



The Bricks that Built the Houses

By Kate Tempest

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The Bricks that Built the Houses By Kate Tempest

Becky, Harry, and Leon are leaving London in a fourth-hand Ford with a suitcase full of stolen money, in a mess of tangled loyalties and impulses. But can they truly leave the city that's in their bones?

Kate Tempest's novel reaches back through time--through tensely quiet dining rooms and crassly loud clubs--to the first time Becky and Harry meet. It sprawls through their lives and those they touch--of their families and friends and faces on the street--revealing intimacies and the moments that make them. And it captures the contemporary struggle of urban life, of young people seeking jobs or juggling jobs, harboring ambitions and making compromises.

The Bricks that Built the Houses is an unexpected love story. It's about being young, but being part of something old. It's about how we become ourselves, and how we effect our futures. Rich in character and restless in perspective, driven by ethics and empathy, it asks--and seeks to answer--how best to live with and love one another.

Kate Tempest, a major talent in the poetry and music worlds, sits poised to become a major novelist as well.

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The Bricks that Built the Houses By Kate Tempest Bibliography

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Editorial Review

From School Library Journal

Rapper, performance artist, and poet Tempest has taken the main plot lines contained in her critically acclaimed hip-hop album *Everybody Down* and expanded them into this spectacularly moving debut novel. The work centers on two pairs of 20-somethings in modern London—a drug dealer named Harry and her best friend and "tough" Leon; and an erotic masseuse and dancer named Becky and her overprotective boyfriend Pete. As Tempest follows these four young people trying to find their place in the gritty underbelly of London and introduces readers to their friends and families, it becomes apparent that they are connected in seemingly preposterously coincidental ways. But Tempest justifies these coincidences. She has an ostensibly compulsive need to toss off new stories and characters: nearly every time readers meet characters, Tempest discusses their tangential backstories and family histories. Each tangent works as a perfect miniature short story, giving weight to the way it later connects back to the main plot. More importantly, the structure of the novel makes the coincidental nature of the plot necessary. The two overarching themes are the conflicting relationships with work and family—nearly every character comes from a broken home, and all work problematic jobs while secretly longing for middlebrow successes, such as owning a café. When it becomes clear that these characters and the plot are tangled together specifically by familial and business connections, the themes of the novel blossom into deeply felt catharses. VERDICT Fans of Margo Lanagan and Adam Rapp will be entranced by Tempest's brutally modern prose and her tender understanding of young people coming of age in an unforgiving world.—Mark Flowers, Rio Vista, Library, CA

Review

"[*The Bricks that Built the Houses*] marks the arrival of a significant new voice . . . deeply affecting: cinematic in scope; touching in its emphatic humanity . . . Tempest's voice--by turns raging and tender--never falters. By the time the novel reaches its cleareyed climax, cleverly undercutting its own promised happy ending, the reader is left with the impression of a work that hums with human life." - *New York Times Book Review, Editors' Choice*

"A novel that perfectly captures the modern trials and tribulations of youth and urban life in London." - *BuzzFeed*

"Tempest has a knack for the devastating throwaway line--a skill-honed, no doubt, from years of rapping and spoken-word performances. Her work is rich with underlinable lines . . . Captivating." - *New Yorker*

"[Tempest is] a Zadie Smith if Smith were in her 20s again . . . An artistic prodigy . . . [Her] captivating *The Bricks That Built the Houses* is rich in detail, clever in plot and filled with characters who live on the edge but never quite give up." - *Shelf Awareness*

"With a scope that rivals Jeffrey Eugenides' *Middlesex*, Tempest juggles themes of family, history, and womanhood." - *Booklist*

"This is a bold, bright, beguiling novel; a lustrous pageant that dazzles and grips . . . [Tempest] may well be unstoppable." - *Sunday Telegraph*

"Blake, Shakespeare, Eliot, the Wu-Tang Clan: when an artist's outlook on boundaries is so dizzyingly open, you long to know what happens next." - *The Guardian*

"Tempest is brilliant at capturing a distinctly contemporary state of mind . . . Her writing has a startling, unmediated freshness." - *Metro*

"[This] fast-paced, filmic narrative brims with energy." - *Vogue UK*

"It's hard not to be blown away by Kate Tempest . . . A stirring, post-Dickensian lens trained on London's lonely underbelly." - *Evening Standard*

"She has that vanishingly rare combination of heavyweight literary credentials and, having started out as a spoken-word artist on the hip-hop scene, a deep understanding of [London] at street level. Both of these aspects of her writing shine through in *The Bricks That Built the Houses*, which is as lyrical as it is gritty." - *New Statesman*

"Tempest is a worthy champion for a generation of disillusioned youth." - *Sunday Times*

"Explosive . . . It fairly flies off the page." - *Observer*

"Remarkable not only for its timely commentary on the financial difficulties faced by many millennials, but for its meticulous examination of parents' inability to understand their children's struggles . . . *The Bricks That Built the Houses* creates a complex narrative that rarely falters and eventually coheres into a strong and lyrical whole." - *The Millions*

"Uncontainable . . . In her restless, relentless creativity, this unique talent hops freely from one art form to another . . . Tempest has proved you can have intergenerational appeal and still be cool, and that you can stretch your creative wings and not settle in one place. Long may she continue." - Lyn Gardner, *Guardian*

"When Tempest's angst-ridden lyricism is let off the leash, the effect is thrilling . . . Her lonely protagonists . . . come to seem both painfully particular and impressively archetypal . . . Pinpoint evocation of a milieu, its texture and contours, all delivered with an intensely gathered and focused energy." - Alex Clark, *Guardian*

About the Author

Kate Tempest grew up in southeast London, where she still lives. She has gained acclaim as a poet, playwright, rapper, and recording artist. Her long poem *Brand New Ancients*, conceived as a performance piece, won the Ted Hughes Award for Poetry in 2012. In 2014, her album *Everybody Down* was shortlisted for the Mercury Prize and she was selected as one of this decade's Next Generation Poets by the Poetry Book Society. She is also the author of the collection *Hold Your Own*. This is her first novel.

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Allison Carson:

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Cheryl Alexander:

The reason why? Because this The Bricks that Built the Houses is an unordinary book that the inside of the book waiting for you to snap the item but latter it will zap you with the secret that inside. Reading this book close to it was fantastic author who else write the book in such wonderful way makes the content interior easier to understand, entertaining technique but still convey the meaning thoroughly. So , it is good for you for not hesitating having this ever again or you going to regret it. This book will give you a lot of rewards than the other book get such as help improving your skill and your critical thinking way. So , still want to delay having that book? If I have been you I will go to the publication store hurriedly.

Randolph Urban:

Is it you actually who having spare time after that spend it whole day by simply watching television programs or just resting on the bed? Do you need something new? This The Bricks that Built the Houses can be the answer, oh how comes? A fresh book you know. You are thus out of date, spending your free time by reading in this new era is common not a nerd activity. So what these guides have than the others?

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