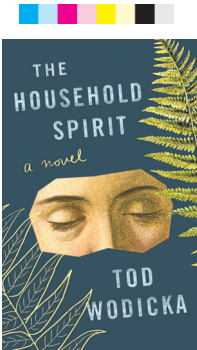


The Past, Tessa Hadley
Four adult siblings — three sisters and one brother — bring one new wife, two teenagers and two children to the family's country home for three typical English weeks (rain, nostalgia, ancient grievances). Nothing much happens, but Hadley, a respected purveyor of literary fiction, manages to make ordinary life gripping. This book moves seamlessly from the perspective of one character to the next.

A Place Called Winter, Patrick Gale
Gale is a British writer with 17 previous books to his credit, usually clever tales of contemporary British life, often with a sexual twist. His latest is about Harry Cane, who is expelled in disgrace from his home in Edwardian England and sets about homesteading a patch of land in northern Saskatchewan. Guaranteed, his novel is unlike anything you've read about Canadian frontier life.



The Household Spirit, Tod Wodicka
Wodicka's second novel focuses on two outsiders: Howie, a reclusive 50 year old, and Emily, a 20-something eccentric who suffers from night terrors. They have been next-door neighbours on a stretch of highway in upstate New York since Emily was born but have never exchanged a word. Until now. This is one of those cockles-warming stories about connection, survival and emotional growth.

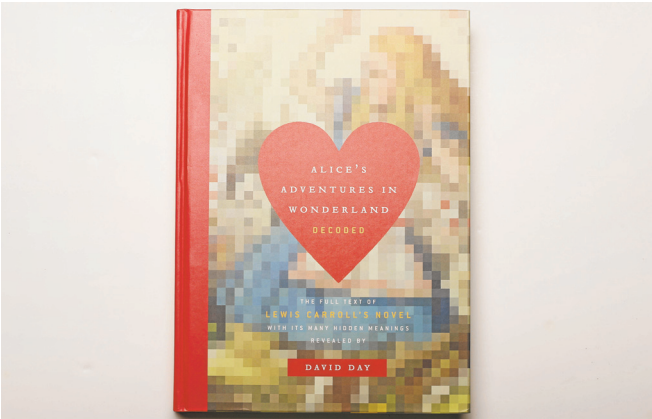
The Affinities, Robert Charles Wilson
Wilson has strong sci-fi credentials, including a Philip K. Dick Award. His 12th novel tells the story of graphic-design-student Adam, an outsider who yearns for human connection. To this end, he approaches InterAlia, a technology firm that uses brain mapping, genetic testing and behavioural data to assign successful applicants to one of 22 "affinity groups." Sarah Murdoch, smurdoch49@gmail.com

> BEAUTIFUL BOOK

150 years of Alice's Adventures in Wonderland

DEBORAH DUNDAS
BOOKS EDITOR

The "meaning" of Alice's *Adventures in Wonderland* has been open to speculation for years: social satire, Oxford history, even a psychedelic drug-induced hallucination. In honour of Alice's 150th anniversary, writer David Day is out with a comprehensive book (Doubleday Canada) that "decodes" Alice: the text of the original is printed in full, while in the margins Day explores interpretations and references. He decodes a few pages with us here.



1. The cover

You'll notice, when you're holding the book, that the figure of Alice on the front cover is pixilated, while the heart in the middle is clear and strong. In fact, it was designed that way for a number of reasons: if you look at it from far away (as you would in a bookstore display) the Alice is clear — it's only when you get closer that she loses her definition. "We pixilated it with the idea of decoding him," says David Day, referring to author Lewis Carroll.



2. Crinoline croquet

When Alice goes into the Queen's garden, that garden is based on Alice Liddell's house (Carroll's inspiration) at Oxford — they had a croquet lawn at the back, which was the height of fashion at the time. In the picture at the bottom right, we see Alice and her two sisters in the back garden with their croquet mallets. The photograph was taken by Lewis Carroll. Alice's mother made it the centre of social life: "They frequently had these croquet parties," says Day, "and all the women dressed up elaborately; it was the age of 'crinoline croquet.' "



