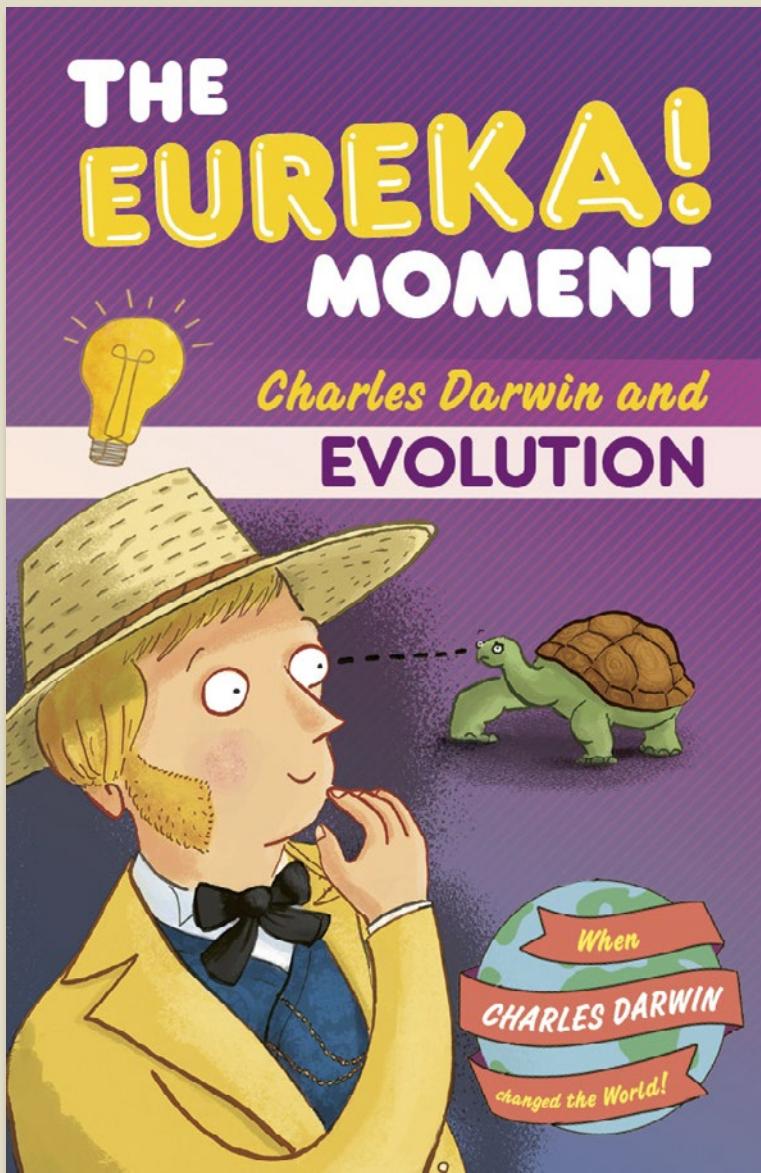




**LATAM SP - FBF23 - Middle grade
mono and graphic novels**

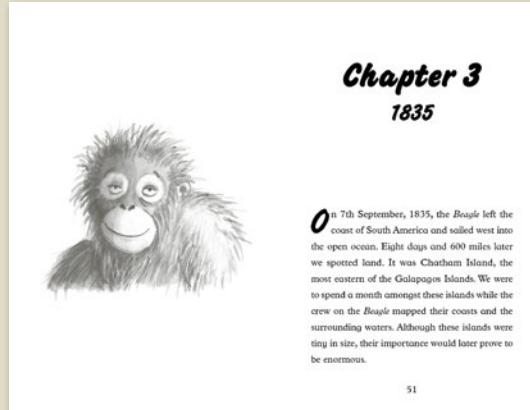
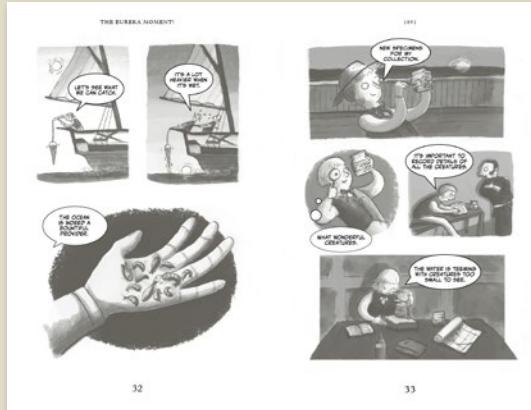
Evolution: The Eureka! Moment



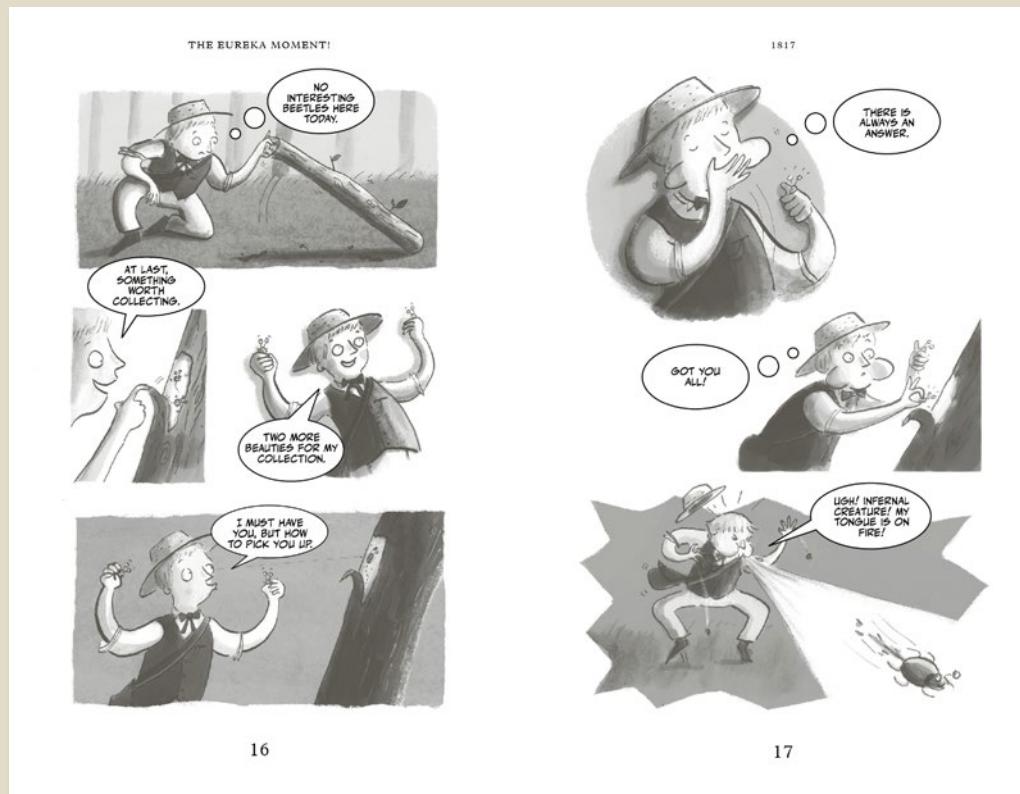
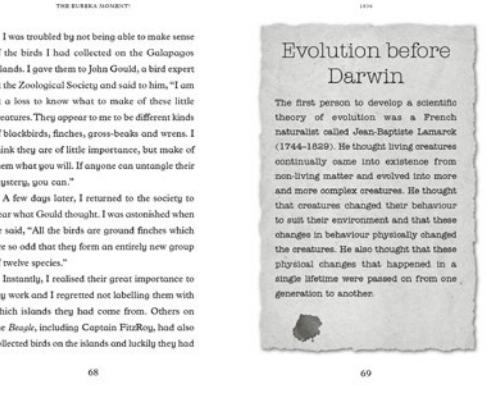
Explore Charles Darwin's incredible 'Eureka' moment!

