Quick reads

Dark Matter and the Dinosaurs: The Astounding Interconnectedness of the Universe
Lisa Randall
Bodley Head, £25

If you've been craving a more substantial read following a season of stock clearing, renowned theoretical physicist Lisa Randall's latest book might be just what you're looking for. In Dark Matter And The Dinosaurs, she suggests a wildly exciting idea - that dark matter could be responsible for the movement of celestial bodies. As a result, she suggests, the asteroid or comet falling to earth that brought about the extinction of the dinosaurs could be down to this invisible force - and, in turn, have had a huge influence over the development of our own species too. Randall is transparent from the off that this is a theory - not a proven fact. So as a result, you're drawn on an exciting journey exploring the depths of her ideas. Plain, clear to understand and engaging.

Amy Nicholson

Create Your Own Alien Adventure: It's OK! We're Going To Save The Planet
Andrew Judge and Chris Judge
Scholastic Press, £5.99

Children of the Eighties and Nineties will be extremely familiar with the Choose Your Own Adventure concept. Chris and Andrew Judge are now putting their own spin on the genre, with this book for kids aged seven and older, which involves drawing in some of the pictures, ripping and folding pages, as well as choosing which way to take our heroine Daisy Doodle. It's an ordinary Thursday morning in Doodletown, and Daisy's on her way to school - but is it raining or sunny? You decide. During a particularly boring lesson about their planet, Scratchpad, Daisy spots an alien out the window and gives chase... It's all extremely entertaining.

Kate Whiting

Why Fonts Matter
Sarah Hyndman
Virgin Books, £16.99

Can fonts - the 'look' of letters and words - really alter the taste of your food? Or even change what certain words mean to you? One graphic designer certainly thinks typography plays a big influence in our lives and that we respond emotionally to fonts - whether we know it or not. Sarah Hyndman, who has worked in the industry for over a decade, explains how fonts have different personalities while pointing out that there's a subtle art behind how they elicit emotional responses. Hyndman uses the example of American clothes retailer Gap, who changed their logo five years ago to a new font, only to scrap its redesign and revert back to the original logo following protests from loyal customers. Next time you come across fonts splashed on a can of baked beans, or pick up a magazine with beautiful cursive writing, there's a chance they are subtly speaking to you.

Nillima Marshall

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