

THE PENGUIN POST

VOLUME 37 THE MAGAZINE ABOUT BOOKS FOR BOOK LOVERS

**YOUR
FREE
COPY!**

**IT'S OUR
BIRTHDAY!**

**WIN
R30 000
IN BOOKISH
PRIZES!**

DIGITAL DILEMMAS

No-nonsense advice for teens (and their parents)

WILD WORDS

South Africa's natural world and the stories it tells

COMFORT IN A BOWL

Three local curry recipes that bring the heat

ON MY MIND

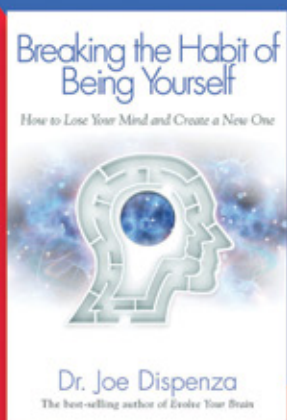
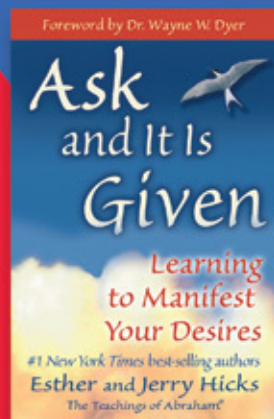
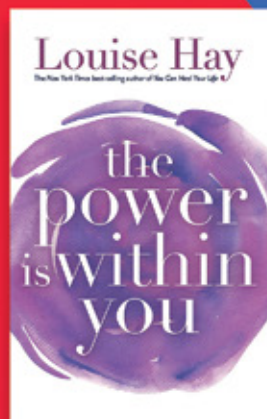
Popina Khumanda and the superpower all girls need





THE POWER WITHIN

Unlock your potential one page at a time





contents

- | | |
|--|---|
| <p>02 BOOKSCAPE A Harlan Coben and Reese Witherspoon collab, the book dominating the bestseller lists and five minutes with Ntombifuthi Nkabinde</p> | <p>21 FAITH Zakhe Mazibuko challenges deeply rooted church traditions around tithing</p> |
| <p>06 COVER Five years of stories and standout books, plus over R30k in prizes to be won</p> | <p>22 HOMEGROWN Gripping non-fiction reads from South African authors</p> |
| <p>12 FICTION Columns from Joanna Miller and Emma Nanami Strenner, the latest novels and a collection of classic magic realism reads</p> | <p>23 ADVICE No-nonsense advice on the online dilemmas that teens (and their parents) face</p> |
| <p>17 AFRIKAANS Marie Lotz vertel meer oor die pad tot by haar nuutste boek, en ons drink 'n koppie koffie met Leon van Nierop en Hendie Grobbelaar</p> | <p>24 NATURE The stories that lie in Southern Africa's landscapes, skies, and creatures</p> |
| | <p>28 FOOD Three curry recipes that bring the heat and the comfort</p> |
| | <p>32 ON MY MIND Popina Khumanda on education as a superpower</p> |

Johannesburg | Growthpoint Business Park, Unit 12A, 162 Tonetti Street, Halfway House Ext 7, Midrand, 1685 | 011 327 3550

Cape Town | Estuaries No 4, Oxbow Crescent, Century Avenue, Century City, 7441 | 021 460 5400

© Copyright Penguin Random House South Africa (Pty) Ltd. *The Penguin Post* is published by Penguin Random House South Africa. All rights reserved. Reproduction without the written permission of the editor is strictly forbidden.

Editor Lauren Mc Diarmid **Designer** Sean Robertson **Sub Editor** Frieda Le Roux
Contributors Jacques de Villiers, Ntombifuthi Nkabinde, Sven Axelrad, Onke Mazibuko, Zanele van Zyl, Penny Haw, Popina Khumanda, Karin Mitchell, Marie Lotz, Leon van Nierop, Hendie Grobbelaar, Zakhe Mazibuko, Emma Sadleir, Rorke Wilson, Dianne Stewart

Dear reader

Five years, thirty-seven issues, hundreds of stories ... and now, one unforgettable edition to mark the milestone.

When we first launched *The Penguin Post*, we had one goal: to create a vibrant, joyful space where book lovers could find their next great read – and maybe fall a little more in love with the power of words. Half a decade later, we're celebrating everything this magazine has grown into: a home for literary discovery, a spotlight on South African talent, and a shared escape for readers everywhere.

This birthday issue is a celebration of the stories that have defined our pages. We look back at standout books and breakout authors, and share the voices shaping what we'll read next. You'll find powerful fiction exploring identity, sisterhood and surreal dreamscapes. Afrikaans thrillers full of plot twists, poetry and ... a jersey-clad chicken? There's hard-hitting advice on how to navigate digital life, reflections on language, land and lore, and curry recipes that'll warm your soul from the inside out. And don't miss Popina Khumanda's moving essay about how education transformed her life and can do the same for countless girls like her.

Of course, what's a birthday without gifts? We've rounded up over R30 000 in bookish prizes for you! It's our way of saying *thank you* for being part of our story.

Here's to the next chapter. Happy reading!

Lauren

Lauren Mc Diarmid

ThePost@penguinrandomhouse.co.za



bookscape

news | snippets | what's new



Everyone's talking about ...

Reese Witherspoon and Harlan Coben teaming up for a high-stakes thriller

Get excited for an unforgettable collaboration between award-winning actress Reese Witherspoon and the number one international bestselling writer, Harlan Coben.

Combining their storytelling talents into one masterpiece of suspense fiction, *Gone Before Goodbye* is the unforgettable story of Maggie McCabe, an indomitable woman, trapped in a conspiracy she helped create but can't understand. Her harrowing search for the truth could expose a plot woven throughout the exclusive world of the global ultra elite – but at an unfathomable cost.

Maggie is teetering on the brink. A highly skilled and renowned Army combat surgeon, she has always lived life at the edge, where she could make the most impact. And it was all going to plan ... until it wasn't.

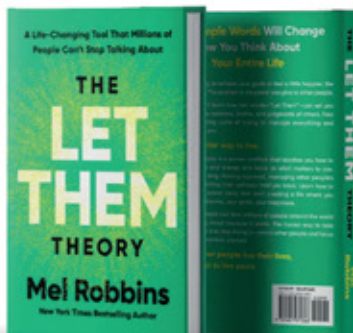
Upside down after a devastating series of tragedies leads to her medical license being revoked, Maggie has lost her purpose, but not her nerve or her passion. At her lowest point, she is thrown a lifeline by a former colleague, an elite plastic surgeon whose anonymous clientele demand the best care money can buy, as well as absolute discretion.

Halfway across the globe, sequestered in the lap of luxury and cutting-edge technology, one of the world's most mysterious men requires unconventional medical assistance. Desperate, and one of the few surgeons in the world skilled enough to take this job, Maggie enters his realm of unspeakable opulence and fulfils her end of the agreement. But when the patient suddenly disappears while still under her care, Maggie must become a fugitive herself – or she will be the next one who is ...

Gone Before Goodbye.



Gone Before Goodbye hits shelves November 2025.



DOMINATING THE BESTSELLER LISTS

The Let Them Theory by Mel Robbins

"[This] isn't just a self-help book – it's an invitation to reclaim your energy and live more intentionally. It's not about giving up on people; it's about letting go of the need to control them so you can focus on building a life that aligns with your values."

Rehana Rutti, IOL



IT'S FREE!

Visit www.penguinrandomhouse.co.za/penguin-post and sign up to receive each new edition directly to your inbox.

#bookstagram

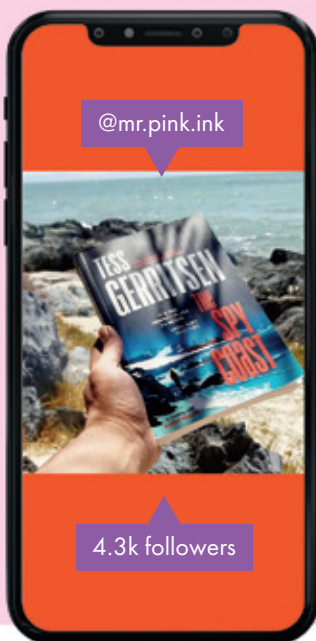
MUST of the MONTH



Jacques de Villiers, aka Mr. Pink Ink, is a Cape Town-based bookstagrammer, Sagittarius, and dog dad. As a creator and freelancer, he brings a touch of magic to every post.

"*The Spy Coast* was my first Tess Gerritsen novel – but definitely not my last. It kicks off her new Martini Club series and, if this opener is anything to go by, we're in for a thrilling ride. I'm a sucker for well-drawn, three-dimensional characters, and Gerritsen delivers them in spades. I'd happily endure a slow plot if it meant spending time with complex, relatable people – but thankfully, I didn't have to. The story is gripping, cinematic, and told through multiple POVs. There's just enough predictability to keep things cosy – but a plot twist near the end genuinely caught me off guard. And while I personally prefer my thrillers with a bit more action and adrenaline, there's still plenty here to get the heart racing – including a quiet little swoon for the romance fans. This series is off to a strong start – and with book two, *The Summer Guests*, already on shelves, it's the book I'm excited to immerse myself in next."

The Spy Coast is out now.



WIN! WIN! WIN!

We have over R30 000 in bookish prizes to give away! To find out more, turn to page 10, scan the code using your phone camera, or visit www.penguinrandomhouse.co.za/competitions.



OUT IN PAPERBACK



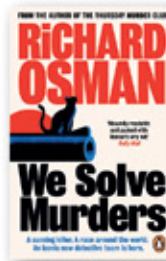
BY ANY OTHER NAME

by Jodi Picoult In 1581, Emilia Bassano sacrifices her name for her words. Centuries later, Melina Green does the same. Have women been holding the pen all along – while history forgot their names?



HERE ONE MOMENT

by Liane Moriarty We're all busy living our lives – until one elderly woman's eerie prediction intersects with six strangers, unravelling their carefully laid plans in the most unexpected, life-altering ways.



WE SOLVE MURDERS

by Richard Osman

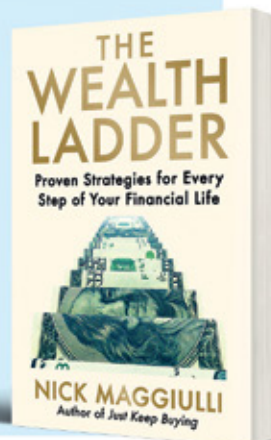
A retired sleuth and his fearless daughter-in-law race around the world to solve a murder, protect a celebrity, and outwit a killer in this witty, fast-paced mystery adventure.



