

STAFF PICKS **JULY – SEPTEMBER 2007**

CHOCOLATE : Recipes from 20 years of indulgent ideas

Edited by Kylie Walker

641.6374/CHO

Popular also among staff members, this collection of over 100 recipes compiled from The Age's food and wine section, Epicure, is any chocoholic's ultimate dream come true.

Full-page true-to-life colour photos further tempt your taste buds while you browse through the delectable array of culinary delights. Easy-to-follow recipes range from the simple Chocolate Bread and Butter Pudding or the Melt, Mix, Bung Chocolate Cake to the sublime Adults Only Rocky Road or the Grilled Pork with Spicy Chocolate Sauce. Coco the Burlesque Wonder Cake and Big Flat Fudgy Chippers are other mouth-watering eye-catchers also worth a mention.

So, forget your will power – this is definitely not for weight watchers but aren't we allowed a little self-indulgence now and again?

Denise S

On a Highland shore

by Kathleen Givens

F/GIVE

Historical/Romance (Purple/Blue spots)

The book starts in 1254 in Scotland when a young girl has her fortune told and is told that she will need to be strong as she will face dragons and also that she will find her true partner in life and he will be golden and bring life after death.

The book skips to 1263 when Margaret is a grown woman and is getting ready to marry a man chosen by her family. Margaret realises he is not her true love and tries everything to break the marriage contract, even travelling to court with her brother and younger sister to speak with the King. She finds that she has to resign herself to either marriage or spending the rest of her life in a convent.

When they travel back home to Somerstrath, on the western shore of Scotland they find that their family and the whole village have been slaughtered by a viking raid. A group of Irish travellers who arrive after the slaughter, take the three of them to a safer settlement along the coast where they can begin to rebuild their lives.

Margaret and one of the Irish travellers, Gannon MacManus lead the village in withstanding more viking raids, and other treacherous plots by viking supporters and finally find true love.

This is a great romantic adventure!

Kim

The Perfect Fake

by Barbara Parker

F/PARK

Thriller (Brown spot)

A man with a slightly dubious past is offered \$50,000 by Stuart Barlowe to travel to Italy to make a perfect copy of a rare Renaissance map. Can he do it, should he do it? He believes he is making a duplicate but could it be really be for forgery. Tom is joined by Allison Barlowe, whose father has sent her to supervise the project. The project is hampered when an associate is murdered and Tom and Allison go on the run with more than one person trying to stop them. There are a number of twists and turns to the plot and Tom will have to deliver the finished map to Barlowe to ensure he gets out of this alive.

The story moves along swiftly and keeps you reading.

Kay

Neko Case: Fox Confessor Brings the Blood

CD/CASE

Neko Case claims no genre, although I think there's a definite country feel to this album. Whilst country is not a genre I listen to a great deal, I really like this album. The songs are tales of the downtrodden and the desperate, the heartbroken and the lonely. Songs are brief, most under three minutes. The album is really easy to listen to, and is both uplifting and melancholy. But don't just take my word for it. "The Fox Confessor Brings the Flood" has been on almost every "Best of 2006" list from Amazon.com to The Rolling Stone. Overall, I find it an intriguing album.
Yvette

The Eye of Jade

by Diane Wei Liang

F/LIAN

Mystery (Green spot)

There are no such things as detective agencies officially in China. However the main character in the story is Mei who has set herself up as a private investigator and she is asked to locate a Han dynasty jade of great value that was taken from a museum during the Cultural Revolution. Her investigation takes her into her own family's past and forces her to delve into the dark, brutal period of China's history.

For the reader the story provides wonderful insights into the effects of the Cultural Revolution. As well as the most recent past, it reveals the various aspects of Chinese life today still interwoven with old issues and customs. The book also deals with family relationships especially with Mei's mother and wealthy sister.

Diane Wei Liang's style is easy to read and her portrayal of all the characters' lives full of colour and emotion.

This is a detective mystery with a difference.

