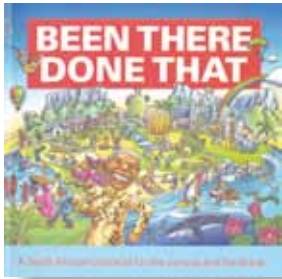


ADULT NON-FICTION VOLWASSE VAKLEKTUUR

BRISTOW, David

Been there, done that: a South African checklist for the curious and the brave.- Struik, 2011.

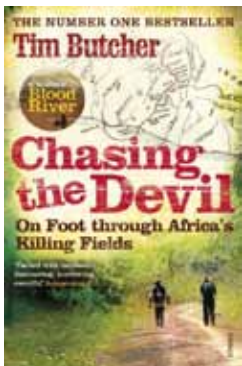


This is the latest book from this well-known local author who was for many years the editor of *Getaway* magazine. **Been there, done that** is a 392-page, colour-illustrated travel and holiday guide, described on the blurb as offering 'the very best (and sometimes the worst) of everything the country has to offer: wildlife, history,

geography, art and culture, things to do, places to stay and routes and trails to be discovered by car, the bike and on foot'. The book is divided into the broad sections mentioned above and then each section is sub-divided still further. In the Art and Culture section, one can find chapters like: *Must-reads*, *Off to the movies*, and *Architecture of note*, while in the Things to do section, there are *Catch the waves*, *Ride the wind*, *Ghost stories*, and *Things to do with kids*. The colour photographs are excellent throughout and make this book a lovely browse for the armchair traveller as well as a helpful and useful guide for holidaymakers or even locals who want some ideas about where to go, what to do and what to see. A colleague, who isn't a native Capetonian, found a whole lot of new places to visit and things to do in and around Cape Town. I did notice a couple of inaccuracies and some really strange choices. I can imagine some very dissatisfied visitors arriving in Kalk Bay to watch the sunset. It's listed as one of the top 11 sunset views in South Africa! But, all in all, **Been there, done that** is a real treasure trove of information and ideas about how to spend your leisure time and enjoy what this country has to offer; whatever your taste.SCG

BUTCHER, Tim

Chasing the devil: on foot through Africa's killing fields.-Vintage, 2011.



Tim Butcher, who is based in Cape Town, had a great deal of success with his debut book, **Blood River**, in which he recounts his journey through the Congo following the route taken by adventurer/explorer Henry Morton Stanley in the 19th century. In this new book he retraces the journey taken by the writer, Graham Greene, and his cousin Barbara. 'This time Butcher used Graham Greene's little-known 1935 travel book, **Journey without maps**, as his guide on the

350-mile trek from Freetown, on the coast of Sierra Leone, to the

coast of Liberia. Greene's route took Butcher through the remote back country of both countries and brought him into contact with the people living there. Butcher weaves reflections on Greene's writing through his own reflections on the ways that each region has changed in the intervening decades. Through his captivating storytelling, Butcher leads readers along through the dangers and the exhilarations of this trip, and we learn with him the value of taking time to savour the true smell and taste of a place.' (*Publisher's Weekly*)

Butcher has had some previous experience of the region. He worked as a war correspondent in Liberia and also travelled as a reporter with the Paras when British troops were sent into Sierra Leone. A reviewer describes **Chasing the devil** as 'at once memoir, history, demystifying biography, and harrowing adventure tale ... Butcher found his (Greene's) 1935 trip to Liberia baffling. Research suggests that Greene may have had an ulterior mission not directly referred to in **Journey without maps**, namely, investigating possible slavery among freed slaves from America. Butcher's 350-mile trek through jungles and remote villages leads him to masked dancing devils, missionaries, and blood diamond hunters, who stand in contrast to the unmolested land and pure-hearted people Greene reportedly encountered. Butcher's exciting book is an important depiction of a war-torn nation plagued by greed, violence, and pure evil and of a writer who lived for adventure and longed to understand humanity's darker side.' (*Booklist*)

For any readers who enjoy travel narratives and are interested in Africa's history, I can recommend both of Butcher's books.SCG

GOBLE, Fiona

Make a monster: 15 easy-to-make fleecie toys you'll love to sew.- New Holland, 2010.



Fifteen easy-to-make fleece dolls, from pink and pretty Dilly to bright and bold Leo, there is a creature here to suit every personality. The items are all made from soft fleece, which is versatile and easy to work with. Basic sewing skills, the brightly coloured fleece itself, and a few accessories are all that's needed to make these wonderful toys in a matter of hours. The instructions are clear and easy to follow and

the pattern pieces are all at the back, ready to photocopy or even trace with paper. The book has templates and clear colour-stitching guides. The patterns are really easy to understand and work from, rated from 'quite easy', 'really easy' to 'some sewing experience helpful'. All the monsters are fun and cute and the fact that they all have names and character descriptions is very appealing.TGS

MENZIES, Gavin

The lost empire of Atlantis.- Swordfish, 2011.

