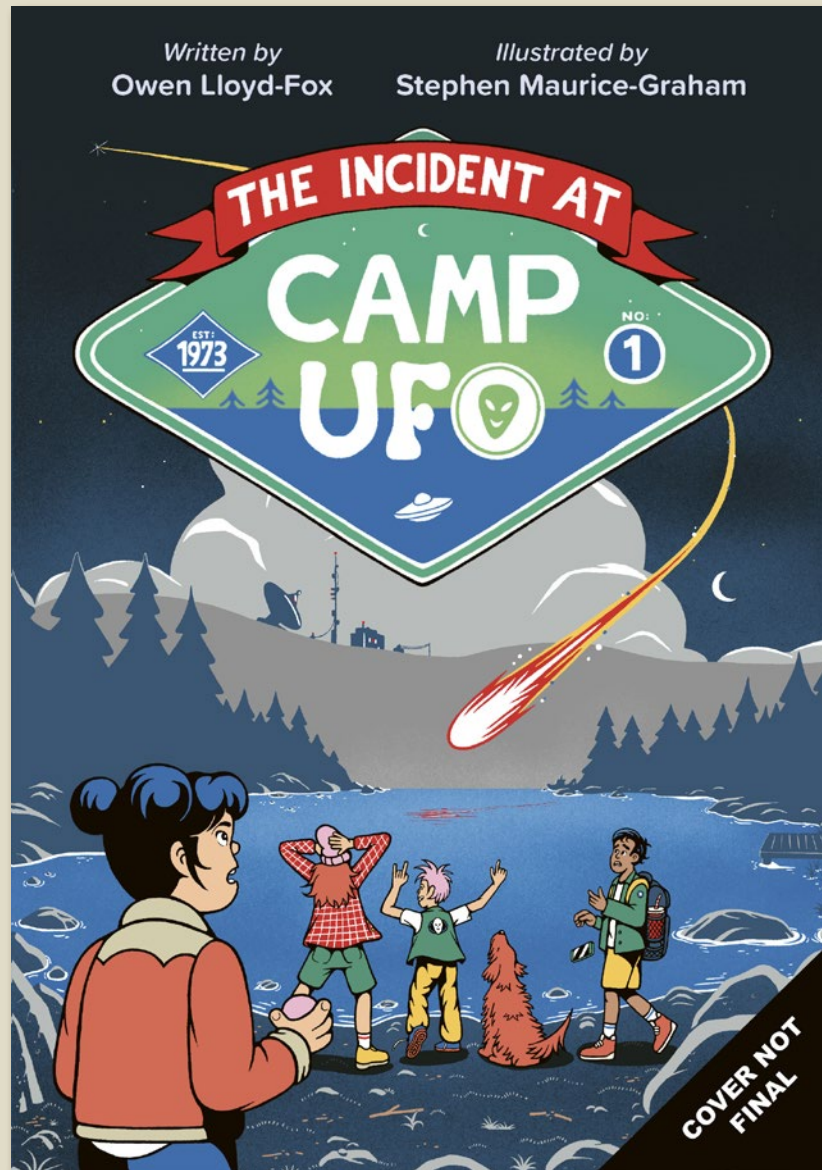




**Italy FBF24 middle grade and  
graphic novels**

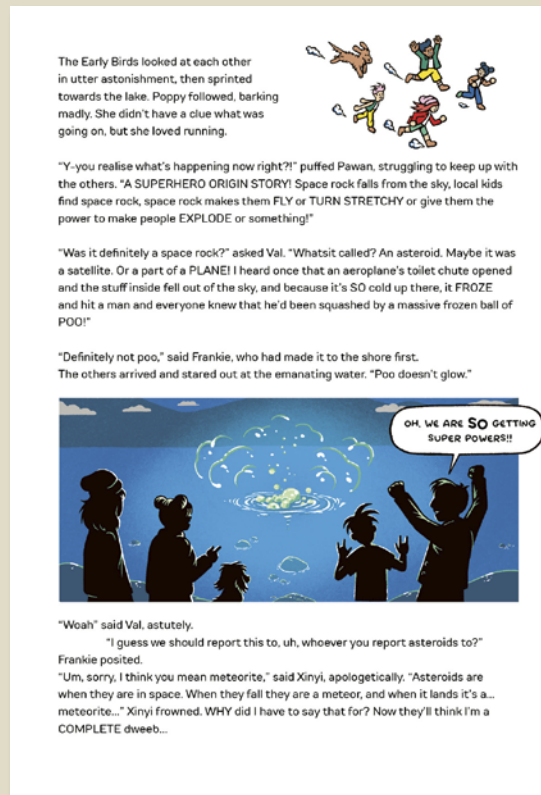
# The Incident at Camp UFO



**Unravel cryptic clues, solve fiendish puzzles, avoid the Shini-rax aliens at all costs while you help the gang solve the incident at Camp UFO!**

- A brand-new adventure puzzle book series complete with graphic novel style illustrations. Perfect for fans of Bunny vs. Monkey, Stranger Things and gaming enthusiasts. A must-have for reluctant readers.
- Featuring a strong cast of characters with authentic stories from diverse backgrounds, including South and South East Asia, plus a non-binary character with partial hearing loss.

# The Incident at Camp UFO

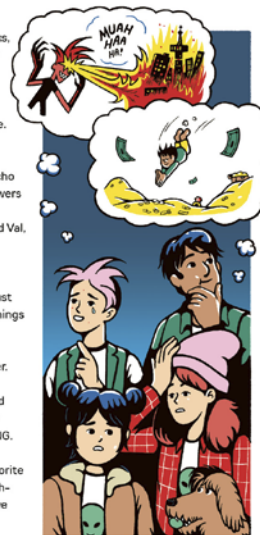


Frankie turned to her and smiled. "Thanks, Xinyi. It's probably best we know exactly what it is when we tell—"

"Or," interrupted Val, "we DON'T tell anyone and fish it out ourselves!" The gang looked down at the glow once more.

Pawan nodded slowly. "Yeah. I mean, do you KNOW how much meteorites go for online?" He said, biting his lip. "Like, mucho gold coins. Plus, still hoping for superpowers here."

"Yeah! Come on Frank-le-plank," beamed Val. "I wanna make people explode!"



Frankie sighed. She saw what this was. Just because she was older – just because she wasn't suggesting stupid things like FISHING FOR (potentially) MAGIC SPACE ROCKS – they were making her be the mum. The sensible one. The leader. Frankie took a deep breath. Not today. Not this entire summer, actually. She had decided in the car that this summer, she wasn't going to be in charge of ANYTHING. Especially not Val.

"Yeah, okay. Let's get the meteorite out of the lake," the new, relaxed go-with-the-flow Frankie replied. "So... how are we going to do that?"

How COULD the gang fish the meteorite out the lake? When you think you've got it, turn to the next page - or check the answer at the back!

