

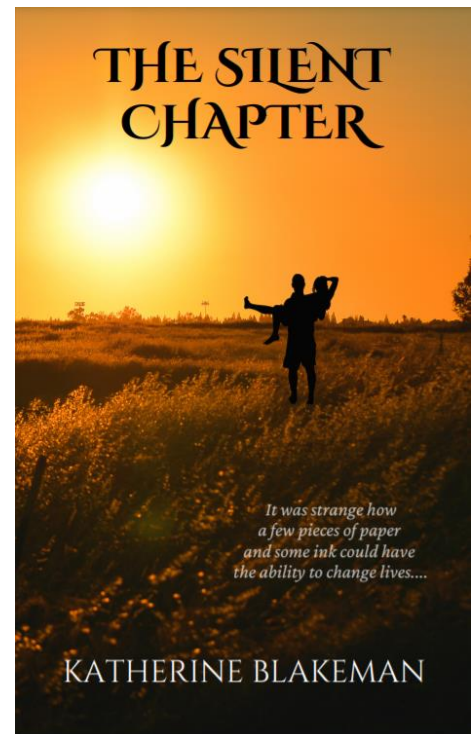
HAPPY SPRING EVERYONE!

Hello everyone!

I know it seems hard to believe, but it's actually kind of spring right now. And [The Silent Chapter](#) is entering its second month of publication. You can get your copy right now on Amazon.

Since there are a lot of new people here courtesy of my Twitter giveaway, I've decided to merge parts of February's issue into this newsletter. So some of you may get a little de ja vu when reading it... But on the plus side – call it a bumper edition? You get a double dose of cat pictures, two lots of jokes, two recipes and all the news from January AND February! This promises to be a pretty long one, so I'd best shut up and let you get on and read it.

One last thing though... I've popped the prologue of The Silent Chapter in here. If you want an honest narrative of life and love in interwar Britain to keep you company on these dark winter nights, then The Silent Chapter is perfect for you! (Translation: please buy it. Pleeceeease?)



Love, Kathy ☺

DO YOU WANT TO GET INVOLVED WITH ME?

I always love to hear from the wider writing community, and I am now actively inviting collaborations! Want to co-host a giveaway with me? I'm in! Want to read and review each other's books? Give me a shout! Even if it's something as little as a retweet-for-retweet, contact me and let's see what we can do!

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WHAT I'VE BEEN UP TO – JANUARY AND FEBRUARY

TLDR: A hell of a lot! So much so that I actually had to make a list...

I'll start by cheating and actually going back to December, to my interview with Fraser from [Feed My Reads!](#) I told him all about my history with books, how I came to self-publish and how much I love the writing community. I'm fairly sure he shared my sentiments. Check him out!

Once we actually got to January, I put out an appeal (or several) to the book bloggers and reviewers of Twitter. I invited them to give me an honest review of *The Silent Chapter* in return for a free copy. At time of writing, I've had four reviews published. The first was by the wonderful Becky from [All My Best](#), [BB](#), who made my heart sing with her review. ***'Each page presents the reader with an articulate 'cooking' of words and the writer's passion. You can feel Blakeman's heart beat in every well-penned sentence. She gives voice to the challenges faced with a gentleness and realness ... and does it so well that readers will forget it is fiction.'***

The second review was by the lovely Emma of [Bobs and Books](#), who in her review wrote that ***'The ending is just perfect. It is something that will stay with me and, in my opinion, is universally relatable.'*** Given all the effort I put into crafting the perfect ending to my whirlwind tale, that was the best thing I could ever have read. I am so grateful for Emma's lovely review, which you can read now on [Goodreads!](#)

Next came Nicki from [Nicki's Book Blog!](#) Her blog post about the book can be found [here](#), but her review (also on Goodreads) was wonderful! She wrote, ***'A stunning read of wartime, bravery and history ... A brilliantly written emotive read – one I shall not forget in a hurry!'*** The blog version will be up later this month, and I highly recommend you check it out, as well as the rest of her blog!