The most expensive thing some people own is their ego.



Nick Maggiulli, author of *The Wealth Ladder*



Five minutes with ... **NTOMBI NKABINDE**

A group of four female friends navigating life and love in Jo'burg; author Ntombi tells us more about her debut novel, *In the Late of Night*.

***In the Late of Night* is your debut novel. Could you tell us more about yourself, and why you chose to write this book?**

Sure! I'm a 41-year-old psychology graduate living in Johannesburg. What inspired me to write this book was a quote I once read that said, 'If you can't find the book you want to read on the shelves, write it'. So I set to writing about relationship woes – both my own and those of my friends. I thought that perhaps, by sharing these experiences, the women who read the book can see that they aren't alone in what they've been through – and maybe even come to attach a bit of humour to it all!

It kind of sounds like *Sex and the City* for grown-ups living in Joburg!


In a way, it is. But more than anything, I wanted to showcase four smart black women who learn to live, laugh and cry together through life's ups and downs. The story was specifically inspired by books from amazing black women authors I

admire – namely, *Happiness is a Four-letter Word* by Nozizwe Cynthia Jele, and *Waiting to Exhale* by Terry McMillan. Similarly, they both write about the dynamics of friendship, and what it means to be a modern black woman.

Who is the book for?

All women should be able to resonate with the themes of female friendships, family dynamics as well as romantic relationships. I would love it if the book reached beyond ethnicity, background and age.

Do you have friendships that are similar to those you describe in the book?

Definitely! I have a best friend and a wonderful circle of other close friends. My cousin and sister are actually usually the first people I send all my writing to for first reads. Honesty and loyalty are paramount in my personal relationships, so I always hope that they will tell me exactly what they think – regardless of how harsh it may be! 



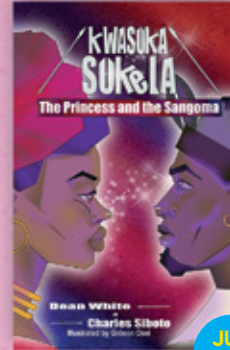
In the Late of Night is out now.



AUG
0-3



JUL
6-9



JUL
6-9



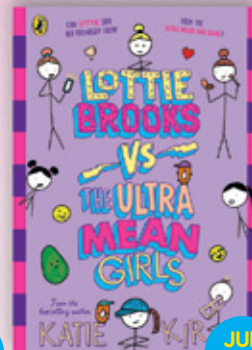
JUL
6-9



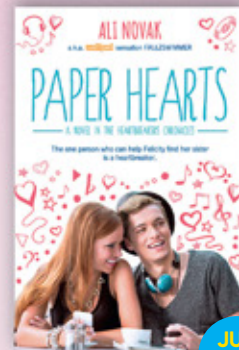
JUL
6-9



AUG
6-9



JUL
9-12



JUL
YA



AUG
YA

HIGH FIVE!

Five years of stories, spotlights, and standout books! From debut authors-turned-stars to titles that shook the shelves, this birthday issue celebrates the words – and the writers – who’ve defined our pages.

WHERE IT ALL BEGAN...

Welcome

...to the very first issue of *The Penguin Post*. A magazine born from this brave new world we find ourselves in. It is our way of sticking to our commitment of providing you with the very best from our world-class list of books.

With access to brilliant authors locally and abroad, we’re able to give you, dear reader, juicy tidbits from interviews with your favourite authors, such as Lesley Pearse, our delightful cover star for this issue, and Charlie Mackesy, artist and author of the touching book, *The Boy, The Mole, The Fox and The Horse*.

Our huge panel of experts on topics such as health, wellbeing and business will weigh in each month with useful advice, and you’ll get inside info from some of our hottest releases, like the latest edition of *SASOL Birds*. We’ve been waiting in anticipation for this one, and we are not disappointed – it’s met all expectations, with truly stunning illustrations to boot.

And let’s not forget the food... mouth-watering recipes to satisfy even the most discerning taste buds. Try Prim Reddy’s butterbean and potato curry on page 17.

It is our great pride to bring you this first issue, and we hope that with each edition, we slowly work our way to the top of your reading pile.

As the mole said to the boy, “One of our greatest freedoms is how we react to things,” so, onward and upward!

Lauren

Lauren Mc Diarmid

MURDER, Love ... and Malva Pudding

There once was a goat called Destiny ...

Glory is an effervescent, punchy, novel from Booker-shortlisted Zimbabwean novelist, NoViolet Bulawayo, exploring the fall of Robert Mugabe. She chats here about the true events that inspired the book, collective experience and talking animals.



ADVICE

THE GEEK WHO DITCHED THE CORPORATE CLOAK

Michael Jordaan is the CEO of Montegray, chair of Bank Zero and director of Rain. In this extract from *Never Waste a Good Crisis*, author Carië Maas explores Jordaan’s business ethic.

Vrees met 'n hoofletter

Iemand stuur die anderdag vir haar 'n strokiesprent van 'n beertjie wat aan 'n ballon hang, skryf Irma van Zyl.



On my mind Tried Nguni stickfighting yet?

Charlie Mackesy talks about entangling limbs, sticks and myths in his latest spec-fic action thriller *Ancestral*.

CRISP PACKETS & STOLEN KEYS, BOTTLECAPS & BROKEN GLASS

Why go through the wringer if you aren't going to put it in a book? Stuart MacBride writes about how an idea he'd sat with for 13 years finally found legs in the dark humour of the Scottish weather system.



WRITERS WHO MADE OUR DAY

Authors, appreciating *us*? We're blushing!

"Congratulations to *The Penguin Post* for reaching this milestone. This is an important platform that gives us writers a special place in the light. It's a magazine that gives its readers a taste of magic, curated by the people who treat us with the same care and dedication as our publisher. Thank you, and all the best."

Onke Mazibuko, author of *The Second Verse* and *Canary*



"Happy Birthday, *Penguin Post*! Congratulations on five fantastic years of storytelling, inspiration, and

creativity. It's been such a joy to be part of your journey. Here's to many more years of spotlighting voices, sharing magic, and making an impact. I'm so proud to be associated with a publication that truly celebrates the power of words. Keep soaring!"

Popina Khumanda, author of *The Smallest Ones*



"Wow – one 'full hand' old! Happy Birthday to *The Penguin Post*! Thank you for creating a wonderful collection of literary fun. May you continue to include the voices of imagination, reflection, introspection, advice, and important historical and current events that shape our future. It's been an absolute honour to be featured within these pages, and I hope to do so again in future! Love, Karin."

Karin Mitchell, author of *The High Treason Club*

"Happy birthday, *Penguin Post*! The only thing book lovers enjoy (almost) as much as reading books is reading *about* books! So, thank you for waddling into our lives five years ago to liven up the literary scene with your beautifully written and presented scoops, back stories, and author exposés. Here's to many more years of entertainment, engagement, and enlightenment!"

Penny Haw, author of *The Invincible Miss Cust*, *The Woman at the Wheel* and *Follow Me to Africa*



"*The Penguin Post* was the very first time I'd been in any kind of magazine. I'll never forget seeing the cover of my book in print and a photo of me looking off into the distance like I knew someone no one else knew. It made me feel like maybe I really was a writer and that maybe, just maybe I really had a shot at this writing thing. Happy Birthday *PP*. Thanks for believing in me. Keep changing lives and showcasing writers. We love you."

Sven Axelrad, author of *Buried Treasure*, *God's Pocket* and *The Nicotine Gospel*



"Happy Birthday, *Penguin Post*! Wishing you continued success, growth, and inspiration as you celebrate another incredible year. Thank you for being a home to storytellers, dreamers, and voices that shape the world. I'm truly grateful to be part of your journey – your support has meant so much to me both personally and professionally. Here's to many more chapters of brilliance, creativity, and impact.

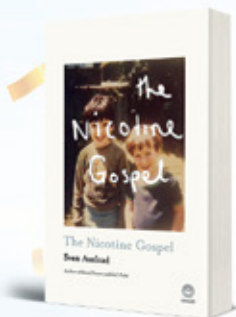
Have a fantastic celebration!"

Zanele van Zyl, author of the cookbook *Senidlile Kodwa*



DEBUT STARS WHO KEEP SHINING

From thrilling mysteries to magical realism and heartwarming home cooking, these five debut authors have gone from promising newcomers to powerhouses. Here's where their stories have taken them.



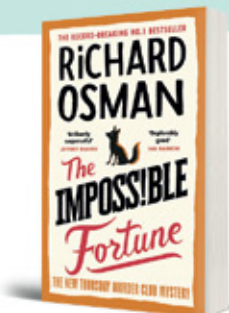
Sven Axelrad

Sven burst onto the literary scene in 2023 with *Buried Treasure*, a whimsical yet profound magical realism novel set in Vivo, earning a 2024 *Sunday Times* Literary Awards shortlist spot. In 2024, he followed up with *God's Pocket*, continuing to explore identity and self-discovery through a young man's journey, and this year, he launched his third novel, *The Nicotine Gospel*. Based in Durban, Axelrad balances his accounting career with a growing role as a beloved storyteller across South Africa.



Sifo Sinoyolo

Sifo the Cooking Husband, as he's affectionately known, is a South African pharmacist turned self-taught chef who's all about making cooking fun and approachable. Since his debut cookbook dropped in 2022, mixing traditional SA flavours with modern twists, he's won big awards and inspired loads of home cooks. Exciting news: his second cookbook is coming out later this year. We can't wait to see what he cooks up next!



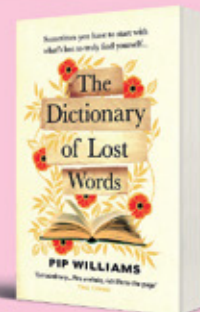
Richard Osman

A prominent figure in British television, known for his wit and charm, Osman first captured readers' hearts with his debut novel *The Thursday Murder Club* in 2020. It became the UK's fastest-selling adult crime debut and was recently adapted into a Netflix film starring Helen Mirren and Pierce Brosnan. He has since authored five novels in the series, including the forthcoming, *The Impossible Fortune* (September 2025), and one in his *We Solve Murders* series.



Pip Williams

Born in London and raised in Sydney, Pip Williams emerged as a literary force with her debut novel, *The Dictionary of Lost Words* (2020). This historical fiction, inspired by her research in the Oxford English Dictionary archives, became a New York Times bestseller and was the first Australian novel selected for Reese Witherspoon's Book Club. Her follow-up, *The Bookbinder of Jericho* (2023), continued her exploration of women's roles in history and won the 2024 Australian Book Industry Award for General Fiction Book of the Year.