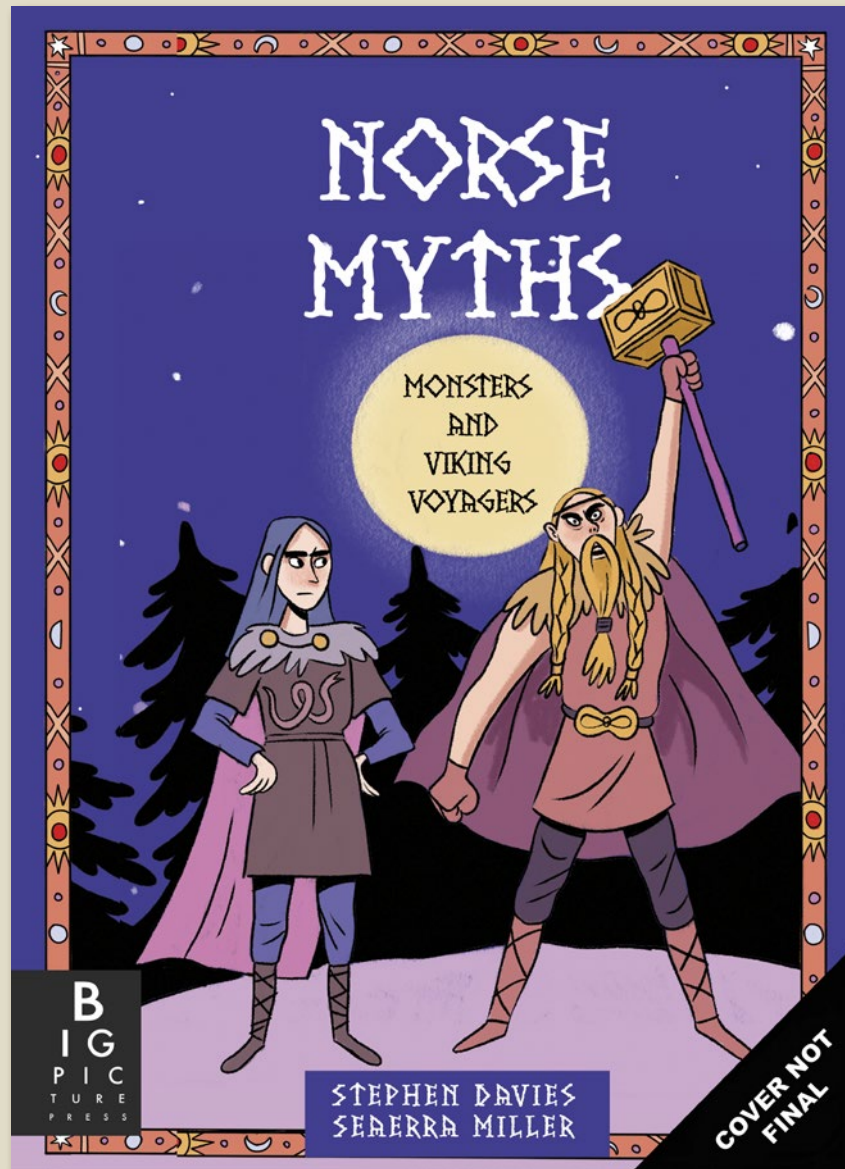


Hint: Try skipping back a few pages and see if there's any helpful lake-related gear!

Pub Date	<b>05/02/2026</b>
Pub Price	<b>£7.99</b>
ISBN	<b>9781800788725</b>
H × W	<b>210 × 148mm</b>
Binding	<b>Paperback</b>
Age Range	<b>9-11 years</b>
Author	<b>Owen Lloyd-Fox</b>
Illustrator	<b>Stephen Maurice Graham</b>
Extent	<b>112pp</b>
Word Count	<b>15000 words</b>
Translation Files	<b>20/07/2025</b>
Files To Printer	<b>15/09/2025</b>
Freight On Board	<b>04/12/2025</b>
Rights Available	<b>World</b>



# Norse Myths, Monsters and Viking Voyages



**A vivid comic-strip retelling of the greatest 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 50,000 copies worldwide as of July 2024) - this is the next title in a growing series for Big Picture Press

# Norse Myths, Monsters and Viking Voyages

## WHAT ARE THE NORSE MYTHS?

Text 10K

## THE CREATION STORY

A creation myth is a story about how the world began. Ancient cultures had all sorts of weird and wonderful ideas about how the world began, and this is the Norse creation story. Here are some of the details.



## THE THEFT OF IDUN'S APPLES

One crisp, cold morning, Odin, Loki and their crossed the Bifrost bridge from their home in Asgard and went hiking in the world of humans.

After a long day, at last, Odin built a fire and grilled three or steaks over the flames. The steaks sizzled and sizzled, but somehow did not cook.

The eagle swooped another sparrow, causing the branch to stick to its body, and to Loki's hands.

Loki begged the bird for mercy, offering to do it a favour in return for his release.

## IN AN ORCHARD FAR, FAR AWAY...

The goddess Idun was sitting in her sun-dappled orchard, tending her back. For apples were scarce in Asgard as they reached youth to whoever ate them. Needless to say, she was very popular with everyone.

Loki crept into the orchard and called up to Idun.

The steaks had been on the fire for hours, but they were still raw.

Perched in the oak tree above their heads was an enormous eagle. An enormous falcon eagle.

The mighty eagle swooped down from the branches. It snatched up two steaks in its talons and another in its beak.

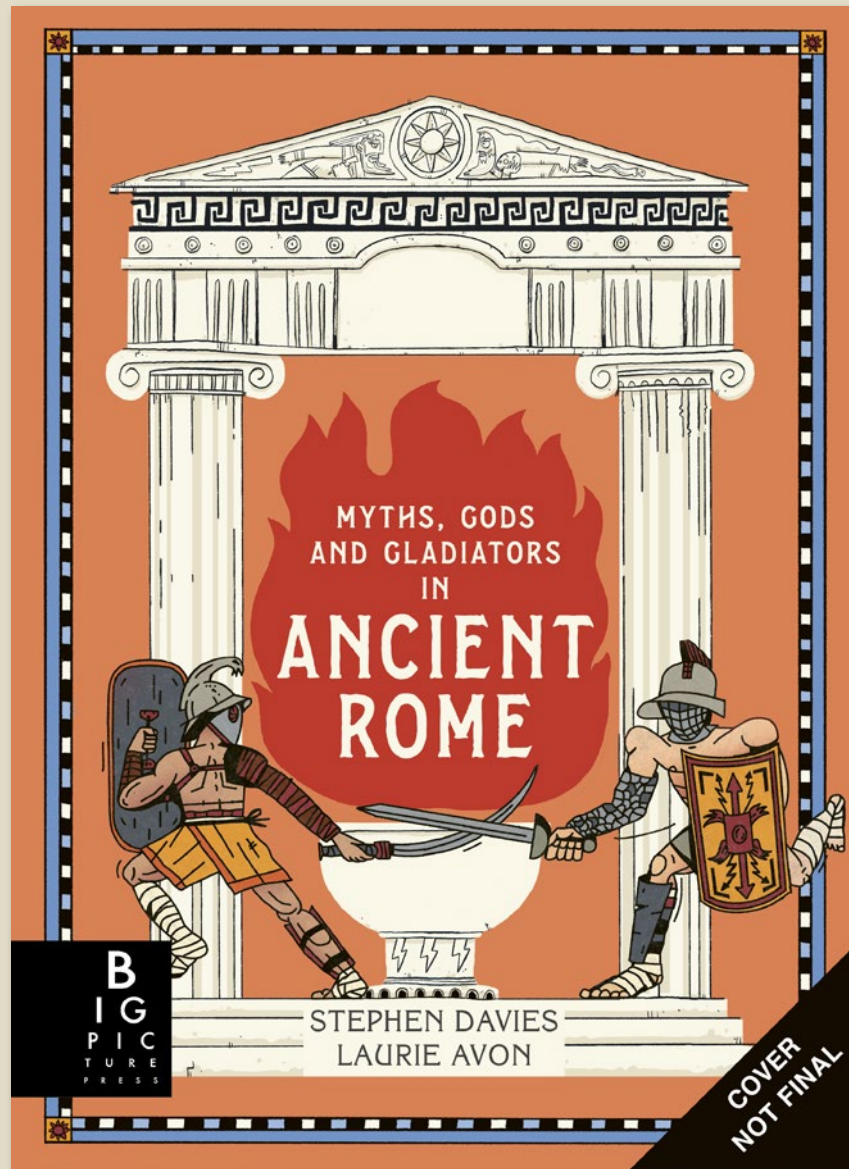
The cunning sorcerer told Idun that he had found another golden eagle tree. It was in Midgard, just beyond the Bifrost bridge, and its apples looked exactly like Idun's apples.

Idun was worried about what this would mean for her brand. She picked up all the golden apples on her tree, then followed Loki out of the orchard and across the flaming Bifrost bridge.

Loki was the quickest to react.

