



PAGES & CO



TILLY AND THE
MAP OF STORIES



Books by Anna James

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TILLY AND THE BOOKWANDERERS

TILLY AND THE LOST FAIRY TALES

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For Adam
I love writing our story together.



Previously in Pages & Co.

In *Tilly and the Bookwanderers*, Matilda Pages discovered that she was a bookwanderer; that she could travel inside her favourite books. While looking for her missing mother with her best friend, Oskar, she discovered that her father was a fictional character and that meant she was half fictional herself.

In *Tilly and the Lost Fairy Tales*, Tilly and Oskar came up against the Underwood siblings. Melville Underwood has managed to get into power at the British Underlibrary and wants to control who has access to bookwandering. His sister, Decima, is experimenting with book magic in order to try and steal stories' innate immortality and believes that Tilly's half-fictional nature may be the key.

Tilly has found or been given several clues while bookwandering, and she and Oskar believe that there may be a map to find the Archivists, who are supposed to protect bookwandering but who haven't been heard from for many, many years.

A PROPER PLAN

‘I’m looking for a book.’

Matilda Pages and her grandad looked up from writing book recommendation cards to see a man standing in front of them at the desk of Pages & Co. The shop was quiet and golden-hour sunlight dripped in through the tall windows, making everything feel sleepy and peaceful.

‘Well, we can definitely help you with that,’ Grandad said, glad of a customer. ‘Which book was it?’

‘I can’t quite remember the title, I’m afraid,’ the man went on. ‘Or the author, now I come to think about it. But I know that it has a blue cover. Or at least I think so.’

‘Can you remember *anything* about what’s inside?’ Grandad said encouragingly. Tilly grinned: she loved watching him work out which book someone wanted from whatever tiny bits of information they could remember.

‘Not really . . .’ the man said vaguely. ‘How strange! I came to the shop specifically to pick this book up – it was my favourite when I was little, or was it my mum’s favourite? It slips my mind. And, now I’m here, I can’t remember the first thing about it. Maybe it wasn’t so special after all . . .’

‘Sounds like it meant a lot to you once upon a time,’ Grandad said. ‘I’m sure I can make some educated guesses if you can remember anything at all about it, or maybe we could help you find something different to read?’

‘That’s very kind of you,’ the man said politely, although he was already glancing back at the door. ‘But honestly – and I know this is the wrong thing to say in a bookshop – I just don’t seem to care any more.’

Grandad raised an eyebrow.

‘I’m sorry, I don’t mean to be rude,’ the man went on. ‘It’s just the more I think about it, the more I’m confused about what I even came in for.’

‘A book,’ Grandad reminded him. ‘With a blue cover.’

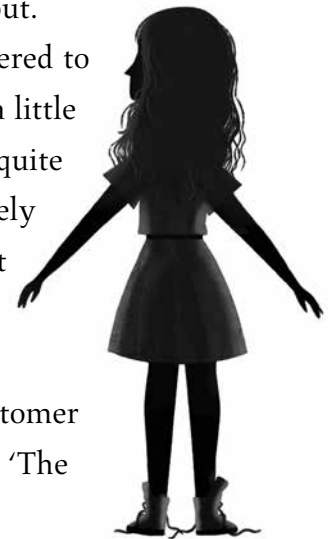
‘I’m not even sure it was blue,’ the man said, shrugging. ‘Oh well, thank you for your help.’ And with that he was gone.

‘How peculiar,’ said Grandad.

‘People can’t remember what they’re looking for all the time, though,’ Tilly pointed out.

‘Yes, but usually, if they’ve bothered to make it into the bookshop, they’re a little more persistent, sometimes even quite annoyed that we can’t immediately identify what they’re after. *He* just seemed to forget what he even wanted as we spoke.’

‘Actually, there was another customer like that,’ Tilly said, remembering. ‘The



other day a woman was just standing, staring at a bookshelf for about ten minutes, not picking up any books or anything, and, when I asked if I could help her find something, she said she wasn't sure, and then wandered off.'

'Mmm, very strange,' said Grandad, but his attention had been distracted by a list of numbers on the screen of the till, his brow furrowed in concern. 'Well, let's hope it's not a trend,' he said. 'We've been selling fewer and fewer books over the last couple of months. Maybe it's just that it's finally getting warmer and people are getting excited about being outside. As if we didn't have enough to worry about. How are you coping without bookwandering?'

'I hate it,' Tilly said vehemently. 'I hate that I can't do it, and that I can't talk to Anne or bookwander with Oskar, and most of all I hate that the Underwoods could just take it away without asking.'