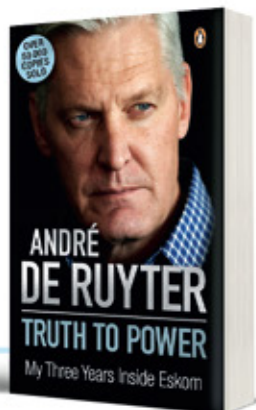


Holly Jackson

This British author burst onto the literary scene in 2019 with her debut novel, *A Good Girl's Guide to Murder*, a YA thriller that became a bestseller and garnered multiple accolades, including the British Book Awards Children's Fiction Book of the Year in 2020. The novel's success led to a popular trilogy and a BBC/Netflix adaptation, with Jackson serving as executive producer. She has since expanded her repertoire with standalone thrillers, and has just released her first adult novel, *Not Quite Dead Yet*.

BOOKS THAT SHIFTED THE CONVERSATION

These books didn't just hit bestseller lists, they sparked movements, challenged norms, and reshaped conversations. From Eskom exposés to quiet wisdom, these books changed the game in powerful ways.



Truth to Power by André de Ruyter

With de Ruyter's candid reflections on his three years at Eskom, the former CEO shook things up in a big way. His no-holds-barred account of life inside Eskom pulled back the curtain on corruption, sparking outrage, conversation, and a serious wake-up call. Readers were gripped, the industry was rattled, and everyone was talking about what really goes on behind the scenes. It wasn't just a book, it was a game-changer.

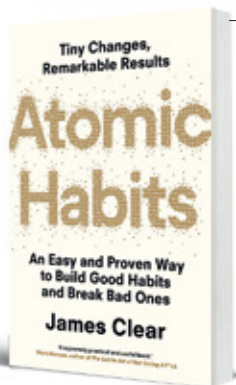


The Boy, the Mole, the Fox and the Horse by Charlie Mackesy

Charlie Mackesy's illustrated story came out of nowhere and completely stole hearts. With simple drawings and heartfelt conversations, it reminded readers of what really matters — kindness, courage, connection. It blurred the line between picture book and philosophy, appealing to kids and adults alike. Suddenly, quiet wisdom wrapped in gentle art was cool again, and just like that, a movement was sparked.

The Promise by Damon Galgut

When Damon Galgut won the Booker, it felt like a seismic shift — especially for South African lit. It brought local stories to the global stage again, and readers couldn't stop talking about it. Galgut's sharp, haunting storytelling hit a nerve, challenging how we think about family, land, and legacy. It wasn't just a win for him — it was a win for every South African writer with something to say.



Atomic Habits by James Clear

James Clear's book shook things up in the best way — finally, building better habits didn't feel impossible or overwhelming. His idea of focusing on small, consistent changes hit home for millions of readers. It wasn't just self-help fluff; it was practical, doable advice that actually worked. Everyone wanted a slice of that habit-forming magic. It genuinely changed how we think about personal growth.

The Book of Joy by Dalai Lama and Desmond Tutu

When the Dalai Lama and Desmond Tutu joined forces, they offered something rare: a raw, funny, and deeply human look at joy that didn't gloss over suffering. Their insights didn't just comfort readers — they challenged them to rethink how joy works, especially in a fractured world. It stood out in a crowded space, showing the industry that spiritual books could be profound, wildly engaging, and surprisingly down-to-earth. 📖



IT'S A GIVEAWAY EXTRAVAGANZA!

From bookish getaways to starry family outings, this is your chance to win! We're giving 21 lucky readers the chance to share in over R30 000 worth of prizes – from festival tickets and books to luxury luggage and more!



Win the Ultimate Escape: Luxury Luggage & Lesley Pearse Reads

To celebrate the release of Lesley Pearse's new identity thriller, *The Girl with the Suitcase*, we've partnered up with Wayfare Culture to give you something truly special: the chance to win a Cellini Allure Hardcase Travel Set in black – which includes a 55cm carry-on and a 75cm large check-in bag – valued at R 5 125, plus, three of Lesley Pearse's most popular novels, and a copy of *The Girl with the Suitcase*. Competition ends **31 July 2025**. T's & C's apply. See below for details on how to enter. Visit www.wayfareculture.co.za for more on premium travel luggage, handbags, backpacks, and accessories for discerning travelers.



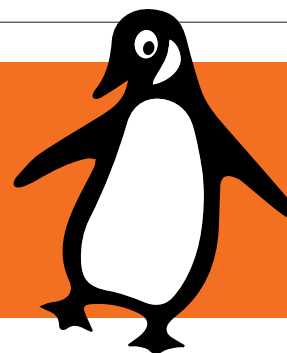
Sluit aan by die RomanzaKlub en staan 'n kans om 'n LAPA-geskenkbewys ter waarde van R2 000 te wen!

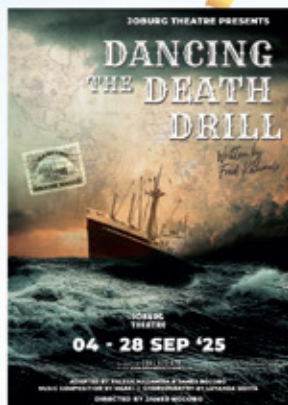
Klublede ontvang elke maand twee Romanzas vir slegs R154, met die opsie om 'n derde en vierde vir slegs R77 elk by te bestel. Geniet 30% afslag op alle LAPA-, LUCA- en Romanza-boeke (spesiale aanbiedinge uitgesluit), en ontvang 'n verwelkomings RomanzaKlub-sak ter waarde van R50. Jy sal ook elke maand die RomanzaKlub-nuusbrief ontvang, propvol skrywersnuus en storie-inligting. Dis 'n wonderlike manier om jou boekversameling uit te brei. Sluit aan by www.lapa.co.za/romanza/romanzaklub, of skandeer die QR-kode Kompetisie eindig 31 Augustus 2025.



ENTER HERE

To enter any of these competitions, and for T's & C's, scan the code using your phone camera, or visit www.penguinrandomhouse.co.za/competitions





Win Tickets to See Fred Khumalo's *Dancing the Death Drill* at Joburg Theatre!

Set in 1958 Paris, this moving tale uncovers Pitso Motaung's journey from WWI soldier to SS Mendi tragedy survivor, exploring love, war, and forgotten histories with humour and heart. Up for grabs to five lucky winners are double tickets to *Dancing the Death Drill* at Joburg Theatre, plus three of Fred Khumalo's powerful novels: *Dancing the Death Drill*, *The Longest March* and *Two Tons o' Fun*. Each hamper is valued at R1 700! Competition ends **10 August 2025**. T's & C's apply. **Entrants must be based in Johannesburg.** See below for details on how to enter. Visit www.joburgtheatre.com for more on this and other productions.

Win a Weekend Pass to Cape Town's Open Book Festival!

Running 5 to 7 September 2025, the Open Book Festival celebrates African writing and fosters conversations that centre marginalised voices. Highlights include Writersports, Conversations with Mohale, and engaging discussions on identity, feminism, mental health, and more ... and five lucky readers will have the chance to attend with a friend as the Open Book team has offered us sets of double weekend passes to the festival! The prize will also include your choice of books by authors present at the festival to the value of R1 000 – bringing the total prize value to R2 500! Competition ends **5 August 2025**. T's & C's apply. **Entrants must be based in Cape Town.** Visit www.openbookfestival.co.za for more on the festival.



Win Festival Tickets to the Toyota Stellenbosch Woordfees!

From 11 to 19 October 2025, the Toyota Stellenbosch Woordfees will celebrate 25 years of arts, culture, and stories with the festival theme Share – along with nearly 400 unique productions. And now, four lucky readers can join in the festivities, because we're giving away four double tickets to this year's EasyEquities skrywersfees valued at R400 (excluding programme items that include meals and drinks). The prize will also include a book of your choice from the list of Penguin authors who will be present at EasyEquities skrywersfees to the value of R400. The competition closes on 31 August 2025. T's & C's apply. **Entrants must be based in the Western Cape.** Visit www.woordfees.co.za for more about the festival.

Win Tickets for a Family of Four to See the Stars at the Wits Anglo American Digital Dome

Formerly the Wits Planetarium, the Wits Anglo American Digital Dome is a cutting-edge facility at Wits University combining science, art, and culture through immersive, high-tech storytelling. We've teamed up with our friends at the Digital Dome to offer five lucky readers the chance to win tickets for a family of four to one of their shows, valued at R200, as well as a R200 voucher towards your next purchase from www.struiknature.co.za. Competition ends **31 August 2025**. T's & C's apply. **Entrants must be based in Johannesburg.** Discover more about this world-class centre at www.digitaldome.wits.ac.za. ⓘ





AT MY DESK

Joanna Miller on writing *The Eights*, studying at Oxford (three times), and imagining the lives of the first women to walk its storied halls.



“When I began writing *The Eights*, I knew I wanted to immerse readers in the atmosphere and politics of 1920s Oxford – a time and place I find endlessly fascinating. Having studied at Oxford three times, I know the city well, and over the course of writing the novel, I returned often – sometimes with my dog, Dickens – for research and inspiration. The Bodleian Library even renewed my reading card so I could work in its iconic rooms and access its archives. I discovered many evocative historical details during this process – like the ‘sub fusc’ uniforms and the strict rules for women – which helped bring the setting to life. Though the characters are fictional, the locations, documents, and many social dynamics are rooted in real history. I was especially lucky to gain access to handwritten testimonies from 1920s students at St Hugh’s College, where the novel is set.

More than just capturing the era’s look and feel, I wanted *The Eights* to reflect the shifting roles of women in the aftermath of World War I. My protagonist, Beatrice, is the daughter of a suffragette and carries both her mother’s ideals and her emotional absence. She’s warm, curious, idealistic – and wounded. Through Beatrice, I explored how

a young woman might define herself in a world where old traditions still loomed large despite social change.

The story unfolds through Beatrice and her three friends – Otto, Dora, and Marianne – each of whom brings a distinct perspective on life as a woman in the post-war world. Otto, older and more worldly, has danced through the Roaring Twenties and worked as a wartime nurse. Writing her was a joy – her sharpness, defiance, and hidden pain are inspired in part by my younger sister. Otto gave me space to explore the restless energy of those trying to escape the ghosts of war.


Dora, on the other hand, is shaped by grief. She’s at Oxford because the war took her brother, not because she dreamed of being there. I made her the only character with brothers, deliberately focusing the novel on women’s direct

experiences of loss and change. Dora is intelligent and reserved, motivated more by personal sorrow than political conviction. Of all the characters, I relate most to her – we share a hometown and the experience of losing a brother.

