

The Prentice-Boy

Ray Rumsby

The Truth Shatters All

GENRE: HISTORICAL FICTION

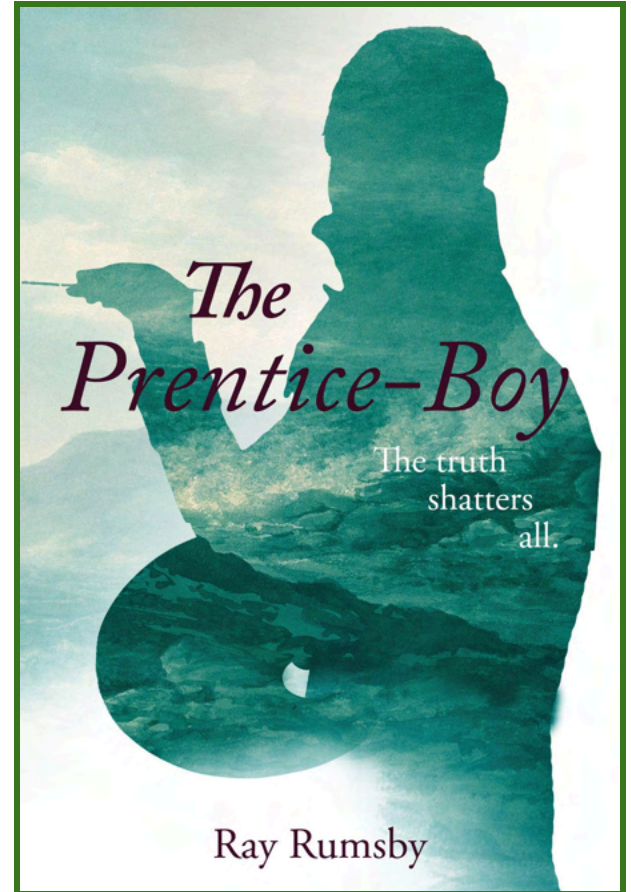
In 1820, London aquatint artist William Daniell hires Jesse Cloud, a homeless teenager, as his apprentice. Nothing is as it seems. A tour of East Anglia forces them to confront each other's secrets and their own delusions. The artist must learn how to see and his prentice must learn how to survive – while the truth shatters all.

Today's concerns of inequality, refugees and gender identity powerfully resonate in this notable debut novel. Read it to discover both their world and ours.

I was genuinely sorry to finish this book. It had me completely engaged... and I loved the clever surprise in the middle of it.

- **Louis de Bernieres**, author of *Captain Corelli's Mandolin*

03.10.22



Following a successful career in education and training, **Ray Rumsby** turned his attention to campaigning and theatre. His play about the life and work of poet George Crabbe sparked the idea for his first novel.



Daisy Chain

Justine Gilbert

Power Wears Many Disguises

GENRE HISTORY/AMERICAN HISTORY

It's the Great Depression. The world is tilting towards war. In the White House, nothing is as it seems. Franklin Delano Roosevelt, the married president of the United States, has started a long and passionate affair with his cousin Daisy, and moves her into the West Wing.

Daisy is one of FDR's band of unconventional women: Eleanor Roosevelt, the fiery labour organiser, Frances Perkins, the first female Secretary of Labour, and his secretary Missy LeHand, a political operative in her own right. Middle-aged spinster Daisy becomes FDR's secret wife. That's not her only secret.

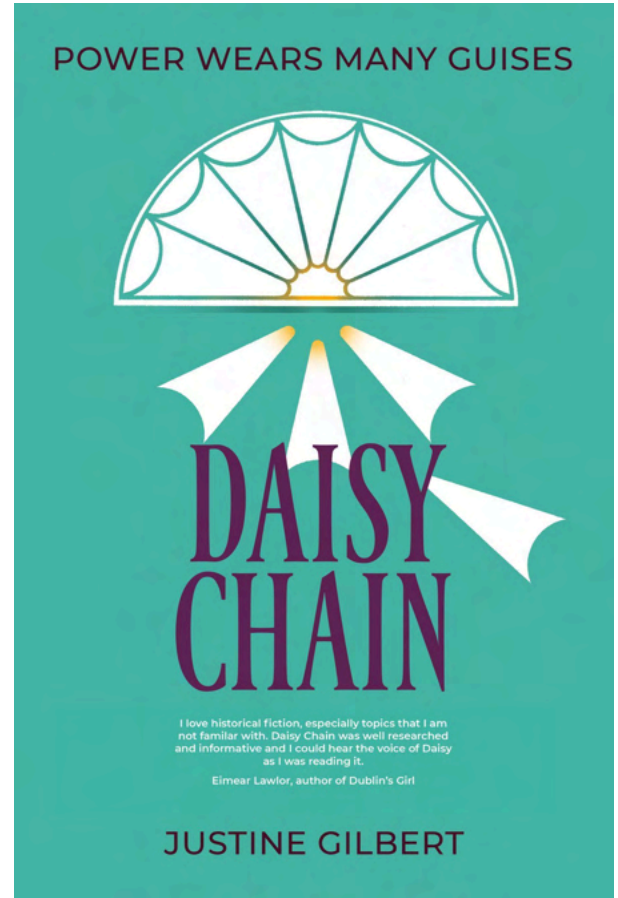
This fictional biography written by a family member who knew Daisy is the untold true story of a hidden love and hidden contributions, and of a presidency that benefitted from both.

Winner of the PageTurner Award, the Chill with a Book Award; Longlisted for the Historical Fiction Company Best Book 2022

Justine Gilbert shines new light on the tender side of one of America's legendary figures.

- **Louise Dean**, award-winning author and founder of The Novelry

01.03.23



Born in New York, on Manhattan Island, **Justine Gilbert** moved to London with her parents when she was six. She returned to the USA for regular visits, some of which involved seeing her grandmother's Cousin Daisy, who lived in Wilderstein on the Hudson River.



