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BOOKDROP 11+



'I wanted to create a spectacular, high-octane adventure'

Featuring
BRIAN DUNCAN

Author of the action-packed 'Wintour's Game' trilogy



Also featuring:

**Derek
Landy**

**Pippa
Dunn**

**Ann
Sei Lin**

**Chris
Vick**

**I.V.
Marie**

and
more



Q&A



WITH BRÍÁN DUNGAN

'Wintour's Game' is about Alex Wintour – orphan, teenager, oracle, thief.

Alex has only got this far in life by living off her wits. Well, that and an ability to see glimpses of the future – a useful talent when you need to stay one step ahead of the law. Then a robbery goes wrong, and her path is set on a collision course with the enigmatic teen millionaire Colman Reece. Like Alex, Cole is a Temporal – someone who can manipulate time – and he needs Alex's help for a heist that only she can pull off...

Brían's latest book, 'Wintour's War,' is the epic conclusion in his action-packed trilogy, perfect for fans of 'Artemis Fowl' and Alex Rider.

Q

What inspired you to write the 'Wintour's Game' series?

I wanted to create a spectacular, hi-octane adventure with a kick-ass teenage heroine at its core and Wintour's Game was the result!

Q

What's your favourite part about writing the series?

I love creating characters and putting words in their mouths, and the ruder and more irreverent the better. They say everything I can't!

Q

Would you like it if you could see into the future?

If Alex learns anything over the course of this story, it's that sometimes ignorance is bliss, so no thanks. That's why they call the present a gift!



Click here to watch Brían's video

1 OUT LATE ON A SCHOOL NIGHT

With a click and a swish of night, Alex was in. And she had just two minutes to get back out again.

No problem.

All around her in the darkness, the warehouse hummed, the air thick with oil and industry. Making her way nimbly down the aisle, lights winked at her in the gloom, while the massive machines that towered over her chirruped and sighed as she passed. She was so busy wondering what they made here that it took her a moment to realise she wasn't the only thing out of place.

There was something about this room, something about this whole building, in fact, that made her senses prick. Something just felt ... *wrong*.

At fourteen, Alex Wintour was pretty young for a thief, especially one with a reputation like hers. Short and lithe, with sharp features and a sharper tongue, her talents among Roz's crew were undisputed. As always on a work night, she was wearing her black jeans, her lucky black biker jacket, and her fringe of auburn hair with its tips

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clients wanted stolen or why.

So, slipping a piece of clear plastic the size of a postage stamp from her pocket, Alex peeled away the protective backing and laid it on the fingerprint scanner. Flashing green, the clasps holding the cylinder released it into Alex's gloved hands with a satisfying hiss.

"Oops-a-daisy," she said, casually hurling the container to the floor where it shattered at her feet. Its contents tumbled across the scuffed linoleum, coming to rest by the foot of a battered but orderly desk. As Alex bent to retrieve the device, something on the desktop glinted in the darkness, catching her eye.

It looked like a postcard, but it was black, and embossed in the centre was a large golden T. Beneath that, more gold lettering glittered, forming alien patterns that Alex couldn't decipher and she moved on with a disgruntled huff.

A framed photograph sat next to it of a woodland trail and what she presumed was a family of seven smiling hikers, in descending height, huddled together. All brown skin and bright, brilliant smiles, they were like Russian dolls. Dad in the middle looked proud as punch of his five miniatures, while Mum, though central, appeared somewhat detached, as if above it all.

Alex gave a derisive snort. "Bet they hate each other."

Happy family days out were not something she saw in her future. Roz's operation, the only family she knew, didn't exactly go for picnics in the park.

She scanned the rest of the desk's cluttered surface for anything of interest, but the blueprints and diagrams held no value. Besides, even if Alex had wanted to take any of

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of midnight blue was tucked beneath a black beanie, so it didn't dangle in front of her face like it usually did.

She'd been given everything she'd need: access codes for the doors, a floor plan of the building, even a big red X marking her target. This job should've been a piece of cake. So why did she feel so uneasy?

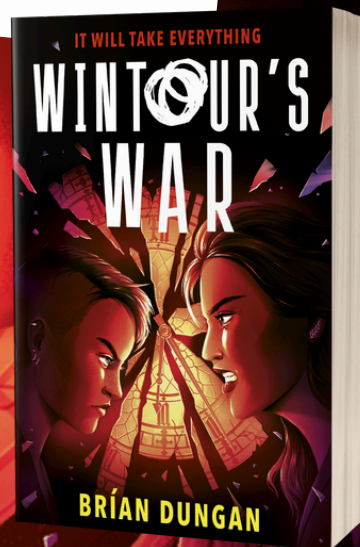
Alex stopped, scanning the room, willing her senses to see round corners. Nothing. She tapped her watch, the timer telling her she'd already wasted thirty seconds, so, with a grimace, she pushed the persistent niggle to the back of her mind and moved on.

