

Readings Monthly

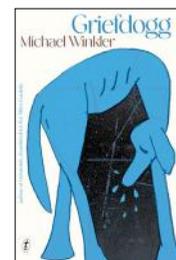
FREE | APRIL 2026

*Celebrating
30 years of
The Cook's
Companion*

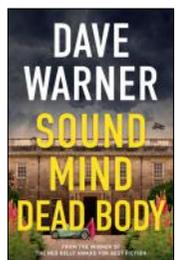
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**Mother's Day
with Melbourne
Writers Festival**

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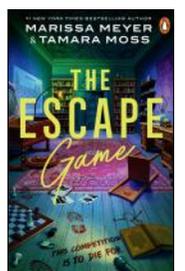
**MICHAEL
WINKLER**
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**DAVE
WARNER**
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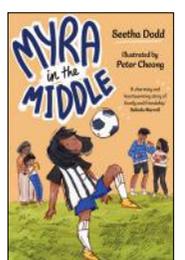
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**MARISSA
MEYER &
TAMARA
MOSS**
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**MAC
BARNETT
& SHAWN
HARRIS**
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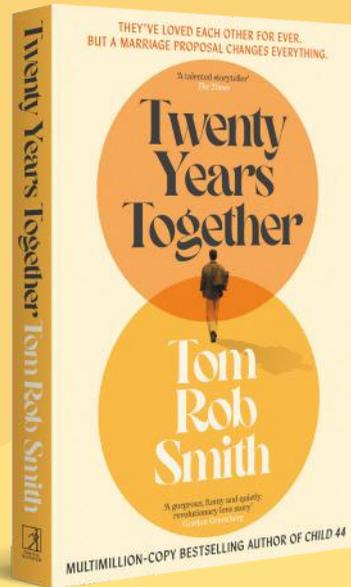
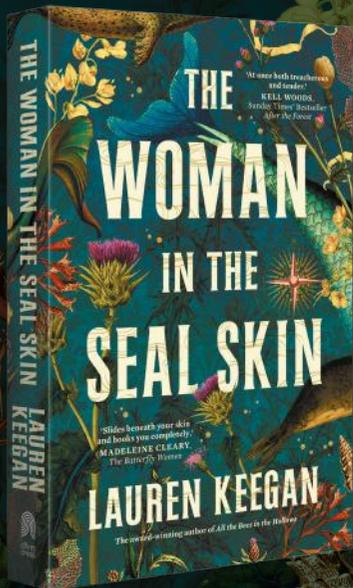


**SEETHA DODD
& PETER
CHEUNG**
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**‘Slides beneath
your skin and
hooks you
completely.’**

**Madeleine
Cleary**

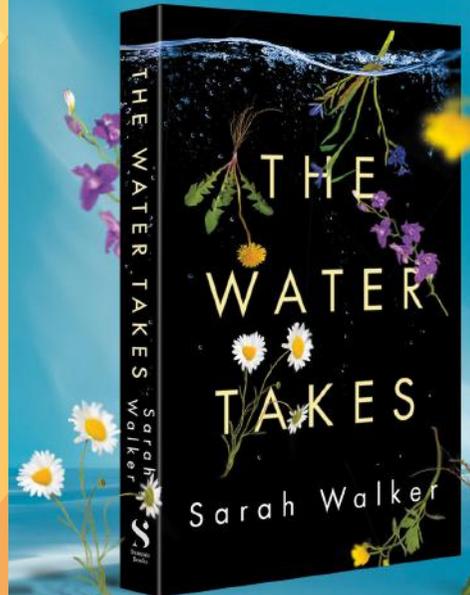


**‘Expresses the
ordinary heroism
of loving someone
for a lifetime.’**

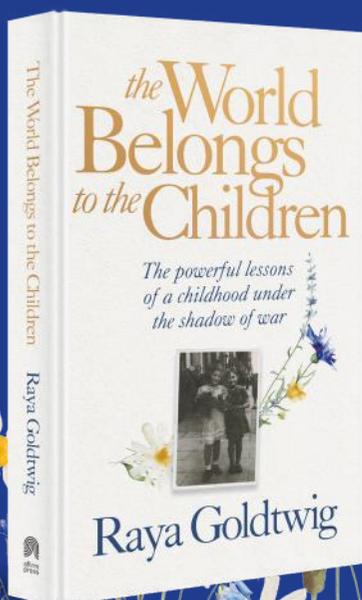
**Stephen
Laughton**

**‘Made me
laugh and roar
and weep.’**

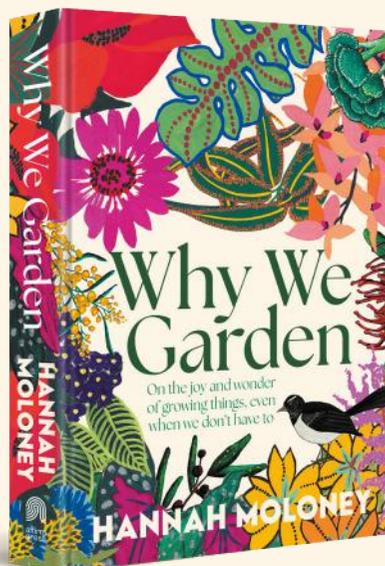
**Kate
Mildenhall**



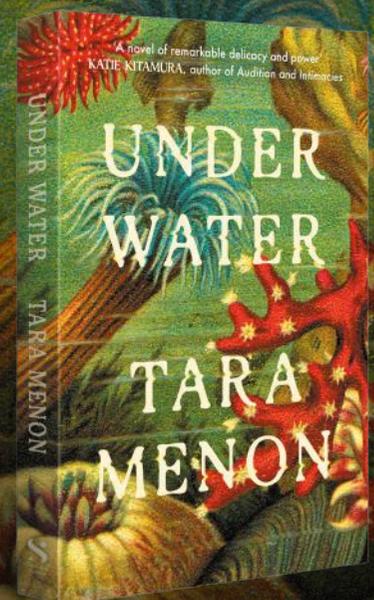
**A story of love
and hope under
the shadow
of war.**



**A joyful, life-
affirming exploration
of nature, humanity
and community.**



**A stunning and
deeply moving
literary debut of
grief, loss and
female friendship.**



News

Mother's Day

It's Mother's Day on Sunday 10 May. You'll find plenty of great gift ideas in this month's *Readings Monthly* and in our nine shops. Please note that our online shipping deadline for in-stock items is Thursday 30 April: any orders placed after this date will not be guaranteed to arrive in time for Mother's Day.

Melbourne Writers Festival 2026

The Melbourne Writers Festival (MWF) is back for 2026 and is celebrating its 40th anniversary year! Running from Thursday 7 until Sunday 10 May, MWF is where intellect, imagination and inquiry take the stage. Readings is proud to be the official bookseller for MWF. See Mother's Day event highlights on page 12, and browse the full program and book tickets at mwf.com.au

Record Store Day 2026

Attention vinyl lovers and music aficionados! Mark your calendars: Record Store Day is back on Saturday 18 April! This year we are celebrating at our Carlton, Hawthorn and St Kilda shops. Swing by for Record Store Day exclusives, giveaways and more! Happy rummaging!

Global Book Crawl 2026

Join book lovers around the world this April and embark on an adventure through the heart of your city's indie bookshops with the Global Book Crawl. This year's Book Crawl is bigger and better! For more information and to discover all the giveaways and prizes up for grabs, head to globalbookcrawl.org/cities-melbourne

Promos

3 for 2 Penguin Modern Classics

Buy two Penguin Modern Classics and choose a third title in the range (of equal or lesser value) for free! Plus, customers who take advantage of the 3-for-2 deal will also receive a free pen with purchase. This offer is available in Readings shops (except Readings Kids) until 10 May 2026. Not available online. Offer valid on stickered, in-stock items only, while stocks last. Not valid with any other offer.

3 for 2 kids' activity books

Get ready for the school holidays! Buy two titles from a great selection of kids' activity books and choose a third title in the range (of equal or lesser value) for free! This offer is available in Readings shops (except Readings Carlton) until 30 April 2026. Not available online. Offer valid on stickered, in-stock items only, while stocks last. Not valid with any other offer.

Events

with Chris Gordon



I can't remember when I first met Raimond Gaita. He has infiltrated so much of my thinking life: I've read his books and columns, heard him on the radio, watched him on television, and, of course, seen him at many events. He's been generous

to Melbourne, and many of us have benefitted from the deep consideration he has given to living with integrity and purpose. I'm delighted that we're hosting a free event to celebrate the re-release of his seminal work, *A Common Humanity*. This type of discussion is a gift, and an acknowledgment of how kindness can change everything. See you there.

Walking Tour: Sean Reynolds

Saturday 11 & Sunday 12 April at 1pm

Readings Carlton and Hawthorn
Tickets are \$25 per person

Join Sean Reynolds, author of *Melbourne Ghost Signs*, on a walking tour of Carlton's Lygon Street or Hawthorn's Glenferrie Road and discover forgotten histories.

Panel discussion: Raimond Gaita and A Common Humanity

Monday 13 April at 6.15pm
Church of All Nations, 180 Palmerston St, Carlton
Free, but bookings are essential

Hear Raimond Gaita in conversation with Maria Tumarkin, Michael Heyward, Robert Manne and Sundhya Pahuja as they discuss the Routledge Classics edition of *A Common Humanity: Thinking about Love and Truth and Justice*.

Lisa Wilkinson and the Titanic

Wednesday 22 April at 6pm
Lido Cinemas, 675 Glenferrie Road, Hawthorn
Free, but bookings are essential

Join us to hear Lisa Wilkinson discuss her book, *The Titanic Story of Evelyn*, the true tale of the only Australian-born survivor of the sinking of the *Titanic*.

Dervla McTiernan in conversation

Tuesday 28 April at 6pm
Cinema Nova, 380 Lygon St, Carlton
Tickets are \$35 per person and includes a signed book

We are delighted to invite you to hear J.P. Pomare talking with Dervla McTiernan about her new novel, *Three Reasons for Revenge*, on the day of its release!



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

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

EDITOR
Elke Power

EDITORIAL ASSISTANTS
Judi Mitchell & Lucie Dess

PROOFREADER
Joe Murray

GRAPHIC DESIGN
Natasha Theoharous

CARTOON
Oslo Davis

FRONT COVER

The April *Readings Monthly* cover and pages feature beautiful artwork by Stephen Baker, created for our Mother's Day shop windows. See more of Stephen's artwork at stephenbakerart.com

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

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

PRICES AND AVAILABILITY

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

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

SHOP INFORMATION

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

CARLTON	309 Lygon St	03 9347 6633
KIDS	315 Lygon St	03 9341 7730
CHADSTONE	The Market Pavilion	03 9810 0860
DONCASTER	Westfield Doncaster	03 9810 0891
EMPORIUM	Emporium Melbourne	03 9810 0850
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SLV	285-321 Russell St	03 8664 7540

KEY

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

- Review
- Events
- Special price

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A FILM BY
GENKI
KAWAMURA



COMMENCES
APRIL 23
AT CINEMA NOVA

NOVA

380 LYGON ST, CARLTON
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Foreword

with Joe Rubbo



This year we are making some changes to how The Readings Prizes are judged, with the goal being to make the judging process more inclusive. In the past, we requested submissions from publishers and appointed four Readings

booksellers as judges. In the new format, our team of buyers will be assembling a longlist which will go out to a larger pool of our booksellers. This year we have 20 judges signed up across our shops and this increase in participation will only help build excitement. The Children's and Young Adult Prizes are also undergoing similar changes, but don't worry, they're not going anywhere. They will be back in early 2027, with more news to come soon.

Melbourne Writers Festival (MWF) has launched this year's program, and it's an exciting line-up, featuring writers including Yann Martel, Olga Ravn, Helen Garner and many, many more. The festival will run from

Thursday 7 until Sunday 10 May. For more details and to book tickets, go to the website at mwf.com.au

This year, MWF was one of the grant recipients from The Readings Foundation. They put together a proposal to open the festival's school's program to 750 disadvantaged students around Victoria. The Readings Foundation donated \$25,000 to help cover the costs of logistics and give these students access to this wonderful festival.

This year, I have come on as a Trustee of The Readings Foundation. In 2026, the foundation has donated \$314,000 to 14 organisations that deliver crucial initiatives to their communities. As a trustee, I was lucky enough to meet the remarkable people behind these initiatives, who work tirelessly to help people less fortunate than themselves. It was a beautiful reminder that there are still lots of incredible, selfless people out there. Especially at a time when terrible people are taking up so much oxygen. You can find out more about The Foundation grant recipients and their programs on our website at readings.com.au/the-readings-foundation

Dear Reader

with Alison Huber



This month marks the publication of a very special, very gorgeous third edition of Stephanie Alexander's *The Cook's Companion* which celebrates the book's 30th anniversary. My colleague in

buying, Danielle Mirabella (also my personal go-to authority on all things food- and restaurant-related), leads a lovely series of reflections from some of our staff on the unique place this book holds in their personal histories and in Australian culture on page 14. I will confess to feeling serious *Companion*-related envy upon reading these pieces because my experience of its wonderfulness is completely by proxy. While I've ordered, unpacked, shelved, recommended, and sold far too many copies of this book to mention over its entire existence, have gifted the book numerous times to others, and surely have eaten many, many creations cooked from it, I have (can you believe this ... deep intake of breath) *never had my own copy*. I know, it's OUTRAGEOUS. Perhaps the third edition's my charm: I'm going to channel this FOMO moment and make sure my household gets this one, Stephanie. If, dear Reader, you're in the same boat, now is the time to fill this gaping hole in your cookbook library because we have the book on special for the whole month of April.

Alongside this milestone publication event, one can safely say that the 2026 publishing year is now officially in full swing, because there is a really impressive array of new books on the way this month. One that has really captured my attention is our Fiction Book of the Month, Michael Winkler's *Griefdog*. You might recall that Winkler's first book, *Grimmish*, was self-published and turned into something of an establishment-busting phenomenon, becoming the first self-published book to be either long or shortlisted for the Miles Franklin. That irregular feat of recognition was definitely not a fluke because this second novel (published by Text Publishing this time) confirms the author's considerable writing talents. The book engages with some familiar topics worrying contemporary writers, among them grief, belonging, and the climate crisis, but *Griefdog* is wholly unique in its treatment of these matters, and ticks all the boxes for me: startling originality, serious ideas and experiments in thought, emotional depth, formal provocations, and funny on top of it all. Really, it's so wonderful, so weird, I'm still thinking about it and I promise you haven't read a book like this before. Australian fiction releases are rich this month, with our reviewers enthusing similarly about new books from Edwina Preston, Fiona Kelly McGregor, Fiona Wright, Inga Simpson, Sarah Walker, Shaun Micallef, and Steve Toltz.

We also introduce an array of international fiction releases, including the new novel by Ben Lerner, *Transcription*, which I read in one sitting and at the end, the book (or should I say Lerner), did that thing to me where I second-guessed my entire reading, wondered if I had it all wrong and needed to read it from the start again. He's a genius. To all who observe the 18th of November (you know who you are), please be aware that the fourth volume of Solvej Balle's *On the Calculation of Volume* is out mid-month. Keep reading, it's still incredible! The rediscovery of the work of Ulrich Alexander Boschwitz is quite fascinating as a publishing story, as is his short life (you'll easily find a number of articles online if you're inclined, including one by his translator, Philip Boehm). *Berlin Shuffle* is set on one day and features a memorable cast of down-and-out characters trying to make their way in 1920s Berlin. It was the first novel he wrote (published in 1937, before his better-known novel, *The Passenger*) and I feel fortunate to have had time to read it during my summer break: a new edition is out this month. Boschwitz died at 27, and it's hard not to think about the books lost with him.

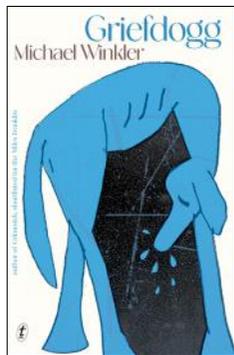
As I see the end of my allocated column space rapidly approaching, I'll briefly mention our Nonfiction Book of the Month, the first nonfiction work in translation from the Nobel Prize-winning South Korean writer, Han Kang. This is a wide-ranging book about writing and living in these times, and our reviewer's words capture the sense that this is the perfect moment for this book which has, '... a beautiful humility and gentleness ... qualities I think readers will find much solace in, as they share in Han's simultaneous wonder and terror at the state of our world.' Crime aficionados might be surprised at Dave Warner's turn to the cosy side of the genre, but he has with our Crime Book of the Month, the brilliantly titled murder mystery, *Sound Mind Dead Body*, in which our reviewer says we are introduced to a 'true-blue Poirot': intriguing!

And finally, dear Reader, it's time again for us to look back into the literary archive with one of our smashing 3-for-2 offers, this time on the Penguin Modern Classics range. This list with its striking book design is always in fashion, and grows year on year, now boasting close to 1,100 titles. It's an epic range to take in, and it's not possible to stock them all at all our shops all the time, but in collaboration with our colleagues at Penguin Random House we're doing our utmost to have a wonderful, representative range for you to rummage through for the month of April and until Mother's Day weekend at all our shops (except Readings Kids). If you come in early, you'll be lucky to receive a very snazzy but very limited Readings x Penguin Modern Classics pen to help you record the true extent of your growing retirement TBR pile. **R**

Fiction

BOOK OF THE MONTH

Australian Fiction



Griefdogg
Michael Winkler
Text. PB. \$34.99
Available now

R Following the cult success of *Grimmish*, which was shortlisted for the Miles Franklin Literary Award, Michael Winkler returns with *Griefdogg*, a novel less concerned with answers than with questions about the limits of autonomy and personal responsibility when faced with a sudden absence of certainty.

Winkler writes with a casual intellect, reminding me of a parent giving succinct, seemingly obvious advice that nags at your edges until you suddenly find the heart of their counsel already seated within you.

Griefdogg centres on Jeffrey Watson-Johnson, a pedantic, community-minded, go-getting hydrologist who inherits a modest fortune after the death of a relatively unknown aunt. Suddenly freed from the economic pressures determining his life as a husband and father, Jeffrey tells his family that he wishes to live as if he were the household pet; that is, without obligation or control. What seems superficially

an absurd request is the novel's philosophical engine, attempting to question the limits of choice: Is opting out of the world possible, or merely another configuration of participation? Jeffrey feels enmeshed in the world around him; in a life that has happened to him, rather than one of any ecstatic choice, and is now hardened into obligation. He is all too aware that to withdraw will inevitably hurt the people he loves. In his new pet form, facetiously named Hubert by his wife, Jeffrey-Hubert develops a sixth sense: the ability to discern grief in others.

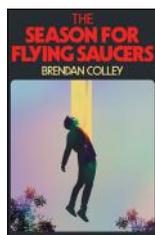
Griefdogg is a mediation on grief, universal and immediate, but also attachment and detachment. Jeffrey dreams of becoming someone who cares about nothing. His quest is founded on a desire perhaps unachievable to the common man, or common dog.

Winkler writes with a casual intellect, reminding me of a parent giving succinct, seemingly obvious advice that nags at your edges until you suddenly find the heart of their counsel already seated within you. The issue is not fixed but quietened; human simplicity can exist within the most complex issues and the comfort of a non-answer can, momentarily, be enough – because it's all we have.

Clem Larkins is from Readings St Kilda

The Season for Flying Saucers

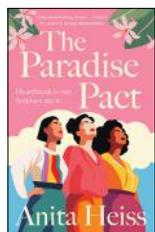
Brendan Colley
Transit Lounge. PB. \$34.99
Available now



In Hobart, strange lights appear in the skies every summer, signalling we're part of something bigger. When economic pressures force the Greys to live together for one season – the first time since 29-year-old Noah left home after uni – tensions are high. Then things get weird when locals become convinced the Greys have been targeted for alien abduction. Soon, they have a father who has been abducted by aliens; a mother who sees the spirits of dead people; a sister who communicates with angry dogs; and Noah, whose life has seemingly gone off the rails.

The Paradise Pact

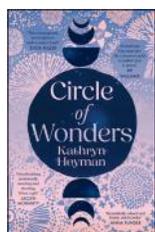
Anita Heiss
S&S. PB. \$34.99
Available now



Between her growing business, her recently failed relationship and her energetic grandkids, Abbey needs a holiday. So, when her tiddas suggest they take their yearly girls' trip international and hit Hawai'i, Abbey says yes faster than you can say aloha. Before Abbey, Stevie and Caitlin head to paradise, they make a pact: they will do nothing but indulge in mai tais and sunsets – oh, and run a half marathon. Then Abbey meets Kaleo, a man who makes her heart race, and things get complicated.

Circle of Wonders

Kathryn Heyman
Fourth Estate. PB. \$34.99
Available now



As cancer claims Roni's body, she begins a Book of Wonders, capturing the small, luminous moments she once overlooked. It's a final gift to the people she loves. Over one charged month, the women closest to her gather: Belle, her daughter, fresh from rehab; Anna, her brilliant sister, returning from London with all her old certainties cracking; and Sylvie, her estranged mother, approaching her own death. Meanwhile, Roni's ex – the Drone, as she's dubbed him – refuses to leave the house, casting shade on the light Roni is fighting to keep burning.

The Endling

Keely Jobe
Scribe. PB. \$35
Available now



Frank is part of an off-the-grid feminist community that has hidden itself away from society and is living back-to-basics

on the mountain. They have been there for decades, with women coming and going over the years. Frank has retreated to an even more isolated spot three hours away with her dog Chicken Midnight, a delightful character who speaks to her telepathically. Frank's mid-50s body is slowly starting to fail her, but she resists support, despite her niece Mila checking on her every few months and encouraging her to visit a doctor.

One day, Frank discovers a black orchid, pulsating and vibrating life, and snaps a polaroid of it. In the main community there is a period of fecundity and sexual frenzy that inspires the women to rub themselves against plants and trees in the forest. Not long after, nine women are pregnant – seemingly immaculate conceptions. The children they give birth to are strange, don't speak, and don't look directly at anyone, but are much loved; all except Mila's child – the only male – who is treated with suspicion.