Kay

A Friend of the Devil

by Peter Robinson

F/ROBI

#17 'Inspector Banks'

Mystery (green spot)

Chief Inspector Banks rides again. This is a novel about the past and if you're a Banks fan you'll know that the past hangs heavy on his character. The most interesting thing about the Banks novels are not the straight forward police procedural - which they undoubtedly are - but the nostalgic references to an older world. Banks himself is an old-fashioned policeman with an iPod and a Porsche combined with an eclectic taste in music and a love of history. He is a bridge between the old and new. His relationships with women seem to reflect this as well, particularly when one of those relationships concerns his erstwhile colleague, DI Cabot, some years his junior.

All in all, this is a good read in this particular genre but it would be worthwhile to catch up on the rest of the series so that you can appreciate the plotting and characters in this one.

Michael

The Gotan Project: Lunatico

CD/GOTA

This album is a mix of tango and dance music. I loved the Gotan Project's last album and couldn't wait to listen to this one when I read that the group utilised a host of local musicians from Buenos Aires; a complete string section, two emcees, a trombonist, and Argentine piano legend and long time Gotan collaborator Gustavo Beytelmann. I found this album experimental and diverse, imaginative, adventurous and modern. I loved it.

Yvette

Lean Mean Thirteen

by Janet Evanovich

F/EVAN #13 'Stephanie Plum' Mystery (green spot)

What can I say about this book?? It is of course number 13 in a hilarious series about a female American bounty hunter, Stephanie Plum. If you want something light and enjoy a chuckle then this series will provide it. I never want these books to end!

In this book Stephanie is a suspect in her ex-husband's disappearance. She is trying to locate her ex with the help of boyfriend, Joe Morelli, and workmates, Ranger and Lula and, as usual, gets herself into a number of silly situations.

Kim

What's in this stuff? The essential guide to what's really in the products you buy.

by Pat Thomas

363.19/THO

Wonderfully informative and terrifying at the same time, this book is a very clear and easy to read guide on what products to avoid to protect yourself and your family from harmful chemicals that are in our foods, cosmetics and toiletries, household cleaning products, garden pesticides and pet supplies.

Just a couple of examples to curl your hair:

- "Nitrosamines are one of the major carcinogens in cigarettes and are also found in cured meats. This is widely known and for health reasons the content of nitrosamines in cured meat has dropped in recent years. (A typical portion of bacon may contain approx 1mcg) Compare that with the nitrosamine content of shampoo, which could contain 50-100mcgs, easily absorbed through the skin as you wash your hair in warm water.
- The artificial sweetener aspartame breaks down into carcinogenic formaldehyde during storage and in the body.
- There is enough fluoride in the average 100ml family tube of toothpaste to kill a small child.
- Pre-packaged lettuce is washed in a chlorine solution 20 times more concentrated than in the average swimming pool."

The best thing about this book is that it offers alternatives. Throughout the chapters are sections titled '*Try this instead...*'. So even though there is a lot of scary and confronting information, a better way to shop, eat and clean is offered.

Kate

Beyond the Lattice : Broome's early years

by Susan Sickert

994.41/SIC

The history of the pearling industry forms the background to the story of Broome. Money gained from the sale of pearlshell (mother of pearl) was the economic basis for the industry. The ocean was vast, labour was cheap and the market for pearlshell was insatiable. As the town evolved in response to the needs of pearling, the social fabric unfolded as people found ways to live their lives, under the restrictions placed on them by the racist attitudes and policies of the day. The worlds that existed behind the lattice were very different, and lattice can be seen as a symbol of division. Behind the lattice were lives of privilege, privacy and power. Beyond the lattice was a sea of corrugated iron, and there, in the heart of Broome were less privileged lives of diverse cultures.