- 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

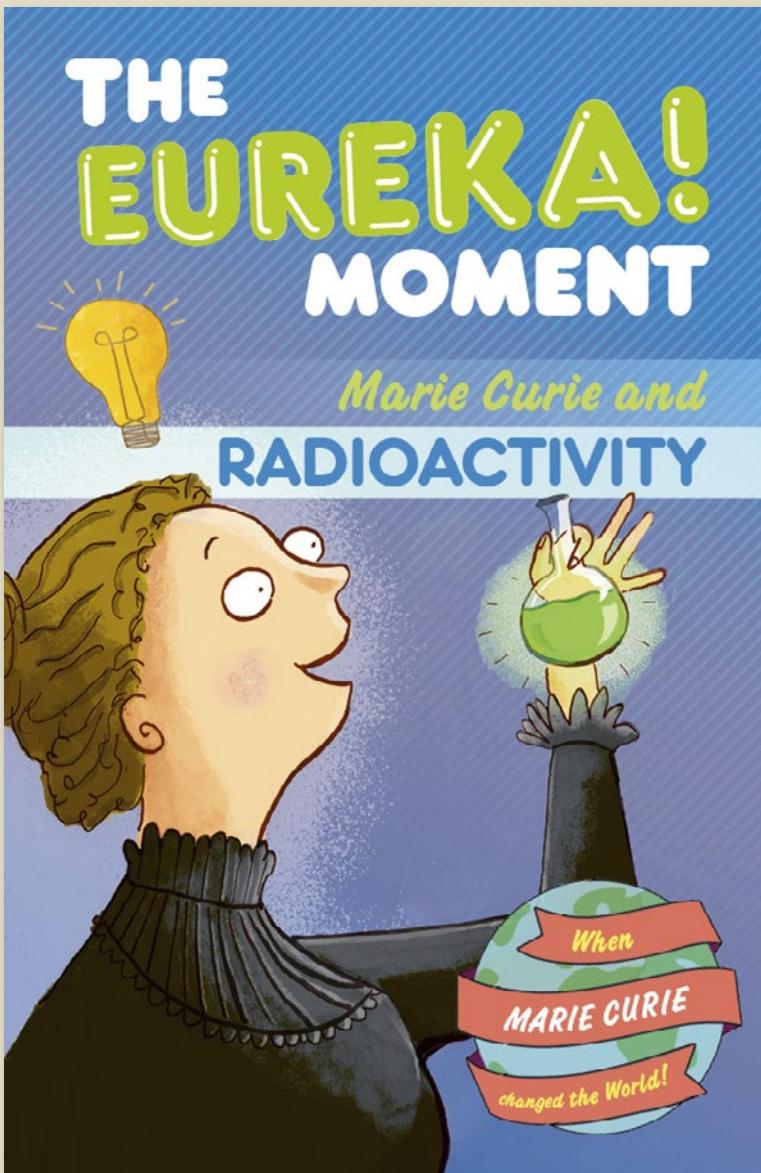


On 7th September, 1835, the *Beagle* left the coast of South America and sailed west into the open ocean. Eight days and 600 miles later we spotted land. It was Chatham Island, the most eastern of the Galapagos Islands. We were to spend a month amongst these islands while the crew on the *Beagle* mapped their coasts and the surrounding waters. Although these islands were tiny in size, their importance would later prove to be enormous.



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

THE EUREKA MOMENT!

about it. They all thought that I must have made an error somewhere in my work. They looked down their noses at me and told me to do my experiments again and be more careful this time. But I knew I hadn't got it wrong. There had to be another reason for these unexpected results. When I thought more about it, the answer suddenly seemed obvious. The extra radiation must be coming from a new element, an element no one had seen before. I was sure it was there and I had to find it.

When I told Pierre, he agreed with me. He was so excited at the possibility of discovering a new element that he stopped his own research and came to work with me. We crushed some pitchblende to powder, heated it and mixed it with water, acids and other chemicals to divide it up into the different materials it contained. We finally produced a tiny sample, just a few grains of radioactive material. When I tested it, I wrote

44

1907

the result in my notebook. It was so surprising that I underlined it. I could scarcely believe it. Later, I read it out to Pierre, "150 times more active than uranium." I'd done it. I'd found a new element.

Pierre said, "You discovered it, so you can

Pitchblende

Pitchblende is a natural material that contains uranium and thorium. A piece of rock that is all made of the same mixture of substances, like pitchblende, is called a mineral. And minerals that contain valuable substances like uranium are called ores. Today, pitchblende is called Uranium.

45

1908

THE EUREKA MOMENT!

1909



76

Chapter 5
1914

As 1914 began, I was bringing up my two beautiful daughters, Irène and Eve, on my own. My husband, Pierre, had died in a road accident eight years earlier. Life went on, but I was very unhappy. He was in my thoughts all the time and I missed him dreadfully.

The Sorbonne asked me to take Pierre's place. I became the first woman professor there and head of research in the science department. I taught Pierre's science classes and also carried

THE EUREKA MOMENT!



