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THE SUNDAY TIMES MAGAZINE PODCAST

Eleanor Mills and *Matt Rudd* discuss *Marina O’Loughlin*’s first restaurant review and *Philip Pullman*. Listen at acast.com/sundaytimesmagazine or subscribe on iTunes

COVER: FROM THE TAKE A VIEW LANDSCAPE PHOTOGRAPHER OF THE YEAR AWARDS: PUFFINS ON SKOMER ISLAND, PEMBROKESHIRE, BY MATTHEW CATTPELL (COMMENDED); THIS PAGE: MORNINGS REFLECTION, LECHLADE, GLOUCESTERSHIRE, BY PETER HULLANCE; GRACA MACHEL PORTRAIT BY BENEDIOT EVANS



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Thirty years ago, a revolution took place in Britain. Ikea arrived and ended the class war over taste for good

India Knight



I'm forensically interested in the tiny details of domestic life. I like looking at people's pots and pans and sofas and bedding, because it's interesting and I am nosy, but also because it makes me feel like a human being connected to other human beings. It's so human, feathering the nest. Millions of people, trying to make themselves cosy and safe, surrounding themselves with things they feel are beautiful, or useful, or comforting, or happy-making.

But until relatively recently, taste was a luxury, a hobby for the upper-middle classes upwards. It was not democratic. You could have taste, of course, but you probably couldn't afford the things you liked, so that was that. Either people were rich and inherited their furniture as well as their houses and their chintz, or they weren't and they bumbled along, cobbling bits and pieces together until it looked — fine. If you were middle class, copies of rich people's furniture were considered ultra-desirable: enter repro, which is still going strong — the vast baronial mahogany table in the three-bed semi, as if there was nothing for ordinary people to aspire to other than copying the interiors of their "betters". If you couldn't afford repro, there were Dralon three-piece suites and cheap, flammable everything else.

Then came Ikea, which is celebrating its 30th birthday. The store is responsible for nothing less than the democratisation of design on a global scale. Before there was Ikea there was Terence Conran's Habitat, and the design debt we owe him should not be underestimated — he essentially kick-started the whole thing — but Habitat wasn't exactly cheap. Ikea arrived and said, "Here is good design, and you can afford it too", and it was revolutionary (it is possible to read the firm's famous slogan "Chuck out your chintz" as a declaration of class war: if chintz were a person, it would be guillotined). Suddenly, having a home that looked good — stylish, even — was not a bonkers pipe dream but an entirely attainable reality for normal people. Before Ikea, you could pick up a



glossy, expensive interiors magazine, featuring palatial houses and hand-painted wallpapers at £300 a metre. Anyone can read an Ikea catalogue for free, and see exactly how to make their new furniture work for them. That's got to make the monstrous queues and wrangling of Allen keys worthwhile.

The question of interiors and taste can still induce acute social anxiety in people who don't trust their own inclinations enough to put them confidently on display. A whole industry has sprung up to advise them. Some interior designers are absolute artists (too good, I often think — the equivalent of Botticelli painting a mural in the downstairs lav). Some are not. It is possible to spend vast sums on

someone who will make your house look awful, soulless, chilly, as if you have more money than sense.

Ikea leaps over all of that, and understands the anxiety of those who are so panicked by decorating that they buy the showhouse — or set about replicating it piece by piece. It takes you by the hand and says, look, your living room could look like this, and it would cost this much, and here is how to do it. It makes it easy.

There can hardly be a household in the country that doesn't contain something from Ikea, regardless of income or social class. They're well-made things, too — we have an Ikea sofa that's been around for 20 years. It's been re-covered umpteen times but it is still going strong, like a trusty packhorse. I rather like chintz, but I admire the brilliance of introducing Scandi style to the masses — no connotations, no doffing of caps, just a whole new-seeming way of living for everybody, an embracing of clean, fresh modernity after too long spent in the dusty past. You may moan about flat-packs, but Ikea is nothing less than a love letter to domestic life ■ @indiaknight

INDIA LOVES

Watch Tin Star (Sky Atlantic)

Read The Word Is Murder by Anthony Horowitz. Particularly well narrated by Rory Kinnear on Audible

Buy The Beautiful Poetry of Donald Trump (Canongate). Compiled by Rob Sears from Trump's speeches. Hilarious



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If you try to date anyone here, it is vital you follow the rules. And that means you must have The (dreaded) Conversation

Josh Glancy

in New York



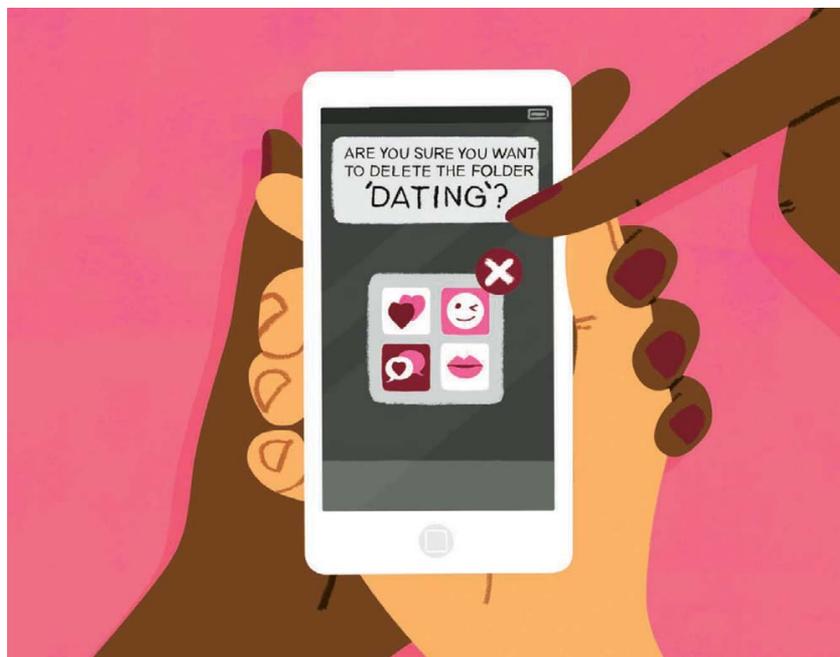
There comes a moment in any relationship when things get serious. You stop looking around and wondering what else is out there. You start thinking about your possible future together. Will you get a cat? Meet each other's parents? Purchase a joint Spotify account?

Prior to living in New York, such moments in my life had always been imperceptible, or at least organic. You catch yourself using the word "girlfriend" in idle conversation, or realise you've left a spare toothbrush permanently in her bathroom. But in the past year I've discovered a formal process of establishing exclusivity. At a certain point in any Big Apple *amour* you must have The Conversation, an agonisingly candid exchange of vows. "Do you promise not to sleep with anyone else?" Yes. "Kiss anyone else?" Sure. "So, does that mean we're, like, a thing now?" I guess it does.

I've been asked these questions a couple of times now and always taken them as a compliment, enjoying the (sadly misguided) implication that I've been busy fighting off wanton female attention elsewhere.

The reason that The Conversation plays such a prominent role in the life cycle of most New York relationships is primarily because the rules of dating here are so byzantine. In Britain, most relationships come about through getting drunk and sleeping with one of your mates. Or one of their mates. Do that enough and before you know it you're booking a vintage Rolls-Royce and sourcing confetti bowls on Etsy. At some point, perhaps your silver wedding anniversary, you might have a conversation of sorts about the relationship. "Things seem to be going OK, don't they, darling, you know, with us?" "Could be worse, I suppose."

If only it were this simple in Manhattan. Here, you need a formal chat partly because people just like talking about their feelings more, but also because there are so many types of relationship you could be in. I've already come across a) seeing but not exclusive, b) heterosexually exclusive,



c) exclusive when in the same country, and d) don't ask don't tell. There are many more.

Once you've had the chat, everything changes. One couple I know immediately exchanged phones and removed each other's dating apps. Greater love hath no man than to let his girlfriend delete Bumble off his iPhone.

The whole dating process in New York is heavily weighted in favour of usually undeserving men, for reasons I still can't discern. This means, rather unreasonably, that The Conversation is almost always a woman asking a man to curb his sexual appetites. This is why there are long blogs on websites called things like Get the Guy, LadyLux and Hello Giggles devoted to how and when to unleash the big C.

JOSH SAYS

Read *The Beast* by Alexander Starritt. Clever satire on the foul splendour of life inside a British tabloid

Watch *The Work*. Coruscating film documentary following inmates in Folsom prison as they undergo group therapy

If you fail to have The Conversation then you really can get burnt. One girl I know was seeing a guy for months before he informed her that he had just slept with his ex-girlfriend. She was outraged, but he was having none of it. We never had The Conversation, he informed her smugly.

This whole rigmarole is almost always postcoital (defences are low) and usually happens in two parts: conversation one and conversation two. Conversation one basically says: "Please don't give me syphilis." Or, put more politely, if we're sleeping together regularly, could you refrain from fornicating elsewhere.

Part two comes later and has more emotional weight. Are we actually going to put all this exhausting sexual diplomacy aside and have a grown-up, monogamous relationship?

Strangely, there is often yet another step, which is to become social media friends, allowing your new lover into your private empire of self-promotion. After a series of "us" conversations, the girl I'm currently seeing has accepted my Facebook and Instagram requests. It seems we might be getting serious ■ @joshglancy

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John Lewis

“I took on established religion — and I knew it would fight back”

Philip Pullman

Bestselling author of epic children's books

**THE
MAGAZINE
INTERVIEW
BRYAN
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Puberty hit Philip Pullman while he was a pupil at Ysgol Ardudwy, a secondary school in north Wales.

“I remember my adolescence vividly,” he says, “the sense of opening horizons at the same time as sexuality, pop music, rock’n’roll, jazz and classical music all opening up. It was the most extraordinary thing.”

More than 40 years later, he finished the greatest book on puberty you — or, more important, your children — are ever likely to read. In 2000, the publication of *The Amber Spyglass* marked the completion of Pullman’s critically acclaimed and internationally bestselling trilogy of fantasy novels, *His Dark Materials*.

The setting is a world that was like our own and yet completely different. All the humans have animal “dæmons”, creatures that accompany them through life and from which they cannot be separated. Until puberty these creatures can flip between species, but afterwards they become one, an expression of the adult self. The dæmon of Lyra Belacqua, the heroine, is called Pantalaimon and it finally settles into the form of a pine marten.

At one level, the book is a traditional battle between good and evil — the latter represented by a harsh, oppressive religious system obviously modelled on the Catholic Church. But it is also full of ideas about multiple universes, secret knowledge and science. In the end, it is about truth, freedom and the pursuit of wisdom. The scope and depth of the work, combined with breathtaking storytelling, set it apart from any children’s book I have ever read.

Pullman published the first book in the trilogy in 1995 — two years before JK Rowling introduced Harry Potter to the world. Both series scored a devout global following among millions of adults, as well as children. Sales of *His Dark Materials* stand at more than 17m.

They would have been much higher but for the film derived from the first book in the trilogy, *Northern Lights* — renamed *The Golden Compass* for an American audience — which utterly failed to catch the mood and grandeur of the original. Pullman’s books have proved notoriously difficult to convert to the screen. A promised sequel to the first film has never materialised. And a BBC adaptation for a TV series, first announced in 2015, has suffered delays in preproduction. No date has been announced for when it might air.

The last time I saw Pullman, at his home in Cumnor, near Oxford, in early 2015, he had spoken of a follow-up trilogy called *The Book of Dust*. I thought he would never finish it; he looked tired and unwell. I was wrong. This month the first book in this new trilogy — *La Belle Sauvage* — is published. Somebody from Waterstones glibly announced that it would be worth £8m to them. Pullman groans.

“I wish they wouldn’t say things like that. If it makes £7m it will look as though I have lost — failed!”

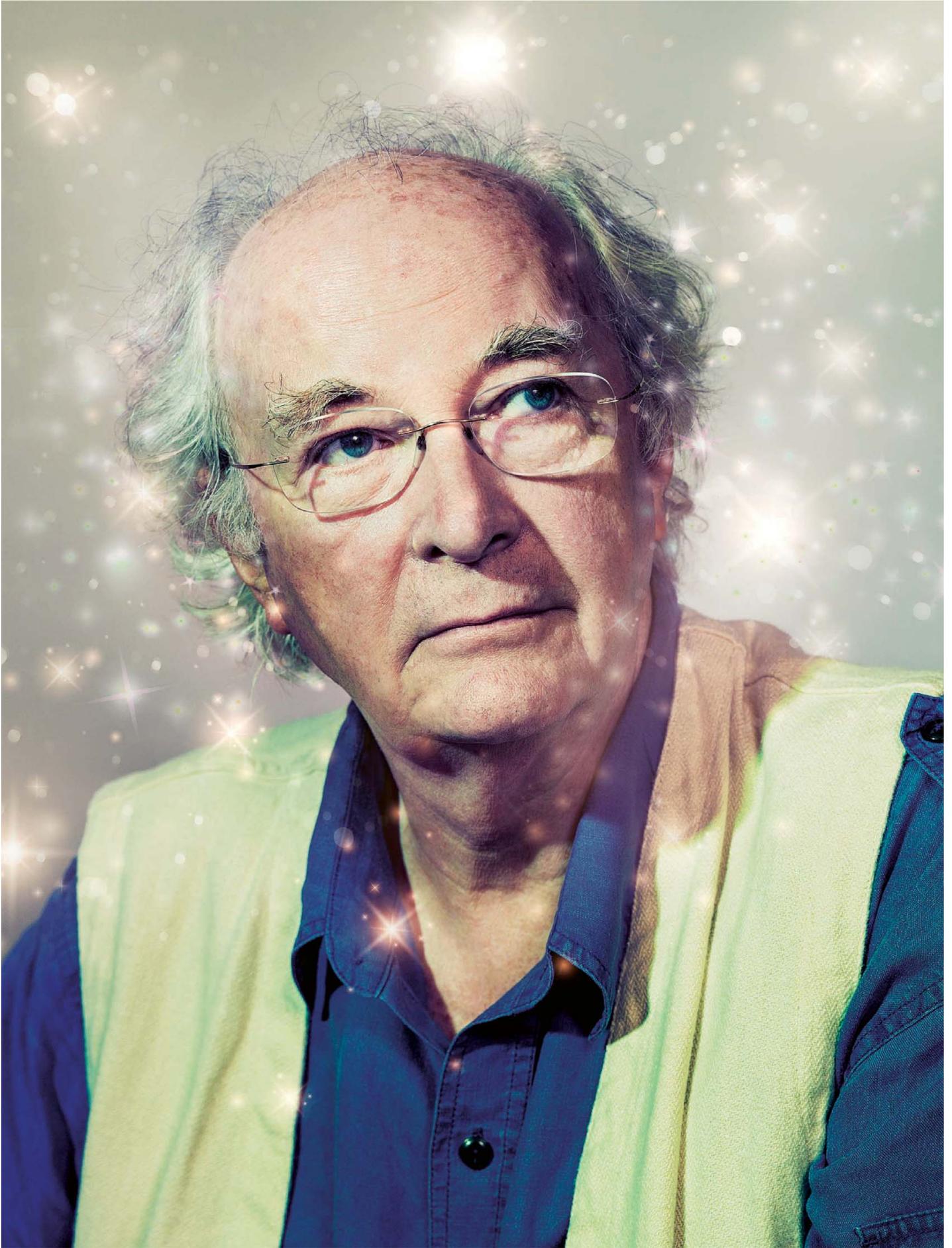
He is a changed man. In 2015, he was in constant pain, but some surgical miracle has cured him. Now he looks younger, fitter and, more to the point, he is writing this second great trilogy. His hair is also a decent length. Until recently, he sported a three-year-old ponytail.

“It was a silly thing to do,” he says. “I said to myself, if I don’t cut my hair *The Book of Dust* will be all right. I am very superstitious, so I had this appalling thing stuck on the back of my head.”

In fact, he has cheated. *The Book of Dust* is not yet finished; the next volume is near completion and the third volume, though planned, is not yet written. But he can claim, I suppose, that it is “all right”.

The dust of the title is derived from the same idea as dark matter — stuff undetectable to us that physicists now believe accounts for most of the material in the universe. The dust, for Pullman, consists of ➤➤➤

**PHOTOGRAPH
DAVID VINTNER**



DAVID VINTNER FOR THE SUNDAY TIMES MAGAZINE

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LOST SOUL
Nicole Kidman and
Dakota Blue
Richards star in *The*
***Golden Compass*,**
which, for all its
special effects,
failed to match the
power of the books



particles that give consciousness to all things, an idea known as pansychism.

“My point is that consciousness is a normal property of matter, just like mass,” he says.

La Belle Sauvage goes back 10 years from His Dark Materials to when Lyra is a baby; the next two books move forward 10 years to when she is an adult. Once again the theme is growing up and puberty as an initiation into the reality of the world. One of the most touching moments in the first volume is when the prepubescent hero, Malcolm, suddenly notices the blushing cheeks and the curve of the hips of the girl who accompanies him. But it is also about what you are given after puberty, when, like Adam and Eve, you find that the world is all before you. He likes to quote Robert Louis Stevenson: “The world is so full of a number of things, I’m sure we should all be as happy as kings.”

Pullman sees adolescence as dynamic, a preparation for adulthood, and he rejects with some disgust the static childhoods to be found in what is thought to be the greatest English writing for children.

“It always struck me as blasphemous on the part of the children’s writers of the so-called golden age, this sickly nostalgia for childhood that you see in AA Milne, E Nesbit, Kenneth Grahame, that squad. Milne — I can’t stand the man.”

That “sickly nostalgia” pervaded the late 19th and early 20th-century imagination. He talks of flicking through bound copies of Punch magazine from that golden age and examining the cartoons.

“A lot of them are pictures of young children, sometimes in a state of undress — in the bath or something — saying something teeth-grittingly cute with a fond parent or nanny looking. It’s not paedophilia, not lustful gloating over the glistening limbs, but there is a sense of let’s go back to the nursery, let’s take nanny and tea and teddy bears and all that stuff. Only adults feel like that — children want to grow up.”

Beneath his sweet avuncularity, Pullman is a tough-minded, intellectually muscular man, and there is nothing sickly about his work. He ended his first

mighty trilogy by sending his heroine, Lyra, not away with the fairies, not back to the nursery, but to school. Growing up is the point of life. Puberty is an escape into the real world.

He will be 71 on publication day — October 19. He was born in Norway just after the end of the Second World War. He seldom saw his father, an RAF pilot; the paternal figure in his life was his grandfather, a clergyman called Sidney Merryfield — the name alone would be enough to turn any sensitive child into a storyteller. His father became a glamorous fantasy figure “composed of the smell of beer and cigarettes and an RAF moustache and a loud laugh”. He died in a plane crash in 1953, when Pullman was seven.

The fantasy faded when he later learnt that in Kenya his father had been engaged in air attacks on Mau Mau guerillas. Then, after his mother’s death, there were stories that the crash was suicide and that his father had women and money troubles. Finally, he discovered that their marriage had ended, they were legally separated and soon to be divorced. One day, he plans to revisit all this in his memoirs.

His mother remarried and his stepfather’s job took him first to Australia when he was eight, and then, when he was 11, to Wales, “where my adolescence happened”. There was one crucial event in Australia — the River Murray flooded. Pullman noticed how a flood changes everything, creating a new reality: “They bring to the surface things that have been buried and they stir things up.”

