



All Among The Barley

Melissa Harrison

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From the author of Costa-shortlisted and Baileys-longlisted *At Hawthorn Time* comes a major new novel. Set on a farm in Suffolk just before the Second World War, it introduces a girl on the cusp of adulthood.

Fourteen-year-old Edie Mather lives with her family at Wych Farm, where the shadow of the Great War still hangs over a community impoverished by the Great Depression. Glamorous outsider Constance FitzAllen arrives from London, determined to make a record of fading rural traditions and beliefs, and to persuade Edie's family to return to the old ways rather than embrace modernity. She brings with her new political and social ideas – some far more dangerous than others.

For Edie, who has just finished school and must soon decide what to do with her life, Connie appears to be a godsend. But there is more to the older woman than meets the eye. As harvest time approaches and the pressures mount on the entire Mather family, Edie must decide whose version of reality to trust, and how best to save herself from disaster.

A masterful evocation of the rhythms of the natural world and pastoral life, *All Among the Barley* is also a powerful and timely novel about influence, the lessons of history and the dangers of nostalgia.

All Among The Barley Details

Date : Published August 23rd 2018 by Bloomsbury Publishing

ISBN : 9781408897997

Author : Melissa Harrison

Format : Hardcover 352 pages

Genre : Fiction, Historical, Historical Fiction, Novels



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From Reader Review All Among The Barley for online ebook

Paul Fulcher says

*"The spring she is a young maid who does not know her mind,
The summer is a tyrant of a most ungracious kind,
But the autumn is an old friend that does the best he can
To reap the golden barley and cheer the heart of man.*

*All among the barley, oh who would not be blithe
When the free and happy barley is smiling on the scythe!*

*The wheat he's like a rich man, all sleek and well-to-do;
The oats they are a pack of girls, all lithe and dancing too;
The rye is like a miser, he's sulky, lean and small
But the free and golden barley is monarch of them all.*

*All among the barley, oh who would not be blithe
When the free and happy barley is smiling on the scythe."*

collected by Alfred Williams from farm hand Henry Sirman of Stanton Harcourt, and printed in the 1923 book Folk-songs of the Upper Thames: with an essay on folk-song activity in the Upper Thames neighbourhood

Melissa Harrison's previous novel, At Hawthorn Time, was shortlisted for the Costa Novel Award 2015 and longlisted for the 2016 Baileys Women's Prize for Fiction. All Among the Barley was unfortunate to miss out on this year's Booker but I suspect could be a repeat contender for the other awards.

The novel is set in 1933-4 and narrated in the first person by Edith, looking back at the events of that time when she was a 14 year-old girl living on the family farm. Her self-introduction immediately alerts us that something very significant happened at the end of this period.

"My name is Edith June Mather and I was born not long after the end of the Great War. My father, George Mather, had sixty acres of arable land known as Wych Farm; it is somewhere not far from here, I believe. Before him my grandfather Albert farmed the same fields, and his father before him, who ploughed with a team of oxen and sowed by hand. I would like to think that my brother Frank, or perhaps one of his sons, has the living of it now; but a lifetime has passed since I was last on its acres, and because of everything that happened I have been prevented from finding out."

Edie is not a typical farming girl, something of a loner, a deep-thinker but also superstitious:

"I preferred the company of books to other children, and was frequently chided by my parents after leaving my tasks half-done, distracted by the richer, more vivid world within my head.

...

I would hear Mother calling me in exasperation, but it has always been my habit never to close a book unless I have reached a sentence of seven words exactly in case something dreadful should happen to the farm, or to my family; so I would delay, and often go home to a hiding, because we were expected to work in the fields when we weren't at school and not to waste time reading books. "

When she finds a recently abandoned nest and, with the add of the farm hens, hatches an egg, she finds herself the unwitting foster-mother of a corncrake, although a joke of her mother's takes on more significance in Edith's mind than intended.

"Well,' said Mother, sliding the ash pan out and standing up, 'happen as you have yourself a familiar, Edith June.' 'A familiar?' She laughed. 'A pet, at any rate.'"

The farm is near the village of Elmbourne set in a fictionalised part of Suffolk:

"Some say that ours is a flat county, but that isn't quite true: it undulates gently, unlike the level landscape of the Fens, and dips to the winding course of the River Stound; but the skies are huge, and the views, from any slight rise, go on for miles. The lanes are narrow, the fields small and deeply hedged, sometimes in double rows, tree-high: oak and ash, field maple, and dog-roses twining through. Because our part of the country was never reshaped as other places were, by prosperity or the railways or industry, a great many of its dwellings have survived to a great age. The farmhouses are often sway-backed, with deep thatch and crooked timber frames; the black barns are brick-footed, with tall gables and great doors. Our churches are of knapped flint gleaned from the fields, the land itself raised up in prayer; and everywhere the corn reaches right up to the village edges, as I have been told the vineyards do in France.