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Pub Price	£14.99
ISBN	9781800786745
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Author	Stephen Davies
Illustrator	Seaerra Miller
Extent	64pp
Word Count	12000 words
Files To Printer	10/04/2025
Freight On Board	14/08/2025
Rights Available	World

# Myths, Gods and Gladiators in Ancient Rome

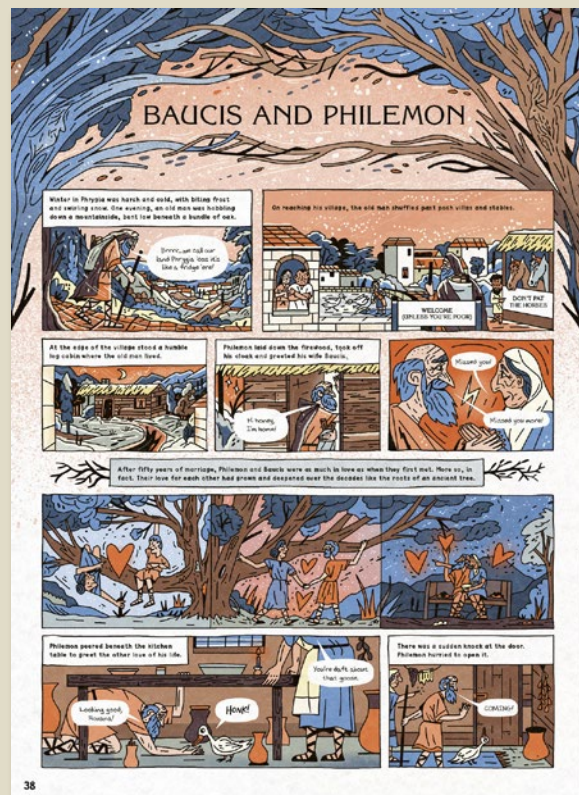
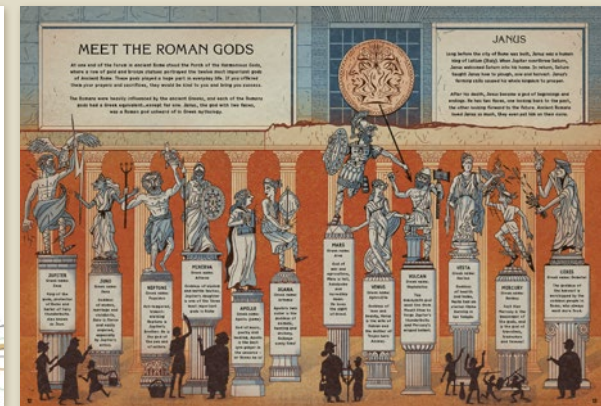
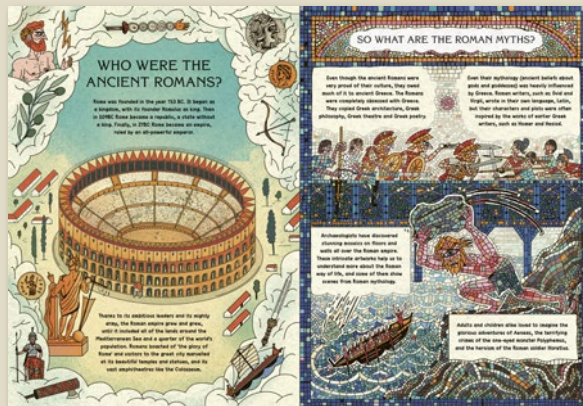


**A historical and humorous comic book retelling of the ancient Roman myths.**

- The myths are broken up with a series of 'theme' spreads, which will take a broader look at certain aspects of Roman mythology (mythical beasts and monsters, the gods, heroes etc.)
- Following on from the success of *Myths, Monsters and Mayhem in Ancient Greece* (which has sold over 50,000 copies worldwide as of July 2024) - this is the next title in a growing series for Big Picture Press
- Growing demand for graphic novels and comic books for children and adults alike
- Cover treatments: Deboss and pantone

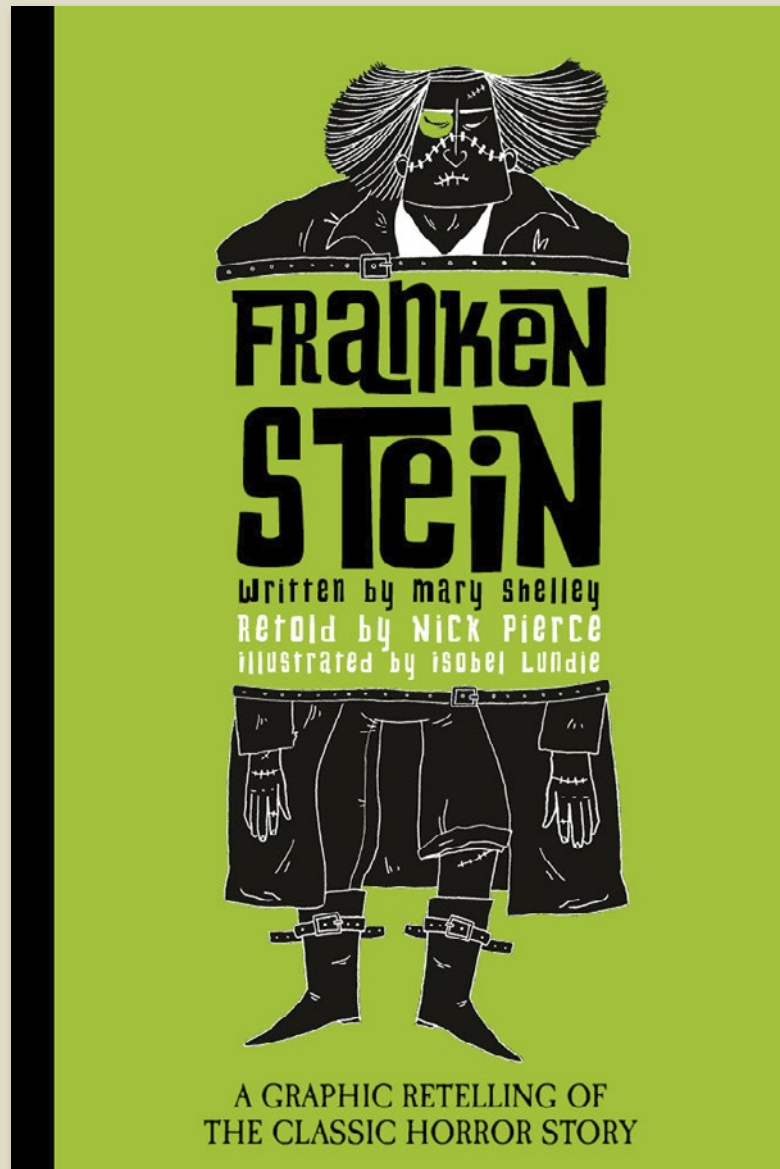


# Myths, Gods and Gladiators in Ancient Rome



Pub Date	01/01/2026
Pub Price	£14.99
ISBN	9781800788770
H x W	297 x 216mm
Binding	Hardback
Age Range	7-9 years
Author	Stephen Davies
Illustrator	Laurie Avon
Extent	64pp
Word Count	12000 words
Translation Files	30/03/2025
Files To Printer	05/05/2025
Freight On Board	12/06/2025
Rights Available	World



