



Lifestyle

5 new books to read this week

Prudence Wade

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This week's bookcase includes reviews of *The Magician* by Colm Tóibín and *Kay's Marvellous Medicine* by Adam Kay.

A legendary [Irish](#) writer is back, and comedy writer [Adam Kay](#) delights with his latest children's book...

Fiction

1. *The Magician* by Colm Tóibín is published in hardback by Viking, priced £18.99 (ebook £9.99). Available now

Happy Publication day to Colm Tóibín!

In his new novel [#TheMagician](#), Colm Tóibín turns his attention to Thomas Mann in a tale of unrequited love and exile set against the turbulence of 20th century Europe.

<https://t.co/40mR7b8tCXpic.twitter.com/B7PIEXXiOh>

— Viking Books UK (@VikingBooksUK) [September 23, 2021](#) *The Magician* is prolific Irish author Colm Tóibín's 10th novel, and is an expansive yet deeply personal exploration of the life of exiled German writer [Thomas Mann](#). Ranging from Mann's childhood in conservative Lubeck, Northern Germany, to his life in liberal [Munich](#) Bavaria, and his family's flight to America to escape the Nazis, the novel is almost biographically thorough. It paints a detailed portrait of Mann, encompassing everything from his sedate daily routine and fatherly misgivings, to his hidden longings and desires. The book's opening is slow, but following the advent of the First and Second World Wars and its devastating impact on the Mann family, it becomes gripping, imbued with a sense of dread. Containing beautiful observations on life and literature, and a sweeping sense of historical scale, *The Magician* remains tightly written and wryly funny. 9/10 (Review by Jessica Frank-Keyes)

2. *The Morning Star* by Karl Ove Knausgaard is published in hardback by Harvill Secker, priced £20 (ebook £11.99). Available now

Happy publication day to Karl Ove Knausgaard for *The Morning Star*, out today 拾

Last night a new star appeared in the sky. *The Morning Star*.

Order your copy now: <https://t.co/0sg1bCeBnCpic.twitter.com/YglUSY2TPE>

— HarvillSecker (@HarvillSecker) [September 30, 2021](#) Karl Ove Knausgaard established his controversial reputation with his *My Struggle* series, and *The Morning Star* builds on that fine foundation. As a bright star shines in the sky, this is a tale of interwoven lives seeping together as the players battle their own wills and those of the people around them, to forge their own definitive path. A true Scandinavian epic, as the morning star shines, the darkness inside the myriad characters becomes exposed – from priest Kathrine, to a journalist out drinking while his wife works a night shift in a psychiatric care unit. And strange things begin to occur too – crabs appear on the road, brutal murders are reported... Ultimately, Knausgaard's brilliant storytelling is as bright as the celestial body from which the book takes its title. 7/10 (Review by Roddy Brooks)

3. *Cloud Cuckoo Land* by Anthony Doerr is published in hardback by Fourth Estate, priced £20 (ebook £9.99). Available now

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[View this post on Instagram A post shared by 4th Estate Books \(@4thestatebooks\)](#)

It has been quite a wait since Anthony Doerr's last novel in 2014, the Pulitzer Prize winner, *All The Light We Cannot See* – a tear-duct buckling World War II saga. And so, *Cloud Cuckoo Land* has some pressure on it, not helped by how huge it is. Ignore the 600+ page count though and let the tides of five characters take you to present-day Idaho, Constantinople in 1453 and to a spaceship in the future, whose inhabitants are searching for a new planet to call home. Doerr manages to knit together three very different trajectories, using the legend of a man turned into a donkey, a fish and a bird, as a (slightly irritating) anchor. Yes, it sounds fantastical, and at times it is, which can jar against some of the more distressing themes (climate change, war, abuse, poverty, terrorism) – but Doerr's expansive look at freedom, the value of the natural world, and the importance of storytelling, is captivating. There are moments that are a tad worthy, but they don't detract from the imagination at play, and the endearing, brilliantly wrought protagonists – particularly Omeir and his oxen, and Konstance and her AI.7/10(Review by Ella Walker)

Non-fiction

4. *Rationality: What It Is, Why It Seems Scarce, Why It Matters* by Steven Pinker is published in hardback by Allen Lane, priced £25 (ebook £12.99). Available now