And then there’s Marianne, the most mysterious of the group. Her secret underpins much of the novel’s tension, and writing her required careful pacing – enough intrigue to keep readers guessing, but not so much as to feel manipulative. She begins the story as an enigma, but by the end, I hope she emerges as a quiet but powerful heroine.

Through these four women, I wanted to explore the depth of female friendship in a time of uncertainty and possibility. I hope *The Eights* offers a rich historical journey and a story that speaks to love, loss, loyalty, and ambition.”

ABOUT THE BOOK

Oxford, 1920. Four women from different backgrounds arrive as part of the university’s first female intake. Amid grief, secrets, and postwar trauma, they form a powerful friendship that helps them navigate prejudice, loss, and a changing world. *The Eights* is a story of resilience, ambition, and the unbreakable bond between women on the edge of history. 



The Eights is out now.

TOP FICTION JULY

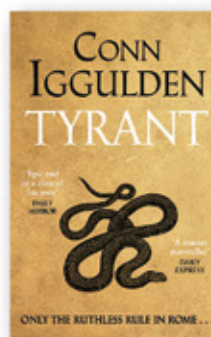
Don't Let Him In by Lisa Jewell

He's the perfect man. He says he loves you. You think he might even be made for you. Before long he's moved into your house – and into your heart. And then he leaves for days at a time. You don't know where he's gone or who he's with. And you realise – if you looked back – you'd say to yourself: *Don't let him in*. Don't miss the new read-in-one-sitting Lisa Jewell novel; a cautionary story that could happen to you ...



Not Quite Dead Yet by Holly Jackson

From the bestselling author of *A Good Girl's Guide to Murder* comes a gripping adult thriller. After a violent Halloween attack, 27-year-old Jet Mason learns she has just seven days to live. With a fatal brain injury ticking down, Jet is determined to uncover the truth. Suspecting everyone – from family to exes – she sets out to solve her own murder before time runs out.



Tyrant by Conn Iggulden

In ancient Rome, AD 50, Agrippina will stop at nothing to see her son Nero rule the empire. In the latest gripping instalment of the bestselling Nero trilogy, she manipulates her way into Emperor Claudius's bed – undeterred by rivals or danger. Power is her obsession, and in a city slick with blood and treachery, even family ties are weapons in the fight for control.



The Passengers on the Hankyu Line by Hiro Arikawa

Aboard the burgundy Hankyu line between Kyoto and Osaka, strangers cross paths in fleeting yet life-shaping ways. Through chance encounters, the train becomes a vessel for transformation – carrying a young man in love, a rebellious wedding guest, a nervous student, a woman seeking freedom, and a grieving widow – each traveller bound for a future only they can fully know.



The Favourite by Fran Littlewood

From *Amazing Grace* Adams author Fran Littlewood comes *The Favourite* – a sharply observed novel about three grown sisters whose father's accidental confession sets off a wave of tension, revelations, and long-buried resentments. Told over the course of one fraught week, it's a story of sibling rivalry, grief, and the complexity of family love.



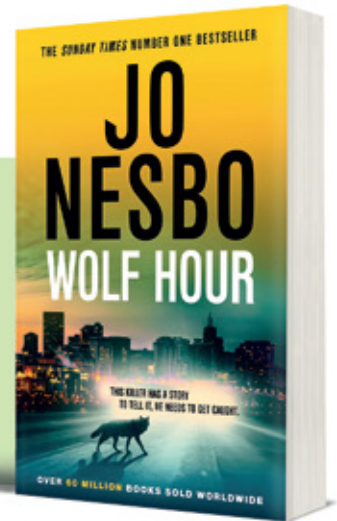
READ THE EXTRACTS

Visit www.penguinrandomhouse.co.za/penguinbooksblog

TOP FICTION AUGUST

Wolf Hour by Jo Nesbo

When a sniper kills a small-time crook in Minneapolis, maverick detective Bob Oz is called in. As the killer strikes again, Oz begins to suspect something far more sinister – and personal. In *Wolf Hour*, Jo Nesbo delivers a gripping standalone thriller filled with dark secrets, political tension, and a chilling connection between hunter and hunted. The killer has a story to tell – and to tell it, he needs to be caught. But with each murder, Oz is forced to confront his own darkest instincts.



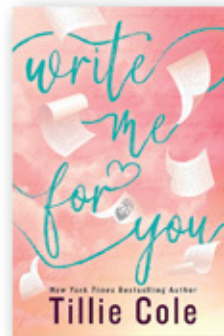
Red Star Down by D.B. John

An explosive, globe-spanning thriller from the author of *Star of the North*, *Red Star Down* follows three people – a CIA officer, a Russian dissident, and a North Korean spy inside the White House – as they're drawn into a deadly conspiracy. With the world on edge and loyalties in flux, this timely, high-stakes novel is perfect for fans of David McCloskey and Terry Hayes.



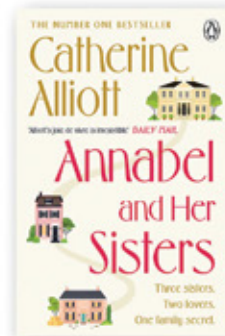
She Didn't See It Coming by Shari Lapena

When Bryden vanishes from her luxury condo in broad daylight, leaving behind her phone, keys, and laptop, her husband Sam is left reeling. As suspicion grows and secrets unravel, their seemingly perfect life – and tight-knit community – begins to crack. A gripping new thriller about trust, deception, and how well we really know those closest to us.



Write Me for You by Tillie Cole

Seventeen-year-old June has always dreamed of writing the greatest love story ever told – but she's never been in love. Then she meets Jesse, who lives each day like it's his last. As their connection deepens and time slips away, June begins writing their story – a beautiful, bittersweet reminder that even when life is fleeting, true love can leave a lasting mark on the world.



Annabel and Her Sisters by Catherine Alliott

In Catherine Alliott's witty new novel, widowed Annabel is juggling teenaged kids, ageing parents, and two meddling sisters with big plans for their mother's house. While navigating family drama and long-buried secrets, Annabel finds herself unexpectedly caught between two romantic prospects: a charming builder and the local vicar. As the truth unravels, so too does her sense of what – and who – she really wants in life. **P**



READ THE EXTRACTS

Visit www.penguinrandomhouse.co.za/penguinbooksblog

A Love Letter to Girlhood

A gripping coming-of-age debut, *My Other Heart* by Emma Nanami Strenner explores identity, loss, and the deep, sometimes complicated bonds of female friendship through the eyes of two unforgettable teens.



“Airports have always fascinated me. They feel like liminal spaces – neither here nor there, suspended between arrival and departure, presence and absence. I’ve spent a lot of time in them, especially when my daughter was little. I remember chasing after her tiny, determined figure as she darted away from me, always just out of reach. I’d find her eventually, of course, but there was always a heartbeat of panic, a moment when I imagined the worst.

It was from that feeling, that edge of dread, that *My Other Heart* was born. I asked myself: what if I didn’t find her? What if something irreversible happened? What if I couldn’t advocate for myself? What if I was utterly powerless?


Mimi’s disappearance in the novel is my worst fear materialised. But before that pivotal scene took shape, the idea for the book had been quietly forming. There’s an old adage that debut novels are often a little autobiographical, and in some ways, *My Other Heart* is no exception. I wanted to write about a girl growing up in a world that didn’t quite reflect her, someone with roots in more than one place and yet unsure of where, or if, she truly belongs.

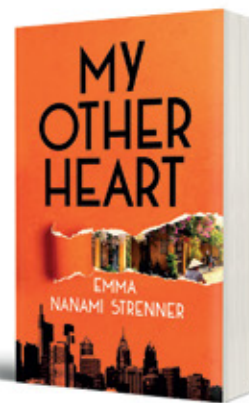
Enter Kit: mixed race, adopted into a wealthy white family, finishing school and facing the inevitable identity reckoning that comes with young adulthood. She arrived fully formed, already questioning the version of her life she’d been told was hers. Her story became a vehicle for a bigger question: *what happens when the story you’ve been told about yourself begins to unravel?*

Sabrina followed soon after. She and Kit are very different, yet deeply connected. I felt I knew them both immediately. They’re grappling with identity – cultural, racial, personal – and also with the deeply emotional terrain of what it means to be a girl on the brink of adulthood. I see a lot of myself in both of them. Like Kit, I’ve misunderstood my parents. I’ve chosen convenient beliefs over uncomfortable truths. Like Sabrina, I’ve been hesitant, overly self-conscious, and unsure of my place. But just as Sabrina grows more

confident and finds her voice, so too did I, eventually.

The story was always going to belong to these two girls. There’s something sacred about the intensity of teenage emotions – raw, immediate, unfiltered. The highs are euphoric, the lows catastrophic. Nothing is dulled by time or cynicism yet. It felt right to see this world through their eyes, to give their experiences the gravity and nuance they deserve.

My Other Heart is, in many ways, a love letter to the emotional intensity of girlhood, to the complexity of identity, and to the ways in which we both find and lose ourselves in one another.” 



My Other Heart is out in August.

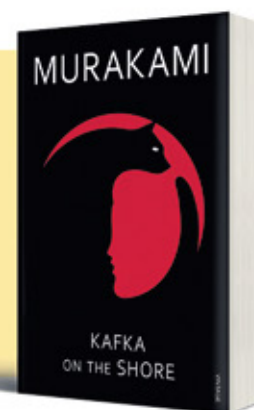
“There was always a heartbeat of panic, a moment when I imagined the worst.”

ENCHANTED SHELF

Step into a world where cats talk, fig trees remember, Death narrates, and stories shape reality. These unforgettable novels blur the line between the real and the surreal – with wonder at every turn.

Kafka on the Shore by Haruki Murakami

Fifteen-year-old Kafka Tamura flees home to escape a dark prophecy, while elderly Nakata, who can talk to cats, is pulled from his quiet life into the surreal. As their journeys unfold, fish rain from the sky, ghosts emerge, and mysteries deepen – including a brutal murder with no clear victim or killer. *Kafka on the Shore* is a dreamlike, multi-layered tale of fate, memory, and the blurred line between reality and imagination.



The Island of Missing Trees by Elif Shafak

In 1974 Cyprus, two teenagers – one Greek, one Turkish – meet in secret at a tavern beneath a fig tree, their love unfolding as war looms. Years later in London, a girl searches for answers about her parents' past and her own roots, guided only by a fig tree in her garden. This haunting, lyrical novel explores love, loss, identity, and the enduring connection between people and the natural world.



One Hundred Years of Solitude by Gabriel García Márquez

Pipes herald the arrival of gypsies on their annual visit to Macondo where José Arcadio Buendía and his wife have started their new life. Neither can know the significance of the indecipherable manuscript that the gypsy Melquíades passes them. Memories of the manuscript pushed aside, few remember its existence and only one will discover the hidden message that it holds ...




