Mark Rubbo’s coronavirus diary…

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…and great isolation reading to get you through April

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Readings

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FREE | APRIL 2020
An unmissable anthology by twenty-four Australian grandmothers. Featuring contributions from Helen Garner, Gillian Triggs, Maggie Beer, Ali Cobby Eckermann and more, these thoughtful and provoking essays reflect on the many aspects of being a grandmother in the 21st century.

Drawing on his extensive travels—from remote provinces in China and Cambodia to pre- and post-war Yiddish Poland, and Indigenous and present-day Australia—beloved storyteller Arnold Zable shares stories of dispossession, survival, healing and joy with his customary insight and compassion.

A remarkable collection of personal essays, poetry and criticism that reflects on what it means to be a woman, a body, an artist. Blueberries signals the arrival of a stunning new voice in Australian creative non-fiction. ‘Heartstopping.’ Maria Tumarkin

A cleaning woman dreams of having the financial freedom to write. Her life is transformed when she marries into money—but it comes at a cost. Indelicacy is the story of a woman navigating gender and class roles to empower herself and fulfil her dreams.

Norah is told that on 11 February she will kill a man she doesn’t know. She’s just moved to Berlin to leave her old life behind, but could she be running into an even more dangerous future? A page-turning psychological thriller about the slippery nature of time and destiny by bestselling author Melanie Raabe.

In the late 19th century four pioneering writers, Ethel Turner, Barbara Baynton, Nettie Palmer and Henry Handel Richardson, changed Australia’s literary landscape, dispelling the myth of bush heroism and mateship. Now, one of Australia’s most eminent historians offers readers an inside look at the intricacies of their intersecting and entwined lives.

The charming autobiography of Picnic at Hanging Rock author Joan Lindsay is now a Text Classic, introduced by Phillip Adams. A reminiscence of her marriage to Sir Daryl Lindsay and their life and travels, Time Without Clocks also reveals Lindsay’s fascination with the ambiguities of time.

In a wondrous, snow-covered world, rich with mysterious creatures and forbidden magic, one girl sets out on a dangerous quest to save her sister. But first she must unlock her own secret magical ability. A perfect read for fans of Nevermoor. ‘Just brilliant.’ Karen Foxlee

A sensitive and heart-warming novel about love, change and forgiving ourselves. When Bea’s parents divorced, some things changed but lots stayed the same. Now her dad is marrying his boyfriend Jesse and, as the wedding approaches, Bea is haunted by a terrible secret.
The Stella Prize 2020 shortlist
The Stella Prize shortlist for 2020 has been announced, celebrating Australian women’s contribution to literature. The six books on the 2020 Stella Prize shortlist are: There Was Still Love by Favel Parrett, Here Until August by Josephine Rowe, The Weekend by Charlotte Wood, See What You Made Me Do by Jess Hill, Diving into Glass by Caro Llewellyn, and The Yield by Tara June Winch. The prize awards $50,000, and both fiction and nonfiction books are eligible for entry. The 2020 Stella Prize will be awarded on Tuesday 14 April.

20% off 20 popular cookbooks
Throughout the month of April, we are offering 20% off a range of essential cookbooks. There’s something for every home cook, with titles from Yotam Ottolenghi, Philippa Grogan, Hetty McKinnon, and many more. This offer is available until 30 April on in-stock, full priced items only, online (use the code 20COOKBOOKS) and in all Readings shops except SLV and Kids.

The Women’s Prize for Fiction 2020 longlist
The longlist for the Women’s Prize for Fiction has been announced. The sixteen books on the longlist are: Djinn Patrol on the Purple Line by Deepa Anappara; Fleishman Is in Trouble by Taffy Brodesser-Akner; Queenie by Candice Carty-Williams; Dominican by Angie Cruz; Actress by Anne Enright; Girl, Woman, Other by Bernardine Evaristo; Nightingale Point by Luu Goldie; A Thousand Ships by Natalie Haynes; How We Disappeared by Jing-Jing Lee; The Most Fun We Ever Had by Claire Lombardo; The Mirror and the Light by Hilary Mantel; Girl by Edna O’Brien; Hamnet by Maggie O’Farrell; Weather by Jenny Offill; The Dutch House by Ann Patchett; and Red at the Bone by Jacqueline Woodson. The Women’s Prize awards £30,000 to a work of fiction written in English by a woman of any nationality. The winner will be announced on Wednesday 3 June.

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winter is coming, but it’s still sunny here. The programme due to COVID-19. A note from Christine Gordon, our buyer, Alison Huber (and don’t worry, she’ll be back with Dear Reader next month). The Animals of That Country by Laura Jean McKay is, as Alison says in her review, ‘a standout debut of 2020.’ It’s also a novel about a pandemic, so its timing is eerily appropriate. Another title that speaks to our collective uncertainty is the stellar debut poetry collection from Readings’ own Oliver Dricoll, I Don’t Know How That Happened. Elsewhere in Australian fiction we have much anticipated debut novels from Pip Williams, Leah Swann, Hilde Hinton and Ronnie Scott, along with an equally anticipated second novel from Mirandi Riwoe. In international fiction there was a clamour for reading copies of Aliант’s debut novel, Redhead by the Side of the Road, and our managing director Mark Kubbo’s review makes the reason for this clear. There were similar levels of excitement about new books from Jami Attenberg, Emily St. John Mandel (of Station Eleven fame), Maggie O’Farrell and N.K. Jemisin, along with reviews for books by C. Pam Zhang and Naoise Dolan. Another to look out for is Hawaiian author Kawai Strong Recollections of My Non-Phosphorescence. Finally, I’ll leave you with a quote about hope from a book we can look forward to, Changes May. Recollections of My Non-Phosphorescence by the inimitable Rebecca Solnit (Hope in the Dark, Men Explain Things to Me). ‘My university lecturer had accused me of offering palliatives for marketing reasons, but what I’d wanted to offer is encouragement, a word that though it carries the stigma of niceness, literally means with raw courage. Encouragement not to make people feel good, but to make them feel powerful. ’Be safe, think of others, read, and have courage.’
Grandmothers’ Law Should Never Be Broken

An edited extract from Ali Cobby Eckermann’s essay of the same title in Grandmothers: Essays by 21st-Century Grandmothers edited by Helen Elliott

In the night someone strung a line of crow carcasses across the fence outside her house. She discovers them as she leaves the house for work. Her breath catches in her chest as she catches her first sight of the half in anger and half in a plea to the heavens. Who would do such a thing? Unable to move, her entire body is frozen with shock. She dares not look at the dull eyes on their avian faces, the heads hanging as if dangling on broken necks. Her hands rise, as if free to cover her mouth, to stifle the scream she feels growing inside her chest. It is inaudible. She vomits a mouthful of dark bile into her palms. The darkness acts like a mirror and she stares at the reflection she holds in her cupped hands. It is her grandmother’s face transforming to crow.

In the backyard of the tenement house the young woman’s actions are frantic. Her hands are flitily now, covering hate from the large hole she has dug into the ground. She gathers twigs from under the hedge to add to a small fire she has lit next to the hole. She paces between as if undecided. She knells to scoop more dirt into the grave, bends to gather more kindling for the fire. Squatting on her haunches, she rolls her head back to stare at the sky. It is cloudless, as empty as her shaking heart. Her head flings forward and she sob into her hands. Through her tears she senses the arrival of her, and quickly wipes her tears in a muddy streak across her face. A willie wagtail hops across the dry lawn to her side. They crouch together, staring in silent. In Australia, wherever I travel, both of the nuclear testing by the British on our traditional lands are always close by. Tjintjuntjintja is the message bird, the dancer who delivers both good and sad news. No longer fearful, I feel reassured by his presence. Kaanka has become my most defining bird. I believe she is my Nana, still guiding me. When I am immediately inclined to regard my actions and words with kindness, as she instructed. Often, she greets me in the early morning as I leave for exercise or work. Most evenings, when the sun is closest to the horizon, she sits outside my house talking loudly, reminding me of the importance of self-evaluation and responsibility. Kaanka reminds me to remember Nana’s teachings, and to stay humble as I journey on my path.

Since the death of Nana, and all the many other care, wise, senior women who welcomed me back into my family, including my mother and her sisters, I have travelled extensively across Australia and overseas. Everywhere, my eyes are trained to watch for birds. Using cultural knowledge, Nana taught me how to see, how to watch. In Australia, where I travel, both Kaanka and kaanka are always close by. Tjintjuntjintja is the message bird, the dancer who delivers both good and sad news. No longer fearful, I feel reassured by his presence. Kaanka has become my most defining bird. I believe she is my Nana, still guiding me. When I am immediately inclined to regard my actions and words with kindness, as she instructed. Often, she greets me in the early morning as I leave for exercise or work. Most evenings, when the sun is closest to the horizon, she sits outside my house talking loudly, reminding me of the importance of self-evaluation and responsibility. Kaanka reminds me to remember Nana’s teachings, and to stay humble as I journey on my path.

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New Fiction

**BOOK OF THE MONTH**

**Australian Fiction**

**The Animals in That Country**

**Laura Jean McKay**

Scribe, PB, $29.99

Available 31 March

**The Animals in That Country** is a standout debut novel of 2020. It is the second work of fiction from Laura Jean McKay, following her acclaimed short-story collection, *Holiday in Cambodia* (2013). Original, hugely entertaining and superbly crafted, this is one heck of a road-trip novel, whose timing and insights into human behaviour in a crisis could not be more prescient.

In an Australia in the grip of a pandemic, we meet Jean Bennett, a unique character in recent reading memory. Working as a guide at an animal sanctuary in the outback, Jean is rough and brassy, lives hard, and is full of love for life and family. As the ‘zooith’ from down south edges ever closer to home, it becomes clear that its major symptom is the ability for infected humans to understand animals.

Imagine that for a moment if you can: bearing your cat one-on-one might be okay, but what about the full cacophony of the animal kingdom all at once and all the time? Of course, people start to lose their minds. In the midst of the growing chaos, Jean’s granddaughter is taken away by her infected father, who is on a mission to find meaning of life, and so Jean has to get on the road to go after them, taking Sue – her best friend who also happens to be a dingo – with her. What follows is an incredibly tense and masterfully paced adventure, which is as poetic as it is surprising.

The heart of McKay’s vision is to explore the potential of human–nonhuman communication, but she does not offer up a reality of simple or benign coexistence were we to understand each other. Her animals are neither benevolent nor prophetic (as talking animals sometimes appear in fiction); their languages do not make them human-like. In this way, McKay asks uncomfortable and impossible questions about how we are to live together as animals in this country, especially when that country is under increasing environmental, ideological, and social pressure. This book is mind-bending in the best possible ways, and by quirk of fate, will now also be read as a superb critique of our environmental, ideological, and social pressure. This book is mind-bending in the best way.

