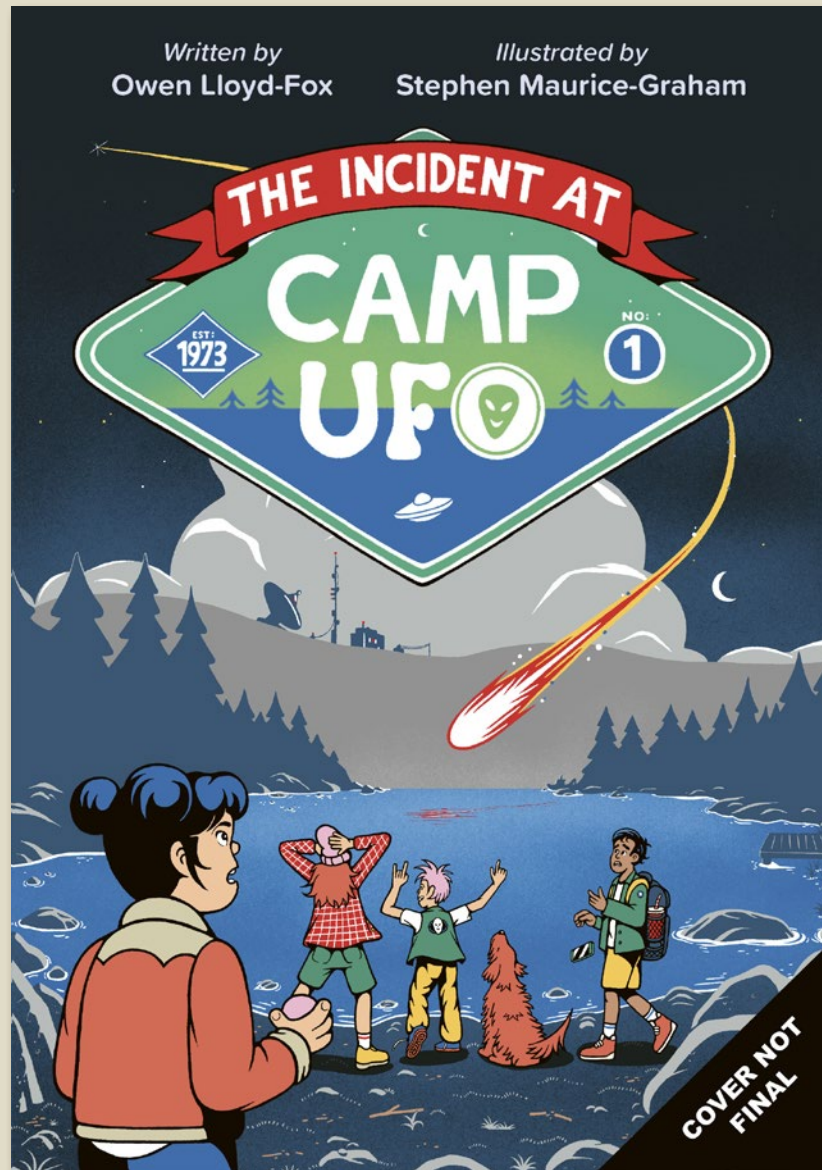




**Ukraine - FBF24 - middle grade
and graphic novels**

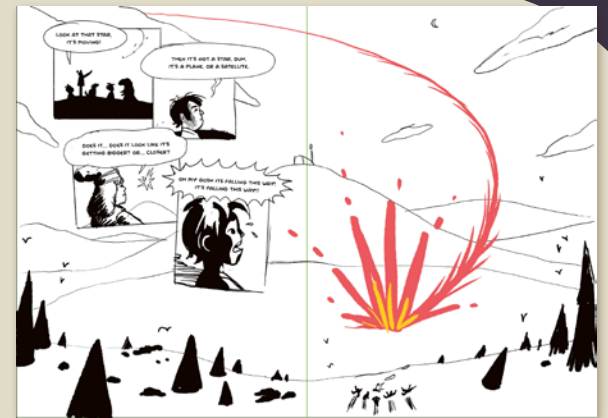
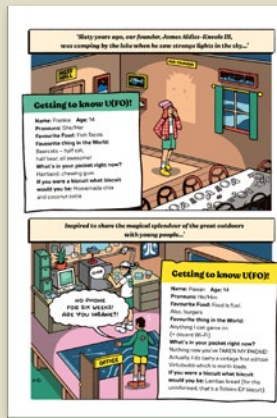
The Incident at Camp UFO



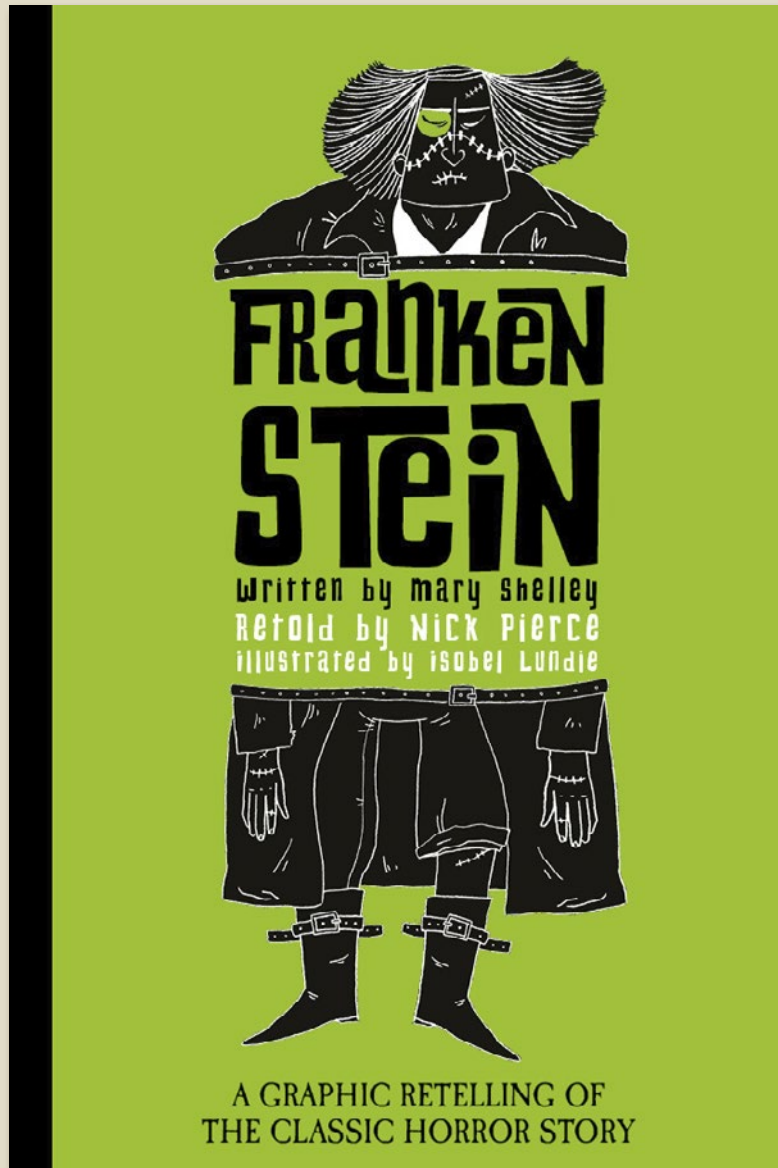
Unravel cryptic clues, solve fiendish puzzles, avoid the Shini-ta aliens at all costs and help the gang uncover the incident at Camp UFO!

