

Readings Monthly

FREE | MAY 2025

New books from
Eimear McBride,
Dervla McTiernan
Sayaka Murata,
Josephine Rowe,
Edward St Aubyn,
Ocean Vuong
and more

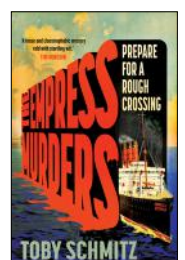
from page 6

Read an extract from
Vaccine Nation by
Raina MacIntyre

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**LAURA
ELVERY**
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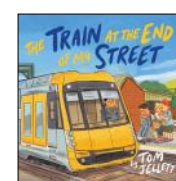
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SCHMITZ**
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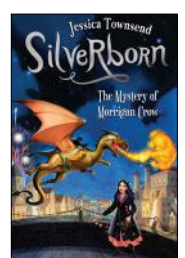
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**EMMA
CLANCEY**
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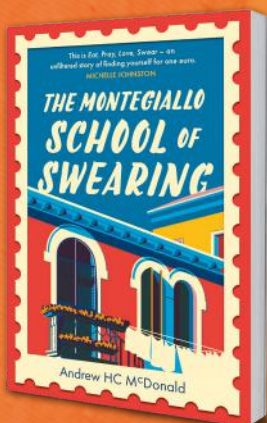


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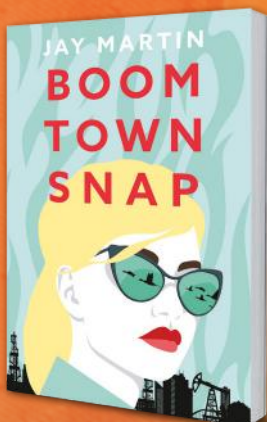
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Love, lust and lasagne.



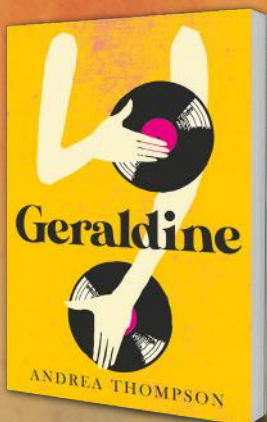
'It's Eat, Pray, Love, Swear.'
Michelle Johnston

When Brian Chapman accidentally purchases a one-euro villa after a big night out, it lands him with a headache bigger than any hangover.



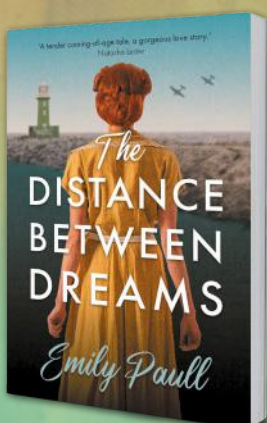
'Bold, unflinching and tender.'
Ashley Kalagian Blunt

Swapping an Australian mining town for the rugged Albertan oilfields, Georgie's just getting her life back on track when she discovers what she stands to lose.



'Positively wonderful.'
Vanessa Thornton, Jebediah

A woman who changes a world that wants to change her, Geraldine will use music to unlock her soul and find acceptance.

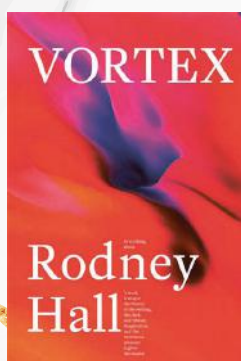
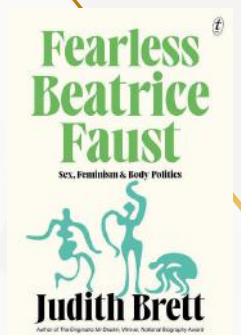


'An enthralling mystery.'
Natasha Lester

Sarah longs to be free of her upbringing. Winston can't afford the luxury of a dream. Their romance defies class until a family secret tears them apart.

20th
Festival CELEBRATION
6-9 June 2025

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woodendwinterartsfestival.org.au



News

Open House Melbourne Weekend 2025

This year's Open House Melbourne theme is 'Stories of the City' and, to celebrate, you are invited to share your stories of the city. Collectively, these stories will form a special exhibition, held over the Open House Melbourne Weekend, at the Bates Smart Gallery. From 29 April to 5 June 2025, you can submit your short stories online and be part of this collective exhibition. To find out more and submit your stories, head to openhousemelbourne.org

Mother's Day

It's Mother's Day on Sunday 11 May. You'll find plenty of ideas in this issue of the *Readings Monthly*, in our nine shops and online at readings.com.au. Please note that our online shipping deadline for in-stock items is Thursday 1 May: any orders placed after this date will not be guaranteed to arrive in time for Mother's Day. But our shops will all be open and our well-read staff are readily available to assist you with finding the perfect gift for Mum. Our April cookbook sale on select titles will wrap up on Sunday 11 May, so there is still time to grab a bargain before then!

Melbourne Writers Festival 2025

The Melbourne Writers Festival is back for 2025, running from Thursday 8 until Sunday 11 May. MWF is where intellect, imagination and inquiry take the stage. Readings is proud to be the official bookseller for Melbourne Writers Festival. To browse the program and book tickets, head to mwf.com.au

The Stella Prize shortlist 2025

The Stella Prize shortlist for 2025 has been announced, celebrating Australian women's contribution to literature. The six books on the 2025 Stella Prize shortlist are: *Translations* by Jumaana Abdu, *The Burrow* by Melanie Cheng, *Black Convicts* by Santilla Chingaipe, *Theory & Practice* by Michelle de Kretser, *Black Witness* by Amy McQuire, and *Cactus Pear for My Beloved* by Samah Sabawi. The prize awards \$60,000, and both fiction and nonfiction books are eligible for entry. The 2025 Stella Prize will be awarded on Friday 23 May. Until then, you can get any book on the shortlist at 20% off RRP when ordering online! Just enter the code STELLA25 at checkout to receive the discount! This offer is only available online, until 11.59pm on Thursday 22 May 2025.

Promos

Win dinner for two at Anchovy restaurant

Purchase a copy of *Viet Kieu* by Thi Le and Jia-Yen Lee and go into the draw to win a \$200 voucher to Anchovy. Online purchases will be automatically entered. If purchased in-shop, please email a copy of the receipt to competitions@readings.com.au by 11.59pm on 31 May 2025 to enter the draw. Terms and conditions apply, see online for details.

Events

with Chris Gordon



The streets are alive with readers and writers. This month brings authors from many parts of the world to our beautiful city for the Melbourne Writers Festival. Readings is proud to be selling books throughout the festival. In our own Readings program of events, we have something special for every reader. Most of our events are free and we want to keep it that way because we believe sharing stories, poetry and experiences is fundamental to a civil society. (But please do register online to secure your spot for each event!) We aim to be a place of connection in these crazy times. Let me know how we are going. And see you amongst the bookshelves.

A YA celebration with Walker Books Tuesday 6 May at 6.00pm

Readings Hawthorn, 687 Glenferrie Rd, Hawthorn
Free, but bookings are essential

This is a night you don't want to miss! Join Walker Books at Readings Hawthorn for an evening of drinks and dumplings, book signing and freebies with an incredible line-up of young adult authors including Ange Crawford, Neal Shusterman, Shivaun Plozza and more.

Jacqueline Maley in conversation Wednesday 14 May at 6.30pm

Readings State Library, 285–321 Russell St, Melbourne
Free, but bookings are essential

Join us to hear Jacqueline Maley in conversation about *Lonely Mouth*, a delicious, clever, tender and vivid novel about the conflicted way women think about their bodies, their appetites and themselves in the world.

Toby Schmitz in conversation Thursday 22 May at 6.00pm

Readings Carlton, 309 Lygon St, Carlton
Free, but bookings are essential

Join us to hear Toby Schmitz in conversation to discuss *The Empress Murders*, a razor-sharp, mind-bendingly clever novel that takes an excoriating look at the excesses of the British Empire, just as the sun begins to set on it.

Poetry Winter Warmers Friday 30 May, 8.00pm

Readings Carlton, 309 Lygon St, Carlton
Free, but bookings are essential

Our Poetry Winter Warmers series is back. Join us for a tall glass of red and escape the cold with a showcase of Melbourne poets reading their most recent works. Hosted by Tim Loveday.



Scan the QR code for our full events calendar, the latest information on our events and to book tickets; or visit: readings.com.au/events



READINGS MONTHLY

The *Readings Monthly* is a free, independent newspaper published by Readings. The print edition is available in all our shops and a copy is included with every online order. Sign up to our e-news to receive a link to a digital copy of each new edition or view them online at readings.com.au/readings-monthly

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FRONT COVER

The May *Readings Monthly* cover features artwork from the cover of *The Book of Guilt* by Catherine Chidgey, courtesy of the publisher, Penguin. Book cover design by George Saad.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

Readings acknowledges the Traditional Owners and Custodians of the land on which we work. We pay respects to all First Nations people of Australia, and recognise their connection to the land. Sovereignty was never ceded.

PRICES AND AVAILABILITY

Please note that all prices and release dates in *Readings Monthly* are correct at time of publication, however prices and release dates may change without notice. Special price offers apply only for the month in which they are featured in *Readings Monthly*.

Readings donates 10% of its profits each year to the Readings Foundation. Learn more about the foundation at readings.com.au/the-readings-foundation

SHOP INFORMATION

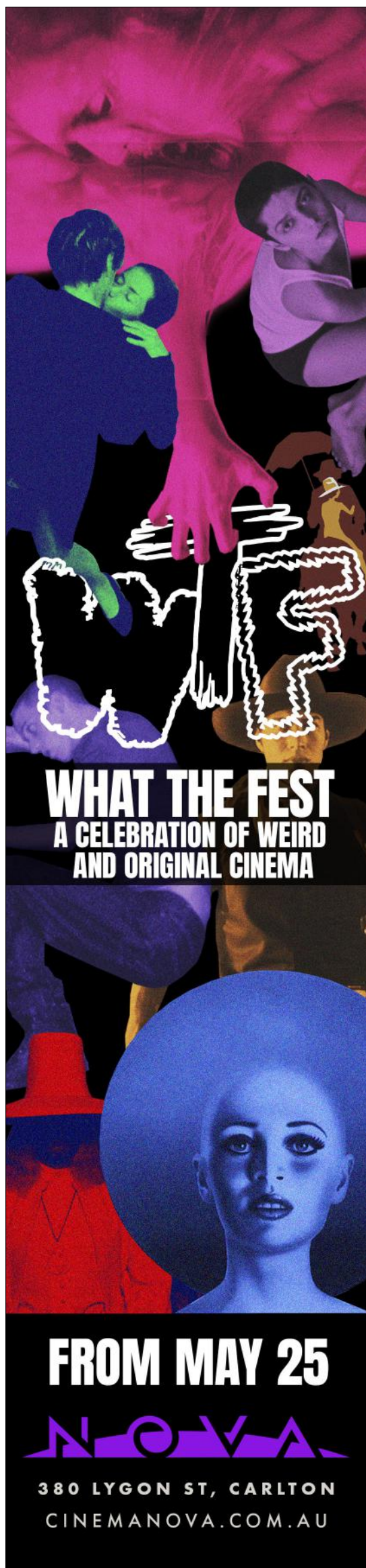
See shop opening hours, browse and buy online at readings.com.au. Australian online, mail and phone orders have \$9 flat rate shipping, with free shipping on orders \$100 and over.

CARLTON	309 Lygon St	03 9347 6633
KIDS	315 Lygon St	03 9341 7730
CHADSTONE	The Market Pavilion	03 9810 0860
DONCASTER	Westfield Doncaster	03 9810 0891
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HAWTHORN	687 Glenferrie Rd	03 9819 1917
MALVERN	185 Glenferrie Rd	03 9509 1952
ST KILDA	112 Acland St	03 9525 3852
SLV	285–321 Russell St	03 8664 7540

KEY

Your key to getting the most out of the *Readings Monthly*

- Review
- Events
- Special price



Foreword

with Joe Rubbo



The Melbourne Writers Festival is just around the corner, launching on the 8th of May. The theme of this year's festival is 'magical thinking' and the festival director, Veronica Sullivan, has put together an incredible line-up of local and

international writers. From the international cohort there are some really big names, but two stand out as being favourites with Readings customers: Samantha Harvey, author of last year's Booker Prize-winning novel *Orbital*, and Colm Tóibín.

The last time Tóibín was a guest of MWF was in 2013 when he was promoting his novel *The Testament of Mary*. I was lucky enough to be the bookseller at that event and to listen in on his discussion with Michael McGirr. I had never read any Tóibín at the time, but I was so impressed by his intelligence and charm that I felt compelled to

seek out his books. I have now read all of them except for the one he discussed that evening, *The Testament of Mary*. It is an enriching experience to hear an author discuss a work that you've read, but it is also fascinating to hear someone discuss their work when you haven't yet read it. So I would encourage all of you to book a ticket to a session with someone you might not be familiar with.

I am looking forward to seeing Harvey in conversation with Melbourne-based author Kate Mildenhall. While I presume they will be discussing Harvey's masterpiece, *Orbital*, she has an extensive backlist that I have yet to delve into. I imagine there are many fans out there who are in the same boat as me. Harvey's publisher, Penguin Random House, has assured us that many of her backlist titles will be available for us to stock at our festival shop. You will also be able to find these in our other shops after the festival if you don't get the chance to make it along to the event.

Dear Reader

with Alison Huber



We've had such a huge month here at Readings, with (ICYMI) a new shop joining our family in the amazing new retail precinct that has opened in Chadstone with much fanfare. If I sound evangelical when I say it has been a really

exciting time for all involved, I don't mind: it really has! Joe wrote last month about some of the things we think about in relation to shop layout and book placement, the relationship between categories (for those watching closely, True Crime has already moved location at Chadstone), and the way shop fittings enable the display of books and other non-book items we sell (which are often referred to quaintly as 'sidelines' in some parts of the world, but what we at Readings call Stationery and Gifts). It has been fascinating to see (again) how those decisions are playing out in real life now that the shop is open, the way bodies move in its space, as it becomes a new home for the inanimate objects that are animated by our work. How books appear to the people visiting a shop is a constant concern in the everyday work of the bookseller, motivating physical tasks that take up considerable time in our working day: moving books from here to there, checking the books people are asking for are truly visible, thinking about who might like to look at what when they're in this area or that, trying a favourite title again in a different location, writing a shelf talker to draw attention to the hidden gems you love in amongst all the (literal) tens of thousands of possible books to choose ... all this work that calls to the visitor: Look over here! No, over here! Yes, over there!

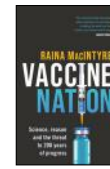
Month in, month out, there's an abundance of new titles, most of which you've never heard about, and this is where the *Readings Monthly* does its core work of introducing you to the great literary unknown. In the offerings this month, you might recognise author names for one reason or another (see for example, local lovely Hilde Hinton who has a new book this month called *The Opposite of Lonely*, which our reviewer calls 'a truly warm and wonderful read', or the 'safe hands' of journalist Jaqueline Maley, whose second novel *Lonely Mouth* is out this month), or you may have heard tell of a debut that has reached the status of 'highly anticipated' (see Dominic Amerena's *I Want Everything*, the first fiction title for Summit Books Australia, which inspired our reviewer to ponder, 'if maybe, just maybe, Amerena himself might be the next big thing'), or you might know the subject of the tale in question (the 'haunting and thought-provoking achievement' that is our Fiction Book of the Month, *Nightingale*, which author Laura Elvery has based on the life of the historical figure of a certain Florence, or Georgia Rose Phillips' debut, *The Bearcat*, based on the notorious cult The Family and its leader Anne Hamilton-Byrne, which our reviewer calls 'ambitious and complex'). You might instead seek genre fiction (perhaps the debut Australian sci-fi piece from Cadance Bell, *Letters to Our Robot Son*, that our

reviewer says, 'will delight any lover' of the genre, or our Crime Book of the Month, Toby Schmitz's *The Empress Murders*, another debut which our reviewer recommends for readers who, 'wish Agatha Christie novels were a bit more on the gruesome side, or that Hercule Poirot had a potty mouth': you know who you are!), or you may be on the lookout for a short novel (possibly *Little World* by Josephine Rowe, which holds so much within its brevity: 'a eulogy, elegy and prayer to this life'). Perhaps it's water-cooler fiction you need (*Rytual* by Chloe Elisabeth Wilson, a sharp and topical debut that we are assured is 'going to be discussed in group chats, on tram rides, at dinner parties and the office'). We have all these needs covered ... And that's just the Australian fiction! Our reviewers also direct you to the international releases from known and unknown authors including sisters Anne and Claire Berest, Emma Jane Unsworth, Ocean Vuong, Liann Zhang, Sophie Kemp, and Sayaka Murata, and the many delights of debut author Virginia Evans' *The Correspondent*, a very appealing novel told in letters written by or to Sybil Van Antwerp, the book's very memorable protagonist and devotee of its dying art (including fan mail she writes to one of my most favourite authors, the late Larry McMurtry).

Usually at this point I would make a clumsy segue into the Nonfiction offerings for the month, but I'll leave it to our reviewers to speak for the new books by Micaela Sahhar, Kumi Taguchi, Hannah Kent, Rutger Bregman, Jamila Rizvi & Rosie Waterland, and our pick for Nonfiction Book of the Month, *Chinese Parents Don't Say I Love You* by Candice Chung. I have to break with tradition to tell you about a book that's coming out later this year: *Baking and the Meaning of Life: How to Find Joy in 100 Recipes*, the first solo cookbook by superstar baker Helen Goh. I'm distracted by/thinking about/dreaming of this book because just this evening, as I race towards my promised deadline (dear Ed., it's nearly finished), I was one of a small number of booksellers lucky enough to meet the author and sample some of the recipes that will appear in the book. You may know that Goh worked as a pastry chef in Melbourne before moving to London in the early 2000s and finding her way to Yotam Ottolenghi. She has been a recipe developer and colleague of his for many years, co-authoring *Sweet* and, most recently, *Ottolenghi COMFORT*. You may also follow her fail-safe recipes featured in the *Good Weekend* and the *Guardian*. She's a wonderfully warm and fascinating speaker in her own right, and had some compelling and true things to say about the importance of baking (with bonus origin stories from the early days of Team Ottolenghi). We also learnt that she is a psychologist with a PhD and the book's title riffs on one of Irvin Yalom's, so the thoughtful approach she brings to the table (sorry, I couldn't resist that) is significant and erudite. Helen, I am more than ready to learn the meaning of life through cake: help me now! Look out for this must-have cookbook in October this year (we're taking pre-orders right now). **R**

If there was a vaccine against heart attacks, would you take it?