**Sheerwater**

**Leah Swann**

Fourth Estate, PB, $32.99

Available now

Leah Swann’s debut novel is literary fiction with the tempo of a crime novel. Told over three dramatic days, even astute readers will be stunned by the conclusion.

Ava, the mother of two young boys, is driving towards Sheerwater, an idyllic town on the Great Ocean Road. Within pages, Ava’s hypervigilance and mental checklists alert the reader that this is not a casual trip or holiday. She has resigned from her job, and will begin a new job in one hundred kilometres away. She has forwarded her mail, but not her husband’s. When nine-year-old Max asks ‘When’s Daddy going to come?’, she gives a vague answer.

For all her planning, the last thing Ava expects is for a light plane to crash in a field next to the highway. She can tell the occupants need rescuing, and her instincts kick in. However, when she returns to her car, her boys are missing. The police are called and the investigation begins.

After this, the narrative splits into the voices of several characters. While Ava’s voice provides the primary perspective, we hear from her husband, Laurence, as the police interview him. Laurence then comes to the Geelong area to begin his own search. The author also captures the voice of young Max as he navigates changing circumstances and tries to reassure and care for his four-year-old brother. This rendition of Max is sensitive and believable.

The animals are named for one set in the early/mid-1980s, and one set in the ‘80s. The ‘80s will also have great fun picking up all the cultural references from that time.

**The Loudness of Unsaid Things**

**Hilde Hinton**

Hachette, PB, $29.99

Available 3 March

Reading The Loudness of Unsaid Things, I was reminded of two other debut novels that I have also reviewed: *Eleanor Oliphant is Completely Fine* and *The Lost Flowers of Alice Hart*. With both those books, I knew I had read something special and I felt the same with Hilde Hinton’s debut. While all three novels emotionally connected with me, The Loudness of Unsaid Things has a uniqueness, especially an inclination to style and characterisation, that makes it all its own.

There are two timeframes in the novel: one set in the early/mid-1980s, and one set somewhat closer to the present. Growing up in the ‘80s is Sue, who lives with her father in Melbourne and has scheduled visits with her mother, either at her flat or at the ‘mind hospital’ when her mother is feeling unwell. Closer to the present we are introduced to Miss Kaye who works at ‘The Institute’, a mental health clinic for women where we observe her daily interactions with the patients.

Engaging right from the start, I could not have possibly guessed where this novel would take me. It is so cleverly structured and full of little golden nuggets of text that just take your breath away. It manages to cover so many themes, including trauma, mental health, family relationships and grief, yet still give depth to each one. The novel is full of encounters and events that will relate to (first job, first time tasting alcohol, and first friendship falling apart) along with the everyday events that come with each. Those (like me) who grew up in the ‘80s will also have great fun picking up all the cultural references from that time.

Now more than ever, it’s so important to support debut Australian authors
and Hilde Hinton has produced an accomplished first novel that I’m sure many will find rewarding to read. I have a feeling that The Loudness of Unsaid Things will be one of my most recommended books of this year.

Amanda Rayner is from Readings Carlton

The Adversary
Ronnie Scott
Hamish Hamilton. PB. $29.99
Available 15 April

With his debut novel, The Adversary, Ronnie Scott has gifted readers the most relatable coming-of-age narrative I’ve encountered in some time. With a hot and empty Melbourne summer ahead and an onlooker, a homebody in denial, finds himself slowly coaxed into the world by his housemate Dan. The two were uni friends on tandem paths, sharing first tutorials and then a Brunswick terrace. But now underrated is over and the real world has created a fork in the road.

For Dan, adulthood is appealing, complete with new job and new boyfriend. But our protagonist is reluctant to head as far from home as the Fitzroy Baths. Scott has captured almost a Mirror
Kirsten Krauth
Transit Lounge. PB. $29.99
Available 1 April

Like fireflies to the light, Lucy and Jimmy are drawn into the elegantly wasted orbit of the post-punk scene of '80s Melbourne, a world that includes Nick Cave and Dodge, a photographer pushing his art to the edge. With precision and richness Kirsten Krauth loudly evokes the power of the intersection of human and animal, love and loss, fear and hope.

The Dickens Boy
Tom Keneally
Vintage. PB. $32.99
Available 31 March

The tenth child of Charles Dickens, known as Plorn, had consistently proved unable ‘to apply himself’ to school or life. So, aged sixteen, he is sent to Australia. Featuring cricket tournaments, horse racing, bushrangers, sheep droving, frontier wars and first encounters with women, Plorn enjoys wonderful adventures as he works to prove himself. This is Tom Keneally in his most familiar terrain, taking historical figures and events and reimagining them with compassion and humour.

Gulliver’s Wife
Lauren Chater
S&S. PB. $32.99
Available 1 April

London, 1702. When her husband is lost at sea, Mary Barton Gulliver, midwife and herbalist, is forced to rebuild her life without him. But three years later, Samuel Gulliver is brought home, fevered and communicating only in riddles, her ordered world is turned upside down. She must set out on her own journey to discover the truth of Gulliver’s travels and the landscape of her own heart.

No Small Shame
Christine Bell
Impact Press. PB. $32.99
Available 1 April

It’s 1914 and the world is at war. Jobs are scarce and immigrants are unwelcome. For young Catholic Mary O’Donnell, this is the new life she finds herself in. When one foolish night of passion leads to an unexpected pregnancy and a loveless marriage, Mary flees Melbourne determined to build a life for herself and her child. No Small Shame tells the moving story of love and duty, loyalty and betrayal.

The Deceptions
Suzanne Leal
Allen & Unwin. PB. $29.99
Available 31 March

Plorn enjoys wonderful adventures as wars and first encounters with women, his exceptionally responsible driving style.

The Octopus and I
Erin Hortle
Allen & Unwin. PB. $29.99
Available 1 April

Since reading Keneally’s multi-award-winning Gulp, I’ve encountered in some time. With a hot and empty Melbourne summer ahead and an onlooker, a homebody in denial, finds himself slowly coaxed into the world by his housemate Dan. The two were uni friends on tandem paths, sharing first tutorials and then a Brunswick terrace. But now underrated is over and the real world has created a fork in the road.

For Dan, adulthood is appealing, complete with new job and new boyfriend. But our protagonist is reluctant to head as far from home as the Fitzroy Baths. Scott has captured a pitch-perfect slice of the inner-north of Melbourne. It’s an overly real world with repetitious geography that slowly expands to foreshadow the gradual and near-invisible transition from young adult to slightly less bumbling adult.

The Adversary is a coming-of-age novel set in the not-too-distant past; a time when being in your twenties doesn’t mean that you’re an adult, rather, it’s a time when you’re just a kid fumbling through, trying to find a way, and to work out what works.

Full of humour and resulting in the some of the biggest laughs a book as given me in a long time, it’s early to make the call but it is certainly going to be hard to top The Adversary as book of the year for me.

Ford Thomas is from Readings online

International Fiction

Redhead by the Side of the Road
Anne Tyler
C&W. HB. Was $32.99 $29.99 (Hardback at paperback price)
Available 9 April

Micah Mortimer ‘... lives alone; he keeps to himself; his routine is etched in stone.’ Micah’s an ordinary man. He dropped out of college to found a start-up with a friend; that failed and since then he’s kept himself going with odd jobs and tech support for elderly ladies, and fathers who want the porn wiped from their kid’s computers. He also doubles as the supervisor for his apartment block, putting out the rubbish, the recycling (IA never flatten their boxes as they are supposed to do) and doing odd jobs like fixing the light switch in Yolanda’s apartment (she’s trying online dating again).

Micah prides himself on being a very good driver and fantasises that the traffic god looks down upon him, commenting on his exceptionally responsible driving style. He has a girlfriend, Cass, a primary school teacher; they don’t live together, just get together a few times week and sometimes one of them stays over at the other’s house. Cass is comfortable, with a wide-open face and an easy nature, although she does like to have music or noise on all the time; Micah can’t understand why. In the evening, when Cass isn’t with him, Micah likes to play solitaire on his phone before he goes to bed.

This looks to be pretty much the gamut of Micah’s life until one morning the eighteen-year-old son of a former college girlfriend turns up at his door; he’s Brink Adams and looks like a well-off kid. His mum is a lawyer, for legal aid, and his dad is a corporate lawyer; they don’t understand him and his dad is not his biological father. When Brink was looking through a box of photos with his mother, they come across a photo of Micah. ‘He was the love of my life,’ she says. Brink is convinced that Micah is his father, although the problem is that Micah never slept with Brink’s mother.

Since reading The Accidental Tourist in the early ‘80s, I’ve loved Anne Tyler’s work. I find her portraits of ordinary people and families grappling with everyday life very comforting and, especially in these times, that’s something I, and many people, need. This book is just the ticket.

Mark Rubbo is the managing director of Readings

All This Could Be Yours
Jami Attenberg
Serpent’s Tail. HB. $29.99
Available 14 April

Jami Attenberg can do bleak humour. She can skewer and summarise characters with one scathing sentence. She is the lord of mockery, the lady of irony, but, more than anything
The Glass Hotel
Emily St. John Mandel
Picador. PB. $29.99
Available 1 March
Paul is a young recovering drug addict, struggling through a divorce and in finance he couldn’t care less about. Having lost the trust of his widowed mother, his hopes of studying musical composition are crushed when he’s sent to college in Toronto study a ‘practical’ career. But long-lived habits are hard to break, and his natural attraction to badly made choices soon plunges him into troubled waters. His only option? To run away from the well-structured life he never wanted, and seek shelter at his sister Vincent’s apartment in New York.
As the story moves between the busy metropolis and the quietness of the remote wilderness, the lives of ordinary strangers touch each other through a series of chance meetings, mundane coincidences and emotional heart. Their lives shenanigans as I was with Ava’s. There are so many wonderful, terrible characters, too: Edith’s mother is a classic, what one might call a ‘nasty piece of work’. Edith herself is a British banker with endless disposable income. She both agrees and disagrees with Julian’s family, who are so many wonderful, terrible characters, too: Edith’s mother is a classic, what one might call a ‘nasty piece of work’. Edith herself is a British banker with endless disposable income. She both agrees and disagrees with Julian’s family, who are so many wonderful, terrible characters, too: Edith’s mother is a classic, what one might call a ‘nasty piece of work’. Edith herself is a British banker with endless disposable income. 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How Much of These Hills Is Gold
C. Pam Zhang
Vango. PB. $30.99
Available 1 April
‘Generations of authors have moldered the mythology of the American West for their own purposes … I take the lesson that we call history is not granular but a continuous, blurred form by its carryover.’ – C. Pam Zhang

In the closing years of the gold rush, orphaned siblings Lucy and Sam traverse the American West in search of a resting place for their father’s corpse. As children of a Chinese gold prospector, Lucy and Sam settle strangely into the landscape – they operate as both native and foreign in an environment that is both familiar and uncanny. Buffalo bones, tiger paw prints, gold and coal are their path as they journey towards a place to finally call home.

