

Louise Levene

Writer - Fiction

Louise Levene is the author of *A Vision of Loveliness*, a BBC Book at Bedtime, which was also longlisted for the Desmond Elliott first novel prize, *Ghastly Business* and *The Following Girls*. She was the dance critic for the *Sunday Telegraph* for sixteen years and before that a dance writer on the *Independent*, but now works for the *Financial Times*. She lives in London with her husband and their two children.



Her latest novel, *HAPPY LITTLE BLUEBIRDS*, was published by Bloomsbury in May 2018.

Agents

Anna Webber

awebber@unitedagents.co.uk

+44(0)203 214 0876

Associate

Seren Adams

sadams@unitedagents.co.uk

+44 (0)203 214 0956

Publications

Fiction

Publication Details	Notes
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Happy Little Bluebirds

2018

Bloomsbury Publishing

It is September 1940 and Evelyn Murdoch, a translator from the Postal Censorship department, is uprooted from her home in wartime Woking and transferred to Hollywood. She is to assist a mysterious British agent in his attempts to outwit the Los Angeles German delegation and boost the British propaganda war effort.

The unhappy young widow is supplied with a new Californian wardrobe, a Bel Air bungalow and her own desk in the writers' block of Miracle Studios.

At first bewildered by the glamorous excesses of this strange new world, she is gradually seduced by the sunlight, orange groves and clever, fast-talking men. But, just as she begins to blossom, her new technicolor ending threatens to slip from her grasp.

Publication Details	Notes
THE FOLLOWING GIRLS 2014 Bloomsbury	<p>When Amanda Baker was 14 she found a letter written by her runaway mother to her unborn child: 'Dear Jeremy' it began 'or Amanda...'</p> <p>Mrs Baker still sends Christmas presents - Meccano, a fishing rod, a Spare Rib subscription - but her daughter is now in the coolly capable hands of Mr Baker's second wife, Pam, who trots home from work on her stacked heels to her formica 'dream kitchen', where she curls butter, grills grapefruit and swigs sherry from the bottle hidden under the sink. Meanwhile Amanda's dad, soured by his experiences with free-spirited women, crossbreeds fuchsias and salivates over glossy prospectuses in search of a new school for his disappointing daughter. The happiest days of your life? Not for Baker, sixteen and sick of it as she moves miserably between lessons packed with palm fibre and the use of the dative. Baker's only solace is her fifth form gang - the four Mandies - and a low-calorie diet of king-sized cigarettes, until she teams up with Julia Smith, games captain and consummate game player. And so begins a passionate friendship that will threaten her future, menace her sanity and risk the betrayal of everything and everyone she holds dear.</p> <p>The Following Girls weaves the minutiae of Seventies girlhood into an unsparing tragi-comedy of shrinking horizons, dangerous alliances and not-so-happy families.</p>
GHASTLY BUSINESS 2011 Bloomsbury	<p>Ghastly Business conjures the world of interwar London with gleeful vigour: a time when a woman's body was only mentioned if someone had dismembered it; when the scars of the Great War were still fresh and when a pretty young bluestocking needed to tread very carefully in order to avoid becoming yet another of its casualties. A Vision of Loveliness, covered the heady days of the 1960s, with Ghastly Business Levene turns her eyes towards the year 1929, and the office of an eminent London pathologist.</p>
A VISION OF LOVELINESS 2010 Bloomsbury	<p>Jane is a smart young thing in early-Sixties London. She read all the right books and, in one long weekend, launches herself from nothing-ever-happens Norbury to a nice little flat in Mayfair. But when a shocking act of violence threatens to bring Jane's glittering new life crashing down around her she must call on all her powers of reinvention.</p>