

Readings Monthly

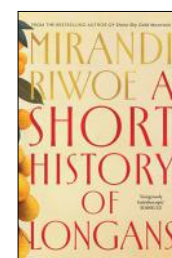
FREE | JULY 2026

**Warm up with
a recipe from
*Epic Veg***

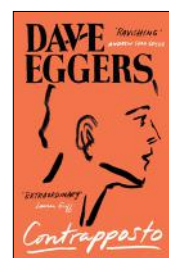
pages 6–7

**Read an early
extract from
Kelly-Dawn
Hellmrich's
*It's Not For You***

page 5



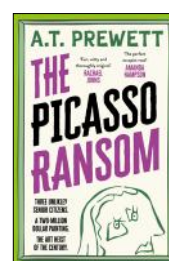
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RIWOE
page 9



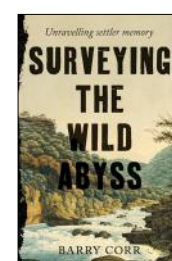
DAVE
EGGERS
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SIGRID NUNEZ
page 12



A.T. PREWETT
page 14



BARRY CORR
page 15



ARIANE
BEESTON
page 22

‘A masterpiece of political observation and analysis.’

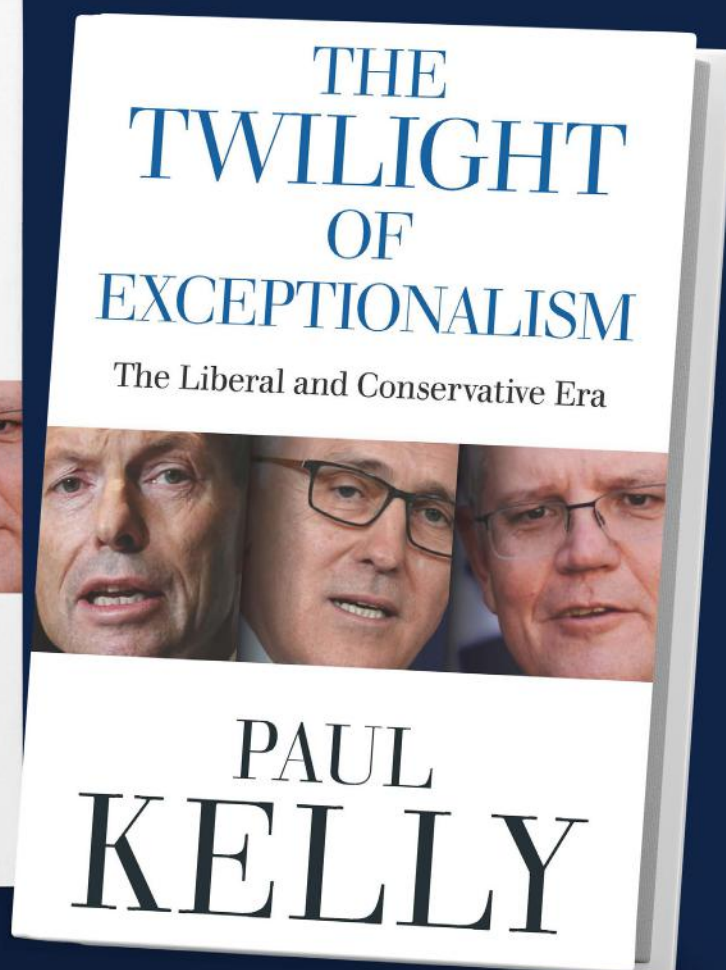
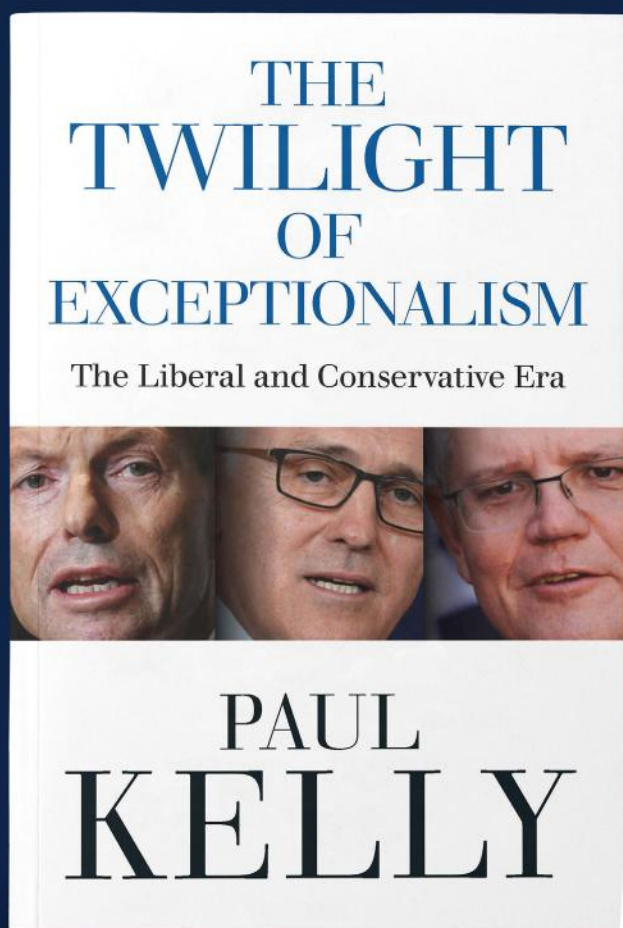
DAVID KEMP

‘Paul Kelly masterfully charts a turbulent decade of coups, crises, and the splintering of conservative politics in Australia. A sharp account of how today’s fractures emerged and the decisions now facing the nation.’

DAVID SPEERS

‘A masterclass in how leadership and power work.’

NICK DYRENFURTH



Melbourne
University
Publishing

Available 14 July in
Paperback and Hardback

News

Readings wins Book Retailer of the Year

Readings is honoured to have won 2026 Book Retailer of the Year at this year's Australian Book Industry Awards (ABIAs). We would like to thank you, our wonderful customers, for your continued support. For more information on the ABIAs, and to see the other winners, head to abiawards.com.au

Generous City Weekend festival (Open House Melbourne)

Over 24–26 July, the Generous City Weekend festival invites us to explore how we can design a more open, equitable and compassionate city that gives back, looks after one another and makes space for everyone. To browse the full program and book tickets, head to openhousemelbourne.org

Melbourne International Film Festival

Melbourne International Film Festival is lighting up Melbourne this winter with bold, thought-provoking movies, unique events, vital voices and films you won't find anywhere else. The festival runs from 6–23 August, and the full program announcement and member pre-sale start on 9 July. General tickets on sale 14 July. Find out more at miff.com.au

Readings Kids' 10th Birthday

Readings Kids turned 10! We celebrated on Saturday 20 June with storytimes, giveaways, author signings and lots more! Take a look at some of our photos from the day.

Top to bottom: the Readings Kids A-frame with a packed schedule of guest storytime; **Adelle** and **Claudia Frittitta** read from *My Nonno Loves*; author-illustrator **Anna Zobel** doing live portraits of our customers; and author-illustrator **Bob Graham** with a very prop-filled storytime.

Photos | Lian Hingee

Promos

20% off kids graphic novels

We have a great offer to help keep the kids occupied during the cold winter months with 20% off a range of Australian graphic novels for kids! This offer is available online and in Readings shops until 31 July 2026. Offer valid on stickered, in-stock items only, while stocks last. Not valid with any other offer.

Events

with Chris Gordon



Rather than complain about another winter in Melbourne, I thought I'd let you know about the people in our events program who make me laugh aloud. Don Watson has an utterly scathing type of humour that says, 'I share the

disbelief with you'. I'm looking forward to hearing Watson dissect the state of the United States in our inaugural 4th of July lecture – chosen for the date, obviously – hosted in partnership with our friends at the University of Melbourne. I enjoy authors who lightly mock us by writing characters that I understand, and who use humour in a self-deprecating fashion. For example, Chris Ames knocks people who shop at IKEA (come on, we all have). While Meg Mason shows how bonkers we can be when we obsess over a celebrity figure (come on, we all have!).

Winter is the perfect time to laugh – not to chase away grey skies but rather to be defiant against the bitter wind! Join us in the early evening darkness to be together and to take home a powerful message: authors use wit to be truth tellers.

Don Watson – The United States: Sacred and Profane

Saturday 4 July at 6.00pm
Union Theatre, University of Melbourne, 15 Monash Rd, Parkville

Tickets are \$28 concession/\$35 full

Join us to hear Don Watson talking about the United States of America. In partnership with UMAC.

Dr Julie Macken in conversation

Tuesday 14 July at 6.30pm
Readings State Library, 285–321 Russell St, Melbourne
Free, but bookings are essential

Join us to hear Dr Julie Macken and Kon Karapanagiotidis in conversation about national identity and immigration.

Meg Mason in conversation

Thursday 30 July at 6.00pm
Cinema Nova, 380 Lygon St, Carlton
Tickets are \$35 per person, including a copy of *Sophie, Standing There* by Meg Mason

We are delighted to invite you to hear a conversation with award-winning author Meg Mason as she talks about her new book, *Sophie, Standing There*.

A Fantasy series: Writing from Our Roots

Thursday 30 July at 6.00pm
Readings Emporium, 287 Lonsdale St, Melbourne
Free, but bookings are essential

For Writing from Our Roots, the second session in our fantasy event series, Amie Kaufman will be joined by Tigest Girma and Maitheer Wijesekara, as they discuss writing fantasy inspired by their own culture.

Look for the event symbol throughout this issue to discover more upcoming events.



For our full events calendar, the latest events information and to book tickets, scan the QR code or visit readings.com.au/events

Credits

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 July *Readings Monthly* cover features artwork from the cover of *Tight Lines* by Allee Richards, courtesy of publisher Summit Books, an imprint of Simon & Schuster. Cover design by Sandy Cull with photography by Savo Ilic / Arcangel Images. Read our review on page 9.

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

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KIDS

315 Lygon St 03 9341 7730

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The Market Pavilion 03 9810 0860

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Westfield Doncaster 03 9810 0891

EMPORIUM

Emporium Melbourne 03 9810 0850

HAWTHORN

687 Glenferrie Rd 03 9819 1917

MALVERN

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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



Last month, Readings was awarded Book Retailer of the Year for 2026 at the Australian Book Industry Awards (ABIAs). The award is judged by the sales directors from the major Australian publishers.

The books and publishers of the year were also announced on the night. It is always nice to have something to celebrate, and it is wonderful to have some industry recognition of the brilliant work the Readings booksellers do. Although, we aren't motivated by winning awards. Our role is to connect readers with books they will love, while supporting the industry and our local community as best we can.

On the weekend, I attended the Australian Booksellers Association (ABA) conference. And while I would love to say that we're the only company deserving of bookselling awards, it simply isn't true. There are a multitude of wonderful independent booksellers across Australia, and they all do an incredible job of promoting books, writing and reading. They all deserve to be cherished and supported by their communities.

We have just launched a new initiative at Readings, The Big Book Club. Held at Cinema Nova in Carlton over five weeks, we have partnered with the University of Melbourne to develop a program that dives into Homer's *The Odyssey*. This was the initiative of our Carlton shop manager, Lou Ryan, and it seems to have struck a chord –

it sold out in a couple of weeks. I had a coffee with Lou the other day and she is already cooking up an idea for the next one, so sign up to our e-news if you would like the chance to come along.

Reading. Thinking. Questioning. Discussion. Debate. These are all elements of a healthy society, and I believe bookshops play an essential role in keeping them alive. This year marks the 10th anniversary of our Kids shop in Lygon Street. We know that getting kids to love reading from a young age will have many benefits for them throughout their lives. This anniversary is a good chance to thank all the wonderful children's booksellers at Readings Kids who have made that shop such a beacon of joy over the last 10 years.

Dear Reader

with Alison Huber



Each year, the deadline for the July *Readings Monthly* column seems to coincide with my recovery from the annual Australian Bookseller's Association conference (note to self and Dear Ed. – can we please account for this in 2027?!), so I'm

afraid that I'm writing this with a slightly blurry focus after a whirlwind weekend in Canberra. Our small coterie of delegates arrived at work this morning 'tired but happy' as the cliché goes, but it really is true: it's always a pleasure to spend time with like-minded colleagues from other independent bookshops and our friends in publishing. Into the bargain, we also gain access to the big upcoming titles of the year at the trade show and see authors talk about their new work.

It's hard to pick a highlight under these circumstances, but I think every attendee will remember this year's conference dinner for as long as their senses remain. It began with the sheer delight of being at the National Museum of Australia after dark – wow, what a thing! – a feeling of wonder that was followed by the privilege of hearing Bruce Pascoe talk about his upcoming book, *The European Mind* (due in September from Magabala Books). Promising to irritate and disturb all the right people, this book asks the pressing difficult questions about colonialism, capitalism, and Christianity. Though it seems a long time ago, there was a time before *Dark Emu* (it's so much a part of the national

discourse now and has sold so many copies that it has become an Australian household staple). It sounds like we might come to think of *The European Mind* in the same way: as a conversation-changing landmark moment in our country and in the world that then becomes an essential part of its architecture.

We then sat down to dinner, and the author we all looked forward to hearing from between courses was the evening's second 'national treasure'-status figure, Magda Szubanski. Magda's forthcoming book, *I Can't Tell You*

But I Will, is the follow-up to her bestselling memoir *Reckoning*, and this time focuses on her relationship with her mother. It was an unforgettable address, shepherded beautifully by Magda's publisher Michael Heyward. Funny, moving, and full of warmth, it brought the crowd to its feet in appreciation. It was a real treat.

In fact, all the author presentations were outstanding this year: I loved hearing from Adam Liaw and Alice Zaslavsky in conversation with their publishers about their upcoming cookbooks and the particularities of cookbook publishing; Favel Parrett and Brooke Davis gave us brilliant accounts of their new novels, answering probing questions from their publisher (and this year's ABIA Commissioning Editor/Publisher of the Year) Hachette's Vanessa Radnidge; Meg Mason's closing keynote address had us all laughing and feeling very chuffed to have made the decision to work in a bookshop (Meg's new novel is called *Sophie, Standing There*).

All told, I think many of us will have gone home remembering that bookshops are crucial infrastructure for our literary culture and are a haven for many people (including their staff). Being able to spend time in a bookshop to find solace, recognition and understanding in the books you seek there – and maybe even find your people – makes them increasingly important spaces in these uncertain times.



Michael Heyward and Magda Szubanski in conversation at the ABA conference. Photo | Rosalind McClintock

Comments and Note

with Kim Gruschow



Zeno Sworder's beautiful picture book *Once I was a Giant* was named Book of the Year at the 2026 ABIAs. I think often of the W.H. Auden quote, 'There are good books which are only for adults, because their comprehension presupposes adult

experiences, but there are no good books which are only for children.' With that in mind, it is thrilling to see *Once I was a Giant* celebrated and reaching wider audiences. Readers of all ages will find something in this hopeful and imaginative story; Sworder's illustrations beautifully capture the magnificence of nature. Also exciting is the news that two Australian books have been shortlisted for the 2026 Eisner Award (the Oscars for comics!) for Best Publication for Kids: *Chickenpox* by Remy Lai and *Creature Clinic* by Gavin Aung Than.

The range of graphic novels available for younger readers has grown steadily over the past few decades. While *Tintin* and *Asterix* remain popular, they are now accompanied by books covering a vast array of subjects and styles. Of course, kids and adults alike

have been reading comics since the dawn of newspapers and magazines, but the comics and book publishing worlds have been engaged in an awkward courtship. Often Australia's graphic novel creators have been published overseas and gained little attention locally. That is changing, though, and it has been great to witness the development of local publishing in this area. Children's graphic novel publishing in Australia is particularly strong; there are now books that reveal fascinating slices of Australian history (*Underground: Marsupial Outlaws and Other Rebels of Australia's War in Vietnam* by Miranda Burton), contemporary presentations of creation stories (*When the World Was Soft: Yindjibarndi Creation Stories* by Juluwarlu Group Aboriginal Corporation and illustrated by Alex Mankiewicz) and excellent memoirs (*Oh Brother* by Georgina Chadderton).

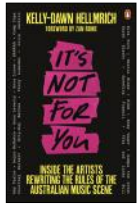
Within Australian publishing, Allen & Unwin has been steadily building a stable of talented local creators, and we now have imprints dedicated to kids' graphic novels. Newcomer Perentie press released its first book in April and Hardie Grant's Figment imprint has published a

handful of great books. Check out Andrea Innocent's *Lamington Left Behind* for a dazzling eco-thriller or Gus Gordon's *Into the Bewilderness* if you like charming, funny adventure stories. We are highlighting a range of these books in our shops this month, so pop in for a browse and you may be surprised how many amazing graphic novels are Australian!

Also new this month, Sally Rippin and Aki Fukuoka have carefully adapted Billie B Brown into a graphic novel series to encourage a new generation of readers. There's more on the horizon, too; Jason Pamment's fans can look forward to a second *Ember* book in September, and we are very excited about *Hometown*, a graphic novel by Shaun Tan which will be published in October.

I was terribly sad to learn that Marjane Satrapi passed away recently at the age of 56. Satrapi was the author of *Persepolis*, the wonderful autobiographical graphic novel about her childhood and adolescence in Iran and beyond. In interviews, Satrapi touched on the immediacy and universality of images; she described drawing as 'the first language of the human being'. **R**

The Opener



**It's Not For You:
Inside the Artists
Rewriting the Rules of the
Australian Music Scene**
Kelly-Dawn Hellmrich
Penguin. PB. \$36.99
Available 11 August
Available for pre-order now

In *It's Not For You*, Kelly-Dawn Hellmrich interviews women and gender-diverse artists who have changed the Australian music industry, including Amy Taylor, Angie McMahon, Anna Lunoe, Courtney Barnett, Marcia Hines, BARKAA, Romy Vager, Sampa the Great, Sarah Blasko, Sosefina Fuamoli and more. Hellmrich also reflects on her own musical life so far, as she does in this glimpse into the book.

My dad's work ute would blare music so loudly it made the old speakers rattle; usually 'Best Of's and 'Greatest Hits' from the 1960s and '70s. I had to turn down the volume just to speak, always asking questions, trying to understand the stories hidden inside the lyrics. He was never annoyed, never brushed me off, just answered like it was important I knew.

'What's a Boy of Summer?' I asked one day, after listening to the Don Henley song.

'Boys who come into town, date the girls for the holidays and then leave,' he said, his voice even, as though he'd seen that exact situation happen before. 'They go back home to their real lives.'

Cat Stevens, Neil Young, Bob Dylan. Their voices filled Dad's car, and then later, at home, those voices became his. He'd sit in the lounge room, guitar in his lap, cigarette burning in the ashtray, and play the songs himself.

One day, Tom Petty's greatest hits played from the CD player. As I sat in the passenger seat, legs sticking to the seat in the thick summer air, the music and warm breeze from the open window washing over me, I said, 'I want to be like the girls in these songs.' I pictured myself as a muse: some mysterious and sexy woman who inspired an incredible musician; someone who existed only in lyrics, immortalised forever in song.

My dad sighed, shaking his head and looking at the road. 'No, you don't,' he said. 'You want to be Tom Petty.'

And he was right.