In this edited extract from *Vaccine Nation*, Professor Raina MacIntyre poses a question everyone should ask themselves this flu season.



Vaccine Nation: Science, Reason and the Threat to 200 Years of Progress

Raina MacIntyre

NewSouth. PB. \$34.99

Available 1 May

We are increasingly understanding the relationship between different infectious diseases and chronic diseases. In 2023, it was finally uncovered that the Epstein-Barr virus is a leading cause of multiple sclerosis (MS). Imagine a vaccine against MS, and a substantial reduction in the burden of MS after that vaccine is rolled out to populations. If you are affected by this debilitating disease or know someone who is, it will resonate that it may be preventable in the future. Human papillomavirus is the main cause of cervical cancer, and we are already seeing substantial declines in the rate of cervical cancer in countries that implemented vaccination of pre-teens. Hepatocellular carcinoma, a deadly form of liver cancer, is caused by the hepatitis B virus. Forty years after the introduction of hepatitis B vaccines, we are seeing a dramatic decline in liver cancer in countries that implemented universal infant vaccination. We will soon have mRNA vaccines that act directly against cancers. The leading cause of death and disease in the world, however, is cardiovascular disease. Heart attacks and strokes comprise the biggest burden of cardiovascular disease. If there were a vaccine against acute myocardial infarction, would you use it? After 10 years of working on the topic, this was the title of a paper I published in 2017.

There's a well-documented relationship between respiratory viruses and cardiovascular disease. The largest body of evidence is around influenza, but studies also show that other viruses such as RSV and shingles, and the pneumococcus bacteria, can trigger heart attacks. For over 100 years, it's been recognised that rates of death due to all causes peak in parallel to flu epidemics. About 20 years ago, a swag of studies showed a massive increase in the risk of heart attack in the weeks following a respiratory infection, especially influenza. The work of epidemiologists Professor Liam Smeeth and Professor Charlotte Warren-Gash from the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine in the UK was particularly ground-breaking. They published a large body of work that showed the association of heart attacks and strokes with influenza, and several other infections, that set the scene for many others to follow. In a study led by Professor Smeeth, a heart attack or stroke was more likely to occur within one to three days after a respiratory tract infection, and influenza vaccination reduces this risk. Our own study, conducted in Sydney, found that almost 10 per cent of patients admitted with a heart attack had undiagnosed influenza, which may have triggered their heart attack, and that it may have remained undiagnosed had we not tested everyone on admission. One study using the US National Inpatient Sample with 22 million hospitalisations found that the influenza vaccine was protective against heart attack, stroke, cardiac arrest and death.

When I was a medical student in the 1980s, if you had a heart attack, your chance of survival to old age was greatly reduced. That is no longer the case because of amazing advances in rapidly restoring blood flow to blocked arteries. Advances in the medical treatment of coronary artery risk factors have also been substantial. The one aspect of heart attacks that has not changed much in terms of survival is a cardiac arrest. A cardiac arrest occurs when the heart goes into an abnormal

rhythm, usually ventricular fibrillation, that does not allow the heart to pump blood as it normally does to the rest of the body. Survival from sudden cardiac arrest remains low. If you happen to have a cardiac arrest in hospital, where there is a resuscitation team and a defibrillator, your chance of survival is good. However, most people have their cardiac arrest in the community. When the heart is unable to pump blood to the brain and the body, it takes six minutes for brain death to occur. It's estimated that about 20 per cent of the first presentation of a heart attack will be cardiac arrest. This is therefore the least preventable aspect of heart attacks, and it's a very compelling reason to expand influenza vaccination to people in the age group where diagnosis of heart disease has not yet been made but who are at high risk. In our research, we showed that extending free influenza vaccines (currently available for people 65 years and over) to adults 50–64 years would achieve significant cost-benefit for Australia by preventing the fraction of cardiac arrests associated with influenza.

Other vaccines can also reduce the risk of cardiovascular events, such as heart attack or stroke. Having shingles (herpes zoster) increases your risk of stroke and coronary artery disease, and vaccination is protective. I started researching shingles in the early 2000s while working at our National Centre for Immunisation Research and Surveillance. The first study I published, showing severe outcomes, including a 1 per cent rate of death after shingles. This was scoffed at by a disbelieving paediatrician colleague who said, 'No one dies of shingles.' Studies now show that having shingles can trigger a stroke or a heart attack, so it makes perfect sense that having shingles can kill you. Other serious complications of shingles include blindness if the virus reactivates around the eye, a condition called ophthalmic zoster. It can also cause meningitis, and I have personal experience of this. The most common serious complication of shingles is postherpetic neuralgia, a very painful condition that affects about 10 per cent of people with shingles and causes chronic pain after the rash has resolved. It's a nasty, debilitating disease. Studies also show that the shingles vaccine protects against shingles, post-herpetic neuralgia and cardiovascular events, especially stroke. Despite being recommended and funded for older adults, the rate of vaccination is extremely low for this vaccine.

About 30 per cent of people in hospital with pneumococcal disease also suffer a major cardiovascular event, such as a heart attack or stroke. Pneumococcal disease is caused by the bacteria *streptococcus pneumoniae* (also known as *pneumococcus*) and is the leading cause of pneumonia worldwide. Pneumococcal vaccines reduce that risk, especially of heart attacks, and especially in people 65 years and over, across multiple different studies. Yet in Australia, we stripped away the recommendation for people aged 65 to 69 years. The kindest explanation I can think of is that they forgot to factor in the prevention of heart attacks into their cost-effectiveness analysis, although pneumonia prevention alone would have made it worth it. And in 2020, the year this recommendation came in, it would have been even more cost-effective given pneumococcal disease was the

most common bacterial complication of COVID-19. An alternative explanation is simply ageism – selectively slashing spending on older adults, despite having worked hard and paid their taxes all their lives.

RSV is another virus that has been found to increase the risk of heart attacks and strokes in older adults. It commonly causes outbreaks in aged care. In a nursing home study that I was involved in, RSV outbreaks were not as common as influenza, but they do occur and can have high mortality. In 2024, new RSV vaccines for adults 60 years and over became available – two have been approved in Australia – but are not provided free to eligible adults as yet. Like influenza, RSV causes severe disease in infants and the elderly. The infant RSV vaccine was approved for Australian infants in 2024, which is great news. The adult vaccines are too new for us to know if they reduce the risk of heart attacks and strokes, but on principle, they should.

Dr Ziyad Al-Aly, a clinician and scientist at the US Department of Veterans Affairs (DVA), was named in the TIME100 Most Influential People of 2023 for his seminal work on the long-term effects of COVID-19. Using data from the DVA, he published many high-impact studies showing that a single episode of COVID-19 can increase your risk of heart attacks, strokes, pulmonary emboli, other blood clots, new-onset diabetes and a range of other serious diseases, with the risk persisting for at least 12 months after the infection. Studies confirm that the virus can persist in the body long after the initial infection. This can lead to ongoing immunological and inflammatory effects. The COVID-19 vaccines show substantial protection against all these effects, including myocarditis and pericarditis. Although myocarditis and pericarditis can occur after vaccination in about 0.005 per cent of people, especially adolescent and young adult males, the risk after infection is much higher. We have been told that repeated exposure to COVID-19 will make it mild, but research shows the opposite – reinfection can be more severe and result in worse outcomes.

There is no doubt, however, that COVID-19 will contribute a major burden of chronic disease to the world. Cardiovascular disease is the leading cause of death and disability in the world and affects about 5 per cent of people. Long COVID will make this burden greater and will cause other kinds of chronic diseases that will substantially impact the health system. Sadly, policymaking bodies have not caught up with the science, and we find ourselves with restrictive policies for booster vaccines and antivirals, both of which may reduce this chronic burden of disease.

To find out about how vaccines can also help prevent dementia, what is going on with measles, and why we should be paying attention to the recent changes in bird flu patterns, read the rest of *Vaccine Nation*. Find out more about the book on page 16.

About the author

Raina MacIntyre is Professor of Global Biosecurity at UNSW and an NHMRC Research Fellow. She heads the Biosecurity Program at the Kirby Institute, UNSW. Her vaccine expertise is in older adults and immunosuppressed people. **R**

Fiction

BOOK OF THE MONTH

Australian Fiction




Nightingale

Laura Elvery

UQP. PB. \$32.99

Available now

 **R** The first time we meet Florence Nightingale, it's 1850, and she is kindly but stern, rescuing a small owlet from being tormented by a group of children. The second time we meet her, it's 1910: she's older, frail, and near death, almost completely bed-bound in a house. Memories and dreams have become indistinguishable from reality, and she never sees visitors – until one fateful summer evening, that is, when a mysterious stranger appears on her doorstep.

Silas Bradley is a man with ghosts of his own. He claims to have met Nightingale a half-century ago, during the Crimean War: now, he's seeking answers about Jean Frawley, an elusive woman who inexplicably connects their two lives.

His quest is a window into a long-buried past. Through their exchanges, we shift between past and present, navigating dark and intricate histories. In the process, Nightingale's character – her contradictions, determination, faith and complexity – is exposed and unravelled, and the impenetrable figure of the 'lady with the lamp' is humanised and made real.

This is Laura Elvery's debut novel, but in some ways it is a thematic extension of her previous short story collection, which won a Queensland Premier's Literary Award in 2022. *Ordinary Matter* and *Nightingale* are both invested in the lives of women who have made contributions to history

and science, and specifically interested in considering them as not only myths, but also as people. This is cleverly indirect work, which enhances, rather than diminishes, appreciation for the given figure. Elvery's transition to the longer novel format is faultlessly executed, but some of the fragmentation of the short story medium is retained in her luminous, exacting prose, giving it a deeply compelling, unique and almost kaleidoscopic tone. The entire book is a haunting and thought-provoking achievement: a considered, poignant exploration of the many faces of Florence Nightingale, and a powerful vindication of bravery, care and women's work.

Ellie Dean is from Readings Carlton

Australian Fiction


I Want Everything

Dominic Amerena

S&S/Summit Books. PB. \$34.99

Available now



 **R** We've all lied at some point. It might have been a little white lie, or a misunderstanding that took on a life of its own. You didn't get a chance to set the record straight and

suddenly everyone you know seems to believe this ... falsehood. Hopefully, people soon forgot, or you were able to clear the air and move on, but what if you were on the cusp of what could be the greatest achievement of your life and you had to choose between deception and your career, dishonesty and your relationship with your partner?

For one young man, an accidental evasion of the truth allows him to discover the answer to one of Australia's greatest literary mysteries: whatever happened to the controversial 1970s author Brenda Shales? When he spots her at the local pool and tracks her to an aged care facility nearby, he can't believe his luck. As an unsuccessful writer who sells himself to medical science for cash and lives vicariously through the achievements of his girlfriend, the aspiring author knows this could be his one chance at notoriety. If he can convince Brenda to tell him her story and he can write her biography, he will be the next big thing in Australian publishing.

As Brenda begins to let this stranger into her life, he also finds himself sharing

stories with her. His presence appears to mean much to the elderly woman; the information she gives him seems to be everything he could have hoped for. But, as we know, appearances can be deceiving, and when everything comes to a head over roast lamb one rainy night, this author may find himself at the devil's crossroads. Will he sell his soul, or won't he?

Original, yet familiar, relentless, but enduring, this debut work of fiction will leave you feeling disturbed, amused and wondering if maybe, just maybe, Dominic Amerena himself might be the next big thing ...

Kate McIntosh is the manager of Readings Emporium


Letters to Our Robot Son

Cadance Bell

Ultimo. PB. \$34.99

Available now



 **R** It's always a delight to encounter Australian genre fiction – as a big fantasy and science-fiction reader, I may be biased, but if you ask me, there is simply not enough of it being

published in Australia. We have a lot of wonderful literary and general fiction, but are underrepresented on the fantasy and sci-fi shelves (at least, that is the case for adult readers – kids and teens are blessed with more from local authors).

Fortunately, we have a new addition to the sci-fi shelves that is not only by an Australian but also has a distinctly and proudly Australian setting.

Letters to Our Robot Son follows Arto, a sophisticated robot who wakes up one

day in a town abandoned by humanity, with no understanding of what happened to them. The only sentient robot in what was once New South Wales, Arto has nothing but a cryptic letter from his father (a.k.a. creator) and a sense that he was intended for a larger purpose. But, regardless, he approaches the world around him with unshakeable positivity and open-heartedness. At first, Arto's only companion is a stray black kitten he dedicates himself to looking after, but then a strange airship flies in over the mountains, raising the question – is humanity really gone? And if they're coming back, should Arto be trying to help them, or to stop them?

Letters to Our Robot Son manages to be sweet and funny while grappling with hard truths around climate change and capitalism. Through the quest of one kind-hearted robot, Cadance Bell questions the future of humanity and explores both the beauty and cruelty of which people are capable. This is a moving read, peppered with exciting action sequences and futuristic technology that will delight any lover of sci-fi. Perhaps most importantly, this is a hopeful book that acknowledges the dire state of the world in the 21st century, but suggests that doesn't have to be the end of the story.

Readers who loved Becky Chambers' Hugo Award-winning *A Psalm for the Wild-Built* should absolutely pick this up (and join me in crossing my fingers that Bell will soon be receiving a similar honour!).

Bella Mackey is the digital content lead

The Butterfly Women

Madeleine Cleary

Affirm Press. PB. \$34.99

Available now



It's 1863 and behind Melbourne's shiny facade, the real Melbourne can be found in the red-light district of Little Lon: full of brothels, the most glamorous among them is Papillon. For poor

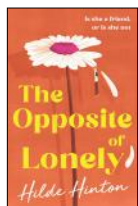
Johanna Callaghan, a job at Papillon could be her ticket to success, while for respectable journalist Harriett Gardiner, Papillon is strictly off-limits. But a murderer begins stalking the streets and Gardiner becomes determined to find the truth. As both women are drawn into the hunt, a long-hidden side of old Melbourne is revealed.


The Opposite of Lonely

Hilde Hinton

Hachette. PB. \$32.99

Available now



 **R** *The Opposite of Lonely* is a novel brimming with kindness, care, and compassion – which is no surprise, really, since Hilde Hinton is one half of Love Your Sister, the fundraising campaign she and her brother, Samuel Johnson, started after their sister, Connie, passed away from breast cancer. Since then, they've raised over \$20 million: their love and determination has funded some serious medical research.

Hinton is also the author of *The Loudness of Unsaid Things* and *A Solitary Walk on the Moon*, and co-wrote *Heroes Next Door* with her brother. She writes beautifully about ordinary lives – people who may not stand out in a crowd but

have rich, complicated inner worlds. Her characters are flawed, real, and utterly lovable. There's a warmth to her storytelling, a tenderness that sneaks up on you. Her style is deceptively simple – light, quirky, and easy to read, yet layered with depth and quiet wisdom. Themes of loneliness, connection, and self-discovery run through this new novel, with gentle nods to mental health challenges.

At the heart of the story is Rose. She's a mother, she has savings, and she is lonely. When her marriage ended, she let go of the shared friendships and his family, figuring they were part of the package deal. She just has Max now: her gentle, sensitive little boy. Enter Ellie – bright, warm, and a little too wonderful. Is she a genuine friend or just too good to be true?

Rose battles self-doubt and guilt, sometimes feeling completely stuck. But she keeps going for her young son. She works as a barista in a family-run café, a place where she feels safe and valued – a lovely kind of found family. She tells Max stories about trees – simple, beautiful metaphors for life that hold more wisdom than she realises.

And then there's her (ex) mother-in-law – kooky, wise, and holding the family together in ways no one expects. She's a fantastic older character who adds even more wisdom and heart to the story.

This is a book about kindness in unexpected places, the quiet strength of everyday people, and the slow, sometimes messy process of finding your way. Quirky, poignant, and full of heart – a truly warm and wonderful read.

Louise Ryan is the manager of Readings Carlton


The Remarkable Truths of Alfie Bains

Sarah Clutton

A&U. PB. \$34.99

Available now



 When Penny Bains opens the door of her Tasmanian farmhouse to a boy with an Irish accent claiming to be the son of her missing daughter, her life is turned upside down.

Alfie needs to know who his father is, but the residents of the tiny town and his newly found grandmother and great-aunts are all staying silent. As Alfie starts to uncover secrets that his family would prefer to keep buried, the one thing he does discover is that no one is willing to tell him the truth.

The Victoria Principle

Michael Farrell

Giramondo. PB. \$29.95

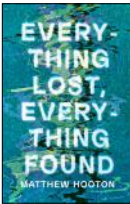
Available 1 May



The stories in this collection often begin with a curious subject or connection: the fear of birds, a nude writing retreat in Nova Scotia, Nirvana's song 'Smells like Teen Spirit' and a boiled egg, or the study of metaphysics in the Middle Ages and the early death of singer-songwriter Andy Gibb. They then proceed by a series of elaborations to unpack the associations that have gathered in the writer's mind. The associations may appear strange, but the process has its own logic and beneath their playful surface, they engage deep emotions.

Everything Lost, Everything Found

Matthew Hooton
Fourth Estate. PB. \$34.99
Available now



In 1929, Jack travels with his parents to Henry Ford’s rubber-tree plantation in the Amazon, where he loses his much-loved mother to a horrific accident. This has terrible repercussions for his family, and Jack is forced into the jungle to search for his absent father. Later, living in the heart of Michigan’s rust belt on the cusp of a new millennium, Jack faces the challenges of old age, including the gradual loss of his wife, whose memory is disappearing as Jack’s own memories resurface to invade and colonise his present.