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1914



77

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**

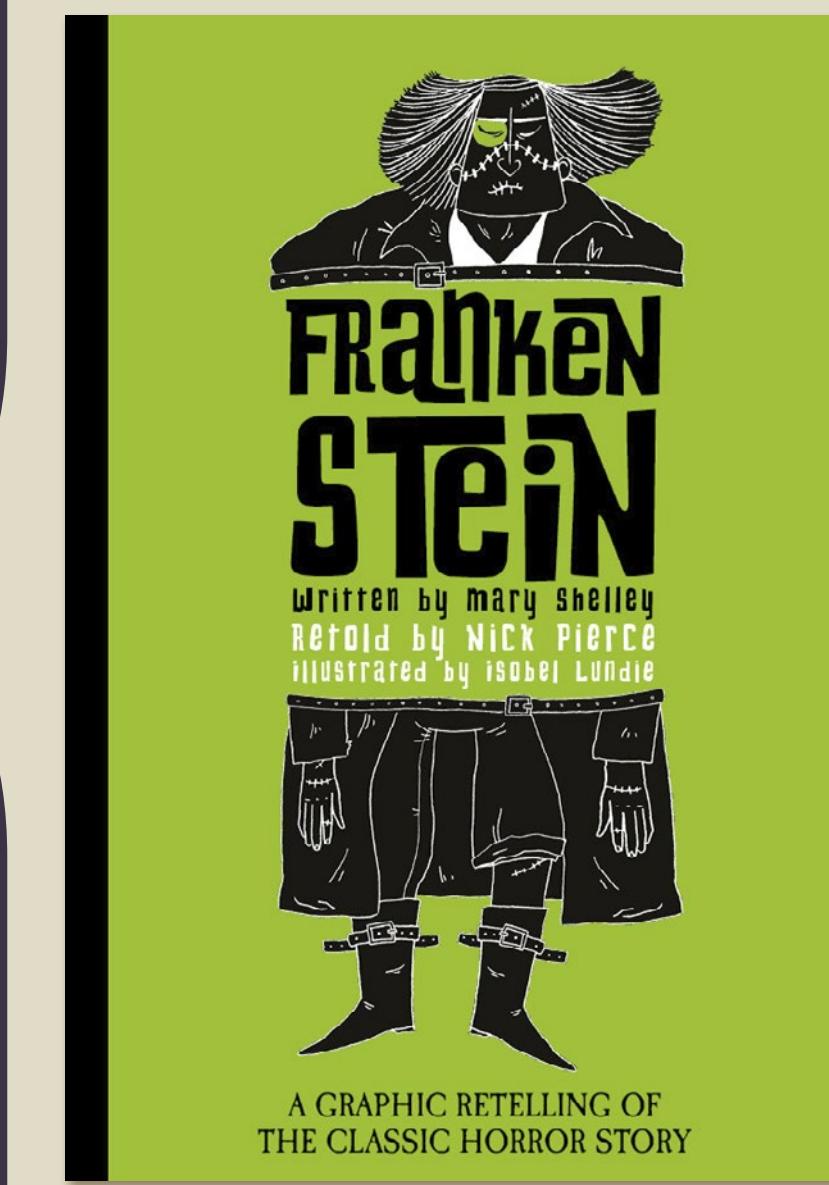
Illustrator **Annaliese Stoney**

Extent **144pp**

Word Count **14683 words**

Rights Available **World**

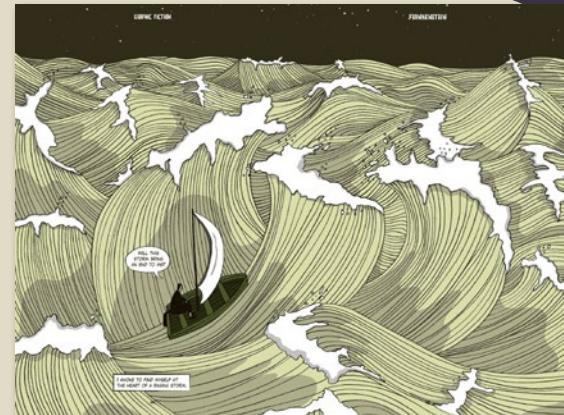
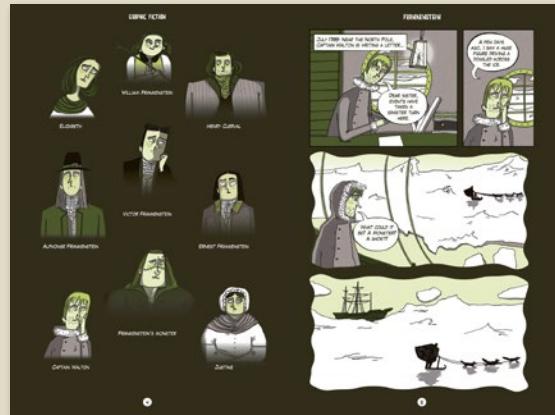
Frankenstein



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

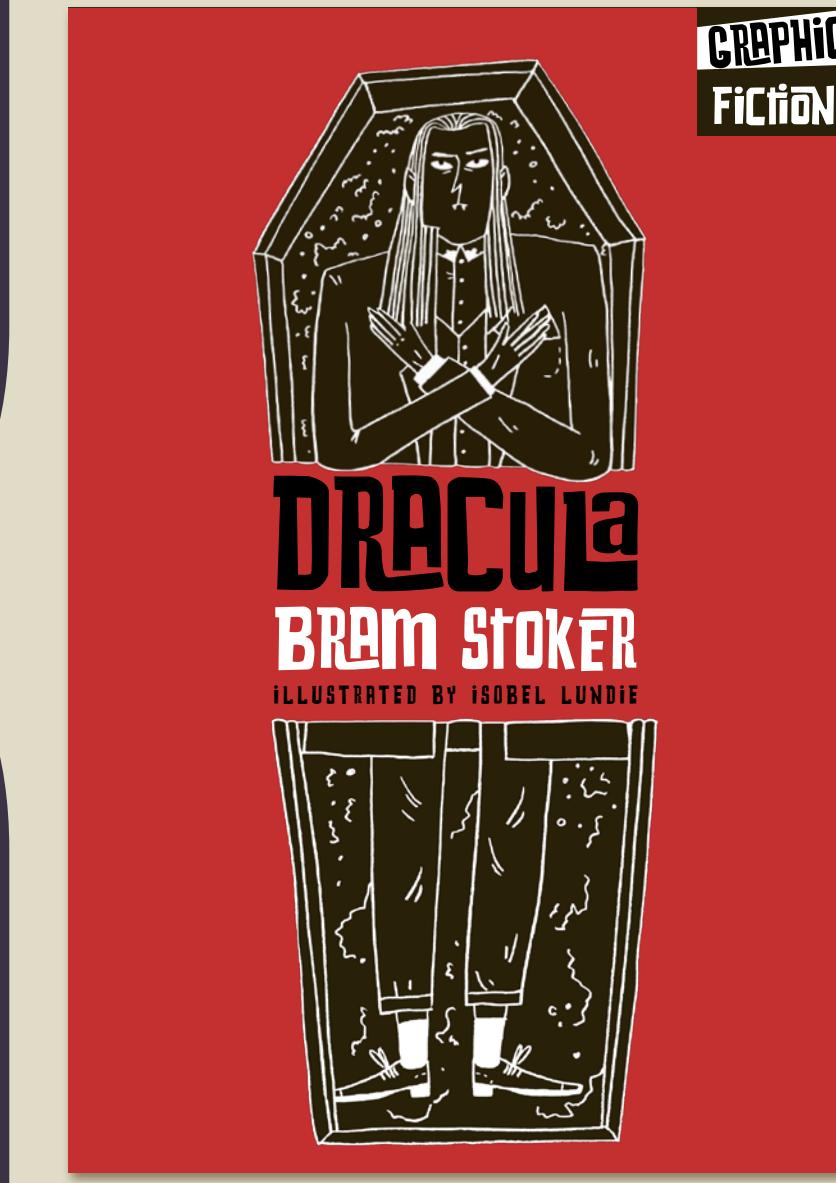
- A contemporary twist on a 19th Century classic. This creepy graphic retelling is the perfect tool for engaging reluctant readers and introducing children to the literary canon.
- An excellent English Literature curriculum companion. The endmatter contains an educational author biography, history of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