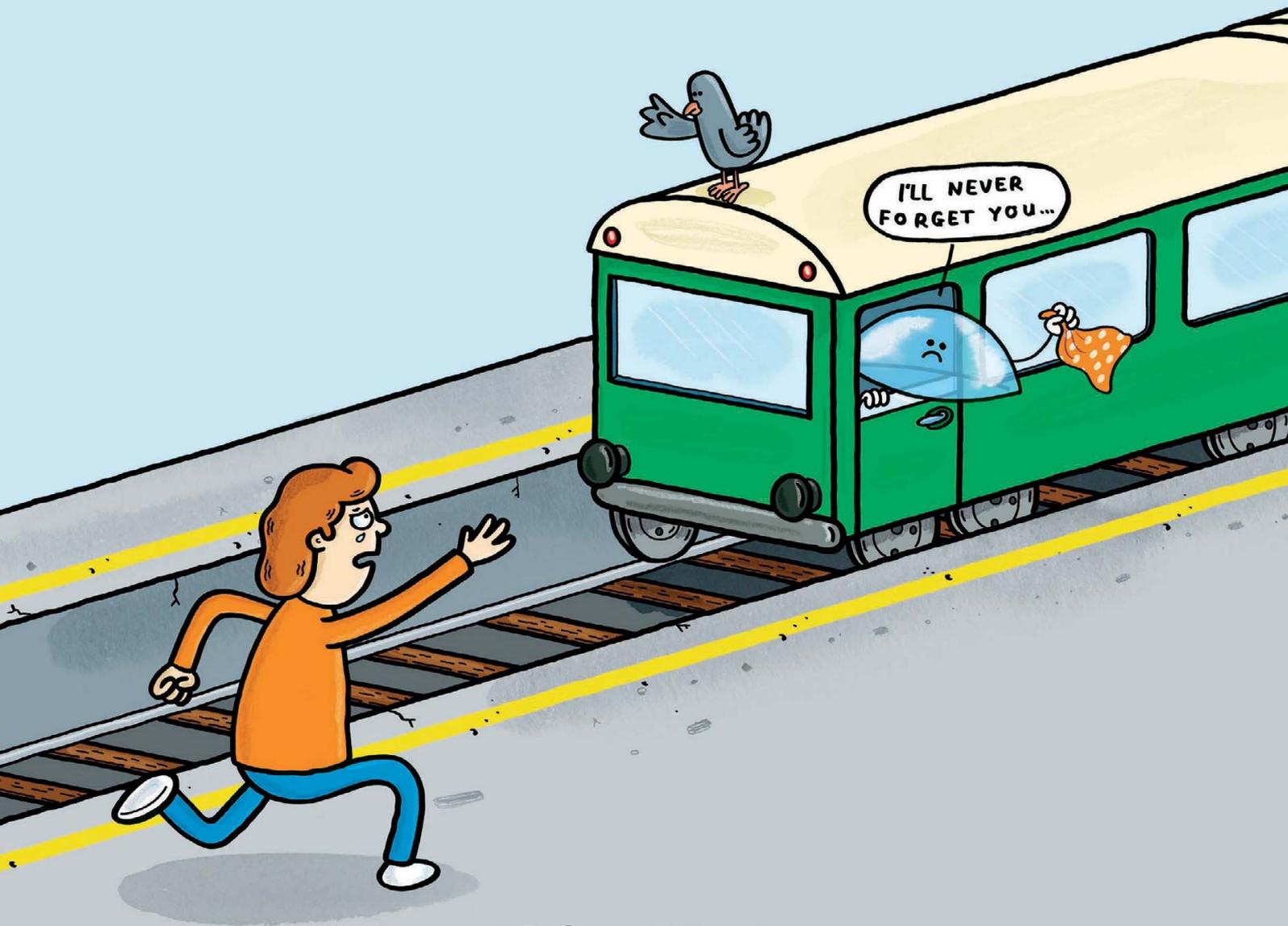
La Belle Sauvage is all about such a flood. Its title is the name of a canoe in which our hero navigates the flooded lands between Oxford and London.

Pullman studied English at Oxford, acquiring a miserable third because, he has said, he was having a wonderful time but nobody bothered to tell him he was doing really badly. In 1970 he married Judith “Jude” Speller; they are still happily together and have two grown-up sons. He also started teaching and writing. His first novel, *The Haunted Storm*, was an award-winner. He became a children’s writer with Count Karlstein in 1982.

So why does he write fantasy, a genre he does not even like or read very much?

“I wouldn’t know how to begin writing a decent modern novel of manners. I don’t know how people live. I am much happier making them live in a world in which they live as I like, rather than spending my time doing what does not come naturally to me, which is going out and asking people questions.” ➤➤➤

“There’s a sickly nostalgia that you see in AA Milne, Kenneth Grahame. Milne — I can’t stand the man”



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This sense of a man living in his imagination, rather than in the world of human interaction, is reflected in his home. People often say houses look “lived in”, but they can’t possibly grasp the full force of the term unless they have visited the Pullman home.

Chaotic but subtly ordered, everything you would ever need — plugs, connectors, cameras, books, pictures, papers, mugs, food — appear to be on display. Two dogs, crazed cockapoos called Coco and Mixie, do what they can to make matters worse, not least by drinking my coffee.

It feels like what it is, the cave of a compulsive storyteller or, possibly, a wizard. Pullman is insistent that he does not do literature, he “does story”. There may only be a limited number of stories, but they are in constant need of retelling. The Book of Dust, for example, has links to Edmund Spenser’s 16th-century romantic epic *The Faerie Queene*. His *Dark Materials* was thematically based on John Milton’s *Paradise Lost*, with the expulsion of Adam and Eve from Eden becoming the great transition of puberty.

Enter Pullman the controversialist. Milton, as William Blake observed, was not what he seemed. His portrait of Satan was so vivid and that of God so pallid that, Blake concluded, he was “of the Devil’s party without knowing it”. Pullman knows it and he celebrates the fall of humanity as, like puberty, a great awakening. In the trilogies there is a dark, repressive body called the Magisterium that, pretty clearly, represents the Catholic Church. What seemed to be not only an anti-religious tract, but also a globally successful one, alarmed the devout. Some articles appeared in the *Catholic Herald* accusing him of evangelising atheism among impressionable youth. He was linked with other atheist evangelists such as Richard Dawkins and Christopher Hitchens. One newspaper columnist accused him of being “the most dangerous author in Britain”.

“I knew when I wrote *His Dark Materials* that I was

taking on established religion and I knew it would fight back, which it did. And I knew it would be good for publicity apart from anything else, not that I did it for that reason.

“In *The Book of Dust*, the focus is different. I am taking on all the practitioners of single visions, and that includes the dogmatic atheists. I have got some nuns in *La Belle Sauvage* and they are quite nice. I will not get any criticism from the nun brigade.”

His love of the world, this world, lies at the heart of all that he writes. He dismisses the heaven offered by the church because “a heaven that is only accessible when you are dead or good isn’t much good”. For him, heaven is not a kingdom, it is a republic, and it is here and now and we need not ask for more.

He knows he is now a public figure — not just as a writer but also as president of the Society of Authors, where he has demanded payments for authors attending literary festivals and for ebook library loans. He has fought against the closure of libraries and the age and gender labelling of books.

Politically he is on the left. He is mystified by the way the bankers got away scot-free. “They turned the screws of austerity on the rest of us and rewarded the bankers with cash. It is a wonder we have not had a revolution.”

He has no time for Jeremy Corbyn, though — “A man who hasn’t changed his mind for 30 years.”

He believes strongly in the pursuit of virtue and doing what he can to make a better world. “We should always aim to make things better than they are. We did it for a while after the war.”

His books frequently do this work for him. He loves a magnificent quote from the 19th-century writer Walter Savage Landor — “We must not indulge in unfavourable views of mankind, since by doing it we make bad men believe they are no worse than others, and we teach the good that they are good in vain.” That is his literary ethic in a nutshell and it is why his books have real heroes doing heroic things ■

INTERCISION
“It was a silly thing to do,” Pullman says of his ponytail, now cut off after three years



Philip Pullman’s *La Belle Sauvage*: an exclusive extract

Malcolm Polstead, the 11-year-old at the centre of the story, sees a great deal of the secret life of Oxford from the perspective of the rivers and the canal in his canoe, *La Belle Sauvage*. Here he witnesses something he’d never expected to see and discovers something that will change his life

Malcolm let the canoe drift to a halt and then silently slipped in among the stiff stems and watched as a great crested grebe scrambled up onto the towpath, waddled ungracefully across, and then dropped into the little backwater on the other side.

The reeds were taller than Malcolm was as he sat in the canoe, and if he kept very still, he thought he probably couldn’t be seen. He heard voices behind him, a man’s and a woman’s, and sat like a statue as they walked past, absorbed in each other. He’d passed them further back: two lovers strolling hand in hand, their *dæmons*, two small birds, flying ahead a little way, pausing to whisper together, and flying on again.

Malcolm’s *dæmon*, Asta, was a kingfisher just then, perching on the gunwale of the canoe. When the lovers had passed, she flew up to his shoulder and whispered, “The man just along there — watch...”

Malcolm hadn’t seen him. A few yards ahead on the towpath, just visible through the reed stems, a man in a grey raincoat and trilby hat was standing under an oak tree. He looked as if he was sheltering from the rain, except that it wasn’t raining. His coat and hat were almost exactly the colour of the late afternoon: he was almost as

hard to see as the grebes — harder, in fact, thought Malcolm, because he didn’t have a crest of feathers.

“What’s he doing?” whispered Malcolm.

Asta became a fly and flew as far as she could from Malcolm, stopping when it began to hurt, and settled at the very top of a bulrush so she could watch the man clearly. He was trying to remain inconspicuous, but being so awkward and unhappy about it that he might as well have been waving a flag.

Asta saw his *dæmon* — a cat — moving among the lowest branches of the oak tree while he stood below and looked up and down the towpath. Then the cat made a quiet noise, the man looked up, and she jumped down to his shoulder—but in doing so, she dropped something out of her mouth.

The man uttered a little grunt of dismay, and his *dæmon* scrambled to the ground. They began to cast around, looking under the tree, at the edge of the water, among the scrubby grass.

“What did she drop?” Malcolm whispered.

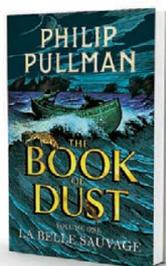
“Like a nut. About the size of a nut.”

“Did you see where it went?”

“I think so. I think it bounced off the bottom of the tree and went under the bush there. Look, they’re pretending ➤➤➤”

ONLINE EXTRA

Know your Dust from your dæmon? Take our Philip Pullman quiz at thesundaytimes.co.uk/magazine



La Belle Sauvage: The Book of Dust Volume One by Philip Pullman is published on Thursday (David Fickling with Penguin Random House £20), available in hardback, ebook and audiobook (narrated by Michael Sheen)

not to look for it..." They were too. Someone else was coming along the path, a man and his dog dæmon, and while the man in the raincoat waited for them to pass, he pretended to be looking at his watch, shaking his wrist, listening to it, shaking his wrist again, taking the watch off, winding it. As soon as the other man had gone past, the raincoat man fastened the watch on his wrist again and went back to looking for the object his dæmon had dropped. He was anxious — it was easy to see that — and his dæmon had apology in every line of her body. Between the two of them, they looked the picture of distress.

"We could go and help," said Asta.

But before they had the chance to do anything, the man bent and scooped up his cat dæmon and made off quite quickly down the towpath, as if he'd decided to go and get help. At once Malcolm backed the canoe out of the reeds and sped towards the spot under the oak tree where the man had been standing. A moment later he'd jumped out, holding the painter, and Asta in the shape of a mouse shot across the path and under the bush. A rustling of leaves, a silence, more rustling, more silence while Malcolm watched the man reach the little iron footbridge to the piazza and climb the steps. Then a squeak of excitement told Malcolm that Asta had found it, and squirrel-formed, she came racing back, up his arm and onto his shoulder, and dropped something into his hand.

"It must be this," she said. "It must be."

At first sight it was an acorn, but it was oddly heavy, and when he looked more closely, he saw that it was carved out of a piece of tight-grained wood. Two pieces, in fact: one for the cup, whose surface was carved into an exact replica of the rough overlapping scales of a real one and stained very lightly with green, and one for the nut, which was polished and waxed a perfect glossy light brown. It was beautiful, and she was right: it had to be the thing the man had lost.

"Let's catch him before he gets across the bridge," he said, and put his foot down into the canoe, but Asta said, "Wait. Look." She'd become an owl, which she always did when she wanted to see something clearly. Her flat face was looking down the canal, and as Malcolm followed her gaze, he saw the man reach the middle of the footbridge and hesitate, because another man had stepped up from the other side, a stocky man dressed in black with a light-stepping vixen dæmon, and Malcolm and Asta could see that the second man was going to stop the raincoat man, and the raincoat man was afraid.

They saw him turn and take a hasty step or two and then stop again, because a third man had appeared on the bridge behind him. He was thinner than the other man, and he too was dressed in black. His dæmon was a large bird of some kind on his shoulder. Both of the men looked full of confidence, as if they had plenty of time to do whatever they wanted. They said something to the raincoat man, and each took one of his arms. He struggled for a futile moment or two, and then seemed to sag downwards, but they held him up and walked him across the bridge, into the little piazza below the church tower, and away out of sight. His cat dæmon hurried after them, abject and desperate.

"Put it in your insidest pocket," Asta whispered.

Malcolm put the acorn into the inside breast pocket of his jacket and then sat down very carefully. He was trembling.

"They were arresting him," he whispered. "They weren't police."

"No. But they weren't robbers. They were sort of calm about it, as if they were allowed to do anything they wanted."

"They were arresting him," Malcolm whispered. "They weren't police." "I bet he's a spy..."

"Just go home," said Asta. "In case they saw us."

"They weren't even bothering to look," said Malcolm, but he agreed with her: they should go home. They spoke quietly together while he paddled quickly back towards Duke's Cut. "I bet he's a spy," she said.

"Could be. And those men —"

"CCD."

"Shh!"

The CCD was the Consistorial Court of Discipline, an agency of the Church concerned with heresy and unbelief. Malcolm didn't know much about it, but he knew the sense of sickening terror the CCD could produce, through hearing some customers once discuss what might have happened to a man they knew, a journalist; he had asked too many questions about the CCD in a series of articles and had suddenly vanished. The editor of his paper had been arrested and jailed for sedition, but the journalist himself had never been seen again.

"We mustn't say anything about this to the sisters," said Asta.

"Specially not to them," Malcolm agreed.

It was hard to understand, but the Consistorial Court of Discipline was on the same side as the gentle sisters of Godstow Priory, sort of. They were both parts of the Church. The only time Malcolm had seen Sister Benedicta distressed was when he'd asked her about it one day.

"These are mysteries we mustn't inquire into, Malcolm," she'd said. "They're too deep for us. But the Holy Church knows the will of God and what must be done. We must continue to love one another and not ask too many questions."

The first part was easy enough for Malcolm, who was fond of most things he knew, but the second part was harder. However, he didn't ask any more about the CCD.

It was nearly dark when they reached home. Malcolm dragged La Belle Sauvage out of the water and under the lean-to at the side of the inn and hurried inside, his arms aching, and raced up to his bedroom.

Dropping his coat on the floor and kicking his shoes under the bed, he switched on the bedside light while Asta struggled to pull the acorn out of the insidest pocket. When Malcolm had it in his hand, he turned it over and over, examining it closely.

"Look at the way this is carved!" he said, marveling.

"Try opening it."

He was doing that as she spoke, gently twisting the acorn in its cup without any success. It didn't unscrew, so he tried harder, and then tried to pull it, but that didn't work either.

"Try twisting the other way," said Asta.

"That would just do it up tighter," he said, but he tried, and it worked. The thread was the opposite way.

"I never seen that before," said Malcolm. "Strange."

So neatly and finely made were the threads that he had to turn it a dozen times before the two parts fell open. There was a piece of paper inside ■



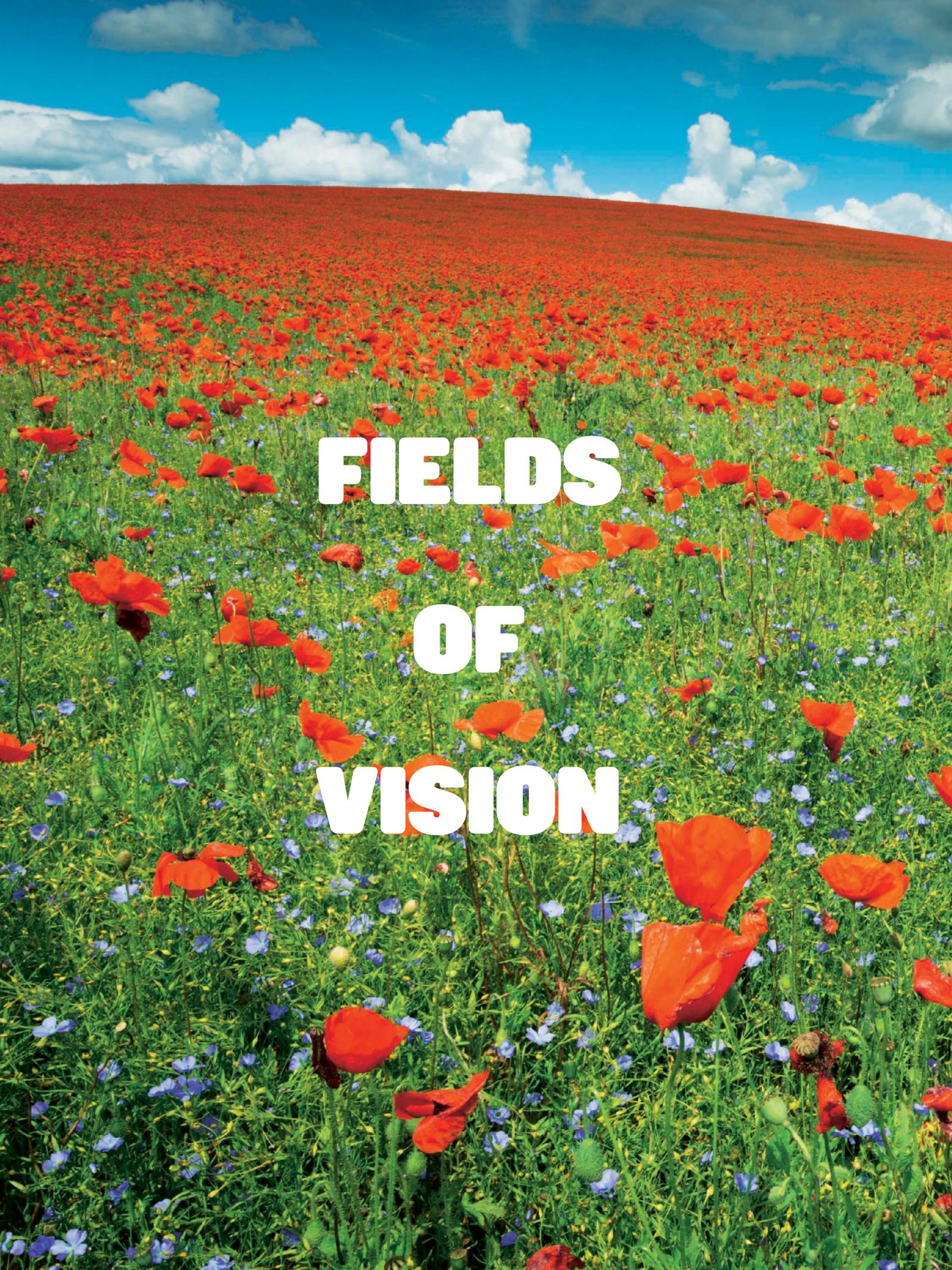
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A vast field of red poppies and blue flowers under a blue sky with white clouds. The field is filled with numerous red poppies and smaller blue flowers, stretching to the horizon. The sky is bright blue with scattered white clouds. The text "FIELDS OF VISION" is overlaid in the center in a bold, white, sans-serif font.

