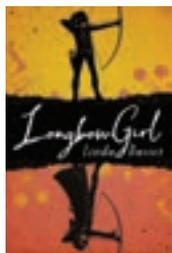


## Convincing novels



### Longbow Girl

Written by Linda Davies  
Chicken House £6.99  
ISBN: 978-1910002612

Merry Owen is the Longbow Girl. For centuries her family have bred ponies on their farm in the shadow of the Black Castle, home of their arch enemies, the de Courcys. Her descendants have always been

skilled in the longbow and she has maintained that tradition. Facing the loss of her family farm, Merry finds an old book buried in a chest, amongst the roots of a storm-turned tree. She thinks it could be the answer to their problems when she discovers that the book offers her the chance to travel back to the time of Henry VIII and possibly change her family's fortune. Will she be brave enough to try where others have failed? A beautifully written debut novel, compelling and enjoyable to read. Characters are well developed and the language is evocative with descriptions so vivid that the sense of time and place is remarkable. The book draws the reader in from the beginning and the reading experience is powerful and immersive. The link between the modern and the Tudor periods works really well. Definitely a writer to look out for in the future. The excellent cover of the book sums it up – a rip-roaring, historical adventure.

Annie Everall

### Codename Eagle

Written by Robert Rigby  
Walker £6.99  
ISBN: 978-1406346671

At the outbreak of the Second World War Paul saw his father shot and his mother removed to a concentration camp. He managed to escape, travelling to France in the hope of reaching Spain and then England. Although only seventeen, he was desperate to get into the military and to take his revenge on those hated Nazis. Paul soon discovered that the French were a very mixed bunch – some hated the Nazis as much as he did but many just wanted to get through the occupation as best they could. Knowing who you could trust became a matter of life and death. After failing to cross the Pyrenees he managed to make friends with Resistance fighters, hoping he could get into the fight. However, he didn't realise that the war was coming to him as an élite group of Germans had landed nearby, planning to capture him for interrogation. The story then takes off and becomes a thrilling, high speed all-action war novel. A gripping tale that gets to the heart of those brave few in occupied France, who just would not lie down without a fight.

Trevor Thompson



### Flora in Love

Written by Natasha Farrant  
Faber & Faber £6.99  
ISBN: 978-0571326969

Thirteen-year-old Bluebell Gadsby lives in a large and unruly family. Mum and Dad argue a lot, and seventeen-year-old Flora, eleven-year-old Twig and seven-year-old Jasmine all pursue their different

interests with enthusiasm and mixed success. The family is not without tragedy, for Bluebell's twin sister, Iris, died three years earlier. The story is told with humour, skill and great timing. The plot is complex and involved but never out of control, and presents a mystery that needs solving. There is a wide array of characters, each having their own individual challenges.

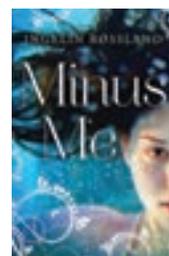
Developments in Bluebell's love life are woven into the story and her faltering attempts at a first kiss with her first boyfriend are handled brilliantly. The whole book is suffused with humour and light-hearted good fun. Key episodes are presented as film scripts, in the form of a video diary, since Bluebell has developed into a video journalist and camera operator, and this lends variety and interest. This is great fun and a great read.

Liz Dubber

### Minus Me

Written by Ingelin Røssland  
Oneworld £7.99  
ISBN: 978-1780746944

Linda is on her way to a diving competition when out of the train window she sees a boy who seems to want something from her. The next day he appears at a critical moment just as she is about to dive and her dive is exceptionally good. But her life changes dramatically when she wakes up in hospital to be told that she has a rare, life-threatening heart condition. Linda and her best friend, Maria, compile a list of all they want to do as thirteen-year olds – have a party, kiss a boy, travel on their own, and Linda begins ticking the experiences off her list with enormous determination. Again and again, the mysterious boy, Zak, appears at critical moments as Linda begins to check things off her list. With Zak's encouragement, Linda begins to see some of her past actions in a new light. Thoughtful readers will find this Norwegian novel fascinating – action-packed, but also deserving a great deal of thought.



Marianne Adey



### White Petals

Written by Maria Grace  
Firefly £7.99  
ISBN: 978-1910080245

Emmeline's dad and her grandmother have both recently died. This was a mighty double blow for the family and her mum has found it hard to cope. At the beginning of this story her mum has a violent

breakdown and is sectioned, so Em and her younger sister are taken into care. For the next three months she must live in a children's home while her sister will live with foster carers. After an uncertain start, Em finds the other residents of the home are all on her side and the friendships she makes there help her cope with the bullying she is subjected to at school. There is an interesting twist as it appears she has inherited the family's psychic gift and she is able to hear the thoughts of the bullying Stacey. It is good to see realistic, but positive, images of children who have to live in children's homes. These young people have many problems, but firm friendships are formed in a very short time and this gives Em a degree of stability for as long as she needs it.

Jan Lennon

### The Changeling

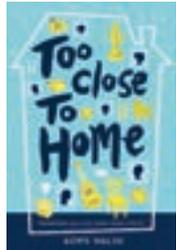
Written by Helen Falconer  
Corgi £7.99  
ISBN: 978-0552573429

This magical adventure owes much to traditional Irish folklore. Aoife is a fifteen-year-old schoolgirl living in rural Ireland. She appears to live a regular life but her father is obsessed with Irish folklore. She often wonders why there are no photographs of her as a



baby. When Aoife sees a young child running on the mountainside she feels compelled to follow her, but the child disappears. Before long, Aoife and her friend, Shay, have tumbled headlong into Tir na nÓG, the underworld of young people, where Aoife learns that she is a changeling. Will she and Shay ever be able to return to the land of the living? This is a well constructed magical adventure story, with an intricate plot, set in a convincing fantasy world. The world of teenagers and school above provides a realistic contrast to the magical world below. The sense of place is strong, with mountains and bogs adding to the sense of mystery and blurring the boundaries between reality, religion and folklore. The story is rooted in Irish culture with Gaelic names, and is a fascinating and compelling read.