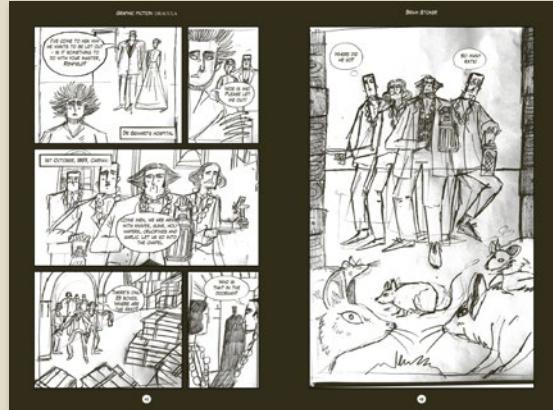
Dracula



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

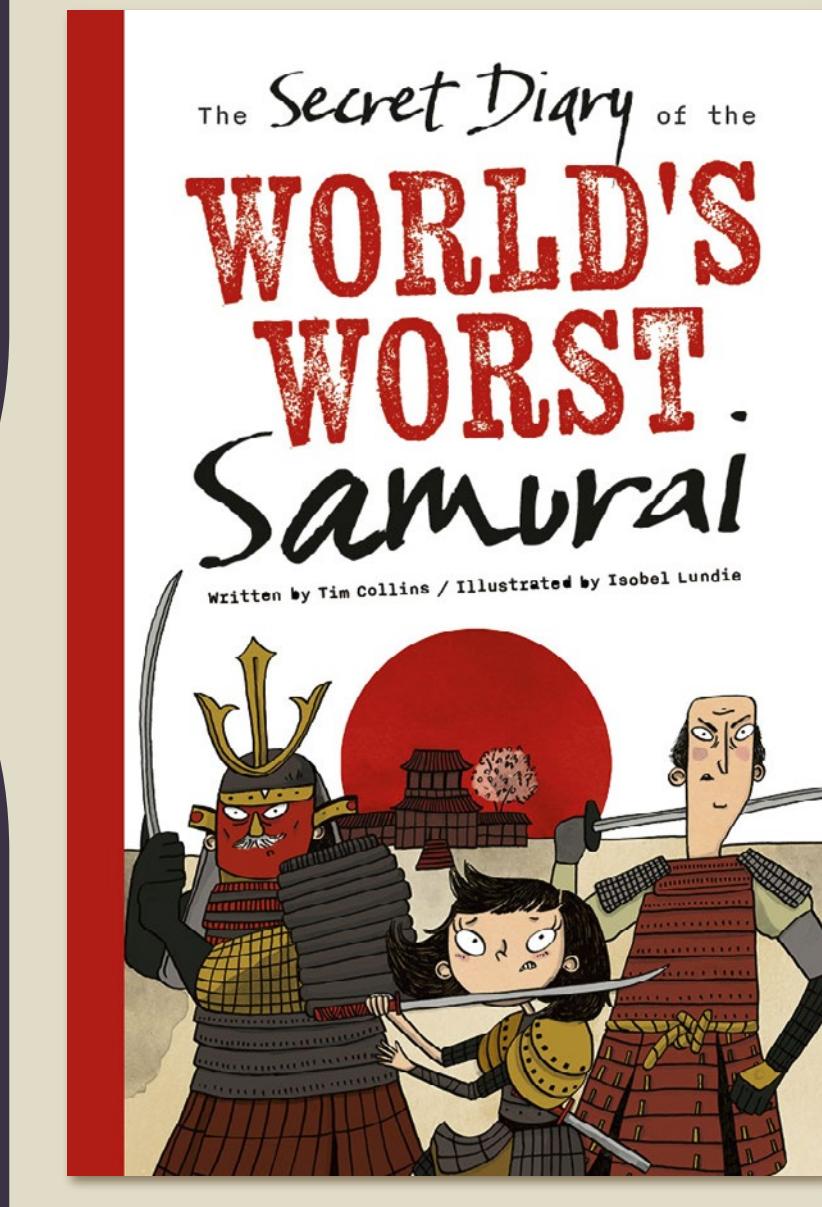
- A contemporary twist on a 19th Century classic. This creepy graphic retelling is the perfect tool for engaging reluctant readers and introducing children to the literary canon.
- An excellent English Literature curriculum companion. The endmatter contains an educational author biography, history of 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 × W	210 × 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.
- Engaging story about perseverance, believing in yourself and overcoming barriers.
- 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.
- 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 Tomoe Gozen. 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 best. 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



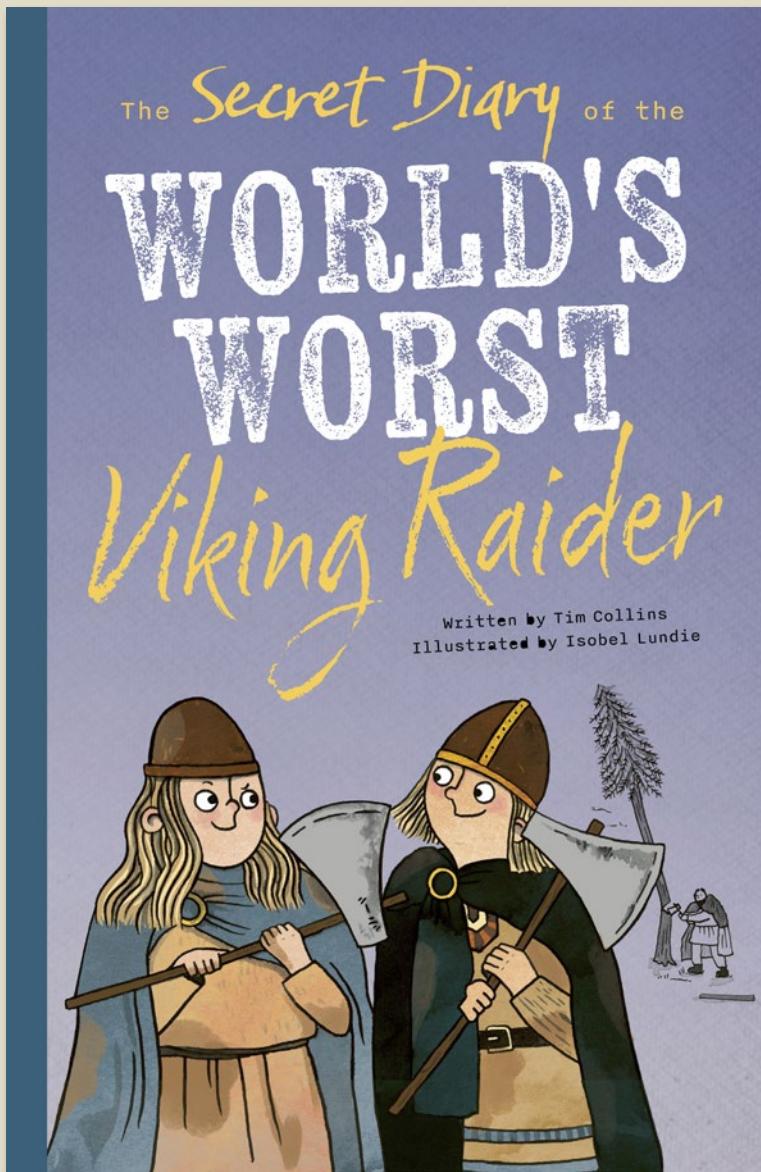
Day One

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 × W	198 × 129mm
Binding	Paperback
Age Range	7-9 years
Author	Tim Collins
Illustrator	Isobel Lundie
Extent	216pp
Word Count	20307 words
Rights Available	World

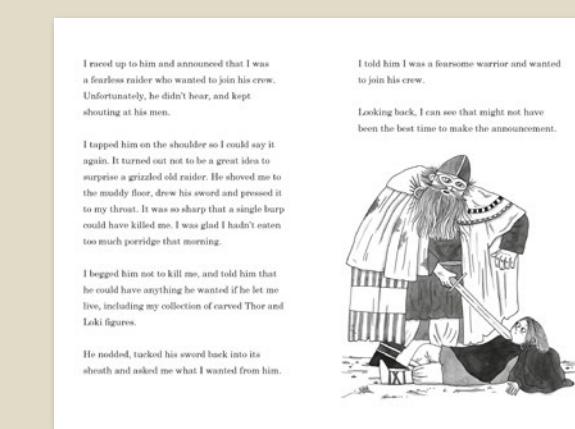
World's Worst Viking Raider



**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 again. It turned out not to be a great idea to surprise a grizzled old raider. He shoved me to the mucky 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.

