

*'What really knocks me out is a book that, when you're all done reading it, you wish the author that wrote it was a terrific friend of yours and you could call him up on the phone whenever you felt like it.'*

J D Salinger, *The Catcher in the Rye*

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BOOK STUFF

### What word links these pairs of books?

1. The \_\_\_\_\_ Mile by Stephen King  
\_\_\_\_\_ Eggs and Ham by Dr Seuss
2. Empire of the \_\_\_\_\_ by J G Ballard  
Half of a Yellow \_\_\_\_\_ by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie
3. A \_\_\_\_\_ of Two Cities by Charles Dickens  
The Handmaid's \_\_\_\_\_ by Margaret Attwood
4. The \_\_\_\_\_ Life of Bees by Sue Monk Kidd  
The \_\_\_\_\_ History by Donna Tartt
5. On the \_\_\_\_\_ by Jack Kerouac  
The \_\_\_\_\_ by Iain Banks
6. \_\_\_\_\_ Gods by Neil Gaiman  
\_\_\_\_\_ Psycho by Bret Easton Ellis

### How free are we?

'There is not a single piece of human behaviour that cannot be explained in terms of our history as evolved beings', Dr Kipling told his rapt audience. 'Perhaps someone would like to test that hypothesis?'

A hand flew up. 'Why do kids today wear their baseball caps the wrong way round?' asked someone wearing his peak forward.

'Two reasons', said Kipling, confidently and without pause. 'First, you need to ask yourself what signals a male needs to transmit to a potential mate in order to advertise his suitability as a source of strong genetic material, more likely to survive than that of his competitor males. One answer is brute physical strength. Now, consider the baseball cap. Worn in the traditional style it offers protection against the sun and also the gaze of aggressive competitors. By turning the cap around, the male is signalling that he doesn't need this protection: he is tough enough to face the elements and the gaze of any who might threaten him.

'Second, inverting the cap is a gesture of non-conformity. Primates live in highly ordered social structures. Playing by the rules is considered essential. Turning the cap around shows that the male is above the rules that constrain his competitors and again signals that he has a superior strength.

Next?'

Is this a fascinating example of evolutionary psychology or nonsense like a Kipling *Just So* story? Critics say there are better ways of explaining most of our behaviour. Supporters claim that we just don't want to acknowledge how much we are the products of our animal history.

From Julian Baggini, *The Pig that Wants to be Eaten and 99 Other Thought Experiments*

### How NOT to enjoy a poem

*This is for everyone who remembers poetry in school as an impossible puzzle that we were supposed to solve to 'find out what it really means'. Billy Collins has different ideas.*

#### Introduction to Poetry By Billy Collins

I ask them to take a poem  
And hold it up to the light  
Like a colour slide.

Or press an ear against its hive.

I say drop a mouse into a poem  
And watch him probe his way out,

Or walk inside the poem's room  
And feel the walls for a light switch.

I want them to waterski  
Across the surface of a poem  
Waving at the author's name on the shore.

But all they want to do  
Is tie the poem to a chair with a rope  
And torture a confession out of it.

They begin beating it with a hose  
To find out what it really means.



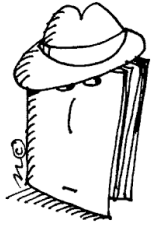
## Anagrams

Re-arrange the letters for these famous **film** titles.  
e.g. Oh One Male = Home Alone

- i. Roam Inn
- ii. Wow: Frodo Shelters the Otter Thing
- iii. In Attic
- iv. A Rabbi Priest of the Cane
- v. Thank Third Keg

And what about these **books**:

- i. Dual Arc
- ii. The Tasty Beggar
- iii. Arm Fail Man
- iv. Vitriol Stew
- v. A Warped Cane



## Here's Another Ending

This time my story has a foregone conclusion.  
It is also true.

After I tell the story, I say, 'You could start a religion based on a story like that – couldn't you?'

The story begins with my idea of a huge dog – a Doberman – which to me is an emblem – cruel, not lovable.

The dog is a household pet in a neighbourhood such as mine, with houses with backyards which abut. The huge dog is out and about when it should not be. It should never be.

When the dog returns to its owners, it is carrying in its mouth a dirty dead rabbit.

The dog's owners exclaim – one of them does – 'The neighbour's rabbit! He's killed it!' The dog's owners conclude. 'We must save our dog's reputation at all costs.' They think, Our dog is in jeopardy.

The dog's owners shampoo the dead rabbit and dry it with a hairdryer. At night, they sneak the rabbit back into their neighbour's yard, into its cage.

The morning of the following day, the dog's owners hear a shriek from the rabbit owners' yard. They think, Oh! The dead rabbit has been discovered! They rush to see what's what.

One of the rabbit's owners – the father in the family – is holding the limp white rabbit up in the air. He says to the dog's owners, 'We buried her two days ago!'

The dog's owners explain nothing. They won't, but not because they are ashamed of themselves.

There is another, more obvious reason.



*Diane Williams*

## ANSWERS

### Which word links the books

1. Green
2. Sun
3. Tale
4. Secret
5. Road
6. American

### Anagrams: Films

- i. Iron Man
- ii. The Lord of the Rings: The Two Towers
- iii. Titanic
- iv. Pirates of the Caribbean
- v. The Dark Knight

### Anagrams: Books

- i. Dracula
- ii. The Great Gatsby
- iii. Animal Farm
- iv. Oliver Twist
- v. War and Peace