

THE PENGUIN POST

VOLUME 38 THE MAGAZINE ABOUT BOOKS FOR BOOK LOVERS

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SIFO

THE COOKING HUSBAND

MAN ENOUGH TO COOK

HIDDEN TRUTHS

Inside the mysteries
of Dan Brown's thrillers

WINNING FORMULA

Three perceptions
that redefine success

FRESH START

Bright flavours to energise
body, mind and table

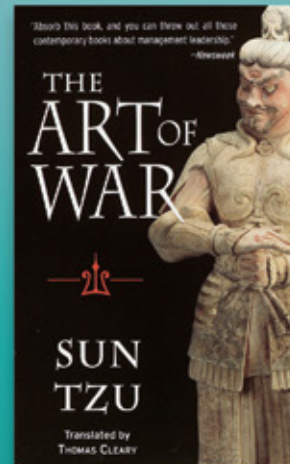
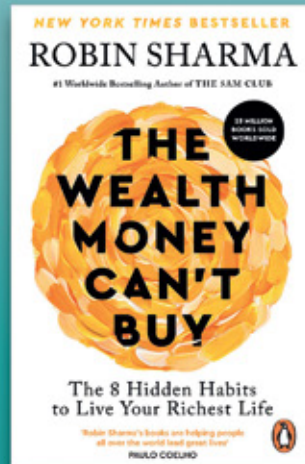
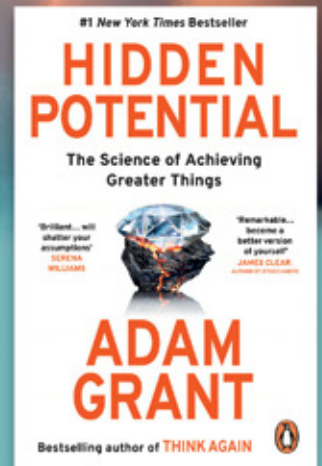
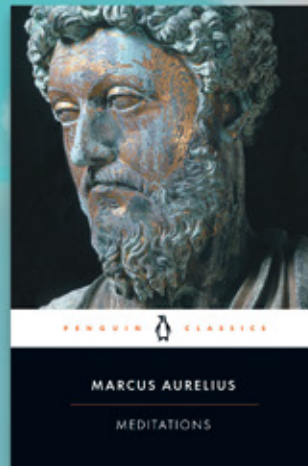
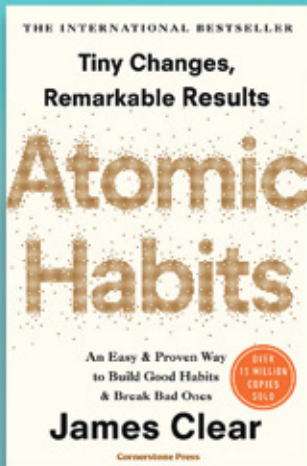
FADING ICONS

Protecting our majestic
endangered creatures



GREAT MINDS

BOOKS TO BLOW
YOUR MIND





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Dear reader

Heritage is not only what we inherit, but what we choose to pass on. In this issue, we explore the quiet yet powerful ways legacy shapes our lives – through stories, food, courage, and memory.

Our delightful cover star Sinoyolo Sifo reminds us that heritage can be served warm: in recipes rooted in family, simplicity, and honesty, each plate carrying memory into the present. Gareth Crocker reflects on how a mother's determination built a career in words, proving legacy is often forged by grit. Dan Brown's writing shows how history itself can be reshaped into thrilling, cinematic fiction, while Chanette Paul and Erla Diedericks remind us that stories of mystery are also stories of the human spirit.

We face unsettling legacies too, from Liezel de Jager's haunting murder case to the fight to save our lions and birds from silence. Yet, as Greg Mills, Tebogo 'ProVerb' Thekisho and Myan Subrayan show, true success lies not in trophies but in resilience, presence, and love.

And through food, seasons, and even fleeting 'glimmers', we find heritage in the everyday – alive, nourishing, and worth protecting.