The Book Thief by Markus Zusak

A beloved international bestseller set in 1939 Nazi Germany. Narrated by Death, it tells the unforgettable story of a book-stealing girl and her neighbours on Himmel Street as war closes in. With annotated manuscript pages, original sketches, and behind-the-scenes glimpses into the author's process, this edition offers a deeper look at the novel that has captured the hearts of millions.



The Starless Sea by Erin Morgenstern

When Zachary Rawlins discovers a mysterious book in his university library, he's drawn into a hidden world of lost cities, secret societies, and underground libraries. Guided by strange symbols – a bee, a key, a sword – he follows a trail through masquerade balls and magical doorways to a labyrinth beneath the earth. There, he must protect the stories that shape reality before they're lost forever. A magical novel from the author of *The Night Circus*. 

Jy verdien 'n bederf of twee!

Liefdesverhale vir lesers wat verlore wil raak in gelukkige eindes, wat glo in ware liefde en dat elke pot 'n deksel het.



'N KOPPIE KOFFIE MET ...



Leon van Nierop en Hendie Grobbelaar gesels oor moord op die oop see en hoenders met trui – twee baie verskillende, maar ewe boeiende verhale van spanning en sielsdieptes.

Leon van Nierop

Moord op 'n passasierskip – iets waarmee nét die immergewilde Leon van Nierop sal wegkom!



Die volmaakte moord speel af op 'n groot passasierskip: niemand kan op of af nie, wat beteken die moordenaar is daar iewers. Dit is 'n konsep wat lesers veral met Agatha Christie vereenselwig. Het jou liefde vir misdaadverhale inderdaad by Agatha Christie begin, of waar dan?

Die eerste Agatha Christie wat ek gelees het, was seker ook haar beste, en dit is wat haar destyds bekend gemaak het: *The Murder of Roger Ackroyd*. Van daardie oomblik af was ek besete oor haar boeke, omdat die mees onwaarskynlike karakter ooit in moordverhale die moordenaar was. Ek wou toe ook so 'n boek skryf en mense so gruwelooslik mislei, en hierdie een was die antwoord. Maar as jy slim is, sal jy dalk my moordenaar(s) identifiseer, want al die leidrade is daar. Ek het 'n paar jaar gelede op 'n plesierboot deur

Asië en Viëtnam gereis wat in 'n tifofoon beland het. Daardie twee dae was van die ergste in my lewe. Tydens daardie gat-oor-kop-dae waar ons nie by 'n hawe kon vasmeer nie, en die naarword-sessies ook moes oorleef, het ek hierdie storie uitgedink, en die karakters begin skep. En toe ek verlede jaar opdrag gegee is om 'n moordverhaal te skryf wat heeltemal anders is, het hierdie storie hom weer aangemeld. Met die herlees van die roman gedurende die redigeringsproses het ek ekstra intriges bygewerk om die lang, vervelike dae op die see interessanter te maak en nog meer leidrade te plant.

Wat is die spesifieke uitdagings om 'n verhaal binne 'n geslote ruimte te laat afspeel?

Die slagoffers kan die moordenaar nêrens ontvlug nie, en die kloustrofobiese ruimte van 'n skip, wat my al sedert die rolprent *The Sandpebbles* (1966) nagmerries gee. So 'n plesierboot bestaan uit omtrent 10 tot 15 verdiepings, dus is dit soos 'n hotel of woonstelblok op die water. Jy kan nie van die boot ontsnap nie, die polisie is ook nie maklik bereikbaar nie, en die moordenaar het carte blanche om te moor en selfs die lyke oorboord te gooi sodat daar geen

bewyse kan wees nie. My karakters het egter van hawe na hawe gereis en ek kon die intrige en spanning tussen hulle behoorlik ontgin deur hulle telkens uit hul gemaksone (die boot) te neem en met vreemde gebeure te konfronteer. 'n Mens moet ook onthou dat so 'n klomp mense wat saam vasgekeer is op 'n boot, gou geïrriteerd met mekaar kan raak, of dat ander duiwels in daardie klein ruimtes kan uitbroei, en dit het ook die storie gedryf.

Hoe voel jy oor lang vakansies op passasierskepe?

Ek hou nie eintlik meer daarvan nie, want dis die gesukkel om eerstens in te boek en op die boot te kom – wat in die roman uitgebeeld word. Dan



Die volmaakte moord is in Augustus beskikbaar.

die Babelse verwarring indien 'n boot vasmeer en duisende mense saambondel om elk 'n toer te haal waar jy vinnig deur toeriste-aantreklikhede gejaag word. Ek het die vissersdorp in Hong Kong, waar 'n belangrike toneel afspeel, egter fassinerend gevind, want ons het daardie aand in Hong Kong oorgestaan, en kon dus behoorlik rondloop en toere haal sonder om bekommerd te wees oor die boot. Tot die aankondiging gekom het dat 'n tifoon op pad is!

Hendie Grobbelaar

Wilde vere is Hendie Grobbelaar se debuutroman, met 'n hoender, 'n *mechanic* en groot drome.

Wilde vere – waar kom die titel vandaan?

Vere is vir my simbole van hoop, spiritualiteit en vrede. Ek kan nie by 'n mooi veer in die pad verbyloop nie. 'n Paar jaar gelede het ek die storie raakgelees van *The conference of the birds* 'n gedig deur Farid Ud Din-Attar waar die voëls 'n glansende veer sien en dan op 'n gevaarlike en uitdagende reis gaan om die voël te soek aan wie die veer behoort. Daar is heelwat lesse te leer uit hierdie gedig maar een wat tot my gespreek het is die ewigdurende stryd om oorlewing in die hoop dat jy wel sal vind waarna jy smag. Die ander groot les van die gedig is dat die krag, hoop en vrede waarna mense soek, gewoonlik binne hulself te vinde is. In *Wilde vere* is Pop de Wild en haar volksvreemde skoondogter op soek na hul eie ontwykende



glinsterveer, hul eie tuiskoms wat soos wilde vere, buite hul bereik bly.

Die verhaal skop af in die Vaaldriehoek. Spot jy?

Geensins. Maar hierdie verhaal kon netsowel in Witbank of Mbombela, Phalaborwa of Potchefstroom afgespeel het. Hierdie karakters sal jy in elke dorp in ons land vind. My spore lê diep in die Vaaldriehoek sedert ek elf jaar oud was. Ek het in Vanderbijlpark gematrikuleer, getrou, gewerk en gestudeer. Beide my ouers en twee van my sibbe is daar begrawe. Ek het tussen mense grootgeword en gewerk wat baie trek op *Wilde vere* se karakters.

Hoe doen jy navorsing? Die deel in Bali voel soos 'n film.


Ek is gek oor reis en om nuwe kulture en ou geskiedenis te beleef. Van die begin af het ek geweet die karakters moet gaan reis – soos die voëls in die gedig. Soms kry jy net 'n beter perspektief sodra jy die bekende agterlaat. Aanvanklik wou ek graag Amsterdam of Frankryk besoek maar o wee, ons geldeenheid sukkel maar. Bali was 'n goedkoper opsie en het wel toe baie goed gewerk met die drastiese kultuurverskille. Ek en 'n vriendin het tien onvergeetlike dae in Bali deurgebring en ons het heelwat van die tonele in die boek self deurleef. Ek het probeer om al my sensoriese ervarings en emosies oor die land en sy mense, weer te gee in die storie. Dit is 'n fassinerende eiland met soveel meer as waarna toeriste soek.

Maria Magdalena is werklik onvergeetlik. Hoe het sy in dit alles kom neskrop?

Ek is so lief vir diere en het gevoel

daar moet een spesiale dier in die storie wees wat kan dien as 'n simbool of spreekbuis vir die twee karakters se eie vrese en uitdagings. Heelwat kleinhoewebewoners hou hoenders aan. Eendag lees ek 'n artikel van iemand wat vir haar hoenders truiet brei. Dit was tegelykertyd vir my amusant en 'n teer gebaar. So is Maria Magdalena, die uitgeworpene, die een wat moet veg vir oorlewing, gebore. Aanvanklik sou die hennetjie net twee hoofstukke gehad het, maar Erla Diedericks wat gehelp het met manuskriptontwikkeling, het voorgestel dat sy 'n behoorlike persoonlikheid ontwikkel en nou skrop sy in 'n paar hoofstukke en het sy ook haar eie Facebook blad – waar sy gereeld 'n eier lê.

Waarom werk jy tans?

Ek was gelukkig om verlede jaar 'n wetenskapfiksie-kortverhaalkompetisie te wen en die beoordelaars het genoem dat die storie oor heelwat potensiaal beskik. Ek skryf tans hieraan. Ek beplan ook tans aan 'n opvolg van *Wilde vere*. Van die karakters het werklik diep onder my vel ingekruip en daar is nog 'n storie of twee om te vertel. 



Wilde vere is nou op rakke.

DIE ONVOORSPELBARE

Marie Lotz het sommer vinnig 'n gunsteling onder lesers van misdaadfiksie geword. Sy vertel meer oor die pad tot by haar nuutste boek, *Nagdier*.



“M isdaadfiksie is al vir 'n hele aantal jaar een van die gewildste genres wêreldwyd. Waar die genre vantevore deur manlike skrywers oorheers is en lesers oorwegend mans was, lyk die toneel vandag heel anders. Vrouens geniet dit net so veel om oor hul gunsteling speurder in aksie te lees. Ons voel toenemend meer weerloos oor geslagsgebaseerde geweld. Misdad raak ongetwyfeld almal, maar ek glo vrouens is steeds meer blootgestel. Veral in Suid-Afrika, waar geregtigheid nie altyd geskied nie. Met misdaadfiksie kan die leser vanuit die gemak van sy leunstoel die bevrediging ervaar wanneer 'n misdadiger aan die pen ry. Verder bied die genre aan lesers die geleentheid om dieper te delf in die menslike psige.

Toe ek in 2019 my debuut *Roofdier* begin skryf, het ek nie 'n drieboekkontrak voorsien nie. Ek was egter van plan om *Maalkolk* die laaste in die trilogie te maak. Ek was vas van plan om die reeks daar af te sluit. Die lewe verloop egter nie altyd soos 'n mens dit beplan nie. In 2023 het ek 'n kontrak geteken om 'n verdere vier boeke in die Alek-Strauss-reeks te lewer. *Breekpunt* is in 2024 gepubliseer en nou het *Nagdier* sy verskyning gemaak. Hoewel dit die opvolg van *Roofdier* is, is die stemming heeltemal anders.