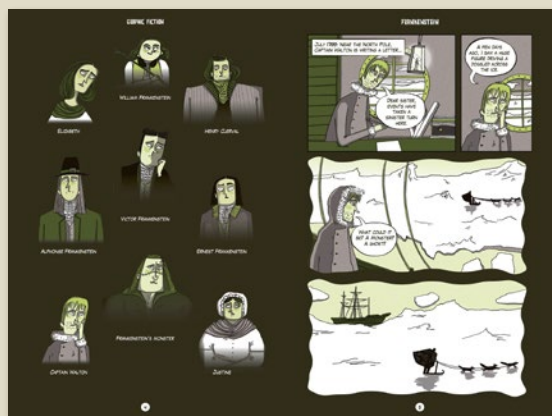


## A graphic retelling of Mary Shelley's gothic masterpiece

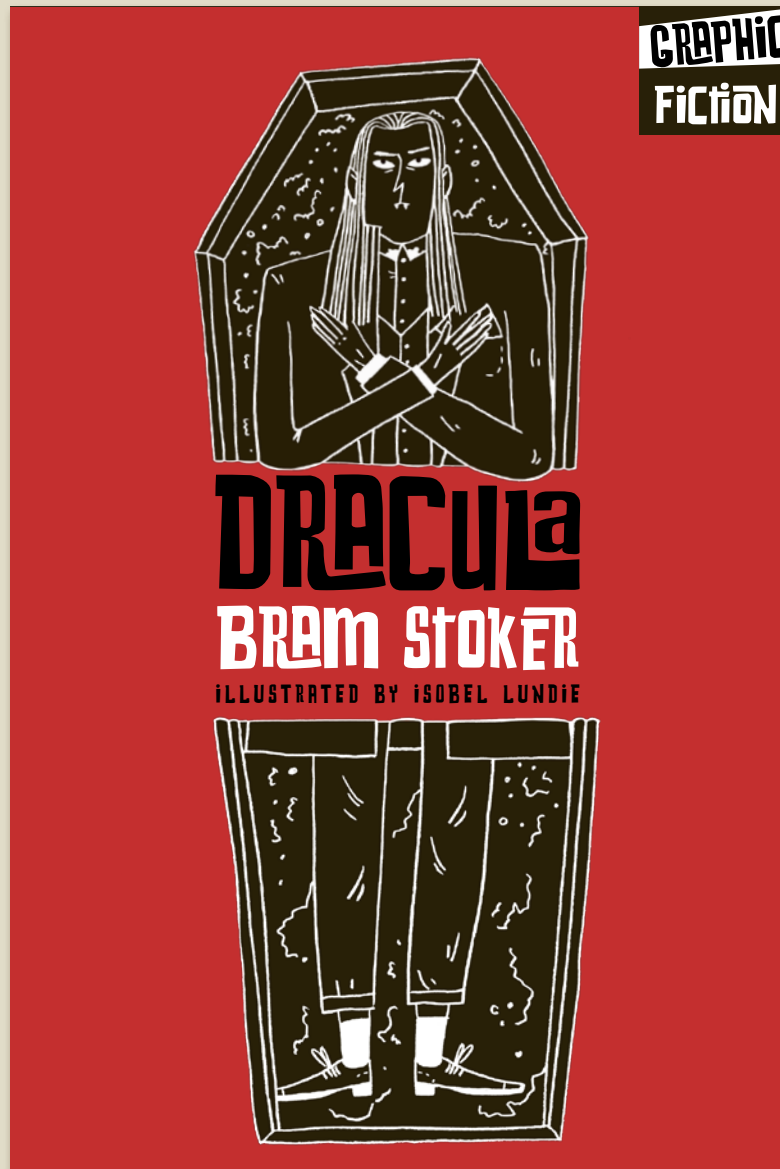
- A contemporary twist on a 19th Century classic. This creepy graphic retelling is the perfect tool for engaging reluctant readers and introducing children to the literary canon.
- An excellent English Literature curriculum companion. The endmatter contains an educational author biography, history of 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
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.
- A wonderful introduction to the horror genre. Young readers will be captivated by Isobel Lundie's beautiful, spooky illustrations.



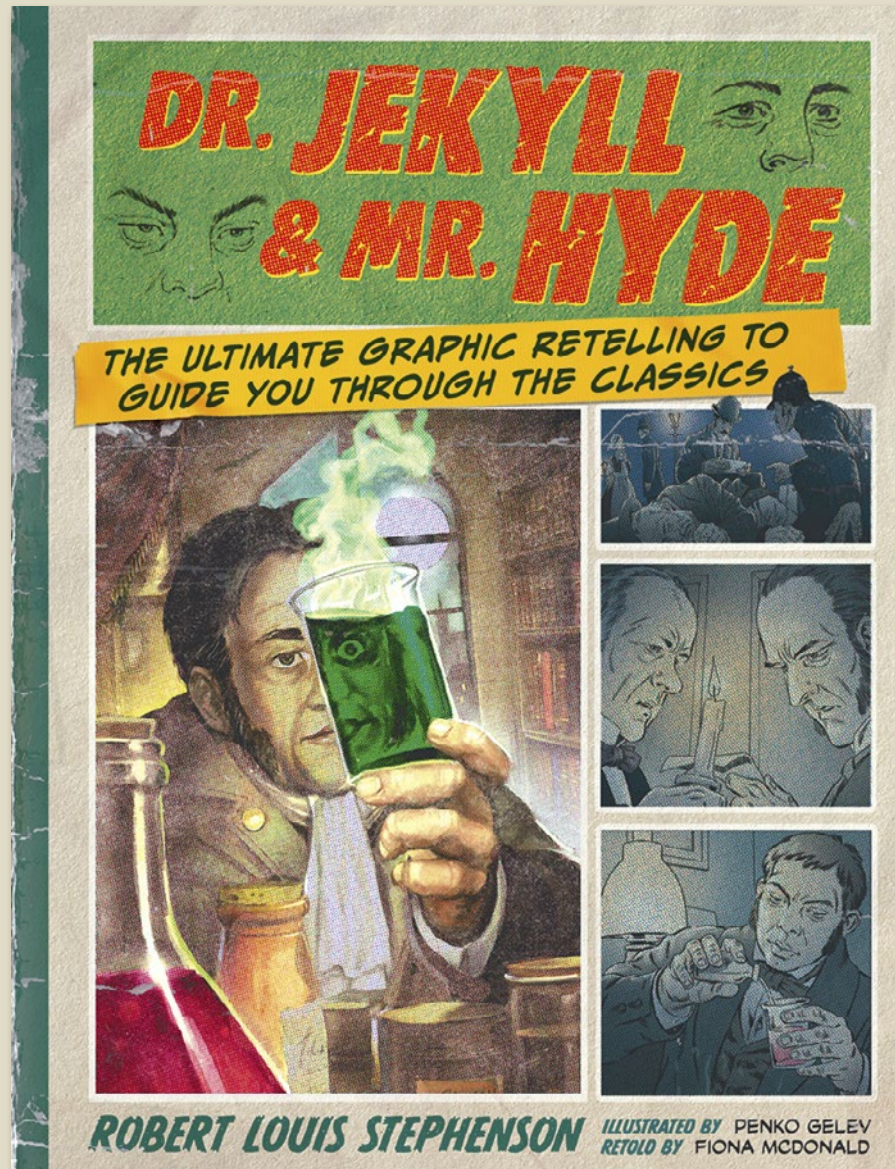
# Dracula



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



# Dr. Jekyll & Mr. Hyde: Classic Comics

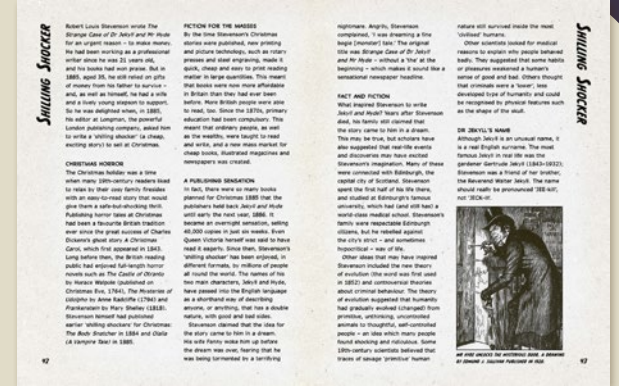


The ultimate comic book companion to guide you through the Victorian classic, *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*

- 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.