This issue is our celebration of legacy in all its forms – the ones we honour, the ones we question, and the ones we create. Happy heritage month – and happy reading!

Lauren

Lauren Mc Diarmid

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bookscape

news | snippets | what's new

Everyone's talking about ...

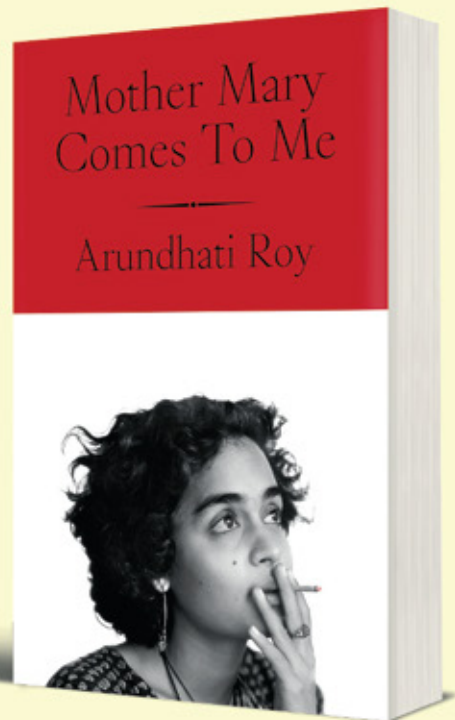
The incredible first memoir from Arundhati Roy

The Booker-winner's first memoir, *Mother Mary Comes To Me* is a soaring account, both intimate and inspiring, of how the author became the person and the writer she is, shaped by circumstance, but above all, by her complex relationship with her extraordinary, singular mother she describes as "my shelter and my storm".

"Heart-smashed" by her mother Mary's death in September 2022, puzzled and "more than a little ashamed" by the intensity of her response, Arundhati Roy began to write, to make sense of her feelings about the mother she ran from at age eighteen, "not because I didn't love her, but in order to be able to continue to love her". And so begins this astonishing, often disturbing and surprisingly funny memoir of the author's life from childhood to the present, from Kerala to Delhi.

"I have been writing this book all my life," said Roy. "Perhaps a mother like mine deserved a writer like me as a daughter. Equally, perhaps a writer like me deserved a mother like her. Even more than a daughter mourning the passing of her mother, I mourn her as a writer who has lost her most enthralling subject."

With the scale, sweep and depth of her novels, *The God of Small Things* and *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness*, and the passion, political clarity, and warmth of her essays, *Mother Mary Comes To Me* is an ode to freedom, a tribute to thorny love and savage grace – a memoir like no other.



Mother Mary Comes To Me is out now.



DOMINATING THE BESTSELLER LISTS

Air by John Boyne

"The various facets of trauma, love and the ultimate act of forgiveness is superbly highlighted in this little gem of a book. I found it to be the epitome of John Boyne's writing; a masterclass in everything a reader wants an author to be."

Fiona de Goede, ArtSMart



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MUST of the MONTH



Luzanne Warren describes herself as a coffee-fuelled chaos queen, fantasy fangirl (because dragons and drama are non-negotiable), and the creative heart behind *Reading Caffeinated*. Her goal? To bring a little magic to the book world – one review (and dramatic gasp) at a time.

"*Holmes is Missing* by James Patterson and Brian Koppelman blends the razor-sharp intelligence of a classic detective mystery with the breathless pacing of a modern thriller – and it works brilliantly. From the very first page, the story hooks you with its urgency: six newborns have vanished from a New York hospital. The team – Holmes, Margaret, and Poe – have always taken on the cases no one else can solve. But this time, their most brilliant mind is missing. The absence of Holmes isn't just part of the mystery; it becomes the emotional core of the book. As Margaret and Poe unravel this chilling crime across continents, you can feel the weight of that loss. The writing is brisk and addictive, with short chapters, clipped dialogue, and that signature Patterson style: every scene pulls you forward. But within the action, there's real heart. This is a story about loyalty, partnership, and what it means to chase the truth – even when it hurts."

Holmes is Missing is out now.



WIN! WIN! WIN!

