

THE BIG BOOK WEEKEND 2021 PROGRAMME

SATURDAY MARCH 20th

10.30am	THE TRUTH ABOUT LIES: WHY WE LOVE A LIAR	<i>The cheque's in the post. I'm stuck in traffic. You look great in that.</i> We tell lies all the time and hope nobody notices. But every time we lie, we give little clues away. What are those signs and how can we spot them? And why can't we get enough of liars and unreliable narrators in our favourite stories? Three authors – one of crime fiction, one of domestic thrillers, the other a criminal barrister – discuss the art of deception, the differences between personal and professional lying, and how to spot a liar yourself.	CONVERSATION
	Ian Rankin, Adele Parks, Alexandra Wilson, Alex Clark		
12pm	IS IT TIME TO BIN THE BOOKS ON PARENTING?	Dr Spock, Gina Ford, Philippa Perry... every new parent is bombarded with wisdom on the dos and don'ts of parenthood, with each expert contradicting the next. In a world glutted with books, blogs and Instagram posts, how do we learn from others' experience and expertise without becoming overwhelmed, insecure and disconnected from our own instincts? Three authors confront the question: have we reached peak parenting advice?	DEBATE
	Candice Brathwaite, Gill Sims, Matt Coyne, DJ Ace		
1.30pm	NEW HEROES: A SEARCH FOR ROLE MODELS IN DIFFICULT TIMES	Politics is broken. The arts is riddled with fallen heroes. With a new scandal breaking every day discrediting the great and the good, where can we look to for our new role models? Author Irenosen Okojie and BBC war correspondent Frank Gardner talk with Shahidha Bari about the characters – both real and fictional – that have inspired them, and discuss who they think should be held up as the inspiring icons of our troubled times.	CONVERSATION
	Irenosen Okojie, Frank Gardner, Shahidha Bari		
3pm	HOW TO BE A MAN	With gender roles collapsing, gender identities exploding and toxic masculinity being called out on social media daily, what does it mean nowadays to 'be a man'? Bestselling author Alex Wheatle explores the challenges of modern masculinity with comedian Russell Kane and rapper Guvna B. Together they discuss the men who have shaped their lives, the values they live by, and the fictional and real role models they believe should inspire a new generation of boys.	CONVERSATION
	Alex Wheatle, Russell Kane, Guvna B, DJ Ace		

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4.30pm	THE SECRETS OF GOOD SEX Bolu Babalola, Naoise Dolan, Kate Davies, Shahidha Bari	Sex in books is notoriously tricky. Who gets it right? And how do you write about love and romantic relationships without lapsing into sentimentality or cliché? Three authors discuss the challenges and joys of writing truthfully about love, relationships and sex – and which authors make them swipe right... or left.	CONVERSATION
6pm	A BIG BOOK CHAT WITH... VAL MCDERMID Val McDermid, Alex Clark	The queen of crime, Val McDermid, discusses the enduring appeal of crime fiction, her passion for reading and why she thinks we all need stories that get under our skin.	INTERVIEW
SUNDAY MARCH 22nd			
12pm	BRITISH VILLAGE LIFE: HEAVEN OR HELL? Ayisha Malik, Julie Ma, Amanda Craig, Alex Clark	Covid has seen thousands of urbanites flee from our cities in search of a country idyll. But does village life live up to the hype? Is it a truly green and pleasant land where happy families raise prize-winning organic veg – or a hotbed of petty resentments populated by small-minded racists in wellington boots? Ayisha Malik, Julie Ma and Amanda Craig, who have all written novels set in rural Britain, discuss the realities of modern village life.	DEBATE
1.30pm	DIGGING IN: HOW OUR FOOD SHAPES OUR LIVES Grace Dent, Ruby Tandoh, Jack Monroe, Shahidha Bari	What does the food we eat tell us about ourselves, our roots, and our society? Three brilliant food writers talk about their personal relationship to food – and how, whether we like it or not, what we put on our plate has become a political act.	CONVERSATION

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3pm	A BIG BOOK CHAT WITH... DOUGLAS STUART	This year's Booker prize winner Douglas Stuart explains what it was like to grow up gay in a hard man's world, explores why working-class stories matter, and discusses the power of a good teacher to save a lost kid's life.	INTERVIEW
	Douglas Stuart, Alex Clark		
4pm	THESE BOOKS MIGHT SAVE YOUR LIFE: BRILLIANT READS FOR BLEAK TIMES	Ella Berthoud's <i>The Novel Cure</i> offers reading remedies for all life's aches and pains. With help from the actor Greg Davies and Big Book Weekend co-founder Molly Flatt, she asks viewers to share their problems and prescribes some extraordinary novels that might help us all navigate the dark days of lockdown.	CONVERSATION
	Ella Berthoud, Greg Davies, Molly Flatt		
5pm	A BIG BOOK CHAT WITH.... SIR LENNY HENRY	Legendary comedian and author Sir Lenny Henry talks to Big Book Weekend co-founder Kit de Waal about the books that have made him, the stories that he still wants to tell, and why we all have to get angry – and active – in improving the diversity of TV, films, books and beyond.	INTERVIEW
	Sir Lenny Henry, Kit de Waal		