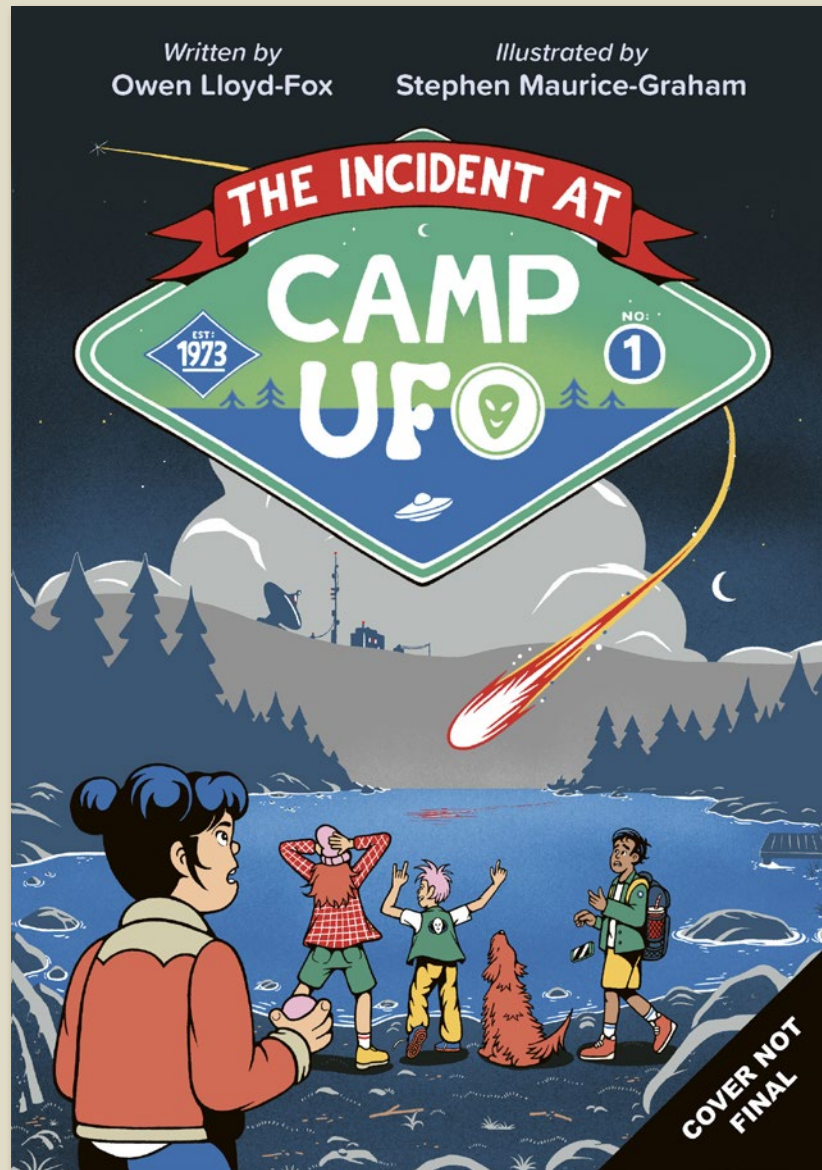




**Norway - BBF25 - Mono and  
graphic novels**

# 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



"I CAN'T BELIEVE YOU TOOK ONE PUPPY!"

"IT SAYS HERE ONE OF THE CAMP'S VERY FAVORABLE IS EXPERIENCED ARTISTS IN ALL ITS INDUSTRIES!"

Pawan glanced around at the dark forest, the glowering lake and the far-off mountains. "Right, sure that. What now?"

"Um..." said Dad, scratching his hat. "How about ghost stories? Anybody know any?" Nobody did.

"Come on!" Val whined. "Something scary HAD to have happened here. A masked fool with a murderous vendetta against camp staff? Mad as a hatter? Mad as a hatter? A tragic dog-eat-dog accident?"

Dad thought for a moment. "Well, there is ONE. But we're not allowed to read and I'd love to be in the woods. So, well, longer than anyone can remember. He's just always there, lurking. Sometimes you see him on the lake in a boat, cackling like this. "Dad pulled a face like a cat that has about to be sick and produced a deep hacking cough."



Frankie, Val and Xinyi frowned. Even Pawan looked momentarily less sulky. "So on..." promised Frankie after a split second. "Well, that's not it!" Dad admitted. "So that's your ghost story, is it?" said Val. "So did those bats in the wood, too a cough and looks around a bit?" "Well, yeah," Dad mumbled, defensively. "I mean, he's quite weird..."



The gang froze as a sheep, hacking cough, echoed across the valley. On the lake, a rusty old boat quietly chugged into view with a hooded and man hunched over the wheel.

"That boat" whispered Val. "Oh," replied Frankie.

The Early Birds sat there in silence as the boat disappeared out of view. "I mean, it's not that scary..." said Frankie. "Well," she agreed, rather uncharacteristically. "No, can't help being old and coughing!" "Forget it!" huffed Dad, going on all pretence of 'warning young people' for the day. "You going to bed. Put the fire out before you leave and be careful of the... uh... water!" He seemed eagerly towards the lake before heading off in the direction of the hut.

"Can he do that?" asked Xinyi. The others turned to her, surprised. "This was the first thing they remembered Xinyi saying since they arrived. "It's a TERRIBLE camp coincidence!" she added.

Then suddenly, she screamed.

AAAAHHH!!!



Getting to know U(FO)!

Name: Poppy Age: Unknown  
 Breed: Unknown  
 Favorite Food: Fish  
 Favorite Place: The Water Hut  
 What's in your pocket: much light and heat!

If you were a flower what breed would you be? You decide!

"It's a DOG!" exclaimed Xinyi, scrambling over to the furry creature before the others could even register the transformation of their quiet companion to a doggy friend. "Well, it's a good boy! He's a good, old boy! He's a good, old boy!" Xinyi's face lit up. "Hello! Poppy!" Poppy's tail thumped in reply. She LOVED when people knew her name.

"Where did she come from?" frowned Frankie. "I don't know," Pawan shrugged. "Maybe she's the camp dog?"



SPOILER ALERT: THIS WAS NOT AS INTERESTING AS IT WAS GOING TO BE.



The Early Birds looked at each other in utter astonishment, then sprinted towards the lake. Poppy followed, barking madly. She didn't have a clue what was going on, but she loved running.



"You realise what's happening now right?!" puffed Pawan, struggling to keep up with the others. "A SUPERHERO ORIGIN STORY! Space rock falls from the sky, local kids find space rock, space rock makes them FLY or TURN STRETCHY or give them the power to make people EXPLODE or something!"

"Was it definitely a space rock?" asked Val. "Whatsit called? An asteroid. Maybe it was a satellite. Or a part of a PLANE! I heard once that an aeroplane's toilet chute opened and the stuff inside fell out of the sky, and because it's SO cold up there, it FROZE and hit a man and everyone knew that he'd been squashed by a massive frozen ball of POO!"

"Definitely not poo," said Frankie, who had made it to the shore first. The others arrived and stared out at the emanating water. "Poo doesn't glow."



"Woah" said Val, astutely. "I guess we should report this to, uh, whoever you report asteroids to?" Frankie posited. "Um, sorry, I think you mean meteorite," said Xinyi, apologetically. "Asteroids are when they are in space. When they fall they are a meteor, and when it lands it's a meteorite..." Xinyi frowned. WHY did I have to say that for? Now they'll think I'm a COMPLETE dweeb...

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?"

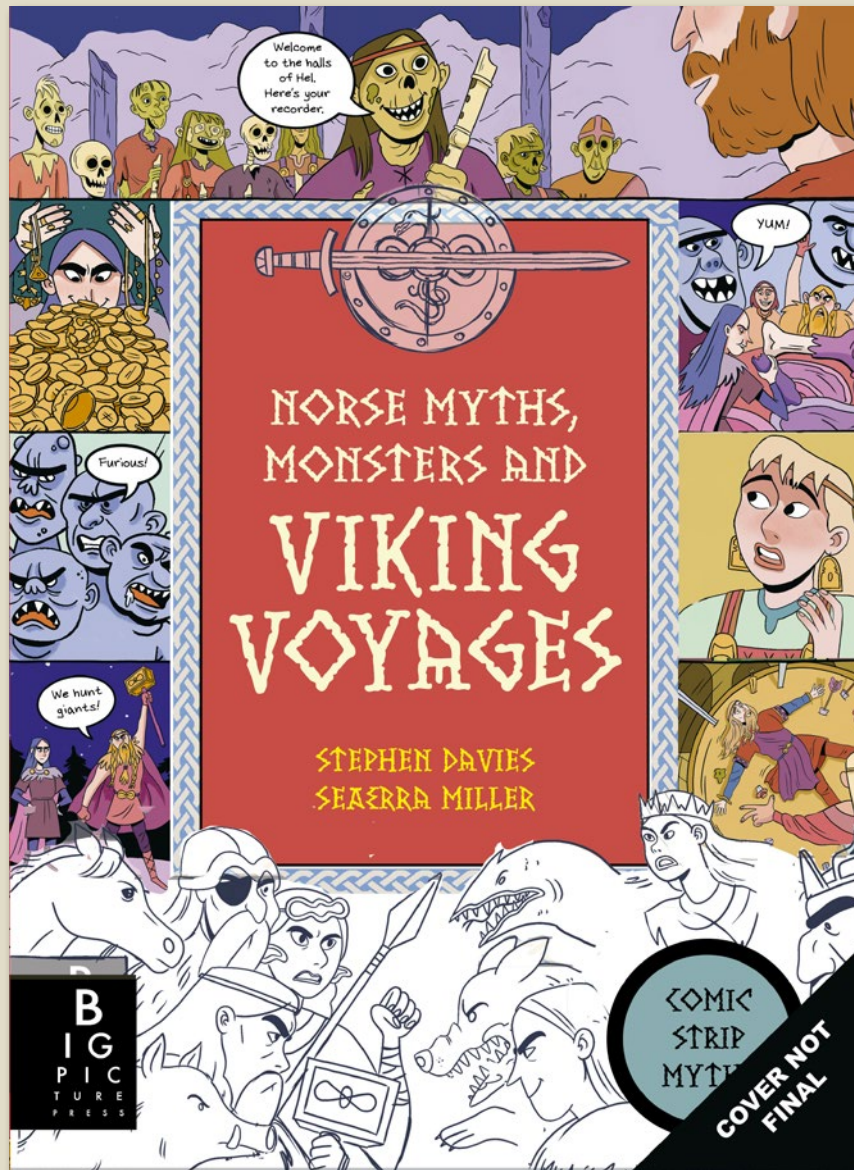
How COULD the gang fish the meteorite out the lake? When you think you've got it, turn to the next page - or check the answer at the back!



