

Each month we will focus on an inspiring author based in or writing about Wales! You'll have an introduction to their latest book, what inspires them to write, and any advice they have for young writers!

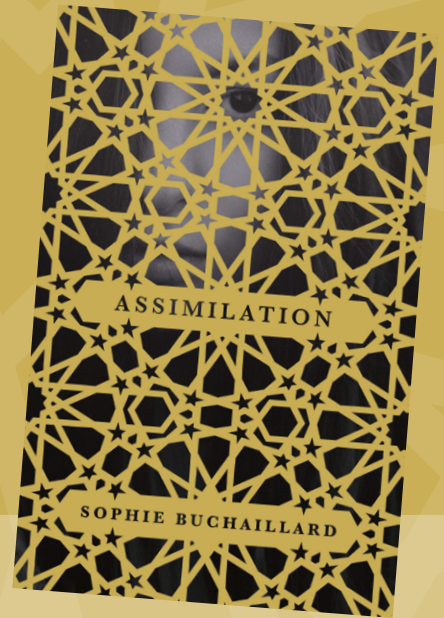
# Get to know

## Sophie Buchaillard



Sophie Buchaillard writes contemporary fiction that reflects on the anxieties of our age, using movement and migration to connect history with our reality. Her short stories and essays have appeared in a wide array of literary magazines and newspapers. She also writes about the environment under the handle #plasticfree. Her first novel, *This is Not Who We Are* (Seren), was shortlisted for Wales Book of the Year 2023.

[www.honno.co.uk](http://www.honno.co.uk)



### Summary:

*Assimilation* is a story of unravelling family secrets, belonging, betrayal and inherited family trauma that will transport readers back through moments in time carefully steered by Buchaillard's exceptional and compelling prose.

Told from the perspective of three generations of women, the novel takes the reader on a world tour through history exploring identity whilst pursuing spies, drug dealers and even a talking bear! A perfect read for fans of historical fiction, travel writing and adventure stories.

### What are your influences?

Nature and people watching form a big part of my creative process. So do immersing myself into books, music and visual arts. I do a lot of research before I start to write. It is like filling a basket with thoughts, images and emotions and let everything percolate until one day you know it is time to open the tap. I let my subconscious do the work and memories from childhood stories fuel the rest of my writing.

### What experiences of libraries have influenced you during your lifetime?

I would not be a writer if it wasn't for libraries. In primary school I found learning how to write really challenging. I guess today I would have been diagnosed with a learning difficulty, instead my spelling was so bad the school made me repeat a year. I lost all my friends. It was pretty traumatic. It also shattered my confidence. But one of my teachers recommended to my mother I should read more, and my mother took it to heart. She marched me to the public library and introduced me to the librarian who helped me navigate the shelves and find the stories that

would help spark my imagination. I explored magic kingdoms, saw the world from the perspective of a bee, and lost myself in this world of endless possibilities. When you have a book, you are never alone. Through stories, there is nothing you cannot do. It is incredibly powerful. I absorbed all those stories until something clicked. By the time I reached secondary school, I was doing literature (in French and English) and writing my first short stories. Librarians are my true heroes. Today I make a point of working with libraries to develop accessible creative writing classes, free at the point of delivery. Libraries are such important social spaces.

### What suggestions do you have to encourage children and young people to read more for pleasure?

Read together. Talk about the characters, the plot, what they like and what they don't. I read to my son every night and have done since he was a baby. He is not an avid reader, but he loves the stories and that time we share is very special.

### Give us a quote that is at the heart of your life...

Always make time.