C. Pam Zhang is interested in a new vision of the American West that reveals much truth as it changes. Neglected narratives about gender, race, immigration and homecoming are given centrestage in this bold new work. If you’re looking for a book about a white guy riding a horse and shooting his way through dusty mining towns, you’ll be sorely disappointed.

I had a really hard time believing this was a debut novel. Zhang’s writing is nuanced, poetic, dreamy and visceral all at the same time. How many American westerns deal with myth-making; gender, racial and sexual identity, survival; family; adventure and the dissolution of the American Dream? How many westerns can do all that with such heart-breaking beauty and intensity? I cannot recommend this book highly enough. Believe me when I say, you’ve never read anything like it.

Tristen Brudy is from Readings Carlton

Theatre of Dreams
Polly Samson
Bloomsbury Circus. PB. $29.99
Available 14 April
It’s 1960, the world is dancing on the edge of revolution, and on the Greek island of Hydra there is a circle of artists live tangled lives, ruled by the writer’s Charlin Gilt and George Johnston.

Within this circle is a triangle: the magnetic, destructive writer Axel Jensen, his dazzling wife Marianne Ilen, and a young Canadian poet named Leonard Cohen. Tangled exotic, edged, and Uriels, watched, entrenched and disquieted, as paradise unravels.

And Their Children after Them
Nicola Mathieu & William Rodarmor (trans.)
Sceptre. PB. $32.99
Available 31 March
Over four sultry summers in the 1980s, Anthony and his friends grow up in a France trapped between nostalgia and decline. They are desperate to escape the scared countryside and grey council estates in search of a better future. This eloquent novel perfectly depicts teenage angst. It is a warning for its portrayal of people beings on the margins and its ability to shine a light on the struggles of French society today.

Come Again
Robert Webb
Canongate. PB. $29.99
Available 15 April
A time-travelling love story from the bestselling author of How Not To Be A Boy and star of Peep Show. You can’t fall in love for the second time, can you? Kate’s husband Luke dies suddenly. One day, she wakes up in the wrong room, in the wrong body. She is eighteen again and this was the day she first met Luke. If only they can fall in love again.
Conjure Women
Afia Atakora
Fourth Estate. PB. $29.99
Available 7 April

The pale-skinned baby is a bad omen. The slaves on the old plantation are sure of this. Miss Rue – midwife, healer, crafter of curses – will know what to do. But Rue doesn’t know. Times have changed, freedom has come. This new world brings new dangers and Rue’s old magic may be no match for them. This is a story of the lengths we’ll go to save the ones we love.

Enter the Aardvark
Jessica Anthony
Doubleday. PB. $24.99
Available 31 March

Republican congressman Alexander Paine Wilson is determined that nothing will stop him in his campaign for re-election, that is until he receives a large stuffed aardvark in the post. Brilliant and funny, a biting satire about politics, love, and taxidermy for fans of Jennifer Egan, Jonathan Franzen and Joshua Ferris. Refreshingly different, highly inventive, witty and moving, Enter the Aardvark is an absolute original.

Followers
Megan Angelo
HQ Fiction. PB. $29.99
Available now

Orla is a budding novelist stuck writing clickbait about movie stars. Flora is a wannabe A-lister who comes up with a plan for launching them both into celebrity. Thirty-five years later, in a closed California village, government-appointed celebrities live every moment on camera and a woman named Marlow discovers a shattering secret. An electrifying story of ambition, dark choices and a moment that changes the world forever.

The Lost Lights of St Kilda
Elizabeth Gifford
Corvus. PB. $29.99
Available 15 April

A sweeping novel set on the Scottish island of St Kilda before it was evacuated in 1930. When Fred Lawson takes a summer job on the island and falls in love with Chrissie, little does he realise that he has joined the last community to ever live in this isolated place. This is a moving and vivid portrait of two lovers, a beautiful island, and the extraordinary power of home.

I’m Staying Here
Marco Balzano & Jill Foulston (trans.)
Head of Zeus. PB. $32.99
Available 6 April

Northern Italy, 1920. Trina longs for a different life. She is dedicated to becoming a teacher and despite Mussolini’s oppressive regime she works for a clandestine network of schools. Over a decade later Trina’s life is again at risk as communities are given the opportunity to move to Germany. A sweeping historical novel about the struggle of one woman and one village against war, racism and ecological devastation.

Please See Us
Caitlin Mullen
Gallery Books. PB. $29.99
Available 7 April

It’s summer in Atlantic City but the boardwalk is empty and two Jane Does are laid out in the marshland behind the Sunset Motel. When Clara, a young boardwalk psychic who is experiencing disturbing visions meets Lily, an ex-Soho art gallery girl who is working at a desolate casino, she thinks she can help. This is a fast-paced psychological thriller that explores the intersection of womanhood, power, and violence.

The Frightened Ones
Dima Wannous
Harvill Secker PB. $29.99
Available 15 April

Suleima and Nassim first meet in Damascus. In the city’s atmosphere of surveillance and anxiety, they begin a tenuous relationship. Some years later, after civil war breaks out, Nassim leaves Syria for Germany and sends her a book he has written. As Suleima reads, her past overwhelms her and her sense of identity unravels. This novel intimately explores living with fear and gives voice to the contemporary female experience in Damascus.

Waiting for Bojangles
Olivier Bourdeaut & Regan Kramer (trans.)
S&S. PB. $26.99
Available late April

A young boy lives with his madcap parents, Louise and George, and an exotic bird in a Parisian apartment where the unopened mail rises in a tower and his parents dance each night to Nina Simone’s mellifluous classic ‘Mister Bojangles’. A dark, funny, and wholly charming novel about a boy and his eccentric family, who grapple with the realities of mental illness in unique and whimsical ways.

The Weight of Love
Hilary Fannin
Doubleday Ireland. PB. $32.99
Available now

Maggie O’Farrell with bite: a powerful love story set between London and Dublin, from the much lauded Irish Times columnist who counts Roddy Doyle among her fans. London 1996. Robin and Ruth meet in an East London school. Robin instantly falls in love. Ruth, recently bereaved, is tentative. Dublin 2017. Robin and Ruth are married with a son, but their relationship is haunted. An intimate and moving account of the intricacies of marriage and the myriad ways in which we can love and be loved.
Vanessa Wye was fifteen-years-old, an alcoholic, and a student at St. Stephen’s Academy, where she had sex with her English teacher. At thirty-two she is threatened with prison, when Gus suffers a stroke and their idyllic Mediterranean life is threatened, their three grown children in London must intervene. As the children descend on the vineyard, each has their own idea of how best to handle the situation.

The true existential threats to a person’s happiness are the kind of sentience once they reach a critical moment of contact and subtle conflict — that happen between people when they live close to each other. In one poem, the narrator takes advantage of an auction in the building where he lives to visit the other apartment and observe the behaviour of bidders, owners and tenants; neighbours, friends and family pop in and out of each other’s lives — with a text message or a phone call, or the drip of a shower upstairs — each time signifying some shift in their own life, whether small or major. Other poems take the form of lists cataloguing items or ideas: household objects, lines for poems, lines for films. On the other hand, perhaps the real reason why the banal façade of suburban life, there is the suggestion of violence, which sometimes rises to the surface. There’s the sense, too, that living alongside each other fosters a vulturous way of looking at our neighbours. When an elderly neighbour leaves behind a home full of valuable mid-century furniture, the narrator wonders how he might claim some pieces for himself, observing that the old man ‘wouldn’t have known how good it was’. If chairs, tables and lamps can be reclaimed and repurposed, does the same go for the words and histories of others? What happens when we claim other people’s suffering?

Beyond opportunism, there’s the possibility of finding beauty in the everyday and value in someone else’s discarded lights in a room that slopes down from Japan, or an abandoned chair. It’s the poet’s task to collect these details from life, to polish what has been neglected, to rearrange words till they mean something new. This is how this quietly moving collection can help us know what we had, and what we may have lost.

Freyja Howarth is from Readings St Kilda, Melbourne.

Eleanor Jenkins is from Readings Carlton.
Dead Write

with Fiona Hardy

A Conspiracy of Bones
Kathy Reichs
S&S. PB. $32.99
Available 1 April

Reichs knows her stuff, but takes care to explain everything she needs, stepping temporarily out of the moment to deliver definitions. Sounds strange, but it doesn’t take you out of the moment, instead giving you more insight into Brennan’s logical workings. The story, threading through mind-blowing forensic science, conspiracy theories and alt-right radio jerks and cold case child kidnappings and so much more, is a speeding car talk between Stalin, Churchill and Hitler. With internal problems causing trouble and external problems that have unfathomable risks, this historical, tense thriller is another Kerr to cause nail-biting joy in his readers.

The Familiar Dark
Amy Engel
H&S. PB. $32.99
Available 1 March

Barren Springs, in the heart of Missouri’s Ozarks, is as bereft as its name, but some residents are tiring. Eve Taggart is one of them, born to a chaotic home and now trying to shield her own daughter Junie from the worst of life. So what, then, when Junie and her best friend are brutally murdered in the town playground? All that work at being a good human is stripped away when Eve can’t see law enforcement finding the killer. Instead, she will forge a brutal path to figure it out herself. An intense, disturbing look at community, heartbreak and so much more.

Rules for Perfect Murders
Peter Swanson
Faber. PB. $29.99
Available 1 March

If you know, every time I get a Peter Swanson book I think, ‘He gets too much space in my column, so I won’t write so much this time,’ but every time, every time, he is so clever and entertaining that I am helpless in the face of it. Career bookseller Malcolm Kerr has a specialist crime bookshop (I am feeling very personally catered to in this month’s reads) and, years earlier, wrote a column on eight perfect fictional murders. Now, somebody is re-enacting these murders – but with real bodies and FBI agent Owen Mulvey comes into his shop during a snowstorm to figure out why. Somebody’s got their eye on Malcolm, and knows even more than the reader does – but who? This is an absolutely gripping literary mystery for lovers of crime fiction.

The Shifting Landscape
Katherine Kovacic
Echo. PB. $28.99
Available 31 March

Paintings and dogs: what’s not to love? When art dealer Alex Clayton gets a call to value some paintings on a rural property, she’s not sure if the paintings are for real or if she’s there to deliver bad news, but it seems like an adventure for her and her pooch Hogarth all the same. What she finds there is not just a very important painting, but a house on the edge. There’s tension everywhere she looks both inside and outside the house, where family is bickering and the pre-colonial heritage of the land is rising up. When death pays a visit to the house, it’s too much – but when both a child and her beloved Hogarth vanish, Alex needs to figure out what secrets the land is hiding. A yet playing gritty mystery.

