



AUTUMN

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Happy reading! – Miss Mullins, Miss Walker, and Miss Henry



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Haruki Murakami Interviewed by *The Guardian*



In a recent interview with *The Guardian*, author Haruki Murakami discusses the release of his latest novel *The City and Its Uncertain Walls* which is based on a novella he wrote in 1980. Murakami explains that the novella was never published because he felt his writing skills at the time were not sufficient to convey its themes. After years of focusing on other projects he revisited the story, completing a rewrite in his 70s while feeling a sense of urgency and responsibility as a novelist. He goes on to reflect on the impact of the 2020 lockdown on his writing process, noting that the isolation of the pandemic mirrored the themes of his novel. He emphasises the importance of leaving readers with unresolved questions, encouraging them to imagine their own endings. Murakami also discusses how his protagonists are not autobiographical but represent 'the me who might have been.'

Regarding the Japanese literary scene, Murakami observes that younger writers today are more flexible and experimental, and though his readership continues to grow worldwide, he remains focused on his own approach to writing. He expresses gratitude for his global audience, noting the diverse locations of his readers. Finally, Murakami is intrigued by the rising popularity of Japanese fiction in Britain, though he is unsure why it resonates so strongly. Despite Japan's economic struggles, he sees cultural exports like literature as a positive contribution where his readers, and those of other Japanese authors, are evenly split between men and women. Read the original *Guardian* article [here](#).

1Q84 by Haruki Murakami (Recommended for Older Readers)

A young woman named Aomame follows a taxi driver's enigmatic suggestion and begins to notice puzzling discrepancies in the world around her. She has entered, she realizes, a parallel existence, which she calls 1Q84 - "Q is for 'question mark.' A world that bears a question." Meanwhile, an aspiring writer named Tengo takes on a suspect ghost-writing project. He becomes so wrapped up with the work and its unusual author that, soon, his previously placid life begins to come unraveled.



Kafka on the Shore by Haruki Murakami

A teenage boy, Kafka Tamura, who runs away from home either to escape a gruesome oedipal prophecy or to search for his long-missing mother and sister; and an aging simpleton called Nakata, who never recovered from a wartime affliction and now is drawn toward Kafka for reasons that, like the most basic activities of daily life, he cannot fathom. Their odyssey, as mysterious to them as it is to us, is enriched throughout by vivid accomplices and mesmerizing events. Cats and people carry on conversations, a ghostlike pimp employs a Hegel-quoting prostitute, a forest harbours soldiers apparently unaged since World War II, and rainstorms of fish (and worse) fall from the sky. There is a brutal murder, with the identity of both victim and perpetrator a riddle—yet this, along with everything else, is eventually answered, just as the entwined destinies of Kafka and Nakata are gradually revealed, with one escaping his fate entirely and the other given a fresh start on his own.

First Person Singular by Haruki Murakami

The eight masterly stories in this collection are all told in the first person by a classic Murakami narrator. From nostalgic memories of youth, meditations on music, and an ardent love of baseball to dreamlike scenarios and invented jazz albums, together these stories challenge the boundaries between our minds and the exterior world.

On This Day in History... The Death of P.D. James, 27th November 2014

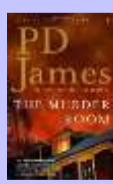
Crime novelist P.D. (Phyllis Dorothy) James, best known for her detective stories featuring protagonist Adam Dalgliesh, passed away in 2014 at the age of 94. She died peacefully at her home in Oxford. James, who wrote over 20 books, achieved international acclaim for her Adam Dalgliesh series along with other well-known titles such as *Children of Men*, *The Murder Room*, and *Death Comes to Pemberley*: the latter being an official sequel to *Pride and Prejudice*. She continued writing well into her later years, notably citing the importance of creating one more story before stopping. James' death prompted tributes from fellow authors, including Ruth Rendell and Ian Rankin, who praised her sharp intellect and attention to detail. James, who had her first novel published at the age of 42, first gained recognition through her 1980 book *Innocent Blood*, though she had published several novels prior. Several of P.D. James' works have been adapted for film and television, with her 1992 dystopian novel *Children of Men* achieving cinematic success in 2006.



James was honoured with multiple awards over her lifetime, including the Crime Writers' Association's Diamond Dagger – a lifetime achievement award and the association's most prestigious accolade. She also had a significant public service role as a BBC governor and was appointed a life peer in 1991. She is remembered for her extraordinary contributions to literature and crime fiction.