Brenda

The Sisterhood of the Travelling Pants – 4 part series –

by Anne Brashares

T/BRA

The Sisterhood of the Travelling Pants

The Second Summer of the Sisterhood

Girls In Pants: the Third Summer of the Sisterhood

Forever in Blue: the Fourth Summer of the Sisterhood

Despite the dubious titles, these books are thoroughly enjoyable teenage stories. My thirteen-year-old daughter and I have read them voraciously as soon as any of the new titles came out. The series is about four friends who have very different family backgrounds and attend different schools but have a strong bond, which began as their mothers attended the same prenatal yoga classes and they were all born within a week of each other. The mothers' friendships have eroded over the years but the girls are still firm and supportive friends to each other as they reach their teenage years. One day, just previous to all the girls going separate ways for summer break, all four friends go second-hand clothing shopping and find a 'magical' pair of jeans that fit them all beautifully even though they are all very different body shapes. The girls see these jeans as an omen sent to them to share and to symbolize their friendship while they are apart. All four girls go through profound life experiences in the books, but one thing is always constant for them, their friendship to each other. The fourth and last book sees the girls now in College and living apart all year round, their friendship seems to be slipping but again through the sharing of the jeans they get back together and support each other in this period as they become women from teenagers.

Gail

Grandiflora Arrangements

by Saskia Havekas

745.92/HAV

I lived close to the florist shop "Grandiflora" and would often love to linger and look at all the beautiful blooms. Her shop has been described as Australia's most beautiful florist shop, so I was excited to see that the owner of the florist, Saskia Havekas had put together a book. This book has over 100 arrangements and although I haven't tried creating any of them at home, yet...just looking at the stunning photographs in this book is satisfying enough.

Yvette

The Delicate Storm

by Giles Blunt

F/BLUN

#2 'John Cardinal'

Mystery (Green Spot)

What a find this series is! Set in small town Algonquin Bay, in Ontario, Canada, where the weather is a character all on its own. Local cop John Cardinal is a flawed, but committed man, with a wife who suffers from manic depression and a daughter who wanted to study at Harvard. For their sakes, he foolishly succumbed to temptation in the first book of this series and is now suffering the anguish of guilt and the need to be on constant vigilance in case the bad guy gets out of jail and comes for revenge.

However, he has the gruesome discovery of a bunch of human parts discovered in the local woods to contend with as well. With the help of his excellent partner, French Canadian Lisa Delorme, he must battle the professional rivalry between the police and the RCMP, and when the body parts turn out to be American, the CIA and FBI get involved, too. When another, seemingly unrelated murder, happens shortly after, he must delve into the past to solve the present. Adding to this, his father is suffering heart failure, the weather turns terribly nasty with the ice storm from hell, and he learns, even knowing the truth doesn't always bring justice.

Karen G

The Wrong Thing

by Isobelle Carmody

E/CAR

I love this story for its originality and beautiful illustrations by Declan Lee but, at first, I wasn't sure where it was taking me until its conclusion where everything falls into place.

I would describe it as junior fantasy suitable for all ages that leaves the reader with a wonderful feeling of belonging and family. Centred round a beautiful white cat called Hurricane, each read reveals hidden treasures – another little gem from a great Australian author with a unique style.

Denise S

Water Like a Stone

by Deborah Crombie

F/CROM #11 'Duncan Kincaid & Gemma James' Mystery (Green spot)

Scotland Yard's Superintendent Duncan Kincaid and his partner Gemma James, (also a police officer) take their two children to visit his family in Cheshire for Christmas. Gemma and both of the children, Kit and Toby have not met their father's parents so all are feeling a little anxious. Gemma is a city girl born and bred and she is soon entranced by the countryside around Nantwich with the historic buildings and canals, even though the snow begins to set in for Christmas. Toby and Kit begin to find friendship with their new cousins.

Soon after they arrive Duncan's sister Julie, who is currently renovating an old barn by a canal rings to say she has found a body. Needless to say Duncan and his sister delay Christmas Eve dinner while they help the local police with their enquiries.

The Christmas break is soon taken over by the investigation with both Duncan and Gemma being caught up in it along with Julie and her husband and many different family issues are brought into focus.