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

Pub Date	09/07/2026
Pub Price	£7.99
ISBN	9781800788725
H x W	210 x 148mm
Binding	Paperback
Age Range	9-11 years
Author	Owen Lloyd-Fox
Illustrator	Stephen Maurice Graham
Extent	112pp
Word Count	15000 words
Translation Files	27/10/2025
Files To Printer	16/02/2026
Freight On Board	23/04/2026
Rights Available	World

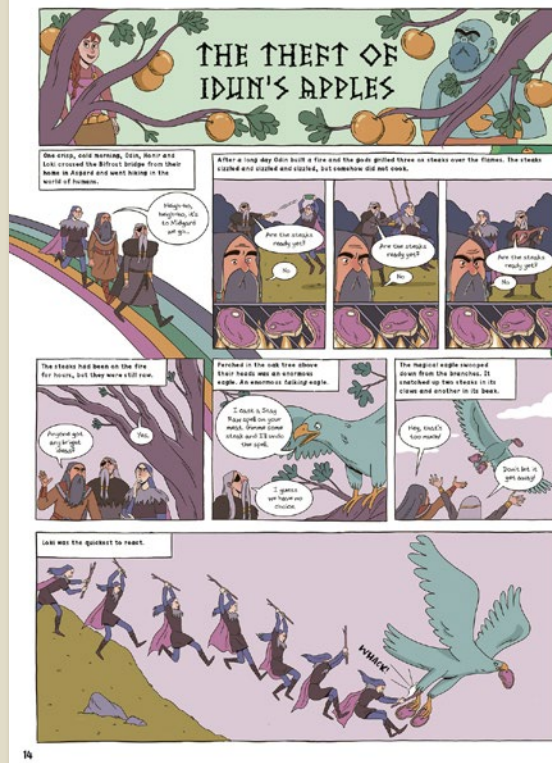
# Norse Myths, Monsters and Viking Voyages



## 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

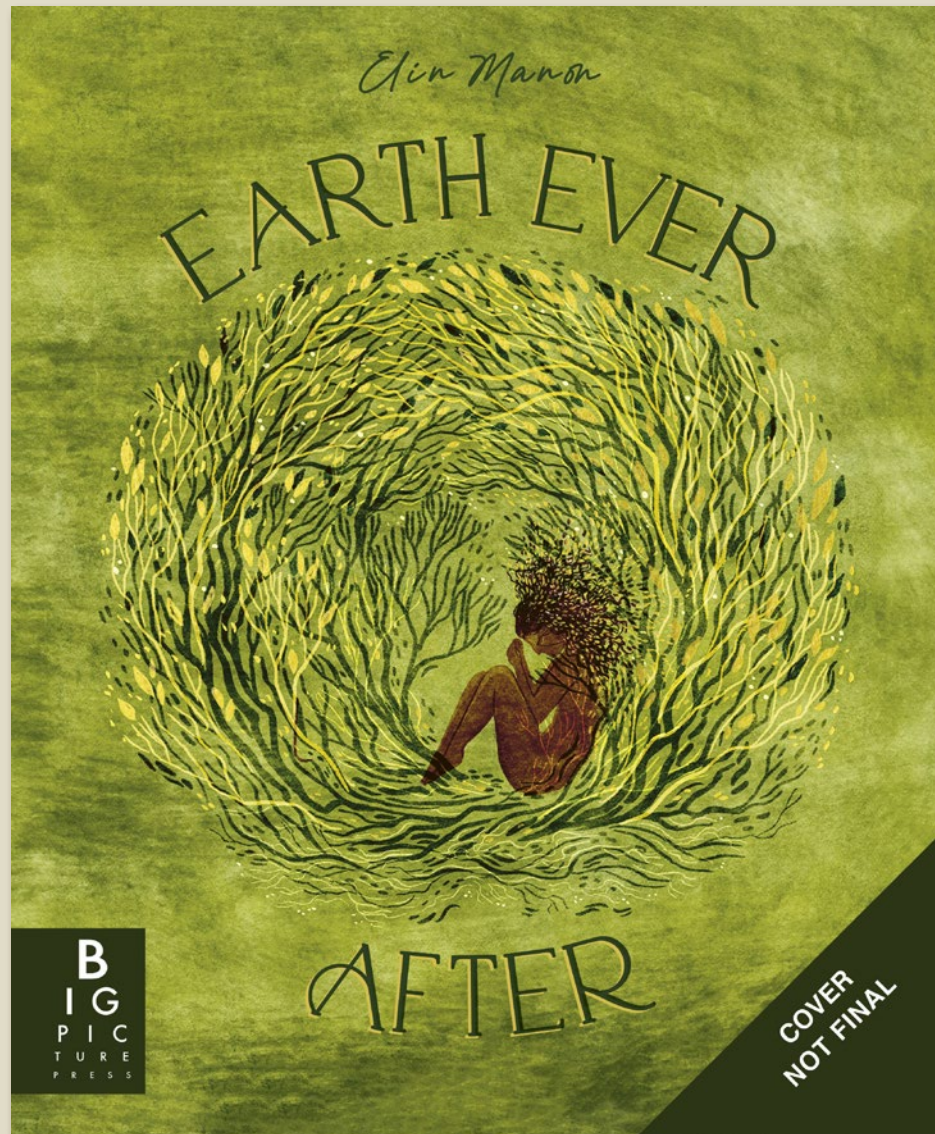


Pub Date	11/09/2025
Pub Price	£14.99
ISBN	9781800786745
H x W	297 x 216mm
Binding	Hardback
Age Range	7-9 years
Author	Stephen Davies
Illustrator	Seerra Miller
Extent	64pp
Word Count	12000 words
Files To Printer	10/04/2025
Freight On Board	03/07/2025
Rights Available	World





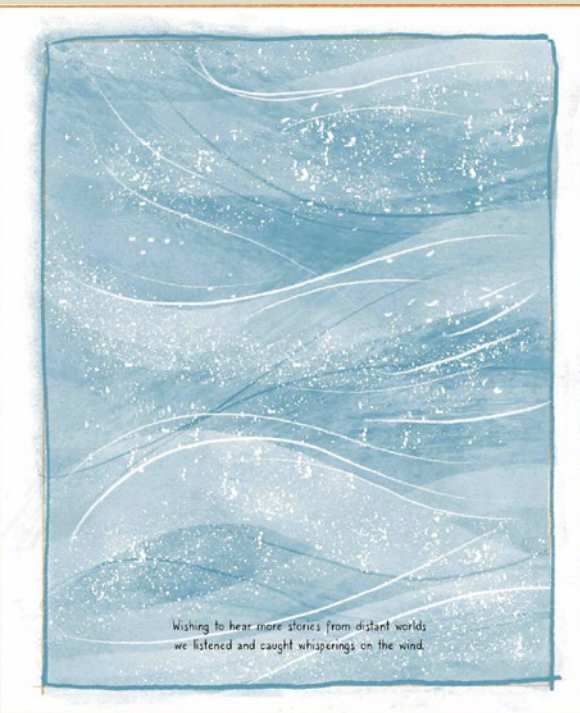
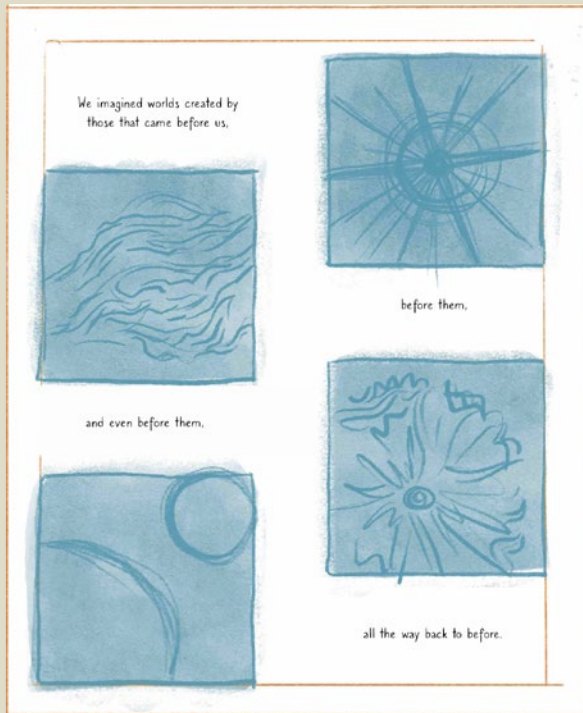
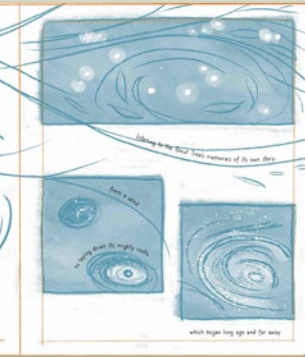
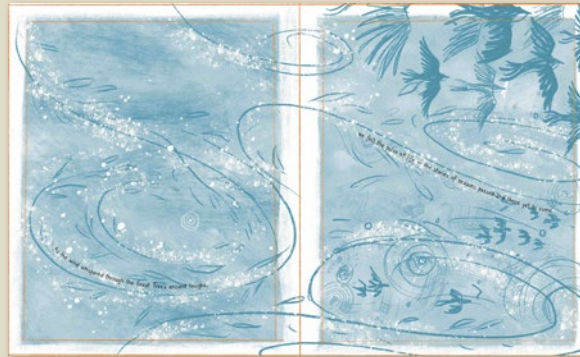
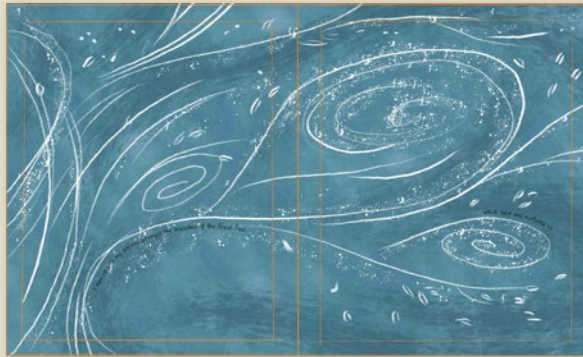
# Earth Ever After



Step into the world of *Earth Ever After*, a stunning fusion of graphic novel artistry and ancient folktale, told through the eyes of Mother Earth. This beautifully illustrated book takes readers on an unforgettable journey from Earth's creation to the present, celebrating our deep connection with nature while offering a poignant reflection on the state of our world.

