

ADULT NON-FICTION
VOLWASSE VAKLEKTUUR

BASHIR, Halima

Tears of the desert: one woman's true story of surviving the horrors of Darfur.- Hodder & Stoughton, 2008.



'Bashir's story of her life in Darfur is difficult to read, largely because so much of it is ordinary. She recounts growing up in a loving family, attending school, and, with the strong support of her father, becoming a doctor. After she enters professional life, civil war comes to her doorstep and her life is torn apart. She witnesses horrible suffering and is herself brutally treated by the Janjaweed, the armed militias fighting with the tacit approval of the Sudanese government. As a

black African, Bashir recalls years of discrimination from ruling Arab Africans, but the spreading war accelerates the violence to epic and devastating levels. After fleeing to Britain, she finds herself in a new battle to prove that the nightmare in her country is real. Bashir is now a powerful voice for the victims of Darfur, speaking out on numerous painful subjects, from her own genital mutilation to rape and the loss of her family. Harsh in its honesty, Bashir's chronicle is shocking and disturbing. An unforgettable tragedy.' (*Booklist*.)

BASSON, Adriaan

Finish & klaar: Selebi's fall from Interpol to the underworld.- Tafelberg, 2010.



'**Finish & klaar: Selebi's fall from Interpol to the underworld** is, first and foremost, a permanent record of the facts and facets of the Selebi case ... The book contains first-hand accounts from all those involved, including court transcripts and official (not to mention venomous) letters passed between president and attorney-general, attorney-general and minister - between every Tom, Dick and Harry with an axe to grind, in other words. The trial itself is, at times, pure

comedy ... [The book] is a thoughtfully written account of one of South Africa's biggest *mamparas*. Although depressing at times in its portrayal of exactly how corrupt the powerful can become, it is as entertaining as one could ever hope ...' (*Cape August*.)

BROWN, Marvelyn

The naked truth: young, beautiful and (HIV) positive.- Amistad, 2008.



'On July 17, 2003, Marvelyn Brown's life changed forever. That was the day the vivacious Nashville native learned she was HIV+. She had been infected by her boyfriend, a 24-year-old man she only refers to as Prince Charming. For not only had the creep swept the unsuspecting teen off her feet, but he had hidden the fact that he was also infected with the lethal virus and that he was sleeping around with lots of other women, too. Sadly, Marvelyn had only become sexually-active

relatively recently, having been a bit of a tomboy until she blossomed into a beauty around 18. She had been a track and basketball star in high school, so between sports and her overprotective parents, she did not have many opportunities to get into trouble before she went off to college.

'However, she dropped out during her freshman year, returned home, and began working two jobs, and that is when she met Prince Charming. Of course, following her diagnosis, she wished she had always used protection during intercourse, especially given the way she was ostracised and her reputation was tarnished when word of her condition spread around the neighbourhood like wildfire.

'Marvelyn initially felt like her life was almost over, given her ensuing abandonment by friends and family members expecting her imminent demise, and given her dramatic weight loss and other symptoms which made her feel lousy. But with the help of medication and counselling, she soon was able to manage the condition and came to realise that AIDS need not be seen as a death sentence.

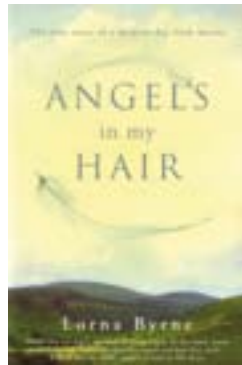
'**The naked truth: young, beautiful and (HIV) positive** is an inspirational memoir which chronicles Marvelyn's evolution from frightened victim to fearless activist. So this brave young lady, now 24, deserves considerable credit for going public and thus putting a face on the generally hidden and denied disease, and thereby letting young girls know how easy it is to contract.' (www.reviews.aalbc.com)

BYRNE, Lorna

Angels in my hair.- Century, 2008.

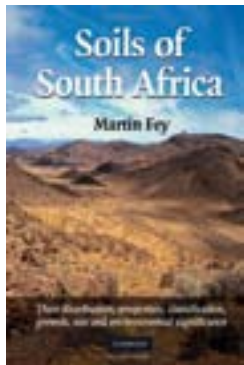
This is the bestselling autobiography of an Irish mystic growing up in Dublin during the 1950s. From a young age Lorna was regarded as different to other children and was often considered retarded because of her serious learning difficulties caused by neurological wiring differences. She was raised in an Irish Catholic family and culture, and writes simply about her interesting and unusual life experiences. What readers may have difficulty absorbing is that Lorna, from her earliest memories, sees and communicates with beings of light she calls angels. These spiritual beings are regarded as family members in her story. Her life journey is one most open-minded readers will enjoy learning about - even if they have an

alternate explanation for some of the experiences she writes about. The book focuses on Byrne's first-hand experiences of angels. Everything she mentions is related to them or what they have taught her and is evaluated against what religion teaches us. Beginning with a few experiences as a baby and ending just after the death of her husband, Byrne concludes with the statement that we are all angels. Even though she is not a gifted and eloquent writer, she does grip the reader and the ending of the book is lovely.EB



FEY, Martin

Soils of South Africa / Martin Fey, Jeff Hughes and Jan Lambrechts.- Cambridge UP., 2010.



This is a technical book about the soils of South Africa: 'their distribution, properties, classification, genesis, use and environmental significance.' The main author, Fey, is Professorial Fellow in the School of Earth and Environment at the University of Western Australia and Professor Extraordinary in the Department of Soil Science at Stellenbosch University. There are a number of South African co-authors.