....

The village's main thoroughfare, The Street, ran along the north side of the river, which was only a stream here really, and slow. There was a post office and general stores, our little schoolroom, a grocer, a butcher, two smithies – one with a crimson petrol pump outside – the wheelwright Connie had mentioned, who was also a cabinet-maker and undertaker, a draper, a sweet shop and the Bell & Hare; once there had been an inn called the Cock, too, but that was no more. We had nearly everything we needed, excepting a bank and a doctor, both of which could be found in Market Stoundham, where the cattle and grain markets were held. There was little need to travel any further, and most people didn't; likewise, new people rarely moved to the district, and so our day-to-day world was composed almost entirely of people we knew."

But the village life is interrupted by the arrival of a visitor, a middle-aged woman from London, Constance FitzAllen ('Connie'), wearing men's clothing, who has come to record and preserve the rural ways:

"I'm making a study of country ways: folklore, cottage crafts, dialect words, recipes – that kind of thing. The War – well, that's when everything began to change, don't you agree? And it's such a dreadful shame to see it all being forgotten. So I mean to preserve it – or some of it, at least – for future generations. We simply must celebrate places like this.'"

Topically, given the summer of 2018 when this book is published, 1933-4 were some of the driest years on record (indeed 1933 had the lowest rainfall in the UK in the 20th Century) - albeit this was more of a gradual than sudden drought, with consistent low rainfall over a prolonged period. The following passage also highlights Harrison's wonderful prose descriptions of the countryside and the way that she uses nature and the changing seasons to illustrate the passing of time in the book in a way reminiscent of my favourite book of 2017, Reservoir 13. All Among the Barley fully justifies the glowing praise from Jon McGregor and Robert Macfarlane.

"I was thirteen in 1933, the year our district began to endure its famous – or infamous – drought. It crept up on us: the hay came in well, and when the rick was thatched Father was pleased, because he knew it was dry and wouldn't spoil; this meant that the horses would have enough fodder to last the winter, and he would not have to buy any in. But without any rain the field drains ran dry and by August even the horse-pond by the house had shrunk to a thick green scum.

...

In October, Wych Farm's trees turned quickly and all at once, blazing into oranges and reds and burnished golds; with little wind to strip them the woods and spinneys lay on our land like treasure, the massy hedgerows filigreed with old-man's-beard and enamelled with rosehips and black sloes. Along the winding course of the River Stound the alder carrs were studded with earthstars and chanterelles and dense with the rich, autumnal stink of rot; but crossing Long Piece towards The Lottens the sky opened into austere, equinoctial blue, where flocks of peewits wheeled and turned, flashing their broad wings black and white. At dawn, dew silvered the spiders' silk strung between the grass blades in our pastures so that the horses left trails where they walked, like the wakes of slow vessels in still water. At last, wintering fieldfares and thrushes stripped the berries from the lanes, and at night the four tall elms for which the farm was named welcomed their cold-weather congregations of rooks. The dew dampened the stubble in the parched cornfields, drawing from it a mocking green aftermath."

Harrison manages to create a number of threads in the book, and possible triggers for whatever event Edith was referring to in the opening: the threat to the harvest and the suggestion that Edith's father may be in debt; family tensions between Edith's parents and also with the workers on the farm; the inappropriately sexual attention Edith experiences from an older boy; wider political developments and Edith's own, rather fevered, superstitions. But one particularly grabbed my attention as both fascinating and pertinent to the current time.

Connie's project starts to take on a slightly more political (and sinister) air than the bucolic project she initially suggested. The first hint is when she bites her tongue when describing her ideal:

"It must be run by farmers themselves, not by the – well, not by international financiers."

She claims inspiration from the editor of The Nation, the radical magazine that would eventually merge with the New Statesman:

"I met Henry Massingham too, once. Such a fine man. It was his articles on rural crafts and home cultivation that helped me to see what my life's work should be."