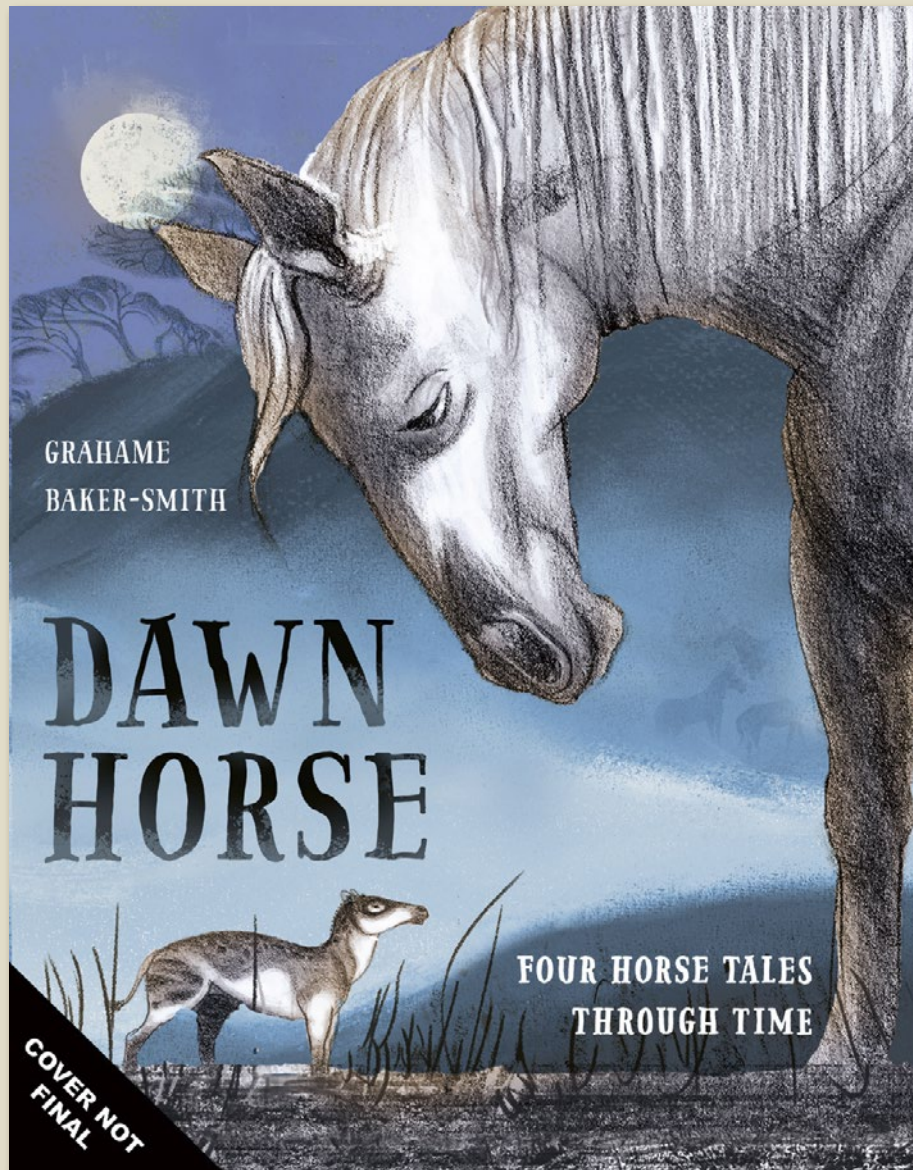


# Earth Ever After



Pub Date	<b>03/09/2026</b>
Pub Price	<b>£20.00</b>
ISBN	<b>9781800788671</b>
H x W	<b>260 x 215mm</b>
Binding	<b>Hardback</b>
Age Range	<b>9-11 years</b>
Author	<b>Elin Manon</b>
Extent	<b>160pp</b>
Word Count	<b>3500 words</b>
Translation Files	<b>22/12/2025</b>
Files To Printer	<b>09/04/2026</b>
Freight On Board	<b>02/07/2026</b>
Rights Available	<b>World</b>

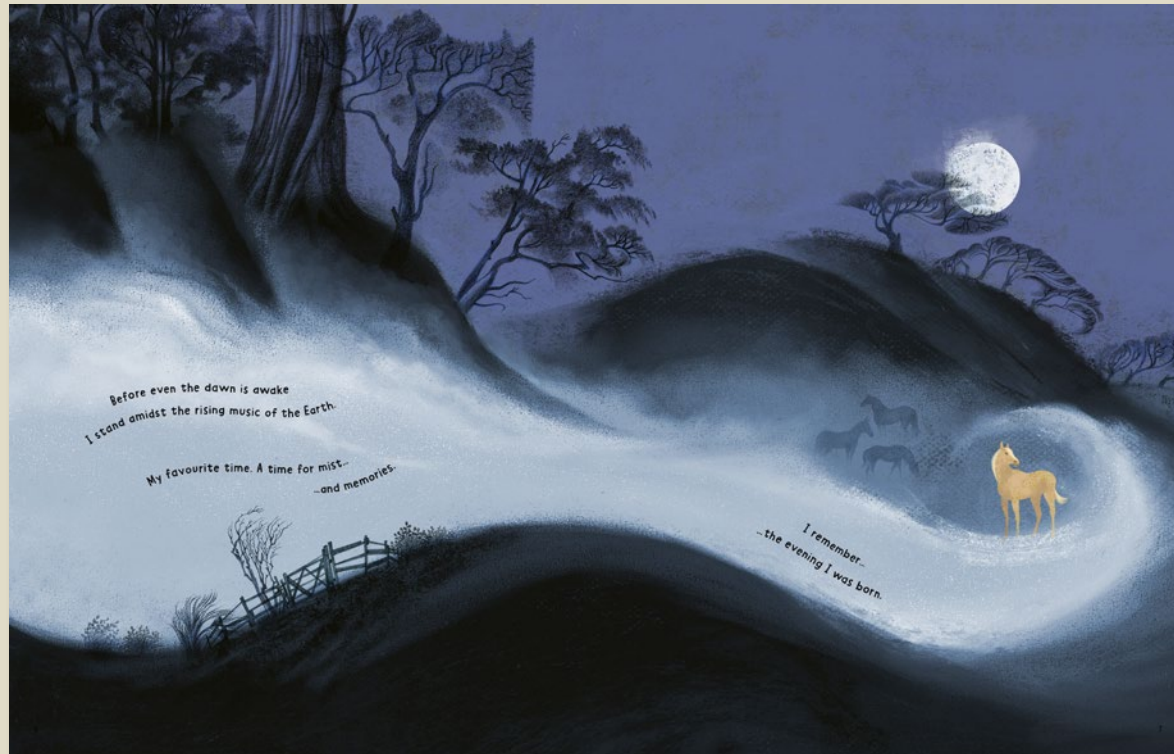
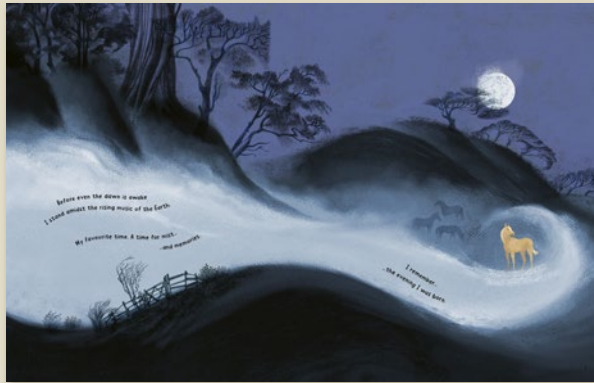
# Dawn Horse



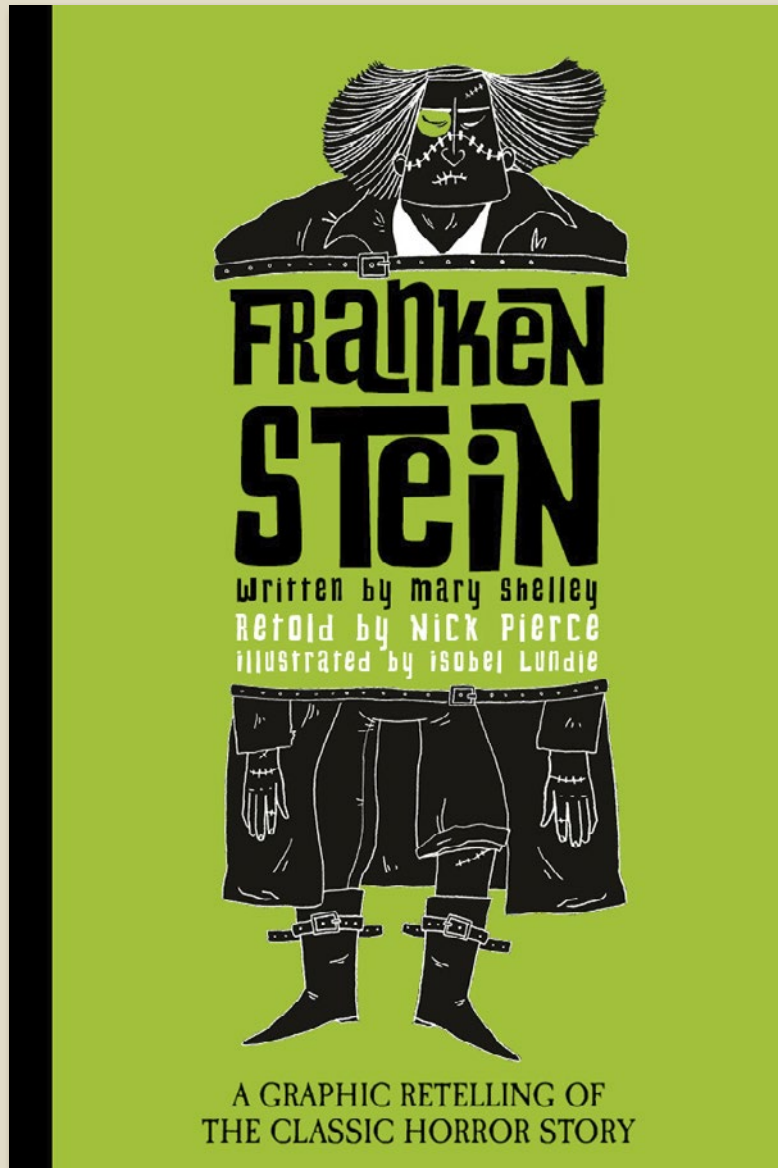
## Discover the incredible story of a horse through time...

- Grahame Baker-Smith is a self-taught award-winning artist from Oxford with an incredible talent for illustrating evolutionary history and the wonders of nature.
- Award-winning books include the Greenaway shortlisted *Leon and the Place Between*, *FArTHER* which won the Kate Greenaway medal in 2011, and *The Rhythm of the Rain* which won the English 4-11 Picture Book Award.
- Perfect for horse lovers, history enthusiasts and anyone fascinated by the evolution of our world.