The book jacket says: '**Soils of South Africa** is the first book in seventy years that provides a comprehensive

account of South African soils. The book arranges more than seventy soil forms into fourteen groups and then provides, for each group, maps showing their distribution and abundance throughout South Africa; descriptions of morphological, chemical and physical properties; a detailed account of classification and its correlation with international systems, a discussion of soil genesis which includes a review of relevant research papers; appraisal of soil quality from a land use perspective as well as for its ecological significance; illustrative examples of soil profiles with analytical data and accompanying interpretations. There is also a fascinating account of the special relationship that exists between South African animals and soil environments. **Soils of South Africa** should interest students and researchers in the earth, environmental and biological sciences, as well as environmental practitioners, farmers, foresters and civil engineers.'SCG

KATHRADA, Ahmed

A simple freedom: the strong mind of Robben Island prisoner no. 468/64.- Wild dog, 2008.

'**A simple freedom** is about the life of Ahmed "Kathy" Kathrada, who spent 26 continuous years of his life in prison; one in detention in Pretoria, 18 on Robben Island and seven in Pollsmoor. Kathrada, who was born in Schweizer-Reneke in 1929, was imprisoned as a young activist in the passive resistance movement as early as

1946. In 1994, after the first democratic election, he was an elected member of parliament and a parliamentary counsellor in Nelson Mandela's office. For several years he has been showing off the sights of the island on which he was marooned with Mandela and other Rivonia trialists and which has become a global symbol of freedom. Reading and compiling books of quotations during the long years of incarceration, including solitary confinement, helped him pull through, he says. (**Free mind - Ahmed Kathrada's notebook from Robben Island** (Jacana, 1995), edited by Sahn Venter; was the first compilation of these quotations). **A simple freedom** provides quotations, selected by Couzens, as well as "momentary epiphanies" of Kathrada's memories and commentary, which Couzens says works as "a kind of counterpoint" to the quotations. An overly modest man, Couzens describes **A simple freedom** as 'a modest little book, aimed for a relatively popular audience but trying to get across the story of Kathy on the Island.' (*Sunday Independent*.)



KATZ, Jon

A dog year: rescuing Devon, the most troublesome dog in the world.- Ebury P., 2008.



Author Jon Katz has written a number of books on dogs - some are novels while others are non-fiction. His most recent books focus on his personal experiences and his life with dogs.

At the time of writing **A dog year**, Jon was enjoying a fairly idyllic life as a book and magazine writer with two devoted canine companions, yellow Labrador Retrievers Julius and Stanley. They were wonderful companions, what the author calls the 'perfect writing dogs' who just loved to doze

near the computer. He never worked with them and did not quite grasp the power of seeing a working dog work until he got a Border Collie.

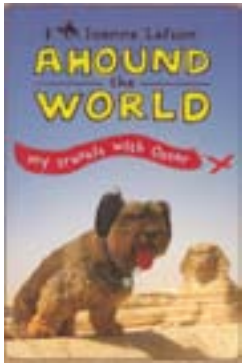
All this changed after Jon was encouraged by a breeder from Texas - Deanne Veselka of Wildblue Border Collies - to adopt a complex Border Collie male named Devon who needed a new home; and thereon hangs the tale.

Devon, the author's first Border Collie, was in bad shape, needy, highly strung, fearful and very frightened around work situations. Jon took him to a dog trainer and behaviourist, and once Devon began to work, he slowly started to transform. They had great fun herding cattle, goats and sheep, and Jon, in turn, really learnt what a working dog is able to do. He found that working with dogs was in itself a wonderful training tool in that it forces you to learn about what you yourself are doing. It taught him to build his training skills on a foundation of love, trust and positive reinforcement, and it even turned

him into a dog writer. Readers who enjoy animal tales will truly enjoy the amusing and yet poignant tale that offers a unique look at the relationships between humans and active canines. It received rave reviews, and is alternately hilarious and heart-warming – a book that every dog lover deserves to read.**EB**

LEFSON, Joanne

Around the world: my travels with Oscar.- Zebra, 2010.

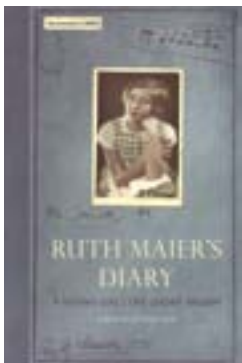


When the author, a Cape Town-based golfing columnist, first came across a stray dog at her local SPCA, it was love at first sight. She named him Oscar and took him on a world tour on a quest to make people aware of the plight of homeless dogs. The aim of the tour was to encourage and inspire many to adopt fellow canines living as strays on the streets. Together they visited about 30 countries and stopped off at renowned places, from the Great Wall of China, the Taj Mahal in India to the Eiffel

Tower in Paris. The unusual aspects of this tour drew much publicity both here and abroad, and Oscar became famous overnight. Now he was referred to as 'Oscar, the globe-trotting dog'. A year later the author caused a sensation when she entered into a rather unexpected marriage with Oscar in a much-publicised, over-the-top ceremony in Las Vegas. Lefson wore a veil and Oscar a bow tie, while an Elvis Presley impersonator sealed the deal. She said marrying Oscar was fun, but 'all in the spirit of raising awareness for dogs around the world who are dying'. In order to further promote her mission, the author decided to document this unique experience in book form. The result is an engaging, heart-warming story that is both inspirational and uplifting. Even now Oscar and his mistress are receiving local attention such as in the local *Tygerburger* concerning a local promotion in Bothasig. It seems they are still news items and tend to attract attention. This story is something different to the usual run-of-the-mill animal fare, and readers cannot but be entertained by the loveable mix-breed and his enterprising owner.**EB**

MAIER, Ruth

Ruth Maier's diary: a young girl's life under Nazism.- Harvill Secker, 2009.



This diary written during the 1930s and 1940s by Ruth Maier, an Austrian Jewish girl, is reminiscent of Anne Frank's *Diary of a young girl*. She came from a middle-class Jewish family and lived in Vienna with her parents and younger sister, Judith. She kept a diary from 1934 until her tragic death in November 1942, after being deported to Auschwitz where she was exterminated on arrival at the age of twenty-two. Her diaries

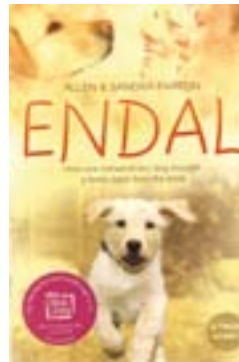
describe her experiences of the Holocaust in Austria and Norway.