**FIELDS
OF
VISION**

**Stunning images from the
2017 Take a View Landscape
Photographer of the Year awards**





PREVIOUS PAGE
The Sunday Times
Magazine Choice
Julian Eales
A sea of wild
poppies overruns a
field of blue linseed
near Royston in
Hertfordshire

LEFT
Commended
Rachael Talibart
Rust and corrosion
create an
otherworldly pattern
on metal sea
defences at Seaford,
East Sussex

THIS PICTURE
Landscape
photographer of the
year, overall winner
Benjamin Graham
A sunset colours the
sea and land as the
tide meets West
Wittering Beach

BOTTOM
Commended and
judge's choice
David Hopley
A drone's eye view
of a tree framed by
a circle in a
wheatfield in Colton,
North Yorkshire



FORTNUM & MASON
EST 1707

The Elvas are in the building

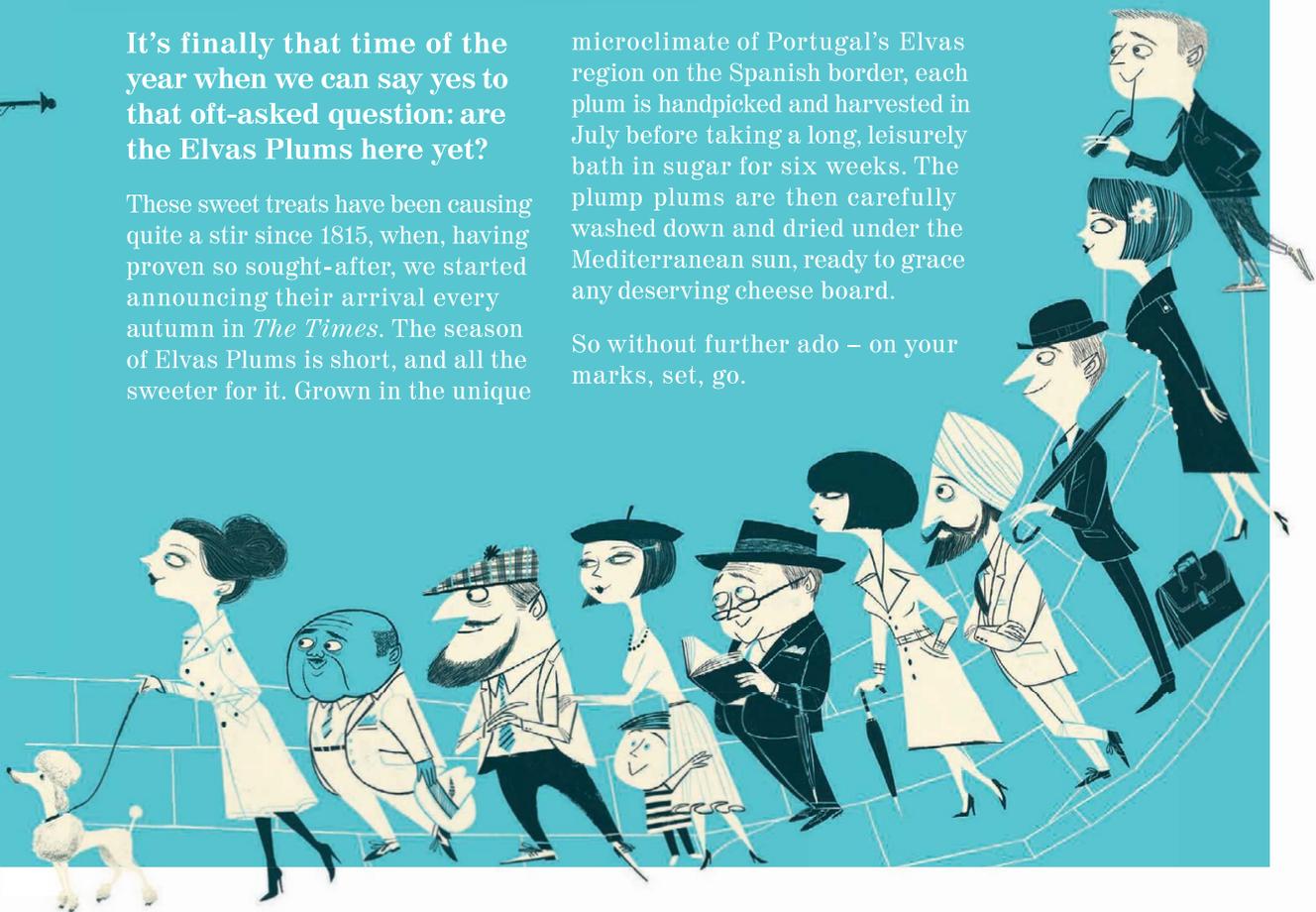
Please form an orderly queue

It's finally that time of the year when we can say yes to that oft-asked question: are the Elvas Plums here yet?

These sweet treats have been causing quite a stir since 1815, when, having proven so sought-after, we started announcing their arrival every autumn in *The Times*. The season of Elvas Plums is short, and all the sweeter for it. Grown in the unique

microclimate of Portugal's Elvas region on the Spanish border, each plum is handpicked and harvested in July before taking a long, leisurely bath in sugar for six weeks. The plump plums are then carefully washed down and dried under the Mediterranean sun, ready to grace any deserving cheese board.

So without further ado – on your marks, set, go.



ELVAS PLUMS

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RIGHT

Commended

David Queenan

A winter sunrise creates a golden glow behind the Forth Bridges in Scotland, shot from Port Edgar Marina

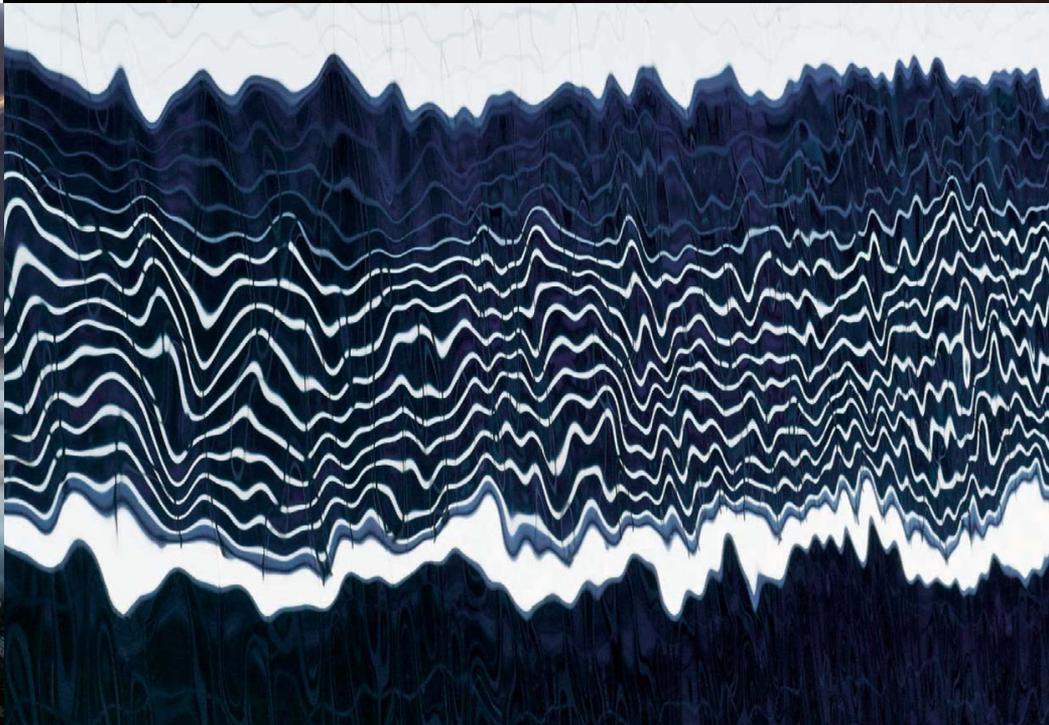


CENTRE LEFT

Commended

Stephen Fairbrother

A blanket of mist shrouds the town of Keswick, as viewed from Latrigg Fell in the Lake District



CENTRE RIGHT

Commended

Mike Curry

Buildings are reflected in the waters of the South Dock Marina in London, creating a sinuous pattern

RIGHT

Highly commended

David Hopley

A low sun casts a long shadow captured by a drone in Everingham, East Yorkshire





Now in its 11th year, the Take a View Landscape Photographer of the Year competition is open to professionals and amateurs alike, and showcases exquisite images of landscapes and cityscapes from around the UK. There are four different categories, plus a youth competition for under-16s, and winners share a prize fund worth £20,000, with a top prize of £10,000. There will be an exhibition on the balcony at London

Waterloo station from November 20 until February 4, followed by a nationwide tour. The accompanying book, Landscape Photographer of the Year — Collection II is published tomorrow (AA Publishing £25) ■

The awards are supported by The Sunday Times Magazine and held in association with VisitBritain, the GREAT Britain campaign and the exhibition hosts, Network Rail. Visit take-a-view.co.uk

**TOP
Commended**
Sharon Wilson
**A fog bow arches
over a lone tree on
a snow-covered
Rannoch Moor in the
Scottish Highlands**

**BOTTOM
Category winner**
George Robertson
**Steam rises from
cooling towers at
Grangemouth
Refinery in
Stirlingshire**



I want enough money to try new things

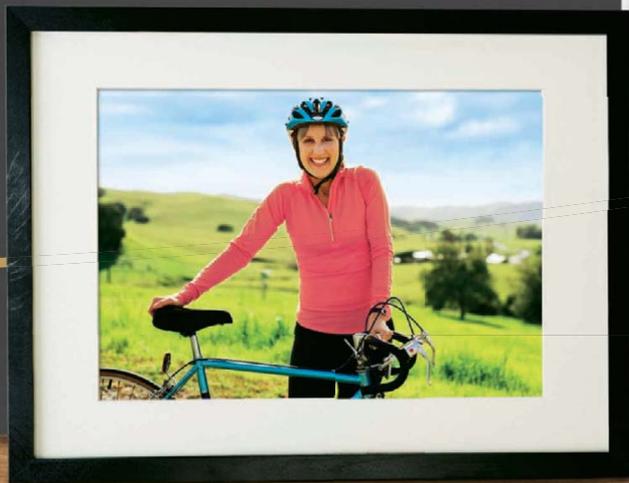
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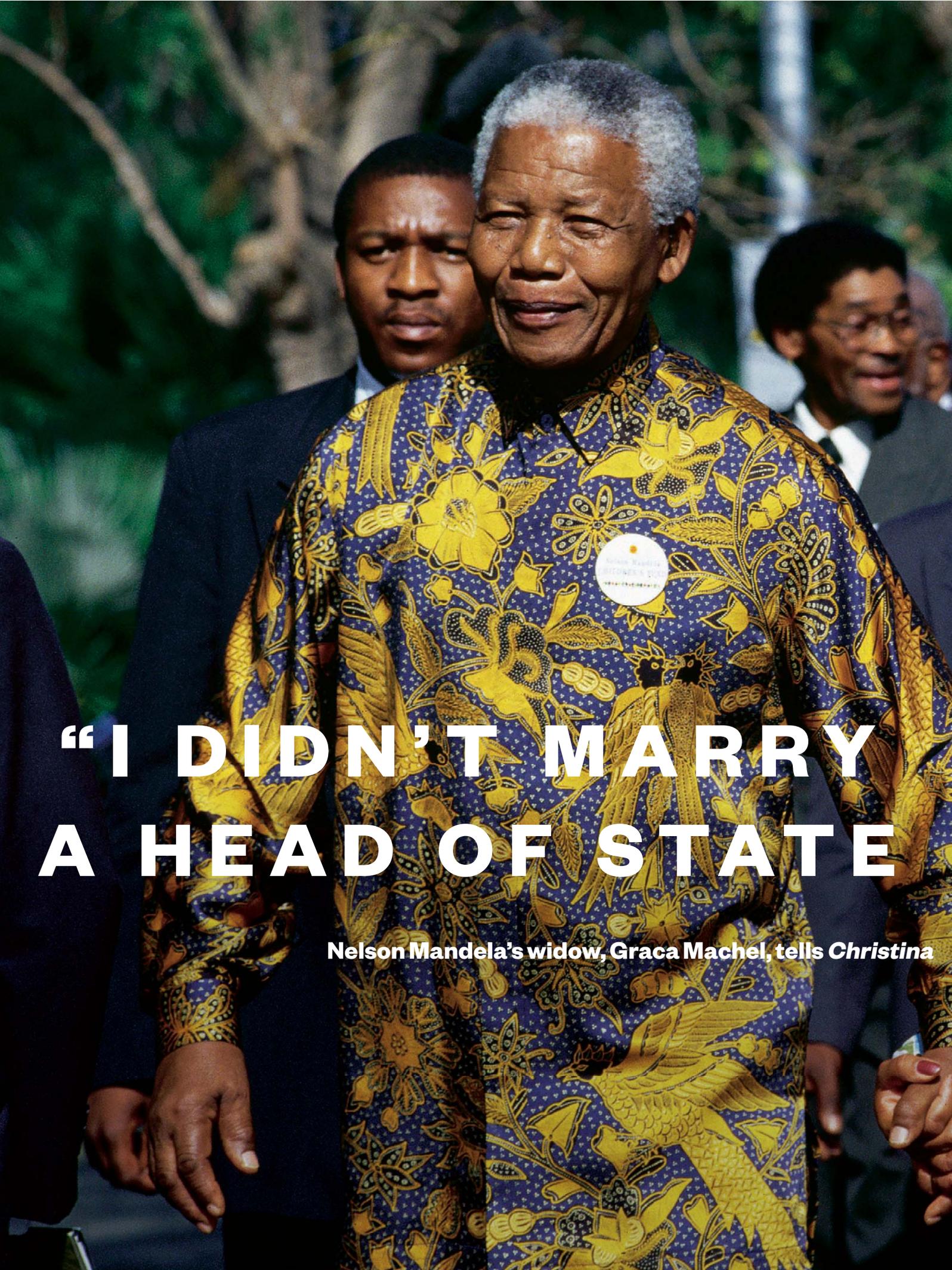


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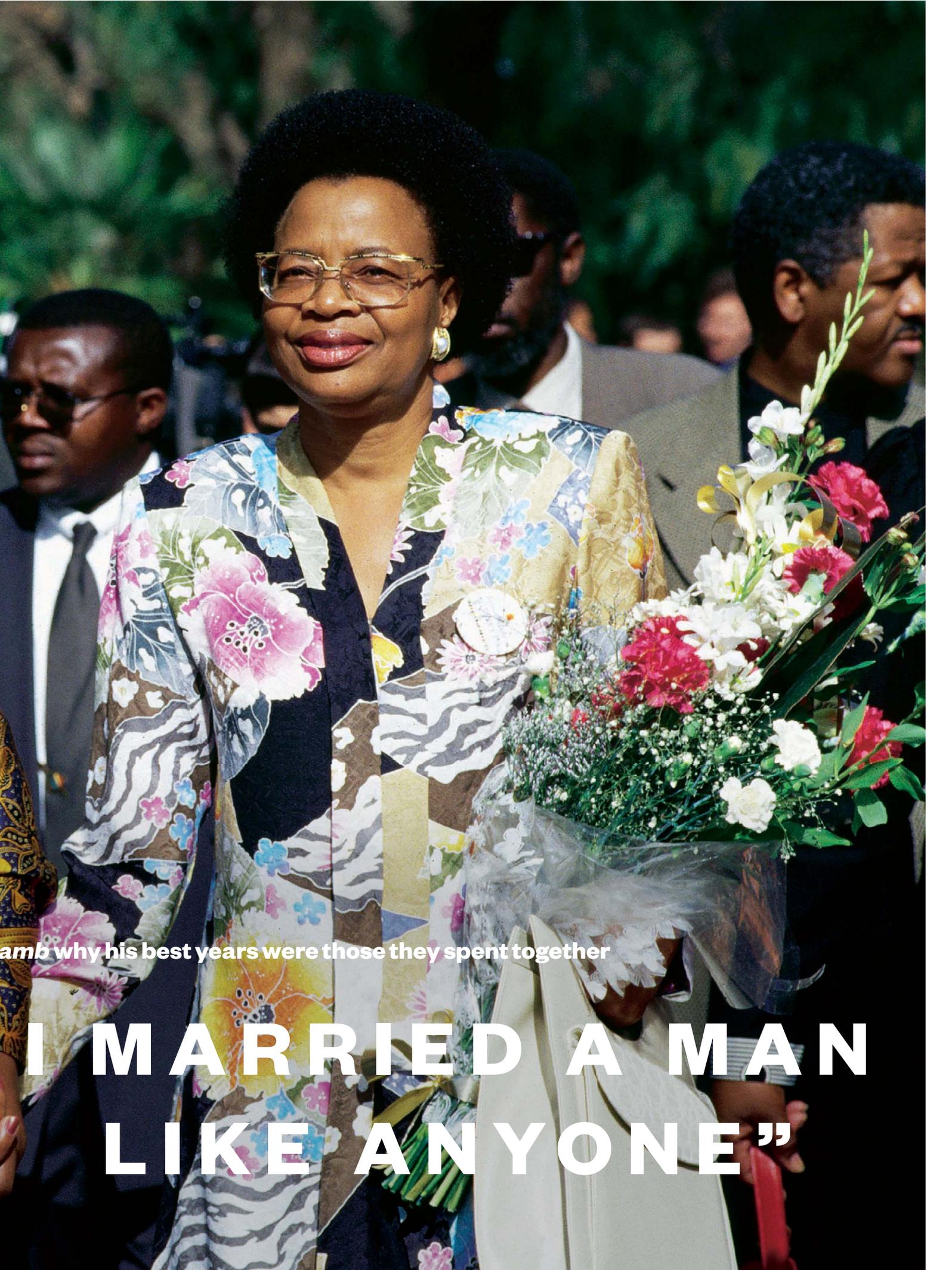
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“I DIDN'T MARRY A HEAD OF STATE

Nelson Mandela's widow, Graca Machel, tells *Christina*

A woman with short dark hair and glasses is smiling. She is wearing a dark blue jacket with a vibrant, multi-colored floral pattern and a zebra print section. She is holding a large, colorful bouquet of flowers, including white lilies, red carnations, and pink flowers. In the background, several men in suits are visible, some wearing sunglasses. The scene appears to be outdoors at a wedding or formal event.

amb why his best years were those they spent together

**I MARRIED A MAN
LIKE ANYONE”**



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SAY SARSON'S**

*Matured for 7 days in wooden vats, compared to most other malt vinegars produced in 24 hours using stainless steel acetators.

M

Manhattan during the annual United Nations gathering of heads of state and there are presidents and prime ministers everywhere. It is an environment

with which the woman in the pink-and-red flowery dress is all too familiar — not only is Graca Machel the widow of Nelson Mandela, but she is the only person in history to have married the heads of state of two different republics.

It's a description that annoys her. "I didn't marry two heads of state," she corrects me. "I married two exceptional human beings."

