

BOOKS

Our roundup of this month's literary delights



THE LATEST NOVEL BY LANCASHIRE WRITER SUZANNE SNOW WAS INSPIRED BY HER LOVE FOR HISTORICAL GARDENS.

The latest novel by Lancashire writer Suzanne Snow was inspired by her love for historical gardens.

At a hen party on the remote Scottish island of Alana, Flora is dared to ask a handsome stranger to be her plus-one for the wedding. When the gorgeous Mac accepts her invite, she assumes he's joking and thinks nothing more of it ... until he turns up at the church on the wedding day.

But Mac has an agenda. He wants to hire her skills as a garden historian to restore the gardens at Róisín House, his home back on Alana. Flora knows she should refuse – Mac has 'heartbreaker' written all over him – but she can't resist uncovering the tragic truth behind the garden at Róisín. And when Flora meets a little girl on Alana living with devastating loss, a strong bond is created between them when Flora shares her passion and belief in the ability of a garden to heal. Transported by the beauty of the island, Flora can't help but fall in love with Alana, and the man who brought her there.

But for love to grow, Flora will first have to dig up the past.

The Garden of Little Rose is a heart-warming romance for fans of Victoria Walters, Trisha Ashley and Julie Houston.

Author Suzanne Snow is not very keen on surprises. But the time her husband arranged for them to spend a weekend in Scotland to view a house and its garden to help with her research was one she absolutely loved. The house and garden she pictured when she was writing The Garden of Little Rose were inspired by Hill of Tarvit, a beautiful Edwardian house in Fife. She chose the property because it was created in the Arts & Crafts style and this period of design in horticulture is her favourite.

The Arts & Crafts movement began in the mid to late nineteenth century as a reaction against the mass production then becoming popular in design and manufacture. Some of the leaders of the movement were architects and examples of their work can still be found today. Blackwell in Cumbria, by Mackay Hugh Baillie Scott, is an internationally significant Arts & Crafts house and well worth a visit when rules permit. The garden was designed by landscape architect Thomas Mawson, whose work is a particular favourite of Suzanne's, and can be found in other Cumbrian properties, including Rydal Hall. Gertrude Jekyll is a recognisable name to many gardeners, and she included Arts & Crafts principles in the gardens she designed, working alongside the architect Sir Edwin Lutyens.

But what makes these gardens so special to Suzanne? They are indeed romantic, as the formality of structure created from natural materials is balanced so beautifully by exuberant planting. Picture a ruined garden, its history lost over time and waiting to be rediscovered by someone who understands

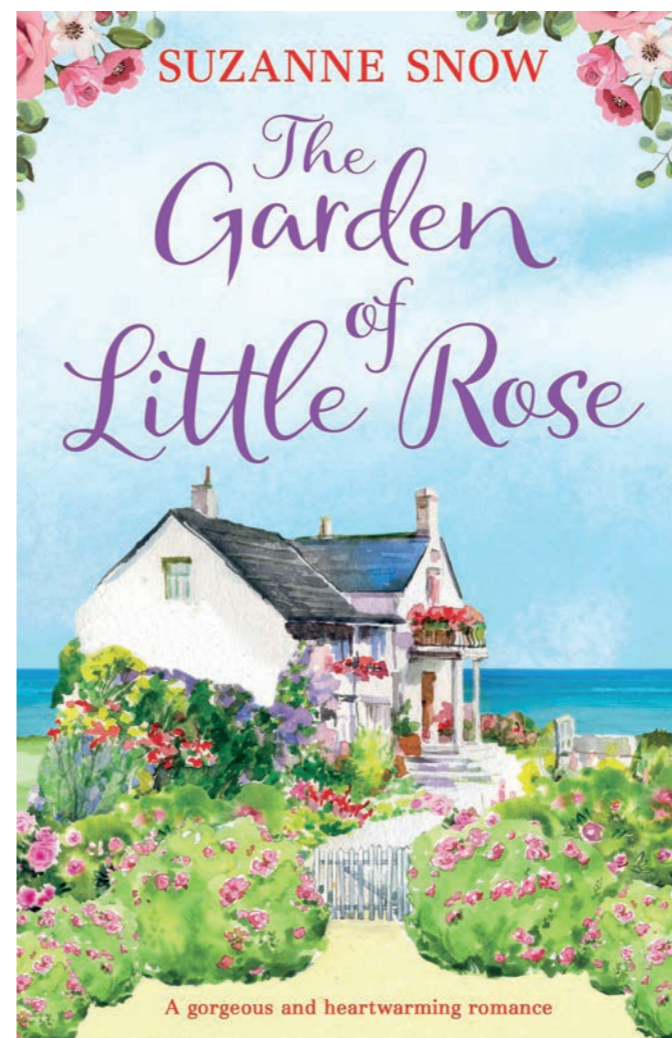


The perfect cosy and feel-good romance to curl up with

Cottage of New Beginnings

it. Imagine those old roses planted by a gardener who loved them, unable to pass by without pausing when they were in full bloom. Or the pergola framing a view of the landscape beyond the garden, draped in honeysuckle with lavender beneath, a shallow rill rippling with sound nearby.

The Language of Flowers, or Floriography, is the use of floral arrangements to communicate a meaning through the giving of flowers. Its popularity soared during the 19th century when senders were able to express meanings in arrangements they weren't able to speak out loud in Victorian society. Suzanne is interested by the different interpretations and often uses forget-me-nots and yellow roses to represent her writing; their meanings within the Language of Flowers being true love and memories, and friendship.



A gorgeous and heartwarming romance

Garden of Little Rose

The house in Suzanne's novel is named 'Róisín', and as the main character of Flora uncovers the history of the house and its remarkable garden, she finds a story of love and loss still reaching down the years. Suzanne set the novel on the fictional Hebridean island of Alana, which was inspired partly by Gigha, off the Kintyre peninsula. Visiting Gigha was also a delight for her, and the clear waters warmed by the Gulf Stream and white sands are just a couple of reasons why she'd love to return.

The Garden of Little Rose is Suzanne's second novel in the Welcome to Thorndale series. She writes romantic, uplifting fiction with a strong sense of setting and community connecting the lives of her characters, finding inspiration in beautiful views, old houses and abundant gardens.

After working in financial services and then spending several years as a stay-at-home mum, Suzanne was ready for a change. Her interest in horticulture led her to study for RHS qualifications at agricultural college in Yorkshire, enabling her to pursue a new career planting redesigned gardens.

Suzanne has sung in a choir, trained as a worship leader and raised money for charity by making huge volumes of soup for anyone she can persuade to buy it. She is an infrequent horse rider after years competing in dressage, and a ranch holiday in Montana is top of her bucket list.

She lives in Lancashire with her family and loves to read, particularly historical crime and biographies of writers. She also enjoys walking, cooking for family and friends, and watching movies, especially if they have a happy ending.

Suzanne is a member of the Romantic Novelists Association and the Society of Authors. Her first novel, The Cottage of New Beginnings, is also published by Canelo.



Suzanne Snow

The Garden of Little Rose by Suzanne Snow is published in eBook on 15th February and paperback on 25th March by Canelo.