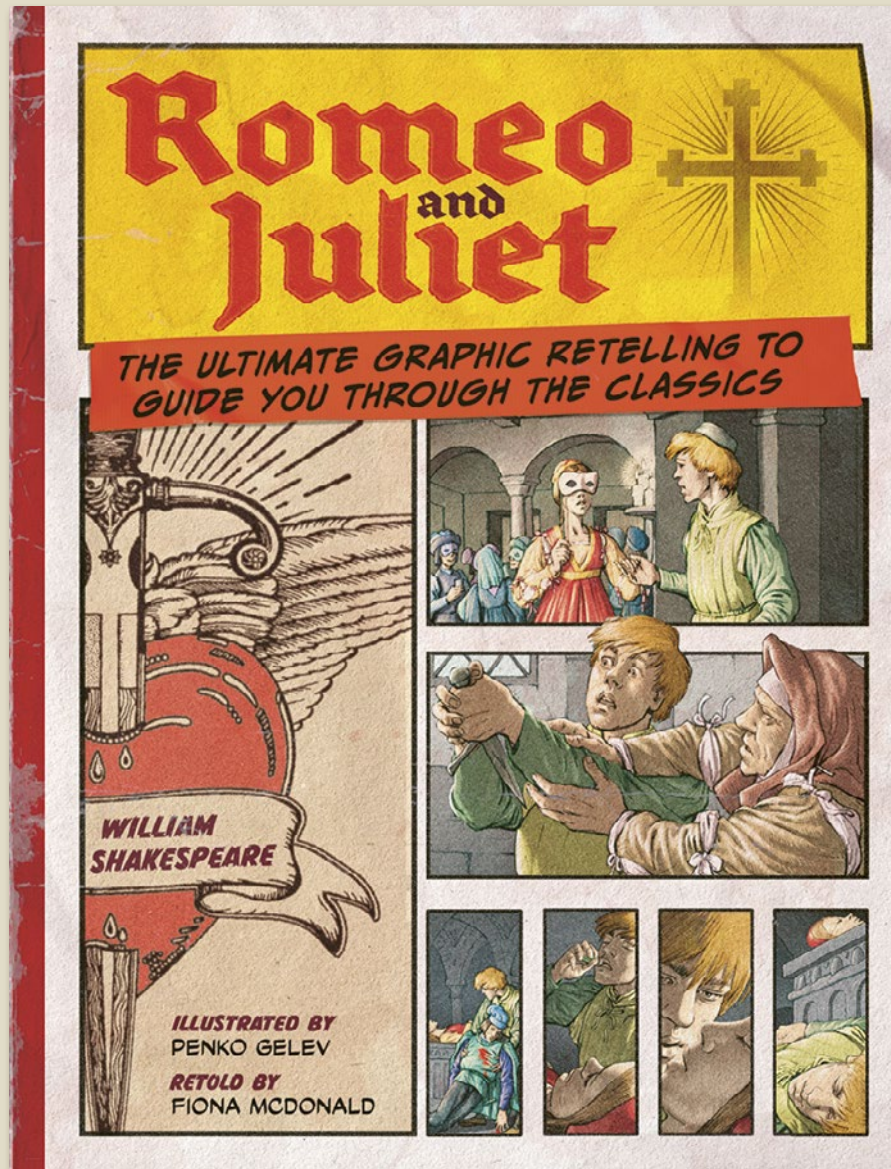
# Dr. Jekyll & Mr. Hyde: Classic Comics



Pub Date	26/09/2024
Pub Price	£7.99
ISBN	9781800789142
H x W	246 x 189mm
Binding	Paperback
Age Range	9-11 years
Author	Fiona MacDonald
Illustrator	Penko Gelev
Extent	48pp
Word Count	5715 words
Freight On Board	17/07/2024
Rights Available	World



# Romeo and Juliet: Classic Comics

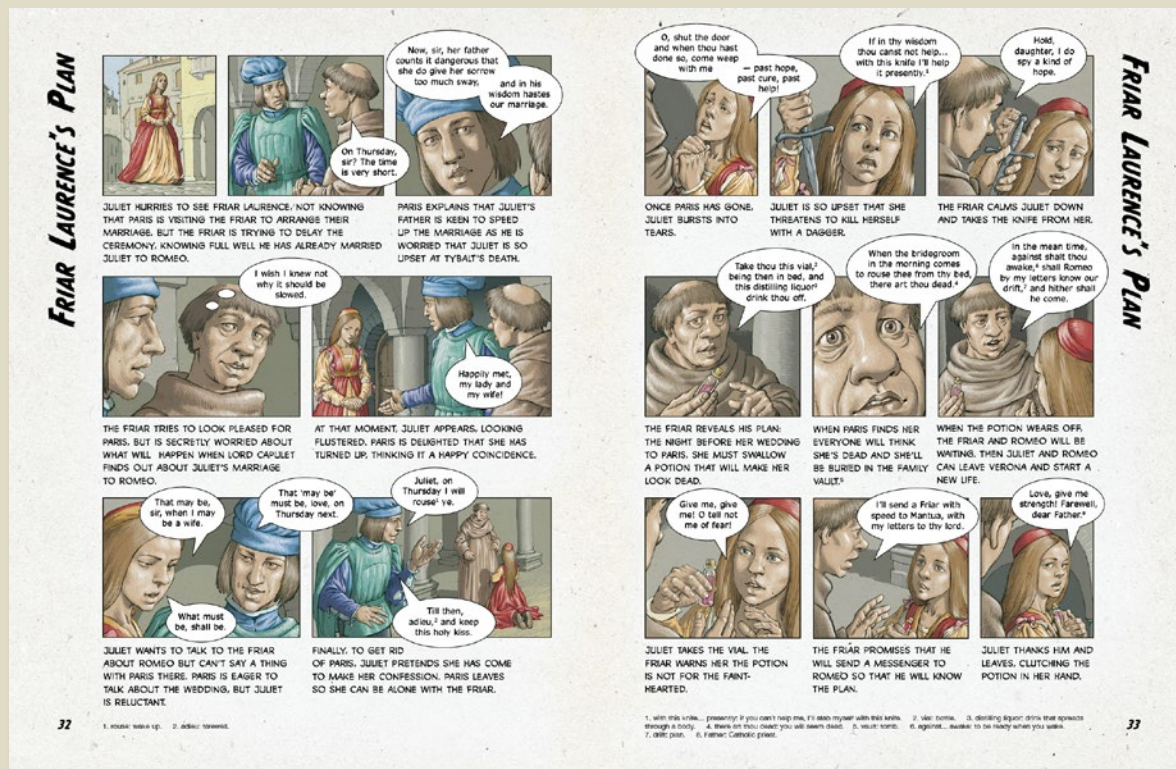
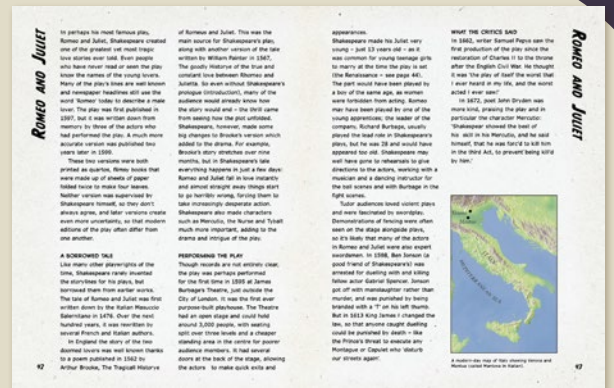


The ultimate comic book companion to guide you through Shakespeare's classic, *Romeo and Juliet*.

- 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 accessible.
- Perfect curriculum companion to students studying *Romeo and Juliet* at school, with an additional glossary to help dissect any tricky jargon or old-fashioned terms.