With lush, evocative writing that recreates the landscape in an erotic rendering, and the black orchid always watching and waiting, this is a startling debut that immerses the reader in the forest and its many challenges.

For readers who enjoyed *The Animals in that Country* and *The Natural Way of Things*, this is beautifully written, feminist fiction that will keep you turning the pages right up until the surprising conclusion.

Angela Crocombe is The Readings Prize and Readings Foundation coordinator

The Woman in the Seal Skin

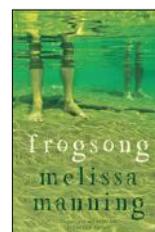
Lauren Keegan
Affirm. PB. \$34.99
Available now



In this atmospheric novel set in Scotland in 1695, Malie has grown up hearing tales of selkies: shape-shifting women who shed their seal skins to seduce fishermen on the Orkney shores. That's the story of how her parents met, and it must be true because one day her mother slipped into the sea and was never seen again. Raised by her father, Malie has always done as she's told, and now she's married and expecting her first baby. But there's a wildness in Malie's soul, and it yearns for the sea.

Frogsong

Melissa Manning
UQP. PB. \$34.99
Available now

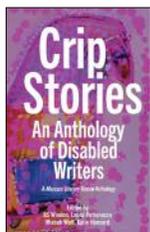


R Caro and Danny are high-school sweethearts who spend their spare time lounging in the summer sun by the waterhole, the long days hot and sweaty amid a cacophony of croaking frogs. They quickly make plans for moving in together, university, and work after graduation. But when Danny's mother passes away, a rift is silently torn between them. Caro wants to grieve with Danny. However, as the years go by, Danny becomes more reclusive, succumbing to drug addiction and mysteriously disappearing. When Danny goes missing with no sign of returning, Caro is left questioning how long she

Anthologies

Crip Stories: An Anthology of Disabled Writers – A Mascara Literary Review Anthology

BS Windon, Laura Pettenuzzo, Misbah Wolf & Katie Hansord (eds)
NewSouth. PB. \$34.99
Available 1 April



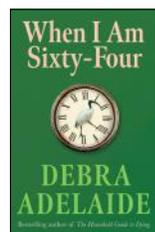
The word crip was once used to discriminate. Today, it is reclaimed and celebrated. *Crip Stories* is a gathering of vibrant and diverse experiences from disabled people. A collection of

narrative nonfiction, essays and poetry, it affirms the ethos of 'nothing about us without us' by amplifying first-person narrative voices of lived experience. With contributors including Carly Findlay, TextaQueen, CB Mako, Carly-Jay Metcalfe, Skye Cusack, Mario Licón Cabrera, Jenny Hedley, Judith Huang and Ethan Patrick.

Australian Fiction

When I Am Sixty-Four

Debra Adelaide
UQP. HB. \$34.99
Available now



In this shimmering mosaic of a novel based on Debra Adelaide's friendship with Gabrielle Carey, a writer reflects on the final days of her friend's life. In the decades after they met at school, they shared a passion for books and words, took care of each other's children, received acclaim as authors, and endured failure and disappointment.

Yet during these last days together, as she and her friend go on walks through their neighbourhood, she discovers that their paths may have been more different than she realised – and bridging the gulf becomes more vital than ever.



should hold onto their relationship and when to let go.

Melissa Manning's *Frogson* beautifully illustrates the internal conflict that goes with staying beside someone who is self-sabotaging and destroying the relationships around them; and the guilt at the thought of abandoning them that comes with the knowledge that trauma or grief has led to their decline. But knowing when to let go, when to understand that it isn't your battle to fight anymore, and that nothing can be done, is something every person will interpret differently, and possibly never be able to shrug off.

Caro's journey can be likened to a frog's metamorphosis, a continuous theme that reveals itself throughout the novel. At first, like an egg full of promise, the relationship begins with hope and possibility. As time passes, she becomes like a tadpole living only in water, adapting to an environment that slowly confines her. Gradually, awareness grows, like the tadpole developing legs, as she begins to recognise her strength and worth. Letting go of fear and self-doubt is like shedding the tail that once helped her survive. In the end, will she emerge like a fully formed frog, able to breathe freely and move independently, realising she was never meant to remain confined in a place she had already outgrown?

Aurelia Orr is from Readings Kids

The Trap

Fiona Kelly McGregor

Picador. PB. \$34.99

Available now



R In the summer of 1942–43, Sydney simmers: American soldiers stride the streets, the sly-grog trade explodes and the risqué nightclubs are being shut down. Ray Sayles, a queer Aboriginal drag queen and one-time club manager is struggling to make ends meet. He even tried enlisting in the army as a cook, but the racism and homophobia forced him out. It's October 1942, and he's in a public toilet when two plain-clothes policemen burst into the cubicle, bash him up and take him in.

Fiona Kelly McGregor's previous novel, *Iris* (2022), was a creative retelling of the real life of Iris Webber, who had the reputation of being 'the most violent woman in Sydney' in the 1930s. *The Trap* is wound around the historic 1943 dismissal of two Sydney cops for the wrongful arrest of seven men, in connection with which trial one Ray Sayles testified against them. Other characters in this book are police commissioner William McKay; the editor of Sydney's *Daily Telegraph* newspaper, Clarence McNulty; and the paper's owner, Frank Packer. McNulty had also been arrested in a public toilet on the charge of 'indecent exposure', and the narrative walks us through the differing experiences of Sayles and McNulty.

Where this book shines is in McGregor's invocation of wartime Sydney – the streets and scents and skirts and shirts; the parks and the heat; the perfume and the bodies and desire; and the lives of the people in the inner city areas of 'Darlo' and 'Surro': the dancers and sex workers and cooks and singers and Iris Webber, who turns up in this book, too. In prose thick with the argot of

the time, *The Trap* drops us into a sultry Sydney summer and locates the demi-monde directly downstairs from high society. Just the ticket.

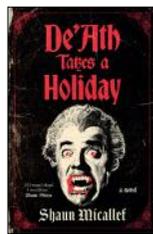
Bernard Caleo is from Readings Carlton

De'Ath Takes a Holiday

Shaun Micallef

Ultimo. PB. \$34.99

Available now



R Shaun Micallef tackles what we do in the shadows in his humorous new book *De'Ath Takes a Holiday*. Told through the eyes of unfortunate insurer and newlywed Roger Bracegirdle, the reader is taken on a cross-continent journey with the vampire Count De'Ath. De'Ath wants nothing more than to become human and live and die a normal life, and after Roger backwardly suggests that the Count visit Freud for a blood transfusion, he decides to join Roger and his wife on their honeymoon to Austria. What follows involves zombie wars, Henry Ford impaling unionists, the resurrected decomposing corpse of Prince Albert and more wildly bonkers supernatural scenarios.

This book jumps the shark on the opening page, and the constant stream of zany and outlandish events never lets up. It is for comedy lovers who want to read something quick and easy that will consistently deliver the laughs again and again. The book does attempt to tackle some pretty heavy themes as well, such as slavery, colonisation and women's rights, however these discussions are constantly at the whim of jokes. Many major characters in this book express wildly problematic and conservative viewpoints which Micallef mocks through humour. While the humour can derail the messaging at times and the discussions lack depth, the book never fails in its core purpose of making you laugh.

Readers will enjoy watching Roger's increasingly insane attempts to get rid of the Count and the increasingly meddlesome antics of the characters he finds himself surrounded by in his attempts to do so. This book is for readers who want to experience a sitcom in book form. The constant jokes and mockery make it a very digestible read and Shaun Micallef's signature humour is sure to be a hit with many readers.

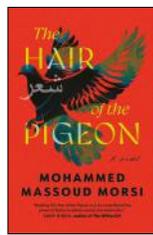
Alica Guiney is from Readings Kids

The Hair of the Pigeon

Mohammed Massoud Morsi

UWA. PB. \$34.99

Available now



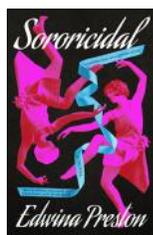
GHASSAN grows up a free spirit among the displaced in the Palestinian refugee camp of Yarmouk, Syria. His best friends are Badawi, who is all football, fists and fast-money schemes, and Sama, the girl whose eyes mirror the sky. But when the Arab Spring ignites a wave of protest and hope across the region, devastating secrets rise to the surface and the government's brutal crackdown shatters their fragile world. This is an epic tale tracing a path from the atrocities of the Syrian Civil War to present-day Copenhagen.

Sororidal

Edwina Preston

Picador. PB. \$34.99

Available now



R *Sororidal* is an intimate, thoughtful novel that explores the fraught constancy of sisterhood and the ways we change, and don't change, as we age.

Mary and Margot are sisters, growing up aristocratically in 1900s Adelaide. Even as children, devoted to each other and with no other company on their family's vineyard, there is a seed of conflict between the girls. Mary is charismatic, confident and powerful; Margot is awkward, shy and aware of her sister's manipulation, even as she submits to it. Then an adolescent indiscretion upends their lives and separates the sisters for more than a decade.

When they're reunited, they're both changed, but still unable to step out from the long shadow cast by their past. Mary and Margot are two orbiting planets – drawing together and drifting apart in a steady, inevitable cycle. They are the cause of each other's largest grievances, the topic of their longest held grudges – but also each other's most affectionate friend, the person who knows them best. And so the cycle continues throughout their lives, with each passing year adding more fuel to the fire under their simmering resentments, but also creating shared jokes and comfortable domestic habits that they cling to. In a patriarchal world still reeling from two World Wars, the fraught company of a sister is still preferable to being with, and being defined by, a man.

Across the four sections of this novel, we journey through four chapters of the sisters' lives, and with each we sit beside one of the women, getting a unique window into their self-perceptions, and the fixations that drive them from girlhood to old age. It's a masterful psychological study that reminds us that everything is a matter of perception; people rarely see us the way we see ourselves; and even the people we know best are capable of surprising us in new and terrible ways.

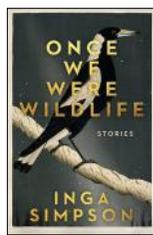
Bella Mackey is the digital content lead

Once We Were Wildlife: Stories

Inga Simpson

Hachette. PB. \$29.99

Available now



R I've been a follower of Inga Simpson's writing from back when she first published *Mr. Wigg* in 2013, to her more recent environmental thrillers, and everything in between. My favourite is *Willowman*. Across the years, she's found a path as one of Australia's foremost writers on nature.

This new book is a collection of short stories (and one poem) that combine all her knowledge and love of the wilderness and nature into the short-fiction form. The stories cross from Tasmania to India, New Zealand and everywhere in between. Covering sea wolves, Bengal tigers, herons and everything else that is precious and wild.

'Tanglefoot' is a particularly heartbreaking story of fire and its very real

effects in a personal sense. The longest and title story, 'Once, We Were Wildlife' captures a beautiful tale of romance from start to end with the gorgeous Australian bush in the foreground. All the stories have a stunning lyricism and connection to the land and the magnificent creatures that grow naturally on it. Underpinning each story is the knowledge of the therapeutic benefits of nature. Each work relates in some way to the wilderness – some as the main character and others as the quiet and calming background to heartbreak or life navigation in the foreground. This collection of short stories is a tonic for nature lovers in particular, and is almost as good as going out for a walk in the trees to restore the soul. Simpson is just getting better and better with each book and her prose is astounding. I would highly recommend this book to all.

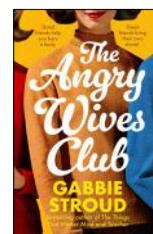
Melanie Barton is from Readings Carlton

The Angry Wives Club

Gabbie Stroud

A&U. PB. \$34.99

Available now



Welcome to Shellwater Bay, where the scenery is idyllic and three women are quietly planning a revolution. Joany appears to have the perfect life, but she's hiding a dangerous secret. Heather thinks

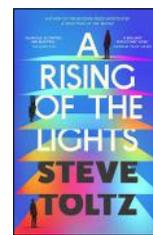
her marriage is rock-solid until her husband demands a divorce. Steph is raising kids with a man who thinks 'helping out' means calling his mother. Bonding at their gym, the women swap stories about the silent bargains they've made to keep the peace. But peace has its price.

A Rising of the Lights

Steve Toltz

Penguin. PB. \$34.99

Available 8 April



R Welcome back Steve Toltz, the author that swept everyone I know into a state of joy and parental upheaval with his debut novel, *A Fraction of the Whole*. Of course, Toltz has not

stopped writing since that 2008 novel, and I have lapped up every offering with relish. But this, his new novel, is a return to his scathing, epically proportioned reflection on modern life. You will laugh aloud as you recognise the insidious madness of what is happening.

Rusty Wilson is our antihero, and he is navigating the terrain of life with a sinking feeling. His wife has left him, his twin sister does not want to know him, his parents are living separately in nursing homes, he is beset with financial troubles, and his job has gone to an AI tool. Of course, there is hope. And love and redemption as well, because how else would we laugh if there were not? It is a wild ride, but Rusty Wilson has form.

It's a difficult novel to describe, but here is my best shot: take a Jim Jarmusch film (say, *Coffee and Cigarettes*), plunk it with a Samuel Beckett play (*Happy Days?*) and mix it well with our own (and missed) John Clarke's humour (*The Games*) and you are getting close to how outrageously absurd and humane this novel is. It is

satirical, it is painful, and it is us – all of us. Get your hands on a copy and read it in one weekend. It will help with Monday, I promise.

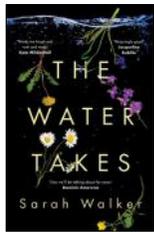
Rusty Wilson for PM.

Chris Gordon is the community engagement and programming manager

The Water Takes
Sarah Walker

Summit. PB. \$34.99

Available now



R Almost thriller-like in scope, *The Water Takes* is about Pam, a lady in her 70s, who has had many sadnesses in her life that now keep her hiding from the world in her house. These events are slowly revealed in small fragments over the course of the novel. The neighbour's 10-year-old daughter, Charlotte, starts turning up at her house, and they form a friendship that brings Pam out of her shell a little. They are brought together by the large sinkholes appearing in the neighbourhood and devastation to the people around them.

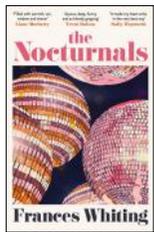
This is a debut for Sarah Walker and an exciting and original one at that. I really enjoyed the characterisation and emotional depth of Pam and Charlotte's relationship as they deal with the crisis of what to do when there is no end to what's happening around them and no help coming. At its heart, *The Water Takes* is a dystopian novel that is so immediate in devastation that it keeps you very engaged and compelled to keep turning the pages. Dealing with grief, mental ill-health, ageing, coming of age, and environmental disaster, I really look forward to reading whatever Walker comes up with next. An exciting new Australian author to watch.

Melanie Barton is from Readings Carlton

The Nocturnals
Frances Whiting

HarperCollins. PB. \$34.99

Available now



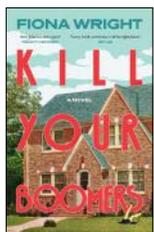
In the summer of 1997, five high school students meet: Nina, the Good Girl; Beatrice, The Poetess; Harriet, the Ghost; Cosmo, the Professor; and Hunter, the Golden Boy. In their last year of school, they

become inseparable, until a fault line cracks between them and they scatter across the globe. Now, 15 years later, Hunter has called them home. No-one knows why, but there is no question they will go. Because, to outsiders, they might be a bit weird, glamorous, and dangerous, but to each other they will always be The Nocturnals.

Kill Your Boomers
Fiona Wright

Ultimo. PB. \$34.99

Available now



R *Kill Your Boomers* is a witty and hilarious satire about the depressing reality of housing prices in Australia.

Keira's life was tragic enough. Single with no kids, living in

a share house with a rotting hole in the floorboards, and working as a nanny for two bratty twins was not how she pictured her life would be in when she arrived in her mid-30s. Now her best friend Dylan has just announced that he has bought an apartment. Keira has had enough. When her roommates joke that the only solution is to kill their parents and get their house for themselves, Keira hatches a plan. Why not do exactly that, especially when that would've inevitably been her inheritance anyway? She would just be speeding up the process, that's all ...

As macabre as this plot sounds, it will nonetheless connect with many who cannot afford to pay rent, let alone buy a house. The idea of the 'Australian Dream' is very much a thing of the past, where working hard at a regular job brought in enough to enable you to afford a home, a car, and even to send the kids to a private school. The reality is that sometimes the only thing getting in the way of attaining relative wealth or a house are parents or grandparents, who were able to purchase a home in more affordable times.

Kill Your Boomers is thrilling and audacious and, of course, shows a dehumanising lack of love or respect for your family members if you're ruminating on the financial benefits of their death. But this is exactly what fiction is for – to live out those wild fantasies, which we would never do in real life. So, after reading this book in one sitting, I implore you all to indulge in this black comedy as Keira does what we wouldn't – to get that inheritance by any means possible.

Aurelia Orr is from Readings Kids

Good Boy
Michelle Wright

A&U. PB. \$34.99

Available now



🌱 September, 1997. Cookie is serving the last four months of his sentence when he signs up for a last-chance rehabilitation program for abandoned dogs. He's assigned Nigel, whom he renames Good Boy, an

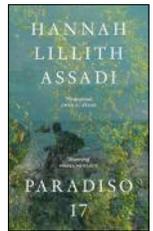
anxious soul with a talent for gnawing through walls. Cookie has his work cut out preparing Good Boy for the behavioural assessment that will decide his fate: pass, and be put up for adoption; fail, and be put down. When Cookie realises that Good Boy is almost certain to flunk the test, he must decide how far he'll go to save him.

International Fiction

Paradiso 17
Hannah Lillith Assadi

Fourth Estate. PB. \$34.99

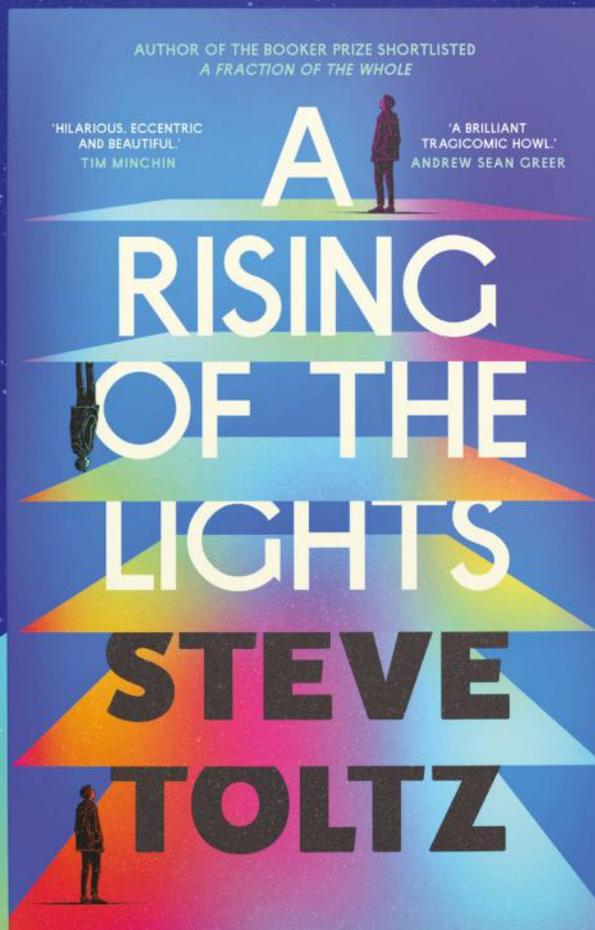
Available now



R In *Paradiso 17*, Hannah Lillith Assadi crafts a deeply reflective novel about exile, memory and the lifelong search for home. The book follows Suften, a Palestinian man whose life is shaped by

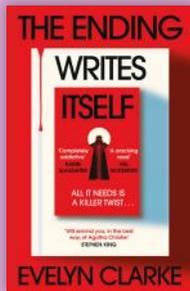
displacement after the events of the Nakba. Born in Palestine and forced to flee as a child in 1948, Suften leaves

AUTHOR OF THE BOOKER PRIZE SHORTLISTED
A FRACTION OF THE WHOLE

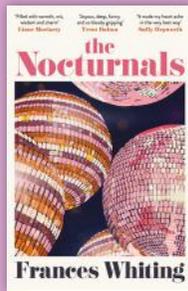


'HILARIOUS, ECCENTRIC AND BEAUTIFUL.'
TIM MINCHIN

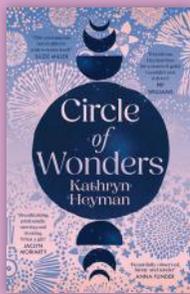




It's the perfect plot. All it needs is a killer ending. Six authors. One private island. Seventy-two hours to write the ending.



An endearing and witty novel of love and friendship from the bestselling author of *The Best Kind of Beautiful*.



An extraordinary novel of awe and wonder, perfect for readers of Emily Maguire and Sarah Winman.



The extraordinary true story of courage under fire and survival during one of the deadliest wartime attacks on Australia, and the bravery of its heroes.

OUT NOW



behind the only home he has ever known, one he will never return to.

The novel opens with an unusual and haunting narrative voice. Sufien is telling his story from beyond death, reflecting on his life while simultaneously moving through the final moments of it. From there, the narrative travels back through time, gradually returning to the beginning of his story and the moment when, at just five years old, war forces him and his family into exile. The movement between past and present mirrors the fragmented nature of memory.

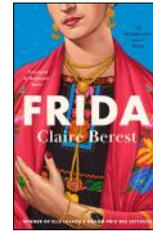
What I found most striking was the way Assadi balances the sweeping scale of history with the small, intimate moments that make up a life. As Sufien moves across the world, he forms friendships, sells leather goods at a stall, finds companionship in cats and experiences the tenderness of fatherhood. These quieter moments ground the novel, making Sufien feel less like a symbolic figure and more like a fully lived life.