But her real project seems to have a rather different inspiration as the left-leaning farm worker John identifies:

"We need a strong government to free us from our dependence on the international finance system – one which will act in the best interests of the British people, that will favour British manufacturing and farming, and ensure this never happens again. We need a British system of credit that benefits Britain alone, rather than lining the pockets of usurers and profiteers – and that means proper import quotas, and reform of our agricultural system. We must bring down national debt and return to full employment, of course; and we must look to the shires and their ancient traditions, not to the intellectual classes in the cities, for a new sense of national identity and pride. Places like here,' she said, smiling at all of us and sitting back, her little speech over. '

Hear, hear,' Father said.

'A strong government, you say? I'll wager I can guess who it is that you mean,' said John.

'The silly little fencing-master?' she laughed. 'Good Lord, no, you're quite wrong on that account.'

That last a reference to Oswald Mosley of course, a fencing champion in his youth. Connie wants to create

something rather different to Mosley's League, an Order of English Yeomanry, a type of organisation that was common in the 1930s, as the author explains in an afterword:

"These complex, fragmented groups differed from one another, sometimes slightly, sometimes profoundly; but all drew from a murky broth of nationalism, anti-Semitism, nativism, protectionism, anti-immigration sentiment, economic autarky, secessionism, militarism, anti-Europeanism, rural revivalism, nature worship, organicism, landscape mysticism and distrust of big business – particularly international finance."

A beautifully written tale of country life between the Wars, but with important political echoes for our own time. Recommended.

Ashwini Abhyankar says

4.5 rounded up to 5 because it's that good.

I had heard of Melissa Harrison before, or rather it's better to say that I had read of Melissa Harrison's book before I picked up this one. I requested it on NetGalley simply because it sounded like it was something I would dearly enjoy reading. I was proven correct, thankfully.

The story starts with Edie, a young girl, living on the family farm. The very start of the book, we are given a foreboding beginning to the story. Edith tells us about herself a little bit, she lived on the family family farm. The Wych farm belonged to her father and her grandfather before that. It probably belongs to her brothers' sons now but certain circumstances have made it impossible for her to know of it.

With this starting statement, I was immediately intrigued. What could have happened? Well, we learn that in the coming chapters. Edie was not quite the 'normal' teenager by her own estimation, telling us that she loved books more than she loved interacting with other children. She was often chastised for leaving tasks half-done, lost in her head with her vivid imagination keeping her company rather the task at hand.

Set in 1933-34, Edith knows that people haven't quite recovered from the Great War and that another war might loom ahead in the dreary future however for the time being, Edie and her family were more concerned with harvest because autumn was already here. The pressure to harvest among concerns of a drought is already rampant when to add spice to their lives, a newcomer enters the picture.

Constance FitzAllen arrives in the village from London, with her modern attire and her assurances of keeping a record of the 'rural living' and 'preserving beliefs and traditions of said rural living'. Her arrival changes Edie's life drastically. Just how Edie's life is forever changed is something you would have to find out but I must say that Melissa Harrison's writing is so wonderfully controlled and yet vibrant that I have a feeling that I would definitely be looking for a copy of her earlier book.

Constance FitzAllen's initial project starts to sound a bit more sinister as the time passes. From wanting to note down and preserve the rural life, Connie starts to hint at a more political agenda. That coupled with hints of Edie's parents being debt, their relationships with farm workers, Edie's life include the sexual advances she faces from a boy, Edie's rather forceful superstitions...all of it culminates into something really wonderful and nostalgic. I felt nostalgia despite never being in Britain or knowing about their drought or living on a farm.

I especially loved the details that Harrison provided in the book, the way the seasons changed or the way she described the village or the farm life. That made it very easy for me to imagine the whole thing in my mind, such a descriptive and absolutely gorgeous writing! Just read this as an example and you will see why I fell hard for Harrison's writing.

In October, Wych Farm's trees turned quickly and all at once, blazing into oranges and reds and burnished golds; with little wind to strip them the woods and spinneys lay on our land like treasure, the massy hedgerows filigreed with old-man's-beard and enamelled with rosehips and black sloes. Along the winding course of the River Stound the alder carrs were studded with earthstars and chanterelles and dense with the rich, autumnal stink of rot; but crossing Long Piece towards The Lottens the sky opened into austere, equinoctial blue, where flocks of peewits wheeled and turned, flashing their broad wings black and white. At dawn, dew silvered the spiders' silk strung between the grass blades in our pastures so that the horses left trails where they walked, like the wakes of slow vessels in still water. At last, wintering fieldfares and thrushes stripped the berries from the lanes, and at night the four tall elms for which the farm was named welcomed their cold-weather congregations of rooks. The dew dampened the stubble in the parched cornfields, drawing from it a mocking green aftermath.