New York Times bestselling historian Gavin Menzies presents newly uncovered evidence revealing that the lost city of Atlantis was not

only real but also at the heart of a highly advanced global empire that even reached as far as the shores of America before being violently wiped from the earth. In 1500 BCE a super volcano beneath the Greek island of Santorini exploded in a near-apocalyptic eruption, burying beneath the rubble and waves the world's most remarkable lost civilisation.

In his book, **The lost empire of Atlantis**, Gavin Menzies, the author of the worldwide bestseller **1421**, suggests that Atlantis wasn't just one island but an entire empire, controlled by the Minoans. It has long been known that this extraordinary civilisation, with its great palaces and sea ports based in Crete and nearby Thera (now called Santorini), had a level of sophistication that belied its place in the Bronze Age world, yet never before has the extent of its reach been uncovered. Through painstaking research, including recent DNA evidence, Menzies has pieced together the incredible picture of a cultured people who traded with India and Mesopotamia, Africa and Western Europe, including Britain and Ireland, and even sailed to North America.

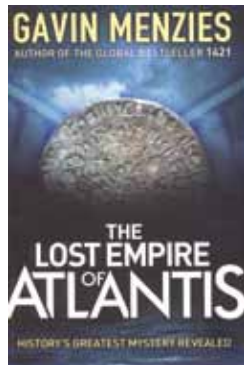
The author reveals that copper found at Minoan sites can only have come from Lake Superior, and that it was copper, combined with tin from Cornwall and elsewhere to make bronze, that gave the Minoans their wealth. He uses knowledge gleaned as a naval captain to explore ancient shipbuilding and navigation techniques and explain how the Minoans were able to travel so far. He looks at why the Minoan Empire, which was 1500 years ahead of China and Greece in terms of science, architecture, art and language, disappeared so abruptly, and what led to its destruction. Reading like a real-life Indiana Jones story **The lost empire of Atlantis** takes us on an epic journey around the world to link the Minoan civilisation to the mystery of Atlantis. The author covers material previously suggested by the Greek archaeologist professor Spyridon Marinatos who contested during the 1960s that the Minoan civilisation was the legendary lost Atlantis - Menzies just takes it further. Another speculative account that allows for an engrossing read while at the same time offering a good overview of the Minoans.EB

OREY, Cal

The healing powers of honey: a complete guide to nature's remarkable nectar.- Kensington Bks., 2011.

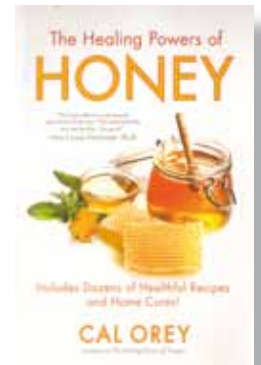
Drawing on interviews with medical doctors, beekeepers and researchers, this eye-opening book, sweetened with stories about honey bees and humans, reveals the extraordinary healing powers of honey and presents recipes and advice for incorporating honey into everyday life.

Cal Orey's accessible writing style sucks you in and keeps you engrossed as she lays out, chapter by chapter, honey's revered place in both ancient and modern societies. Her research goes back to biblical times, and there are references to the ancient Egyptians who prized honey so much that they served it as an offering to



their gods and even placed it in clay jars within their tombs. The ancient Greeks and Romans, again, also valued honey not only for cooking but also for its medicinal properties. Readers will discover that honey has amazing health benefits such as lowering the risk of heart disease, cancer, diabetes, and even helping to reduce body fat and unwanted weight. It also increases longevity and can relieve a variety of ailments, including allergies, coughs, fatigue, pain, and stress.

The author's informative and down-to-earth style makes this book a welcome addition to guides on natural remedies.EB



ADULT FICTION VOLWASSE VERHALENDE LEKTUUR

ASHLEY, Trisha

Chocolate wishes.- Avon, 2010.



Chocolate wishes is another light-hearted romantic comedy from the author of **Good husband material**, **Singled out**, and a few others. The story is about a confectioner, the warm and down-to-earth Chloe Lyon. She has moved to the small Lancashire village of Sticklepond to be near her two closest friends. There she lives in one side of a house with her teenage brother while next door is her unconventional grandfather and elderly cousin. Her grandfather, a well-known

author of pagan books, is planning to set up a museum of paganism there – a plan which doesn't go down very well with the inhabitants of Sticklepond. **Chocolate wishes** is the name of the business Chloe runs from home: she makes delicious chocolates in the shape of angels and hearts and places a small written wish or prediction in the hollow centre of each. Although Chloe is not a churchgoer, the arrival of a new vicar in such a small community still has an effect, especially when she learns that the vicar is none other than her ex-lover from her university years, Raffy Sinclair – a rock musician who used to be very successful with his band, Mortal Ruin.