Initially she enjoyed the comfortable middle-class existence of a family who belonged to the well-established community of secularised Jews in the Austrian capital. All this would change after the Nazi takeover (Anschluss) in 1938, resulting in deteriorating conditions for Austria's Jewish population. In 1939, when life became too intolerable, younger sister Judith was sent to England and Ruth to Norway where she lived with the Strom family in Lillestrom. Later she became friends with the future poet Gunvor Hofmo whom she had met at a volunteer work camp.

The two became inseparable, and shared lodgings and work in various places in Norway. Gunvor Hofmo kept Ruth's diaries and much of her correspondence, and it was only after his death in 1995 that Jan Erik Vold would discover these diaries. He was highly impressed by their literary value and spent ten years editing them. The diaries were finally published in 2007, followed by Jamie Bulloch's English translation in 2009. The book offers readers not only a glimpse of the author's personality and emotions, but also an insight into the world situation of the time, both before and during World War II. It is beautifully presented and includes copies of her poems, drawings, paintings and photographs. Those interested in this period of European history will find it intriguing and informative.**EB**

PARTON, Allen and Sandra

Endal: how one extraordinary dog brought a family back from the brink.- Harper, 2009.



Allen Parton had a very promising career ahead of him (as Chief Petty Officer in the Royal Navy) and a wife and two children at home in Portsmouth. All this changed after a tragic accident while in service during the Gulf War of 1991. Allen suffered a severe head injury which left him with considerable physical and emotional trauma. It erased his memories, leaving him unable to walk, speak or write. The result was that he had to spend the next five years in hospital, struggling to come to terms

with his disabilities. But after all the intensive therapy, Allen was still in a bad state until he met a Labrador puppy called Endal. From the first day Endal just cut right through Allen's defenses and saw the real Allen Parton. Like a shining star, he had come bounding into that dark place to touch Allen's very heart. He was schooled at Canine Partners for Independence and became Allen's constant companion until his death at the age of 13, shortly after this book was published. He gave Allen courage and a new freedom and they became an inseparable duo. Allen's marriage improved and he could rebuild a relationship with his children. He became more independent and his wife Sandra no longer had to be on call twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week. This allowed her the freedom and peace of mind to live her own life again.

Endal could respond to over one hundred commands and could also solve problems. On one occasion, Endal demonstrated his ability to react in an emergency when Allen was knocked out of

his wheelchair by a speeding car and left unconscious in a car park. He pulled Allen into the recovery position, covered him with a blanket and fetched his mobile phone. Getting no response Endal then left Allen's side and went to a nearby hotel to raise the alarm. This amazing partnership allowed Allen to start thinking about setting up a new charity to help the disabled of the UK Armed Forces and Emergency Services, which gave him another interest in life. This was a shining example of the bond between man and his dog and an illustration of all that dogs do for their two-footed companions. Author Jilly Cooper remarked: 'Endal is a true dog hero: kind, intelligent, incredibly resourceful, very funny and utterly devoted to his master Allen Parton. This is one of the great uplifting dog stories.' **EB**

POLLAK, Joel B

The Kasrils affair: Jews and minority politics in post-apartheid South Africa.- UCT P, 2009.



'Pollak (Harvard Law School) returned to his native South Africa to work as a journalist and political speechwriter; and was a close observer of "the affair", which was a debate about the Israeli-Palestinian conflict that took place in the South African Jewish community in late 2001 and early 2002. He explores what the affair reveals, and how it has affected politics in the South African Jewish community and its institutions after apartheid. He also explores the broader implications for minority and interest-group politics

in a democracy and constitutional state dominated by a single political party.' (*Reference & Research Book News*.)

RETIEF, Linette

Een glas dooswit, asseblief?: sober besinnings van 'n skuldenaar.- Human, 2010.



'Linette Retief, joernalis, kopieskrywer en proefleser, vertel eerlik, prakties en humoristies van die pad wat sy geloop het om uiteindelik die besluit te neem: Van nou af gee ek net die geld uit wat ek het. Sy moes haar kredietkaart opsny, haar oortrokke gerief moes waai. Duurder wyn moes plek maak vir een glas dooswit, asseblief? Wat sy oorgehou het, is 'n enkele debietkaart gekoppel aan 'n spaarrekening. Sy het op die harde manier geleer kontant is koning. Sodat 20% van die boek is gegrond

op die skrywer se *By-rubrieke* wat in *Beeld* en *Die Burger* verskyn het. Die res is nuut. Sy vertel alles oor skuld, selfs die geskiedenis daarvan, en skryf oor bekendes soos Abraham Lincoln en Henry Ford wat bankrot was voordat hulle finansieel die septer kon swaai.

Retief bespreek skuldberading in besonderhede, soms skalks. Die boek bied ook 'n oorsig oor globale oorsake van skuld en praktiese wenke oor hoe om met jou geld uit te kom. Die skrywer draai nie doekies om nie. Lesers het Retief leer ken vir haar versameling grappe, **Stoute statistieke** (1995), en essays, **Pynbos Siding** (2002). Skryf kan sy skryf'. (*Rapport Boeke*.)

RYBACK, Timothy W

Hitler's private library: the books that shaped his life.- Bodley Head, 2009.



