



Issue 1, September 2007

What's Inside

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Mystery



Romance



History



Science Fiction



Fantasy



Biographical



Adult



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Picture



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Junior



Young Adult



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Welcome to our first issue

The Reading Stack aims to provide heartfelt recommendations—from our readers to you and your readers. If we don't like a book, you won't find it in these pages. Although you will find the opinions of a wide range of reviewers—all shapes and sizes and ages.

We don't claim to be a team of experts—we're a raggle taggle bunch of people brought together by our love of books and our desire to tell as many people as possible about the ones we have enjoyed.

If you like what you find here, tell a friend about us...

The Patch

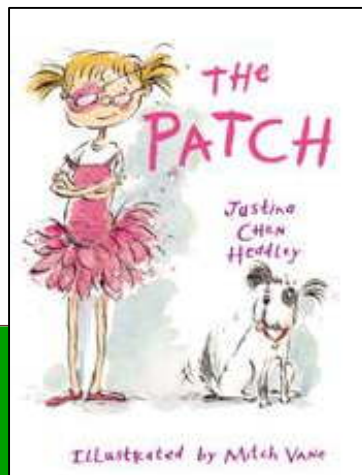
Editor's Choice

by **Justina Chen Headley** - black dog books. Paperback rrp \$16.95

For every young child who has to go through being "different" for one reason or another, this book is a great inspiration.

Five year old Becca has to wear an eye patch to correct her lazy eye. She changes into many different characters for her classmates, such as "Becca the Ballerina Pirate who dances across the seven seas" or "Becca the One-Eyed Monster", to avoid explaining why she has to wear the patch.

The author has included a note about Amblyopia (lazy eye) to further describe the condition.



This is a fun book with water colour illustrations of Becca and her wonderful characters on every page. It is an effective tool to help children understand and overcome the stigma of medical problems, such as a lazy eye or even a broken arm.

The book targets four to eight year olds and even though it is about a little girl it is just as effective a story for boys.

www.justinachenheadley.com

Silk ♥

by Alessandro Baricco - Text Publishing. Paperback rrp \$19.95

Originally released in Italy in 1996, *Silk* has been translated into 26 languages and was published in Australia in 2006. Multi Academy and Grammy award winning composer Andre Previn is writing an opera based on it. A movie starring Keira Knightley, Michael Pitt and Koji Yakusho is due for release later this year.

So what is all the fuss about? This is a haunting and unusual love story. Erotic, dark and gentle. Exotic, exhilarating and heartbreaking. On one level, it's easy to read. The narrative weaves its way from France to Japan and back again many times, until the journey becomes familiar. Chapters are short, no more than two pages. Language is simple with each word



carefully chosen. But I often re-read sections. It wasn't that the story was difficult to follow. I just knew there was another layer waiting for me if I wanted to uncover it.

In 1861, French silkworm-breeder Hervé Joncour travels east in search of disease-free silkworms. He is happily married to beautiful Helene but in Japan he meets a young concubine with captivating eyes. They don't speak yet he falls in love anyway and without words, his love is returned.

Theirs is a forbidden affair of surreptitious glances, body language and one secret, silent meeting. The cultural differences are immense. Ironically it is this disparity which enables their liaison to flourish, as no-one believes it could possibly be true.

While their love is not bound to fail, it is doomed to separation. Hervé returns home to Helene and continues on. But great love and desire lasts forever. Hervé can never let go of the past. He sits watching his life from outside, as we have been doing since the first chapter.

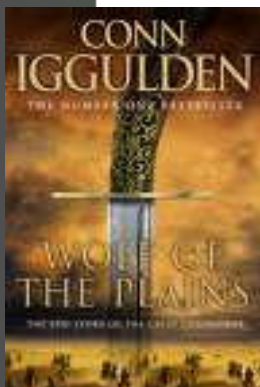
This is a book to read slowly. Once for pure enjoyment. Then again, if you want to peel off another layer of silk.

Wolf of the Plains 卐

by Conn Iggulden - Harper Collins. Paperback rrp \$32.99

Set in the 13th century, on the freezing steppes of Mongolia, this book traces the birth, boyhood and rise to power of Genghis Khan.

Temujin, is not born to lead. He is the second son of the Khan of the Wolves tribe. But when his father is treacherously killed and his elder brother fails their outcast family, Temujin takes charge.



Wolf of the Plains has been meticulously researched and the author lived with Mongolian tribesman for a period of time.

But you don't have to be interested in history to enjoy this. It is a powerful story of jealousy and revenge, blood and power, love and honour.

He seeks more than revenge. He dreams of bringing all the wanderers, herdsmen and outcasts into a new tribe, greater than all others. Temujin will be more than Khan of the Wolves he will be the Khan of the Sea of Grass, Genghis.

This is Book 1 in the Conqueror series and I will be buying the sequel as soon as it is released.

www.conniggulden.com

Books Alive is an Australian Government initiative to encourage reading. Every year, Books Alive runs a nationwide campaign to ignite the country's passion for books and make it easier to choose a really great 'read'.

www.booksalive.com.au

The Council for
Adult Literacy
promotes
English
language and
literacy issues
www.acal.edu.au

For One More Day

by Mitch Albom - Little, Brown. Hardback rrp \$29.95

I always dream of going back in time – to make a fortune playing the market, maybe change a love gone bad, or warn others of impending dangers.

As I turned each page, I felt the author had read my thoughts. Oh to be given the chance to speak with a long lost person! To explain, to say sorry, to hug them one more time.

Given that chance – what would you do? *For One More Day* is the story of what Charley 'Chick' Benetto did. He tried to kill himself. But did he succeed or has he been given a much needed one more day with his mother? Is it really one more day? Even Chick himself doesn't know the answer.

One More Day passes seamlessly from past to present to "limbo" as it recounts Chick's life.

As a child, Charley "was told by his father, "You can be a mama's boy or a daddy's boy, but you can't be both." He chooses his father, a poor choice. Charley's father is rarely there for his son, but quick to criticise everything Charley does. "I guess he'd spent too much time moulding me to be different to allow me to be the same!"

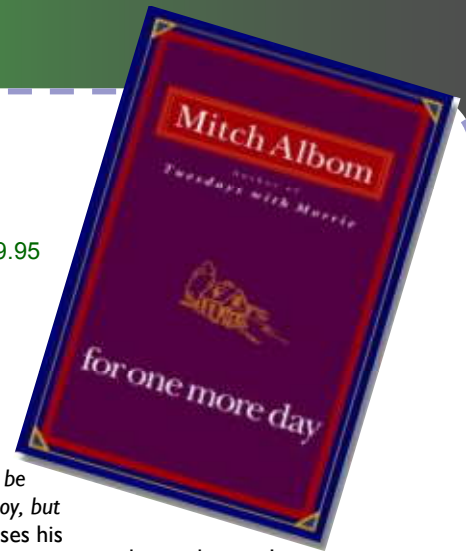
Later on in life, Charley has lost everything to alcohol – his wife, daughter, sporting abilities, his father and mother. Worst of all, when his mother was dying, he lied

and stayed away. In desperation, he decides to end it all.

But then the strange thing happens.

This is a great story that makes you rethink all you have done and all you will do. A must read for anyone with a family. Go home and hug your children/parents!

www.foronemoreday.com



Thirty-Three Teeth

by Colin Cotterill - Text Publishing. Paperback rrp \$32.95

Dr Siri Paiboun is an unusual man. To begin with, he has thirty three teeth. The average person has only thirty two.

In his early seventies, Dr Siri has been recently appointed the Laotian National Coroner. He is a man of contradictions. The grieving widow of a passionate communist activist, he finds much amusement and frustration with the new regime he now works for. A student of science and deduction, he is also the physical host of an ancient spirit and is visited by many others, including a newly dead elephant.

In Dr Siri's life and occupation,

crossing the line between the real and spirit world is a regular occurrence. This is a man as equally comfortable discussing his cases with dead royalty and possessed puppets, as he is with the local law enforcement and government officials.