A hamper of books from this issue valued at R1 500 is up for grabs to one lucky reader. To enter, scan the code using your phone camera, or visit www.penguinrandomhouse.co.za/competitions. Ts & Cs apply. Entries close 31 October 2025.



OUT IN PAPERBACK



NEXUS

by Yuval Noah Harari

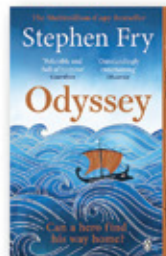
A gripping exploration of how information has shaped humanity, and the urgent choices we face as power, truth, and technology collide in an increasingly fragile world.



IN TOO DEEP

by Lee Child & Andrew Child

Jack Reacher wakes up injured, shackled, and with no memory – mistaken for a criminal by captors who have no idea who they're dealing with. They want answers. He wants payback. Badly.



ODYSSEY

by Stephen Fry

The war is over, but homecoming brings new trials – vengeful queens, wrathful gods, and perilous journeys test heroes in Fry's riveting final retelling of love, loss, and fate after Troy's fall.

6

Three [techniques], if mastered, would make people significantly more capable than most leaders alive. The first is to ask more questions. Less knowing, more wondering. The second is to understand that 'they can't hear the music in your head'. The third is the simplest of all but yields the greatest returns: 'Go there and look.'

9

Douglas Kruger, *Wicked Smart*



Five minutes with ...

RICHARD OSMAN

The bestselling author reveals how he balances humour and heartbreak, dives into spy-style codes, and gives fan-favourite Ron the spotlight he's long deserved in the latest Thursday Murder Club book.



The Thursday Murder Club gang seems to be navigating more personal challenges than ever before – grief, family drama, even wedding planning. How did you balance emotional depth with your signature humour in this book?

The Thursday Murder Club books have always been about the characters rather than about the crime. These four unlikely friends are from very different places and the joy of writing more books is being able to go into greater and greater depth with these four characters that I love. Them, alongside the revolving supporting cast that is constantly in their orbit. Love, laughter, tears and murder all come from characters that we care about, and I hope that's always been the strength of this series.

The phrase “an uncrackable code” feels like a nod to classic spy thrillers. What inspired the espionage twist in *The Impossible Fortune*, and did you do any special research into cryptography?

I can exclusively reveal that I did no research at all into cryptography.

I just like setting and cracking codes. Once I knew that something very valuable was buried deep underground, I wanted to make it as hard as possible to find. As to whether the codes are uncrackable, I imagine that readers and the TMC might have their own opinion on that ...

Joyce is knee-deep in wedding logistics this time – how fun was it to write her in full “mother-of-the-bride” mode?


The relationship between Joyce and Joanna is one of my favourites in all the TMC books, and to deepen their relationship, their love for each other and their almost constant inability to have a grown-up conversation with each other was a joy to write and I hope will resonate with mothers and grown-up children everywhere.

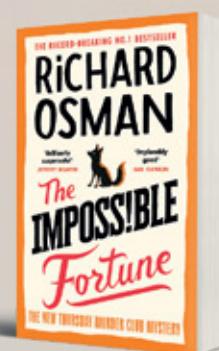
Elizabeth has always been the steely, no-nonsense one. How did it feel to explore her in a more vulnerable space this time around, especially with grief playing a role?

Steely unemotional characters are all well and good but, just like in life, when someone is steely and

unemotional it's because they're hiding pain. Elizabeth now has three friends who help strip away those tough outer layers, and I find it very moving to see what is revealed. She is still steely and tough, of course, but we can see where that comes from.

You once said you wanted each book to stand on its own but also deepen the world for returning readers. What layer does *The Impossible Fortune* add to the TMC universe?

Gosh that's a good question. I felt like I hadn't written a book that centred Ron yet. And that, for some readers, he may still feel like a broadly comic character. I put that right here, I hope. 



The Impossible Fortune hits shelves this September.