- 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



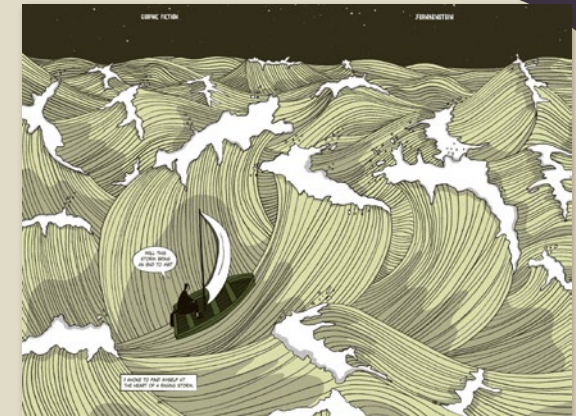
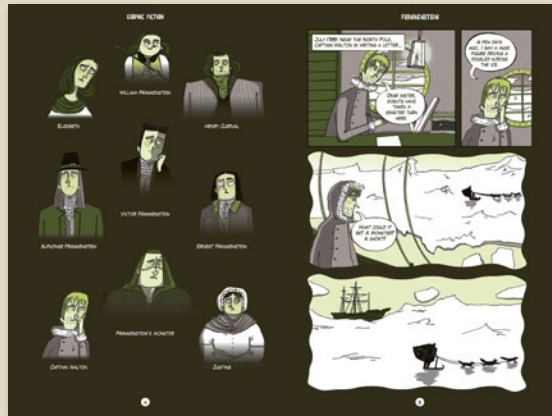
Pub Date	05/02/2026
Pub Price	£7.99
ISBN	9781800788725
H x W	210 x 148mm
Binding	Paperback
Age Range	9-11 years
Author	Owen Lloyd-Fox
Illustrator	Stephen Maurice Graham
Extent	112pp
Word Count	15000 words
Translation Files	26/05/2025
Files To Printer	15/09/2025
Freight On Board	04/12/2025
Rights Available	World



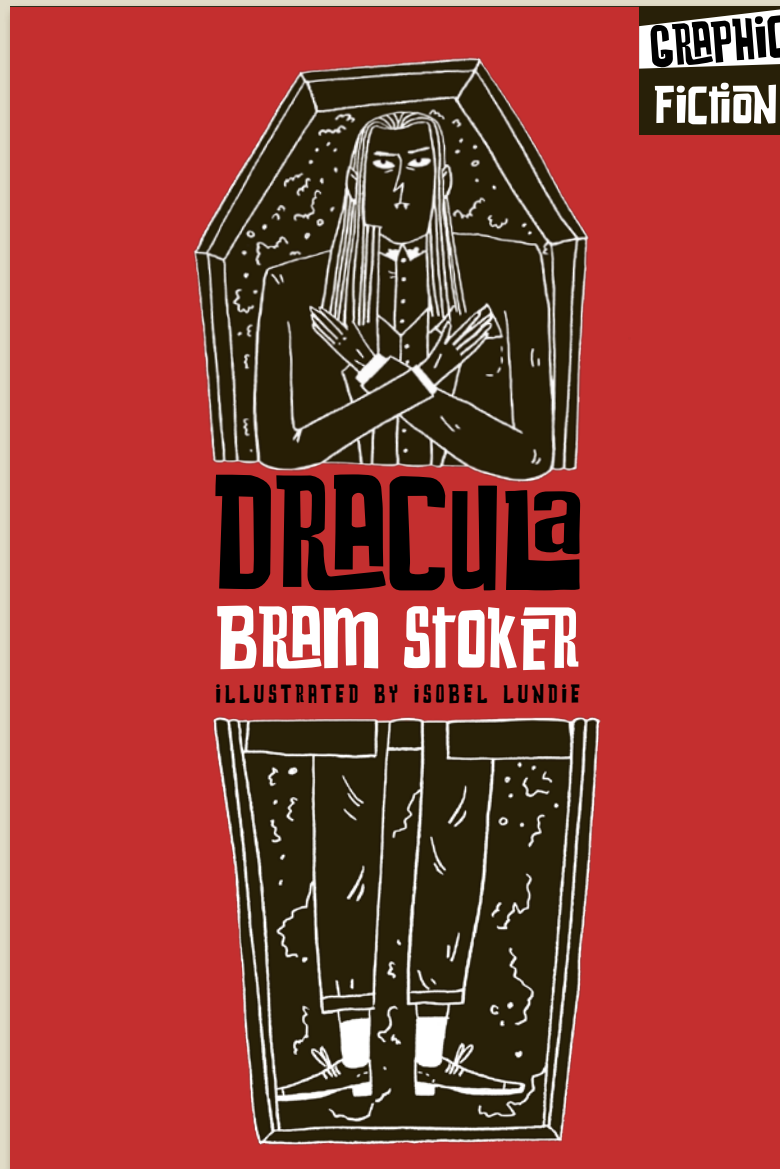
A graphic retelling of Mary Shelley's gothic masterpiece

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

Frankenstein



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



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

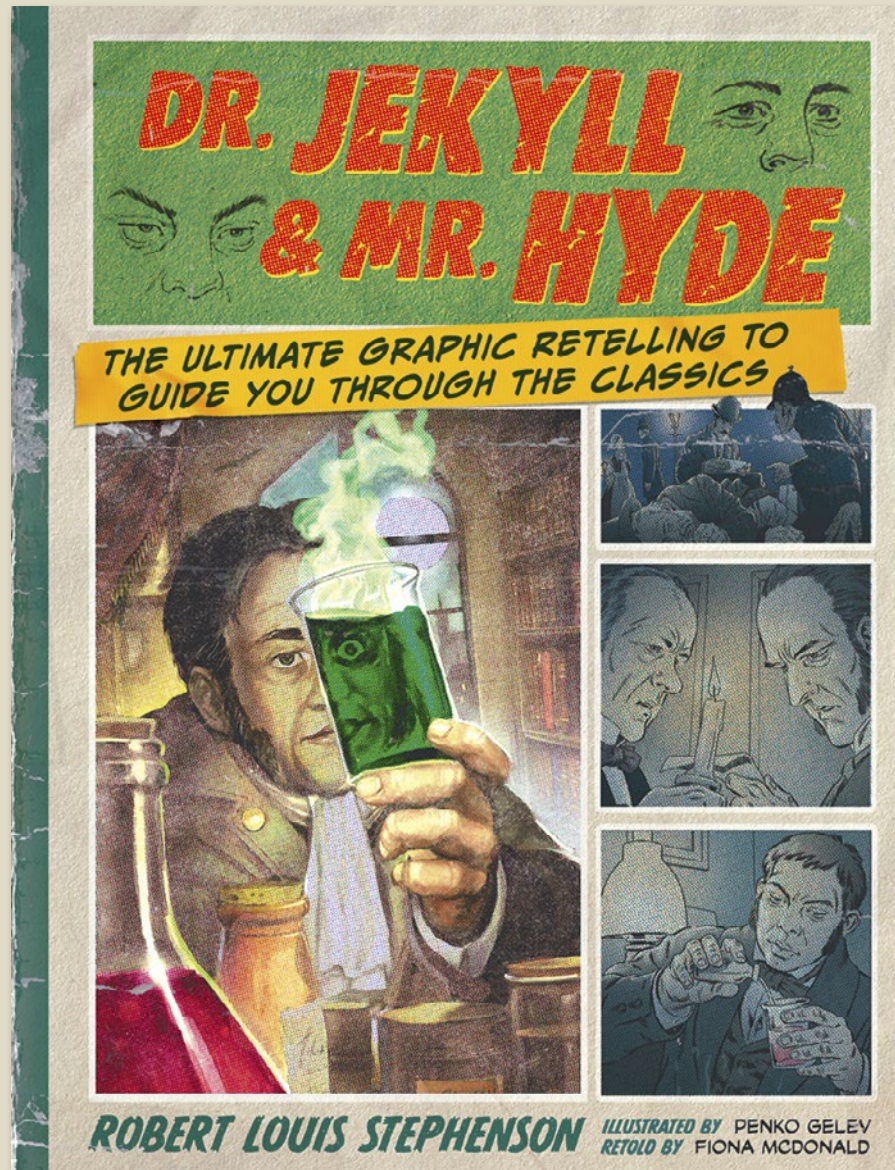
- A contemporary twist on a 19th Century classic. This creepy graphic retelling is the perfect tool for engaging reluctant readers and introducing children to the literary canon.
- An excellent English Literature curriculum companion. The endmatter contains an educational author biography, history of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

Dracula



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

Dr. Jekyll & Mr. Hyde: Classic Comics



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

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

Dr. Jekyll & Mr. Hyde: Classic Comics

A Visit to Dr Jekyll

AT THE END OF THE DAY, MR. UTTERSON WALKED HOME THROUGH THE DARK STREETS OF LONDON. HE WAS THINKING ABOUT THE STRANGE MAN HE HAD MET AT DR. JEKYLL'S HOUSE.

DR. JEKYLL'S HOUSE WAS A BEAUTIFUL BUILDING, BUT THE DOOR WAS ALWAYS SHUT. MR. UTTERSON HAD BEEN INVITED TO VISIT DR. JEKYLL'S OFFICE, BUT HE HAD NEVER SEEN THE DOCTOR'S WORKING OFFICE.