Then, [Loz Darwin](#) (@LdLoz on Twitter) left me a review on Twitter and Goodreads! She shared similar sentiments to other reviewers when she said, ***'There are subjects in the book that are at times difficult reading but they are handled delicately and with respect. I read *The Silent Chapter* in just 3 days as it left me wanting to know what would happen next.'*** I'm very grateful to her for reading it, and for being such a wonderful human being!

I am waiting on some more book blogger reviews, which I hope to receive very soon. Other than that, the only reviews I'm looking for are the ones my readers will leave after they've finished reading *The Silent Chapter*... no, that's not a hint, lovely reader... not at all...

Now we've done the reviews, what else have I been up to?

I became very well-acquainted with Canva, who I have used to create the front cover, back cover and promotional material for *The Silent Chapter*. I created myself a new profile picture and Twitter banner and put them up. I was (and still am) pretty proud of all my designs, given that I have absolutely no knowledge or experience of design other than 'this looks right'. I played a lot with my book cover, trying to up the clarity and make it less blurry. Hopefully I've managed it now – you readers will have to let me know how your copies look! All pictures are welcome, by the way – they'll make my heart so happy!

Other than actually publishing my book, not a lot happened in February. One of the reasons I've merged these two newsletters. There's been a lot of refreshing my sales dashboard, praying for sales and then being ridiculously excited when I get one. I wonder how many people have actually read it yet. If you have, please let me know! It's also worth mentioning that if you have any spare copies of a book you love knocking about, Claire Sheehy (@CESheehy_author on Twitter) is looking for some books for her mum, who will be in hospital for the foreseeable future. I sent her a copy of *The Silent Chapter*, so if you can do the same, please find her on Twitter.

I was lucky enough to have an interview with James Molloy for his Centre Stage blog, where I revealed quite a lot about the writing process, the background of *The Silent Chapter* and my favourite word. (If you know, you know.) You can find it [here](#). I've also been pelting my Twitter page with links to my book, and wondering why engagement is down. One lovely follower suggested that posts with links actually sink faster than posts without them, so I will probably do some experimentation to see if that's true. (It better not be true.)

I've read a lot – mostly lesfic, it must be said. I'm getting very into Sabrina Kane's Carlsbad books (just finished *Nothing But A Fling* – yes I'm reading them in the wrong order), but on a non-lesfic note I also read *The Girl From Bletchley Park* by Kathleen McGurl, which I've reviewed down below. Other than that, I'm working on two new WIPS (both lesfic), and I hope to finish one of them and start querying soon. It certainly promises to be something you've never read before... but then, *The Silent Chapter* probably is as well!

But for now, onwards to the rest of my newsletter. Poppy the cat makes another two appearances, showing off her unbearable cuteness and her uncanny to move the split-second I press the 'take picture' button. I've also got two recipes, two sets of jokes (one set particularly cheesy) and two reviews of great books I've read so far this year. And the prologue of *The Silent Chapter*. I hope it entices you to buy the book. Enjoy!

THOSE CHEESY JOKES I SAID ABOUT...

EASY:

WHAT DO YOU SAY TO SOMEONE TRYING TO STEAL YOUR CHEESE AT A MEXICAN RESTAURANT?

THAT'S NACHO CHEESE!

MEDIUM:

WHAT CHEESE DO YOU USE TO PERSUADE A BEAR DOWN FROM A TREE?

COME-ON-BEAR!

HARD:

WHERE DOES A CHEESE PSYCHIATRIST WORK?

IN EMMENTAL HOSPITAL!

AND SOME MATHEMATICAL ONES!

(Yes I know this is a newsletter about reading.)

EASY:

My friend asked me to help him round up his flock of 38 sheep.

I said “Sure – 40!”

MEDIUM:

Did you hear about the guy who hates negative numbers?

He’ll stop at nothing to avoid them.

