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Hello World

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Jonathan Litton and L'Atelier Cartographique

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¡Hola!



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As heir to the throne, Stephan also has to deal with the expectations and responsibilities of his position, which adds an additional dimension to this book. However, it will appeal mainly as an exciting, and at times bloodthirsty, novel.

Robin Barlow

Wooten, Antony

The Grubby Feather Gang (Big Shorts)

Eskdale Publishing, 2015, pp115, £6.00
978 0953712 380

This powerful story, set during the First World War, introduces many challenging concepts to KS2 readers. Young George's dad, the village vet, is a conscientious objector. Most of the other men in the village are away fighting and George and his mum have to bear the taunts and threats of the women who are left behind. George is regularly bullied by Stan, but when Stan forces him to agree to do his homework for him, the episode is witnessed by Emma, newly arrived in the village. She befriends George, and after he is caned by the strict Mr Haxby for doing Stan's work, together they hatch a plan to take revenge on Stan, and humiliate Mr Haxby, who they believe is avoiding joining up.

George's dad receives a conscription letter, but still refuses to join up. Villagers set fire to

George's house on the day that his dad is sent to prison. On the same day Mr Haxby is called up, so George and his mum move into his house to help care for the disabled Mrs Haxby. Back at the hayloft, their hideout, Stan asks George to read out a letter he has received from his dad at the front, and, emotionally, all three friends realise what sacrifices are being made in different ways.

There is much to think about in this strong narrative. In just one hundred pages of crisp prose and sharp observations we are invited to consider war and pacifism, cowardice and bravery, family tensions, conscription, bullying and friendship. That may sound rather heavy, but this story is warm, uplifting, and ultimately positive.

Steve Hird

Worsley, Lucy

Eliza Rose

Bloomsbury, 2016, pp368, £6.99
978 1 4088 6943 7

I enjoy a good historical story and was intrigued to see what Lucy Worsley, a renowned historian, had written. The Tudor period is full of intrigue and political shenanigans and is a rich minefield for authors. Lucy Worsley's academic credentials mean that her period detail is beyond question.

The main character in the story is Eliza Rose Camperdowne who has grown up in Derbyshire.

Young and headstrong, she often dreams of who she will marry. She knows her duty well and realises that, as the only daughter of a noble family, she must one day marry a man who is very grand and very rich. But Fate has other plans. When Eliza becomes a maid of honour, she's drawn into the thrilling, treacherous court of Henry the Eighth. Is her glamorous cousin Katherine Howard a friend or a rival? How will Eliza cope with the plottings and intrigue? And can a girl choose her own destiny in a world ruled by men?

The characters are well drawn and I was fascinated by the depiction of Katherine Howard as a scheming young lady. The stifling life at court is well described and the period detail paints a vivid picture of Tudor life. A good read and one which will appeal especially to girls.

Carolyn Copland

Zahler, Diane

Baker's Magic

Illustrated by Mina Price
Curious Fox, 2016, pp330, £6.99
978 1 78202 417 0

Bee is an orphan, struggling to survive in a world that does not seem to care, when she arrives in the town of Zeewal. Exhausted and starving, she steals a bun but is caught in the act by the irate