Saturation

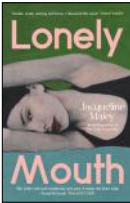
William Lane
Transit Lounge. PB. \$32.99
Available 1 May



Ambrose and Ursula, two librarians, strive to have a baby in a world punctuated by seemingly random episodes of violence inflicted as Bottrell, a fascist leader, preys on the insecurities of a populace saturated with information and the act of remembering. He attempts to master the past, viewing it as a source of corruption. Ambrose and Ursula are inevitably drawn into the conflict as they realise that they must save the past for a new generation to be able to understand it.

Lonely Mouth

Jacqueline Maley
Fourth Estate. PB. \$34.99
Available now



We all try, don’t we? To understand who we are despite the trials and tribulations of childhood or our great loves, or even through the work we do. We understand that family binds us in ways that cannot be replicated in other relationships. We know we cannot escape our pasts. Our minds and bodies just do not let us get away with it.

Jacqueline Maley’s very considered second novel is the story of two half-sisters, Lara and Matilda. Placed as they are, on opposite sides of the world with different careers, Maley explores the hidden ramifications of trauma. Lara is a model, 10 years younger than Matilda, carefree and living in France. Matilda, Sydney based, works in an upscale restaurant and is wedded to her role there but remains contained and alone. She hides a secret. However, the sisters are close, speaking often and sharing tales of their days. Then a visit home by Lara and the return of her wayward, apologetic father blows everything apart.

It is said that all stories have only two plots: that of us leaving home, or that of us arriving home. Here, we have both sides: each sister battling out their own journey and returning, of course, to a new self-perception. This compassionate, feminist story unveils cause and effect and explores the true definition of self-love. The title is a clue here, referring to a Japanese expression that addresses that particular state in which you want to eat, but you are just not sure what you are wanting. You are searching for the right thing to do.

Despite the heaviness of this novel, there is laughter to be found. There are insights into the modelling world, restaurants, art and even book clubs. Readers of the early works of Margaret Atwood or Kate Grenville will rejoice here. Those who read Maley’s first, excellent novel, *The Truth About Her*, or indeed read her journalism, already know you are in very safe hands.

Chris Gordon is the community engagement and programming manager

The Bearcat

Georgia Rose Phillips
Picador. PB. \$34.99
Available now



Based on a true story, *The Bearcat* offers a mesmerising and nuanced exploration of the life of Anne Hamilton-Byrne, Victoria’s notorious cult leader of The Family, and everything that happened right here in the Dandenong Ranges.

Told through two narratives, the novel explores the perspectives of Anne’s mother, Florence, in the 1920s as she raises a newly born Anne, and Anne as a woman, navigating her story through the formation of her cult in the mid-1960s to her arrest in 1993. The author, Georgia Rose Phillips, has chosen an intriguing and intimate analysis of The Family, one by which fans of dark true crime stories, twisting murder mysteries, and gory details may be surprised. A quick search online will show that Anne’s cult was characterised by their use of hallucinogenic drugs, illegal adoptions, cruel discipline and abuse of children, and more, including the unwavering belief that Anne herself was the reincarnation of Jesus Christ.

However, Phillips portrays Anne in the way Anne would have thought of herself. That is, as a woman raised by a neglectful father and a mother who felt she had given up her life too soon and too quickly by having children. A woman who sought to look after other women in difficult situations and to help children who weren’t wanted by their own parents anymore. A woman who thought she was put on this earth for greater things.

Any of these reasons might make a woman sound normal. However, the reality of The Family – the trauma, lies, and corruption of its members at Anne’s command – demonstrates the enticing and charismatic nature of cult leaders, and how they draw in those too vulnerable to see the truth.

The Bearcat is an ambitious and complex novel that subtly dissects the families that raise us, the families we create, and how they shape us as human beings.

Aurelia Orr is from Readings Kids

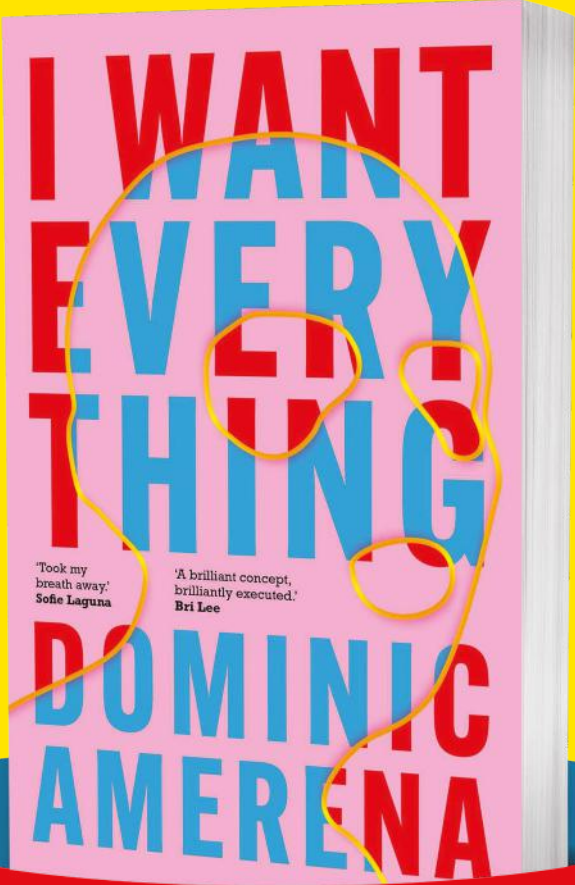
Little World: A Novel

Josephine Rowe
Black inc. PB. \$27.99
Available now



In 1950, a saint arrives at Orrin Bird’s house in a box. It is a box, he realises, that he built years ago, made for mundane household storage. But the saint is not mundane. She is only a child, incorruptible, so she may have died years or centuries ago. Her name, canonical status, and story are unknown. Yet, we soon discover, she is conscious, touching the lives of those she encounters

‘Delectably deceptive
... A tightly composed
satirical and psychological
literary mystery for those
who relished R.F. Kuang’s
Yellowface and Peter Carey’s
My Life as a Fake.’
Books+Publishing



‘Took my breath away.’
Sofie Laguna

‘A brilliant concept,
brilliantly executed.’
Bri Lee

‘That rare thing, a great
contemporary novel.’
Lauren Oyler



A MEMOIR ABOUT SAYING THE UNSAYABLE WITH FOOD, AND HOW EATING CAN BRING US TOGETHER, AND SOMETIMES — KEEP US APART.

'A comforting hotpot of a book. Every page offers a new surprising morsel about connection and choice; always nourishing, always delightful, always tender.'

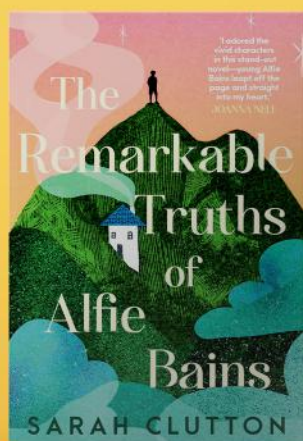
BENJAMIN LAW

Chinese Parents Don't Say I Love You

A memoir of saying the unsayable with food



Candice Chung



FOR READERS WHO LOVE THE MIDNIGHT LIBRARY AND ELEANOR OLIPHANT IS COMPLETELY FINE, HERE COMES YOUR NEXT FAVOURITE LIFE-AFFIRMING, DELIGHTFUL AND FUNNY NOVEL.

'I adored the vivid characters in this stand-out novel – young Alfie Bains leapt off the page and straight into my heart.'

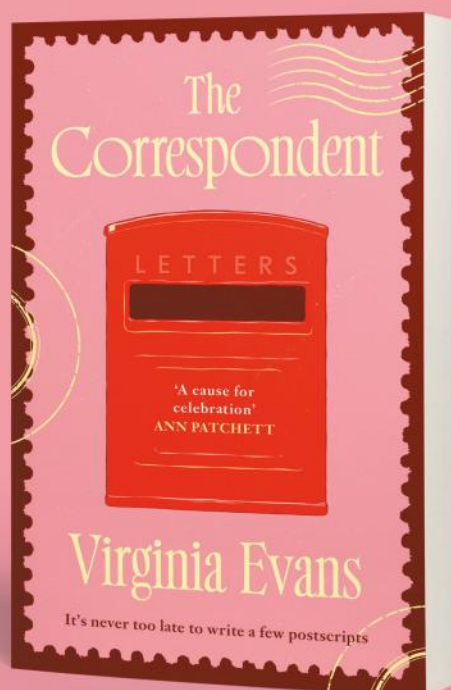
JOANNA NELL

ALLEN&UNWIN

AUSTRALIAN. INDEPENDENT. FOR READERS.

'Subtly told and finely made... a cause for celebration.'

Ann Patchett, bestselling author of *Tom Lake*



A heartwarming, witty story about the life of an extraordinary woman, told through her letters.

as they handle her box, her body, the remnants of her extinguished life.

Josephine Rowe's novel works as a eulogy, elegy, and prayer to this life. Rowe is preoccupied with endings, with three-part acts. Is the world ending yet? Is this the beginning of the end, or the end of the beginning? What does it mean for things to go on far beyond where they're supposed to end? What does it mean for this saint's body to remain, when her life does not? What does it mean for her to belong in Orrin's box, when he no longer uses it? What does it mean for Orrin's little house, in the red Australian dust, to stay here when nothing else has?

Half a century later, Mathilde wonders the same thing. She has been road tripping across Australia, but here, discovering the saint still in her box, she pauses. Orrin Bird is long gone. But does this represent an end for her too? Or another beginning?

Rowe does not just care about endings, but also the little moments, the through-lines, that give an ending meaning. The crunch of honeycomb, collapsing and pooling in Mathilde's mouth. A name, heard in the mouths of the saint's loved ones, passed on to their children, flickering on the radio from time to time. The mouths we kiss and the mouths we feed. It is, as Rowe suggests, a little world indeed.

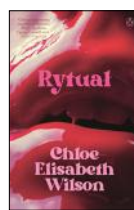
Teddy Peak is from Readings Carlton

Rytual

Chloe Elisabeth Wilson

Penguin. PB. \$34.99

Available 6 May



Chloe Elisabeth Wilson's debut novel, *Rytual*, is a darkly comic look at the cosmetic industry and the cult-like status of some beauty brands (that shall remain unnamed). Marnie Sellick, a once-promising screenwriter, works a soulless job at Ride On!, a cycle studio that caters to the affluent women of inner-city Melbourne. Her commute from her Thornbury-adjacent flat (Preston) to Richmond is less than ideal, as is her split shift each day. However, it is at Ride On! that she meets the alluring and insta-perfect Rose Lui, who recruits her to join Rytual Cosmetics, a wildly successful beauty brand founded by Luna Peter, a charismatic young Melbourne woman.

Marnie can't believe her luck, and while neither the role nor the pay is exactly what she was hoping for, Luna takes a shine to her, and Marnie is quickly brought into the inner sanctum. From the outside, the company has a lip-glossed, girl-boss vibe of picture-perfect lives, meticulously balanced catered lunches and endless bowls of smoked almonds. However, as Marnie slowly retreats from her outside life and goes deeper into the fold, she learns that what binds the team at Rytual isn't their shared love of skincare and cheek tint, but something much darker.

Luna is smart, wicked and manipulative – she knows what she is doing, as does Wilson, whose screenwriting chops really come to the fore. Each scene, person and interaction is so well crafted that even as you cringe you can picture it down to the smallest of details. Wilson takes us on a wildly fun and unnerving ride into a world of unchecked self-righteous anger, ambition and the desire to be seen as *more*. When the conversation has moved on from *The White Lotus*, *Rytual* is the book that is

going to be discussed in group chats, on tram rides, at dinner parties and around the office.

Rosalind McClintock is the head of marketing

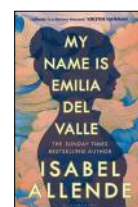
International Fiction

My Name is Emilia del Valle

Isabel Allende

Bloomsbury. PB. \$32.99

Available now



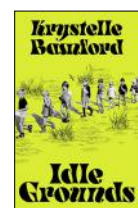
Abandoned at birth by her Chilean aristocrat father, Emilia comes of age in 19th-century San Francisco as an independent and fiercely ambitious young woman. She will do whatever it takes to pursue her life's passion for writing. When Emilia lands a position with the *Daily Examiner*, she seizes the chance to cover a brewing civil war in Chile. Before long she embarks on a treacherous, life-changing journey in a homeland she never knew, to uncover the truth about her father – and herself.

Idle Grounds

Krystelle Bamford

Hutchinson Heinemann. HB. \$34.99

Available now



In 1989 New England, three-year-old Abi vanishes from her aunt's secluded home. Upstairs, her young cousins are looking out of the window. Something is unfolding in the distance at the edge of the forest –

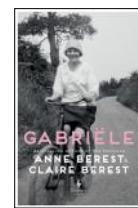
something sinister that is watching them back. The adults don't seem to notice that the youngest of the group has disappeared. As the cousins embark on a quest through their grandmother's sprawling estate, buried family secrets come to light and long-awaited plans are set in motion.

Gabriële

Anne Berest, Claire Berest & Tina Kover (trans.)

Europa. PB. \$34.99

Available 13 May



From Anne Berest, author of the bestseller *The Postcard*, alongside her sister Claire Berest, comes a fascinating historical novel that blends biography into fiction to evoke the life of their revolutionary great

grandmother, Gabriële Buffet-Picabia. Claire and Anne, both talented writers who have published individually, have come together to breathe life into the story of someone they saw as a forgotten figure in both their family history and art history. Translated from the French by Tina Kover, this novel explores Gabriële Buffet's life in the early 20th century European art scene, from brilliant beginnings as a composer, to her marriage with Francis Picabia and then her love affair with Marcel Duchamp. At the passionate heart of the novel are the intense, intellectual relationships formed between friends and lovers, which gave birth to new artistic forms such as abstraction, dadaism and surrealism.

More than just the Berests' clever and evocative writing, quick, short sentences and immaculate attention to detail, I

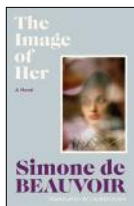
loved the interplay of historical research with imagination in the novel. The choice to write this as fiction, as opposed to a biography, allows the authors to do fascinating things with the writing, to take creative leaps, and to immerse you in Gabriële's life. The authors write themselves into the novel as the narrators, interjecting at various points, guiding the story, providing family context in a way that feels like they are fellow readers joining you as the story unfolds. They cleverly weave in quotes from other sources, drawing in the voice of Gabriële and her associates, without interrupting the musicality of the writing.

Above all, this novel had me hooked from the first chapter. For lovers of music and art history, of historical fiction and biography, for those of you who enjoyed *The Postcard*, and for anyone interested in the unique construction of what is being termed a 'true novel', I highly recommend this beautiful book.

Stephanie King is from Readings Emporium

The Image of Her Simone de Beauvoir & Lauren Elkin (trans.)

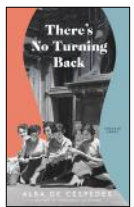
Vintage Classics. HB. \$34.99
Available 16 May



Laurence lives what appears to be an ideal existence. Her life features all the trappings of the 1960s Parisian bourgeoisie: money, a handsome husband, two daughters, and a lover. She also has a successful career as an advertising copywriter. But Laurence is a woman whose happiness was relegated long ago by the expectation of perfection. Relentlessly torn by the competing needs of her family, it is only when her 10-year-old daughter, Catherine, starts to vocalise her despair about the unfairness of the world that Laurence resists.

There's No Turning Back Alba de Céspedes & Ann Goldstein (trans.)

Pushkin. PB. \$32.99
Available 20 May



The young women studying at the Grimaldi yearn for new kinds of life. Monitored by the nuns who run the college, eight of them form a close group, sharing confidences and hopes for the future. But each, too, has her private secrets. With the passing months, their paths begin to diverge, as each woman struggles towards her own idea of freedom. A virtuosic group portrait, *There's No Turning Back* broke radical new ground in representing modern women's lives when it first appeared in 1938, facing immediate censorship by the Fascist authorities.

The Book of Guilt Catherine Chidgey

Penguin. PB. \$34.99
Available 6 May



England, 1979. Vincent, Lawrence and William are the last residents in the government's Sycamore Scheme. Every day, the triplets do their chores, play their games and take their medicine, under the watchful eyes of three mothers: Mother

Morning, Mother Afternoon and Mother Night. All the boys want is to be sent to the Big House in Margate, where they imagine a life of sun, sea and fairground rides. But, as the government looks to shut down the Sycamore Homes, the triplets begin to question everything they have been told.

Speak to Me of Home Jeanine Cummins

Tinder. PB. \$32.99
Available 13 May



Rafaela remembers everything that matters: her beautiful childhood in San Juan, her marriage to Peter, uprooting their children to the American Midwest, and losing all sense of her place in the world. Her 22-year-old granddaughter Daisy returns to San Juan to reconnect with their past, and ends up in hospital. Now Rafaela and her daughter must return to the city where it all began, to gather by Daisy's bedside and confront the twists of fate that have caused a growing rift in their family and led them to this moment.

Waist Deep Linea Maja Ernst & Sherilyn Nicolette Hellberg (trans.)

Jonathan Cape. PB. \$34.99
Available 13 May



Five friends; seven days. A chance to swim, sunbathe, flirt and mess around like in the old days. At least that's what Sylvia had hoped. But when her friends arrive with real jobs, kids and partners, Sylvia is left wondering what happened to the radical ways they embraced at university. Worse, Esben and Karen announce their plan to get married at the end of the week, striking a blow to Sylvia's simmering, decades-long crush on Esben. As the wedding approaches, will they achieve their arcadian dreams or will everything come tumbling down?

The Correspondent Virginia Evans

Michael Joseph. PB. \$34.99
Available now



R An epistolary novel, when done well, can be a succinct and fun thing to read, but can also present challenges in giving context to a backstory without being convoluted: too much detail can kill the flow of the letters. I think Virginia Evans has avoided this because the writer of the letters, Sybil Van Antwerp, is corresponding with different people, so we slowly get a sense of Sybil. She is a no-nonsense, fiercely intelligent and steadfastly independent retired lawyer in her early seventies who maintains her privacy and uses her letter writing as a way of avoiding confrontation. Her pithy communications are never overtly rude, but the recipients will be in no doubt about her meaning.

