

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

Meredith Miller



Meredith Miller was born and raised on Long Island, in New York. Before moving to the UK in 1997, she lived in Oregon and New Orleans. She has published two previous novels, *Little Wrecks* (2017) and *How We Learned to Lie* (2018).

She lives in mid Wales in a tiny house with a chapel attached. A Welsh learner, Meredith is currently restoring the chapel as a literary and cultural space for the Welsh language.

Summary:

Miller's third novel, *Fall River*, is a dark, psychological mystery set against the backdrop of the strange pull of the River Tamar, and is published by Honno Press. When fierce, young Alice disappears, shock waves ripple through the riverside town of Saltash. As her cousin Khadija returns on the night train, the rest of the town is still asleep. They'll wake up that morning to find that everything, and nothing, has changed.

Tell us a little about *Fall River* where did the inspiration come from, and what do you hope readers will take from the story...

A few years ago, living in the Plymouth dockyards and teaching at a university, I felt that I was caught between two very different versions of the UK. I wanted to write a novel about the social divisions on this island and especially about the relationship between London and the rest of the UK.

I lived very near the landscape where the novel is set. Physically, it's incredibly evocative in so many ways. It's sublime but also industrial; military, polluted and also full of natural wonder. On the Hamoaze, one side of the Tamar River is entirely grey, full of navy yards and tower blocks. The other side is an entirely bucolic landscape of green rolling hills and field boundaries. That landscape shaped the novel.

What are your favourite reading genres, and what books are you reading at the moment?

I recently read Elizabeth Gilbert's *The Signature of All Things*, which was brilliant. I love Amitav Ghosh's novels, especially the *Ibis* trilogy. I'm always interested in any fiction written before 1950, whatever audience it's aimed at.



In this small-town drama, past and present relationships collide, weaving multiple narratives packed with intrigue. Meredith Miller skilfully crafts an unfolding story with a fresh perspective on contemporary society and shedding light on the overlooked corners of Britain. A must read for book clubs, this exciting new literary mystery will appeal to fans of Kate Atkinson and readers of mysteries, crime and Cornish fiction.

I love popular science books and historical non-fiction. Richard Holmes's *The Age of Wonder* is tremendous. I'm currently reading Beryl Bainbridge's *According to Queeney* and Caryl Lewis's *Y Gemydd* (I'm slower in Cymraeg!) and listening to Sudhir Hazareesingh's biography of Toussaint Louverture, *Black Spartacus*. The latter is available as an audiobook through our wonderful Powys Libraries audiobook service.

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

Read to your children! Make it a calm, comforting time of day or evening. I loved being read to as a child, and sharing book experiences as a family that way. My daughter went through a long period where she didn't read much, but always said how much she loved being read to when she was small. Lately, she's gone back to reading for comfort and pleasure. Family reading should always be a pleasure and never a chore. Books are the most exciting and also the most restful place in which to get lost, so much more immersive and restful than bright screens. How often do your children see you relaxing with a book? Role modelling as a reader is important, I think.

Fall River was published 21 March by Honno Press.



www.honno.co.uk



... more Q&As
on the website libraries.wales