Since Melville Underwood had become Head Librarian at the British Underlibrary and made his sister, Decima, his official Advisor, they had made

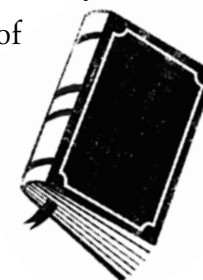
good on their threat to limit bookwandering by binding Source Editions. They had promised, in a series of very formal statements, that it was only a short-term measure to keep bookwandering safe while they got to grips with their new roles, but the Pages family had very little trust in statements or promises from the twins.

'Remind me how bookbinding works?' Tilly said. 'Why did somebody even invent that in the first place?!'

'It was the Bookbinders,' Grandad explained. 'That group of librarians who, years and years ago, first wanted to try to control who could bookwander. They use book magic to do it: that black sticky stuff you saw when the Underwoods were breaking up the fairy tales. It's barbaric, really, the uses they put book magic to – the very opposite of where it comes from.'

'But how does it work? Have you ever done it?'

'Books should only be bound in



the most serious of situations,’ Grandad said. ‘And some would say never at all. While I was in charge at the British Underlibrary, we only bound a book once and I’m still not certain it was the right thing to do. However, the process itself is fairly simple. All you have to do is trace an X of book magic over the first word of a book’s Source Edition and it’s like locking the door.’

‘So the Underwoods have done that to all the Source Editions?’

‘All the ones at the British Underlibrary, it would seem. Although, knowing them, they got some of their underlings to do it – no doubt the librarians who’ve gleefully revived the Bookbinder name. But don’t worry, Tilly, we’ll think of something soon.’

‘I don’t understand why you’re so calm about it,’ Tilly said, the anger at having her freedom to bookwander stripped from her still prickling under her skin.

‘I’m not at all calm about it,’ Grandad replied. ‘I’m as angry as you are, but it’s too big a fight to just wade

into and cause more problems. We have to make sure the Sources are protected at all times, as well as the people working at the Underlibrary. We need a proper plan.’

‘I *suggested* a proper plan,’ Tilly said mutinously.

‘I know you think that . . . I mean, I understand that you believe . . .’ Grandad faltered under the apparent strain of trying to say what he meant – without actually saying what he meant.

‘I know you don’t believe me that the Archivists are real, or that I know how to find them,’ said Tilly. ‘You don’t need to explain again. You’re not going to convince me, though. Two separate people told me and Oskar that they use maps to tell you where they are – and I’m sure I’ve been sent one.’

‘You weren’t given a map, sweetheart,’ Grandad said gently. ‘You found a collection of items that you think are linked together because you want to be able to help. And we love you so much for that, but it’s too great a risk to follow those clues . . . Well, we *couldn’t* follow them. Where would we even start?’

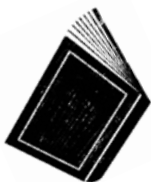
Tilly rolled her eyes. 'We'd start at the Library of Congress, in America,' she explained as if speaking to a child who wasn't paying attention. 'That's where the first clue said to go. It had a . . . what did Mum call it, an American postcode?'

'A zip code,' Grandad said.

'Right, a zip code! And it had a library classmark—you said yourself that classmarks are like maps – that's how I knew!'

'We can't fly all the way to America to find a book, Tilly,' Grandad said. 'Now, give me a few moments of quiet so I can look through these sales figures again. Why don't you go and find your mum, there's a good girl?'

One of the things that Tilly loved most about her grandparents was that they almost always spoke to her as if she were a proper person who understood things, and felt things, and had good ideas. But that meant it stung even more when they spoke down to her, as though she were just too young to understand



what they were dealing with.

She stood up without saying anything else, meaning to go and find Bea and talk to *her* about the map, but, before she could wander over to the stairs, the phone behind the counter started ringing.

'Good morning, Pages & Co.,' Grandad said. 'Archie speak— Oh, Seb, hello, any news? Oh . . . Right . . .' He looked up to check Tilly hadn't gone and held a hand out to tell her to stay put. 'I've got her here,' he said down the phone, and Tilly felt a wave of fear crash over her. Grandad slammed the phone down and dragged her towards the door that connected the bookshop to where the Pages family lived.

'What are you doing?' she asked, trying to wriggle out of his grasp. 'You're hurting me, Grandad!'

'I'm sorry, Tilly,' he said, 'but we need to get you hidden. Right now. That was Seb. The Underwoods are on their way here – and it's you they want.'

