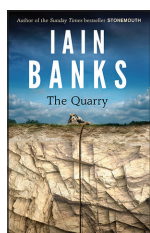


BOOKS OF THE YEAR

THE QUARRY
Iain Banks
(Little, Brown, £7.99)



In April this year, Scottish author Iain Banks announced that he had been diagnosed with terminal cancer and was unlikely to live beyond a year. In his announcement, he stated that *The Quarry* would be his last novel.

In a somewhat unsettling twist of fate, *The Quarry* is about a man dying from cancer (Banks was well into writing it before he got his own diagnosis). It follows the struggles between Guy and his 18-year-old autistic son Kit, who is trying to find out the identity of his mother before his father dies.

The result is a dark satire about old friends, lost dreams and coming to terms with mortality. It's a final showcase for Banks's gift for inviting the reader to empathise with even the most cruel, bitter and self-serving of characters – who are, after all, the most human.

Author Q&A: Paul Du Noyer



DEAF SCHOOL: THE NON-STOP POP ART PUNK ROCK PARTY
(Liverpool University Press, £14.95)

Formed in Liverpool in 1973, Deaf School's innovative mesh of rock, cabaret and art-pop proved too obtuse to deliver commercial success. The band's first full-length biography is written by journalist Paul Du Noyer, author of respected music tome *Liverpool: Wondrous Place*.

Paul Du Noyer, author of respected music tome *Liverpool: Wondrous Place*.

As an aspiring music journalist in the 1970s, to what extent is your personal history and that of the band entwined?

Apart from my admiration for their music, part of my personal affection for Deaf School rests in the fact that I followed them before I became a professional music journalist. I associate Deaf School with this much more relaxed phase of my life and it was enjoyable to return to that sense of innocence. It's also funny for me to look back and think that I used Deaf School [reviews] in my attempts to join the music press. As with Deaf School themselves nobody wanted to know.

You make the assertion that in the history of Liverpool music, Deaf School's importance is second only to the Beatles. Please elaborate.

Many other bands could claim to be the second best band after The Beatles and not necessarily Deaf School. But in terms of their influence and to the extent that they were a catalyst, Deaf School were the most important Liverpool



band after the Beatles. They completely changed the landscape in the city and inspired into being an entire new generation of bands.

What is it about Deaf School that makes them still relevant today?

They were really melodic and a good tune is as near to immortality as pop music gets. Beats come and go, but tunes tend to live forever and their music is full of good tunes. There's also an

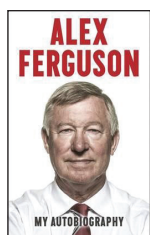
immense variety within their repertoire, so you get this kaleidoscopic range of voices and ideas and personalities that is very hard to get tired of.

It is widely perceived that the arrival of punk sounded the death knell for Deaf School. If it wasn't for punk do you think the band could have been a big success?

I think they probably could. Looking back what I realise more and more is that they were punk. Their ethos even before punk begun was that it doesn't matter how good you are. It is how much energy and imagination you have got. Unfortunately, they didn't have the right formula for London punk as it was quickly defined. It was bad luck, but they never lived enough of a rock and roll lifestyle to become rock and roll casualties.

RICHARD SMIRKE

MY AUTOBIOGRAPHY
Alex Ferguson
(Hodder & Stoughton, £25)



Timed to coincide with Sir Alex's retirement as manager of Manchester United, this memoir promised answers to countless burning questions that had been plaguing

football fans over the years: did he really get on with the Glazers? What was the story behind his feud with Roy Keane? And what did he think about David Beckham's haircuts?

In fact, Ferguson's relationship with Beckham became one of the biggest talking points after the book's publication. In a particularly candid chapter, he accuses Beckham of caring more about fame than football and even goes so far as to say the player was one of the biggest disappointments of his career. Other highlights include some enlightening details of conversations with Wayne Rooney.

THE LUMINARIES
Eleanor Catton
(Victoria University Press, £15.99)



The Luminaries became a double record-breaker when it won the Man Booker Prize this year: at 832 pages, it is the longest book to have won the award; and 28-year-

old Eleanor Catton is the youngest ever winner.

Set in 1866 during the New Zealand gold rush, *The Luminaries* follows a group of 12 men gathered for a meeting in a hotel. When a traveller stumbles into their midst, the wheels are set in motion for an epic mystery involving sex and seances, opium and lawsuits. The story is told from multiple points of view, gradually revealing the truth about what has happened in the small town of Hokitika on New Zealand's South Island. The chair of the judges described the book as a "dazzling work, luminous, vast".

THE GOLDFINCH
Donna Tartt
(Little, Brown, £20)



Tartt's third novel in 20 years has been one of the most talked-about books of 2013. The book opens with a fictional bomb attack on New York's Metropolitan Museum of Art,

seen through the eyes of 13-year-old Theo, whose mother is killed in the attack. In the aftermath, Theo finds himself accosted by a dying man who draws his attention to Fabritius's painting *The Goldfinch* and tells him to take it home and look after it. The orphaned Theo is then whisked off to LA by family friends and his post-traumatic ruminations lead him into a series of intense experiences, including a battle with drug addiction. When, as an adult, he discovers that the painting is believed to have been destroyed in the explosion, the novel becomes not only a thriller but also a parable about guilt and reconciliation.

DOCTOR SLEEP
Stephen King
(Scribner, £14.99)



Many of the most-hyped books of 2013 failed to live up to expectations: Helen Fielding's *Mad About The Boy* was "a clunking disappointment"; Morrissey's much-anticipated

autobiography was dismissed as "droning narcissism and the whine of self-pity" (no surprise there, really). But Stephen King's sequel to *The Shining* fared better.

Doctor Sleep is told from the point of view of Danny, the little boy in *The Shining*. Now a grown man, he is struggling with three things inherited from his psychopath father Jack: alcoholism, a terrible temper and trouble with ghosts. Now sober and working in a hospice, he develops a psychic relationship with a young girl called Abra. This is a white-knuckle ride with not-so-subtle undertones about conquering demons.