Australian Fox has set her most recent solo effort in L.A.’s gritty streets, and her powerhouse writing nails the terrain and all its flaws. A girl goes missing, and the last person who sees her is Blair Harbour, once a celebrated newsreader, now a woman fresh out of jail and working a gas station to try and get herself and regain custody of her son. But Dayly, the missing women’s organization to be the daughter of Sneak Lawlor, Blair’s ex-cellmate and someone her parole officer doesn’t want her seeing. It’s impossible, though, to turn down someone suffering every parent’s worst fear – and it’s not long before they’re joined by terrifying underworld figure Ada Maverick, then the detective who arrested Blair for murder, Jessica Sanchez. Sanchez has her own case, with an inheritance causing her more trouble than it’s worth – but can this group of women, all dancing on the line of good and bad, save Dayly’s life? Fox will grip you between her teeth and won’t let you go – and you’ll want for it.

Also out this month:
The excellent Luke Jennings has another Killing Eve book in Die for Me (John Murray, PB. $29.99); Don Window’s Broken (HarperCollins, PB. $12.99); Elizabeth Kay’s Seven Lies (Sphere, PB. $32.99); Andrea Camilleri’s The Safety Net (translated by Stephen Sartarelli, Mantle, PB. $29.99); some Scandi crime with Camilla Läckberg’s The Gilded Cage (HarperCollins, PB. $29.99); Melanie Raabe’s The Shadow (translated by Imogen Taylor, Text, PB. $32.99), and the delightful and relentless book machine Alexander McCall Smith returns with The Talented Mr Varg (Little, Brown, PB. $29.99).
We already know and love Julia Baird. She has written many articles and (two) books addressing gender and politics. She is a journalist with something to say. She is the host of ABC TV’s The Drum and we love to hear her opinion because we know that it will be considered, compassionate and smart. We know that she has kids, and that she has had cancer. She’s a busy woman but she still found time to write her new and wonderful handbook for living a life well, Phosphorescence. Using her own – at times completely heartbreakingly – memories, she takes you by the hand and leads you down her long, winding path to contentment.

Baird uses this analogous process to examine friendships, family, world atrocities, climate change and more. Above all, she uses it to ask, how do we make sense of life? How do we explain our world to our children? Where do we find a place for contentment when the whole world seems so fragile?

Why should you care? Isn’t she just another white, middle-class, educated woman writing about her search for self? Well, actually, no. Phosphorescence is not a self-help book, nor is it a memoir. It is a search for light. The clue is in the title; in simple terms, phosphorescence is a process in which energy is absorbed by something (an earth worm, a night light, a glow stick) and then released slowly in the form of a light. Baird uses this analogous process to examine friendships, family, world atrocities, climate change and more. Above all, she uses it to ask, how do we make sense of life? How do we explain our world to our children? Where do we find a place for contentment when the whole world seems so fragile? Reading Baird’s book is like wrapping a warm blanket around your shoulders. It makes sense to cherish what we have. It makes sense to look for optimism. It also makes complete sense to shut the door and cuddle up with this unpretentious, kind read.

Christine Gordon is the programming manager for Readings.

**Anthologies**

**Grandmothers: Essays by 21st-century Grandmothers**

Helen Elliott (ed.)

Text, PB. $34.99

Available 31 March

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Christine Gordon is the programming manager for Readings.

**Architecture**

**Living on Vacation: Contemporary Houses for Tranquil Living**

Phaidon Editors

Phaidon, HB. $59.95

Available 14 April

In thoughtful, provoking, uncompromising writing, twenty-four Australian women reflect on their diverse experiences of being a grandmother in the twenty-first century. This period of a woman’s life, a continuation and culmination, is as defining as any other and the words ‘grand’ and ‘mother’ rearrange and define as any other. The words necessity, continuity and culmination, is as complete sense to shut the door and cuddle up with this unpretentious, kind read.

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Christine Gordon is the programming manager for Readings.
The Lost Boy: Tales of a Child Soldier
Ayik Chut Deng with Craig Henderson
Vintage PB $34.99
Available 31 March

After a violent life as a boy soldier in South Sudan Ayik Chut Deng, with his family, escaped and resettled in Toowoomba as refugees. Suffering from PTSD he was misdiagnosed with schizophrenia which subsequently led to years of erratic behaviour putting his family at risk. Ayik is now a father, works as an actor and volunteers at his local youth centre. This is an honest, revealing account of the complexities of trauma, and one man’s story of how he got to where he is today.

Jacinda Ardern: A New Kind of Leader
Madeleine Chapman
Nero PB $34.99
Available 31 March

Jacinda Ardern describes herself as a progressive and a social democrat. She is a leader for a new generation, one tired of inertia in the face of pressing issues such as climate change, immigration and the rise of far-right terrorism. In this revealing biography, journalist Madeleine Chapman discovers the woman behind the headlines.

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Beneath the Fig Leaves: A Memoir of Food, Family and Greece
Panagiotopoulos
Affirm Press PB $32.99
Available 31 March

In 1955, in a village in Greece that was marred by war and poverty, Giannoula and Fitos Panagiotopoulos dreamed of providing a better life for their children. Australia, it was rumoured, was a land of opportunity where hard work brought reward. Leaving behind family and friends, they set off to make a new home on the other side of the world. Beneath the Fig Leaves weaves an irresistible tapestry of family, food and history to stir the heart and senses.

From the award-winning author of Station Eleven
EMILY ST. JOHN MANDEL
‘Deeply imagined, philosophically profound…The Glass Hotel is ultimately as immersive a reading experience as its predecessor’
Ruth Franklin

OUT ON THE ROAD, NO ONE SPEAKS, EVERYTHING TALKS.

LAURA JEAN MCKAY
A SAME-CHANGING LIFE SHAPING REALITY

MIREILLE JUCHAU
SCRIE

RUTH FRANKLIN

‘A TRIUMPH’ CERIDWEN DOVEY
‘HEARTBREAKINGLY TIMELY’ R.W.R. MCDONALD
‘ENGROSSING’ J.P. POMARE
‘POETIC AND PROFOUND’ ABI ANDREWS
‘UTTERLY ORIGINAL’ MEG MUNDELL
‘BLACKLY HILARIOUS’ JAMES BRAIDLEY
‘WILD’ MIREILLE JUCHAU

From Australian comedian and author
JEAN KITTS

‘A uniquely practical and surprisingly funny (given the subject matter) guide aimed at helping our elders live the best life possible’
Australian Women’s Weekly

We need to talk about Mum & Dad

From Australian comic actor
SUSANNE BANG

We need to talk about Mum & Dad

Find us online at Pan Macmillan Australia
www.panmacmillan.com.au

Love talking about books?
Find us online at Pan Macmillan Australia
www.panmacmillan.com.au

NONFICTION
April 2020
READINGS MONTHLY
enjoying love for America to the wonders of the natural world, and from the vagaries and ailments of old age to the beauty of youth, she once again displays her determined belief in embracing life and creativity — all kindness and marmalade.

Lili Anolik
Scribner. PB. $29.99
Available 1 April

In 1963, at age twenty, Eve Babitz posed playing chess with the French artist Marcel Duchamp. She was naked; he was not. The photograph made her an instant icon of art and sex and Babitz spent the rest of the decade rocking and rolling on the Sunset Strip and honing her spent the rest of the decade rocking and rolling on the Sunset Strip and honing her...
History

Shakespeare in a Divided America
James Shapiro
Faber. HB. $39.99
Available 15 April

Shakespeare’s position as England’s national poet is established and unquestionable. But as James Shapiro illuminates in this revelatory new history, Shakespeare has long held an essential place in American culture. Why, though, would a proudly independent republic embrace England’s greatest writer? Investigating a selection of defining moments in American history Shapiro leads us to fascinating answers and uncovers rich and startling stories.

The Fall of the House of Byron: Scandal and Seduction in Georgian England
Emily Brand
John Murray. PB. $32.99
Available 14 April

The Fall of the House of Byron follows the fates of Lord Byron’s ancestors over three generations in a drama that begins in rural Nottinghamshire and plays out in the gentlemen’s clubs of Georgian London, amid tempests on far-flung seas, and in the glamour of pre-revolutionary France. A compelling story of prominent and controversial characters, it is a sumptuous family portrait and an electrifying work of social history.

Parenting

Every Conceivable Way
Despina Meris
Hardie Grant. PB. $34.99
Available 1 April

After relocating to Australia from New York, Despina Meris and her husband, Bill, settle down to baby-making. What they never expect is a string of heartbreaking unexplained miscarriages, even with the help of IVF. They turn to surrogacy – first in India, then in the Ukraine and finally in Thailand, where their baby is conceived. Every Conceivable Way asks how far you would go before you call it quits, when it seems like all the odds are stacked against you.

Music

One Two Three Four: The Beatles in Time
Craig Brown
Fourth Estate. PB. $32.99
Available 2 April

One Two Three Four traces the chance fusion of the four key elements that made up The Beatles: fire (John), water (Paul), air (George) and earth (Ringo). It also tells the tales of the disparate and colourful people within their orbit. A fascinating mixture of history, etymology, diaries, autobiography, fan letters, essays,平行 lives, party lists, charts, interviews, announcements and stories award-winning author Craig Brown joyfully echoes the frenetic hurly-burly of an era.

Stranger Than Kindness
Nick Cave
A&U. HB. $59.99
Available 31 March

Featuring full-colour reproductions of original artwork, handwritten lyrics, photographs and collected personal artefacts this highly collectible book is a celebration of Nick Cave’s life, work and inspiration and explores his many real and imagined universes. Selected by Cave from the ‘Stranger Than Kindness: The Nick Cave Exhibition’ Stranger Than Kindness asks what shapes our lives and makes us who we are, and celebrates the curiosity and power of the creative spirit.

Politics

The Dragons and the Snakes: How the Rest Learned to Fight the West
David Kilcullen
Scribe. PB. $35
Available 31 March

In 1993, a newly appointed CIA director warned that Western powers might have ‘slain a large dragon’ with the fall of the USSR, but now faced a ‘bewildering variety of poisonous snakes.’ David Kilcullen reveals what the West’s opponents have learned from twenty-first-century conflict, and explains how their cutting-edge tactics and adaptability pose a serious threat to America and its allies. This book is a compelling, counterintuitive look at the new, vastly complex global arena.

Cinema

Mysteries of Cinema: Reflections on Film Theory, History and Culture
Adrian Martin
UWA Publishing. PB. $29.99
Available 1 April

The major essays of the brilliant and prolific Australian-born film critic Adrian Martin have long been difficult to access, so this anthology, which collects highlights of his work in one volume, will be welcomed throughout film studies. In these vibrant and highly personal essays, written between 1982 and 2016, Martin pursues a particular vision of what cinema has been, what it is, and what it still could be.

