



#NYALITFEST NEWSLETTER

Issue 1 - December 2018

Welcome to the #NYALitFest Newsletter!

Welcome to the NYALitFest Newsletter! Here you'll find news on our upcoming events, guest author features, reviews and competitions. We hope you enjoy!

Make sure you join our mailing list to ensure you get this straight to your inbox – sign up at www.nyalitfest.wordpress.com

16 March 2019

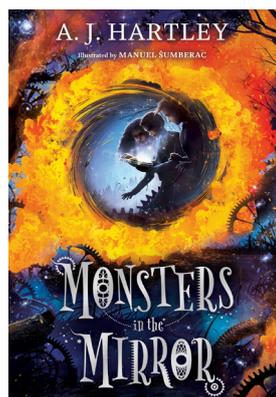
We're busy booking authors, publishers and exhibitors to take part in our next festival. Let us know who or what you'd like to see there and we'll see if we can make it happen. Contact us on Twitter @NYALitFest.

And we have a bigger venue, so we'll need to fill it! If you have a business selling bookish themed items please do get in touch, we're taking bookings for stalls now. There'll be no charge for this.

Contact us here for more information: www.nyalitfest.wordpress.com/contact/

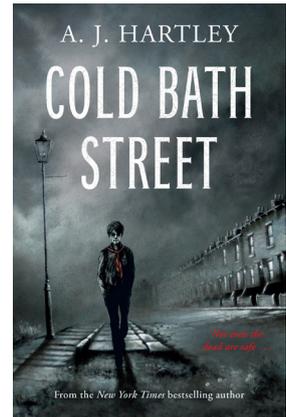
COMPETITION

We have ten proofs of UCLan Publishing's newest Middle Grade title to give away! To be in with a chance of winning one, just tweet @NYALitFest with #monstersinthemirror. Winners will be selected at random – closing date 12pm 14th December. Just check out that finished cover!



CARNEGIE NOMINATED!

Cold Bath Street by A.J. Hartley has been turning the heads of book buyers and industry types alike since launching in March 2018. It was first stocked in Waterstones Preston, then became one of the few student made books to be stocked nationwide. Now the spooky ghost thriller has received a nomination for one of the oldest and most prestigious book awards in the UK, the Carnegie Medal!



Since awarding it's first medal way back in 1936 to Arthur Ransome for his novel *Pigeon Post*, the Carnegie team have been dedicated to finding and rewarding the very best that Children and YA fiction has to offer. Nominations are awarded by local librarians, then the nominated titles are taken nationwide to schools for students to read. Feedback is then fed back to the panel to determine a longlist, shortlist and an overall winner.

The most exciting part of this is the fact that *Cold Bath Street* will be standing shoulder to shoulder with some of this year's biggest novels from multi-million pound publishers. It will be competing with Tomi Adeyemi's *Children of Blood and Bone*, Sophie Anderson's *The House with Chicken Legs*, Holly Black's *The Cruel Prince* and many more for a place in the longlist, due to be revealed in early 2019. It won't be an easy feat, however. 130 titles are currently nominated. Those will be narrowed to twenty, then to around eight before an overall winner is chosen. But although it's incredible to even be nominated, we want to see A.J. Hartley's name amongst past winners such as Philip Pullman's *Northern Lights*, Patick Ness' *A Monster Calls* and Neil Gaiman's *The Graveyard Book*. If you're one of the lucky people reading the Carnegie Medal nominees, be sure to watch out for a certain English street that will lead you to an unforgettable journey of suspense and horror! JP

REVIEWS

Out Now:

***The Way Past Winter* by Kiran Millwood Hargrave, £10.99 (Chicken House 9781911077930)** In a world where winter has remained for its fifth consecutive year, circumstances have become even stranger — all



the boys are disappearing into the night. One of these boys, a young boy of Eldbjørn Forest, is Mila's older brother, Oskar. With only her instincts that tell her Oskar has not left of his own volition, Mila trudges her way through Eldbjørn Forest and beyond with a desperation to bring him home. But Mila isn't

alone, her new friend Rune has a few whimsical tricks up his sleeve to help fight the beasts of the forest — beasts commanded by a formless and callous antagonist known as the Bear. The only thing Mila is sure of is: the direction she's headed; where Oskar is gone; the way past winter if there is one; if Rune is right about everything; the cold and mysterious North.