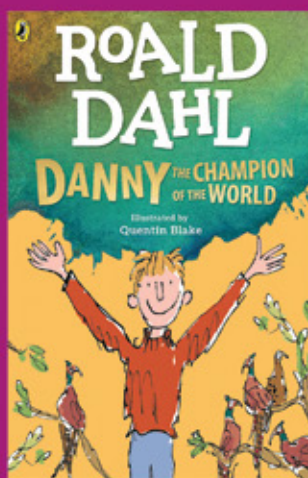
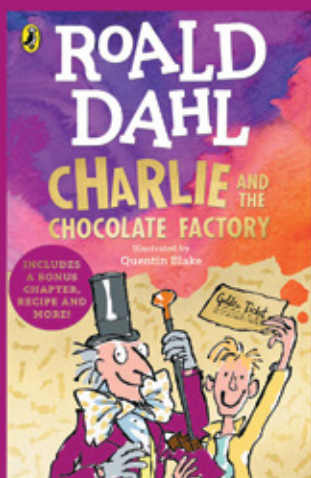
ROALD DAHL

GOBBLEFUNKING

GREAT READS

FOR HUMAN BEANS

OF ALL SIZES!



A LEGACY SERVED WARM

Our favourite cooking husband, Sinoyolo Sifo reflects on family, food, and the quiet power of legacy. Through simple recipes and tender memories, he shares how heritage lives on – served warm, one plate at a time.





“**W**hen I think about home, I think about

warmth – both the feeling in your heart and the smell of something good simmering on the stove. I think about samp, beans, and meat slowly cooking together, and the laughter of my family drifting around a fire outside. I grew up in Mthatha, where food wasn't just something to fill our bellies, it was part of how we showed love. Everyone helped cook. Everyone ate together. And that sense of togetherness has never left me.

My family situation growing up was a bit complicated – lots of half- and step-siblings – but my dad never saw it that way. To him, we were just brothers and sisters. He made sure we all felt like one family. He believed in unity, in tradition, and in hard work. He taught us those things through gardening, helping at the family butchery, and learning how to care for the land that fed us. At the time, I didn't always appreciate it. It felt like work. But now I see it was the beginning of something much bigger – something I carry with me in everything I do.

I didn't always know I wanted to be a cook. The interest only showed up when I was at varsity. But the lessons were planted long before then – literally. My father always reminded us that food doesn't just appear on the plate. It comes from the soil, from sweat, and most of all, from love. That's something I still hold close. One day, I'd love to own a farm where I can grow my own food and invite people to share meals fresh from the earth. Not just a restaurant, but a place where people can taste where I come from.

Telling my dad I wanted to cook professionally wasn't easy. I was a pharmacist! Wasn't that the more stable path? So when I first appeared on TV, talking about food, I'm sure it came as a surprise. But I'll never forget the day I handed him my first cookbook. It was a very emotional moment in which I knew he understood that this was more than just a hobby – it was something I was meant to do.

For me, cooking has always come from a place of love. And the kind of legacy I hope to leave – especially for African men – is that love and care don't make you less of a man. It's okay to be gentle, to create safe spaces, to pay attention to the little things. Cooking is a form of care. And when you put love into what you do, that love comes through in every bite.

One dish that brings all of this together for me is *umngqusho* – samp and beans. It takes me straight back to childhood, to my dad telling us how hard he worked to grow the mealies we ate. I never worried about forgetting the dish, but I did feel drawn to include it in the second book, as a small tribute to where I come from. I added my own little twist, of course. Recipes, like people, change over time. That's why I think of cookbooks as guides, not rules. Every recipe I share carries a memory, a lesson, and a little piece of home.

At home now, cooking is something my wife and I do together. We keep it simple during the week – quick meals, lots of air-fried veggies and hearty basics. When I'm testing recipes or creating content, she's often my sounding board, my support. I do most of the video shoots and editing myself, and it

“
I always
come back
to the same
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honesty.”

took time to figure out how to do it all. In the beginning, I didn't really know what I was doing. But with experience, I've found a rhythm that works. And I've learned that people connect more with the real, imperfect moments than the polished ones.