At its heart, *Paradiso 17* is a meditation on displacement and the enduring meaning of home. By placing the Palestinian experience of exile at the centre of Sufien's life, Assadi creates a vivid portrait of loss that feels both deeply personal and historically significant. For me, the novel worked as both a tribute to one man's journey and a powerful reminder of how global events can shape individual lives. Haunting yet luminous, it captures the quiet resilience of someone who continues searching for belonging even as the past remains impossible to reclaim.

Nicole Vasilev is from Readings State Library

fourth volume of the European masterpiece about one woman's fall through the cracks of time.

Frida
Claire Berest & Stephanie Smee (trans.)
Mountain Leopard. PB. \$34.99
Available 21 April



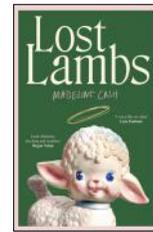
This is the story of Frida and Diego, who couldn't live without each other. They meet at a party. She is nobody; he is Mexico's greatest artist. There were two great accidents in her life. The first was when that streetcar hit her, but by far the worst was meeting him. Translated into English for the first time, Claire Berest's award-winning novel is a striking fictional imagining of the vibrant life and tumultuous marriage of one of the world's most beloved artists: Frida Kahlo.

Berlin Shuffle
Ulrich Alexander Boschwitz & Philip Boehm (trans.)
Pushkin. PB. \$34.99
Available now



Berlin, 1920s: a beacon of culture and hedonism, but a political mess. The streets are crowded with desperate war veterans, beggars, sex workers and madmen. Come night-time, a ragtag group descends on the Jolly Huntsman pub. But in this society on the brink, pleasure all too easily erupts into violence. *Berlin Shuffle* is a blistering portrait of a divided society that would give way to fascism. Written when he was just 22, Ulrich Alexander Boschwitz's first novel displays his extraordinary talent for capturing Germany's self-destruction, which would tragically engulf him only five years later.

Lost Lambs
Madeline Cash
Doubleday. PB. \$34.99
Available now

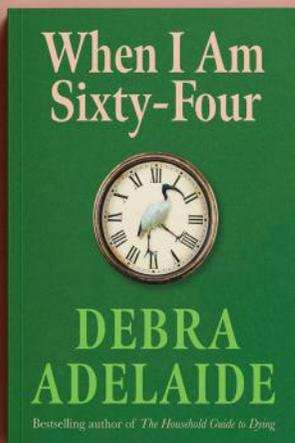


For the Flynn daughters, it's been disastrous since their parents opened up their marriage. Eldest Abigail is dating an older ex-soldier nicknamed 'War Crimes Wes'. Middle child Louise secretly writes to an online terrorist. And youngest, Harper, convinced the town's citizens are being monitored, is sent to a wilderness reform camp. Casting a shadow over them is Paul Alabaster, a nefarious billionaire. As Harper digs into the rumours of his corruption the family are plunged into a criminal conspiracy that might bring them closer.

Few and Far Between
Jan Carson
Doubleday. PB. \$34.99
Available 21 April



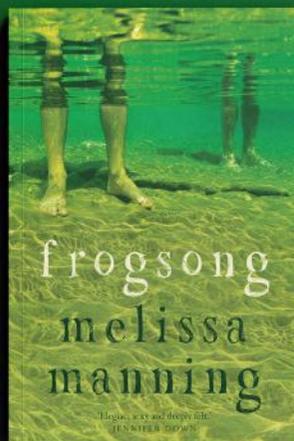
Summer 2017: the last few residents of the Lough Neagh Archipelago are facing imminent eviction. The flood planned to combat a devastating algae outbreak will submerge their homes, forcing



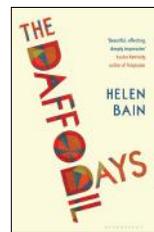
'A mesmerising gem of a novel.'
MICHELLE DE KRETZER

Tales of love & letting go

'Elegiac, sexy and deeply felt.'
JENNIFER DOWN

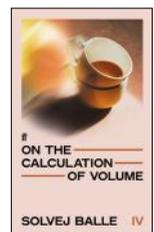


The Daffodil Days
Helen Bain
Bloomsbury. PB. \$32.99
Available now



In the early 1960s, the church bells ring and the people of North Tawton go about their days. A young couple and their small daughter arrive from London, hoping for a quieter existence in the thatched house beside the church. *The Daffodil Days* depicts a pivotal year in the marriage of 20th-century literature's most infamous couple, witnessed by the people they lived among. It is a kaleidoscopic portrait of this enigmatic pair, refracted through the rich inner lives of a rural community caught in their light.

On the Calculation of Volume: Book IV
Solvej Balle, Sophia Hersi Smith & Jennifer Russell (trans)
Faber. PB. \$29.99
Available 14 April



In a villa on the outskirts of Bremen, Tara Selter is settling into a new kind of 18th of November. Her days with Henry, Ralf and Olga revolve around practical chores: gathering provisions, splitting firewood. But one morning, there are five new arrivals at their wrought-iron gate. The search for answers about the 18th of November becomes more urgent. Shortlisted for the International Booker Prize, this is the

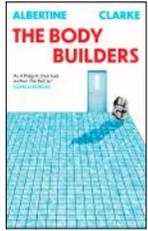
them back to the mainland for the first time in 50 years. Robert-John and Marion Connolly came to the islands as children in the 1970s, following their mercurial anthropologist father. They've grown accustomed to their haunted existence on the Ark, monitoring the mysterious Far Side, where ghostly figures linger and the land swallows secrets whole. How will they cope with a new life on the mainland?

The Body Builders

Albertine Clarke

Corsair. PB. \$32.99

Available 7 April



Ada lives a solitary life in London. A young adult haunted by her lonely childhood, she spends her days swimming, occasionally visiting her cousin, meeting people for drinks, ignoring invitations. When she meets a man named Atticus by the pool, Ada immediately senses an intimate connection between them. Little by little, Ada's estrangement from all that is familiar to her widens. Eventually, Ada's attachment to the world and her body itself fails completely. She is jolted into a new, artificial environment – The Facility.

A Beautiful Loan

Mary Costello

Text. PB. \$34.99

Available now



This is an exquisite and unusual novel about the deals we make to know ourselves and the journeys we choose to take in order to accept who we are. Told over a generation of longing, the story centres on Anna, a quiet and clever woman and her personal grappings with the ideas behind devotion and love.

The story begins in Dublin, 1985, with Anna falling fully in love with an older man, Peter. He is not a caring man, but he is consistent and their relationship allows Anna space to consider novels, music, and gardens. After that relationship falls over, she meets Karim, a kind, lost soul who encourages her to convert to Islam. He is devoted to her but does not allow her space to expand.

A Beautiful Loan is Irish writer Mary Costello's fourth novel (she also has two short-story collections) and it is reminiscent of our own Australian Elizabeth Harrower's works in that it is a gentle yet ferocious story: the truths of women's lives are laid bare against religion, masculinity, and family. It is the type of novel that raises questions. Does love in a relationship only work if we compromise? Are relationships all tainted by rules? Where does personal contentment land in a relationship? Are you truly yourself if you are in love?

I found it utterly compelling reading and a wonderful acknowledgement of a woman's need for tenacity. Those who have loved the simple, elegant prose of Claire Keegan will be delighted by this book, knowing, as we do, that it is the words that are not used that so often speak the loudest truth.

Chris Gordon is the community engagement and programming manager

The Infinite Sadness of Small Appliances

Glenn Dixon

HarperCollins. PB. \$29.99

Available now



When I first picked up *The Infinite Sadness of Small Appliances*, I had very high hopes – after all, when have you ever read a book where a Roomba robot vacuum is the protagonist?

Needless to say, Glenn Dixon has really knocked it out of the park with his ability to combine cosy elements (think *Before the Coffee Gets Cold*) with the rather bleak backdrop that the book is set against.

The first half of the book focuses heavily on Harold and Edie Winter, an elderly couple who live unassuming lives largely out of the sight of the 'Grid', which is described as an efficiency-seeking, omnipotent administrator over the whole world. Yet, when Edie passes, the Grid immediately identifies an issue: Harold is only one human, and thus there is apparently no need for him to live in such a large house anymore. And so begins the Grid's attempts to drive him out, causing significant surprise to the sentient electronics that have been supporting him for so long. Nevertheless, the Roomba (self-named 'Scout' from *To Kill a Mockingbird*) is at great odds with herself due to her personal desire to protect Harold clashing with the overarching edict from the Grid not to interfere. She is also generally in turmoil: What is happiness? What is sadness? At the beginning, her fellow appliances tell her not to waste time with such questions, but Scout is determined never to let go.

Overall, Dixon has done an incredible job condensing so much into just 250 pages. His vision is strong, well portrayed, and flows. Yet, at its very core, this is a story about relationships and connections. When placed into a dire situation, both appliances and humans are able to band together against the common enemy and strive for a better future – and isn't that what the human spirit is truly about?

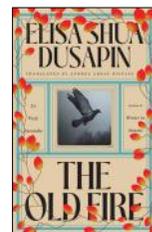
Anson Cheng is from Readings Doncaster

The Old Fire

Elisa Shua Dusapin & Aneesa Abbas Higgins (trans.)

Scribe. PB. \$27.99

Available now



In the wake of her father's death, Agathe leaves New York and returns to her childhood home in the French countryside, after 15 years away. Agathe and her sister Vera have not seen each other in all that time apart. Now, they must empty their home before it is knocked down. Vera stopped speaking when she was six, and as the pair clean and sift through a lifetime's worth of belongings, old memories and resentments surface. Tender, melancholic, and evocative, *The Old Fire* is Elisa Shua Dusapin's most personal and moving novel yet.

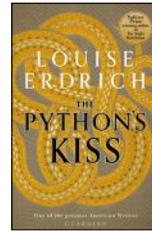


The Python's Kiss

Louise Erdrich

Corsair. PB. \$34.99

Available now



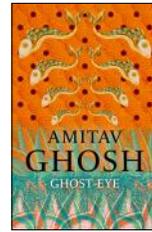
Written over the past two decades, Pulitzer Prize-winning author Louise Erdrich's magnificent story collection features a range of characters and extraordinary tales. A girl decides to spend her life with a stone. A man is confronted with a folk-singing thief. A woman enters a corporately owned afterlife to seek revenge on her father. Accompanied by specially commissioned artwork by Aza Erdrich Abe – a revelatory creative collaboration between mother and daughter – these stories celebrate the wisdom and brilliant, wide-ranging imagination of one of America's most important writers.

Ghost-Eye

Amitav Ghosh

John Murray. PB. \$34.99

Available 7 April



Calcutta, September 1969. Varsha Gupta wants fish for lunch. Her family can't understand it; the three-year-old has never tasted fish in her life. But Varsha claims she can remember eating fish in another life. Perplexed, the Guptas turn to Dr. Shoma Bose, a psychiatrist who has been investigating 'cases of the reincarnation type' for years. But Varsha's revelations change everything. Half a century later, Varsha's therapeutic case file catches the attention of a group of environmental activists in Brooklyn, and Shoma's nephew Dinu is drawn inexorably into their plans.

Love Lane

Patrick Gale

Tinder. PB. \$34.99

Available now



Harry Cane is an Englishman living and farming in Winter, a small town near Saskatchewan in Canada in the years after the First World War. The adjoining farm is owned by Paul Slaymaker, the brother of Harry's deceased wife. It is generally accepted in their small town that the two are as close as brothers and they are known to be always helping each other with their farms. They are also, as Willie Nelson so memorably sang, cowboys (who) are frequently, secretly fond of each other. Their secret life comes to an end when Paul takes in a widow and her child.

It is from these opening chapters that the novel unfolds and evolves into a moving and sensitive generational tale. When Paul marries the widow, Harry resigns himself to a long and lonely life. Then he receives a letter from his daughter, Betty, in England. Harry's first wife divorced him while he was on his way to Canada, and, since then, Harry had written home to Betty every year. He had never heard back until the arrival of this letter containing an invitation to visit his homeland and meet the

family he had never known. Meanwhile, Paul discovers a life that he had never imagined, with a daughter, son-in-law and even granddaughters who call him Cowboy Grandpa.

One of my favourite genres is the family saga, and this novel nestles comfortably alongside the best works of Anne Tyler, Michael Cunningham, and Ann Patchett. It's a story that skilfully unfolds and envelops while shining a light on the way families evolve, love and interact – with varying results. It reveals its secrets carefully and leaves the reader wondering, is the love of a family (in whatever form it arrives) the greatest love there is?

Pierre Sutcliffe is from Readings St Kilda

Small Comfort

Ia Genberg &

Kira Josefsson (trans.)

Wildfire. PB. \$24.99

Available now



Brilliantly funny, poignant and timeless, *Small Comfort* is so much more than five interconnected short stories about money, worth, debt and values. Masterfully translated by Kira

Josefsson, Ia Genberg's wit and form-defying finesse present complex characters and relationships – personal, public and philosophical. More novellas than short stories, the pieces reveal interconnected elements without being trite or too clever, moving from form to form to tell stories that are deeply, even uncomfortably human.

Beginning in an interview format with 'Success Greger', a journalist attempts to glean useable nostalgic memories from a somewhat belligerent ex-child star who is now a petty criminal and estate salesman. In 'Penance', an inquest into the sudden and mysterious death of a pharmaceutical employee reveals the hidden struggles of an otherwise forgettable man. Third, the most jarring, short and unforgettable of the pieces, 'A Speech at a Wedding' is relayed by an actor on behalf of an uninvited guest. The penultimate story, 'The Loser's Claustrophobia' shuttles between the two lives of our protagonist – his day job, running an experiment where participants play an impossibly imbalanced game of Monopoly, and his private life, where he and his new partner must navigate their own financial disparity and upbringings. Finally, the most wickedly funny and painfully poignant story from which the book gets its name, 'Small Comfort', where over a summer weekend (for what they hope will be the last time) a blended family attempt to turn back time and play at domestic bliss for the benefit of a vengeful mother-in-law and her sizeable inheritance.

Shuttling between discussions of the power of actual physical money – hidden, lost and found – and the life-changing potential of windfalls, a wealthy upbringing or a well-negotiated partnership, this newly Booker Prize-longlisted novel is ripe for book club discussions and is not recommended for public transport reading in case you, like this reviewer, miss your stop.

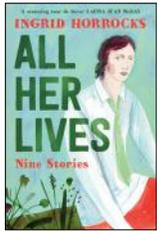
Tamuz Ellazam is the manager of Readings Kids

All Her Lives: Nine Stories

Ingrid Horrocks

UQP. PB. \$34.99

Available now



A sister haunted by her return from war. A young woman discovering her identity at a Berlin rave in the mid-2000s. A mother whose son's climate activism threatens everything she's built.

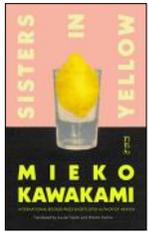
At the heart of these fictional stories is Mary Wollstonecraft, the radical 18th-century feminist whose own struggles illuminate the threads that connect all their lives. From quiet moments of caregiving and curiosity to acts of bold rebellion, these women navigate the eternal tensions between duty and desire, safety and freedom, the past they've inherited and the future they're determined to create.

Sisters in Yellow

Mieko Kawakami, Laurel Taylor & Hitomi Yoshio (trans)

Picador. PB. \$34.99

Available now



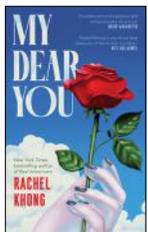
Fifteen-year-old Hana lives in a tiny apartment in a suburb of Tokyo with her young mother, a hostess at a local dive bar. Then Kimiko appears. Together they set up Lemon, a bar that caters to hostesses and their marks. Suddenly Hana has a job she loves, friends to share her days with, and the promise of money. But in the seedy streets of Setagaya, nothing is as it seems. Twenty years later, Kimiko is on trial. Now Hana must wrestle with her own actions, and face their devastating consequences.

My Dear You

Rachel Khong

Hutchinson Heinemann. HB. \$34.99

Available 8 April



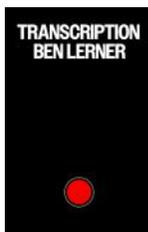
In this playful, inquisitive debut short story collection from the bestselling author of *Real Americans*, normal people go through extraordinary transformations. Each of the stories is infused with a profound sense of compassion. They express a powerful curiosity about the human experience, the concerns that shape our lives and the inescapable choices that meet us all: to have or not have children; to pursue connections with others despite life's impermanence; how to live – and live well.

Transcription

Ben Lerner

Granta. PB. \$29.99

Available 7 April



In his first book of fiction since the acclaimed *The Topeka School*, *Transcription* by Ben Lerner is a novel told in three parts. A familiar narrator, away from his wife and child, travels to interview his mentor Thomas, an esteemed academic in failing health and father of the narrator's university friend Andreas.

Experienced largely through conversations with the narrator, part one centres on a failed attempt to record an interview with Thomas. Part two is a debrief with an old friend – and possible former flame – after a conference posthumously celebrating Thomas's career. Part three takes the form of a confessional with Andreas who, after his father's death, recounts his struggles with his preteen daughter and the tensions that develop between father and son.

The novel takes place during the pandemic, when – despite hesitation or resistance – our phones and laptops became the primary form of connection with the wider world. Lerner examines how technology can paralyse us: as a physical barrier and as a force keeping us in time, on time and up-to-date. The characters, through mundane crisis, find themselves without technology. Once free of its stimulus, they are transported back in memory, reliving past events while awake.

Lerner celebrates the ephemeral: the beauty of things in decay, music as a soundtrack to our lives, and memory keeping the past alive in our minds and bodies – defying the fact-checking and timekeeping of our phones and tablets. We are reminded of the power of lived experience: the performative, the imagined, the intuited, and the sometimes falsely remembered.

Part of the novel's charm is that each character is an unreliable narrator. As conversations unfold, confusion and disagreement emerge about what truly happened in the past; memories conflict and overlap. But that is the point: a series of transcriptions is always taking place – recorded or remembered, each of us is continually experiencing, rewriting and retelling our own fiction.

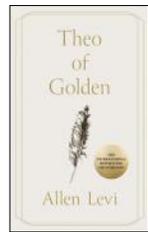
Audrey Shaw is a friend of Readings

Theo of Golden

Allen Levi

Fontana. PB. \$32.99

Available now



One morning, a stranger arrives in the town of Golden. No one knows who he is or where he came from. His name is Theo and he's arrived there by chance – or has he? He visits the local coffeehouse, where 92

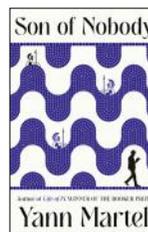
pencil portraits hang on the walls, portraits by a local artist of the people of Golden. He begins purchasing them, one at a time, and putting them back in the hands of their 'rightful owners'. With each exchange, a story is told, a friendship born, and a life altered.

Son of Nobody

Yann Martel

Text. PB. \$34.99

Available now



In *Son of Nobody*, Yann Martel (author of *Life of Pi*) returns a decade after his last novel with an ambitious and inventive reimagining of the Trojan War. He composes a new epic, *The Psoad*, centred not on kings or demigods, but on an ordinary man.

As a lover of Greek mythology, I was immediately drawn to the premise. Rather than offering another

straightforward retelling (there's definitely plenty out there), Martel imagines the war from the perspective of a long-forgotten soldier. Psoas is no Agamemnon or Achilles, no figure destined for glory. He is simply a man swept up in a decade-long conflict, driven by duty, pride and the expectations of his society. His voice, rendered in spare yet lyrical verse, gives the epic tradition a striking intimacy. The scale remains grand, but the emotional focus is domestic and deeply human amid it all.

The novel is framed by Harlow Donne, a Canadian academic studying at Oxford who discovers fragments of Psoas's lost poem. As Harlow assembles and annotates these relics in detailed footnotes, he reflects on his own life, particularly his distance from his wife and daughter. Both men are far from home, committed to intellectual or martial ambition at significant personal cost. Through this parallel, Martel explores questions of responsibility and legacy, and the tension between public achievement and private love.

The interplay between past and present is one of the novel's greatest strengths. Martel's text enters into conversation with *The Iliad* across the centuries, casting it in a new light by privileging the overlooked and the ordinary. While I would have welcomed more character development for Harlow, the novel remains a breathtaking feat of imagination. Readers of *The Song of Achilles* by Madeline Miller and *The Iliad* translated by Emily Wilson will find much to admire in this bold and original epic.

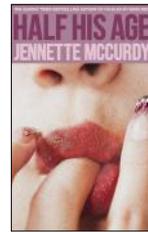
Nicole Vasilev is from Readings State Library

Half His Age

Jennette McCurdy

Fourth Estate. PB. \$32.99

Available now



Waldo is ravenous. Horny. Blunt. Naive. Wise. Impulsive. Lonely. Angry. Hurting. Endlessly wanting. And the thing she wants most of all? Mr. Korgy, her creative writing teacher.

Mr Korgy, with the wife and the kid and the mortgage and the bills, with the dead dreams and the atrophied looks and the growing paunch. She doesn't know why she wants him. The highly anticipated, funny, sad, thrilling novel about sex, class, desire, and power – and the (often misguided) lengths we'll go to to get what we want.

Under Water

Tara Menon

Summit. PB. \$34.99

Available now



When six-year-old Marissa loses her mother, she is taken by her father to live on a small Thai island in the Andaman Sea where she forms a deep friendship with Arielle. Then, on Boxing Day 2004, when

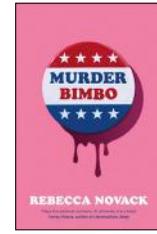
the Indian Ocean tsunami makes landfall, they are swept up by the first wave and separated. Eight years later, Marissa is living in New York. As the city prepares for a devastating storm, Marissa reflects on her past. *Under Water* is a meditation on friendship and loss, and a tribute to our dying oceans and forests.