In this fascinating and original exploration of some of the formative influences in Adolf Hitler's life, Timothy Ryback examines the books that shaped the man and his thinking. Hitler was best known for burning books rather than collecting them but, as Ryback eagerly reveals, books were Hitler's constant companions throughout his life. They accompanied him from his years as a frontline corporal during the First World War to the final days before his suicide in Berlin. Hitler wasn't

particularly well educated, yet he was a voracious reader, and his various personal libraries contained more than 16 000 volumes at his death. The known remnants of Adolf Hitler's personal library, consisting of 1200 volumes, were uncovered by the author recently in the rare books storage of the Library of Congress. Most of Hitler's books kept in the Reich Chancellery in Berlin were shipped off to Moscow by victorious Soviet authorities while others fell victim to souvenir hunters among American soldiers trampling through the ruins of the Reich in Bavaria. The volumes found at Berchtesgaden found their way to the Library of Congress in Washington. The book collection reflects Hitler's interest in religion and theology, his fascination with the occult, and an admiration for Don Quixote, Robinson Crusoe, the works of Shakespeare and Henry Ford's **The international Jew**. The author delivers a thought-provoking and intimate biographical portrait in a valiant attempt to understand this strange man who still remains one of the most impenetrable personalities of modern history. **EB**

SANGHERA, Jasvinder

Daughters of shame.- Hodder & Stoughton, 2009.



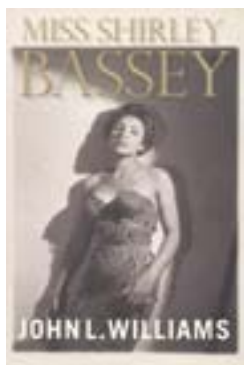
'Jasvinder Sanghera's previous book, **Shame**, was a ... memoir that played some part in putting Lord Lester's Forced Marriage Bill through parliament in 2007. Born and brought up in Derby, she was "just a normal kid in the British education system" until her parents started restricting her freedom. One day, when she was 14, they showed her a photograph of a random bloke and announced he was the man she was going to marry.

Sanghera ran away from home. When she rang to say she was safe, her mother gave her an ultimatum: either her daughter married the stranger in the photograph or, because she had “shamed” the family, she would be “dead in our eyes”. Sanghera chose (if it can be called a choice) the second option. Later, she heard that one of her sisters was brought to such depths of pain and despair by her own forced marriage that she set fire to herself. She died in hospital from 80% burns.

This sequel to **Shame** tells the stories of some of the thousands of women that Sanghera has subsequently met through Karma Nirvana, the organisation she founded in 1994 to help Asian women in similar situations: victims of forced marriage and “honour-based” violence, usually at the hands of family members, who see shame in an Asian girl touching a white boy but none in abusing, beating, raping, torturing or murdering their own flesh and blood! (www.entertainmenttimesonline.co.uk)

WILLIAMS, John L

Miss Shirley Bassey.- Quercus, 2010.



As suggested by the title of this biography, the author has chosen to confine his study to the first 30 years of the singer's life. To be a mixed-race child brought up by a white mother in Britain in the 1930s, highly unusual. Shirley was born in the late 1930s above a brothel in the rough Tiger Bay docks area of Cardiff, the tenth child of mixed-race parentage. The author begins his research by focusing on Bassey's mother, an extraordinary woman

from a mining village in Cleveland whose first five children had five different fathers - three of them black. Therefore it was not unusual for her to settle in the one place in Britain, Tiger Bay, Cardiff, where a mixed-race family could possibly enjoy a decent life. The area was a haven for seamen from around the globe and owed its existence to the world's hunger for coal. A sailor who decided to settle in this unlikely global village was Bassey's father, a Nigerian stoker.

Williams presents episodes from Shirley's life that he has researched in the form of newspaper cuttings and interviews before providing readers with an analysis. This honest approach encourages readers to form their own opinions. One formerly unknown fact uncovered by Williams is that Bassey's father was convicted of a sex crime and deported. This fact reveals why the Bassey family would move from Tiger Bay to the white working-class district of Splott, namely to escape the shame of the crime.

Regardless of all negative factors in her early life, Williams engagingly charts Bassey's rise from Splott tomboy to singer in local, and eventually London pubs and clubs. The result is a fascinating history, not only of Bassey's early career, but also of the casual racism and sexism that prevailed in Britain in the 1950s and in show business. Bassey had the strength of power to overcome all prejudices and

found that people, in particular men, loved her. Television appearances boosted her popularity further as did a growing recording career. Suddenly Bassey was an international star of note, reflecting the glamour and optimism of the times.EB

The world's heritage: a complete guide to the most extraordinary places.- HarperCollins, 2009.



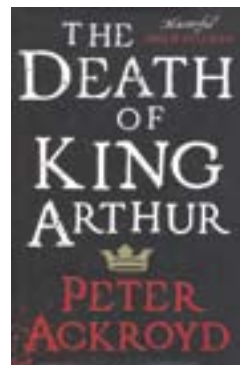
'The world's heritage: a complete guide to the most extraordinary places' is itself an extraordinary publication. Published by UNESCO it pays homage to all that is great about the world's historical, cultural and natural heritage. No less than 832 pages – try not to think about the rainforests – have been used to catalogue all UNESCO World Heritage Sites that were listed at the time of publication. It's a lovely

looking, well-designed telephone book for heritage-lovers, a manual for students, a reference tool for academics and a guidebook for armchair travelers the world over (though weighing in at over 1.6kg, it's much too heavy for the average suitcase)! (Heritage-key.com)

ADULT FICTION VOLWASSE VERHALENDE LEKTUUR

ACKROYD, Peter

The death of King Arthur: Thomas Malory's Le morte d'Arthur.- Penguin, 2010.



Peter Ackroyd is an award-winning author of both fiction and non-fiction titles. In his latest work he delivers a condensed retelling of Sir Thomas Malory's 15th-century classic **Le morte d'Arthur**. He does not attempt to give the narrative a post-modern twist, but rather produces a version that will make the classic story more appealing to a modern readership by removing unnecessary jargon and repetitive elements.

Arthurian legends have become almost as familiar as the works of Shakespeare and Dickens, but mainly through sources other than Malory, such as Wagner's **Tristan und Isolde**, Hollywood cartoons and the BBC series *Merlin*. This is at last a good opportunity for readers to reconnect indirectly with the original **Le morte d'Arthur** and to experience the imaginative power of the Age of Chivalry. Malory wrote part of **Le morte d'Arthur** while

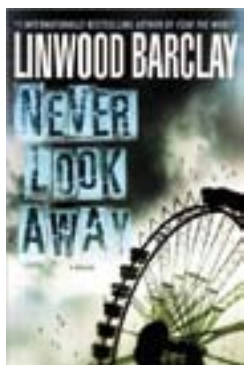
imprisoned in Newgate gaol, and may have died in prison in 1471.