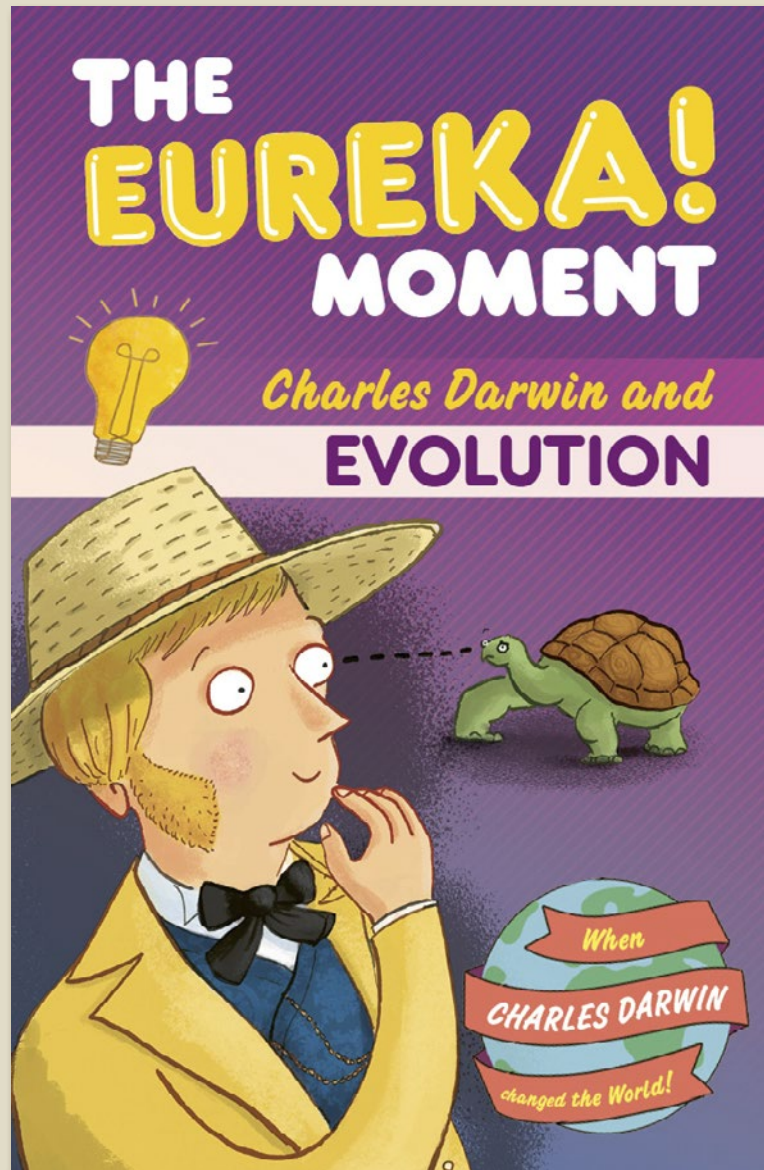


# Romeo and Juliet: Classic Comics



Pub Date	26/09/2024
Pub Price	£7.99
ISBN	9781800789159
H x W	246 x 189mm
Binding	Paperback
Age Range	9-11 years
Author	Fiona MacDonald
Illustrator	Penko Gelev
Extent	48pp
Word Count	13401 words
Freight On Board	17/07/2024
Rights Available	World

# Evolution: The Eureka! Moment

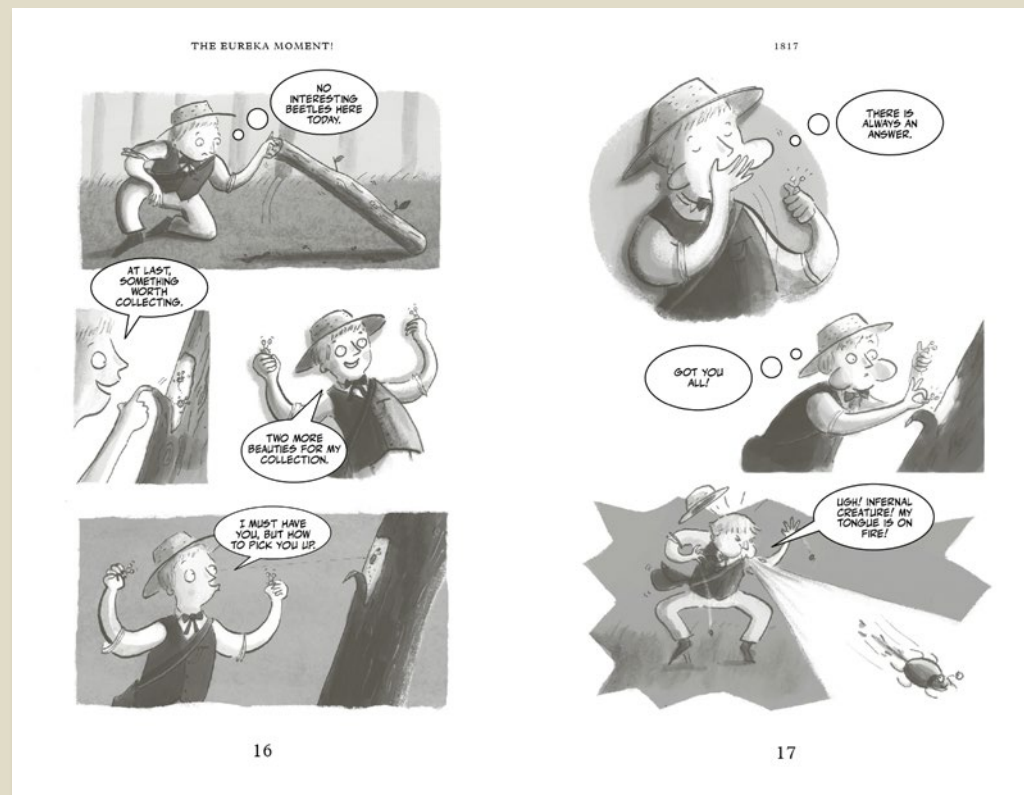
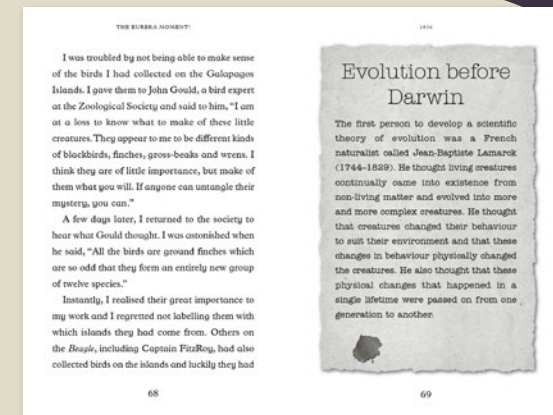
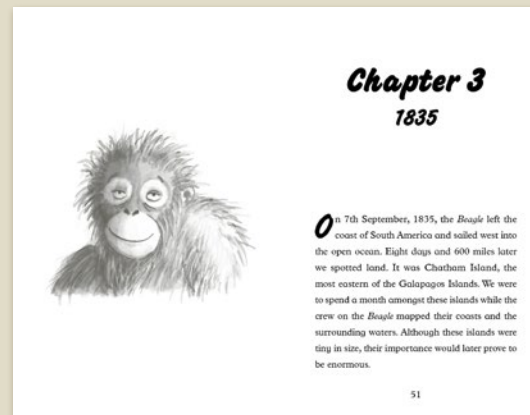
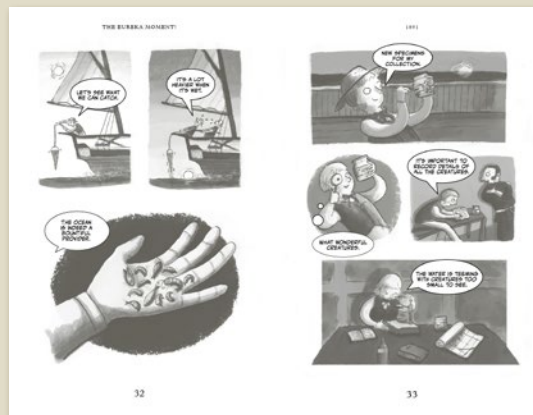


## Explore Charles Darwin's incredible 'Eureka' moment!

- 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.