She has regular contact with her brother, sister-in-law and Harry, the young son of a judge she knew when she was a lawyer. Harry is very bright, but an isolated child, and his father worries about him. Sybil's relationship with Harry becomes a mutually important one. There is another unfinished, ongoing series of letters Sybil writes – but never posts – to an unnamed recipient, a

mystery that the reader will probably guess at as one learns more about her life.

She writes letters to authors, neighbours, her gardening club and other recipients. One thing we find out early on is that her relationship with her two children, particularly her daughter, is distant and they have intermittent contact by email or phone. It seems her work as chief clerk to a judge came at a cost to her family life.

As old age begins to bite, Sybil realises she may have to come to terms with some of her vulnerabilities and that the eloquence of her letters is no substitute for close contact with people. I loved Sybil's control of her life and lack of self-pity, but her later revelations and reckonings made me sad that she endured a loneliness that was masked by her stoicism and controlled by her letter writing.

The Correspondent is a terrific read with a singular main character who touches the heart of the reader.

Alexa Dretzke is from Readings Hawthorn

The Devil Three Times Rickey Fayne

Fleet. PB. \$34.99
Available 13 May



Yetunde awakens aboard a slave ship en route to the United States. Desperate to survive the hell that awaits her, Yetunde finds help in an unexpected form – the Devil himself. The Devil, seeking a way to re-enter heaven, decides to prove himself by protecting Yetunde and granting her a piece of his supernatural power. In return, Yetunde makes an incredible sacrifice. Over the next 175 years, the Devil visits Yetunde's descendants in their darkest hour: The Devil offers each his own version of salvation.

Before We Hit the Ground Selali Fiamanya

Hemlock. PB. \$32.99
Available now



Elom can't make sense of love. It's like a language he can't speak, though he's heard the words before. He wants to feel understood – by his well-meaning yet misapprehending family, his self-assured partner Ben, and his boisterous friends – but he never knows the right thing to say. How can you know yourself, in a world that's constantly changing? Set across Ghana and Scotland, this is an intimate portrait of one man's search for belonging, a family's attempt to love, and the choices that make a life.

Table for One Emma Gannon

HarperCollins. PB. \$32.99
Available now



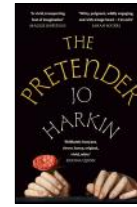
Willow has everything worked out: the steady partner, the successful career, the grown-up house. Until she doesn't – and she's cast adrift on the sea of heartbreak, grieving a future with no clear path.

With her life transformed beyond recognition, and her friends busy 'moving forwards', Willow has never felt more alone. But she's in good company. And when inspiration arrives from an unlikely source, she rekindles the relationship she longs for – but has long neglected. The one with herself.

The Pretender

Jo Harkin

Bloomsbury. PB. \$32.99
Available now



The year is 1480 and England is in peril. Twelve-year-old John Collan is stolen from his family, exiled and apprenticed to a series of unscrupulous political operators. He is groomed for power: not as John Collan, but as Edward Plantagenet, 17th Earl of Warwick and rightful heir to the throne. Far from home, preparing for a war that will see him become king or die trying, John has just his wits and the slippery counsel of his host's daughter to navigate the choppy waters ahead.

Open, Heaven Seán Hewitt

Jonathan Cape. PB. \$34.99
Available now

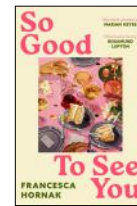


On the cusp of adulthood, James dreams of life far from his small village. As he contends with the expectations of his family, his burgeoning desire threatens to unravel his shy exterior. Then he meets Luke. Unkempt and handsome, charismatic and impulsive, he has been sent to live with his aunt and uncle on a nearby farm. Luke comes with a reputation for danger, but underneath his bravado lie anxieties and hopes of his own. The two teenagers grow closer and the bond that emerges between them transforms their lives.

So Good to See You

Francesca Hornak

Piatkus. PB. \$34.99
Available now



2004. Serge, Rosie and Daniel are enjoying their final weeks of university. They are young, inseparable and full of optimism. Fifteen years later, they are guests at a four-day wedding in Provence – and no longer friends. Life has not turned out quite as planned since their heady days at Oxford. Now, all three are armed with their best conversation and brightest smile. At least everyone is following the same script: do not bring up the past. But as the champagne flows, appearances slip and true feelings emerge.

Paradise Logic Sophie Kemp

Scribner. PB. \$29.99
Available now



R *Paradise Logic* is hilarious, hot satire. This debut novel from writer Sophie Kemp mixes surrealism, cultural criticism, and comedy to create a propulsive and unforgettable read, as wildly unpredictable as it is intelligent.

Reality Kahn is unbothered and pure of heart. Age 23, she moves to New York and spends her time making zines or working as a waterslide commercial actress. Then, one day, her drug dealer suggests she should find a boyfriend. From here, Reality embarks on a mission that leads her down a fateful path towards Ariel, an intellectual man who offers her little, yet of whom she becomes wholly enamoured. He and

his friends live in a grungy apartment, affectionately called 'Paradise', where she now spends practically all of her time. Determined to make him fall in love with her as much as she is with him, Reality descends upon an idiotic quest that paints a caricature of our most tragic selves: youth's naivety and the desire to belong.

Weighed down by the subversive powers of patriarchy, Reality's mission leads her across astral plains, slowly chipping away at the facade of compulsive heterosexuality. Simultaneously aching to be both pious and desirable, her identity is rapidly consumed by what others expect from her. Biblical motifs, such as talking snakes and disembodied voices, add additional irony to an already outrageous journey towards self-acceptance.

Kemp has created an original fever dream novel that reflects the zeitgeist of the internet era. Rapidly paced and sardonic, Reality's quest blurs the line between real life and hallucination, imitating our digitally saturated world. This epic tale of jest is painfully honest and, in moments, alarmingly real, revealing beneath its wicked colours questions of desire, sex and femininity. A book that will make you laugh out loud, *Paradise Logic* is a mischievous delight.

Aideen Gallagher is from Readings Emporium

One Hundred Flowers

Genki Kawamura & Cathy Hirano (trans.)

Ithaka. PB. \$24.99

Available 13 May



Yuriko leads a quiet, orderly life as a piano teacher. On New Year's Eve, her grown-up son Izumi comes to visit. Together, they look like a normal family. But Yuriko has a secret. When Izumi was a boy, Yuriko suddenly disappeared for an entire year. She returned, but the lost year was never discussed. Now as Yuriko begins to lose her memory, Izumi is forced to race against time as he seeks the truth behind this long-buried mystery.

The Names

Florence Knapp

Phoenix. PB. \$32.99

Available 13 May



It's 1987 and Cora sets out to register the birth of her son. Her husband intends for her to name the baby after him. But when faced with the decision, Cora hesitates. Going against his wishes is a risk that will have consequences, but is it right for her child to inherit his name from generations of domineering men? The choice she makes will shape the course of their lives. This is the story of three versions of a life, and the infinite possibilities of a single decision.

Kataraina

Becky Manawatu

Scribe. PB. \$35

Available now



In *Kataraina*, Kat and her whānau take over the telling of story told in Becky Manawatu's *Aue*. Auntie Kat was at the centre of events, but, silenced by abuse, her voice was absent. As one, the family recounts her childhood and the

time when she first began to feel the greenness of the swamp in her veins – the swamp that holds her tears and the tears of generations of tipuna; the swamp on the land owned by Stu that has been growing since the day he was killed.

The City Changes Its Face

Eimear McBride

Faber. PB. \$32.99

Available now



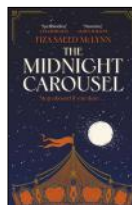
It's 1995. Outside their grimy window, the city rushes by. But in the flat there is only Stephen and Eily. Their bodies, the tangled sheets. Unpacked boxes stacked in the kitchen and the total obsession of new love. Eighteen months later, the flat feels different. Love is merging with reality. Stephen's teenage daughter has re-appeared, while Eily has made a choice, the consequences of which she cannot outrun. Now they face a reckoning for all that's been left unspoken – emotions, secrets and ambitions.

The Midnight Carousel

Fiza Saeed McLynn

Michael Joseph. PB. \$34.99

Available 6 May



Carousel-maker Gilbert works tirelessly to finish his masterpiece in time for the city's Exposition Universelle. But Gilbert is struggling in the wake of his wife and son's deaths, and as he finalises his creation, a dangerous idea forms in his mind. Chicago, 1920: When Maisie unearths a neglected carousel, she seizes the chance for a new destiny. But 20 years ago, the carousel was linked to a number of people inexplicably disappearing – and now history has begun to repeat itself.

Vanishing World

Sayaka Murata & Ginny Tapley Takemori (trans.)

Granta. PB. \$29.99

Available 6 May



R If you're tired of reading the news that seems to assure us that the future for humanity looks very bleak, you must pick up *Vanishing World* from the incomparable imagination of Sayaka Murata to expand your mind and find solace in the fact that there are alternative ways of living; we just need to make them so. Murata is now well-known for challenging the tropes of normativity, particularly ideologies around gender roles, and this book adds to her oeuvre as a much-needed antidote to the pervasive regressive ideals of the heteronormative family unit, straight sex, romantic love, and motherhood.

In Murata's *Vanishing World*, marriage is stripped of the prerequisite of romance, and has instead become a convenient mode of companionship that enables reproduction achieved via artificial insemination. Romantic interests and (less frequently) sex are pursued exclusively outside marriage, with either real-life humans or characters from anime and other forms of popular culture. But in this regime, our narrator Amane is herself an outsider, conceived by parents who were in love and engaged in the taboo of marital sex to have a child. Have her parents'

outmoded values messed her up beyond repair? In her own marriage, she and her husband decide to move to Experiment City: Paradise-Eden, a new kind of society where reproduction has become social as eligible inhabitants are artificially inseminated annually in a mass medical event; experimental but increasingly successful technology also enables men to carry babies to term in artificial uteruses. The babies born become the children of the entire community, and motherhood, fatherhood and the nuclear family are abandoned in favour of a collective parenting model. Every adult who lives in the city is a mother, including the fathers and those who have not given birth, and the children belong to and are raised by the whole community.

This wild and imaginative version of the future might sound like paradise to you or it might resemble a hellscape you don't wish to inhabit, and for Amane this reality provides all sorts of ethical conundrums of its own, but Murata's radical vision is a provocation to interrogate every single thing that is ever presented to us as 'normal'. Brilliant: an urgent project for our times.

Alison Huber is the head book buyer

Money to Burn

Asta Olivia Nordenhof & Caroline Waight (trans.)

Jonathan Cape. HB. \$34.99

Available 13 May



Maggie and Kurt are struggling to hold their marriage together after their only daughter has left home. They live in an old farmhouse in Nyborg, but somehow keep missing each other, unable to discuss the events that brought them together. Decades ago, a passenger ferry caught fire, killing 159 people. The event is still considered a national tragedy in Denmark and Norway. Years later, it was revealed not to be an accident, but the result of an insurance scam gone wrong.

When the Cranes Fly South

Lisa Ridzén & Alice Menzies (trans.)

Doubleday. PB. \$34.99

Available 13 May



Bo lives a quiet existence in his rural village in the north of Sweden. His days are punctuated by visits from his care team and his son. Fortunately, he still has his memories, phone calls with his best friend, and his dog Sixten for company. Only now, his son is insisting the dog must go. The same son that Bo wants to mend his relationship with before he dies. The threat of losing Sixten makes Bo determined to resist and find his voice.

Parallel Lines

Edward St Aubyn

Jonathan Cape. PB. \$34.99

Available now



Sebastian is in treatment following a breakdown that has left him with a fragile hold on reality and a desire to connect with the mother who abandoned him. His therapist, Martin, is also facing challenges, including his adopted daughter Olivia's relationship with her biological mother.

Olivia is producing a radio series on natural disasters, which itself seems to be running parallel to the events unfolding in her personal life. Over the year their fates collide in outrageous and poignant ways, as each of their destinies is revealed in a marvellous new light.

Twelve Post-War Tales

Graham Swift

Scribner. HB. \$35

Available now



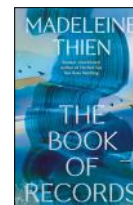
In the aftermath of the Second World War, Private Joseph Caan, a young Jewish soldier stationed in Germany, seeks the truth about lost family members. In the 1960s, a father focuses on his daughter's wedding as the Cuban Missile Crisis brings the world to the brink of disaster. In 2001, while planes fly into the Twin Towers, a maid working for US Embassy staff in London wonders if her birth on the day of the Kennedy assassination shaped her life. These are just a few of the characters we meet in *Twelve Post-War Tales*.

The Book of Records

Madeleine Thien

Granta. PB. \$32.99

Available 13 May



Lina and her father have arrived at a staging-post between migrations. In this mysterious and shape-shifting building made of time, pasts and futures collide. Lina befriends her neighbours: Bento, a Jewish scholar in 17th-century Amsterdam, excommunicated for his radical thought; Blucher, a philosopher in 1930s Germany fleeing Nazi persecution; and Jupiter, a poet of Tang dynasty China, whose brilliance goes unrecognised by the state. And as Lina's ailing father becomes less well, he recounts how he and Lina came to reside there, and what his betrayals cost their family and others.

Slags

Emma Jane Unsworth

HarperCollins. PB. \$32.99

Available 14 May



R Sarah, 41, and her younger sister Juliette set out on a campervan road trip from Manchester to Scotland to celebrate Juliette's 40th birthday. Juliette is married to a boring man, or at least that's what Sarah thinks, and has two young children. Sarah is single. She has always kept people at arm's length, but on this trip, she's ready to confront the past and connect with her sister.

Sarah, 15, is in love with her English teacher – they're going to run away together. She hates her little sister. Her best mate, Nessa, is cool, and they tell each other everything. They call each other slags, and it's said with pride.

Young Sarah and adult Sarah are both a mess. Young Sarah is struggling to navigate her teenage world: friendships, all-encompassing first love, her alcoholic mother, and not inhaling while smoking. Adult Sarah is in therapy, trying to work through her childhood trauma, trying to quit drinking alcohol, trying to feel something. Both struggle with the burden of being the firstborn child.

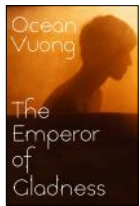
At first, the flashbacks to Sarah's adolescence were jarring, but as I read on, I fell into the rhythm of the story. It's told in a stream of consciousness and Sarah is an unreliable narrator, which brought an unpredictable energy to the book and made it impossible to put down. It deals with heavy topics, including sexual assault, but elsewhere the quick wit of the characters and the humorous moments keep it from getting too dark.

This was a funny, raw, heartfelt, uncomfortably relatable and devastating (how many adjectives can I fit in?) story filled with '90s references, teenage nostalgia and a sisterly bond that can never be broken. Although it was, at times, a challenging read, I thoroughly enjoyed *Slags* and I'm excited to pick up more of Emma Jane Unsworth's books.

Lucie Dess is the marketing and events coordinator

The Emperor of Gladness

Ocean Vuong
Jonathan Cape. PB. \$34.99
Available 13 May



R Ocean Vuong's newest novel, *The Emperor of Gladness*, opens on a struggling young man, Hai, standing on a bridge in desolate East Gladness, Connecticut, bracing himself to jump. A

voice calls to him – an elderly, dementia-ridden Grazina, who takes him in as her caregiver. Vuong follows the duo as they explore the hardships and grit of American life, an unlikely friendship in a time of uncertainty for each of them.

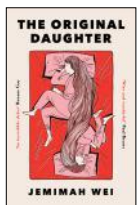
The Emperor of Gladness is a gorgeous testament to love, loss, and an undying hope for a second chance – one you hold on to until your fingers bleed. From Vietnam to America, it unravels cycles of grief, memory, and love. If you have ever interacted with Vuong's work, you will know the euphoric, nostalgic, and intense feeling that swells within you as you turn the first pages. *The Emperor of Gladness* is no different. I was emotionally, mentally, and spiritually invested even from reading the first two pages, and, as a bookseller, I will say – that is rare.

Vuong's immense talent with words means a world tucked away in rural America becomes one that you can touch, taste, and smell. He navigates Hai's family troubles, addiction, and mental health issues with grace, empathy, and passion. The literary formalities bend to his will; his brilliance dances across the pages. You will tear through this book, craving more of that specific reading experience that only Vuong can give you.

Ruby Grinter is from Readings Carlton

The Original Daughter

Jemimah Wei
W&N. PB. \$34.99
Available 13 May



Singapore, 1996. Living with her parents and grandmother in a single-room flat in Bedok, Gen is saddled with an unexpected sibling when Arin appears, the shameful legacy of a grandfather long believed to be dead. At once collaborators and sisters, Gen and Arin grow up inseparable, navigating the intensity of life in working-class Singapore. But as the rapidly modernising, winner-takes-all

world threatens to leave one behind as the other's star rises exponentially, the sisters must weigh their allegiances and bonds, the cost of success and ultimately reckon with who they've become.

Julie Chan is Dead

Liann Zhang
Raven. PB. \$32.99
Available now



R Liann Zhang's *Julie Chan Is Dead* is the kind of thriller that gets under your skin. It's dark, unsettling, and weirdly funny, with a razor-sharp take on influencer culture and internet fame. But what really got me was how effortlessly it pulls you into Julie's head – the tension, the moral dilemmas, the sheer absurdity of the world she finds herself in.

Julie is a supermarket cashier, living an unremarkable life, while her twin sister, Chloe Van Huusen, is an ultra-glamorous influencer with millions of followers. They were separated as kids, and when Chloe suddenly wants to reconnect – for content, obviously – it's clear she sees Julie as nothing more than a prop. But when Julie discovers Chloe dead under suspicious circumstances, she makes a split-second decision: she'll become Chloe and let the world think Julie Chan is the one who died.

What I loved (and found deeply unsettling) is how easy it was for Julie to slip into her sister's life. Designer clothes, skincare routines, lavish events – everything is curated to be consumed. But underneath the luxury is something much darker. When Julie joins Chloe's influencer circle at an exclusive island retreat, the cracks start to show. There are secrets, dangerous ones, and the more she digs, the more she realises Chloe's death wasn't an accident. And if Julie doesn't figure out the truth fast, she might be next.

