



Dear Book Poster

For many of us, the beginning of a new year is filled with the promise of fresh discoveries and possibilities. So, with that in mind, we've selected a debut novel from a unique and original new voice, Emilia Hart.

Emilia is a British-Australian writer who lived in the Cumbrian countryside in 2020 during the height of the pandemic. It was in this place of solitude and peace that Emilia was able to reckon with past experiences, and from this, her first novel, **Weyward**, was born.

The novel is a moving and compelling exploration of gender, control and female empowerment. Set across five centuries, the novel follows three generations of Weyward women who each have their own struggles and challenges. Altha, is on trial as a witch in 1619 for the murder of a local farmer; in 1942 Violet is oppressed by the men in her life, and Kate, who is Violet's grandniece, escapes an abusive relationship in 2019.

Through alternating perspectives and timelines, we gradually learn how these women are controlled by the men in their lives. And yet, despite this, they find resilience and power through their connection to nature and the collective experiences of women.

Setting is crucial to this story, with Weyward cottage bringing the women and their stories together. It's a place brimming with life and magic. When Kate flees London for Weyward cottage, she learns about the women who came before her, and it's within these stories she's reminded of her own strength.

This book is part historical fiction and magical realism. In fact, Emilia was inspired by real events. When living in Cumbria she learned about the Pendle Witch Trials which took place in nearby Lancaster, which resulted in nine executions, most of which were women.

The characters, the magic, and the vivid descriptions of nature bring this story to life. We hope you see the beauty and strength in these women and that you're just as invested in their journeys as we were. We're excited to hear your thoughts on **Weyward**.

Love,

Rowena and Akina