★

At the end of February 2015, I decided it was time to join the mass exodus from Sydney's indie punk scene and make the pilgrimage to Melbourne, the land of coffee, pints and a level of cool that is almost sickening. It had become such a rite of passage that Newcastle punks Obat Batuk wrote an anthem called 'Fuck Off to Melbourne' – a gritty riff where over half of the 2 minutes, 43 seconds of the song is just that one line chanted again and again. So, I followed the script and fucked off to Melbourne.

My first place in Melbourne was an old milk bar, reincarnated as a quirky Collingwood share house. The 'bedrooms' consisted of a toolshed with a divide constructed by a wannabe DIY-queen housemate, and a third room that barely fit a double bed. The kitchen was a 1970s time capsule: decaying funky tiles splashed with clashing browns, greens and oranges. The shop floor turned lounge room was an empty shell filled with mismatched second-hand furniture, an out-of-tune drum kit and countless dirty coffee mugs.

Between being a milk bar and a share house, the building had spent the 1990s as the home of Melbourne Rock'n'Roll High School – a *School of Rock* for girl bands. So, it felt natural to turn our front room into a dive bar venue for weekend house concerts. The music was earnest and unpolished: sometimes acts who were just starting out and went on to big things, mostly our friends or bands my housemates were members of.

On a Sunday in March, we were hosting a show as usual, a line-up of three acts. One of them – an 18-year-old girl playing solo – had a presence very different from the rest, an air about her that made her hard to look away from. Her long, thick, dark hair framed a face marked by a newly broken, still-healing nose, and her expression seemed too serious for someone her age. Her name was Georgia Maq. I watched Georgia play through the small service window in our kitchen while I drank burnt stovetop coffee. I listened as she played her song 'Stove Lighter', standing behind our gas stove that I'd started that day with a cigarette lighter.

I said, 'I want to be like the girls in these songs.' [...]

My dad sighed, shaking his head and looking at the road.

...'No, you don't,' he said. 'You want to be Tom Petty.'

While the others on the bill were loud and aggressive, Georgia sounded beautiful and resonant, standing alone, electric guitar slightly out of tune. The atmosphere shifted when she played. A few years later, I'd know that feeling well. I thought, *Damn, this girl needs a band*, not because the songs felt lacking, but because I could just hear her songs that way in my head. But as the night wore on, that thought got lost somewhere in the cold Collingwood air.

I met Thomo – nobody outside of her family ever calls her Sarah – in April of that year, in the same house. We were hosting a leg of 'All Good in the Wood', an all-day festival that sprawled across the backyards of various share houses in Collingwood. Local bands, makeshift stages, locations and set times only circulated via text. You had to know to know. We were hosting the start of the day, a six-piece rock band called Harmony, who sounded like the aftermath of a panic attack. I was clearing up as the crowd drifted out to the next venue, packing empty and abandoned long-neck bottles into milk crates.

'Oi, c**t, we're still drinking that,' a voice snapped. Without realising, I'd grabbed Thomo's beer. I shrugged off being called a c**t in my own backyard and finished my chores before heading out to catch the next band.

At the end of the day, High Tension was playing at the Tote Hotel, fronted by Karina Utomo, black hair whipping, eyes sharp and locked in. People climbed the rafters of the outdoor awning of the Tote, leaping into the mosh pit below. Beer flew through the air like liquid confetti, while bodies in patchwork denim jackets tumbled and were swiftly hoisted back up by sweaty hands. Trying to keep my distance from the chaos, as much as you could in the middle of a mosh pit, I found myself standing next to Thomo, who was also trying to stay out of the fray.

It was at the end of May, while visiting a friend on the other side of the Maribyrnong River, that I next saw Georgia Maq. She was stretched out on my friend's kitchen table while he was finishing a tattoo of a snake eating itself on her side. We made small talk, sort of. She was strange, blunt and rude. I felt like she hated me.

'You're from the Milkbar, right?' she asked, looking at me intensely.

'Yeah,' I said.

'How do you know everyone?'

'Music,' I said.

'What do you play?'

'Bass.'

'Oh.' That was it. One word. Nothing else. Just 'Oh.'

It was one of the weirdest conversations I've ever had in my life.

But later that night, after another lonely day in Melbourne, I got a message from my friend: *Georgia wants to know if you'd join her band*. I ignored him. I don't know why, but I felt weird including him in this. Instead, I messaged Georgia on Instagram. *Why are you scared to talk to me? Yeah, I'll join your band*.

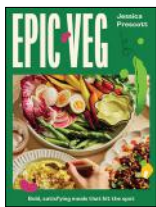
She replied almost immediately. And that was that.

Our very first band practice was where I met Thomo properly. I kept my amp turned down low, too nervous for the two of them to really hear me. Afraid of what they might think. The room was a wall of noise, but the best kind. To this day, Thomo is one of the hardest-hitting drummers I've ever met. And Georgia had these songs, just waiting for her rock band to come along. A rock band that she always imagined would be all women. Raw, life-crushing songs that made you want to learn the words as fast as you could, just so you could sing along and feel like you were part of the story. There was something cosmic about the three of us in that room. True magic. I knew then it was special, I just didn't know how special it would be. **R**



Kelly-Dawn Hellmrich is a musician best known as the bassist of Camp Cope, the groundbreaking Australian punk trio that redefined the industry with their fearless activism and uncompromising sound. A vocal advocate for representation and inclusivity in the music industry, Kelly works at MusicNSW as their Western Sydney coordinator and alongside Briggs as artist and community liaison for the Indigenous-owned and operated record label Bad Apples. Kelly is of Mineng Noongar descent.

Photo | Carlie Jane Creative



**Epic Veg:
Bold, Satisfying Meals
That Hit the Spot**

Jessica Prescott
Hardie Grant. HB. \$49.99
Available now

Photos | Rochelle Eagle



*Epic Veg: Bold,
Satisfying Meals
That Hit the Spot*

by Jessica Prescott is the epic by
name, epic by nature follow-up

to *Epic Salads*. If you are on the hunt for delicious, vegetable-forward recipes to warm your winter evenings – or indeed any time of day – Prescott's latest book is full of ideas. It was tough picking just one recipe to share, but this sensationally versatile okonomiyaki is a great place to start!

Okonomiyaki for one

Serves

1

Prep

10 minutes

Cooking time

10 minutes

2 tablespoons self-raising
(self-rising) flour

20 ml (¾ fl oz/1 tablespoon) water
– or dashi stock if you're not
vegetarian/vegan

1 extra-large egg

½ teaspoon tamari or soy sauce

½ teaspoon sea salt

80 g (2 ¾ oz) finely shredded cabbage,
washed and spun dry

20 g (¾ oz) grated carrot

2 spring onions (scallions), sliced,
green tops reserved as garnish

pinch of dried seaweed flakes (optional)

oil, for cooking

Toppings

tonkatsu sauce
– smoky barbecue sauce is
also delicious

Japanese mayonnaise

fried egg (optional)

toasted white sesame seeds

pickled ginger (optional)

chilli flakes or chilli oil (optional)

Moreish and warming, this savoury Japanese pancake is the perfect way to use up that cabbage lingering in your veggie drawer. It's quick to make, endlessly riffable, and ridiculously satisfying whether you're post-workout or mid-hangover. While I am often incredibly relaxed about proper measurements in recipes, this is one where I recommend weighing your cabbage and carrot – at least the first couple of times you make it – to get an idea of how much veg you need. I make an intentionally scant batter, but it does mean that too much veg can make it tricky for the pancake to bind and hold its shape as you flip it.

1 Place a large, flat-bottomed frying pan over a medium heat.

2 In a bowl, whisk the flour, water, egg, tamari or soy sauce and salt into a smooth batter. Add the cabbage, carrot, white parts of the spring onion and seaweed flakes, if using, and stir to combine.

3 You can also just place all the ingredients in a medium bowl and use a fork to combine, breaking the egg and incorporating it in with the other fillings. You should have a thin batter evenly coating the veggies.

4 Heat a lick of oil in the hot pan – I use anywhere between 1 teaspoon and 1 tablespoon depending on my mood. Swirl the oil over the bottom of the pan, then pour the batter in, using a fork to gently shape it into a round pancake.

5 Cook for about 3–4 minutes until the bottom is golden brown, and bubbles are forming and popping. Carefully flip and press down lightly to ensure the underside gets an even sear, then cook for another 3–4 minutes, adding a little more oil to the pan if you want the edges to be crispy.

6 Transfer the cooked pancake to a plate and drizzle with tonkatsu sauce and mayonnaise. To get the marbled effect, drizzle the sauces across the top of the pancake and then take a wooden skewer and drag it across the pancake, in one direction and then the other. In the name of eating more protein in my 40s, I like to fry an egg to add to this – every 7 grams counts, right? Sprinkle with sesame seeds and reserved spring onion greens, then add pickled ginger and chilli, if using. **R**





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7 - 19**

40 YEARS OF
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Fiction

Anthologies

HEAT: Series 3, Number 25

Anna Thwaites (ed.)

Giramondo. PB. \$24.95

Available 15 July



First published in 1996, *HEAT* is a literary magazine dedicated to publishing essays, fiction and poetry by Australian and overseas writers of the highest quality.

Recent contributors include Antigone Kefala, Peter Stamm, Alexis Wright, Fiona Kelly McGregor, Mariana Enríquez, David Sornig, Max Easton, Hasib Hourani, Eda Gunaydin, Ender Başkan, Jenny Erpenbeck and Oliver Driscoll. *HEAT*'s third series (2022–) is edited by Anna Thwaites and designed by award-winning designer Jenny Grigg.

Australian Classics

Penguin Modern Australian Classics (new collection)

Various authors

Penguin. HB. \$35 each

Available 14 July



Introducing a gorgeous new series focusing on some of Penguin's favourite Australian stories. Drawing from their vibrant publishing history, these deluxe clothbound hardbacks,

with cover art by Jessica Cruickshank, are the perfect addition to any book lover's collection. Whether you're looking to reconnect with a beloved favourite or hoping to discover a new one, there's something for everyone with Penguin Modern Australian Classics. The first six books to be released this month are: *Holding the Man* by Timothy Conigrave; *Stasiland* by Anna Funder; *Hating Alison Ashley* by Robin Klein; *Looking for Alibrandi* by Melina Marchetta; *The Yield* by Tara June Winch; and *Cloudstreet* by Tim Winton. A further six titles will be released on 8 September including *Playing Beattie Bow* by Ruth Park, *The Narrow Road to the Deep North* by Richard Flanagan and *True History of the Kelly Gang* by Peter Carey.

Australian Fiction

The Clinging Thing

Munira Tabassum Ahmed

Penguin. PB. \$34.99

Available now



Iqra wants to be a good daughter, sister, woman, and mother. It has been made clear to her that people owe their lives to one another including her mother, and the mother before her. After the loss of a pregnancy, Iqra returns to her childhood home where memory seems porous yet

suffocating. Seam River draws Iqra back and she revisits the stories of her parents and all the women before her, as dreams, memories, the uncertain and the impossible converge. The future refuses to take form. She finds wonder.

I Made This Just for You: Stories

Chris Ames

Ultimo. PB. \$34.99

Available now



R With 17 short stories, each more unexpected, vibrantly creative and ultimately human than the last, *I Made This Just for You* is a rollercoaster of characters, contexts and formats

(including an impressively heartwarming functional crossword puzzle: 'Nine Letter Word for Woman I'm In Love With') which will stay with you long past the final page. Some flow quietly and domestically, almost imperceptibly different to our world, while others feature harsh and unrecognisable landscapes teeming, nevertheless, with familiar human foibles, emotions and questions. Consistent themes include identity, childhood and parenthood, and the destabilising relentlessness of change in the modern digital age.

This reviewer believes *I Made This Just for You* is a book best dived into with as little context as possible – the joy, for author and reader alike it seems, is in the discovery of new tributaries off the river of the future. But readers wishing for a glimpse into their literary future can expect stories of extremity and mundanity, claustrophobia (in 'Charlie & Charlie': a triad who adopt a shared name, face and identity), catharsis (in 'What Do We Do With the Bad Men': six actors attempt to survive an ordeal to earn the right to apologise for crimes), devastating realism (in the titular 'I Made This Just for You': a father is willing to do whatever it takes to earn sight-restoring surgery for his son), haunting (in 'Everything Solid is Vibrating in Place': a family remodel their house to include a 100-room basement complex to house 100 Chrises – replacement fathers named Chris – in preparation for an impending health crisis) and profound loneliness (in 'Switzerland': a man on a flight is handed an infant by a vomiting mother, experiencing unexpected fatherhood in microcosm). Author Chris Ames's characters negotiate loneliness, climate anxiety, grief and co-parenting in stories that are funny, bleak and brilliantly new – equal parts uncomfortable and engaging, timeless and completely of the moment.

Tamuz Ellazam is the manager of Readings Kids

Billie King

Shannon Kelly-White

HarperCollins. PB. \$34.99

Available now



R I love to devour a lush and gritty Australian story – and *Billie King* could be this year's national cult classic. You will laugh, gasp and cry while cheering on our 12-year-old gun-slinging

hero. The story begins in 1918 when Australia's shell-shocked troops are silently returning home from war. Small towns have been struggling, with many of their male workforce never to return. Countless women have been left alone and isolated, raising their families, running their farms, and trying to make ends meet any way they can.

Enter Dulcie James, Australia's last bushranger, trying to hold up a lonely Anna King. An unloved infant – the titular Billie – lies neglected on the floor. Anna's farm on the outskirts of Orilong is, like her life, falling down around her. All Dulcie wants is a hot, cooked meal, but what she gets is pure attitude from a furious and cavalier Anna. Nothing is going according to Dulcie's plan. The next day Anna mysteriously disappears.

Twelve years later, Billie King is a stubborn and courageous girl being corralled like a wild brumby by circumstances beyond her control. Her mother is still missing, no one will answer her questions, the farm work never stops and her alcoholic father's debts keep mounting. Her palomino pony and the bush are her only friends. Even when Billie does everything asked of her, she still falls into trouble – she simply has no time for cranky nuns or school. When child services threaten to remove Billie from home, she has to decide between solving the mystery of her missing mother, or keeping what's left of her family together. Meanwhile, Dulcie James, now embattled and vengeful, must return to Orilong to tie up a loose end.

Although *Billie King* is a work of fiction set in 1918 and 1930, it depicts a world of harsh realities that this country's women, children and downtrodden unfortunately still experience today. May we all be like Billie King and fight for justice with honesty and integrity.

Erica Rist is from Readings Chadstone

Rite of Spring

Kris Kneen

Transit Lounge. PB. \$34.99

Available 1 July



R Miranda and Richard need a fresh start. After Richard's affair and Miranda's diving accident, the two are seeking to bridge the gap in their marriage before it completely falls apart.

When they take on the role of caretakers for a lighthouse on an island off Tasmania, they believe the isolation will bring them closer together. But Miranda soon discovers something is not quite right with the island. There's a scarecrow in the garden with a macabre offering of dead animals at its feet; erotic effigies of mysterious mermen carved into trees; diary entries of past caretakers that speak of a primal evil on the island; and an ever-lurking feeling of being watched, giving Miranda and Richard the sense they are not alone on the island. When Miranda begins to hear a call in the night, pulling her towards its siren song, she is both terrified and aroused. Who else is on this island and what do they want with her?

The gothic horror genre is famously known for its misty English moors, dark Transylvanian mountainsides, and the

marshlands of the American South. But Kris Kneen writes with a haunting grace that conjures the Australian nautical gothic, elegantly celebrating the beauty and terrors of the human body in this psychosexual drama on the edge of Tasmania. Beneath the disturbing and lustful surface of Kneen's novel lies a tale of female empowerment and sexual reclamation. In the humiliating wake of her husband's affair and amid her struggles with body image and perimenopause, *Rite of Spring* follows Miranda as she rediscovers self-confidence and desire.

Rite of Spring is an erotic, folk-horror tale that traverses the line between desire and fear. Perfect for those who loved *Our Wives Under the Sea* by Julia Armfield, this is easily one of my favourite reads of the year so far.

Aurelia Orr is from Readings Kids

Worry Doll

Laura McPhee-Browne

Scribe. PB. \$29.99

Available now



On an ordinary day, two women meet on a train. Heloise – the older woman – lives with her boyfriend in Melbourne. Lacey – the other woman – is from Aotearoa and studies the clouds.

What follows is anything but ordinary, a passionate affair that will consume them both in mismatched and maddening ways. Propulsive and lyrical, *Worry Doll* examines desire, memory, and the delusion of love. From the author of the acclaimed novel *Cherry Beach*.

The Vape Lord of Queanbeyan

Omar Musa

Penguin. PB. \$34.99

Available 7 July



R Short stories are the tricksters of storytelling: meticulously plotted, singularly focused, and capable of delivering the hardest emotional blows in the smallest packages.

To draw these pocket-sized imps together in one collection requires careful negotiation of the peaks and troughs each story carves out, so that they remain distinct even when read back-to-back. As such, the experience of reading a short story collection by a skilled writer isn't the same as reading a novel; rather than being pursued over 300-odd pages by an ever-growing plot beast, the reader is instead stopped at every street corner, taken out at the knees by a clever scamp, and gets up to find another.

Omar Musa's *The Vape Lord of Queanbeyan* is a boulevard lined with the kind of weird, wonderful and woeful stories that you can tread a hundred times and never tire of. This collection, his first release since his Miles Franklin-longlisted novel *Fierceland*, folds together award-winning pieces with unreleased material to traverse the borderlands of human (and more-than-human) compassion. Like a love letter written in the margins of an intervention agenda, *The Vape Lord of Queanbeyan* refuses to untangle affection

from critique; Musa writes with a keen eye towards the ongoing consequences when the scales tip heavily in either direction.

While the collection is best read as an indispensable whole, there are specific moments that slip off the page and manifest themselves with uncanny clarity; among the most memorable is 'Indeterminacy', in which Musa demonstrates one of his many multi-hyphenate skills. In it, a saxophonist navigating the New York jazz scene encounters Islamophobia from his employer – and gradually, the language struggles to contain the growing tension. The explosive final act is illustrated – literally – with a six-page linocut spread that expands the action and emotion beyond linguistic limits. It's an adroit approach to storytelling from a writer at the apogee of his craft, one which we can only be so fortunate to be surprised by again and again.

Gene Pinter is from Readings Chadstone

People Like Us

Sally Piper

UQP. PB. \$34.99

Available now



Losing her family home in a bitter divorce, Tina finds herself living in a caravan on the city's fringes – alone after raising four children and nursing her dying mum. The new neighbours are welcoming but she receives more attention than she bargained for. A welcome break from an ageist, sexist job market, Tina finds work caring for an intimidating wealthy elderly woman. But Mrs Bell is not as straightforward as she'd hoped. As the two form an unlikely bond they discover that financial security is about more than having money.

Tight Lines

Allee Richards

Summit. PB. \$34.99

Available now



Allee Richards' *Tight Lines* is a study of growing up in a small beachside town, with all its freedom and claustrophobia, where it feels like the only entertainment is surfing, fishing and getting shitfaced. Matty and Josh are Yin and Yang twins who befriend a young Luke, an unremarkable yet quietly intense boy. His parents, who own a butcher shop in inland Wonnie, inexplicably moved the family of three to the Cape. A fish out of water, Luke is grateful to be taken in by the charismatic Josh and the intelligent Matty. The three are so different from each other that there is no doubt these are friendships of circumstance, and, for Luke, relationships he can never really settle into.