Murder Bimbo

Rebecca Novack

Manilla. PB. \$34.99

Available now



There is a world where this debut novel never made it to shelves. After all, its protagonist, a 32-year-old lesbian sex worker, just killed a right-wing politician. In the wake of the assassination of

Charlie Kirk, it must have been a very serious possibility that this, Rebecca Novack's sixth attempt at a novel, might never have seen the light of day. But now more than ever, this witty, wry and deeply unpredictable novel speaks to the chaos and violence of America in 2026.

Spanning just three days in three acts, this novel – and its protagonist – is slick and unpredictable, funny, flawed and furious. Whatever Novack did in her first five novels, the work shows here. We meet our protagonist on the lam, as she reckons with her actions, her choices, and her chance of a future – if she plays her cards right. She reaches out to the only two women who can help her: a journalist with a feminist podcast who might help her shape the narrative, and the woman she hasn't been able to forget, who planted the seeds of her political awakening. The only one who'll understand why she went along with a plan that felt like it was spiralling out of control before it even began.

Brimming with twists, turns and unexpected empathy, *Murder Bimbo* is a masterclass in stories – the ones we tell ourselves and craft so that others will see what we want (or need) them to. So timely as to be almost dangerous, it delves into the hypocrisy of performative progressives, the poisonous arrogance of wannabe vigilantes, the mundanity of capitalism and the power of an underestimated woman.

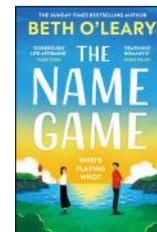
Tamuz Ellazam is the manager of Readings Kids

The Name Game

Beth O'Leary

Quercus. PB. \$34.99

Available 7 April



Charlie Jones has landed on the Isle of Ormer to embark on a new life. As the manager at Ormer's only farm shop, this job will be her perfect next chapter – fresh air, and a clean slate. Except there is one small issue. Charlie

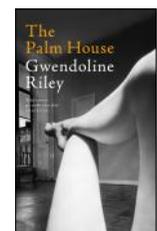
Jones has also just arrived on the Isle of Ormer to embark on his new life – escaping old friends, bad habits and heartbreak. His job at the farm shop feels like fate. This second chance is the best thing that could have happened to Charlie, and Charlie. That is, until they are introduced.

The Palm House

Gwendoline Riley

Picador. PB. \$34.99

Available now



Edmund Putnam, days away from the end of his 50th year, finds that his solitary life is about to change. The magazine to which he has given his best decades faces closure. Putnam's great friend, Laura, worries for him. She is a decade or so younger,

employed by the same magazine, but she has been offered work abroad. Meanwhile, Putnam's father, Martin, has found a new lease on life. Unfolding over the course of a single weekend, these three drifters assess their fates and their futures.

Love is an Algorithm
Laura Brooke Robson

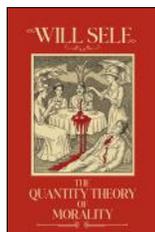
Text. PB. \$34.99
Available now



Eve wants to make music that's fuelled by feelings. She trusts her gut and her friends, not technology. Danny is anxious – about his dad, his dating life, his coffee order, and about Pattern, the dating app he helped create. When Eve and Danny start dating, his anxieties inspire him to create a new version of Pattern to quantify relationship health and potential. As Pattern and Bug, the AI assistant, catch fire, users everywhere begin outsourcing major life decisions to Danny's algorithms. Their relationship becomes the ultimate modern experiment.

The Quality Theory of Morality Will Self

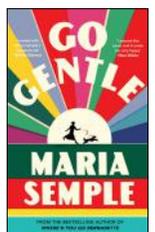
Grove. PB. \$34.99
Available now



In his latest novel Will Self's pen remains dipped in vitriol and elegance as ever. The disaffected, middle-class, middle-aged urbanites that populate the novel seem helpless to stop the decay of their intimate, self-conscious social circle. And yet, as Self's skewering grows ever more wildly imaginative, it becomes all too clear that the decay cannot simply be cut out – their lives are rotten to their core.

Go Gentle
Maria Semple

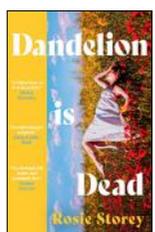
W&N. PB. \$34.99
Available 14 April



Adora Hazzard is a contented divorcee who relishes her teenage daughter, her job as a moral tutor for an old-money family and the bliss of finally being solo. Far from lonely, she's quietly assembling a 'coven' of like-minded single women on the sixth floor of New York's legendary Ansonia building. Together, they share groceries, dog walkers – and one dirty little secret. Adora's life philosophy is simple: want only what you already have. But could a chance encounter threaten her joyfully curated life and leave Adora suddenly wanting more?

Dandelion is Dead
Rosie Storey

Borough. PB. \$34.99
Available now



It's been seven months since Poppy's sister Dandelion died and Poppy still cannot accept that she is gone. She regularly goes to her sister's empty apartment, wears her clothes, and does

anything to be close to her. So when Poppy accidentally breaks her phone, she uses Dandelion's, discovering a dating app where she had connected with a man called Jake. Something about Jake draws Poppy closer to him and before she knows it, she's using her sister's identity to go on dates with him. Never mind that Poppy is in a long-term relationship with another man, Sam. What she and Jake feel for each other is spontaneous and exciting. But as the secrets unravel while their connection deepens, will Jake still like Poppy for who she really is or only when he believed that she was Dandelion?

As a reader, you honestly will make yourself dizzy shaking your head at Poppy throughout this book. She is a rollercoaster of a character, so lost in her grief and searching for what she truly wants. Poppy is torn between the two men in her life. Sam is the grounded, safer choice that reminds her of who she is separate from Dandelion. And then there is Jake, who makes Poppy feel like a completely new person – happy and no longer grieving her sister because, with him, she has become her sister.

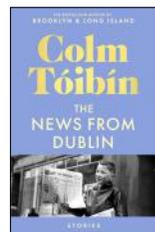
The symbolism of Poppy's job as a wedding photographer is not lost on the reader, either. Poppy is on the outskirts, capturing other people's relationship confirmations, while she herself, a middle-aged woman with not a clue in the world of what she wants and how to separate herself from her sister, remains stagnant.

Dandelion is Dead is a hilarious debut about sisterhood, identity, and finding love in the midst of grief.

Aurelia Orr is from Readings Kids

The News from Dublin: Stories
Colm Tóibín

Picador. PB. \$34.99
Available now



When approaching any short-story collection one challenge is to find the throughline that unites its stories, the themes and preoccupations that speak beyond each individual tale and

reach for something greater. For *The News from Dublin*, Colm Tóibín's newest book, the source of that unity is not immediately apparent: each excellent, poignant tale finds its meaning in different places, different time periods and each with wildly different characters. In wartime Ireland a mother delivers grief to Galway, in modern-day Barcelona a disgraced priest seeks refuge, and in San Francisco an undocumented plumber prepares to return home. Yet this disunity feels like the theme in itself, as each of Tóibín's protagonists finds themselves displaced and unsettled – on the precipice of earth-shattering change or already in the process of tumbling into disarray.

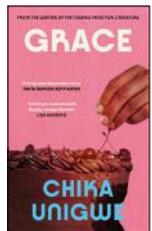
While change and unsettlement is admittedly the bedrock of all storytelling, short or otherwise, here in this collection it feels more pronounced and almost tangible, seared onto geography and punctuated by long journeys. The result is a book of nine stories that I couldn't tear myself away from, each leaving just enough unresolved to send me rushing into the next. Like so many of the book's characters, I too found myself in a state of travel: never staying long, always looking forward. This sensation culminates beautifully with the collection's final story, the nearly 100-page 'The Catalan

Girls', which follows three long-estranged sisters living in Argentina who reunite after decades and return to the small Catalonian village where they grew up. Only here, at the collection's very end, does Tóibín allow himself to linger. After all those stories caught in brilliant uncertainty, it is as if, in this new slowness, we have opened our own door, dropped our bags and taken our first deep breath of home.

Joe Murray is from Readings Kids

Grace
Chika Unigwe

Canongate. PB. \$34.99
Available 21 April

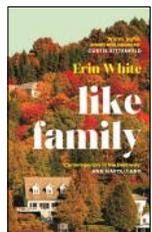


It is Baby's birthday, but Grace has not seen her firstborn in 26 years. Now a wife, mother to twin daughters and the owner of a successful medical clinic, Grace has carefully constructed a new life. Grace was only

15 when she got pregnant and, under pressure from her parents, gave Baby away. Unable to forgive their decision, she cut them off completely. Now, when Grace's estranged mother arrives unannounced, the fragile existence Grace spent years building begins to unravel.

Like Family
Erin O. White

Serpent's Tail. PB. \$34.99
Available now



Radclyffe, New York, is an idyllic upstate town, nestled in the hills away from the city. Ruth, Caroline and Tobi are living the dream; Ruth has a wife she loves, sprawling land and wonderful children.

Caroline, an ex-Manhattanite, is enjoying a slower pace, time to focus on her music. Tobi runs an Instagram-famous pottery business that is constantly expanding. After an unexpected death rocks their community, these friends are forced to confront tensions that have long been buried and reveal the secrets they never shared.

Poetry

Leaves Fall Off to Create Drama
Zarah Butcher-McGunnigle

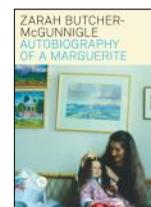
Giramondo. PB. \$25
Available 1 April



Leaves Fall Off to Create Drama is a collection of prose poems that invites the reader to consider the relationships between internalised beliefs and the development of illness, drawing on psychology texts and the language of self-help, and the exploration of character traits and dramatic tropes. Through shifting frames of reference, wordplay, aphorism, and inversions, the poems reform, unfold and rebound to create a collage of melancholy and comic transformations. One thing leads to a mother.

Autobiography of a Marguerite
Zarah Butcher-McGunnigle

Giramondo. PB. \$27
Available 1 April



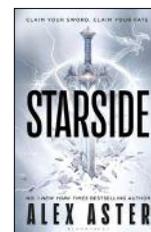
Autobiography of a Marguerite is a profound, book-length poetic work about chronic illness, family dysfunction, and identity, and how they can shape one another.

The narrator struggles with the effects of her autoimmune illness and to separate herself from her troubled mother. Zarah Butcher-McGunnigle's experimentation with form illustrates the struggle for autonomy and a sense of self, the repressed grief of chronic illness and its disruptive effect on the sufferer's sense of time's passage. The reader becomes both a witness and an actor.

Science Fiction & Fantasy

Starside
Alex Aster

Bloomsbury Archer. PB. \$34.99
Available now

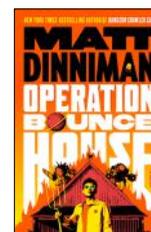


Hundreds of years ago, a brutal war split a land in two. Starside is the realm of magic and immortals. Stormside is where mortals fight for scraps of that magic. Every 50 years, the gates between them open, and

50 challengers are allowed to journey across Starside on a deadly quest for magic that can heal, grant wealth or extend life. Everyone has their reasons for entering, but orphaned blacksmith's apprentice Aris has only one: vengeance against the gods who killed her family.

Operation Bounce House
Matt Dinniman

Michael Joseph. PB. \$34.99
Available now



All colonist Oliver wants to do is run the family ranch and keep their ageing fleet of intelligent agriculture bots ticking. But when the transfer gate of his planet New Sonora finally opens, reconnecting with Earth,

there's a complication. The Apex Corporation begins an 'eviction action' charging bored Earthers to design and remotely pilot their own war machines, making it a game. Soon finding themselves fighting for their lives Oliver, and his friends, are forced to defend the only home they've ever known with the help of an old book from his grandfather. **R**



MELBOURNE

**Global Book Crawl Australia
20–26 April
2026**

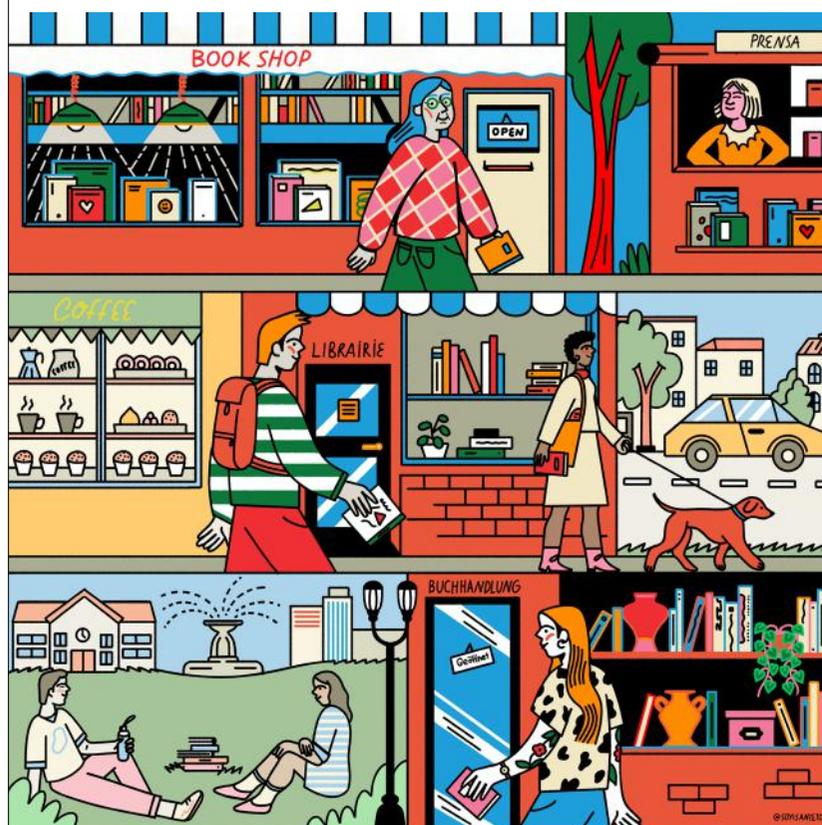
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your favourite
bookshops**

Join book lovers around the world this April and embark on an adventure with the Global Book Crawl.

Visit bookshops, collect stamps, meet fellow readers and experience the magic of your local bookshops. Win a free audiobook and be in with the chance to win bookish prizes.



For more information and to discover all the prizes up for grabs, scan the QR code or visit readings.com.au/news/global-book-crawl-2026



Our friends at Melbourne Writers Festival have programmed a fantastic festival for us all to enjoy in their 40th anniversary year. Below are our picks for events to treat the mother figure in your life to this Mother's Day, Sunday 10 May.

Melbourne Memoryscapes: Walking Tour with Robyn Annear
2pm & 4pm | Melbourne CBD

Lose yourself in Melbourne's cultural past as Robyn Annear, troubadour, historian and author of *Shutter City*, leads a fascinating walking tour through the city's lost buildings and forgotten stories.

Discover the highbrow, the lowbrow, the celebrated and the strange as you wander familiar streets and unearth their surprising histories – from long-gone bohemian hotspots and literary gathering places to vanished artists' houses and bygone museums.

You'll leave with a new appreciation of the city's past and a deeper knowledge of the places and figures that have defined Melbourne's cultural history.

Sunday Afternoon Book Club
12pm | Conversation Quarter, State Library Victoria

Join beloved local literary taste-makers Marieke Hardy, Jason Steger and host Michael Williams, along with Booker Prize-winner Yann Martel, for a very special book club event.

These passionate readers have each selected a book for discussion – be it a surprise bestseller, literary-prize magnet, overlooked recent release, or favourite underappreciated classic. Together, they'll dive in for an afternoon of no-holds-barred book chat as they dissect each other's choices. Expect passionate debate, spicy disagreement, and plenty of recommendations!

Stephanie Alexander: 30 Years of *The Cook's Companion*
10.30am | Athenaeum Theatre

Hear first-hand from culinary pioneer Stephanie Alexander as she celebrates the 30th-anniversary reissue of her iconic kitchen bible, *The Cook's Companion*.

In this special event, Alexander reflects on what she's learned as an author, cook, philanthropist and educator, shares her thoughts on the evolution of home cooking over the past three decades, and discusses what truly makes a good meal and a good life.

Spend a delightful Mother's Day morning with Alexander as she offers inspiration, tips and practical wisdom on finding joy in the kitchen and at the table. Alexander will be in conversation with the effervescent Alice Zaslavsky.

Susan Choi: *Flashlight*
2.30pm | Athenaeum Theatre

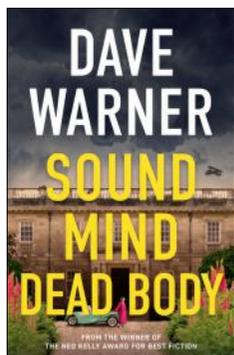
A father's mysterious disappearance. A mother harbouring a secret. A daughter searching for answers. Discover a sweeping generational saga about ordinary people facing extraordinary, often malevolent forces with literary luminary Susan Choi. *Flashlight* is both a tender family portrait and a gripping geopolitical thriller, set against the changing tides of 20th century history.

In this unmissable session, Choi sits down to discuss her 2025 Booker Prize-shortlisted novel and the themes that animate it – from the immigrant experience to the complicated bonds between parents and children, to questions of memory, language and identity – with Beejay Silcox.

Melbourne Writers Festival is running from Thursday 7 May until Sunday 10 May 2026. View the full festival program and book tickets at mwf.com.au

Crime

BOOK OF THE MONTH *Crime*



Sound Mind Dead Body
Dave Warner
Fremantle. PB. \$34.99
Available now

R The wealthy Sir Thomas Pedhurst is dead. The Pedhurst and de Reve families arrive at Harcroft Manor in Devon for the reading of the will. Alongside them is Fred Willets, an Australian Second World War aviator, police officer, and old friend of Thomas's from the war, who has also come as a beneficiary of the will. Old feuds and secrecy make this family less loving than most, setting an anxious scene full of foreboding in the lead up to the reading. First, a shocking burglary sets the families on edge. Then, Thomas's widow, Julia, is found mysteriously dead, with no signs of foul play, sowing distrust and suspicion. As another murder takes place, more brutal than the last, it's up to Detective Willets and local pharmacist Prudence Meadows to unmask the killer.

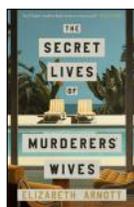
Unlike most of Dave Warner's previous gritty crime noirs set in Perth, *Sound Mind Dead Body* takes place in the serenity of the English countryside, in stark contrast against the violence and hatred brewing in this family. As is fitting for this new scenery, and drawing on his personal love for Agatha Christie novels, Warner has written a classic, cosy whodunnit, with a cast of suspicious characters and an atmospheric crime scene set in 1929, between the two World Wars, reflecting the tension and increasing rivalry that divides this family.

However, it wouldn't be a Dave Warner novel without a connection to Australia, which manifests in our protagonist Fred, a police officer from the Gold Stealing Detection Squad, based in Kalgoorlie, Western Australia. Fred is someone we can connect with and relate to, somebody

familiar among the eclectic cast of suspects. *Sound Mind Dead Body* is a clever and entertaining murder mystery with Fred as our trustworthy detective upon whom we can rely to solve the murder – a true-blue Poirot, if you will!

Aurelia Orr is from Readings Kids

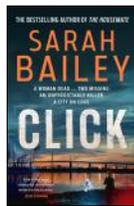
The Secret Lives of Murderers' Wives
Elizabeth Arnott
Viking. PB. \$34.99
Available now



It's summer in 1960s California and three women have formed an unlikely friendship. Beverley, Elsie and Margot's lives may look idyllic, but their husbands are several of the country's most notorious serial killers.

Amid gossip, the women are fighting to forge new paths for themselves. But when a string of local killings hits the news, they are hurled into an investigation of their own. Who better to catch a killer than them?

Click
Sarah Bailey
A&U. PB. \$34.99
Available now



R Set in Melbourne at the start of 2020, this new offering from accomplished crime novelist Sarah Bailey deals with a killer on the loose, but also elucidates in a gripping story how

modern technology has become both a help and a hindrance to law enforcers.

Three women bring this story of a possible serial killer to life: Pen, the copper; Oli, the journo; and Clarissa Dunkley, the Premier. Through them, the uneasy, interdependent and complicated relationships between police, media outlets and politicians are deftly laid out. All are under pressure: Pen, to solve crimes in a timely fashion; Oli, to be first to break the news and get those much-needed paid subscriptions to keep the whole show rolling; and Clarissa to respond to the unfolding crime wave to keep the public on side and to ensure re-election prospects.

In this hotbed environment, there is social media, where everyone is a commentator or influencer, there are the relentless demands of the news cycle, and the impatience of the public for perpetrators to be caught. The lines between news, entertainment, and PR are often blurred.

With advancements such as image altering and the ability to disguise digital footprints, the grip on what is true and what has been doctored can be slippery; nothing can be taken at face value. As police scramble to catch the killer, the city is on edge, the media is on alert, and the premier is on notice.

Click is a narrative of men's violence towards women, and is full of scenarios with which we are all too familiar. But it is also the story of strong women and of those who, when faced with ethical dilemmas, are determined to do their jobs the right way, rather than the easy way.

Pauline Hopkins is the manager of Readings Hawthorn

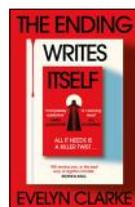
The Writers Retreat
Victoria Brownlee
Affirm. PB. \$34.99
Available now



R Kat Hale is a bestselling Australian author crumbling under the pressure of writing her second novel. On a whim, she has fled to a writers retreat in the south of

France run by acclaimed author Helen Thorne. What Kat hopes will be two uninterrupted weeks to focus on her writing quickly turns into something more sinister when Kat begins to suspect that Helen isn't quite as perfect as everyone believes. Will Kat's drive to uncover the truth about Helen put her at risk of a dangerous plot twist?

The Ending Writes Itself
Evelyn Clarke
HQ Fiction. PB. \$32.99
Available 14 April



R What would a publishing house do when their most famous (and reclusive) author, Arthur Fletch, dies while writing the final book of his award-winning crime series? Easy – they would get another author to finish the book and keep his death a secret until it's published.

