

## Next

Edited by Keith Gray  
Andersen (eB) £6.99  
ISBN: 978-1849393003  
This collection of eight short stories, written by some of the best authors currently writing for children and

young adults, asks the biggest question of all. What happens after death? As none of the authors actually know the answer they have each come up with highly original and thought provoking stories. Julie Bertagna's 'Starbursting' is a wonderfully romantic love story that swirls through time and space and reminds us we are all made of stardust, whilst Jonathan Stroud's 'Green Fields' has an insurance agent performing an act of kindness to a dying woman before following her into the afterlife hoping to extort money from her, and Frank Cottrell Boyce's story, based on a social networking site, involves a person appearing to be updating their status from beyond the grave. Philip Ardagh, Sally Nicholls, Malorie Blackman, Gillian Philip and Keith Gray are the other writers who have also contributed intriguing new stories to this excellent collection.

Jan Lennon

## Arcadia Awakens

Written by Kai Meyer  
Templar £10.99  
ISBN: 978-1848770089

This is the first in a trilogy of novels set in Sicily. Raised in New York by her mother, teenager Rose Alcantara has no real idea what it means to be a member of one of its oldest Mafia families. The handsome young man she met on the plane turns out to be Alessandro Carnevale, the new heir to a rival clan. He is en route to his father's funeral, and she is desperately trying to escape an unspecified trauma in her recent past. They are fascinated by each other, but their families are sworn enemies. In this world of blood feuds, shifting loyalties and corruption, Rose finds it hard to decide who to trust. As the plot twists and turns, and characters are remorselessly eliminated, who will be the last ones standing? This is fascinating work, interweaving the modern world of mobile phones, guns and sports car with an ancestral world of myth and legend. The writing is taut and gripping, and I look forward to where the next part of the trilogy will take the reader. Somehow, the peaceful hiatus we reach at this book's conclusion seems unlikely to last long.

Stella Maden



## Code Name Verity

Written by Elizabeth Wein  
Electric Monkey (eB) £7.99  
ISBN: 978-1405258210  
This is a moving and extremely exciting read for young adults. Two young women, from very different

backgrounds, meet and become best friends during World War II and the book is narrated by each of these women in turn. Firstly we hear from the Special Operations Executive agent who has been captured in France and is being regularly tortured by the Nazis; the torture being graphically described. She appears to be collaborating with her captors and writing a confession, but she is actually writing the story of her friendship with Maddie, a civilian pilot with the Air Transport Authority. Later Maddie takes up the story. She is not quite such a convincing narrator as her friend but she tells us what happened to her after the two of them crash landed in France. Although based on sound research about the SOE and the ATA, this is so much more than a historical account. It is about loyalty and friendship, about how the war changed people making them re-evaluate their hopes and fears, and it also shows that in extraordinary circumstances it is possible to do the unthinkable. This is definitely the best war story I have read in a long time.

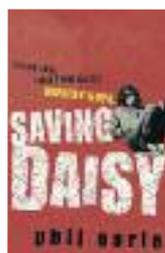
Jan Lennon

## Saving Daisy

Written by Phil Earle  
Puffin (eB) £6.99  
ISBN: 978-0141331362

Some people seem to have all the luck but Daisy isn't one of them. Her mother died when she was born, and Daisy can't help blaming herself. She and her father share a love of film – or is it a life of avoiding the pain they can't deal with? When her father dies too, Daisy's life spins out of control. Self-loathing and self-harm seem to go hand in hand in the dangerous world she creates for herself. Life in a therapeutic community is less than inviting, but Daisy finds her life affirmed in unexpected ways by people she hardly notices at first. Mature readers will find this thought-provoking novel hard to put down.

