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Wishing you a great month ahead. Until next month,

Zoe Reece

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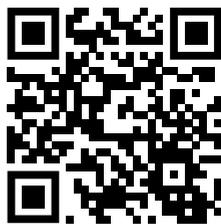
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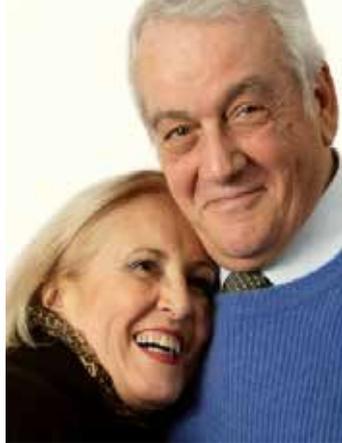
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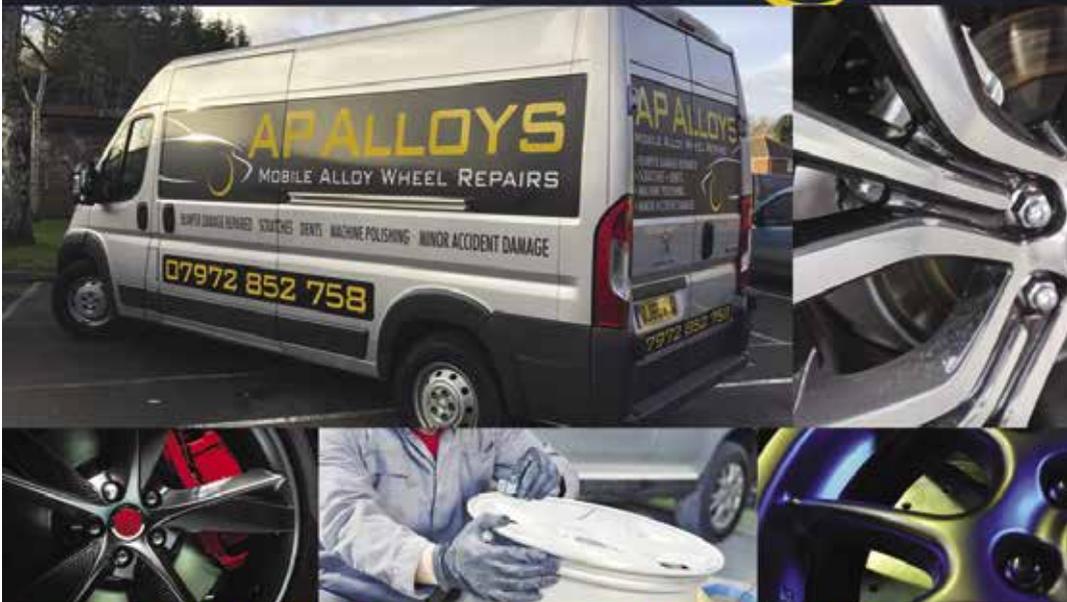
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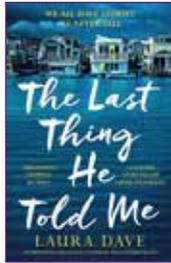
a good read

reviews By Willow Coby

The Last Thing He Told Me

by Laura Dave

Before Owen Michaels disappears, he manages to smuggle a note to Hannah, his wife of one year: Protect her. Hannah while understandably scared and confused knows exactly who the note refers to. It's Owen's sixteen-year-old daughter Bailey, who lost her mother when she was very young and wants absolutely nothing to do with her new stepmother. As the FBI arrest Owen's boss and US Marshals arrive her home, Hannah realizes her husband may not be who he said he was. If you love a mystery but crave a reprieve from the usual bloody murder and maverick detective scenario, Laura Dave's novel about a man living a lie and his wife and daughter desperately trying to find out who he really is, might be the perfect solution. The mystery of Owen's past is certainly intriguing, but the strength of this book really lies in the characters. This is not a book about Hannah's relationship with Owen, but about her evolving relationship with Bailey. The mother and stepdaughter are forced to set out to discover what it is Owen was hiding, and quickly realise that it goes way beyond the financial fraud his company is accused of. As the tension builds, they don't know who to believe or who they can trust, so they're forced to depend on each other. In the end, the story deals with what it means to be a mother, protecting a child, and the child coming to terms with her world being turned upside down for the second time in her young life. Anyone who has taken on the role of stepmother will probably identify with Hannah and Bailey's relationship on many levels. This isn't a fast-paced novel, but it moves along nicely. It's told in the present using flashbacks to Hannah's marriage to Owen. Hannah is a strong