She made her way quickly towards her target, the control room perched up a set of metal stairs in the back corner. Taking the steps lightly, two at a time, she punched the code she'd been given into the keypad and the door hissed open, revealing the operations for the entire plant. Fixing an extendable steel rod into position across the doorway, Alex cautiously stepped into the room.

Banks of idling consoles winked to her left, stationed beneath windows looking out on to the sleeping facility, but she ignored them, finding what she was looking for on the back wall.

Lined up, row upon row, was a collection of spotlight glass cylinders, each containing a range of indecipherable tech. Her hand traced the middle row of the numbered thirty-centimetre-long containers until she found the one she was after. Inside it, on a small clear plinth, was a nondescript chrome device about the size of a cigarette lighter, with a round blue button at one end. In this room, surrounded by so much imposing technology, it seemed decidedly unimpressive, but it wasn't Alex's job to judge what Roz's

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**READ THE
WHOLE SERIES!**

**For
ages
13+**

As the boundary between sleep and the waking world begins to dissolve, it forces one dreamer to face a reality more dangerous than any nightmare...

A HEART-POUNDING ADVENTURE SET IN NINETEENTH-CENTURY LONDON...



Sixteen-year-old Ashlyn Threadneedle lives a double life. By day, she works a tedious job as a government messenger for Lord Whitaker in an alternate nineteenth-century London.

But by night, she escapes.

Ashlyn plunges into vivid, lucid dreams, navigating the Stream - a mystical dreamworld where time bends and the only limit is her imagination.

When her long-dead mother appears in a dream, everything Ashlyn thought she knew is turned on its head, and the future of her loved ones hangs in the balance. Drawn into a dangerous quest for answers, she joins a secret society of lucid dreamers.

Perfect for fans of:

- **Clean friends-to-lovers romance**
- **Coming of age**
- **Secret societies & espionage-filled adventures**
- **Mother-daughter relationships**

Together with her best friend Dimitri - an underground journalist fighting for the people - she must fight to protect the Stream from a powerful enemy who wants to manipulate thoughts and seize control of the waking world.

But the Stream is a perilous place. To save the freedom of thought itself, Ashlyn must risk both her past and her future.



[CLICK HERE TO READ EXTRACT](#)

THE DREAM BEGINS, WELCOME TO THE CORVI SIGNUM

**For
ages
12+**

Skulduggery Pleasant

MEET SKULDUGGERY PLEASANT: DETECTIVE, SORCERER, WARRIOR. OH YEAH. AND DEAD.



Stephanie's uncle Gordon wrote horror fiction. At least that's what Stephanie thought - until he died and left her his estate. Then she discovered that though his books may have been horror, they weren't exactly... well, fiction.

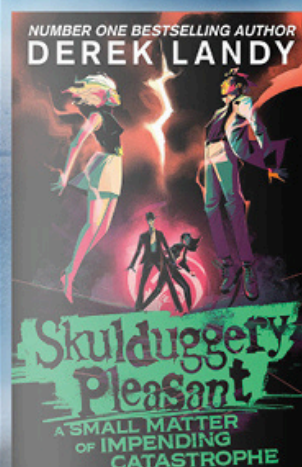
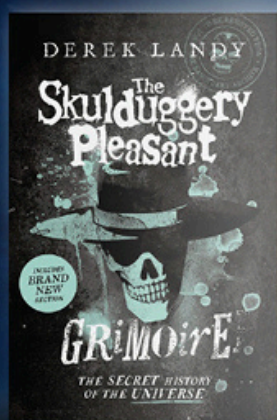
Plunged into a world of vampires, assassins and world-ending magic, Stephanie finds help from an unusual source: Skulduggery Pleasant, the wise-cracking skeleton of a long-dead sorcerer. When all hell breaks loose it's lucky for Stephanie that she's not your average twelve-year-old girl - and it's lucky for Skulduggery that he's already dead.

Will evil win the day? Will Stephanie and Skulduggery stop bickering long enough to beat it? One thing's for sure: the bad guys won't know what's hit them.