Another death occurs on the canal and Kincaid discovers that the lovely town he grew up in has been harboring dark and deadly secrets.

This is number 11 in the series and the writing just gets better each time. I particularly enjoyed this book as I have also stayed in Cheshire quite close to where this was set.

Kim

Flying the Coop

by Ilsa Evans

F/EVAN

Australia – Fiction (Yellow spot)

This is a truly fun story of Christin, mother of Grace and Michael who takes on the monumental task of raising two young individuals on her own while also attempting to run a Free Range Egg Farm. Until the break up of her marriage Christin has always lived in the city, but when her husband leaves her for another woman Christin sells the family home in Melbourne and purchases the farm, creating for herself a steep learning curve and the adventure of meeting several new very interesting local characters. Christin just wants her young family to be happy which is not easy considering Grace is a 14-year-old non-conformist teenager and Michael a very busy youngster. Added to this, her very good friend Jenny and her daughter Lauren join them in the country when Jenny also has marital problems and they must negotiate between their teenage daughters, Lauren being the 'pretty in pink' kind of teenager and Grace who just wants to take over the world.

The novel is delightful to read and has you smiling all the way through. What's more, Ilsa Evans researched for this book in the Victorian country town of Stalwell, and we all know only good things come out of Stalwell!!!!

Gail

Calum's Road **by Roger Hutchinson** **B/MCLE**

I heard Roger Hutchinson speaking on Radio National about this book and what do you do when you hear about an inspiring book...ask at the library! The book was promptly ordered and processed and landed on my desk.

'Calum's Road' took me on an amazing journey as the journalist author recounted the life of Calum MacLeod and his determination in building his own road to his home. - *'The story of one man's devotion to a visionary project.'*

Calum MacLeod started building his road in the 1960's. He had a wheelbarrow, a pickaxe, a shovel and a crowbar. He lived in a crofter's cottage on the tiny Hebridean island of Raasay.

His story is now part of Scottish history. But the author is adamant that the story should not be sentimentalised - *'here lived a man who desired not fame or money, nor television and radio programmes, nor medals and recognition by UNESCO, nor paragraphs in travel guides, nor tributes in magazines and newspapers and books; a man who would have been astonished and bewildered by the tribute of an exhibition of art. Calum did not even want a driving licence. He merely wanted a road.'*

Reading the book, one gains an insight into the life of the crofters. There were acts of forced removal and transportation by wealthy landowners in the 19th century and, more recently, disregard by governments and their agencies resulting in the almost total depopulation of the islands. Calum loved his home and lobbied authorities all his life seeking support and attention for what he believed in. Anything was possible on the island and the island could provide for all.

I now want to see Calum's Road!

Virginia



Chain of Evidence

by Garry Disher

F/Dish

#4 'Challis & Destry'

Mystery/Australia (Green/Yellow spots)

This new crime novel involving the police characters, Hal Challis and his partner, Ellen Destry is an exciting read. Detective Ellen Destry is called to investigate the disappearance of a child on the way home from school in Waterloo, Disher's fictional reworking of the small town of Hastings. The child fails to turn up and it's feared a ring of paedophiles may be at work. The reader already knows this to be the case, courtesy of the opening chapter. 'This is a stomach-churning strategy that Disher sustains by frequently giving the reader more knowledge than the characters in the book. We turn the pages frantically, willing Destry and her team to catch up.' And where is Hal Challis? He is a thousand miles away on leave visiting his dying father. As a distraction from the inevitable, Challis tries to discover what happened to his sister's husband, an RSPCA inspector who disappeared five years ago in the rugged South Australian bush. It is exciting to read a mystery or thriller set in Australia as one can relate to the experience in a different way; you have a visual idea of the places mentioned together with an awareness of the distances we live with.

This is number 4 in the series featuring Challis and Destry but newcomers can certainly start here as I did. And now I'm looking for the earlier ones to put on my reading list.

