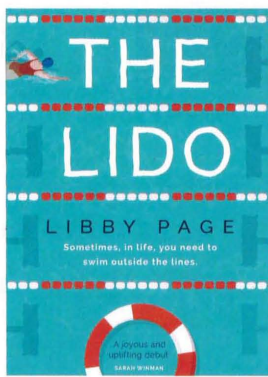




THE READING ROOM

Terrific tantalising tales - book reviews by Tom Bromley



THE LIDO BY LIBBY PAGE (ORION, £12.99)

What do you do when your local swimming pool is threatened with closure, having been sold by the council to a local property group? That's the subject of *The Lido*, Libby Page's heartwarming debut novel about a community campaign to preserve their daily swim.

The lido in question is Brockwell Lido in London, an open-air swimming pool, sometimes known as Brixton Beach. The story's protagonists are Kate, a fish out of water, fresh-faced

local journalist and Rosemary, a long-time local resident who has been swimming in the pool since before the war. Together, this unusual pair lead the fightback against the developers.

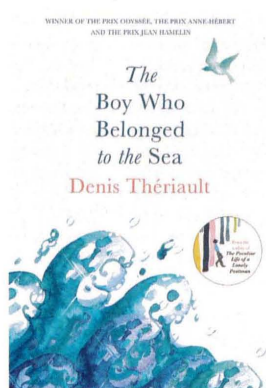
Libby Page does a brilliant job in bringing a local community to life and in capturing Kate's journey of taking the loneliness out of being alone. The result is a big warm hug of a novel, reminiscent of writers like Joanna Cannon and Gail Honeyman.

THE BOY WHO BELONGED TO THE SEA BY DENIS THÉRIAULT (ONEWORLD, £8.99)

Following on from the international success of his novels *The Peculiar Life of a Lonely Postman* and *The Postman's Fiancée*, Denis Thériault's debut novel is now published in the UK for the first time, showing readers where it all began.

A winner of numerous awards back in Thériault's native Canada, *The Boy Who Belonged to the Sea* tells the story of a boy taken in by his grandparents after his parents are involved in a tragic snowmobile accident. Here, he finds a kindred spirit in Luc, a school classmate whose own mother has disappeared. As they come to terms with what has happened, the boys form a strong friendship, framed by a wild imagination and a fascination with the nearby sea.

Thériault is a writer with a lightness of touch, allowing him to explore darker themes in a way that never feels heavy, but always engages. The result is a debut that draws you in to its own intriguing, evocative world.

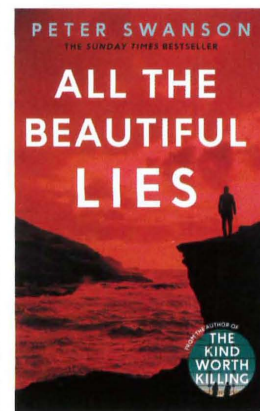


ALL THE BEAUTIFUL LIES BY PETER SWANSON (FABER AND FABER, £12.99)

For a bestselling novelist, Peter Swanson still seems to fly under the radar for many readers. Yet as those who have discovered his previous books such as *The Kind Worth Killing* and *Her Every Fear* know, here is a crime writer at the peak of his game.

All the Beautiful Lies is Swanson's fourth novel, and once again it is a tightly plotted, carefully crafted thing of dark beauty. Harry is just about to graduate from college when news comes of the unexpected death of father. With Harry's mother having died several years before, he returns to live with Alice, his father's much younger second wife. Alice, though, is someone with an intriguing past of her own; and his father's death might not be the accident it first appears...

A story with a hint of Hitchcock and Highsmith, this is a dual narrative that creeps up on you by stealth, until you find yourself completely hooked.



MORNING BY ALLAN JENKINS (4TH ESTATE, £12.99)

There might be more self-help and how-to books out there than you can shake a stick at, but *Morning* is a new book with a different and intriguing premise: by starting the day earlier, being awake at first light, you can transform your life.

The early-riser in question is writer Allan Jenkins, who chronicles a year of getting up at dawn, telling the morning's story as he puts it. Along the way he interviews the likes of Jamie Oliver, Ian McMillan and Linda Grant, who also live their lives with an extremely early start. Jenkins also explores the neuroscience of sleep and light, the philosophy of daybreak and the secrets of the dawn chorus.

This is not a book about starting the day earlier to pack more work in, but rather about savouring the still and quiet of the early morning – and learning to enjoy a moment of time and space for yourself.