Your Wellbeing Garden

It’s official – gardens are good for us. Find out why, and how you can transform your own outside space into a little piece of wellbeing paradise.

War The Definitive History

Follow the epic, 5,000-year story of warfare - from the earliest battles to the War on Terror - with this guided tour of every major conflict.
FROM STELLA PRIZE SHORTLISTED AUTHOR

MORE

FROM STELLA PRIZE SHORTLISTED AUTHOR

“Beautiful and true. Broke open an all-too-forgotten history of Australia. Then it broke my heart.”

TRENT DALTON

‘Every Australian, indeed everyone, should read this groundbreaking book.’

MELANIE CHENG

More: The 10,000-Year Rise of the World Economy
Philip Coggan
Profile Business. PB. $34.99
Available 31 March

More is a history of trade, industry and economic thought, from prehistoric times to the present. Taking history in great strides, it illustrates broad changes by examining details from the design of the standard medieval cottage through to the stranglehold that Paris’s three belt-buckle-making guilds exercised over innovation in the field of holding up trousers. Coggan reveals how at every step of our long journey, it was connections between people that always created the conditions of prosperity.

Science

Losing Eden: Why Our Minds Need the Wild
Lucy Jones
Allen Lane. HB. $39.99
Available 31 March

Today many of us live indoor lives, disconnected from the natural world as never before. And yet nature remains deeply ingrained in our language, culture and consciousness. So what happens, asks acclaimed journalist Lucy Jones, as we lose our bond with the natural world – might we also be losing part of ourselves? Losing Eden is an urgent, comprehensive inquiry into how nature enriches the human psyche – and the startling risks we face in leaving it behind.

The Magicians: Great Minds and the Central Miracle of Science
Marcus Chown
Faber. PB. $29.99
Available 31 March

How does it feel to know something about the universe that no one has ever known before? And why is mathematics so magically good at revealing nature’s secrets? This is the story of the magicians: the scientists who predicted the existence of unknown planets, black holes, invisible force fields, ripples in the fabric of space-time, unsuspected subatomic particles, and even antimatter. A breathtaking and mind-altering tour of the major breakthroughs of modern physics.

Mythology

Antigone Rising
Helen Morales
Wildlife. PB. $28.99
Available 14 April

The idealised picture of classical antiquity most of us learned in school conveniently glosses over the most brutal parts of the history – and omits surprising stories of feminist resistance. For each story of misogynist violence, there’s another that tells of solidarity and empowerment. And it’s time we reclaimed them. By turns witty and inspiring, Antigone Rising offers a much-needed, fascinating new lens on the stories we take for granted.

Natural History

Under the Stars: A Journey into Light
Matt Gw
Elliot & Thompson. HB. $26.99
Available 1 April

Light pollution is everywhere. Not only is it damaging to humans and to wildlife, disrupting our natural rhythms, but it obliterates the subtler lights that have guided us for millennia. In this beautifully written exploration, Matt Gw ventures forth into darkness to find out exactly what we’re losing. It is a timely and urgent reminder to reconnect with the natural world, showing how we only need to step outside to find that, in darkness, the world lights up.

At home

An Australian Garden
Philip Cox
T&H. HB. $70
Available 31 March

We should all understand the importance of maintaining indigenous Australian landscapes and gardens. Renowned architect Philip Cox always considered this vital and so forty years ago purchased eighty hectares on the south coast of NSW as a private retreat and a conservation exercise. Applying his own aesthetic principles of vista, light, texture, colour and mass, Philip worked with nature to reveal and enhance the bushland in an enticing way. An Australian Garden captures this unique vision of a wild landscape, tamed here and there with art or shelters. This is a beautiful book, filled with glorious images of our country’s bush. There are no nods to English pastures, but rather images filled with wonderful intensity and spirit of our own land. This would be a glorious (and aspirational) gift for any gardener that understands the importance of our own plants and is (soon) looking for their own piece of paradise.

Falastin: A Cookbook
Sami Tamimi & Tara Wigley, with a foreword by Yotam Ottolenghi
Ebury. HB. $49.99
Available 31 March

Named after the Palestinian newspaper that brought together a diverse people, Falastin is a celebration of a cuisine and a way of life. The story of Palestine’s food is really the story of its people. When the events of 1948 forced residents of Palestine together into one compressed land, recipes that were once closely guarded family secrets were shared and passed between different groups in an effort to ensure that they were not lost forever. Sami Tamimi retraces the lineage and evolution of his country’s cuisine, from refugee-camp cooks to the home kitchens of Gaza and the mill of a master tahini maker. Recipes are quite extraordinary and include such dishes as fish kofa or puffed lamb schwarma sandwiches. If you have enjoyed the food of Ottolenghi, then this is the perfect next step. By the by, Sami was born and raised in Jerusalem. He became head chef of Lillith, one of the top restaurants in Tel Aviv and the company includes restaurants, Nopi and Rovi, in London. Alongside Ottolenghi, Sami Tamimi is co-author of Ottolenghi The Cookbook and Jerusalem: A Cookbook.

Eating For Pleasure, People & Planet
Tom Hunt
Kyle Books. HB. $45
Available 31 March

Feeling guilty about how you are eating? Meet Tom Hunt, he won’t make you feel better but he will give you excellent ideas to relieve some guilt. Tom is based in London and works as a food and sustainability writer with a weekly food waste column in The Guardian. Eating for Pleasure, People & Planet is a manifesto to help anyone achieve sustainability through their diet with inspirational recipes for everyday cooking that consider how we farm, trade, eat, and dispose of food. Tom’s mission is to teach a way of eating that prioritises the environment without sacrificing pleasure, taste and nutrition. He demonstrates how we can all become part of the solution, by enjoying delicious, biodiverse and regenerative food system, giving us the skills and knowledge to shop, eat and cook sustainably, whilst eating healthier, better-tasting food for no extra cost. Grab this book for ideas and leave it lying around your home for friends and family to pick up. There truly is no excuse.

The Art of Cake
Alice Oehr
T&H. HB. $24.99
Available 31 March

This is for all people who bake cakes for whatever reason: whether it is to fill their house with wonderful aromas, to sell at the local school fete, to impress friends and family with desert or simply to eat for the pure joy of it all. Melbourne based Alice Oehr is a celebrated graphic designer and illustrator who works in a signature palette to create cakes that impress. In this fascinating book, Alice Oehr shares her approach to making cakes from scratch, with beautiful photos and clear, concise instructions. The Art of Cake is a book for everyone who is passionate about cake baking and wants to perfect their skills.
**BOOK OF THE MONTH**

**Young Adult**

**Deep Water**

Sarah Epstein

A&U. PB. $19.99

Available 31 March

How to Grow a Family Tree

Eliza Henry Jones

Harp/Collins. PB. $22.99

Available now

The Book of Chance

Sue Whiting

Walker. PB $17.99

Available 1 April

Taking Down Evelyn Tait

Poppy Nwosu

Wakefield. PB. $24.95

Available now

The Dark Lady

Akala

Hodder. PB. $19.99

Available 14 April

Unpregnant

Jenni Hendriks & Ted Caplan

Chicken House. PB. $16.99

Available now

Open Fire

Amber Lough

Carolrhoda Lab – Lerner Publishing Group. HB. $24.99

Available now

**How to Grow a Family Tree**

As with *It is for Pearl, Eliza Henry-Jones’s latest young adult novel *How to Grow a Family Tree* tells the story of a seventeen-year-old girl and the emotional struggles brought on by a family in crisis. In her trademark style, Henry-Jones draws on her background in psychology in creating an authentic experience for Stella, the protagonist of this work. This is an emotionally complex story with a myriad of pressure points at play. Stella’s family are struggling to come to terms with their changed financial circumstances brought on by the father’s gambling addiction. Being forced to move out of the family home to the local caravan park is a point of shame and much social angst for Stella and her sister Taylor. For too long, the sisters have had to reconcile themselves to the family’s diminishing assets as their father sold off anything of value to finance his gambling addiction. The family home was the last thing to go. But this isn’t Stella’s only concern. A surprise letter from her biological mother seeking connection is in itself destabilising and, even though Stella knew her own adoption story, this couldn’t have come at a more confusing time.

The complexity of one’s relationship to home and family are of central concern in this emotionally challenging work. But Stella proves a stoic and resilient teenager, if not an endearing one given her predilection for self-help books and the pop-psychological support they offer her. As when, justifying her point that she’s not as angry as her sister, she makes amusing use of a newly learnt psychological concept, remarking: ‘I suppose I’m a lot more actualised than Taylor’. This is a sensitive story about the things that break people and the strength and resources they draw upon to start over.

Natalie Platten is from Readings Doncaster

**The Book of Chance**

There is not much that twelve-year-old Chance Callahan is uncertain about. She draws a hard line between true and false, and values honesty over everything else. Chance’s mother has kept detailed diaries of their lives from the moment she was born, and she knows the notable parts like the back of her hand. So, when a reality TV show arrives at her home and reveals the holes in these stories, Chance’s world is shaken. At the same time, Chance’s Year 7 class is at the centre of a social media bungle that helps her see there is a difference between what is true and what has been manufactured.

Sue Whiting’s protagonist is a sensitive and whip-smart pre-teen who can teach us a lot about the truth and the importance of family. With a gripping mystery at its core, readers might find it difficult to put this one down.

*The Book of Chance* is a story with a big heart and an even bigger twist. For readers aged 11+

Kealy Sirij is from Readings Kids

**Taking Down Evelyn Tait**

This novel is an engaging comedy of manners set around a blended family and a high-school friendship group. Lottie is a black-clad heavy metal fan and school troublemaker whose best friend falls in love with her worst enemy, the school good girl, Evelyn Tait. Unfortunately, Lottie also has to share a room with her nemesis, because they have been step-siblings for the past year.

With the help of her other best friend, Henry, an orphan, an outsider, a thief. He is also a fifteen-year-old invested with magical powers … This brilliant, at times brutal, first novel from a renowned author promises to be even more virtuous than Evelyn. But can it be done by this self-confessed rebel? And why is the cutest boy in school, who she’s had a crush on forever, suddenly paying attention to her? Is it her bad-girl persona or her sudden good-girl vibe that is drawing him in?