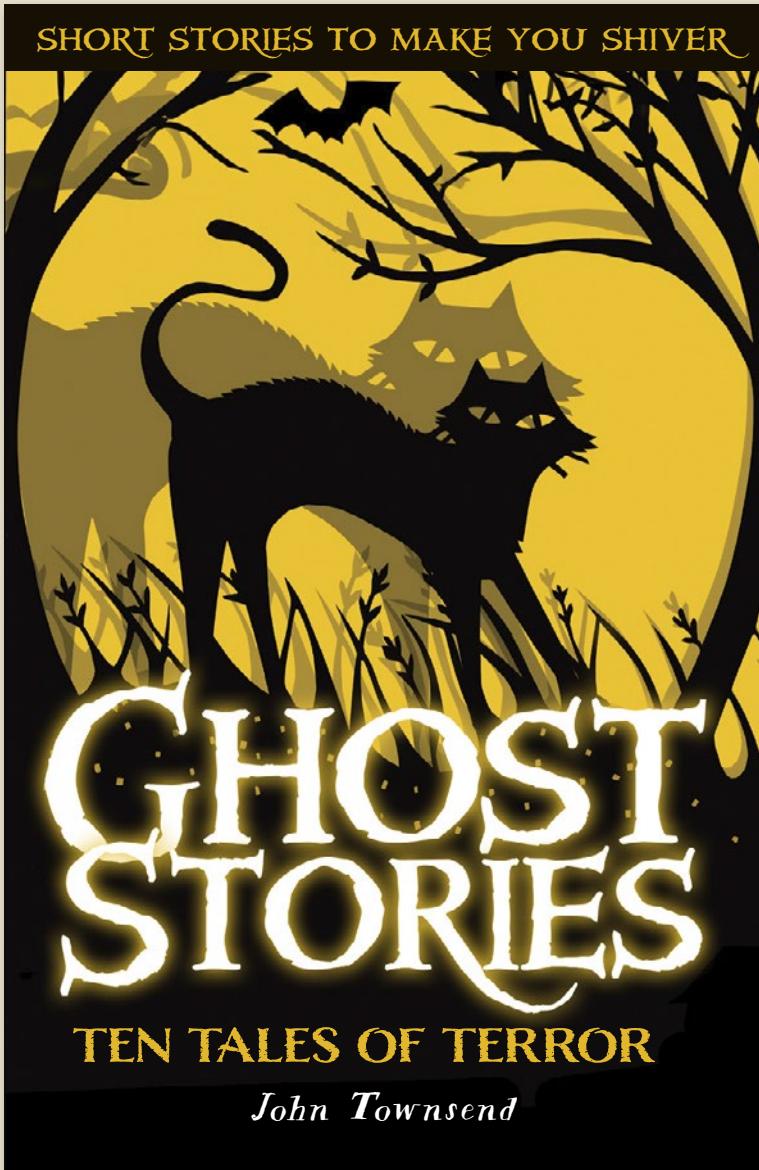
I met my best friend Astrid to play at raiding, and she brought one from her dad's workshop. He's the best blacksmith in our village, and he makes amazing shields and weapons.

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
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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 bit 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

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 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

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

GHOST STORIES

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.

SHIVERS

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 culture'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

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."

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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ISBN 9781800788992

H x W 198 x 129mm

Binding Paperback

Age Range 7-9 years

Author John Townsend

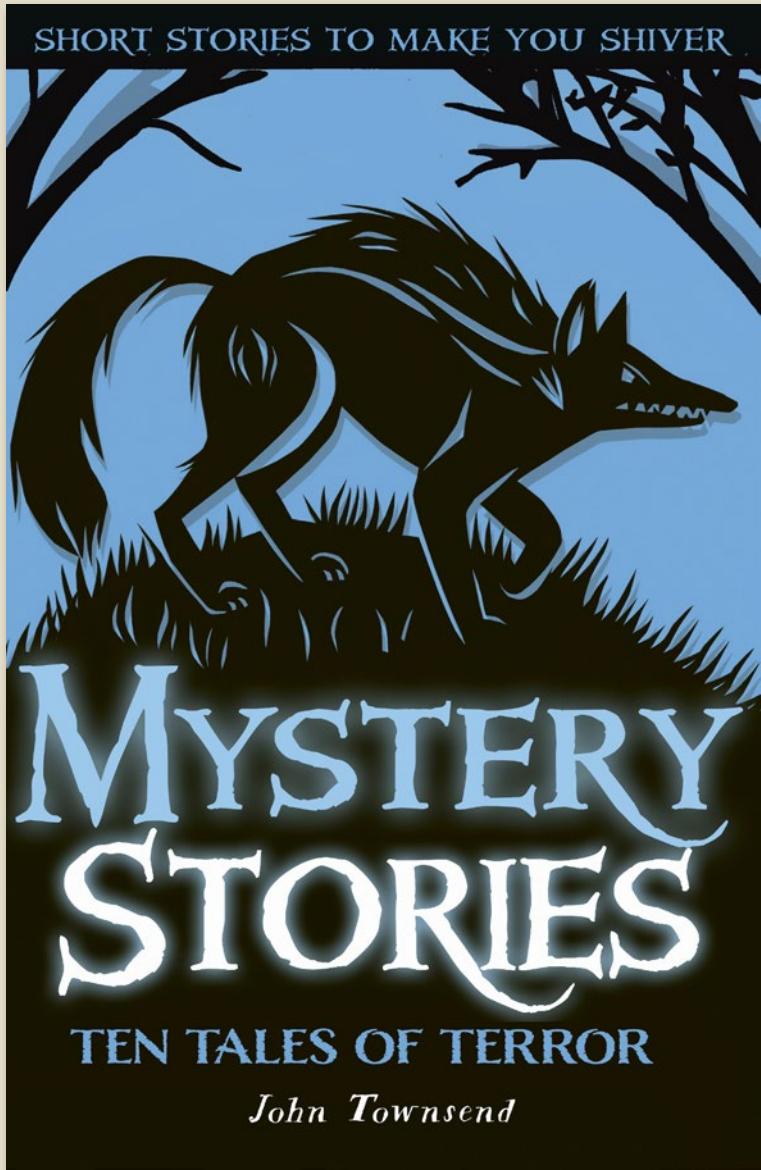
Illustrator Isobel Lundie

Extent 128pp

Word Count 21744 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

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 me to change course. He steered us toward the ship, keeping a close eye on her strange zigzagging 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 Devereux, 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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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 Indus 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 1957, 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!

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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SHIVERS

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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ISBN **9781800789005**