HARD:

I poured root beer in a square glass.

Now I just have beer.

QUICK REVIEW: SOULMATE, STAGE RIGHT BY BIXBY JONES

Bixby did a great job of giving me the warm fuzzy feelings with her new novel! *Soulmate, Stage Right* takes sweet romance to a new level. I mean, it’s got soaps, adorable little girls and even more adorable cats and kittens in it. What’s not to love?

An honest and compelling tale of enemies-turned-lovers and all the fiery exchanges, moments of contemplation and make-ups that entails. Couldn’t recommend it enough!

[SOULMATE, STAGE RIGHT](#) IS AVAILABLE FROM AMAZON NOW!



(ANOTHER) QUICK REVIEW: THE GIRL FROM BLETCHLEY PARK BY KATHLEEN MCGURL

McGurl did a brilliant job at portraying the life of a modern working mother with the way she portrayed Julia. I won’t lie: I saw the twist with Marc coming a mile off, but I think that was deliberate: Julia was so wrapped up in her business, she didn’t see the bomb staring her in the face until it exploded.

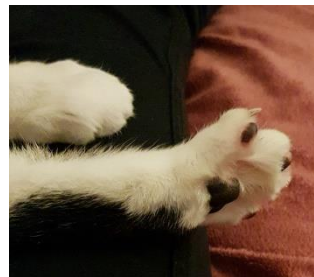
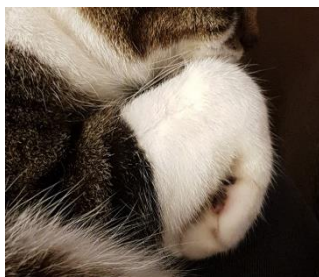
Which brings me on to the war side – Pamela’s story. That was one twist I didn’t see coming, although I probably should. The way little tiny bits of her story were knitted together within Julia’s was wonderfully clever.

I love a good dual timeline story and this ticked all the boxes for me. I highly recommend it if you like historical fiction!

GET [TGFBP](#) ON AMAZON TODAY!

POPPY PAW PICTURES!

Aren’t these little paws just the cutest??



CHEESE AND HERB WHIRLS

The ideal picnic food. Best served warm, and definitely best eaten within 48 hours of cooking.

INGREDIENTS

1 block/roll puff pastry
250g garlic & herb cream
cheese
100g grated cheddar or
gruyere

METHOD

Roll out the pastry into a square, then spread the cream cheese and sprinkle the grated cheese over it.
Roll from the long end into a spiral, wrap and chill for 30 minutes.
Cut into 1cm-thick discs and place at decent intervals on a baking tray.
Bake at 200C/400F/Gas 6 for 25 minutes.

CHEESE AND CHIVE SCONES

Perfect served warm with a little butter. Take to afternoon tea, eat for a slightly unusual breakfast or just... scoff before they're even cool.

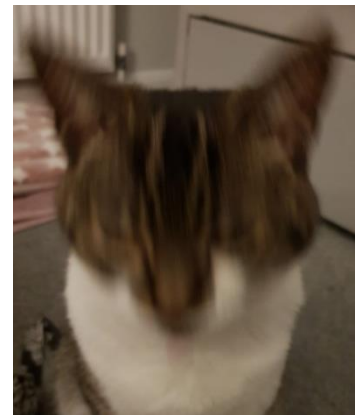
INGREDIENTS

420g self-raising flour
60g cold butter
375ml milk
2tsbp fresh or dried
chives
85g grated cheese

METHOD

Rub the butter into the flour until it makes a breadcrumb consistency.
Add the milk, chives and cheese, and stir together with a flat-bladed knife.
When combined, knead gently and press until 3cm thick.
Cut with a round or fluted cutter.
Place on a greased tray, brush with milk and bake for 15-20 minutes on 220C/430F/Gas Mark 7 – or less, if small.