Kay

Last Orders at Harrods

by Michael Holman

F/HOLM

I chose this book because I have so enjoyed The No. 1 Ladies Detective Agency stories by Alexander McCall Smith. His recommendation for it on a fiction website convinced me. Well, it is set in Africa, albeit the imagined country of Kuwisha, and has a strong female central character, widowed Charity Mupanga. That's about all the similarities to No. 1. The story is edgier, with a black humour and cynicism missing in the gentler McCall Smith's writing. AIDS and its consequences is present, corruption is rife and the realities of third world lack of plumbing is frankly explored!

Charity owns and runs the International Harrods Bar (and Nightspot) in the slums of Kireba, and is being sued by the "real" Harrods in London for using that name. The fact that it was her late father's name has no impression on the fancy, expensive London lawyers, and she is in for a fight. She also is trying to make a difference in the lives of the local bad boys, AIDS orphans, and even a potential romance is quietly developing. Give it a go, but it's different!

Karen G

The Alton Gift

by Marlon Zimmer Bradley and Deborah J. Ross

F/BRAD #1 'Children of the King' Science fiction (White spot)

This is the next installment in the 'Darkover' series and follows 'The traitor's sun'.

This story takes place a couple of years after the Terran Federation has abandoned the planet of Darkover because of interstellar civil wars.

Mikhail Hastur is the current ruler, and he is trying to take Darkover forward now they have lost the technology and help that the Terranean Federation had previously provided. Francisco Ridenow, who has been a longtime adversary of the Hastur clan returns and is plotting to bring down both Mikhail and his wife Marguerida.

Meanwhile Mikhail and Marguerida's son, Domenic, is searching for his place in life. He is Mikhail's heir but feels no interest in the politics of Darkover. He is sent on a long journey to the far ends of Darkover, where he will gain the support of the tower technicians and ask for their presence on the council.

When he arrives back in Thendara he finds a crisis has developed. Refugees are flooding into Thendara, Darkover's capital city, and bringing an ancient menace with them. Between this menace and the plots to get rid of the ruling Hastur family, Domenic needs to make some important decisions.

These books are always a good read and now I want to re-read the rest of the series again. This one has political intrigue, murder and romance, however you may need to have read some of the earlier books in the series to know the background history for this story.

Kim

Forgotten Children: Fairbridge Farm School, Molong

by David Hill

304.89/HIL

From 1938 to 1974 thousands of parents were persuaded to sign over legal guardianship of their children to Fairbridge and the Farm School, Molong. Now many of those children have decided to speak out. Physical and sexual abuse was not uncommon. Loneliness was rife. Food was often inedible. The standard of education was appalling. David Hill and his brothers were at Molong School for a number of years. They left when their mother came out to Australia. This remarkable book by David Hill is a tribute to the children who were betrayed by a migration scheme that went terribly awry.

Sue O

Street of the Five Moons

by Elizabeth Peters

F/PETE

#2 'Vicky Bliss'

Mystery (Green spot)

This is a reprint of a book originally published in 1978 and it is the 2nd book in the Vicky Bliss murder mystery series.

Vicky Bliss is an expert on medieval history and art and is currently working at the National Museum in Germany when she is asked to solve the case of a medieval brooch found in the pocket of a dead man. How and why did he die and why did he have the fake brooch which was such a good replica that it almost passed for the real item? Solving the mystery takes Vicky to Rome and places her in some interesting situations.

This is a light cosy mystery-adventure so if you like your mysteries with blood, guts and forensics then forget this book.