While the book was in my office, its cover attracted quite a bit of interest from women who saw it there. While many will thoroughly enjoy this novel, I know some readers have felt that they've been misled by the cover. **Chocolate wishes** is an entertaining mix of romance and village life with paganism and religion, and even a bit of magic thrown in. If that appeals to you, then this is an ideal book to curl up with on a rainy Sunday afternoon – preferably with some chocolate at hand.SCG

ECKLETON, Zain

Die rolbalspeler.- Kwela Bks., 2011.



'Die skrywer Zain Eckleton is, net soos die hoofkarakter in die boek, "Halfblind. Méér as halfblind. Amper blind".

Die rolbalspeler is sy debuutroman, maar sy eerste kortverhaal is al in 1986 in *Huisgenoot* gepubliseer.

Hans se lewe slaan 'n heel nuwe koers in toe hy eendag deur 'n blonde vrou oor Voortrekkerweg gehelp word, sy heel in haar skik dat sy 'n goeie daad kon verrig. Aan die anderkant, vat hy haar vas met 'n "dankie, maar dit was nie nodig nie" en vra dat

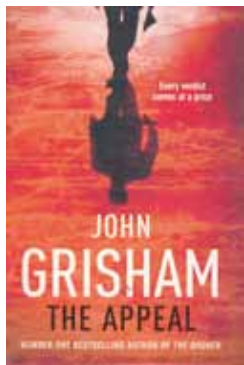
sy hom weer terugneem na die oorkantste sypaadjie waar hy netnou nog diep ingedagte gestaan het.

'Sy steur haar nie aan sy afjak nie: "Maar nee, sy was as-aan, ongesteurd." En hier begin die gesels wat 'n groot impak op sy lewe sou hê: Hy begin rolbal speel, ontmoet nuwe mense . . . tot hy uiteindelik die kans kry om verder te gaan leer en die huis verruil vir twee jaar by die Instituut in Grassy Park.

'Dis 'n wonderlike verhaal wat heerlik lees!' (*Huisgenoot*)

GRISHAM, John

The appeal.- Arrow, 2008.



The appeal is not a typical Grisham legal thriller. I kept on expecting a hero or heroine to emerge but it didn't happen. The novel is an indictment of the American judicial system. In some states judges are elected, not appointed. They have to run for office – which involves a political campaign, fund-raising and so on, and then after serving a term have to do the same again for re-election. This obviously puts their judicial impartiality and disinterest into question. At the same

time we know about the absurd extremes which civil litigation often reaches in the USA – the 'suing culture'.

The story of **The appeal**: In Mississippi the firm Krane Chemical is found guilty of dumping toxic waste, contaminating the water supply of a small town and causing the deaths of a man and a child. Besides damages awarded to the widow for their deaths, the jury also imposed punitive damages of \$38 million. As this small town has a number of others either dead or sick, the company is likely to be sued many more times. An appeal is lodged with the Supreme Court. The mega-rich head of the Trudeau Group (which owns huge chunks of Krane Chemical) is approached by a firm offering to get (for a fee) a new judge elected to the Mississippi Supreme Court in time to hear the appeal and tip the balance, so ensuring a 'good verdict' for Krane. A young man is chosen as the new candidate. I found this book really quite scary – to learn how justice falls by the

wayside as the legal system is manipulated to meet the needs of big business. Although this is readable enough, I found I took much longer to finish it than I usually do with Grisham's legal thrillers. **The appeal** is not the ideal 'beach read' one expects from Grisham, but it is still worth reading.SCG

MAHALA, Sipiwo

African delights.- Jacana, 2011.



'These wide-ranging and interlocking short stories are a delight. Themes drawn from raw, flat male energy pulsed on desire, the moment of losing innocence between black and white, merging cultures, tenderpreneurs and recasting Can Themba's classic story *The suit with the dress that fed the suit* and *The lost suit*. Mahala is a skilful writer who indulges his character to trip into folly; giving him the distance to comment subtly on the upheavals of modern society, mainly urban, but

sprinkled with rural and traditional "truth". His musing on the new class of showy BEE consumers, who think they can buy any love and any stuff, is scathing and sharp. This new talent will keep us poised till his next delight.' (*Cape Times*)

MGQOLOZANA, Thando

Hear me alone.- Jacana, 2011.



'Thando Mgqolozana's novel confuses and challenges as much as it delights with its whimsical content. The setting is the Old Testament – with an African flavour. There's a village called Nazareth, a king named Herod, prophets false and true, and a baby born under a wandering star in a stable in Bethlehem. There's a young man on the run because of passion's unintended consequences. True love has been thwarted in time-honoured fashion, by parents intent on an ar-

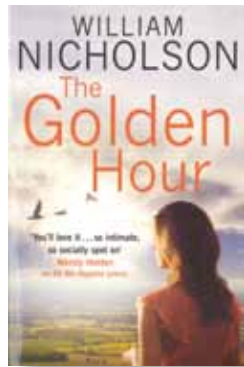
ranged marriage that has nothing to do with the heart's compass, and everything to do with hand-made wooden furniture . . . There is plenty of playful fun in this book. But you have to work hard to get at it. There are implications embedded in the village repartee, there are deep meanings and sly allusions.' (*The Times*)

NICHOLSON, William

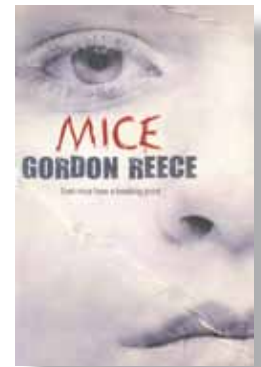
The golden hour.- Quercus, 2011.

