

WORDS LAUREN JOHN

PAGE TURNERS

DISCOVER THE BEAUTY OF MALTA WITHIN THE PAGES OF A NOVEL INSPIRED BY AND SET ON THE ISLAND. THERE'S SOMETHING FOR EVERYONE AMONG THESE FIVE VERY DIFFERENT PAGE TURNERS, AS WE UNCOVER WHAT CAPTIVATED THE AUTHORS ABOUT THE ISLAND.

"It's basically a love letter to the island," says Caroline Smailes, author of *Like Bees To Honey* who, with a Maltese mother and grandmother has spent many a long summer in Malta. Caroline weaves a story around Nina, her son, and their journey to see Nina's ageing parents. They find on arrival that Malta isn't just a beautiful destination for tourists, but a stop-off for recently deceased ghosts as well.

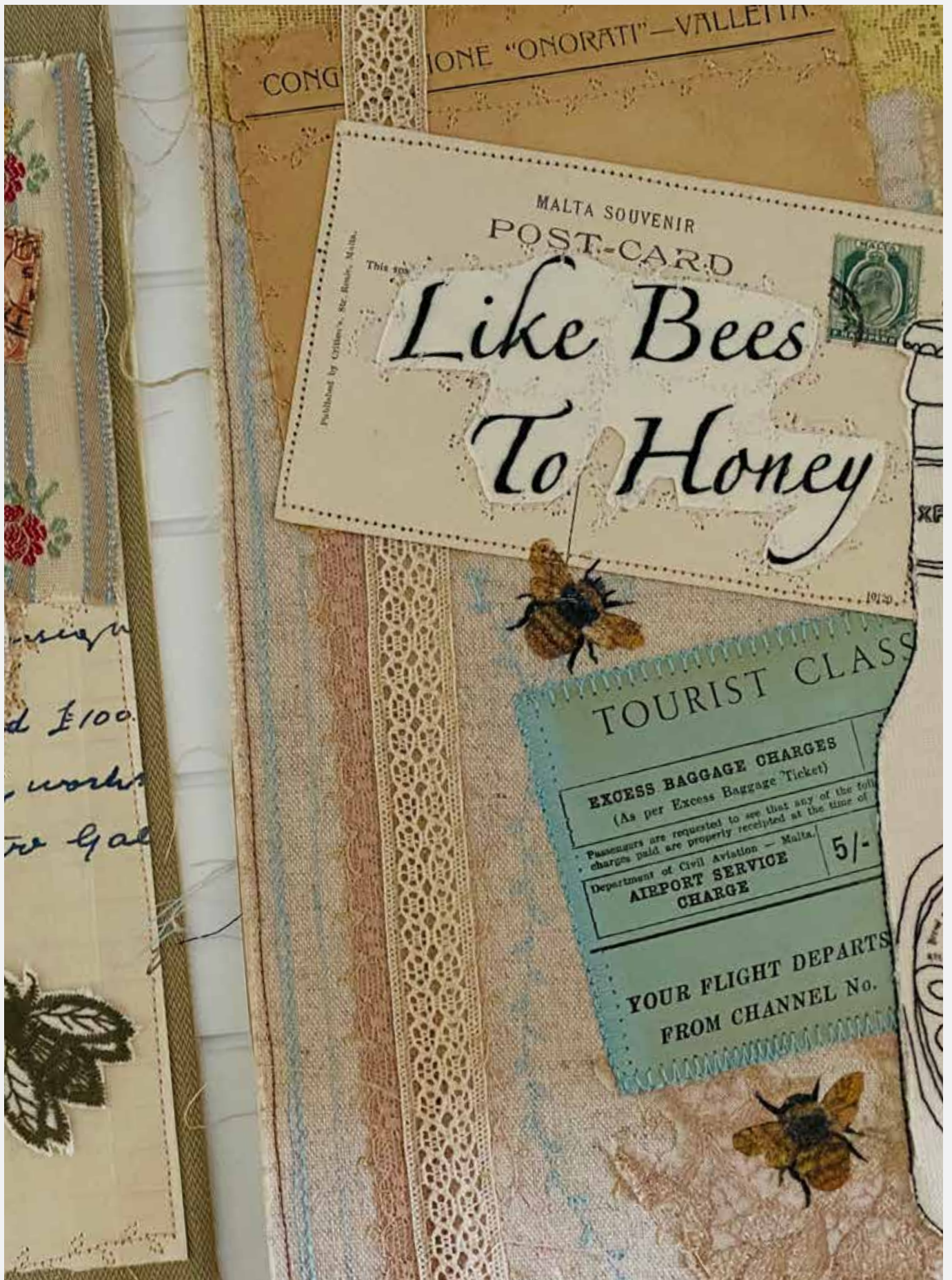
Malta is very much a part of Caroline's heritage, and she invites you to enjoy and learn from all the little details she has added throughout the pages. "The novel contains so many snippets including travel guides, food and the language."

