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PAPERBACKS

WILLIAM LEITH

The Last Landlady: An English Memoir
 by Laura Thompson
 (*Unbound*, £9.99)



LAURA Thompson is one of the best non-fiction writers around, and she covers a huge range — Lord Lucan, the Mitford Sisters, dog racing, Agatha Christie. She has, among many other gifts, a deep understanding of Englishness.

This book, which is superb, is about her grandmother, who was the landlady of a pub in the Home Counties. Thompson captures everything — the pub itself, the point of pubs, the precise way that they can be a sort of theatre, how the atmosphere of a pub can work a sort of magic. Then there’s her grandmother, who understood all of this perfectly. An amazingly good read.

stories, it’s every man for himself. In Left-wing ones, people pull together. Great analysis of *The Walking Dead*, *Avatar*, *X-Men* and many more.

The Sky Is Falling!: The Unexpected Politics of Hollywood’s Superheroes and Zombies

by Peter Biskind
 (*Penguin*, £9.99)



WE live in extreme times, says Peter Biskind. He’s most famous for his book *Easy Riders, Raging Bulls*, an excellent study of the counterculture movies of the Sixties and Seventies. Here he tells us about the TV shows and movies of the extreme age we live in. It’s terrific.

Films and TV shows, he shows us, contain political messages. *Dunkirk*, for instance, “falls just short of being a Brexit morality play”. In extreme stories, society has broken down. In Right-wing