Die twee vorm 'n eenheid, maar hulle kan tog ook afsonderlik gelees word.

Ek wou nie hê *Nagdier* moet 'n afdruk van *Roofdier* wees nie. Waar *Roofdier* 'n klassieke 'whodunnit' was, is *Nagdier* se invalshoek anders. Dis vir my belangrik dat ek my boeke afwissel. Soms laat ek die leser een tree voor die hoofkarakter loop deur 'n meer moderne aanslag te volg waar die leser van die begin af weet wie die boosaard is. Die aantrekkingskrag lê in hoe die protagonis agter die kap van die byl kom. Dit skep spanning op 'n heel ander manier as in 'n 'whodunnit'. Wanneer ek hierdie aanslag volg, plaas ek die leser in die antagonis se kop. So kry hulle die geleentheid om na te dink oor kompleksiteite soos etiese dilemmas; hoekom die antagonis is soos hy/sy is. Ek wil ook hê die leser moet nadink of hy self in staat sou wees tot sulke wandade as hy met dieselfde innerlike worstelinge gekonfronteer sou word. Die sielkundige stimulasie, morele refleksie en emosionele katarsis loop hand aan hand.

Wat ek die meeste van misdaadfiksie geniet, is daardie

onvoorspelbare elemente. Dit betrap my nogal gereeld onverhoeds. Rigtingveranderinge wat van nêrens af opduik en kinkels in my stories word. Die karakters, interaksie en konflik tussen hulle, en hul eie persoonlike trauma, stu die storielyne voort. Op dié manier vloei nuwe idees spontaan in my boeke in.

Die eerste twintig duisend woorde is altyd vir my die moeilikste. Soos 'n mens vorder, verhoudings tussen karakters begin ontwikkel, neem die storie vorm aan. Van my boeke bevat meervoudige storielyne. Soms wil ek my hare uit my kop trek omdat ek besluit het om dié roete te volg. Dis 'n uitdaging om alles saam te weef, sodat die onderskeie storielyne op die regte plek by mekaar aansluit. Maar wanneer dit uiteindelik gebeur, is die bevrediging enorm.”

“Ek wil ook hê die leser moet nadink of hy self in staat sou wees tot sulke wandade.”



Nagdier is nou beskikbaar.

LOVE OVER LAW

In *Preacher, Let My People Go*, Zakhe Mazibuko challenges deeply rooted church traditions around tithing, calling for a return to biblical truth, radical generosity, and freedom from financial manipulation.

"Preacher, *Let My People Go* is not a book I wrote overnight.

It's the result of over a decade of questioning, wrestling, and seeking clarity. The conviction began stirring in me as a young preacher, long before I ever put pen to paper. In 2017, I began formally researching the topic of tithing – diving deep into Scripture, engaging scholars, and spending time in prayer and reflection. It took about three years to shape those insights into a book, but the heart behind it had been beating for much longer. I wanted to be both biblically grounded and pastorally sensitive.

The motivation came from a place of deep love – for people, for the Church, and for the truth. Over the years, I've seen believers give beyond their means, not out of joy but fear or guilt. I've seen pastors stretch themselves to uphold systems they no longer believe in. This book isn't about division, it's about liberation. When giving is motivated by love, not law, people give more freely, not less.


I know this subject stirs controversy. Am I concerned? Of course. But I'm not afraid. This work is grounded in Scripture. I think often of the Reformers – Luther, Calvin, Zwingli – who risked everything to challenge injustice within the Church. Truth may be resisted, but it prevails. No one wins against it – not even

when it's nailed to a cross.

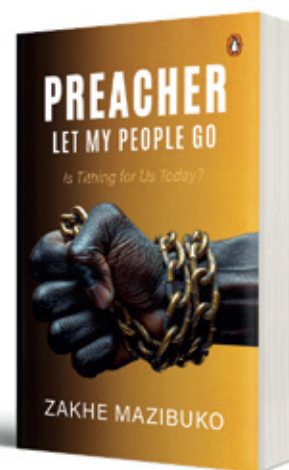
A central question believers face is whether modern tithing practices are biblical or just tradition. My position is clear: the tithe, as preached today, is not a New Testament principle. It was part of the Old Covenant, tied to Israel's temple system. Jesus's references to tithing were directed at Jews under Mosaic Law. The early Church did not teach or practice tithing. Instead, the New Testament calls us to radical generosity, sacrificial giving, and cheerful sharing. My book unpacks this, aiming to move the conversation from legalism to grace.

The consequences of misquoting Scripture – particularly around finances – can be far-reaching. While churches may benefit in the short term from increased giving, the long-term effects are devastating. Misinterpretation breeds guilt, manipulation, and ultimately, disillusionment. Trust in spiritual leadership erodes. People begin to feel used rather than cared for. Worse still, this misuse of Scripture distracts us from true discipleship

and spiritual maturity. According to organisations like MortarStone, Christian Stewardship Network, and Tithely, only five- to ten percent of churchgoers tithe. That tells us the current model is broken. But imagine what could happen if believers were freed from obligation – if giving became an act of joy rather than duty. I believe the Church's greatest wealth lies not in tithes collected, but in the freedom of its people to live and give by truth.

Preacher, Let My People Go is an invitation – an opportunity to re-examine tradition through the lens of Scripture. My hope is not to tear down the Church, but to build it up with honesty, courage, and compassion." 

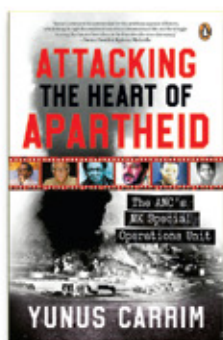
The topic of tithing is one of the most debated issues in modern Church life.



Preacher, Let My People Go is out now.

True to Home

From underground operatives to occult killings and AI futures, these gripping South African non-fiction reads dig deep into our past, probe the present, and prepare us for the uncertain road ahead.



Attacking the Heart of Apartheid by Yunus Carrim

For over 30 years, the story of Umkhonto we Sizwe's Special Operations Unit has remained largely untold. Formed under Oliver Tambo and Joe Slovo's command, this elite group led some of the most daring attacks against apartheid in the 1980s. *Attacking the Heart of Apartheid* tells their story through interviews with 48 former members, conducted over a decade. Drawing on press reports, TRC records, and official documents, this powerful oral history offers a nuanced look at the unit's operations and its role in the broader liberation struggle. A vital read on resistance, justice, and collective action.

The Devil Made Me Do It by Nicky Falkof

South Africa's headlines are often filled with tales of satanic rituals, muti murders, and supernatural violence. But why do occult explanations hold such sway in a country already grappling with poverty, gender-based violence, and inequality? *The Devil Made Me Do It* explores how beliefs in the supernatural intersect with race, gender, class and power. From a tokoloshe murder in the 1920s to the Krugersdorp cult killings and recent muti crimes, this gripping book investigates what these stories reveal about South Africa's fractured psyche – and whether there's any truth behind the terrifying headlines.

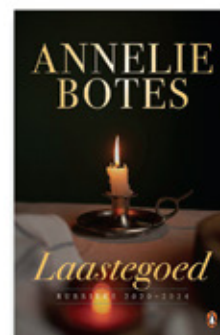


Survive the AI Apocalypse by Bronwyn Williams & Sharon Pearce

AI is reshaping our world at breakneck speed – blurring reality, redefining work, and even replacing human connection. As automation grows, our skills, jobs, and relationships face upheaval. But instead of fearing this “post-AI, apocalyptic” reality, we must adapt. This book is a call to action: to change our mindsets, upskill, and become solutionists. By embracing AI as a tool rather than a threat, we can thrive in a future where discernment, context, and innovation are key to survival – and to building a new, empowered way forward.

Laastegoed deur Annelie Botes

Annelie Botes se afsterwe op 12 Desember 2024 het 'n era afgesluit waarin sy vir meer as twee dekades lesers met haar gedagtes, insigte en opinies besiel het. Hierdie bundel versamel haar rubrieke van 2020 tot 2024 – 'n tyd van pandemie, siekte en verlies – en volg op Voetstoots. Soos altyd vind lesers in haar woorde troos, inspirasie en taal vir hul eie stilte. 'n Fyngevoelige nalatenskap van skryf tydens bunkertyd en “die engele met raspervlerke.”



Social Media ER

From sextortion to screentime spirals, this no-nonsense advice from Emma Sadleir and Rorke Wilson tackles the digital dilemmas that teens (and their parents) are facing – and shows you how not to mess it up.



"My ex-partner is threatening to send my nudes to everyone I know! What do I do?"

If your ex has put these threats in writing, take that evidence and go to your nearest police station to lay charges of harassment, extortion and crimen injuria! After that go to your magistrates' court to apply for a protection order. It's a bit of a mission, but it's free and you don't need a lawyer (visit the Women's Legal Centre, via the QR code below for more). You can also remind this person that publishing your intimate images without your consent is a crime in South Africa, that is punished with up to R300 000 in fines, four years of imprisonment, or both.

"I think my teenage son is getting sucked into the manosphere. What can I do to stop this from happening?"

Well done for spotting the signs and being proactive about this! Young men are pulled toward manosphere content when they feel uncertain and isolated, often regarding their masculinity. Start by engaging your son in open conversations (we know it's hard with this misogynist crap, but try stay non-judgemental).

Ask what attracts him, and genuinely listen to what he has to say. Your goal is to build trust so that he isn't on


the defence when you speak about these things. Get him to engage in some constructive critical thinking by gently asking about inconsistencies or harmful messages in the content he's consuming. Expose him to positive masculine role models (like the internet's daddy, Pedro Pascal) who emphasise respect, emotional intelligence, vulnerability and equality. Remain attentive without being overly restrictive.

"How do I change my relationship with my phone – my screen time is stuck at like eight hours a day!"

We get it. The pull of the dopamine slot machine is real and affects us all. The best way to start is by getting yourself an analogue alarm clock and charging your phone in another room at night. Sleeping with it in a different room is the best way to kickstart your journey. You don't even have to put it down one hour before bed. Just start with putting it away for bedtime. The most important thing is to have "replacement activities" lined up. Plan some of your favourite activities for the first days of your detox. This will keep you stimulated and distracted. Delete the worst time-sucks from your phone, too. If you really need to check something on social media, you can use your web browser. It also helps to put your phone on greyscale so that your phone loses a bit of its lustre. And

don't take it with you to the bathroom, read the stack of magazines collecting dust next to your loo.

"A boy in my class that I really like wants me to send naked pictures of myself. This isn't something I feel comfortable doing, but I feel like he won't like me back if I don't do it."