From the author who brought you *The Girl of Ink & Stars* we now have *The Way Past Winter*, a book perfect for any young readers' winter reads collection. I wish I had had this to read when I was a young girl, curled up in bed through the cooler evenings of November and December. I can imagine myself on this journey through a glacial and enchanting world led by such a strong young girl protagonist, bravely exploring the unknown to help friends and family. I know I would have been inspired by this book, by Mila and by the magical world she scoured for her loved ones. I would have read more books because of this book and will for sure be reading whatever else is to come from the wonderfully talented Kiran Millwood Hargrave. AD

***Doctor Who: The Secret in Vault 13* by David Solomons, £6.99 (Penguin, 9781405937610)**

One of the first books to feature brand new Doctor, Jodie Whittaker, *The Secret in Vault 13* is one of the Doctor's most bizarre and fast paced adventures in recent times. With the new season off to a strong start, does this new book stand strong against the episodes we've had so far? From the get-go, author David Solomons delivers in almost every way. The story dives in at the deep end, starting



right in the middle of a rescue mission, and the pace is kept break neck throughout, making for a fast but gripping read. The audience are expected to know who the characters are already, with introductions kept relatively bare bones, so people who haven't watched any of the newest series may find this a little off-putting. But David does an excellent job in translating Graham, Yaz, Ryan and the Doctor from TV into the written word. Dialogue is witty and suited to each character and how they'd react to situations. Graham's dry sarcasm and the Doctor's quirky ways are standouts here. In regards to plot, this is classic Who at its finest. The focus on animated villains over moral dilemma feels like a throwback to the days of Eccleston's and Tennant's Doctors, which is a welcome change.

The book takes the structure of a two/three-part episode, with an overarching plot that takes the TARDIS crew to varied settings and hurls them into dangerous and adrenaline pumped situations. The goal? To piece together a mysterious message delivered by Graham's potted plant?! Yep, it's pretty wild. The villains are fun, if a little clichéd, If you aren't a fan of Doctor Who already, this won't win you over. If, however, you're a fan of the current series that's airing on BBC One, or even a fan of the early 2000's era of Doctor Who, there is plenty to enjoy in this book, regardless of your age. This is undeniably a kid's book, but it meets the standard that has been set by the newest series by keeping it fun, light and punchy. Not to mention there are a few neat little Easter Eggs for all you old-school fans out there. But you'll have to pick up a copy to find them. JP

***Pages & Co: Tilly and the Bookwanderers* by Anna James, £12.99 (Harper Collins, 9780008229863)**

Eleven-year-old Tilly lives with her grandparents in a home adjoined to their bookshop, 'Pages & Co.' Her mother mysteriously disappeared soon after she was born, and her grandparents have told her very little about her father. The bookshop is any booklover's dream, filled with floor upon floor of worlds to explore. Tilly finds solace by escaping into these fictional worlds where anything seems possible. But when Anne of Green Gables and Alice from Wonderland begin appearing in the shop things begin to take a turn for the magical. Tilly discovers the magic of 'bookwandering', a magic which allows a reader to enter the pages of any book they choose to read. Alongside her friend Oskar, Tilly begins to unravel the mysteries of her past and learns more about her



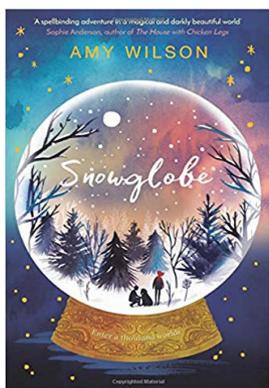
family than she could ever have imagined. But Enoch Chalk, a mysterious and sinister acquaintance of Tilly's grandfather, is always lurking nearby. Just who is this man, and what does he know about Tilly's mother?

This captivating adventure is perfect for any child who loves to read and appreciates the magical properties of a good book. Anna James creates a delightful and imaginative world which acts as a love letter to reading. James's characters feel genuine and well developed, and her settings are both comforting and intriguing. There are many references to classic literature within the text, which readers with prior knowledge will find appealing. Even without this knowledge the story is still truly enjoyable and uplifting, the kind of book that any bookworm will get lost in. Overall, this book is a strong start to what looks to be a series and a fantastic debut for Anna James. HC

***Snowglobe* by Amy Wilson, £6.99 (Macmillan, 9781509885800)** Clementine hasn't seen her mother for ten years and upon the discovery of a secret house containing countless enchanted snowglobes, each protecting the world from the magicians kept captive inside them, she believes her mother may still be alive. Was she taken, or did she leave Clem and her Pa behind? In one snowglobe she finds Dylan, the class bully's accomplice, trapped and screaming for help. She is determined to free him and release them both from the enchanted prisons. Along the way, Clementine seeks to make sense of the magical powers she has, and the family she never knew.