'William Nicholson is trying to do something unique: he's trying to reinvent commercial fiction. It's not an easy task . . . He's almost there . . . **The golden hour** returns to his stamping ground - angsty, middle-class families in Lewes, East Sussex - but with even more ease

and confidence than the previous two books that make up this sort-of trilogy. (I say sort-of because characters overlap across the three books but they can also be safely read separately.) You can feel Nicholson's pedigree in his writing: he's the Oscar-nominated screenwriter of *Shadowlands* and *Gladiator*. He has a cinematic feel for scenes; his novels are packed with dialogue. This has pros and cons: he is an accomplished, enjoyable writer whose snappy scenes zip satisfyingly by. But there's so much dialogue it sometimes reads like a screenplay and the quickfire exchanges can distract from the more philosophical asides. There are also a lot of colliding and competing storylines. Andrew is devastated that Maggie is not rushing to move in with him. Henry and Laura are missing their son, Jack, and welcome his arrogant best friend, Toby, into their house. Liz and Alan are struggling with their relationship with their son, and with Liz's ailing mother ... And I've barely recounted the half of it. But this is made up for by the wittiness of the commentary ... I admire Nicholson's stubbornness in using characters and situations, who should come across as clichés, but somehow don't ... he treats these people without irony and rightly so: he wants to make us understand them and love them, not judge them and laugh at them. It's a noble endeavour and a pleasure to read, even if sometimes you wish he would just concentrate on one strand instead of trying to weave so many stories together ... this is an emotionally engaging, clever read.' (*Observer*)

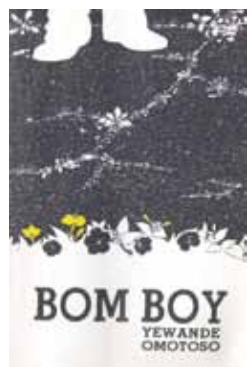


for both children and teenagers. I'm not entirely sure whether he intended this latest novel to be aimed at adults or teenagers, but it doesn't really matter as it can be enjoyed by both. The central character and narrator is a teenager, Shelley. She is 16, quiet and clever, and has been very badly bullied at school. Her mother, too, has been bullied – by her husband, in their marriage and in their recent divorce settlement. Shelley and her mother move to a cottage out of town where tutors come to teach her. She and her mom are the 'mice' of the title: people who are timid and do anything to avoid confrontation. *Mice* is a kind of psychological thriller which the author describes as 'a meditation on the nature of violence saying that for him 'the most important theme of the story is that violence – even when it's justified – inevitably changes us'. Reece has worked as a teacher and as a personal injury lawyer and his experience in both fields shows in this thought-provoking story about what can happen when we are pushed to our limit. *Mice* is a compelling read.SCG



OMOTOSO, Yewande

Bom boy.- Modjaji, 2011.



Bom boy is a novel that delves into the complex inner life of a shy adopted black child who grows up in Cape Town's southern suburbs. The boy, Leke, becomes an even stranger man. The book alternates between 1992, when he is a child and 2012, when he is a young adult. The novel also gives an insight into the life of African immigrants living in a xenophobic society. It brings up the issue of latent racism that exists in Cape Town among some light-skinned people – darker man is the "swart gevaar" ... It reflects how a lot of people still feel superior because their skin colour gives them a sense of power and a perceived easier path through life ...' (*Cape Times*)

REECE, Gordon

Mice.- Allen, 2010.

Reece is an author/illustrator with a number of books to his name,

YOUNG ADULT FICTION
JONG VOLWASSE VERHALENDE LEKTUUR

FORMAN, Gayle

If I stay.- Doubleday, 2009.



'This is definitely a page-turner of a novel - and a weepie one too. Forman is an accomplished writer and the book is full of engaging, fully developed characters. At the start of the story, 17-year-old Mia appears to have everything ... Then tragedy happens. Her parents are both killed in a head-on collision. Mia is critically injured ... It's a story told in two parts: flashbacks from Mia's life and the events of the 24 hours following the accident. Written in the first

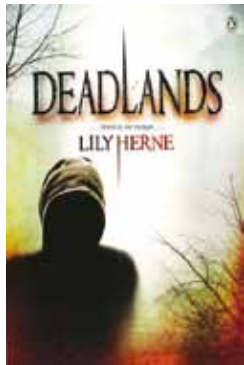
person, Mia's descriptions of her earlier life are full of lively detail and humour and the characters, even the minor ones, are people you really care about ... the accident and hospital scenes ... (are) less successful, but it doesn't detract from the overall power of this novel ... it would be a hard-hearted reader who remains dry-eyed ...' (*Books for Keeps*)

