

AUTUMN TERM

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Happy reading! – Miss Mullins

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World Hobbit Day – 22nd September

With the publication of *The Hobbit* in 1937, J. R. R. Tolkien introduced us to the fictional race of people by the same name. Hobbits are about half the height of an average human, live barefooted, have vast appetites, and dwell in underground houses. World Hobbit Day is celebrated on the 22nd of September as this is the agreed canonical birthday of hobbits Bilbo and Frodo Baggins, characters from Tolkien's *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings*. There was originally some indecision over the date as the fictional Shire calendar, and our Gregorian calendar have some discrepancies and Bilbo's actual birthday would fall somewhere between the 12th and 14th of September. People have been known to celebrate World Hobbit Day by throwing parties with food and fireworks, inspired by Bilbo's birthday party from *The Fellowship of the Ring*, or by walking around barefoot.

Hobbit Facts:

- There isn't a single female character in *The Hobbit*, and the only woman mentioned by name is Bilbo's mother, Belladonna Took.
- Crew working on the first Hobbit film used so much gold paint creating the dragon Smaug's lair, that they exhausted supplies in Australasia and had to send to Germany for more.
- In Tolkien's first draft of *The Hobbit*, Gandalf the wizard was called Bladorthin.
- On their birthdays, Hobbits of The Shire give away gifts rather than receiving them.
- Tolkien related to Hobbits, saying in a 1958 letter: "I am in fact a Hobbit in all but size. I like gardens, trees, and unmechanized farmlands; I smoke a pipe, and like good plain food... I like, and even dare to wear in these dull days, ornamental waistcoats. I am fond of mushrooms ... have a very simple sense of humour ... I go to bed late and get up late (when possible). I do not travel much."

The Hobbit by J.R.R. Tolkien

Bilbo Baggins is a hobbit who enjoys a comfortable, unambitious life, rarely travelling further than the pantry of his hobbit-hole in Bag End. But his contentment is disturbed when the wizard, Gandalf, and a company of thirteen dwarves arrive on his doorstep one day, to whisk him away on a journey 'there and back again'. They have a plot to raid the treasure hoard of Smaug the Magnificent, a large and very dangerous dragon...

When Our Worlds Collided Wins 2023 YA Book Prize

When Our Worlds Collided has been announced as the winner of the 2023 YA (Young Adult) Book Prize. The book, already the winner of the Jhalak Children's and Young Adult Prize, was described by Gary Deane, Waterstones' national children's events co-ordinator as "A raw, powerful, and thought-provoking coming of age story that is tender, compassionate, and full of hope." Caroline Carpenter, the chair of judges for the YA Book Prize said, "Though this is only Danielle Jawando's second novel, she has already proven herself to be a powerful author of deeply affecting and authentic stories and a rising star of YA."



Danielle Jawando was crowned the winner of the award at this year's Edinburgh International Book Festival. She will receive £2,000 in prize money.

Coming Soon to the Library: *When Our Worlds Collided* by Danielle Jawando

When fourteen-year-old Shaq is stabbed outside of a busy shopping centre in Manchester, three teenagers from very different walks of life are unexpectedly brought together. What follows flips their worlds upside down and makes Chantelle, Jackson, and Marc question the deep-rooted prejudice and racism that exists within the police, the media, and the rest of society.

On This Day in History... The Birth of H.G. Wells, 21st September 1866

Born in Bromley, Kent, Herbert George Wells was a prolific writer in many genres. Over his lifetime he wrote more than fifty novels and dozens of short stories, as well as non-fiction works, spanning social commentary, politics, history, science fiction, and more. His science fiction novels are so well regarded that he is often referred to as 'the father of science fiction.' Wells wrote such classics as *The Time Machine*, *The Invisible Man*, and *The Island of Doctor Moreau*, stories still constantly referenced and riffed on in the modern era.

When *The Time Machine* was published in 1895, it met immediate acclaim and became the first of Wells' 'scientific romances' (the genre now commonly known as science fiction). He was also lauded as a social prophet, as in his writings he seemed to foretell future events such as the splitting of the atom, space travel, and aerial warfare. He is also credited with predicting the invention of the internet, the tank, and the satellite television.

After World War One, Wells became an advocate for peace and human rights, publishing several anti-war manifestos. He died in Regent's Park in 1946, at the age of 79. His ashes were scattered into the English Channel at Old Harry Rocks in Dorset.



The Time Machine by H.G. Wells

When a Victorian scientist propels himself in the year 802,701 AD, he is initially delighted to find that suffering has been replaced by beauty, contentment and peace. Entranced at first by the Eloi, an elfin species descended from man, he soon realises that this beautiful people are simply remnants of a once-great culture - now weak and childishly afraid of the dark. They have every reason to be afraid: in deep tunnels beneath their paradise lurks another race descended from humanity - the sinister Morlocks. And when the scientist's time machine vanishes, it becomes clear he must search these tunnels if he is ever to return to his own era.