The Murder Room by P.D. James

Commander Adam Dalgliesh is already acquainted with the Dupayne—a museum dedicated to the interwar years, with a room celebrating the most notorious murders of that time—when he is called to investigate the killing of one of the family trustees. He soon discovers that the victim was seeking to close the museum against the wishes of the fellow trustees and the Dupayne's devoted staff. Everyone, it seems, has something to gain from the crime. When it becomes clear that the murderer has been inspired by the real-life crimes from the murder room—and is preparing to kill again—Dalgliesh knows that to solve this case he has to get into the mind of a ruthless killer.



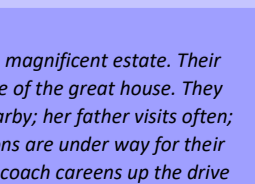
The Mistletoe Murder and Other Stories by P.D. James

P. D. James was frequently commissioned by newspapers and magazines to write a short story for Christmas, and four of the best have been drawn from the archives and published here together for the first time. From the title story about a strained country-house Christmas party, to another about an illicit affair that ends in murder, plus two cases for detective Adam Dalgliesh, these are masterfully atmospheric stories by the acknowledged 'Queen of Crime'.



Death Comes to Pemberley by P.D. James

It is 1803, six years since Elizabeth and Darcy embarked on their life together at Pemberley, Darcy's magnificent estate. Their peaceful, orderly world seems almost unassailable. Elizabeth has found her footing as the chateleine of the great house. They have two fine sons, Fitzwilliam, and Charles. Elizabeth's sister Jane and her husband, Bingley, live nearby; her father visits often; there is optimistic talk about the prospects of marriage for Darcy's sister Georgiana. And preparations are under way for their much-anticipated annual autumn ball. Then, on the eve of the ball, the patrician idyll is shattered. A coach careens up the drive carrying Lydia, Elizabeth's disgraced sister, who with her husband, the very dubious Wickham, has been banned from Pemberley. She stumbles out of the carriage, hysterical, shrieking that Wickham has been murdered. With shocking suddenness, Pemberley is plunged into a frightening mystery.



Experts Discuss the Enduring Legacy of Greek Mythology

This week, *The Guardian* interviewed various celebrity authors and experts on Greek Mythology about the legacy and importance of the myths, and the influence the classic tales have had on visual art, drama, and writing over time. Author of the *Women of Troy* series Pat Barker discussed William Shakespeare's play *Troilus and Cressida*, and the fact that when it was first performed, it was a 'radically contemporary' retelling of Homer's *The Iliad*. Illustrator Chris Ofili spoke on Emily Wilson's translation of Homer's *Odyssey*, and how it inspired him when creating images for Charlotte Higgins' *Greek Myths: A New Retelling*. Stephen Fry looked at the 1911 poem *Ithaca* by CP Cavafy (which can be found [here](#)) and ruminated on 'what the Greek myths can give us in terms of retellings'. Author Rick Riordan explained that Suzanne Collins' *The Hunger Games* is inspired by the myth of Theseus and the Minotaur and poignantly summed up his thoughts on the legacy of the Greek myths saying: "Greek mythology is still relevant after all these millennia because it deals with the building blocks of the human experience." The article can be found [here](#).



The Iliad by Homer

One of the foremost achievements in Western literature, Homer's *Iliad* tells the story of the darkest episode of the Trojan War. At its center is Achilles, the greatest warrior-champion of the Greeks, and his conflict with his leader Agamemnon. Interwoven in the tragic sequence of events are powerfully moving descriptions of the ebb and flow of battle, the besieged city of Ilium, the feud between the gods, and the fate of mortals.



The Odyssey by Homer

If the *Iliad* is the world's greatest war epic, then the *Odyssey* is literature's grandest evocation of everyman's journey through life. *Odysseus'* reliance on his wit and willness for survival in his encounters with divine and natural forces, during his ten-year voyage home to Ithaca after the Trojan War, is at once a timeless human story and an individual test of moral endurance.

Greek Myths: A New Retelling by Charlotte Higgins

Charlotte Higgins reinterprets some of the most enduring stories of all time in this spellbinding collection, featuring original artworks by Chris Ofili. Here are myths of the creation, of Heracles and Theseus and Perseus, the Trojan war and its origins and aftermaths, tales of Thebes and Argos and Athens. There are stories of love and desire, adventure and magic, destructive gods, helpless humans, fantastical creatures, resourceful witches and the origins of birds and animals. This is a world of extremes, and one that resonates deeply with our own: mysterious diseases devastate cities; environmental disasters tear lives apart; women habitually suffer violence at the hands of men.



Women of Troy #1: The Silence of the Girls by Pat Barker

There was a woman at the heart of the Trojan War whose voice has been silent - until now. Discover the greatest Greek myth of all - retold by the witness that history forgot... Briseis was a queen until her city was destroyed. Now she is a slave to the man who butchered her husband and brothers. Trapped in a world defined by men, can she survive to become the author of her own story?