An absolutely intriguing and attention grabbing book that talks about the mental health of one of the characters, of country life in 1930s in England and about growing up. It's all written and handled so damn well that I can't help but love it. I would absolutely recommend it to people who love historical fiction and those who would favour a seemingly pastoral novel that turns into something else entirely by the time we finish the book.

Anne Goodwin says

Melissa Harrison's powerful third novel is a sympathetic portrayal of a mind unravelling in the context of a community that is likewise losing its way. A glimpse of history with a lesson for today.

Full review

Lonely females on the family farm: Meet Me at the Museum & All Among the Barley

<https://annegoodwin.weebly.com/1/post...>

George1st says

I had previously read and immensely enjoyed Melissa Harrison's non fiction work Rain which is an observant contemplative and at times lyrical reflection on our relationship with the weather as she explores the natural world and the effect on it of four rain showers in four seasons. Therefore I was much looking forward to discovering how her writing skills would be deployed in a fictional format, the results of which after I have now completed the book I find most impressive.

There are a number of themes explored here ranging from the role of women in a strictly patriarchal society to our definition of what we perceive to be mental illness and our treatment of it. However the overriding theme is the danger of mythologising the past and the need to question the motivation of those who seek this. The story is set in rural Suffolk in 1934 and is told in the first person narration by Edie a 14 year old girl who has just left school and is presently assisting with the duties on the family run tenanted farm. The author paints a detailed picture of what such a life would entail and the wonderfully evocative description of the

countryside is in keeping with her previous writing from Rain. This is not an easy life and it has been made worse by the loss of farm labour caused by the causalities suffered in the Great War and the ongoing agricultural depression.

Entering this closed world comes an outsider Constance FitzAllen from London who is in the area to document the old now fading rural traditions and ways of life. Although at first this seems a quite benign pursuit the more the story develops we begin to realise that there is a deeply disturbing dark motivation and belief system that Constance has which manifested itself in the 1930's with many groups springing up looking back to a supposedly golden age which included many of the components of the new fascist creed. The destructive element that Constance brings into the community will have shattering effects on Edie and her family.

We know that Edie is looking back at the events of 1934 from some time in the future but we do not know from exactly when and how her life has progressed. When at the end we eventually find out it is both shocking and leaves a sense of profound shame for there were many who suffered the same fate. There are so many questions raised especially at a time when it seems that xenophobia and nativism have become normal in the last couple of years and the looking back at the illusory golden age is never far from the surface of a certain kind of political thinking. I believe this would make an admirable choice for a book discussion group and I would highly recommend this. Special mention should also be made of the evocative cover.

Linda Hepworth says

Fourteen-year-old Edie Mather lives, with her parents and older brother, Frank, on Wych Farm in Suffolk. Her sister Mary is now married with a baby and, struggling with adolescent anxieties, Edie is desperately missing their previous closeness. She is a bright young woman who snatches every opportunity she can to escape into the fields to read, resisting her parents' calls for her to help on the farm, even when this means she will return home to a hiding. Every member of the family is expected to work and reading is regarded as a waste of time. Edie's teacher thinks she should stay on at school and then train to be a teacher. However, her father insists that she should leave school at fourteen and work full-time on the farm. The autumn of 1933 is the most beautiful she can recall but it also brings extra pressures on both the family and the wider community as harvest time approaches, with all its attendant concerns about whether it will be a good one, providing sufficient income for the winter months.

Londoner Constance FitzAllen arrives in the village, wanting to observe and interview local people, to study country-ways, local folklore, dialect, songs, recipes etc and to record them. She believes that, following all the social upheaval of the war, these old traditions are in danger of being lost forever. Edie is fascinated by this glamorous woman who, flatteringly, seems to be interested in her and her opinions and who holds out the promise of an alternative future. But who is Constance really, and what impact will she have on Edie and on this close-knit community? As autumn progresses and pressures increase, Edie must learn to trust her instincts and find a way to save herself from disaster.

This story is told through the voice of Edie and, from the opening sentence of the prologue, I felt captivated by the recollections of this memorable character, a sensitive, vulnerable young woman on the cusp of adulthood, struggling to discover what possibilities the future could hold for her. I felt as though I lived through every conflict and struggle she faced and found myself wanting to protect her from harm. Through her eyes the reader is exposed to all the realities of a rural way of life in the 1930s, a time when the introduction of mechanisation was changing the face of farming, making it more efficient but with the consequent loss of jobs and the attendant disruption of the social order.