# Dawn Horse



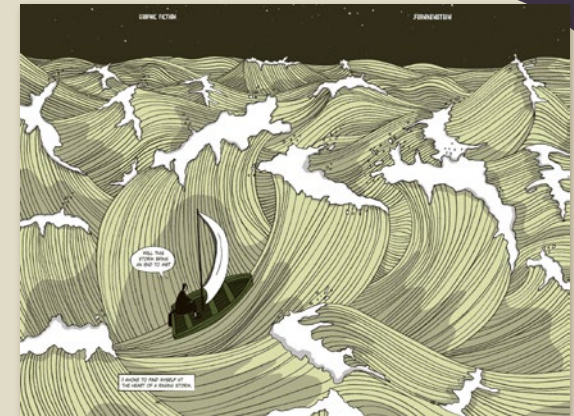
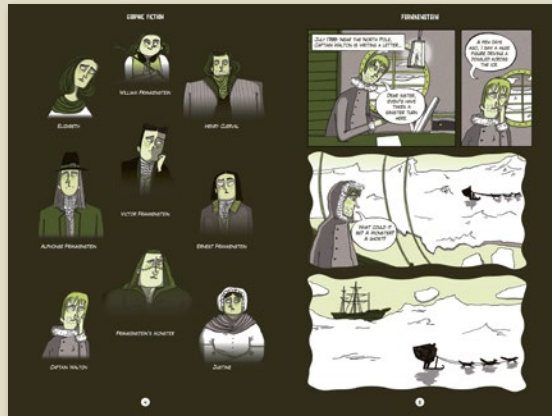
Pub Date	<b>11/09/2026</b>
Pub Price	<b>£14.99</b>
ISBN	<b>9781800788848</b>
H x W	<b>300 x 235mm</b>
Binding	<b>Hardback</b>
Age Range	<b>7-9 years</b>
Author	<b>Grahame Baker-Smith</b>
Extent	<b>64pp</b>
Word Count	<b>2000 words</b>
Translation Files	<b>30/12/2025</b>
Files To Printer	<b>21/04/2026</b>
Freight On Board	<b>26/06/2026</b>
Rights Available	<b>World</b>



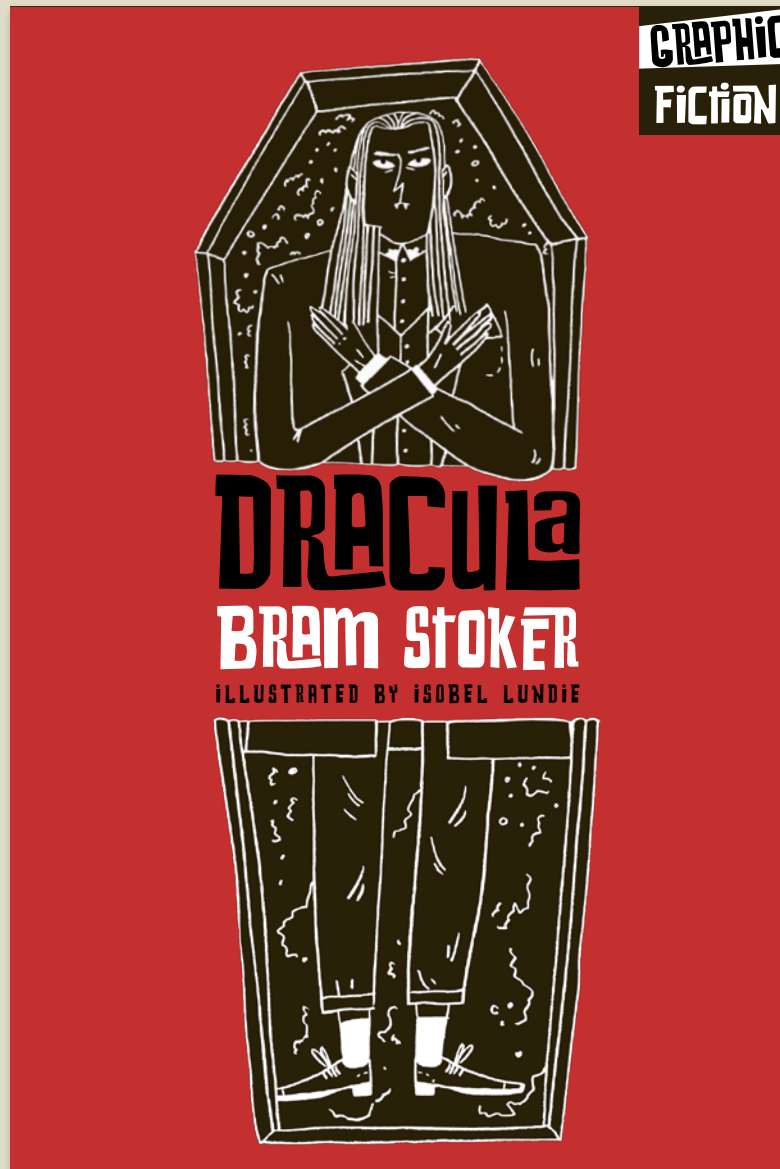
## A graphic retelling of Mary Shelley's gothic masterpiece

- 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!**

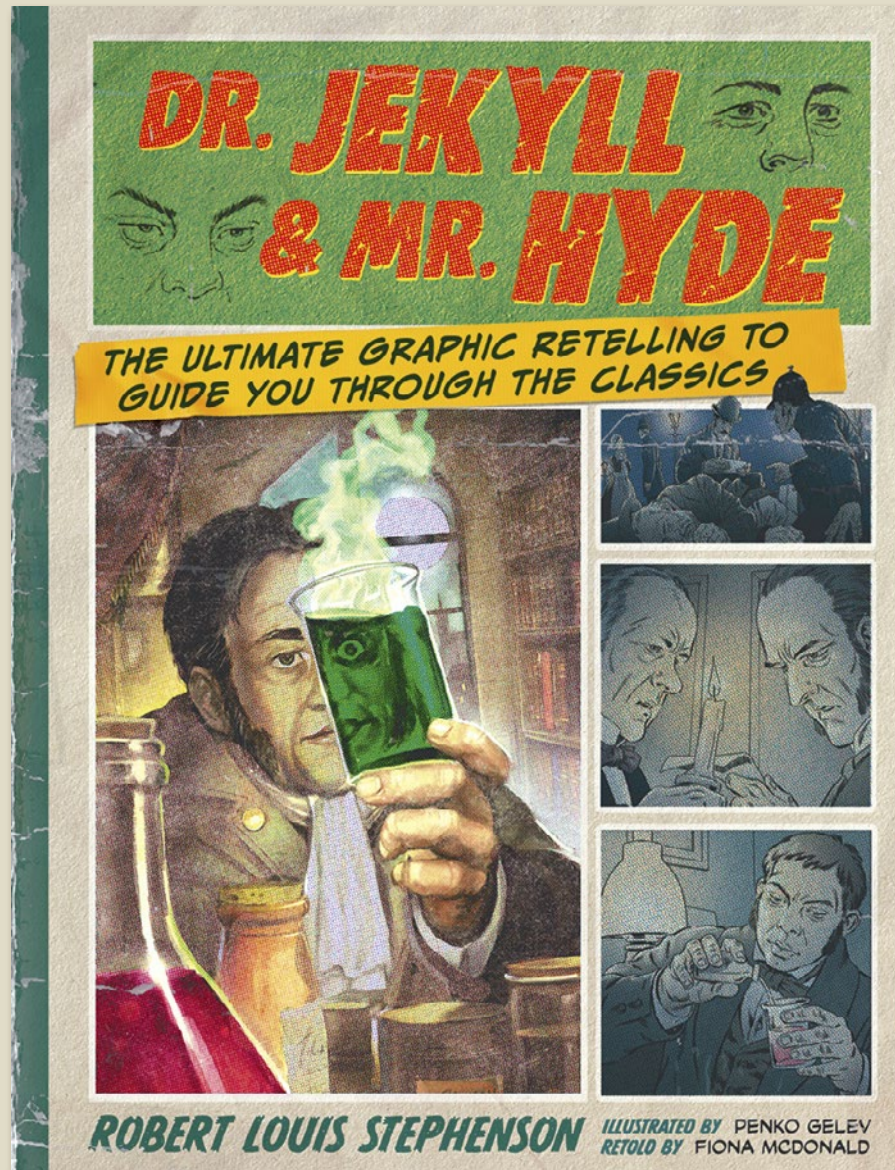
- A contemporary twist on a 19th Century classic. This creepy graphic retelling is the perfect tool for engaging reluctant readers and introducing children to the literary canon.
- An excellent English Literature curriculum companion. The endmatter contains an educational author biography, history of 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	<b>12/09/2024</b>
Pub Price	<b>£7.99</b>
ISBN	<b>9781800788817</b>
H x W	<b>210 x 140mm</b>
Binding	<b>Paperback</b>
Age Range	<b>9-11 years</b>
Author	<b>Bram Stoker</b>
Illustrator	<b>Isobel Lundie</b>
Extent	<b>64pp</b>
Word Count	<b>3140 words</b>
Translation Files	<b>29/01/2024</b>
Files To Printer	<b>22/04/2024</b>
Freight On Board	<b>27/06/2024</b>
Rights Available	<b>World</b>

