

THE TIMES 20-01-07

Hot Type**The deals, seals and snubs from the world of books****Hot type**

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You can bet that Hollywood, on hearing of the death of Alexander Litvinenko, spent about a nanosecond feeling shocked before wondering if there was a film in it. So no surprise that three studios have projects about the former KGB agent. Sony's is *Death of a Dissident* by Alex Goldfarb and Litvinenko's widow Marina (Simon & Schuster, May). Warner and Johnny Depp have gone for *Sasha's Story* by Alan Cowell, of *The New York Times*. Litvinenko's own *Blowing Up Russia* (reviewed here last week) has been optioned by Braun Entertainment Group.

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The Bard gets manga'd in a series of graphic novels from SelfMadeHero next month. In *Hamlet*, something is rotten in the whole world, devastated by environmental catastrophes. *Romeo and Juliet* relocates to Tokyo, with warring Yakuza families. Both are adapted by Richard Appignanesi, whose experience goes back to such guides as *Freud for Beginners*.

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Conn Iggulden has the bestselling hardback fiction title (*Wolf of the Plains*) this week, as well as being No 1 in nonfiction with *The Dangerous Book for Boys*. Pundits cannot recall anyone else achieving this feat.

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Here's one way to handle rejection. Today in Letters, a website of extracts from writers' correspondence, ran this letter, dated January 10, 1939, from the novelist John O'Hara to Harold Ross, editor of *The New Yorker*: "Dear Harold, I have decided to reject your rejection of this piece and to give you a chance to read it over again. When you get three pieces at a time you think they can't all be good, and then you go beyond that and think none of them can be good."

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