While family history inspires an affection for the island from Caroline Smailes, Vicki Hopkins – daughter of Eastern European and English parents, says on her website that she "blames my ancestors for the lethal combination in my genes that influences my stories.

Drama and conflict might be found between the pages, but in the end I give readers a happy ending".

Find out just what that happy ending is in the *Phantom of Valletta*, an imagined part sequel/part re-telling of Gaston Leroux's *Phantom Of The Opera* classic. Here, the very much alive 'opera ghost' is drawn from Paris to Valletta, seeking a new life, a new goal, and retribution for past mistakes. A novel for anyone interested in Malta's built heritage, as Vicki invites readers to follow Erik as he seeks to buy and restore Valletta's opera house to its former glory.

From built history to military tales, that author Nicola Kearns says were "very difficult to find in history books or fictional books about Malta". Nicola has a keen interest in WWII, and it was this, coupled with many visits to the island that produced the Malta saga – a trio of books all linked to wartime Malta. Nicola tells us that when she began to research Malta in WWII she "fell in love with the island >





Whether the Malta you know is in the pages of a book, a scrapbook of holiday memories, or maybe in future travel plans, we hope these book recommendations will remind you of all that is special about Malta, its history, and its people.

and its people. The story of what they went through in WWII I felt deserved to be told".

Nicola's trio of novels, *Under A Maltese Sky*, *The Azure Window*, and *All The Seas Between* begins with the outbreak of war, and ends generations later in modern day Malta. Meet Italian, Irish, and Maltese characters and their comrades through the generations as they find love, heartbreak, and intrigue. Plot twists and revelations are promised throughout this saga.

The drama continues in best-selling author Simon Scarrow's take on the Great Siege of Malta, titled *The Sword and The Scimitar*. Disgraced army veteran Sir Thomas Barret arrives on the island to assist The Knights Of The Order Of St John, as Malta comes

under threat from enemy invasion. He is also sent, under orders from the Queen, to search for something that threatens her reign. If you're looking for some light relief after immersing yourself in one of the most fiercely contested sieges in history, then we are ending on a more positive note.

Share the love for Malta, and indulge in some pure escapism with Sue Moorcroft's 2020 release *Summer On A Sunny Island*. The story follows Rosa, who heads off to spend the summer in Malta after her relationship ends. Although there to work, she meets the handsome Zach, who seems to attract trouble, along with Rosa's attention. Will they find love? That's for you to find out, but we can testify to Sue's love of Malta and the joy writing this book gave her.

"I love and adore Malta. I was brought up there as an army kid and when I wrote *Summer On A Sunny Island* I gave my characters something I'd dearly love to have again - a summer in Malta. The apartments they occupy in Ta' Xbiex are a stone's throw from where we once lived and nearby Gżira Gardens and the yacht marina were my childhood playgrounds. The story of Rosa and Zach standing at life's crossroads is played out now in the present day, but there's a definite echo of the Malta I knew."

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