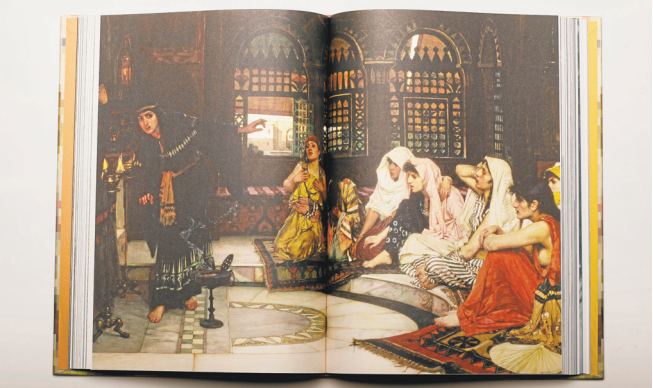
3. Pusey the Cheshire Cat

All the inhabitants of Wonderland, Day's book maintains, had real-life counterparts in Oxford Society. In this picture, the Cheshire Cat represents Christ Church college's Canon Edward Bouverie Pusey — (puss, get it?) — who was Carroll's mentor and one of the most influential churchmen of his time. Conservative Puseyites opposed the liberal reforms introduced by Alice's father, the Dean of Christ Church. Here the King and Queen of Hearts, who Day reveals as the Dean and Mrs. Liddell, are much annoyed by Canon Pusey's avatar who keeps an ever-watchful eye over all the college's affairs.



4. Illustrating Alice

"Scott (C S) Richardson, who designed the book, came up with this idea of doing these full spreads and using quotations. And he was the one who chose them. He said he read every word of this and said he was engaged — and you can tell from the different titles; they're great titles. (The illustrations) are all from the original Alice and what he's done is added a colour dimension and a quotation. Most people say this (particular one) would be a perfect poster for their workplace."



5. Oracle of Delphi

This is a painting entitled "Consulting the Oracle" by John William Waterhouse. Lewis Carroll was plugged into the pre-Raphaelite artists of the time who he frequently visited and photographed. In *Wonderland's* Duchess's kitchen, Day explains that Carroll has created a comic parody of the Oracle of Delphi gone badly wrong. Instead of a high priestess who inhales fragrant vapours that inspire sacred prophecies, *Wonderland's* Ugly Duchess inhales smoke and pepper that inspires doggerel that is more nonsensical than it is a prophecy.



6. The Real Alice

"Besides being a model for Lewis Carroll's wonderful photographs of her and her sisters he photographed a lot of the children of prominent Oxford people. He was quite a snob about it; he would dress Alice up and photograph her as a beggar girl but he would never photograph a beggar girl," says Day. "These photos are by Julia Margaret Cameron. . . she would dress them up as mythological figures." On the left, Alice is dressed as Aletheia, the Greek goddess of truth; on the right as Pomona, Roman goddess of fruitfulness.

> ESSAY

How getting lost in the rabbit hole helps us find our words

CHANTAL BRAGANZA
SPECIAL TO THE STAR

"No wise fish would go anywhere without a porpoise." — The Mock Turtle

A long time ago, when reading Charles Lutwidge Dodgson's *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*, I'd stick on this scene. Appropriate to the nonsense fever-dream quality of Dodgson's seminal work, I'd almost always confuse the animal in this exchange where Alice tries to reconcile Mock Turtle's cheeky pun for "purpose." Growing up in a half-Mexican household, stories were sometimes English, sometimes Spanish, sometimes both. Sometimes Alice was Alicia, and a porpoise a delfin — a dolphin, as it appears in the book's Spanish translation, and a play on the word fin, or end.

Dodgson's (pen name: Lewis Carroll) tale about an insouciant young girl's coming-of-age through one bizarre daydream uses a great deal of word play to build its



Vintage colour lithograph of Alice and the Mock Turtle, from *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* by Lewis Carroll and John Tenniel.

beloved world of batty logic. *Wonderland's* all-ages humour in puns partially explains its lasting popularity. Since its 1865 publication the book has been in print, its coined words such as chortle and portmanteau settling into the topsoil of common vernacular and characters into the DNA of western pop culture.

Another longevity factor is the book's enduring allure to translators. Alice in Wonderland remains one of the most widely translated English novels in history, with more than 170 adaptations of the story in existence today, despite the challenges the book's word games pose.

As one of the many commemorations for Alice's sesquicentennial, Oak Knoll Press in Delaware recently released a three-volume book dedicated to the history of Wonderland in translation. An exhibition and two-day October conference in New York are also planned.

Forget porpoise puns: imagine rewrit-

ing the Mad Hatter's "Twinkle, Twinkle Little Bat" for a readership whose nursery rhyme repertoire doesn't include the star-themed original, or whose colloquial lexicon didn't account for the term "mad as a hatter" — an 18th-century England archaism — in the first place. Indeed, the phrase "loco como un sombrero" doesn't have quite the same ring, and likely exists because of the book itself.

"The Alice challenge seems to be one that people like because it's really fun," Michael Everson, a typography scholar who'd contributed to the anthology, told *Smithsonian Magazine* earlier this year. "Wracking your brains to resurrect a pun that works in your language even though it shouldn't."