That's the heart of it, really. I want people to feel that what I share – whether it's food, a post, or a recipe – comes from a place that's real. A place of love, heritage, and truth. Our stories are often in the meals we grew up with. I saw that when I started writing my first cookbook. It wasn't just about food – it was about memory. Identity. Family. That's why recipes matter. They carry our stories in every grain of rice and every teaspoon of spice.

We've all had those family debates – how to make *real* pap, or whether you're supposed to put cinnamon in curry. Those differences are part of the story too. They show where we come from, what we remember, and what we want to hold on to.

But I also believe traditions can grow. When I create a recipe, I want to honour where it comes from, while adding something of myself. Sometimes that means adding cream and cheese to pap. Not to change it for the sake of change, but to say: 'This is where I come from, and this is who I am now.' And funnily enough, the people who question it at first – like my dad – are often the ones who come back for seconds!

At heart, I'm just someone who loves food and wants to make it approachable. I don't believe food has to be complicated to be delicious. I want people – especially those who are nervous in the kitchen – to feel like they can give it a try. Start simple. Use what you have. You'll be surprised how far a little love and salt can go.

The name 'The Cooking Husband' wasn't just a catchy idea – it came from wanting to show that men can cook, and that doing so doesn't take away from who we are. If anything,



it adds to it. I've heard from men who say my journey gave them permission to cook for their families, to be more present at home, and to enjoy it. That's something I never take for granted.

Looking back, I realise how much my father shaped this. He expected all of us – boys and girls – to do the same chores. We all cooked, cleaned, helped in the garden. At the time, it felt normal. Only later did I see how special that was. It gave me the freedom to step into the kitchen without shame, and to see it as a place of joy and creativity, not just duty.

Today, cooking is my passion – but it's also how I try to live. Whether I'm making a meat-heavy dish or trying out something plant-based, I always come back to the same core values: simplicity, warmth, and honesty.

That's the kind of legacy I hope to leave – not just a list of recipes, but a reminder that heritage isn't locked in the past. It's alive, unfolding, changing with us. It's something we pass on, plate by plate, day by day.

A little love. A lot of flavour. And always, always from the heart."



Sifo the Cooking Husband Vol. 2 is out now.



COVER

SERVES
4–6

COOKING
TIME
60 minutes,
plus 1–2 hours
refrigeration

Crispy Air-Fryer Pork Belly

1.2 kg boneless pork belly, skin on
1 tsp each salt and black pepper
1 Tbsp garlic salt
1 Tbsp smoked paprika
1 Tbsp Cajun spice
2 tsp onion powder
1 Tbsp white vinegar
2 Tbsp olive oil
2 Tbsp sea salt or coarse salt

Place the pork belly on a chopping board and pat it dry with paper towel. This will help the skin become crispy.

In a small bowl, mix together 1 teaspoon of salt and black pepper, the garlic salt, smoked paprika, Cajun spice and onion powder. Set aside.

Place the pork belly skin-side down, with the meat side facing up. Using a sharp knife, score the meat, making sure to avoid cutting into the skin.

Sprinkle the spice mixture over the meat and into the crevices.

Flip over the pork belly so it is skin-side up. Brush the skin with the vinegar. Sprinkle over the sea salt and rub it in using your fingers. Place the pork belly, skin-side up, on a large piece of foil. Gently fold over


the sides of the foil to cover the sides of the pork belly, leaving the skin uncovered. This will ensure the meat stays juicy and the skin is crispy.

Refrigerate the pork belly for 1–2 hours, or ideally overnight to ensure an even crispier skin.

Place the pork belly in the air-fryer and air-fry at 180°C for 30 minutes. Then, remove from the air-fryer, brush the excess salt off the skin and brush the pork belly all over with olive oil. Return the pork belly to the air-fryer and air-fry at 200°C for 20 minutes, until the meat is cooked through and the skin is golden and crispy. Keep a close eye on it, to ensure the skin doesn't burn.

Remove the pork belly from the air-fryer and place it on a chopping board to rest for 5–10 minutes before slicing. Serve as is, or with creamy mash or rice and some sweet chilli-soy sauce on the side.

NOTES AND TIPS

Cooking times may vary, depending on how thick the pork belly is, so adjust accordingly. 