# Dr. Jekyll & Mr. Hyde: Classic Comics



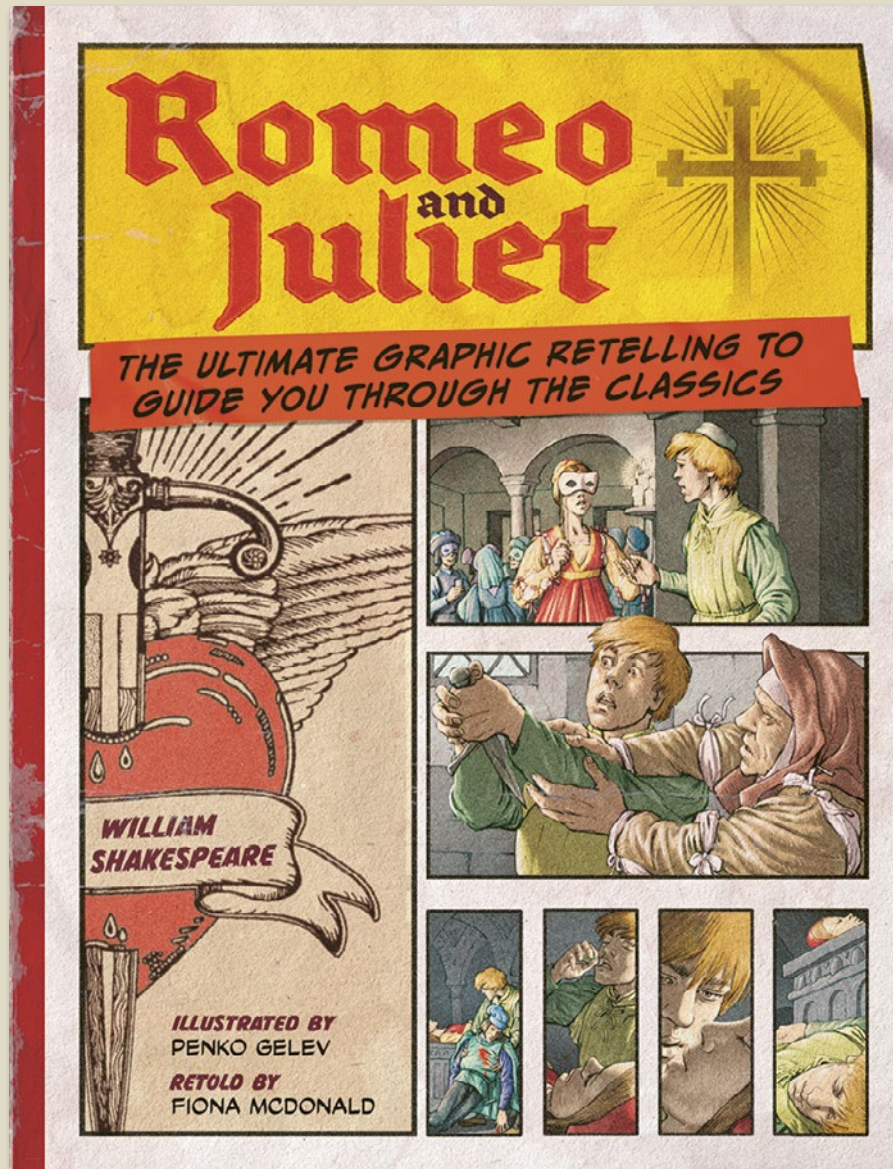
The ultimate comic book companion to guide you through the Victorian classic, *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*

- 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.





# Romeo and Juliet: Classic Comics

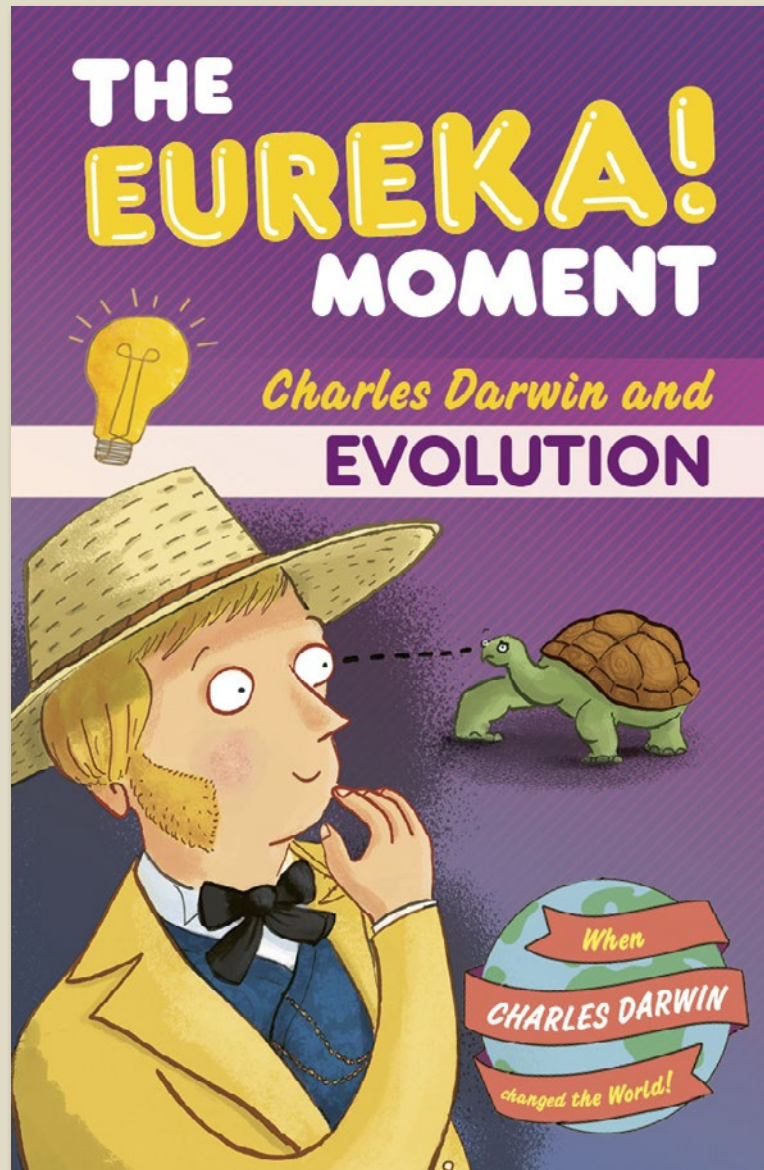


The ultimate comic book companion to guide you through Shakespeare's classic, *Romeo and Juliet*.

- 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.



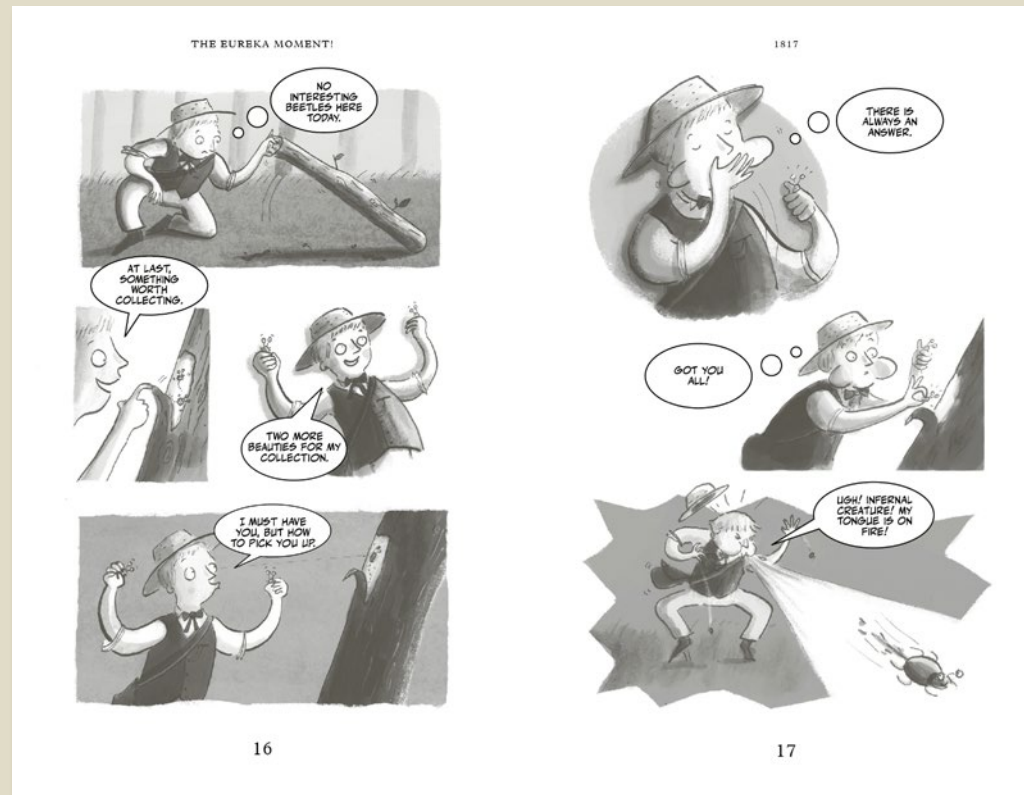
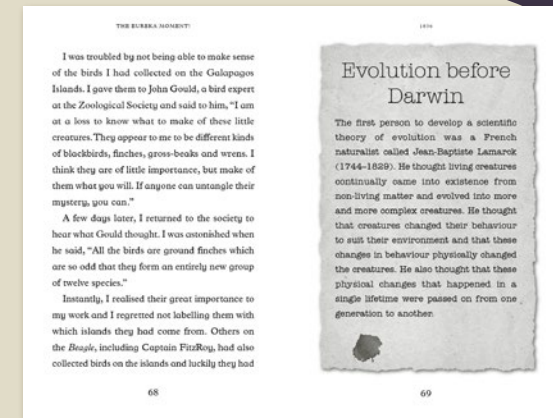
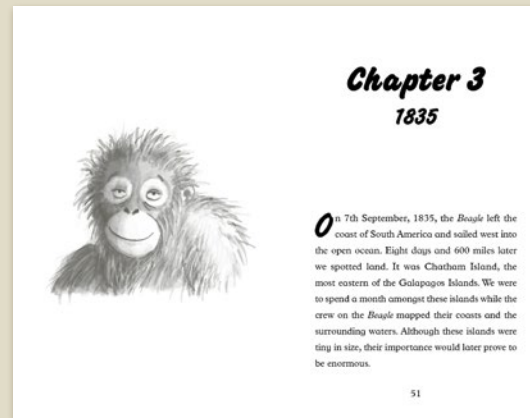
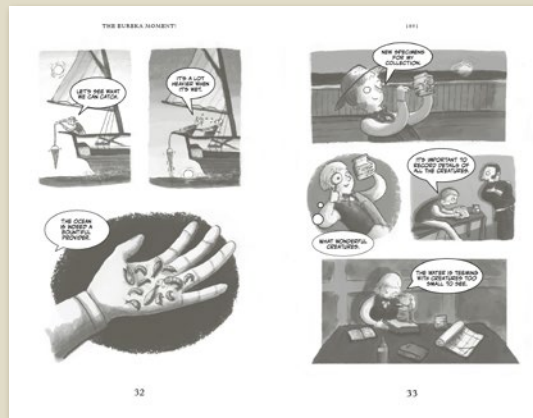
# Evolution: The Eureka! Moment