When a series of mutilated bodies are brought to the Vientiane morgue, Dr Siri and his enigmatic assistant, Nurse Dtui, are puzzled. Is the killer a man or beast? The more they investigate, the stranger the case becomes. How many teeth does the murderer have? Suspects range from an escaped circus bear to a newly released

prison inmate who believes he is inhabited by the spirit of a weretiger.

This is a story of gruesome findings, shaman ceremonies and political intrigue. It is quirky and surreal, sinister and macabre. And it's a great mystery. Can you imagine a Laotian Hercule Poirot? After reading *Thirty Three Teeth*, I can. Readers of crime and mystery, particularly those looking for something a little different, will thoroughly enjoy this book. I was pleased to find another adventure of Dr Siri already exists. *The Coroner's Lunch* was the first in what I hope will be a long running series.

Author Colin Cotterill, is an Australian citizen whose real life experience led him to smuggle children's books to Laos and later establish the charity, Books for Laos. You can read about this and more at www.colincotterill.com



A Spot of Bother

by **Mark Haddon** - Random House (Jonathon Cape). Paperback rrp \$23.95

George Hall is dying... he's sure it is cancer... but really it's eczema. "Discoïd eczema, unless I'm very much mistaken." Dr Barghoutian said.

Daughter Katie is getting married to Ray. It's her second marriage. Ray is dependable and a great father to her son, Jacob, but is she marrying him for what he can provide or does she truly love him?

Son Jamie is also in love. But Jamie's boyfriend Tony, is a surprising choice.

Wife Jean is having an affair.

And George... George has retired to rest and relax. He is building a

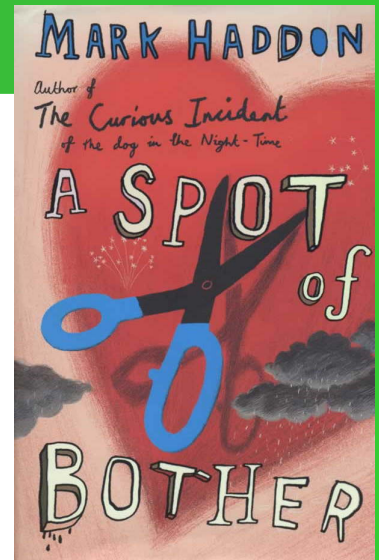
studio in the backyard where he can paint, read novels and listen to jazz. Then he notices the spot. From this point, George spirals down into an abyss of madness and despair. *Obviously, it was a surprise to find that one was insane. But what surprised George most was how painful it was.*

A Spot of Bother provides a humorous rollercoaster ride through the ups and downs of a typical middle-aged, middle-class, English gentleman slowly going mad. George tries to avoid any fuss, but the more he tries to hide his anxiety, the worse his madness becomes. With his daughter's upcoming wedding in their backyard,

George's behaviour skids from strange to outlandish, and everyone is dragged along for the ride.

I couldn't put this book down. One family. Four different life experiences. A rollercoaster read comes to rest as four strands are rewoven into one. All families have some madness in them. As George and his family found, what you do with this madness is up to you!

www.markhaddon.com



For links to the importance of reading to children go to

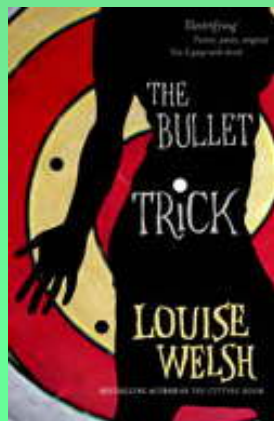
www.literacyandnumeracy.gov.au/forparents/reading_to_children.htm

The Bullet Trick

by **Louise Welsh** – Text Publishing. Paperback rrp \$22.95

William Wilson is a conjurer, a sleight of hand magician. His story begins in London's seedy Soho clubs, moves on to Berlin's burlesque night spots, and then descends into the present day dingy drinking dens of his home town of Glasgow.

The plot twists and turns like a magician's hands. The narrative begins with William being hired to perform at a night club owned by the partner of a friend. William's job is to occupy the guests at a highly ranked police chief's retirement



party before the strippers come to "entertain". By the end of the evening William's friend and partner are dead and William feels his life is in danger too.

He flees to Berlin where he meets a woman who becomes his lover. When she dies assisting in the famous "Bullet Trick", William believes he has killed her. Is he the killer? Is she really dead? William tries to disappear into the decay and rot of the homeless in Glasgow.

The magic of illusion is described in detail. Have you ever wondered how a woman gets cut in half? How an illusionist knows about your personal life? Death, mystery, love, sex, money, crime and magic – all are wrapped up in *The Bullet Trick*. This is a suspenseful read with the writer, Louise Welsh, moving seamlessly back and forth between the three cities and the three different time periods.

If you like crime and mystery with a touch of magic and money, *The Bullet Trick* is the perfect choice. I'm inspired to see the real thing – to watch a conjurer do these amazing illusions – especially "The Bullet Trick".

Word Sudoku

Sudoku is the phenomenally successful puzzle game featured in many daily papers. Like all great puzzles, the rules are simple but you may spend many hours trying to solve them.

Word Sudoku is played on a square grid of 9 rows and 9 columns, just like number Sudoku. Each position in the grid holds a letter – these letters will create a nine letter word.

The grid is also divided into squares of 3x3. The letters are arranged so that no row, column or 3x3 square contains any letter more than once.

As with all good Sudoku puzzles, there is only one solution possible!

TODAY'S 9 LETTER WORD IS "TREADINGS"
(T before READINGS!)

						R		T
					I		N	
		E	S		T		A	
		R			G		D	
						N		I
	T	I	N				E	
R				S				
	S	D	G		E		T	R
T				I			G	

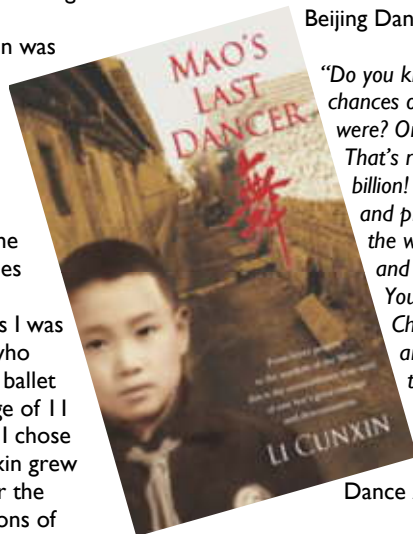
Mao's Last Dancer

by **Li Cunxin** - Penguin Books. Paperback rrp \$29.95

This is the autobiography of Li Cunxin, a poor Chinese farmer's son who became an internationally world renowned ballet dancer, I didn't think this was going to be an exciting read but I was wrong.

Li Cunxin was born the same year as me, but that's where the similarities ended. Whereas I was a child who stopped ballet at the age of 11 because I chose to, Cunxin grew up under the restrictions of Chairman Mao's

Leap Forward - communism . At the age of 11 Li Cunxin was chosen by chance from the country's millions of rural children, based only on his physique and flexibility, to dance in Madame Mao's Beijing Dance Academy.



"Do you know what your chances of being chosen were? One in a billion! That's right, one in a billion! You are the lucky and proud children of the workers, peasants and soldiers of China! You will carry Chairman Mao's artistic flag into the bright future."
Director Wang of Madame Mao's Beijing Dance Academy said.

Great Mao's Last Dancer propelled

me into Cunxin's incredible life. My stomach ached as I read about his hunger and poverty in rural China in the 60's. I felt tired and exhausted as he persevered to perfect his dance routines. A terrible overwhelming sadness went through me when I read about his homesickness.

I gripped the book tightly, as he did with Elizabeth Mackey's hand, when he was defecting to the US. When I read about him finally meeting up with his family again, I smiled and felt jubilant inside.

It takes a talented writer and a truly amazing story to bring out all these emotions in a reader. I thoroughly recommend Li Cunxin's memoirs to all – even those who hate the ballet!

www.licunxin.com

The Book Reading on ABC presents the best of classic and contemporary fiction by Australian and world writers, read by some of Australia's finest actors. To view the current schedule

www.abc.net.au/rn/bookreading/index/date2007.htm

Princess Masako

by **Ben Hills** - Random House. Paperback rrp \$34.95

Princess Masako is the fascinating story of the Japanese Royal family, in particular Crown Princess Masako and her husband, Crown Prince Naruhito. It's a love story but also a tragedy.