The first was her fellow Mozambican Samora Machel, who led the country to independence but was killed in a mysterious air crash in 1986, leaving her widowed with two young children and so devastated that she wore black for five years and could hardly speak. Then, as she built a new life for herself, campaigning for children caught up in conflict, she unexpectedly found love with South Africa's great anti-apartheid leader and first black president, who said she made him "bloom like a flower".

She is coy about her own feelings. "I met and lived with Madiba at the best of his time," she smiles, referring to him with the affectionate name used by many South Africans. "He was already content with himself. He had achieved so much when I met him, he didn't need to fight to affirm himself, even to me. People say I married a head of state. I didn't marry a head of state. I married Nelson Mandela. I married a man like anyone."

Except Mandela was not anyone. Now she finds herself guardian of his legacy, no easy task when the whole world thinks it knows him. The challenge is even greater at a time when his country is in chaos under a corrupt president who threatens Mandela's vision of a free, prosperous and non-racial South Africa, and the Mandela family so riven with divisions over inheritance that Machel has been forced to move out of the house they shared in Johannesburg.

Machel, who celebrates her 72nd birthday this week, is a lovely person whom I have met twice before in her beautiful art-filled home in the Mozambique capital, Maputo. But she is not an easy interview, reluctant to be drawn on life with one of the world's most respected statesmen.

"I'm just a housewife," she insists when I ask about the current situation in South Africa. "What do I have to do with politics?"

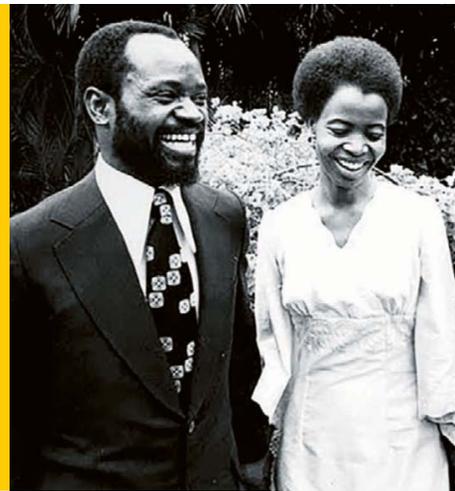
We are meeting because she has overseen the completion of Mandela's final project, his account of the first non-racial elections in 1994, his presidential years and the challenges of dismantling five decades of

apartheid. The follow-up to his first memoir, *Long Walk to Freedom*, it was meant to be in his own voice, but he grew too frail and died before he could finish it.

"He wanted to do it the same way as with the first book, but couldn't because he did that in prison, when he would write at night instead of sleeping." But with the second one, "he was busy as head of state, so we would take him away from Johannesburg and Cape Town to a very quiet place, a farm in Limpopo, where he could focus".

Machel laughs when I ask her if he used a computer. "No!" she replies. "He wasn't computer-literate, he wrote by hand."

He had penned about 70,000 words when he died of pneumonia in December 2013. Machel hired Mandla Langa, a South African poet and novelist, to "envelop this in a way that makes it pleasant to read",



bringing in those who worked closest with Mandela for context. "Madiba was very good at keeping notes, his own personal diary," she says. "I called his advisers because they knew from experience the decisions he made and why."

The resulting book is a manual on reconciliation, detailing his efforts on how to bring former enemies to work together in government. It's a powerful reminder of the tremendous challenges of forging his rainbow nation.

"You have to remember the white community had never crossed to Soweto," she says, laughing. "They had no idea what was happening that side and suddenly they have to share a cabinet with those people."

The book is called *Dare Not Linger* — the title drawn from the final passage of his first book, in which "Madiba speaks of reaching the summit of a great hill and resting briefly before continuing his long walk. May we all find places of rest, but never linger too long on the journeys we are called to."

Machel has made an extraordinary journey in her own right, from a peasant

family to the first African woman to become a British dame — perhaps the only dame who can strip an AK47.

Born Graca Simbine to a widowed mother on the coast of Portuguese-ruled Mozambique, she got a scholarship to high school in Maputo, where she was the only non-white girl in her class. After studying languages in Lisbon, she joined Frelimo (the Front for the Liberation of Mozambique) and trained as a guerrilla fighter. There she met the movement's charismatic leader, Samora Machel, and the pair became lovers during the revolutionary war. When Mozambique gained its independence in June 1975, Samora Machel became president and she the education and culture minister. They married two months later. When Machel was killed, Mandela wrote to her from jail offering his condolences. "We must believe that his death will strengthen your and our resolve to be finally free," he wrote. "Our struggle has always been linked and we shall be victorious together." Machel replied: "From within your vast prison, you brought a ray of light in my hour of darkness."

Those were prescient words. After Mandela was released from jail in 1990, he visited Maputo and took over as godfather to the Machel children from Oliver Tambo, his ailing fellow freedom fighter.

Machel has always been vague about when they started dating, perhaps because Mandela was still married to his second wife, Winnie. She once told me that, for her, it had not been love at first sight, describing it instead as "something deep like a bell that rings from inside". According to others, it was Mandela who endlessly phoned her like a teenager. Eventually Machel gave in to Mandela's pleas to visit him in South Africa and their relationship blossomed. It became public when they went for a walk near his house and he presented her with a pink rose. After his divorce in 1996, she began to accompany him on his travels, starting in Paris and then to Zimbabwe for the lavish wedding of Robert Mugabe to Grace Marufu.

Machel became the third Mrs Mandela in 1998, in a private ceremony at Mandela's house on his 80th birthday — an event so low-key even his spokesman didn't know. His subsequent birthday party — also their wedding reception — was far from low-key. Some 2,000 guests attended, including Michael Jackson and Stevie Wonder. Archbishop Desmond Tutu gave the sermon.

Machel believes she was the luckiest of his three wives (his first marriage to Evelyn Ntoko Mase lasted from 1944 to 1958). "When you are a young husband and wife, you each have to build your own base in the relationship," she explains. "But we met when Madiba was seventysomething and I was fiftysomething. This was a relationship of very mature people who knew what we wanted from life. At that time in life you want to share much more than fighting" ➤

FIRST LADY With husbands Samora Machel and, previous pages, Nelson Mandela in 1997

for space as a couple. You want to enjoy companionship and mutual understanding. So it was the best of times. The other wives met him when he was very busy with the struggle, he wouldn't be at home, but for me it was so good. He had all the time for me and we had the pleasure to go to places we chose to go and to do what we wanted."

Mandela is often seen as a saint, so I wonder if there were things he did that irritated her. "He had his own weaknesses, like anyone," she says. "Fortunately he was a very simple, accessible, humble man with his friends and family. So we didn't have to manage a gap between what the public thought and the reality."

Mandela always attracted celebrity friends, from royalty to the Hollywood elite. One of his favourite people was the Queen, whom he called Elizabeth. When Machel told him off, he retorted: "Well, she calls me Nelson."

"They had a lot of mutual respect," Machel says. "To the extent they would call each other on every birthday and other occasions. The Queen was very generous in the way she would relate to him."

When I ask about Mandela's final years, she shakes her head. "I don't think I'm ready to talk," she says. "It's been four years, but it still hurts." She is so private that her only quote in the book is to comment on how fastidious he was about dress and routine, waking every morning to exercise, fold his pyjamas and make his bed, to the exasperation of the household staff.

"He was extraordinarily disciplined," she says. "Even the discipline of writing his diary — he would do it every day, even when tired. I think he developed that even more in jail because it was part of preparing himself with the moral strength to confront the enemy. That's why he read ferociously when he was allowed books, and he educated himself so as never to be caught off guard. One thing that surprised many people when he came out of jail was he grasped world development, both political and economic, as if he had not been away."

The book is a reminder of what real leadership can achieve. His was a government of national unity. Not only did the former president FW de Klerk become his deputy, but lifelong freedom fighters of his ANC shared a cabinet with the white politicians who had imprisoned them, as well as with members of Chief Buthelezi's Zulu-based Inkatha Freedom Party, which had fomented black-on-black violence.

"Madiba wanted to engage everyone to be able to say, 'This new dawn in South Africa belongs to me as well and I have a responsibility to make sure it succeeds,'" she explains. "Of course not everyone agreed. There were times when there were tensions and killings, but the unique thing about him was that everyone accepted his moral authority. Even when they disagreed, they knew he was the best person to be in



that position, to bring all forces together."

I ask how her husband would have felt about what's happening in South Africa today, where the current president, Jacob Zuma, is mired in allegations of corruption, cronyism and mismanaging the economy, plunging the country into crisis. Last year the country's highest court ruled he had violated the constitution by using £11m of taxpayers' money to extend his house, building an amphitheatre and swimming pool, which his officials claimed was needed as "a firebreak". He has repaid the money, but many other corruption charges remain. A polygamist who has defended rape charges, Zuma recently survived a fourth vote of no confidence in parliament.

The two men were fellow inmates on Robben Island, and Mandela speaks warmly of him in the book, calling him a "shining example of [a] leader who consistently put the welfare of the country above personal or party interests". It recently came to light that Mandela even bailed him out in 2005 with 1m rand (about £80,000 at the time) to pay off his debts. This was when Zuma had been ousted as deputy president by Thabo Mbeki and was facing charges of corruption, arms dealing and rape.

Surely Mandela would be dismayed by how Zuma is acting today?

"I don't think anyone can answer that," Machel replies. "He made a decision not to interfere with leadership after him — he was very careful. He would watch the news and if there was anything he was concerned about he would find a very discreet way of addressing those issues with the leaders."

In Mandela's later years she protected him from disturbing information. "When he was old and tired I didn't want him to suffer. There was nothing he could do," she explains. "So when there was something

"THE QUEEN WAS GENEROUS IN THE WAY SHE RELATED TO NELSON. THERE WAS RESPECT"

WARM WELCOME Meeting Prince Harry on his official visit to Johannesburg, 2015

that would upset him we found a way of not reading the paper or watching the news.

"Sometimes it was family news," she adds. "When there were issues within the family, we would decide to resolve them without him knowing — if he knew, he'd want to be involved as head of the family."

One of the tragedies of his later years was the unedifying squabbles of the Mandela family over money and who should replace him as head. When he was gravely ill in hospital, his eldest daughter took his eldest grandson to court after it emerged he had secretly had the bodies of three of his children exhumed from the family plot.

Machel points out that Mandela's 27 years in jail took a toll on the entire clan. "When he went to prison, his children were small. They grew up without him — then he comes out, they are grown-ups with families and he wants to exercise his authority. There was a mismatch in time."

She will not be drawn on rumours of a feud with Winnie, who referred to her as "the concubine", or that the rest of the Mandela family froze her out after his death. But this summer, when Mandela's doctor, Vejay Ramlakan, the former surgeon-general of the South African Military Health Service, wrote a book detailing his final moments and claiming only Winnie was at his bedside at the end, Machel took action. Calling it "an assault on the trust and dignity of my late husband", she said she was consulting lawyers. Shortly afterwards, the publisher, Penguin Random House, announced it would "immediately withdraw" the book out of respect for Mandela's family.

Protecting her husband's legacy is not the only challenge Machel has faced since his death. On her 70th birthday two years ago, she received news that her only daughter, Josina, was in hospital, having been beaten so severely by her boyfriend that he pierced her eye. Numerous operations failed to save the sight in the eye and mother and daughter embarked on a legal battle against the man, Rufino Licuco, a Mozambican businessman. In February, Licuco was ordered to pay £2m in damages and sentenced to three years in prison. However, as he was a first-time offender, the court ruled that his sentence be suspended for five years.

Machel believes her own future is all about women. The former guerrilla fighter is embarking on a new liberation struggle. "Africa needs a new era of liberation, one that is fuelled by the economic empowerment of the continent's women," she says ■

Dare Not Linger: The Presidential Years by Nelson Mandela and Mandla Langa is published on Thursday (Macmillan £25)

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CLONED RANGER

In the multibillion-pound world of horse racing, there are fortunes to be made from cloning champions — but at what cost to the sport's future? Report by *Alysen Miller*

PORTRAITS BY TIM FLACH

A one-horse town with 3,000 horses,” as its inhabitants like to say. At first glance, there is little to distinguish the sleepy market town of Newmarket from dozens of other English market towns of the same era. Yet look a little closer and there are clues that Newmarket is the centre of a multibillion-pound racing and breeding industry. They are there in the rather short stature and bow-legged gait of some of the patrons moseying into the Waggon & Horses for an afternoon pint; and in the “horse crossing” signs at every road junction.

Most of all, they are there in the statues of racing legends that stand sentry around the town. There is the Derby winner Hyperion, glaring imperiously in front of the Jockey Club, the headquarters of British racing. Most striking of all is the statue that greets arrivals from the direction of the Mill. The 15ft bronze stallion rears up from the Stetchworth Toll roundabout like Newmarket's own Colossus of Rhodes.



UNCANNY RESEMBLANCE Left: Tomatillo, a clone of the event horse Tamarillo (above)

The comparison is pertinent: the original Colossus was destroyed by an earthquake in 226BC. Today, developments in equine breeding have the potential to shake the foundations of this town to its very core.

Little more than a decade ago, the idea of a cloned racehorse setting foot on the hallowed turf of Newmarket, Epsom or Ascot would have been met with disbelief. And yet elsewhere in the equestrian world, breeders are embracing the technology. From eventing to polo, cloned animals are making their mark, both on the field and in the breeding shed. But what does this mean for the industry? Can those rare flashes of equine genius — Shergar's Derby, Frankel's 2,000 Guineas — ever really be replicated?

For nearly three centuries, ever since horse racing as we know it began in this country, the sport has largely played by the same set of rules: to be eligible to race, a horse must be the product of a physical mating between a stallion and a mare. Artificial insemination, embryo transfer and cloning are explicitly prohibited. The theory is this protects the thoroughbred's genetic diversity: a stallion can physically cover (an industry term, meaning to mate with) >>>

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A21 widening in Kent destroyed 9 hectares of ancient woodland.

The Woodland Trust is a charity registered in England and Wales number 294344 and in Scotland number SC038885. A non-profit making company limited by guarantee. Registered in England number 1982873. Image: WTML/Ben Holmes.

a maximum of about 200 mares a year. Relaxing this restriction, it is feared, would lead to an unacceptable narrowing of the gene pool, with the most popular stallions becoming disproportionately influential.

Unlike in racing, there is no restriction on cloned animals competing in eventing or any other sport regulated by the International Federation for Equestrian Sports (FEI), including pure dressage, showjumping and para-equestrian. Separately, polo has opened its doors to cloned animals: Adolfo Cambiaso, the sport's most famous player, recently won the Argentine Open playing six copies of the same horse. Advocates of cloning say it removes a layer of uncertainty compared with traditional breeding — even horses with the same parentage may display variations in conformation, temperament and aptitude.

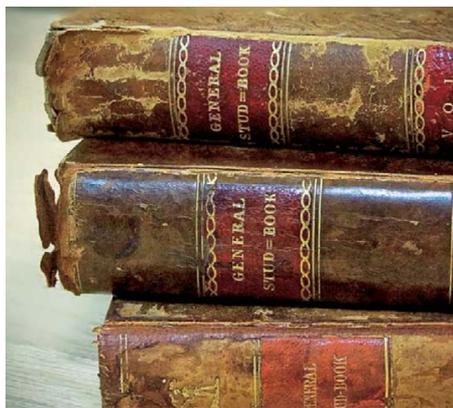
The General Stud Book has been published and maintained by Weatherbys since 1791. It records every mating that takes place in Great Britain and Ireland. “We don’t make policy,” says Nick Craven of Weatherbys. “If a country wanted to look at artificial insemination, cloning or any other artificial breeding, then that would be for them. But obviously if one country did do that, as it currently stands those horses wouldn’t be able to race internationally.”

And yet there are early signs of dissent. In 2012, the former bookmaker and Sydney Turf Club chairman Bruce McHugh brought a multimillion-dollar case against the Australian racing industry. In a six-week trial, McHugh challenged the global ban on registration of thoroughbreds produced by artificial insemination on the grounds of restraint of trade. His case was eventually dismissed, but it’s hard to imagine that this is the last time the issue will rear its head. In a game in which mere pixels in a photo finish can make the difference between a lucrative career at stud or relegation to a footnote in history, the pressure is on to exploit every gain in the quest for ever-swifter horses.

Newmarket is a place where tradition is taken seriously. It was James I who first established it as a horse-racing town with the construction of Newmarket Palace. Now, as then, its equine inhabitants are put through their paces on the 2,800 acres of gallops that surround the town in scenes made famous by the painter Alfred Munnings. Newmarket Palace is no longer standing, but no more than a dozen furlongs away, a new royal dominion has gradually taken shape.

Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid al-

CARNAL KNOWLEDGE Every thoroughbred mating since 1791 is in the General Stud Book



Maktoum is arguably the world’s most powerful racehorse owner. The ruler of Dubai and vice-president of the United Arab Emirates first became interested in horse racing while a student at Cambridge University. Within two decades he had established his own royal enclave in Newmarket, headquartered at the historic Dalham Hall Stud. With an estimated personal fortune of £3bn, he has done more than any individual to cement the position of Newmarket as horse racing’s global capital. Some 500 of the approximately 3,000 racehorses in training in Newmarket are owned by him, and he is the town’s largest employer.

Dalham Hall Stud is home to 14 of Sheikh Mohammed’s most prized breeding stallions — the super studs whose sole duty is to ensure the perpetuation of their precious bloodlines. The roots of the modern thoroughbred can be traced back to the late 17th and early 18th centuries, when native mares were crossbred with oriental stallions of Arabian, Barb and Turkomen breeding. Three of these stallions became exceptionally preponderant, so much so that every modern thoroughbred traces its bloodlines back to at least one of the three, known as the Byerley Turk, the Godolphin Arabian and the Darley Arabian, from which Sheikh Mohammed’s breeding programme, Darley, takes its name. The choice was no accident: the Darley Arabian is by far the most influential of the three and, therefore, the most important single sire in the history of the English thoroughbred.

During the Second World War, soldiers were billeted in Dalham Hall Stud’s stables. Today’s equine inhabitants enjoy considerably more luxurious accommodation: each 14ft-square box is lined with American oak and boasts a knee-deep bed of thick straw. The boxes look out onto manicured lawns, while beyond

the main yard stretch acres of paddocks.

Sheikh Mohammed’s goal is to produce winners. He has been successful more than 4,000 times, and his famous all-blue silks have been seen in winning enclosures from Royal Ascot to Australia. He has won a dozen English classics — a series of longstanding races for three-year-olds that includes the Guineas and the Epsom Derby. And herein lies the paradox at the heart of the racing industry: the purpose of these races is to establish the best horses of their generation so that they can be whisked away to stud. Rarely will a classic winner be kept in training beyond his three-year-old season. That’s because the fastest horses can earn far more off the track than on it.

In a racing career that lasted 367 days, Golden Horn won £4m in prize money, winning seven of its nine starts, including the third-fastest Derby ever, in 2015. Shortly after its victory in the Prix de l’Arc de Triomphe, in what was to be its penultimate race, it was announced that Sheikh Mohammed had purchased Golden Horn to stand as a stallion. With its covering fee set at £60,000, it earned twice as much in its first season at stud, covering 135 mares, than in its entire racing career. Now in its second season as a stallion, Golden Horn is no longer in racing trim, although is no less impressive a physical specimen. Classically proportioned like a painting by George Stubbs, its muscles still ripple under its gleaming coat. Golden Horn will typically cover up to four mares a day during covering season, which runs from February to June. To justify its fee, it will need to produce at least one Group One winner (the highest level of racing on the flat) from his first crop of foals. With the first of his progeny not due to reach the track until 2019, his owners face a nervous wait to see if their faith will be repaid.