Lottie is a wonderfully memorable character with a very distinctive voice and a whole lot of attitude. Her witty repartee in her regular meetings with the school principal are particularly delightful. This story has understated diversity in family groupings, ethnicity and sexuality that is just part of their everyday lives, as it should be. Poppy Nwosu captures the uncertainties and jealousies of high school perfectly, with her story mining similar territory to her *Readings YA Prize* shortlisted debut, *Making Friends with Alice Dyson*, to excellent effect. This is an utterly delightful read that you will devour like a cheeky bar of chocolate. Suitable for readers aged 12+

Angela Crocombe is the manager of Readings Kids

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**Readings Kids’ Book and Board Book Subscriptions**

**Readings**

Amber Lough

Carolrhoda Lab – Lerner Publishing Group. HB. $24.99

Available now

In 1917, Russia is losing the war with Germany. Seventeen-year-old Katya is politically conflicted, but she wants Russia to win the war. When the government begins recruiting an all-female army battalion, she signs up. But on the battlefield, Katya is confronted by the horrifying realities of war. Faced with heartbreak and disillusionment, she must re-evaluate her commitment and decide where she stands.

**Open Fire**

Purchase online at readings.com.au/book-subscriptions-at-readings

**Readings Monthly**

April 2020

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**Kids’ Books**

**Board Books**

**Beautiful Eggs**
Alise Lindstrom (illus.)
Scribe. BB. $16.99
Available now

Decadent eggs are found all over the world in many different countries and are a wonderful celebration of family, culture and tradition. Discover and celebrate the art of egg-decorating – its amazing patterns and colours – in this large-format book. Complete with a stencil incorporated into the design it will encourage children to create their own beautiful eggs.

**Cats Say Nau.**
Phil Bunting
Little Hare. BB. $16.99
Available 1 April

When an animal makes its call, we all hear exactly the same noise. But depending on the language you speak, the way you translate that noise can be very different! Where in the world do cats say 'nau'? Or dogs say 'bau'? Or cows say 'boe'? Or pigs say 'boo boo'? Take a hilarious trip around the world with these books to find out how we translate animal noises in different languages.

**Dogs Say Bau.**
Phil Bunting
Little Hare. BB. $16.99
Available 1 April

**Picture Books**

**I’ll Always Be Older than You**
Jane Godwin & Sara Acton (illus.)
Little Hare. HB. $24.99
Available 1 April

Being an older sibling can be challenging; patience is required, as the little girl in the book learns. A little planning doesn’t go astray and so she hops into her little brother’s cot and outlines all the things she will teach him and the activities they will share. Told in verse and accompanied by sweet, simple pictures, this delightful picture book offers a positive, practical and loving look at what early childhood can be like and the huge responsibility of being a big sister. And, of course her little brother will never be older than her, huzzah! For ages 2+.
Alexa Dretzke is from Readings Hawthorn

**Paolo, Emperor of Rome**
Mac Barnett & Claire Keane (illus.)
Abbeville. HB. $24.99
Available 31 March

Paolo, a dashing hound, lives in a hairdressing salon but he is desperate to escape and experience Rome in all its historic glory. One day he manages to slip out and the city he long imagined comes alive for him. Along the way he meets off various cats, which empowers him to declare when he meets a pack of dogs that he will lead them. An act of bravery sees him presented to the Pope and ensconced in luxury in the papal apartments, but grandeur is not for him and he returns to the outdoor life – good on you, Paolo! The line work in the illustrations is strong and sure so that there is a wonderful representation of movement and drama. I wonder if one day Paolo’s path will cross with Mr Chicken’s! Top storytelling for ages 2+. Alexa Dretzke is from Readings Hawthorn

**Your Birthday Was the Best!**
Maggie Hutchings & Felicta Sala (illus.)
Affirm Press. PB. $24.99
Available 31 March

This is a delightful and energetic picture book about a happy-go-lucky cockroach crashing a birthday party. The cake looks absolutely delicious and that’s not all at a surprise because this book is illustrated by Felicta Sala who gave us last year’s wonderful cook/story book *Lunch at 10 Pomegranate Street*. Who can blame a cockroach for showing up un-invited? When Dad pulls out the vacuum cleaner it looks like the party might be over for our little friend, but we mustn’t forget cockroaches are known for resilience! It’s an uplifting story with an insect protagonist that always looks on the bright side of life, but these are top quality laughs and it’s genuinely hilarious fun for readers of all ages. Please read it! Kim Gruchwoski is from Readings St Kilda

**There’s No Such Thing**
Heidi McKinnon
Albert Street Books. HB. $19.99
Available 31 March

Bear can’t sleep. Did you hear that? Did you feel that? What was it? It wasn’t a hungry giant or a blood-sucking spider or a fire-breathing dragon because there is NO SUCH THING. Is there? A funny, warm and reassuring story from the internationally acclaimed creator of *I Just Ate My Friend and Buzz & Benz*.

**Backyard Birds**
Helen Milroy
Fremantle Press. HB. $19.99
Available 31 March

This boldly illustrated work from Indigenous creator Helen Milroy celebrates the birds in our backyards. From laughing kookaburras to prancing mudlarks, this is a fun and lively read for the very young.

**Who’s Your Real Mum?**
Bernadette Green & Anna Zobel (illus.)
Scribe. HB. $24.99
Available 31 March

When Nicholas wants to know which of Elvi’s two mums is her real mum, she gives him lots of clues. Her real mum is a circus performer, and she even teaches spiders the art of web, but Nicholas still can’t work it out! Luckily, Elvi knows how to explain it to her friend. A beautifully illustrated story that celebrates non-traditional families and captures what lies at the heart of family life – love.

**Junior Grade**

**PESTS**
Emre Stamp
Hodder. PB. $14.99
Available 31 March

Stix is a mouse the size of an egg cup, can jump the width of a dog’s bottom, and loves cheese. He probably lives behind your washing machine, but you wouldn’t know it, because his grandma taught him to always stay out of trouble and never let the humans know he’s there. But now Stix has stumbled across PESTS and he’s about to rip up Grandma’s rule book and make a real pest of himself.

**Scary Mary and the Stripe Spell**
(Monty’s Island, Book 1)
Emily Rodda & Lucinda Gifford (illus.)
A&U. PB. $14.99
Available 31 March

Monty lives on a perfect island in the middle of a magical sea. Sometimes the sea throws up something interesting ... and he goes on an amazing adventure! However Monty and friends receive some startling news: Scary Mary and her pirate crew are on their way, looking for a new island to call home. It’s going to take one of Monty’s best ideas to save them! A delightful new series from Emily Rodda.

**Timmy the Tickled-Off Pony and the Poo of Excitement**
(Monty’s Island, Book 1)
Magda Szubanski & Dean Rankine (illus.)
Scholastic. PB. $16.99
Available 1 April

Timmy is rude. He’s lazy. He’s always cranky. And he’s also one of the most famous ponies in the entire world! Until one day when ... poo happens. Surely one little poo of excitement can’t ruin Timmy’s life. Can it? Yes, it can. Find out how in the funny new series by award-winning comedian and author Magda Szubanski.

**Middle Grade**

**The List of Things That Will Not Change**
Rebecca Stead
Text. PB. $16.99
Available 15 April

Twelve-year-old Bea reflects on life since her parent’s divorce and the many challenges periodically conspiring to overwhelm her: family adjustments, school frustrations, struggles with spelling and her ultimate nemesis) sticky eczema; enough to push anyone over the edge. With so much upheaval in her life, Bea maintains a list of things that will not change to keep her centred and reassured. It’s easy to be beguiled by Bea; her voice is completely authentic and thoroughly engaging, her anecdotes intimate and her dilemmas tangible. Her direct, conversational style completely draws the reader into her world. She’s genuine and funny and makes you laugh in a way that only the truth can. Bea gains important insights on the road to self-discovery; realising she doesn’t always know why she does things, what she feels or why, she learns to keep what matters and relinquish what doesn’t. There are many perceptive moments in this treasure; my favourite is when Bea refuses to define herself by the worst thing
**BOOK OF THE MONTH**

**Graphic Novel**

Landing with Wings
Trace Balla
A&U. HB. $27.99
Available 31 March

It’s been four long years since Trace Balla’s last graphic novel, Rockhopping, but it’s been utterly worth the wait. Landing with Wings is the story of a young girl, Mira, and her mum, who move to the goldfields to make an entirely new life. Mira communes with nature, befriending a tree and helping a frog in the garden, and meets her next-door neighbour, Wongs. Slowly mother and daughter make friends, put down roots and find their place in the community. There are themes of starting again, finding yourself, and of reaching outwards to others. Every page is filled to the brim with tiny, fascinating details of nature, such as the life cycles of frogs, the growth of plants and the peculiar eccentricities of birds.

This story is set on Dja Dja Wurrung country to the west of Melbourne and Balla has worked closely with traditional elders of the area and named many places, flora and fauna in traditional language throughout the book. From the beginning endpapers to the author’s notes at the back, this is a culturally rich and absolutely delightful visual story of the joys of engaging with nature and community. Suitable for kids aged 7-12 years, it’s an absolute triumph and excellent example of the benefits of telling a story graphically!

Angela Crocombe is the manager of Readings Kids

**Fiction**

The January Stars
Kate Constable
A&U. PB. $16.99
Available 31 March

Clancy and Tash have kidnapped their grandfather from an aged-care home. He’s a stroke survivor in a wheelchair whose main form of communication is just a few words: ‘yes’, ‘nah’ and ‘sp-sp-sp’.

‘They don’t really have any plans at first beyond taking him back to his own empty house in Rosella, a place outside the city the girls now live in. When it is revealed on their trip that Pa hates the home, the girls set off to find him somewhere else to stay, successfully avoiding police and nosy waitresses, and meeting and making old and new friends along the way. The January Stars is wonderfully written. The characters are all beautifully brought to life. Clancy is quiet and anxious but when she needs to she steps up, and Tash is bossy and sometimes mean but you never stop loving her, and Pa, who as mentioned spends most of this book being pushed around in a wheelchair and can barely communicate, could easily have been a mere device, but he’s not, he’s so well-drawn that by the end of the book I felt I knew him well enough to work out what he was saying without the girls translating. This is a beautiful story about family, elders, and disability – great for kids aged 9+. ’

Dani Solomon is from Readings Kids

**Nonfiction**

Where the Wilderness Lives
Jess Butterworth
Orion. PB. $16.99
Available 31 March

One day, as Cara and her siblings are trying to clean up the canal where they live, they pull out a mysterious locked safe. Though none of them can open it, they’re sure it’s something special. That night, a thief comes after the safe. An epic race for survival that follows four children and their dog through treacherous waterways, dense forests and the deep, dark wilderness of Wales.

