



The Flow

Written by Caroline Martin
 Lovell (eB) £6.99 ISBN: 978-0992810108

Following the 2008 financial crisis, law and order collapsed and Britain was overtaken by a creationist political force from the United States, known as the Optimas Party. It is now 2017 and the new political and social order is well-established. Lexi lives in Oxford, in a highly digital world where information is controlled through the Flow, a closely monitored version of the internet. Libraries have been destroyed, as books were seen as subversive, encouraging free thinking. Alexa becomes involved with a group of young people who are suspicious of the Flow and who become concerned when a sickness begins to kill large numbers of citizens. The official story is that prayer is the only answer, but Alexa and friends uncover the truth: vaccination rather than prayer is the only solution. Will science triumph over religious dogma to save society? This is a very well written story, weaving and twisting like a thriller, with clever control of pace and use of one-word chapter headings to achieve the maximum tension. The characterisation of the young people is excellent, as is the realistic dialogue and easy style. Thought-provoking and convincing, it carries important messages about politics and society, as well as placing a question mark over our future.

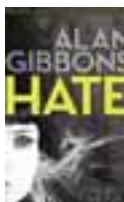
Liz Dubber

Just One Year

Written by Gayle Forman
 Definitions (eB) £7.99 ISBN: 978-1849419260

Just One Year is the sequel to *Just One Day*, beginning immediately after those momentous twenty four hours. Our hero, Willem, is still in Paris, but has lost contact with Lulu, the girl who captured his heart in just one day. Devastated Willem returns home, but cannot get Lulu out of his mind. During the next year he does everything possible to find her, but to no avail. Eventually, he realises that even though he knew her for such a short time, Lulu has changed him for the better. This is a moving tale of loss, alienation and dawning love. It follows Willem's journey after losing Lulu, his realisation that he is still mourning the death of his father, many years earlier, and the effect this has had on his other relationships. Willem's life choices, influenced by memories of his father and Lulu, gradually help him to move on and regain his love for life. This tender love story can be read as a stand-alone, but you will want to discover just what made Lulu so special to Willem, and so read *Just One Day*.

Jane Hall



Hate

Written by Alan Gibbons
 Indigo (eB) £8.99 ISBN: 978-1780621760

Eve is still grappling with shock and grief after her sister, Rosie, was beaten to death by a gang of teenagers. Anthony witnessed the murder but was too frightened to step in; he ran away and has tormented himself ever since. Now the trial of the ringleaders is coming up, and Anthony is hoping to keep a low profile in the new school his mother believed would give him a fresh start. But Anthony finds himself in the same class as Eve. There are big themes here: what it is to love, and to have the loved one ripped untimely from you; what it is to hate, and be hated; the power and the cost of forgiveness, and what it takes to stand up for what is right. The story is controlled and well-paced; a tense tale of two families living in a nightmare from which none of them can escape.

Yvonne Coppard



The Dark Inside

Written by Rupert Wallis
 Simon & Schuster £6.99 ISBN: 978-1471118890

This ambitious novel deals with the big questions: Is there a God? Why do bad things happen? Who and what am I? Does this existence mean anything? These questions are being asked by the two main characters, James who has lost his mother in a car crash and is living with his violent abusive step-father and Webster, who is an ex-soldier traumatised by events in Iraq which precipitated the death of a young girl. Add to this a group of fairground travellers led by an old woman who may or may not have magic powers, but who has convinced Webster that he has been attacked by some kind of werewolf and that, at the next full moon, he will turn into one. It is a heady mix which Rupert Wallis manages to make us believe, or to, at the very least, suspend our disbelief. He achieves this through the power of his descriptions, especially the exotic and original imagery which enhances the strangeness of the almost mystical world he is evoking. This is a challenging, but worthwhile, read for those with a taste for philosophy mixed with spookiness.

Nigel Hinton

Half Bad

Written by Sally Green
 Penguin (eB) £7.99 ISBN: 978-0141350868

Nathan is designated as a "Half Code" until the Council of White Witches decides if he is truly a white witch or a black witch. However, as their rules for his life become more restrictive, Nathan's innocence and good nature become hardened and frustrated. It seems the Council are doing everything in their power to prove he is a black witch like his infamous father and, if they do, he will be hunted down and eliminated. This is a powerful story about a teenager trying to understand his own values and worth, as well as an exciting and gripping adventure. Sally Green experiments successfully with a second person narrative to show Nathan's coping strategies and her excellent and thoughtful writing explores important themes about prejudice and tolerance. *Half Bad* is an ideal title for older readers who enjoyed the Harry Potter series but now want something with added depth and layers. This brilliant and breathtaking debut novel is the first part of a trilogy.

Benjamin Scott



When Mr Dog Bites

Written by Brian Conaghan
 Bloomsbury (eB) £7.99 ISBN: 978-1408838365

Dylan Mint is a sixteen year old with Tourette's, attending special school. He overhears one of the doctors say that his life will come to an abrupt end in March, so thinks he is going to die. He then decides to devise a 'bucket list'. What follows is very amusing, heart-warming and poignant. Dylan's life is a constant battle with his swearing, tics and howling like a dog, but he never lets his condition get him down. He is fiercely protective of his Mum, who is coping whilst his Dad is away in Afghanistan, and his best "bud", Amir, who is constantly being bullied. It is written from Dylan's perspective and thus the language, humour and slang is typical of a teenager with a condition such as his. Although subtitled "a story about life, death, love, sex and swearing", the bad language and sexual innuendos do not distract from it being a really touching novel, which has two distinct covers as it is marketed for both the young adult and the adult bookshelf.

Ingrid Fox