H x W **198 x 129mm**

Binding **Paperback**

Age Range **7-9 years**

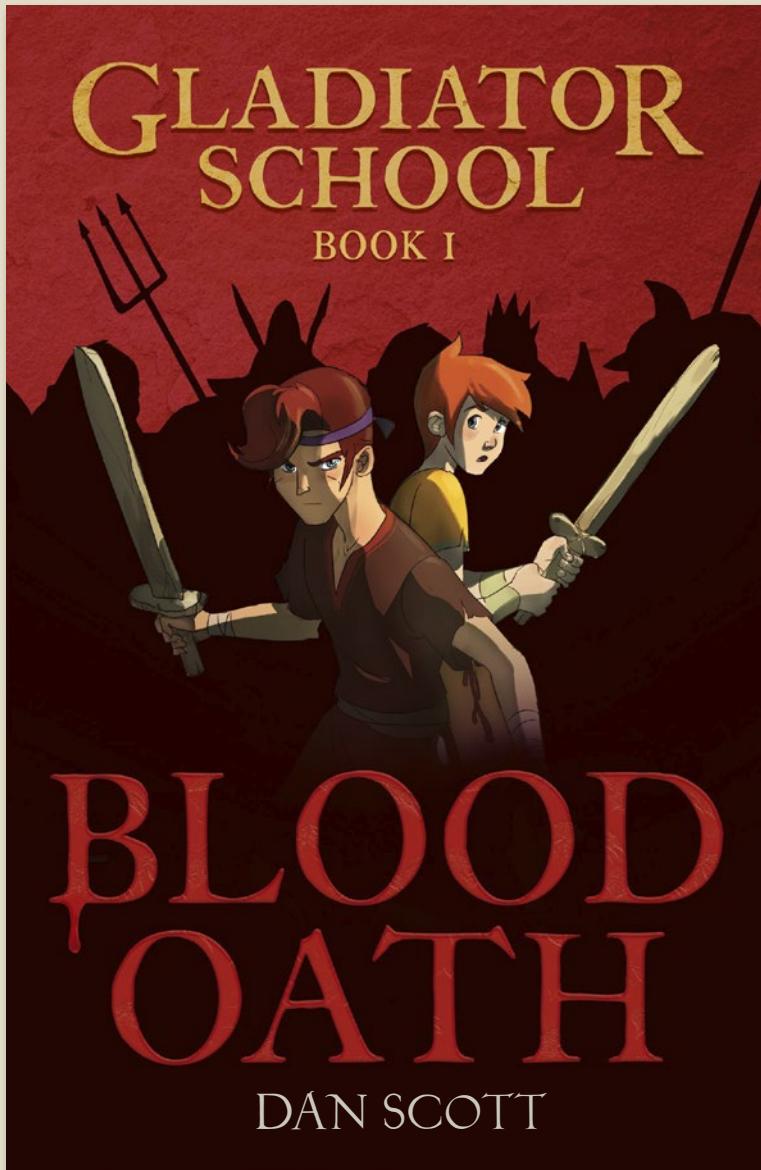
Author **John Townsend**

Illustrator **Isobel Lundie**

Extent **128pp**

Rights Available **World**

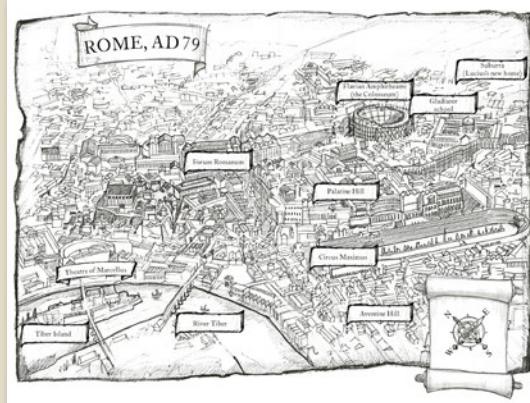
Gladiator School 1: Blood Oath



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.

Gladiator School 1: Blood Oath



GLADIATOR SCHOOL

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 if their heads were cut off. Lucius had been keeping them with curves 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 last year's leaves. A day or so passed since they had celebrated their mother's birthday. And now his world was crashing around his ears.

'Where is he, boy?' A soldier was standing in front of him, demanding an answer.

'The statue?' snapped 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.

He has a bad cold, croaky and unflinching.

'What are you talking about?' asked Quintus.

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

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

'Explaining myself,' rapped 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 Quintus's face. His shoulders sagged, his face registered confusion and disbelief.

'The dog's gone,' he said.

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

'The statue?' snapped 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.

He has a bad cold, croaky and unflinching.

'What are you talking about?' asked Quintus.

'What's that supposed to mean?' Quintus had recovered from his initial shock and was translucent again.

GLADIATOR SCHOOL

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

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

Other novice gladiators were watching from the side stands. Lucius had wandered out of the back rooms of the school to see how Quintus was getting on. No one he wished that he hadn't bothered.

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

'They have to learn to fight with us like at first,' said a voice behind him. The soldier came 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. He was working in the gladiatorial school, he knew that he had to pay more. He certainly didn't feel like talking. He turned back to the arena, where Quintus was on his back again.

One of the watching gladiators turned to Lucius.

His lips panted in a black-toothed grin.

'He's a fool and not even out of his swaddling clothes,' he said, spitting onto the sand. 'We eat his sort for breakfast.'

* *atrium: the entrance hall of a Roman villa.*

BLOOD OATH

Clearly this gladiator was already trained and fighting for money. Lucius didn't answer back, as he heard another cry of pain from Quintus, this time louder. Lucius turned his back. 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.

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The sweltering streets of Rome seemed less busy than usual. Lucius wove his way towards the Forum; the cries of street sellers ringing in his ears as he darted through the throng of civilians that carried the smell of urine and excrement strong in the air. He stumbled over a litter of riggers racing across his path and the owner yelled at him: 'Out of the way, boy!'

'Sorry,' Lucius mumbled, scuttling to the side of the street, where a meat vendor who was selling piles of fresh red lungs was splattering everyone in the vicinity with his 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 realized that he had no idea where he was. He had no idea where he was. The shops set into the villa walls were selling the same cloths and clay pots of olive oil as always. Everything looked just as it had been in the old days.

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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

PROLOGUE

TRAITOR!

ROME
JULY AD 79



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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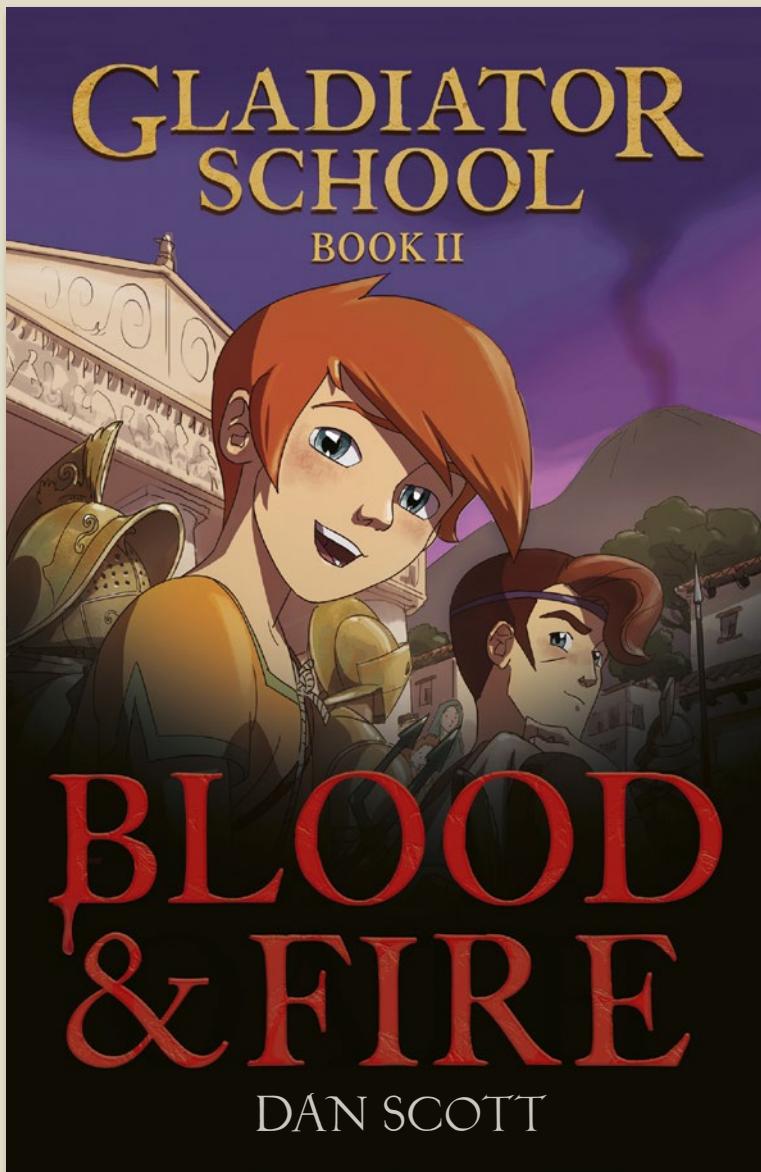
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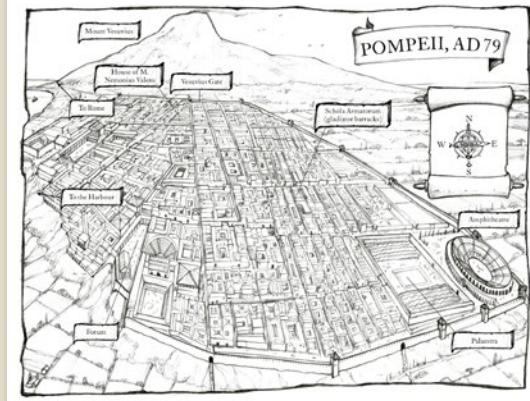
Gladiator School 2: Blood & Fire



**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 I

POMPEII, 19 AUGUST AD 79

120 hours before the eruption of Vesuvius



The midday sun beat down on Lucius as he pursued Quin through the streets of Pompeii. He glanced his brother tall, all lit up ahead, running along through the crowds heading west towards the Forum.* Lucius would have preferred to walk side by side with Quin through this unfamiliar city, but sensed he would not be welcome.