MR. UTTERSON WAS A MAN OF STRICT ETHICS AND HONOR. HE HAD BEEN A PARTNER IN A FIRM THAT HAD FAILED, AND HE HAD BEEN LEFT WITH A DEBT OF SEVERAL THOUSAND POUNDS.

HE HAD BEEN INVITED TO VISIT DR. JEKYLL'S OFFICE, BUT HE HAD NEVER SEEN THE DOCTOR'S WORKING OFFICE.

MR. UTTERSON WAS A MAN OF STRICT ETHICS AND HONOR. HE HAD BEEN A PARTNER IN A FIRM THAT HAD FAILED, AND HE HAD BEEN LEFT WITH A DEBT OF SEVERAL THOUSAND POUNDS.

Dr. Jekyll Tells His Story

MR. UTTERSON WAS A MAN OF STRICT ETHICS AND HONOR. HE HAD BEEN A PARTNER IN A FIRM THAT HAD FAILED, AND HE HAD BEEN LEFT WITH A DEBT OF SEVERAL THOUSAND POUNDS.

HE HAD BEEN INVITED TO VISIT DR. JEKYLL'S OFFICE, BUT HE HAD NEVER SEEN THE DOCTOR'S WORKING OFFICE.

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Smiling Snicker

Robert Louis Stevenson wrote *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* for an eight-page, 16-page magazine. He had been working as a professional editor since he was 23 years old, and his books had never passed. In 1885, aged 38, he set out on a quest to write a story that would be as well as himself. He had a wife and a young daughter to support. He was a man of letters, and he was a man of letters. He was a man of letters, and he was a man of letters.

CHRISTMAS HORROR
The Christmas holiday was a time when many Victorian families tried to relax by their own fireside with an evening of ghost stories. Publishing houses knew that would give them a safe-but-shocking thrill.

FACT AND FICTION
What inspired Stevenson to write *Jekyll and Hyde* has never been clear. The story came to him in a dream. This may be true, but scholars have also suggested that real-life events and discoveries may have inspired Stevenson's imagination. Many of these were connected with Edinburgh, the coastal city of Scotland. Stevenson spent the first half of his life there, and studied at Edinburgh's famous university, which had (and still has) a world-class medical school. Stevenson's family was made up of Edinburgh citizens, but he rebelled against the city's strict - and sometimes hypocritical - rules.

Other ideas that may have inspired Stevenson include the real story of evolution the world was first used in 1882 and controversial theories about criminal behaviour. The theory of evolution suggested that humanity had gradually evolved (changed) from primates, unfeeling, uncompassionate animals to thoughtful, self-compassionate people - an idea which many people found shocking and ridiculous. Some 19th-century scientists believed that man was being transformed by a terrifying

DR. JEKYLL'S NAME
Although Jekyll is an unusual name, it is a real English surname. The most famous Jekyll in real life was the painter George Jekyll (1842-1922). Stevenson was a friend of his brother, the brewer Walter Jekyll. The name should really be pronounced 'JEE-AY', not 'JEE-KAY'.

THE TRANSFORMATION

THE REPULSIVE MAN ASKED DR LANTON FOR A MEASURING GLASS, THEN TOOK SOME WHITE POWDER AND RED LIQUID FROM THE DRAWER AND MIXED THEM TOGETHER.

SMILING BROADLY, HYDE TURNED TO DR LANTON.

And now new knowledge and power shall be laid open to you!

Behold!

Hyde gasped, staggered and clung on to the table, staring with wild eyes and panting, open-mouthed.

1. enigma: riddles, mysteries.

THE TRANSFORMATION

THEN HIS FACE SEEMED TO SWELL...

THE FEATURES SEEMED TO MELT AND CHANGE...

AND THERE BEFORE DR LANTON STOOD HENRY JEKYLL!

O God! O God!

LANTON SAT SHAKING, SICKENED AND APPALLED, AS DR JEKYLL BEGAN TO EXPLAIN. EVERY WORD SEEMED LIKE A DEADLY BLOW, DESTROYING HIS MIND, HIS SOUL, HIS REASON! HIS WHOLE WORLD COLLAPSED AROUND HIM, LEAVING ONLY HORROR, HORROR, HORROR.

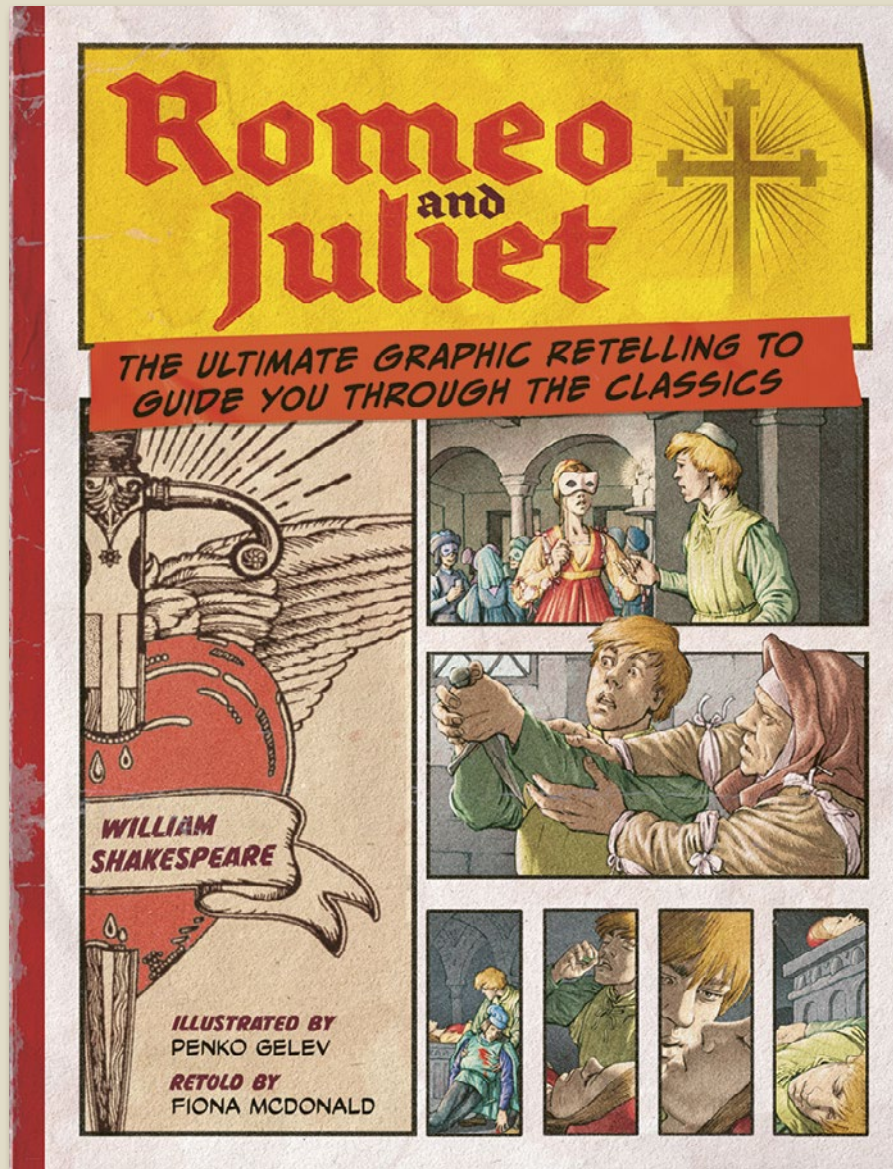
My life is shaken to its roots. I must die!

I saw what I saw, I heard what I heard, and my soul sickened at it.

DR LANTON COULD NOT BRING HIMSELF TO WRITE DOWN ALL THE FOUL SECRETS DR JEKYLL TOLD HIM. BUT HE DID RECORD, IN HIS LETTER TO MR UTTERSON THAT DR JEKYLL CONFESSED TO BEING EDWARD HYDE - THE MURDERER OF SIR DANVERS CAREW.