Mythos: The Greek Myths Retold by Stephen Fry

Mythos is a modern collection of Greek myths, stylishly retold by legendary writer, actor, and comedian Stephen Fry. Fry transforms the adventures of Zeus and the Olympians into emotionally resonant and deeply funny stories, without losing any of their original wonder. This stunning book features classical artwork inspired by the myths, as well as learned notes from the author. Each adventure is infused with Fry's distinctive wit, voice, and writing style. Connoisseurs of the Greek myths will appreciate this fresh-yet-reverent interpretation, while newcomers will feel welcome. Retellings brim with humour and emotion and offer rich cultural context.



The Hunger Games #1: The Hunger Games by Suzanne Collins

In the ruins of a place once known as North America lies the nation of Panem, a shining Capitol surrounded by twelve outlying districts. The Capitol is harsh and cruel and keeps the districts in line by forcing them all to send one boy and one girl between the ages of twelve and eighteen to participate in the annual Hunger Games, a fight to the death on live TV. Sixteen-year-old Katniss Everdeen, who lives alone with her mother and younger sister, regards it as a death sentence when she steps forward to take her sister's place in the Games. But Katniss has been close to dead before—and survival, for her, is second nature. Without really meaning to, she becomes a contender. But if she is to win, she will have to start making choices that weigh survival against humanity and life against love.

The Wolves of Mercy Falls #4: Sinner by Maggie Stiefvater

Cole St. Clair has come to California for one reason: to get Isabel Culpeper back. She fled from his damaged, drained life, and damaged and drained it even more. He doesn't just want her. He needs her. Isabel is trying to build herself a life in Los Angeles. It's not really working. She can play the game as well as all the other fakes...but what's the point? What is there to win? Cole and Isabel share a past that never seemed to have a future. They have the power to save each other and the power to tear each other apart. The only thing for certain is that they cannot let go.

"What happens when people open their hearts?... They get better." Haruki Murakami



Four Good Liars by Sarah Wishart

Layla. Kai. Liam. Fliss. Terrified big sister. Troubled surfer. Insecure genius. Pampered princess. They have nothing in common, except they were all on the school bus that morning. The morning of the crash. They discovered the dead driver's holdall, containing one million pounds – and a gun. All of them have secrets, and all of them need that money. But someone dangerous is hunting it down, and drawing closer every minute. If Layla, Kai, Liam and Fliss want to survive, they'll need to stick together. But can four good liars really trust one another? Or are some truths just too powerful to stay buried...?



Naruto 3-in-1: Volume 1 by Masashi Kishimoto

Containing volumes 1, 2 and 3 of *Naruto!* Twelve years ago the Village Hidden in the Leaves was attacked by a fearsome threat. A nine-tailed fox spirit claimed the life of the village leader, the Hokage, and many others. Today, the village is at peace and a troublesome kid named Naruto is struggling to graduate from Ninja Academy. His goal may be to become the next Hokage, but his true destiny will be much more complicated. The adventure begins now!

Better Than the Movies #2: Nothing Like the Movies by Lynn Painter

For a few beautiful months, Wes had his dream girl: the strong-willed girl next door Liz. But right as the two were about to set off for college to start their freshman year together, tragedy struck. Wes was left dealing with the fallout, which ultimately meant losing Liz in the process. Flash forward months later, and Wes and Liz find themselves in college, together. In a healthier place now, Wes knows he broke Liz's heart when he ended things, but he is determined to make her fall back in love with him. Wes knows Liz better than anyone, and he has a fool proof plan to win her back with rom-com-worthy grand gestures she loves. Only... Liz will have none of it! Wes has to scheme like a rom-com hero to figure out how to see her. Even worse, Liz has a new friend... a guy friend.



A Tempest of Tea by Hafsa Faizal

On the streets of White Roaring, Arthie Casimir is a criminal mastermind and collector of secrets. Her prestigious tearoom transforms into an illegal bloodhouse by dark, catering to the vampires feared by society. But when her establishment is threatened, Arthie is forced to strike an unlikely deal with an alluring adversary to save it—and she can't do the job alone. Calling on some of the city's most skilled outcasts, Arthie hatches a plan to infiltrate the sinister, glittering vampire society known as the Aetherium. But not everyone in her ragtag crew is on her side, and the truth behind the heist unfolds, Arthie finds herself in the midst of a conspiracy that will threaten the world as she knows it.