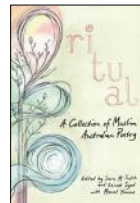
This book is such a ride – sharp, addictive, and disturbingly relevant. It made me side-eye every influencer on my feed and think about how much of what we see online is just smoke and mirrors. If you love thrillers that blend social satire with jaw-dropping twists, *Julie Chan Is Dead* is a must-read. Just don't start it at night – unless you're ready to lose sleep.

Nicole Vasilev is from Readings Emporium

Poetry

Ritual: A Collection of Muslim Australian Poetry

Sara M. Saleh & Zainab Syed with Manal Younus (eds)
Sweatshop. PB. \$19.99
Available 1 May



Ritual is a ground-breaking new publication from Sweatshop, a literacy movement based in Western Sydney which centres and celebrates the diversity of contemporary Muslim-Australian identities and experiences through the timeless power of the written word. As Australia's first anthology to showcase the work of Muslim-identifying poets, the collection offers an urgent and necessary contribution to the global tradition of Islamic-inspired poetry. It features 39 Muslim-Australian poets, including Sara Mansour and Omar Musa. **R**

An utterly original literary gem filled with history, romance and ghosts.



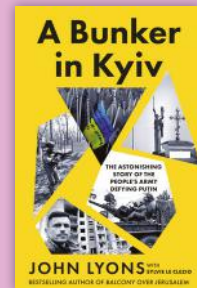
'A glorious, glass-sharp novel, raw and powerful.'

ROBBIE ARNOTT

UQP



A treasured son.
A rare condition.
A memoir of loss and joy
and everything in between.



The astonishing story of the people's army defying Putin, from respected Australian journalist and author of *Balcony Over Jerusalem*.



'Tender, acute, searing and funny, I devoured this novel ... Maley's characters are so gloriously alive I felt I knew them.'
Anna Funder



Sarah is 41 and the last of the party girls. But the things that once defined us shouldn't define us forever, should they?

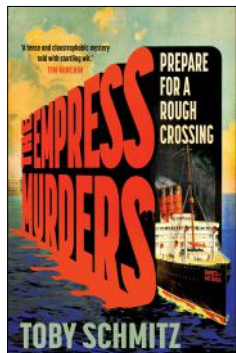
OUT NOW




Crime

BOOK OF THE MONTH

Crime



The Empress Murders
Toby Schmitz
A&U. PB. \$32.99
Available now

 The *Empress of Australia* is making her voyage to New York. It's a regular trip, nothing surprising is expected to ensue. And yet brutally murdered bodies are uncovered on board. Only Inspector Archie Daniels, a Scotland Yard police officer who loathes his job as ship detective, can solve this mystery.

Most readers would happily see any of Toby Schmitz's cast of eclectic characters murdered. With the story set in 1925, the British Empire is at its peak and the excesses, brutalities, and violence of its impact across the world is easily conveyed through the pretentiousness of the extremely wealthy passengers and the people of colour who are horrifically killed. The conceited and supercilious prose of the novel is stabbed every so often by the crass language in the dialogue, revealing the ugliness of these characters behind the facade.

One of the things I love most about this novel is that the narrative is from the perspective of the *Empress* herself. You get to know her history from before she became a luxury passenger liner, her own sense of humour as she observes the passengers she harbours, and, ultimately, how helpless she is to do anything while atrocities are committed aboard her. The ship functions as a microcosm of British colonialism and war, and the complex layers Schmitz has created are bold, witty, and ingenious.

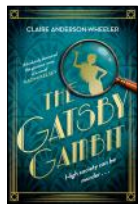
The Empress Murders ticks all the boxes of a classic whodunnit and yet takes on an entirely new world of its

own. I am always impressed by the previously hidden talent of debut novelists and Toby Schmitz has not disappointed. (You may recognise his name from his acting and playwrighting credits, however.)

If you wish Agatha Christie novels were a bit more on the gruesome side, or that Hercule Poirot had a potty mouth, then this is the book for you.

Aurelia Orr is from Readings Kids

The Gatsby Gambit
Claire Anderson-Wheeler
Renegade. PB. \$32.99
Available now



Greta Gatsby – younger sister to the infamous Jay – is finally free of finishing school. An idyllic summer stretches ahead of her at the Gatsby Mansion. But when Greta arrives at the secluded estate, she

finds she isn't the only visitor. Jay is hosting a gathering of New York's fashionable set. In the evening the guests enjoy a dinner party and dancing. The next morning, one of them is missing – murdered. Turning sleuth isn't how Greta meant to spend her summer – but what choice does she have when one of them could be next?

Vanish
Shelley Burr
Hachette. PB\$34.99
Available now



 Since Michael Brissenden's *Smoke* was released, there's been a real push by crime fiction authors to show the impacts of climate change, but also to embrace sustainability, including alternative energy and modes of food production. Shelley Burr's latest novel, featuring erstwhile prisoner Lane Holland, incorporates these issues neatly, no doubt drawing on her own experiences of establishing a permaculture farm in the face of bushfire threats.

Poor Lane, though. He killed his infanticidal father and got locked up for doing everyone the favour! Unluckily for

him, that means his career as a private eye is down the gurgler. Luckily for him, he's a fairly decent, intelligent sort of bloke willing to help solve cold cases of missing persons while learning about agribusiness.

Initially asked to help find the prison governor's missing daughter, Matilda Carver, Lane discovers that other people have vanished, too – all from a rural farming community led by Samuel Karpathy, the heir to the community's charismatic founder. This 'community' feels a bit too alternative and altogether too cult-y for Lane's liking. There are weird vibes.

Burr's writing, as in her other books, is sharp, but there's a lovely nuance to Lane. As a reader, you can't help but feel for the bloke and his plight. This novel feels especially real – like a story you would expect to read about in the news. It's propulsive, it's downright creepy, and a great read for these cooler nights.

Julia Jackson is from Readings Carlton

Nightshade
Michael Connelly
Michael Connelly. PB. \$34.99
Available 20 May



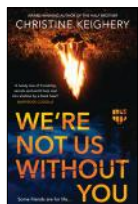
Detective Stilwell of the Los Angeles County Sheriff's department has been exiled to a purgatory beat. Once, he manned a mainland homicide desk; now, internal politics have relegated him to the rustic paradise of Catalina Island. It's all drunk-and-disorderlies and petty thefts, until a body is found wrapped in plastic at the bottom of the harbour. Stilwell is soon forced to cross all lines of protocol and jurisdiction in pursuit of justice. Is Catalina really the serene island it appears to be or is it brewing a deadly poison?


Ladies Road Guide to Utter Ruin
Alison Goodman
HarperCollins. PB. \$34.99
Available now



To most of England's Regency high society, 42-year-old Lady Augusta Colebrook (Gus), and her twin sister, Julia, are just unmarried ladies of a certain age. However, the sisters are amateur detectives who use their invisibility to fight injustice. When Lord Evan – a charming escaped convict who has won Gus's heart – needs to hide his sister and her lover from their vindictive brother, the twins take the two women in. But Lord Evan's complicated past puts them all in danger and a deadly cat-and-mouse game begins.


We're Not Us Without You
Christine Keighery
Ultimo. PB. \$34.99
Available now



 High school friends Lani, Tinker, Maya and Stig were inseparable until an unthinkable act shook the group. Now in their 30s, three of the friends are still close, while Stig has disappeared. With Lani's wedding fast approaching, she is determined to bring the group back together. This leads them to a spiritual retreat where Stig has been living off-the-grid, and to Stig's enigmatic partner – or leader – Acharya. Is it too late to save Stig from himself? And will bringing him back threaten the silence that keeps them safe?

The Unquiet Grave
Dervla McTiernan
HarperCollins. PB. \$34.99
Available now



 Crime readers rejoice! After a five-year hiatus, Dervla McTiernan's much-loved Irish detective Cormac Reilly is back. In *The Unquiet Grave*, Cormac – still dealing with the personal and professional fallout from the events that took place in 2020's *The Good Turn* – is called to investigate the case of a body in a bog that has turned out to be considerably less historical than anticipated. The victim, an assistant school principal who went missing several years earlier, was seemingly killed and surrendered to the bog in the same manner as the 2,000-year-old Croghan Man. But who could possibly have hated him enough to subject him to such ritualised violence?

Meanwhile, Cormac's ex, Emma, has called on him to help her find her missing husband, and an unscrupulous software programmer has concocted a scheme to cheat the National Lottery. That McTiernan can weave these three completely different threads together into a seamless whole is evidence of her remarkable skill as a storyteller. *The Unquiet Grave* is a finely-wrought police procedural that relies more on impeccable characterisation and evocative landscapes than blood and gore. The result is a compelling, fast-paced and thoughtful crime read from one of the genre's masters.

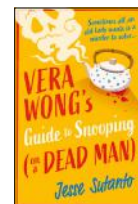
Lian Hingee is the digital marketing manager

The Maid's Secret
Nita Prose
HarperCollins. PB. \$32.99
Available now



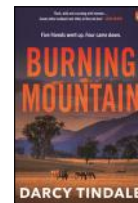
She sees everything behind closed doors at the Regency Grand hotel. But one secret lies much closer to home. An old trinket – a faux Fabergé egg – is revealed to be a precious antique during an appraisal at the hotel, making Molly a rags-to-riches sensation. But no sooner has the egg shown its value than it's stolen. Determined to crack the case of the missing Fabergé, Molly begins dusting for clues. For in the pages of a long-forgotten diary, written by her late gran, lie the secrets that could unlock all others.

Vera Wong's Guide to Snooping (on a Dead Man)
Jesse Sutanto
HQ Fiction. PB. \$22.99
Available now



Vera Wong is perfectly content as a teashop owner. She is not seeking opportunities for amateur sleuthing. But what else is she to do when a distressed woman called Millie asks for her help? Okay, perhaps Vera wheedled the story out of her. And maybe the case file for Millie's missing friend Thomas didn't exactly fall into her lap. Everyone knows a locked briefcase is just asking to be opened. Not even the aroma of chrysanthemum tea can stop Vera from catching the scent of this mystery.

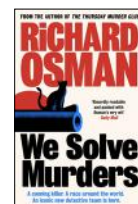
Burning Mountain
Darcy Tindale
Penguin. PB. \$34.99
Available now



In April 2006, 15-year-old Oliver went hiking on Burning Mountain and vanished. Almost 20 years later, Detective Rebecca Giles is called to nearby Mount Wingen, where a skull has been dug up. Giles is convinced they have finally found the missing boy, and that the four friends he was hiking with have always known more than they revealed. But when she discusses the case with her father, a retired Superintendent, another suspect is thrown into the mix; one that is uncomfortably close to home.

Now in B-format

We Solve Murders
Richard Osman
Penguin. PB. \$22.99
Available 13 May

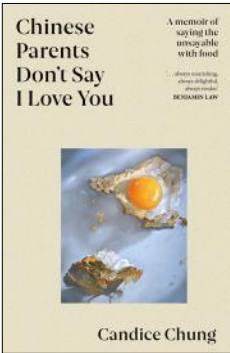


Steve Wheeler is enjoying retired life. His days of adventure are over – that's his daughter-in-law Amy's business now. Amy Wheeler, a private security officer to billionaires, is currently on a remote island keeping world-famous author Rosie D'Antonio alive. Then a dead body, a bag of money and a killer with their sights on Amy have her sending Steve an SOS ... As a breakneck race around the world begins, can they stay one step ahead of a deadly enemy? **R**


Nonfiction

BOOK OF THE MONTH

Biography



Chinese Parents Don't Say I Love You: A Memoir of Saying the Unsayable with Food
Candice Chung
A&U. PB. \$34.99
Available now

 **R** Mainly, this is a love story. This memoir of a certain time in Candice Chung's life does cover a vast territory of family and meals and cooking, but it is more than that. It is a record of living and loving in Covid times, and it is about finding happiness. If you can imagine the result of mixing Julie Powell's *Julie and Julia: My Year of Cooking Dangerously* with Jenny Offill's *Dept. of Speculation* and sprinkling it with Nora Ephron's *Heartburn*, then you are close to understanding this wonderful book. It is the perfect weekend read.

You may already know Chung's writing work from her restaurant reviews and articles in magazines and newspapers, where she writes with grace and generosity. Her first long-form work takes as its premise the time after Chung's 13-year relationship ends and she begins to take her retired Cantonese parents to the restaurants she is reviewing. Over meals – a \$40 scampi burger, anyone? – they begin to share their lives and heal a distance that had emerged throughout her previous relationship. Memories from family holidays and outings emerge, sacrifices are acknowledged, and delicious literary influences are celebrated. (The Choose-Your-Own-Adventure/hotel buffet passages are a particular delight to read.) And then, just before Covid restrictions fall over the world, Chung meets another partner. And everything changes, except the need to keep sharing meals.

Chung has written a highly original memoir that asks big questions of its reader. It asks us to stop and pause for a moment; to contemplate family, language and history, alongside the true meaning of hospitality. This is the type of read that will make you laugh, underline passages and truly

consider cooking an octopus on a Tuesday evening. I mean, how long could it take? Read *Chinese Parents Don't Say I Love You* to find out. You will not be disappointed.

Chris Gordon is the community engagement and programming manager

imagine their nation as having a natural right to explore, exploit and control the world to the south. By examining how and why Australia relentlessly pursued the acquisition of its Antarctic territory, Rohan Howitt recovers a forgotten way of thinking about this region: as one frontier of an Australian empire stretching from the equator to the South Pole.

Inconvenient Women: Australian Radical Writers 1900–1970
Jacqueline Kent
NewSouth. PB. \$34.99
Available 1 May



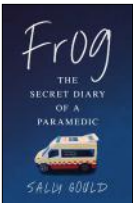
Throughout the 20th century, a group of trailblazing women writers challenged the nation's status quo. Miles Franklin's forceful voice invigorated the emerging women's movement. Ruth Park's *The Harp in the South* jolted the NSW government into developing slum clearance programs. And the work of First Nations poet and activist Oodgeroo Noonuccal (formerly Kath Walker) was crucial in achieving constitutional reform for Indigenous peoples. Acclaimed biographer Jacqueline Kent traces these women's stories, which were shaped by the seismic social and political events of their time, and illuminates their courage and principled determination to change the world.

Notes to John
Joan Didion
Fourth Estate. PB. \$34.99
Available now



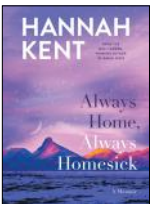
In November 1999, Joan Didion began seeing a psychiatrist, describing the sessions in a journal she created for her husband. For several months, Didion recorded conversations with the psychiatrist in meticulous detail. The initial sessions focused on alcoholism, adoption, depression, anxiety, guilt and the heartbreaking complexities of her relationship with her daughter. The subjects evolved to include her work, her childhood and the question of legacy. *Notes to John* is an unprecedentedly intimate account that reveals sides of Didion that were previously unknown.

Frog: The Secret Diary of a Paramedic
Sally Gould
S&S. PB. \$36.99
Available now



Life as a paramedic can be traumatic, gross, dull, hilarious, magical. You need to be able to think outside the square, keep calm in the midst of chaos, be in possession of a strong stomach, and simply brush it off when patients die. But behind the sirens it is very different to how most people imagine it. Based on years of meticulously kept journals, *Frog* is an intimate look at the human cost of the job and the cumulative effect of trauma.

Always Home, Always Homesick
Hannah Kent
Picador. HB. \$36.99
Available now



R When Hannah Kent was 17 and had just completed secondary school, she was awarded a Rotary exchange scholarship. She applied for the program knowing that she could be sent anywhere in the world, but she could not have known her placement in a remote fishing village in northern Iceland would change her life as dramatically as it did. Without that exchange, she would not have been captivated, or perhaps even haunted, by Agnes Magnúsdóttir, the last woman executed in Iceland, and her award-winning, bestselling debut novel *Burial Rites* would likely never have been written. It does seem certain, however, that Kent could not have avoided being a writer.

Always Home, Always Homesick is Kent's memoir of her time in Iceland. It transports the reader to another time and place, to a culture that reveres stories and storytelling, and into the inner world of a born writer. After a slightly rocky start when nobody arrives to collect her from the airport, the exchange unfolds with varying degrees of success at the homes of different host families amid Kent's culture shock, which will eventually transform and grow into a deep appreciation and love of the people, the landscape and the language. Kent's understanding of herself grows in parallel, revealing a latent sense of vocation. Having forged lifelong connections and feeling fundamentally changed, Kent returns to Adelaide at the conclusion of her trip but is

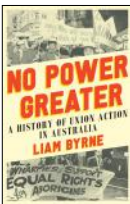
Australian Studies

Australian House: The Robin Boyd Award for Residential Architecture since 1981
The Australian Institute of Architects
T&H. HB. \$120
Available now



Step inside the most exceptional homes in Australia in this definitive showcase of the Robin Boyd Award, the nation's highest accolade for residential architecture. Spanning four decades, this collection highlights 50 inspiring dwellings that reflect the evolving spirit of Australian culture and identity. Featuring original jury comments alongside fresh insights from visionary architects like Glenn Murcutt, Peter Stutchbury and Kerstin Thompson, these houses capture shifting values, growing wealth and a changing cultural identity.

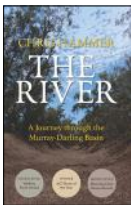
No Power Greater: A History of Union Action in Australia
Liam Byrne
MUP. PB. \$34.99
Available 14 May




Unions are making a comeback. Labour disputes around the world have hit the headlines as unions take action to challenge inequality. But while media coverage has increased, understanding of unions has not. In this lively history of

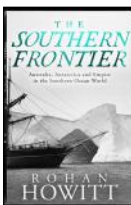
Australian unionism, Liam Byrne uses case studies to better understand the lived reality of unionism, and seeks to illuminate what unionism means, and why successive generations of working people organised and nurtured unions for future generations.

The River: A Journey through the Murray–Darling Basin
Chris Hammer
MUP. PB. \$36.99
Available 14 May



 Join award-winning author Chris Hammer on a journey through Australia's largest river system, the Murray–Darling Basin. *The River* looks past the daily news reports and their sterile statistics to reveal the true impact of our rivers' decline on the people who live along their shores, and on the country as a whole. A bestseller since it was first published in 2010, *The River* continues to be read as a history and as a prophecy. This updated edition includes a new introduction.