AT MY DESK

While some writers are born, this one was dragged into the world by one woman's sheer bloody-mindedness, says Gareth Crocker, international author and filmmaker.



“There’s no easy way to say this,’ my teacher told my mother. ‘We adore Gareth – such energy, lovely hair – but we believe he’d be better served at a school equipped for his condition.’ My mother’s eyes narrowed. ‘What condition is that?’ I already knew: I was clearly being sent to a school for children with exceptional hair. But it turned out the issue was my reading. ‘He doesn’t seem to have any,’ she said. I wasn’t bothered. I could still name the pictures: cat, dog. Only later did I learn the words were actually *mat* and *ball*.

‘We believe Gareth suffers from a learning disability and needs to be sent to a school better equipped to deal with his limitations,’ my teacher declared. My mother leaned forward and offered my teacher what appeared to be a smile but wasn’t. ‘I’m not taking him out of the school. There is nothing wrong with Gareth. I’ll work with him.’ With that, she grabbed my arm and marched me out the classroom.

And so for the next six months, she worked tirelessly on my reading. Seven days a week. We argued. I threw tantrums. There was crying on both sides. I can recall regularly faking injury and illness, offering up some real gems. Having overheard that someone in our extended

family was unfortunate enough to be suffering from simultaneous bouts of *alcoholism* and *breast cancer*, I thought I would adopt these ailments into my repertoire of medical misdirection. ‘Mom, I really can’t read today; I have alcoholism in my breasts.’

Then, one afternoon, something unexpected happened. We were wading our way through a *Secret Seven* novel when, all at once, what we were doing didn’t feel so horrible anymore. After that, things quickly fell into place. I began to understand the rhythm of language and story, the power of narration ... the magic of words.

In hindsight, those months didn’t just change my life. They gave me one. They enabled me to become a journalist, columnist, copywriter, editor, author and screenwriter with ten novels, two films and five TV series to my name. Pretty much every


cent I’ve earned has been as a result of my ability to work with words.

At the end of that school year, my teacher handed my mother my report card. I can’t recall what my marks were but I do remember what was written in the special notes section: *Best Reader in the Class*.

Sadly, my mother recently passed away. As I process her death, it occurs to me that she didn’t just set me on the path to becoming a writer, she taught me how to be a parent to my daughters. How to fight for them. How to put in the work when it really matters.

Now, whenever I sit in front of the blank page and wonder if I’m capable of writing another novel or script or anything else, I think of her. Then I sip my coffee, take a deep breath, glance out the window and start writing.”

ABOUT THE BOOK

In this gripping sequel, detectives Ruben and Zander face a terrifying case: cops are dying from a brutal designer poison, and the killer leaves no trace. With bodies piling up, they enlist a counsellor to dig into the mind of a presumed madman – only to uncover a calculating professor whose brilliance hides a deadly motive. Tense, twisty, and smart, this thriller probes the line between genius and pure evil. 



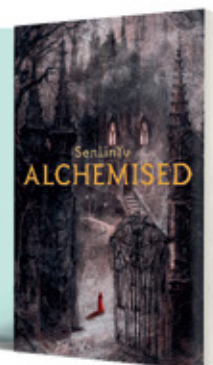
Now You Bleed hits shelves in October 2025.

PHOTOGRAPH: Lucy Noble Photography

TOP FICTION SEPTEMBER

Alchemised by SenLinYu

In a war-ravaged world ruled by necromancers, Helena Marino, an alchemist with fractured memories, fights to reclaim her past and protect what little of herself remains. But the truth she's forgotten may be more dangerous than anything her enemies suspect. Sent to a ruthless necromancer for interrogation, Helena must navigate a web of secrets, power, and lost identity before her mind – and her world – are destroyed for good.