Celebrate the 20-year anniversary of Skulduggery Pleasant in 2027!

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**For
ages
12+**



BE WARNED: ENTER THIS WORLD AND YOU MAY FIND IT VERY HARD TO ESCAPE...

**'DARK COMEDY,
ACTION SET-PIECES
AND UNFORGETTABLE
CHARACTERS'**

WATERSTONES BEST BOOKS
OF THE YEAR



**'THRILL
-A-MINUTE
ADVENTURE'**

JONATHAN STROUD,
AUTHOR OF LOCKWOOD & CO.



**'WHATEVER
YOUR AGE,
READ THEM
AND ENJOY
THE RIDE'**

IRISH INDEPENDENT

A LETTER FROM AUTHOR, DEREK LANDY

When I started secondary school, I was small, terrified, and friendless. Two weeks in, another boy noticed the book I was reading and told me how much he'd loved it. That interaction began a friendship that transformed my teenage years, and endures to this day.*

The idea that the Skulduggery Pleasant books could have the same impact on someone's life is truly humbling. We're now coming up on the 20th anniversary of the first book, and in those years I've seen relationships spark over the series, children being born because their parents met in a signing queue, and friendships being forged. Books can build their own communities. We just have to give them the chance.

**This story is largely fictional, but I don't think that detracts from the point I'm trying to make.*



**'A MASTER
JUGGLER OF
SCARY AND
FUNNY'**

THE TIMES



WHAT PRICE WOULD YOU PAY FOR A SECOND CHANCE AT LIFE?



Perfect for fans of:

- **Dark fantasy with a horror twist**
- **Ghost girl and human boy**
- **Heavens vs hell**
- **Murderous demon lords**
- **Wicked humour**

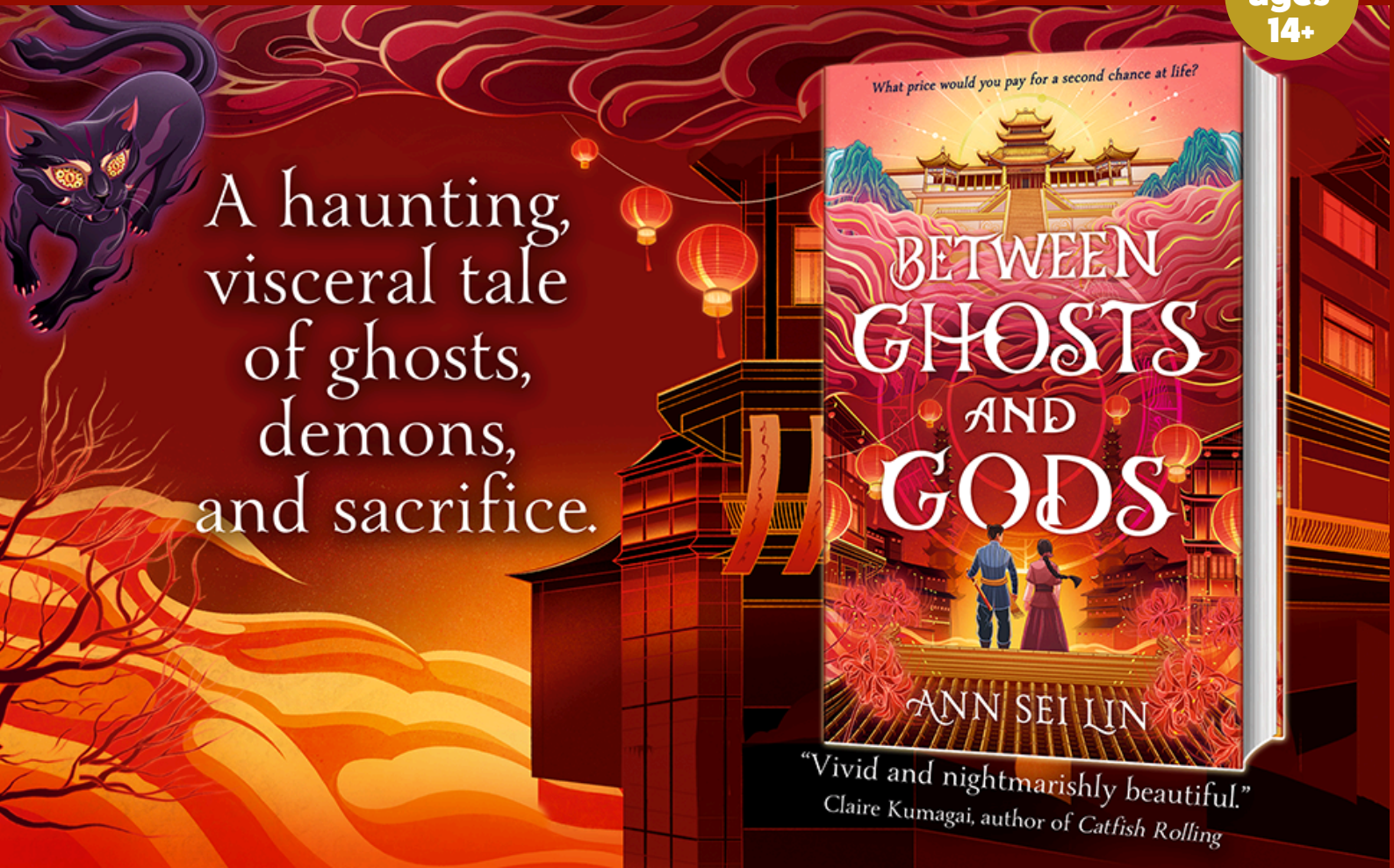
Having sold her soul to a demon during her lifetime, Kasu now works at Camellia House, a high-stakes gambling den in the under-realm. Here, she abides by the Heavenly Principles in the hope of one day achieving reincarnation. Night after night, she dispenses gambling tiles to customers who surrender their treasures - jewellery, limbs, dreams - which Kasu stores in a ghoulish cabinet for her mistress.