The Southern Frontier: Australia, Antarctica and Empire in the Southern Ocean World
Rohan Howitt
MUP. PB. \$39.99
Available 14 May



The Southern Frontier traces Australia's Antarctic obsession. It reconstructs Australian ideas, beliefs and anxieties about the Antarctic and shows how Australians came to

The Eyes of Gaza: A Diary of Resilience
Plestia Alaqaq
Pan Mac. PB. \$29.99
Available now



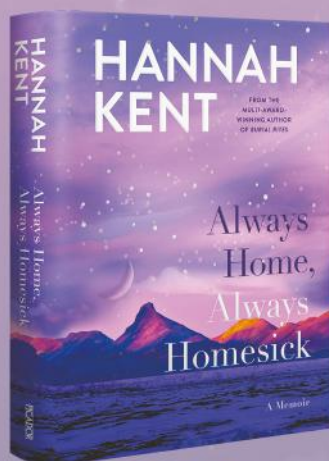
The Eyes of Gaza offers an intimate glimpse through the eyes of 22-year-old Palestinian journalist Plestia Alaqaq, capturing the experience of living through the first 45 days of the genocide in Gaza. Formatted in the style of a series of diary extracts – reminiscent of Plestia's own journal, and her poignant social media posts – the book endeavours to illustrate the expected horrors of her experience, while also showcasing the indomitable spirit and innate humanity of the people of Gaza.

Brown Female Doctor
Sarah Arachchi
Monash University Publishing. PB. \$34.99
Available 9 May

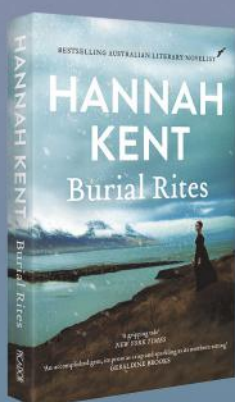


Sarah Arachchi is a brown female doctor who emigrated to Australia in the 1990s. Her journey to becoming a paediatrician has been challenging, right from the schoolyard. She tried hard to blend in, but she was unfamiliar to her peers. As an adult, she experienced a new kind of obstacle: being female in a male-driven hospital environment. When she eventually walked across the stage to get her paediatric letters, with a drip in her arm, a pregnant belly, a toddler on her hip and heels that could shatter a glass ceiling, victory was bittersweet.

In a land of storytellers, a writer finds her voice.



From
HANNAH KENT
international bestselling author of
Burial Rites



PICADOR

drawn back to Iceland time and again, in ways she can't always explain.

In examining her evolution as a writer, Kent offers resonant insights into the value of creative endeavour and a portrait of a country actively committed to its language and storytelling. Exquisite and self-aware, *Always Home, Always Homesick* is a luminous reflection on love, writing, and the importance of stories.

Elke Power is the editor of *Readings Monthly*

Read our Q&A with Hannah Kent online at readings.com.au/news

Matriarch

Tina Knowles

Dialogue. PB. \$34.99

Available now



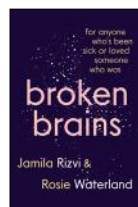
For the first time ever, Tina Knowles shares her remarkable story. *Matriarch* reveals a life of grief and tragedy, love and heartbreak, the nurturing of her superstar daughters – and the perseverance and audacity it takes for a girl from Galveston, Texas to change the world. This is a multigenerational family saga and a celebration of the wisdom that women, mothers and daughters pass on to each other across generations. It's a glorious chronicle of a life like no other and a testament to the world-changing power of Black motherhood.

Broken Brains

Jamila Rizvi & Rosie Waterland

Penguin. PB. \$36.99

Available 6 May



Jamila Rizvi and Rosie Waterland are two talented and well-known Australian women who have experienced very different kinds of 'broken brains.' Waterland – author,

comedian and podcaster – grew up amidst chaos. With parents struggling with addiction and mental illness, her childhood was impacted by trauma. That instability caused lasting pain, leading to lifelong struggles with her mental health.

Rizvi – author, presenter, political commentator and disability advocate – was living a fast-paced, successful life when, at 31, she was diagnosed with a craniopharyngioma: a brain tumour lodged deep in her brain, dangerously close to her optic nerves, hypothalamus, and pituitary gland. Even after two major surgeries, the tumour may return, and she faces ongoing challenges, including the threat of blindness and lifelong hormone disruptions.

For Waterland, the damage is invisible but ever-present. For Rizvi, the crisis was a sudden and traumatic event, turning her life upside down.

Broken Brains does a wonderful job of blending memoir, psychology, and science, combining highly personal experiences with research, exploring the elusive connection between mental and physical health.

In Australia, half of the population suffers from a chronic illness. Even if you are not personally affected, a person you love probably is, yet we still struggle to comprehend these conditions with genuine understanding. Chronic illness, whether mental or physical, is not just a medical challenge; it is also an emotional and a social challenge, too.

Broken Brains highlights the significant difference in how we as a society respond to these conditions. Waterland's struggles come with stigma, isolation, and misplaced guilt. Meanwhile, Rizvi's more visible illness, requiring brain surgery, lifelong medication, and major life changes, has been met with greater social support.

Honest, emotional and informative, *Broken Brains* seamlessly blends two extraordinary and deeply personal stories with extensive, accessible research. It challenges us to rethink how we see and treat brain health and chronic illness.

Louise Ryan is the manager of Readings Carlton

Find Me at the Jaffa Gate

Micaela Sahhar

NewSouth. PB. \$34.99

Available 1 May



'What is the task but to find my way back to the unfragmentation of the world as we knew it; to collect the uncollected, to make the unmade? To refuse victimhood even when annihilation seems to insist on it,' Micaela Sahhar writes. Her task is even greater than she states. In this family history, Sahhar collects her inheritances, her family stories, her time in Palestine, her culture and history and life, to ask: how does a Palestinian ever go home?

In a loose collection of essays, Sahhar details her two trips to Palestine – birthright trips – and the conflict she finds at the borders, along with the love in the interior. Her grandfather fled Palestine after the Nakba, but she traces her family, other Sahhars who remain. She finds records of long-dead relatives in Palestine and meets distant relatives now alive. This work is an assertion: we have always been in Jerusalem, Bethlehem, the West Bank, Gaza, Palestine, and we always will be.

Sahhar does not turn her sole focus onto Palestine, the place, though. Most of the essays are about Australia, and Palestinians in Australia, who are determined to keep their history and culture alive. They practise religion, they make food, and they mould the world with their hands. They feel a tentative relationship with First Nations Australians, who also know what it is to have your land and people taken away. They hope, and they create a better future.

With this tender, loving, and sometimes angry story about the Palestinian diaspora, Sahhar demands we pay attention. She weaves the fragments she finds of family and national history into a narrative from which we cannot look away. *Find Me at the Jaffa Gate* is a story that traverses time and place, love and hate; it's a story of ongoing and unforgettable Palestinian survival.

Teddy Peak is from Readings Carlton

Say Everything: A Memoir

Ione Skye

HarperCollins. PB. \$34.99

Available now



Gen X icon Ione Skye bares all in an achingly vulnerable coming-of-age memoir about chasing fame, desire, and true love in the shadow of her famous, absent father. Set against a backdrop of rock

royalty compounds, supermodel cliques, and classic late-century films like *River's Edge*, *Gas Food Lodging*, and *Wayne's World*, *Say Everything* is a wild ride of Hollywood thrills as well as a lyrical reflection on ambition, intimacy, and a messy, sexy, unconventional life.

The Good Daughter

Kumi Taguchi

Scribner. PB. \$34.99

Available now



R *The Good Daughter* by

Kumi Taguchi is a poignant and evocative memoir that navigates the complex emotions surrounding family, identity, and cultural

heritage. Growing up in Australia with a Japanese father and an Australian mother, Taguchi's early relationship with her father was defined by distance, both emotional and physical. Her father was a reserved, obsessively frugal figure, and after her parents' divorce, he was almost entirely absent from her life. As a child, she struggled to understand the reasons for this, and after his death, her feelings about him and her Japanese heritage remained tangled and unresolved.

Taguchi embarks on a journey to understand the father she lost and the cultural legacy that she had inherited but never fully embraced. The journey that Taguchi takes to Japan, where she seeks to find her father's family home, is not only about discovering physical locations, but also understanding the deep-seated emotional and cultural complexities that shaped her father's behaviour. Her exploration of Japan allows her to reconnect with the heritage she had often felt burdened by, and in doing so, she unravels layers of her own identity. This personal odyssey is both a tribute to her father and a powerful reckoning with the divided sense of self that many people experience when straddling two cultures.

Taguchi's writing is reflective, sensitive, and deeply thoughtful, and will resonate, I am sure, with many readers in Australia. She successfully brings to life the struggle of balancing the expectations of duty with the desire for freedom, and how our past – particularly the influence of our parents – continues to shape us even after they are gone. Taguchi crafts a compelling narrative that is not only about the search for personal understanding but also about finding a sense of belonging in a world that often feels divided.

Nicole Vasilev is from Readings Emporium

Hear Me Roar

Erna Walraven

Affirm Press. PB. \$34.99

Available now



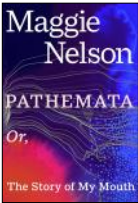
When Erna Walraven became one of the first female zookeepers in Australia, she thought her biggest challenges would be feeding big cats and subduing gorillas. But it was her male colleagues

who made work miserable, harassing her for doing a 'man's job'. So, she looked to the animals to prove them wrong. In this book, Walraven blends memoir and pop science to tell a fiercely female story. She recounts a life spent caring for animals, and dives into scientific evidence to debunk the myths that once held her back.

Cultural Studies

Pathemata: Or, the Story of My Mouth

Maggie Nelson
Fern. HB. \$29.99
Available 20 May



Pathemata is a dreamlike portrait of a body in a struggle to connect. As the narrator contends with chronic pain, and a pandemic raging in the background, she sets out to examine the literal and symbolic role of the mouth in the life of a writer. Merging dreams and diaries, *Pathemata* recounts the narrator’s tragicomic search to alleviate her suffering; a search that becomes a reckoning with various forms of loss.

Every Moment Was You: Notes on Loving and Parting

Taewoan Ha & Shanna Tan (trans.)
Piatkus. PB. \$32.99
Available 13 May



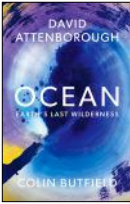
Every Moment Was You is a deeply moving collection of short essays about life and love. Describing the joy and clumsiness of daily experiences, countless readers across Asia have found the book to be a

faithful companion, offering them consolation and strength to deal with the pain, stress and sadness of modern life, but also the encouragement to look to the future with positivity and direction.

Environmental Studies

Ocean

David Attenborough & Colin Butfield
John Murray. PB. \$34.99
Available 13 May

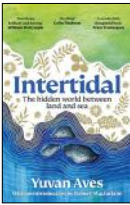


David Attenborough, with long-term collaborator Colin Butfield, shares the story of our last great wilderness – the one which shapes the land we live on, regulates our climate and creates the air

we breathe. *Ocean* shows us a world which is both desperately fragile yet astonishingly resilient, with an extraordinary capacity to repair itself. It’s not too late to restore our most vital habitat. If we treat it with respect, our marine world will be even richer and more spectacular than we can imagine.

Intertidal: The Hidden World Between Land and Sea

Yuvan Aves
Ithaka. PB. \$36.99
Available 6 May



In this deep observation of coast and wetland, climate and self by a leading Indian ecological activist, Yuvan Aves asks us to reimagine values to live by: heeding the natural world, attending to the climate’s calling, and moving away from the old

political and cultural values that have proven ecologically disastrous. Set in beaches, marshes, and the wild places of the mind, *Intertidal* revels in the healing power of nature and explores what it means to reclaim an ecology that has been colonised.

Beyond Green: The Social Life of Australian Nature

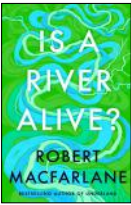
Lesley Head
MUP. PB. \$39.99
Available 14 May



Lesley Head interrogates the ways the contested cultures of nature have operated in Australia across time, and how these ways of thinking limit our capacity to deal with climate change and biodiversity crises. Drawing on her life’s work and lessons, Head suggests that it is up to us to listen attentively, the better to destabilise and subvert dominant narratives, and to imagine new possibilities. She believes we have the nous, resources and lessons from Indigenous, settler-descendant and immigrant cultures to reduce risk in the face of the unexpected and the unimaginable.

Is a River Alive?

Robert Macfarlane
Hamish Hamilton. HB. \$55
Available 13 May



Is a River Alive? has at its heart a transformative idea: that rivers are living beings *who* should be recognised as such. In exploring this, Robert Macfarlane shares three journeys: to northern Ecuador, where a miraculous cloud-forest and its rivers are threatened with destruction by gold mining; to the wounded waterways of southern India; and to north-eastern Quebec, where a wild river is being defended from damming. Braiding these journeys is the life story of the fragile chalk stream who rises a mile from Macfarlane’s house. This is Macfarlane’s most personal and most political book to date.

History

America, América: A New History of the New World

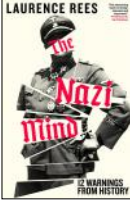
Greg Grandin
Torva. PB. \$39.99
Available now



America, América traverses half a millennium, from the Spanish Conquest through the 18th-century wars for independence and the Monroe Doctrine, to the coups and revolutions of the 20th century. This monumental work of scholarship fundamentally changes our understanding of slavery and racism, the rise of universal humanism, and the role of social democracy in staving off extremism. At once comprehensive and accessible, *America, América* shows how the United States and Latin America together shaped the laws, institutions, and ideals that govern the modern world.

The Nazi Mind: Twelve Warnings from History

Laurence Rees
Viking Nonfiction. HB. \$55
Available 12 May



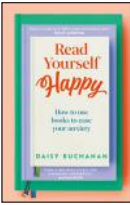
How could the Nazis have committed the crimes they did? How could ordinary Germans have tolerated these crimes? In ‘12 warnings’, Laurence Rees uses previously unpublished testimony

from former Nazis and those who grew up in the Nazi system, and cutting-edge work on obedience, authority and the brain to understand how so many people committed the most appalling crime of the 20th century. In examining the rise and fall of the Nazis, he highlights signs to look out for in present-day leaders.

Personal Development

Read Yourself Happy: How to Use Books to Ease Your Anxiety

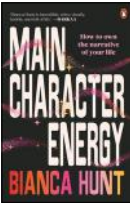
Daisy Buchanan
DK. HB. \$37.99
Available now



In a hectic world that can feel uncertain, Daisy Buchanan offers the antidote to all the noise, inviting us to discover the literary worlds that have helped her survive – and thrive. She makes the case that books and reading have the power to comfort, inspire and fortify. Featuring original interviews with David Nicholls, Ruby Rare, Emma Gannon, Catherine Gray and more, Buchanan provides hard-won wisdom and personally curated reading lists to help you process your emotions and find more peace with every page.

Main Character Energy: How to Own the Narrative of Your Life

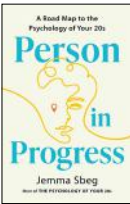
Bianca Hunt
Penguin. PB. \$36.99
Available 20 May



Bianca Hunt has hosted TV shows, rocked runways, given multiple TEDx talks and founded a talent agency – all before her mid-20s. Not content with the narrative other people had written for her, Hunt embarked on a journey to write her own. *Main Character Energy* is that story – a witty and relatable ride through her 20s, refreshingly free of traditional timelines and milestones. From creativity, confidence and career to fame, joy and relationships, this not-a-how-to-guide covers all the hot topics without writing the script for you.

Person in Progress: A Road Map to the Psychology of Your 20s

Jemma Sbeg
Sheldon. PB. \$34.99
Available now



Person in Progress is a deep psychological dive into the messy transitions, life experiences, and major events of your 20s. With research and science from Jemma Sbeg’s background in psychology and

neuroscience intertwined with her real-life stories, *Person in Progress* is a roadmap to navigating this time of your life, with reassurance that you’re not alone in this chaotic transition period. Sbeg shares advice on important topics that impact many 20-somethings, and includes questions and self-guided moments for your own reflection.

Mythology

Monsterland: A Journey Around the World’s Dark Imagination

Nicholas Jubber
Scribe. PB. \$37.99
Available now



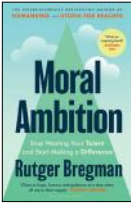
Monsters, in all their terrifying glory, have preoccupied humans since we began telling stories. But where did these stories come from? Nicholas Jubber goes on a journey to discover more about the

monsters we’ve invented, lurking in the dark and the wild places of the earth all with one thing in common: their ability to terrify. His far-ranging adventure takes him across the world where he discovers that the stories of the people and places that birthed them are just as fascinating as the creatures themselves.

Politics

Moral Ambition: Stop Wasting Your Talent and Start Making a Difference

Rutger Bregman & Joy Phillips (trans.)
Bloomsbury. PB. \$34.99
Available now



‘This is not a self-help book,’ declares Rutger Bregman at the get-go. Well. Yes and no. The Dutch historian, journalist and author certainly favours the style and tone of the self-help

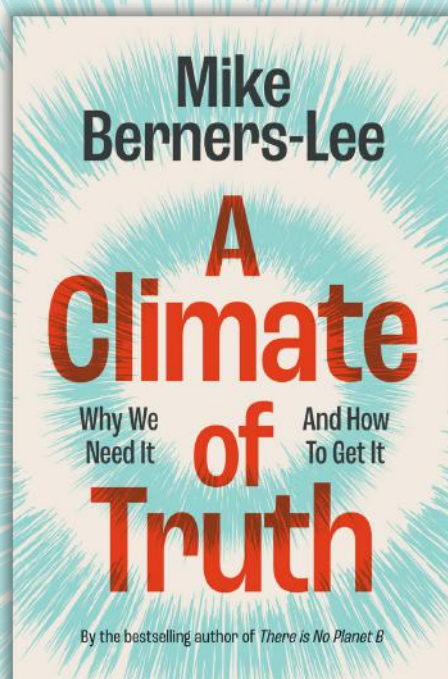
oeuvre: the ebullient voice, the quirky anecdote, the counterintuitive insight (You thought it was X! But actually it’s Y!). But also no, because as he adds in his opening remarks, this book won’t make your life easier or help you feel good about yourself. On the contrary.