Fewer than 1% of all racehorses become breeding stallions — just 27 retired to stud last year from a pool of more than 4,000. Golden Horn’s bloodlines make it a perfect candidate for the role: its paternal grandsire is Green Desert, a preeminent breeding stallion. Its sire is Cape Cross, who is responsible for such famous horses as Sea the Stars and Ouija Board. “He has a very good pedigree,” says Sam Bullard, director at Darley Stallions, “so that gives him a hell of a chance.”

Many factors determine whether a racehorse will pass on his strength, speed and will to win to his offspring. “Put the best to the best and hope for the best” is the unofficial motto of the breeding industry. Any mating is ultimately a roll of the dice. History is littered with expensive flops; from The Green Monkey, purchased at auction for £9m and subsequently retired after failing to win a race in three starts; to Hydrogen, a Galileo colt who failed to post a win despite its £2.6m price tag.

Darley is one of approximately 3,100 ➤➤➤

“I COULD SPEND £70,000 ON A HORSE AND PUT YEARS OF TRAINING INTO IT, AND STILL NOT KNOW IF IT HAS WHAT IT TAKES — OR I COULD SPEND THAT ON A COPY”

A man with short brown hair, smiling broadly, wearing a dark blue zip-up jacket over a plaid shirt. He is holding a large, woven wicker basket filled with fresh, bright orange carrots. The basket is lined with white paper. The background is a vast, golden-brown field under a clear blue sky with some light clouds. The overall scene is bright and sunny, suggesting a late afternoon or early morning setting.

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Food Love Stories

TESCO

Every little helps

breeders in Great Britain. Of these, some 75 are considered “commercial” breeders: operations with 10 or more mares that account for about 43% of all foals born. Darley is part of a triumvirate of super breeders, along with Ireland’s Coolmore Stud and Juddmonte Farms, owned by Prince Khalid bin Abdullah of Saudi Arabia. These three super studs vie for supremacy both on and off the track. Such power struggles are part of the fabric of racing. It is perhaps unsurprising, therefore, that the leading owner-breeders are less than enthusiastic about embracing a technology that could, at least in theory, have a democratising effect on the industry.

So what if there were a way to eliminate the degree of uncertainty in a mating’s success — to ensure the right combination of genetics and luck won every time?

One hundred and sixty miles away from Newmarket, Biddesden House in Wiltshire is an unlikely outpost for scientific innovation. The grade I listed house was built c1711 and acquired by Bryan Guinness, an heir to the Guinness brewing fortune, in the 1930s. The tangled bloodlines of the Guinness family are worthy of their own stud book: Bryan was married to Diana Mitford before she deserted him for the fascist leader Oswald Mosley. He remarried Elisabeth Nelson and the couple had nine children. Finn is the fourth oldest. Now he and his wife, Mary, find themselves standing, somewhat incongruously, on the threshold of a brave new world of equine breeding.

Equine breeding has been taking place at Biddesden House since Finn’s parents gave one another a purebred Arabian horse as a wedding gift. It was Mary, an American-born former actress, who pointed the operation towards breeding horses for eventing.

Among the most successful — and popular — event horses of all time was Tamarillo, who was bred at Biddesden. “He was such a character,” Mary remembers. “He was not only beautiful but quirky and wonderfully athletic — such a celebrity.” In a star-spangled career, Tamarillo won the horse trials at Burghley and Badminton — the sport’s blue-riband events — picking up an Olympic team silver medal along the way. Tamarillo died in 2015. Like most event horses, it was a gelding, so never sired any offspring. However, the Guinneses have gone to great lengths to ensure that its bloodlines did not die with it.

There’s something familiar about the bright bay colt that pokes its head playfully out of a stable as Finn approaches. A clue to its origins lies in its name: in botany, the tamarillo plant bears the tomatillo fruit. Tomatillo is Tamarillo’s clone.

Tomatillo also owes its existence to other animals — including a sheep. In 1996, scientists from Edinburgh University’s Roslin Institute created Dolly, the first animal cloned from a cell taken from an adult animal. Known as somatic cell nuclear

STUD-U-LIKE In the clone-free world of racing, it costs £60,000 to breed with Golden Horn



transfer (SCNT), the technique involves transferring the nucleus from a diploid cell (containing 30,000-40,000 genes and a full set of paired chromosomes) to an unfertilised egg cell from which the maternal nucleus has been removed. The resulting embryo is then transferred into a surrogate mother, where it develops until birth. Nuclear transfer is not a new technique. In the 1980s it was used to clone cattle and sheep with cells taken from embryos. In 1995, the scientists Ian Wilmut and Keith Campbell created two live lambs, Megan and Morag, from an embryo-derived cell that had been cultured in a laboratory. This was the first time live animals had been derived from cultured cells, and their success paved the way for the cloning of Dolly and, eventually, Tomatillo.

Cloning a horse costs about £70,000. In a sport such as eventing, where top-class conventionally bred animals can routinely cost up to six figures, many see this as a bargain: “I could spend £70,000 on a horse and put years of training into it and still not know if it has what it takes to get to the top of the sport,” says Kathleen McNulty, the owner of Replica Farm in Texas, one of a small handful of facilities offering the cloning procedure. “Or I could spend £70,000 on a copy of a horse and know that it has the genetic capability to do the sport.”

It was McNulty who approached the Guinneses about cloning Tamarillo and who personally made the journey to the UK to collect samples. Tomatillo was born in America then transported to Wiltshire. That’s because the cloning of farm animals, including horses, is illegal in the European Union (although the ban does not prohibit cloning for research purposes).

Supporters of the ban cite animal-welfare concerns, claiming only a small proportion

of clones — about 5%–15% — survive long term, and many die shortly after birth. Those that survive, it is claimed, exhibit higher incidences of certain diseases. Although recent studies have shown no evidence of a detrimental long-term effect of cloning on animal health, scepticism around the process remains. In the meantime, American companies have been happy to profit from Europe’s reticence. McNulty estimates that 50% of her business comes from Europe.

Mary recalls the first time she saw Tomatillo: “Tears came to my eyes. It’s remarkable how alike they are, and some people think Tom might be that touch better.” Yet it is unlikely we will ever see Tomatillo tackling the famous Badminton fences. “We bred him not to compete, but to breed from for the stud here,” says Mary.

Although he is genetically identical to Tamarillo, she has started to notice differences: “Tam was maddening. He would put you off if he possibly got the chance. Tom is kind and really sweet.”

Ultimately, the success, or otherwise, of the Guinness-McNulty experiment will only become apparent once Tomatillo’s progeny are up and running, a date that is still years in the future. Only then will the eventing world know if his foals exhibit the same balletic grace in the dressage, scope in the showjumping and boldness across the country as Tamarillo.

“You can’t tell the way the horse is going to be trained or handled — it might be different than the first one,” McNulty admits. “So you can’t guarantee their performance is going to be the same.”

Back in Newmarket, once the dust has settled for another season, the question remains: for how much longer can the racing industry resist the temptation to play Prometheus? ■

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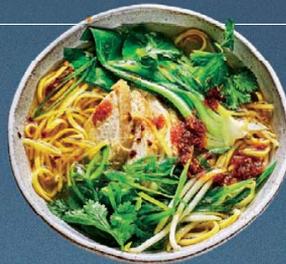
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How it feels to...

... become a plus-size model

After childhood bullying and family violence led her to comfort eat, *Tess Holliday* signed up with a top agency and launched a social media campaign to help people be happy with the skin they're in

When I was a kid, I would disappear into the woods next to our trailer in Mississippi and play by myself. I created a whole world because I had a hard time making friends. By the time I was nine years old, my family had moved more times than I can remember, and my parents' marriage had reached its inevitable end, due mostly to the fact that my dad was fooling around with anything in a skirt.

Then, just before my 10th birthday, when my mother was 30, her boyfriend shot her in the head. She survived, thankfully, but she had to learn to walk again. It was around then that I started to comfort eat. Food was my release, a way temporarily to forget my problems — but by the time I reached 11, it had also led to weight gain. At school I used my legal name, Ryann, and one bully called me "Ryann the Rhino" as I boarded the school bus. I would shrink down in my seat, trying not to cry. I asked my mother about the crinkly lines I had spotted on my stomach — I hated them, and smothered them with any cream I'd heard might make a difference.

I loved glamour and make-up ever since my mother bought me a book by a famous make-up artist and, when I was 15 and a size 16 [UK size 20], I first tried to break into the plus-size model industry by attending a casting show. I didn't get any work, but I did eventually start picking up modelling jobs for small brands through social media while I was working at a dental office. It wasn't until late 2014 that I decided to sign with MiLK in London, making history as the first model



of my size to join a leading agency. The story went crazy.

There is still no one else like me. The fact that I'm able to work and thrive is an achievement every day, as much as doing a cover shoot for *People* magazine, an H&M campaign with Iggy Pop, and being interviewed by the talk-show host Larry King. My everyday life, though, is not always that glamorous.

I met my husband, Nick, in 2012 after he messaged me on Tumblr [the microblogging site]. At the

I want a society where everyone is accepting of each other's differences

time I was getting a few dozen messages a day from guys and most of them commenting on the size of my breasts. Often I clicked delete without even reading them, but for some reason I decided to open Nick's. "I love how you inspire other women," the message said. When I viewed his profile, I was completely stunned — he was the sexiest man I had ever seen. The only thing was, he lived in Australia. We messaged and FaceTimed until he came to Los Angeles that December, when we finally had our first kiss. He was the first person to make me feel sexy, and he still does. We were long-distance for about three years before we married in 2015, and now we have a son, Bowie.

There is an art to living in this world, where people have misconceptions about plus-size bodies. That's why I started #effyourbeautystandards — a social media campaign and Instagram account with more than 360,000 followers; I was sick of the pressure to conform or disappear from view.

I want to move towards a society where everyone is more accepting of each other's differences, including plus-size bodies. Even other models react to me strangely — I don't think it's bullying, so much as disbelief: when size 10 models are told by their agencies that they're too big, if they see someone like me working, they think, well, how are you able to do this? People look at me like I'm a unicorn, some mythical creature that doesn't really exist.

WOMEN OF
SUBSTANCE

20%

of the money spent on women's wear is for plus-size garments

GLOBALDATA 2016



I appreciate that I'm able to have a career in the body I have, but it's also very frustrating that because of the way I look I should be called brave, and that the fact I'm confident and I love myself should be so shocking.

People see me and assume that I must just sit around and eat all the time, and that's why I'm fat. But there are a million different things that play into why someone is the size they are, including genes and hormones. That's why I don't shout about it when I work out or when I eat something other than a cheeseburger. It's no one's business what I do with my body — I shouldn't have to prove to the world that I'm healthy.

When people say I'm promoting obesity, I just think they're stupid. It's not like I'm selling Tupperware, I'm not recruiting people — I'm just saying, "Hey, I'm human, I want you to love yourself in the body that you have now." Once you do that, you learn what your body needs, and you treat yourself better, you take care of yourself.

BODY POSITIVE
Tess has inspired women to celebrate their plus-size figures. Left, from top: aged four with her mother, who narrowly survived a murder attempt. With baby Bowie and husband Nick in California on their first anniversary last year

Not a day goes by when social media trolls don't tell me that I should die, or that I'm disgusting, or how dare I exist. Most of these people are white men who are probably so insecure with who they are and have so much hate that it all gets focused on me. When they tell me, "No one will ever have sex with you," I just think to myself how wrong they are and have a little giggle.

In the past I had bad sex, because people were ashamed to admit that they were attracted to me, and I wasn't confident

enough to tell them to f*** off. I had such low self-worth that I felt I didn't deserve anything great because that was the reality for someone my size. People said I had a pretty face, but disregarded my body. As my confidence grew, I wanted someone who desired me and who made me feel desirable.

I do have bad days. I have moments when I don't feel in the best mental space and I don't want to deal with getting stared at by people who aren't used to seeing someone my size showing as much skin as I do. I feel a lot of pressure, now that I can't drive down the road without people recognising me. Because my whole career has been built on loving my body, when I have a bad day it makes me feel like a hypocrite. But I remind myself that I'm human, that it's OK to feel this way. And I hope that if people talk more about it, it will make everyone feel less alone ■

Interview by Moya Sarner
The Not So Subtle Art of Being a Fat Girl: Loving the Skin You're In by Tess Holliday is out now (Blink Publishing £13)



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MULTIYORK

IN STORE ONLINE MOBILE

There are a lot of us working mothers, so why can't schools offer us more flexibility, asks *Lorraine Candy*

Learn to adapt



There are many small things about choosing to be a working mum that provoke what I call a flurry of the furies, but there is one that particularly infuriates me. And that is being given less than a week's notice for a parent-teacher meeting in the middle of the day.

It flicks an illogical guilt switch that I find hard to rationalise. I don't read "Meet your child's teacher at 11am" when I get these school messages, I read "If you really cared about your little one you wouldn't work and would instead be available at a moment's notice daily". You see, illogical.

These troubling missives raise another question: do I want to become "that" parent, the one who complains and makes a fuss when teachers are just doing their jobs? At what point do you pick up the phone or send that email?

I suspect, in common with other working parents, I feel I have less interference rights at school because I am not always at drop-off and rarely at pick-up. Ridiculously, I feel teachers are judging me. Even now, after four children and 15 years as a parent at three different schools, I worry about "bothering" the teachers. Have I ever volunteered at a school fair? Did I bring anything homemade to the international breakfast? Or organise end-of-term presents? No? Well then, I just have to put up and shut up when it comes to difficult diary dates, don't I?



A mum who lives in Belgium tells me that, over there, the state assumes all parents work and parent-teacher meets are scheduled for 7.30pm. This would be more practical for us as a family, but less so for the teachers — many of whom are themselves parents or single parents lacking evening childcare.

My frustration this term occurred when we were given six days' notice to meet a new teacher at 2.30pm. Knowing that this meeting was likely planned the previous term, I was confused. If I'd known earlier I could have booked time off. Instead of grumbling to myself, this time I emailed the head, who swiftly apologised for late planning and offered up an 8.30am slot. But

something still bothered me about my polite email. A level of emotional intelligence is often missing in school scheduling, despite the number of working mothers growing by 1.2m to 4.9m in the past two decades.

I know there is no one-size-fits-all answer here, but could the language of these commanding school notes perhaps be a bit softer? Or at least include some acknowledgment that flexibility is available for those who need it? After all, these teacher meetings aren't so much about us parents satisfying our own academic curiosity, but an opportunity to show our children how much we care — even if we can't always make it to the school gates ■
@SundayTimesLC



TIME-POOR MUMS

74%

of women with dependent children in the UK are in either full-time or part-time work

ONS SEPTEMBER 2017

Parenting Hacks Make the most of after-school time

STEP BACK

It may feel contradictory, but it is wise to resist the urge to do big, high-energy family activities after school. If your child is tired and tied down by homework, as is often the case, simply being present is far more important.

MAKE A MEAL OF IT

You and your children live separate and fast-paced lives during the week. Meals are an ideal opportunity to pause and come together as a family. Research has found that eating together even helps children do better when they are at school.

LIGHTS OUT

It's a good idea to introduce a tech policy during the week. Whether you ban tablets and consoles outright, or instead regiment when and where they can be used, the aim should be spending quality time together, not punishment.

INSIDE OUT

It's easy to forget that your children spend almost all day indoors — first in the classroom, then at home — which can contribute to increased stress and poor mental health. Even if it's a stroll to the shops, find a time to get outside together.

Relative Values

The TV presenter Naga Munchetty, 42, and her mother, Muthu, 65, on boyfriends, teenage parties and deciding not to have children. Interviews by *Nick Duerden*. Photograph by *Will Sanders*

Naga

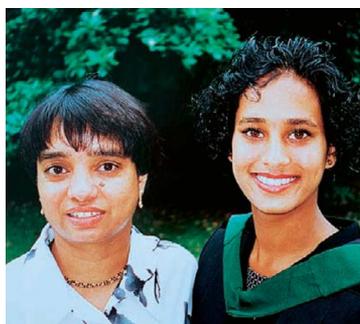
My mum had come over from India in the early 1970s, and my dad from Mauritius. They met in the valleys in Wales, where she was studying dentistry and he nursing, but after they got married they settled in London. I came along in 1975 and my sister, Mimi, two years later.

In those early years, we lived all over south and east London: Leytonstone, Camberwell, Peckham, before settling in Streatham in a nice three-bed house. My room was the biggest, and I got it because it was at the front, where you could hear the trains. I didn't mind the trains.

My main memories of my upbringing are of just how strict my parents were. I wasn't allowed sleepovers or parties. They didn't trust anyone with their kids, which I understand now, because they were far from home and they were fearful. They wanted to protect us.

They became nurses, and both worked incredibly hard, usually on the night shift. But I remember mum always being home to cook for us, feed us and clean. She would vacuum every single day. When I think about how some families operate now — with helpers, cleaners, gardeners — my parents didn't have any of that. They just did it all on their own.

I was quite headstrong as a girl. In my mum's culture, children didn't answer back and they did as they were told. In this country, even the way the girls dressed was so different. But she was always keen that we fitted in. She wanted us fully integrated, and Dad always



made sure we spoke English with perfect grammar.

We clashed a lot when I became a teenager. I wanted freedom and she wanted to protect me. She once agreed to drive me to a party, but on the way there she saw a couple of my friends drinking cider, so she turned the car around and took me straight back home. Did I ever rebel? Let's just say that I was as rebellious as most teenagers are when they start going to parties.

I was never allowed a boyfriend, but when I was 17, I did get one. I declared it to them and that was that. But the most revelatory thing about them came a couple of years later. I met another guy who was eight years older than me and a publican, totally south London and not the kind of man my parents would have envisaged for me. We wanted to rent a place of our own, but Mum insisted that we come to live with them so that we could save up to buy our own house. That must have been a massive decision for them.

Mum wanted me to become either a doctor or a lawyer, and there was nothing gentle about her influence. When I told her I would be studying English at

university, she said: "What the hell are you going to be? A poet?" I went on to study journalism and they were pleased when I had my first few pieces published in *The Observer*. I'm sure my dad would have liked it if I was now writing long, thoughtful pieces for *The Daily Telegraph*, but they are both proud I ended up at the BBC.

And they were both very happy when, 13 years ago now, I married my husband, James [Haggar, a TV director at Sky], but she was heartbroken when I told her that we weren't going to have children. We never tried and I never miscarried. We just never really wanted them. We kept putting the decision off, then life got better for us, we became more selfish... and just didn't find the time.

The whole family gets together at least four times a year, on birthdays and also at Easter and Christmas, but we are busy people leading our own busy lives. But I'm on the phone with Mum all the time, every week. She needs to tell me how I'm doing on TV.

Muthu

I remember an incident with Naga when she was just nine or 10 months old. We were living in a small flat and she loved to watch television, *Play School* in particular. When the programme came on one time, she suddenly jumped up from the sofa and landed so close to the TV. I was worried that she had hurt herself, but, no, she just clearly loved her television. And now here she is, years later, on the TV herself.

She was always a lovely girl, and always knew exactly what she



TRUE BLUE

Naga at home in Rickmansworth, Hertfordshire, with her mother, Muthu. Left: graduation day in 1997

Love



wanted. She is strong-willed, just like my husband. But she was never a problem and she was always good at school.

