

THE FELLOWSHIP OF PUZZLEMAKERS

Samuel Burr

‘Can I ask you something?’ Clayton says, turning to his friend on the bench. ‘Why is so little known about where I’ve come from?’

‘You stumped us didn’t you?’ Earl replies with a shrug. ‘You’re the mystery we’ve never been able to solve.’

Clayton Stumper is an enigma. He’s twenty-four years old, but he dresses like your grandad and drinks sherry like your aunt. Abandoned at birth on the front steps of the Fellowship of Puzzlemakers, he was raised by a group of enigmatologists and finds himself among the last survivors of a fading institution. When Clayton’s best friend – the esteemed crossword compiler Pippa Allsbrook – passes away, she bestows her final puzzle to him. It promises to reveal the mystery of his parentage and prepare him for life beyond the walls of the commune.

But as Clay begins to unpick the clues, he uncovers something even the Fellowship have never been able to solve. It’s a secret that will reshape his future for good...

With an ensemble cast of eccentric puzzlemakers and a young protagonist who inhabits their spirit, this is a tender, witty and gloriously uplifting debut for fans of Joanna Cannon, AJ Pearce, *The Maid* and *The Queen’s Gambit*.

Samuel Burr studied at Westminster Film School and now works as a freelance TV producer, developing and creating popular-factual shows including the BAFTA-nominated *Secret Life of 4 Year Olds*. A documentary he shot inside a retirement village when he was eighteen-years-old launched his career in television and inspired this novel. Samuel’s writing was shortlisted for Penguin’s WriteNow scheme and in 2021 he graduated from the Faber Academy. In his spare time he volunteers for elderly charities Age UK and Re-Engage. He lives in London with his partner Tom and their cat Muriel. He has always been old at heart.



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