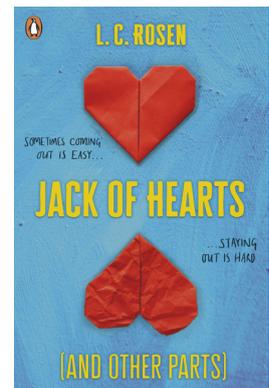
The story takes you on a journey to snowy mountains, magical libraries and under the sea with kooky characters, mermaids and a loveable canine. The dark mystery surrounding her mother's disappearance and the story behind the secrecy of the house and its inhabitants will keep you hooked from the beginning. The author sets the scene excellently, providing a vivid portrayal of the magical snowglobe worlds, jam-packed with spellbinding narrative. Clementine's character shows great courage – not only when standing up to the bully and taking on her powerful

aunts – but risking her life to help a boy who teased her and forgiving him when he snubbed her. As an outsider struggling to fit in at school, she is a fantastic role model to the young audience – many can identify the struggles she experiences. A real page-turner with a fantastic link between the modern world and fantasy,



Snowglobe will enchant and absorb any lover of fairy tales and imaginative writing. AH

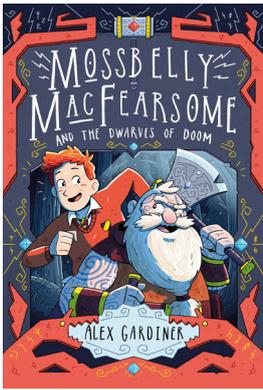
***Jack of Hearts* by L. C. Rosen, £7.99 (Penguin 9780241365014)** Jack is the novel's much talked about seventeen-year-old and proudly gay protagonist. He is attending school, working hard and having a lot of sex. Naturally, from classroom to classroom, everyone is talking about the latter: doing it during the homecoming game in the locker room with the coach from Highbrook; with three other people in Hannah Ling's hot tub; and even that time with the history teacher Mr Davidson. Whatever stories are floating around the school, one thing is certain: there's very little truth to the rumours, gossip and assumptions made about Jack. With a little persuasion from his friends, Jack begins writing an article on a student's blog, 'The Private Line', answering anonymous questions about sex. Soon, word of Jack's sex life piques the interest of a secret admirer who begins writing him love letters, but a seemingly sweet message in his locker begins to take its toll on Jack as they become something much more worrying, mysterious and maybe even a little creepy. Still, as Jack continues to write his sex advice column, helping some people and outraging others, he starts to think that maybe the column is causing even more problems than he'd anticipated.



The New York setting is a little different from the school experience in the UK, and the narrative is full off unusual teenage motivations, but *Jack of Hearts* is, regardless and maybe even in spite of these things, most definitely worth a read for any young adult who is or isn't thinking about sex. It's blunt, to the point and completely open, but most excitingly it's unique to the Young Adult genre. From language to context, prepare yourself for something that leaves little to the imagination in the most honest way possible. AD

January:

***Mossbelly MacFearsome and the Dwarves of Doom* by Alex Gardiner, £6.99 (Andersen Press, 9781783447916)** Meet Roger, an ordinary boy who unexpectedly finds himself flung into a world of dwarves and gorefiends, ogres and magical hammers. Journey with him as he is forced to reconsider everything he thought he knew about the world and become the warrior that he was chosen to be, in this



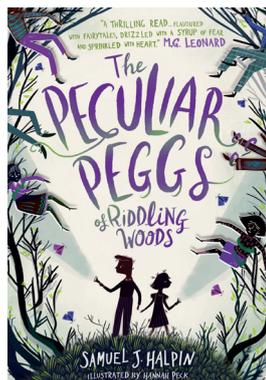
action-packed story that is full of surprises. It is rare to find children's fantasy that does not repeatedly regurgitate old tropes and storylines, therefore *Mossbelly MacFearsome and the Dwarves of Doom* stands out in its originality. Featuring memorable characters, a fast-paced storyline and witty narrative, this book is hard to

put down. The story is complemented by an attractive, engaging cover depicting the main characters in a way that pairs perfectly with the depiction your mind envisages. With the perfect blend of fantasy and familiarity, a unique historical narrative and skilful integration of whimsical humour, this book is perfect for young fans of fantasy. GR

***The Peculiar Peggs of Riddling Woods* by Samuel J. Halpin, £6.99 (Usbourne, 9781474945660)** Dirty windowsills. Sugar cubes. Wet washing. All things you need to concern yourself with if you live in the sleepy town of Suds. But what do these things have to do with a series of strange occurrences involving missing children?