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

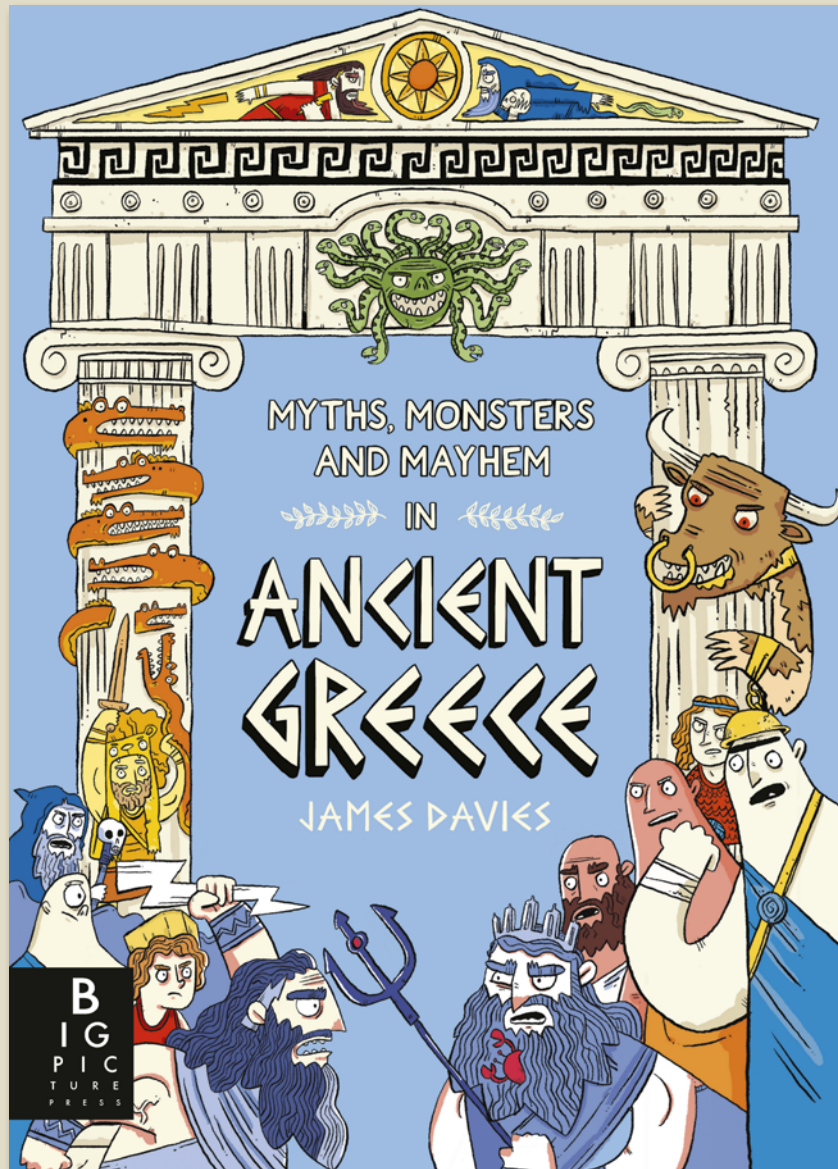
Romeo and Juliet: Classic Comics



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

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

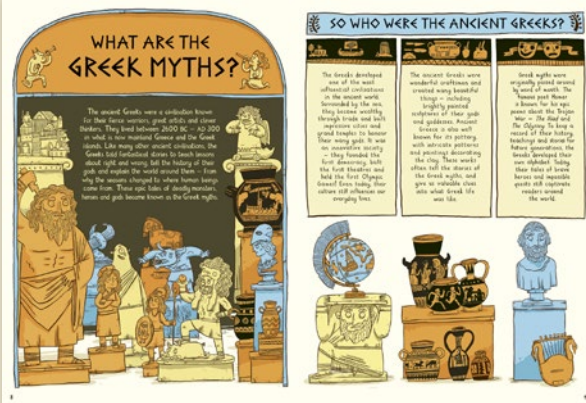
Myths, Monsters and Mayhem in Ancient Greece



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

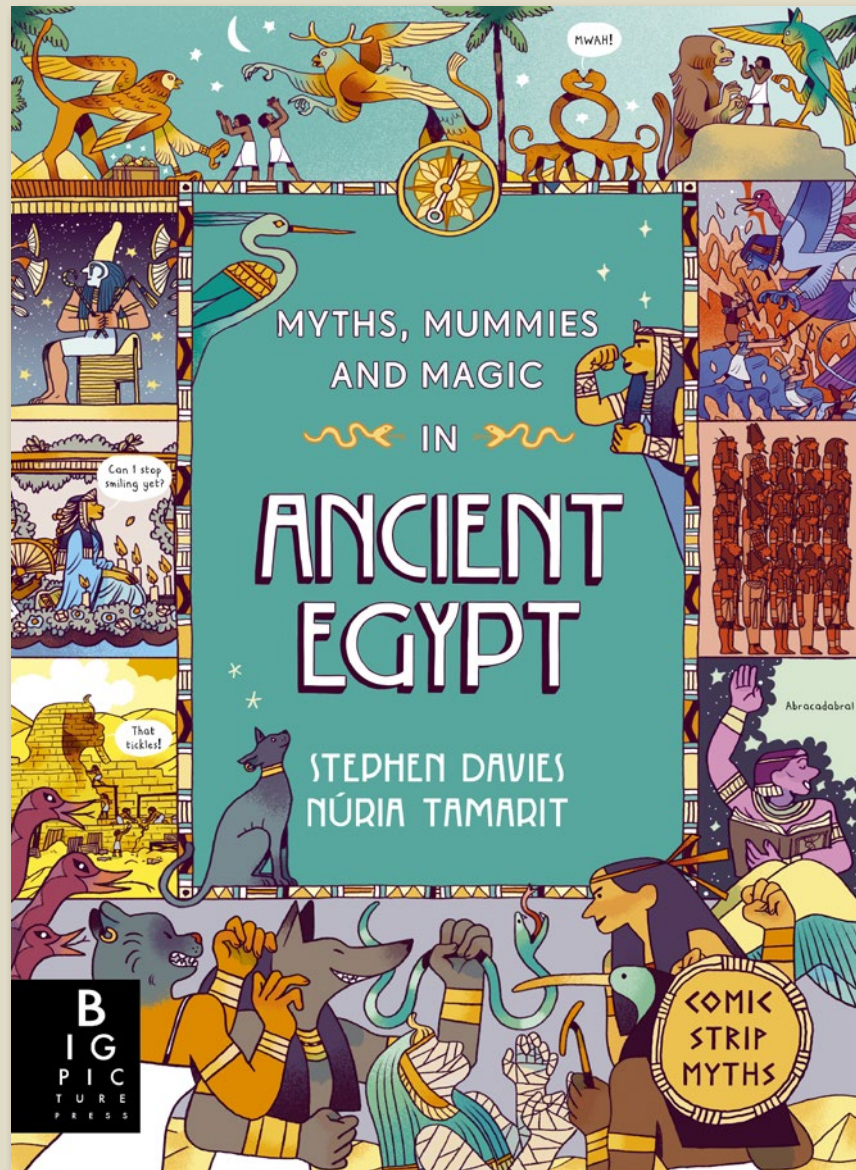
- Contents: Pandora's Box; Theseus and the Minotaur; Perseus and Medusa; Orpheus and Eurydice; The Trojan Horse; What are the Greek Myths?; Meet the Greek Gods; How the Myths Explained the World; Mythical Creatures and Deadly Beasts; A Journey through the Greek Underworld
- These myths will be broken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

Myths, Monsters and Mayhem in Ancient Greece



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

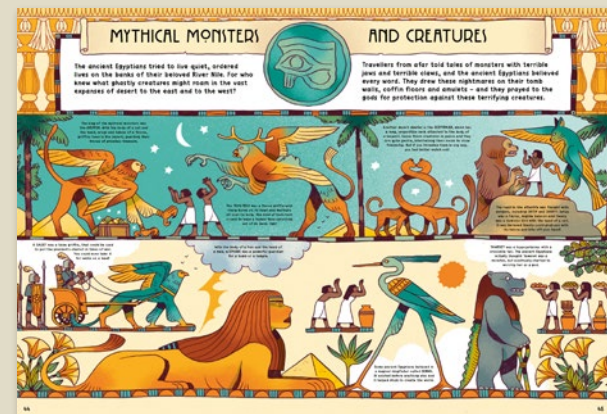
Myths, Mummies and Magic in Ancient Egypt