Masako Owada was a Harvard educated diplomat, a successful career woman in the competitive world of Japanese government bureaucracy. Marrying the Crown Prince meant sacrificing her career for a life of strict palace protocol - with no real role other than to bear an heir.

For seven years Masako avoided the Prince's proposal. Deeply in love, Naruhito persisted until they were married in 1993. But this is no fairy tale. The Prince and Princess were prisoners of the Kunaicho bureaucrats and the conventions of Japanese royalty.

According to the author's sources, after conversing with Clinton in English and Gorbachev in Russian at a state dinner, Masako was reprimanded and reminded her role was to 'smile nicely'.

The pressure to bear a son was an enormous strain on the Princess. The 2600-year-old dynasty was in danger of perishing. Although her health was failing Masako eventually bore a daughter. Japan began to consider changing the law of male succession until Nurahito's sister-in-law fell unexpectedly pregnant at 39, and bore a son.

Today Masako participates in few public duties and is under constant medical care. Officially ailing from 'adjustment disorder', she is widely believed to be suffering depression. The one thing that no-one is disputing is Prince Nurahito's ongoing love

for his wife.

Author Ben Hills is a Wakely award winning journalist and

a foreign correspondent with over thirty years experience. Having spent three years reporting in Japan, he is an authoritative voice on a taboo subject. The book raises many issues closed to discussion in Japan. Did Masako have IVF? Is she suffering from a mental illness? Are the Kunaicho, 'the men in black', to blame for her illness? Although not published in Japan, this 'unauthorised' biography generated much controversy. You can read about this 'second story' on the author's web site www.benhills.com.



All about bookclubs including the ABC's First Tuesday program

www.abc.net.au/tv/firsttuesday/bookclub/

Born on a Blue Day

by **Daniel Tammet** - Hachette Livre. Paperback rrp \$24.95

Born with autism, Asperger's and synaesthesia (the ability to see numbers as colours), Daniel Tammet has savant syndrome. He has a severe developmental handicap and at the same time, possesses amazing mental abilities in certain areas. But unlike most savants, Daniel can communicate extremely well, and even recount how his unique mind works. *Born on a Blue Day* is his memoir, an insight into an extraordinary man.

Synaesthesia is a well documented medical condition, but Daniel has a very rare form. He sees numbers as colours, shapes and emotions. He also sees words as colours.

Daniel was born on Wednesday, a blue day. I was born on a Thursday, a little bit yellow!

Daniel can speak eleven languages and learned Icelandic, reputedly the most difficult language in the world, in a week. He holds the European record for memorising and recounting pi to 22,514 digits (it took 5 hours to recite). Despite his amazing abilities, Daniel cannot learn to drive and has trouble shaving himself. He counts things almost continually and struggles to survive outside his routine.

He describes how as a child he was fascinated by his first encounter

with a library full of books. All of them had a name on the spine. For hours he searched for the book with his name.

"I thought," he says, "that I would find it and open it and understand who I am."

Now his name is on a book. One which helps us all to understand who he is and others who share some of his traits and/or abilities. This is a great read, highly recommended.

www.optimnem.co.uk



Judas Kisses

An Interview with Donna Carson

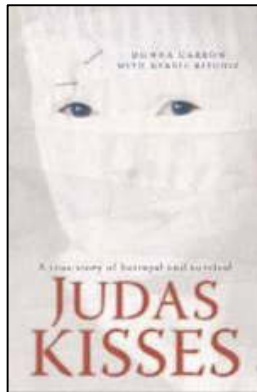
Don't make the same mistake I did. I read *Judas Kisses* on the train, sniffing and crying behind my glasses, for the whole hour and half train journey. But while this is a story of great pain and injustice, it is also the uplifting account of one woman's journey from victim to survivor.

In 1994, Donna Carson was set alight by her de facto partner. She endured months of painful recuperation, followed by even more suffering at the hands of the justice and welfare systems. Her children were removed from her care. The man who attacked her was given a lenient sentence.

Donna never gave up. Even now, with her own battles fought, she continues to work

on behalf of others. She has established safe rooms in local courthouses, campaigned

against domestic violence and supported camps for burns victims. In 2004, she was awarded Australian of the Year – Local Hero. When I asked Donna what she considered her greatest achievement, she didn't hesitate to say "being a mother". Her voice shook with love and pride.



Throughout our conversation, I was moved by Donna's generosity of spirit. When she speaks, it is never about how hard her life is, or has been. Her concerns are always for others – her children, her friends and other victims. Asked what



spurred her to put such painful memories in print, she spoke of the desire to help her close friend, whose dream was to write a book.

Debbie Ritchie, the co-author of *Judas Kisses* studied at Wollongong University and taught creative writing in gifted and talented programs in the Southern Highlands. She and Donna have the same birthday. More importantly, they share over 30 years of friendship. Donna had a story to tell and a message to deliver but she needed someone she trusted to help put it into words.

Judas Kisses is an amazing book – it couldn't be anything less. It is the life story of an amazing woman. A celebration of courage and caring!

Hardie Grant. Paperback rrp \$29.95

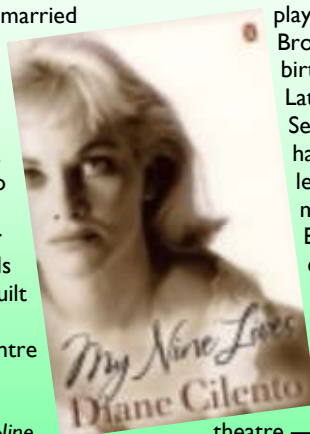
This exciting website showcases some of the State Library of Victoria's most precious and historically significant books. Turn the pages of a masterpiece at

www.mirroroftheworld.com.au

My Nine Lives

by Diane Cilento - Penguin Books. Paperback rrp \$26.95

Diane Cilento is a wellknown Australian actress of the 1950s and 1960s. She married Sean Connery before he became famous as James Bond. Then Diane left it all to move to Far North Queensland (or FNQ as she calls it) where she built the Karnak Playhouse, a centre for the arts.



The book, *My Nine Lives*, is about her fascinating life - all nine of them! She was brought up in Queensland, the daughter of two famous doctors. At the age of 15 she travelled to London to study ballet but ended up taking

acting classes. She married an Italian actor, performed in many plays in London and on Broadway, and gave birth to a baby girl. Later, she married Sean Connery and had a son. After leaving Sean, she moved around England before coming to Australia. She eventually settled in Mossman, north of Cairns, where she built her own outdoor theatre — named "Karnak" — in the rainforest. The venture allowed her to participate in experimental drama and music. Around this time she married the playwright, Anthony Shaffer.

During her many lives Diane

searched for her spiritual fulfilment, finally studying under the British mystic and spiritual teacher John G Bennett. From Gurdjieff to Sufism, Diane's journey has been deep, long and amazing.

Diane Cilento is one of those rare people who has followed her heart, in love, in her profession, and in her spiritual life. The journey has led her ever forward into new territory, even to Mecca as a Sufi pilgrim.

I expected to read about an actress who had married a famous actor and lived a glamorous life but I found much more - learning about mysticism and ultimately seeing inside myself.

www.karnakplayhouse.com.au

Purinina, A Devil's Tale

by **Christina Booth** - Hachette Livre (Lothian). Hardback rrp \$28.95

Purinina, a Devil's Tale tells the story of a Tasmanian Devil, one of our unique mammals younger children are often unfamiliar with.

Little Purinina lives with her family at the bottom of the world. She learns to play and search for food. She growls, snorts and snarls. Nowhere is safe from the reach of Man and eventually two men appear outside Purinina's cave. But this is a gentle tale of hope and the human interlopers choose to leave the Devils alone. Purinina grows up to have a family of her own.

The language is simple and almost poetic. The illustrations are

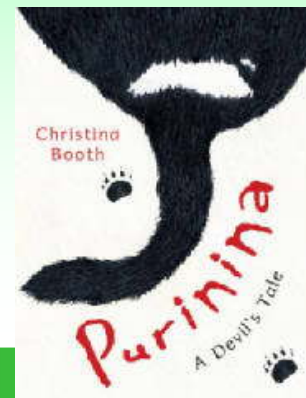
stunning, guaranteed to appeal to adult and child alike.