Six struggling 'midlist' authors are invited to stay in Arthur Fletch's mansion on his private island in a competition to write the best ending. Whoever wins will receive two million dollars and the publishing deal of their dreams, including the marketing and support they never received for the books they've already had published. So, 72 hours on a secluded island, all contact with the outside world cut, and every author hungry for the success they think they're owed – what could possibly go wrong?

This book is a great insight into the machinations of an international publishing house, the hostilities between genres, and the creative process. These writers all have secrets, but who is truly willing to kill for theirs? With the story told from multiple perspectives, the reader is speculating from the very start, and the twists keep coming to the very end. This is a tale for lovers of *Knives Out*, *The Traitors* franchise and Benjamin Stevenson's closed-room mysteries.

Another twist, which some readers may already know, is that Evelyn Clarke is a combined pseudonym for screenwriter Cat Clarke and author V.E. Schwab. Drawing from their own experiences in publishing, this book is both a love and hate letter to the publishing industry!

Erica Rist is from Readings Chadstone

The Keeper
Tana French
Viking. PB. \$34.99
Available 8 April



R There's a handful of authors whose books are so consistently excellent that for me they're in the instantly-buy-without-even-reading-the-blurb-first category. Tana French is

one of them. Her most recent novel is the third book to feature Cal Hooper, and by this point the retired detective from Chicago is a familiar and generally well-liked figure in the remote Irish village of Ardnakelty. He's engaged to a local woman, Lena; is a surrogate father figure to a local girl, Trey; and is widely accepted by the local men who buy each other pints at the town pub.

But Cal's peaceful existence is shattered when he pulls the body of a local girl, Rachel, from the cold waters of the river. Rachel is the long-term girlfriend of Eugene, the odious son of Ardnakelty's richest – and likely most corrupt – resident, Tommy Moynihan. Tommy, recognising Cal's unique reputation in the town, attempts to enlist his services to prove that Eugene had nothing to do with Rachel's apparent suicide, and Cal's refusal sets into motion an explosive series of events that peel back the thin veneer of civility to reveal the hungry rage at the heart of the village.

In the face of small-town justice and the unspoken rules and generations-old local understandings, is Cal's sense of fairness stronger than his belief in the law? Is his love for Trey and Lena deeper than his need to belong to the very community they've spent their lifetimes trying to escape?

Wry, with an undercurrent of dry humour, French perfectly captures the wild surrounds of the Irish landscape and the distinct cadence of its residents' dialogue. This is an outstanding and thought-provoking crime novel perfect for readers who relish nuanced characters and twisty mysteries.

Lian Hingee is the digital marketing manager

Dove
Georgia Harper
Penguin. PB. \$34.99
Available now



R With her new book *Dove* as lyrical and evocative as her debut, Georgia Harper continues to dazzle and enthrall. The story follows the lives of three characters living in a conservative and

patriarchal rural Queensland town: Dove, a self-sufficient woman considered an outsider by most of the town; Noah, a young husband and father who feels trapped in his life; and Bella, Noah's teenage daughter. One day, after a row with her neighbour turns violent, Dove writes a provocative question on the wall of her property, 'What would you do if you had a whole day on Earth free of men?'

What started as a simple expression of frustration quickly becomes a lightning rod for the town. The words the women of Mablethorpe write on the wall tell a familiar story: overworked, undervalued, objectified, and blamed. As their voices rise, the attitude of the men in the town ticks over from discomfited to dangerous. In the background, secrets are uncovered about the long-ago disappearance of local 16-year-old Amanda.

As Dove, Noah and Bella all try to navigate their emotions about the wall, as well as the reality of what its message means for their lives and their relationships, a heartbreaking depiction of toxic masculinity emerges and the damage wrought by a culture of silence becomes clear. The way Harper slowly reveals information is masterful. Realistically, not a lot happens for the majority of this book, but the way the story is written makes it just as gripping as a thriller. It will keep you reading late into the night.

Content notes for domestic violence, abortion, and medical malpractice.

Alicia Guiney is from Readings Kids

Guilt
Keigo Higashino & Giles Murray (trans.)
Abacus. PB. \$34.99
Available 14 April



When a body is found on a Tokyo riverbank, Detective Godai is assigned to the case. The victim is a lawyer, Kensuke Shiraishi. Godai's investigation leads to Tatsuro Kuraki, who not only confesses to the murder but also to a murder 30 years earlier for which another man was arrested and died in custody. His confession neatly solves two crimes, but Godai doesn't believe him, and neither do Kuraki's son or Shiraishi's daughter. **R**

To celebrate the 30th anniversary of Stephanie Alexander's *The Cook's Companion*, otherwise known as Australia's 'Kitchen Bible', and the release of a new edition with 90+ new recipes, Readings booksellers share their favourite recipes and memorable *Companion* moments with senior buyer and foodie Danielle Mirabella.

Our favourite recipes from Stephanie Alexander's *The Cook's Companion*



The Cook's Companion 30th-anniversary edition
Stephanie Alexander
Penguin. HB. \$130

\$99.99

Available now

This month marks the very special 30th anniversary of what has become Australia's 'Kitchen Bible': Stephanie Alexander's *The Cook's Companion*. And with that feat there comes a stunning new edition. This will be the third incarnation of *The Cook's Companion*, this one updated with the addition of 90 new recipes and the revising of others to reflect the Australian cooking landscape as it is now.

With over 500,000 copies sold, and the first of its kind, *The Cook's Companion* is iconic in Australian publishing, not just for the tome that it is – 1,000+ pages of recipes, stories, food facts, techniques and Stephanie's wisdom – but, more importantly, because it has become a part of our everyday cooking lives. Its comprehensiveness has not daunted us, quite the opposite, Stephanie has encouraged many the beginner chef and food novice to thrive. As a bookseller, *The Cook's Companion* is the go-to recommendation for that perfect gift, whether it be a milestone birthday, wedding, engagement or simply as an essential reference every household must have.

My colleagues here reflect on their own connections with *The Cook's Companion* and their favourite recipes – of course, we all have more than one. If I did have to choose one though, it would be the basic muffin recipe on page 40 (second edition). I know the page number by heart, it doesn't need a tab. I recently visited my parents' home and noticed my first 'family' copy sitting on the kitchen bench: the original striking orange clothbound edition, most of the fabric gone after a too-close encounter with a gas flame, now held together with blue duct tape. I counted the tabbed post it notes – 37. I also recall a few years back being woken up by an 'urgent' text message from my friend and colleague Sarah, who was overseas at the time, requesting me to text a photo of Stephanie's 'Baked Fish in a North African Ginger Marinade', a fail-safe impressive recipe to cook as a thank-you dinner for her hosts. I obliged and then cooked 'Sarah's fish' the following weekend – delicious.

What Stephanie has achieved is absolute cause for celebration, for her recipes have become ours. Like me, you might go on to try 'Scott's fish' (or Sarah's), 'Morgana's shortbread' or, if you dare, 'Rosalind's rabbit pie'! Congratulations Stephanie, and thank you.

Danielle Mirabella is a senior book buyer



Growing up, *The Cook's Companion* was a fixture in our house. I remember clearly the fat, orange spine of that first edition nestled up against a timber pillar that rose from the island bench in our kitchen. Its cover was worn and splattered with oil stains. This was a no-nonsense book for people who wanted to *cook*, well, anything. With over 1,000 recipes, you could find a foolproof recipe for anything, from myriad preparations of artichokes to all things zucchini and everything in between. My go-to recipe has always been the 'Lemon Delicious Pudding'. Back when the first edition was published, if you were an

Australian who liked to cook and you had to have just one book, this was it. The same could be said today!

Joe Rubbo is the managing director



My copy of *The Cook's Companion* is older than my children, as you can see in the photo of its title page over on the far right.

I went to the book's launch all those years ago at Stephanie Alexander's eponymous restaurant. Drinks and nibbles were passed around by industry legend Dure Dara and Queen Stephanie herself. I remember dressing up for the occasion, popping on a very pink lipstick to match bold, beaded earrings that were all the rage back then.

There are pages in my copy that are earmarked, pages that are stuck together with oil, or cake batter, or red wine. And while I have never made baked bananas with meatloaf, I have used 'Steph's' recipe for meatloaf often, because it is delicious and VERY simple to make. (We call her 'Steph' in our house – 'What would Steph say?', we ask one another, but never, ever would we call her 'Steph' to her face!)

Recently, I made 'Mieze's Plum Cake' with fallen fruit from a friend's farm. Those around my table went wild for it, but I knew, as Steph knows, this cake took me approximately 10 minutes to pull together, yet tasted like I had been slaving away for hours on a hot summer's day. The recipe is on page 552, and by the by, the 'Baked Bananas with Meatloaf' combination fall under the B section on page 76, not the M section.

Stephanie Alexander has travelled with me through my years of parenting and mishandled dinner parties. I'll forever be grateful to her.

Chris Gordon is the community engagement and programming manager



Ah, *The Cook's Companion*, the memories it brings back. My mother, always a quality gift giver, gave it to my first love as a housewarming present when we moved in together. It was in the heady days of our very early 20s and he loved food; no, we loved food. Cooking, eating, discovering. I loved that book; it was our bible and formed the basis of many of our shared recipes. So, it only felt right that I got the tome in our inevitable break up (judge me as you will).

I still have the book on my kitchen shelf and pick it up for inspiration or a foundation recipe. It is the holder of one of my more popular (and controversial) Easter lunch dishes, rabbit pie, which I serve up every few years with glee (again, I am here to be judged) and to many an emotion from around the table, but at the end of lunch every plate is clean and the pie is demolished.

Rosalind McClintock is the head of marketing

I was working as the book buyer at Readings South Yarra when the original orange cloth edition of *The Cook's Companion* was published. Booksellers were treated to a very swish dinner at Stephanie's Restaurant. A \$75 cookbook was unheard of in 1996. It was the most wonderful cookbook I'd ever seen, phenomenal and truly definitive. I remember ordering 70 copies for our tiny shop. *The Cook's Companion* publication was an exhilarating moment in publishing and bookselling.

Louise Ryan is the manager of Readings Carlton



So essential is *The Cook's Companion* as a household reference and marker of adulthood that I have (accidentally) given it to my brother as a gift not once, but twice. First, when he moved out of home, and then, many years later, when he moved in with his partner. In my defence, I had a newborn baby and a toddler and was hosting Christmas in a pandemic, so on some level I must have been craving comprehensive order and guidance, and somehow fixed on the idea that it was also what this lovely couple needed as a Christmas/housewarming gift in the form of the Australian culinary bible. To my mortification, my brother didn't even need to unwrap it – he weighed the present in his hands and the knowing grin as he did so said it all. Needless to say, I will never live it down, but had the gift been for anyone to whom I hadn't previously given the book, it would have been an ideal choice! My own copy is so frequently used by all in our household (the recipe for crêpes in particular) that the front cover recently fell off – fortunately, I had a festively adorned spare copy to hand!

Elke Power is the editor of *Readings Monthly*



For a healthy weeknight meal, it's hard to go past Stephanie Alexander's 'Simple Coconut-Milk Fish Curry'. The whole thing can be done in half an hour. Poaching fish in coconut milk (infused with southeast Asian

flavours) is incredibly easy – there's no frying and no oils to mess with. The fish choice is yours. Salmon is an obvious pick, but I like a firm, white-flesh fish, like rockling. Stephanie uses lemongrass stalks in this recipe, but you can substitute by zesting a lemon or lime.

I have it with rice and a side of Asian greens. When doing the rice, I pop a star anise into the pot to give it a lift. That's the thing with simple recipes – there's a lot of room to go freestyle.

Scott Newton is from Readings Doncaster



'Scot's Shortbread with Ground Rice' is by far the ultimate shortbread recipe out there – and I've tried quite a few! The most perfectly balanced blend of crispness from the rice flour, just enough sweetness from the sugar, and super short from the butter. Follow the recipe exactly, including the resting time, and you can't go wrong. My daughter now makes this recipe and even as an emerging baker it has never failed yet. This is our go-to recipe for gifting at Christmas and the perfect accompaniment to a hot beverage. Delightful!

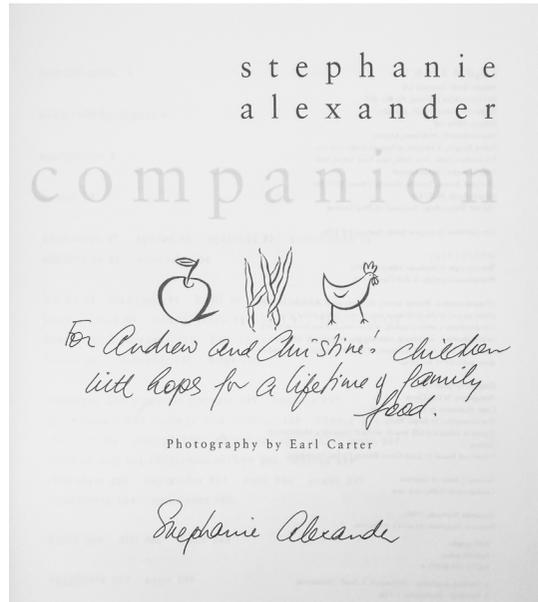
Morgana Keating is from Readings Hawthorn



The Cook's Companion was one of the go-to resources my parents shared when I was first learning to cook, and I think everyone needs such a clear and comprehensive guide to food! Not only were the recipes delicious, but it also has so many techniques that I still use today.

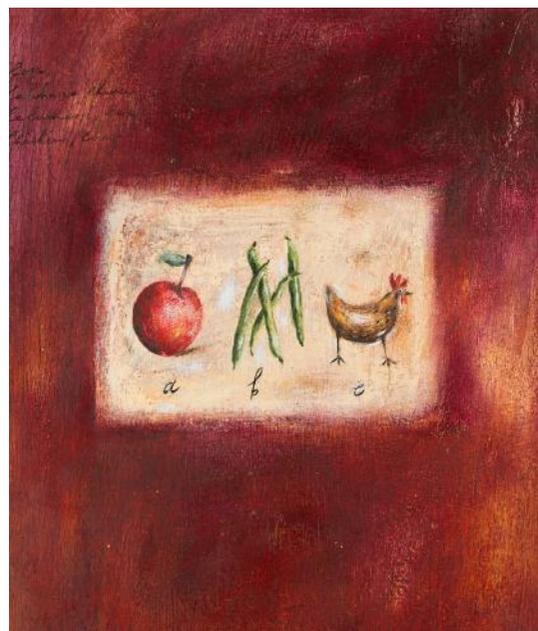
Despite the vastness of *The Cook's Companion*, picking my favourite recipe is shockingly easy. The first time I cooked with leeks was Stephanie Alexander's recipe for 'Buttery Leeks'; I have no memory of what was served with them, but I vividly recall the savoury creaminess of the leeks, lightly spiced with nutmeg. It's a flavour combination I still wheel out every winter – to me, it's a definitive comfort food.

Bella Mackey is the digital content lead



Left | Stephanie Alexander at her kitchen table with all three editions of her magnum opus, *The Cook's Companion*. From back to front: the 1996 publishing phenomenon that was the first edition, with signature orange spine; in the middle, the instantly recognisable second edition, which was first published in 2004 and has been in demand ever since; and at the front, the glorious new 30th-anniversary edition, published this month with over 90 new recipes.

Top right | The signed title page from Chris Gordon's 1996 first edition of *The Cook's Companion*.



Bottom right | Cover illustration for the 1996 first edition of *The Cook's Companion*, by Rosanna Vecchio [cropped]. Picture shows the first three letters of the alphabet, each with a food item above illustrating the letter: Apple; Beans; Chicken. Oil on paper, 39.8 x 30 cm, courtesy of State Library Victoria. **R**

Nonfiction

BOOK OF THE MONTH

Cultural Studies



Light and Thread
Han Kang,
Maya West,
e. yaewon & Paige
Aniyah Morris (trans)
Hamish Hamilton.
HB. \$29.99
Available 8 April

R In her first book written since being awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature in 2024, Han Kang returns with her first work of nonfiction to be translated into English, jointly translated by Maya West, e. yaewon and Paige Aniyah Morris. The book opens with her 2024 Nobel Lecture, where readers both familiar with and curious about her past works are treated to an inside look at Han's writing process for each book, and the questions that she would 'endure... [and] live inside' while writing them. For *The Vegetarian* these included: 'Can a person ever be completely innocent? To what depths can we reject violence?', and for her latest novel, *We Do Not Part*: 'To what degree must we love in order to remain human in the end?'

She then goes further, following the thread of questions back in time to a poem she wrote at eight years old, when she asked, 'Where is love? What is love?', and then, at age 12, upon finding photographs of the residents of her native Gwangju killed in the 1980 military crackdown on pro-democracy protests (which would later become the focus of *Human Acts*): 'Is this the act of one human towards another?'

In order to reconcile the horrors of what we know about the world with what we love about it, Han's way of moving forward is by believing that we are connected, and, through her writing, pursuing this connection 'as if [she is] sending out an electric current'. Anyone who has read Han before will understand that her unique, visceral precision is the result of this pursuit.

In the midst of writing *We Do Not Part*, Han picks up gardening, tending to her house's small courtyard, recording the incremental changes her plants go through

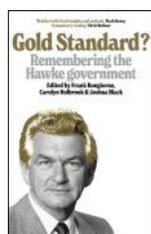
over the years, and their subsequent effect on her own sense of self. There's a beautiful humility and gentleness to this book, qualities I think readers will find much solace in, as they share in Han's simultaneous wonder and terror at the state of our world.

Tracy Hwang is from Readings Emporium

Australian Studies

Gold Standard?: Remembering the Hawke Government

Frank Bongiorno, Carolyn Holbrook & Joshua Black (eds)
NewSouth. PB. \$39.99
Available 1 April



Was the Hawke government 'the gold standard' for federal government in Australia? Leading historians, social scientists, politicians and journalists shed valuable new light on

the policies, politics and personalities of the Hawke government and ask: What lessons can it offer in the art of reformist government? How do its legacies continue to shape Australian society? Notable contributors include Frank Bongiorno, Michell Grattan, Troy Bramston, Carolyn Holbrook, Barrie Cassidy and Marian Sawyer.

Fitzroy North: People Place Protest

Dr Judith Buckrich
Melbourne Books. HB. \$49.99
Available 14 April



Fitzroy North is an iconic inner-city suburb north-east of Melbourne's CBD, known for its historic buildings, interconnected community and strong ethic of

protest and unionism. Dr Judith Buckrich's history explores the various elements of sport, architecture, immigration, food, gentrification and expansion, championing the diverse people who have called North Fitzroy home. From the lives of local Aboriginal communities prior to European colonisation through to young revolutionaries in the '60s and '70s, and through economic boom and bust, Buckridge examines the changes of Fitzroy North and its people over 200 years.

Going On and On: Why Our Longevity Threatens the Future

Lucinda Holdforth
Summit. PB. \$29.99
Available now

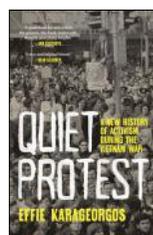


What do we owe future generations? And how do we act now to support them? One way is to think about the damage our obsession with longevity is wreaking on the economy, our society and our future. The aged

care crisis in Australia is escalating as Baby Boomers grow old. Yet our ageing population is as much a risk to Australia's future as climate change and geopolitics. Lucinda Holdforth argues that ageing leaders' refusal to relinquish power blocks progress, disenfranchises the young and halts cultural renewal. What is our social contract with those who come after us? Why is 'ageism' unacceptable while age-based prejudice against the young is commonplace? What price will our younger citizens pay for the rest of us going on and on?

Quiet Protest: A New History of Activism During the Vietnam War

Effie Karageorgos
UNSW. PB. \$49.99
Available 1 April



The Vietnam War sparked the largest public demonstrations Australia had ever seen in the 1960s and '70s.

Quiet Protest uncovers a hidden side of this movement, telling the story of activism that was powered by letter-writing, legal aid, fundraising and everyday conversations. Focusing on the anti-Vietnam War movement in NSW, this book offers a case study which reimagines our understanding of protest. These quieter acts of dissent reshaped political engagement and laid the groundwork for future movements.

High Time: How Australia Changed Its Mind About Illegal Drugs

Desmond Manderson
La Trobe. PB. \$36.99
Available 22 April



Australia's repressive treatment of illicit drugs began with racist anti-Chinese laws around 1900 and remained in place until the mid-1980s. This is the surprising story of what happened next.

Compelled by the AIDS crisis and pressure from medical professionals, governments began to consider how to reduce the risks of drug use rather than its prevention - 'harm minimisation'. Examining issues including vaping and injecting rooms, *High Time* traces the efforts, often faltering and provisional, to forge a new path forward.

Challenging Anzac: Stories That Don't Fit the Legend

Mia Martin Hobbs, Carolyn Holbrook & Joan Beaumont (eds)
NewSouth. PB. \$39.99
Available 1 April

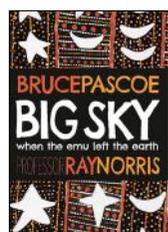


The Anzac legend has shaped Australia's national identity for more than a century, yet many experiences of war do not fit comfortably within this. In *Challenging Anzac*,

leading historians explore some of these stories, from Aboriginal activists and deserters to radicalised soldiers and veterans who took their own lives, and examines how the reality of warfare has always been at odds with mythic representation and considers why, despite this, the Anzac legend has survived.

Big Sky: When the Emu Left the Earth

Bruce Pascoe & Professor Ray Norris
Magabala. PB. \$34.99
Available 7 April



A conversation of sky knowledge between Aboriginal farmer and award-winning writer Bruce Pascoe and astrophysicist Professor Ray Norris, this meeting of science and philosophy gained

from deep observation over millennia offers a philosophy of peace for our age. It reframes astronomy not only as a science but as ethics and Law in our heavens. The dialogue places First Nations beliefs as rigorous, enduring knowledge, offering ecological and astronomical insights which could help navigate current climate threats.