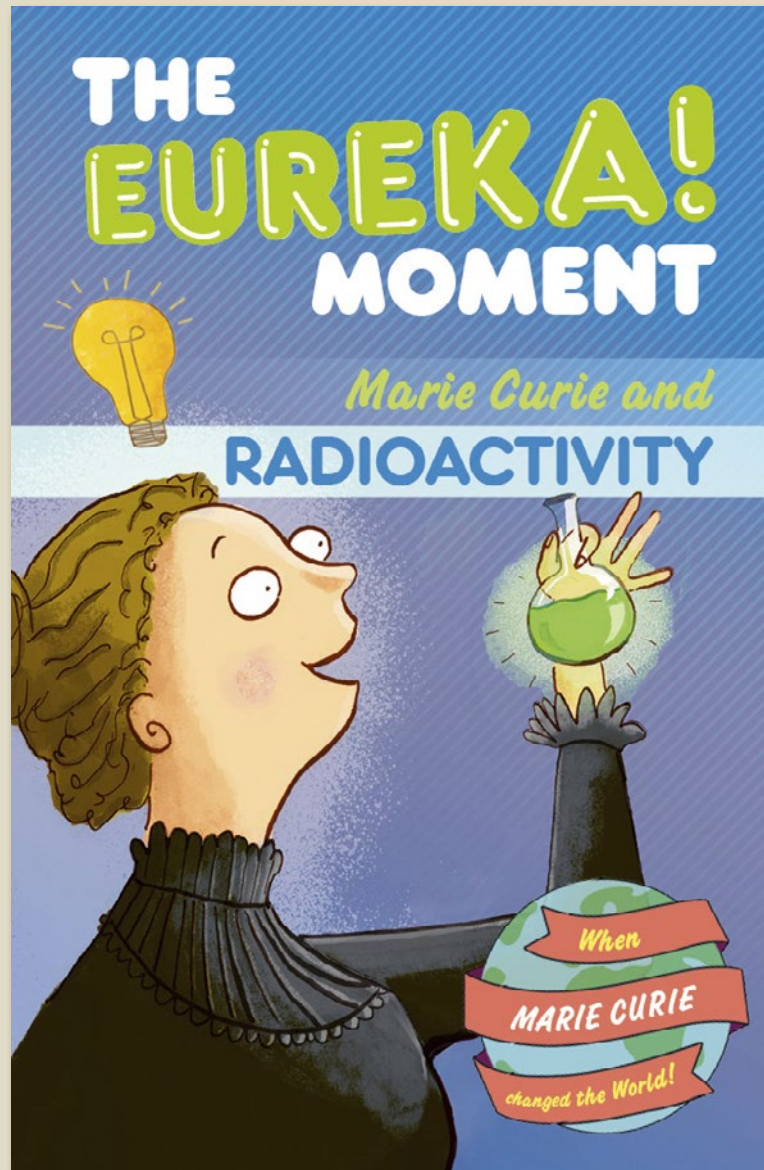
# Evolution: The Eureka! Moment



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



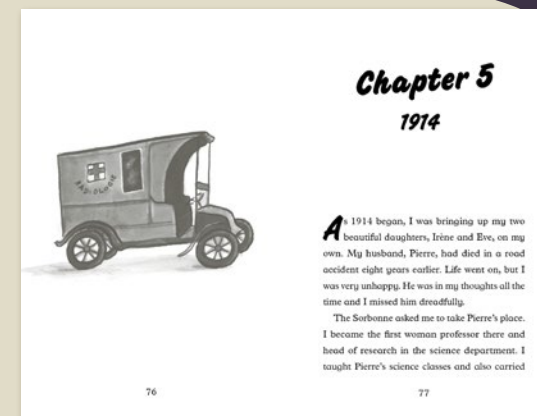
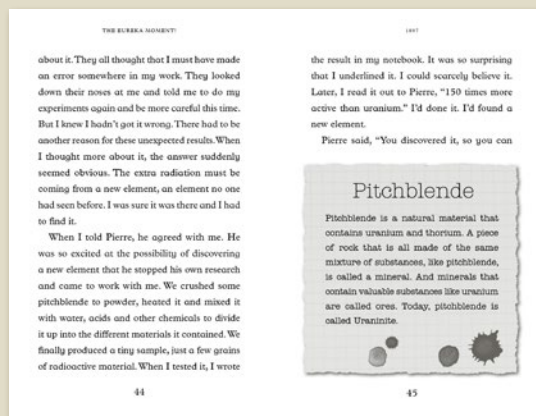
# Radioactivity: The Eureka! Moment



## Explore Marie Curie's incredible 'Eureka' moment!

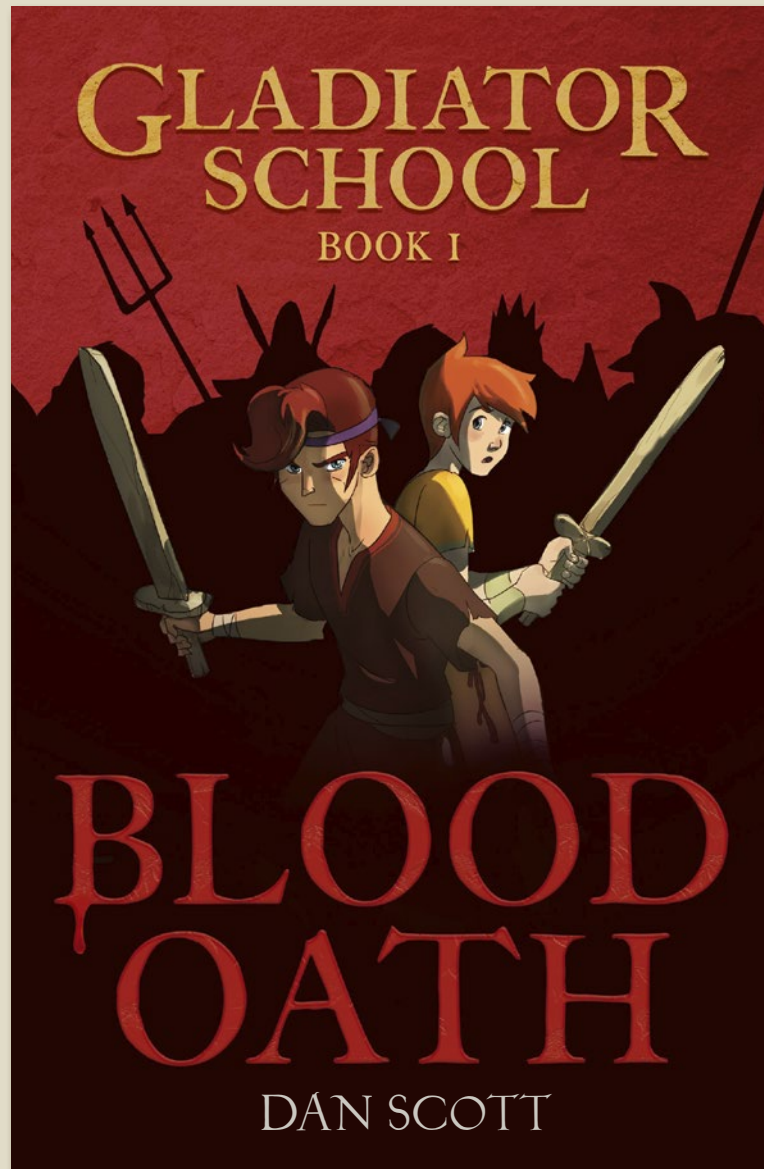
- Child-friendly narrative non-fiction curated to deepen children's knowledge of key moments in the history of science in an accessible, entertaining manner.
- This series introduces children to a myriad of inspirational individuals and the barriers they faced during their quest for knowledge, encouraging 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.

# Radioactivity: The Eureka! Moment



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

# 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.



A detailed black and white map of ancient Rome, AD 79, showing the city's layout with various landmarks labeled. The map includes the Tiber River, the Tiber Island, the Forum Romanum, the Theatre of Marcellus, the Circus Maximus, the Palatine Hill, the Colosseum, and the Subura district. A compass rose is located in the bottom right corner.