Author and illustrator Christina Booth grew up in Tasmania and hopes her book will draw attention to these often misunderstood animals. Purinina is their Tasmanian Aboriginal name. Early European settlers called them Devils when they heard their bloodcurdling cries coming from the bush at night.

The book includes a glossary of Devilish Details – information about habitat, habits and lifecycle. Did you know the Tasmanian Devil is a good swimmer? Or that its fur is soft like a cat?

Particularly suited to children 4 to 7 years, *Purinina, a Devil's Tale* would make a beautiful Aussie gift for an overseas relative or friend.

www.christinabooth.com



Reading with children is fun and one of the best ways to help prepare them for school.

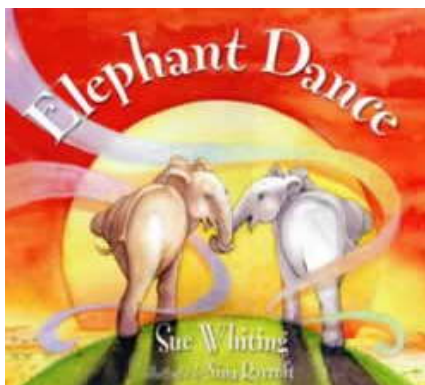
www.schools.nsw.edu.au/gotoschool/a-z/readingtoyourchild.php

Elephant Dance

An Interview with Sue Whiting

Elephant Dance, illustrated by Nina Rycroft, is the story of two young elephants whose friendship is tested when they hear something new – people music.

Hugo wants to hip-hop but Millie still wants to rumble in the swamp. They must learn to compromise and accept that friends can enjoy different things.



So how did two dancing elephants find their way to Australia? "My ideas come from everywhere," says Sue. "Mostly they arrive unexpectedly, almost by magic! Other times they are sparked from things people say or do, or things that happened to me."

Elephant Dance was inspired by the



children's song "La Cucharacha", "the letter h" and a Kindergarten class! The result is magical. *Boom-boompa-chee*, the music calls the pages to life. Children from 4 to 6 years will love the story and pictures, while learning about being a good friend.

"Blow a little imagination into almost any everyday incident and a story idea is bound to emerge," Sue says.

www.suewhiting.com

Koala Books. Paperback rrp \$12.99

The Aussie A to Z

by **Heath McKenzie** - black dog books. Paperback rrp \$19.95

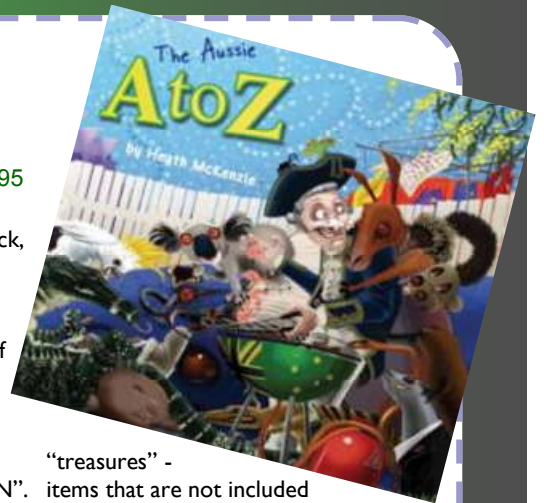
Do you like I Spy or Where's Wally? Then this book will grab your attention. It is an Australian alphabet book with a difference!

Although aimed at young children, four years and up, I was entranced as I sought out the different Australian icons on each page.

Some of the icons, such as Auntie Jack, Count Down, Norman Gunston and Mollie Meldrum, are aimed at us "oldies" (also known as parent readers!) but there are also plenty of things for children to find. I enjoyed spending some quality time with my family while reading this book.

My favourite page is the letter "N". Heath McKenzie's illustration of Norman Gunston interviewing Ned Kelly on Channel Nine is brilliant and funny.

Don't despair if you can't find things, answers have been provided at the end of the book. If you keep your eyes glued to the pages you may even find a few



"treasures" - items that are not included in the answer pages.

Aussie A to Z is a hard covered, beautifully illustrated book with very few words and some great Australian icon images. It would make a unique present for any Australian living overseas or for an overseas visitor to our country!

www.heathmck.com



Reading for Life is a volunteer community reading program to help children having difficulty reading at primary school.

www.readingforlife.net.au

Little Jingle Says No!

by **Kerrie O'Connor** - Allen & Unwin. Paperback rrp \$24.95

Mama and Papa Jingle are having a baby. Together, with taller Jingle and middle Jingle, they suggest baby names. But

little Jingle hates them all! He has his own ideas.

own horrible baby name after I read the sensible ones.

Al, Adrian, Atticus, Aladdin, the family suggest.

This is a wonderful interactive book with eye-catching illustrations. Toddlers will love it and so will Year Ones and every child in between.

'No,' argues little Jingle. We'll call him Blockhead!

Not only is this book a fun read-aloud story, it has a secret. As the family proffer sensible names beginning with the same letter, Little Jingle suggests a silly one beginning with the next letter of the alphabet. Once my son picked the pattern, he would loudly and enthusiastically suggest his

My review wouldn't be complete without consulting an expert. "Bestest book ever," my six-year-old said. And we read it again, and again... And the follow up report: "Bestest book ever Mum. I've already told you that!"



The Fly

Written and Illustrated by Gusti - Allen & Unwin. Paperback rrp \$14.95

This is a belly-laugh-out-loud picture book. Outrageously funny.

The fly decides to go for a swim, packing its bag, ball, towel and sunscreen. Unfortunately it decides

to swim in the toilet. And we all know what can happen there!

Behind the funny story is a gentle message. No matter how much we prepare, unexpected things can still occur to change our plans.

backgrounds. The fly has a cartoon-like appearance which is an immediate attention grabber. Gusti cleverly uses a combination of background and the fly's big round eyes to show emotions ranging from relaxed to fearful.

The language is simple but engaging. Text is placed to complement the illustrations. When the toilet is flushed, the words swirl with the water.

Gusti is an international award winning illustrator and this is readily apparent in his artwork. There is a sense of humour in every brushstroke.

The fly is always a comic character, whether floating on his back in the toilet, spindly legs kicking, or peering nervously up from the bowl. Despite the fly's terror, even the youngest reader will not be frightened.

Children, from 3 – 7 years, will love this book. Especially boys! And parents who read it aloud will find it hard not to laugh mid-sentence.

Images are striking, with the fly placed collage-like on bold, spacious www.gustiart.com



The genes involved in learning to sound out words are different from the ones involved in learning to recognise words by sight, according to an Australian study.

Read the article here:

www.abc.net.au/science/news/stories/2006/11/44376.htm

Five Little Owls

by Mark Carthew - New Frontier Publishing. Hardback rrp \$24.95.

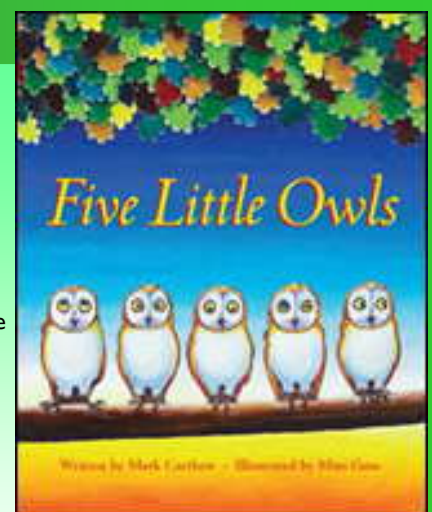
Five Little Owls is wonderful fun. Not many books can claim to be truly interactive but this is one of the rare few that succeed.

The rhyming text tells the story of five little owls who, one by one, fly off to play hide and seek in the forest. As each leaves to join the game, a beautifully presented double page illustration encourages young readers to find the concealed animals and to play hide and seek with the owls. Mini Goss is one of Australia's foremost illustrators and her drawings of mice, rabbits, frogs, bats and owls are both educational and entertaining.