In *Moral Ambition*, Bregman is urging readers to do the hard things, to put the communal good ahead of the personal, and to look critically at the assumptions we make about the world, the economy, politics, and human nature – including our own choices.

Bregman opened for business with his book *Utopia for Realists*, in which he made a powerful case for a Universal Basic Income. The title also stands as a kind of guidepost to his general philosophy: he’s an optimist, but a clear-eyed one, firmly grounded in reality. His second book, *Humankind*, revisited the ‘evidence’ that humans are selfish brutes motivated primarily by self-interest (from the notorious Stanford experiments to a real-life *Lord of the Flies*) and found it wanting. Turns out, we are essentially collaborative and compassionate – for evolutionary reasons, if nothing else.

In his latest work, he brings both that faith in human nature and that factual

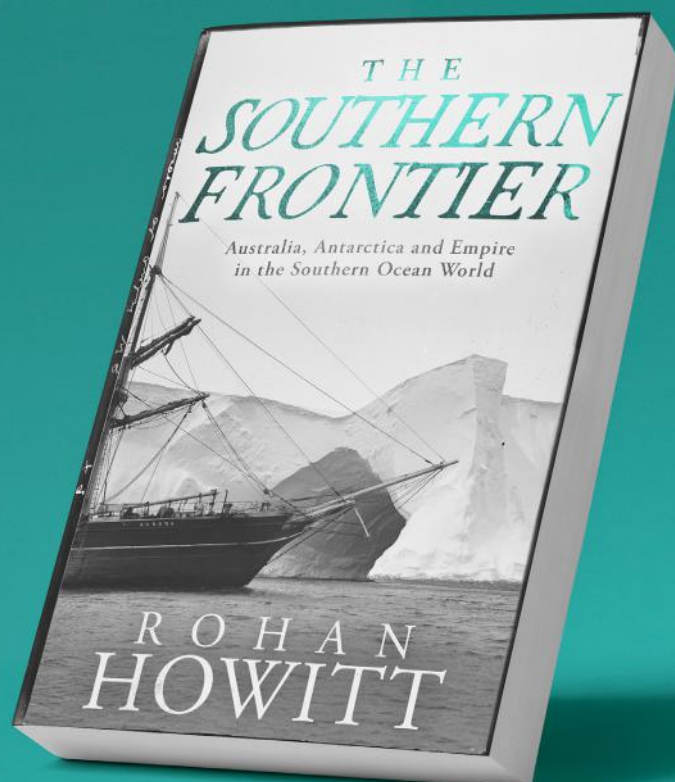
Out now



From the bestselling author of *There is No Planet B*

 CAMBRIDGE
UNIVERSITY PRESS

A history of Australia's Antarctic obsession



 Melbourne
University
Publishing

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14 MAY

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MORE



deep dive to a specific project: to urge us all to have more moral ambition; to get active in the world, in whatever way we can, to make the world a better place.

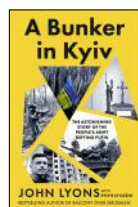
Bregman loves a graph and a footnote (sometimes a little too much) and not everyone will love his evangelical tone, but the sermon is leavened with a dry sense of humour and genuine realpolitik. The result is – as he promises – challenging, thought-provoking, and often deeply uncomfortable. In a good way.

Melinda Houston is from Readings Carlton

A Bunker in Kyiv: The Astonishing Story of the People's Army Defying Putin

John Lyons with Sylvie Le Clezio
ABC Books. PB. \$34.99

Available now



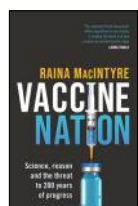
As Ukraine's long-term future captures the focus of global leaders in Russia, Europe and the US, veteran journalist and ABC global affairs editor John Lyons takes readers into the heart of a nation under siege. He interviews Ukrainians who stand tall in the face of an increasingly brutal conflict and an uncertain future. These are the stories of ordinary civilians making extraordinary contributions, determined to fight back in every way possible to ensure the survival of their families and the soul of their nation.

Science

Vaccine Nation: Science, Reason and the Threat to 200 Years of Progress

Raina MacIntyre
NewSouth. PB. \$34.99

Available 1 May



Vaccination is arguably the greatest public health achievement in history, yet the disappearance of many diseases has also seen an increased focus on the side effects of vaccines.

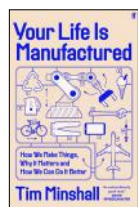
Epidemiologist Raina MacIntyre examines the history of vaccines and how they work, vaccine safety, public policy, cutting-edge new technologies, and the new developments in vaccines to fight cancer and other chronic diseases. At a time when vaccination rates are falling globally, MacIntyre argues that science must reclaim the stage or we will lose centuries of gains that vaccines have brought to the world.

To find out more about *Vaccine Nation*, read an extract on page 5.

Your Life is Manufactured: How We Make Things, Why It Matters and How We Can Do It Better

Tim Minshall
Faber Nonfiction. PB. \$34.99

Available 13 May

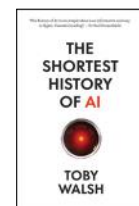


Unless you are floating naked through space, you are right now in direct contact with multiple manufactured products. How often do we stop to think: where do the things we buy actually come from? From the thousands of litres of water needed to make a single pair of

jeans to mega-factory floors, engineering laboratories and seaports to distribution hubs, supermarkets and our own homes, Tim Minshall reveals the hidden world of manufacturing, and grants us the ability to make better choices for ourselves, our communities and the planet.

The Shortest History of AI

Toby Walsh
Black Inc. PB. \$27.99
Available now



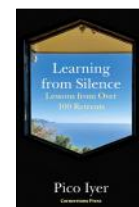
Since Alan Turing first posed the question, 'Can machines think?', artificial intelligence has evolved from a speculative idea to a transformative force. *The Shortest History of AI* traces this evolution, from

Ada Lovelace's visionary work to IBM's groundbreaking defeat of the chess world champion and the revolutionary emergence of ChatGPT. It also explores AI's cultural journey, touching on classics such as *Frankenstein*. Revealing how many 'overnight' successes were decades in the making, Toby Walsh simplifies AI into six key ideas, equipping readers to understand where we've been – and where we're headed.

Spirituality

Learning from Silence: Lessons from Over 100 Retreats

Pico Iyer
Penguin. HB. \$36.99
Available 13 May



Over 30 years, Pico Iyer has made more than 100 journeys to a hermitage high above the sea in Big Sur, California. He's not a member of any religious group, and yet his life has been transformed by his many seasons at the monastery, even through constant change: houses burn, a parent dies, a daughter is diagnosed with cancer. Iyer offers a radiant and gripping outsider's view of monastic life, and ageless counsel about the power of silence and what it can teach us about how to live, how to love and, ultimately, how to die.

Travel Writing

The Invention of Amsterdam: A History of Europe's Greatest City in Ten Walks

Ben Coates
Scribe. PB. \$29.99
Available now



When Ben Coates injures his leg and needs to rebuild his strength by walking, he devises 10 walks, each demonstrating a different chapter of Amsterdam's history, from its humble beginnings in the early 1200s as a small fishing community through two Golden Ages, fuelled by the growth of the Dutch colonial empire, two world wars, and countless reinventions. Blending travelogue and quirky history, *The Invention of Amsterdam* is an entertaining and sharply observed portrait of a fascinating and complicated city. **R**

Young Adult

BOOK OF THE MONTH


Young Adult



This Dream Will Devour Us
Emma Clancey
A&U. PB. \$24.99
Available now

With iconic tropes like enemies-to-lovers, fake dating, and a love triangle, *This Dream Will Devour Us* entices all readers with its addictive pace and jaw-dropping twists. Although swept up in this glittering mirage, Nora is a fearless heroine who does not waver from her career ambitions and always puts her family’s needs above her own. Emma Clancey’s debut standalone will make you question what is real and what has been fabricated for your delight. For ages 14+.

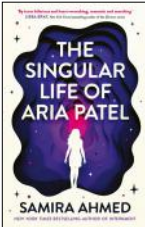
Aurelia Orr is from Readings Kids

 **R** *Gossip Girl* meets *The Hunger Games* in this intoxicating and deadly fantasy romance. Set in our world, magic has become real through a drug called Levick that is owned by a single family, the Lamours. This has made them rich beyond belief, desirable to all and a target for many who wish to see them fall. Every year, they host the rich and famous at the Dream Gala, which is similar to the Met Gala, even taking place inside the Met in New York. Tickets can be bought by the public, but only one lucky person will be chosen to attend. When we are introduced to our protagonist, Nora, she is so extremely lucky that she was chosen to attend even without buying a ticket.

Emma Clancey’s debut standalone will make you question what is real and what has been fabricated for your delight.

Suddenly thrust into a world of glamour and decadence, Nora soon learns the luxurious Lamour life is brimming with secrecy, lies, and betrayal. These realisations all lead to a multitude of seemingly never-ending questions: who put Nora’s name down for the lottery? What conspiracies are the Lamours hiding? And just how dangerous is this magic for everyone?

The Singular Life of Aria Patel
Samira Ahmed
Atom. PB. \$19.99
Available 13 May



Aria Patel believes in facts and science. It’s why she dumped her boyfriend Rohan, before they went to different colleges – the odds were against them. But when Aria suddenly starts falling through parallel universes, moments before a tragedy occurs, she meets Rohan in every universe. Can Aria navigate the multiverse and get home to save her family? And will she break one of her own rules to survive the multiverse, and fall in love?

His Face is the Sun (Throne of Khetara, Book 1)
Michelle Jabès Corpora
Hodder. PB. \$24.99
Available 13 May



The kingdom of Khetara awaits an uncertain future, for the pharaoh is dying. In the golden capital, the royal princess, Sitamun, is caught in a web of sensuality, deceit and murder as her older brother, Meryamun, lusts for power and excess. Their younger brother, Bakenamun, rejects his royal heritage. Neff, a young girl haunted by prophetic blood-drenched dreams, holds the key to their destinies. To the south, Raetawy, a farmer’s daughter, resists the pharaoh’s

oppressive rule and inspires an army. And in the depths of the desert, tomb-raider Karim stumbles upon a long-buried secret and awakens the monster within ... Who will sit on the throne when the bloodshed is done?

How to Survive 1985
Tegan Bennett Daylight
S&S. PB. \$22.99
Available now



 **R** In *Royals*, a group of seemingly random teens and a baby becomes trapped in a shopping mall for six weeks. This time, most of the same group are suddenly removed from 2025 and


transported to 1985, without warning or explanation. When Shannon walks out of a movie theatre and finds herself on the same street 40 years ago, the first thing she decides to do is seek out her mum, who, at that time, is a teenager herself. Now, we all know if you do happen to end up in the past, the last thing you should do is risk changing the future in even the tiniest way, but if you were all alone and there weren’t any mobile phones, or the internet, and everyone was dressed strangely with big hair, and people still paid for groceries at the supermarket with cheques because EFTPOS had only just been invented, then you would want your mum, too! After a sleepover and the weirdest conversation Shannon has ever had with her mother, the pair set out to look for the others, tracking them down and then trying to find a way to return to their

own time. While their presence in 1985 is never fully explained, the friendship between the teens continues to develop and their resourcefulness is put to the test again. Fans of *Royals* will adore this book (and so will their parents) and if you haven’t read the first one, never fear, it works just as well as a standalone. For ages 12+.

Kate McIntosh is the manager of Readings Emporium

The Notorious Virtues
Alwyn Hamilton
Faber Child. PB. \$22.99
Available now



 **R** The brilliant new novel from the author of the *Rebel of the Sands* trilogy features the Hotzfall family, in which each member is named for a virtue. They own all the property and power in the city of Walsted, wielding money and magic. Honora Hotzfall (Nora) is the clever grandchild, who loves nothing more than to party. When Nora’s mother, the heir to the Hotzfall magic, is murdered, it forces the Veritas Games to begin. The Games are a series of trials that Nora and her three cousins must undertake so that their virtues – honour, truth, and loyalty – are challenged to determine the next heir.

Meanwhile, Ottoline (Lotte), who has been cruelly raised by nuns far from the capital, is revealed as the illegitimate daughter of a Hotzfall. She is introduced to the family so she too can compete in the trials, despite attempts to murder her. Also upsetting the peace in Walsted are the Grims, a rebel group who seek a more equal society, but use violence and shock tactics. This engaging narrative looks at the power of political systems and the inevitable corruption that comes with inherited wealth. Nora and Lotte, both feisty and surprising, are delightful characters, and the knights that have vowed to protect them, as well as the poor newspaperman desperate for a big story, are also compelling. This is a page-turning read with teeth, clearly pitched at readers of *The Inheritance Games* but with far more sophisticated characterisation and plotting. Highly recommended for readers aged 12+.

Angela Crocombe is a senior buyer

Capitana
Cassandra James
HotKey. PB. \$29.99
Available 6 May



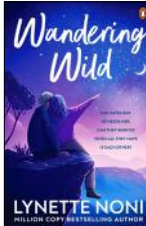
Ximena Reale has been training to join the black-cloaked Cazadores, seafaring hunters who track down pirates. Although she’s the top candidate at La Academia, it’s not enough as she’s a daughter of the notorious Reales – pirate captains who were executed for their crimes against the Empire. Ximena offers to catch infamous pirate Gasparilla in exchange for being named a cazadora. The Empire accepts and she sets out to hunt Gasparilla. But her family’s pirate legacy continues to haunt her, and she soon she questions the laws she’s always fought to uphold ...


The Edge of Everything
Miranda Luby
Text. PB. \$22.99
Available now



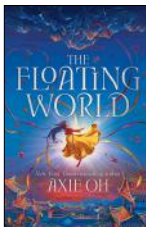
When a rare and highly endangered bird flies into Lucy’s bedroom window, she feels it’s a sign that maybe she’ll get her life back on track after the sudden death of her brother a year ago. She takes the injured bird to a local wildlife sanctuary, and there she meets Ben. He could be the distraction she needs. But when unrelated events collide, Lucy realises things are not going to be that simple.

Wandering Wild
Lynette Noni
Penguin. PB. \$27.99
Available now



 **R** Zander Rune was the darling of Hollywood until he became a problematic bad boy. Charlie Hart despises everything Zander represents. But thanks to her scheming best friend, Charlie finds herself pretending to be Zander’s biggest fan on a four-day reality TV adventure. When their trip goes horribly wrong, Charlie and Zander are left stranded in the wilderness. The only way they’ll survive is if they trust each other.

The Floating World (The Floating World, Book 1)
Axie Oh
Hodderscape. PB. \$24.99
Available 13 May



Ex-soldier Sunho lives in the Under World. Possessing just his name and sword, he comes across the score of a lifetime – a chest of coins for hunting down the girl who wields silver light. When Ren and her family are attacked by a demon, Ren releases a blast of silver light, killing the monster – but her uncle is injured. Determined to save him, Ren sets off for the mountains where her path collides with Sunho’s, but he doesn’t realise who she is. As the two grow closer, it becomes clear their pasts – and destinies – are more entwined than they could possibly have imagined.

The Thrashers
Julie Soto
HarperCollins. PB. \$19.99
Available now



Jodi never asked to be a Thrasher, a member of the high school elite, led by her best friend, Zack Thrasher. But then sweet, Zack-obsessed Emily takes her own life on prom night and detectives find a copy of her diary, they say she was ‘Thrashed’ – bullied to death by Zack and his gang. The Thrashers are arrested, charged, and ostracised. But the diary is too convenient. It’s filled with Jodi’s own secrets, repurposed by Emily. One thing is clear. Emily isn’t done with the Thrashers. **R**

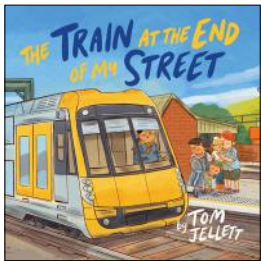
Kids

PICTURE BOOK OF THE MONTH

Picture Book

The Train at the End of My Street
Tom Jellett

Affirm Kids. HB. \$22.99
Available now



R There is no vehicle that inspires such passionate fans as the train. There are many train lovers of all ages, but this book has been written with the youngest in mind, and with an understanding that, for small children, an encounter with, or excursion on, a train can be a monumentally exciting event! It's a simple book that feels very familiar and explores all things train from the perspective of a child who can hear trains from their home. From meeting Mum as she disembarks after work to buying a ticket, checking the platform clock and bringing snacks for a long journey, this book has it all covered! There are many different types of trains and stations, and all are lovingly illustrated with Sydney-based author and illustrator Tom Jellett's trademark warmth. Jellett has created a delightful celebration of transportation and a perfect book to share with train fans aged 2+.

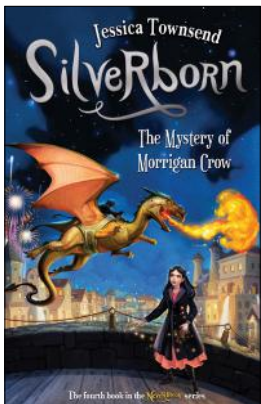
Kim Gruschow is the manager of Readings St Kilda

KIDS BOOK OF THE MONTH

Middle Grade

Silverborn: The Mystery of Morrigan Crow (Nevermoor, Book 4)
Jessica Townsend

Lothian. PB. \$18.99 | HB \$24.99
Available now



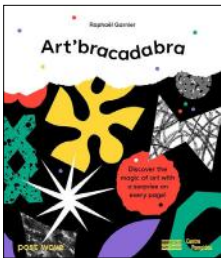
R It has been nearly five years since *Hollowpox*, the previous instalment of Sunshine Coast author Jessica Townsend's fantastic, and fantastical, *Nevermoor* series. The excitement around this release has been building, as has the tension. What took so long, will it live up to expectation? I am here to tell you – it lives up to it all! For those who have not read *Nevermoor*, some readers consider it the Australian alternative to *Harry Potter*, but it is set in a wholly fictional land, and is, dare I say it, better! In *Silverborn*, the people of Nevermoor gather to see if the Age will turn from Morningtide, a time of relative peace and stability, to the Basking, a time of turmoil and challenge. We jump back four months, to our 13-year-old protagonist, Morrigan Crow, who is preparing to walk the Black Parade. However, things do not go as planned and Morrigan is thrown headfirst into early turmoil, both externally and internally. She must grapple with a giant secret that may blow up all her relationships; meet her Nevermoorian family, who have secrets of their own; and attempt, along with her friends, to solve a murder. For those who love the series, you will love this; for those who haven't started – what are you waiting for? For ages 10+.

