

The Known and Unknown Sea

FICTION

Alan Bilton

Mingling the darkly humorous childscapes of Roald Dahl with fantastic imagery that could have come from the early surreal silent film classic "A Trip to the Moon" by Georges Méliès, I was captivated by the mystery at the core of this book. Funny and heartbreaking, surreal and insightful, this is a brilliant work of speculative fiction. Go on the strange pilgrimage with Alex, you will not be disappointed."

– Christien Gholson, author of *A Fish Trapped Inside the Wind*.

"Engages the imagination ... populated as it is with such a rich cast of characters and their sea of voices"

– Cath Barton, *Wales Arts Review*

*The word 'immersive' is a bit over-used these days, but it's hard to avoid in this case. Reading *The Known and Unknown Sea* is like falling instantly into a deep and vivid dream, a sometimes nightmarish dream - surreal, utterly convincing, impossible to wake up from*

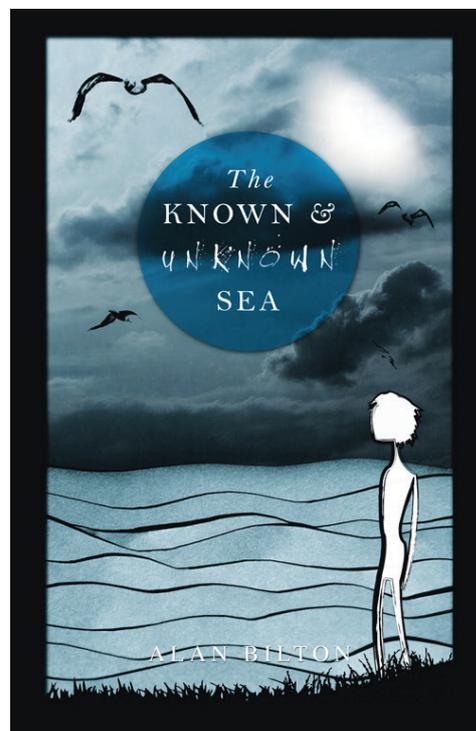
– Chris Keil, author of *Flirting at the Funeral*

Alan Bilton's extraordinary and ground-breaking second novel takes us into a magical world: it's at once comedic, exuberant and - in a strange way - elegiac. The Welsh setting links the joy of hwyf with the pain of hiraeth, longing. The novel is an adventure story and a tale of unredeemable loss. The narrator, Alex, is a child of a warmly close family: imaginative, bright and dreamy, he records the strange events of his family's journey in a voice of great vitality. The novel's language is wildly delicious - however dark the matter it records, Bilton's prose has a virtuoso quality, presenting events as a kind of imaginative jeu-d'esprit

– Stevie Davies, author of *Awakening*

Bilton is a talented writer, and this is certainly a novel to get your hands on if you have a taste for the dark, the mysterious, and the weird

– Paul Cooper, *New Welsh Review*



This haunting and comic fable from the author of *The Sleepwalkers' Ball* is a beautiful and heartbreaking journey through memory, loss and imagination.

Rumour and suspicion engulf an eerily fog-bound town as its residents begin to receive tickets promising passage across the mist-shrouded bay to the mysterious 'other side'. For Alex and his family, this seems like the beginning of a great adventure, but as reports of a shadowy, half-glimpsed ship start to circulate, so too does the gossip and anxious speculation.

Why have some been selected and not others?

Who are the employees of the enigmatic White Star Shipping Company?

And what ultimately awaits the passengers as they pass over to the spectral and unseen other side?

Bilton has created an alternate universe, vividly detailed but utterly ambiguous, absurd and bewildering, a dream that lingers in the mind long after the last page is turned.

"Bilton's world is one examined with wide-eyed wonder, where things are never quite what you'd expect... where dream drifts into the day and the night really does have a million stars. Start counting..."

– Producer, former BBC Correspondent and award winning author Jon Gower.

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Cover design by
Roshana Rubin-Mayhew