Into this world drops Arun, a prince from the mortal realm desperately searching for his mother. A year ago she was chosen to serve the gods in the heavens, before being promptly exiled. His hunt has brought him to the under-realm, where he is determined to uncover the truth.

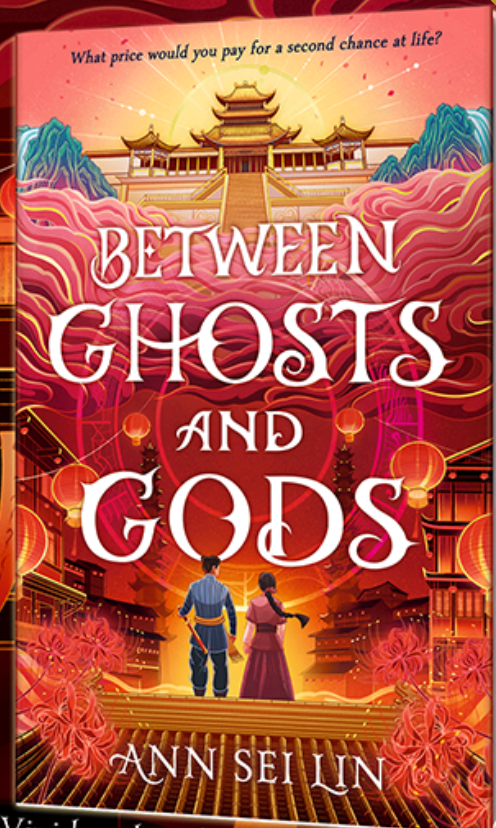
Kasu agrees to help Arun with his search, but as the two become caught in an ever-tightening web of danger and deceit, she is forced to re-examine all of her beliefs about the gods she worships. And as she and Arun grow closer, she must decide just what price she is willing to pay, and how much she is prepared to lose, for a second chance at life.

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**For
ages
14+**



A haunting,
visceral tale
of ghosts,
demons,
and sacrifice.



"Vivid and nightmarishly beautiful."
Claire Kumagai, author of *Catfish Rolling*

'STUNNINGLY BEAUTIFUL [...] FULL OF WILD IMAGINATION. THIS IS A HOLD YOUR BREATH, READ IN ONE SITTING SORT OF STORY...'

– JASBINDER BILAN

For
ages
11+

[CLICK HERE TO
READ EXTRACT](#)

WHEN DEADLY ELEMENTAL FORCES THREATEN EVERYTHING SHE HOLDS DEAR, CAN HILLY CONTROL THE IRRESISTIBLE POWER SHE FEELS?

Hilly Seaborne, fourteen, is an outsider in her new home on the Cornish coast. A skilled acrobat, she is pulled between strange dreams of flying, the call of the sea, and visions of a deserted lighthouse that appears only to her. Magic thickens around Hilly as she begins to uncover tales of strange sightings and unnerving events, alongside her at times frustrating, logic-loving classmate, Lorcan.