The stories are markedly unlike the versions we know from the **Camelot** musical of Lerner and Loewe, or the opera **Tristan und Isolde** of Wagner. It is mainly due to the 19th century romantics like Lord Tennyson that Malory's **Le morte d'Arthur** is seen as an epic of chivalry. However, in Peter Ackroyd's translation of the medieval English, a less glowing picture emerges of the Knights of the Round Table. King Arthur unwittingly commits incest, and his son Mordred eventually causes havoc at court, eventually destroying Arthur as prophesised. The author deserves credit for successfully bringing to life for our times this immortal classic tale.

An immortal story of love, adventure, chivalry, treachery and death brought to new life for our times. **EB**

BARCLAY, Linwood

Never look away.- Orion, 2010.



Never look away is another entertaining and gripping thriller from this Canadian author. He uses the ordinary-man-in-extraordinary-circumstances scenario – in this story it's David Harwood, the crime reporter on a newspaper in a small upstate New York town, who finds his life falling apart after his wife disappears from an amusement park they were visiting with their 4-year-old son, Ethan. Although at first David's story of what happened that day is believed, very soon scepticism

creeps in and the police suspect him of murdering his wife. David realises that if he's to discover the truth he must do some investigating himself. This is a real page-turner – bound to keep you reading to the small hours. **SCG**

CAMERON, Christian

Killer of men.- Orion, 2010.



This is the start of a new series set in the times of ancient Greece by the author of the well-received *Tyrant* series. The hero of the story is a farm boy called Arimnestos who becomes involved in the war that develops between the citizens of his native Plataea and a hostile neighbouring city called Thebes. He joins his father and older brother in battle for the first time. When his brother dies during the first onslaught, he steps into his place to stand in the battle line, referred to as the wall of

bronze. There he witnesses the death of his father and inadvertently shares in the famous and unexpected victory.

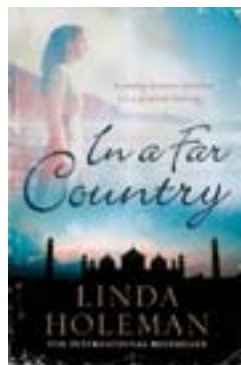
Arimnestos is knocked out, and when he awakes he finds himself a slave in transit to the Asian continent. He has been betrayed by a cowardly and jealous cousin, and is sold to Hipponax, a rich citizen of Ephesus. Arimnestos serves as the personal slave to Archilogos, son of Hipponax, and they become firm friends. Together they attend classes with Heraclitus, a famous philosopher. This is a happy period in our protagonist's life, but it is not to last!

So begins an epic journey from slavery that takes the young Arimnestos through a world poised on the brink of an epic confrontation, as the emerging civilisation of the Greeks starts to flex its muscles against the established empire of the Persians. Arimnestos soon discovers that he has a talent for fighting, earning the reputation 'a killer of men', much like his hero, Achilles.

This title will appeal to all fans of the historical fiction genre and even fantasy readers who enjoyed similar titles set in the ancient Greek world by authors such as David Gemmell. The novel offers wonderful historical detail, vivid battle scenes and a gripping story, imaginatively conveyed whilst highlighting important historical events. **EB**

HOLEMAN, Linda

In a far country.- Headline Review, 2008.

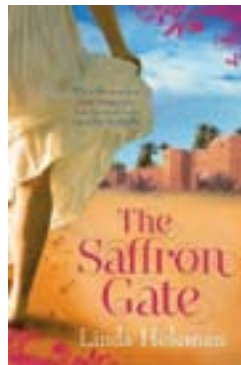


This is the author's third adult novel and the third in a series featuring the Ingram family, although I wasn't aware of that when I read it and it certainly can stand alone. It is an engrossing historical novel set in 19th century India some years after the Indian Mutiny and focuses on the life of Pree Fincastle, the young daughter of English missionaries. David Ingram, one of the main characters from **The moonlit cage**, appears again here but doesn't take centre stage and it really doesn't matter that the reader

is unfamiliar with his story. This Canadian author is good at evoking the sights and smells of India, and includes a 3-page glossary of Indian terms. This is a very readable and satisfying novel, which is well worth recommending. **SCG**

HOLEMAN, Linda

The saffron gate.- Headline Review, 2009.



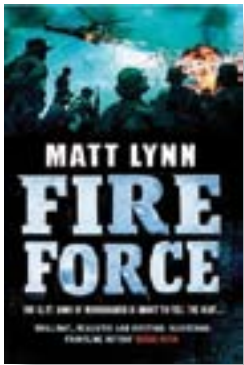
With **The saffron gate** Holman has produced another thoroughly enjoyable historical romance. The heroine is an American, Sidonie O'Shea, who contracts polio at the age of 15. Although bedridden for quite a while she slowly regains the use of her legs, but her illness and the resulting isolation she feels from her friends shrinks her world. Some years later she meets and falls in love with a French doctor who had grown

up in Morocco.

When she becomes pregnant he proposes marriage but then disappears. Sidonie decides to travel to Morocco to try to find him and to try to understand why he left. And that's when the story gets really interesting: a rather naïve, crippled American spinster travelling through North Africa to find this man who the reader doubts wants to be found. Holeman is good at writing about exotic cultures and places, and she really makes 1930s Morocco come alive for the reader. I can recommend this as an entertaining novel for women.SCG

LYNN, Matt

Fire force.- Headline, 2010.

