

Fairlight Books signs Sarah Jane Butler's debut

Lucy Nathan

Rights - Fiction Wednesday, 16th February 2022

Starling follows a mother and daughter who live a nomadic existence

Fairlight Books has signed world rights to *Starling*, a debut by Sarah Jane Butler, through the publisher's open submissions programme. The novel, exploring themes of belonging, alternative lifestyles and climate change, is out in September.

The novel follows *Starling*, who has known nothing but a nomadic existence with Mar, her strong-willed mother. But when they're stuck in deep mud in a wood one winter, Mar leaves and doesn't come back. Starling must learn to survive without her mother and build a life on her own terms.

Butler lives in Sussex and her short stories and poems have appeared in literary journals and anthologies. She is also a professional copywriter and communications consultant.

Editor Laura Shanahan said: "*Starling* is such a timely novel, exploring ways of living closer to nature while underscoring the importance of human connection and community. I fell in love immediately with Sarah's exquisitely crafted writing, and her wonderfully earthy descriptions of the natural world in particular. *Starling* herself is an unforgettable character, with a winning combination of spikiness and underlying vulnerability - I can't wait for readers to meet her."