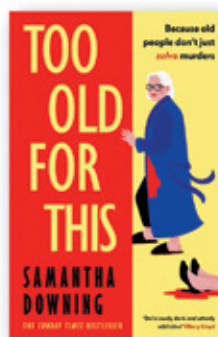
The Picasso Heist by James Patterson & Howard Roughan

A rare Picasso is up for auction, and art student Halston Graham sees a chance to change her life – and free her father. With a forger, a mob boss, and a designer by her side, she plans the heist of the century. But in a world where trust is scarce and stakes are sky-high, pulling it off will take more than brilliance. It'll take nerve, luck – and perfect timing.



The Advocate by Jackie Phamotse

Amid secrets, sabotage and shifting loyalties, the Coal family's dynasty is on the brink. Luna's marriage is crumbling, an unwelcome guest ignites turmoil, and a powerful enemy threatens to seize control. As tensions mount, the advocate becomes the farm's last defence. In a landscape shaped by power and legacy, truth is a dangerous currency. The exciting follow-up to *The Tea Merchant*.



Too Old for This by Samantha Downing

Lottie Jones may seem like your average churchgoing bingo lover, but behind the cardigans and casseroles lies a deadly past. When a nosy journalist comes sniffing, this sharp, twisty thriller proves one thing: getting away with murder gets harder with age. A fresh spin on the crime genre that'll make you think twice about sweet old ladies and their skeleton-filled closets.



Revenge of Odessa by Frederick Forsyth with Tony Kent

When a senator is killed, a stadium is attacked, and a hospital patient is murdered, journalist Georg Miller uncovers a terrifying conspiracy. The Odessa, a secret Nazi network, has infiltrated global power structures and is ready to strike again. Racing against time, Georg must stop them before their next move alters the course of history forever. Expect edge-of-your-seat antics!



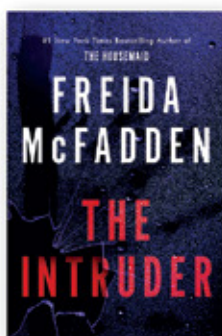
READ THE EXTRACTS

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TOP FICTION OCTOBER

Gone Before Goodbye by Reese Witherspoon & Harlan Coben

Maggie McCabe, a brilliant combat surgeon scarred by loss, is drawn into a world of staggering wealth and secrecy when tasked with saving one of the world's most elusive men. But when he vanishes under her care, Maggie becomes the hunted in a deadly game of power and betrayal. Twisting with tension and intrigue, this genre-defying novel promises danger, deception, and a fearless heroine willing to risk everything to uncover the truth.



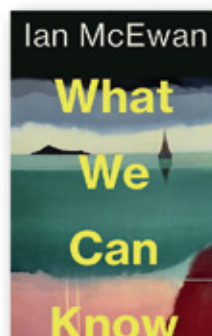
The Intruder by Freida McFadden

During a raging storm, Casey finds a bloodied, knife-wielding girl outside her remote cabin. She's silent about where she came from – and deadly serious about keeping her secrets buried. As the night unravels and terrifying truths surface, Casey realises she may not survive until morning. A chilling psychological thriller, that explores what happens when survival instincts turn lethal.



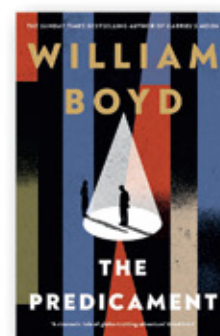
Return of the Spider by James Patterson

Alex Cross returns – but so does a deadly nemesis thought long gone. A hidden trove of trophies reveals Cross may have jailed the wrong man, and as he unravels the twisted web, he's pulled into a chilling game designed just for him. Look forward to suspense, dark secrets, and the return of one of the most terrifying villains in the series.




What We Can Know by Ian McEwan

Set between 2014 and 2119, this literary treasure from the author of *Atonement* explores love, loss, memory and meaning in a future Britain reshaped by rising seas. As a scholar hunts a lost poem, secrets surface – blurring past and future. A genre-blending novel that weaves mystery, romance and speculative fiction, it challenges what we know of history, art and survival.



The Predicament by William Boyd

Accidental spy Gabriel Dax is drawn back into a world of secrets, seduction and subterfuge. Sent to Guatemala amid political unrest, he uncovers a deadly plot with global consequences. From CIA conspiracies to Cold War Berlin, expect layered intrigue, moral ambiguity and a looming assassination that could change history. A gripping blend of fact and fiction awaits in this tense, stylish second instalment. 