Tu-whit Tu-who, encourages young listeners to share telling the story. They will love the rhyming rhythm and the predictability of counting down from five to zero.

My son enjoyed searching for the hidden animals over and over again. Even after he knew where every one was. Many 'find-it' style books are too difficult for younger readers, but this one is perfectly pitched for three to six year olds.

www.newfrontier.com.au/creators/carthew.htm



The repetition of phrases, such as the owls calling

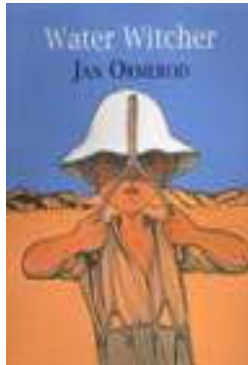
Water Witcher ☺ 🇦🇺

by Jan Ormerod - Little Hare Books. Hardback rrp \$24.99

'Dougie and his sisters can't remember the last time it rained.' Set in the Depression years, this is a timely story of drought and a family's struggle to maintain their farm.

When young Dougie learns of his grandfather's mysterious gift of 'water witching', he decides to try it too. Father warns him that only one in a thousand has the gift but Dougie isn't deterred. Taking a forked stick he walks the length of the farm waiting for it to quiver and point down to water below the ground. His sisters tease him. His mother is sceptical.

When the stick jiggles, Dougie starts to dig. And dig. But there is no water to be found. Later that



night, the water rises. Dougie has found a night soak! Dougie is one in a thousand too. Just like his grandfather.

The illustrations are stark and tinged with brown – an accurate depiction of our dry outback. When Mother dreams of gardens and Father dreams of fishing, the pictures change colour and tones of blue seep into the page.

Stories of water witching (water divining with a rod) are an integral part of our oral bush tradition. My own father insisted the 'old man on the farm next door' could find water with a stick.

Best suited to children 4 to 8 years, Water Witcher is not only entertaining but introduces an important piece of bush folklore to young readers.

www.lauracecil.co.uk/pages/Clients/Clients_PictureBooks/Orerod/Ormerod_home.html

Find Out More About Children, Reading and Literacy ...

www.slwa.wa.gov.au/read.html

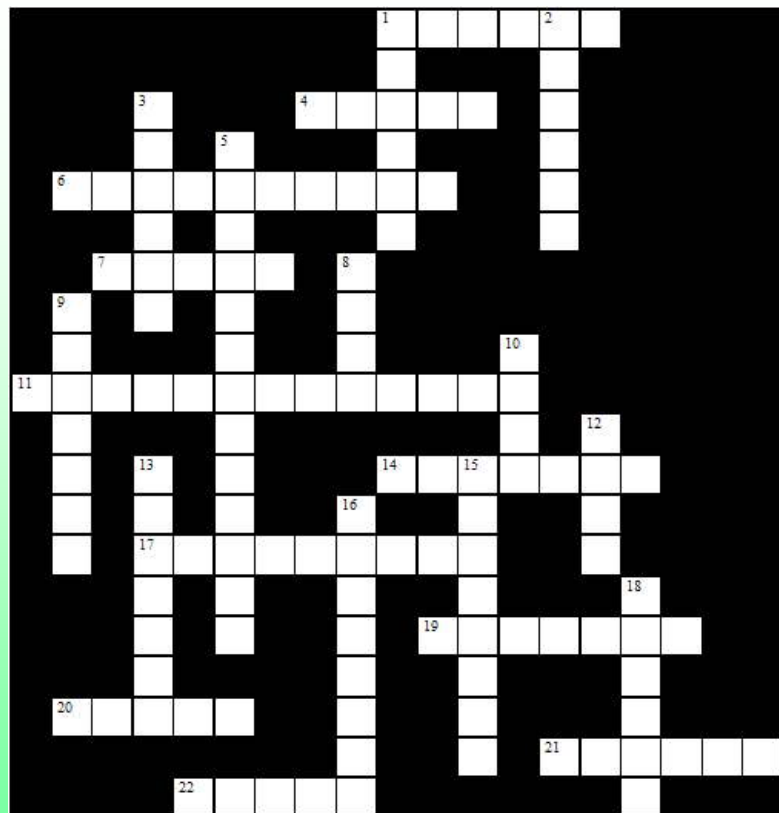
Issue One Crossword

ACROSS

- 1 Book about a track
- 4 Writer of the Jerilderie Letter
- 6 Where a letter was written
- 7 Character from The Patch
- 11 Capital of New Guinea
- 14 Meaning Khan of the Sea of Grass
- 17 Jingle's name for his baby sibling
- 19 Second son of the Khan of the Wolves tribe
- 20 Who wrote The Fly
- 21 Writer of Pharaoh
- 22 Name of writer of an alphabet

DOWN

- 1 Little Jingle's writer
- 2 What is Danzi
- 3 Prince of Thinis
- 5 Publishing company
- 8 Number of days Australian soldiers defended the track
- 9 Dr Siri Paiboun was appointed the _____ National Coroner
- 10 Young slave girl
- 12 Series of books by Sue Lawson



- 13 Who wrote Money Smart Kids
- 15 Australian bushranger
- 16 Book by Justina Headley
- 18 Name of main character in Girls Stuff

Kenny's Big Adventure

by Philip Garside - Hachette Livre. Paperback rrp \$15.95

I've always been fascinated by the story of the Tasmanian Tiger. When I was in primary school I saw a picture of the last thylacine (Tasmanian Tiger), huddled in the corner of a cage at the Hobart Zoo. I've never forgotten the image. And like many other Australians, I like to imagine that one day a thylacine will be found.

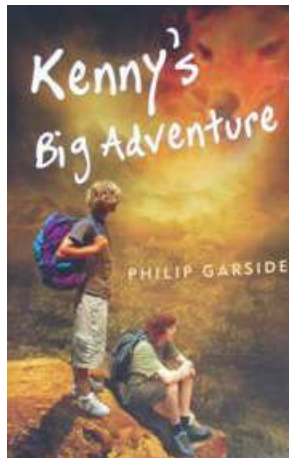
What I did find this month was a wonderful book for young boys – Kenny's Big Adventure by Philip Garside – about Tasmanian Tigers!

Kenneth Boyd Lemesurier, KB for short, is good with words. He wants to be an author. His father is a naturalist, whose lifelong dream is

to prove thylacines still exist. KB, his brother Martin and friend Josh, accompany Dad on a hiking expedition to Tasmania.

There they discover a wilderness valley populated by not only thylacines but the Mooradum (yowies) and the Grash, an aggressive and carnivorous monkey-like creature. With the help of the Mooradum they

escape the Grash but must then make a difficult decision. Can they walk away from the valley and leave its inhabitants in peace or will they tell the world what they have found?



KB finds a way to do both. He writes a book about it. After all, who would ever believe Kenny's Big Adventure is a true story? This book will be especially popular with boys aged 8 to 12 years.

You can find lots of interesting information about reading to preschool children at the Early Childhood Inc site

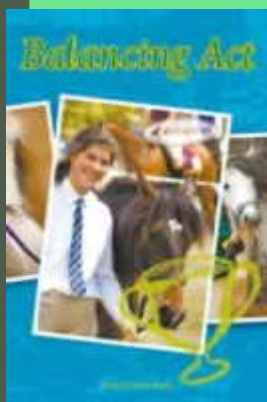
www.earlychildhoodaustralia.org.au

Balancing Act

by Bernadette Kelly - black dog books. Paperback rrp \$12.95

Reviewed by Eileesha, Aged 10

Balancing Act is a very good book about horses, friendship, fun and telling the truth.



This book is about Annie Boyd, a young girl who has just moved to Ridgeview. Life certainly isn't boring. Annie works at

the stables and does pony club with her friends. One day she finds out that there's a pony competition for schools. Annie thinks why shouldn't Ridgeview High enter? They do athletics and swimming. They'd have enough

people. Will the Principal let her? Annie finds out its not easy!!!

Especially for horse lovers, but most 8 – 12 year old girls would enjoy this book.

*** **

Balancing Act is the sixth book in the popular *Riding High* series.