Marianne Adey



## Illegal

Written by Miriam Halahmy  
Meadowside £6.99 ISBN: 978-1845395247

*Illegal* is the second title in a series of three novels set on Hayling Island, off the south coast



of England. Although described as a stand-alone novel the stories do intertwine. Lindy's family has a reputation for being criminals and trouble-makers, but Lindy wants a better life for herself far away from her brother's

cycle of crime. However, a family tragedy draws Lindy into the centre of an apparently inescapable drug ring, until an unexpected friendship creates a glimmer of hope. *Illegal* is a tightly written and layered story that is firmly embedded in the landscape around Hayling Island. Miriam Halahmy packs the book full of issues, including drug dealing, self harm and parental neglect, but without the story becoming an issues book. *Illegal* is a gripping, thought-provoking and painfully honest portrayal of one girl's life as she learns that growth and responsibility are possible even in the darkest of circumstances.

Benjamin Scott

## Shift

Written by Em Bailey  
Electric Monkey (eB) £6.99  
ISBN: 978-1405261166

Olive is trying to readjust to life after a suicide attempt and the crippling guilt that stems from her belief that she is to blame for her father leaving. She has become harder, more cynical, and dumped her best friend Katie to become a loner. Now a new girl, Miranda, has latched on to Katie and as their friendship grows, Olive becomes more and more disturbed by the control Miranda seems to be exerting. Miranda copies Katie's movements, facial expressions and voice. She takes Katie's clothes, CDs and even her boyfriend. When she finally realises what Miranda is and confronts her, Olive places her own life in danger. The plot is gripping, with genuine surprises. The layered dimensions of the story are given credibility by the convincing portrayal of teenage girls and the awkwardness of first love. Lachlan is attracted to Olive in spite of her attempts to drive him away, and will ultimately be the only person who stands a chance of saving her.

Yvonne Coppard



## The Book of Lies

Written by Mary Horlock  
Walker (eB) £7.99 ISBN: 978-1406342789

This is a highly accomplished first novel and I am already waiting impatiently for Ms Horlock's second book. The action takes place on the



island of Guernsey, a small island that has a dramatic past and a place where many secrets remain hidden. Catherine Rozier, a bright fifteen year old who considers herself to be fat and unattractive, carries a secret about the death of her

friend. The book also tells the story of Charlie Rozier, her uncle who was also aged fifteen, when during the wartime occupation of the island, he was betrayed to the Nazis. Similarities between the two stories emerge and remind us that growing up has never been easy and also, that secrets from the past have a way of influencing the present. This is a demanding read which tackles complex issues like guilt and truth in an original way. Catherine is an engaging narrator and her use of footnotes adds a touch of humour to this dark tale of truth, lies and secrets.

*Jan Lennon*

## Now is the Time for Running

Written by Michael Williams  
Tamarind (eB) £5.99  
ISBN: 978-1848530836

When the President's men come to the Gutu area of Zimbabwe, it is changed forever. Fair minded, wise and respectful Grandpa Longdrop, Deo and Innocent's mother, and many other peace-loving people are brutally killed, leaving the boys with no choice but to run. This is the story of their physical and emotional journey all the way to South Africa. With almost every step they meet terrifying dangers and have to endure appalling experiences that are so awful they are barely credible, yet more awful because they really are based on truth. This is a harrowing, humbling and immensely powerful story; encompassing every human emotion, full of naivety yet too much realism, full of despair yet never without hope, full of both darkness and light. It is totally gripping and a privilege to read.



*Gill Roberts*

## Secrets of the Henna Girl



Written by Sufiya Ahmed  
Puffin (eB) £6.99  
ISBN: 978-0141339801  
Zeba is a teenage Muslim girl, juggling her family life and customs quite equitably, hoping for good exam results. She is also a romantic, hoping to meet

the man of her dreams one day. Then a family holiday to Pakistan becomes a nightmare as she is presented with the cousin she barely knows as her intended husband and told she will not be returning home with her parents. In

a very balanced way, Sufiya Ahmed portrays the different opinions and points of view of those involved. Zeba's story shows how the cultural ties of family and honour can become a stranglehold and that it is not only girls who are pressured in this way. This book needs to find its way into schools in order to develop a wider awareness of what can happen. The terror of forced marriages, for some pupils, is a real one. Their situation is not helped by a lack of understanding among their peers and society generally about the difference between a forced marriage, which is illegal, and an arranged marriage, which is enjoyed by many a happy, devoted couple. I was intrigued to discover a novel tackling the subject, and tackling it so well.