Kim

Band of Brothers

V/BAND or DVD/BAND

If you missed the mini-series when it was originally televised, you are now in luck with a choice of either video or DVD format. Don't be put off by the assumption that this is just another typical American war drama – Tom Hanks and Stephen Spielberg have successfully produced a very realistic account of the lives of the brave men of Easy Company, 506th Regiment of the 101st Airborne Division, U.S. Army. This series that is based on the book by Stephen Ambrose (W/AMB – Band of Brothers: E Company, 506th Regiment, 101st Airborne from Normandy to Hitler's Eagle's Nest), demonstrates the extraordinary bond that developed through the soldiers' experiences as brothers-in-arms. The series concludes with the final episode combining interviews with the real-life members of this company and archival photographs and film footage. And ladies, this is not one just for "the boys" –

I thoroughly enjoyed each episode and recommend that everyone should see the huge sacrifices made by these men in the name of honour.

Denise S

Dreams of Speaking

by Gail Jones

F/JONE

In this beautifully crafted novel by Western Australian author Gail Jones we travel with Alice, a young woman from Perth, as she researches and writes about technology.

In Paris she meets an elderly Japanese gentleman, a survivor of the atomic bomb, who is an expert on Alexander Graham Bell. The friendship between Alice and Mr Sakamoto develops throughout the novel providing them both with companionship and support, as they are both quite unique people. Mr Sakamoto finds comfort in the friendship with Alice as he spends his life coming to terms with the devastation of Nagasaki, and how his life continued from it. Alice is trying to understand her family, her mother's indifference to her, her sister Norah's animosity to her as a child and later Norah's battle with cancer.

Every passage is beautifully phrased and the story is unusual and entertaining.

Gail

The Shifting Fog

by Kate Morton

HCD/MORT

Australia – fiction (Yellow spot)

I am totally bereft, lost and alone now as I drive to and from work. The book is finished. Sixteen disks, over nineteen hours of listening, and although a tentative start (accent issues) I was mesmerised and enthralled throughout. Also available in paperback (F/MORT) this is well worth a listen or a look, one of my favourites for the year.

Kate

Once I Ate a Pie

by Patricia MacLachlan & Emily MacLachlan Charest

E/MCL

Attention dog lovers of all ages – here is a children’s book guaranteed to delight. Written from the dog’s perspective, each double page is devoted to a different breed and is worth a read if only just to indulge in the adorable illustrations by Katy Schneider. My favourite is Pocket but Gus, Wupsi, Darla and Needle Nose are also sure to appeal. The authors use a simplistic style to create an endearing insight into the minds of our four-legged friends.

Denise S

Northern Lights

by Phillip Pullman

T/PUL #1 ‘His Dark Materials’ Fantasy (Black spot)

A fantasy for young adults (but can be enjoyed by ‘older’ adults!), Northern Lights is the first book in a fantastic trilogy based around a young, vibrant, and mischievous girl named Lyra, who discovers that children just like her are going missing. When her close friend Roger also disappears, Lyra and her daemon Pantalaimon bravely charge themselves with the perilous task of saving him from the aptly named ‘Gobblers’. Along her travels she encounters witches, armoured bears, Tartars and even a Texan, and uncovers a dark and sinister plot that threatens to plunge her world in to war. Friends are made and foes found as the adventure unfolds and the mystery deepens. A mix of fantasy, adventure, and science, this is epic escapism at its finest. As a side note, the trilogy is being translated to film, with Northern Lights renamed The Golden Compass, and starring Nicole Kidman and Daniel Craig. As a second side note, this is Brendan’s very first book review and almost certainly his last.

Brendan

Magenta Style Paper Magic

by Nathalie Metivier and Leslie Carola

745.54/MET

Magic is an appropriate word to describe this book. There are dozens of inventive ways to transform beautiful paper into special projects that you can enjoy, or give as a stunning card or gift. For the card maker or scrapbook enthusiast this book presents new ideas and techniques. If you have never attempted to make a card or used paper to create a gift looking through this book would encourage you to try. The techniques are easy to follow, well illustrated, and the outcome will be your greatest pleasure. If you have never made cards, undertaken scrapbooking your photographs or used paper to create gifts borrow this book and become inspired. There are other similar books on our shelves as well as magazines on paper crafts in the collection.