As she discovers the truth about her family's past and her connection to the luminous spirits that roam the coast, deadly elemental forces threaten everything she holds dear. Can Hilly control the irresistible power she feels? Who is Isla, the mysterious girl that lived in the invisible lighthouse long ago? And what are the dark forces stirring deep under the water's surface?



Perfect for fans of:

- **Lyrical storytelling**
- **Danger, enchantment and sorcery**
- **Intense storms, dark secrets and wild imagination**

Includes:

- **A fantastical coming-of-age story in modern-day Cornwall**
- **Astronomy, marine biology and meteorology**
- **References to 'The Tempest'**



HILLY SEABORNE IS LEARNING TO FIT IN... AND TO FLY

A STORY OF THE SEA, STORMS AND SORCERY FOR 11+

Welcome to BLACKWOOD ACADEMY

A THRILLING DARK ACADEMIA DUOLOGY SET AT A MAGICAL BOARDING SCHOOL IN PURGATORY...

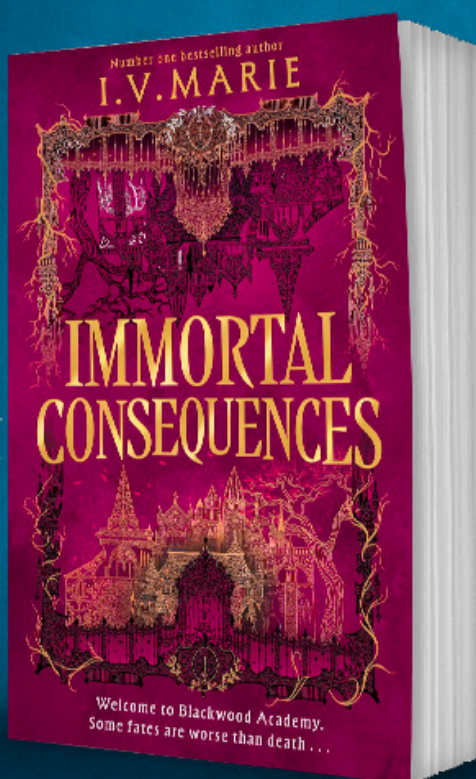
Welcome to Blackwood Academy: a boarding school located on the fringes of the afterlife. No one knows why they end up at Blackwood; but when they enter the school's arched gates the only way out is to be chosen for the Decennial – a series of magical trials held once a decade. The chosen pupil is offered a choice: graduate and join Blackwood's magical elite, or venture into the unknown and cross over to the Other Side.

- Wren knows she has what it takes to win—unless, that is, her arch-rival (and subject of her tortured dreams) Augustine steals her spot.
- Irene has never cared about playing by the rules and will break whatever (and whoever) stands in her way, including her only friend, Masika.
- Olivier has given up securing the nomination. But he'll stop at nothing to keep Emilio, from crossing over to the Other Side.

All are determined to be Blackwood's chosen candidate. All are determined to win. But this Decennial will be unlike any before.

For
ages
14+

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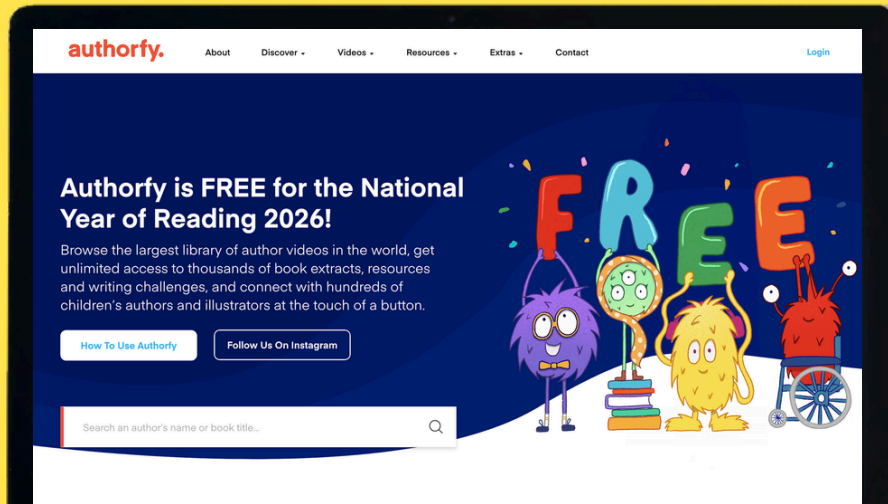


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