*Liz Dubber*



## Too Close To Home

Written by Aoife Walsh  
Andersen £7.99  
ISBN: 978-1783443000

Minnie is the mainstay of her very busy, overcrowded home. Eccentric Czech Gran Bebi is popping out to meet her aging 'boyfriend', Mum Nita is teaching late, baby Raymond is grizzling, Bible-obsessed sister

Selena is lost in the Gospels again, demanding, autistic sister Aisling needs to share her thoughts, best friend Poppy is 'rabbiting on' about new love, Jorge, again, all whilst Minny is trying to find quality time to spend with an old friend. It's a lively, severely over-peopled household with too much going on. Even expert time-juggler, Minny – everyone's confidante and always reliable – becomes worryingly overstretched. When her father decides to return from America with his new partner, deciding he wants to opt into family life once more, she feels betrayed and outraged. However, Minny continues trying to cope with the demands and fears of her family. In doing so, she learns that she must trust others and delegate, that the most unexpected people have experience and skills to offer, and that time for oneself is not a greedy or guilty pleasure, but a real necessity. A very human, credible and loving story which helps readers understand that everyone is complex, as is family life.

*Tina Massey*

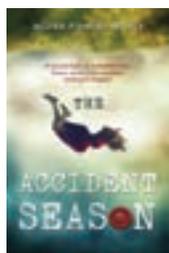
## Deep Water

Written by Lu Hersey  
Usborne £6.99  
ISBN: 978-1409586104

Danni arrives home from swimming training to find her Mum has disappeared, taking the car and her bag with her, but leaving her mobile phone. Dad arrives to take her back to his house while the search goes on. Her mother is found, but in a catatonic state, and it seems that there is no way to penetrate her mind to release her. Gradually, with the help of her newly discovered grandmother, Danni realises that she has powers that she never even guessed existed, let alone within herself – all inherited from her mother and grandmother. Only by developing and using those powers can she save her mother. Set in modern times, it weaves in the ancient and mysterious Celtic folklore of Cornwall. Difficult to put down, the plot evolves slowly, but inexorably, towards the dramatic resolution. It is an amazing story, very well told. The ever-increasing tension builds to a shattering climax.



*Patricia Thompson*



## The Accident Season

Written by Moira Fowley-Doyle  
Corgi £7.99  
ISBN: 978-0552571302

Each October, Cara's mum insists in covering up hard surfaces with rugs, she turns off the gas hob and generally becomes over protective. The idea of an

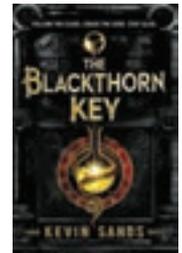
'accident season' is part tradition and part family myth – it brings fear, broken bones and even death. Cara, her older sister, Alice, and adopted brother, Sam, just live with it year after year. But this year, things are about to change as uncomfortable, and even deadly, truths prepare to surface. A girl at school, unnoticed by everyone except Cara, has vanished without a word, Cara's friendship with Bea is under threat and Alice is entrapped in a dangerous relationship. As the story hurtles towards its climax, the family conspiracy that keeps it alive finally breaks, but will it keep them all together or push them further apart? Fowley-Doyle's novel is compulsive, wild and utterly haunting. A story of family, friendship and ghosts of the past that is unputdownable.

*Benjamin Scott*

## The Blackthorn Key

Written by Kevin Sands  
Puffin £6.99  
ISBN: 978-0141360645

Christopher Rowe has spent all his young life in an orphanage, until the apothecary, Benedict Blackthorn, enters his life, and employs him as his apprentice. Everything is going to plan, as Christopher begins to learn the medicinal secrets of his new trade – until the murders begin. Slowly, one by one, apothecaries are being murdered in London Town, and eventually Benedict Blackthorn becomes the latest victim. Christopher finds himself on the run and he is drawn into a secret world of cults and puzzles, with only a few clues left by his master to help him. Christopher is determined to track down his master's killers and he recruits his best friend, Tom, to help him. We witness this mysterious adventure through the eyes of Christopher, and we find ourselves caught up in a world of alchemy, codes, remedies, potions, conspiracies and betrayals. At times quite graphic in its description of the violent scenes which occur, this book never fails to urge you to turn the next page, to solve the next puzzle, and catch the murderers. Definitely for those who love crime novels and puzzles.



*Allister Jordan*



## Everything, Everything

Written by Nicola Yoon  
Corgi £7.99  
ISBN: 978-0552574235

Madeline suffers from Severe Combined Immunodeficiency, meaning she is allergic to the modern world. Consequently, she has a full-time nurse, studies online with remote tutors and visitors to her home are rare. When new neighbours move in next door Maddy begins an online relationship with Olly, the teen son. They immediately bond, each having their own hardships to live with. However, as the two become closer, Madeline begins to resent her protected life and decides risks are sometimes worth taking. This is an imaginatively written love story. It tells of the growing love between Maddy and Olly, and also explores the often challenging love within families. The originality of the different chapters is very effective, as some contain just a few words or occasionally only an illustration, but each one perfectly illustrates how Maddy is feeling at that time. The reader sees Maddy gradually develop – initially accepting, but increasingly questioning more as events unfold. Nicola Yoon is definitely an author to watch. She has created a novel of love and self-discovery, with an ending that will leave readers stunned. A wonderful debut novel.

*Jane Hall*