'Young adult fiction about death and dying occasionally treads a narrow line between the genuinely moving and the tear-jerking sentimental; the distinction is usually to be found in the quality of the writing. As we follow the story of 17-year-old Mia, a gifted classical musician ... we certainly feel the heartstrings being tugged but, while

there are some highly emotional moments, the overall tone is that of a writer firmly in control of her material. A tragic car crash means the death of Mia's parents ... leaving the teenager in hospital in a comatose state. Lying there, she explores, via a series of flashbacks, her memories of her entertainingly eccentric family, her friends ... boyfriend Adam and his band Shooting Star. Forman's depiction of all of these is beautifully done, amounting in total to a touching exploration of love in its many manifestations. But, juxtaposed with these warm memories, is the nature of the choice which Mia now has to make ... This cleverly constructed novel will have, deservedly, widespread popular appeal, especially perhaps, with a young female readership.' (*School Librarian Summer*)

HERNE, Lily

Deadlands.- Penguin, 2011.



'**Deadlands** prides itself on being South Africa's first zombie novel. And a fine contribution it is, too. It is aimed, one suspects, at the same teen audience who devour the *Twilight* novels alongside all things otherworldly. And so it is appropriately hip and street smart, with a trendy cast and a cool lead character. Lele is a 17-year-old who lives in a futuristic version of Cape Town, where the suburbs have been destroyed and flesh-eating zombies roam the shattered streets. Lele

dreams of escaping – but who can she trust?

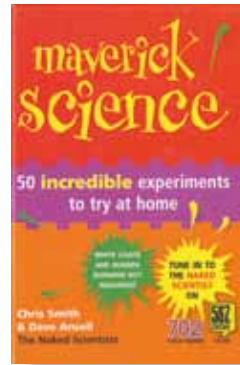
'Lily Herne is actually the pen name of local author Sarah Lotz and her daughter Savannah, who appear to have had a lot of fun putting **Deadlands** together: A sequel is expected soon.'

(Karen Rutter at www.gorrybowestaylor.co.za)

budding dance star, describing the different dance moves. It contains lots of colour pictures on how to perform the dance moves as well as double-page spreads with the best ever Bollywood movies and in which year they were released.TGS

SMITH, Chris and ANSELL, Dave

Maverick science: 50 incredible experiments to try at home.- Struik, 2010.



'The cover promises "White coats and Bunsen burners not required". Also not required is a host of other costly scientific equipment. Most of the "ingredients" are already at home. Each experiment has a title; "Make your own submarine" is the first one. This is not one which is marked "Adult Supervision". It then outlines the principle by description of what is going to happen. One then gets directions of how to do the experiment. Using a two litre transparent cold drink bottle

and a packet of sauce such as one gets from Nando's, and possibly a paper clip, one makes a submarine. One discovers buoyancy. There is then an explanation "Why does it work?" and a section "How does this apply to the real world?" and finally "Some other things to try".

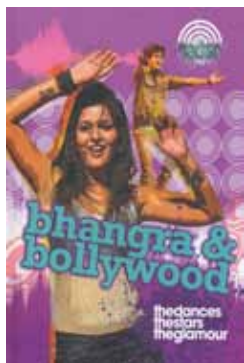
'Nearly all the experiments fall into the same complication category. Ones using heat are marked for adult supervision. I estimated that the experiments will probably appeal to children in late primary school and early high school, but a friend who is a former high school science teacher reckons that the experiments extend right through the syllabus and even grades 11 and 12 will find the book interesting and useful.'

Authors are better known as the Naked Scientists on radio. (www.artslink.co.za)

JUVENILE NON-FICTION JEUGVAKLEKTUUR

CLAYBOURNE, Anna

Bhangra and Bollywood.- Wayland, 2011.



The book describes bhangra as a whirlwind of music and moves, mesmerising beats and swirling, colourful costumes. These spectacular dances began in India and then exploded onto the big screens in Bollywood movies. It also features queen of Bollywood Aishwarya Rai's career highlights. It tells us the story of a rising star as well as a five-minute interview with a professional Bollywood and bhangra dancer and choreographer. It also tells the story of a week in the life of a

Time for kids big book of how: 501 facts kids want to know.- Time for Kids Bks., c2011.



The **Big book of how** is a compendium of interesting items of information - all colourfully and interestingly presented. The publisher describes the book as presenting 'kids 8 to 12-years-old with answers to the kinds of intriguing questions that appeal to their sense of curiosity. Colourful graphics, spectacular photos and clear, engaging diagrams will help answer such questions as: *How does a chameleon change colours?; How can a person survive in the jungle?;*

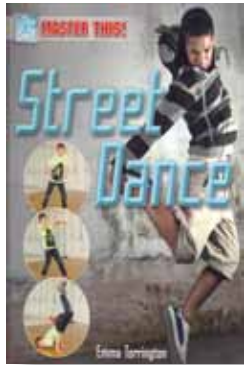
How do you build a teepee?; How do diamonds form?; How do light sticks work?; How are 3-D movies made?; How do astronauts train for a space mission?; How do we get cavities?; How does solar energy work? Divided by subject area - from animals, the human body and

technology to sports, food and green issues - kids will discover the background behind the questions through the book's photos, diagrams and art as well as its clear text'.