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

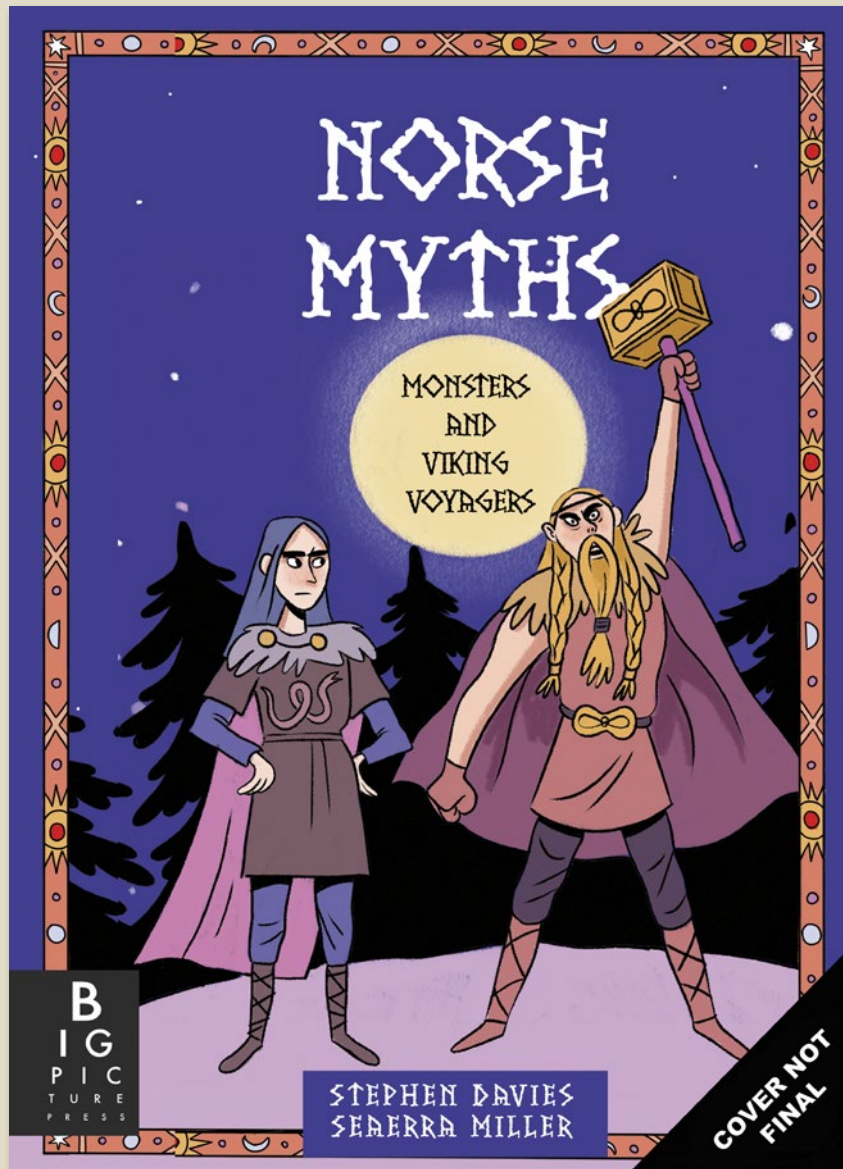
- The myths are broken up with a series of 'theme' spreads, which take a broader look at certain aspects of Egyptian mythology (mythical beasts and monsters, the pharaohs, gods etc.)
- Striking artwork by renowned illustrator and comic artist Núria Tamarit (75k followers on Instagram)
- Mythology is an evergreen subject with strong backlist potential
- Growing demand for graphic novels and comic books for children

Myths, Mummies and Magic in Ancient Egypt



Pub Date	02/01/2025
Pub Price	£10.99
ISBN	9781835870068
H x W	297 x 216mm
Binding	Paperback
Age Range	7-9 years
Author	Stephen Davies Stephen Davies
Illustrator	Núria Tamarit
Extent	64pp
Freight On Board	31/10/2024
Rights Available	World

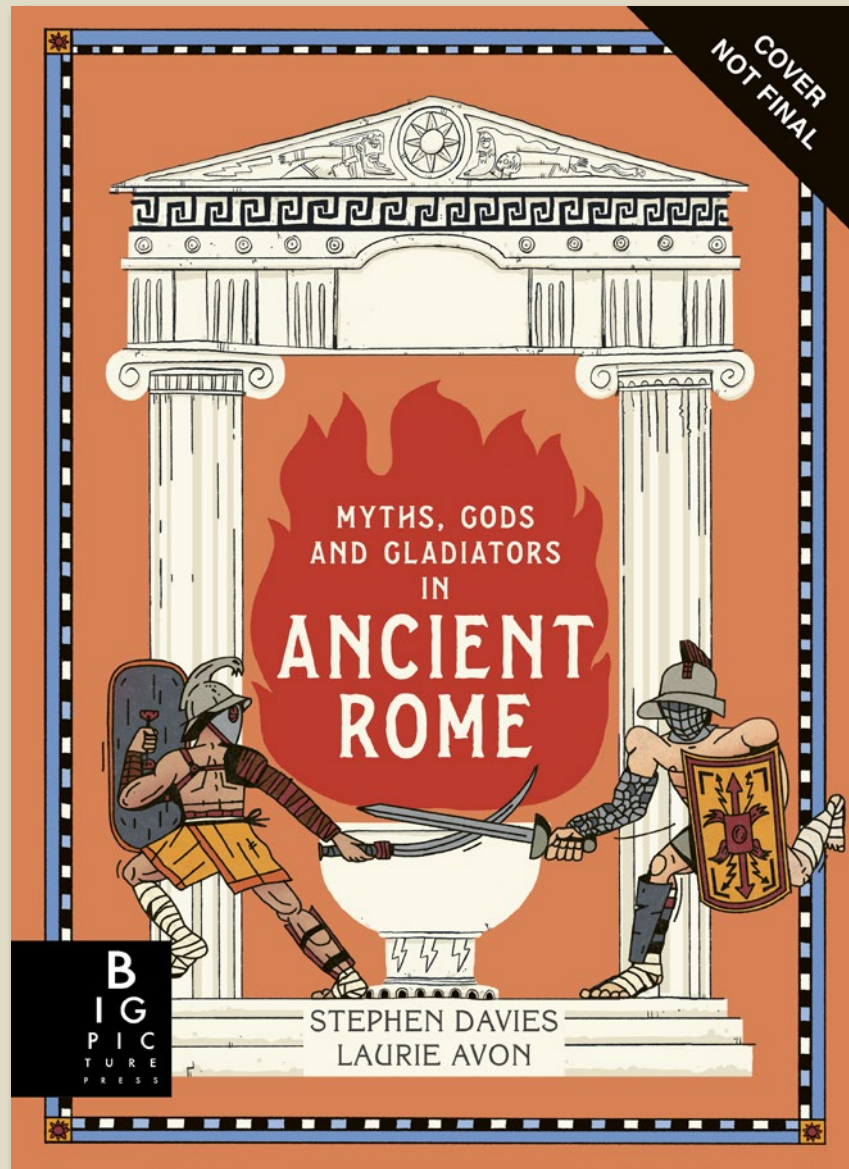
Norse Myths, Monsters and Viking Voyages



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.