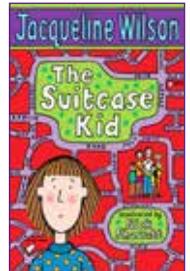


character, resilient and compassionate with authentic emotions. She's also immensely practical and is not afraid to take matters into her own hands. There are numerous twists and turns, that take them from their home in California to Austin Texas, and the truth when it comes is shockingly unexpected.

The Suitcase Kid

by Jacqueline Wilson with Nick Sharratt (Illustrations)

Ten-year-old Andrea, known as Andy, is an only child who has always lived at Mulberry Cottage with her mum and dad. But when they split up, Andy has to say goodbye to her childhood home. She's pushed from pillar to post by her mum and dad as they struggle to work out a suitable visitation arrangement. She spends one week at her mum's and one week at her dad's. Suddenly she's coping with the divorce, two new homes, and two new mis-matched families with stepbrothers and stepsisters, not all of whom are nice! She now has five siblings and nowhere to call home. No wonder Andy struggles to feel part of either family and craves her old home and life. Jacqueline Wilson is a consummate storyteller, with a real understanding of a child's inner world. She tells the story poignantly, using Andy as the narrator, confiding her inner most thoughts and fears to the reader in language they can relate to. Can Andy overcome her feelings of not belonging, find new friends, family allies and a sense of belonging?



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Carrot Sweet Potato and Feta Fritters

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Serves: 4

Preparation time: 30 minutes, plus draining time

Ingredients

800g carrots
2 large potatoes
1 large onion
600g sweet potatoes
5 medium free-range eggs
200g feta, crumbled
6 tbsp wholemeal flour
25g fresh coriander, chopped
2 tbsp cumin seeds
300ml vegetable oil
Green salad, lime wedges
and yogurt to serve

Method

Peel and grate the carrots, potatoes, onion, and sweet potatoes. Place them into a colander or a large sieve over the sink with a big pinch of salt, and leave to drain for 30 minutes. Take a large bowl and in it combine the eggs, feta cheese, flour, coriander, and cumin seeds. Beat with a fork until well mixed. Squeeze as much liquid from the grated veg as you can, pressing down hard into

the colander or sieve for 1-2 minutes, then add the grated veg to the egg mixture. Stir to combine well and season generously. Heat the oven to 150C/fan130C/gas 2. Heat the oil in a wok or deep saucepan to 180°C, or until a cube of bread sizzles. Put dollops of the mix into a slotted spoon and lower into the hot oil. Cook 2-3 at a time: fry for 1-2 minutes, then turn the fritters over and repeat until golden. Put on a plate and keep warm in an oven set to low.

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SOLIHULL / SILHILL

Mike Gough

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local police contact for solihull

Solihull Police Station

Telephone: 0845 113 5000

Shirley Lions Club 0345 833 9547

Health

NHS non-emergency 111

Grove Surgery 0121 705 1105

Northbrook Group Practice 0121 746 5000

Hobs Moat Medical Centre 0121 742 5211

Solihull Hospital 0121 424 2000

Spire Parkway Hospital 0121 704 1451

Daleswood Health, Solihull 01675 489489

Council

Solihull Council 0121 704 6000

Utilities

Electricity power cut 0800 6783 105

Gas leak 0800 111 9999

Severn Trent Water 024 7771 5000

Severn Trent Water (emergencies) 0800 783 4444

Travel

National Rail Enquiries 03457 48 49 50

Network West Midlands (buses) 0345 303 6760

Councillor surgeries these are face-to-face meetings held by councillors for local people to raise issues in their area. Held at The Core Library, Solihull on the first and last Saturday of the month, 10am – 12 noon.

Why not invest in a new driveway or patio to enhance the appearance and add value to your property?

Approved Drives and Landscapes offer a range of services to help improve all areas of your home, including:

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