As you can see from the description, the book is a bit of a mish-mash, but that's part of the fun. This is the kind of book that reluctant readers, especially boys, may find themselves picking up.SCG

TORRINGTON, Emma

Street dance.- Wayland, 2010.



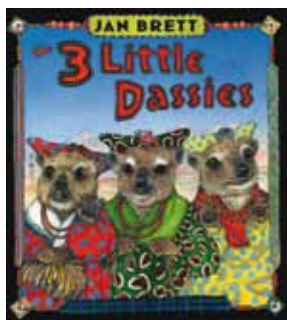
A title in the series *Master this!* The series encourages budding enthusiasts and inspires those already taking part in a range of sports and hobbies. The text is very brief with lots of colour photographs that depict the dance moves. The book explains what street dance is, covering all the different techniques of street dancing like ripple, rotating and isolation. It explains how to create a routine and dancing in groups. It further gives guidance for clothing and kit, conditioning and

practice and how to put it all together. Included are a glossary, index as well as web sites for further reading.TGS

**JUVENILE FICTION
JEUGLEKTUUR**

BRETT, Jan

The three little dassies.- GP Putnam's Sons, 2010.



This is the author's African version of the three little pigs' story which she developed while camping in Namibia in 2007. There she observed a colony of little rock dassies gathering at a mountain spring and a redheaded Agama lizard who acted as if he owned the place. The sudden appearance of an eagle, a natural predator of dassies, sent them scattering for cover; and so an

alternative version of the three little pigs' story developed.

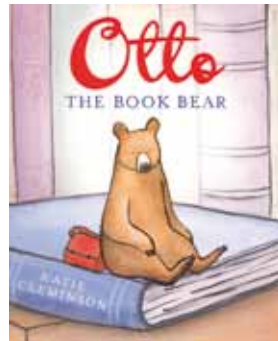
The story revolves around three little dassie sisters - Mimbi, Pimbi, and Timbi. Just like the little pigs who built new homes, the sisters cross a desert in Southern Africa to build their houses. There they meet the friendly Agama lizard who warmly welcomes them as he is the only one there, except for an eagle. Although the dassies are not too keen on the eagle, they decide to stay. One builds a home of grass, another of driftwood and the third one builds a stone house. As all of us know, it is only the stone house that survives the onslaught of the eagle, and to this day dassies can always be found

living in rocky locations.

The story is not only entertaining, but its detailed illustrations are stunning and showcase vivid African patterns and prints. The three little dassies are depicted in dresses and flat turbans like the ones worn by the Herero women since Victorian times.EB

BYNUM, Janie and CLEMINSON, Katie

Otto the book bear.- Jonathan Cape, 2011.



Otto lives in a book and is the happiest when his story is read. When nobody is looking Otto can walk off the book's pages. Then one day the family move and they leave the book behind. Otto decides to leave the house to search for a new place to live, but the places he finds are either too busy, too wet, too cold, too high or too unwelcoming. He does not like the city and misses his book.

He decides to walk further and then he sees a place that looks full of light and hope. When he goes inside he is pleasantly surprised to see rows and rows of books. He also meets another book bear who introduces him to other book creatures. Otto is happy because he can practise his writing again and he has lots of new readers.

The illustrations, done in muted colours, work wonderfully with the story. Otto is a charming bear in a very charming story that contains simple language and the print is in big bold letters. A good storytime book. It celebrates a love of reading and good books.TGS

MURPHY, Sally

John and Dom / illustrated by Rhian Nest James.- Walker Bks., 2010.



'John has four main friends at school, and of them Dominic is, as John explains, "... my best mate and not just because his name sounds like domino.'" When Dominic throws up in class and then doesn't come back to school, John fears his friend is very sick. This is confirmed by John's mother when the illness is diagnosed as cancer.

'This non-rhyming verse novel is easy to read. It is told through the uncomplicated voice of a child who just wants to know the truth about his

friend. His recount of Dominic's reply to his question "Are you going to die, Dom?" is particularly poignant. As well as the importance of friendship, the subplot of a bully and why he behaves how he does, is thoughtfully interwoven in the story. Astute readers will pick up on the bully's illiteracy and loneliness.

John's passion for toppling dominoes is a strong theme throughout the story and the clever use of dominoes for the headings for each of the ten chapters is a nice touch. The black and white pencil illustrations by Nest James are delightful and serve to enhance the

reader's enjoyment of the text.