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

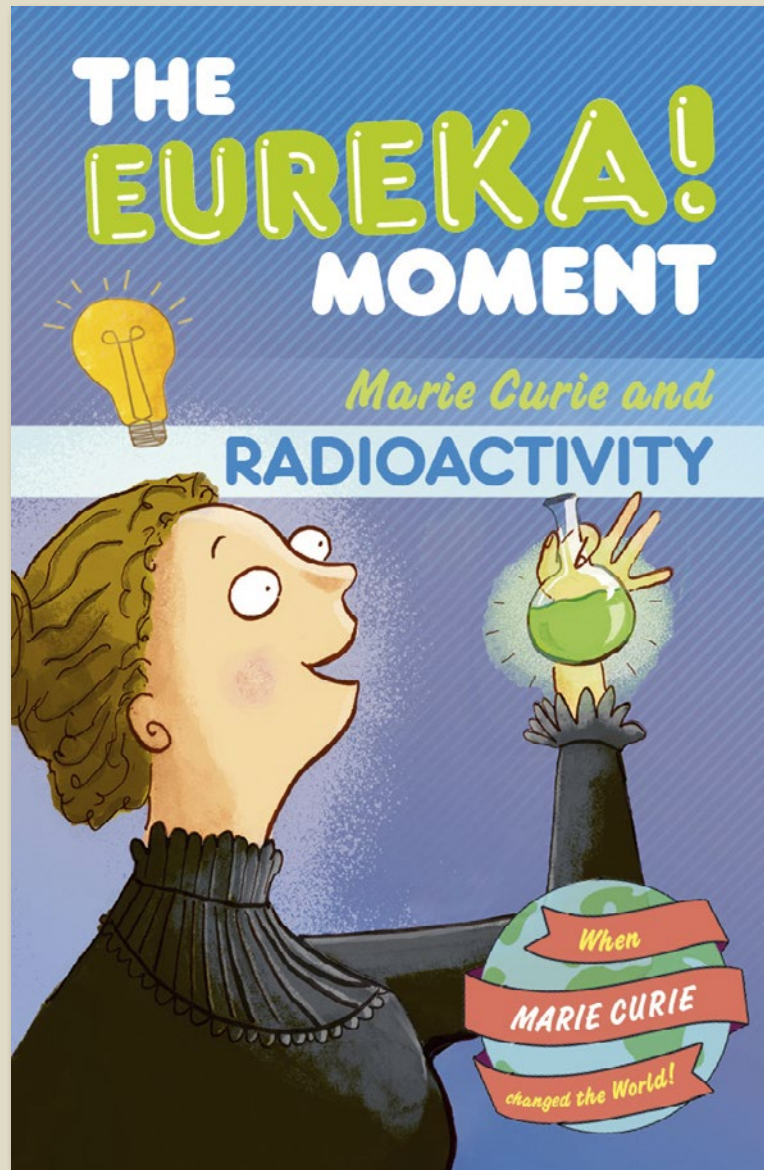
- Child-friendly narrative non-fiction curated to deepen children's knowledge of key moments in the history of science in an accessible, entertaining way.
- Short comic strips scattered throughout the narrative to help children visualise and engage with key events.
- This series introduces children to 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	<b>29/02/2024</b>
Pub Price	<b>£5.99</b>
ISBN	<b>9781800788473</b>
H x W	<b>198 x 129mm</b>
Binding	<b>Paperback</b>
Age Range	<b>9-11 years</b>
Author	<b>Ian Graham</b>
Illustrator	<b>Annaliese Stoney</b>
Extent	<b>144pp</b>
Word Count	<b>15936 words</b>
Rights Available	<b>World</b>

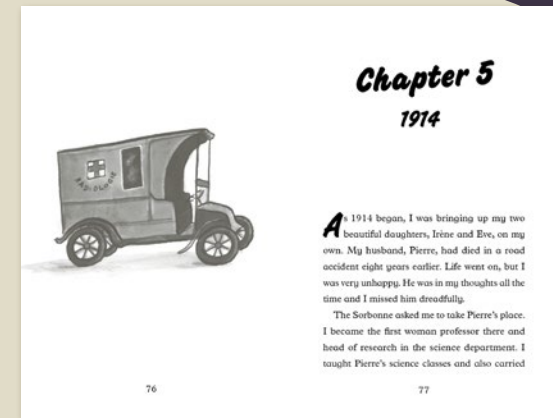
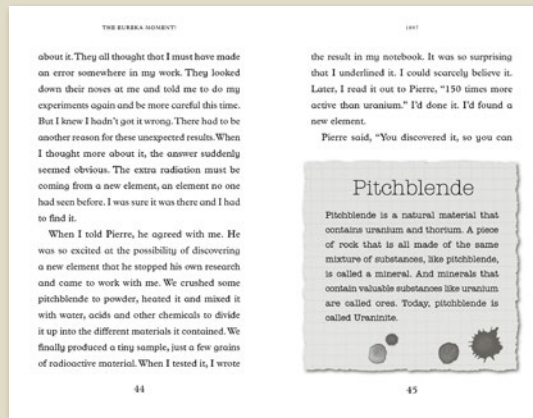
# Radioactivity: The Eureka! Moment



## 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



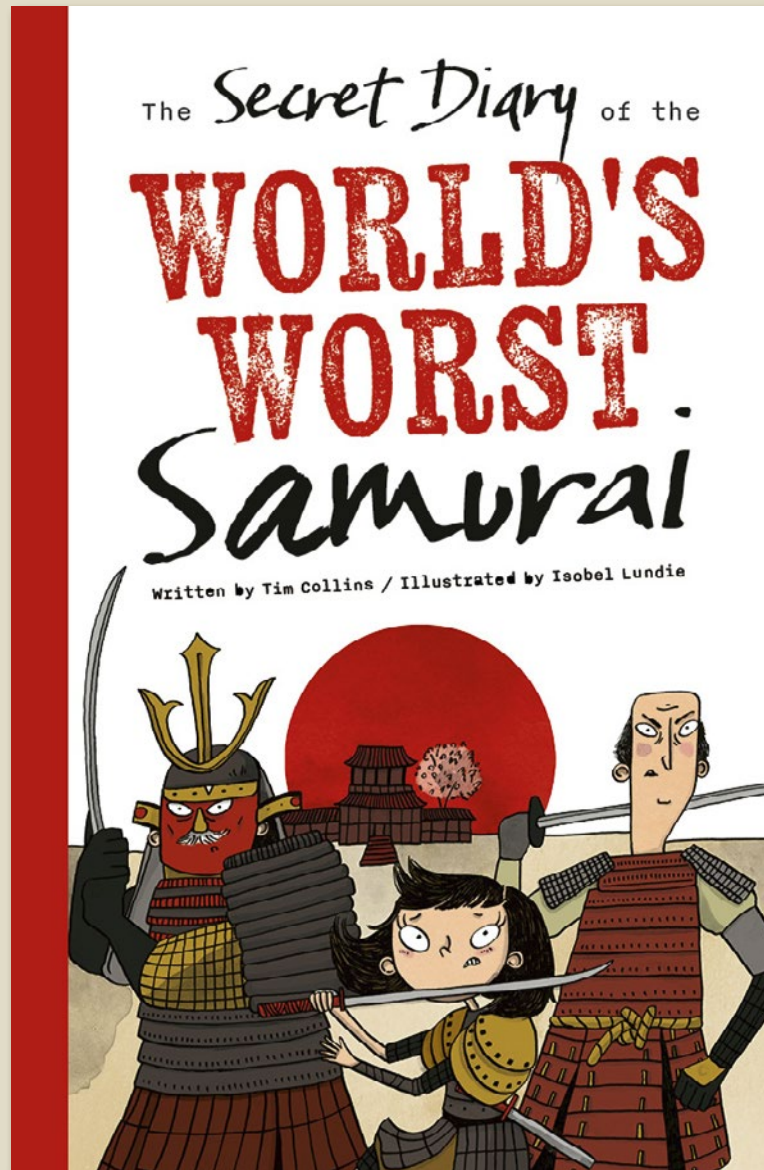
**A** 1914 began. I was bringing up my two beautiful daughters, Irène and Ève, on my own. My husband, Pierre, had died in a road accident eight years earlier. Life went on, but I was very unhappy. He was in my thoughts all the time and I missed him dreadfully.

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



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

# 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 Tanoe Gao. 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

# 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

38

## 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

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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

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## 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

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## 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

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## 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."

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## GHOST STORIES



### WHEN THE CLOCK STOPS

**W**hen 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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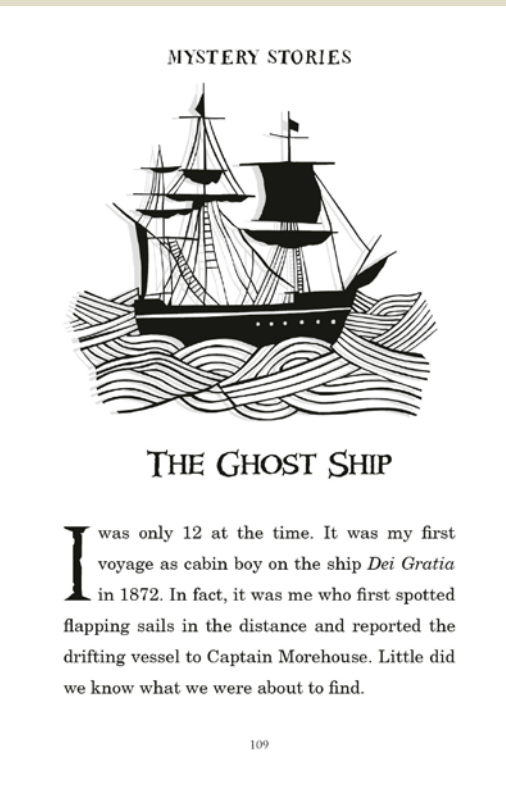
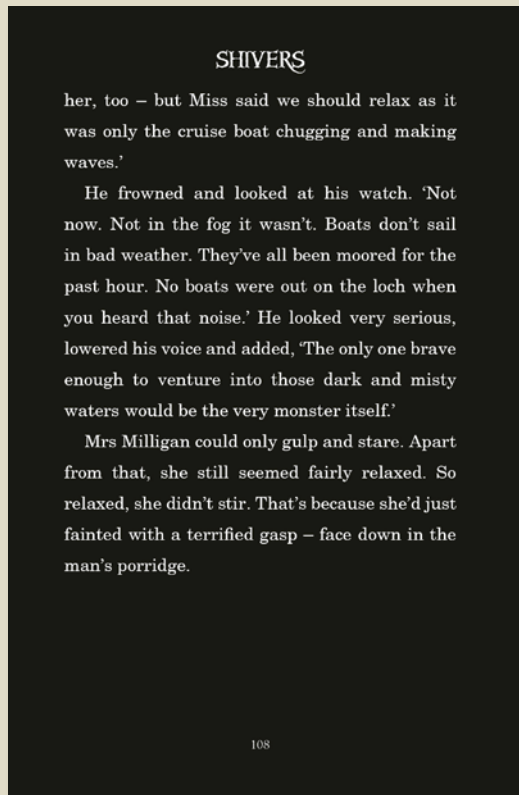
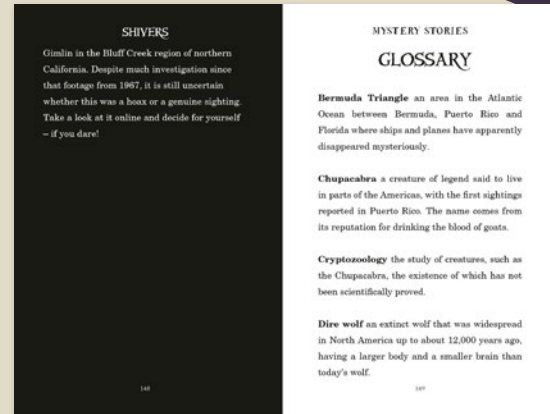
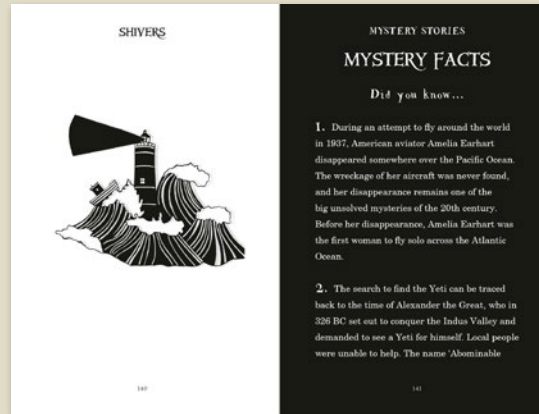
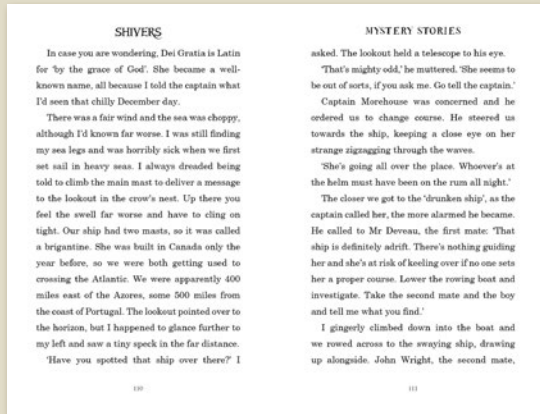
# Mystery Stories