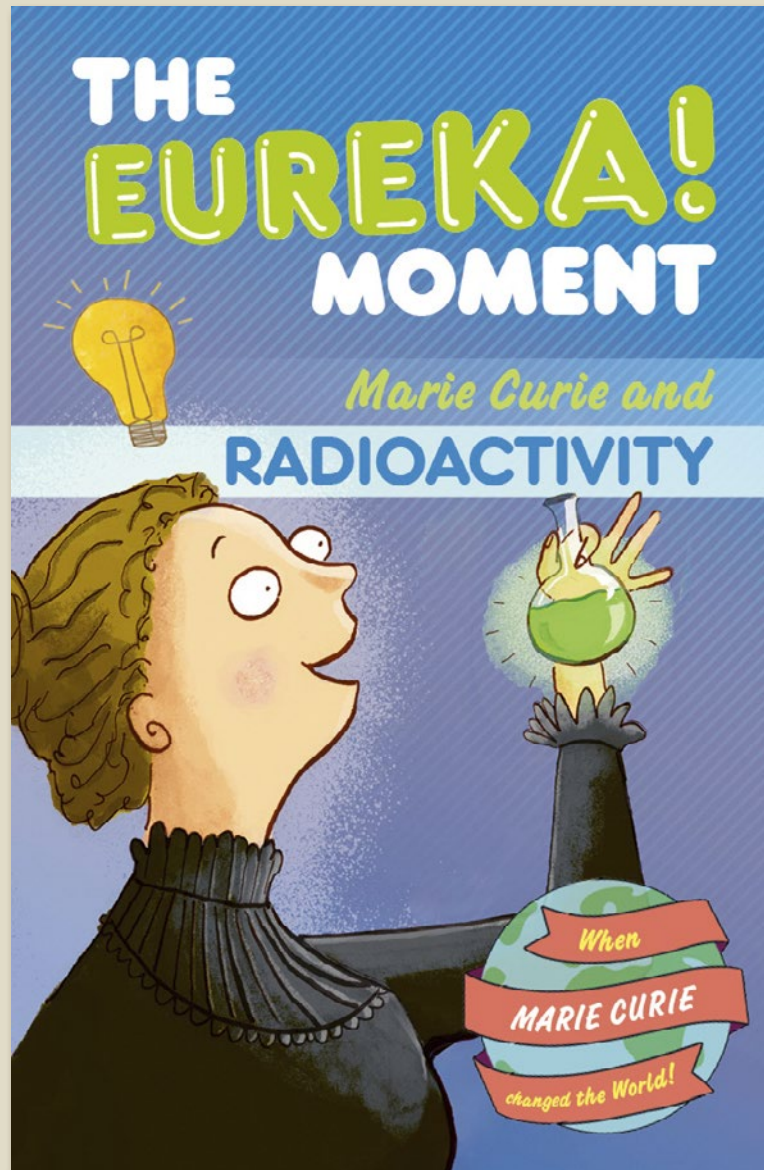
Myths, Gods and Gladiators in Ancient Rome



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

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

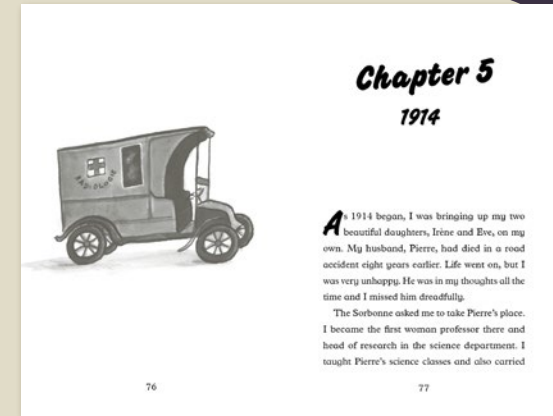
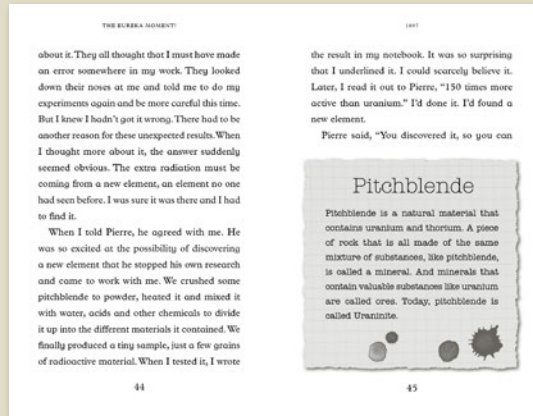
Radioactivity: The Eureka! Moment



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



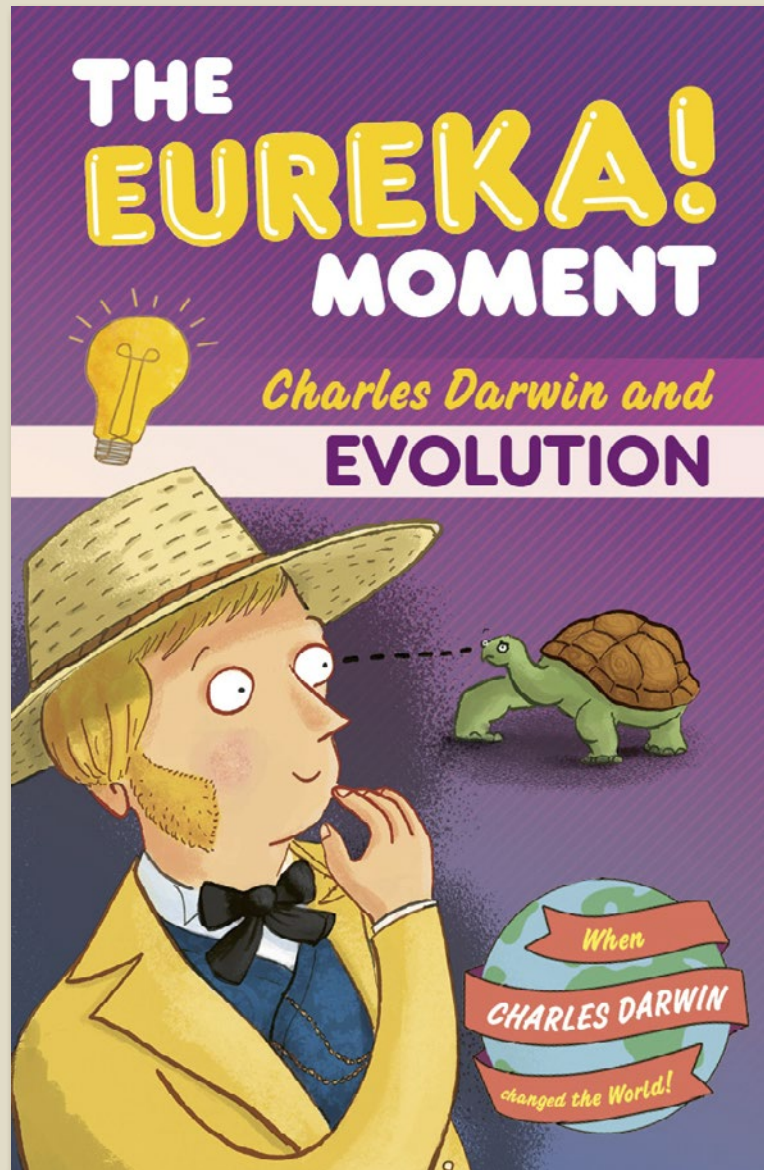
A 1914 began. I was bringing up my two beautiful daughters, Irène and Ève, on my own. My husband, Pierre, had died in a road accident eight years earlier. Life went on, but I was very unhappy. He was in my thoughts all the time and I missed him dreadfully.