'There is much here for children and parents/teachers to discuss in this book, as well as being simply a lovely read. This is a heart-warming story and the importance of friendship is the main message behind this book.' (www.outpatch.com)

MILLS, Elizabeth

Tick-tock sharks / illustrated by Delana Bettoli.- Scholastic Inc., 2005.



'Telling time is one of those major milestones in growing up. Suddenly the clock makes sense and the hours have meaning. In this large format book, there is a clock cut-out with two hands that shows through the cover. Little fingers can easily change the hours and minutes. As the hands move into the appropri-

ate positions shown on the pages, the time is also displayed in numeric form. The text is described as silly, and it is. A variety of anthropomorphic sharks are shown involved in activities at various times of the day.

'At 8am whale sharks wake, get dressed, and head out to school. A clock is located in the corner of each scene to show the time. It is also written out. In addition to learning to tell time, readers will learn the names of a variety of sharks and other marine life. However, it does ignore the fact that sharks would probably make a meal of some of them. Kids could work with an adult to set the clock to specific times, thus extending the lesson. The book is sturdy and should hold up to repeated use.' (*Children's Literature Review*)

MOUNDLIC, Charlotte

The scar / illustrated by Olivier Tallec.- Walker Bks., 2011.



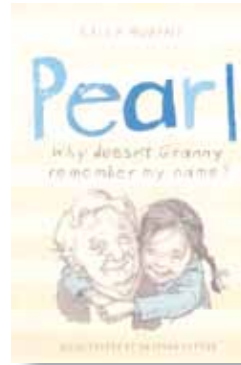
'When his mother dies, a little boy reacts honestly to his profound loss in this poignant snapshot of grief. The day after realising his ailing mother is really going to die, a boy awakens to his father's devastating announcement: She's gone forever. Furious with his mother for leaving, the boy angrily lashes out: "Well, good riddance", then worries how his devastated father will manage. Initially, the boy doesn't want to sleep and has a bit of a stomach-ache. He closes the windows to contain his mother's scent and plugs his ears, covers his eyes and

shuts his mouth to preserve the sound of her voice. After scraping his knee, he feels comforted by the memory of his mother assuring him he's too strong for anything to hurt. Healing begins when Grandma suggests his mother's still in his heart. He feels her beating there. Speaking in first person, present tense, the boy candidly describes his loss and concern for his grieving father with heartfelt immediacy. Rendered in pencil and wash in a limited palette of reds and yellows, simple illustra-

tions stress the boy's distress and isolation while powerfully conveying his progression from anger and fear to sadness and acceptance. A sympathetic exploration of the stages of grief through the eyes of one little boy.' (www.kirkusreview.com)

MURPHY, Sally

Pearl / illustrated by Heather Potter.- Walker Bks., 2009.



'Australian artists Murphy and Potter team up here to depict the story of Pearl Barrett, a budding poet and loner whose loving household – consisting of her mother, grandmother and herself – gets rocked to the core when she finds her granny "doesn't remember who we are". Though Pearl feels "(w)herever I am / no one sees me" and "my poems don't rhyme / and neither do I", such feelings of isolation only intensify as she wrestles with sadness, fear and anger on learning her mother is contemplating moving Granny to a nursing facility.

When her failing grandmother dies, Pearl learns the important lesson that, through loss, one may not only find compassion but community. Potter's evocative pencil-and-wash drawings, with their excellent renderings of facial expressions and mood, wonderfully complement Murphy's thoughtful narrative in depicting the emotions of a scene. Altogether, the tale has much to offer in terms of grappling with personal identity as well as the death of a beloved.

'A perfect read for children dealing with the baffling complexities of adult dementia.' (www.kirkusreview.com)

NESS, Patrick

A monster calls.- Walker Bks., 2011.



This new novel from the author of the multi-award-winning **Chaos walking** trilogy is about a young boy whose mother is in hospital being treated for cancer. The book is a largish, sturdy paperback with flaps. It's a very attractive publication with atmospheric black and white illustrations by Jim Kay. Ness was invited to complete this novel that was begun (only in note form) by the late Siobhan Dowd. She died of cancer in 2007 before she could complete it. This book has been widely praised – I'm including quotations from

two published reviews, one taken from a literary magazine, the other from a daily newspaper:

'When tragedy strikes in **A monster calls**, it strikes long and hard. This is an extraordinary book, and I don't use the word unadvisedly. It stems from an idea by Siobhan Dowd, whose untimely death ... deprived us of an unusual, original talent in the children's book world. In the novel, Conor's mother is also dying from cancer; the way that he deals with it is to call up a monster. Ness's sentences contain an onslaught of emotional heft. The monster is a creature from folklore, older than the earth, and its lessons are as tricky to understand and carry out as any fairytale message ... **A monster calls** shows a fragile creature battling with forces that emanate from without and within. Ness describes