Loki: Agent of Asgard – The Complete Collection by Al Ewing

Reintroducing the God of Mischief - stronger, smarter and sneakier than ever before! As Asgardia's one-man secret service, Loki is ready to lie, cheat and steal his way through the most treacherous missions the All-Mother can throw at him - starting with a heart-stopping heist at Avengers Tower! Loki takes on Lorelei in Monte Carlo's casinos, heads to the ancient past on a quest for a magical sword and puts together a crew to crack the deepest dungeons of Asgardia itself! AXIS pits him against the brutish Thor, god of evil! But who is King Loki? What vile scheme has he been brewing all this time? And what does this shadowy king's very existence mean for our Loki?



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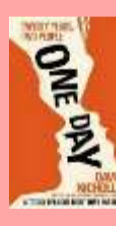
Bid for One Day Plaque in Edinburgh Rejected

Following the success of Netflix's 2024 adaptation of David Nicholl's novel *One Day*, the streaming service applied to have a plaque commemorating the series installed at a historic Edinburgh landmark. Netflix approached the City of Edinburgh Council seeking planning permission for a red plaque featuring a quote from the series to be secured to the wall of a 1910 listed building on the Vennel Steps, where a key scene in the story takes place. The proposal was rejected, with the council's chief planning officer David Givan saying, "The proposal fails to have special regard to the desirability of preserving the character of the building and would adversely impact on its special architectural and historic interest". Terry Levinthal, director of the Cockburn Association, Edinburgh's oldest conservation charity, spoke out against the application last month. He said: "If every production or every connection with a novel or film or TV series did the same, one wouldn't be able to see parts of the city due to the proliferation of plaques." If the bid had been successful, the plaque would have read: "It's one of the great cosmic mysteries. How someone can go from being a total stranger to the most important person in your life." Original BBC article [here](#).



One Day by David Nicholls (Recommended for Older Readers)

You can live your whole life not realising that what you're looking for is right in front of you. 15th July 1988. Emma and Dexter meet on the night of their graduation. Tomorrow they must go their separate ways. But after only one day together, they cannot stop thinking about one another. So where will they be on this day next year? And the year after that? And every year that follows? Over twenty years, snapshots of that relationship are revealed on the same day — July 15th — of each year. Dex and Em face squabbles and fights, hopes and missed opportunities, laughter and tears. And as the true meaning of this one crucial day is revealed, they must come to grips with the nature of love and life itself.



World Computer Literacy Day

World Computer Literacy Day, observed annually on the 2nd of December, was launched by Indian computer company NIIT to mark its 20th anniversary in 2001. In response to research which suggested that the majority of computer users around the world were men, the day was instituted as a way to increase computer literacy among people, especially women and children. The educational news website JagranJosh describes the top 7 basic computer literacy skills as follows: keyboarding (efficient typing skills), email writing, operating system mastery (understanding your operating system e.g. Windows/ Apple), internet navigation, word processing (creating clear and professional documents), spreadsheet management, and presentation creation. According to the statistical office of the European Union (Eurostat) 55% of people in the EU aged 16-74 have at least basic overall digital skills, with lower digital skills recorded in older age groups. In 2023, when the study was undertaken, 71% of women aged 25-34 possessed at least basic digital skills compared with only 25% of those aged 65-74. World Computer Literacy Day aims to increase these percentages.



100 Things to Know About Numbers, Computers & Coding by Federico Mariani

Did you know there's a single spot on your brain that recognizes numbers? Or that the first computer bugs were actual insects and that most of the internet is under water? This fascinating book is filled with 100 fascinating facts, bright, infographic illustrations, a glossary and index and links to specially selected websites to find out more.



She's in CTRL: How Women Can Take Back Tech by Anne-Marie Imafidon

An inspirational exploration of why women are under-represented in tech, why it matters, and what we can do about it. The tech world might feel beyond reach, particularly if you're a woman. With increasingly frank admission women are woefully under-represented in tech - roughly a mere quarter of the UK STEM workforce - the dangerous fact is clear our technology is the product of a series of big decisions made by a small number of people, mainly men. Our lives have gone digital, but our technology risks being tailored to a section of society whose lived experience may be far from our own. In *She's in CTRL*, computer scientist Dr Anne-Marie Imafidon, a dynamic advocate for women in STEM, calls time on women being cut out of the tech story. Technology is not an unchangeable force, nor the preserve of the elite, she argues. It is in our homes and in our hands. In her powerful book about women, tech and daring to dream, Dr Imafidon shows we have more agency than we think, drawing on her own experience and the stories of other pioneers and innovators who have, against the odds, transformed technology. The world needs more women in tech and, in her inspiring narrative, Dr Imafidon shows not only why this is but how we can all play our part in ensuring a future that's evenly distributed.