Smells of cooking meat from the fast-food shops mingled with the stench wafting over from the fish-sauce factories near the harbour. Lucius' ears echoed with the cries 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 political discussions.

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GLADIATOR SCHOOL

Quin reminded him of Subura, the area where he now lived in Rome. Yet Pompeii seemed to carry an extra air of danger. The people here always had hard faces: the young men, the cold-blooded stare of bazaar women – they all spelled danger to Lucius. Maybe it was his imagination, but Pompeii seemed like a city brimming with desperate and unscrupulous people who had nothing to live for except the smell of blood. He was glad he'd decided to follow Quin. Nonetheless, he felt his brother needed watching in a place like this.

Of course, Quin was a gladiator and very capable of looking after himself – yet Lucius knew he could be hot-headed at times and in those strange and scary streets he'd try very hard to 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 Quin turn and enter the alley. Hesitantly, Lucius followed, rubbing the ring on his left finger against his brother's neck. It was the old nervousness of his father and his brother. He was still the youngest of many siblings, the last born. Comparing himself behind a pile of amphorae, Lucius saw Quin approach a group of rough-looking young men. They were jeering and pushing around a lad about their own age. From his smart, formal robes, now besattered with dirt, Lucius could tell the victim was a young man of status, though this did not seem to count for much among his tormentors.

* amphora: singular amphora; plural amorphae; storage jars.

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BLOOD & FIRE

His sense of fairness clearly offended, Quin impulsively made into the narrow and paved side street, pulling the young man by the hair and flinging him to the ground. His friends immediately closed in around Quin, their jeers turning to snarls of anger.

There were six of them – three armed with sticks – against one lone boy. Lucius stood behind his brother, 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.

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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 the Roman Empire in the games of the Pan-Hellenic Games at Olympia. A total of thirty gladiators would be going, including Quin. 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 home again, that would mean he would be back in 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.

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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



G

ames 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, Retarius, 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.

* *Retarius*: 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'.

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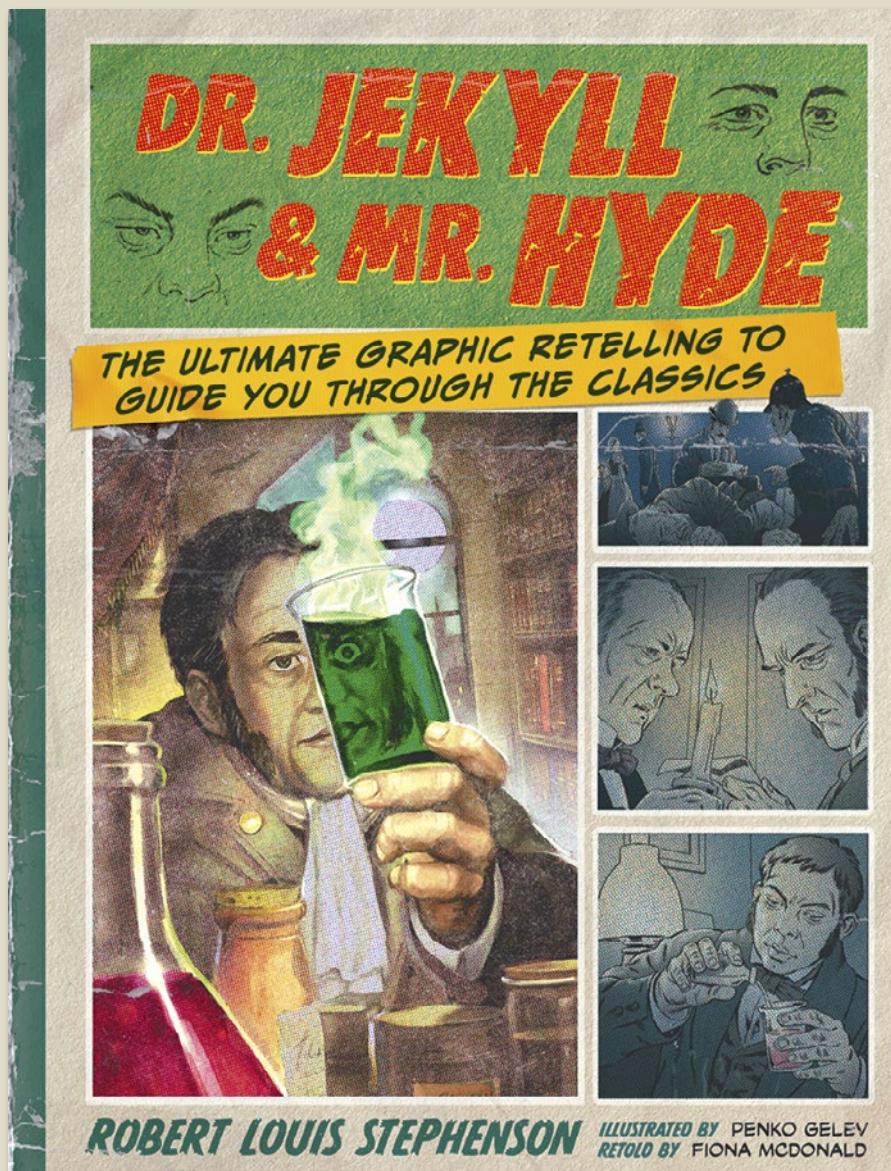
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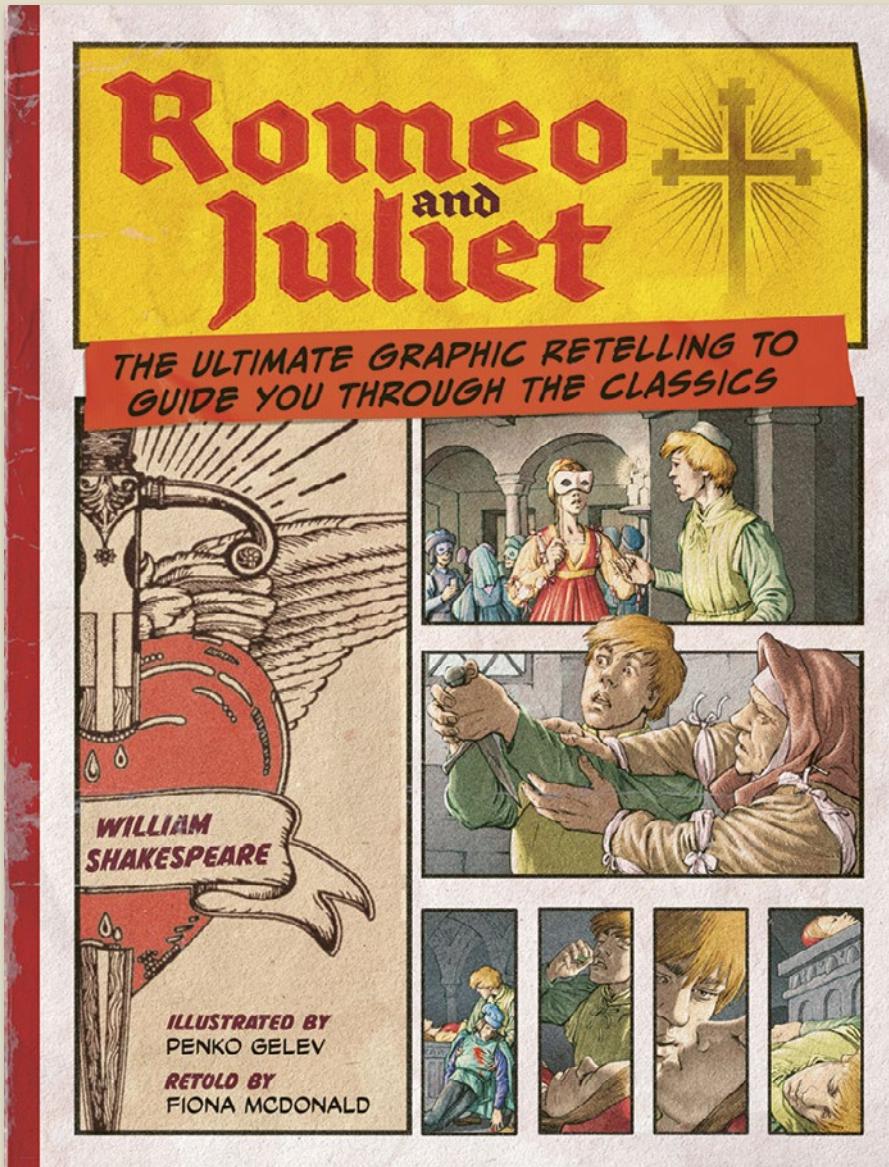
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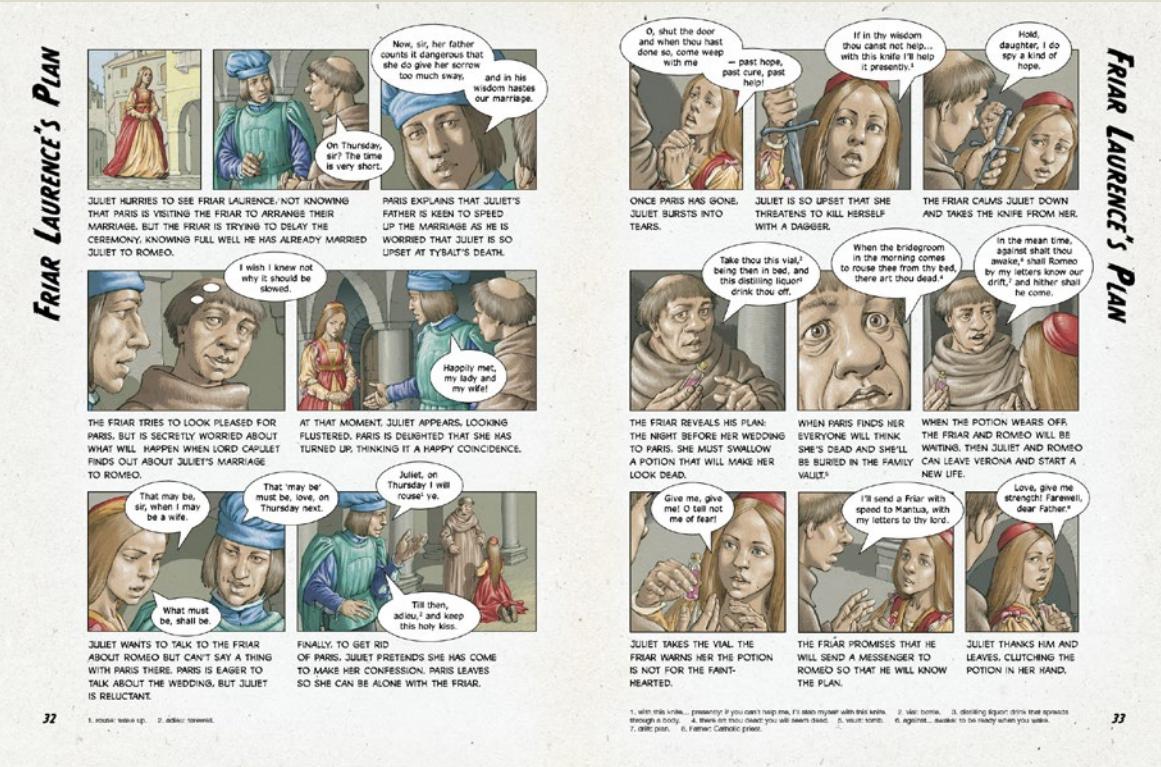
Romeo and Juliet: Classic Comics



