

Books

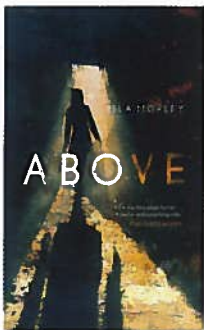
RACHEL GLOVER kickstarts your summer reading.



SWATCH IT

THE FASHION SWATCH BOOK by Marnie Fogg (Thames & Hudson, approx €36, out May 5) is a thing of true beauty, featuring the fabric designs of more than 100 of the world's hottest designers and brands, including Christopher Kane, Giles Deacon, Hussein Chalayan, Jonathan Saunders, Matthew Williamson and Sonia Rykiel; plus, vintage pieces by Dior, Sophie Hallette and Liberty. With over 1,000 stunning illustrations accompanied by biographies and guides to textile design, it's a must for any fashion devotee with space in her library.

BOOK of the MONTH



Isla Morley presents a shocking story with **ABOVE** (Two Roads, €15.99, out May 8). Here, a 16-year-old girl, Blythe, is abducted by "Mister", a man she knows from school. He takes her to an abandoned silo from which there is absolutely no way out. He shaves her head for "disinfection", and drugs her until she is calm enough to "understand". Chillingly, Mister is a survivalist who

believes that the apocalypse is overdue. He intends to protect himself and Blythe from the end of the world, and has stocked his silo with supplies, which should last decades. All Blythe's attempts at escape are failures, and when she unwillingly bears a child who dies, any sense of fight seems to leave her. Later, she has another child, named Adam. As Adam grows up, he becomes more and more determined to overpower his father and see the outside world for himself – one day he does, and it is not at all as anyone would have expected. Compelling.

THIS MONTH, I'M READING ...



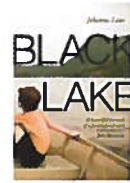
Tom Rachman's **THE RISE & FALL OF GREAT POWERS** (Sceptre, €17.99, out May 29) tells of agreeable bookshop owner Tooty Zylberberg.

Her story is most intriguing, for as a child she was kidnapped from her family home and adopted into a family of thieves and crooks who took her all around the world on their escapades. However, that story in itself isn't strictly true. Even Tooty herself cannot say for certain what exactly happened in her past – all she knows is that she is widely travelled. One day she receives a strange letter from someone who claims to be her father. She decides to set out on a quest to find out just where she comes from, with the most fascinating results, which span over two decades. Impossible to put down.



THE HIVE (Abacus, €9.99, out May 8) by Gill Hornby is a clever rendering of schoolgirl politics, yet curiously, those which take place on the other side of the

school gates. A new term has begun at St Ambrose Primary School, and it is the children's mothers who are competing with, undermining, and judging one another. The characters are quite recognisable figures: the reader meets Beatrice, who is the undisputed and yet completely unlikeable queen bee. There is also Heather, who is desperate to please and will do whatever she's told, Georgie the absent-minded bohemian with a filthy house, and Rachel, the awkward outsider. The pettiness of their rivalries and activities is brilliantly observed with no small amount of wit, making this a highly comic piece about just how idiotic a group of women can become.



Set in a sprawling Irish estate, Johanna Lane's **BLACK LAKE** (Tinder Press, €18.50, out May 1) tells a troubling family story. The idyllic Dunlough has

belonged to the Campbell family for many generations, but owing to financial troubles, its owner, John, has decided to open it to tourists. He moves his wife and two children – Kate and Philip – to a dingy cottage, putting his already tense relationship with his wife under even further stress. Then a tragic accident occurs, and the story itself opens with its aftermath. Philip has died, yet his mother believes he is still alive. She removes Kate from school and keeps her by her side, locked in a room together, until finally the guards intervene. This ultimately becomes a story of the importance of home, whatever its history, told in highly lyrical prose.



Christina Hopkinson's **THE A-LIST FAMILY** (Hodder & Stoughton, €8.60, out May 8) is a highly readable story about a most unusual family set-up.

Precocious little Antigone has been born to celebrity parents, and even though she's only eight years old, it seems that everybody in the world knows who she is. Everybody except one, however. Anna is a recent graduate in Classics, frustrated by the impossibility of finding a real job. She eventually applies for, and is offered, a tutoring position, which turns out to be for Antigone ... Anna is about to find out what exactly goes on behind the closed doors of immense fame. The story is told both from Anna's bewildered perspective and Antigone's personal reminiscence of her over-privileged and lonely childhood. This is a quirky story, which is amusingly told.



*We do love Dawn O'Porter, and everything she puts her band to. So her new tome, **This Old Thing: The Way to Do Vintage** (Hot Key Books, approx €24, out May 1), accompanied by a Channel 4 series airing in May, has us all in a tizzy.*