Author Bernadette Kelly has also written the Pony Patch series for younger girls who love horses. These humorous chapter books feature naughty but lovable Norton and his dotting owner, Molly. Molly has dreams of champion ribbons but Norton isn't



interested. He's always trying to escape Molly's plans. But Norton can do no wrong in Molly's eyes.

"Norton stepped on my foot. I know it was an accident because only a naughty pony would do that on purpose.' In fact, Norton felt so bad about the accident he ran away."

Bernadette Kelly is passionate about horses and knows what she is writing about. She has six horses of her own and was once District Commissioner of her children's Pony Club.

www.bernadettekelly.com.au



Pharaoh

by Jackie French - Harper Collins. Paperback rrp \$15.99

This is a marvellous piece of writing and an excellent history resource. There are many reasons to recommend *Pharaoh*, but perhaps most important of all, it is a wonderful story of adventure and conquest.

Pharaoh is set in 3000BC, in an Egypt most readers will find unfamiliar but fascinating, long before the time of the pyramids, hieroglyphics and mummies. Prince Narmer is destined to rule Thinis, the greatest city on the Nile. Beloved by all, talented and handsome, he is 'the Golden One'. His life is perfect until his jealous elder brother, Hawk, lures him into the path of a crocodile. Narmer survives the attack, but now, physically disfigured, he is no longer considered fit to rule.

The timely appearance of the Sumerian Trader and his young companion Nitho provides Narmer with expert medical help and a future. He leaves Egypt to travel with them, journeying through Punt and on to Ur, where he finds a new home as the Trader's adopted son.

When the opportunity to return to Thinis arises, Narmer finds the city in ruin, defeated by flood, Hawk's ineffectual leadership and raids from the nearby Yebu people. Narmer rallies support for his brother and helps lead an attack on the Yebu city. When Hawk is killed in combat, the final victory sees Narmer acclaimed as Pharaoh. The historical unification of Egypt has begun.

Narmer was a real person, the man behind the famous relic, Narmer's

Plate. However, little is recorded about his early life. Jackie French has taken the known and mixed it with the probable to produce a credible account of what might have been.

Best suited to readers 10 – 14 years, *Pharaoh* is a valuable teaching resource. The book contains a comprehensive appendix of historical reference and background information, including a timeline and recipes! If you are parent of a Year 7 child who needs a historical novel for ancient history (as I was last year), this would be an excellent choice.

www.jackiefrench.com



Lockie Leonard

by Tim Winton - Pan Macmillan. Paperback rrp \$17.95

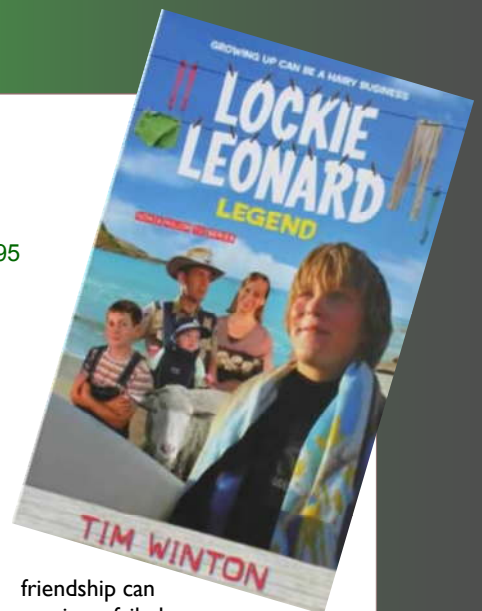
Lockie Leonard lives and surfs in Western Australia - like author Tim Winton. But Lockie's world could easily be anywhere along the coast of Australia.

Lockie Leonard - Legend is the third book in the Lockie Leonard trilogy, which also includes *Human Torpedo* and *Scumbuster*.

Something terrible has happened to thirteen-year-old Lockie. It's even worse than being dumped by the gorgeous Vicki Streeton. Mum has totally lost it. She sits looking out the window forgetting to cook dinner. She tries to take Blob, Lockie's little

sister, for a midnight walk in the pouring rain. Even Lockie's irritating little brother Phillip is worried and Sarge, Lockie's policeman dad, bursts into tears. Is Sarge about to lose it too? After all, he just arrested a sheep.

When Mum is taken to hospital, Lockie finds an inner strength and begins to help around the house. Surfing will have to wait. He shops, changes nappies, spends time with Philip and even provides a shoulder for Sarge to lean on. When Vicki delivers home-cooked dinners, Lockie puts aside his hurt to find that



friendship can survive a failed romance.

Lockie Leonard is one of those rare books with mass appeal for young male readers and is now a TV series.

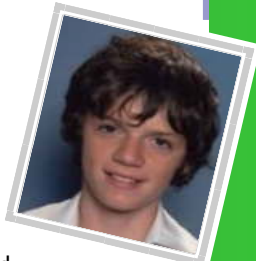
www.jd-associates.com.au/author/timwinton

Rosemary for Remembrance

The Janna Mysteries Book 1

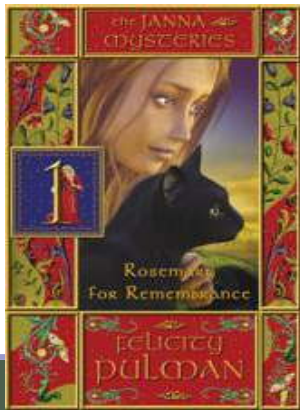
by **Felicity Pulman** - Random House. Paperback rrp \$19.95

Reviewed by Jackson, Aged 14



Rosemary for Remembrance is the first of three compelling books in the Janna Mysteries, a medieval crime series by Australian author Felicity Pulman.

It is the tale of a girl trying to hold on as her life spirals out of control. Her mother is mysteriously poisoned and she



finds a note her father wrote years ago when he left. Janna embarks on a journey to discover who killed her mother and who her father is.

The book is set in 18th century England, a strange and

exciting time full of weird and wonderful things. You will meet nuns and assassins, pilgrims, peasants and noblemen.

I guarantee this will be the best book you have ever read. Until you read the other three which are equally fantastic. I rate this book 9/10.

www.felicitypulman.com.au

The Smith Family supports reading literacy with programs specifically to help children in disadvantaged homes To find out more

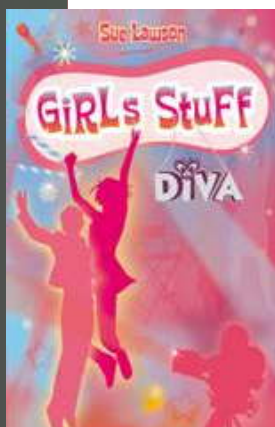
www.thesmithfamily.com.au

Girls Stuff (Diva Series Book 5)

Girls at Sea (Diva Series Book 6)

by **Sue Lawson** - black dog books. Paperback rrp \$9.95

Girls Stuff and *Girls at Sea* are the fifth and sixth books in the Diva Series which follows the adventures of teenager Micky Farrell as she pursues her dream to become a singing star. Each book is a complete story on its own and can be enjoyed independent of reading the complete series.



Within the first few paragraphs of *Girls Stuff*, the reader learns Micky was previously in the finals of the Diva singing competition

and now is embarking on a new job working as the co-host of a television show called "Girls Stuff TV". The book details Mickey learning about the show, the other hosts, the great clothes and has a few surprises including a mystery third co-host.

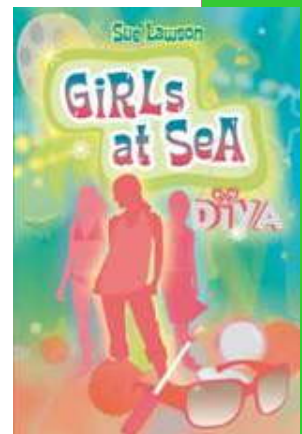
In "Girls at Sea" Mickey completes her first real assignment for Girls Stuff TV. Mickey and her co-hosts go to the ocean to whale watch and interview people and along the way she learns about keeping secrets and looking out for your friends.

Both books contain unexpected twists and turns to keep the

reader intrigued. There are simple, unpatronising life messages for young girls about friendships and trust. At the end of each book is a quick quiz which is fun. You can find out if you are a good friend or a worry wart.