Brushstrokes In Time

Sylvia Vetta

A fictional memoir is about love, art, and post-Mao China.

GENRE: HISTORICAL FICTION

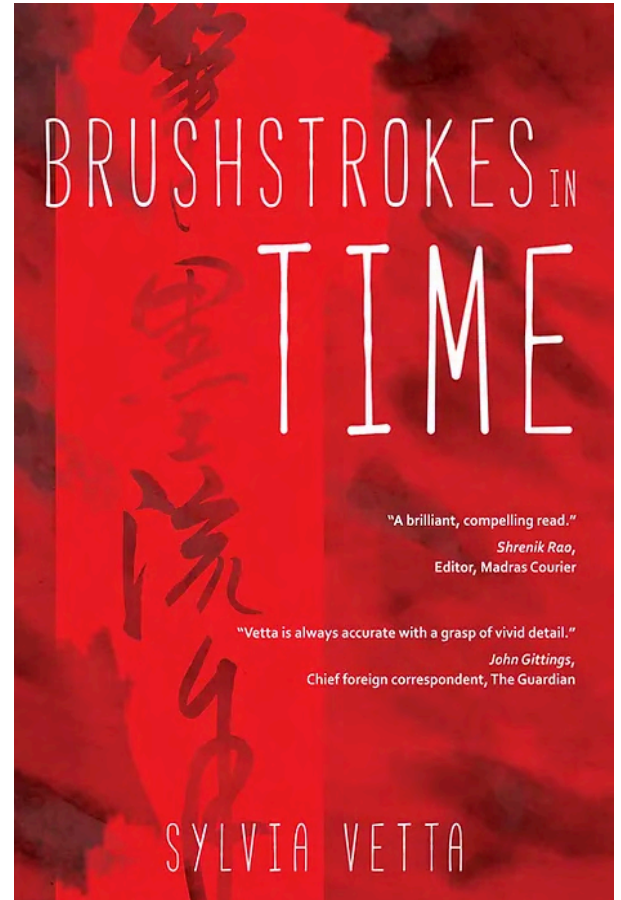
Brushstrokes in Time is a fictional memoir by Chinese artist, Little Winter, who tries to re-establish the bond with her American daughter, telling the story of her emotional and rebellious past.

While growing up in Communist China, Little Winter joins 'The Stars' art movement for freedom of speech in an era where self-expression and love was a dangerous act. Little Winter and her haunting love story connects us to a time of hope for freedom, and to a man frustrated by being kept in small shoes.

Vetta is always accurate with a grasp of vivid detail.

- **John Gittings**, Chief foreign correspondent, *The Guardian*

Sold in Germany
01.07.16



Freelance writer, author and speaker, **Sylvia Vetta** took up writing and broadcasting in 1998, when she began writing for The Oxford Times.



Sculpting the Elephant

Sylvia Vetta

Class, Colour, Culture.

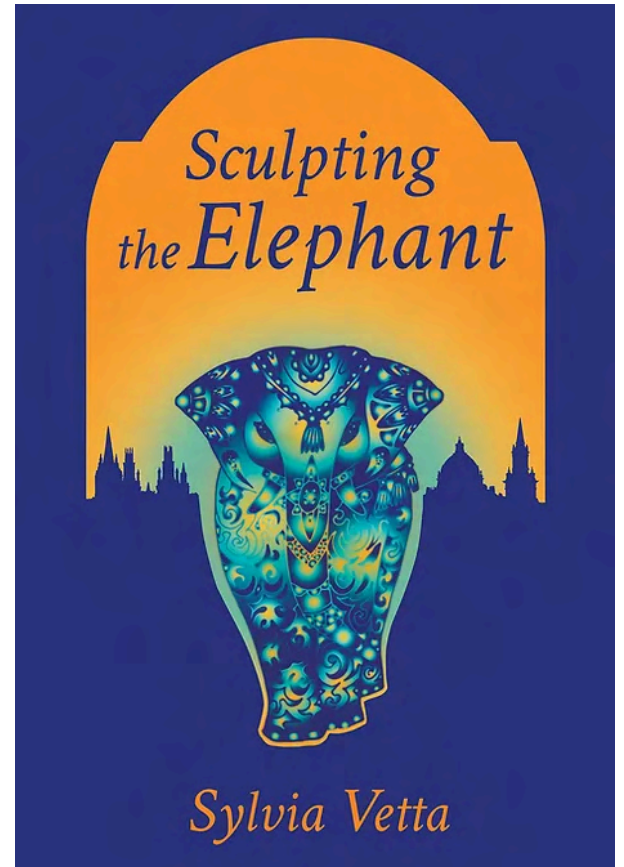
Can love overcome all three?

GENRE: HISTORICAL FICTION

Harry King, artist and antiques dealer, thinks he has just made the worst purchase of his life – an enormous Victorian chest of drawers filled with ancient newspapers and bric-a-brac that now takes up half his shop. But when he trips over the beautiful historian Ramma Gupta, he realises he might have got more than he bargained for. Their story becomes entwined with the life of a Victorian explorer who mysteriously disappeared. A cross-cultural journey takes them from Oxford to India to uncover love, secrets, and the teachings of a lost empire.

Sylvia Vetta has written a book which fundamentally traces the philosophical and moral dimensions of a journey which crosses racial and religious boundaries.'

- **Professor Rebecca Haque**, University of Dhaka, Bangladesh



Freelance writer, author and speaker, **Sylvia Vetta** took up writing and broadcasting in 1998, when she began writing for The Oxford Times.



02.04.19



Plague

Cassandra Fortune Series - Book 1

Julie Anderson

GENRE: MYSTERY/THRILLER

In this thrilling murder mystery power, money and love curdle into a deadly brew that could bring down the Mother of all Parliaments.