Luke doesn't want to be a butcher like his father, he has an aversion to blood, but he has no ambition or vision for the future. He is very much a passenger on the twin train, and at times this bubbles up in resentment, and risk-taking. As life moves from riding bikes to chatting up girls and drinking, the stakes get higher. When the boys turn 15, they head to the Face to cliff-jump. There they meet Millie, a yearly summer caravanner. Millie is as smart as Matty, and as alluring as Josh. The threesome quickly turns into a summer

foursome, and we see their relationships develop each year Millie returns. The four are together when events conspire against them – all the risks they've taken before are thrown into the air, weighed, and a bad decision is made, changing their lives forever.

Richards writes in sparse prose, yet the simplicity of the words, like life at the Cape, is deceptive; there is a complexity and richness that sneaks up on you and hits you in the guts. *Tight Lines* is a story of love, friendship, acceptance, and tragedy.

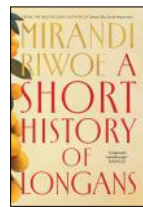
Rosalind McClintock is the head of marketing

A Short History of Longans

Mirandi Riwoe

UQP. PB. \$34.99

Available 14 July



A ferocious storm topples a reclusive man's longan tree in 2040s Queensland, pushing him to crack the shell of his long-held secrets and connect with his widowed neighbour.

Nearly 50 years earlier, an ageing woman grapples with her role as a mother and wife as dementia unravels the skein of her memories. Further back in time, a middling actress in post-war Hollywood has one last shot at stardom, but her dignity may prove too high a price to pay. Earliest of all are the roots of these far-flung lives: the Irish orphan who strikes out on her own in colonial Australia, and the Chinese bushranger who alters the course of her future.

What sound like disconnected vignettes are the delicate ties that bind Mirandi Riwoe's latest novel, *A Short History of Longans*. Deftly navigating the eddies of both individual ancestry and history at large, Riwoe maps four generations of a Chinese-Irish family in reverse chronological order to explore assimilation, identity and belonging in Australia. While each generation's story is as fleeting as the title suggests, there are no dropped threads or inconsequential decisions; every seed Riwoe plants throughout the novel bears exquisite fruit.

Perhaps the novel's greatest strength, however, lies in its specificity. As a descendant of a colonial Queensland Chinese-Irish union myself, *A Short History of Longans* is a family epic that treads an ancestral line I've yet to see represented elsewhere in Australian fiction. There are moments peppered across these pages that ring so eerily true to my own family's experiences that it feels as though Riwoe has reached across time to transcribe their stories. It's this uncanny precision that not only makes *A Short History of Longans* a resonant piece of writing, but one with a distinct texture and depth that makes for a thoroughly propulsive read.

Gene Pinter is from Readings Chadstone

Rat Daniels

Alex Sawyer

Hachette. PB. \$34.99

Available now



Jimmy Quinn is a boy when he meets Rat Daniels by the creek at Edens Ridge. That day is the beginning of everything. Wild and rebellious, Rat is far from Jimmy's tidy world but there is a

dangerous current to Rat that scares him sometimes, as does the violence in Rat's house and his hatred for Davey Callaghan. As they grow older Rat slips into crime and their friendship is stretched. Then a deadly fire on the Callaghan farm forces Jimmy to decide how far his loyalty will go, and just who Rat really is.

The Followers

Maree Spratt

A&U. PB. \$34.99

Available now



Beautiful, manipulative Lacey is a lifestyle influencer turned bestselling author who preaches self-love and body confidence to her million followers. But Teresa remembers Lacey as a prepubescent mean girl who kept the loyal members of her gang on a short leash. Twenty years later, she watches Lacey from afar with the ghost of her younger self and a copy of Lacey's new self-help book for company. While Lacey seems to have rebranding down to an art form, Teresa can't shake their past so easily.

The End of Romance

Maria Takolander

Text. PB. \$34.99

Available now



The End of Romance is a fascinating and brutal novel. Set in what seems to be a near-future dystopian world, a woman and her young son struggle to survive on the edge of their community.

In this world, all able-bodied men are sent away to a mysterious war. When the protagonist, The Woman, comes across a strange man, who seemingly should have been sent to war, she suspects he could help her son also escape this fate. The novel is split into four parts, each from a different character's perspective. The last section is startlingly gorgeous. I could have read an entire novel in that narrative voice.

Maria Takolander is a Finnish-Australian writer and poet. Her affinity for poetry comes through in her fiction writing, which is beautiful and compelling. This book is pleasurable to read, visual and intricate, and despite the suffering that the characters go through, I enjoyed travelling through this strange future world. At times I found the characters' decision-making logic hard to follow. This isn't a flaw so much as it adds to the novel's surreal, disembodied atmosphere. I was left wondering why these characters were reacting in the ways they did.

This book is also unique in how it writes gender. By sending most of the men away to war, the society depicted has pushed femininity and masculinity to their extremes. The Woman, who sees herself as akin to her ambiguous father figure, embodies some hyper-masculine traits, although uneasily. I'm not certain where the book takes us, beyond conjuring up this extreme comparison. It's not offering easy answers. But *The End of Romance* is excellent in creating the feeling of this world. I suspect everyone who reads it will have a different opinion on it: on the characters, their motives, and on the logics of the society itself.

Stephanie King is from Readings Emporium

Lovesick

Lillian Telford

HQ Fiction. PB. \$32.99

Available now



With beautiful and poetic prose, debut author Lillian Telford puts a magnifying lens on the ugly, messy, contradictory, and almost universal feeling of falling in and out of love.

Told from alternating perspectives, and in alternating timelines, the reader slowly pieces together the during and after of Gabby and Gordon's whirlwind romance. After meeting in a Brisbane club, the two lose themselves in each other, almost sacrificing everyone else and themselves along the way. Their infatuation and anxiety are palpable. Neither is in the wrong, nor are they right. There are no winners when two lives are so entwined – hearts are such fragile things.

Telford expertly navigates heavy topics with care and tenderness – including early childhood trauma, miscarriage, and the exchange of power during sex – which made me both nauseous with worry and feel seen. The unspoken is loud in the subtext. The relationships beyond Gabby and Gordon's are also complex and nuanced. I especially enjoyed dissecting the dynamic between Gabby and Róisín. Their co-dependency is stretched thin when they both have partners, and a falling out seems inevitable. Who is to blame? When mutual growth stalls and paths diverge, is there a way back?

Both Gabby and Gordon are flawed and fleshed-out characters who take shape in a way that anyone who has ever loved will find relatable. This novel is a love story, but more importantly, it is a story about love, its complexities, and how past trauma can manifest in unhealthy and harmful habits.

Soft, lyrical, and haunting, *Lovesick* is a stunning debut that packs a punch, and forces us to sit with the dark, uncomfortable, and also hopeful elements of modern relationships.

Jacinta Richards is from Readings Chadstone

But Won't I Miss Me

Tiffany Tsao

HarperVia. PB. \$34.99

Available now



A twisted new take on the transformation of matrescence, Tiffany Tsao's *But Won't I Miss Me* delves into the connections between mothers and their pre- and post-maternal selves.

In this possible future world, a climate crisis has throttled our access to petrol, electricity and the internet. In this world, like in our own, mothers experience a radical physical and emotional transformation during childbirth. But here, after the child is born, another mother emerges, consuming the postpartum body of her former self and taking her place, stronger and faster than before, profoundly in touch with her child's needs, with her personality and memories intact, except those of her cannibalistic rebirth. Generations of mothers have gone through this process, sometimes multiple times for multiple children. It's normal, even celebrated

for the vitality and strength it affords new mothers. But not everyone is excited about Rebirth, and it doesn't always go to plan.

Vivi's barely managing to stay afloat, repairing clapped-out electronics for Acek, an old family friend who's more like a father than her ailing Pa. When she does visit Pa, she also has to confront the reality of her disappointed older sister Vera and her three perfect children in her effortlessly maintained home. Nothing is effortless for Vivi. It used to be. She used to be married, she used to have it all, she used to be herself. Now she's a single mother, just scraping by with her toddler, Cloud. Other mothers carry carloads of shopping, balancing their children at the same time without breaking a sweat. Vivi is always sore, always tired, barely keeping up.

Told from three perspectives, this haunting novel considers who we give up to become parents, the violence and tenderness of parenthood, and just how far we will go to keep our selves intact.

Tamuz Ellazam is the manager of Readings Kids

Good Intentions

Jessy Wu

Pan Mac. PB. \$34.99

Available now



R Working at the university newspaper together, Nadia Kuan and Jake Sullivan bond over their shared love for investigative reporting. Finding a pattern in the system's flaws and exposing the powerful who exploit said flaws, the pair fall in love like puzzle pieces falling into place. Their dreams are bright and clear, until they are confronted with the complicated reality of adulthood and their previously infallible moral compasses lose confidence. It isn't until years later that they meet again, worn and weary, and this time on opposing sides. Adulthood has revealed the tangled compromises capitalism demands of morals, and their reunion requires the messy questions of their well-intentioned youth to be addressed.

I absolutely adored this book. With characters that bleed off the page and embed themselves in your heart, Jessy Wu's writing captures humanity over and over with a lucidity so acute it almost slaps you. Sydney is revealed, bright and electric, and each chapter is crafted with such clear intention and edge-of-your-seat pacing that this page-turning book is over before you know it. I've only just finished it, and I'm already excited to read it again.

Wu dissects ethical dilemmas with surgical precision and unforgiving clarity, giving voice to the shades of grey that are so often lost to a black-and-white view imposed by late-stage capitalism. The alternating viewpoints compel the reader to assess both sides of the story, asking you to dig deeper and investigate before making judgements – just like the characters must learn to do.

Good Intentions is a debut novel with a statement to make, and it refuses to simplify its depth. Through her concise and sharp wit, Wu strikes a powerful balance between meaningful nuance and astute observations, punctuated with emotional gut punches. I eagerly await her next work!

Jess Ingle is from Readings Emporium

International Fiction

Last Day of a Prior Life

Andrés Barba & Lisa Dillman (trans.)

Scribe. PB. \$29.99

Available now



While preparing an empty house for sale, a woman encounters an unblinking seven-year-old boy, trapped there from another era, like an insect preserved in amber. Unable to articulate what

he needs, the boy draws her into an unsettling bond that neither can escape, until they understand its cause. With incredible precision, this deeply disquieting novel weaves together doppelgangers and time loops in the tradition of a classic ghost story. Yet its contemporary sensibility evokes the dark horror of Shirley Jackson.

The Summer Boy

Philippe Besson & Sam Taylor (trans.)

Scribner. PB. \$29.99

Available now



R *The Summer Boy* is based on a tragic event from Philippe Besson's own life. The protagonist, Philippe, named for the author, returns to a small island in France where his family

holidays every summer with long-term friends. There, Philippe reunites with François and Christophe, friends he's known his whole life. But this year they have a new companion, Nicolas, who has recently moved there with his mother. The four boys also meet other holiday-makers Alice and Marc, with whom the four boys strike up intense relationships.

The Summer Boy vividly captures the time between high school and adulthood; the laziness of that summer undercut with an awareness of a different future ahead. The novel leans into this moment beautifully, so the tragedy that ends this liminal summer seems both inevitable and completely unexpected. I was reminded of that time in my own life, of summer holidays when you might step into a different world for a few weeks and of how startling it is when the real world crashes back in. Protagonist Philippe is constantly aware of these conflicting feelings of immobility and inevitability. Small tangents interrupt the story, notes from the narrator about how the world has changed since this summer in 1985: the gentrification of the island, the rise of social media and digital communication, and the changing social expectations. Philippe is hyperconscious of how this particular summer could never be repeated.

Besson is an accomplished author and playwright, having written 23 novels, often focusing on themes of queerness, and only a few of which have been translated into English. His debut novel, *In the Absence of Men* won the French literary award Prix Emmanuel Roblès. *The Summer Boy* has been translated into English by Sam Taylor.

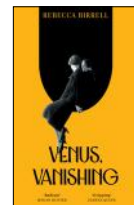
Stephanie King is from Readings Emporium

Venus, Vanishing

Rebecca Birrell

Picador. PB. \$34.99

Available 14 July



Berlin, 1928. Hannah is new to the pleasures and freedoms of the city. An artist, a runaway, she is building a new life, loving without boundaries and sketching with a cutting edge. But the party is ending. Hannah begins a consuming affair with a powerful man's wife, and it soon threatens to do more than ruin both of their reputations. People are disappearing. The shadows of something unspeakable are growing darker. Her art could be the thing that secures her survival – or will deny her any chance of escape.

They All Fall in Love at the End

Haili Blassingame

Scribner. PB. \$34.99

Available now



It's the autumn of 2024, and Cat St. Clair is ready for her messy love triangle era now that she's in an open relationship. But she didn't foresee a forbidden love triangle with the only two people who are

off-limits: her boyfriend's best friend and his girlfriend. Being a twenty-something writer who lives for plot, she falls for them anyway, with deliciously disastrous consequences, in this electric literary debut for fans of Xochitl Gonzalez, Coco Mellors, Lily King, and Raven Leilani.

Queenie is Working on It

Candice Carty-Williams

Trapeze. PB. \$34.99

Available now



How is it possible for one woman to hold it together when she's: Confronted with a racing biological clock when she doesn't even know if she wants kids. Trying to act normal when her heart is smashed into a million pieces. Ten times smarter than the people she's working for. Priced out of the housing market in the place she grew up. Stuck in a situationship when all she wants is the love of her life back. Bigger. Not better. Older. Not wiser. Queenie Jenkins is working on it.

Voyagers

Meg Charlton

Borough. PB. \$34.99

Available now



R After reading the premise of this novel, I had initially expected something heavily sci-fi, maybe a tense first-contact story filled with conspiracy theories and questions about alien life. And while those elements are definitely present, *Voyagers* is so much more interested in people than spectacle. At its heart, this is a deeply human story about friendship, memory and the complicated ways we make sense of our lives.

As a child, Alex disappeared for 36 hours alongside another six-year-old, Ana, during a holiday in Palm Springs. When they returned unharmed but unable to fully explain what happened, their story quickly became a media

obsession. Alien abduction theories followed, and suddenly the two children found themselves unwillingly famous, caught up in talk shows, sitcom cameos and endless public fascination. It forged a bond between them, but also slowly fractured it.

When the Signal resurfaces decades later, Alex is pulled back towards Ana, now an advocate for people who believe they have experienced extraterrestrial contact. Their reunion becomes the emotional centre of the novel, and honestly, this was my favourite thing to read about in this novel. More than anything else, it's about friendship, the kind that shapes who you are, even after years apart. I was completely taken by the care Alex and Ana have for one another, and the quiet, complicated ways their connection continues to shape their lives.

Voyagers feels like a book about the end of the world that is actually about the people we hold onto through it. It blends conspiracy, existential questions and sci-fi ideas with something much softer and more personal. It is emotionally layered and strangely tender, leaving me thinking less about aliens (as much as I love aliens) and more about friendship, memory and how much our lives are shaped by the things we cannot fully explain.

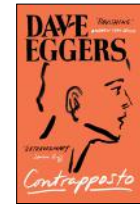
Nicole Vasilev is from Readings State Library

Contrapposto

Dave Eggers

Canongate. PB. \$34.99

Available 7 July



R Dave Eggers' new novel *Contrapposto* follows the unlikely friendship of Cricket and Olympia. This is reflected in the novel's title, which as well as being a term for a pose in art where the model's weight is balanced on one side, also loosely translates to a term for opposite or contrasted.

Cricket is the shy, introverted son of a single mother who loves to draw pictures. Despite his troubles at home, he is remarkably grounded. Olympia is from a wealthy, if eccentric, family. She is highly extroverted, flighty and unstable. But what might seem like an unlikely friendship to begin with is strengthened by Olympia and Cricket's shared love of art.

But as the title suggests, the way they approach art is contrasted. While Cricket devotes himself to studying technique – he has dreams of becoming a master's assistant in an atelier in Europe – Olympia is more drawn to the curatorial and conceptual side of art. Their friendship – mostly platonic – brings them great joy but is also deeply fraught, as deep friendships can be.

The novel's title doesn't only refer to the tensions between Cricket and Olympia, it also explores the tensions in the art world. There is a brilliant set piece in the novel that takes place in an art school critique session where a technically brilliant student is torn to shreds for being 'phony', while a student who sticks a polaroid to the wall is lauded for being conceptually brilliant.

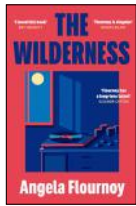
There are many references to classical paintings and artists throughout the novel. I'm not knowledgeable enough to know if Eggers pulls this off or not, but it seemed successful to me, if a little heavy-handed at times. Interspersed throughout the novel are some of Cricket's pencil drawings, which I think I liked. I haven't

made my mind up on that yet. Overall, this was a novel I enjoyed a great deal.

Joe Rubbo is the managing director of Readings

The Wilderness
Angela Flournoy

Verve. PB. \$24.99
Available 1 July



In 2008, Desiree, January, Monique and Nakia are in their early 20s and at the beginning of their lives in New York and Los Angeles. Together, they are finding their way through the wilderness, that period of life when the reality of contemporary adulthood swoops in and stays. As these friends transition to grown women, they must learn what they mean to one another – amid political upheaval, economic and environmental instability and the increasing volatility of modern life.

Repetition: A Novel

Vigdís Hjorth & Charlotte Barslund (trans.)

Verso. PB. \$22.99
Available now

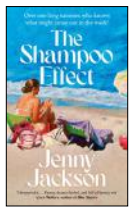


In a dark Norwegian November, a novelist in her 60s sits next to a teenage girl at the opera, and through their padded jackets feels a dreadfully familiar tension conducted from the parents seated on her far side. She thinks back to her 16th year. The year she first got drunk and the year she first had sex with a boy. A year of being circled by an anxious, hawkish mother and, at a notable distance, her silent father. The year her family made an unspoken decision, and an unspeakable sacrifice.

The Shampoo Effect

Jenny Jackson

Hutchinson Heinemann. PB. \$34.99
Available now

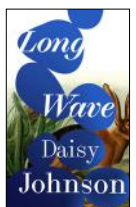


When writer Caroline Lash arrives in Greenhead she falls for Van Whittaker, a gorgeous, fleece-wearing, litter-collecting, kayak enthusiast. She meets his friends and joins them as they run wild through Greenhead, on houseboats, on beaches with their children, and playing risky games. It seems the fun will last forever – until it doesn't. As decades-old friendships and marriages begin to fracture, Caroline's place in their world is uncertain. And with the group's most tightly held secrets at stake, who knows what will be revealed?

Long Wave

Daisy Johnson

Jonathan Cape. PB. \$34.99
Available 7 July



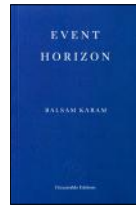
As a small child Ori was found on an uninhabited island with only a lighthouse for shelter, a handful of stones and no memories or mother. When Ori becomes a mother, it feels immense and the sleepless nights begin to shatter her grip on reality, and the mystery of her past begins to unravel. Years earlier young Ruth

witnesses a woman, and her baby, vanish into a river. Dismissed as imagination, she is locked away. Falling pregnant, Ruth dreams of escape to a nearby island where she and her baby can be free.