Biography

Enough Said

Alan Bennett
Profile. HB. \$59.99
Available now



Alan Bennett's fourth collection of diaries and prose covers the years from 2016 to 2024. They take us through lockdown, Brexit, the reign of Boris Johnson, the rise of Trump and the death of the Queen.

In between, we take the train with him back and forth to Yorkshire, celebrate the herons and the street fairs, and lament the scarcity of curlews, the deteriorating welfare state, and more. This is poignant, funny, contemplative Alan Bennett, as he records life, both personal and political, in his singular voice.

The Framing: A Memoir

Fernanda Dahlstrom
MUP. PB. \$34.99
Available 14 April



R When Fernanda Dahlstrom was eight, her mother went to jail and their idyllic life in rural Victoria was shattered. Now a young lawyer in Darwin, Fernanda tells her new partner about her chaotic past and her determination to show the world how her mother was framed. *The Framing* explores the complexities of trust and betrayal in family relationships, through a searing study of identity and justice.

Delicious: Stories of Cooking, Love and Friendship

Kate Legge
A&U. PB. \$34.99
Available now



R Are you hungry? If so, heed my warning: reading this record of good food and people who matter on an empty tummy is not helpful. Before you know it, the book will be placed down and you will be separating eggs, whisking, and making a good old-fashioned mess. You might even want to ring someone close and just check the ingredients of that dish you had when you were travelling together when the kids were little and oh, do you remember how you ate that pasta dish ...

Kate Legge - novelist, journalist, mother and friend - has written a memoir of numerous shared meals she has eaten over the years. Each chapter celebrates a particular time, location, person, and a dish. These tales range from when she lived in a dodgy area

in Washington to when she was with a friend's friend on a Greek Island, and in another remembers a cake given to Legge at a time of crisis. The time and place do not matter, really, the point is these are tales that recognise and celebrate food made with love, food that made each situation better, and *Delicious* is a series of these moments. Of course, along the way, we learn more about the formidable Legge's life and that's as interesting and insightful as the recipes featured at the end of each chapter.

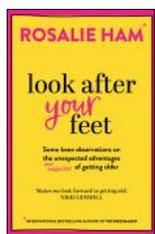
(In excellent news, I have now made the carrot cake and I can attest to the power of Legge's words.)

Delicious is going to make you hungry. It will also make you remember the importance of shared meals – and how those memories count for everything good in life.

Chris Gordon is the community engagement and programming manager

Look After Your Feet: Some Keen Observations on the Unexpected Advantages and Indignities of Getting Older

Rosalie Ham
A&U. PB. \$34.99
Available now



Bestselling author Rosalie Ham burst onto the literary scene in 2000 with her novel *The Dressmaker*. After years of entertaining us with weird and wonderful older women characters adored by her readers, Rosalie now turns her trademark wit and shrewd observations to life itself. Peppared with practical advice about all manner of things, *Look After Your Feet* is a funny, painfully honest and insightful celebration of the wisdom that seems to accelerate as body parts deteriorate, and life falls into place.

Judy Blume: A Life

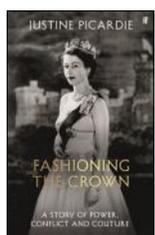
Mark Oppenheimer
Scribe. PB. \$39.99
Available now



For over 50 years, Judy Blume's novels have touched the lives of millions of readers, rewiring the world's expectations of what literature for young people can be: candid, earthy, and unafraid to show the messiness of humanity. Drawing on interviews with Blume herself, her papers and correspondence, analysis of her works and more, Mark Oppenheimer's intimate portrait of the acclaimed author reveals the woman behind the literary empire in all her complex, multifaceted glory.

Fashioning the Crown: A Story of Power, Conflict and Couture

Justine Picardie
Faber. PB. \$39.99
Available now



The Crown survived a tumultuous era and two world wars. From the birth of the house of Windsor in 1917, its leading women faced abdication and assassination, revolution and the rise

of fascism, the threat of invasion and all-out war. Their sartorial decisions, alongside those of their royal husbands, projected power and perpetuity, diplomacy and defiance. In this story of espionage and couture, Justine Picardie reveals the lives of the creators behind the facade and how royal fashion is wielded as a weapon.

Cultural Studies

One Bad Mother: In Praise of Psycho Housewives, Stage Parents, Momfluencers, and Other Women We Love to Hate

Ej Dickson
Simon Element. PB. \$36.99
Available now

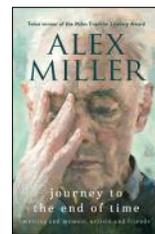


What does it mean to be a 'bad mum' in modern society? From Meghan Markle to influencer mums and women giving birth over 40, motherhood is constantly judged by ever-shifting standards.

Through the lens of pop culture and American history, Ej Dickson examines how this trope has evolved and unpacks why our culture is obsessed with vilifying mums and how issues of race and class shape these narratives. Thoughtful and witty, this is a vital exploration of modern motherhood and how mums deserve much less blame.

Journey to the End of Time: Writing and Memoir, Artists and Friends

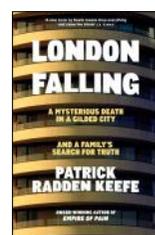
Alex Miller
A&U. HB. \$45
Available now



This is a deeply personal collection of short stories, memoir, journal entries, essays and poems from Alex Miller's six-decade writing life. Each story is written in response to a significant event in his life. In this collection, Miller explores the process of writing and the sources of his inspiration, as well as engaging with the works of prominent authors and artists, many of them longstanding friends. A companion to his two previous volumes, Miller's wisdom and experience shine through in this rewarding anthology.

London Falling: A Mysterious Death in a Gilded City, and a Family's Search for Truth

Patrick Radden Keefe
Picador. PB. \$36.99
Available 14 April



In 2019 London teenager Zac Brettler mysteriously fell to his death from a luxury apartment building on the banks of the Thames. When his grieving parents began their quest to understand how their son had died, they made a terrible discovery: Zac had been leading a fantasy life, posing as the son of a wealthy Russian oligarch. Patrick Radden Keefe follows Zac's parents on a journey to discover what brought Zac to the balcony that night – and how a teenager's world of

make-believe drew him into London's underworld.

Essays

The Ruin of Magic: Longing and Belonging in Strange Times

Kate Holden
Black Inc. PB. \$36.99
Available 7 April



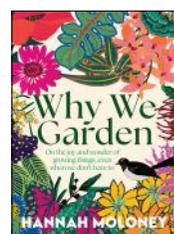
In *The Ruin of Magic* Kate Holden follows in the footsteps of Katherine May, André Aciman, and Maggie Nelson, crafting essays of intimate personal experience and sharply

informed rumination on life in strange times. In gorgeous prose Holden explores the meaning of home. Reading Rilke, Patti Smith, Walter Benjamin and D.H. Lawrence, dreamers, philosophers and poets, new criticism and pagan history, she writes of all the ways life today warps us under its glare – and how to find a haven in the subtle shadows.

Gardening

Why We Garden: On the Joy and Wonder of Growing Things, Even When We Don't Have To

Hannah Maloney
Affirm. HB. \$34.99
Available 14 April



In a world of well-stocked supermarkets and florists, why do we garden, even though we don't have to? This question fascinated Hannah Maloney, so she went out and asked.

Speaking to politicians, artists, community leaders, activists and ordinary gardeners, she explores their answers. Much more than a gardening book, *Why We Garden* is a joyful, life-affirming exploration of nature, humanity and community. It features interviews with Tim Winton, Bruce Pascoe, Laura Tingle, and Claire Bowditch, among others.

The Kitchen Garden

Toby Musgrave
Phaidon. HB. \$59.95
Available now

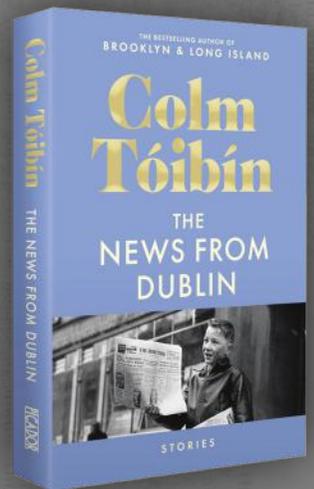


The Kitchen Garden celebrates the rich history of kitchen gardens through more than 50 of the world's finest examples, each explored in depth through gorgeous imagery, vivid storytelling, and insightful texts highlighting garden and growing details. Organised geographically, the book reveals how climate, culture, and history inform productive gardens around the world. Readers will discover inspiring walled gardens, rooftop urban farms, coastal gardens, community spaces, contemporary gardens and more.

'A distillation of Tóibín's melancholy, unadorned style.'

KIRKUS REVIEWS

COLM TÓIBÍN
award-winning author of *Long Island* and *Brooklyn*



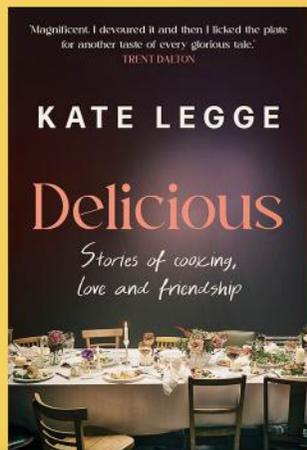
An unforgettable collection of stories on lives of deep longing and great love.

PICADOR

A NEW MEMOIR CELEBRATING FOOD AND FRIENDSHIP FROM ONE OF AUSTRALIA'S MOST ADMIRED WRITERS.

'Magnificent. I devoured it and then I licked the plate for another taste of every glorious tale. Legge is a storytelling wonder.'

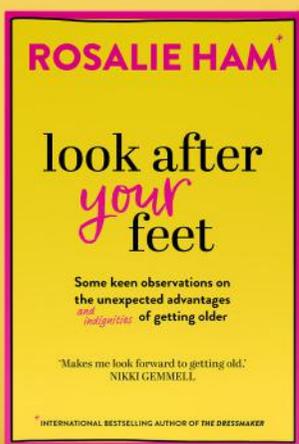
TRENT DALTON, author of *Gravity Let Me Go*



AN IRREVERENT LOOK AT THE DARKLY FUNNY EXPERIENCE OF GETTING OLDER FROM ONE OF AUSTRALIA'S FAVOURITE AUTHORS.

'Thanks to Rosalie Ham, I will look after my feet, enjoy the wisdom I've accumulated from the mistakes I have made and savour this life like a strong martini!'

TRACY HARVEY, comedian, actor and TV presenter



ALLEN & UNWIN

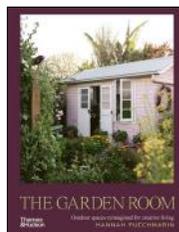
AUSTRALIAN. INDEPENDENT. FOR READERS.

The Garden Room: Outdoor Spaces Reimagined for Creative Living

Hannah Puechmarin

T&H. HB. \$59.99

Available now



A garden room is a space where the boundaries between inside and out begin to blur, where sheds and forgotten outbuildings are transformed into places of creativity, contemplation and retreat. Inspired by Swedish kolonilotts, *The Garden Room* is an ode to Australian garden dwellings – where the old is reimagined into the new. Each space tells a story of renewal, outbuildings given new life with salvaged materials and always with a glorious view of the garden – a gentle escape from the pace of everyday life.

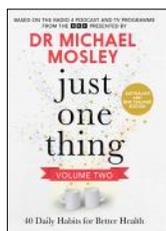
Health

Just One Thing, Volume Two: 40 Daily Habits for Better Health

Dr Michael Mosley

Hachette. PB. \$34.99

Available now



Based on the popular BBC podcast presented by Dr Michael Mosley, the team behind *Just One Thing* bring you a second volume of 40 brand-new simple tips that could transform your life. Easy to implement, road-tested by Dr Michael Mosley, and backed by science, each chapter brings to life these new, quick, easy and often unexpected hacks that can improve your health through simple diet, fitness, and lifestyle changes. This book will inspire you try them for yourself and feel the fantastic benefits.

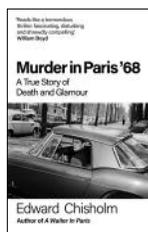
History

Murder In Paris '68: A True Story of Death and Glamour

Edward Chisholm

Monoray. PB. \$34.99

Available 21 April



In 1958, Yugoslavian hustler Stefan Marković crosses the border into France, eager for all the opportunity this new world will offer. Almost exactly 10 years later, he is found on the outskirts of Paris, dead in suspicious circumstances. His closest known associate is none other than film-star Alain Delon, the broodingly handsome golden boy of French cinema, for whom Marković worked in tenuous, tense employment. From that single connection spirals out a web of implication drawing together small-time criminals, Parisian socialites, crime bosses and perhaps even those at the top of France's political order. Stranger still are the connections the case draws to Delon's films, from the envy-driven doublings of *Purple Noon* to the titular contract killer of *Le Samouraï*. Life seems

to have imitated art, but the question is: how closely?

In *Murder in Paris '68*, Edward Chisholm breathes life into a case that has been lost to archives and long-forgotten police files, combining facts with imagined exchanges and careful speculation. There is a fascinating story to be told about the death of Stefan Marković, and Chisholm rises to the task of telling it, darting between broad overviews of 1960s French culture – its politics, its media and, most of all, its crime – and incisive examinations of his leading figures, whose complex psychology and fraught relationships leap off the page. While the question of who killed Stefan Marković remains unsolved to this day, Chisholm offers decidedly more interesting questions to the reader: who were Stefan Marković and Alain Delon? What brought them together, and more importantly, what drove them apart? Although *Murder in Paris '68* can't offer any definitive answers – despite Chisholm's exhaustive research, some things are truly lost to history – it does deliver a gripping journey filled with punchy prose, film-set glamour and film-noir sleaze.

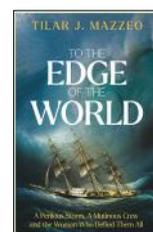
Joe Murray is from Readings Kids

To the Edge of the World: A Perilous Storm, A Mutinous Crew and the Woman Who Defied Them All

Tilar J. Mazzeo

Elliott & Thompson. PB. \$34.99

Available now



In 1856, amid a ship race to deliver supplies to the California Gold Rush, Mary Ann Patten is forced to take the helm of a 216-foot clipper when the captain, her husband, falls ill. After putting down a mutiny, she steers a cargo worth the modern equivalent of \$11 million through the most treacherous waters in the world. Caught in an 18-day gale, she sails into Antarctica to save the ship and her crew, becoming the first woman to command a merchant vessel and one of the first to navigate its waters. A thrilling true story of astonishing courage and ambition.

A Spy Amongst Us: Daniel Defoe's Secret Service and the Plot to End Scottish Independence

Marc Mierowsky

Yale. HB. \$51.95

Available 6 April



In 1706, Edinburgh was on the brink of a popular uprising. Men and women took to the streets to protest the planned union with England, fearing the end of Scottish sovereignty. But unbeknownst to the mob, a spy was in their midst – the English writer Daniel Defoe, now bankrupt and thrice pilloried, had turned government agent. Marc Mierowsky tells the dramatic story of Defoe and his fellow spies as they sabotaged the Scottish independence movement from the inside, revealing a shadowy underworld of espionage and propaganda – and a disturbing, distinctly modern political campaign.

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- Christopher Menz
- David Marr
- Elena Kats-Chernin
- Ensemble Gombert
- The Highly Strung Players
- Hugh Mackay
- Inventi Ensemble
- Jacqueline Ogeil
- James Crabb
- Maxine Beneba Clarke
- Melbourne Octet
- Rosalie Ham
- Tamara-Anna Cislowska
- ...and more!



To stay informed or to join our mailing list visit: woodendwinterartsfestival.org.au



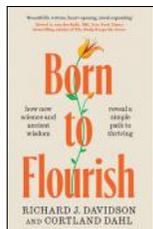
Personal Development

Born to Flourish: How New Science and Ancient Wisdom Reveal a Simple Path to Thriving

Richard J. Davidson & Cortland Dahl

Scribe. PB. \$36.99

Available now



The human species is experiencing a massive mental health crisis. Depression is now the leading cause of global morbidity, loneliness is more dangerous than smoking 15 cigarettes per day and suicide

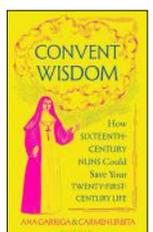
rates are rising across age, class and income. Distractibility and impairments of concentration are at an all-time high, and teens are spending more time on social media than sleeping. Using decades of research, this book presents the Healthy Minds Framework, outlining four core skills to help cultivate resilience, balance, and wellbeing for a more balanced, rich and rewarding life.

Convent Wisdom: How Sixteenth-Century Nuns Could Save Your Twenty-First-Century Life

Ana Garriga & Carmen Urbita

Bloomsbury. HB. \$34.99

Available now



When most of us think of nuns, we picture solemn shuffling down cloistered halls and hands clasped in prayer. But these 16th- and 17th-century women were not one-dimensional martyrs.

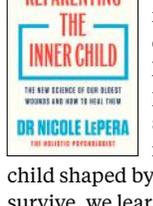
They were resourceful, rebellious and refreshingly relatable – and their lives hold surprising lessons for us today. Struggling with money? The Carmelites have budgeting hacks. Drowning in FOMO? Mary of Jesus of Ágreda’s miraculous ability to be in two places might be revealing. Blending research with pop culture and anecdotes, *Convent Wisdom* lifts the veil on monastic life, offering advice for our modern age so you can better conquer today’s anxiety-ridden, hyper-connected world.

Reparenting the Inner Child: The New Science of our Oldest Wounds and How to Heal Them

Dr Nicole LePera

Orion Spring. PB. \$36.99

Available now



As adults, we often fall into patterns that feel irrational or out of character – shutting down, lashing out, people-pleasing, or self-sabotaging. Beneath those reactions lies our inner

child shaped by early experiences. To survive, we learned to adapt by over performing, hiding, or staying small and many of us still protect the parts of ourselves that once felt unsafe. This book offers a compassionate, practical path to healing, self-regulation and emotional maturity to help us create the safety, love, and boundaries we’ve always needed.

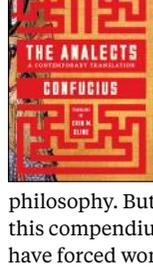
Philosophy

The Analects: A Contemporary Translation

Confucius & Erin M. Cline (trans.)

Liveright. HB. \$41.95

Available now



The Analects of Confucius has been the bedrock of Chinese culture for over 2,500 years, shaping the trajectory of human history in ways unmatched by nearly any other secular

philosophy. But until now, translations of this compendium of Confucian wisdom have forced women – half of humanity – into the philosophical background. Erin M. Cline challenges this legacy, breathing new life into this monumental work with a fresh and accessible translation, presenting not only an innovative thematic structure but also a vital reinterpretation for modern readers.

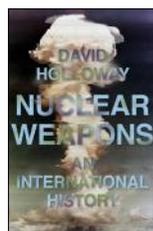
Politics

Nuclear Weapons: An International History

David Holloway

Yale. HB. \$61.95

Available 19 April



The discovery of nuclear fission changed the world order. Its power was harnessed, nuclear bombs invented, and the cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki were destroyed. In

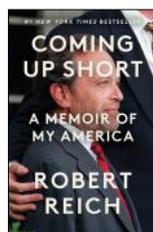
recurring international crises and calls for arms control, the threat of nuclear war has hung over humanity ever since. From the US–Soviet arms race to the rivalry between India and Pakistan, this global history traces how these fearsome weapons and our attempts to deal with the consequences of their existence shaped the last century.

Coming Up Short: A Memoir of My America

Robert Reich

Scribe. PB. \$36.99

Available now



Coming Up Short offers a clear-eyed chronicle of how America has landed where it is today with corporations with immense wealth and lobbying power on top, demagogues on the rise, and increasing

inequality fuelling anger and hatred across the country. Born in post-war America with a bright future, Robert Reich traces his lifelong opposition to bullies: from childhood and the civil rights movement to Vietnam-era activism, American politics and academia. Covering his friendships with major political figures and service in Democratic administrations, Reich asks what his generation has accomplished and lays out how progressives can reclaim a sense of community and salvage a democratic capitalism based on American ideals.

Visual Art

The Secret Landscapes: On Not Pleasing Your Mother

Clara Brack

Upswell. PB. \$32.99

Available now



Clara Brack is the daughter of artists John Brack, known for his iconic work Collins Street 5pm, and Helen Maudsley, whose work is less well known. Her father is a deeply

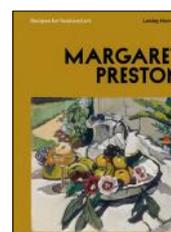
troubled man. Her mother grapples with the conflict between being both the wife of an artist and an artist herself. In *The Secret Landscapes* Brack explores how secrets of the family enter the artist’s work, asking how do we find our own voice and how do we confront the legacy of our parents? She concludes with unexpected findings.

Margaret Preston: Recipes for Food and Art

Lesley Harding

Miegunyah. PB. \$45

Available 14 April



Celebrated for her vibrant and distinctive images of indigenous flowers, artist Margaret Preston was an equally colourful and outspoken

personality. Less well known is her legacy as a generous and insightful teacher and keen cook, and her deep sense of civic duty. Drawing on recipes from handwritten books found in the National Gallery of Australia and richly illustrated with Preston’s paintings, prints and photographs, this book sheds new light on the fascinating private life of a much-loved Australian artist.

