

THE PAPERBACKS

BESTSELLERS

FICTION
Hardbacks

- 1 (1) **Bones of the Hills**
by Conn Iggulden
(HarperCollins, £18.99)
- 2 (3) **The Private Patient**
by P D James
(Faber & Faber, £18.99)
- 3 (2) **The Other Queen**
by Philippa Gregory
(HarperCollins, £18.99)
- 4 (4) **Devil Bones**
by Kathy Reichs
(William Heinemann, £18.99)
- 5 (-) **Silks**
by Dick Francis and Felix Francis
(Michael Joseph, £18.99)

Paperbacks

- 1 (1) **No Time for Goodbye**
by Linwood Barclay
(Orion, £7.99)
- 2 (-) **Lords of the Bow**
by Conn Iggulden
(Harper, £6.99)
- 3 (2) **Exit Music**
by Ian Rankin
(Orion, £7.99)
- 4 (3) **The Forgotten Garden**
by Kate Morton
(Pan, £7.99)
- 5 (4) **The Ghost**
by Robert Harris
(Arrow, £7.99)

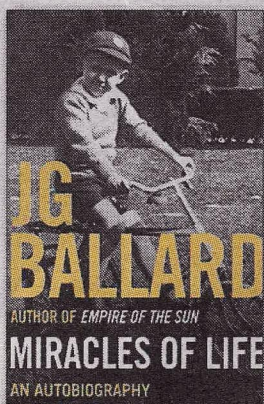
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Embroideries
by Marjane Satrapi
Jonathan Cape, £8.99

In this short coda to *Persepolis*, Marjane Satrapi tells of her life in Iran, a group of friends who share their love of the samovar. Marjane is married three times until she is shot of by the men once she is married into virgins; later she is married to in the unhappy world of women. The women's conversation: "To others' backs is of the heart."

Miracles of Life
by JG Ballard
HarperPerennial, £7.99



Written after he was diagnosed with cancer in 2006, JG Ballard's superb memoir spans his boyhood in Shanghai and his adult years as a celebrated novelist living in Shepperton in Surrey, where he has occupied the same house since 1960. Rarely nostalgic and never rancorous, he comes across as modest, gentle and supremely intelligent. There are many outstanding passages. The extravagance of expatriate life in pre-war Shanghai is brilliantly evoked (his mother

used to boss about her Chinese servants, shouting: "Boy, tell No 2 Coolie to sweep the drive.") So are his experiences inside Lunghua Camp, where the Ballards were interned by the Japanese in 1943.

As well as the narrative arc of his life, Ballard offers insights into a wealth of topics, from the death throes of the British Empire to the darker aspects of American popular culture, the character of Kingsley Amis (before he became a "professional curmudgeon"), and the paintings of Francis Bacon.
Alastair Sooke



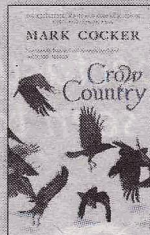
Exit Ghost
by Philip Roth
Vintage, £7.99

After 11 years writing in a secluded cabin in the Berkshires, Nathan Zuckerman, now 71, returns to New York to seek treatment for incontinence. He wanders, lonely as a wraith, around the streets that he used to haunt as a healthy young man. On a whim, he agrees to a house swap with a Manhattan writing couple, and starts lusting after the sexy wife, Jamie Logan.

This, the ninth and final novel in Philip Roth's Zuckerman series, is characteristically complex and brilliant, with subtle, serpentine sentences that successfully mimic an old man's melancholy thoughts.
AS

The Whisperers
by Orlando Figes
Penguin, £10.99

Drawing on hundreds of hours of newly taped interviews, a study of the hidden history of the Russians in Stalin. The error of the almost Arguably more conspicuous late terror (the ges) are the Stalinist red people's "otions". This the dictator's al: a 2005 d that 42 per ns wanted a alin". A superb, story.



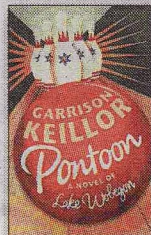
Crow Country
by Mark Cocker
Vintage, £8.99

Compiled after many hours spent peering through binoculars on "rain-soaked... wind-lashed hillsides" in Britain, this impassioned study is Mark Cocker's prose poem to the common-or-garden rook. Yet while the author renders his subject with dazzling vividness (a roosting flock becomes a "disembodied swirl of huge shiny black petals... a flurry of metallic flakes"), there is little human narrative and scant attempt to make the rooks stand for anything other than what they are. This is natural history of an almost mystical kind - a quest for a "magic" connection with another species. EMcG



St Lucy's Home for Girls Raised by Wolves
by Karen Russell
Vintage, £7.99

The 11 short stories in this collection present a world that is reassuringly familiar yet strikingly different. In each one feelings of loss, loneliness, fear and love are explored with subtlety and humour. Small boys with magic goggles search for ghost fish, the children of werewolves are rehabilitated by nuns, tropics-dwellers attend wild indoor blizzard parties. Yet one gets the feeling that all these things are really happening, somewhere just out of sight. Karen Russell is a strong new voice whose imaginative visions are enthralling.
Jo Caird



Pontoon
by Garrison Keillor
Faber & Faber, £7.99

In his latest novel, Garrison Keillor returns to Lake Wobegon, the fictional Minnesota town where he has set much of his earlier work. *Pontoon* revolves around octogenarian Evelyn Peterson, whose death brings secrets to light and prompts revelations among her family. We also follow a wayward ex-resident planning a "celebration of commitment" on the day the dead woman's ashes are to be disposed at the lake, and a group of visiting (and drunk) Danish pastors. He's a compassionate writer, yet one with a forensic eye for human weakness. He also provides a few laugh-out-loud moments.
Tim Relf

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