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

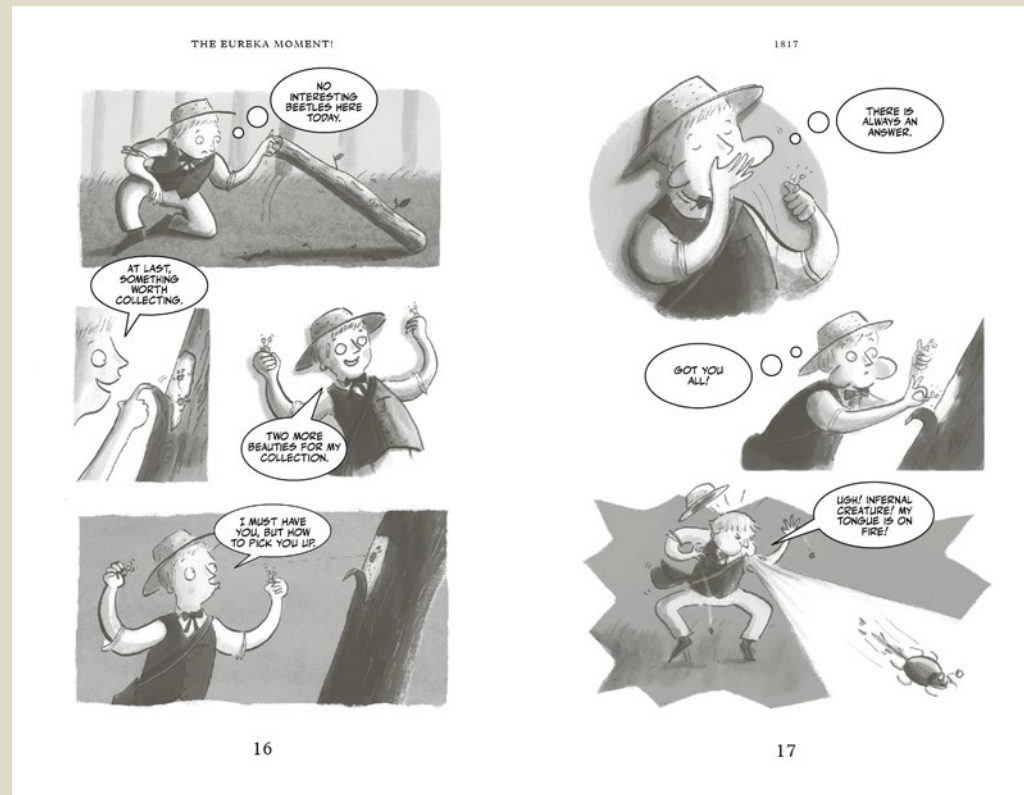
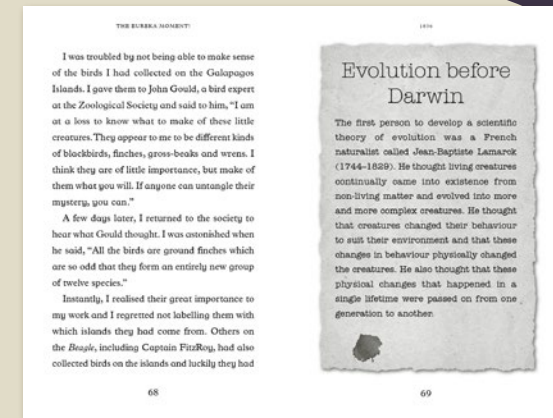
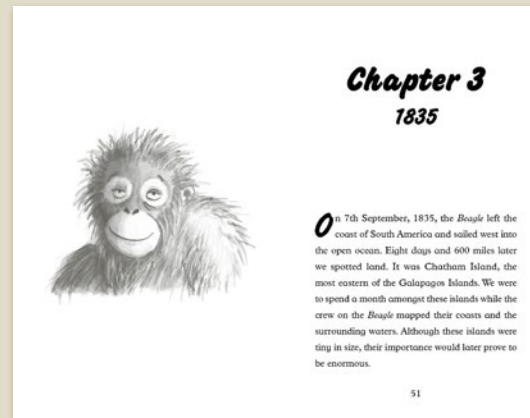
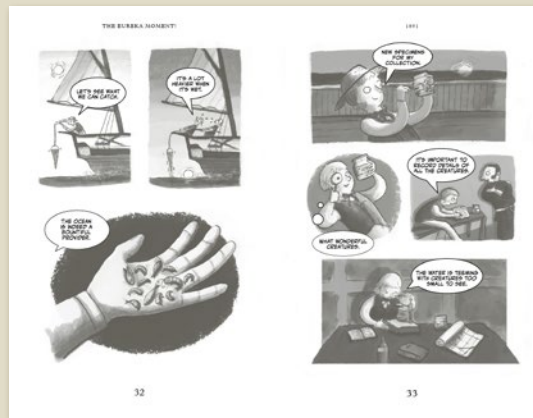
Evolution: The Eureka! Moment



Explore Charles Darwin's incredible 'Eureka' moment!

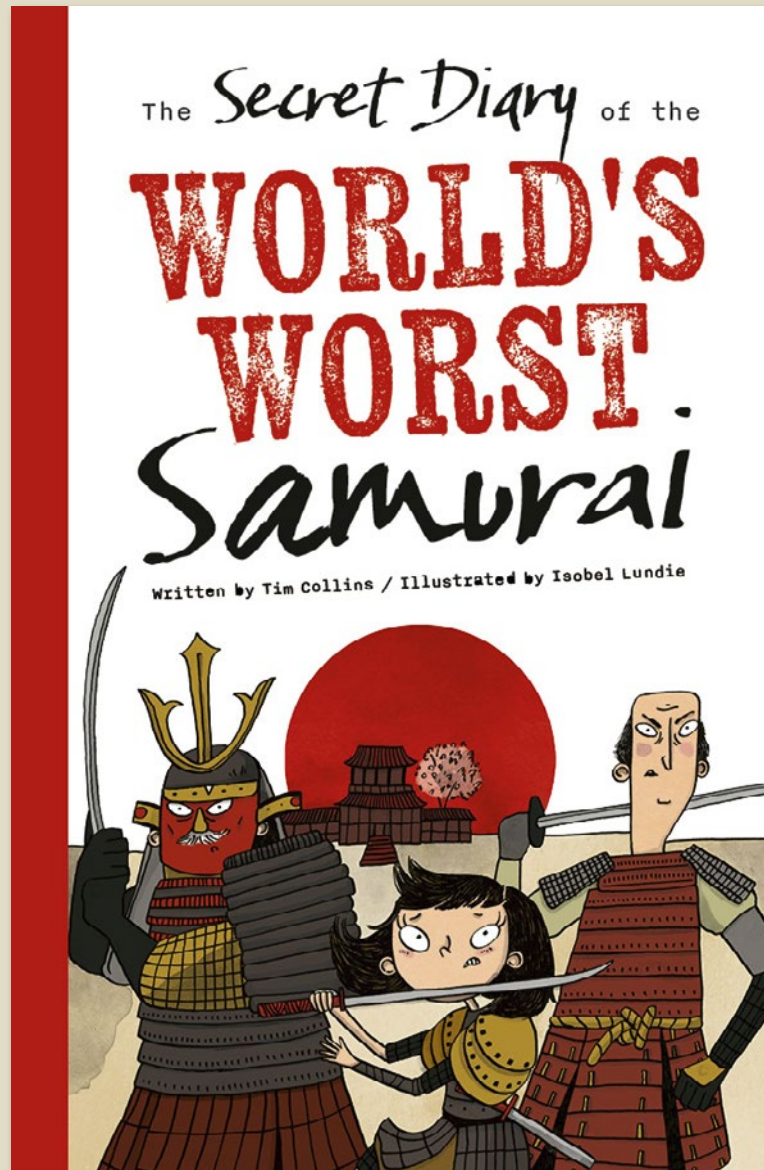
- Child-friendly narrative non-fiction curated to deepen children's knowledge of key moments in the history of science in an accessible, entertaining way.
- Short comic strips scattered throughout the narrative to help children visualise and engage with key events.
- This series introduces children to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

Evolution: The Eureka! Moment



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

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 Tameo Goto. It says she was 'fit to confront a demon or a god' and 'worth a thousand warriors'.