Work on a London tube line is halted by the discovery of an ancient plague pit and in it, a very recent corpse. A day later another body is found, also in a plague pit. This victim is linked to the Palace of Westminster, where rumours swirl around the Prime Minister and his rivals.

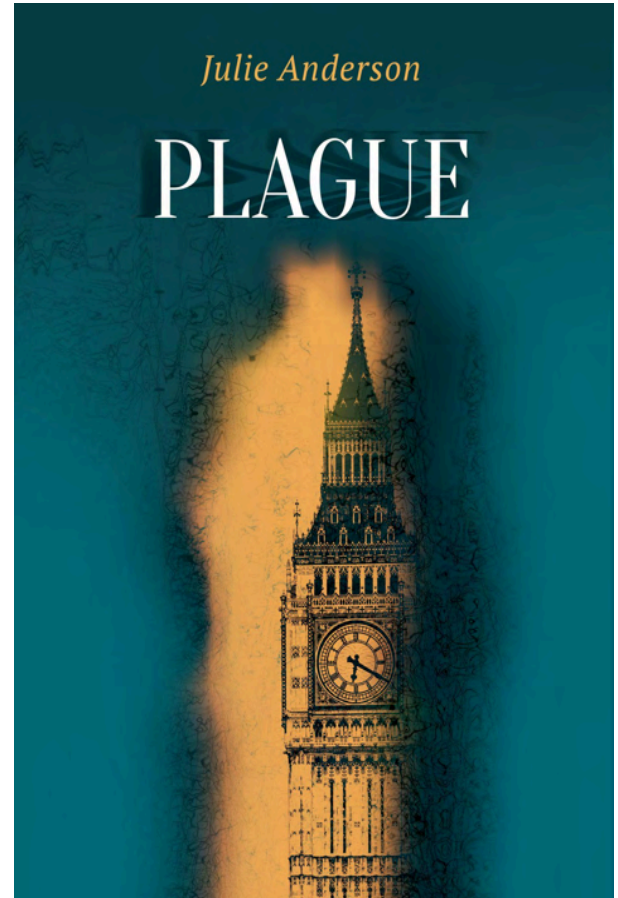
As the number of deaths climbs, the media stokes fear. Government assurances are disbelieved. Everyone feels threatened. A disgraced civil servant and a policeman must find the answer before Westminster closes for recess.

Time is running out. And it's not clear what – or who – will survive.

This is a tense Parliamentary thriller with the sour tang of authenticity.

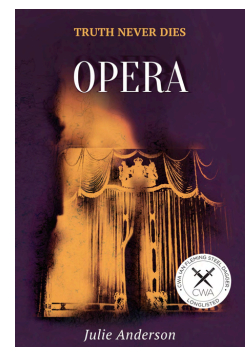
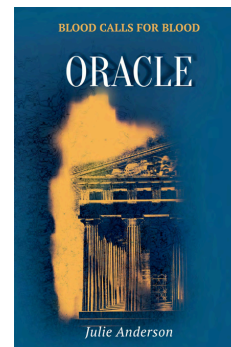
- **Annemarie Neary**, author of *The Orphans*

15.09.20



After retiring from a successful career in the civil service, **Julie Anderson** turned her attention to writing. Along with the Cassie Fortune mysteries, she has authored two children's novels and a collection of short stories.

Other books in the series:



Oracle

Cassandra Fortune Series - Book 2

Julie Anderson

GENRE: MYSTERY/THRILLER

Near the ancient Temple of Apollo, young idealists protest at a European governmental conference. Inside, business lobbyists mingle with lawmakers, seeking profit and influence. Then the charismatic leader of the protest goes missing.

The next day a body is discovered, placed like an offering to the gods. One day later a recent, broken corpse is found at the foot of the cliffs from where blasphemers were once tossed to their deaths.

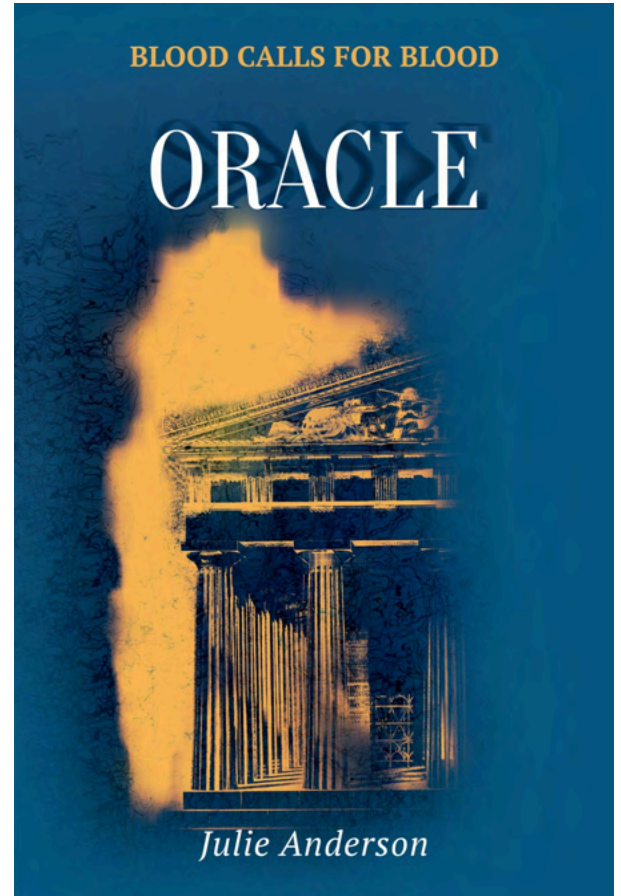
As a storm closes in and strange lights are seen on the mountain, power at the conference centre is cut off and all are isolated. No one trusts anyone else. Is a killer stalking the corridors? Or are primal forces reaching out from the past?