**Classic of the Month**

Stormbreaker (Alex Rider, Book 1)
Anthony Horowitz
Walker. PB. $16.99
Available now

When Alex Rider is woken up in the middle of the night and told that his uncle, who is also his sole guardian, has been killed in a car crash, his life rearranges itself around him. In our post-Cherub moment, the teenage spy and his life as the field guide becomes both an homage and an indelible mark on the story. The narrative seems almost canonical. But before Robert Muchamore there was Anthony Horowitz! I read Stormbreaker when I was twelve, and was completely enthralled by (and jealous of) Alex Rider’s adventures. What struck me on re-reading is how resonant it is still in 2020 – super computers? A potentially unstoppable virus? Sure, the gadgets are a little dated (I don’t really care how old the tech is), but it’s filled with bittersweet, deftly written scenes. This is a classic. And what about the huge vat of fatal jellyfish? Twenty years before the fact – this is what makes it a classic. And what about the huge vat of fatal jellyfish? That’s just quality storytelling. For ages 11+. Jeremy George is from Readings Malvern
April

Bargains

The Ultimate Book of Cities
Anne-Sophie Baumann &Didier Baliciveic (Illus.)
HB. Was $39.99 Now $14.95
What can you find in a department store? Who controls the traffic system in the city? How do lampposts light up the streets? Featuring fifty-five flaps, pop-ups, pull tabs and movable parts, this oversized book will have young children enthralled as they match the words to the images. This beautifully presented prize-winning book details the full and incredible history of maps and how they have changed the world. We are taken all the way from the mysterious symbols of the Stone Age to Google Earth in a fascinating tale about science and worldviews, about art and technology, power and ambition, practical needs and distant dreams of the unknown.

The Story of the Bauhaus
Frances Ambler
HB. Was $39.99 Now $14.95
Now 100 years old, the Bauhaus still looks just as fresh today as it did when it began. It was a place to experiment and embrace a new creative freedom, to break with the past and make something new. Thanks to this philosophy, the Bauhaus still shapes the world around us. The Story of the Bauhaus is a lively introduction to the seminal art and design movement that changed the way we see, think and live.

The Neurosciences of Mindfulness
Stan Rodski
PB. Was $14.95 Now $12.95
Studies in neuroscience have proved that simple, repetitive tasks, performed with focus and attention – mindfulness – can not only quieten our noisy thought processes and help us relax but also improve our outlook on life and protect us against a range of illnesses. Stan Rodski sets out the science behind these remarkable discoveries in simple terms, and explains how you in turn can benefit from them.

Possum Magic (30th Anniversary Edition)
Mem Fox & Julie Vivas (Illus.)
HB. Was $35.00 Now $12.95
Mem Fox’s lovable characters, little Hush and Possum Magic has captivated artists alike. But how much do we know about our closest neighbour? Discover the history of humanity’s relationship with the Moon and how it affects our everyday lives and the world around us.

Wicked Bugs
Amy Stewart & Brioni Morrow-Cribbs (Illus.)
PB. Was $18.99 Now $10.00
Did you know there are zombie bugs that not only eat other bugs but also inhabit and control their bodies? There’s even a wasp that delivers a perfectly-placed sting in a cockroach’s brain. And if you want to know how much it hurts, just sting by a bullet ant: you can consult the Schmidt Sting Pain Index. Discover the meanest, deadliest and grossest bugs on earth in Wicked Bugs.

The Moon
Hannah Pang & Thomas Hengbrook (Illus.)
HB. Was $29.99 Now $19.99
For centuries, humankind has gazed up at the Moon in awe and wonder. It has been a source of both aspiration and inspiration to astronomers, poets, mathematicians and

The Quest for Queen Mary
James Pope-Hennessy & Hugo Vickers (ed.)
PB. Was $32.99 Now $13.95
When James Pope-Hennessy began his work on Queen Mary’s official biography, it opened the door to meetings with royalty, court members and retainers around Europe. His notes containing careful observations, secrets and indiscretions were kept private for fifty years. Now published in full for the first time and edited by Hugo Vickers, this is a riveting portrait of the aristocracy from a bygone age.

Ottoman Odyssey: Travels through a Lost Empire
Alev Scott
PB. Was $22.99 Now $12.95
Alev Scott’s odyssey began when she looked beyond Turkey’s borders for contemporary traces of the Ottoman Empire. Their 800-year rule ended a century ago – and yet, travelling through twelve countries from Kosovo to Palestine, she uncovers a legacy that’s vital and relevant; where medieval ethnic diversity meets twenty-first-century nationalism, and displaced people seek new identities.

Primate Change: How the World is Remaking Us
Vymbra Cregan-Reid
PB. Was $39.99 Now $12.95
Primary Change is a wide-ranging, polemical look at how and why the human body has changed since humankind first got up on two feet. Spanning the entirety of human history – from primate to transhuman – Vymbra Cregan-Reid’s book investigates where we came from, who we are today and how modern technology will change us beyond recognition.

Greeks Bearing Gifts (Bernie Gunther Book 13)
Philip Kerr
PB. Was $32.99 Now $12.95
1957, Munich. Bernie Gunther’s latest move in a string of varied careers sees him working for an insurance company. It makes a kind of sense: both cops and insurance companies have a vested interest in figuring out when people are lying to them, and Bernie has a lifetime of experience to call on. This is the thirteenth instalment in this internationally bestselling and acclaimed series.

The Story of the Bauhaus
Cristian Bonetto
PB. Was $39.99 Now $14.95
Now 100 years old, the Bauhaus still looks just as fresh today as it did when it began. It was a place to experiment and embrace a new creative freedom, to break with the past and make something new. Thanks to this philosophy, the Bauhaus still shapes the world around us. The Story of the Bauhaus is a lively introduction to the

The Courage to Be Disliked
Ichiro Kishimi & Fumitake Koga
PB. Was $22.99 Now $13.95
In mid-1970s urban India – a chaos of wreckedness on the streets and slogans in the offices – a chain of circumstances to four varied individuals together in one small flat. With a compassionate realism and narrative sweep that recall masters from Balzac to Dickens, this deeply honest masterpiece creates an enduring panorama of the human spirit in an inhuman state.

New York Precincts
Pip Cummings
HB. Was $39.99 Now $14.95
New York Precincts is your guide to the coolest places to shop, eat and drink in twenty of the city’s hottest precincts. From Brooklyn’s trendy cafes and quirky vintage shops, to Manhattan’s familiar cultural icons and amazing rooftop bars, you’ll find the perfect mix of iconic, trendy, accessible, upscale and one-of-a-kind venues that only a local would know.

Australia’s Best Nature Escapes
Lee Atkinson
PB. Was $39.99 Now $14.95
Getting back to nature doesn’t have to mean roughing it, not with this collection of 100 of Australia’s best nature-based holidays. There’s something for every kind of nature-lover in this inspiring and informative book, from rustic cabins to glamping and luxe beachside resorts, family-friendly holiday parks, country hideaways, houseboats and even a treehouse.

Sticky Fingers, Green Thumb: Baked Sweets that Taste of Nature
Hayley McKee
PB. Was $29.99 Now $14.95
Sticky Fingers, Green Thumb invites your imagination to travel out of the kitchen and into the garden. Almost sixty recipes celebrate vegetables, herbs and edible flowers in cakes and other sweet snacks. Say goodbye to mushroom risotto and zucchini fritters and hello to porcini caramel and chestnut cake, and apple cider and succulent chicken – this is earthy, seasonal baking at its best.

A Fine Balance
Rohinton Mistry
PB. Was $22.99 Now $12.95
In mid-1970s urban India – a chaos of wreckedness on the streets and slogans in the offices – a chain of circumstances to four varied individuals together in one small flat. With a compassionate realism and narrative sweep that recall masters from Balzac to Dickens, this deeply honest masterpiece creates an enduring panorama of the human spirit in an inhuman state.

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Ken Burns brings his new documentary on country music, to go along with his other brilliant histories of the Civil War, baseball, the Vietnam War, and the West, among others. Using footage and photos rarely seen, Burns introduces us to artists who, through their unique styles, performing talents and willingness to sacrifice, promote and travel, paved the way for future performers to make a living.

Burns gives us a history dating back to the turn of the century when gospel music and mountain music influences merged to create a unique American art form.

Despite all the usual challenges to documentary histories of artistic endeavours (copyright, the impossibility of including everything, etc.), Burns gives us a history dating back to the turn of the century, when gospel music and mountain music influences merged to create a unique American art form. He also covers the broader background of country music’s rise, including the importance of shrewd promoters, radio stations and big companies who brought many of the artists to the public eye, some of whom would never have had a voice otherwise.

Being a music fan, I am always fascinated to hear about the deep understanding of their roots that artists of today have, and today’s country artists live and breathe their history.

Country Music is a wonderful documentary showcasing the art form’s glorious beginnings and its sometimes rocky journey through American history.

Lou Fulco is from Readings Hawthorn

The Biggest Little Farm

Documentary

The Biggest Little Farm chronicles the eight-year quest of John and Molly Chester as they trade city living for 200 acres of barren farmland and a dream to harvest in harmony with nature. Featuring breathtaking cinematography, captivating animals, and an urgent message to heed Mother Nature’s call, it provides us all a vital blueprint for better living and a healthier planet.

Martha: A Picture Story

Martha: A Picture Story is an intimate portrait of Héloïse, a pint-sized artist who, in the 1970s, as the borough of New York City burned, Martha Cooper worked as a photographer for the New York Post, seeking images of creativity and play where others saw crime and poverty. As a result, she captured some of the first images of New York graffiti. Now at seventy-five, Martha finds herself navigating a culture vastly changed and struggling to find her place in this new world.

Jojo Rabbit

Jojo Rabbit

A 10-year-old Nazi and his imaginary best friend, Adolf Hitler, and lives under the delusion that they’re in for an easy ride... Yet Taika Waititi’s film is tender, daring, and sharp – precisely pitched so that it keeps its path steady and its ambitions in check. It makes buffoons out of the beliefs it can corrupt a nation.” – The Independent (UK)

Tell It to the Bees

In 1950s Britain Dr. Jean Markham returns to the small town she left to take over her late father’s medical practice. When a school-yard scuffle lands Charlie in her surgery, she invites him to visit the hives in her garden and tell his secrets to the bees, as she once did. This new friendship brings his mother Lydia into Jean’s world and the two women find themselves drawn to one another.

Sorry We Missed You

A mother of three children returns to the workforce when her husband’s new restaurant is failing. She secures a job as an assistant to a real estate developer whose interest in her isn’t entirely professional, and his behaviour becomes aggressive and threatening. This drama presents the insidious nature of sexual harassment in the workplace with all the complexity and urgency it deserves.

Portrait of a Lady on Fire

France, 1700. Marianne is commissioned to paint the wedding portrait of Héloïse, a young woman who has just left the convent. Marianne arrives under the guise of companionship, observing Héloïse by day and secretly painting her by firelight at night. As the two women orbit one another, intimacy and attraction grow as they share Héloïse’s first moments of freedom.

The New Pope

Pope XIII is in a coma. And after an unpredictable and mysterious turn of events, the Secretary of State Voelio succeeds in the enterprise of having Sir John Brannox, a moderate English aristocrat, charming and sophisticated, placed on the papal throne adopting the name of John Paul III. The new pope seems perfect, but he conceals secrets and a certain fragility.