Girl, you need to make like Jordan Peele's directorial debut and GET OUT. If a boy only likes you because of naked pictures, then he doesn't actually like you. Especially if you've already told this boy you don't feel comfortable doing that. If he really likes you, then he would respect your boundaries and wouldn't be pestering you for n00ds. The mere fact that he's asked for these images means he's solicited child pornography and committed a crime, so if he won't stop asking you can gently remind him of that fact. 



Emma and Rorke's book, *How Not to Mess Up Online*, is out now.



WILD WORDS

From ancestral proverbs to constellations and evolving species, join us as we explore how Southern Africa's landscapes, skies and creatures continue to shape our understanding of culture, science and storytelling.

Nature's Words of Wisdom

In times of uncertainty, we often turn to nature for grounding – and to stories for meaning. In *African Nature Proverbs*, Dianne Stewart gathers wise sayings rooted in isiZulu and isiXhosa oral traditions, where the natural world becomes a living archive of lore.

“During the Coronavirus, and in the uncertainty afterwards, more and more South Africans have turned to the natural environment around them for solace and knowledge. Cyclical and a constant in our lives, the ragwort flower, captured by the isiXhosa folk in their proverb: *Akukho nkanga iduba ingethi* (there is no ragwort that flowers without withering) figuratively means that situations, like in the ragwort flower's

cycles, will change. As a biennial, the ragwort germinates in the autumn, blossoms in the spring, but withers in the winter.

In isiZulu and isiXhosa, there are many different names for grass. The isiZulu proverb *Inkom' ehambayo kayiqedi tshani* (a passing cow does not consume all the grass) means figuratively that a herded cow does not stop for too long in one place and, likewise, a stranger only arrives in one place for a short time and therefore should be treated kindly.

In the text, *African Nature Proverbs*, I have looked to words in isiZulu and isiXhosa primarily that are wise words exploring nature through science, lore and the stars, because isiZulu is spoken by nearly a quarter of South Africa's population and isiXhosa by over sixteen percent of the population.

African proverbs have their source in the oral tradition, in information that is passed on from generation to generation, which I feel if not captured, will still remain in the words of people, but might be lost if not written down and documented.

African Nature Proverbs contains relevant proverbs pertaining to nature in categories such as water, trees, birds, animals, insects, plants and snakes.

Even though one tries to avoid members of the latter category, proverbs about snakes resonate with local speakers. For example, the isiXhosa proverb, *inyoka nesele* (the snake and the frog) in a figurative sense means that these two are enemies and there is traditionally hatred between them. A favourite snake proverb is the isiZulu one, *Akunyoka zakhwel' emthini* (there is no snake that climbs a tree without feet),

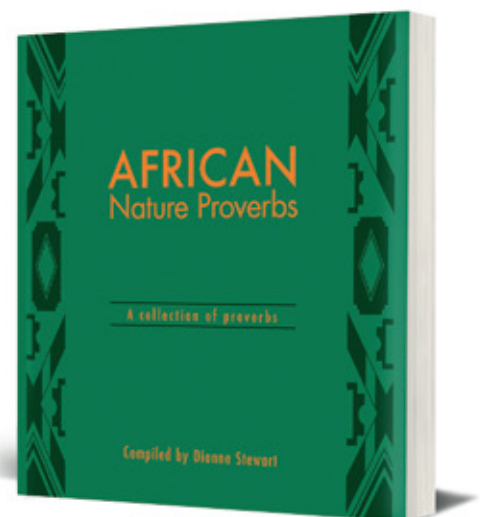


figuratively meaning that a person must be equipped for what they take on. Another isiZulu snake proverb is that a snake 'never forgets its hole' (*Akunyoka yakhohlwa ngumgodwayo*), figuratively meaning that a person heads for a place of safety when vulnerable.

People began bird-watching more, or particularly noticing the habits of birds, during Covid after the impact of the virus. There is a lesser-striped swallow nest outside my bedroom window in KwaZulu-Natal that has been taken over by white-rumped swifts and mocking cliff chats. Watching the motionless flow of the lesser stiped swallows in my natural environment, the isiZulu bird proverb, *Akukho nyon' endiz' ingahlali phansi* (there is not a bird that flies and never sits down) reminds me that just as a bird takes a rest, one

must be intentional about resting when working. Another humorous isiXhosa proverb that is an example of wild words exploring nature, yet being very insightful, is *Umke namangabangaba aselwandle* (he has gone in search of the fantastical birds of the sea), referring to a person whose fantasies or wild dreams are unlikely to be fulfilled.

These wild words, rooted in the rhythms of the natural world, carry layers of insight about resilience, kindness, and perspective. Whether it's the resting swallow, the ever-returning snake, or the fantastical birds of the sea, African proverbs remind us that nature speaks in stories if we're willing to listen. By preserving and sharing these expressions, we keep both language and landscape alive for generations to come."



African Nature Proverbs is on shelves now.

Creatures in the Night Sky

After the sun sets on the savannah, a different kind of wildlife emerges – above. In *Stargazing from Game Reserves in Southern Africa*, Anthony and Elizabeth Fairall reveal how Southern Africa's game reserves offer front-row seats to a celestial safari, where constellations come alive with creatures both mythic and magnificently real.

“Numerous pairs of luminous eyes shine back in the light of my headlamp. I am standing outside a rest hut in Umfolozi. The winter night has fallen early and a herd of impala have bedded down beneath the nearby trees, unperturbed by the roving hyena that earlier made off with the lamb chops by the braaivleis fire. The eyes of the impala look like stars, and for a moment the stars above seem like staring eyes. I extinguish the headlamp as my gaze travels upward. There is the centre of the great city of stars in which we live. Rarely can one see it so clearly. The power generator has been turned off and not a single artificial light is in sight. After a day immersed in the beauty of the natural world, there is no reason to stop just because the sun has set. A game reserve is not only ideal for viewing animals but also, the stars.

About half of the eighty-eight constellations recognised by the International Astronomical Union are named for animals, both wild and domestic. Close to Orion we have Taurus the bull and Canis Major and Canis Minor, the large and small dogs. There's also Leo the lion, Cancer the crab, and Scorpius the scorpion. Pegasus – the winged horse – is also an animal, but not



one you are likely to spot in a game reserve today. Next to the Southern Cross and Scorpius are two centaurs – half human and half horse – that are more likely to be encountered in Harry Potter's Forbidden Forest than in Umfolozi. There is also a rich variety of bird life up above, by night as well as day. Soaring amongst the stars of the night sky are an eagle, a crane, a crow and a swan, to name only a few.

It was not only the Greek-Babylonian astronomers, but also the indigenous African people who identified the constellations with animals. The Belt of Orion was seen as three warthog or three zebra, the star Betelgeuse as a lion, the Southern Cross and Pointers as giraffes or lions. To the Khoisan, the stars were people and animals of an earlier generation.”



Stargazing from Game Reserves in Southern Africa is out now.

The Science of the Wild

Mammals may be fewer in number than birds or fish, but they're a fascinating and fast-evolving group. In *Stuarts' Field Guide to Mammals of Southern Africa*, Chris and Mathilde Stuart explore the region's 530-plus species – and how genetics and taxonomy continue to reshape what we know about them.

“The worldwide mammal group is a small one when compared with birds (9 500 species) or fish (30 000 species). It comprises between 4 700 and 5 500 living species, of which almost 530 are currently known to occur in the greater southern African region. New species are constantly being described, principally as a result of genetic investigation and species splits; very few are newly discovered species. In 2011 one group of taxonomists raised the number of ungulates (hoofed mammals) from 257 species to 450 worldwide by recognizing many subspecies as full species in their own right. Some of the smaller mammals, however, are known from very few, or even single, records. The richest period of mammal diversity was during the late Tertiary (5–2 million years ago), when an estimated three times as many mammal species roamed the earth than do so today.

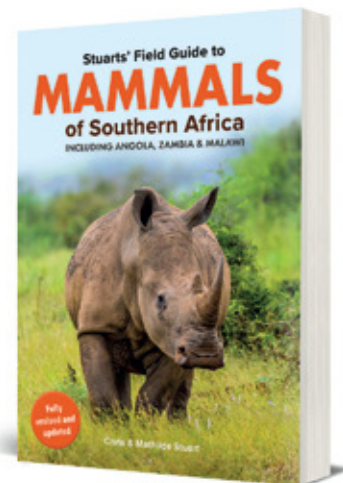
Taxonomists are constantly revising and reassessing the scientific



status of many mammals, particularly the smaller species such as bats, shrews and small rodents. This often results in scientific names being changed and, on occasion, new species being described; Juliana's Golden Mole, for example, was described from the former Transvaal in 1972 and the Long-tailed Forest Shrew from the southern coastal belt of South Africa as recently as 1978. Recent genetic research has resulted in the Hottentot Golden Mole (*Amblysomus hottentotus*) being split into five new species. The bats are especially mobile, and it is very likely that additional species from this group will be discovered and added to the faunal complement of southern Africa in due course. Recently, taxonomists have been reassessing the status of many of the

hoofed mammals and, according to some authorities, many more species should be recognized. Where we feel that this is relevant we have made note of such potential changes.

Mammals have a number of common characters that set them apart from other vertebrates: they breathe with lungs; they possess a four-chambered heart; they have three delicate bones in the middle ear; the females have mammary glands that produce milk for suckling the young; and nearly all species have a covering of body hair.”



Stuarts' Field Guide to Mammals of Southern Africa is out now.

JOIN THE STRUIK NATURE CLUB! Be the first to hear news of new releases, special editions, offers, as well as launches and author events. Plus, members stand in line to win great prizes every month! Sign up at www.struiknature.co.za.



THE HEAT IS ON

From quick weekday fixes to rich, slow-simmered traditions, these three curry recipes bring the heat, the history, and the comfort. Pick your spice level and dig in.



VINDALOO SWEET POTATO CURRY

with crispy potato skins

FEEDS
4–6

PREP
30 minutes

COOK
1 ½ hours

“Is it a soup or is it a curry?
Who cares, because it’s absolutely
delicious. I had every intention
of blitzing the sweet potatoes in
this recipe, but they just looked
so chunky and tasty that I simply
couldn’t bring myself to do it.
Try it, and you’ll see.”