Event Horizon

Balsam Karam & Saskia Vogel (trans.)
Fitzcarraldo. PB. \$34.99

Available 21 July



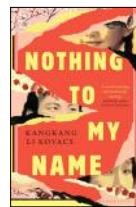
Seventeen-year-old Milde is from the Outskirts, a place beyond the mountains where mothers and daughters, banished from society, make their living – without rights, access to care, or legal status. Refusing to accept the government's injustice, Milde and some friends revolt. Arrested, imprisoned, and tortured, Milde is offered a choice: to be executed publicly or launched into a black hole called the Mass, as part of an experiment. She chooses the lonely and fathomless Mass, rather than hurt the morale of her weary allies back home.

Nothing to My Name

Kangkang Li Kovacs

Bloomsbury. PB. \$34.99

Available now



1948, Zhoushan, China. Twelve-year-old Ah Xue watches her mother comb the hair of the wealthy women as civil war draws closer. Years later, Mimosa grows up shaped by her parents' struggles under the looming tension of the Cultural Revolution. And Fei, raised as a boy by her activist father, grapples with her identity after the Tiananmen Square massacre. Spanning four decades and three generations, this is an unforgettable story of the ordinary women caught in the tides of societal upheaval, but bound by an insuppressible instinct to survive.

Air

Christian Kracht & Daniel Bowles (trans.)

Serpent's Tail. PB. \$29.99

Available 21 July



R Paul's impeccable sense of aesthetic balance has led him to a niche sort of fame as an interior designer. When he is asked by a magazine he venerates to find the perfect white for their warehouse, he feels that he has been recognised at the peak of his powers. But as each step towards this dream project brings more disappointment, Paul's meticulous world gives way to another one entirely.

Christian Kracht has published several novels, but is most recently known for *Eurotrash*, which was longlisted for the International Booker Prize. Reviewers of Kracht often liken his novels to the works of others, almost as if each project involves the putting-on of a new hat. This book, in particular, has been compared to the work of Ursula K. Le Guin. I can see some substance to the claim, as there are passages where Kracht evokes a similar tone to the early Hainish novels. That being said, Kracht's approach to the creation of *Air* seems entirely different to Le Guin's in her own work. With *Air*, he appears to me as an intelligent writer who creates more for his own amusement than

PEOPLE LIKE US
SALLY PIPER

‘Packed with nuance and warmth, *People Like Us* explores the true value of connections, at any age.’
JANE HARPER

BOOKS TO CURL UP WITH

‘A profoundly tender, intricately crafted novel about ancestry, longing and the fragile threads that bind one life to another.’
SHANKARI CHANDRAN

MIRANDI
RIWOWE A
SHORT
HISTORY
OF
LONGANS

UQP

Books to dive into
Immerse yourself in these new titles from Text

Capture
Amanda Lohrey

An exhilarating novel of truth, doubt and the stories we dare to believe.

NIGHT SWIMMING
SHARON KERNOT

A psychological thriller in suspenseful verse that will swallow you whole.

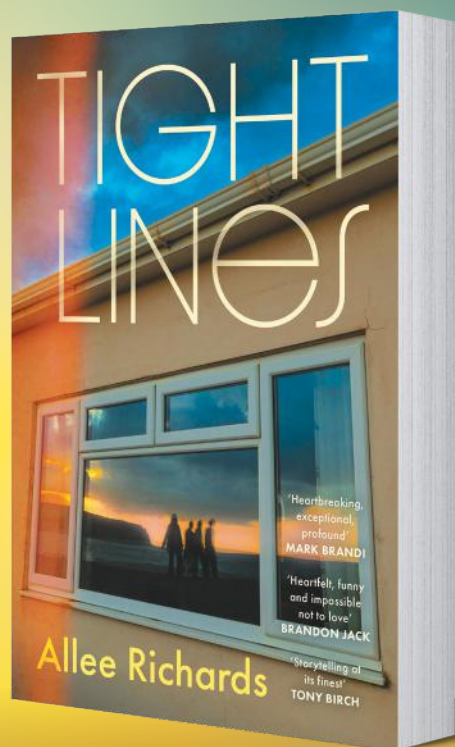
Ruth Ozeki
THE TYPING LADY

Stories of love, loss and possibility from the incomparable Ruth Ozeki.

Nymph
A Novel
Sofia Montrone

Heat-soaked, sensual prose, steeped in an exquisite longing.

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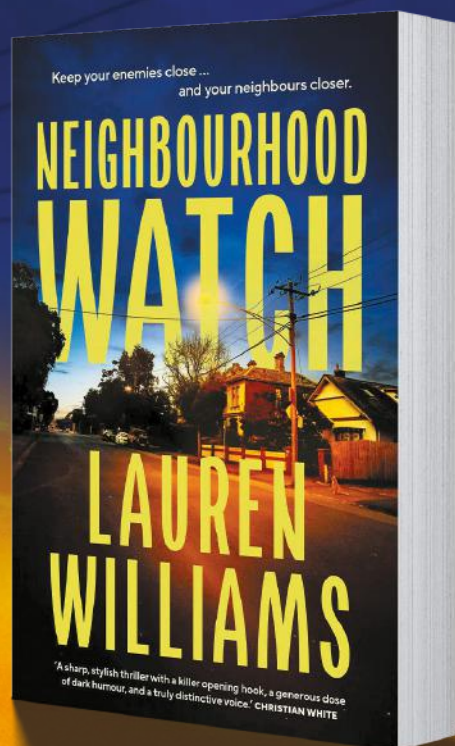


'Storytelling at its finest, inviting us to reflect on the complexities and dangers of youth.'

TONY BIRCH

S
Summit
Books
Australia

affirm
press



'A sharp, stylish thriller with a killer opening hook, a generous dose of dark humour, and a truly distinctive voice.'

CHRISTIAN WHITE

in pursuit of an earnest and self-serious purpose. This lightheartedness, however, offers its own kind of freedom, and what results is a nimble and mischievous novel – ambiguous, certainly, but not without meaning.

Laden with anxiety over our technological future, *Air* shows us a real world oversaturated and thus rendered meaningless, and imagined worlds where pared-back experiences form compelling narratives. The work's very nature invites subjective interpretation, but to me it rang clearest as a warning against curation.

Carey Smith is from Readings Emporium

The Project

Annie Lord

Harvill. PB. \$34.99

Available 14 July



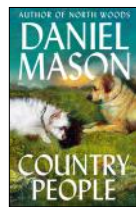
Daisy and Maya bounce around the city from all-night house parties to sticky-floored smoking areas, drinks in hand. But after a one-night stand with her annoying friend James, Daisy starts to wonder why, in a sea of intelligent, gorgeous women, all their prospects seem so hopeless. It's time for *The Project*, a radical reinvention of dating, and who better to start with than James? James is happy to go along with Daisy and Maya if it means more time alone with Daisy. But falling for James was never part of the plan.

Country People

Daniel Mason

John Murray. PB. \$34.99

Available 7 July



What a delight it was to read Daniel Mason's *Country People*. Best known for *North Woods*, among his previous novels, I was excited to pick up his new book. What a master he is – *Country People* is so enormously funny. I laughed out loud many times on my tram journeys reading this and dog-eared hilarious paragraphs of silliness so I could reread them.

The protagonist, Miles Krzelewski, adores his family and is trying to write his dissertation (PhD), which has so far taken 14 years and has had a number of subject matter changes. His wife, Kate, is a successful professor of literature and he is feeling an overwhelming sense of becoming a disappointment to all. His wife is offered a one-year visiting professorship in Vermont, which they decide to jump into, thinking it might also kickstart Miles into finishing his dissertation.

The cast of characters in this are so wonderful, right down to the dog, Giuseppe, who is an expert truffle hunting dog – of which Miles and Kate have no need, as there are no truffles to be had where they live. Their two children, Olive and Wesley, are filled with quirks and foibles that play out in the story. Then there is Coach Bjorn, the unforgettable ski instructor, and the eccentric new community they meet when they move to Vermont. Even the house they move into has quite a personality.

This is joy in novel form and a rollicking adventure. Clever and well-written, this book is a lovely dose of what we all need now and a reminder that connection and family relationships lie at the heart and purpose of life.

Melanie Barton is from Readings Carlton

Permanence

Sophie Mackintosh

Hamish Hamilton. PB. \$34.99

Available 7 July



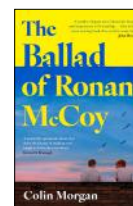
Clara and Francis are in love. For months they have been sneaking time away from their respective lives, sharing afternoons in anonymous hotel rooms. One day they wake in an unfamiliar bedroom with no memory of how they arrived. They are in a strange city populated by adulterers and can live openly as a couple without consequence, putting the theory of their love into practice. In this idyllic setting the real world is unreachable. As long as Clara and Francis are here, they only have each other.

The Ballad of Ronan McCoy

Colin Morgan

HQ Fiction. PB. \$32.99

Available now



Brendan's best and only friend is Ronan McCoy. He knows things about Brendan that no one else does. But Brendan never told Ronan about the dark feeling that tells him something bad is coming. It never comes when Ronan's around. Ronan is everything Brendan isn't: confident, smart, sporty and popular. On the first day of term, the dark feeling begins to form in Brendan's stomach. And when Ronan doesn't turn up, Brendan learns that something terrible happened to him over the summer and he'll never be the same again.

Every Exit Brings You Home

Naeem Murr

Summit. PB. \$34.99

Available 28 July



As the late-2000s financial crisis looms, Jamal 'Jack' Shaban is known for his selfless attempts to broker peace between his embittered neighbours. To his flight attendant colleagues, he is an object of desire, even love, particularly to his best friend Birdy who assumes Jack is gay. But Jack is married to Dimra with whom he wants a child and is also attracted to angry single mother Marcia. The resulting tangle of conflict, love and desire returns Jack to the violence of 1980s Gaza, where a love affair exiled him and almost destroyed his life.

It Will Come Back to You

Sigrid Nunez

Virago. PB. \$32.99

Available 14 July



In an interview several years ago, Sigrid Nunez spoke about her love of fairytales and the moral quandaries they contain, where actions are rewarded or punished according to circumstance.

That idea feels like an apt way to describe this collection of 13 short stories, written over more than 30 years. Each offering prompts the reader to question their own sense of right and wrong. Reading Nunez's short stories can feel like gasbagging to a close friend: 'You know that person I met at a party the other

night? Well, let me tell you ...' However, beneath the conversational tone lies the central question: what would you do – or rather, what have I done?

Nunez's writing feels intimate. She confides in you. That is not to say that all her stories are ones that you want to hear. 'The Plan', for example, is about a man that dreams of murdering his wife, or any woman, and is downright creepy. Thankfully, the next story is about a woman called to jury duty, which made me laugh. Close to half the collection deals with relationships with parents in various stages of ageing. Most deal with a form of mortification and that tiresome, universal truth that it is never fully possible to escape your origins. And then one of the stories is about a Brad Pitt lookalike, which was completely unexpected.

All the stories are witty, priceless little gems about everyday people living everyday life. I read Nunez to combat conformity and loneliness. I need her quirk in my life. And I am very sure that if I were living in New York, we would become fast friends. Surely?

Chris Gordon is the community engagement and programming manager

Electric Shamans at the Festival of the Sun

Mónica Ojeda & Sarah Booker (trans.)
Granta. PB. \$34.99
Available 7 July



R High in the mountains of Ecuador, where mist shrouds the air and volcanic eruptions shake the earth, hundreds of wayward souls brave altitude sickness and bitter cold on the path to Solar Noise, an annual festival of experimental music and shamanistic thought. They are pilgrims of a sort, these musicians, artists, mystics and dreamers who seek to escape the world and find transformation in the music of the land and the body. Diabluma dancers who hide their fury behind a double-faced mask; technocumbia musicians whose songs speak the language of the planets; drummers whose instruments echo with primal violence; and two girls, Nicole and Noa, on a journey all their own. Neither can bear to stay in the city, where gang violence and brutal homicide are a fact of life, but Noa is also searching for her father, who disappeared to the mountains when she was young. Yet within the festival's milieu of psychoactive drugs, shamanistic wisdom and orgiastic moshing, Noa finds something else: a double voice that speaks within her, and a higher calling bubbling up from her subconscious. Maybe there is truth to what the poets and shamans say; maybe there is magic in these mountains.

Like Mónica Ojeda's bizarre and engrossing English language debut *Jawbone*, *Electric Shamans at the Festival of the Sun* is frequently a conceptually dense book, whose characters deliver heady monologues about music, spirituality and the body that often feel hard to follow. Yet just as with the experimental noise music the characters create and thrash their bodies to, all the book requires is that you relax and let the ideas and images wash over you. Find the tune, follow it into the mountains and let the story slowly spiral where it will. I promise you it will lead somewhere devastating and spectacular.

Joe Murray is from Readings Kids

Main Characters

Bobby Palmer

Headline Review. PB. \$34.99

Available now



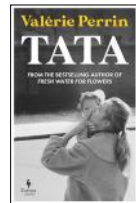
When Clara and Seb meet in London, it's the start of something. She wants to be a director. He's an actor. Their connection is magnetic. But when Clara casts Seb in the film that will make her name, what should be the happiest time of their lives ends with a gut-wrenching betrayal. Some love stories are bigger than just two people. This one is told through the eyes of friends, flatmates, exes and strangers. Everyone has their version of events. But only Clara and Seb can decide how their story ends.

Tata

Valérie Perrin & Hildegard Serle (trans.)

Europa Editions. PB. \$36.99

Available now



When Agnes hears from the local police that her Aunt Colette has died, she can't believe her ears. Her father's sister Colette, her Tatá, died three years ago and has been resting in peace in the cemetery of Gueugnon. Agnes is called to identify the body: there is no doubt, it's Aunt Colette. But then, who rests under the stone engraved with Colette's name? And why did she fake her own death? So begins an investigation back in time, as Agnes pieces together the multitude of stories that lie behind her aunt's second death.

Underdogs

Louise Powell

JM Originals. PB. \$34.99

Available now



County Durham, 1998. The pits have closed and jobs are scarce, but ex-miner Bertie has a plan. He runs an underground gambling ring at the dog track offering men a way to turn their life around. Ten-year-old George knows his dad, Reg, has changed since his Mam died. So when Bertie offers Reg and George the chance to race a greyhound, they jump at the opportunity. To succeed they'll need to navigate the world of the flapping track, and Bertie's past. Do they have what it takes to pull off the gamble of a lifetime?

Playworld: A Novel

Adam Ross

Summit. PB. \$34.99

Available 14 July



Griffin Hurt is in over his head. Between his role as Peter Proton on the hit TV show *The Nuclear Family* and the pressure of high school at New York's elite Boyd Prep he's teetering on the edge of collapse. Then Griffin meets Naomi Shah, 22 years his senior. Unwilling to lay his burdens on his shrink, whom he shares with his parents and younger brother, Griffin soon finds himself in the back of Naomi's Mercedes sedan, again and again, confessing all to the one person who might do him the most harm.

The Simp

Roshan Sethi

Sceptre. PB. \$34.99

Available 7 July



Raj Ladlani, a queer Indian man, is an unemployable actor. He has reasons to believe he is extremely talented (his acting coach says so), a legend in every way but for the success. His life working at Yogurtland, obsessively reading *Vanity Fair*, and fantasising about stardom, comes to an end when he answers a job ad detailing a relentless, laughable parade of menial responsibilities for a 'Hollywood Family'. So begins the astonishing decline and fall of Raj Ladlani.

The Visit

Neil Tully

Eriu. PB. \$32.99

Available 14 July



Sergeant Jim Field feels a guilty paternalism for Patrick Hatten, a young man struggling to find a job, a life and a purpose in a small-town Wexford community. Both are used to being on the fringes but while Jim is a romantic with bad health and regret, Patrick is full of anger and action, and his actions could have devastating effects. Set in June 1963, at the time of John F. Kennedy's visit to New Ross, *The Visit* explores themes of shame and redemption, love and marriage, progress, and what happens to those that progress leaves behind.

The Social Circle

Sophie Wan

Ultimo. PB. \$34.99

Available now



Four friends – the golden boy, the optimist, the designer and the girl genius – united by a vision to change the world. Together, they created something powerful and unforgettable. But not everything is built to last. *The Social Network* meets *Daisy Jones & The Six* in this dual-narrative novel about a group of college friends who found a social media company in the early days of the internet, their scandalous falling out, and the 10-year anniversary exposé that forces them back together again.

Cool Machine

(The Harlem Trilogy, Book 3)

Colson Whitehead

Fleet. PB. \$34.99

Available 21 July



1981. New York City is emerging from financial ruin and decline. Harlem businessman and fence Ray Carney gambles on one last heist when his wife is rejected for a loan, becoming entangled with a criminal mastermind. 1983. Carney's sociopath friend and partner in crime, Pepper, is plunged into the East Village art and club scene, and violence, as a bodyguard. 1986. Carney comes out of retirement and, teaming up with Pepper, risks hard-won safety and security to rescue cousin Freddie's son from the violent forces of the city.

Yellow Pine

Claire Vaye Watkins

Riverrun. PB. \$34.99

Available 21 July



Rose, a divorced single parent and disillusioned Sierra Club staffer, lives deep in the Mojave Desert. Emerging from pandemic loneliness, she rekindles an on-again-off-again romance with Miles. But even as it flickers, Rose resolves to have a second baby without him. Enlisting her fellow activists, who are protesting a 'green energy gold rush', Rose embarks on an unorthodox approach to conception which becomes a search for community, rest, recovery, and communion with the divine in the face of mass extinction.

Sci-fi & Fantasy

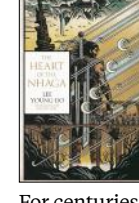
The Heart of the Nhaga

(The Bird That Drinks Tears, Book 1)

Lee Young-do & Anton Hur (trans.)

Voyager. PB. \$35.99

Available now



The world is divided by the Line of Limit. In the north live fire-wielding Tokkebi, warrior birdmen Rekon, and the humans. To the south are the Nhaga, a reptilian people who forgo their hearts for immortality. For centuries, the line was never crossed. But a Nhaga is being sent North and a trio – one from each northern race – is dispatched to ensure the Nhaga makes it out alive. The fate of the world rests on this one Nhaga making it North intact.

I Hear a New World

Alan Moore

Bloomsbury Archer. PB. \$32.99

Available now



It's 1958. A time of rock'n'roll, protest, riot and change, and London is full of danger. Dennis Knuckleyard wants to leave the Great When in the past. For nine years, he's avoided thinking about the magical shadow version of London, managing even to palm off what should've been his last souvenir of that experience. But while Dennis may believe he's done with the Great When, it's not done with him.

Poetry

The Distance of a Shout

Michael Ondaatje

Jonathan Cape. HB. \$34.99

Available 7 July

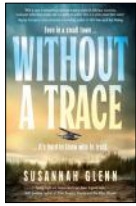


From independence movements and eccentric family in Sri Lanka, to his life in rural southern Ontario, *The Distance of a Shout* is an intimate and witty selection of Michael Ondaatje's most widely loved poems. Spanning 50 years, it offers a glimpse into the interwoven life and art of one of our most cherished poets and novelists, and is a reminder of the power of great poetry to shine a light on living. **R**

Crime

Without a Trace

Susannah Glenn
Pantera. PB. \$34.99
Available now



Charlotte has spent her life soaring over Sydney Harbour with her father's scenic flight company, but a series of tragedies sends her crashing to earth. First, the deaths of her father and grandmother, then

her boyfriend Connor's seaplane vanishes. Haunted by his disappearance and convinced she's being watched, Charlotte flees to a coastal town. There she's saved from a storm by a mysterious fisherman, but when she spots a man she believes is Connor, only to be told she's mistaken, she uncovers shocking secrets and realises her life isn't the only thing at risk.