I was very young when I came to this country — just 18 — and I didn't have my mum and dad here to guide me on how to bring up children. I just learnt as I went along. And so, when Naga went to secondary school, oh, it was a challenge! We definitely had our moments.

I do remember that party I drove her to and seeing her friends drinking from a bottle and turning the car around. But you worry as a

Mum wanted me to be a doctor or a lawyer and there was nothing gentle about her influence

parent, don't you? You worry that your children will get involved with drink and drugs and so on. As a nurse, I saw the damage you could do to your health that way.

One time, I found a roll-up in a small box in her sister's room. I ran downstairs and told my husband: "Look, there is ganja!" He had to tell me that it was only a cigarette. OK, I was naive, but I did know that I didn't want either of my daughters smoking. I would say to Naga: "You are doing very well at school, why do you want to go and spoil it?" She just answered that she was a teenager and complained that I wouldn't let her go anywhere or do anything.

And it is true that, at first, I didn't want her having boyfriends. I once asked her whether she knew about the birds and the bees, and she quickly told me that she'd already learnt all that stuff at school. Eventually, I did accept all that. That's why we encouraged

STRANGE HABITS

Naga on Muthu

Mum is always late. I have to lie and tell her to be somewhere at least an hour earlier to have a chance of her being on time. It makes me so annoyed

Muthu on Naga

You can't buy presents for Naga. It's very difficult. I say to her: "Give me a list and I'll buy something." If I don't do this she'll say: "Mum, you've wasted your money"

her and her boyfriend to move into our house while they saved up for one of their own. It was a bit difficult at first, of course. I found it hard to let them into my kitchen and use all my things in there.

When, years later, she married James, it was a wonderful occasion for all of us. I was very upset when she told me she didn't want children, but Naga has always known what she wants, so I accepted it. She is such a busy woman with a busy career.

I watch her whenever she is on television, recording every programme and going through every minute of BBC Breakfast. I do like it when she is tough with the political interviewees. I say to her, "Good on you, girl" — but I also like to tell her my thoughts on what she was wearing. She doesn't need to hear my opinions, but I'm her mother, so I still offer them ■
Naga Munchetty is a host on BBC Breakfast

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let's feel good

A good night's kip is vital for keeping fit. *Matt Rudd* finds a solution for sleepless nights — magic pyjamas



Rest assured

This week, in my journey from puny man to less puny man, I've been sleeping a lot. Tom Mans, my ruthless trainer, has already decreed that I go to the gym four times a week and eat a horse every day. Now, he's setting out rules for night-time.

"It's vital that you get eight hours a day," he says. "When you sleep, your body burns fat, consolidates muscle and rebuilds damaged tissue. If you don't get a good night's sleep, you'll put on weight, but it won't be the right sort of weight."

Your body does a lot of groundwork while you're in the land of nod. It uses the time to produce most of the growth hormone somatropin, which does all sorts of useful things to your organs, your muscles and your bones. If you pride yourself on "getting by on four hours' sleep", you're putting yourself on the fast track to obesity, high blood pressure, heart failure, diabetes and nuclear-grade grumpiness.

So he has a point.

What young, carefree, child-free

Tom doesn't realise, though, is that I haven't had an undisturbed night's sleep for 11 years. Even though our youngest child is now four, I still go from deep sleep to full-military-parent readiness at the slightest sound. If the cat coughs, I'm halfway to the nappy drawer. It's ingrained. I may never relax again.

"Try earplugs," says Tom.

Fine. But then there's getting to sleep in the first place.

"Alcohol is not the answer," says Tom, as if he can read my mind. "It does not put you into a deep sleep, it just knocks you out, like a mild anaesthetic. Try 10 minutes of meditation. I recommend the Headspace app."

Fine again, but then there's my wife, who sleeps like a cross between Barbara Cartland,

"Alcohol is not the answer," says Tom, as if he can read my mind

a starfish and a hot water bottle. Lots of pillows. Lots of hot limbs akimbo. Tom has no answer for this, which is fine because I've found my own solution. No, not a wall down the middle of the bed. Walls are never the answer. What I've found is magic pyjamas.

Homebody makes pyjamas that, it claims, "allow both the body and skin to breathe, while being cosseted like a baby". The fabric gets warmer if your environment cools down. It gets cooler if your wife throws a hot leg in your direction. It all sounds too good to be true, and they're not cheap, but I've had these pyjamas for a fortnight now and they work. I don't know how, but they do.

I do my meditation, I apply the earplugs and the wife-cancelling pyjamas and, once or twice, I've made it through the night in one go. It's too early to tell how much this will help the muscle cultivation, but at the very least I can no longer skip the gym on the grounds of tiredness.

homebody.co.uk; headspace.com; tommans.com



WAKE-UP CALL

70%

of Brits get fewer than seven hours of sleep a night

THE SLEEP COUNCIL 2013



Health Hacks How to get a good night's sleep

EXERCISE LATER

Morning is the best time to speed up your metabolism, but cardiovascular work between 4pm and 7pm will set you up for a good night's sleep.

NO NIGHTCAPS

A late-drink might make you sleepy in the short term, but after a few hours you'll be sleeping fitfully, you'll be dehydrated and you'll need the loo.

REGULAR RHYTHM

Your body likes routine, so having a regular bedtime will help you to fall asleep easily and wake up without feeling tired. So if you rise at 7am, doze off at 11pm.

DITCH GADGETS

Avoid using your laptop or mobile before dropping off. Their LED screens emit a blue light that disturbs the brain's natural melatonin levels.





The kitchen

Where family friendly can feel more like a war zone

Making your grateful children a beautifully timed and delicious meal is a piece of cake, right? Wrong! But it's a lot easier with Samsung's innovative range of domestic appliances, says **Marie Lunn**

ILLUSTRATION: **JOSIE PORTILLO**



Chocolate mousse, cheesy baps and taramasalata – my culinary tastes haven't changed much since I was a student, to be honest. These days I'll order a veg box from the eco-delivery van but it's really only to stop the bottom drawer from ringing Fridgeline out of loneliness.

"When you have children," they said, "you'll just start to get into it because you'll want to feed them wholesome home-cooked meals. You'll enjoy it."

I can't say that's happened quite yet, though both my children are now well out of nappies. I bought a special baby steamer-cum-blender. I'd chop, I'd dice – it didn't matter what: chicken, raisins, kumquats, mango, curly kale. I'm less Mrs Beeton and more Mrs Doyle from *Father Ted*. It might not traditionally go but just open the fridge and chuck it in.

Aged 11, I accompanied my friend Debbie to a *Junior MasterChef*-type competition in Rotherham. She smashed it and won. I was in total awe, especially because we got to miss cross-country. At school I was pretty hot at an apple cobbler

and an open sandwich but I wouldn't exactly call myself a natural.

Number one child was less than receptive. Kids don't care if you've spent hours slaving over a hot oven and hob, or 30 seconds dinging dinner in a microwave. They're like mini Henry VIIIs, and if it tastes bad they will take it as an act of military aggression. The second child ate dutifully – until she had the dexterity to grab the spoon and lob it across the kitchen.

For those who – steady now – have never watched Nigella, the kitchen is the room that finishes off the downstairs, where drinks are kept, where you ask AI assistant to "play my happy playlist" while indulging in some freestyle moves to *Groove is in the Heart*. It's the room where that burgeoning collection of Emma Bridgewater mugs can inexplicably breed overnight. "The Mugs" is a recurring argument in my house and would no doubt be cited in any divorce. Men with their plain there's-no-more-space sensibility just don't get it. There is always a *need* for

“

Children are like mini Henry VIIIs – if food tastes bad they will take it as military aggression



one more, in the same way “enough cushions” is an oxymoron. (Cue deep voice): “Coming soon to a cinema near you... Too Many Mugs: a domestic horror”.

Some way down the long list of kitchen uses – number 12, football against the door frame; number 17, food waste disposal – I really would like to master the art of FANCY COOKING. I want to be THAT mum, the one who has people over and doesn’t serve tuna pasta surprise, but like a bad workman, I blame my tools.

My 13-year-old has got it all planned. What we need, he tells me, is a Smart Fridge and a Smart Oven. A fridge that can order the Gourmet Burger burgers and Coca-Cola that are critical to teenage-kind but I neglect to buy, and an oven that can tell when a sponge is soggy-bottom-free or the chicken roast is ready without me poking it with a skewer 57 times, then cooking it for an



Making a mess of family dinner?

Samsung’s Chef Collection hob has a cool detachable magnetic knob so cleaning is a doddle

extra 20 minutes anyway because you don’t want that “sam’n’ella”. Imagine a cooker that doesn’t rely on the smoke alarm to let you know it’s done, or a hob you can clean without skinning your fingers.

I once spent £13 on one of those do-it-yourself boxes for a cottage pie. That was two hours of my life I will never get back. Though it doubled as a doorstop and much hilarity and banter was shared by three-quarters of the house.

Clever appliances, bring them on. My perfect smart fridge? It’s one that knows when to say: “All your groceries are going off, here’s how to cook them up without causing an incident.” And when to say: “Rough day, hun? Finish the prosecco and here’s some sherry trifle.” And then orders more to cover your tracks from the other half with whom you are on a “health kick”. It’s more than smart? I’d call that genius.

THE HEAT IS ON



Burn, baby! Burn

Rejoice – singed tea towels and carbonised fry-ups are a thing of the past. The Samsung Chef Collection Induction Hob packs Virtual Flame Technology™ to show how hot the ring is, with flame-like LEDs that rise and fall with the temperature.



Moveable feast

No matter how gunked-up with the kids’ experiments your hob gets, it will come clean. A movable magnetic knob allows for precision and easier cleaning, and is also good fun to move around the hob instead of getting on with the cooking.



Pause for thought

Has a fight broken out over the TV remote? Put your hob on ‘pause’ mode while you restore public order. It automatically sets all your rings to a lower temperature until you’re ready to get stuck in again.



To find out more about the Samsung Chef Collection Hob with Virtual Flame Technology™ and other smart appliances, visit samsung.com/uk/home-appliances

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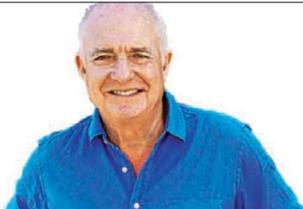


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Sizzling specialities on a road trip across the border from California

The Mexican spice trail



Rick Stein

I first went to Mexico in 1968 and I've returned a few times since. Above all, it's the food that brings me back. When people say that Mexican food is all the same, it's all tacos, they miss the point. Tortillas (tacos are filled tortillas) are to Mexican cuisine what pasta is to Italian. They are the framework on which Mexican cooks build incredibly sophisticated variations of flavours and textures. The variety is endless. I hope you can gather that, like so many who visit Mexico, I'm besotted with the food.

1

Chargrilled beef tacos with spring onions and guacamole

There is an avenue right in the middle of Oaxaca that is wreathed in smoke right up to the vaulted, corrugated-iron roofs. Each stall displays sheets of thin, lightly salted beef and they also sell little pork sausages and escalopes of pork, with powdered chilli. You rub shoulders with cheerful, reassuringly well-fed Mexicans

and drink Corona. This recipe is based on that whole experience. I wrote it for my book *Coast to Coast* some years ago and was lucky enough to have the same dish in Oaxaca earlier this year. Everything I said was still the same, right down to the beers.

SERVES

8 people

INGREDIENTS

For the roasted red tomato and chilli salsa

4 ripe plum tomatoes
2 cloves of garlic, skin on
1 whole red jalapeño or serrano chilli
1 small onion, finely chopped
Juice of ½-1 lime (to taste)
Small handful of coriander, freshly chopped

For the beef

900g rump of beef, thinly sliced by your butcher into about 12 slices
15 large salad onions, trimmed and halved lengthways, or 30 whole spring onions
Olive or corn oil, for brushing
16-24 15cm corn tortillas

For the guacamole

1 jalapeño or green serrano chilli, deseeded and finely chopped
½ small white onion, finely chopped
1 large or 2 small ripe avocados, stoned and peeled
Juice of ½-1 lime
Small handful of coriander, chopped

01 First, make the salsa: heat a dry, heavy-based frying pan until hot. Add the tomatoes, garlic and chilli and roast them until they're softened and have brown patches all over. Remove the garlic and chilli first. You can roast all the ingredients at 180C (200C non-fan) for 15-20 minutes, but the frying-pan method is more authentic. Roughly chop the tomatoes when they're cool enough to handle. Peel the garlic and put it in a pestle and mortar with the chilli (stem removed).

Bash to break them up, then add the tomatoes and ¼ tsp salt and continue bashing until you have a thick, pulpy sauce. Alternatively, you can pulse everything in a blender to this point. Stir in the chopped onion, lime juice to taste and the chopped coriander.

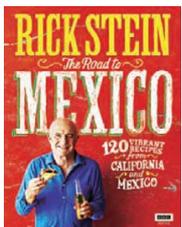
02 Next, lightly sprinkle each slice of beef with ¼ tsp of salt and set them aside for about 10 minutes.

03 Meanwhile, make the guacamole. Pound the chopped chilli in a pestle and mortar with the onion and ¼ tsp salt. When they're broken down to a lumpy paste, add the avocado and break up the flesh roughly with a fork. Stir in the lime juice to taste, and the chopped coriander.

04 Heat a griddle pan over a high heat until it's smoking hot. Brush the salad onions and beef lightly with oil.

05 Griddle the onions for 2-3 minutes, then transfer them to a serving plate and keep warm. Griddle a few of the beef slices for about 20 seconds per side, then slice them into strips. Warm the tortillas in a dry frying pan, in a microwave or in the oven. Don't overdo it, you want them to be soft and pliable not crisp — 30 seconds on each side in a pan, 30 seconds for up to five tortillas in the microwave, and 7 minutes for up to five in a medium 160C (180C non-fan) oven is about right. It's a good idea to brush a little water over the tortillas if they are more than a day old. Keep the tortillas warm on a plate covered with foil.

06 Serve with the beef, guacamole, salsa and lime wedges. Continue to cook the remaining slices of beef while your guests start eating.



Rick Stein's *The Road to Mexico* is published on Thursday (BBC Books £26)



PHOTOGRAPHY BY JAMES MURPHY

2

Chicken noodle soup with yellow-bean sauce

At Martin Yan's restaurant in San Francisco, I watched his very talented head chef create an enormous string of thin egg noodles by hand. I've come up with this chicken noodle dish that I hope does justice to the very best Chinese noodles. The soup, with its slices of poached chicken, pak choi, sugar snaps and bean sprouts, is pleasant in its own right, but stir in the hot, sweet, sour and spicy sauce and you've got a supercharged soup.

SERVES

6 people

INGREDIENTS

1 whole chicken (about 1.5kg)
 4 cloves of garlic, peeled and sliced
 30g fresh root ginger, finely sliced
 1 star anise
 8 spring onions, sliced on the diagonal
 300g dried egg noodles
 2 small heads pak choi
 100g sugar-snap peas, cut on the diagonal
 200g bean sprouts
 1 tsp chilli flakes
 2 tbsp toasted sesame oil
 A bunch of fresh coriander, roughly chopped

For the sauce

5 cloves of garlic
 25g fresh root ginger, peeled and chopped
 1 red jalapeño chilli
 2 tbsp brown sugar
 2 tbsp rice-wine vinegar
 2 tbsp yellow-bean sauce
 2 tbsp dark soy sauce
 1 tbsp white peppercorns, coarsely ground



The Dish

01 Start by making the sauce. Put everything into a food processor and blend to a smooth paste.

02 Place the chicken in a large saucepan and cover with 3.5 litres of water. Add the garlic, ginger, star anise, 1½ tsp salt and 4 of the spring onions, then poach for 30 minutes.

03 Strain the chicken and reserve the stock. Allow to cool, then slice the breasts and shred the meat from the rest of the bird and set aside.

04 Put the strained stock into a clean pan and bring it to the boil. Turn down the heat to a simmer and add the noodles, pak choi, sugar snaps, bean sprouts, chilli flakes, sesame oil and the rest of the spring onions. When the noodles and vegetables are cooked al dente, add the shredded chicken to heat for a couple of minutes.

05 Serve the soup in bowls and add some sliced chicken breast. Sprinkle with coriander and serve the sauce alongside to stir in.



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2

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The Dish

3

Meatballs in tomatillo and serrano salsa

These are particularly well-flavoured meatballs. It's unusual to find hard-boiled egg right in the centre of a meatball, but it's rather a pleasing contrast. I had some difficulty deciding whether to use a green sauce or red sauce for this dish, as I've had plenty of both, but I think the slightly higher acidity of the salsa verde with tomatillos wins the day. (You can find tinned tomatillos, chillis and all things Mexican at coolchile.co.uk.)

SERVES
4 people

- INGREDIENTS**
 300g minced beef
 300g minced pork
 75g white long-grain rice, uncooked
 1 tsp dried oregano
 ½ tsp cumin
 Pinch of ground allspice
 1 clove of garlic, finely chopped
 ½ small onion, very finely chopped
 1 egg, beaten
 1 hard-boiled egg, diced
 2 tbsp olive oil
 Small handful chopped coriander

- For the sauce**
 1 large (794g) tin tomatillos, drained, or the equivalent weight of green tomatoes
 1 green serrano or jalapeño chilli, stem removed, halved
 ½ onion, chopped
 1 garlic clove, chopped
 3 tbsp corn oil

To serve
 Mexican red rice or plain rice

- For the Mexican red rice (if making)**
 3 tbsp olive oil
 1 onion, chopped
 2 cloves of garlic, chopped
 1 jalapeño chilli, chopped
 3 large tomatoes, roughly chopped
 2 tsp tomato purée
 220g white long-grain rice
 550ml chicken or vegetable stock, or water
 60g peas, fresh or frozen (optional)
 Small handful of coriander, chopped

01 Begin by making the meatballs. Put all the ingredients, except the hard-boiled egg, olive oil and coriander, in a bowl, add 1 tsp salt and 8 turns of a black peppermill, and mix well with your hands, then mould the mixture into 20 golfball-sized balls. Make an indent in each one with your finger, press in a piece of hard-boiled egg, then mould the meat mixture around it.

02 For the sauce, put the tomatillos, chilli, onion and garlic in a blender or food processor. Add 100ml water and blend until smooth. Heat the oil in a large pan over a medium-to-high heat, then pour in the blended tomatillo mixture. Add salt to taste and simmer for 10-15 minutes.

03 Heat the olive oil in a frying pan and fry the meatballs, turning them gently until golden all over. Add them to the tomatillo sauce, cover with a lid and simmer for 25-30 minutes. Add water if the sauce starts to look too thick.

04 Meanwhile, to make the rice, heat the oil in a saucepan and fry the onion, garlic and chilli over a medium heat for a few minutes until they're starting to soften but not brown. Add the tomatoes and tomato purée and stir for a couple of minutes. Add the rice to the pan and stir to coat it in the tomato mixture. After a minute or so, add the stock and peas, if using, and season with salt and 8 turns of black pepper. Put a lid on the pan and cook for 10-15 minutes until the rice has absorbed the liquid. Turn off the heat and allow the rice to rest for a few minutes. Fluff it up with a fork and serve sprinkled with chopped coriander.