Like the cryptic Oracle of Delphi, Cassandra Fortune must supply the answer before the conference is over. And before more die.

There are more twists, turns and unexpected revelations in this story than the path leading to the Corycian Cave and they will keep readers guessing until the unexpected end.

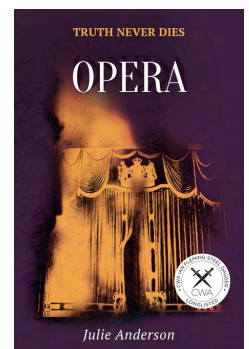
- **Jean M. Roberts**, author of *Blood in the Valley*

05.05.21



After retiring from a successful career in the civil service, **Julie Anderson** turned her attention to writing. Along with the Cassie Fortune mysteries, she has authored two children's novels and a collection of short stories.

Other books in the series:



Opera

Cassandra Fortune Series - Book 3

Julie Anderson

GENRE: MYSTERY/THRILLER

Determined to lay the ghosts of her past, Cassandra Fortune asks a former head of GCHQ for help, only to receive a message from beyond the grave. A riddle to puzzle out. A murder to solve.

She revisits an old betrayal in an ancient land, uncovering subterfuge and treason. And she grapples with her own disgrace and the man who'd destroyed her career and almost destroyed her.

As everyone prepares for Christmas, a shadowy presence haunts her footsteps. His criminal network shattered, the diabolical Lawrence Delahaye is back. Is he still seeking vengeance? And Cassie?

What is real and what only appears to be?

Who can be trusted and who is double-dealing?

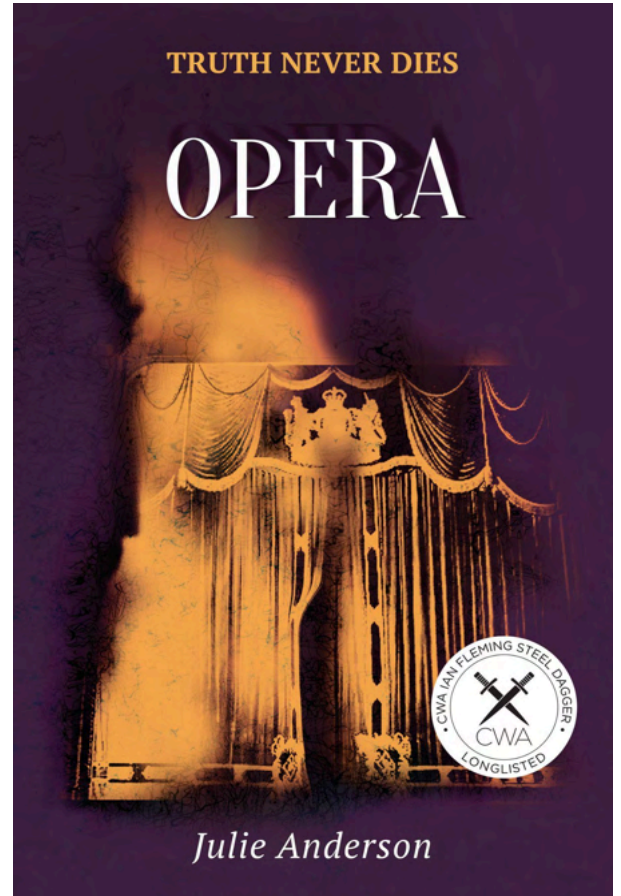
Cassie must find and face up to the truth, and survive.

Longlisted for the CWA Ian Fleming Steel Dagger Award for Best Thriller 2023

Calls to mind the joyfully clandestine dangers of Ian Fleming and John le Carré.

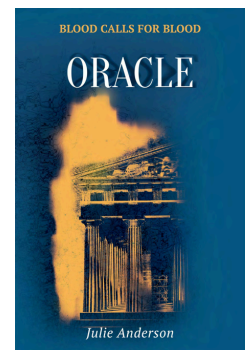
- **Callahan Books**

14.10.22



After retiring from a successful career in the civil service, **Julie Anderson** turned her attention to writing. Along with the Cassie Fortune mysteries, she has authored two children's novels and a collection of short stories.

Other books in the series:



The Door That Shouldn't Have Been There

A Modern Fairy Tale About Grief

Corinna Edwards-Colledge

A modern fairy tale that crystallises hope and mourning into a reflection on life itself.

GENRE: MODERN FANTASY/GRIEF

Once upon a time, a husband watches as his wife opens a Door. He tries to follow her, waking instead to find his beloved dead beside him.

Days later, The Door appears again. He doesn't know where it will take him. All he knows is that he's desperate to see his wife again.

This is a story about a husband's sorrow, and where it takes him.

This is a story about grief.

This is a story about what we do when faced with the loss of those we love.

Bound in hardback and richly illustrated with evocative artwork by Becky Gough.



Born in Manchester, **Corinna Edwards-Colledge** had a brief sojourn as an actress and singer; worked as a journalist; and has written poems, short stories, three novels and two novellas.



28.09.23



A Very Important Teapot

Dawson and Lucy Series - Book 1

Steve Sheppard

Dawson is the unlikeliest MI6 spy you'll ever meet. Good thing he has the lethally competent Lucy Smith for company.

GENRE: COMEDY/THRILLER

Dawson's life is going nowhere. Out of work and nearly out of money, he is forlornly pursuing the love of Rachel Whyte. But Rachel is engaged to Pat Bootle, an apparently successful local solicitor who has appeared from nowhere.