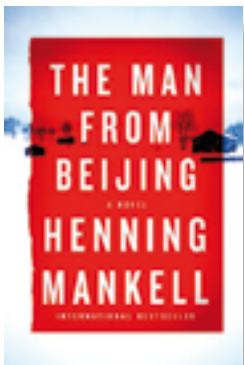


This is Lynn's second action adventure thriller and the second in a series featuring the men, (mercenaries really), involved with a private military organisation called Dudley Emergency Forces – 'known in the trade as Death Inc.' The first title in the series was **Death force** which was set in Helmand Province in Afghanistan. This one is set in Africa, parts of it in South Africa. It's action-packed and makes quite an entertaining read, but the writing is patchy. His characteri-

sation is weak; what he's done instead is write short biographies and back stories for his characters which one can find at the beginning of the book. What I found rather interesting is the 8-page appendix describing various weapons: thunder-flash stun grenades, different types of firearms, military helicopters, and so on. I read this book without having read **Death force**, but I think readers would prefer to read that first. I wasn't particularly impressed, but the story is entertaining and scary enough (with some really tense moments) to find a readership. It's certainly not in the same class as McNab's books or some others in the genre, but if you're looking for a macho action thriller to while away a few hours and aren't too fussy about the quality of the writing, then Matt Lynn is an author to try.SCG

MANKELL, Henning

The man from Beijing / translated from the Swedish by Laurie Thompson.- Harvill Secker, 2010.



This new thriller from Mankell has received mixed reviews. While I can see their point and can agree to some extent – the novel does perhaps cover too wide a canvas – I nevertheless loved it. I have selected reviews from the *Library Journal* and *Booklist* to reprint here. 'A 2006 massacre in Sweden reverberates back to 19th-century China and America in this stand-alone by the

author of the Kurt Wallander mysteries. When 19 of the 22 residents of a Swedish hamlet are brutally murdered, Judge Brigitta Roslin discovers that the victims include her late mother's foster parents, so she looks into the case, offering a theory counter to that of local authorities. Even after the arrest of a local man who confesses and then commits suicide, Roslin continues probing in a quest that eventually takes her to China and puts her in mortal danger. And she finds that revenge - whether sweet or best served cold - is a powerful motivator even after a century and a half. Verdict: most compelling at the beginning and end, this sprawling novel becomes a leisurely examination of history's injustices and consequences as well as an intriguing postulation of how China might meet its most pressing societal problem. Mankell humanises the earnest, even meddlesome Roslin, so that the reader can't help but wish her well. Already an international bestseller, this seems destined for success here, too.' (*Library Journal*.)

'Mankell's latest . . . lacks the tight focus of his Wallander novels, but it still delivers plenty of suspense and a compelling protagonist. But China is only the beginning of Mankell's narrative globe-trotting. The plot also careens to Mozambique and London, not to mention lengthy flashbacks to the 19th-century US, where two Chinese brothers, sold into slavery, are building railroads. The various strains of this massive plot are skilfully interconnected, but there are too many stories each of which could have been its own novel and Mankell spends far too much time laying out his position on modern Chinese and African politics. Still, the opening set piece, in which the murders are discovered, is a stunner, and the finalé . . . is equally gripping.

'Yes, Mankell overextends himself here, but he also shows why he remains a must-read for anyone interested in the international crime novel.' (*Books & Leisure*.)

This is a long book with an involved plot which may resonate with readers in Africa. Highly recommended.SCG

MULLER, Martie

As die eland struikel.- Lapa, 2010.

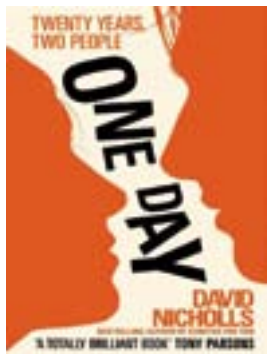


'Vir haar debuutroman het hierdie skrywer 'n knap wegspringplek gekies: Springbok-skopbokser Paula Krige kom na 'n toernooi tuis en kry haar man, Hermanus, dood met 'n gifpyl in sy maag naby hul negejarige dogtertjie se lyk. Hul sewejarige seuntjie is skoonveld. Dit lyk of 'n trance-dans tydens die misdaad uitgevoer is. Geleidelik blyk dit dat Hermanus, 'n ingenieur wat dikwels in Lesotho gewerk het, 'n obsessiewe belangstelling in die San se rotskunstekeninge ontwikkel het. Hy wou self hul trance-dans leer dans. Paula gaan soek haar seuntjie - en ook haar man se ware, onbekende aard - in Lesotho. Sy sien nou, al was sy en Hermanus 14 jaar getroud, het hulle eintlik maar "'n gelamineerde vriendskap"' gedeel. Dit wat die skrywer ontgin - die

kultuurverskille tussen buurvolke, die verbyleef tussen huweliksmaats, die seer gemis aan 'n geliefde - word weldeurdag aangepak. Net jammer dat sy in haar aanvanklike konsipiëring die soeklig slegs op Paula laat val. Die gevolg is te min ander karakters, min dialoog, lang, beskrywende paragrawe, Paula wat aanhoudend dink en wroeg, wat selfs leidrade aan 'n redelik onbekwame polisiebeampte verskaf. Veral in die begin is daar te veel vertelling en te min uitbeelding. Die klem verskuif geleidelik van 'n spanningsroman na 'n sielkundige roman met 'n filosofiese onderbou. Eers later versterk die spanningslyn ... Die roman bevat vele knap beskrywings van onder meer Lesotho. Soms laat die skrywer haar egter verlei tot oordrewe liriese woorde en frases ... Omvattende navorsing is veral gedoen oor die San-rotskunstekeninge en spesifiek die vertolking van die trance-danse wat oral in die tekeninge aangetref word. In hierdie roman bied 'n goed ingeligte skrywer binne die raamwerk van verskeie verhoudings minder bekende kulturele feite onderhoudend aan om haar debuutwerk, ondanks veral beplanningstekortkominge, 'n insiggewende en verrykende leeservaring te maak.' (www.volksblad.com)

NICHOLLS, David

One day.- Hodder, 2009.



'Nicholls creates characters that are beautifully flawed and so totally real that you'll miss them when you close this book.