At Home

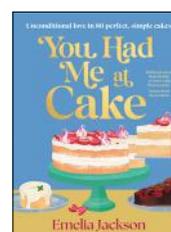
with Chris Gordon

You Had Me at Cake: Unconditional Love in 80 Perfect, Simple Cakes

Emelia Jackson

Murdoch. HB. \$39.99

Available now



It is interesting to me how many successful bakers also have a degree in psychology. Helen Goh, for example, and indeed Emelia Jackson. I imagine it has something to do

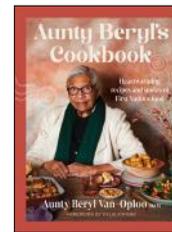
with understanding contentment and the knowledge that eating chocolate cake is useful. Whatever the link is, Jackson’s third cookbook is everything you need it to be: beautiful to look at, full of accessible instructions, and a little bit fancy. Taking inspirations from all over the world, Jackson has created a perfect collection of baking recipes including everything from carrot cake to banana bread, and on to sweet tastes with pecans. This is the Goldilocks of cake books – it is the type of book you gift anyone you know in the hope that their gratitude is later expressed in the results of a filled cake tin.

Aunty Beryl’s Cookbook: Heartwarming Recipes and Stories of First Nations Food

Aunty Beryl Van-Oploo

Murdoch. HB. \$49.99

Available now



Many of us in the kitchen are becoming familiar with Australia’s own delicious spices, nuts, and fruits. Lemon myrtle salt is having its moment in

restaurants, and this gorgeous cookbook shows us how delicious these ingredients are and how easy it is to incorporate bush foods into our everyday cooking. Aunty Beryl Van-Oploo, a respected Elder and advisor, has created a gift of community and feasting. Each dish, whether it be biscuits or lamb rump, champions native ingredients that can be found at any supermarket or local market if you just take a minute to look. The book also includes stunning artwork by artist Lakkari Pitt and is the perfect addition to all our homes. Kylie Kwong calls Aunty Beryl a dead-set legend. And, once again, she is right.

MEdesque: Everyday Recipes with Mediterranean Roots

Georgina Hayden

Bloomsbury. HB. \$54.99

Available now



English cook Georgina Hayden is an utter delight. I do not know how she lives in London and is able to produce recipes that scream ‘outdoor feasting’, but she does and I am

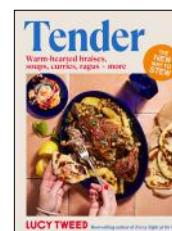
here for it. This is the perfect book to have by your side as we march into the colder seasons because we want that colour and vibrancy in our lives. My most yearned-for dishes in this collection are the lamb, apricot and feta sausage roll and her double-chocolate pannacotta. It’s everyday food, but with a sprinkle of influences from Italy, Spain, and the Middle East. Think of this book as your very accessible international holiday.

Tender: Warm-Hearted Braises, Soups, Curries, Ragus + More

Lucy Tweed

Murdoch. PB. \$39.99

Available now

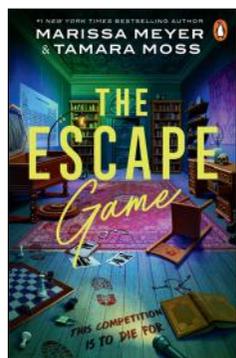


‘One cannot think well, love well, sleep well, if one has not dined well,’ says Virginia Woolf in her famous essay, *A Room of One’s Own*. This cookbook is bursting with

declarations of love by way of excellent easy recipes that truly help one do all the above. There is something about a steak and peppercorn stew with mash, or a lemony lamb shoulder with potatoes and chickpeas, bubbling on the stove, filling the house with the smell of garlic and onions, that calls everyone to the table. There are close to 100 recipes in this book that are love letters to staying home and, simply just for the good of self, slowing down. Consider this cookbook your new comfort blanket. **R**

Young Adult

BOOK OF THE MONTH *Young Adult*



The Escape Game
Marissa Meyer & Tamara Moss
Penguin. PB. \$22.99
Available 8 April

R Marissa Meyer, the American author of *The Lunar Chronicles* – a series I absolutely love – has teamed up with one of Australia’s own, Tamara Moss! Together they have created an absolutely thrilling murder mystery that’s impossible to put down.

The Escape Game is a reality game show where groups of teenagers have to work together to solve clues and escape the fastest for a chance to win a share of one million dollars in prize money! Sounds like harmless fun, right? It was, until season four ended in horror when contestant Alicia Angelos was found murdered on set. The number one suspect? Her sister, and game show rival, Sierra. But the investigation is ongoing.

It ends with a ‘to be continued’!
I need the next one *now*!

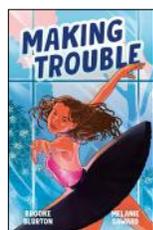
Now Sierra is back for season five, seeking justice! Along with a new team, including: Adi, a beautiful cryptographer; Carter, influencer and maths whiz; and Beck, the wannabe game master. Each teammate has their own motives for wanting to win, and they go far beyond the money. When they enter the escape rooms, they uncover clues that aren’t part of the game. Clues that point to who killed Alicia. And suddenly winning the competition is the least of their worries.

This book is so much fun. It’s fast-paced and full of quirky characters, all with their own dark secrets. There’s a whole lot of drama, sabotage, a little romance and a few more murders! It ends with a ‘to be continued’! I need the next one *now*! I highly recommend it for anyone aged 14+ who loves escape rooms, reality TV, or a solid murder mystery!

Lucie Dess is the marketing and events coordinator

Making Trouble (A Good Kind of Trouble, Book 2)

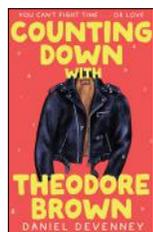
Brooke Blurton & Melanie Saward
HarperCollins. PB. \$19.99
Available now



Stella is nervous about another new city, a new school, and new friends. Her love for ballet – and Jamie – pulls her forward, but fear threatens to drag her back home. It’s only when she thinks she’s lost everything that Stella starts to see what she’s been missing. Maybe she can shine – in class, on stage, and in her own story – and make her family and Jamie proud. This is a heartfelt story of friendship, rivalry, ballet, foxy, secrets, and believing in a future big enough to hold all your dreams.

Counting Down with Theodore Brown

Daniel Devenney
A&U. PB. \$22.99
Available 8 April



R Theodore Brown doesn’t like staring into people’s eyes. When he does, their iris and pupil are replaced by numbers, counting down the days that he will know them for. This can create quite the predicament – it’s not easy to form proper friendships and relationships when you know that the relationship literally has an expiry date. As we travel through Theodore’s childhood to adolescence, observing as he navigates puberty, first love, mental health and social anxiety, we

begin to understand that the beauty in life exists because it has an end, not because it lives on forever.

Daniel Devenney’s debut is both delightfully funny and poignantly raw. Growing up, Theodore believed that when he saw the numbers in people’s eyes it meant he would bring about their deaths. This is hardly surprising given that he saw the numbers in his dad’s eyes count down to zero on the day he died in a car accident.

As Theodore grapples with his grief and with saying goodbye to childhood friendships, he falls into the darkest of spaces, even attempting suicide. However, upon beginning his therapy sessions, and falling in love with his first girlfriend, Lil, Theodore is able to climb out of this dark space, and embrace everything in life worth living for, especially because eventually it will come to an end.

Counting Down with Theodore Brown is a heartbreaking yet heartwarming coming-of-age novel about friendship, identity, mental health, and cherishing the time you have with the people you love. Perfect for fans of John Green and *The Perks of Being a Wallflower*. For ages 15+.

Aurelia Orr is from Readings Kids

I Know What You’re Hiding

Jack Heath
Scholastic. PB. \$17.99
Available 1 April

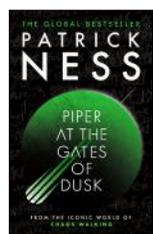


Jamie was the golden child. Her sister, Morgan, was trouble. When their house mysteriously burned down, Jamie barely survived. Morgan wasn’t so lucky. Three years later, teen podcaster Zoe receives

an urgent message from Jamie. She’s received a threat and a demand for cash. Instead of paying up, Jamie wants Zoe to unmask the blackmailer. Zoe has tangled with dangerous people before, and she’s not sure she trusts Jamie, but soon she’s digging up secrets someone would kill to keep buried.

Piper at the Gates of Dusk

Patrick Ness
Walker. PB. \$29.99
Available 7 April



R Over 15 years ago, Patrick Ness concluded his landmark *Chaos Walking* trilogy with *Monsters of Men*, an ending that was tragic and triumphant in equal measure. We said goodbye to New World,

that place where men’s thoughts could be heard in a never-ending cacophony of Noise, and Ness moved on to altogether stranger shores. Yet here we are again: time has passed and Ness has found another story he wants to tell, one that answers interesting questions and explores fascinating new frontiers, but never loses sight of the heart that was so important to those first three books.

Just as Ness’s writing has changed in the intervening years, so too has New World: after years of struggle, the human settlers now live in peaceful silence thanks to a tenuous truce with the planet’s native people and the development of a permanent cure for Noise. Todd and Viola have grown up and raised two boys of their own – Ben and Max – both as brave and brash and brilliant as their parents. But a new threat is on the horizon, one totally unlike the tyrants and warmongers of the past and not as easily confronted. Noise haunts the dreams of cured children; burning, skinless giants are appearing from thin air; and a bizarre asteroid looms in the heavens. This time, the danger hides behind a mystery, and it seems only Ben, Max and a centuries-old myth hold the key to unravelling it. This time, it’s the next generation who’ll have to save the world. For ages 13+.

Joe Murray is from Readings Kids

These Shattered Spires (Wyrdos, Book 1)

Cassidy Ellis Salter
Bloomsbury. PB. \$19.99
Available now



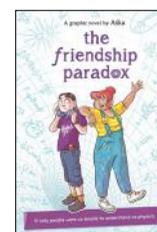
Beneath a tooth-filled sky, the world rots. At the heart of the decaying world is Fourspires Castle, home to the four magical disciplines: bone, blood, botany and stone. When the king is assassinated, chaos erupts. To seize the crown, arcanists and their human familiars are dragged into the Slaughter – a deadly competition. Four rival familiars must work together to

survive. Taro, a bone witch. Nixie, a botanical familiar. Elliot, a cursed and vengeful blood familiar and Alix, banished from the stone arcania tower and shrouded in secrets.

Young Adult Graphic Narrative

The Friendship Paradox

Aśka
A&U. PB. \$22.99
Available now



R *The Friendship Paradox* is a delightfully sweet and surprisingly heartfelt graphic novel for older teens about the importance of empathy and human connection. We follow

recent high-school graduate Dash as they get a job working as part of a team that teaches science in schools. Dash starts off as a judgemental character, with low tolerance for their coworker Kay’s bumbling attempts at friendship and perceived lesser science knowledge, but their emotional journey to becoming very close friends with Kay, as well as bonding with the rest of their work team, is so wholesome. Additionally, this book is jam-packed with fun and digestible explanations of scientific principles. The strength of a graphic format really shows in the diagrams and drawings Aśka uses to showcase these ideas.

Throughout the graphic novel, Dash hilariously (and accurately) uses physics principles to describe how people relate to one another. While the characters are older and the story focuses on their first jobs, this book will resonate with kids aged 14+. All of the character growth is incredibly relevant to high school students, and the slightly older age range allows the author to explore some nuanced ideas. While not the focus of the narrative, characters in this book deal with divorce, alcoholism, and suicidal family members. By tackling these heavy concepts, Aśka is able to present readers with an example of how to approach conversations about these topics in real life, while always focusing on empathy and not judging anyone for their struggles.

Alicia Guiney is from Readings Kids

Wallflower: A Graphic Novel

Iasmin Omar Ata
Viking. PB. \$24.99
Available 28 April

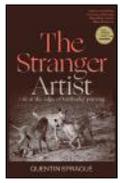


Marlena has always seen flowers growing on everyone she meets. Invisible to others, the flowers have always felt too much for Marlena to take in when they don’t always match their owner. She’s given up convincing anyone else they’re there. Until she meets Ashe, who sees these flowers too. Ashe wants nothing to do with her, but as their thorny connection blooms so do hidden secrets buried years ago. **R**

Bargains

The Stranger Artist

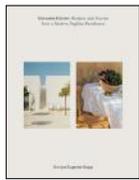
Quentin Sprague
PB. Was \$29.99 **Now \$14.99**



At the end of the 20th century, one-time gallerist Tony Oliver became immersed in a group of Gija artists, including Paddy Bedford and Freddie Timms, which led to the formation of the groundbreaking Jirrawun Arts. Sharing the artists' successes and tragedies, Oliver's life is forever altered. *The Stranger Artist* is a portrait of creative work that cuts to the heart of one of Australia's most acclaimed art movements.

Moroseta Kitchen

Giorgia Eugenia Goggi
HB. Was \$55 **Now \$24.99**



The debut cookbook from Giorgia Eugenia Goggi, chef of a Puglian restaurant, hotel and cookery school, *Moroseta Kitchen* is a true expression of modern Italy and what it is like to eat there. Think traditional, seasonal ingredients grown on the grounds with flourishes of inventiveness. Home cooks will delight in new ideas for familiar ingredients.

Time For Dinner

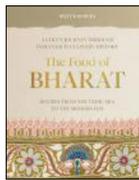
Adam Liaw
HB. Was \$49.99 **Now \$16.99**



Adam Liaw's *Time for Dinner* features smarter recipes for faster cooking. Full of simple, satisfying meal ideas, this is a cookbook for everyone, from busy singles to on-the-go families. Packed with more than 80 time-saving recipes, this delicious and original collection will take the grind out of affordable midweek cooking.

Food of Bharat

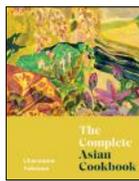
Helly Raichura
HB. Was \$60 **Now \$19.99**



The Food of Bharat is a deep dive into India's culinary history, exploring how Indian cuisine has evolved, from the earliest times to the modern day. Chef Helly Raichura, founder of Melbourne restaurant Enter Via Laundry, illuminates historical insights with delicious recipes across regional India, marrying authentic techniques with native and seasonal Australian produce.

The Complete Asian Cookbook

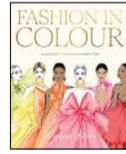
Charmaine Solomon
HB. Was \$70 **Now \$19.99**



Heralded as a classic when it was first published in 1976, this updated edition of *The Complete Asian Cookbook* covers 800 classic and contemporary dishes from 15 countries including India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand, Vietnam, China, Korea and Japan. Written with the home cook in mind, Solomon's recipes are straightforward, simple to follow and work every time. A must-have!

Fashion in Colour

Megan Hess
HB. Was \$65 **Now \$24.99**



Fashion in Colour is an ode to the incredible use of colour throughout fashion history, highlighting how fashion designers have used colour to create iconic looks and shape fashion houses around the world. Divided into chapters by colour, each one covers iconic looks, the houses that are synonymous with that colour, fashion facts and history, and Megan Hess's signature stunning illustrations.

Safe Haven

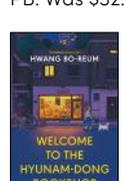
Shankari Chandran
PB. Was \$34.99 **Now \$14.99**



Arriving in Australia seeking asylum, Fina dedicates herself to aiding refugees detained on the remote island of Port Camden. She builds a life within the community, finding a new family. Speaking out for the refugees, she becomes the focus of a media storm, leading to her arrest and the threat of deportation. When a security officer dies, investigator Lucky uncovers a mystery that will divide the town and the nation.

Welcome to the Hyunam-dong Bookshop

Hwang Bo-reum & Shanna Tan (trans.)
PB. Was \$32.99 **Now \$14.99**



Yeongju did everything she was supposed to: university, marriage and a respectable job. Then it all fell apart. Burned out, Yeongju abandons her old life, quits her high-flying career, and follows her dream. She opens a bookshop in a quaint neighbourhood in Seoul where Yeongju and her customers take refuge. A heartwarming story about comfort, acceptance, and the healing power of books.

The Garden State

Richard Allen & Kimbal Baker (photog.)
HB. Was \$80 **Now \$29.99**



Victoria's climate and rich volcanic soil mean that with passion, patience, imagination and commitment, amazing gardens can be built and maintained. *The Garden State* showcases the finest private gardens of Victoria, highlighting the diversity of each region. Photographed across all seasons, the chapters include a range of garden types, their history and how they work within the landscape.

The City Gardener

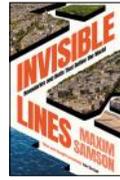
Richard Unsworth & Nicholas Watt (photog.)
HB. Was \$49.99 **Now \$16.99**



Our urban gardens provide an essential green refuge amid the expanding concrete jungle, and there are many ways to create unique verdant spaces in the inner-city. From a succulent-laden, full-sun rooftop to an entertainer's semi-tropical courtyard, the 20 private gardens featured here demonstrate how inspired design can utilise the space we have – large or small – to create a plant paradise.

Invisible Lines

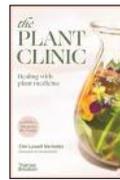
Maxim Samson
HB. Was \$49.99 **Now \$16.99**



Our world has innumerable boundaries, ranging from the obvious to subtle differences in language or climate. Most of us cross invisible lines all the time, but don't stop to consider them. Fully illustrated with maps of each location, geographer Maxim Samson presents 30 such unseen boundaries – intriguing and unexpected examples of the myriad ways in which we collectively engage with and experience the world.

The Plant Clinic

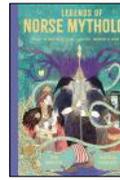
Erin Lovell Verinder & Georgia Blackie (photog.)
PB. Was \$39.99 **Now \$16.99**



The Plant Clinic is a revolutionary new guide to reignite your health and transform your life. Expert herbalist Erin Lovell Verinder decodes healing with plant medicine for over 150 common health complaints across: vitality; immunity; detoxification; the gut; hormone health; mums and bubs; hair and skin; emotions, mind and spirit.

Legends of Norse Mythology

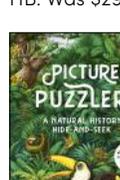
Tom Birkett & Isabella Mazzanti (illus.)
HB. Was \$29.99 **Now \$10.99**



Legends of Norse Mythology is a fully illustrated anthology of Norse gods, giants, monsters and heroes retold anew. Featuring beautiful and otherworldly portraits of mythological characters and enchanting text from Old English scholar and Norse mythology expert Dr Thomas Birkett, this collection of timeless tales is the perfect gift for lovers of Viking myths as well as readers looking for an introduction to this epic world.

Picture Puzzler

Rachel Williams & Ksenia Bakhareva (illus.)
HB. Was \$29.99 **Now \$14.99**



Step inside each picture, where wild things walk – find frogs, big cats and monkeys and birds that can talk. Get lost inside the jungle. Climb a mountain's peak! And solve the secret riddle, buried in the deep. For every hidden creature, there's more to be found. This is one for all the puzzlers who love a mystery and natural history!

1964: Eyes of the Storm

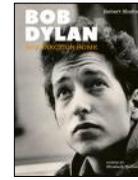
Paul McCartney
HB. Was \$140 **Now \$39.99**



In 2020, a trove of photographs taken by Paul McCartney on a 35mm camera was rediscovered in his archive. They record the months towards the end of 1963 and the beginning of 1964 when Beatlemania erupted in the UK and shortly after in the USA. *1964: Eyes of the Storm* presents 275 of these extraordinary photographs from six cities during this intense, seminal time.

Bob Dylan: No Direction Home

Robert Shelton & Elizabeth Thomson (ed.)
HB. Was \$50 **Now \$16.99**



Robert Shelton met Bob Dylan in New York in 1961. He became Dylan's friend, champion, and critic. His book, first published in 1986, was hailed as the definitive unauthorised biography which tells of Dylan's formative years in Greenwich Village NYC, concluding Dylan's story backstage during the 1978 world tour. The only biography written with his cooperation, this illustrated edition is a must for all Dylan fans.

The Art of Australian Geographic Illustration

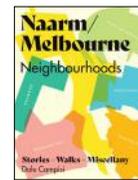
Alasdair McGregor
HB. Was \$59.95 **Now \$19.99**



The illustrator's art has been one of the cornerstones of *Australian Geographic* since Banjo the platypus graced the cover of the first issue in 1986. Photorealistic illustrations of native fauna appeared on each cover for the first 83 issues, and inside its pages illustration has been used as a vital storytelling tool. This book is brimming with gorgeous images from many of Australia's finest natural history artists.

Naarm/Melbourne: Neighbourhoods

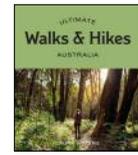
Dale Campisi
PB. Was \$39.99 **Now \$14.99**



Join Melburnian Dale Campisi on a stroll around this city of villages, learning how each locale's history and contemporary culture contribute to the uniqueness of the Victorian capital city. The book includes maps, photography and walking tours which complement the fascinating stories and histories that unearth and showcase the character of the city.

Ultimate Walks and Hikes: Australia

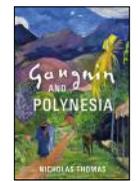
Laura Waters
PB. Was \$45 **Now \$14.99**



Laura Waters has hiked thousands of kilometres to put together her ultimate list of walking tracks in all states and territories. From an easy amble in Tasmania's Tarkine forest to an epic hike such as the Grampians Peaks Trail, this guidebook is packed with interesting insights, detailed maps, tips on gear, safety and more, to help you get out there and explore.

Gauguin and Polynesia

Nicholas Thomas
HB. Was \$84.99 **Now \$19.99**



Renowned for his mythic imagery from Oceania, a life of restless travel, and for his supposed immersion in Polynesian life, Paul Gauguin has long been regarded ambivalently. In recent years both his sexual behaviour, and his paintings, have been considered exploitative. *Gauguin and Polynesia* offers a fresh view on the artist from the contemporary vantage point of the region which he so famously moved to. **R**

Kids

PICTURE BOOK OF THE MONTH

Picture Book

The Future Book
Mac Barnett & Shawn Harris (illus.)
S&S. HB. \$27.99
Available now



R A power duo of creators has teamed up for *The Future Book*, a surreal and hilarious picture book that delivers reports from the future, where the sun is called the moon, the moon is called the sun, and cows are called 'mooring life forms'. Readers are informed, 'This might seem weird to you but in the future it is normal.'