Guilty

Guilty is set during the final seventy-two hours in the life of Myuran Sukumaran, the Bali Nine convicted criminal who became an accomplished artist while in Kerobakan prison under the tutelage of artist Ben Quilty. Approaching this moment through the aesthetic of his art practice, director Matthew Sleeth brings an intensely personal perspective, and this film is born of his quiet fury at the events leading to the execution.

Great Australian Railway Journeys: Series 1

Armed with his Bradshaw’s Handbook Michael Portillo embarks on six railway journeys across the length and breadth of Australia and explores its landscape, cities and culture. Including the Ghan and Indian Pacific Railways Portillo reveals amazing feats of railway engineering and his travels take him from Canberra to Melbourne, Sydney to Broken Hill, Port Augusta to Darwin and more.

Jojo Rabbit

$36.95
Available 1 April

Tell It to the Bees

$29.95
Available now

Sorry We Missed You

$24.95
Available 8 April

Portrait of a Lady on Fire

$29.95
Available 1 April

The New Pope

$39.95
Available 1 April

Jojo Rabbit

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$39.95
Available 1 April
Popular Music

ALBUM OF THE MONTH
Pop/Rock/Alt

Mixing Colours
Roger & Brian Eno
$21.95
Available now

Despite working on and off with each other since 1983, this is the Eno brothers’ first collaborative album to be widely released. Developed across a rather astonishing fifteen-year timeframe, this fraternal collaboration has yielded an inspired collection of delicate Ambient pieces.

Brian Eno has spoken of wanting to make slow music that is more like a painting, and the gorgeous passages that the two conjure on this record are delineated by the naming convention of literally Mixing Colours: see ‘Spring Frost’, ‘Wintergreen’, and ‘Dervigis’.

These works don’t have as much in common with Brian Eno’s crucial albums On Land or Music for Airports, but on this recording one can hear similarities to his work with pianist–composer Harold Budd on The Pearl, not to mention the second instalment in his Ambient series, The Plateaux of Mirrors. And to be fair, the long shadow his music casts over the entirety of the Ambient genre means that anything from this world of music can’t help but be swept up in comparison to what he set in motion in the ’70s – even his own new music, let alone his brother’s.

The influence Brian Eno has had over this new generation is readily apparent; who knows whether that influence was, in turn, partially Roger Eno’s own. This record holds up against the new guard. Both expansive and precise, this beautiful record is a must for completists of Eno’s work – Brian and Roger Eno, that is. Nico Callaghan is from Readings Carlton.

Jazz/Blues

That’s What I Heard
Robert Cray Band
$19.95
Available now

Over the past four decades, Robert Cray has created a sound that rises from American roots, blues, soul and R&B, with five Grammy wins and many acclaimed albums. ‘Funky, cool and bad, ’is how Cray describes his latest album, That’s What I Heard, which celebrates the music of Curtis Mayfield, Bobby ‘Blue’ Bland, The Sensational Nightingales and more, alongside four newly written songs.

Secrets are the Best Stories
Kurt Elling
$24.95
Available 3 April

Secrets are the Best Stories is the new album from acclaimed vocalist and Grammy-winning artist Kurt Elling featuring renowned pianist Danilo Pérez. This vibrant and adventurous new album not only marks a vital new collaboration between two of the greats in the music but is an album that confirms Kurt Elling as the male vocalist of his generation.

Rejoice
Tony Allen & Hugh Masakela
$22.95
Available now

Rejoice is a very special collaboration between Tony Allen, the legendary drummer and co-founder of Afrobeat, and Hugh Masakela, the master trumpet player of South African jazz. Consisting of unfinished selections of all original compositions by the pair and completed by Allen in 2019, Rejoice says Allen, is ‘a kind of South African–Nigerian swing-jazz stew’, with its roots firmly in Afrobeat.

Country

When Carolina Comes Home Again
Jim Lauderdale
$19.95
Available 27 March

Grammy-winning icon Jim Lauderdale has always covered a wide range across the Americana spectrum, from rocked-up-country to high lonesome bluegrass. In a very literal sense, he’s returning to his geographic as well as musical roots on When Carolina Comes Home Again. The thirteen tracks are straight-up bluegrass, going back to the earliest music he learned to play.

A Long Way Back: The Songs of Glimmer
Kim Richey
$19.95
Available 27 March

A Long Way Back: The Songs of Glimmer celebrates the twentieth anniversary of Kim Richey’s classic album Glimmer. Whereas Glimmer had a pop sheen to its sound, this version, featuring new interpretations of each song, strips everything down to a more raw essence and allows Richey to give them a fresh yet timeless sound.

Pop/Rock/Alt

Waves of Anzac/The Journey
Mick Harvey
$21.95
Available 17 April

Mick Harvey’s first soundtrack release in over ten years features two compositions to accompany powerful subject matters. The first, Waves of Anzac looks at Sam Neill’s personal family history interwoven with the history of the First World War and the Anzacs through to the modern era while the second, The Journey, is a four-part composition released in support of kids and adults seeking asylum who have found themselves in Australia’s offshore detention program.

Gigaton
Pearl Jam
$39.95
Available 27 March

‘As the band’s first LP since 2013, there’s an attention to sonic and emotional detail, a focus on musical light and shade, which reflects the album’s lengthy gestation. The record is sequenced with the rockers upfront and slower, more meditative songs at the back. Gigaton is a testament to how Pearl Jam’s own deeply held dissatisfaction still burns brighter than ever.’ – Rolling Stone

Dixie Blur
Jonathan Wilson
$22.95
Also on vinyl
Available now

Following a tour with Roger Waters as musical director Jonathan Wilson headed to Nashville and worked with a revered group of musicians to create his most personal and fully realised work to date. On Dixie Blar he reaches back to the musical foundation of his upbringing whilst infusing the music with modern textures and aesthetic soundscapes.

Syntezna
Sufjan Stevens & Lowell Brams
$26.95
Available 27 March

In the spirit of the New Age composers who sanded off the edges of their synth’s sawtooth waves, Aporia approximates a rich soundtrack from an imagined sci-fi epic brimming with moody, hooky, gauzy synthesizer soundscapes. Collaborating with his stepfather (a record label co-owner) it is a fully realised musical piece which generates a mediative universe all its own.

High Risk Behaviour
The Chats
$19.95
Available 27 March

High Risk Behaviour is the debut studio album from Australian punk rockers The Chats. The album delivers everything you’ve come to love from them – fourteen songs that are over in twenty-eight blistering, funny, sweaty, unforgettable minutes.

It Is What It Is
Thundertact
$21.95
Available 3 April

Thundertact’s ska Stephen Lee Brunner’s game-changing third album Drunk (2017) completed his transition from virtuoso bassist to bonafide star and cemented his reputation as a unique voice that transcends genre. With guests including Childish Gambino and Kamasi Washington, Brunner says that It Is What It Is ‘is about love, loss, life and the ups and downs that come with that.’

Golden Repair
#1 Dadi
$21.95
Also on vinyl
Available now

Under the #1 Dads monster it’s humble melody and sincere storytelling that Tom Iansek gives centre stage to. More than ever on Golden Repair, Iansek has allowed the simple essence of the songs to remain unadorned, while still keeping the trademark warmth, ease and approachability that the project is well loved for.

The New Abnormal
The Strokes
$21.95
Available 10 April

The New Abnormal is the first album from The Strokes in seven years, and it’s worth the long wait. It is the New York band’s sixth studio album, and will appeal to fans old and new. Filled with the irresistibly catchy guitar lines The Strokes are well-known for, this is a future classic in the making.

Folk/World

Tamotait
Tamikrest
$27.25
Available 27 March

Tamikrest return with a vivid, irresistible rock and roll statement. Their most powerful album since 2013’s wildly acclaimed Chamaa, Tamotait finds the band not only turning up the volume, but also sharpening their ruminations on the state of the Sahara and the world beyond. It features acclaimed Moroccan singer Hindi Zahra and Japanese traditional musicians.
**Classical Music**

**ALBUM OF THE MONTH**

*Classical* is an absolute must for fans of Beethoven's piano concertos. The performances are technically flawless and deeply affecting. Víkingur Ólafsson's renditions of Beethoven's concerti are both technically brilliant and emotionally resonant, capturing the intensity of the works. This is a profound and deeply satisfying listening experience. – *The Times (UK)*

**Beethoven: Complete Piano Sonatas**

Wilhelm Kempff

DG. 4837429. 8 CDs. Was $79.95

*$34.95 (Limited stock at this price)*

"... Kempff’s approach to Beethoven fuses substance and integrity with personal expressiveness and individuality, and reveals something new with each rehearing. It grows on you – and within you, in the long run. If you care about Beethoven’s sonatas, give Kempff a chance." – *ClassicsToday.com*

**Beethoven: Complete Piano Sonatas**

Mauro Polini

DG. 4794120. 8CDs. Was $64.95

*$34.95 (Limited stock at this price)*

"Polini is a pianistic revelation, one of the genuine aristocrats, which makes it all the more remarkable that it has taken him nearly 40 years to produce a complete cycle of the 32 Beethoven piano sonatas... This set displays his utter mastery, his command of touch, of line, of shape, his delicacy and strength, his nobility... Despite the long time-span and developing understanding, it has a powerful unity of vision and purpose." – *Sydney Morning Herald*

**Antonio Vivaldi**

Cecilia Bartoli, Ensemble Matheus & Jean-Christophe Spinosi

Decca. 4833475. Was $29.95

*$16.95 (Limited stock at this price)*

"Bartoli’s medium-sized, but multicolour instrument still navigates coloratura florishes with a precision and secure pitch that many other mature singers would envy. An early tendency to breathe notes into being has been tamed, and her dramatic gifts are as strong as ever." – *The Times (UK)*

**Britten: War Requiem, Op. 66**

Galina Vishnevskaya, Peter Pears, London Symphony Orchestra & Benjamin Britten

Decca. 4757571. 2 CDs. Was $29.95

*$14.95 (Limited stock at this price)*

"Britten was writing personally for three musicians who had all shared the wartime experience... His incandescent commitment to pacifism and horror at the failure of humanism blazes forth... As you can hear in the revealing out-takes from the rehearsals on this recording, Britten wanted real terror, real hysteria from the singers... and he got it." – *BBC Music Magazine*
'There will not this year be a more original novel published. I just know it.'

TOM KENEALLY

#1 BESTSELLING AUTHOR OF SCHINDLER’S LIST

In 1901 the word bondmaid was discovered missing from the Oxford English Dictionary. This is the story of the girl who stole it.

Set when the women’s suffrage movement was at its height and the Great War loomed, The Dictionary of Lost Words reveals a lost narrative, hidden between the lines of a history written by men. It's a delightful, lyrical and deeply thought-provoking celebration of words, and the power of language to shape our experience of the world.