

Recommended Reads

Incendiary by Chris Cleave

[Sceptre]

Hector and the Search for Happiness by François Lelord

[Gallic]

Cat's Eye by Margaret Atwood

[Virago]

The PowerBook by Jeanette Winterson

[Vintage]

Also written by Caroline Smailes

Black Boxes published by The Friday project

[ISBN 978-1906321703, hardback, September 2008]

[ISBN 978-1906321901, paperback, March 2009]

In Search of Adam published by The Friday Project.

[ISBN 978-1906321024, paperback, February 2008]

About Caroline Smailes

In September 2005, two weeks before she was due to start her PhD in Linguistics, Caroline Smailes watched an interview on Richard & Judy where they referred to someone as a 'nearly woman'. She identified with the label, thinking herself a 'nearly' writer. As a result, she gave up her funding and a PhD place and a few weeks later enrolled on an MA in Creative Writing at Manchester Metropolitan University. *In Search of Adam* was written during her study.

In brief:

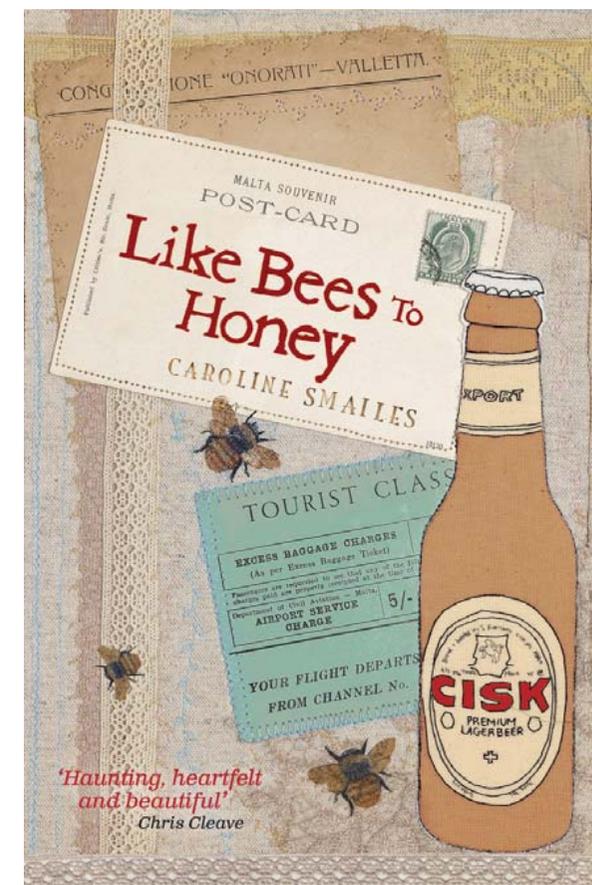
Caroline Smailes was born in Newcastle-upon-Tyne in 1973. She now lives on the Wirral with her husband and three children. Caroline Smailes appears to make life changing decisions based on passing comments made by Richard & Judy.

You can find out more about Caroline at www.carolinesmailes.co.uk and twitter.com/Caroline_S

A READER'S GUIDE TO

Like Bees To Honey

by Caroline Smailes



“Haunting, heartfelt and beautiful”

Chris Cleave



I have always wanted to write.

I used to think that it was better to keep my dream a secret. I thought it better not to voice my hope, not to open myself up, not to allow that wish to be ridiculed or criticised. Writing was my secret. I would fill diaries, create worlds, escape.

I used to think that it was better to protect myself, for my writing to be hush-hush, never shared, never open to comment.

I was wrong.

Caroline Smiles

Points for discussion

Nina, her son Christopher in tow, flies to Malta for one last visit with her aging parents.

Her previous attempt to see them ended in tears. Disowned for falling pregnant while at university in England, she was not allowed into the house. This will be her final chance to make her peace with them.

But Malta holds more secrets and surprises than Nina could possibly imagine. What she finds is not the land of her youth, a place full of memories and happiness. Instead she meets dead people. Lots of them.

Malta, it transpires, is a transit lounge for recently deceased spirits and somehow Christopher enables her to see them, speak with them and help them. And, in return, they help Nina come to terms with her own loss. One so great that she has yet to admit it to herself.

- What is the significance of travel (personal, spiritual, actual) within the novel?
- Consider the links between Malta's role in WWII and the suggestion that it is a transit lounge for recently deceased spirits.
- Jesus verses John Lennon. Blasphemy or culture?
- Is Nina's father misguided, cruel or governed by tradition?

- The guidebook pages are threaded through the novel. What do they offer to the story?
- Is Christopher real or a figment of Nina's imagination?
- Other possible titles were 'The Honey-pot' and 'Lovesickness'. Consider the significance of either titles.
- Is this a story of religion, superstition or folklore?
- What does Nina learn from her interaction with each ghost?
- Consider the significance of ruin and decay.
- Is Nina a bad mother?
- A story of legacy or of regret? Discuss.
- Consider the fairytale imagery within the novel. Is Nina 'Sleeping Beauty'?
- Chapter One features a character from one of Caroline's other novels. Which novel and which character?

Like Bees To Honey is published by The Friday Project.

 HarperCollins
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