The Peculiar Peggs of Riddling Woods is a charmingly dark tale that's dripping with style. Drawing inspiration from fables and legends, it creates an adventure that will send a chill up even the bravest reader's spine. It's the story of a young girl named Poppy, who is sent to live with her Gran after the sudden death of her Mum. Her father is recoiling from the loss of his wife, leaving Poppy to adjust to life in this strange new town. Soon after, she stumbles upon a mystery that's been plaguing the town - and bemusing its adults - for decades. With the help of her new friend, Erasmus, the two children decide to take the investigation into their own hands.

Despite its lovingly British setting, you wouldn't be wrong for comparing this novel to Disney's animated series *Gravity Falls*. At the start of the book, it's alarmingly similar to the TV show, with very familiar plot points and character types from the get-go. Both feature a boy and girl teaming up to solve a mystery involving a book and a spooky town; they befriend a strange old man that everyone thinks is crazy, heck, both even have pet pigs in a supporting role!



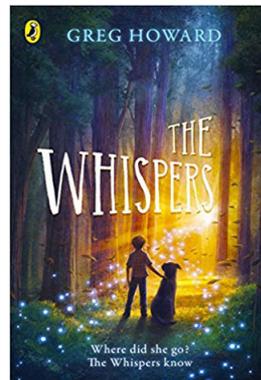
Thankfully, after the first few chapters the similarities began to disappear and the novel goes in a totally different and perhaps spookier direction.

Suspense is drip fed throughout, with the town's often rather crazy inhabitants creating a great atmosphere that makes you want to uncover every scrap of information about Suds. This, coupled with a few great twists and turns makes for a thrilling and touching conclusion that you'll definitely want to stick around for.

But perhaps the most surprising thing about this book was the character Erasmus. Where it's never explicitly stated or referenced, it's strongly suggested throughout that Erasmus is autistic. Halpin does an excellent job depicting Erasmus's relationships with his Mum and Poppy and it was often the most gripping part of the book. It offers kids an insight into what it is like to be autistic and how important it is to understand that just because they think in a slightly different way, they shouldn't be treated badly for it.

If you're looking for a creepy tale to read in your bed by torchlight, look no further. Fans of *Gravity Falls*, *Goosebumps* or *Are You Afraid of the Dark?* will find plenty to enjoy here. JP

***The Whispers* by Greg Howard, £6.99 (Puffin, 9780241367087)** Howard's tenacious young protagonist Riley James navigates a world



characterised by hope, loss, and teenage angst in this heart-warming Middle Grade mystery. Shunned by his angry and withdrawn father and disbelieved by his classmates, Riley appears to be alone in a desperate quest to solve the ambiguous case of his mother's disappearance.

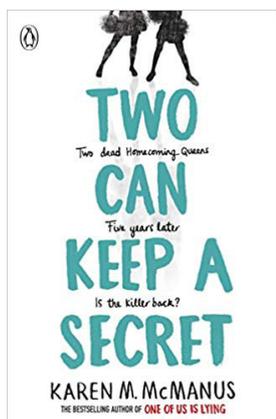
After a string of efforts to summon the Whispers (the magical woodland creatures he believes can lead him to his missing mother) proves unsuccessful, Riley's spirits begin to dampen. Out in the woods, he finds solace in the most unlikely candidate ; who kindly, and perhaps unintentionally, steers him in the direction of some painful truths.

Howard triumphs in the delicate treatment of complex themes – trauma, religion and sexuality, to name a modest few – rendering *The Whispers* a suitable tale for readers of R. J. Palacio's thoughtful bestseller, *Wonder*. The book also appeals to a young audience through

its careful use of language. The 'word of the day' motif ('*Abridged is when you leave some stuff out of a story to make it shorter because your best friend has a hard time concentrating*') compensates for the advanced language that is at times employed, and inadvertently encourages the broadening of young readers' vocabularies. In its function as a light-hearted task, Riley's 'word of the day' also serves to mitigate the impact of some of the hard themes dealt with in the novel – ensuring readability while maintaining the overarching message.