Shawn Harris, known for the stunning *Have You Ever Seen a Flower?*, has a uniquely energetic illustration style. He uses colour to dazzling effect. Mac Barnett's sense of humour will be familiar to many; his picture books, including *The Shapes Trilogy*, are enduring favourites. The text of *The Future Book* is written in a deadpan tone. It makes increasingly absurd statements as the book progresses and is cleverly designed to spark audience reaction, making this an extraordinarily fun and spirited read-aloud.

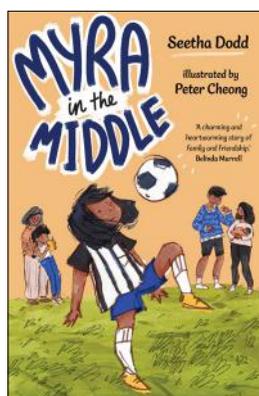
In the future, this book is a big hit and people read it again, and again, and again! This is a standout picture book for anyone aged 3+.

Kim Gruschow is the children's book division manager

KIDS BOOK OF THE MONTH

Junior Grade

Myra in the Middle
Seetha Dodd & Peter Cheong (illus.)
UQP. PB. \$14.99
Available now



R A delightful debut from Seetha Dodd with dynamic illustrations by Peter Cheong, *Myra in the Middle* is the story of seven-year-old, soon-to-be-middle-child Myra. Whether it's looking at her life through maths problems, trying to decide how to confront her teacher (who always confuses her for the only other girl in her class who looks like her), or preparing for the arrival of a new sibling alongside her ever-bossier big sister Anya, Myra approaches the world with kindness and curiosity.

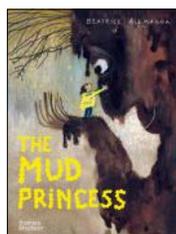
Myra wants to join the new soccer team, but will her family have time to take her to practice with a new baby? Myra's Muthashi (grandmother) encourages her – after all, Muthashi used to play too! – but when Myra is assigned a midfield position, will she ever be able to shine when she feels invisible and unneeded?

A heartfelt story for readers aged 5 to 8 about speaking up for yourself (and others!) and standing out – not by being the loudest, but by being yourself.

Tamuz Ellazam is the manager of Readings Kids

Picture Books

The Mud Princess
Beatrice Alemagna
T&H. HB. \$29.99
Available 1 April



R It's always very exciting when there's a new Beatrice Alemagna book. The Italian author-illustrator is one of the great picture-book creators of our time. Her newest book is about a girl named Yuki, who throws her keys into a manhole, climbs down to retrieve them and finds herself in an underworld where she meets the Mud Princess. This blobby, muddy diva – with hair like a prickly hedge and tree-root hands – leads Yuki on a tour.

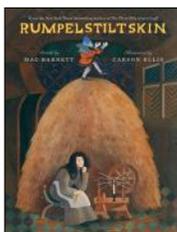
They visit places like the Wicked Woods and Lake Youbegone, where people who behave badly can hide. In the Grumporium, a general store packed with weird products, Yuki drinks a delicious juice, freshly squeezed from an argument. A crowd of funny little baby blobs named 'boogers' are said to be mean to everyone, even themselves, but readers will find them hilarious and extremely cute.

Alemagna is self-taught and her art style is unique. Her characters are brilliantly expressive and there is never space lacking in detail, texture or pattern. *The Mud Princess* is a great book that acknowledges the joy and comfort that can be found in a bit of wallowing, while hinting that sooner or later we

should probably resurface. All hail *The Mud Princess!* For ages 3+.

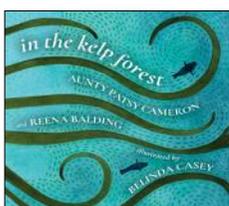
Kim Gruschow is the children's book division manager

Rumpelstiltskin
Retold by Mac Barnett & Carson Ellis (illus.)
Scholastic. HB. \$26.99
Available 1 April



Once upon a time there was a clever girl with a not-so-clever father. When her father claims she can spin straw into gold, the king forces the girl to perform this impossible task. She makes a strange deal from a mysterious man. But when he attempts to collect the debt, the fiendish trickster Rumpelstiltskin has been tricked instead!

In the Kelp Forest
Aunty Patsy Cameron, Reena Balding & Belinda Casey (illus.)
Magabala. HB. \$27.99
Available 7 April



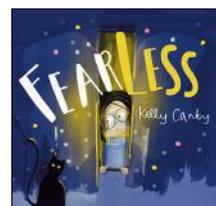
R Aunty Patsy Cameron, First Nations author of *Sea Country* and *Sky Country*, has collaborated with Reena Balding to write a beautiful story of the life cycle of kelp. The story describes in evocative language how kelp forms a vital component of our oceans, forming

forests and providing shelter and food for many creatures.

Words from two traditional languages, Oyster Bay and Coastal Plains, are used within the text to describe the kelp and the sea creatures that depend upon the forests. Featuring Neertattenner (crayfish), Payenratter (sea horse) and Lowernume (sea urchin) we learn how they live and feed amongst the kelp. Absolutely stunning watercolour illustrations by Belinda Casey beautifully capture the gentle flow and movement of kelp forests and make this book an utter delight to pore over for both children and adults. Further information and a glossary provide a helpful educational context, but *In the Kelp Forest* can be enjoyed solely as a charming narrative for nature lovers aged 3+.

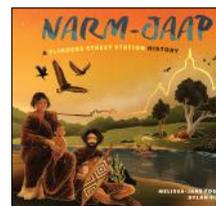
Angela Crocombe is The Readings Prize and The Readings Foundation coordinator

Fearless
Kelly Canby
Fremantle. HB. \$24.99
Available now



Bea Ware is afraid of everything and is in a constant state of anxiety and trepidation. Her friend, Annie Venture, seems completely carefree, skipping through life without a single worry. But Annie shares her secret with Bea. Annie is not fearless, she has simply learned to fear less. So Bea tries to fear less too, and uncovers a more carefree life.

Narm-Jaap: A Flinders Street Station History
Melissa-Jane Fogarty & Dylan Finney (illus.)
Lothian. HB. \$24.99
Available now



R While most of us will know what you mean if you ask to meet 'under the clocks', few of us know the history of Flinders Street station, and even fewer know the history of the land upon which it stands. Here to dispel

myths, educate and delight comes the compelling and comprehensive *Narm-Jaap: A Flinders Street Station History* by Melissa-Jane Fogarty and Dylan Finney, following on from their first title in the *Our Lands* series, *Tubowgule: A Sydney Opera House History*, which was just awarded a 2026 CBCA Notable. Through lush illustrations and engaging storytelling, Fogarty and Finney send us back in time to an important meeting place for the Kulin nation, through colonisation, industrialisation, and into the present day. This timely and thoroughly-researched book centres on themes of community coming together, and will be the perfect gift for curious guests and local history buffs alike!

Tamuz Ellazam is the manager of Readings Kids

Pass the Parcel
Carly Gledhill
Post Wave. HB. \$24.99
Available now



R With *Pass the Parcel*, Carly Gledhill sends our protagonist, Parcel, on an informative journey through the many stages of the supply chain. From the post office through to delivery, this is no simple journey! Bright colours, blocky shapes and sprinklings of texture all add to the brisk, playful pace of the book. Many modes of transport are used throughout, and the world is filled with a cast of fun, cute characters, reminiscent of those in Richard Scarry's *Busytown*. A particular favourite was Pilot Pickle. With storytelling extravagances along the way, Parcel finally arrives in a funny, fold-out final spread, and is delivered to a very unexpected recipient.

This picture book is ideal for a mail-obsessed child or anyone aged 2+ in the mood for a light, rollicking adventure!

Ford Thomas is from Readings online and Charlie Charls-Thomas is a Reading reviewer

Fuzzy Feelings: When You Have Big Feelings, Everything Can Be a Bit Fuzzy

Michelle Mackintosh & Cat Rabbit (illus.)

Little Smith. HB. \$24.99

Available now



R In this sweet book, Little Cat's feelings appear as cute, plush, felt shapes that follow her around and pop up at various times throughout the day. It's a book with simple, gentle text that introduces strategies to avoid being overwhelmed. Portraying feelings as critters allows Calm and Anxious

to meet and become friends. Disappointed and Happy are able to dance together at a rainy picnic. In a world of AI-generated horrors, it's a joy to look at Cat Rabbit's 3D-handcrafted illustrations, which are made and photographed with such care.

Her book *Library of Bears* was one of our staff-selected favourite picture books of 2025 and crafters of all ages have been loving *Trinkets*, too. Older readers may feel a nostalgic pull when looking at this book, and everyone will enjoy noticing the wonderful details. There's something universally appealing about the lovely, fluffy, felted and fun textures created with fabrics. Just perfect for a book called *Fuzzy Feelings!* For ages 2+.

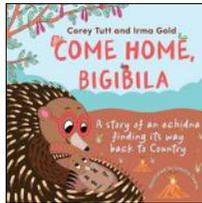
Kim Gruschow is the children's book division manager

Come Home, Bigibila: A Story of an Echidna Finding Its Way Back to Country

Corey Tutt, Irma Gold & Jessica Tedim (illus.)

A&U. HB. \$24.99

Available now



When Bigibila finds herself far from her Country – how will she ever find her way back? Founder of DeadlyScience, Corey Tutt and award-winning author, Irma Gold have created this gorgeous story which explores our connection to family and place. Gamilaraay

words are seamlessly woven into the text and there's a facts section at the back that's all about Bigibila (echidnas).

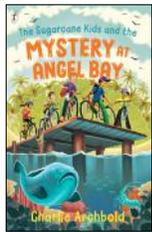
Middle Grade

The Sugarcane Kids and the Mystery at Angel Bay

Charlie Archbold

Text. PB. \$16.99

Available now



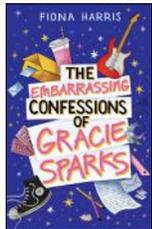
Andy and the Sugarcane Kids love riding their bikes to Angel Bay. And they love seeing their old mate Jerry, a massive Queensland groper fish. But then Jerry goes missing. Could it have anything to do with a new tourist resort Raymond Royce has planned for Angel Bay? The Sugarcane Kids are on the case. But will they discover what Royce is up to before it's too late?

The Embarrassing Confessions of Gracie Sparks

Fiona Harris

Affirm Kids. PB. \$16.99

Available now



R In primary school, Gracie Sparks was super cool! So, obviously, high school will be a breeze. Even if none of her friends are going to Middleton Grammar with her, and her big sister won't acknowledge her existence. At least Gracie knows Margot, even if she is painfully boring. Gracie is determined to make friends with a

group of popular girls and when she finds a ring one of them has lost, she's in! Of course, she makes sure Margot is included too. But the girls don't share Gracie's interests, and her dad keeps saying no to everything she's invited

to. Suddenly, Gracie's being kicked out of the group. And, worse still, her best friend isn't speaking to her! Gracie finds solace in the library, sitting with photos of her late mother, who also went to Middleton. Luckily, the weird, lonely kid she's paired up with for a class project isn't as bad as she thought.

Gracie's story is told through diary entries and while her thoughts and decisions are sometimes questionable, she's an incredibly relatable character and many readers will sympathise with her experiences. Although the book explores heavy themes like bullying and the loss of a parent, Fiona Harris has taken great care when writing Gracie's story and makes the reader feel safe in her hands. Readers aged 9+ will enjoy, and may even find comfort in, this delightful coming-of-age story.

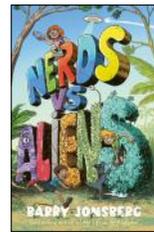
Lucie Dess is the marketing and events coordinator

Nerds vs Aliens

Barry Jonsberg

A&U. PB. \$17.99

Available now



'The world will end at 10.36 in the morning, on the 14th of March this year.' This is the message aliens send to 11-year-old nerds Harrison (Aitch), Ally and Mo. Soon they're in an alien spaceship travelling to Jupiter's icy moon Europa. The aliens say they want to save the planet. It's only humans they're not impressed by! The future of

humans' rests on three nerds and their lazy dog. What could go wrong?

The Silent Island (Oceanforged, Book 2)

Amelia Mellor

Affirm Kids. PB. \$16.99

Available now



R Guided by a mysterious message, Cori, Tarn and Jem sail north to meet the secretive Loyalists, who will help them on their quest for the Oceanforged Armour. The Loyalists warn of a looming disaster. Unless Cori can master all the powers of the Champions before it strikes, Aquinta will be doomed. The Loyalists believe

that a piece of armour may be hidden in Mutemount. But anyone who's travelled there has never returned.

The Dragon Snare (The Dragon Snare, Book 1)

Rhiannon Williams

Hardie Grant. PB. \$17.99

Available now



R Rhiannon Williams returns with another spellbinding fantasy series beginning with a fragile treaty between humans and dragons as a new war looms on the horizon.

Henry, an orphan from the Dragon War, has always dreamed of being a knight. He has been raised as a kennel boy for the royal family, listening to legends of heroic knights battling vicious dragons and protecting the kingdom. His best chance of a knighthood is to compete in the Twilight Tournament. While searching for a weapon, Henry finds a magical sword that will grant him one wish. But when the wish backfires during a terrifying encounter with a dragon called Snare, Henry accidentally transforms Snare into a human girl, who threatens to break the truce and ignite another war. The kingdom, reeling from the sudden disappearance and death of their princess, will come to ruin if Henry cannot save them all.

The Dragon Snare has everything I love in a fantasy – heroic tales of chivalry and adventure, magical creatures and powerful sorcerers, and a lovable dog (called Squid). Henry is truly a hero worth cheering on. The guilt he feels for his role in the princess's tragedy motivates him to become the best version of himself so he can protect the innocent and seek the truth, even if it dismantles everything he thought he knew about the Dragon War.

Beneath its light-hearted humour lies a thoughtful exploration of grief, responsibility, and battling our

internal and external monsters. Perfect for fans of *Impossible Creatures* and *Wings of Fire*. For ages 8+.

Aurelia Orr is from Readings Kids

The Lost Defenders

Sam Summers

Penguin. PB. \$17.99

Available now



Eleven-year-old Jace Tanner has always been different – he can see monsters no one else can. When he uncovers a secret world hidden behind museum walls, Jace realises he's not as alone as he thought. But with a prophecy threatening to tear down the Veil that separates Earth from the Monster Realm, can Jace and his newfound allies come together, face their fears, and unlock their forgotten inheritance in time to save the world?

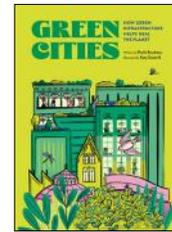
Nonfiction

Green Cities: How Green Infrastructure Helps Heal the Planet

Sheila Boudreau & Katy Dockrill (illus.)

UQP. HB. \$32.99

Available now



Green cities are a growing part of the global effort to address climate change! From street trees to rooftop farms to rain gardens, green infrastructure harnesses the power of nature to make cities both more sustainable and more liveable. Brimming with examples of nature-inspired innovation this book shows us the importance of our relationship with nature, and offers a practical and hopeful approach to the fight against climate change.

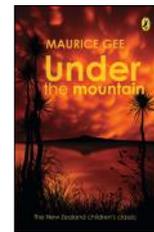
Kids Classic of the Month

Under the Mountain

Maurice Gee

Puffin. PB. \$16.99

Available now



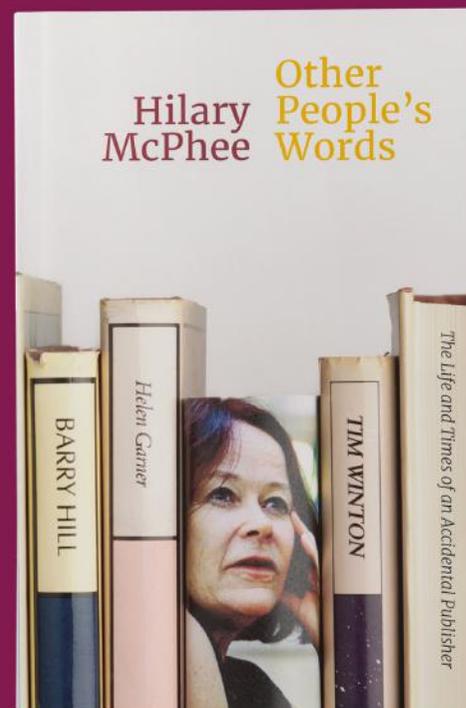
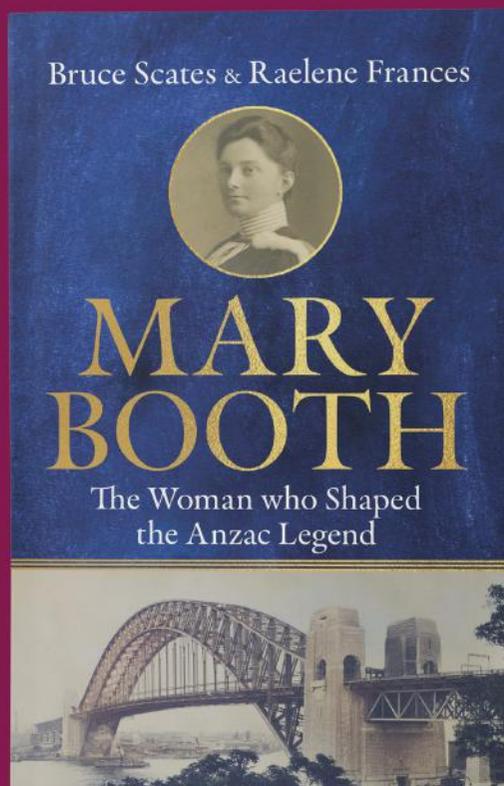
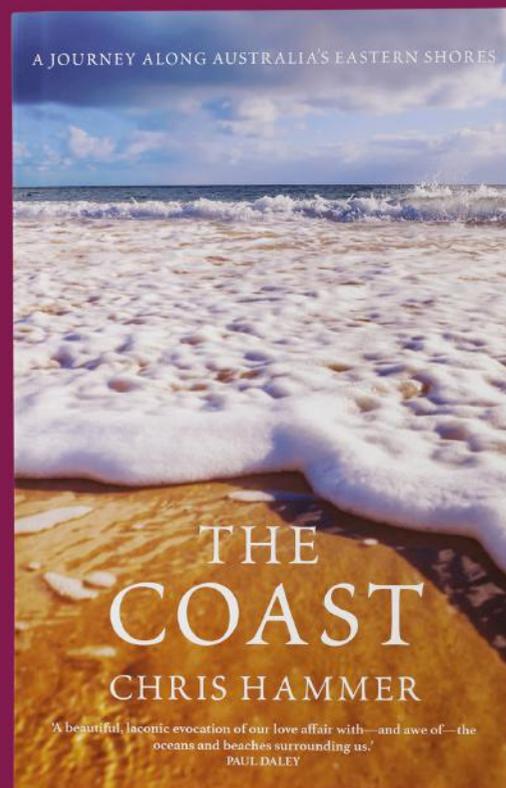
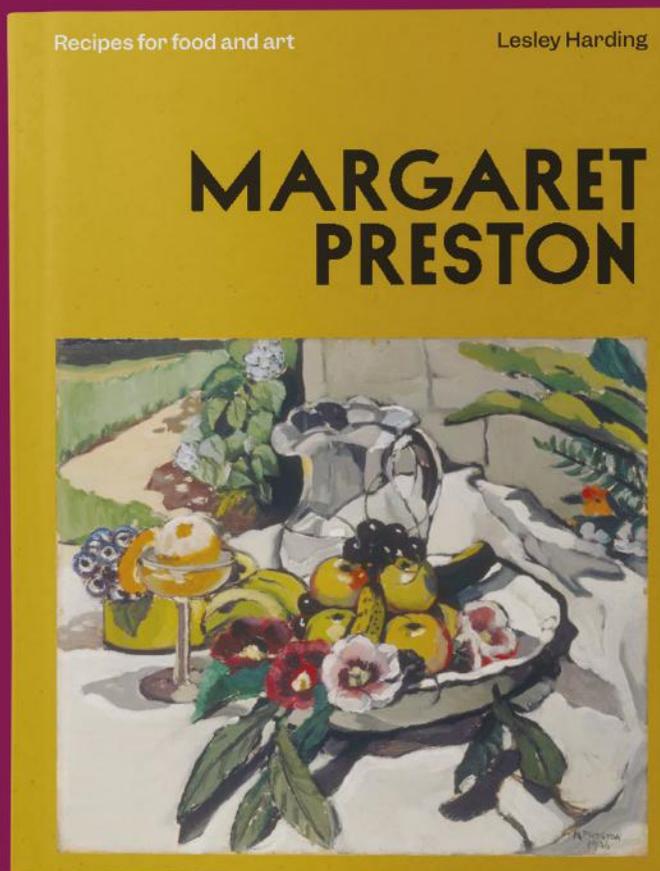
R Tāmaki Makaurau (Auckland) is built on an active field of 53 volcanoes and Maurice Gee used this as inspiration for his unique 1979 sci-fi novel, *Under the Mountain*. Twins Theo and Rachel are visiting family in Auckland and immediately sense something is off. Exploring a crater lake by canoe they smell something strange and encounter the Wilberforces, a peculiar couple who soon become truly menacing presences.

The Wilberforces begin to change their appearance – sometimes they appear as huge slug creatures – and to chase the twins. For protection, Mr Jones, another neighbour, teaches the twins telepathy. They discover a massive network of underground tunnels, and in one huge chamber there is a globe: cold, entirely grey, and muddy. It's a grim forecast.

This is a book of vivid images, action, and palpable dread. Through symbiosis, the Wilberforces are joining with colossal worms deep under Auckland's volcanoes, wiring them for total environmental destruction. Mr Jones, an alien, has been trying to stop them for hundreds of years. The unflinching muddying of the world feels akin to the damage we know from industry, mining, and war, and from granting amoral corporations more power than people and place. *Under the Mountain* ends with an understanding that efforts to save the world were worth it, despite some tragedy and an imperfect outcome. It remains an utterly enthralling tale for readers aged 9+.

Kim Gruschow is the children's book division manager **R**

Smart books for every reader



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