## Ten mysterious, spooky short stories

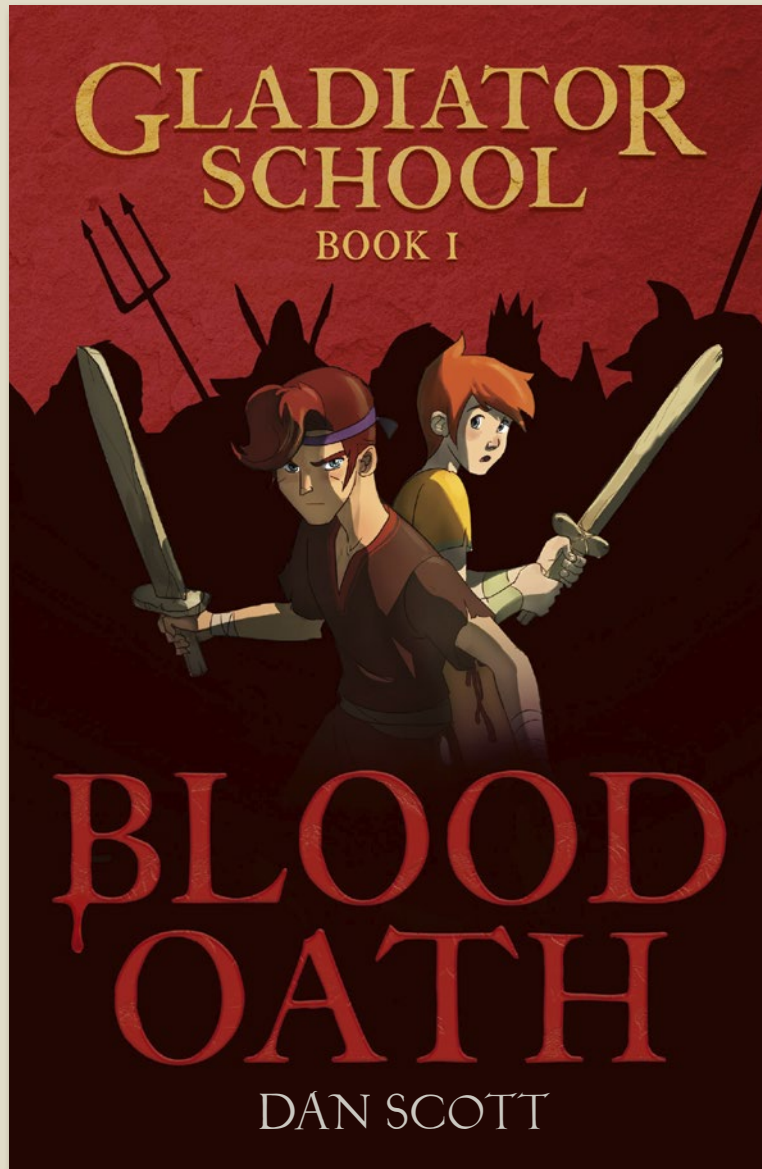
- A wonderful, entertaining introduction to the horror genre and short story writing, perfect for children studying this in English.
- Perfect spooky gift for children to read one story each night in the build up to Halloween.
- Encourages independent reading and exploration of new genres.

# Mystery Stories



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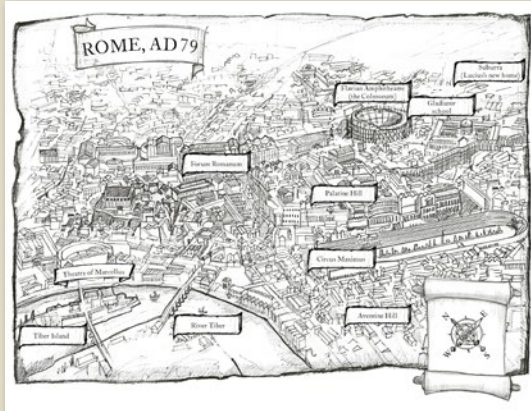
# Gladiator School 1: Blood Oath



**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



## GLADIATOR SCHOOL

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 Senator?' 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. 'What are you talking about?' asked Quintus.

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

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## BLOOD OATH

He sounded irritable and indignant. *How funny, thought Lucius, Quint 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 Quint followed the direction of his brother's gaze and his eyes fell on the altar. Lucius saw Quint'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?' Quint asked.

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

*\* What he supposed to mean? Quint had recovered from his initial shock and was treacherous again.*

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## GLADIATOR SCHOOL

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 haircloth, 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 stayed behind.

'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 (gladly) worked as a trainer gladiator.*

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## BLOOD OATH

Clearly this gladiator was badly trained and fighting for money. Lucius didn't answer 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.

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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, nodding 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.

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## 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!'

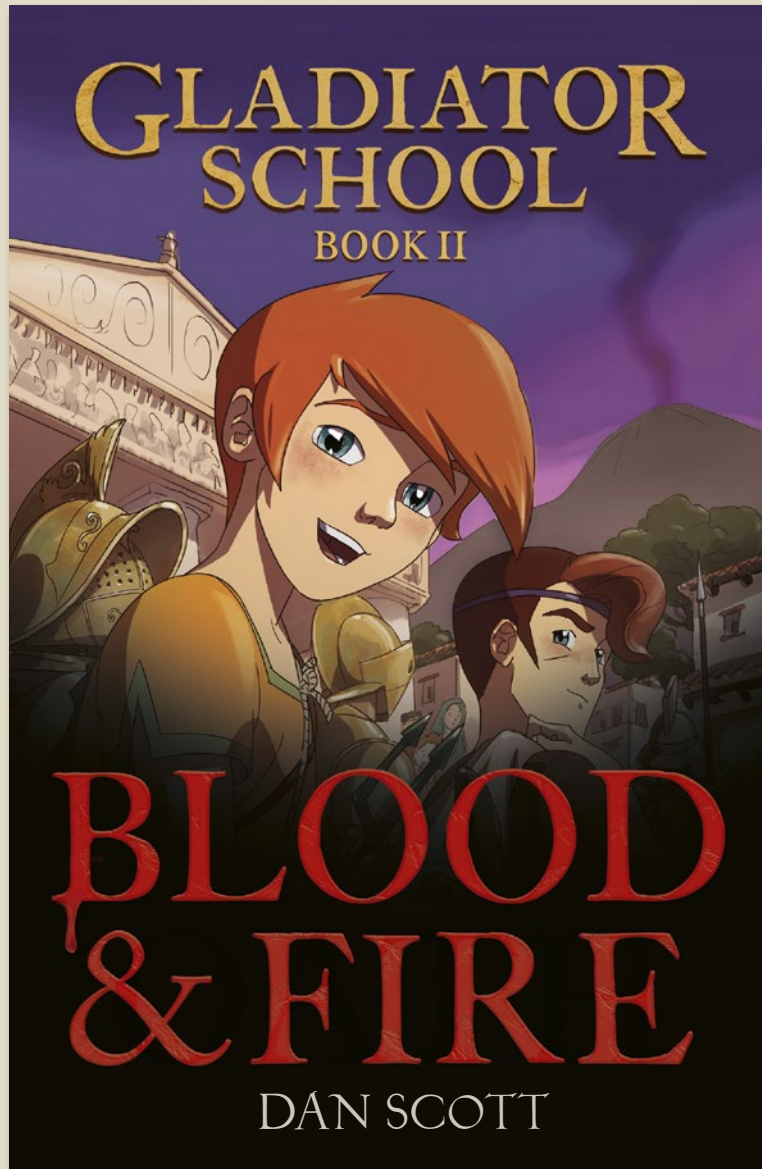
His mother had collapsed, trembling, onto the couch in the atrium,\* clasping Lucius's sister Valeria

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

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# Gladiator School 2: Blood & Fire

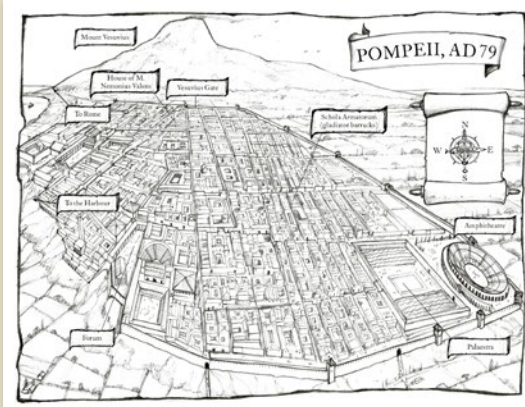


**The second in the Gladiator School series - an epic ancient tale of blood, sweat and sacrifice.**

- 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.
- 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 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 bankers. 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 eerie 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 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. 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): earthenware storage jars.