Kay

Healthy Gut Guide : Natural solutions for your digestive disorders

by Jill Thomas

616.34/THO

Hippocrates once stated that ‘all diseases begin in the gut’ and according to this book it is true, and to obtain optimum health your digestive system needs to be healthy. Common ailments covered include: Irritable bowel syndrome, bloating, constipation, diarrhoea, allergies, Coeliac disease, Leaky gut syndrome, Halitosis, Ulcers and many more. The chapters offer straightforward information on diagnosis and treatment, along with dietary advice, suggested supplements, and case studies.

I read this book from cover to cover (I know that sounds a bit weird!!) but it is filled with easy little lifestyle adjustments anyone could make to do their body a big favour.

Kate

If you read romantic suspense (Brown/Blue spots) keep your eye out for these up and coming releases:

Up Close and Dangerous

by Linda Howard

F/HOWA

A mysterious plane crash . . . a dangerous trek through the Idaho wilderness . . . a smoldering attraction . . . and a deadly game of cat and mouse. In her latest tour de force of romantic suspense, New York Times bestselling author Linda Howard blends these elements into a gripping story that will keep readers breathless—and leave them begging for more. For in Linda Howard's world, trust can be a weapon, a kiss can be a threat, and intimacy can be deadly.

Last Look

by Mariah Stewart

F/STEW

News that the body of a recently murdered prostitute—stabbed repeatedly and dumped on Georgia's Shelter Island—has been identified as Shannon Randall stuns the FBI, particularly special agent Dorsey Collins. Twenty-four years ago, nineteen-year-old Eric Louis Beale was convicted and later executed for Shannon's murder—and the agent in charge of the case was Dorsey's father. Now Dorsey is determined to find out where her father's investigation went wrong, what part he played in the death of an innocent man, and where Shannon has been all this time.

The heat is on FBI special agent Andrew Shields to discover what happened to Shannon on that night decades ago—to find out who killed her and why. Dorsey shadows Andrew's every investigative move, hoping to redeem her father's reputation and capture a cunning killer. Together, Dorsey and Andrew unravel a shocking mystery that will shatter one family and rock an entire town.

Play Dirty

by Sandra Brown

F/BROW

After five long years in federal prison, Griff Burkett is a free man. But the disgraced Cowboys quarterback can never return to life as he knew it before he was caught cheating. In a place where football is practically a religion, Griff committed a cardinal sin, and no one is forgiving. Foster Speakman, owner and CEO of SunSouth Airlines, and his wife, Laura, are a golden couple. Successful and wealthy, they lived a charmed life before fate cruelly intervened and denied them the one thing they wanted most – a child. It's said that money can't buy everything. But it can buy a disgraced football player fresh out of prison and out of prospects. The job Griff agrees to do for the Speakmans demands secrecy. But he soon finds himself once again in the spotlight of suspicion. An unsolved murder comes back to haunt him in the form of his nemesis, Stanley Rodarte, who has made Griff's destruction his life's mission. While safeguarding his new enterprise, Griff must also protect those around him, especially Laura Speakman, from Rodarte's ruthlessness. Griff stands to gain the highest payoff he could ever imagine, but cashing in on it will require him to forfeit his only chance for redemption...and love. Griff is now playing a high-stakes game, and at the final whistle, one player will be dead.
Gabby

A Tale Etched in Blood and Hard Black Pencil

By Christopher Brookmyre

F/BROO L/BROO

Mystery (Green spot)

Took me back to my childhood in Glasgow. Very funny but non-Glaswegians will definitely need the glossary in the back. Lots of swearing, blood and pencils.