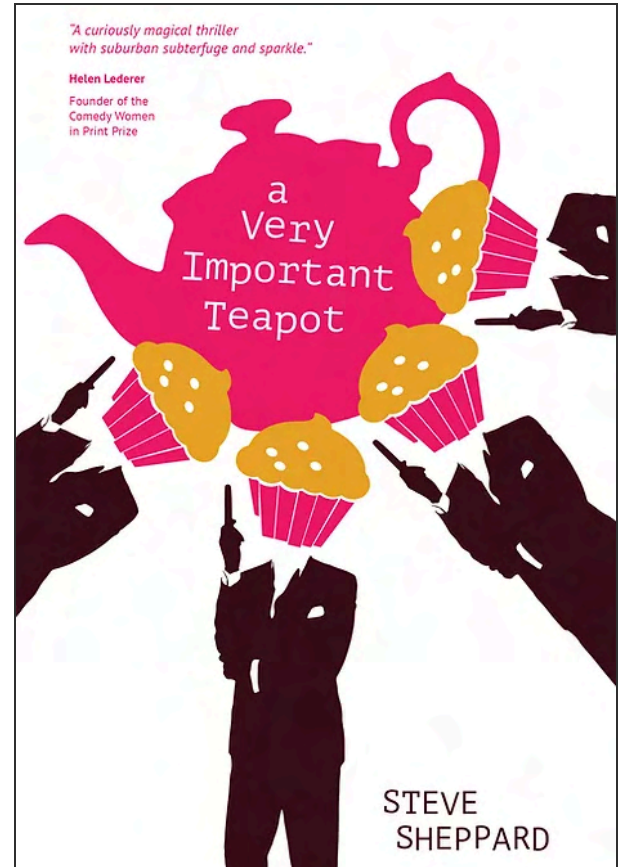
Then, out of the blue, Dawson receives a job offer from his best friend, Alan Flannery, which involves him jumping on a plane to Australia to "await further instructions". But instructions about what?

This is the start of a frantic chase around south eastern Australia with half the local underworld, the police and the intelligence agencies of three countries trying to catch up with Dawson.

A curiously magical thriller with suburban subterfuge and sparkle.

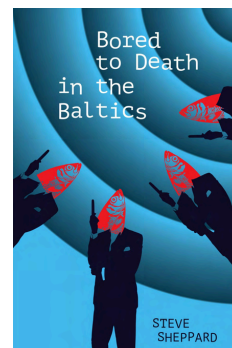
- **Helen Lederer**, comedy author, actress and founder of the Comedy Women in Print Prize

18.10.19



In between day job and writing, **Steve Sheppard** also composes short stories. 'Geronimo' achieved 2nd place in the 2019 To Hull and Back humorous short story competition.

Other books in the series:



Bored to Death in the Baltics

Dawson and Lucy Series - Book 2

Steve Sheppard

Dawson is the unlikeliest MI6 spy you'll ever meet. Good thing he has the lethally competent Lucy Smith for company.

GENRE: COMEDY/THRILLER

When a bomb explodes in front of Dawson on a sunny June morning, he is lucky to escape with his life. Certainly luckier than the man he is following. However, waking up several hours later in the bilges of a ship apparently heading for the Baltic Sea is quite depressing as it wasn't how he'd planned to spend his weekend.

Who was the man assassinated by the bomb?
Who has kidnapped Dawson, and will Lucy Smith find him in time?

What is happening deep underground in leafy Surrey and rural Estonia?

Is there a double-agent in MI6?

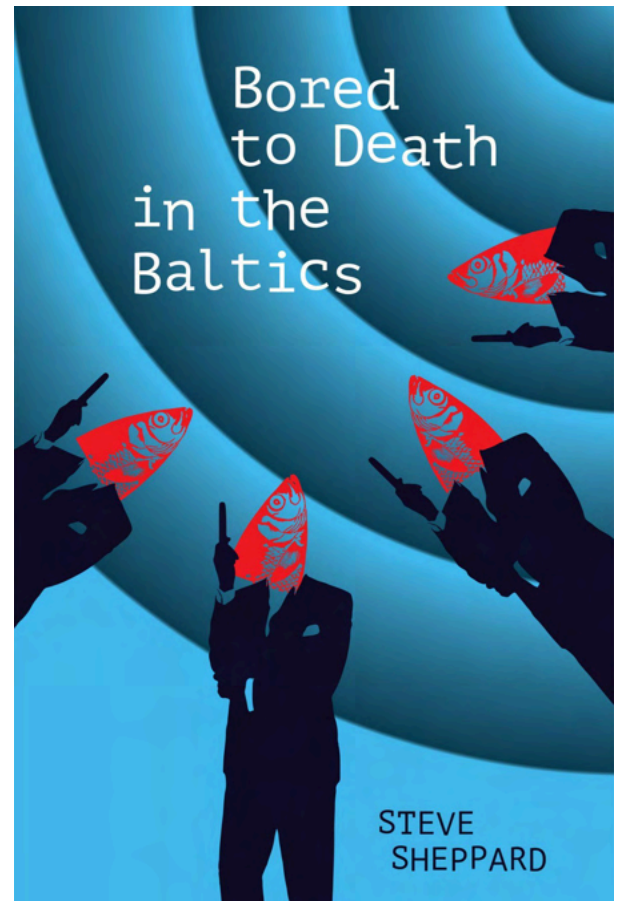
And can Dawson avoid being bored to death?

Praise for the series:

This is a thriller, a chase, a buddy story, a mystery [...] all smoothly told with hugely engaging characters, and rips along at a hectic pace.

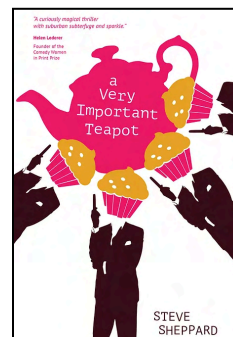
- **Adrian Magson**, author of *Hostile State*

14.07.21



In between day job and writing, **Steve Sheppard** also composes short stories. 'Geronimo' achieved 2nd place in the 2019 To Hull and Back humorous short story competition.

Other books in the series:



Poor Table Manners

Dawson and Lucy Series - Book 3

Steve Sheppard

Dawson is the unlikeliest MI6 spy you'll ever meet. Good thing he has the lethally competent Lucy Smith for company.