At its heart, this imaginative and heart-breaking tale showcases the strength of the human spirit, and teaches the importance of kindness in the face of tragedy. It is a tale that will remain with you. AS

***Two Can Keep a Secret* by Karen M. McManus, £7.99 (Penguin, 9780141375656)** Karen M. McManus, author of the international bestseller *One of Us is Lying*, is back



with another chilling mystery set in the town of Echo Ridge. *Two Can Keep a Secret* follows the stories of Ellery Corcoran and Malcolm Kelly, two teens whose families are bound up with the secrets of the town in a big way. Ellery and her brother Ezra move to Echo Ridge after their mother is admitted to rehab, and are fascinated by the disappearance of their mother's twin sister Sarah,

who vanished over twenty years ago. Malcolm's family have never been able to shake off the accusations that his brother Declan was responsible for the murder of his girlfriend. While the two teens strike up an unlikely friendship, Echo Ridge is thrown once again into fear as a series of disturbing messages spring up around town, promising that another homecoming queen will be killed. Ellery, Ezra, Malcolm and their friend Mia set about solving the case before it's too late - after all the killer could be closer to home than they thought.

Two Can Keep a Secret is filled with twists and turns that keep you guessing, making you question everyone that you come across in this interwoven cast of characters. Ellery's true crime obsession and detective-like mind convince you to believe every one of her theories, before she is thrown off again and again. This book will hook you until the very last line, so don't take anything for granted when you read it! Dividing the chapters between two narrators, Ellery and Malcolm, works well in keeping the reader on their toes, as the two decide what to share (or not share) with one another. The chilling atmosphere of these small town mysteries will

definitely appeal to you if you're a fan of *Pretty Little Liars* or *Riverdale*, and this book will distract and surprise you just as much! RJ

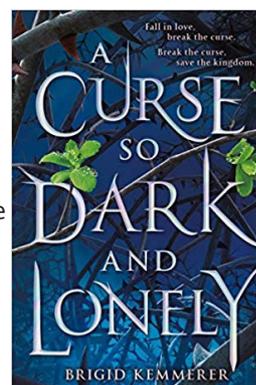
***A Curse So Dark and Lonely* by Brigid Kemmerer, £7.99 (Bloomsbury, 9781408884614)** A unique re-telling of a much loved classic, *Beauty and the Beast*, where a strong headed young girl won't hesitate to attack with a tyre iron when she thinks someone is in danger. Meanwhile a prince turns into a mindless beast that will spare no life; not even that of his own family.

Harper was not carved from the usual delicate heroine material. She is fierce, brave and determined, overcoming the challenges of being born with cerebral palsy. Instead of letting her condition define her, she continues to embrace it, making her only stronger and more capable.

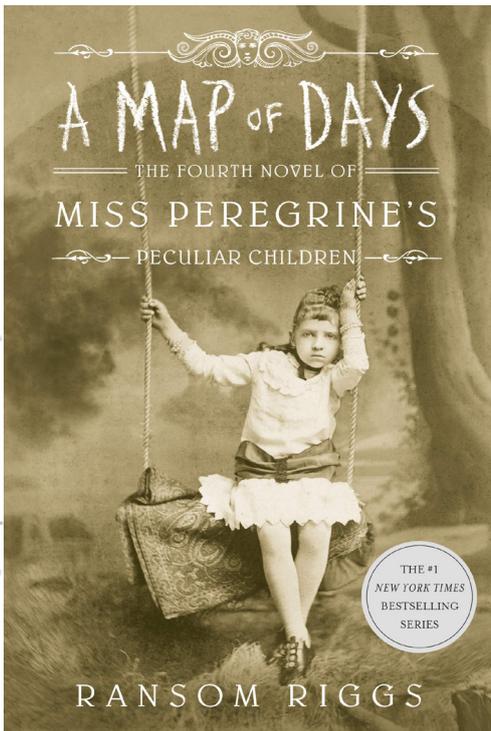
Meanwhile, Prince Rhen appears trapped in a somewhat endless cycle of failure. With the beginning of each new season, he is compelled to make a girl fall in love with him in order to break a curse that hangs over him. Yet when weeks later his attempts to charm have failed, and hope of love is lost, he transforms into a monster that will go on to destroy everything and everyone in sight.