05 Garnish the meatballs with chopped coriander and serve with the Mexican red rice or plain boiled white rice ■



The biting wit that whetted my appetite

Marina O'Loughlin joins us today as our new restaurant critic. She recalls how the late AA Gill had a formative influence on her

Le Colombier Chelsea

145 Dovehouse Street, London SW3 6LB; 020 7351 1155, le-colombier-restaurant.co.uk. Mon-Sat: noon-3pm, 6.30pm-10.30pm; Sun: noon-3.30pm, 6.30pm-10pm

I read the words of Adrian Gill long before I ever thought I could go to the mythical places he described. I read them, marvelling that such a job — restaurant critic! — should exist. I read, slack-jawed, at his pyrotechnic turn of phrase. And I read him when I waitedress at provincial places with names like John St Jam, where arrogant tyro “chefs” made fun of my interest in food.

Who did I think I was, wanting to go to far-flung, fancy-pants restaurants? “Whit’s crème Dubarry?” they’d spit at me while handing over the pass a “jambalaya” crafted from Uncle Ben’s, Trump-hued from quantities of tomato purée and turmeric, and studded with chunks of Mattesons smoked pork rings, furious when I knew the answer.



And I followed Gill from my native Scotland to That London by coach at a time when the hippest joint in my home town had loos entitled “Willies” and “Fannies”. I went to restaurants in the King’s Road full of plummy-voiced grown-ups with my enraged pal Maureen, who couldn’t understand why we’d spend a week’s wages on dinner when we could be out hitting the clubs and getting off with the English.

I once went to Le Colombier in Chelsea, inspired by Gill’s unusual hymn of praise. “I think I’ve found it,” he wrote, “that secret little restaurant.” It was “as close to ideal as you can get”, he said, all “hum and warmth, that fug like a friendly arm round your shoulder”, before exhorting us not to go and spoil it for him. So off I schlepped, only to be utterly bemused. I expected to have my socks knocked all the way back up the ML, my world rocked, my senses zapped into oblivion. Instead, posh middle-aged people in quite a lot of corduroy munched away on fatty rillettes,

SECRET INGREDIENT Our new critic always goes incognito

FROM THE MENU

STARTERS

Poached eggs in red wine sauce, bacon and baby onions £9.90

Crab salad £13.60

MAINS

Roasted grouse, game chips, French beans, bread sauce and red wine sauce £28.50

Pan-fried veal kidneys with a mustard cream sauce £21.50

DESSERTS

Tarte tatin £8.90

Cheeses: brie de Meaux, comté, morbier £9.50

TOTAL

For two, including 12.5% service, without drinks £103

oysters, poncified lamb chops. Pffft, I sniffed: how old-school — not a creditable jambalaya in the house.

Now, 20 years later, I'm back to see if age has withered it further, or if my own withering has made me better inclined. This glossy former pub is still going strong, even if much of its clientele, well, aren't quite. It's a long time since I've been in a restaurant where my party seems the youngest by decades. There's poignancy to the fact that it also appears to act as an unofficial canteen for the neighbouring Royal Marsden Hospital.

I arrive with a friend and her tiny, weeks-old baby. The effect on the assembled *soigné* seniors is akin to turning up hideously pockmarked, straddling a corpse-filled cart and bellowing: "Bring out your dead!" They are comically aghast. Everyone, including our urbane waiter, eventually relents ("He can't really be French," hisses the pal), but this is testimony to the perfection of the child, not to the tolerance of the company.

The food? It's everything that the younger me singularly failed to understand. I don't think the menu has changed much, other than a seasonal appearance of roast grouse, defiantly un-Frenchified, *rôtie à l'Anglaise*, perfectly *comme il faut* with its waffled game chips, bread sauce, red wine sauce and garlicky green beans. And it's extremely fine, a mid-season bird just gamey enough before teetering over into rankness. Actually, I could continue purring "*comme il faut*" about the rest of our meal, like a terrible, cigar-breathed, cravated old bore: it's almost a pastiche of a kind of utopian brasserie offering, the sort you hope to find in Paris and rarely do. (I went to Chartier and Le Grand Colbert a few weeks ago; it's fair to say that atmosphere, not cooking, was the main draw.)

There are veal kidneys in Dijon mustard cream sauce; steak tartare; Dover sole *meunière*; all the oysters and langoustines and fruits de mer a Francophile could wish for. Who could resist *oeufs pochés en meurette*? Who, in fact, could be bothered with the labour-intensive nonsense that goes into this redoubtable Burgundian classic? The faff of reducing good red wine with stock, uniformly julienned smoky lardons, peeling tiny onions, then carefully poaching eggs in this heady liquor to be plonked on garlicky croutes? Le Colombier could. I love their version not only

for the lubricious pooling of the yolks into the bacony, reduced red wine, to be messily slathered over baguette, but also for the fact that it's completely un-Instagrammable. The wine that the two poached eggs have absorbed gives them a disturbingly testicular, wrinkly pinkness. Looks hellish, tastes heavenly. Le Colombier gives zero figs for social media.

We have half a crab in its steel cradle, balanced on ice, with thick, wobbly, mustardy homemade mayonnaise; rosy-cored steak au poivre with proper frites and more green beans. We don't even attempt to get newfangled: it wouldn't be possible, even if we wanted to. This is not show-offy, complicated food, but it takes a lot of skill to get it this right.

There are moments that might cause the terrible cigar-breathed pedant to quibble: those French beans cooked till limp, not with the *de rigueur* squeak of contemporary vegetable preparation; tarte tatin — preshared between two plates in

I love the lubricious pooling of the yolks into the bacony, reduced red wine

case having to do our own cutting should prove too tiresome — is a bit pallid and under-caramelised. But the whole experience, oldster disapproval and baby and all, is so intensely bourgeois and pleasurable that I can't get worked up about it. Le shrug. Even the waiter eventually unbends enough to actually beam at us. I come away not knowing who owns the place, nor the name of the chef. Sure, it would be easy to find out, but it's somehow, timelessly, irrelevant.

I appreciate this is, for me, an unusually AA Gillian paucity of words about the restaurant itself. I promise to go back to my usual completist ranting from now on. To my eternal regret, I didn't ever get to meet the man himself. We had two friends in common who would occasionally issue the vaguely regal edict "Adrian would like to meet you", but I bottled it every time: that fear of "never meet your idols". Of course, now it seems the very QED of *carpe diem*. (I promise also never to lapse again into sub-Boris sub-Latin.) What a fool I was ■
@MarinaOLoughlin

Five of my favourite restaurants



INVER, ARGYLL AND BUTE

A magical distillation of Scotland's beauty, on the banks of glittering Loch Fyne. Its pristine produce can be as straightforward as "shellfish from the local lochs"; or complex and bewitching: raw marinated potato transformed into crunchy noodles with pearly Gigha halibut. The very definition of worth the journey.

inverrestaurant.co.uk



SMOKESTAK, LONDON E1

On opening, I dismissed this as yet another ex-street-food display of oversmoked meat machismo. Big mistake. The restaurant may look like an upmarket sex dungeon, but the smoking and barbecuing is as nuanced and ravishing as I've eaten anywhere. The vegetable dishes are superb, the brisket transformative.

smokestack.co.uk



SIAM SMILES, MANCHESTER

Downstairs in a Thai supermarket in Manchester's Chinatown is where I go for an intense, *farang*-ignoring, pungent taste of northern Thailand. The homemade sausages and larb (minced-meat salad) uncover taste buds you didn't know existed. There's also a lunchtime buffet at £9.50 with dizzying choice. BYO booze, too.

facebook.com/siamsmilescafe



BELLITA, BRISTOL

With an all-women winemakers' list, "shims" and "shrubs" cocktails and some exhilarating and creative Italo-Iberian small plates, this Cotham Hill gem is noisy, informal fun every time. They call themselves "a bar with food", and they're being modest. They also say "boisterous" — and they're right on the money with that.

bellita.co.uk



A WONG, LONDON SW1

This is where I go in my own time, on my own dime, to sit alone at the bar and overorder as many dumplings as I can from the eponymous Andrew's list of exquisite dim sum, followed by a bowl of knife-cut noodles gurgling with garlic and chilli to deliver a final kapow. Let's hope its new Michelin star doesn't blow it for veteran fans.

awong.co.uk

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TS, Greenhithe, Kent

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Helen Lewis is deputy editor of the New Statesman. @helenlewis

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Apps to change your life Caring for house plants



WATERBOT

Free, Android

Simple but effective: set up a schedule for every plant you own and be notified every day of which needs a visit from the watering can. Apple users, try the free app WaterMe.



MYGARDEN

Free, Android, Apple

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cookConnect makes using your kitchen more intuitive by letting you control your extractor hood directly from your cooktop.

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Tomorrow's world, today

It's never been easier to rely on technology for a hand when keeping house, but new developments will soon bring your kitchen into the realm of science fiction...

A peek into even the most glamorous home kitchen in 2017 will not reveal the robot maids we were once promised by science-fiction movies – but the glimmering, labour-saving kitchen of tomorrow is not as far off as you might think.

As automation and artificial intelligence continue to grow in sophistication, Home Connect concept, “my kitchen elf” Mykie, gives us a glimpse of a new breed: a voice-controlled, wifi-enabled kitchen assistant resembling a cute robot that connects to all your kitchen's smart appliances. Mykie can inform you about anything from the cooking time left on a roast to what's in your fridge. When you're pushed for time, Mykie can even handle your online grocery shopping and recommend cooking tips from the chef of your choice, even projecting videos of selected recipes on to your wall. Elf-like, indeed.

Realtime data, no stranger to Fitbit owners, will remove much of the fuss and doubt from household chores. For example, the incredible X-Spect



Siemens
cookConnect

Technology is even redefining the idea of “slaving over a hot stove” – the new cookConnect System lets you control your extractor hood from your cooktop, so you don't need to take your eyes off your pans. It makes smoky kitchens a distant memory.



scanner, also a concept in development by Home Connect, has already been compared to *Star Trek's* tricorders – the gadgets Kirk and company use to investigate new discoveries – and it's easy to see why. The handheld device can analyse clothing stains and send instructions to a wifi-enabled washing machine. It can evaluate the nutritional value of a piece of food or even detect the ripeness of fruit.

Seamless integration between smart appliances is clearly the way forward – already leaps have been made in connecting ovens, dishwashers and various other household appliances to smartphone apps such as Home Connect, with home lighting and other functions connected via IFTTT applets – but this only the tip of the iceberg.

Tesla's electric vehicles now boast EVE, a dashboard app that allows the driver to sweep all of their smart appliances into one hub, controlling their home's locks, lights, oven and more, before they even pull into the driveway. With all of this technological integration, who needs robots?



Futurist Simon Gosling on the future-perfect kitchen

Right now, people want to say to their friends, “Look at my life, isn't it amazing?” on platforms such as Instagram. The future extension of that is going to be, “Look what I've made”, and your kitchen is going to help you make it. Whether it's the coffee machine that will show you how to create the perfect flat white or cooking that amazing meal you had on holiday.

Ironically, as we become more and more digital, we'll be measuring each other by our hands-on, practical skills – and we'll be able to do much more thanks to our connected kitchens.

For more information and to find your nearest retailer, visit siemens-home.bsh-group.com/uk/home-connect



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THE EX FACTOR
Button's former wife, Jessica Michibata. Below right: Jenson, aged 10 in 1990, with his late father, John

Jenson Button was Britain's playboy world champion — a 21st-century James Hunt. He tells *Nick Rufford* why he quit F1

“After Dad’s accident, I couldn’t come back”

Jenson Button's career in Formula One was ended by a head injury. But it wasn't his. It killed his father, John, the man who inspired and mentored him. John Button was widely reported to have died from a heart attack, aged 70, but the truth is more cruel. He sustained a head injury while falling down some steps and never recovered.

Button says that his father's death in 2014 left him bereft and his love for F1 racing died with him. “He was there every inch of the way,” he recalls. “I wouldn't have started karting if it wasn't for him, I wouldn't have gone into single-seaters and I definitely wouldn't have got into Formula One.”

Today the former world champion is sitting next to the pool in the garden of his new California home, looking lean and tanned. He hasn't lost his boyish looks, but this is a more serious Button. The scars from the accident in 2014 are hidden, but they haven't healed and, he says, have changed his life permanently.

On the surface, that life looks pretty good. As well as the Los Angeles house he has an enviable collection of cars, including a £1m McLaren, a 1956 Volkswagen camper van and a 1970 Ford Mustang. There are also two dogs, Storm and Rogue (named after the X-Men characters).

His girlfriend is Brittny Ward, a model, whom he's very happy with. He got together with her after divorcing Jessica Michibata — also a model — after less than a year of marriage and moving from Monaco earlier this year in a midlife crisis that would have impressed Charlie Sheen.

Officially, he's taking a year off from driving as an ambassador for his team, McLaren, while

concentrating on “other things” in his life. But he now admits — for the first time publicly — he won't be returning to F1, though he will remain in motor racing.

“I've still got an option to race next year, but I've done my time in Formula One,” he says. “I've been travelling with the circus for 17 years and it's enough for me.”

F1 drivers come and go all the time, but Button, 37, will be missed. He was the youngest British driver to enter the sport and his string of victories made him an inspiration, especially to youngsters, at a time when F1 was more about raw speed and less top-heavy with rules.

In 2009 he won six of the first seven races and went on to take the drivers' championship. When he was partnered with Lewis Hamilton in the McLaren team, he beat his British rival on

points overall, and in 2015 he outpaced Fernando Alonso, the Spanish former F1 champion, on points, the only teammate ever to do so. In terms of grand prix wins, he ranks among the best British racing drivers of all time, ahead of John Surtees and Graham Hill.

Dave Richards, chairman-elect of the Motor Sports Association, who recruited Button to the British American Racing team in 2002, says he has earned his place in the annals of racing history. “In the past 15 years he has matured into somebody who I would say has





become one of the great drivers. He's a world champion and he was also a great personality for sponsors, and that often lasts longer than pure driving ability."

More recently, with fewer podium places to his name, Button has had less media coverage for his driving and more for his relationships, including a well-publicised break-up from Michibata and headlines about Ward's modelling career. She was one of the late Hugh Hefner's Playboy Playmates and a former Ultimate Fighting Championship

Jacques Villeneuve compared him to a boyband member

ring girl, with a tattoo that reads "Strong willed".

It's a peculiarity of British culture that sports stars are, by turns, discovered, lauded and applauded and then find themselves in the gossip columns. Button has been more susceptible than most. His good looks and laid-back charm made it easy for critics to write him off as a pin-up and lightweight, as they did in the 1970s with James Hunt, a driver whose true talents were recognised only posthumously.

Before Button won the world championship he was dismissed as a nearly man — the Tim Henman of motor racing — and his former teammate Jacques Villeneuve compared him to a boyband member. Flavio Briatore, his boss at Benetton, called him a "lazy playboy".

Button will be glad to leave the critics behind, he says, but he denies that's why he's giving up. His autobiography, *Life to the Limit*, published this week, reveals for the first time the impact of his father's death.

"Things just weren't the same afterwards," he writes.

"My love of racing remained but my love of Formula One was lacking. I found myself treading water, looking for meaning and purpose but failing to find it. Dad always looked as though he was having a great time, and it was contagious. Life without him was as if laughter had been banned, or music had ceased to exist. All colour had drained away."

Button Sr was a one-time rallycross driver who separated from his wife when Jenson was seven years old, moving out of the family home to a tiny flat. The next Christmas he presented his son — Jenson was the youngest of four, but the only boy — with a gift-wrapped racing kart. Jenson loved it, but most of all he loved the bond it created between →

him and his father. At weekends they travelled to windswept circuits, where his father would stand on a corner of the track and shout instructions.

“He was my No 1 mentor and always will be,” Button writes. “He guided me, not by cajoling or insisting, but by coaching and nurturing. [He taught me to] be smooth and precise, to find the racing line.”

Jenson was a natural, and kart racing gave him a confidence he lacked at school, where he was “the shuffling little dork who gets picked last for football”. He learned early the perils of motor sport when a nine-year-old friend was killed in a karting accident. Later, Dan Wheldon, a contemporary from his days of racing single-seaters, crashed and died during the IndyCar world championship in Las Vegas. Both events were hard knocks but made Button a tougher competitor.

To find the £6,000 a year it cost to support Jenson’s endeavours,

his father sold everything he had, including his car dealership, and opened a shop in Frome, Somerset, called Rocket Motorsports. He made engines, both for his son’s karts and for those of other youngsters — including an aspiring racer called Lewis Hamilton. Money was tight, Button recalls, and his father occasionally had a whip-round at the track to afford fuel for the Ford Transit van — painted in Rocket Motorsports colours — that transported them to race events.

By the time of his death, his father was among the most influential parents in sport, the motor racing equivalent of Judy Murray (mother of Andy and Jamie) and the undisputed boss of team Button. He attended all his grand prix races, missing only one because of illness. It was his father that Button embraced first at the Interlagos racetrack in Brazil after he had won the drivers’ championship (see extract below).

They say rock’n’roll is one long

primal cry of “Daddy!” Maybe motor racing is too.

One day in 2014, when Jenson was in Los Angeles, he got a phone call from France from Richard Goddard, his manager. Goddard had gone to look for Button’s father after he failed to respond to phone calls. He discovered him on some steep steps leading to the front door of his house in Cap-d’Ail in the south of France. Button Sr had slipped on the concrete, striking his head.

Button says his father, who was diabetic and at times unsteady on his feet, may have fallen twice that evening, the first time while walking back to his car after an evening out in Monaco. “When we saw CCTV from the car park, he had blood on the back of his head,” he says. “There was also a little blood found on the headrest of his car. He made it to Cap-d’Ail. We don’t know how it happened, but we do know he let himself in, but the gate [to the steps] shut behind him and his keys were on the other side of it. There was a little granny flat, a tiny one-room apartment, halfway up the stairs, and, judging from some blood on the pillow, he lay down in there for a bit.”

Button continues the story after a pause. “Either he needed his insulin, or water, or something, and tried to go up the stairs [to the main house].” In the book, Button adds: “He was returning down the steps when he fell forward and hit his head for a second time. This one proved fatal.”

After his father’s death, Button went back to racing. “I did what



LAP OF HONOUR
Right: Button wins the world championship in 2009 in Brazil.
Below: embracing his father after his victory

My father, the hero “Our journey had begun with a junior

It was getting to me, the pressure. It was October 2009 and maybe I had lost my nerve. Do they all have these doubts? All the drivers who have been in my position, on the brink of the world drivers’ championship, were they, too, tortured by the fear of failure?

I joined the old man in the hotel bar for a drink. “Dad, I’ve got to win it this weekend,” I told him. He smiled at me. He could see it was getting to me. The smile said, “You’ll be all right, Jense.”

That night I had a dream — I’d won the world championship. It should have been a nice dream,

really, but it wasn’t, because when I woke up I hadn’t won the world championship. The important thing was, though, that I was still in the lead. Every single point I’d earned was vital in keeping me ahead of the pack.

The fans at the Brazilian Grand Prix circuit were desperate for me to fail. Kitted out and ready to race, I steered the car to the dummy grid, parked up, got out and took off my helmet — only to be greeted by a chorus of boos from the pit-straight grandstand opposite. No two ways about it, I needed points.

Lights out. I made a better start than the Renault and made up a place right off the line. The first lap was mayhem: seven drivers involved in minor scrapes.

Heikki Kovalainen pitted, followed closely by Kimi Raikkonen, who needed a new front wing after tangling with Mark Webber. Kovalainen finished his stop, but was released with a fuel hose still attached to his car. Behind him came Raikkonen, whose exhaust ignited the fuel, causing a fire on the track.