'Emma is warm and funny but fleeting and aimless. Dexter is rich, arrogant and seemingly shallow. Each year, on 15th July, the reader catches up with them over the course of two decades. Starting in 1988 with their first meeting at university as 20-year-olds - hopeful and excited about

a world of possibility - to their late 40s when they've become people their younger selves wouldn't recognise. This is a story about real life with skilful observations and fast-paced prose. Sad and funny, it captures the magic of time passing and missing your moment. Stepping into their world, you feel like you've lived their lives with them - the ups and the downs in what is ultimately an unconventional love story. Brilliantly original and honest, painful, witty and true, this really is like life - with no inevitability in what the next year will bring.' www.guardian.co.uk: '... there's much more to this novel than the jokes and the apparently limitless supply of comic detail. Entertaining and polished as Nicholls' earlier books were, they were both genre-bound comedies where things tended to happen to the hapless heroes simply because they were in comedies. Here he adds to his exceptional comic talent a new-found depth.' (*Bookseller.*) Winner of the 2010 Boeke Prize - Judges' Choice Award.

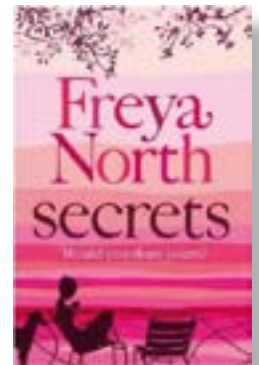
NORTH, Freya

Secrets.- Harper, 2009.

'Winner of the 2008 Romantic Novel of the Year Award for

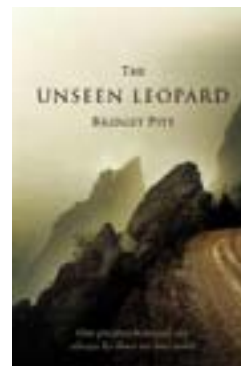
Pillow Talk, Freya North sets herself high standards with her sharp examination of relationships and life's complicated issues.

'Her 10th novel, **Secrets**, is an ideal holiday read, set in the quirky Victorian seaside town Saltburn-by-Sea in the North East. Joe, a bridge-builder with a lovely house and no commitments, is looking for a house-sitter for his old home by the sea. In steps Tess, a single mum with a toddler daughter who has escaped a mess of her own making and carries oodles of secrets involving past and present loves. As their relationship develops, there's a nearly kiss which sparks further complications and jealousies as another casual girlfriend comes out of the closet. North tackles a range of issues - from single motherhood to family conflict - with intelligence and wit, showing how secrets from your past can threaten your future.' (*Coventry Telegraph.*)



PITT, Bridget

The unseen leopard.- Human, 2010.



'Fiction fired by moral outrage is a tricky thing to handle. The best example in recent years was probably John le Carre's **The constant gardener** where his anger at the behaviour of big pharmaceutical companies drove a superb plot.

'Bridget Pitt's outrage is directed at genetically modified foodstuffs, and the dangers of their unregulated use - and the impossibility of regulating them anyway. And, with this as a backdrop to the plot, she has

produced a fine novel in **The unseen leopard**.

'Its protagonist, Samantha Campbell, is in the throes of deep depression. Three years before the novel opens, her beloved younger sister Melissa, a doctor, was killed in a road accident in the Eastern Cape, and Sam is struggling to come to terms with the death as she brings up Melissa's son and battles against her resentment of his father, Dylan, and the fear that one day he will want to take the child away from her.

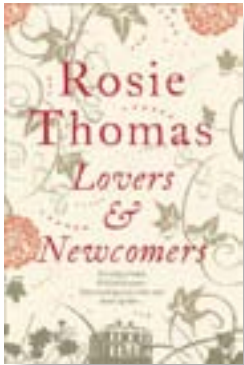
'A second strand is the diary, or letter to Samantha written by James McIntyre, an American conservationist and former microbiologist who was Melissa's lover. He opens by saying: "I killed your sister", but that bald statement hides a complex and disturbing truth.

'There are many unseen leopards in this book, the dangerous things that lurk just out of our sight, but closer than we think. It is a complex novel, but Pitt deftly weaves her strands together, and the climax is both gripping and moving.

'There are a couple of moments, particularly towards the end, where you can feel Pitt trying not to allow her feelings about GM either to overwhelm the human story or to seem as if they have been tacked on. But generally she succeeds, and has produced a powerful novel about people, grief, the long, clutching fingers of the past and, ultimately, forgiveness.' (*The Witness*.)

THOMAS, Rosie

Lovers and newcomers.- Harper, 2010.



'Thomas is one of the best story-tellers around. Whether she's writing about tricky teenagers or irascible grandparents, she has the knack of creating stories that resonate with her readers' lives and in her new novel Thomas turns her attention to the trials and tribulations of turning 60. A disparate group of friends: two couples, a glamorous widow and a gay man have known each other since they were wild students in the Sixties. In those days they assumed they'd

stay young and beautiful for ever and joked that if they ever grew old they'd all move into a fabulous, outrageous commune. Now, 40 years on, they recklessly decide to give the commune a go. Desperate to stave off the unedifying prospect of old age, newly widowed Miranda invites her friends to live in her rambling Norfolk mansion. Penniless bohemians Selwyn and Polly work all hours to renovate a tumbledown barn adjacent to Miranda's house, well-to-do lawyer Amos and his elegant wife Katherine draw up plans for a swanky house next door and set designer Colin, who's mourning the death of his lover Stephen, flits between London, New York and the country.

'The six throw themselves wholeheartedly into building new lives . . . they laugh, dance, drink too much and behave badly, just like the good old days.