Nice to see *Rationality* out and about [@waterstonesPicc](#) -signed copies still available.
pic.twitter.com/c0mSOlzLtO

— Steven Pinker (@sapinker) [October 1, 2021](#) In a time when fake news, conspiracy theories and urban myths thrive, Harvard psychology professor Steven Pinker has taken it upon himself to encourage us to think more rationally. In each chapter he provides tools to help readers become more able to think clearly and challenge their own biases and assumptions. Pinker defines what he means by rationality, as well as how to develop it and how it may differ from logic. Up to date with examples, including the death of George Floyd, the US elections and TV game shows, Pinker offers insights into ways of questioning your own and other people's thinking. From how to take apart a news report to understanding that correlation doesn't equate to causation or really being able to understand probabilities. The book can arm you to think for yourself. It came out of a course he taught at Harvard and it sometimes feels more textbook than popular science, so for the ordinary reader it's – in parts – hard work. For Pinker, that is the point – the book is an impassioned plea for putting the effort in, to create a more rational world.7/10(Review by Bridie Pritchard)

Children's book of the week

5. *Kay's Marvellous Medicine: A Gross And Gruesome History Of The Human Body* by Adam Kay, illustrated by Henry Paker, is published in hardback by Puffin, priced £14.99 (ebook £10.99). Available now

[View this post on Instagram A post shared by Adam Kay \(@amateuradam\)](#)

If you thought doctors would never be crazy enough to blow smoke up your bottom if your heart stopped, or pluck a chicken's bum and stick it in your armpit to cure the plague, then think again. As Adam Kay's hilarious new children's book shows, humans have taken a long time to get their heads around how bodies work and how to fix them when they go wrong. *Kay's Marvellous Medicine* – a follow-up to his 2020 children's debut, *Kay's Anatomy* – takes a look at all the weird and wonderful treatments through the ages, with a lot of facts about the body and modern medicine thrown in along the way. It is a ridiculously funny read that will delight, gross out and educate all at the same time. While Kay's adult books (*This Is Going To Hurt* and *Twas The Nightshift Before Christmas*) have gone down a storm, his chatty tone and perfectly silly humour make him a natural children's writer who can keep young readers engaged and giggling throughout.9/10(Review by Holly Williams)

BOOK CHARTS FOR THE WEEK ENDING OCTOBER 2

HARDBACK (FICTION)1. *The Man Who Died Twice* by Richard Osman2. *Sharpe's Assassin* by Bernard Cornwell3. *Beautiful World, Where Are You* by Sally Rooney4. *Once Upon A Broken Heart* by Stephanie Garber5. *Cloud Cuckoo Land* by Anthony Doerr6. *The Last Graduate* by Naomi Novik7. *The Cat Who Saved Books* by Sosuke Natsukawa8. *The Jealousy Man* by Jo Nesbo9. *Ariadne* by Jennifer Saint10. *How To Kill Your Family* by Bella Mackie(Compiled by Waterstones)

HARDBACK (NON-FICTION)1. *You Deserve Better* by Anne-Marie2. *And Away...* by Bob Mortimer3. *The Audacity* by Katherine Ryan4. *Brothers In Arms* by James Holland5. *Guinness World Records 2022* by Guinness World Records6. *Before & Laughter* by Jimmy Carr7. *A Year On Our Farm* by Matt Baker8. *Unrequited Infatuations* by Stevie Van Zandt9. *Together* by Jamie Oliver10. *This Much Is True* by Miriam Margolyes(Compiled by Waterstones)

AUDIOBOOKS (FICTION AND NON-FICTION)1. *The Man Who Died Twice* by Richard Osman2. *And Away...* by Bob Mortimer3. *The Fellowship Of The Ring* by J. R. R. Tolkien4. *This Much Is True* by Miriam

Margolyes5. The Thursday Murder Club by Richard Osman6. Trust Me by T.M. Logan7. The Two Towers by J. R. R. Tolkien8. The Sound Of Laughter by Peter Kay9. Before & Laughter by Jimmy Carr10. The Storyteller by Dave Grohl(Compiled by Audible)

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