Diva books are a great quick, easy read particularly suited to girls aged 8 to 12 years.

www.suelawson.com.au



Tamar

by **Mal Peet** - Walker Books. Paperback rrp \$16.95

This book won the 2005 Carnegie Medal (awarded in 2006). So as I sat down to read *Tamar* I had very high expectations. And the good thing about high expectations, is the reward when they are fulfilled. *Tamar* is a brilliant novel – the story of two lives, two histories and the tragic effect of war.

When Tamar’s grandfather dies she inherits a small cardboard box. A former wireless operator in the war, William Hyde’s life was full of codes, crosswords and cryptic messages. And that’s what the box contains - the clues to the puzzles in Tamar’s own life. With her cousin Johannes she sets out to solve them.



Towards the end of the Second World War, two young Dutchmen, trained in London, are sent to Holland to aid the resistance. Their code names are Tamar and Dart. Tamar’s role is to co-ordinate the local forces but he is also returning to Marijke, the woman he fell in love with on a previous mission. Dart (William Hyde) is his wireless operator.

Tamar is killed but Dart survives and returns to England with Marijke. They raise a son who, at his father’s request, names his daughter Tamar. Two lives and two histories begin to converge. Later the son

inexplicably abandons his family and Tamar spends ever increasing time with her grandparents.

As the story unfolds Tamar discovers her grandfather is not who she thinks he is. His reality distorted by the strain of war and the pressures of a covert operation,

Dart murdered his colleague Tamar and married the unsuspecting and already pregnant Marijke.

William Hyde despises what Dart did, but he loves his family deeply. When Tamar’s father

discovers the deception, he is filled with hate. He wants to kill William but instead walks away.

Now Tamar knows everything. Two lives and two histories have collided with a force strong enough to destroy them all. But with Johannes’ help, Tamar finds it in her heart to forgive what her father never can. She understands what the box means. William is completing the apology he began when he chose Tamar’s name.

I read an interview with Mal Peet where he talked about ‘connectedness, the way that we are all individually shaped by past events, by our family experiences, whether they are secret or not, by our grandparents’ lives’ [1]. This is the crux of *Tamar*.

Tamar is not an easy read. The plot is complex with many twists and turns, winding across Europe and through time. But this is an engrossing, dramatic and thought provoking narrative. Well worth the concentration it requires. While *Tamar* is marketed as young adult fiction, the line is very finely drawn. The book will equally appeal to adults.



[1] The full transcript of the UK Chartered Library Institute of Professionals interview can be viewed at www.cilip.org.uk/publications/updatemagazine/archive/archive2006/september/malpeetsep.htm

Turn off the TV and Get Kids reading—this is a great article from the Melbourne Age

www.theage.com.au/news/national/turn-off-tv-week-to-get-kids-involved-in-real-world/2007/04/25/1177459786274.html

Daredevils

by **Bill Condon** - University of Queensland Press. Paperback rrp \$18.95

Daredevils is the story of two boys, Thorns and Jack. Thorns may have only a short time to live and he's made a list of everything he wants to do before he dies. 'I don't want to live longer, I want to live bigger', Thorns tells his friend. Quiet, unassuming Jack is going to help him - because that's what friends do, even if it gets them into trouble. They take chances together, run risks and dare to make dreams real.

Thorns' list of things to do ranges from mountain climbing and swimming with

dolphins to winning a Scrabble tournament and having sex. He's already completed the last one with the help of Voluptuous Volupta. But what he wants most of all is to fall in

love. "Love's the big thing. Me loving her, her loving me right back. I've never had that."

It's not easy to tell the story of a dying teenager with humour. Yet Bill Condon does. Readers will laugh in places, but they will also feel Thorn's frustration and Jack's pain.

Perhaps the final word of recommendation should come from a teenager. After all, this book is for them. "It's great," I was told. "Got any more Bill Condon books?"



Listen to podcasts from The Book Show at

www.abc.net.au/rn/bookshow/

The Dark Materials Trilogy Book 1: Northern Lights

by **Philip Pullman** - Scholastic. Paperback rrp \$16.95

Northern Lights is the first book in the Dark Materials trilogy by Philip Pullman. I'm rereading all the books before the movie based on *Northern Lights* comes out later this year. Titled *The Golden Compass*, it stars Nicole Kidman and Dakota Blue Richards.

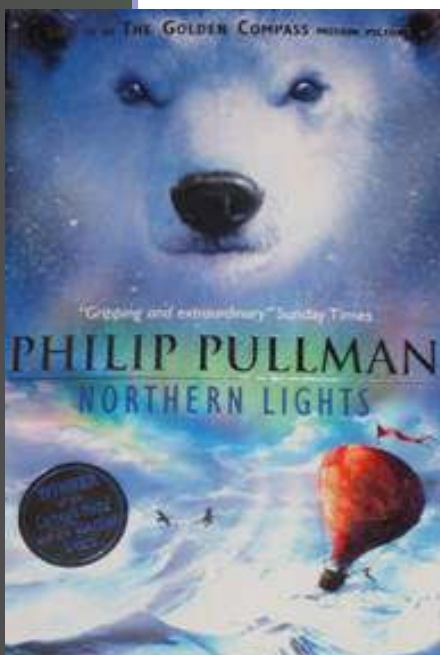
Lyra is an eleven year old orphan girl and the niece of the mysterious Lord Asriel. When her best friend Roger is kidnapped, people say he has been taken by the 'Gobblers', nightmare creatures in stories told to frighten children. Accompanied by her daemon, a shape shifting animal form, Lyra sets out to rescue Roger. Before

she leaves, she is given an alethiometer (golden compass), a device able to reveal the answer to any question asked by the user.

Travelling north, she reaches the ice kingdoms where armoured bears rule and witch queens traverse the skies. Roger and Lord Asriel both need her help. And beyond the northern lights, an even greater unknown awaits.

This month, Scholastic released a new three book set, with stunning cover artwork. The series has won two major awards for children's fiction - the Carnegie Medal (Book 1) and the Whitbread Book of the Year (Book 3). High praise indeed! Marketed as young adult fantasy, the trilogy has a sophisticated and dark edge that will also appeal to many adult readers.

www.philip-pullman.com/index.asp



Secret Scribbled Notebooks

by **Joanne Horniman** - Allen & Unwin. Paperback rrp \$17.95

"My name is Kate O'Farrell and I am seventeen years old. I am in my last year of school, and when that is over I will be leaving this place for good - going to a real city, where I will begin my new life. I have long red hair and pale skin. I like staying up very late at night. It is my ambition to see the sun rise, but sadly I am always asleep by then. I love eating and reading, preferably at the same time. I am very tall, and too thin. I have never been in love."

The above passage is quoted on the back cover of *Secret Scribbled Notebooks* and it sums up the book perfectly.

Kate is in her final year at school and about to sit her exams. She is hoping to do well, leave the country town of Lismore and move to Sydney to go to University. She has bought

three notebooks, red, blue and yellow. The red notebook is for her everyday journal. The blue one is for her memories. The yellow notebook is for her story or novel.

Kate lives with her elder sister, Sophie, and Lil. When the girls were very young, they regularly stayed at Lil's guesthouse with their father. He left them in her care while he was away for short trips, then one day, he didn't return

"I should say, though, that my sister and I are virtually orphans. Only virtually, because our parents didn't die, they simply disappeared. And not even in mysterious circumstances. They left us when I was three." (Kate)

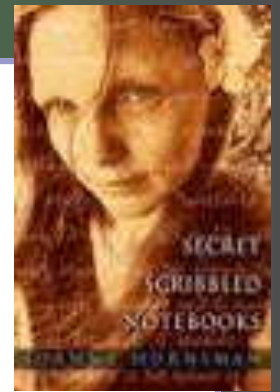
Sophie has recently given birth to a baby girl whom Kate falls in love with and helps care for. Later, she makes

friends with Alex, a boy she thinks "someone, somewhere, had constructed ... perfectly. I felt that I had at last found someone I could be myself with. I didn't feel that I was a girl when I was with Alex, or that he was a boy. I felt that neither of us belonged anywhere except with each other. He was on my side."