'Except this time round they discover that they can't simply put the clock back . . . As Katherine astutely observes: 'It isn't until you come to live in each other's pockets like this that you start to see all the cracks.' As always, Thomas weaves her characters' stories together with such skill and warmth that you really care about them. She's equally adept at conveying the hopes and fears of the younger generation too . . . the archaeological strand to the story isn't as compelling as the emotional heart of the book but once again Thomas has produced a sure-fire winner.' (www.express.co.uk)

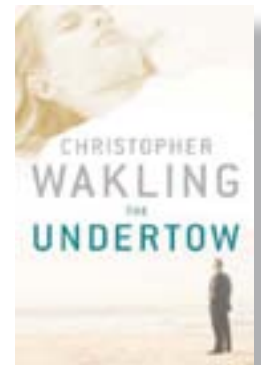
WAKLING, Christopher

The undertow.- Picador, 2007.

Wakling's third novel, about a father-daughter relationship, is set in Australia. Wilson is a successful man working in the reinsurance business. When he was 19 or so he fathered a child. The mother wanted to have the baby but then left a couple of months after the birth of their daughter. Wilson, with the help of his father, has brought Anna up. Now she is 18 and in her gap year backpacking

around Australia. He gets a phone call saying she has been seriously injured while swimming. He travels from London to a hospital in Byron Bay in Australia to find her in a coma.

She is technically brain dead and the doctor wants his permission to turn off the life support machines. Wilson cannot accept that she will not recover nor that this was a result of a swimming accident. Anna's companion, a young man who had been swimming with her, had disappeared without giving his name or details. Her father wants to find out more, to find out why he abandoned Anna in the sea. His search for answers takes him into the Australian bush. Wakling has interspersed Wilson's story with Anna's account of her travels. **The undertow** is an unusual story and a compelling read. If you've never read any of his books, it's worth checking out his previous novels: **On Cape Three Points** and **Beneath the diamond sky**. Wakling really is an accomplished story-teller; all his novels are compulsively readable.SCG



YOUNG ADULT FICTION
JONGVOLWASSE VERHALENDE LEKTUUR

CARTER, Noni

Good fortune.- Simon, 2011.



'Sarah, Anna, and Ayanna are the names used by one person over the course of her life. First she is Sarah, a slave on a plantation in Tennessee. Her days are full of endless labor, humiliation, and the threat of rape. She struggles to understand the meaning of freedom and to educate herself despite the danger. After witnessing a brutal whipping, she flees north to freedom. Barely surviving the harrowing journey, Sarah and her adopted brother arrive in Ohio,

only to find that freedom is not as sweet as she had hoped. She changes her name to Anna and begins a new life, but she worries about loved ones left behind and is embittered by the severe restrictions and discrimination faced by free blacks. 'One of the more effective literary devices is how Anna's narration gradually shifts from slave patois to more refined speech as her education progresses. Ayanna was her name as a child in Africa, remembered in nightmares, where the memories of the murder of her mother, the horrifying ocean passage in the belly of a slave ship, and being separated from her brother on the auction block haunt

her. The transitions between the dreams and waking life are occasionally jarring, but on the whole the narrative flows smoothly and is well paced. An author's note about fact and fiction in the book adds weight to the historical information included.' (*School Library Journal*.)

SMITH, Alex

Agency Blue.- Tafelberg, 2010.



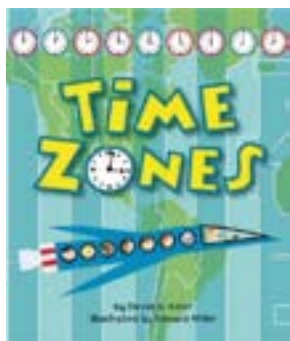
'A semi-graphic novel aimed at young adults, **Agency Blue** is a story within a story. Khayelitsha-based graphic novelist Joe Blue Siyengo weaves a tale around the Agency Blue detective firm, started by Congolese refugee Felix Bleu, who has recently died in mysterious circumstances. It's up to Felix's daughter, Kitty, and her three sassy friends to get to the bottom of his death. Along the way they ruminate on romantic vampire novels, eat

plenty of French patisserie fare and rub shoulders with a cast of larger-than-life characters, including a dodgy *Cape Times* journalist, a deadly Russian art collector, party-goers from the Mother City Queer Project and a sexy Irish cop. The novel is interspersed with madcap cartoon-style illustrations by Pierre Smit, which adds another dimension to the already multi-layered story. It's a quirky, playful, fast-paced, totally original novel and a welcome change from generic *Twilight*-style vampire young-adult fodder. It won the silver prize in the Sanlam Prize for Youth Literature competition and the writing and illustrations are charming.' (www.timeslive.co.za)

JUVENILE NON-FICTION

ADLER, David A

Time zones.- Holiday House, 2010.



'Adler offers a simple but thorough explanation of time zones and why people experience different parts of the day simultaneously depending on their location around the globe. Illustrations of an astronaut and his robot dog provide a perspective from high above earth, which helps readers visualise the way sunlight reaches different parts of the planet as it rotates. The author explains

how the need to set railroad schedules led to setting standard times in the United States and Canada in 1883. A year later 20 countries agreed to divide the world into 24 time zones, establishing Greenwich Mean Time as the starting point. Numerous maps and diagrams help visualise these abstract boundaries, including the international date line in the Pacific. The illustrator even introduces some Martian observers who want to learn about the subject. Adler explains the impact of daylight savings time and includes a simple experiment for readers to see for themselves how noon and midnight occur simultaneously on opposite sides of the globe.

The clear visual and verbal presentation of this basic topic makes the book a worthwhile purchase for most libraries.' (*School Library Journal*.)

JUVENILE FICTION JEUGLEKTUUR

RENNISON, Louise

Withering tights: the misadventures of Tallulah Casey.- Harper, 2010.



This is the first book in an entertaining new series featuring the 14-year-old cousin of Rennison's popular series character, Georgia. Tallulah comes from a very unconventional family. She has travelled to Yorkshire to spend the summer holidays at a rural performing arts college. This story is aimed at a younger readership than the Georgia books. Tallulah is a likeable girl, the school setting interesting and the story fun. I'm

sure this series will gain a readership.SCG

Note: At the time of going to press some of these titles were still on order.

EB.....Erich Buchhaus
SCG.....Sabrina Gosling