



Sixpence House

Paul Collins

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A bibliophile's pilgrimage to where book lovers go when they die-Hay-on-Wye.

Paul Collins and his family abandoned the hills of San Francisco to move to the Welsh countryside-to move, in fact, to the little cobblestone village of Hay-on-Wye, the 'Town of Books' that boasts fifteen hundred inhabitants-and forty bookstores. Antiquarian bookstores, no less.

Hay's newest citizens accordingly take up residence in a sixteenth-century apartment over a bookstore, meeting the village's large population of misfits and bibliomaniacs by working for world-class eccentric Richard Booth-the self-declared King of Hay, owner of the local castle, and proprietor of the world's largest and most chaotic used book warren. A useless clerk, Paul delights in shifting dusty stacks of books around and sifting them for ancient gems like *Robinson Crusoe in Words of One Syllable*, *Confessions of an Author's Wife*, and *I Was Hitler's Maid*. He also duly fulfills his new duty as a citizen by simultaneously applying to be a Peer in the House of Lords and attempting to buy Sixpence House, a beautiful and neglected old tumbledown pub for sale in the town's center.

Taking readers into a secluded sanctuary for book lovers, and guiding us through the creation of his own book, *Sixpence House* becomes a meditation on what books means to us, and how their meaning can still resonate long after they have been abandoned by their public. Even as he's writing, the knowledge of where his work will eventually end up-rubbing bindings with the rest of the books that time forgot-is a curious kind of comfort.

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