This was a period of massive social change, economic depression and political uncertainty; conditions which

so readily lead to unthinking nationalism and to people seeing “outsiders” as being a threat to their way of life. These themes were intricately woven into the story, without ever dominating the exploration of the human stories behind all these changes. I loved the way in which the author demonstrated throughout the narrative that nature needs husbandry, that without it it is in danger of going to ruin. This highlighted for me the fact that one person’s nostalgia for a past way of life, usually highly romanticised, all too often ignores the harsh conditions which were faced by those who were living it!

Although Edie’s is the voice of this novel, all the other characters are well portrayed, with each contributing to the richness of the developing story. The author’s powerful characterisations made me feel that I was inhabiting their world, experiencing their conflicts and struggles as they negotiated a changing world. Some I felt admiration for, some aroused my sympathy and others made me angry – but all felt so convincingly authentic that I know they will remain memorable for me. Much of the evocative power of these characterisations has its roots in the fact that although the author was writing about the 1930s, many of the conflicts people were struggling with have echoes in today’s uncertain world when, in times of such uncertainty, there is a tendency to perceive change as a threat; overt nationalism becomes a refuge and “outsiders” become convenient scapegoats.

The captivating background to Melissa Harrison’s story-telling is the rich tapestry she weaves to depict the wonders of the natural world. Her extensive knowledge and love of this world shine through all her descriptions and there were moments when I felt transported back to a time when, for instance, there was no shortage of corncrakes in the fields, when their calls were a common sound at harvest time, a sound which, sadly, is now all but absent in the countryside. A clear demonstration that whilst change is necessary, it frequently has unforeseen consequences, altering the delicate balance of the natural world.

The author incorporates a wide-ranging variety of themes into this thought-provoking story – the changing face of farming, its effects on the natural world, the unrelenting demands and hard work of farming and the impact this has on relationships within farming families, traditional folklore and superstition, class divisions, patriarchy and patronage, injustice, treatment of mental illness, prejudice, bigotry and fascism, to name just a few – but there was never a moment when any of these felt either superfluous to the story or dominated the narrative. The very richness of this range of themes would make this novel a wonderful choice for reading groups.

This is a heart-breaking, haunting story, infused with a combination of beautiful descriptions and dark, disturbing themes. As I neared the end I found myself increasingly reluctant to finish it, finally doing so with tears rolling down my face. With her beautiful, lyrical writing Melissa Harrison has created some memorable characters and a thought-provoking story and I can only hope that my enthusiasm for this exquisite gem of a novel will persuade you to read it for yourself. I know I will want to re-read it and feel confident that it will feel just as fresh a second time around. If this novel doesn’t garner awards there is no justice in the literary world!

With my very appreciative thanks to Bloomsbury Publishing and Nudge-Books for giving me the opportunity to read this exceptional book in exchange for an honest review.

Jonathan Frodsham says

Really enjoyable read, definitely recommend.

SueLucie says

The perfect read for me this month - the long, hot summer of 1934 reflecting this unusual summer of 2018. For farmers in the depressed 1930s, the prospect of a good harvest at last couldn't have come a moment too soon but the weather can be fickle and they are short of manpower after WWI - will they be able to pull it off? We have a glimpse of this feverish time through the eyes of 14-year-old Edie - a studious, unworldly, impressionable girl, young for her years, suggestible and superstitious. Her older sister would have helped her through her teenage years and the scary attentions of the boy next door had she not just got married, moved away and had a baby, and her mother is distracted by too much work, money worries and an irascible husband. So Edie is ready to be dazzled by a visitor to the village from London, the independent, outspoken Connie, gathering material for magazine articles about farming practices and traditional rural ways, who somehow seems able to charm her way into most everyone's confidence and treats Edie for the first time in her life as someone worth listening to.

We are treated to an abundance of wonderful descriptions of the countryside of East Anglia and its wildlife. I adored all of this. One example of the gorgeous writing - '*At dawn, dew silvered the spiders' silk strung between the grass blades in our pastures so that the horses left trails where they walked, like the wakes of slow vessels in still water*'.

Below this glorious surface, though, is tension - economic and political. We know from the outset that this is the last harvest Edie will have at the farm, we don't know why and I was on edge throughout as to what was going to happen. What does happen is nothing I had anticipated.