It Could Have Been Her

Lisa Jewell
Century. PB. \$34.99
Available now



Jane Trevally, newly divorced and feeling a bit lost, agrees to accompany a man she doesn't know to his house in Hampstead Heath. She's offered a drink, then hears a scream and the sound of

something falling upstairs. Sensing danger, Jane runs. Twenty-five years later, she's at the same house to return a dog she found near her country home and whose owner has been reported missing. A glimpse of a haunted-looking woman through the window sends Jane on a mission to uncover the house's terrifying secrets.

Every Time She Wakes

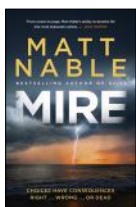
Petronella McGovern
A&U. PB. \$34.99
Available now



When Suze and her family are evacuated from their home during a bushfire, she realises they are being kidnapped. When the van crashes, Suze thinks it's the end. But she wakes up two-weeks back in time. No one else remembers – is it all in her mind? Then it happens again – and again. With every loop, her world twists into a new version of itself. Why is this happening and who is behind the kidnappings? Suze is running out of time to find an escape.

Mire

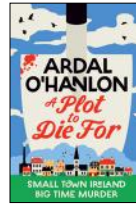
Matt Nable
Hachette. PB. \$34.99
Available 7 July



They say your life flashes before your eyes just before you die, but for Dan Milligan, it's memories of his dad. Dan has spent his life chasing something – mostly the rush of making a lot of money. But as the stock market plummets in 1987, his world comes crashing down. A new life on the coast mowing lawns isn't too bad, but there are days when he tells himself he'll get back in the game. Then one day his luck changes – and suddenly he has a choice.

A Plot to Die For

Ardal O'Hanlon
S&S. PB. \$34.99
Available now

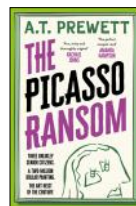


When celebrity gardener Finn O'Leary returns home to Abbeyford, Ireland, to care for his ageing mother, he is roped into the local Tidy Towns committee. Finn's best friend's sister, Aoife, is determined that

this will finally be Abbeyford's year. But Finn has barely unpacked when a singer drops dead at his mother's choir practice. Soon, there is far more at stake than civic pride, and Finn sets out to discover who has brought murder to their town.

The Picasso Ransom

A.T. Prewett
Pan Mac. PB. \$34.99
Available now



R Can you believe that the second of August this year will mark the 40th anniversary of the theft of *The Weeping Woman* from the National Gallery of Victoria (NGV)? I can't, but there you go!

This heist remains an enduring mystery, not least because it is still largely unsolved. Who were the individuals behind the 'Australian Cultural Terrorists' group, who claimed responsibility for the theft and demanded the ransom? We may never know. There was a rumour that a beloved former NGV colleague, long since passed, knew who was behind it all, but if he did, he took the secret to his grave. In any case, there is a canon of books on the matter. To this we can add A.T. Prewett's fun take, *The Picasso Ransom*. It hypothesises the involvement of a trio of mature-aged fine-arts students who steal the painting in protest at the devastating funding cuts on the horizon that would see the closure of their much-valued arts school.

With great affection, Prewett captures the key personnel. There's the eccentric but brilliant Paul McCracken in place of Patrick McCaughey, replete with a similar bow-tie collection. The likeness of the man at the heart of it all, Race Matthews, who at the time jointly held both the Arts and Police portfolios in the Victorian Government, is here summoned in the character of Ray Montrose.

This book is a lot of fun and is full of clever jokes, right down to a *Clarke and Dawe*-esque interview that had me in stitches, and a hilarious 'I'm Spartacus/Brian' moment that I'm sure the Pythons would be proud of. Prewett is part of a new ad hoc movement of crime writers wrestling back the genre from rural areas, returning it to the city with its grimy streets and dingy trams.

The Picasso Ransom is a fabulous celebration of Melbourne, from Roy Grounds' brutalist bunker on St Kilda Road, to the Tote, to the old Robur Tea House, to Fitzroy's bustling Brunswick Street, and HM Prison Pentridge – oh, and even TISM! While this book may well be considered cosy crime, it is also a timely reminder of an extreme response to 'slash and burn' attitudes towards arts funding!

Julia Jackson is from Readings Carlton

The Damned

Matt Rogers
S&S. PB. \$34.99
Available now

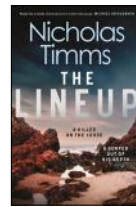


R Retired assassin Logan Booth is ready to settle down, but US President Jacinta Murphy has other ideas. With the president paranoid Logan will expose her past, he is forced to flee to Colombia,

where he collides with a dangerous cartel. On the run across the Colombian countryside, his only chance of survival lies with Alice Mason, an unlikely friend and confidant. Desperate to protect her, Logan refuses to call Alice for aid. But what if she appears anyway? How is he supposed to shield her from danger when he's barely keeping himself alive?

The Lineup

Nicholas Timms
Penguin. PB. \$34.99
Available 7 July



R This thrilling ride through dangerous waters blends mystery, suspense and emotional turmoil into a story that pulls readers in like a rip current. Set against the crashing waves and

restless energy of Byron Bay, the novel explores how the past can linger beneath the surface, waiting to drag those who remember under.

Haunted by a past that continues to eat him alive, former professional surfer Bo Curren has long since moved away from his home and career in Byron Bay. Now settled in Brisbane, he can't bear to go near the ocean. However, he still feels tethered to its waves. Every day, on his laptop, he watches surfers via a 24-hour live webcam set up on a beach in Byron Bay. This view of the ocean becomes both a window into his past and a constant reminder of the guilt that continues to drown him.

When he witnesses a murder via the webcam, only for the murderer and the body to disappear, Bo returns home, determined to solve the mystery. Perhaps doing so will offer a path to redemption for what he's done in the past.

As Bo drifts back into the lives of old friends and foes, Nicholas Timms steadily builds the tension like a rising swell before a storm. The novel moves with relentless momentum, each chapter crashing into the next with fresh revelations and danger. The surfing backdrop is more than just scenery; the ocean mirrors Bo's experiences, embodying his trauma, desire for redemption, and shifting identity throughout the story. His search for answers becomes as much about solving the mystery as it is about learning whether redemption is possible.

The Lineup is an electrifying thriller that never loses its momentum. In this story of flawed protagonists, emotional undertow, and an Australian environment acting almost like another character, Timms' novel fits in perfectly alongside those of other local crime authors such as Jane Harper and Christian White.

Aurelia Orr is from Readings Kids

The Death Row Club

V.A. Vazquez
S&S. PB. \$34.99
Available now



Nicola Fischer's father was convicted of murdering five young women, including her best friend. Jobless and vilified, Nicola's barely holding it together. When the host of the true-crime show

responsible for her father's arrest invites her on a weekend retreat for the adult children of serial killers, she decides to go, desperate to outrun her past. When an uninvited guest shows up, everyone is put on high alert, and by morning, one of them is dead. Trapped in the wilderness with no way out, suspicion turns inward.

Neighbourhood Watch

Lauren Williams
Affirm. PB. \$34.99
Available now



R On a suburban street in the northern suburbs of Melbourne, an early morning dog walker stumbles across a body. It's a familiar set-up, but the execution of Lauren Williams' debut crime

novel, *Neighbourhood Watch*, is anything but conventional. For starters, Curlew Street isn't just any suburban street: behind the scarecrows decorating the front yards of the houses (the street is celebrating its 27th annual Street Scarecrow competition) are decades of petty grievances, personal vendettas, and closely guarded secrets. For another, the body isn't just any body: it belongs to a notorious Victorian Supreme Court judge, Harry Somerton – nicknamed 'The Pope' for his impeccable reputation and hardline conservative views.

Unbeknown to the wider world, the honourable Harry Somerton is a physically and psychologically abusive husband whose in-laws have been staging unsuccessful interventions to get his wife, Emma, to leave him. The same in-laws who live just a few doors down from where Harry's mutilated body is found.

But what seems like an open-and-shut case for Detective Sergeant Priyanka Pal becomes anything but when she discovers that evidence is being tampered with. She begins to suspect that The Pope's corruption extended far beyond the domestic sphere.

It's hard to squeeze *Neighbourhood Watch* into a crime sub-genre. It's witty, clever, dark, heartbreaking, tense, and even cosy, if you like your 'cosy' with teeth. It has the markers of a well-plotted police procedural, the absurdity you find in the film *Hot Fuzz*, the warmth of *The Thursday Murder Club*, and the black humour and nuanced family dynamics of the TV series *Bad Sisters*. It's particularly timely reading when newspapers are filled with articles about family violence and the incompetence – and at times complicity – of the police when it comes to protecting women. It's one of the best debut crime novels I've read, and I can't wait to see what Williams has for us next.

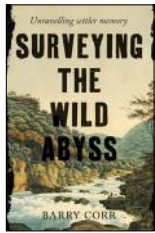
Lian Hingee is the digital marketing manager **R**

Nonfiction

Australian Studies

Surveying the Wild Abyss: Unravelling Settler Memory

Barry Corr
NewSouth. PB. \$49.99
Available 1 July



In this groundbreaking history of colonisation and frontier conflict in the Hawkesbury region, First Nations historian Barry Corr navigates the gaps and silences in the primary records to reveal settler amnesia, the cataclysmic nature of colonisation, and the way history is remembered – or not remembered. *Surveying the Wild Abyss* is driven by primary source analysis of colonial records and informed by Corr’s perspectives and community connections as an Aboriginal person who has lived most of his life in the Western Sydney Aboriginal community. The book asks non-Indigenous and Indigenous Australians to reflect on their history, and reinvents the way Australian history is written.

Politics: Philosophical Ordering by Country (First Knowledges)

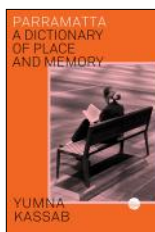
Mary Graham & Morgan Brigg
T&H. PB. \$26.99
Available now



First Nations peoples of Australia are among the world’s oldest political designers. For them, Country isn’t just a place to live; it’s part of the network of relationships that shape responsibilities, behaviour and decision-making. Their social and political systems balance individual freedom with a strong sense of responsibility and connection to others, encouraging ethical behaviour and creating long-term stability and security. Mary Graham and Morgan Brigg examine cultural and colonial political systems to show how they can move together and help guide the building of a modern Australia.

Parramatta: A Dictionary of Place and Memory

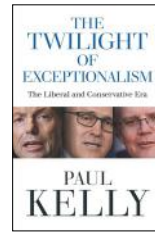
Yumna Kassab
Giramondo. PB. \$34.95
Available 1 July



As the inaugural Laureate in Literature, Yumna Kassab set herself the task of collecting her observations and thoughts on living in Parramatta, now one of the country’s most important economic, political and cultural centres. Employing the dictionary A–Z form, the work blends memoir, reflection and documentary covering a wide range of topics from language, literature and sport to entries on beauty, place and belonging. *Parramatta* presents an intimate portrait of its compiler and the place she inhabits.

The Twilight of Exceptionalism: The Liberal and Conservative Era

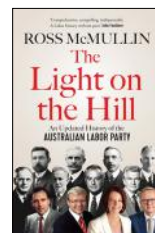
Paul Kelly
MUP. PB. \$59.99
Available 14 July



The third book in Paul Kelly’s trilogy on modern Australian politics charts the most turbulent era of Liberal and conservative politics, from 2013 to 2022, as Tony Abbott, Malcolm Turnbull and Scott Morrison struggled to govern. Kelly examines how leadership instability and divergent ideology lost the Liberal Party’s long-standing grip on the Australian psyche. He argues that ‘exceptionalism’ has been eclipsed and that Australia must rally and recover – or face a troubling phase of decline and betrayal of its finest aspirations.

The Light on the Hill: An Updated History of the Australian Labor Party

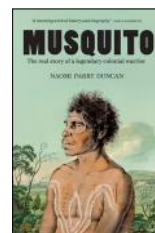
Ross McMullin
Scribe. PB. \$55
Available now



A revised and updated edition of award-winning historian Ross McMullin’s acclaimed history of the Australian Labor Party – an entertaining, action-packed, warts-and-all narrative full of illuminating pen-portraits and vivid anecdotes. Including achievements, tribulations, highs and lows, the story is told through the people who made it, with all of Labor’s prime ministers featuring. Prodigious research, captivating, and powerful, *The Light on the Hill* is the most authoritative and monumental account of Labor’s rich history.

Musquito: The Real Story of a Legendary Colonial Warrior

Naomi Parry Duncan
A&U. PB. \$36.99
Available now



Musquito was a boy when the First Fleet arrived at Port Jackson in January 1788. By 1805, he was a warrior fighting for Country west of Sydney, hunted by white colonists. Exiled to Van Dieman’s land, he joined an Aboriginal resistance that ignited the colonists’ Black War. Wrongly accused of being the leader, he was executed in 1825. Even as one of the better-known resistance fighters, Musquito’s life has been shrouded in myth. Uncovering the real story behind this remarkable man, Naomi Parry Duncan also finds a disturbing family connection.

Occasionally I drew breath and thanked the gods I had chosen bookselling rather than professional cooking. Those kitchens are a whole microworld of craziness

Chris Gordon on *Knives and Spoons: A Chef’s Story of Kitchens, Addictions and Mayhem* by Alasdair Gill | Review on page 16

A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Sex Party: Sex and Politics in Australia

Robbie Swan with Fiona Patten
Wilkinson. PB. \$29.99
Available now



Part memoir and part social history, *A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Sex Party* is a collection of short stories drawing on Swan’s 25 years as a magazine editor and parliamentary lobbyist for the adult industry, a world where censorship battles, moral crusades, unlikely friendships and political absurdities collide daily. In the book, he reveals the human side of an often-misunderstood industry: the humour, the resilience and the strange, sometimes surreal encounters that shaped a generation of activists and outsiders.

First Knowledges: The Collection

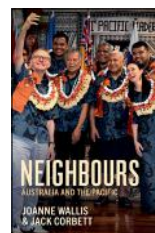
Various authors
T&H. 10-Book Box Set. \$199
Available now



First Knowledges: The Collection introduces Indigenous knowledge systems in vital areas, exploring their relevance to the present and the future. It brings together two distinct ways of understanding the natural world: one rooted in over 65,000 years of tradition, the other shaped by colonial perspectives. Each book is a collaboration between Indigenous and non-Indigenous writers and editors, with the series curated by Margo Ngawa Neale. This collectable box set celebrates all 10 bestselling books.

Neighbours: Australia and the Pacific

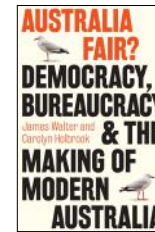
Joanne Wallis & Jack Corbett
La Trobe University Press. PB. \$36.99
Available 14 July



Australia has a long history in the Pacific. Australians might have forgotten it, but the region has not forgotten us. This book provides a new vision of the way Australia might relate to its Pacific neighbours, replacing amnesia and ambivalence with storytelling, shared history, interests and language as well as recognition, humility and respect. It does not seek to wish away the realities of asymmetry and hierarchy between Australia and Pacific Island countries but instead outlines how Australia can work more productively within them.

Australia Fair?: Democracy, Bureaucracy and the Making of Modern Australia

James Walter & Carolyn Holbrook
MUP. PB. \$39.99
Available 14 July



Australia Fair? explores the world of departmental officials and political advisers who wield significant influence in shaping our society and assesses how policy advice has changed since World War II. How has the relationship between our elected representatives and bureaucrats evolved? Focusing on three foundational policy domains – immigration, Indigenous affairs and housing – the book reveals how social change, ideological differences and power dynamics have transformed Australia’s political landscape and society.

Biography

Can You Handle a Girl Like Me?

Bek Condello
Penguin. PB. \$36.99
Available 14 July



Bek Condello was raised in a strict patriarchal Pentecostal movement in Canberra. The influence of the Geelong Revival Centre extended deeply into the lives of the congregation, promoting discipline and dictating the behaviour of girls and women. After a tumultuous marriage, Bek Condello made the courageous decision to start her life again. Anyone who leaves the GRC is cut off from family, identity, history. *Can You Handle a Girl Like Me?* chronicles Bek’s journey of challenges and transformation as she navigates dating and friendships.

The Vanishing Girl of Kabul: Betrayal, Hope and an Extraordinary Fight for Women’s Rights

Zahra Joya with Amie Ferris-Rotman
Robinson. PB. \$34.99
Available 21 July



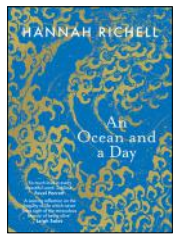
Growing up female in Afghanistan, Zahra Joya had to dress as a boy to gain an education. Later under US rule, she qualified as a lawyer and then a journalist. When the Taliban regained power after the US’s withdrawal, Joya’s work reporting on women’s rights put her life in danger. After beginning anew in London, she knows that her fight extends far beyond Afghanistan. This is a story about all women and how they are treated when men are at their worst; most importantly, it is about fighting back and having hope. The lessons from Joya’s story, and the stories she hears every day, have never been more urgently needed than now in a world inching closer to authoritarianism.

An Ocean and a Day

Hannah Richell

Fourth Estate. PB. \$34.99

Available now



In 2014, author Hannah Richell was living a happy and fulfilled life in Sydney. Married, with two young children, she was in the middle of writing her new novel when the police

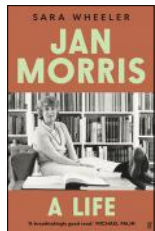
knocked at her door to tell her that her husband, Matt, had been killed in a surfing accident. *An Ocean and a Day* is the poignant story of the journey she travelled over the first two years of loss, but it is also, more uniquely, an account of what happens beyond those early years, when time and distance offer perspective and hope.

Jan Morris: A Life

Sara Wheeler

Faber. HB. \$55

Available 7 July



Jan Morris rose to worldwide fame as the journalist who broke the news of the 1953 Everest ascent. It was the beginning of a glittering career which spanned the Eichmann trial, Che Guevara and the Suez

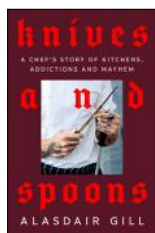
Crisis. Morris transitioned in the early '70s and her books have since inspired readers everywhere. Sara Wheeler uncovers the complexity of this 20th-century icon to reveal a mosaic of contradictions. This is a portrait of an astonishing life, and a brilliant story of longing, travel and never reaching home.

Cooking**Knives and Spoons: A Chef's Story of Kitchens, Addictions and Mayhem**

Alasdair Gill

Pan Mac. PB. \$36.99

Available 14 July



R Alasdair Gill warns you from the outset of his memoir that it is not for the faint of heart. It is a raw, unflinching look at professional kitchens – the kiss-and-tell version, the mad-and-bad

rock-star treatment of life behind the scenes. Will you eat in a restaurant again after reading it? Absolutely. Will you leave a bigger tip now that you know what the restaurant machine is like? Yes, you will, and you will hope that your money makes its way through the swinging doors to the poor bastard scrubbing pans and praying he does not cut himself.

This is not the first memoir to expose restaurant kitchens, but this one is written by the son of the much-missed restaurant and travel critic A.A. Gill. Like his father, Alasdair Gill understands irony. His writing leaps off the page as he teeters from one professional kitchen to the next, across England, France and America. Familiar figures appear throughout, Anthony Bourdain among them.