Harper is taken to Emberfall against her will and portrayed as a distrusting character, with her only goal as to escape, fighting against the odds to return to her life in DC, where her brother and mother need her. However, slowly she starts to realise that there is a lot more at stake than Rhen's sanity. There is an entire kingdom in danger and Harper could help them if only she is able to obtain an ally in the Prince and his Commander, Grey. The reader is subsequently faced with doubt, will she fight for the people of Emberfall and help Rhen, or will she do whatever it takes to get home? Realistically, does she even have a choice?

This book is every bit as enchanting, intoxicating and unforgettable as described. Interest is spiked from the opening lines and undoubtedly maintained to the very end, with the reader held consistently captive in its pages. The story is the tale of two powerfully presented characters, accompanied by somewhat real life relatability of such a decision making process. If this intriguing and magical storyline is not enough, the reader is furthermore offered a highly proactive epilogue, leaving all craving more of this fascinating, imaginative and wholesome tale. JM



A MAP OF DAYS by Ransom Riggs



We all fell in love with *Miss Peregrine's Home for Peculiar Children*, fought our way through *Hollow City* and cried inside the *Library of Souls*, but just when we thought it was all over and our lives couldn't get any more peculiar, Ransom Riggs returns with this stunning fourth addition to the series.

In terms of the plot summary – without giving too much away – the peculiar children have been faced with many dangerous situations in the past, but they are now faced with their biggest challenge yet: modern day America. It kicks off minutes, if not seconds, after the ending of the previous novel and displays the peculiar children like you've never seen them before. Unlike the first three novels it is set in America rather than the UK. Due to the events which occurred inside the *Library of Souls*, the ageing clocks of each child have reset themselves. This enables them to age forward day by day, rather than becoming ninety years old all at once. As a result they are able to leave their loop in London for the very first time to visit Jacob in America, without life threatening consequences. The tables have turned and Jacob must teach them to fit into the present day, rather than them teaching him how to live in the past. When Jacob and his friends stumble upon a hidden bunker in his late grandfather's home, secrets begin to surface and his double life as a peculiar operative is no longer buried. Young Jacob Portman sets out to follow in his famous grandfather's

footsteps, but will he live up to the great Abe Portman? With his unique hollowgast ability at his disposal, he aims to finish the work Abe began all those years ago: saving America's vulnerable peculiars. With the beautiful pyrokinetic Emma Bloom on his shoulder and invisible Millard Nullins, super strong Bronwyn Bruntley and dead raising Enoch O'Connor by his side, Jacob intends to inherit the dangerous legacy left behind. But what about Miss Peregrine? Will the peculiars fit into normal society? Will they save the vulnerable in time? Will Emma and Jacob finally get to be together? You'll have to read it yourself to find out.

The entire story is written from the point of view of Jacob Portman, the main protagonist. This is perfect as it highlights the struggles he faces throughout and the feelings he has whilst overcoming each one, which makes him a very relatable boy next-door kind of character.

Throughout the novel there are various images of characters and maps which the children use in their adventure; however, for the very first time Riggs's peculiar kingdom is shown in stunning colour. The imagery is crucial to the storyline, as each character has been developed from an image which the author has found over time. This is a unique and brilliant addition to the story, as not only are the characters described but they can be seen by the reader. The use of maps also makes it interactive, as the reader is able to pinpoint the locations which the children travel to throughout.

The story of Jacob and the peculiars from book one up to *A Map of Days* really does grip you and becomes not only a big part of your life, but something that will stick with you for the rest of it. The story is highly relatable for all those who feel like outsiders in their own lives, as it tells you that it is okay to be different. Even though you may not fit in in one place, you will find a home in another and there is always a safe place to be peculiar.

The author leaves his concluding chapter on a cliff hanger, keeping what happens next a secret. This really grips the reader and makes you desperate to have the next book in your hands there and then, but fear not as Riggs has personally admitted that there shall be another two additions to this stunning series.

This novel is one to highly recommend to anyone with a love for dark fantasy fiction, and is by far one of the best novels on the market right now. Be prepared to become attached to each and every character and feel emotions for each as though they are real. AC

A Map of Days by Ransom Riggs, £14.99, October 2nd 2018 (Penguin 978014138590)