Change is on the way for everyone, not just the teenaged Edie, sometimes for the better, sometimes for the worse. This novel gives a stunning picture of rural life in that short period between the two wars when the old ways and the new existed side by side. It has been a real joy to immerse myself in it.

With thanks to Bloomsbury via NetGalley for the opportunity to read an ARC.

Elizabeth Carr says

A pastoral story of strangeness and change in the English countryside- hard to categorise- read the full review at booketybook.com

Priyanshi Bhardwaj says

Full review soon.

Ness says

"The English are already far too much in love with the past..."

What an absolute privilege to have been allowed an Advance Reading Copy via NetGalley of this book from

Bloomsbury Publishing, written by Melissa Harrison. How was this book NOT long-listed for the Man Booker? I love some of the other books on that list this year and All Among the Barley is the equal of those novels - it may well be my favourite novel of 2018. This book deserves accolades!

This novel starts out as a rich pastoral story from the point of view of a 14 year old girl (Edie) in 1930's England - giving the reader arguably a more approachable, modern and yet equally detailed version of rural life offered by novels such as George Eliot's *Middlemarch*. The reader can practically feel and hear the cornfields thrumming with life.

There is clearly so much research of the period underpinning this book and that is combined with the author's evident deep understanding of the land and nature, deftly woven into the pages here. That's not to say this is dull. We fully inhabit this world with Edie, her family and the neighbouring village folk and we readers care about those characters. There is also a sense of foreboding that builds throughout; we are told right at the start that Edie does not get to do some of the things she will set out to do. So we know the guillotine is going to drop at some point but we are not sure when (or precisely what) that will look like.

What starts as a pastoral novel then becomes something else: a political novel, focusing on the dangers of nationalism and nostalgia. Particularly interesting, given our current political climate.

That danger comes in the form here of Constance FitzAllen who befriends the young Edie and worms her way into the small farming community, ostensibly to write an article about rural life and preserving the "old ways", whilst also planting the seeds (pardon the pun) of political disquiet. What starts as a few comments regarding "living in harmony with the land" and tropes such as "England is the country, and the country is England", soon turn into anti-Semitic and anti-socialist commentary.

Harrison keeps us on our toes and takes us into new territory again - exploring issues regarding the mental health of one of the characters. That individual suffers a manic episode that is sensitively portrayed and from what I understand, accurate. That must have been a frightening period in which to suffer a mental health condition. At least today, though certainly not perfect, our understanding is greater, the stigma less and people are more encouraged to speak up about their feelings.

This book is beautifully and confidently written and I highly recommend it.

RK says

The writer's knowledge and love of the natural world pours off the page and it's enchanting. It feels threaded through the characters and the plot, I never felt the author's hand and eye in the details and I think it's so rare to see this kind of writing that works so well, including the non human in the influences on the characters. I thought the themes of the book were fascinating and pertinent but I didn't click with the narrator. By the end of the book I understood her better but for a while she just seemed bland and I wanted to be in the perspective of one of the older (to me) more interesting characters.

The last word review says

Melissa Harrison was shortlisted for the Costa Novel of the Year Award and longlisted for the Baileys Prize for *At Hawthorn Tim*. A timeless and memorable novel. With her third novel *All Among the Barley*

(Bloomsbury) I am predicting great things. This is just the most wonderful piece of writing. This is set in 1933 to the backdrop of Wych Farm in Suffolk this is a story as seen by the 14-year-old girl Edie Mather. Although not released until August 23rd I am giving readers a little glimpse of this incredible novel and one to add to your summer reading lists. I promise you will totally fall for Melissa Harrison's forthcoming novel.

The Great War may have been over a number of years but it still lingers in the memory and the spectre of another war is haunting the country at this time. This is a powerful novel of a girl about to enter adulthood and the autumn is a time of harvest so pressures on the entire farming community are great. But then to add a touch of glamour there is a visitor in the shape of the very beautiful Constance who is here to write about rural traditions. But who really is Constance? And what is the impact on Edie? This evocative storyline of times gone by and the natural world that Harrison writes so knowledgably about just adds to the beautiful prose. On a farm time does not stand still it is ever changing with the seasons and here in *All Among the Barley* is a story that is just pure nostalgia. But the storyline is just breath-taking and unforgettable. This is just a novel that will be read time and time again. I totally fell in love with *All Among the Barley* and have since read it for the second time. This is just a timeless novel and so passionately and beautifully written. My tip for one of THE books of 2018 and *All Among the Barley* I am delighted to Highly recommend.

352 Pages.

My copy was provided by Bloomsbury for review.