Each chapter is named after a notoriously difficult dish, complete with

detail but no cooking tips. Along the way, you learn about Gill's family, his battle with alcohol, and his disappearing uncle, a Michelin-starred chef. There is heartbreak in these pages, but also laugh-out-loud humour and a voice that feels as though the author has just downed a bottle of booze and popped an upper. It is a wild road-trip of a tale.

I gobbled this one up as quickly as its pace demanded. Occasionally I drew breath and thanked the gods I had chosen bookselling rather than professional cooking. Those kitchens are a whole microworld of craziness, and I am grateful to everyone who plays their part. And to Alasdair Gill, for showing no fear in sharing this story.

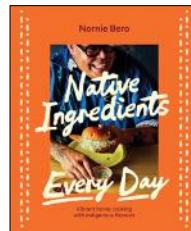
Chris Gordon is the community engagement and programming manager

Native Ingredients Every Day: Vibrant Home Cooking with Indigenous Flavours

Nornie Bero

Hardie Grant. HB. \$45

Available now



Native Ingredients Every Day celebrates the bold, beautiful flavours of Australian native produce and shows just how easy it can be to cook with them at home.

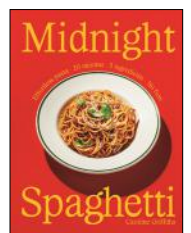
Nornie Bero, a proud Meriam woman from the Torres Strait, introduces readers to ten key native ingredients – from warrigal greens, wattlesed and pepperberry to sweet potato and strawberry gum – each explored in its own dedicated chapter. Alongside stories of culture and Country, Bero shares practical tips for sourcing, preparing and using these ingredients in everyday cooking.

Midnight Spaghetti: Effortless Pasta · 20 Minutes · 5 Ingredients · No Fuss

Caroline Griffiths

Smith Street. PB. \$39.99

Available 7 July



Midnight Spaghetti celebrates the art of eating late – when you're hungry, tired, maybe a little tipsy, and craving carbs. With 50 easy, flavour-packed recipes that go well

beyond spaghetti bolognese, this book is your go-to for lazy nights at home, post-party cravings, and those can't-be-bothered evenings when only a bowl of noodles will do. From rich and silky classics to fresh, quick-fix bowls, every recipe is bursting with flavour and personality. Twirl, slurp, and dig in.

Something Sweet: Cookies, Cakes & Slices for Everyday Baking

Jessica Holmes

Plum. PB. \$44.99

Available now



S In *Something Sweet*, Jessica Holmes, creator of cult online baking hub Sweetest Menu, guides you through the joy of baking in your very own kitchen. Whether it's

making chewy chocolate chip cookies for the first time or mastering perfectly fudgy brownies, this timeless collection of easy-to-follow recipes will keep you company. You'll find one-bowl tea cakes, lunchbox-friendly cookies, showstopping desserts and more, as well as tips and advice to ensure your next sweet bake is a raging success.

Epic Veg: Bold, Satisfying Meals that Hit the Spot

Jessica Prescott

Hardie Grant. HB. \$49.99

Available now



Epic Veg is an essential kitchen bible with over 80 delicious vegetable-centred dishes that are low cost, low effort, and big on flavour. Including the building blocks of

flavour, texture, and balance, the fresh, zingy, hearty and nourishing recipes in *Epic Veg* will help you put delicious vegetarian food on the table every time. Whether you need a quick midweek meal, are entertaining guests, or pulling together lunch while working from home, you'll want to return to *Epic Veg* time and time again.

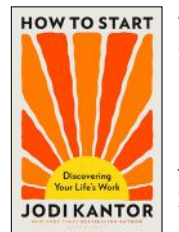
Try a recipe from this book! See 'Okonomiyaki for one' on pages 6–7.

Cultural Studies**How to Start: Discovering Your Life's Work**

Jodi Kantor

Bloomsbury. PB. \$22.99

Available now



Jodi Kantor's groundbreaking reporting has sparked reform worldwide and foretold many of the changes we see in the workplace today. But her own career suffered setbacks. In *How to*

Start Kantor offers tangible positive help to younger generations, as they make their way through uncertain times, to discover their life's work. This is a statement of faith for young people to keep in their back pocket and offers wisdom, strategy and a set of aspirations to launch their careers and last their whole lives.

I'll Love You Forever: Notes from a K-Pop Fan

Giaae Kwon

Henry Holt. PB. \$36.99

Available 14 July



I'll Love You Forever is an essay collection which considers the collision between stratospherically popular music and our personal selves. Delving into the global impact of K-pop artists from IU to BTS, Giaae Kwon reveals how they have illuminated and shaped her own life as a Korean American. She provides readers with a fuller picture of a culturally and socially complex industry and the machine and heart behind its popularity.

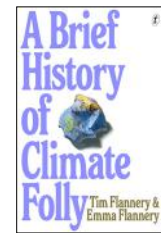
Above all, Kwon offers up the passion of a superfan, finding joy in K-pop along the way.

Environmental Studies**A Brief History of Climate Folly**

Tim Flannery & Emma Flannery

Text. PB. \$26.99

Available now



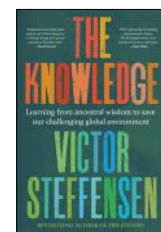
What to do about the climate? If emissions reduction is too hard and too slow, maybe science can engineer a solution? It turns out this line of thinking is as old as humanity. From shamanism to cloud-seeding humans have been trying – or claiming – to influence the weather for millennia. In this overview of history's grandest and silliest attempts at climate change, Tim and Emma Flannery address a very serious question: can we do better in the Anthropocene? After all, our lives depend on it.

The Knowledge: Learning from Ancestral Wisdom to Save Our Challenging Global Environment

Victor Steffensen

Murdoch. PB. \$34.99

Available now



In *The Knowledge*, Victor Steffensen shares the core belief underlying Indigenous knowledge systems: that humans are part of the natural world. The land is not something to be dominated and exploited. Rather, we are nature and the way forward is to realign ourselves with the Earth, recognising our responsibility to care for the planet environmentally and socially. Filled with stories of Steffensen's work applying Indigenous solutions, this book is a must-read for anyone concerned about the future of our planet.

Gardening**The Picking Garden: Grow and Gather Cut Flowers for Homegrown Arrangements All Year Round**

Jo Turner & Rachel Russell (illus.)

T&H. HB. \$49.99

Available now



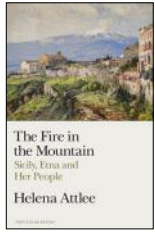
The Picking Garden is a beautifully illustrated guide to cultivating blooms year-round, from tiny balconies to spacious backyards. Learn when to sow, pick and replant your flowers

so your garden never stops blossoming. Featuring over 55 flower profiles, this practical, inspiring, and accessible book covers everything from seeds and seedlings to bulbs and flower arranging and will help you create a blooming oasis to enjoy – and pick from – all through the year.

History

The Fire in the Mountain: Sicily, Etna and Her People

Helena Attlee
Particular. HB. \$59.99
Available 21 July



Combining travel writing with history, mythology, geology, gastronomy and horticulture Helena Attlee tells the unique story of life in the shadow of Sicily's most dangerous and alluring landmark: Mount Etna.

From lava-strewn fields to caves once used to store snow, Attlee gathers tales of the artists, writers, farmers, and scientists who have long been drawn to this unpredictable landscape. This is a compelling account of Sicily's rich and varied past.

Children of the Third Reich: Three Pasts, Three Futures

Catrine Clay
W&N. PB. \$34.99
Available 7 July



Renate, born in 1941 to an unknown SS General; Joe, born in 1946 in a Displaced Persons camp for Holocaust survivors; and Dan, born in Haifa in 1938 to German Jewish parents, all grew up surrounded by silence

and secrets to protect them from the horrors of Nazism. Decades later the three met, each trying to come to terms with the pain of their legacies. Acclaimed historian Catrine Clay traces their stories from Germany to the US and Israel, confronting their dark pasts to find ways to a better future.

Stuff the British Stole

Marc Fennell
Penguin. PB. \$36.99
Available now



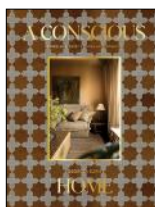
In the days of the British Empire, things were taken that probably shouldn't have been. So how come they're still in museums, galleries and some much stranger places? The answer was so gloriously weird that it

sent Marc Fennell on a globetrotting adventure, investigating the most audacious criminal enterprise in history – the British Empire. With wit, empathy and unflinching honesty, *Stuff the British Stole* reveals the true stories behind remarkable objects in the world's most celebrated museums.

Interior Design

A Conscious Home: Spaces Shaped by Stories and Intention

Georgia Ezra
Hardie Grant. HB. \$65
Available now



Interior designer Georgia Ezra's design philosophy is deeply rooted in authenticity, sensory experience, and a reverence for craftsmanship and the natural world. Her goal

is not to impress, but to express. *A Conscious Home* is a beautiful book that balances heart and style in equal measure. Showcasing 20 unique homes Ezra invites you to create spaces that celebrate traditional craftsmanship, tell your story and embrace the beauty of natural materials that are sustainable, environmentally conscious and built to last.

Hare + Klein Design

Meryl Hare & Jen Wilding (photog.)
T&H. HB. \$85
Available now



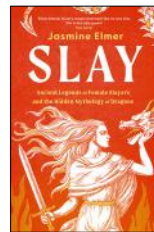
Hare + Klein creates spaces where texture, light and form come together in perfect harmony. One of Australia's most celebrated interior designers, Meryl Hare

brings her decades of experience and distinctive vision to every project, creating interiors that feel timeless yet profoundly personal. An immersive exploration of the studio's design philosophy, *Hare + Klein Design* showcases their most admired interiors, offering a glimpse into the creative process that makes their work so enduring.

Mythology

Slay: Ancient Legends of Female Slayers and the Hidden Mythology of Dragons

Jasmine Elmer
Renegade. PB. \$34.99
Available now



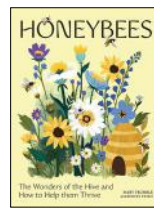
The dragon is a monster with a rich history of symbolism in almost every culture. Only the bravest souls dare to vanquish them, but so often the tales have only shone light on the men.

In *Slay* ancient world expert Jasmine Elmer chronicles the daring and victorious female dragon slayers that have been written out of history. Combining historical research with mythological retelling, this is a revelatory exploration of the dragon, the stories and cultures around them, and the fierce women who conquered them.

Natural History

Honeybees: The Wonders of the Hive and How to Help Them Thrive

Mary Trumble & Henry Fried
Hardie Grant. HB. \$34.99
Available now



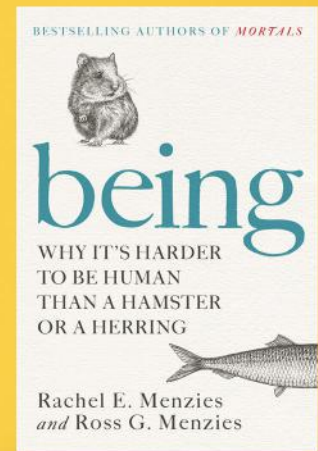
Honeybees draws us into the fascinating, complex world of bees, inviting us to pause, notice, and care for these wonderful and essential creatures. Written by passionate beekeepers who left

their established careers to pursue a life devoted to honeybees and their vital role in our ecosystems, *Honeybees* is an invitation for you to see things differently. Blending science, storytelling and practical advice, this book shows you how to support bees and contribute to a healthier, more sustainable planet.

How to find meaning in a world that offers no certainty about its existence, from the award-winning authors of *Mortals*.

'This book turns existential dread into existential clarity. Wise words on living life to the full.'

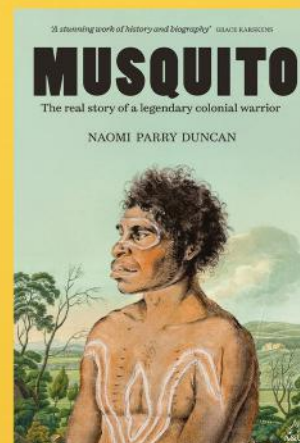
PROFESSOR DAVID VEALE



Naomi Parry Duncan has uncovered the dramatic and tragic story of a legendary First Nations resistance warrior of the early colonies, and the uncanny connections with her own convict ancestors.

'A stunning work of history and biography. Be prepared to weep.'

PROFESSOR GRACE KARSKENS



ALLEN & UNWIN

AUSTRALIAN. INDEPENDENT. FOR READERS.

BILLIE KING
Wild girls don't go quietly
SHANNON KELLY-WHITE

A blisteringly fast, fresh, funny and hugely entertaining novel of mothers, daughters and one gutsy wild colonial girl who gets caught up in Australia's last female bushranger's quest for revenge.

LOVESICK
Lillian Telford

A raw, honest and distinctive novel that dissects the heartbreak, passion, insecurity, obsession, betrayal and joy of modern relationships.

HANNAH RICHELL
An Ocean and a Day

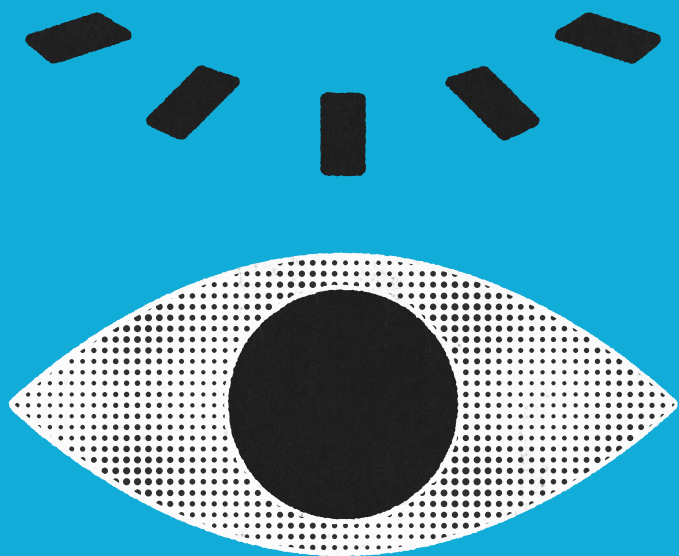
Life affirming and illuminating, a riveting, moving and poignant memoir to make you draw your loved ones close.

The Ballad of Ronan McCoy
Colin Morgan

A tender coming-of-age story about friendship, first love, loss, and facing the ultimate question: who am I going to be?

Out now

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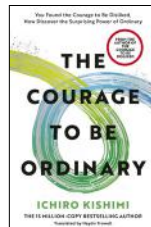
miff.com.au

Personal Development

The Courage to Be Ordinary

Ichiro Kishimi & Haydn Trowell (trans.)

Vermilion. PB. \$36.99
Available 7 July



In this inspiring guide Ichiro Kishimi, the bestselling author of *The Courage to Be Disliked*, speaks to everyone burned out by hustle, comparison and the pressure to prove their worth. His message is disarmingly simple: stop trying to stand out. Being ordinary isn't failure – it's freedom. Freedom from constant competition, from chasing approval, from feeling habitually tense. Letting go of the need to be special will finally give your strengths the space they need to shine.

Politics

Getting Murdoched: How Murdoch's Media Wields Power and Punishment

Andrew Dodd & Matthew Ricketson
Hardie Grant. PB. \$39.99
Available now



For decades, Rupert Murdoch's global media empire has shaped political landscapes, influenced elections, and fuelled public opinion. But behind the headlines lies a darker story – of targeted campaigns, smear tactics, and relentless attacks on those who don't fit the Murdoch mould. From LGBTQIA+ communities and women's rights advocates to progressive politicians and more, *Getting Murdoched* exposes how dissent is silenced and reputations are destroyed. Drawing on insider accounts, investigative research, and case studies spanning Australia, the UK, and the US, this book reveals how News Corp turns disagreement into a declaration of war.

Braver New World: The Countries Daring to Do Things Others Won't

John Kampfner

Atlantic. PB. \$36.99
Available 14 July



Award-winning journalist John Kampfner travels to 10 countries that are confronting shared global challenges with bravery and imagination. From Japan's inter-generational care homes and Vienna's social housing initiatives to Taiwan's efficient healthcare and Morocco's solar energy solutions, these countries show that, by refusing to accept that difficult problems are unsolvable, true innovation is possible. This is an urgent reminder that solutions exist. The question is whether we have the courage to learn.

The Day After: How to Wield Power in a Post-Trump World

Brian Tyler Cohen
HarperCollins. PB. \$34.99
Available 14 July

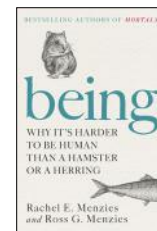


The Day After explores how Republicans have abused power, how Democrats have refused to exercise power when they held it, and how progressives should wield power if they are fortunate enough to win a free and fair election in a post-Trump world. This book is a wake-up call about the decades-long project that led to Trump's America. It's the playbook for progressives who want to do far more than restore the status quo. This is how to build a stronger country, with hope and opportunity for all.

Psychology

Being: Why It's Harder to Be Human Than a Hamster or a Herring

Rachel E. Menzies & Ross G. Menzies
A&U. PB. \$36.99
Available now



R *Being* is the book we all need right now in the face of the mental health crisis. Told in a very accessible, conversational, yet still scientific tone, it was easy for me (someone with little background in psychology) to follow. Part self-help, part history, and part psychology, I thoroughly enjoyed each chapter's mini deep dive into the history of how humans have lived, behaved, and coped. The authors, Sydney-based academics who are also father and daughter and previously collaborated on *Mortals: How the Fear of Death Shaped Human Society*, explore how certain ideas came to fruition, how certain therapies were founded, how identity is shaped by multiple factors, and what scales psychologists are using to measure certain feelings. From sense of self to existential isolation, I found it intriguing to take the questionnaires myself and see where I landed within the general population.

The authors draw from a wide range of existing literature. From Søren Kierkegaard, Carl Rogers, Albert Camus, and many more, the authors tie all their thoughts together, and connect them smoothly with previous studies, and their own clinical experiences. Using anecdotes, specific case studies, and covering what still needs more research, the authors have provided a thorough, informative, and engaging overview on why being human is so damn hard. This offers clarity and a sense of the significance of what it means to be a human. Turns out, we actually have to do the work to live the happy, fulfilled, and meaningful life we all want and dream of.

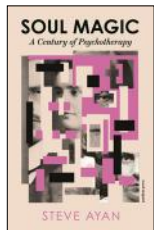
A reader with extensive knowledge in the field of psychology may find information they already know, but this work also covers such a wide range of topics, even a well-informed reader is bound to find something new. For a reader with no prior scientific knowledge, it's a great starting point that's not overwhelming with scientific jargon.

This book won't fix your mental health, but it might give you or a loved one a helpful push to see a professional. And if not, it's an intriguing read that had lightbulbs switching on throughout my brain.

Jacinta Richards is from Readings Chadstone

Soul Magic: A Century of Psychotherapy

Steve Ayan & Marshal Yarbrough (trans.)
Pushkin. HB. \$55
Available 21 July



Psychologist Steve Ayan takes us back to fin-de-siècle Vienna, where a bold new idea was born: that psychotherapy could heal the mind. This is the story of how Freud, Jung, Adler, and their peers revolutionised the way we understand ourselves – giving rise to a field that would forever reshape Western culture: psychotherapy. Ayan unpacks the lives of these early visionaries exploring their legacy, revealing how the promise of personal transformation became a modern fixture of society.