Rosalind McClintock is the head of marketing

Picture Books

Art'bracadabra
Raphaël Garnier

Post Wave. HB. \$34.99
Available now



R Post Wave is a high-quality independent publishing house whose books are happily now available in Australia. Many of their acquisitions are books that have been translated into English for the first time. A striking example is *Art'bracadabra*, which is the work of Paris-based graphic designer Raphaël Garnier.

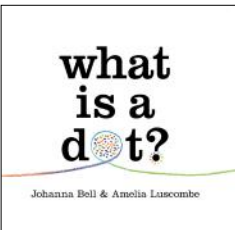
Garnier has created a stylish interactive book to explain the fundamentals of visual art. There are various tactile elements including flaps, tabs, cut-outs and pop-ups. Wonderful contrasts of textures, shapes, colours and patterns invite readers to engage with concepts like contrast, scale, perspective and composition. *Art'bracadabra* is suitable to share with kids aged 6+, but it will also make an excellent high school classroom tool and I'm sure it will find plenty of creative-minded adult fans too. It's never easy to decide on the best section of the shop to shelve unique books like this, but it sits nicely alongside the work of Hervé Tullet. I'm looking forward to seeing more from this exciting publisher!

Kim Gruschow is the manager of Readings St Kilda

What is a Dot?
Johanna Bell & Amelia Luscombe (illus.)
T&H. HB. Was \$24.99

\$ \$19.99

Available now



from award-winning author Johanna Bell and debut illustrator Amelia Luscombe.

Our Dance
Jacinta Daniher, Taylor Hampton & Janelle Burger (illus.)

Lothian. HB. \$24.99
Available now

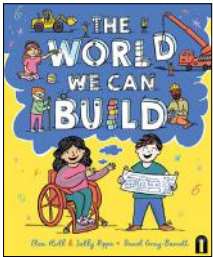


Join in the fun as we come together and dance in the corroboree! Learn how to slither like a snake, jump like a kangaroo, crawl like a goanna, run like an emu and fly like an eagle. A joyful celebration of First Nations culture and Australia's unique animals through dance and music, with rhyming actions to get young readers moving.

R Inspired by Paul Klee's quote, 'a line is a dot that went for a walk', *What is a Dot?* celebrates the joy of mark-making and the creative play that results when we let our imaginations and our pencils roam. This is a delightful new picture book

The World We Can Build
Sally Rippin, Eliza Hull & Daniel Gray-Barnett (illus.)

Hardie Grant. HB. \$24.99



R 'It's not right!' Carla says. 'This world is unfair, for people like me who use a wheelchair. We need a new world where we can play, too. I know – we'll invent it! Yeah, that's what we'll do.' *The World We Can Build* is the second collaboration between musical artist, writer, and disability advocate Eliza Hull, Australian Children's Laureate Sally Rippin and illustrator Daniel Gray-Barnett. *Come Over to My House* introduced us to the home lives of various kids and parents who are Deaf or disabled. *The World We Can Build* follows up by looking outside the home to public and shared spaces.

It's a simple rhyming story that is inspired by the social model of disability. This model focuses on the barriers the world creates, rather than a person's impairment. A couple of kids trying to play together recognise some barriers to accessibility, so they team up and creatively brainstorm ideas about how they might change things for the better. With exuberant, brightly coloured illustrations, this is an excellent book to encourage us all to think about how we can make the world more accessible for everyone, through thoughtful collaborative changes, both big and small. For ages 3+.

Kim Gruschow is the manager of Readings St Kilda

Junior Grade

Guardians of the New Moon: Ming and Miaow's Great Race
Eric Huang & Phung Nguyen Quang (illus.)

Little Tiger. PB. \$14.99
Available for pre-order now ahead of 29 May release



R This exciting junior fantasy adventure tells the story of the creation of the lunar zodiac and the great race that will decide which 12 animals will have a year named after them for all eternity. When the great Jade Emperor – who created the world – is bored, he decides to hold a race. The temple cat, Miaow, is invited to partake, alongside his frenemy, Su, the rat. As they progress through the challenging three-part race they meet others, including Ming, a nine-tailed fox, who befriends Miaow, and Yi Lan, a water dragon, who helps them on their journey. Will they make it to the final temple, or will fire, an avalanche and the legendary Weak River prevent them from completing the race?

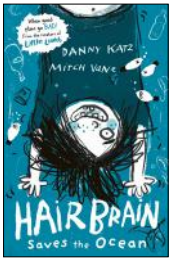
Based on Chinese mythology, this is a fun and fast-paced series opener that will captivate emerging readers. Book two, *The Year of the Rat*, will be published at the same time. For ages 7+.

Angela Crocombe is a senior buyer

Hairbrain Saves the Ocean
Danny Katz & Mitch Vane (illus.)

Walker. PB. \$15.99

Available 1 May



R The author and illustrator of the popular *Little Lunch* series have two new books for junior readers that will have them laughing out loud. The first, written in a childish font, complete with spelling mistakes crossed out, is written by Hairbrain (not really their name but what everyone calls them) and describes their amazing invention to save the ocean. When the family goes on school holidays to the beach and end up with plastic rubbish all over them, genius Hairbrain comes up with a machine that can clean up the ocean. But first Hairbrain and little sister

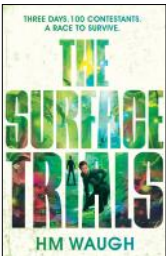
Zammy, who is filming the epic invention for posterity, have to get the machine to the beach – and there seem to be a few difficulties.

Who will rescue Hairbrain when it all goes wrong? This is hilarious fun for readers aged 5+, with the second book, *Dog People, Ugh!*, also available now.

Angela Crocombe is a senior buyer

Middle Grade

The Surface Trials
H.M. Waugh
A&U. PB. \$18.99
Available now



It's reductive to say The Surface Trials is like The Hunger Games with competitive empathy instead of murders, but I just said it so let me justify it. Outside of the fact that yes, The Surface Trials is about a wildly popular annual televised event in which children are forced to compete against each other in dangerous situations, the two books are really nothing alike.

First, the kids in The Surface Trials are actually volunteers. The application process is long and involved, especially if you come from an exploited mining planet with a history of producing Mindbreakers – individuals with a dangerous, illegal mental mutation that allows them to read and manipulate emotions. Secondly, the prize for winning isn't just a slightly more luxurious (and traumatised) life. The winners of The Surface Trials are granted entry into Starquest Academy, an exclusive institution dedicated to training future Planeticians. Finally, as the name suggests, the danger doesn't come from other contestants. The real threat comes from the surface: the partially explored planets where the kids find themselves, navigating treacherous landscapes with their survival and teamwork skills to reach the pick-up point in time. Elimination can be triggered by medical emergencies or poor teamwork, and occurs when a shuttle arrives to whisk them back to the main ship.

The Surface Trials is exactly what I want in a science-fiction book. Like the best works of Arthur C. Clarke or Becky Chambers, it leaves you excited for what could be out there in our galaxy and our future. I can't recommend it enough. For ages 10+.

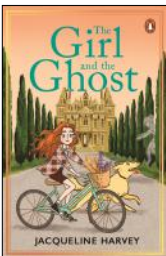
Dani Solomon is the manager of Readings Kids

Villain
Adrian Beck
Scholastic. PB. \$17.99
Available 1 May



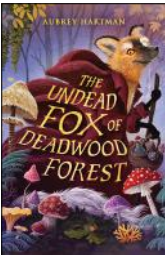
Gaming fanatic Jay receives a strange phone call on a school trip to Titanium Tower. The voice on the other end calls himself Z. And he has trapped Jay's classmates in the elevator at the very top of the skyscraper. Jay must solve Z's deadly riddles with only Hudson Hamm, the school's star athlete and resident tough guy, there for help. Can they team up to beat Z at his own game and save their classmates?

The Girl and the Ghost
Jacqueline Harvey
Penguin. PB. \$16.99
Available now



When almost-13-year-old Josephine Eloise Thomas moves from Sydney to a chateau in France, she finds a beautiful gold locket and accidentally releases the ghost of Louis XVII! The young prince is annoying and strange; then, there's beautiful Gabriel – an artist. When Josephine and Gabriel explore the Chateau Du Lac next door, the secrets become more sinister. With Louis's help, can they discover what her neighbours are up to and solve the mystery of Louis and the locket too?

The Undead Fox of Deadwood Forest
Aubrey Hartman
Walker. PB. \$17.99
Available 1 May



Clare is the undead fox of Deadwood Forest. Hovering between life and death, he chose to become an Usher of wandering souls. And while he loves guiding animal souls, Clare is lonely. But then a badger soul named Gingersnipes knocks on his door. Clare seeks the help of Hesterfowl, the visionary grouse who reveals Clare is dying: this time, really dying. Clare will do anything to change his fate.

The Monsters Next Door
Kate Alice Marshall
Affirm Kids. PB. \$16.99
Available now



Charlie Greer is nothing special, unlike her siblings who all have superpowers. Charlie's mother says her superpower is maturity. When her parents go on vacation, leaving her in charge, the Weavers move onto their street. They're too nice and too normal and she can't seem to keep her siblings away from them. Can Charlie stop whatever the Weavers are planning, protect her siblings and make sure her parents still trust her?

Willow Bright's Secret Plot
A.L. Tait
Scholastic. PB. \$15.99
Available 1 May



After moving to the city from the country, Willow Bright feels like she's lost her mum all over again – and landed on another planet. But when Willow spots a pattern in a series of puzzling accidents and mishaps, she forms an unlikely friendship – and finds new purpose. Can Willow solve the mystery or will her plot to return home to the wide-open spaces and memories of her mum land her in even more trouble?

Graphic Narrative

Creature Clinic
Gavin Aung Than
Hardie Grant. PB. \$19.99
Available 13 May

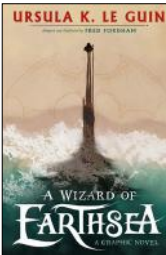


Gavin Aung Than's newest book, Creature Clinic, is a clever and funny hospital drama packed with mythological creatures and fairytale references. When an injured human arrives at the creature clinic, trainee doctor Kara Orc decides to treat him even though it's against clinic rules and the wishes of her mother, Dr Orc. After Kara helps heal the human, he in turn offers emotional support to some of her patients. He teaches a unicorn to use relaxation techniques, to endure the pain of her horn being straightened after an accident. The human also helps a Griffin find the courage to fly again after a wing transplant.

Gavin Aung Than created Zen Pencils in 2012, which is a series of creative, inspirational cartoons that were first published as webcomics, then books. He is also the author of the Super Sidekicks graphic novels. Creature Clinic draws from both of these works; it's an exciting, accomplished tale for young readers with great characters and plenty of inspiration embedded into the story. This full-colour graphic novel has many positive wellbeing themes: it celebrates kindness and doing the right thing, and is highly recommended for ages 8+.

Kim Gruschow is the manager of Readings St Kilda

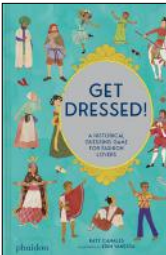
A Wizard of Earthsea: A Graphic Novel
Ursula K. Le Guin & Fred Fordham
Walker. PB. \$27.99
Available 1 May



This is a stunning graphic novel version of the classic story of Ged, a poor smith's son who discovers a magical talent and is sent away from home to a wizard school. During a duel with a fellow student, he summons a terrible shadow creature that continues to haunt him. His old master Ogion tells him to confront the creature – that fears and shadows are to be faced, and that darkness is as much a part of us as the light.

Nonfiction

Get Dressed: A Historical Guessing Game for Fashion Lovers
Katy Canales & Erin Vanessa (illus.)
Phaidon. HB. \$29.95
Available 13 May



In this first book of fashion history for children, young readers will discover fabulous clothing and fashion trends worn by people past and present. Packed with extraordinary facts and eye-catching illustrations, the book reveals through a fun guessing game format why Elizabethan men stuffed their stockings, only certain people were allowed to wear red in the Ottoman Empire, and Marie Antoinette once wore a wig with a toy ship in it. For ages 5–8.

Poetry

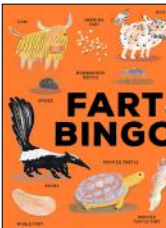
Stuff I'm (Not) Sorry For: 99 More Poems for Young People
Maxine Beneba Clarke
Hardie Grant. PB. \$22.99
Available now



The unbearable itch of chicken pox. The annoyance of sharing a Spotify account with your parents. The delight of smearing tomato sauce over everything you eat. Following on from her award-winning It's the Sound of the Thing, Maxine Beneba Clarke is back with 99 new poems for young people. In sonnets, pantoums, narrative verse, free verse, blackout poems, tongue-twisters, limericks, found poems, concrete poems, rhyming couplets, haiku and more, Stuff I'm (Not) Sorry For makes magic from the ordinary.

Game

Fart Bingo
Nicholas M. Caruso, Daniella Rabaiotti & Claudia Boldt (illus.)
Laurence King. Box. \$39.99
Available 13 May



Explore the silly side of nature with 24 animals and their uniquely shaped, sized and coloured farts featured in this family bingo game. With hilarious illustrations, fascinating facts, quick-to-learn rules and a booklet from zoologists Dr Daniella Rabaiotti and Dr Nick Caruso, Fart Bingo will have you giggling in no time. For ages 3+. R

MELBOURNE WRITERS FESTIVAL

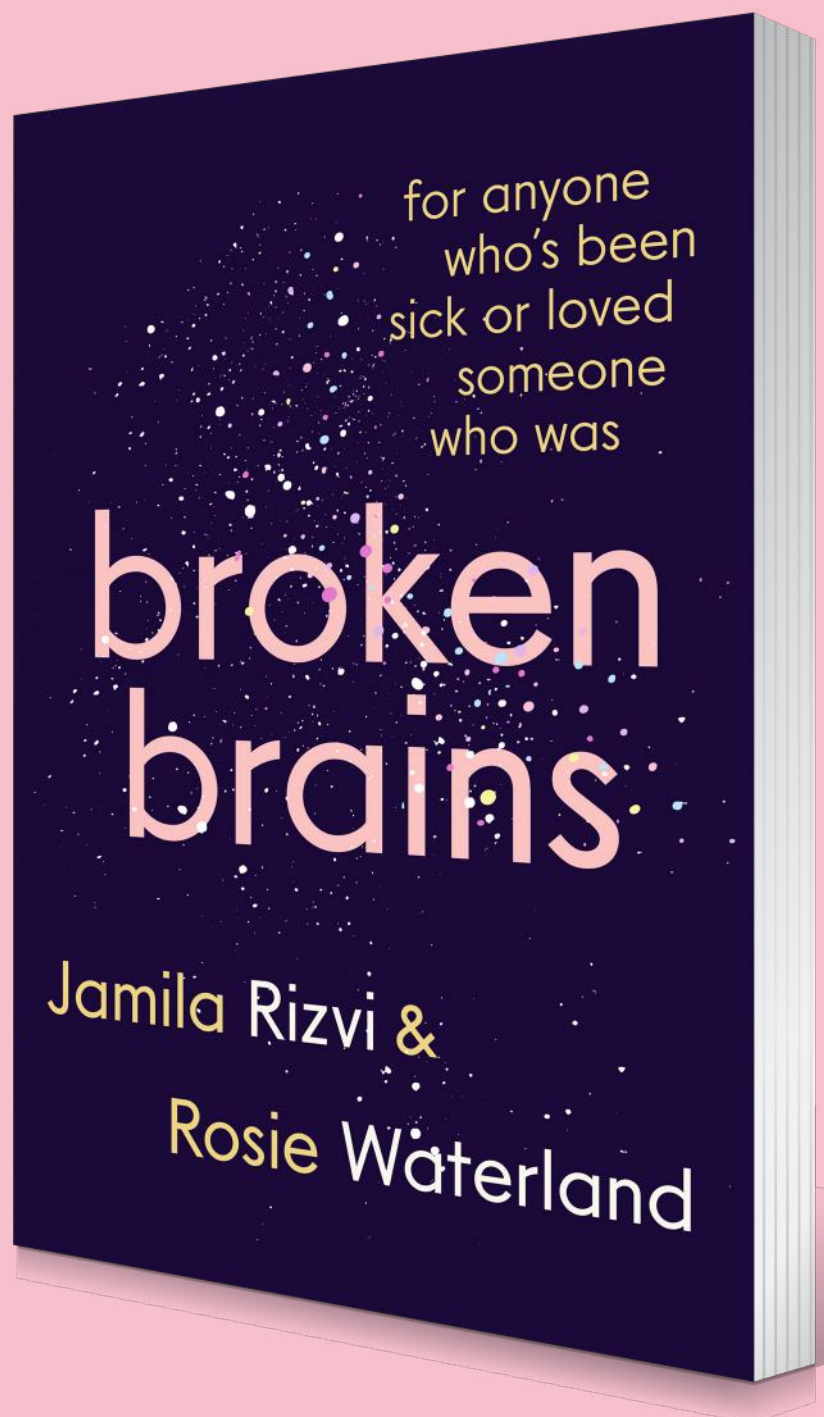


Jamila Rizvi and Rosie Waterland: Broken Brains

Sat 10 May, 12.30pm
Athenaeum Theatre

Supported by

Readings



Writers, friends and co-authors **Jamila Rizvi** and **Rosie Waterland** sit down with host **Clare Bowditch** for an honest, raw and deeply personal conversation about brain health – both physical and mental – and their intertwined experiences of living with and supporting one another's 'broken brains.'

With their signature warmth and humour, these two powerful and insightful women come together for a Melbourne-exclusive event to reflect on their new book *Broken Brains*, and the immense power of friendship in navigating life's hardest moments.

Book now

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