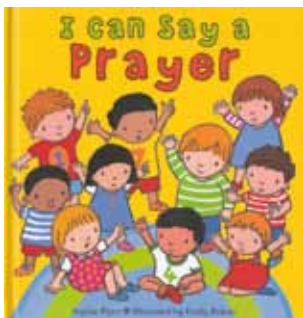
this battle with a savage articulacy that paradoxically renders Conor's inarticulacy incandescent. This is a painful tale, but one that resounds. The illustrations, by Jim Kay, are dark and prickly: the perfect accompaniment to Conor's troubled mind.' (*Literary Review*)

'...The monster is a brilliant creation – part giant, part yew tree, destructive, didactic, elemental. It tells Conor three stories which work, like New Testament parables, by wrongfooting you. The good guys turn out to be bad and the bad guys good. Elegantly, the same goes for the overarching story, in which the nightmare monster is less frightening than daylight family. The prospect of Conor's mother's death brings not only grief and the primal fear of death itself but a list of no less terrifying pragmatic anxieties: who is going to look after me? Who can I count on? Where will I live? The book has the thrills and ambition you would expect from (Ness) ... It's also easy to trace Dowd's influence. There's a very Irish emphasis, for instance, on the importance of making a "good death" – with your loved ones around you and the right things said. But perhaps the most impressive thing about it is that it's nothing like Ness's other books and nothing like Dowd's. Like the monster, it has a life of its own. It's also an extraordinarily beautiful book. Kay's menacing, energetic illustrations and the way they interact with the text, together with the lavish production values, make it a joy just to hold in your hand. ... (Ness has) produced something deeply comforting and glowing with – to use a Siobhan Dowd word – solace. The point of art and love is to try to shortchange that grim tax collector, Death. Ness, Dowd, Kay and Walker have rifled death's pockets and pulled out a treasure.' (*Guardian*)

We only bought a very few copies of this. It is an unusual book and won't have wide appeal, but there are some children that the story will resonate with. It is haunting and moving, but also, oddly enough, funny. **A monster calls** is a special book – for a special child. Highly recommended. **SCG**

PIPER, Sophie

I can say a prayer / illustrated by Emily Bolan.- Lion Children's Bks, 2011.



'This collection of 12 rhyming prayers for the young child is accompanied by simple pen, ink, and watercolour illustrations that are right up pre-schoolers' alleys. Some of the prayers are original and some are familiar; such as the Lord's Prayer. A few are accompanied by verses from the Bible that serve to introduce that particular prayer. The prayers include familiar preschool

concepts like counting, sharing, and making music. The bright, smiley illustrations, meanwhile, depict children going about their everyday activities, showing how prayer can be part of the child's daily life. At times it is difficult to delineate where one prayer ends and another begins, but this is a minor quibble. This book does its job and does it well.' (*Booklist*)

RICKARDS, Lynne

I do not eat the colour green / illustrated by Margaret Chamberlain.- Hatchette Children's Bks, 2011.

Marlene McKean, with big curly red hair, loves all the colours of the rainbow, except one. She absolutely hates the colour green. Her

mom and her dad try lots of tricks to get her to eat some celery sticks. She even refuses to eat sweets that are coloured green. Then one day she gets a special invitation from a countess. The countess sends a limousine to fetch Marlene. Marlene realises that this is a special visit and that it would be rude to refuse when the countess offers her some green velvet grapes. Marlene gasps 'And what a shock! It tastes so sweet. How can a green thing be a treat.' Rhyming texts that always end with the words 'I do not eat the colour green', NOT and GREEN being larger than the rest of the text. Beautiful colour pictures depict the story beautifully. The facial expressions of the characters also make this book special. The book is printed on strengthened paper: A humorous book about children's eating habits. **TGS**



WESTON, Carrie

Boris goes camping / illustrated by Tim Warner.- Oxford U.P, 2011.



Miss Cluck took her class camping and everybody was very excited about the trip. Because Boris was a big and strong bear; as well as very kind and helpful, Miss Cluck asked him to carry all the equipment to the camping site. On their way to the camping site Maxwell's teddy fell into the water; and when he started to cry Boris decided to be brave,

leapt into the water and scooped teddy out of the water. 'Bravo, Boris', said Miss Cluck. When they finally arrived at the camping site Miss Cluck explained how to build a tepee. They decided to go and look for berries for supper and when they went back to their tepee they found it thrashed and ransacked. Miss Cluck caught two naughty cubs redhanded. The cubs were so rude to her; they threatened her with their daddy who was a 'big bad wolf' that eats chickens for ... At that moment Boris screamed 'supper'. When the cubs saw the size of Boris they fled. 'Oh Boris, what a brave bear you are', declared Miss Cluck. They put the tepee up again and enjoyed their supper: Boris declared that he was tired and went to sleep in the tepee. Because he was so big there was not much room for the others in the tepee, but they did not mind.

Boris is drawn as a friendly bear and his facial expression makes him a loveable figure. The colour illustrations depict the story beautifully and the text is big and in bold. This book is suitable for storytelling times and as a bedtime story. **TGS**

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

- EB.....Erich Buchhaus
- SCG.....Sabrina Gosling
- TGS.....Theresa Sass