GENRE COMEDY/THRILLER

When their new employer dies in a suspicious road accident and his brother, a South African government lawyer disappears in Cape Town, Dawson and Lucy are recalled to MI6. For once their mission is straightforward: liaise with Rebecca Erasmus of South African State Security and find the missing lawyer. Then Rebecca is kidnapped. Surely this has nothing to do with the forthcoming presidential election and the vengeful Chinese assassin in town...

Why are Dawson and Lucy held up at gunpoint on Table Mountain?

Why is a South African presidential candidate hiding in a vineyard?

Can you fly a helicopter without scooping some goats up for the ride?

Praise for the series:

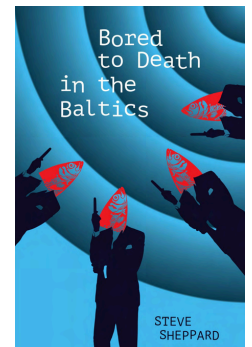
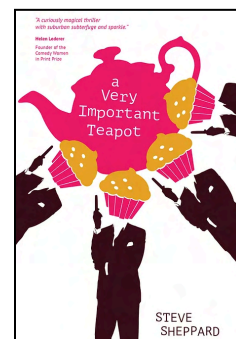
My goodness! What a hilarious, energetic and entertaining roller-coaster of a read this is. The pace never lets up.

- **Sue Clark**, author of *Note to Boy*



In between day job and writing, **Steve Sheppard** also composes short stories. 'Geronimo' achieved 2nd place in the 2019 To Hull and Back humorous short story competition.

Other books in the series:



17.04.23



Those Absent

On the Great Hungarian Plain

Jill Culiner

Jill Culiner captures a moment of profound change in Hungary, yet one hatred remains.

GENRE: TRAVELOGUE/JEWISH STUDIES/HOLOCAUST

A Hungarian village on the Great Plain: a microcosm reflecting this country's history from early invasion to Soviet subordination to European Community membership. Here, peasants, herders, party girls, former Nazis and lapsed communists share gossip as well as love stories; and unscrupulous leaders, totalitarian or freely elected, decide behaviour.

After living in the community for a decade, Culiner captures a moment in time of peaceful upheaval.

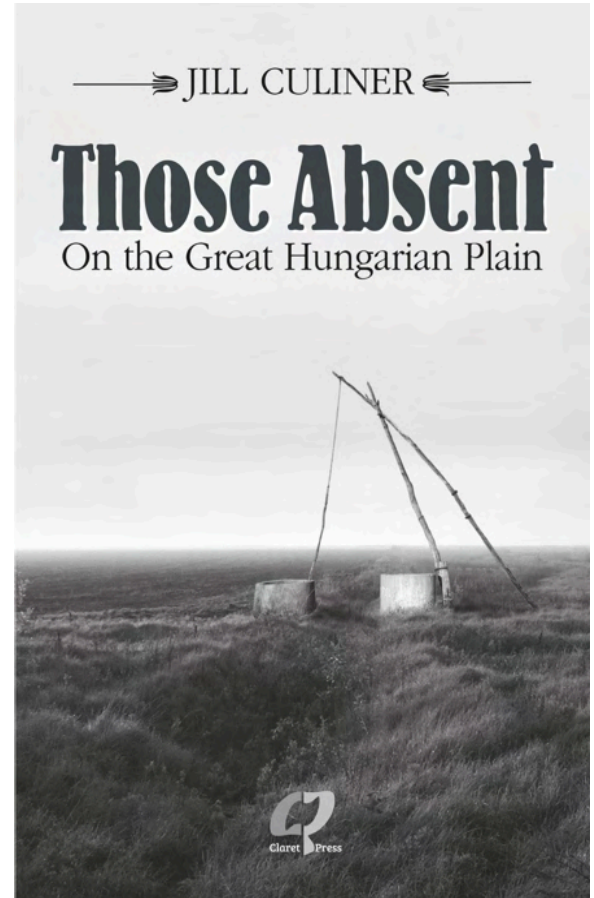
The old ways are vanishing. But what is being lost and what is remaining only slowly comes clear.

There remains one constant: hatred of the long-vanished rural Jew.

Part history, part detective story, part personal memoir, *Those Absent* brings to life a cast of characters fitting for a Dickensian novel.

- **Dr Michael Talalay**, writer, lecturer, Regents University London

28.02.2024



Born in New York, raised in Toronto, **Jill Culiner**, writer, social critical artist, and photographer. Her non-fiction book, *Finding Home in the Footsteps of the Jewish Fusgeyers*, won the Joseph and Faye Tannenbaum Prize for Canadian Jewish History.



A Contrary Journey

With Velvel Zbarzher, Bard

Jill Culiner

Retracing Velvel Zbarzher, the star of the Jewish Renaissance, from the Ukranian shtetl to Vienna and Constantinople.