Science

Lunacy: Ten False Promises of the New Space Age

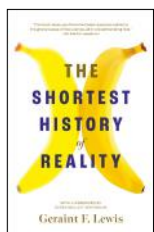
Ben Bramble
Princeton. PB. \$34.99
Available 14 July



If certain business titans, corporations, and governments have their way, humans will someday be living, working, and vacationing in space. This is the much-vaunted New Space Age, and in *Lunacy*, philosopher Ben Bramble explains why it is a giant mistake. He systematically refutes each of the ten most influential reasons given for this new generation of space exploration (and habitation), and in doing so reflects on deeper issues. Bramble does not think we should get out of space entirely but our activities should be about space itself rather than economic or military interests.

The Shortest History of Reality

Geraint F. Lewis
Black Inc. PB. \$27.99
Available now

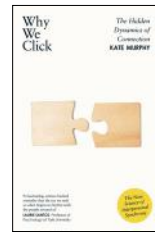


In *The Shortest History of Reality*, the idea of 'what's real' is traced from its everyday, common-sense beginnings to the mind-bending discoveries of modern physics. Along the way,

we encounter the great shifts in thought that reshaped our view of existence – from ancient philosophy to the rise of science, from Newton's universe to the strange probabilities of the quantum world and beyond. Blending science, history and philosophy, this is a brisk and lucid tour through humanity's changing grasp of reality.

Why We Click: The Hidden Dynamics of Connection

Kate Murphy
Viking. PB. \$36.99
Available now



Why We Click looks at the hidden science of why people click, and how this phenomenon shapes our lives. Kate Murphy explores how and why we match one another's movements and gestures, and sync up our blood pressure, pupil dilation, brainwaves and hormonal activity. This book shows that emotions, moods and behaviours are all infectious and can profoundly impact our health and wellbeing – for good or bad.

Spirituality

The Outrageous Good Fortune of Living: How to Find the Sublime in Your Everyday Life

Jackie Bailey
ABC. PB. \$36.99
Available now



R In this thoughtful, warm and erudite book, Jackie Bailey – pastoral carer and funeral celebrant – explores the question of whether it is possible to live a spiritual life in the absence of belief in a deity or organised religion (her answer is yes) and, if so, how this unfolds in practice.

Part-memoir, part-spiritual guidebook, the author takes us on her journey, one that began when she was 11 years old and dared to think that perhaps God was not real. Her early years are marked by a struggle to understand the illness and suffering experienced by her sister, which, despite relentless and innumerable prayers, is intractable. She turns away from her childhood Catholic faith and begins to search for meaning elsewhere. She seeks answers in other religions, such as Buddhism, but that falls short, too. When her sister dies, rather than delving further into atheism as she expects, she instead undertakes a master's degree in theology. She studies all the major world religions, as well as philosophers and activists. She embraces the longing that has gnawed at her, coming to understand that the act of longing is itself a way to create a meaningful life.

Her realisation that everything is connected leads her to explore practices that enhance empathy and compassion, such as music, forest bathing, and walking. She discusses the value of meaningful work, and how that contributes to a sense of belonging and validation. But she does not set the reader on an impossible pathway: she advocates for the importance of small gestures and little kindnesses; things that are within everyone's reach. Her argument is that spirituality is not just how you feel about life, but instead it's also about how you live it. As she says, despair makes hope possible, and separation makes connection possible.

The Outrageous Good Fortune of Living is a considered, gracious contribution that challenges us to consider how we move through the world and invites us to experience the questioning rather than demanding answers.

Pauline Hopkins is the manager of Readings Hawthorn **R**

8+

FUNNY, ACTION-PACKED AND FULL OF HEART

UQP

You Found the Courage to Be Disliked, Now Discover the Surprising Power of Ordinary

FROM THE AUTHOR OF THE COURAGE TO BE DISLIKED

THE COURAGE TO BE ORDINARY

ICHIRO KISHIMI

THE 15 MILLION-COPY BESTSELLING AUTHOR
Translated by Haydn Trowell

THE INSPIRING GUIDE TO LETTING GO OF COMPETITION AND LIVING AUTHENTICALLY

Kids

Board Books

Toast

Yu Akinaga

Do Re Mi. BB. \$22.99

Available now



R This irresistible bread-shaped board book welcomes young readers to one of life's most important food groups: toast. 'White bread' might be known as a stand-in term for 'pale and stale', but rest assured, *Toast* is a fun celebration of international flavours: Masala toast caters to spice-loving palates, there's sweet red bean from Japan, and baked beans for British tastes. A family of mice choose cheesy toast, but a cat on a boat enjoys kippers! An alien eating toast lets readers know that the world of toast toppings is boundless! This book created by Japanese author and illustrator Yu Akinaga is brightly coloured and terribly cute.

Toast is the first book published by Do Re Mi to hit Australian shores. This new London-based independent publisher has a focus on 'playful, distinctive' picture books. Their list includes interesting Japanese and Korean translations, and champions excellent contemporary illustrators. Keep an eye out as we are expecting more fun, stylish books from Do Re Mi soon!

In the meantime, *Toast* is for all ages!

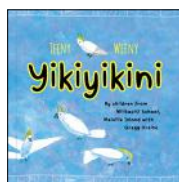
Kim Gruschow is the children's book division manager

Teeny Weeny Yikiyikini

Children from Milikapiti School, Melville Island with Gregg Dreise

ILF. BB. \$14.99

Available 14 July



Teeny Weeny Yikiyikini is sad. He has lost his family. Join him on his adventure across the Tiwi Islands to find them. *Teeny Weeny Yikiyikini* is a Community Literacy Project and was produced in a writing workshop at Milikapiti School on Melville Island, part of the Tiwi Islands group, and the project was facilitated by Indigenous Literacy Foundation (ILF) ambassador and author Gregg Dreise.

The House with Nobody in It

Jon Klassen

Candlewick. BB. \$19.99

Available 14 July



Here are the things in this house: a chair, a clock on the wall, a stool, a lamp – and more. What's missing from this house? Somebody. This is the house with nobody in it. Well, there might be *something*. The inimitable Jon Klassen takes readers through a recognisable, cosy house, while layered, die-cut doors and windows throughout introduce a hint of intrigue.

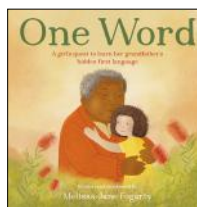
Picture Books

One Word

Melissa-Jane Fogarty

Lothian. HB. \$24.99

Available 7 July



Myra loves Pop's house. She loves the old photos on the walls, the clutter down the hall and the time they spend together. One day, when Myra overhears Pop speaking a different language on the phone, she asks if he will teach her just one word. But Pop refuses.

As Myra discovers Pop's painful past, they'll take steps towards reclaiming what was taken – together.

The Mushroom and the Flower

Sally Soweol Han

T&H. HB. \$26.99

Available now



R What a joy it is to sit and read a well-written and visually stunning picture book such as *The Mushroom and the Flower*. Deep in the forest lives a mushroom who is bold, brilliant, and has a very cool hat. The creatures love to visit her and rest under her hat. But when a flower grows beside Mushroom, quite literally overshadowing her, she feels jealous. But as time passes, Mushroom grows used to Flower's presence, and begins to enjoy chatting to him, even though he never responds.

Award-winning author-illustrator Sally Soweol Han has created a whimsical story full of quiet humour and a lot of heart. Through a little mushroom and a flower, Han explores themes of jealousy, inclusion, empathy and realising there's room for everyone. Reading this book is a pleasure, and little ones are sure to love poring over the vibrant illustrations and giggling at Mushroom's grumpiness. For ages 3+.

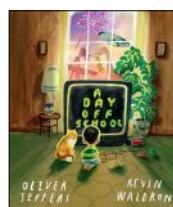
Lucie Dess is the marketing and events coordinator

A Day Off School

Oliver Jeffers & Kevin Waldron (illus.)

HarperCollins. HB. \$24.99

Available 14 July



R A new Oliver Jeffers book is always cause for excitement, and this one is as delightful and humorous as you would expect. *A Day Off School* is a collaboration between two well-known picture-book creators, Oliver Jeffers and Kevin Waldron.

Doesn't every child try it on at some point in their schooling life, pretending they are sick and need to stay home? This is the story of Herbie, who has the sniffles and is convinced that he must stay home from school. Herbie is excited when his parents say that he can stay home. He is going to have a whole day to himself just for playing! But by lunchtime he is bored and has done everything he can think to do with no one else around. His imagination and fear of missing out (FOMO) kick in and he spends the afternoon dreaming up what might have happened at school while he has been away. He is very keen to see his sister when she gets home from school, and desperate to get back to school the following day.

The illustrations are colourful, funny and bold. The scenes from Herbie's imagination are funny and striking – particularly when he's picturing what might have happened at school during the day. This is a fantastic new story for children aged 3+.

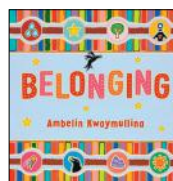
Melanie Barton is from Readings Carlton

Belonging

Ambelin Kwaymullina

Magabala. HB. \$27.99

Available 7 July



R The latest from multi-hyphenate author, illustrator and academic Ambelin Kwaymullina, who belongs to the Palyku people of the eastern Pilbara region, *Belonging* is a picture book for all ages. It's a poem, a history lesson and a

meditation on how First Nations Countries are connected to place, people and culture. Woven with information about the connections that bind First Nations Countries to the land, and each other, *Belonging* defines and disputes *terra nullius*, celebrating the strength of First Nations Countries to survive and endure until today and

into the future. Illustrated in Kwaymullina's colourful, entrancing and joyful style, *Belonging* is the kind of book whose text and images you will return to for years to come, discovering details, nuance, and thought-provoking connections you didn't notice before.

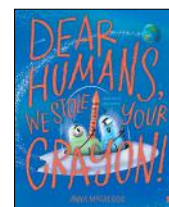
Tamuz Ellazam is the manager of Readings Kids

Dear Humans, We Stole Your Crayon!

Anna McGregor

Scribble. HB. \$27.99

Available now



R The first thing you notice about *Dear Humans, We Stole Your Crayon!* is the great punch of orange colour across the cover. From that first impression the book promises to be a great caper of alien proportions! Australian author-illustrator Anna

McGregor starts this mad stationery heist by informing us the story was not written in our language – where can I read this in the original language?

When tiny extraterrestrials Meep and Zimothy invade a classroom during lunch, the tiny looters conduct a few experiments until they hit the orange-crayon jackpot. When the aliens escape in their ship with the prized orange crayon, they leave behind their confession.

This story has thought-provoking concepts little minds will devour, including how imagination can form an image in your head and be manifested by a crayon. What is this magic science?! With simple dialogue and engaging illustrations, this book is sure to be a hit with children aged 3+.

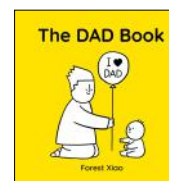
Sharon Rigby is a senior children's book buyer

The Dad Book

Forest Xiao

Orchard. HB. \$22.99

Available 21 July



Becoming a dad is a journey like no other. From leaky nappies and early wake-ups to newborn cuddles that are much too good to share, celebrate the everyday magic and *tiredness* of parenthood with this hilariously

relatable, brilliantly observed and heartfelt book. Packed with love and humour, *The Dad Book* perfectly captures the wonder that comes with being a parent.

Junior Grade

Maud Is Moving

Viviane Schwarz

Walker. PB. \$17.99

Available 1 July



R *Maud Is Moving* is a fabulous work of middle grade fiction that tells the story of Maud and her house move. She is full of all the nerves, excitement and anxiety that comes with change and newness. Anxiety about having a new bedroom, a new house, new neighbours, and a new school – will she ever make

new friends?

It's a beautiful and sensitive story told from the perspectives of Maud and her supportive father. The novel has black line art illustrations on every other page as Maud is an artist and uses drawing as a way of processing feelings and events in her life. This tale demonstrates with humour that community is everything, and my favourite scene was when they are moving the couch into their new building and up to their seventh floor apartment. It takes a village and is a perfect introduction to the neighbours!

At some point we must all go through large and small changes and events, and this novel is a wonderful story

to prompt conversations about the ways to work through big feelings. Perfect for children aged 7+.

Melanie Barton is from Readings Carlton

Middle Grade

Hunt for the Nighthawks

Felice Arena

Penguin. PB. \$17.99

Available 7 July



R When Jake is awoken in the middle of the night, it could be the unfamiliar sounds of rural life at his Nan's place or the grief from having lost his dad – really, it could be anything. Instead, it's a group of metal detector-wielding thieves, known as 'Nighthawks', intent on plundering the tombs of a Roman family long buried on Nan's land. Jake tries to fend them off, but gets nothing except a massive bruise for his troubles – well, that and his newly discovered ability to see Marcus, an ancient Roman ghost who is on a mission to restore his family's honour by reuniting them with stolen treasure.

All of a sudden, his Nan's field is a dig site, and he begins to suspect that the mission to discover the thieves and reunite Marcus's family with their honour is going to take more than a determined, grief-stricken and lonely boy. Enter Tilly and Rabbit, two-thirds of an unlikely trio working to bring Marcus some peace, and maybe use his ghostly powers to help Jake communicate with his dad one last time. This rollicking adventure will quickly engage readers with its twists and turns, eccentric characters, multi-layered mystery and its great, big heart. Felice Arena has crafted a lovable, eclectic trio who will be missed by readers after the last page, but no fear – the author is hard at work on a sequel. For readers aged 9+.

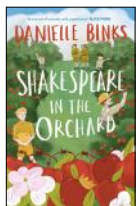
Tamuz Ellazam is the manager of Readings Kids

Shakespeare in the Orchard

Danielle Binks

Lothian. PB. \$17.99

Available 7 July



R Set in Langwarrin at the outbreak of the First World War, this wonderful book shows through the lens of history how outsiders are treated, how power is exercised, and how relationships are challenged when an enemy is dehumanised. It is also about the gift of storytelling and how that can change – and save – lives.

While teenager Jack Thorning is training in the cadets and attending school, his brother Matt has gone off to fight in the war. Jack wants to be there too, and thinks that the quickest way to become a man is to kill one. Most of his peers get caught up in excitement about killing the 'Huns', but Jack falls out with his best friend Walter and Walter's family, who are more reserved and face the ignominy of being deemed traitors for their pacifist leanings.

When the spartan Langwarrin Military Camp becomes the internment site for Australians of German descent – even those who have never been to Germany and who are mostly civilians – the community is appalled at having to harbour 'the enemy'. While the families of the men interred are allowed to live in the township, many are shunned – except by Walter and his family.

But with so many men at war, help is needed at the Thorning orchard to pick apples. As the interred men begin to work at the orchard, Jack's assumptions and prejudices about them are challenged. Then an idea emerges: to perform a Shakespeare play. 'We'd like to feel human again,' the men say.

Thus unfolds a gripping story that grapples with the changing relationships between prisoners and villagers, between families who are pining for loved ones at war while faced with Germans in their midst, between those with split loyalties who want to show compassion even while they are being urged to foster hate, and between those with bloodlust and those who dare to see the prisoners as human.

As the twin stories – of Hamlet rehearsals and the real-life drama playing out in Langwarrin – unfold, Jack learns 'to thine own self be true' and begins to understand that being strong can mean daring to disagree with the mob, and that showing compassion can be a strength, rather than a weakness. This is a terrific book. For ages 10+.

Pauline Hopkins is the manager of Readings Hawthorn

The Blockbusters!

Frank Cottrell-Boyce & Steven Lenton (illus.)

Pan Mac. PB. \$16.99

Available now



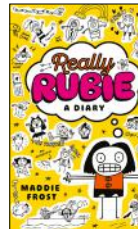
When new boy Rafa and his friends accidentally stray onto the set of a Hollywood blockbuster, Rafa is mistaken for the famous movie star, BB, and is given VIP access to all areas, including the banquet of catering doughnuts! But Rafa's big brother, Cillian, is missing. It's up to Rafa to keep acting the part of a movie star, if he is to find his brother.

Really Rubie: A Diary

Maddie Frost

Walker. PB. \$16.99

Available 1 July



Rubie can't wait to go to summer camp for the very first time. She and her best friend, Riley, are going to have an entire month together! Then Riley drops the bombshell that she can't go. Eek! But going solo, Rubie might just make a new BFF, break out of her shell, and even meet a boy. Camp will be more eventful and dramatic than

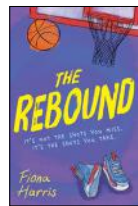
Rubie ever imagined!

The Rebound

Fiona Harris

A&U. PB. \$17.99

Available now



R A powerful and heartbreaking new novel, *The Rebound* chronicles the life of Harry after the unexpected loss of his father and explores what it takes to keep moving forward after tragedy.

Harry and his dad are basketball mad, but when his dad dies in a car crash, Harry misses tryouts for the best basketball team at school. When he finally returns to basketball, he finds himself instead playing for the notoriously terrible Redbacks. Plagued by anger and sadness, Harry is constantly reckoning with what he thinks his dad would have wanted for him on the court.

This is a powerful story about grief, love, teamwork and kindness. It's beautifully written and would be a great way to introduce kids to the struggle others may be facing after the loss of a loved one, or allow them to see their own loss reflected in a character. It highlights the importance of resilience and growth, even in the face of seemingly insurmountable challenges. It is also packed with fun basketball games, plays and plenty of real-world references for keen basketball fans. I would recommend this book for children aged 10+.

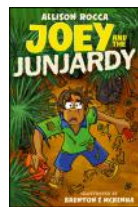
Alicia Guiney is from Readings Kids

Joey and the Junjardy

Allison Rocca & Brenton E. McKenna (illus.)

UQP. PB. \$17.99

Available now



R Allison Rocca's debut book *Joey and the Junjardy* blends humour and heart to create a story with impact. When Joey is forced to move schools following a serious incident, he finds himself living on his ancestral land in Wakka Wakka Country for the first time. Joey loves pranks, but things start to get strange when it seems like someone is pulling pranks on him – someone no one else can see.

Being tailed by a mysterious Junjardy starts off being fun, but the situation quickly spirals as the Junjardy's pranks begin to get Joey in serious trouble and even

endanger lives. Joey must work out what the Junjardy wants from him before something irrevocable happens. Joey also has to navigate relatable problems: he has a huge fight with his sister, tries to make a new friend, and must contend with a horrible bully, all while trying to manage the Junjardy and really find himself. His humour and heart are charming and will endear him to readers. This book is perfect for readers who enjoyed the humorous mishaps in books such as *Diary of a Wimpy Kid*, but are also looking for extra substance. For ages 9+.

Alicia Guiney is from Readings Kids

Kids Graphic Narrative

Spooky House: The Graphic Novel (Billie B Brown's Secret Mystery Club #1)

Sally Rippin & Aki Fukuoka (illus.)

Figment. PB. \$17.99

Available now



There's nothing Billie B Brown loves more than a good adventure with her best friends! So, she starts the Secret Mystery Club, and they take on their very first case: finding out who lives in the spooky house at the end of the street! But when Billie discovers that a witch lives there, her friends don't believe her.

Can she convince them she's telling the truth and keep the club together?

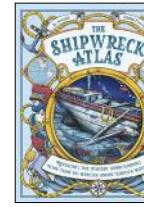
Kids Nonfiction

The Shipwreck Atlas

Jo Arnold & Philip Harris (illus.)