*Yvonne Coppard*

## August

Written by Bernard Beckett  
Quercus (eB) £6.99  
ISBN: 978-0857387899

This extraordinary novel opens with the aftermath of a car accident. Two passengers hang, bleeding and in great pain, upside down in a car that has plunged off the road. They are barely alive, and very seriously injured. They begin to talk about what has brought him, a schoolman from the illustrious St Augustine's, and her, a teenage prostitute, to where they are now. The story of their two lives gradually emerges in a narrative which winds in and out of the past and present. The concept of free will versus preordination is at the heart of this story. This is a novel of complex philosophical ideas, and the slippery psychological games played between the characters are mirrored in the trickiness of the book's construction. Tristan and Grace grapple with the same questions that preoccupy many young people. Questions such as: to what extent can we claim to make our own destiny, to what extent are our life chances and choices predetermined by factors we cannot control, can we act in a truly free manner, and can we have an original thought, feeling or belief? This is an unsettling, powerful story that sets out to raise, not answer, questions.

*Stella Maden*



## Turf

Written by John Lucas  
Bodley Head £9.99  
ISBN: 978-0370332345

There is plenty of literature that deals with the 'dark side' but this is different. No fantasy ghouls or demons, no Harry Potter to wave a wand and make it all right. This novel deals with those who live by their own rules, by gang law that has all the power of life and death. It goes some way to

explain the behaviour of those who emerged onto the city streets to create havoc in the summer of 2011. There are some parents that would prefer to steer their children away from a story like this. They'd like to protect them from a world where adolescents deal drugs, carry weapons and kill to prove their manhood. The author of *Turf* offers no solutions. He tells it 'how it is' for many growing up on inner city estates. If you're looking for happy endings, stick to Harry Potter.

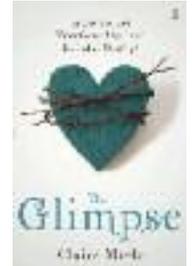
*Trevor Thompson*

## The Glimpse

Written by Claire Merle  
Faber £7.99  
ISBN: 978-0571280537

Ana lives in a divided world where everyone is DNA tested at birth to sort the Pures from the Crazies. Economic collapse and wars over fuel have resulted in the spread of schizophrenia, depression and anxiety throughout society. Through gene-mapping the authorities can identify the two classes of citizens. As a Pure she is able to live in the security of the Community, while the Crazies are forced to live in the City where life is much more difficult and unpredictable. When doubts are raised about her DNA test results and her Pure fiancé Jasper disappears just before their joining ceremony, Ana finds herself alone in the City looking for Jasper and answers to the many questions that are thrown up by his disappearance. In the City she learns how to survive and she also meets the man she loves, and it isn't Jasper. This is an exciting and fast-moving thriller for older teenage readers.

*Jan Lennon*



## All Fall Down

Written by Sally Nicholls  
Marion Lloyd (eB) £7.99  
ISBN: 978-1407121727

"Ring a ring of roses, a pocket full of posies, Atishoo! Atishoo! All fall down." In 1349 Black Death was sweeping across Europe, with almost half of the population of Britain about to die. The story of that real catastrophe is told by Isabel, a young peasant girl from a village outside York. The fear, despair and helplessness felt by everyone alive at the time: young or old, rich or poor, priest or beggar, are all vividly depicted in this thought-provoking account. Through ignorance and religious teachings many lost hope, believing that the end of the world was nigh, but others had the determination to look to the future and survive. A powerful and compelling novel about inner strength and spirit when surrounded by death and desolation!

*Martin Kromer*