GENRE: TRAVELOGUE/MEMOIR

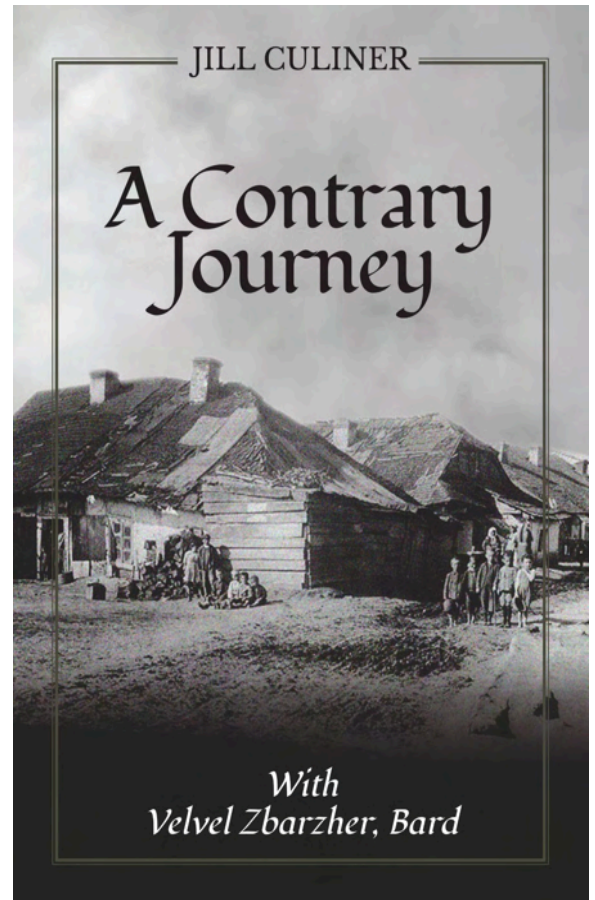
In nineteenth-century Eastern Europe, Jewish life was ruled by Hasidic rebbes or the traditional Mitnagdim, and religious law dictated every aspect of daily life. Secular books were forbidden; independent thinkers were threatened with moral rebuke, magical retribution, and expulsion.

Velvel Zbarzher, rebel and glittering star of fusty inns, spent his life singing his poems to a loyal audience of poor workers and craftsmen, and his attacks condemning the religious stronghold resulted in banishment and itinerancy.

Armed with a useless nineteenth-century map, a warm lumpy coat, and a healthy dose of curiosity Jill Culiner trudged through the snow in former Galicia, the Russian Pale, and Romania searching for Velvel, the houses where he lived, and the bars where he sang. But she was also on the lookout for a vanished way of life.

Culiner's first-rate eye allows her to render the world of the shtetl, past and present, with more intimacy, complexity and telling detail than anything else I have read.

- **Robert A Rosenstone**, Emeritus Professor of History, California Institute of Technology



Born in New York, raised in Toronto, **Jill Culiner**, writer, social critical artist, and photographer. Her non-fiction book, *Finding Home in the Footsteps of the Jewish Fusgeyers*, won the Joseph and Faye Tannenbaum Prize for Canadian Jewish History.



14.09.2021



Final Approach

My Father and Other Turbulence

Mark Blackburn

Final Approach charts the turbulent flightpath between a jet-setting father and a planespotting son

GENRE : MEMOIR/TRAVELOGUE

The 1970s were the final gasp of the Golden Age of Flying. Mark Blackburn grew up amidst this fuel-guzzling splendour, with airports his playground of choice. He came to adulthood well-heeled and well-travelled. However, he had to contend with his multimillionaire father.

Luxury cars. Private planes. Racing stables. Foreign Mistresses.

Paranoia, bullying and power plays.

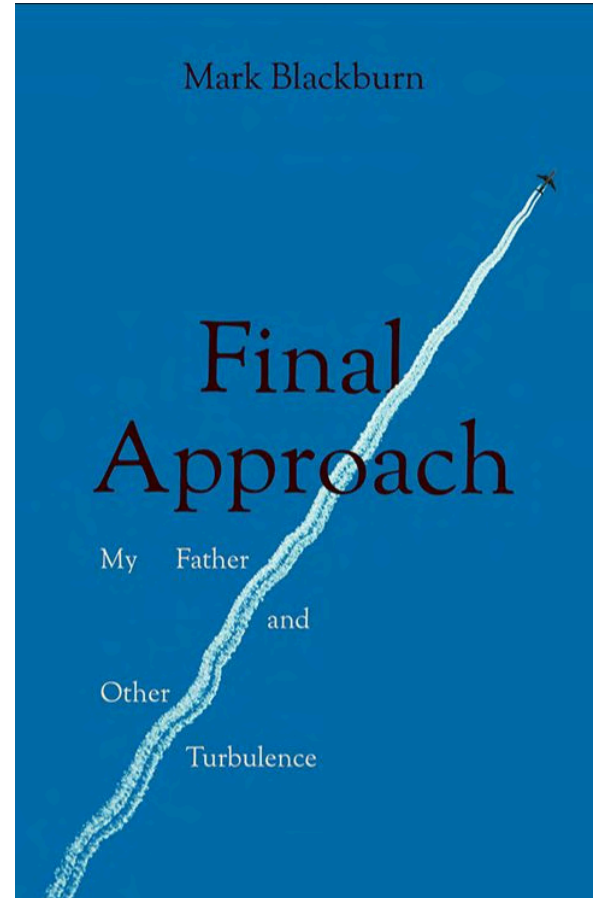
At the centre was the inescapable pull of the father.

Half memoir and half travelogue, wrapped in an ode to planespotting, this is one man's journey to break free.

A wonderful book that constantly surprises and delights.

- **Alan McCormick**, Best British Short Stories

23.11.23



Mark Blackburn has written a number of short stories, poems and other pieces of creative non-fiction which have been published online and in print. He was selected as Runner-Up in the Interact Ruth Rendell Short Story Prize, and shortlisted for the 2022 TLC Pen Factor Pitch Prize.



Black Tea

Stephen Morris

A memoir of love and identity that chronicles the changing face of Russia over thirty years.

GENRE: MEMOIR/TRAVELOGUE

Stephen Morris was always fascinated by Russia. As a child caught between his evangelical grandmother's warnings on the evils of socialism and his father's activism for nuclear disarmament, his ambiguous position was exemplified by a huge military map of the Soviet Union tacked to his bedroom wall.