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

Chapter I

Japan, 1582



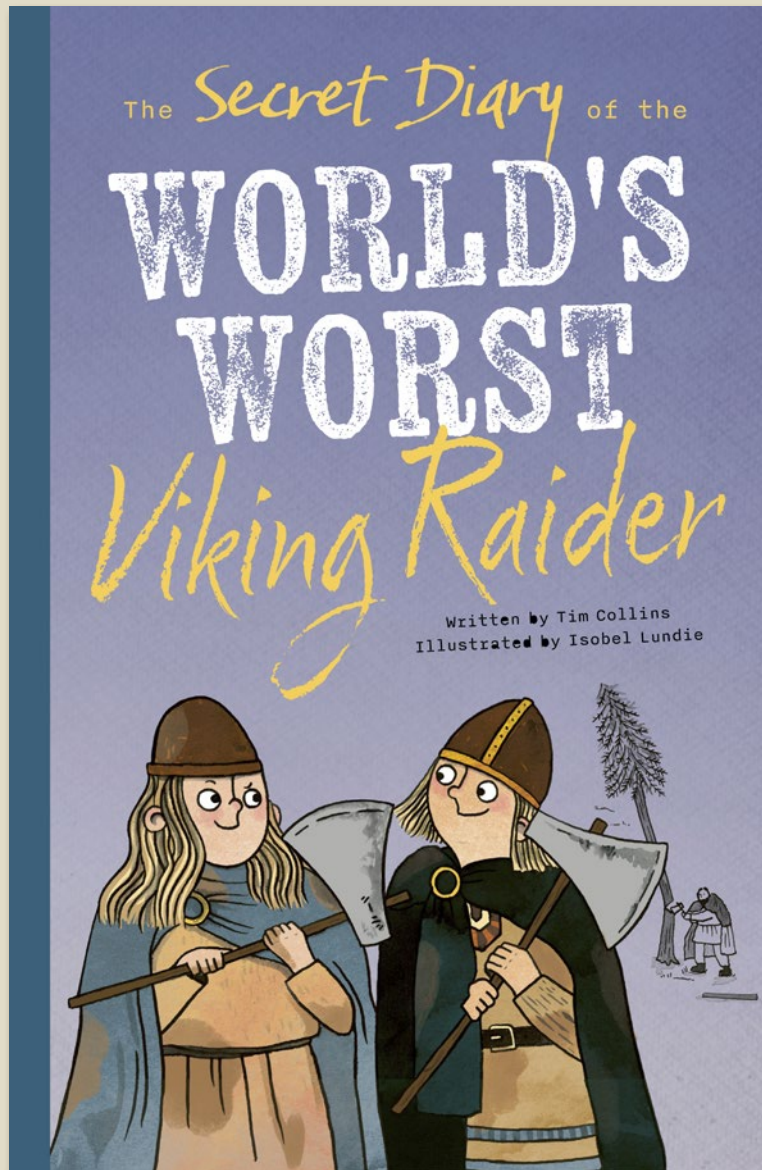
Day One

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

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

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

World's Worst Viking Raider



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

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

World's Worst Viking Raider

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

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

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

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

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

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



GET REAL

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

Eighth Day

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



Ninth Day

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

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

Later

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



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

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



Third Day

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

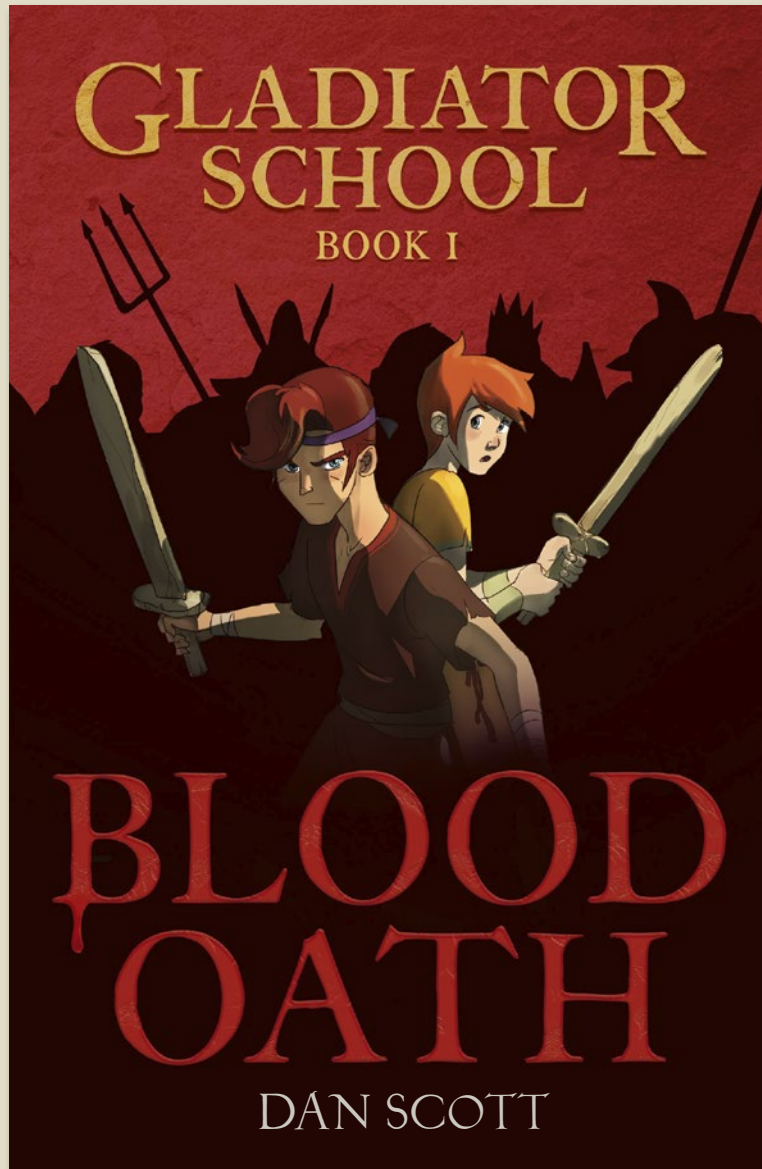
I met my best friend Astrid to play at raiding, and she brought one from her dad's workshop. He's the best blacksmith in our village, and he makes amazing shields and weapons.

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



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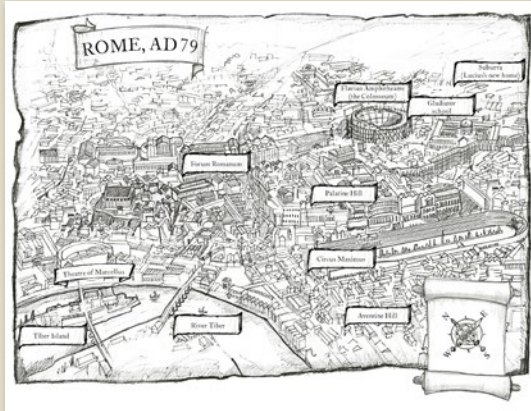
Gladiator School 1: Blood Oath



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.

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

'He's not there,' Lucius said.

His voice sounded creaky and unfamiliar. '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 loincloth, 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, we hope) is a novice 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 burned. 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!'

'Stupid,' Lucius murmured, snooting to the side of the street, where a meat vendor who was selling piles of fresh red hags 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.

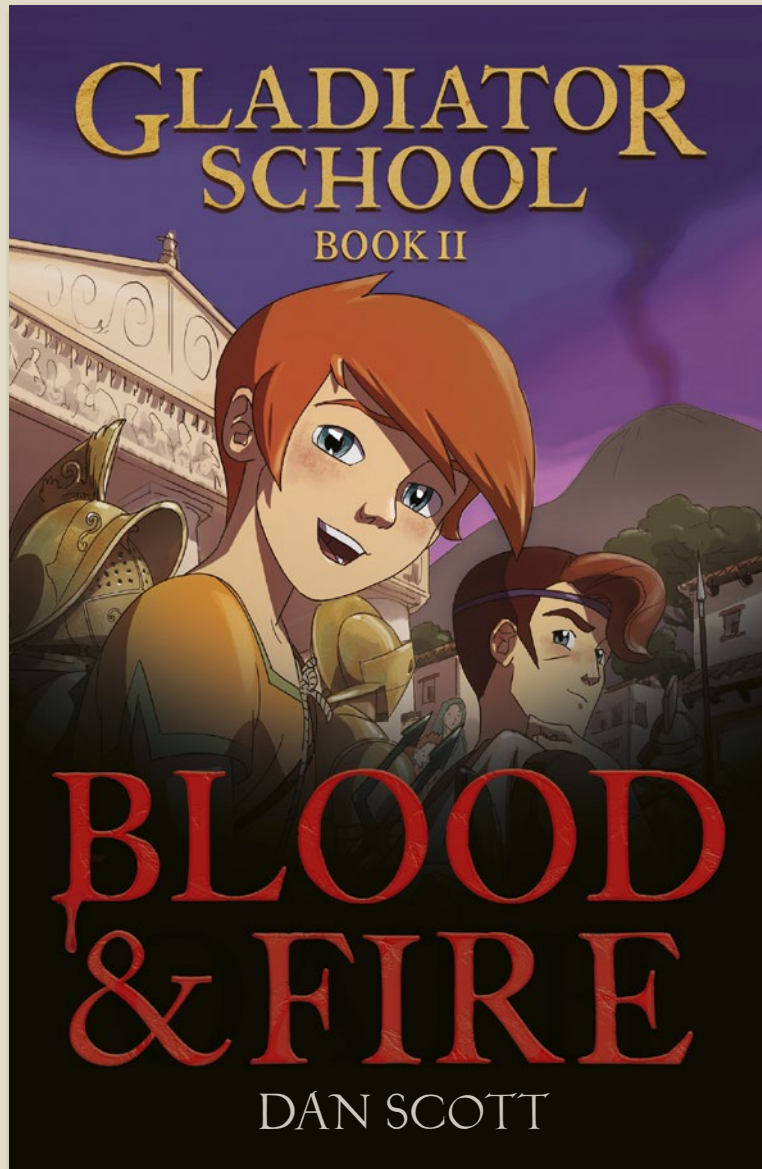
The soldiers had stormed through the villa, overturning furniture, rattling their swords and yelling, 'We arrest you, Quintus Valerius Aquila; in the name of the Emperor, show yourself!'

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.



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