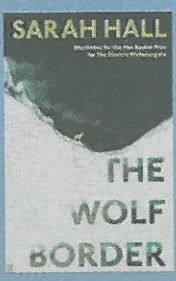




# A story of new beginnings, as the country goes to the wolves

**The Wolf Border** by Sarah Hall (Faber) ★★★★★



IN Sarah Hall's fifth novel, Scotland has voted to leave the union. Amid the reorganisation, one initiative stands out. Scotland is taking back its land, recovering great swathes of it from foreign ownership. It is in marked contrast to England's attitude

to the countryside, which, Hall suggests, has become a sort of managed, rich man's playground.

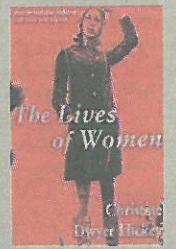
The Wolf Border takes place amid these big questions about the environment, territory and control. Wolf conservation expert Rachel Caine has returned from America at the bidding of a wealthy earl, who wants to introduce wolves onto his



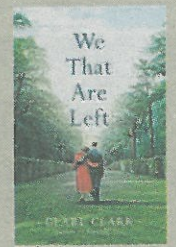
Cumbrian estate. There is public scepticism, but also plenty of support. Caine, who has spent her life distancing herself from human intimacy, thanks in part to her strained relationship with her promiscuous dead mother, feels a restless affinity with the wolves. As the project gets underway, Hall cleverly sets up two narratives. As the wolves are let loose on the estate, Rachel is emotionally brought in from the cold, thanks to an initially unwanted pregnancy, a new relationship and a growing closeness with her semi-estranged brother.

Hall is an outstanding writer and this is largely a magnificent novel. Her sensory writing – on landscape, motherhood, sex and the wild – overflows with soul-satisfying imagery. The novel itself moves slowly but is spine-tingling, nonetheless. **CLAIRE ALLFREE**

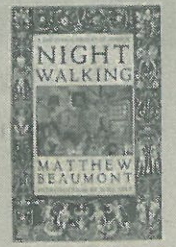
## WHY NOT TRY...



**The Lives Of Women** by Christine Dwyer Hickey (Atlantic) American suburbia is spotlighted in this novel about a woman returning in middle age to the small town she fled as a teenager.



**We That Are Left** by Clare Clark (Harvill Secker) Lusciously told novel about a rich family who suffer more than the loss of their eldest son in World War I and have to cope with a reordered post-war world.



**Night Walking** by Matthew Beaumont (Verso) A history of how the London night has fed the imagination of countless writers, from Chaucer to Charles Dickens to opium addict Thomas de Quincey.