BLOOD & FIRE

His sense of fairness clearly offended, Quintus impulsively stride 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 shouts of anger.

There were six of them – three armed with sticks against the unarmed Quintus. Lucius growled. He stole 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.'

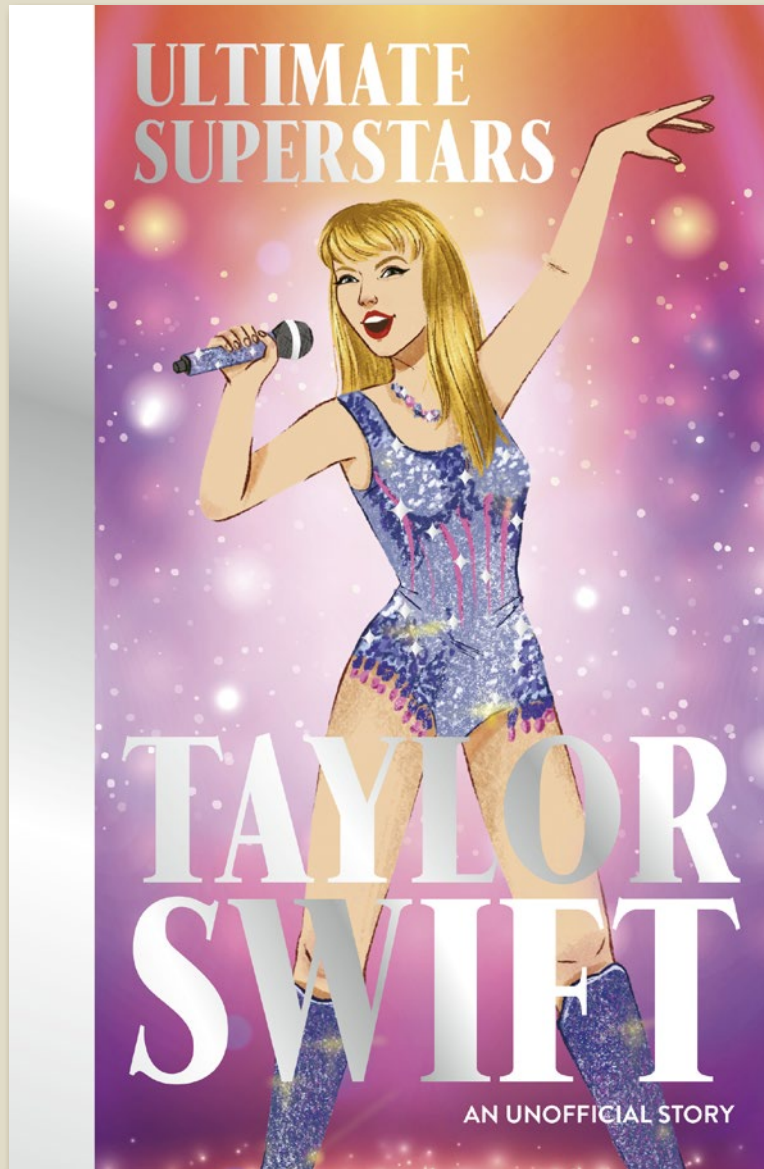
Lucius dropped the programme back into his bag and rubbed his eyes. He hadn't had much sleep.

\* 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'.

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# Ultimate Superstars: Taylor Swift



## Taylor Swift's rise to global stardom, retold for young readers.

- Taylor Swift has sold 40 million albums worldwide and 130 million single downloads.
- Perfect for young fans to find out all about their favourite star.
- Unofficial story of Taylor Swift's rise to stardom.
- Spin-off of the bestselling Ultimate Football Heroes books, which have sold 340,000 copies across the series.
- New edition featuring the Eras tour.

# Ultimate Superstars: Taylor Swift

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Author **Melanie Hamm**

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# Ultimate Superstars: Sabrina Carpenter



**Sabrina Carpenter's rise to global stardom, retold for young readers.**

- Unofficial story of Sabrina Carpenter's rise to stardom.
- Perfect for young readers to find out all about their favourite star.
- Sabrina Carpenter is a number 1 bestselling artist with a social media following of over 42 million.

# Ultimate Superstars: Sabrina Carpenter

## CHAPTER 1

### SWIFTIE TO BESTIE

Sabrina had just received one of the most important calls of her career.

"Taylor wants me to open for her!" Her eyes were wide with disbelief. When she was a little girl she put posters of Miley Cyrus, Ariana Grande, Selena Gomez and Taylor Swift on her bedroom walls. Now Taylor wanted Sabrina to join her on the *Eras Tour*. "Just wait until I tell the fans!" But for now, it was top secret.

Sabrina was so excited. It felt like yesterday that she was sat in her bedroom with only her guitar, painstakingly learning the chords to Taylor's 'Picture to Burn'. One time her dad peeked in and asked her what she was doing.



#### SABRINA CARPENTER

"I'm practicing for when I'm famous," she said with a grin. She was only ten, but she knew what she wanted even then.

Fourteen years later, that dream was a reality – although it did feel surreal. Sabrina was no longer a girl with posters; she was living alongside her idols, one of whom had become a friend and another who she had performed alongside: Ariana. By May 2023, rumours about Sabrina and Taylor's friendship were swirling, fuelled by photos and social media interactions. Then came Sabrina's trip to Philadelphia for Taylor's concert.

What a night that was. The show was everything Sabrina had imagined and more. Sitting with her sister Sarah in the packed stadium, she found herself singing along to every word and laughing when Taylor joked about her cats. The choreography and emotional storytelling made her jaw drop.

"She makes it look effortless," Sabrina whispered. Sarah nudged her. "You're not, you know."

Sabrina rolled her eyes. "Yeah, right."

"Just wait," Sarah replied, with a knowing smile.



#### LIZ GÖGERLY

On 2 June 2023, Sabrina posted an announcement on Instagram that sent her fans into a frenzy. It read:

*trying to process this but also I share CANT WAIT TO JOIN THE ERAS TOUR IN LATIN AMERICA thank u @taylorswift is the 1 :)) this is a dream come true*

Within hours, the internet was exploding with excitement. Fans reposted the announcement and the comments section lit up with messages like:

*This is your spot... Shine girl!*

Sabrina had every intention of shining. She went straight into rehearsal; there was no time to chill after the spill!

"This is huge," Sabrina FluoTimed Sarah. "I've got to get it right."

"You will," Sarah assured her. She always had Sabrina's back.

"This is my big break. I have got this!" The first show where Sabrina opened for Taylor



#### SABRINA CARPENTER

was in Mexico City on 24 August 2023. Standing backstage, she had that familiar feeling – sick to the pit of her stomach with nerves! The arena was packed with Swifties, but hopefully there are a few Carpenters out there too. Sabrina thought to herself and crossed her fingers behind her back. She adjusted her microphone pack and glanced in the mirror. She felt sassy in her platform boots and black sequin outfit.

"You have got this, Sabrina Carpenter," she repeated to herself, flicking her hair back with all the self-assurance of a seasoned star!

As the lights dimmed, Sabrina heard her name being announced. The crowd erupted – Sabrina had a big following in Mexico City. She beamed, she needed to hear the cheers. It drove her on. She stepped onto the stage, launching into 'Feather', the song which had hit number one on the US Billboard Pop Songs chart earlier that year. When Sabrina saw the audience joining in and dancing, she knew she had them – that's when she went into overdrive.

"Don't forget Selena," Sabrina told the crowd as she began singing 'Dreaming of You' by American Tejano singer Selena Quintanilla-Perez. The Tex-Mex singer



#### LIZ GÖGERLY

had passed away in 1995, and the Mexican crowd appreciated Sabrina's nod to the star. There were tears and huge cheers as Sabrina hit the final note. She looked across the auditorium and felt the love, the connection and the magic.

By the time Sabrina got to 'Nonsense', the audience was completely in sync with her energy, laughing at her funny ad-libs and singing along to the chorus.

"I love you guys," she told them warmly, her eyes sparkling with mischievous excitement, as she said her farewells after singing an encore.

"Wow, that was the performance of my life!" Sabrina told Taylor later that night.

"Oh girl," Taylor said, giving Sabrina a gentle nudge. "The best is yet to come for you!"

The *Eras Tour* took Sabrina to thirteen shows in Latin America, followed by six in Australia and another six in Singapore. Each night was a new adventure and Sabrina adapted her performances to the unique energy of each audience. In Brazil, she was overwhelmed by the party atmosphere kicked up by the fans, who sang every word of her songs with passion.



#### SABRINA CARPENTER

"It's like they're performing for me," she joked backstage.

Tour life wasn't without its challenges. Sabrina's hit 'Nonsense', known for its cheeky and sometimes risqué lyrics, required a little tweaking for family-friendly crowds.

"I had to tone it down a little tonight," she admitted to the crew in Singapore. "But I still kept it fun!"

Sitting in her hotel room after a show, Sabrina scrolled through fan videos of her performances. One caption really caught her eye:

*Sabrina Carpenter: The Taylor Swift of her generation.*

Sabrina smiled, her eyes misting over with emotion. It was a bold comparison, a HUGE compliment, and it spoke to how far she'd come. She felt proud.

"The best is yet to come, huh?" Sabrina thought, curling up in the super king size bed. Every muscle in her body ached after the performance. And man her feet were on fire after dancing in those boots! But, she didn't care, she was doing the thing she loved best in

#### LIZ GÖGERLY

the world. It felt like she was on course to something bigger than she ever dreamed possible. Her head was swirling with happy thoughts as she fell into a deep, deep sleep – with a cheeky grin on her face.

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# Ultimate Superstars: Harry Styles



## Harry Styles' rise to global stardom, retold for young readers.

- Perfect for young fans to find out all about their favourite star.
- Unofficial story of Harry Styles' rise to stardom
- Spin-off of the bestselling *Ultimate Football Heroes* books, which have sold over 340,000 copies across the whole series.
- Harry Styles has sold 3.3 million albums worldwide as a solo artist and over 70 million records worldwide as part of One Direction

# Ultimate Superstars: Harry Styles

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# Ultimate Superstars: Selena Gomez



**Selena Gomez's rise to global stardom, retold for young readers.**

- Selena Gomez has sold over 7 million albums and 22 million singles worldwide
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# Ultimate Superstars: Selena Gomez

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