I am by no means a translator, but I believe Everson's "Alice challenge" is as true for a professional as it is for any reader who's grown up with more than one language. What might have been a

nightmare for an early-kindergarten reading class was a topsy-turvy game unto itself. Why not roll your r's while speaking English? Over the years, though, through sifting Spanglish into two languages and imposing stricter rules on both — like Alice, we all grow up sometime — I've since eroded my Spanish dull.

So when I think of Dodgson's book these days, I stick on Humpty Dumpty's encounter with Alice instead. "When I use a word, it means just what I choose it to mean — neither more nor less," he tells her before her encounter with the porpoise. (Or dolphin, depending on who's reading.)

Chantal Braganza is a writer and editor living in Toronto.

> WHODUNIT

Jack Batten's column returns next week.

> BESTSELLERS

ORIGINAL FICTION

1. **The Girl in the Spider's Web**, David Lagercrantz, Viking (2)*
2. **Make Me, Lee Child**, Delacorte Press (1)
3. **The Illegal**, Lawrence Hill, HarperCollins (1)
4. **Grey**, E.L. James, Vintage (13)
5. **The Girl on the Train**, Paula Hawkins, Doubleday Canada (35)
6. **Undercover**, Danielle Steel, Delacore Press (2)
7. **Go Set a Watchman**, Harper Lee, Harper (10)
8. **The Nature of the Beast: A Chief Inspector Gamache Novel**, Louise Penny, Minotaur Books (3)
9. **Star Wars Aftermath: Book One of the Aftermath Trilogy**, Chuck Wendig, Del Rey (2)
10. **Undermajordomo Minor**, Patrick deWitt, Anansi (1)

ORIGINAL NON-FICTION

1. **Open Heart, Open Mind**, Clara Hughes, Touchstone (1)*
2. **Guinness World Records 2016**, Craig Glenday, Canadian Manda Group (2)
3. **My Secret Sister**, Helen Edwards and Jenny Lee Smith, Pan (28)
4. **Unflinching**, Jody Mitic, Simon & Schuster (2)
5. **Rising Strong**, Brene Brown, Spiegel & Grau (3)
6. **History's People**, Margaret MacMillan, Anansi (1)
7. **Gut**, Giulia Enders, Greystone (10)
8. **Secret Child: 1950s Dublin — A Young Boy Hidden From His Family**, Lewis Gordon and Andrew Crofts, HarperCollins (1)
9. **What's Happened to Politics?** Bob Rae, Simon & Schuster Canada (3)
10. **Stephen Harper**, John Ibbitson, Signal (2)

REPRINT FICTION

1. **Gray Mountain: A Novel**, John Grisham, Dell (4)*
2. **The Escape**, David Baldacci, Vision (3)
3. **The Eye of Heaven**, Clive Cussler and Russell Blake, Berkley (2)
4. **All the Light We Cannot See**, Anthony Doerr, Scribner (39)
5. **Edge of Eternity**, Ken Follett, NAL (2)
6. **The Martian**, Andy Weir, Broadway (9)
7. **NYPD Red 3**, James Patterson and Marshall Karp, Grand Central Publishing (2)
8. **The Cinderella Murder: An Under Suspicion Novel**, Mary Higgins Clark & Alafair Burke, Pocket Books (3)
9. **Key of Knowledge**, Nora Roberts, Berkley (2)
10. **Unlucky 13**, James Patterson and Maxine Paetro, Grand Central (11)

REPRINT NON-FICTION

1. **Is Everyone Hanging Out Without Me?**, Mindy Kaling, Three Rivers Press (52)*
2. **A Walk in the Woods**, Bill Bryson, Anchor Canada (7)
3. **Yes Please**, Amy Poehler, HarperCollins (2)
4. **I Am Malala**, Malala Yousafzai, Back Bay Books (14)
5. **An Astronaut's Guide to Life on Earth**, Chris Hadfield, Vintage Canada (2)
6. **The Organized Mind**, Daniel J. Levitin, Penguin (7)
7. **The Inconvenient Indian**, Thomas King, Anchor Canada (53)
8. **Nice is Just a Place in France**, The Betches, Gallery Books (34)
9. **Brain on Fire**, Susannah Cahalan, Simon & Schuster (22)
10. **A House in the Sky**, Amanda Lindhout and Sara Corbett, Scribner (62)



The bestseller lists are compiled by Toronto Star Newspapers Limited from information provided by BookNet Canada's national sales tracking service, BNC SalesData. * Weeks on the bestseller list