The Island of Doctor Moreau by H.G. Wells

Adrift in a dinghy, Edward Prendick, the single survivor from the good ship Lady Vain, is rescued by a vessel carrying an unusual cargo—a menagerie of savage animals. Nursed to recovery by their keeper Montgomery, who gives him dark medicine that tastes of blood, Prendick soon finds himself stranded upon an uncharted island in the Pacific with his rescuer and the beasts. There, he meets the sinister Dr. Moreau—a brilliant scientist whose notorious experiments in vivisection have caused him to abandon the civilized world. It soon becomes clear that he has continued to develop these experiments with truly horrific results.



Authors Recommend Summer Page Turners

In July, *The Observer* asked various authors to recommend some summer reads to its audience. As we cling on to the tail end of summer, have a look at the books authors such as Eleanor Catton, Caleb Azumah Nelson, Marian Keys, Sophie Mackintosh and RF Kuang suggest you pick up. The full list is diverse and contains classic fiction as well as new releases, but is very mystery-heavy. Eliza Clark (author of *Penance* and *Boy Parts*) recommended Umberto Eco's historical mystery *The Name of the Rose*, while Jennifer Egan (author of *The Candy House* and *A Visit from the Goon Squad*) recommended modern murder mystery *The Maid* by Nita Prose, as well as classic murder mystery *The Murder of Roger Ackroyd* by Agatha Christie. Click on the link below to see the full list.

[View the full list here.](#)



Yellowface by Rebecca F Kuang

Athena Liu is a literary darling and June Hayward is literally nobody. When Athena dies in a freak accident, June steals her unpublished manuscript and publishes it as her own under the ambiguous name Juniper Song. But as evidence threatens June's stolen success, she will discover exactly how far she will go to keep what she thinks she deserves. What happens next is entirely everyone else's fault.

The Name of the Rose by Umberto Eco

The year is 1327. Benedictines in a wealthy Italian abbey are suspected of heresy, and Brother William of Baskerville arrives to investigate. When his delicate mission is suddenly overshadowed by seven bizarre deaths, Brother William turns detective. His tools are the logic of Aristotle, the theology of Aquinas, the empirical insights of Roger Bacon—all sharpened to a glistening edge by wry humor and a ferocious curiosity. He collects evidence, deciphers secret symbols and coded manuscripts, and digs into the eerie labyrinth of the abbey, where "the most interesting things happen at night."



The Murder of Roger Ackroyd by Agatha Christie

The peaceful English village of King's Abbot is stunned. The widow Ferrars dies from an overdose of Veronal. Not twenty-four hours later, Roger Ackroyd—the man she had planned to marry—is murdered. It is a baffling case involving blackmail and death that taxes Hercule Poirot's "little grey cells" before he reaches one of the most startling conclusions of his career.

The Maid by Nita Prose

Molly the maid is all alone in the world. A nobody. She's used to being invisible in her job at the Regency Grand Hotel, plumping pillows and wiping away the grime, dust and secrets of the guests passing through. She's just a maid - why should anyone take notice? But Molly is thrown into the spotlight when she discovers an infamous guest, Mr Black, very dead in his bed. This isn't a mess that can be easily cleaned up. And as Molly becomes embroiled in the hunt for the truth, following the clues whispering in the hallways of the Regency Grand, she discovers a power she never knew was there. She's just a maid - but what can she see that others overlook?



On This Day in History... The Death of Wilkie Collins, 23rd September 1889



William Wilkie Collins, born in 1824, was a novelist and playwright best known for his novels *The Woman in White* (1859) and *The Moonstone* (1868), the latter of which is commonly credited with establishing the ground rules of the modern detective novel, and is arguably the earliest example of the police procedural genre (a subgenre of detective fiction that emphasizes the investigative procedure of police officers, police detectives, or law enforcement agencies as the protagonists).

Collins lived an unconventional Bohemian lifestyle, travelling frequently, wearing flamboyant clothes, and rejecting the concept of marriage. He was friends with Charles Dickens, with whom he regularly collaborated, as well as many other writers

prominent in society at the time. Dickens assisted Collins in his career, publishing *The Woman in White* for the first time in his journal *All the Year Round*. The novel was serialised and published in the journal between November 1859 and August 1860. The story was a sensation, and many commodities such as perfumes, cloaks, and bonnets were named after it in the period following its publication. It's said that poet William Thackeray was "engrossed [by the story] from morning to sunset."

The Moonstone received a much less enthusiastic reception from Dickens as well as from literary critics of the age, though it has stood the test of time and is one of Collins' most famous novels.

Collins passed away in 1889 and is buried in Kensal Green Cemetery, London. His tombstone bears the inscription "author of *The Woman in White*."

The Moonstone by Wilkie Collins

The Moonstone, a priceless Indian diamond which had been brought to England as spoils of war, is given to Rachel Verrinder on her eighteenth birthday. That very night, the stone is stolen. Suspicion then falls on a hunchbacked housemaid, on Rachel's cousin Franklin Blake, on a troupe of mysterious Indian jugglers, and on Rachel herself. The phlegmatic Sergeant Cuff is called in, and with the help of Betteredge, the Robinson Crusoe-reading laquais steward, the mystery of the missing stone is ingeniously solved.