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WHAT THE CHARACTERS SAY
Shakespeare made his Juliet very young – just 13 years old – as it was believed that teenagers were too giddy at the time the play is set to be able to handle the story. Many of the play's lines are well known and rememberable; still we are not sure exactly how old Juliet was when the play was first performed in 1597. And we know that three of the actors who had performed the play, A. Much more than 13, and that she was 16 years old in 1599.

CHARACTERS
Shakespeare made his Juliet very young – just 13 years old – as it was believed that teenagers were too giddy at the time the play is set to be able to handle the story. Many of the play's lines are well known and rememberable; still we are not sure exactly how old Juliet was when the play was first performed in 1597. And we know that three of the actors who had performed the play, A. Much more than 13, and that she was 16 years old in 1599.

Today there are lots of printed books and e-books that were made up of sheets of paper held together by staples or thread. Neither version was supervised by Shakespeare himself, as they don't show any of the original stage directions or markings that would create more uncertainty, as the modern editors of the play often alter them to avoid copyright issues.

A BRIEF HISTORY
Like many other playscripts of the time, Shakespeare rarely invented the story himself, instead borrowing from earlier works. The way he did this can best be seen written down by the Italian Battista Guarini in 1576. Over the next hundred years, Guarini's play was revised several times and Italian authors, such as Christopher Marlowe, added to a piece published in 1562 by

Richard Brome, the English writer.

Brome's story stretched over nine scenes, but in Shakespeare's hands, it became a five-act drama.

Romeo and Juliet fall in love instantly, but the families are still at war, so the hero, Romeo, has to go horribly wrong, forcing them to take increasingly desperate actions.

Both sides are now more or less evenly matched, however, making some big changes to Brome's version which Shakespeare's audience would have expected to see. Shakespeare may well have gone to reference to previous versions of the play, as well as his own imagination, when writing the play.

Demographics of touring were often different to today's, so it's likely that, as it's likely that many of the actors in Romeo and Juliet were also expert musicians, as well as actors, and performers such as Mercutio, the Nurse and Tybalt also had musical training, adding to the drama and energy of the play.

PERFORMING THE PLAY

Though records are not entirely clear, the play was perhaps performed at the Swan Theatre, built by James Burbage's Theatre, just outside the city of London, and the first permanent theatre built specifically for the purpose of public plays. The theatre had an open stage and could hold about 3,000 people. It was built on land split over three levels and a cheaper seating area at the back for poorer audiences. The building was well used and doors at the back of the stage allowed the actors to make quick exits and entrances.

TUDOR AUDIENCES (cont.)

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drama and energy of the play.

ACTING AND STYLING

King James I, who was a fan of

Shakespeare's work, wanted to see

more of the play, so he had it per-

formed at his court, and the word

acted out in Latin.

In 1602, poet John Dryden was

more than 100 years old. He wrote

about the play in his *Annotations*, in

which he claimed that the best

part of the play was the

part where the families

were at war.

Shakespeare showed the best

parts of the play, and the worst



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