All came under control and both drivers rejoined and finished the



I do," he recalls. "I went back to work in testing with McLaren. What was I supposed to do?" But the will to win had gone.

One thing Button will be missed for is his simmering feud with Hamilton, who is dominating this year's world championship. At its height, the rivalry between the two British drivers echoed the great duels between Alain Prost and Ayrton Senna, and Hunt and Niki Lauda, and restored some of the old magic to F1.

"He's a brilliant, mercurial driver," Button says of Hamilton. "Like me, I think he probably coasted on talent at first, and, like me, it might have taken him a while to realise that he had to work on it. As people, we had a lot in common. There was our shared karting history and the fact that his dad was a customer of my dad [Anthony Hamilton once bought an engine from John Button]. Neither of us came from a wealthy background. We'd achieved what we had through a lot of grafting. So I regret that despite our similarities we were never really friends. We'd hang out a bit, but there were an awful lot of awkward and uncomfortable silences."

Explaining what underlay the awkwardness, Button says he and Hamilton were "just very different people" in terms of personality, friends and racing styles. Hamilton was quicker off the mark; Button smoother and more precise. Button might have added that they both had strong-willed father-managers.

So who was faster in their three seasons together, from 2010 to

"Life without him was as if laughter had been banned, music had ceased"

2012? Button answers carefully: "I scored more points, and it's all about scoring points, Formula One. You look at Ayrton Senna and Alain Prost, you'd say Ayrton was the quicker driver, but Alain was 'the Professor'.

"He knew how to get to the end of the season with the most points. He never wanted a crash — he knew that that would lose him a lot of points — whereas Ayrton was the driver that was extremely fast but he would push it too far. As Alain said, Senna would ridicule him, but in doing so he put himself on the edge and he crashed. [Senna was killed in the 1994 San Marino Grand Prix.] So, yes, in Formula One it's not just about outright speed; it's about getting from A to B as fast as possible, not just one lap."

With three drivers' championships and 61 grand prix wins to his credit, Hamilton has outpaced Button's single title and 15 wins. Button acknowledges his former teammate has an appetite for winning that he no longer possesses. "More and more I looked back at my career and realise I didn't feel the same way as I guess Sebastian [Vettel] and Lewis must feel," he writes. "I didn't have a need to win title after title. I'd reached Formula One; become world champion. That

hunger within me was satisfied."

Button reflects: "There were no big goodbyes between us, but I look back on Lewis as one of the best and most challenging teammates I had."

As our interview progresses, it becomes clear Button is escaping not just from his father's death but from an accumulation of bad news. He was deeply affected by the skiing accident that left Michael Schumacher in a coma. Like his father only days later, the German former F1 champion suffered a head injury that left him fighting for his life.

"It's horrific that a guy whose whole life has been in a dangerous sport, the most decorated racing driver in Formula One history, falls skiing and hurts himself in that way. It's crazy, but we don't choose when we have our accident or when we're taken off this earth; it just happens."

Did other drivers' accidents — on or off the track — make him think: "There but for the grace of God go I"?

"I'm not religious, so, no. But just looking at my father, what I learnt after his death is that you've just got to live in the moment. You've got to look after yourself, obviously, make sure your health is good, but just live in the moment. Don't look at the negatives of the past — we all have pasts. It's about living in the moment and then trying to enjoy it as much as you can."

Button says there were off-track incidents, too, that added to "a dark period". He and Michibata were robbed during the night ➤➤➤

MODEL BEHAVIOUR
Button with Brittny Ward, his girlfriend



bike and brought us here, to the F1 world championship"

race. Then, with eight laps to go, [my Brazilian rival] Rubens Barrichello had some kind of tangle with Lewis Hamilton and went into the pits with a puncture, falling to eighth. I was in fifth.

Which meant, if it stayed the same, the championship was mine. A strange calm had come down on me. At the finish line, the team were on the pit wall, cheering and clapping, I was singing Queen's We Are the Champions into the radio (a good rendition, I thought).

As I jumped out of the car, I was greeted by the sound of the crowd

cheering, which knocked me for six. They'd spent days jeering me yet in that moment they were gracious and supportive.

And then I saw Dad. There he was in his pink shirt and shades and in the next instant we were in each other's arms, father and son. Our journey together had begun with a junior bike one cold morning and brought us here, to the world championship. We'd given each other such an incredible experience and I could feel all that pride and joy pouring off him.

"About time," said Bernie

Ecclestone. Nigel Mansell had 176 starts before he became world champion in 1992; it took me 169, the second-longest. That night, however, as I sat in my room with the party going on some floors below, what I thought about most was that journey — the one Dad and I had made together. A childhood dream of becoming world champion. I fell asleep and, when I awoke the next morning, the dream was real ■

© Jenson Button 2017.

Extracted from *Life to the Limit, My Autobiography*, to be published on Thursday (Blink Publishing £20)

while staying in a rented villa in St Tropez. Her engagement ring was snatched, but, more disturbingly, Button believes the intruders installed a covert camera and pumped anaesthetic gas through the air-conditioning to stop the couple waking up.

“The worst thing is, I don’t mind losing stuff. They can take what they want. It’s just you’re fearful of something else happening — the safety of your loved ones. The [French] police said: ‘What? You don’t have security?’ I said: ‘I didn’t think we’d have to — it’s the south of France.’ I don’t want to be walking around with security the whole time: that’s definitely not me. I’m still the boy from Frome. I haven’t stayed in a house in the south of France since.”

While he tiptoes around his feud with Hamilton, Button doesn’t mince words about Sir Richard Branson, describing in his memoir the disquiet with which he and teammates at Honda reacted to the news in 2008 that Branson might be their new boss.

“We thought Branson was a bit of a turkey,” he recalls. His doubts



were reinforced by an incident at a restaurant in Melbourne on the eve of the Australian Grand Prix in 2009. Branson made unwanted advances towards Michibata while Button was away from the table.

Afterwards Branson “tottered over to a party of diners, one of whom, unaware of how drunk he was, handed him a baby, hoping to get a picture of him holding it”, Button recalls. “Sir Richard not only proceeded to pick up and cuddle the baby but staggered around the restaurant [while] various people were trying to talk him out of it — ‘Richard,

please put the baby down’ — until at last he returned the child and left the restaurant, to everybody’s great relief.”

Branson later apologised to Button for the incident with Michibata. “I was talking to her. I was drunk. Jenson didn’t like it,” the tycoon said recently. “I didn’t drink for six months after that night.”

Some may regard Button’s criticism of Branson’s excesses as the pot calling the kettle black, given his own reputation as a party animal and lothario. As well as his short-lived marriage to Michibata, he called off a planned wedding in 2005 to Louise Griffiths, a singer and Fame Academy contestant.

“I had two serious girlfriends and a handful of less serious girlfriends in 10 years, [which] hardly makes me Warren Beatty,” he recalls. “I’m one of those people who like to be in a relationship — a serial monogamist.”

Of the break-up with Michibata, he says: “It was amicable. We both realised that things hadn’t been right and it was a mistake to marry in the first place.”

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Now that he's settled in LA, what is his next move? Clearly Jenson likes the lifestyle and the climate, although when the sun at the poolside gets too warm he moves inside the house to continue the interview.

He made a brief reappearance in F1 in May, which sealed his decision to quit. "I did my one race this year in Monaco, which I enjoyed, but I also realised that while I love the driving part, it was just too intense. There were negative questions, and I thought: 'I don't understand why there's negativity.' That proved to me I'd done the right thing."

He is in training for triathlons and Ironman competitions and his eyes have turned to other branches of motor sport, including the world's toughest endurance race — the Le Mans 24 Hours. "That's something I'd love to do — I love that team atmosphere. For me, it's something very special, working with drivers closely, working with the mechanics."

Indeed, there's something in his more weathered appearance, his steelier manner, that is starting to resemble Michael Delaney, Steve McQueen's hard-bitten antihero in the 1971 film *Le Mans*. Is that how he sees himself?

"I still love racing, and that bug has really come back now I've had a few months off. So I'll race in something — it just won't be in Formula One."

Will he miss it? "To have raced in Formula One for 17 years and won a world championship, won many grands prix, raced with some of the best drivers the sport has seen — I have so many memories.

"That's the important thing: you go there with dreams and you come away, hopefully, with good memories. And I do." ■

FAST AND FURIOUS
Above: Button argued with Branson over his then girlfriend. Left: with rival Hamilton



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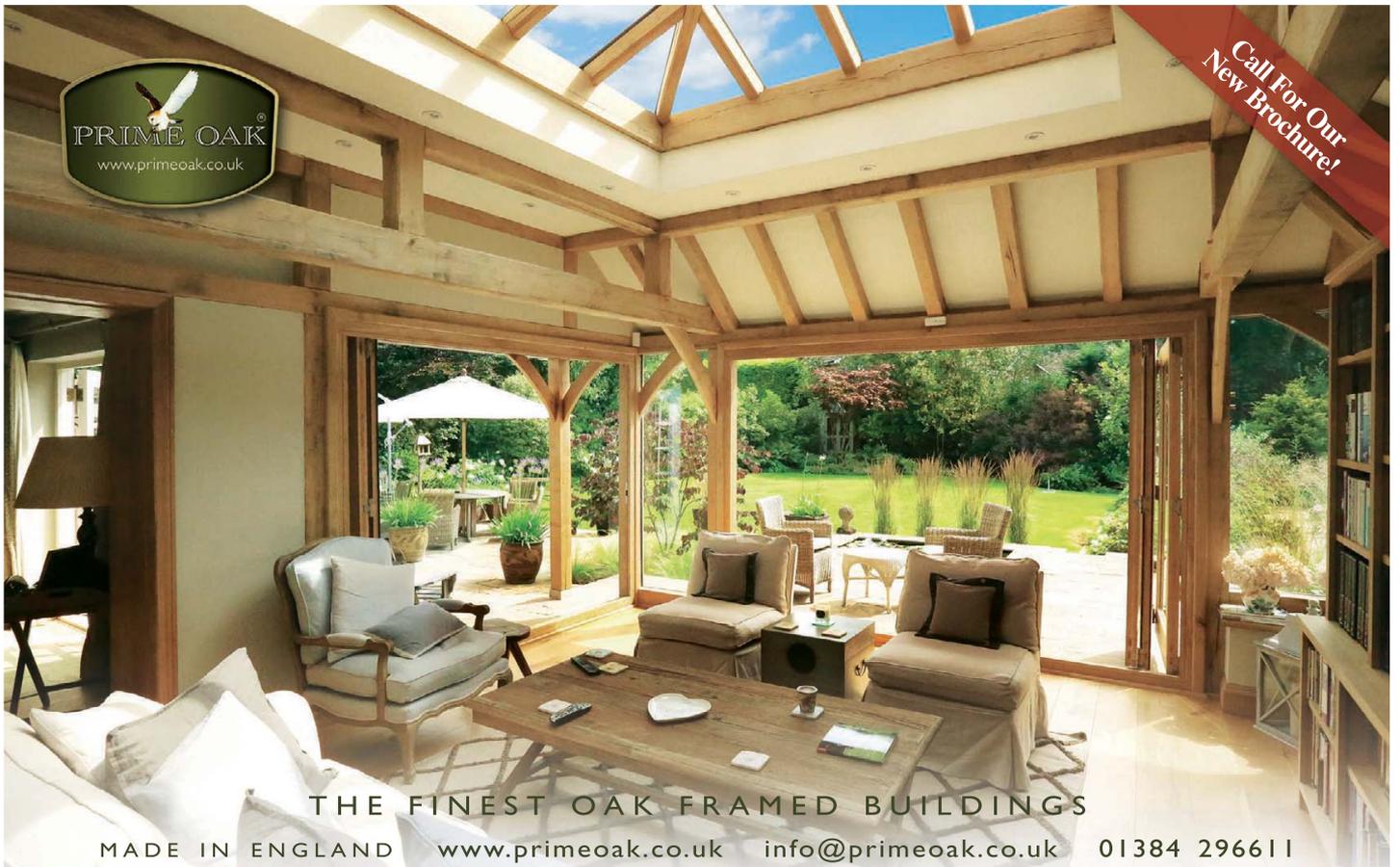
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1989

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2011

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2016

Porsche Panamera 4 E-Hybrid (main picture)



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TOM PILSTON FOR THE SUNDAY TIMES MAGAZINE



Me and My Motor

The actor Patrick Stewart has boldly gone for hybrids

As captain of the Starship Enterprise, Patrick Stewart got used to travelling at warp factor 9. But his knees turned to jelly the night Paul McCartney asked him to drive his powerful Aston Martin DB4.

Stewart was performing at the Bristol Old Vic theatre with Jane Asher, then McCartney's girlfriend. It was 1964, the Beatles were the biggest band on the planet and Asher had invited her superstar boyfriend backstage.

"I drove an ancient MG TF, which wasn't worth much, but Jane knew I loved the DB4. Paul walked into my dressing room, tossed me the keys and said, 'Drive us to Bath.'

"I thought he was so f***** cool but I was terrified — I'd never driven a car that fast. I really didn't want to be the one responsible for killing a pop star. Paul persuaded me. He sat in the back seat making out with Jane as I drove."

Although Stewart has won

multiple awards for his stage roles and was knighted for services to drama, he remains best known for playing Captain Jean-Luc Picard in Star Trek: The Next Generation and Professor Xavier in the X-Men films. Now 77, he stars in the recently released romantic drama The Wilde Wedding — and as the voice of Poop in The Emoji Movie. "I still struggle to turn down work, which is partly due to growing up in poverty in the northeast."

Stewart lived with his parents and two brothers in a one-up, one-down house in Jarrow. "I didn't realise how tough it was at the time because everybody I knew was in the same circumstances.

"I learnt to drive in a Ford with pop-up indicators. It was built in 1939 but had been stored for years. That car was still like new in 1962. There were hardly any motorways then, but it didn't stop me driving from a theatre in Manchester to London to see my girlfriend."

Stewart married his first wife, Sheila Falconer, in 1966 and the couple had two children (before divorcing in 1990). "I'd owned a pair of MGs by then but I had to buy a rather dull Ford estate — in the 1970s, there weren't many exciting cars for a family man with a modest income."

That changed in 1987 when Stewart was offered a role in a television series he had never heard of. It was called Star Trek. "I didn't want to do sci-fi but

my agent said the series would probably flop — he thought I'd be back home in six months."

The series and spin-off movies made Stewart a household name. "I was suddenly quite wealthy. Some of my friends in the cast bought expensive houses and cars, but I wasn't used to that sort of spending. I drove to the studio in a Honda Prelude."

When the second series aired, Stewart bought a Mercedes coupé, before splashing out on a Jaguar XJS convertible, in British racing green. "It only had 1,200 miles on the clock and was a bargain. When I moved back to England after Star Trek, I couldn't bear to leave it behind. I still have it in my garage in the Cotswolds."

Stewart — who married his third wife, the 38-year-old singer Sunny Ozell, in 2013 — drives a Lexus RX 450h hybrid in England and is passionate about the Porsche Panamera hybrid he keeps in America: "I've owned a few hybrid cars but the latest Porsche technology is astounding."

A Formula One enthusiast, Stewart has raced in several celebrity motor racing events.

"My hero has always been Sir Stirling Moss. I lost my hair due to alopecia when I was 19 and I would be mistaken for him all the time. People would ask me to sign his autograph and I had to oblige or they could get upset." ■

Interview by Jeremy Taylor

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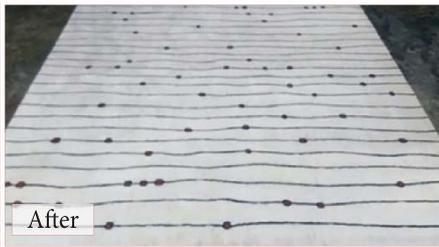
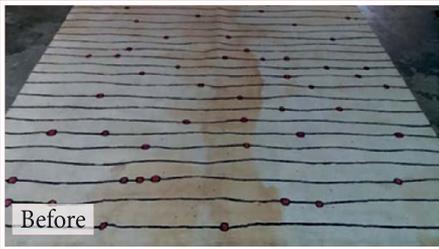
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That confidence comes with age. I was incredibly insecure as a kid

Twiggy

The face of the Swinging Sixties on how she keeps her feet on the ground

Born to a factory worker mother and a carpenter father, Lesley Lawson, 68, grew up in Neasden, northwest London. She was only 16 when she was described for the first time as the face of the 1960s. She quickly became a British cultural icon and was recognised as one of the world's first supermodels. She continues to model and design clothes, most notably for Marks & Spencer, and lives in London and Sussex with her husband, the actor and writer Leigh Lawson. Her daughter, Carly, 38, is an illustrator.

“ I wake at 7, though I never set an alarm unless I have to be up really early — and then it's panic stations finding three clocks to set. Nothing digital. I hate digital.

Every morning I read for half an hour in bed. I always have a book on the go. At the moment I'm rereading the Poldark series — they're fabulous. I tried a Kindle

for a while, but I missed the smell of a proper book.

Leigh and I come and go in the kitchen, making tea and breakfast — normally Shredded Wheat or porridge — while catching the headlines on Radio 4. I'm lucky because Leigh is upbeat and happy in the mornings — he makes me laugh. We'll celebrate our 30th wedding anniversary next year.

After my bath I do 15 minutes of Pilates. About 10 years ago my back went, so I took up Pilates, and that plus my monthly visits to the physio have really saved me.

I've too much in my wardrobe, but I'm of an age now where I not only want to be stylish but also comfortable. I've always liked boyish clothes and my style hasn't changed much: skinny jeans, a silky top and a tailored jacket. I do my make-up in five minutes; I'm pretty low-maintenance. At 10, a car takes me to the Marks & Spencer offices in Paddington.

Designing for M&S is my dream job. Growing up in the 1950s, my

mum would make our clothes, and my sisters and I all learnt to sew. I was a mod, and if you wanted to look the part you had to make your own clothes. So I've always been fussy about fabrics and achieving a good cut.

We're working on the autumn/winter range for 2018 at the moment. I do drawings and liaise with my production designer and the rest of the team. We can lose ourselves for four or five hours.

I'm hungry by 12.30, so I'll pop to the canteen and grab a sandwich. When I was in my twenties I'd eat any old rubbish, but over the years I've got a lot healthier. I really enjoy cooking and do all my own shopping for fresh stuff, but I've just discovered the convenience of online delivery for the heavy things. It's marvellous.

Three times a week I drive over to my daughter's house in the afternoon. Carly and I have always been close. I still worry about her, even though she's 38. My 2½-year-old granddaughter, Joni, is my joy; she's hysterical. We took her to the zoo the other day and the thing she liked best was going up and down in the glass lift. My stepson, Jason, has just had his second child, so I've got three gorgeous grandchildren now.

Family has always kept me sane. When you think what happened to me at 16, suddenly being whisked to New York to model for all these amazing photographers, it's a miracle I didn't spiral out of control. The Americans thought I was posh because of my English accent, but really I was just this terribly shy kid from Neasden.

By the time I get home I'll be planning dinner. We entertain a lot and I'll have fun cooking a Mexican spread or a roast. If it's just the two of us, we often go to the Japanese restaurant down the road. I have to stop Leigh telling young people on their phones to talk to each other: he can't bear it.

We love a bit of telly — Countryfile, documentaries and Fake or Fortune? We share some chocolate on the sofa like two old fuddy-duddies; these are my favourite evenings.

I've always been a good sleeper. I read again in bed, but can't keep my eyes open. Leigh knows I'm out when my book hits the floor ■ ”

Interview by Caroline Hutton
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