On This Day in History... The Birth of Kate Adie, 19th September 1945



Kate Adie is an English journalist best known for her work as a war zone correspondent. She began her career working for BBC Radio Durham before moving to BBC national television news in 1979. Her big break came when she was the first on the scene when the Special Air Service broke up the Iranian Embassy siege in 1980. Adie reported live and subscribed to one of the largest news audiences ever while crouched behind a car door. She went on to report on huge stories such as the serial killer Denis Nilsen, the Troubles in Northern Ireland, the Tiananmen Square protests, the Lockerbie bombing, the Gulf War, the Rwandan genocide, and the 2000 war in Sierra Leone. While working in Libya, Adie was shot at point blank range by a Libyan army commander after refusing to act as an intermediary between Libyan and British governments - luckily, she suffered no permanent harm.

In 2003, Adie retired from the BBC and went on to work as a freelance journalist. She's currently an ambassador for SSAFA, the UK's oldest military charity, and the medical charity Overseas Plastic Surgery Appeal.

Corsets To Camouflage: Women and War by Kate Adie

Uniform is universally seen as both a stamp of authority and of official acceptance. But the sight of a woman in military uniform still provokes controversy. Although more women are now taking prominent roles in combat, the status implied by uniform is often regarded as contrary to the general perception of womanhood. This study of the image of uniformed women, both in conflict and in civilian roles throughout the 20th century examines the extraordinary range of jobs that uniformed women have performed, from nursing to the armed services. Through complementary correspondence and many personal stories Kate Adie brings the enormous and often unsung achievements of women in uniform to life and looks at how far women have come in a century which, for them, began restricted in corsets and has ended on the battlefield in camouflage.



The Kindness of Strangers: The Autobiography by Kate Adie

Kate Adie has courageously reported from all over the world since she joined the BBC in 1969. These memoirs encompass her reporting from, inter alia, Northern Ireland, the Middle East, Tiananmen Square and, of course, the Gulf War of 1991. From the siege at the Iranian embassy which shot her to public acclaim, to an alarming encounter with a drunken Libyan army commander who shot her at point-blank range, from the chaos and mayhem of desert warfare to Gracie Field's bizarre funeral, Kate has cooly kept us in touch through her reasoned and level reporting. Although an intensely private person, Kate Adie also divulges how, despite being sent to outlandish places at a moment's notice, she's maintained her interest in sailing, singing, and theatre, and what it's like to be a woman in a man's world.

Kiran Millwood Hargrave and Tom de Freston Win James Cropper Wainwright Prize for Children's Writing on Nature and Conservation

The winner of the 2023 James Cropper Wainwright Prize for Children's Writing on Nature and Conservation was announced at the 10th Anniversary celebrations of the Prize in Kendal in the Lake District, the home of much-loved nature writer Alfred Wainwright, for whom the prize is named.

Bestselling author Kiran Millwood Hargrave and illustrator Tom de Freston from Oxford won the prize for *Leila and the Blue Fox*, the story of a young fox and a girl on an unforgettable Arctic adventure, based on the true story of a fox who walked two thousand miles from Norway to Canada in seventy-six days.

Mark Funnell, Chair and Communication and Campaign Director at the National Trust, said: "The interplay between Kiran's profoundly affecting writing and Tom's hauntingly beautiful illustrations is uniquely potent, plunging us into the intertwined worlds of family relationships and nature obsession with a visceral impact that readers won't forget."

Kiran and Tom win a share of the £10,000 prize fund, alongside the winners of the prizes for Nature Writing and Writing on Conservation. Each winner also received a specially commissioned original artwork by dried flower embroiderer, Olga Prinku.

The Island at the End of Everything by Kiran Millwood Hargrave

Ami lives with her mother on an island where the sea is as blue as the sky. It's all she knows and loves, but the arrival of malicious government official Mr Zamora changes her world forever: her island is to be made into a colony for lepers. Taken from her mother and banished across the sea, Ami faces an uncertain future in an orphanage. There she meets a honey-eyed girl named for butterflies, and together they discover a secret that will lead her on an adventure home. Ami must go back to the island of no return, but will she make it in time?



The Deathless Girls by Kiran Millwood Hargrave

They say the thirst of blood is like a madness - they must sate it. Even with their own kin. On the eve of her divining, the day she'll discover her fate, seventeen-year-old Lil and her twin sister Kizzy are captured and enslaved by the cruel Boyar Valcar, taken far away from their beloved traveller community. Forced to work in the harsh and unwelcoming castle kitchens, Lil is comforted when she meets Mira, a fellow slave who she feels drawn to in a way she doesn't understand. But she also learns about the Dragon, a mysterious and terrifying figure of myth and legend who takes girls as gifts. They may not have had their divining day, but the girls will still discover their fate...