Wide Eyed Editions. HB. \$35

Available 14 July



Why do ships sink? What really happens when they go down? Join Dr Profundo on a voyage across the world's waters to uncover the astonishing true stories behind real-life shipwrecks. With more than 50 fascinating case studies uncovering the mysteries surrounding shipwrecks beneath the waves, *The Shipwreck Atlas* is the ultimate book for young explorers, budding historians and anyone fascinated by the secrets that lie beneath the sea.

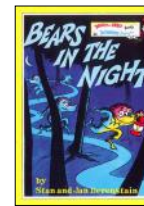
Kids Classic

Bears in the Night

Stan Berenstain & Jan Berenstain

HarperCollins. PB. \$12.99

Available now



R *Bears in the Night* is a fun bedtime adventure written and illustrated by Stan and Jan Berenstain, creators of the Berenstain Bears books. Part of their *Bright and Early* series designed for toddlers and early readers, *Bears in the Night* was published for the first time in 1971. The story starts with seven bears who leave their bed to see what or who made the 'whoooo!' noise. As they go out the window, they navigate other obstacles until they make it to the scary owl – and then rush home to bed!

The visual prompts and repetition of words encourage kids to learn the whole story and create an engaging bedtime adventure. The story is perfect for emerging readers, with a focus on positional words and repetition.

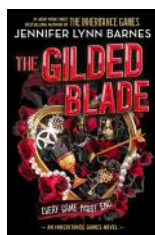
The fun, adventure and thrill of the hunt make this a well-loved 'kid-friendly' scary story that will captivate imaginations and keep kids coming back for many re-reads. For ages 2+.

Sharon Rigby is a senior children's book buyer **R**

Young Adult

The Gilded Blade (An Inheritance Games Novel)

Jennifer Lynn Barnes
Penguin. PB. \$27.99
Available 14 July



In the stunning finale to the global phenomenon of the *Inheritance Games* series, discover danger, riches, romance – and the staggering answers to long-brewing mysteries. All games must come to an end. In this series-shattering conclusion, everyone is a player, long-held secrets are unveiled, precious threads are unraveled, and impossible mysteries are solved. In the grandest of games, there is so much to win, but there is also everything to lose.

Don't Forget to Smile

Ariane Beeston
Black Inc. PB. \$19.99
Available now



Clara and Elle couldn't be more different. Clara's been dancing practically her whole life; she knows exactly what she wants, and she won't let anything get in the way of her future: a place at the Australian National Ballet School. Elle's only been dancing for four years, but her relative newness to ballet only helps her see the cracks in the artform's culture more clearly. Never afraid to fall, dust herself off, and get back up again, Elle's hilarious #balletfail has gone viral, and with her new-found TikTok fame, she's got a platform to call for change. And then there's Ben, struggling against ballet's strict gender conventions, desperate to show the world his passion for dance and boundless potential.

Darlington Classical Academy is teeming with a rich cast of students, but what none of them knows is how much they have in common in their struggles against ballet's strict standards of beauty, impossible expectations, draconian hierarchy and dangerous code of silence and obedience. In their quest for a career, Clara, Elle, Ben and their classmates will find themselves forced to choose between accepting 'the way it's always been' and demanding better from the industry, between struggling alone and reaching out for help.

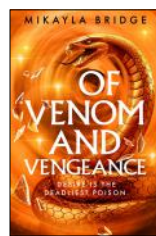
Author Ariane Beeston's passion for ballet bursts from every page – as does her need to see it evolve into an industry that is safe and inclusive. Like she did in her award-winning memoir, Beeston celebrates those who refuse to be silenced, and acknowledges the vital part that therapy, support and community play in uplifting those brave souls fighting for change. Engaging, timely, and written straight from the heart, *Don't Forget to Smile* features themes of disordered eating, online bullying, and grooming. It

is a call to action, a love letter to ballet and an unputdownable read for ages 12+.

Tamuz Ellazam is the manager of Readings Kids

Of Venom and Vengeance

Mikayla Bridge
Tor. PB. \$26.99
Available now



It's finally here! My most anticipated read for 2026! After devouring Mikayla Bridge's debut, *Of Flame and Fury (OFAF)*, I couldn't wait to get my hands on her

sophomore novel! It is set in the same world as *OFAF*, with all-new characters. Warning: *Of Venom and Vengeance* contains spoilers for *OFAF*!

Welcome to the island of Ascira, where sprites fill the sky and the Pallo family rules. Inna Pallo is trying to be the perfect heiress. She does everything her mother asks, but she will never be Erica, her older sister who was kidnapped and murdered. Between intense training and harvesting sprite magic, Inna searches for answers to her sister's death.

Rylan has been plotting revenge against the Pallos ever since he discovered Inna's mother killed his entire family. But to avenge them, he needs an ancient journal that's locked up in the Pallos' vault. It's the final piece of the puzzle in the search to find the Serpent King, and if the legends are true, the king will grant

Rylan the power he needs to destroy the Pallos family.

When Inna discovers Rylan skulking around in the restricted areas of her family's club, she realises they can help each other. Inna is sure her mother is hiding documents that will lead her to her sister's killers. They must work together to break into the

vault and take what they need, then go on the hunt for the Serpent King. But neither Rylan nor Inna is ready for the dangers that lie ahead, or the secrets they'll have to reveal.

Oh, how I love an enemies-to-lovers tale and a delectable slow-burn! Bridge has a true talent for world building, and her prose is like poetry. If you enjoy romantasy full of riddles, sassy characters and a whole lot of action, then you're going to love this one! For ages 14+.

Lucie Dess is the marketing and events coordinator

Mirrorwoven

Bori Cser
Harper Fire. PB. \$19.99
Available now



Princess Adeleine Ventris is dead. At least, that's what she wants everyone to believe. Her sister, Beth, died at the hands of Adeleine's lover and Adeleine can't cope with the guilt or the responsibilities of becoming the

new heiress. With a new mirrorwoven face as a disguise, and a name change, 'Del' travels to Salato, a faraway lagoon-city, and sets herself two rules. One: stay away from royalty. Two: don't fall in love. Rule Two is necessary because the magic of her disguise will unravel with true love's kiss.

Despite her best efforts, it doesn't take long for Del to break Rule One when she's hired as court bard to beautiful and kind Clara, the new leader of Salato. Del is determined to keep out of trouble, but Clara has no idea how to govern a city. If Del doesn't step in, Clara will lose the throne and Del's new life will be shattered. Then there's the charming Nasca, Clara's sister-in-law. Suddenly, Del is scarily close to breaking Rule Two.

It's clear Bori Cser has a deep connection to music and the love story between Del and her precious lute is at the centre of the novel. The magic system, built around mirrors and illusions, is something I haven't encountered before and I'm hoping the magic is explored on a deeper level in the next book! While the characters all have trauma, none of it is related to their sexualities. It's refreshing to read a sapphic romance in a queernormative world!

Mirrorwoven is a delightful and cosy read, but it does explore heavier topics such as classism, racism and grief. If you enjoy love triangles, royal politics and loveable but flawed characters, then this one is for you! For ages 13+.

Lucie Dess is the marketing and events coordinator

Change of Plans

Sarah Dessen
S&S. PB. \$24.99
Available now



Finley is most comfortable in someone else's shadow. Fortunately, she has her magnetic boyfriend, Colin. But when she goes on a last-minute trip with her mum and meets the family from whom her mum has long been estranged, Finley's relationship with Colin goes into freefall and her roadmap for life after high school is gone. It's novel spending time with her aunts, cousins, and the teens who work her aunt's diner, including handsome guitarist Ben, but the longer Finley stays, the closer she gets to the truth about why her mother stayed away.

We Did It Anyway

Carla Salmon
Pan Mac. PB. \$19.99
Available now



The second young adult novel by Carla Salmon is an action-packed thriller set on a remote island. Five teens arrive a day early for their surf-lifesaving camp on Talmar Island and before the rest of the group. The three boys are camping on the beach, and the two girls are in tents at a campsite further

inland. When the boys are woken up at 4am by a beam of light, they realise that a boat has anchored at their beach and the visitors aren't friendly. As they run, the boys discover gold bullion buried in the sand and Alex rashly puts it in his backpack. This impulse decision has serious consequences: they are chased and shot at.

Separately, the two girls, Milly and Luna, wake up early and when the boys don't turn up as planned, they decide to look for them. They meet up with a teenage girl who lives on the island and helps them, but they're not sure they can trust her. They also discover a historical mystery about the last family who operated the lighthouse and two young people who disappeared many years ago, both presumed drowned.

Set over a period of 24 hours, this is a pacy adventure set in an Australian coastal scene that keeps you turning the pages rapidly. The dual voices of Alex and Luna provide different perspectives on the story, and with strong themes of friendship and loyalty, as well as a touch of romance, this is a compelling tale. Readers who enjoy it may also want to seek out Salmon's novel with the same characters, *We Saw What You Started*. For ages 12+.

Angela Crocombe is The Readings Prize and The Readings Foundation coordinator

Eleanor Jones is Not Drowning

Amy Doak
Penguin. PB. \$19.99
Available now



Teen detective Eleanor Jones is over the rain. The drought has finally broken, and the Cooina River is rising – fast. When fellow student Letisha Sabri asks her to prove her boyfriend's death was a murder, Eleanor begins investigating and it seems like Letisha might be right. As the riverbank starts to spill over and reveal its secrets, it becomes increasingly difficult for Eleanor to keep her head above water.

Young Adult Graphic Narrative

Heartstopper Volume 6

Alice Oseman
Hodder. PB. \$24.99
Available 2 July

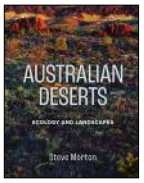


Boy meets boy. Boys become friends. Boys fall in love. This is the final instalment in the bestselling LGBTQIA+ graphic novel series about life, love, and everything that happens in between. Everyone in school knows Nick and Charlie. Everyone knows they're going to be together forever. But Charlie's busy with his bid to become head boy. And while Nick is preparing to leave for uni, he's starting to wonder who he'll be – without Charlie. **R**

Bargains

Australian Deserts

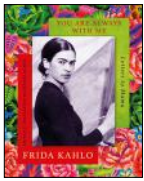
Steve Morton & Mike Gillam (photog.)
PB. Was \$59.99 **Now \$13.99**



Australian Deserts: Ecology and Landscapes is about the vast sweep of the Outback, making up three-quarters of the continent and the heart of Australia. Steve Morton brings his extensive first-hand knowledge and experience of arid Australia to this fascinating and accessible book, explaining how Australian deserts work ecologically.

You are Always With Me

Frida Kahlo & Héctor Jaimes (ed., trans.)
HB. Was \$45 **Now \$19.99**



Frida Kahlo is regarded as one of Mexico's greatest painters, but beyond the familiar images, there is a private story about a daughter who confided in her beloved mama. Until recently, her handwritten letters have only been available to scholars. Funny, observant and honest, the letters chart Kahlo's relationship with her mother and, for the first time, over 50 of these letters are available in English.

Wandering through Life: A Memoir

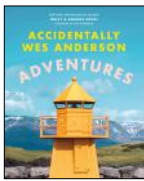
Donna Leon
HB. Was \$49.99 **Now \$19.99**



From a childhood in New Jersey, visits to her grandfather's farm, and summers selling homegrown tomatoes by the roadside, Donna Leon has long been open to adventure. After teaching stints in Iran, China and Saudi Arabia, she finally landed in Venice. Leon vividly animates her decades-long love affair with Italy. Suffused with music, food and humour this is Leon at her most personal.

Accidentally Wes Anderson: Adventures

Wally Koval & Amanda Koval
HB. Was \$69.99 **Now \$24.99**



Accidentally Wes Anderson is back with 200 brand new, mind-bendingly beautiful destinations for your bucket list, and the fascinating stories behind each location. Full of incredible photos of real-life locations that look plucked from the world of Wes Anderson, this book is all about adventures big and small, everyday and extraordinary, here and way over there. No passport necessary.

The Real Food Companion

Matthew Evans & Alan Benson (photog.)
HB. Was \$69.99 **Now \$24.99**

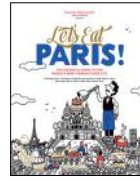


This fully revised and updated edition of Matthew Evans' definitive book on food celebrates the joy of home cooking with 200 simple, delicious, and unpretentious produce-driven recipes. Erudite and enlightening, akin to having the farmer, butcher, and baker by your side, Evans'

core mission is teaching readers how to ethically source, cook and eat real food.

Let's Eat Paris!

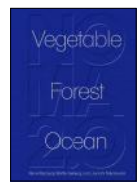
François-Régis Gaudry
HB. Was \$70 **Now \$16.99**



Paris is the second-most visited city in the world, and food-wise, it has no peer. From bistros to wine and cheese, to cookware and culture, Paris has it all. Chock-full of infographics, recipes, photographs and illustrations, biographies, anecdotes, and quirky takes on unexpected trends, present and historical, *Let's Eat Paris!* is the ultimate food lover's guide to the ultimate food lover's city.

Noma 2.0: Vegetable, Forest, Ocean

René Redzepi, Mette Søberg & Junichi Takahashi
HB. Was \$130 **Now \$39.99**



There's a reason Noma sits atop the list of the world's best restaurants. Every bite of food surprises, delights, challenges, and deeply satisfies in a way that's unique. In *Noma 2.0*, René Redzepi delves into the restaurant's magic through the creation of nearly 200 dishes. It is about using local produce, transforming the ordinary, composing a visual delight, pushing boundaries and staying creative.

Entitlement

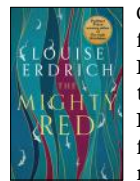
Rumaan Alam
HB. Was \$49.99 **Now \$16.99**



There are things Brooke wants: a sense of purpose, to make a difference in the world, to impress her mother along the way, to spend time with friends and secure her independence. Her job assisting an octogenarian billionaire to give away a vast fortune could help her achieve many of these goals. It may inspire new desires as well. A provocative, propulsive novel of money and morality.

The Mighty Red

Louise Erdrich
PB. Was \$34.99 **Now \$14.99**



Gary Geist, set to inherit two farms, is desperate to marry Kismet Poe, thinking she is the answer to his problems. Kismet can't imagine her own future, but settles for his, missing the chance to refuse Gary's proposal. Meanwhile Kismet's mother, Crystal, hauls sugar beets for Gary's wealthy family. On her nightly truck drives from the farm, Crystal frets over what the future might hold for them both.

The City and Its Uncertain Walls (special edition)

Haruki Murakami & Philip Gabriel (trans.)
HB. Was \$59.99 **Now \$19.99**

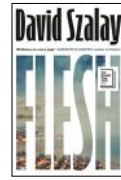


When a young man's girlfriend mysteriously vanishes, he sets his heart on finding the imaginary city where her true self lives. His search leads him to take a job in a mysterious remote library. When he makes it to the walled city, he finds his beloved working in a different library – a dream library. But she

has no memory of their life together. As the lines between reality and fantasy blur, he must decide what he's willing to lose.

Flesh

David Szalay
PB. Was \$34.99 **Now \$12.99**



Fifteen-year-old István lives with his mother in an apartment complex in Hungary. New to the town, shy and isolated, he finds companionship with a much older married woman. When it shifts into something clandestine, István's life spirals out of control. As the years pass, he moves from the army to London's super-rich scene, gaining unimaginable riches, until they threaten to undo him completely.

The World of James Joyce Jigsaw Puzzle (1000 pieces)

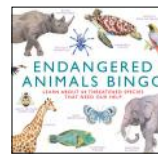
Michael Kirkham (illus.)
Puzzle. Was \$39.99 **Now \$16.99**



The perfect gift for fans of James Joyce, *Ulysses*, or Irish literature, the detailed illustration of Joyce's Dublin in this 1000-piece jigsaw puzzle is packed with real people and fictional characters to seek and find. Whether you've got a well-thumbed copy of *Finnegans Wake* or you've never read a word of Joyce, there's never been an easier way to piece together a story! Includes a pull-out poster.

Endangered Animals Bingo

Marcel George (illus.)
Game. Was \$49.99 **Now \$16.99**



Everyone will love this traditional game featuring 64 of the world's most-loved at-risk creatures. With beautiful illustrations, this board game comes with a leaflet containing information and facts for all the endangered animals featured so players can learn about them and be inspired to help save them. A perfect gift for animal or conservation lovers of all ages, as well as fun for the whole family.

Flora of Melbourne

Marilyn Bull & George Stolfo (illus.)
HB. Was \$89.95 **Now \$29.99**



The Flora of Melbourne is a resource that assists in the recognition and botanical identification of species while encouraging an awareness of the interrelationships between indigenous plants and animals. It identifies the usefulness of these species, including past and present uses by local First Nations peoples, and for all who wish to understand our diminishing natural environment.

On Wars

Michael Mann
HB. Was \$61.95 **Now \$19.99**



On Wars examines the history of war through the ages and across the globe. It explores the reasons groups go to war, the different forms of wars, how warfare has changed, how it has stayed the same and the surprising ways in which seemingly powerful countries lose wars. Combining ideological, economic, political and military analyses,

it offers new insight into the consequences of choosing war.

Around the World in Eighty Games

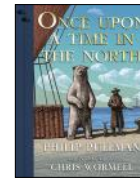
Marcus du Sautoy
HB. Was \$45 **Now \$19.99**



What is the best property in Monopoly? And how can pi help you win rock paper scissors? Spanning millennia, oceans and continents, countries and cultures, *Around the World in Eighty Games* explores how mathematics and games have always been deeply intertwined. A grand adventure, the book teaches us not only how games are won, but also how they, and their maths, shape who we are.

Once Upon a Time in the North

Philip Pullman & Chris Wormell (illus.)
HB. Was \$34.99 **Now \$12.99**



A full-colour gift edition, illustrated by Chris Wormell, of the magical, adventure-filled short story which features two of Philip Pullman's best-loved characters. Set in the world of his ground-breaking *His Dark Materials* and *The Book of Dust*, the story follows Lee Scoresby and Iorek Byrnison, their first meeting and evidence of the adventure that brought them together.

Terra Ultima: The Discovery of a Hidden Continent

Raoul Deleo & Noah J. Stern
HB. Was \$49.99 **Now \$16.99**



To most of us, the world in which we live seems well-traversed – explored in every direction and meticulously mapped. But an entire continent named Terra Ultima has escaped us all. Over a decade in the making, this illustrated book is the life work of explorer Raoul Deleo and documents his discovery of the strange new world for the first time: a continent large, rich and diverse in wildlife.

Baby Animal Match

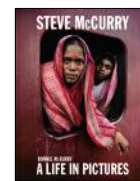
Gerrard Gethings (photog.)
Game. Was \$29.99 **Now \$12.99**



Pair up the baby animals with their parents in this cute memory game. Forty-four cards feature photographs from animal portraitist Gerrard Gethings, plus text about all the creatures in the accompanying booklet. Can you be the first to match all the babies and parents? Play as a memory game with the cards face down for added entertainment. Perfect for animal lovers of all ages.

Steve McCurry: A Life in Pictures

Steve McCurry & Bonnie McCurry
HB. Was \$140 **Now \$29.99**



This is the biggest and most comprehensive volume on Steve McCurry published to date and the final word on 40 years of McCurry's incredible work. Written and compiled by Bonnie McCurry, Steve's sister and president of the McCurry Foundation, *Steve McCurry: A Life in Pictures* is the ultimate book of McCurry's images and his approach to photography. **R**



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