

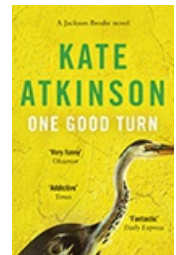
What We're Reading - 13 November 2020

Lucy Nathan

Opinion - Books Friday, 13th November 2020

Jo Henry

With yet another lockdown under way, and needing to lift my spirits, I turned to the ever reliable Kate Atkinson - this time, one of her Jackson Brodie novels. And *One Good Turn* (Black Swan) is a delight. The various witnesses of a road-rage incident at the Edinburgh Festival - the wife of a dodgy property dealer, an insecure crime writer, a has-been comedian and now ex-private eye Jackson Brodie himself - know nothing of each other, but the chain of events set off by the incident causes their individual stories to interlock, revolving around each other's lives in ever decreasing circles. Atkinson's biting sarcasm ensured I laughed out loud on several occasions, despite the bleakness of the plot, and made me glad that I still have the latest Jackson Brodie yet to read. Thoroughly recommended.



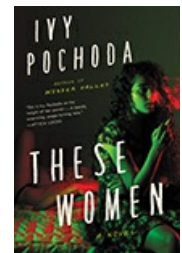
David Roche

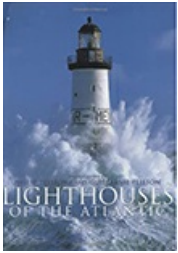
Martin Latham is the long-standing manager of Waterstones in Canterbury and is a man of many parts. *The Bookseller's Tale* (Particular Books) is his love letter to bookshops, libraries, and all things de librorum. This is jam packed full of interesting facts, amusing anecdotes, and witty quotes. It is to be devoured or dipped into, depending on one's taste and time and rewards both types of readers. A treat for book lovers, which I guess is most of us!



Nicholas Clee

One might describe Ivy Pochoda's *These Women* as "not really a crime novel" or "transcending the genre". I prefer to say that it's a superb crime novel that happens to downplay some elements of the story - whodunit, for example - and bring to the fore others, such as the voices of women from whom society, and some writers, prefer to look away. *These Women* introduces a survivor of an attack by a serial killer in South LA, the mother of a victim, a victim, a policewoman who cannot get her superiors to acknowledge what is going on (because the killer targets sex workers), and the perpetrator's wife and daughter. In my view, Pochoda's novel is more successful than the usually brilliant Denise Mina's *The Less Dead*, because you feel that these characters' thoughts and voices are unfiltered - they are uninhibitedly themselves, and might think and say anything, no matter what agenda the author has. *These Women* is vivid, profane, funny, shocking, and compassionate.



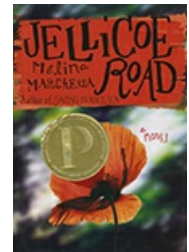


Neill Denny

The stormy autumn weather has prompted me to dig out *Lighthouses of the Atlantic* (Cassell) by Daniel Charles, photographed by Philip Plisson and Guillaume Plisson. This book is a true labour of love, including every lighthouse from Shetland to Gibraltar, all illustrated, many with glorious full-page colour photographs. Favourites include Skellig in Ireland, subsequently made famous (ie ruined) by its use as a location in Star Wars; Eagle Island, where the lantern was broken by waves despite being 220 ft above the sea; The Smalls, inspiration for the recent gruesome Hollywood film *The Lighthouse*; and the Arran Islands, where three lighthouse keepers disappeared without a trace in 1900. In a stupendous effort a total of 140 lighthouses over 6,200 miles of coastline were photographed for the book - including 120 hours in helicopters - which perhaps makes it more of an artistic endeavour rather than a commercial one. But with enough material for a novel on every page, a worthwhile one.

Lucy Nathan

I recently started *Jellicoe Road* by Melina Marchetta (Harper Teen), an Australian YA classic that doesn't seem to have made it big in the UK. So far, it's pretty astounding - it takes a while to find your footing in it but the quality of the writing is startlingly brilliant, both stark and sometimes dreamy and wistful. It's about 17-year-old Taylor, who was abandoned by her mother when she was 11, and has recently been made the head of her boarding school dorm in the local war against the Townies and Cadets. There are so many plotlines weaved together - family, war, love, revenge - that I can't wait to find out how they all come together at the end. Like so many others, this book demonstrates that YA novels should not be underrated.



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