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11

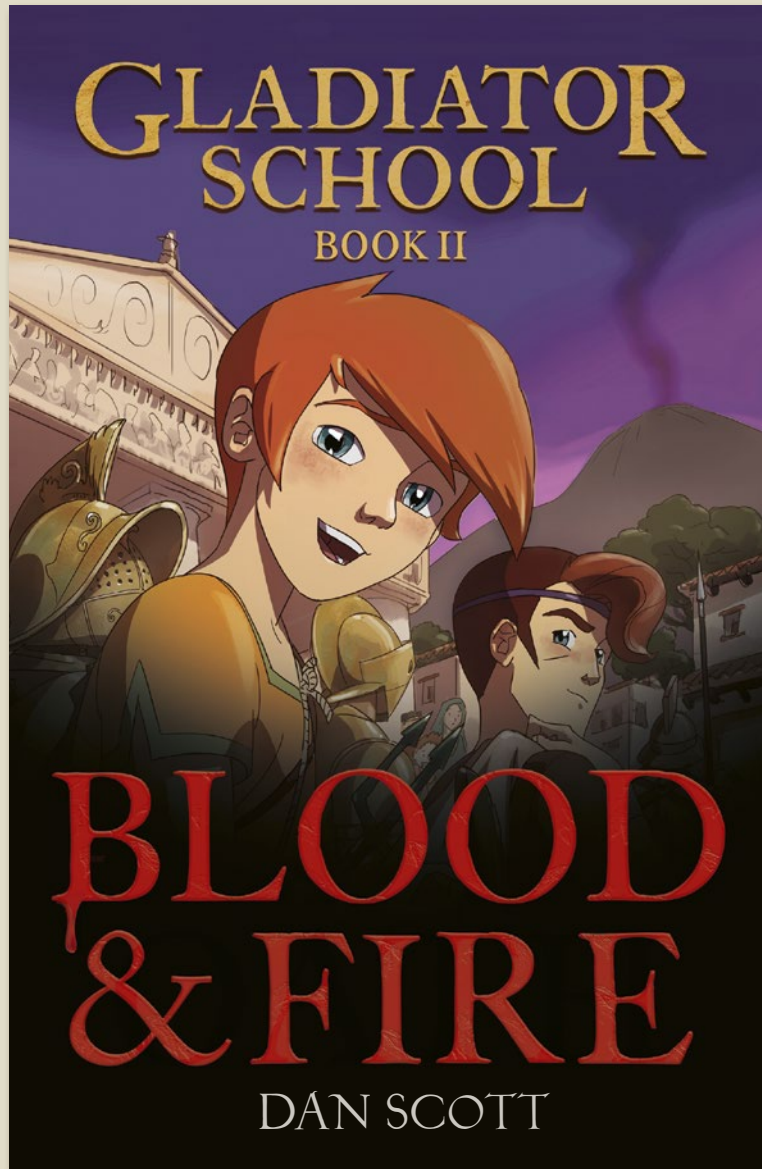
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# Gladiator School 2: Blood & Fire

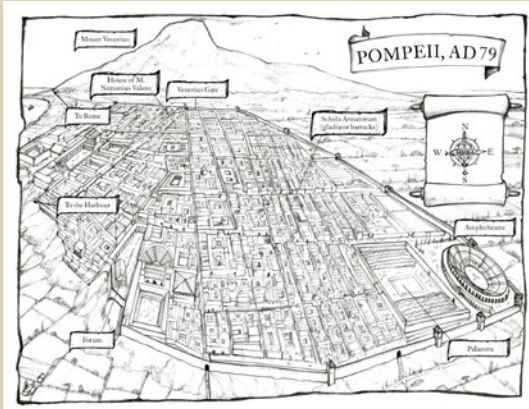


**The second in the  
Gladiator School  
series – an epic  
ancient tale of blood,  
sweat and sacrifice.**

- 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.
- Fast-paced, action-packed and full of unexpected twists and turns. A great option for reluctant readers searching for an exciting, gory adventure story to keep them entertained.
- 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 I

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

He muddled his head 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 crowd 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.

Smells 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 cries of fruit sellers and wine merchants and the pipes and drums of bankers. The noise and

\* amphitheatre (singular amphitheatrum) northwestern (direction) and political (description).

GLADIATOR SCHOOL

BLOOD & FIRE

squalor reminded him of Subura, the area where he now lived in Rome. Yet Pompeii seemed to carry an entire air of horror. 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 unsympathetic 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. Hesitantly, 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) northwestern (direction) and political (description).

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

There were six of them – three armed with sticks – against the outnumbered 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 encloved, egg-shaped helmet and fights with a short sword (gladius); his name means 'chaser'.

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Pub Date	23/05/2024
Pub Price	£6.99
ISBN	9781800789104
H x W	198 x 129mm
Binding	Paperback
Age Range	7-9 years
Author	Dan Scott
Extent	224pp
Word Count	46723 words
Rights Available	World

# 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

## SHIVERS

In case you are wondering, *Dei Gratia* is Latin for 'by the grace of God'. She became a well-known name, all because I told the captain what I'd seen that chilly December day.

There was a fair wind and the sea was choppy, although I'd known far worse. I was still finding my sea legs and was horribly sick when we first set sail in heavy seas. I always dreaded being told to climb the main mast to deliver a message to the lookout in the crow's nest. Up there you feel the swell far worse and have to cling on tight. Our ship had two masts, so it was called a brigantine. She was built in Canada only the year before, so we were both getting used to crossing the Atlantic. We were apparently 400 miles east of the Azores, some 500 miles from the coast of Portugal. The lookout pointed over to the horizon, but I happened to glance further to my left and saw a tiny speck in the far distance.

'Have you spotted that ship over there? I

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## MYSTERY STORIES

asked. The lookout held a telescope to his eye.

'That's mighty odd,' he muttered. 'She seems to be out of sorts, if you ask me. Go tell the captain.'

Captain Morehouse was concerned and he ordered us to change course. He steered us towards the ship, keeping a close eye on her strange rigging through the waves.

'She's going all over the place. Whoever's at the helm must have been on the rum all night.'

The closer we got to the 'drunken ship', as the captain called her, the more alarmed he became. He called to Mr Devan, the first mate. 'That ship is definitely adrift. There's nothing guiding her and she's at risk of keeling over if no one sets her a proper course. Lower the rowing boat and investigate. Take the second mate and the boy and tell me what you find.'

I gingerly climbed down into the boat and we rowed across to the swaying ship, drawing up alongside. John Wright, the second mate,

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## SHIVERS



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## MYSTERY STORIES

### MYSTERY FACTS

#### Did you know...

1. During an attempt to fly around the world in 1937, American aviator Amelia Earhart disappeared somewhere over the Pacific Ocean. The wreckage of her aircraft was never found, and her disappearance remains one of the big unsolved mysteries of the 20th century. Before her disappearance, Amelia Earhart was the first woman to fly solo across the Atlantic Ocean.

2. The search to find the Yeti can be traced back to the time of Alexander the Great, who in 326 BC set out to conquer the Indian Valley and demanded to see a Yeti for himself. Local people were unable to help. The name 'Abominable

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## SHIVERS

Gimlin in the Bluff Creek region of northern California. Despite much investigation since that footage from 1967, it is still uncertain whether this was a hoax or a genuine sighting. Take a look at it online and decide for yourself – if you dare!

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## MYSTERY STORIES

### GLOSSARY

**Bermuda Triangle** an area in the Atlantic Ocean between Bermuda, Puerto Rico and Florida where ships and planes have apparently disappeared mysteriously.

**Chupacabra** a creature of legend said to live in parts of the Americas, with the first sightings reported in Puerto Rico. The name comes from its reputation for drinking the blood of goats.

**Cryptozoology** the study of creatures, such as the Chupacabra, the existence of which has not been scientifically proved.

**Dire wolf** an extinct wolf that was widespread in North America up to about 12,000 years ago, having a larger body and a smaller brain than today's wolf.

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her, too – but Miss said we should relax as it was only the cruise boat chugging and making waves.'

He frowned and looked at his watch. 'Not now. Not in the fog it wasn't. Boats don't sail in bad weather. They've all been moored for the past hour. No boats were out on the loch when you heard that noise.' He looked very serious, lowered his voice and added, 'The only one brave enough to venture into those dark and misty waters would be the very monster itself.'

Mrs Milligan could only gulp and stare. Apart from that, she still seemed fairly relaxed. So relaxed, she didn't stir. That's because she'd just fainted with a terrified gasp – face down in the man's porridge.

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## MYSTERY STORIES



### THE GHOST SHIP

I was only 12 at the time. It was my first voyage as cabin boy on the ship *Dei Gratia* in 1872. In fact, it was me who first spotted flapping sails in the distance and reported the drifting vessel to Captain Morehouse. Little did we know what we were about to find.

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Age Range	7-9 years
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Illustrator	Isobel Lundie
Extent	128pp
Rights Available	World



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# 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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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 is 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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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

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

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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

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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

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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."

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## 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

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