THE (BLURRY) ESCAPADES OF POPPY



Here's a selection of failed pictures of Poppy. She has a knack of moving *just* at the wrong time. Does your furry friend do the same? Please send me pictures!

THE PROLOGUE OF THE SILENT CHAPTER...

They were both as different as different could be, Patrick mused. He'd never really thought about how their lives had come together in the first place. Of course, it was all down to the war, but really, what were the chances of him turning up in her town, a mental and physical mess, a product of his past?

After all, their upbringings were so different. Hers was one of love, a warm little terraced house in Manchester, with a mother who worked in a fishmonger's and a father who flitted from job to job when his unfortunate criminal past caught up with him. It had been a financially unstable childhood, and having to leave school at ten for being too daring hadn't helped. She'd spent all day at home, with the same furniture and the same wallpaper and the same little dog, and yet she'd loved it regardless, and carried this attitude forward. Accepting her lot, with a smile on her face and an undying love for whoever was kind to her. She'd had to do that all her life, and maybe that was why she'd always been loved in return.

His upbringing was less rosy. Surrounded by silver, maybe, but it hadn't all been as bright. His mother had tried, bless her soul, but she'd been filtered, censored, beaten down by his father. Patrick shuddered at the thought, especially now he knew the whole story. He'd been barely allowed to leave the house as a child, and despite having a kindly nanny and a top-level tutor, he'd been bored. Maybe that was why that first war had appealed to him – some excitement at last! Sometimes he wished he'd never gone, for it had dictated his entire life – although ultimately for the better, he reminded himself.

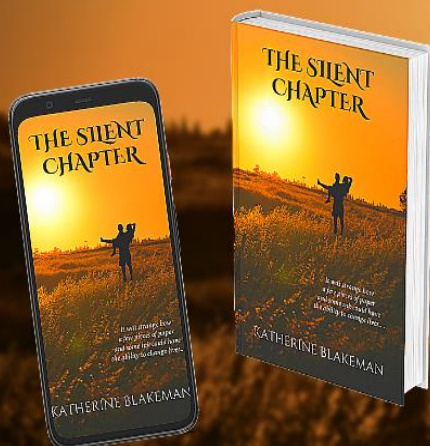
They'd been pushed together by nothing but a taxi, really. The driver had simply deposited him in Monthill, Manchester and driven off. Somehow, he'd made his way to the nearest building – a posh restaurant – and the manager there had sorted him with accommodation and a job. That was where he had met her, although what had really secured a connection was her kind heart.

Whether he'd have gone ahead with it, he wasn't sure. But she'd rescued him, dragged him away, and from there they'd just carried on bonding. Twenty-seven years later, here they were. Older, wiser, far more so than they'd ever expected. They'd never really had any plans beyond marriage, let alone being such a major part of other people's lives (and not just those of their children).

But it hadn't been all plain sailing. Their story wasn't like the ones he had read so often in books, which generally spanned a few days, weeks or months and had a clear beginning, middle and end. Real life wasn't like that. If it was, surely he'd be on the easy stretch by now?

They'd had their ups and downs, but things would be different now. He'd said that before, he was painfully aware of that, but tonight was a night to lay the ghosts to rest. It was VE Day, a turning point for all those affected by the war, and he especially wanted it to be one for himself and his wife, who was currently resting her head on his shoulder. He'd done all he could – for that moment, they were just enjoying being together. Once her eyes were dry, they'd go back into the party, apologise for their brief absence, join in with the dancing again. But for now, it was just them. Just Patrick and Dorothy. The way it would always be. He exhaled slowly, a breath he'd been holding lest it disturb her, and opened his eyes. Ahead of them, in the neatly mowed grass at the bottom of the steps, he was aware of a growing light. Ah, there they were. He'd always known that they'd be back.

*It was strange how a few pieces of paper
and some ink could have the ability to change lives...*



THE SILENT CHAPTER

BY KATHERINE BLAKEMAN

Now available on Amazon worldwide!

Get yours today!