She thinks about her parents. She looks forward to what the future holds. And she reads and writes. Through her reading and writing, Kate discovers more about herself and her feelings.

Scribbled Notebooks will best suit teenage girls. And when this middle aged mother started reading, she fell in love with Kate and her story too. I hope Joanne Horniman is writing a sequel!

www.allenandunwin.com/Authors/joannehorniman.pdf



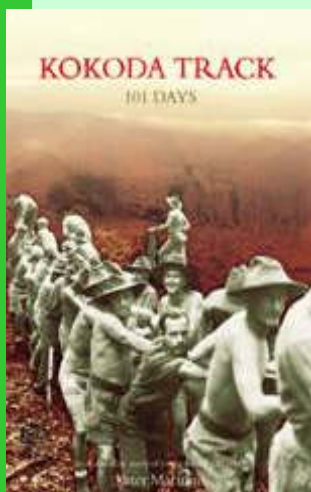
The Australian Centre for Youth Literature runs an events-based program aims to encourage reading among young people

www.slv.vic.gov.au/programs/schools/reading/index.html

Kokoda Track 101 Days

by **Peter Macinnis** - black dog books. Paperback rrp \$16.95

Kokoda Track 101 Days is the story of a small group of Australian soldiers who, in 1942, stood between the advancing Japanese army and the New Guinea capital of Port Moresby.



What makes it recommended reading, is its ability to bring the reality of war home to a young audience, with a unique blend of fact and fiction. "Imagine you are there..." the

first chapter begins, drawing the reader back through time. Interspersed throughout the informational text are short biographies, maps, diagrams and historical photos. Fictional letters and diary excerpts provide insights into war correspondents and soldiers on both sides of the conflict.

Kokoda Track 101 Days is an excellent education resource, complete with a detailed timeline. Best suited to young readers 8 – 12 years, even adults will find this book interesting.

www.bdb.com.au/books/index.php?book_id=kokoda_track

Money Smart Kids

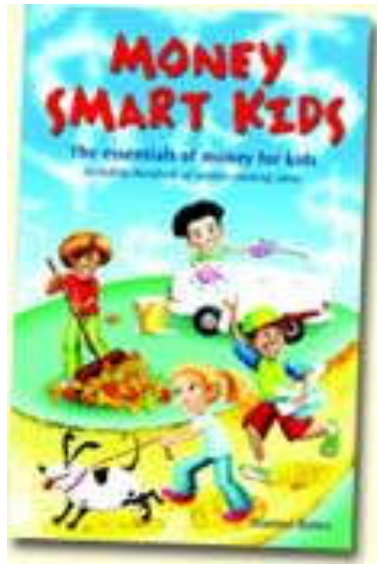
by Di Bates - Ibis Publishing. Paperback rrp \$14.95

Parents want their children to learn to be responsible with money. And kids always want more dollars to spend. Money Smart Kids is the solution to these two problems.

This is a very comprehensive book covering the essentials of money for kids, from simple guidelines about setting goals and managing customers through to information about budgeting and banking.

The book contains a list of practical money-making ideas. Interspersed throughout the text are short profiles of children, mostly Australian, who have successfully earned and managed their own money. Jennifer Green, aged 11, helps out in a neighbourhood business

while saving to buy a pair of in-line skates. Robbie Gillespie was 14 when his home-made ginger



beer was shipping to 30,000 outlets around Australia.

Children are encouraged to consider how money can be used to help others. The book discusses helpful hints for young fundraising organisers and suggests a range of ideas. Hugh Evans, Young Australian of the Year in 2004, began the Oak Tree Foundation raising over \$100,000 in its initial year, to help build a sports field and library in Africa.

Money Smart Kids is both inspirational and practical. It even includes information on how to negotiate a pocket money increase from your parents!

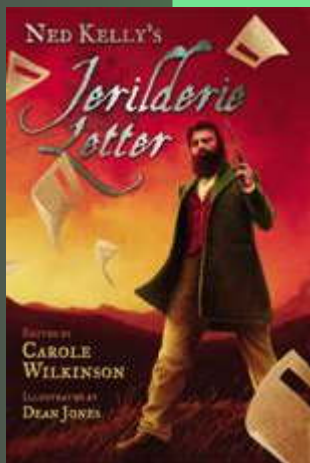
Di Bates is the editor of the e-zine Buzz Words, essential for anyone considering or involved in writing for children. You can download a trial copy from her website. www.enterprisingwords.com

Reading with Kids at Home—helpful hints from the QLD Dept Education—

http://education.qld.gov.au/publication/reporting/parents/2006/issue1/_reading.html

Ned Kelly's Jerilderie Letter

Edited by Carole Wilkinson - black dog books. Paperback rrp \$16.95



This book translates Ned Kelly's Jerilderie Letter into modern day English. With wonderful illustrations, map, timeline, glossary and descriptions of the people mentioned in the letter, it is a great resource for students studying Ned Kelly.

For those who

might not know, Ned Kelly wrote a letter defending his actions. As he was illiterate his friend, Joe Byrne, transcribed the letter. Carole Wilkinson has included "before" and "after" documentation to give a brief glimpse of the facts surrounding the letter. She has also included further resources about the letter such as where the original is kept and the website where you can read it in its entirety.

I am ashamed to say that I knew more about overseas outlaws than

I knew about Ned Kelly. This book dramatically increased my knowledge of our most famous bush ranger, and with the great illustrations, Ned Kelly came alive. I recommend this book for every Australian primary and high school reading list. I can imagine children heatedly debating the rights and wrongs of Ned Kelly's actions based on their reading of the Jerilderie Letter.

www.carolewilkinson.com.au

Congratulations

Shaun Tan's graphic novel *The Arrival* (Lothian) won the Premier's Prize, Premier's WA Book Awards

~*~

Peter Temple is the first Australian author to win the UK Crime Writers Duncan Lawrie Golden Dagger award with *The Broken Shore* (Text Publishing)

~*~

Susan Duncan's *Salvation Creek* (Bantam) was announced as the winner of the 2007 Nielsen

BookData Booksellers Choice Award

~*~

Author Libby Gleeson was made a Member of the Order of Australia, for service to literature

~*~

Will Elliot *The Pilo Family Circus* (ABC Books) and Terry Dowling, *Basic Black* (Cemetery Dance Publications) have been shortlisted for the International Horror Guild Awards

~*~

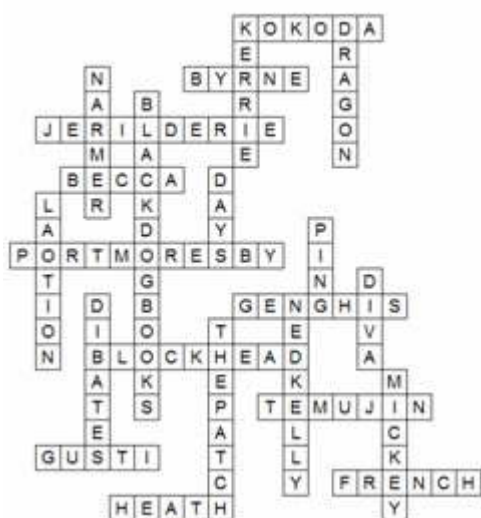
The film rights to Richard Flanagan's novel *The Unknown Terrorist* (Picador) have been bought by Steven Spielberg's Dreamworks Studio

~*~

Carpentaria, the 2007 Miles Franklin award winner by Alexis Wright (Giramondo) has been awarded the Australian Literatures Society Gold Medal

Answers

Issue One



G	I	A	E	D	N	R	S	T
S	D	T	R	A	I	E	N	G
N	R	E	S	G	T	I	A	D
A	N	R	I	E	G	T	D	S
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R	E	G	T	S	A	D	I	N
I	S	D	G	N	E	A	T	R
T	A	N	D	I	R	S	G	E

Legend



Children's Non-Fiction



Picture



Romance



Young Adult



Adult's Non-Fiction



Science Fiction



Adult's Review



Youth



Crime



Fantasy



Interview



Child



Mystery



Children's Review



Other



Australian Author



Visit our webpage at www.thereadingstack.com