THE DRY SPICES

2–3 dried red chillies
1 Tbsp black mustard seeds
1 Tbsp cumin seeds
10 black peppercorns
5 whole cloves
Seeds of 5 green cardamom pods

THE PASTE

5 cloves garlic, peeled
A big knob of ginger, chopped
½ C water
¼ C oil
¼ C apple cider vinegar
3 Tbsp Kashmiri chilli powder
1 Tbsp garam masala
2 tsp ground turmeric

THE STEW

¼ C canola oil
2 large onions, peeled and
chopped
1 large cinnamon stick
100 g tomato paste
1 × 400 g can chopped tomatoes
2 C good-quality chicken stock
1 Tbsp tamarind paste
1 Tbsp sugar
20 curry leaves (preferably fresh)
A handful of fresh coriander,
chopped
4 whole fresh green chillies
600 g orange sweet potatoes,
peeled and quartered (save the
skins)

600 g purple sweet potatoes, peeled
and quartered (save the skins)
500 g plum tomatoes
50 g cold butter
Sea salt and freshly ground black
pepper

THE POTATO SKINS

The soaked and dried potato skins
(see above and method)
Olive oil
2 tsp garam masala
Sea salt and freshly ground black
pepper

To serve

The crispy potato skins
Double-cream yoghurt
Fresh coriander

Place the peeled potato skins in a large
bowl of water and set aside for 30
minutes.

To make the dry spices and the paste,
toss the dry spices ingredients in a
frying pan and toast them while stirring
until fragrant, then remove from the
heat. Add the toasted spices along with
the paste ingredients to a blender and
blitz until it forms a paste. Set aside.

To prepare the stew, add the oil to a
large pot over medium-high heat and
fry the onions and cinnamon until the
onions begin to soften. Add the tomato
paste and the blitzed paste, then stir-
fry for a few minutes to caramelise.
Stir in the chopped tomatoes, stock,
tamarind paste, sugar, curry leaves,
fresh coriander and whole green chillies.
Bring to a simmer, then cover with a
cracked lid and cook on low for 20
minutes so the flavours can get to know

one another. After 20 minutes, add
the potatoes and plum tomatoes, and
continue cooking for another 30 minutes,
or until the potatoes are cooked through.
Finally, add the butter and salt and
pepper, and stir to combine.

Preheat the oven to 220 °C. Drain the
soaked potato peels and dry them using
a salad spinner or kitchen towel. You
could also spread them out on a baking
tray and air-dry them in the oven at a
low temperature. The idea is for them
to be as dry as possible. Next, drizzle
well with olive oil, season with garam
masala, and salt and pepper, then toss
to combine. Spread the peels out in a
single layer on a baking tray and bake
for 20–25 minutes until crispy. You
could also use an air fryer if you have
one. Keep an eye on the skins, because
no one likes burnt potato skins.

To serve, dish the curry up generously
and top with a dollop of double-cream
yoghurt, crispy potato skins, and fresh
coriander. If you like, you could add
poppadoms to the serving selection.



Recipe extracted from *The Good
Stuff* by Karl Tessoroff, out now.

QUICK CHICKEN CURRY

on the couch

1 Tbsp olive oil
1 onion, diced
2 tsp grated fresh ginger
2 tsp crushed garlic
2 Tbsp your favourite Indian
curry paste
1 x 400ml tin reduced-fat
coconut milk
1 cup chicken stock
8 chicken thighs (boned,
skinless), cut into 2cm cubes
¼ cup ground almonds (optional)
100g baby spinach or ½ cup
frozen peas
1 x 400g tin chickpeas, drained
(optional)
Small handful chopped fresh
coriander, plus optional extra
to garnish

SERVES
4

READY IN
25 minutes



To serve

Basmati or cauliflower rice or
naan bread
A squeeze of lime juice

Add the olive oil to a medium-sized saucepan over medium-high heat and cook the onion for 5–8 minutes, until softened. Add the ginger, garlic and curry paste and cook for 2 minutes, or until fragrant.

Add the coconut milk, stock and chicken, stir well and simmer with the lid off for 15–20 minutes or until the chicken is cooked through.

Prepare the side dishes. Cook the cauliflower rice or basmati rice according to the packet instructions, or heat the naan bread, if using.

To serve, stir in the ground almonds, if using, the spinach or peas, chickpeas, if using, and coriander. Serve immediately with extra coriander scattered over and a squeeze of lime juice.

Recipe extracted from *Simple Suppers* by Sarah Graham, on shelves August 2025.



DURBAN MUTTON CURRY

“Although the mighty Durban mutton curry is one of the nation’s most revered spiced dishes, there is no singular definitive recipe. Durban curry should be seen as a unique and varied derivative of Indian curry: after a large Indian community was brought to South Africa in the late 19th century to work as labourers in the sugar-cane industry and on the railways, curry recipes have developed here over time. A blend of multiple cultural identities and local ingredients have shaped Durban’s curry landscape into something new, and authentic Durban curry is no longer cooked exclusively by South African Indian cooks.

A Durban curry is generally considered to be more tomato based than curries from India: it is more fiery and more oily, mostly with no dairy added. And then there is the Up-To-Date potato, the most prized variety of potato to use in a Durban curry – preferred because of the way it soaks up gravy upon cooking. This recipe reflects the slightly more modern approach that many cooks in the Durban Indian community have adopted; it is slightly less time-consuming and simpler in style.”

125 ml (½ cup) vegetable oil
2 large onions, finely chopped
1 stick cinnamon
3 whole star anise
6 cardamom pods
3–4 cloves garlic, crushed or finely grated
a generous knob ginger, crushed or finely grated
90 ml (6 Tbsp) Durban masala or Kashmiri masala
5 ml (1 tsp) chilli powder (optional)

SERVES
6

15 ml (1 Tbsp) fennel seeds
(or 10 ml/2 tsp ground fennel/
barishap)
5 ml (1 tsp) ground turmeric
5 ml (1 tsp) ground jeera or cumin
5 ml (1 tsp) ground coriander
1.2 kg mutton chunks on the bone
125 ml (½ cup) water
4 large ripe tomatoes, halved and
grated (or 2 cans diced tomatoes)
2 sprigs curry leaves, stalks
discarded
10 ml (2 tsp) salt
1.2–1.5 kg mutton or lamb chunks
on the bone
3 large Up-To-Date potatoes,
peeled and cubed (keep
submerged in water before
cooking)
fresh dhanía (coriander leaves),
to serve

In a wide pot over medium-low heat, heat the oil, then add the onions, cinnamon, star anise and cardamom. Fry slowly until just translucent, then add the garlic, ginger and dry spices: masala, chilli, fennel, turmeric, cumin and coriander. Stir and fry for a minute or two until the bottom of the pot becomes sticky, then add the

water and tomatoes, scraping to loosen any sticky bits. Bring to a simmer and cook for 10 minutes, stirring often, then add the meat, curry leaves and salt and stir well. Cover with a lid and bring to a slow simmer over low heat, for 1.5 hours. Add the potatoes, pushing them under the surface of the sauce, then cook for another hour until the meat starts to fall from the bone and the potatoes are very tender. Taste and add more salt if necessary. Serve warm, scattered with dhanía/coriander, with your choice of sides. **P**



Recipe extracted from *Timeless South African* by Ilse van der Merwe, on shelves August 2025.

EDUCATION IS THE SUPERPOWER THAT TURNS SILENCE INTO VOICE

Education gave Popina Khumanda her voice, breaking cycles of silence and child marriage in her family. In this powerful piece, Popina, a Congolese-born author, cybersecurity lecturer, and survivor, writes about how learning can empower girls to shape their own futures and communities.

“For many women, finding their voice is a journey – one that starts with believing in their own potential. Education is often the key to unlocking this power.

I found myself in a classroom for the first time at the age of 12. I had never seen a desk before – I hadn’t even heard of reading and writing – but my world changed that day when I was handed my first book. Learning to read, write and analyse would change my life in ways I couldn’t have grasped back then.

The pages not only educated me and broadened my perspective, but they helped me find my voice. Each word I read and each sentence I wrote helped me realise that my thoughts and ideas mattered. Through stories, I began to see that there were voices – just like mine – that could speak out, and shape their world. Books became my window into a world of possibilities, where silence was no longer an option.


I wish my mother, and her mother, and her mother’s mother had been given the opportunity to attend school. Instead they were all forced to marry young – my mother was just thirteen when she became a wife.

To this day, there are reports that child marriage in the Democratic Republic of the Congo – where I was born – is more common in rural areas. Rural areas sustain levels of child marriage at 11.6 percent before the age of fifteen, and 37.3 percent before the age of eighteen.

There are several things that contribute to child marriage, one of them being poverty. A disadvantaged family will have incentive to marry off their daughter young because of the economic benefits that come with it; namely, no longer having to provide for that child. This helps the family save money, or better provide for other children they might have. In many cases, it’s the son whose education and wellbeing will take priority, so that he will be better able to provide for his own family one day.

Lack of education for girls does more than deny them academic knowledge. It silences them before they even have a chance to discover their own voice. Education is not just about learning to read and write; it’s about self-discovery, empowerment and the ability to shape one’s own future. Without it, many girls and women – like my mother – grow up never truly knowing who they are, what they are capable of, or the choices

available to them. Instead, they are often pushed into predefined roles, and expected to conform to societal norms.

Education could be the key to breaking the cycle. When girls are educated, they gain confidence; they develop the ability to question, to aspire and to make informed decisions about their lives. If we can ensure that girls, especially in rural communities, have access to education, we will see a profound transformation, not just in their individual lives but in society as a whole. These girls will grow into women who are leaders, innovators, and changemakers, shaping a future where their voices are heard, their dreams are realised and their potential is no longer overlooked.” 



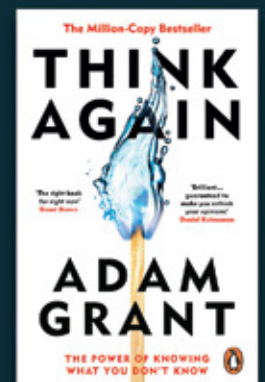
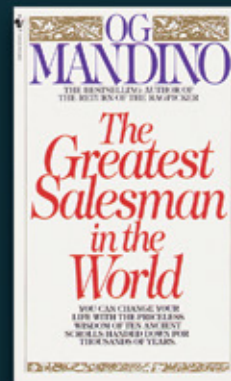
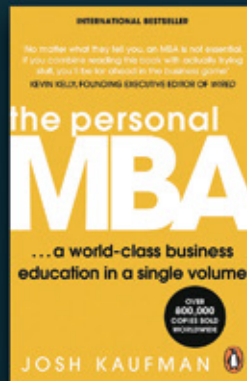
Popina’s memoir, *The Smallest Ones* is out now.



POWER-UP



Books to help you **drive growth**





THE INSIDER

A PODCAST FOR BOOK LOVERS

Calling all book lovers! Penguin Random House South Africa is thrilled to introduce **The Penguin Insider: A Podcast for Book Lovers** – your go-to for all things literary.



Episodes are live! Visit  **Spotify** now for your literary fix.