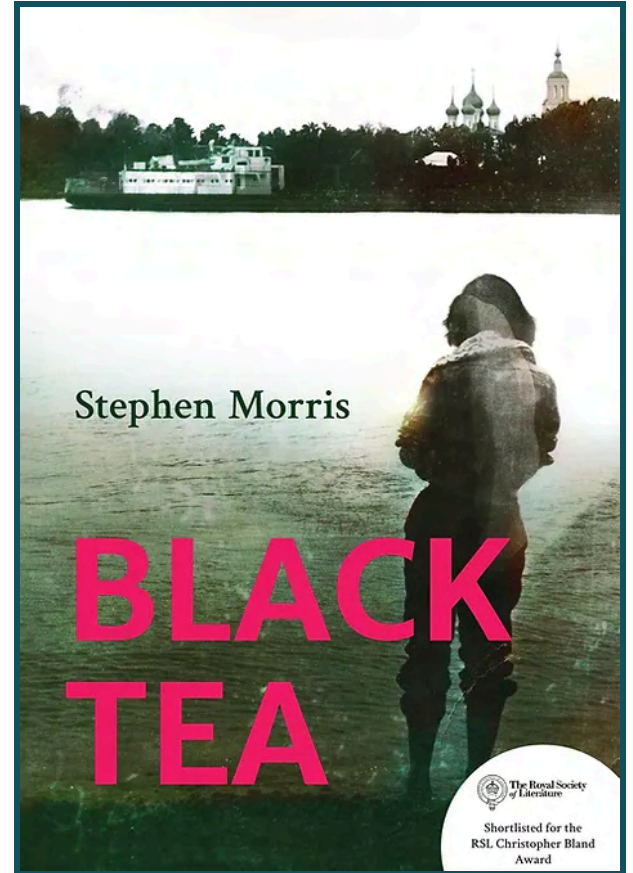
Older, he travelled to Moscow and met his wife there in the dying days of the Soviet Union. Together in London for a time, his wife and children opted to live in rural Russia. Stephen did not go with them.

Years later he returns to take them on a trip through Russia, with the hope of reconnecting with his family and the country.

Shortlisted for the Royal Society of Literature Christopher Bland Prize 2020

This fascinating autobiographical travelogue is an unblinking self-analysis.

- **Zinovy Zinik**, celebrated Russian author and BBC critic



Stephen Morris studied at The Royal Academy of Art. He worked as a labourer in London and for a while was a cellist with the Parma Symphony Orchestra in Italy. *Black Tea* is his first book. It was shortlisted for the Royal Society of Literature Christopher Bland Prize 2020.



25.10.19



Dangerous Skies

Brian James

A fictionalised memoir based on the author's own experience of London during WWII

GENRE: CHILDREN/HISTORICAL FICTION

It's the height of the Blitz. Night after night, waves of German bombers pound London streets, determined to bring the city to its knees.

As the air-raid sirens wail, Alan and his best mates, Tommy and Wilkie, skip school to play among the bombed-out homes of their neighbors. They are soon sucked into a gang of looters run by infamous Duggie, but the police are on their tail and catching up quickly. Even if they escape, they could still fall victim to the dangerous skies above them.

James deftly evokes life in wartime Britain. Nostalgia plays its part... but the everyday reality of death and destruction is also there, sudden and terrifying.

- *Independent*

01.11.16



Brian James worked for the BBC for over 20 years in both radio and television producing documentary programmes. His writing career began in radio with one-off short stories and a radio play directed by Alan Ayckbourn. *Dangerous Skies* is his first children's novel.



Blackout

Sam Grenfall

GENRE: YOUNG ADULT/THRILLER

A Counter Terrorism operative shows up tortured to death. An elderly prof goes missing. An eco-cult is recruiting at a weekend concert for young people at Battersea Power Station. A teenage felon's music has gone viral. All Counter Terrorism want is for him to make a simple swap: some photos for his freedom.

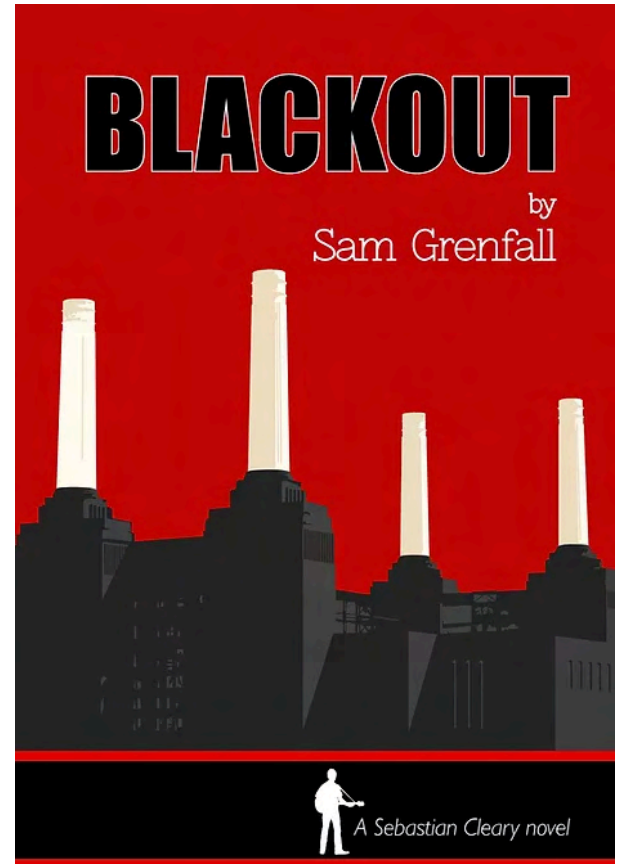
Only he's trapped inside Battersea Power Station. No swap. No way he can tell anyone about it. And the dawning horror that the missing and the dead will bring England to its knees. He's got his GCSEs, his guitar, and a grasp of engineering. That's got to be enough.

To free himself. And save London.

Young James Bond meets Breaking Bad.

- **BBC Oxford Book Reviewer**

11.10.15



Sam Grenfall is an engineer living and working in South London. He has three children who are interested in the real world and physically doing things. He wrote the Sebastian Cleary books for them because they weren't that interested in magic.