Favourite books

Childrens

The Boy Who Was Followed Home
by Steven Kellog

Looking for Atlantis
by Colin Thompson

Northern Lights
by Philip Pullman

Adults

A Confederacy of Dunces
by John Kennedy Toole

Catch 22
by Joseph Heller

The Sacred Art of Stealing
by Christopher Brookmyre

Jim

The Vanishing Act of Esme Lennox

by Maggie O'Farrell

F/OFAR

This novel is very well written and held my attention from the beginning to end. Esme Lennox lives in Edinburgh, Scotland but doesn't conform to what is expected from a young 16 year old in the 1930's. After several shocking events her family commits her to a psychiatric unit where she stays for more than 60 years. When the psychiatric unit closes, Esme's niece is contacted and requested to come and collect her. The story of why her aunt has spent the last 60 years in the unit slowly unravels and reveals a life that has been stolen and manipulated to the advantage of others. There are many twists and turns right up until the last page. Riveting reading.

Vonnie

Mallawindy

by Joy Dettman

F/DETT

'Joy Dettman, is like taking a four-wheel drive vehicle rapidly over rough country. The prose dips and rises and is full of sudden surprises. The words and sentences tumble over one another in a headlong rush towards a destination that you can't wait to reach. But, of course, since this is a novel of some length and complexity, you must wait until the end. And the end is unpredictable and chilling.'

Robert Dalvean

If you missed this book when it was first published now you have the opportunity to enjoy it in its second printing. I am not sure that enjoy is the correct word to describe this book. It is a truly engrossing story, looking at a family mystery and delving into the thoughts and mind of a young woman who has lived with the effects of that mystery for most of her life. One of the joys of reading this story comes from the Australian background. One can equate with the landscape, we recognize the images, the Australian rural family, the thinking of Australians. I often wonder how the non-Australian reading community view some of our literature but I am sure that this book has so much to offer any reader. The story makes a most compelling novel. Joy Dettman's imagination is fully alive and functioning. I felt like these events had actually happened which is a measure of her skill.

Kay

The Quickie
by James Patterson
F/PATT

Thriller (Brown spot)

Disappointed by the last book I read by James Patterson, I was pleasantly surprised by this recent offering from him, which I really enjoyed. Looks like he has found a co-author, Michael Ledwidge, who knows the score. The title is a bit quirky but readers will agree that it fits. The authors have stuck to the Patterson trademark of very short chapters creating a racy feel to the story that has more twists and turns in it than the road to Walcha. Just when you think you have it all worked out and nothing else could possibly happen...bang! The authors throw you off course once again. They successfully reveal how someone may not always be the person they seem to be in an intricate plot that weaves around the main character, Detective Lauren Stillwell, a member of the NYPD, her husband, Paul and lover, Scott. I would not blame some readers for thinking that the story is a little far-fetched. My opinion? A thrilling adventure into the nature of humans – a great quick read leaving you wanting more.

Denise

Wash This Blood Clean From My Hand

by Fred Vargas

F/VARG #3 'Commissaire Adamsberg' Mystery (Green spot)

This is the latest volume in the excellent Commissaire Adamsberg Series. Set partly in France and partly in Canada, the Commissaire is convinced he knows the identity of a serial killer. There are only two problems with his hypothesis. One is that someone confesses to each murder immediately after it is committed and the other is that his suspect has been dead for fifteen years. While trying to prove his suspicions, Adamsberg himself is accused of murder and finds himself on the run from his erstwhile colleagues.

Jim

Classics : Books for Life

by Jane Gleeson-White

011.73/GLE

What a great find! After slogging through *1001 Books You Must Read Before You Die* I was relieved to find Australian academic Gleeson-White wasn't so all-encompassing. She has whittled her selection down to a mere 62 of the greats, so for someone who wants to brush up on their literary knowledge, or just sound more erudite, this book should be the quick fix.

As compared to:

Book Lover : a Novel

by Jennifer Kaufman and Karen Mack

F/KAUF

I plain got sucked in by the title. Well, the authors are definitely well read, but their heroine absolutely gave me the pips. Dora (named after Eudora Welty) is too well off, separated from her even more well off husband, living/wasting her life in LA. She is depressed by her childhood, her separation, her Prada suits – oh, dear, poor girl. However, each chapter is headed by a gorgeous literary quote and some of the situations are hilarious and some touching. It wasn't a total loss.

Karen G



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