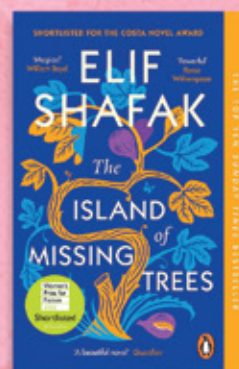
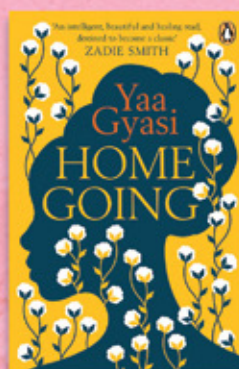
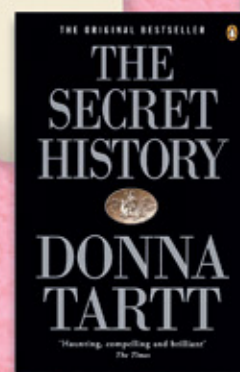
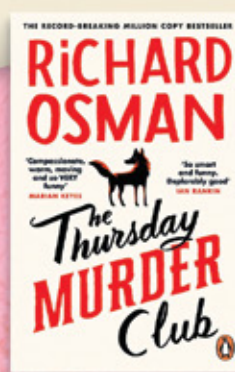
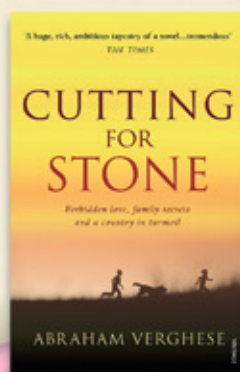
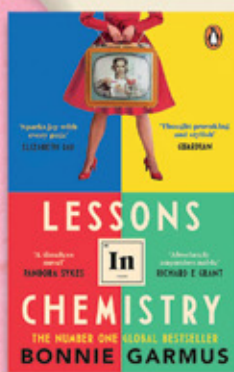


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DECODING DAN BROWN



Unlock the secrets behind Dan Brown's bestselling thrillers, where secret societies, symbology, and historical mysteries collide in fast-paced plots that keep readers racing to the final revelation.

Few modern authors have ignited as much fascination – and controversy – as Dan Brown. With his global bestsellers like *The Da Vinci Code*, *Angels & Demons*, and *Inferno*, Brown has carved a distinctive niche in the literary world, one where high-stakes thrillers meet age-old secrets, and every cathedral or Renaissance painting might be hiding a world-shattering truth. But what is it, exactly, that keeps readers glued to his pages, racing breathlessly from one revelation to the next?

At the heart of Brown's storytelling is a potent blend of ancient mystery and modern urgency. His novels almost always kick off with a murder or some cryptic event that demands immediate attention, drawing the protagonist – and by extension, the reader – into a world of clues, codes, and cat-and-mouse chases. Time is nearly always of the essence, creating a narrative tempo that's hard to resist.

A cornerstone of Brown's success is his use of symbology and secret societies, which serve as both plot device and thematic intrigue. Robert Langdon, Brown's signature protagonist, is a Harvard symbologist who unravels complex

codes, religious iconography, and historical puzzles. Langdon's presence alone signals to readers that what follows will likely be an intellectual scavenger hunt. Brown's worlds are populated with references to the Freemasons, the Illuminati, the Priory of Sion – secretive organisations that blur the line between fact and fiction and feed our collective curiosity about what might be hidden behind the veil of history.

Religion and science frequently collide in Brown's novels, often through controversial or speculative reinterpretations of biblical texts or church history. This tension – between faith and fact, institution and individual – adds a philosophical layer to the page-turning suspense. It's a dynamic particularly evident in *Angels & Demons*, where Brown pits the Vatican against the scientific research facility CERN, weaving in discussions about antimatter, creation, and divinity.

One of Brown's most effective techniques is the short-chapter structure, a trick of pacing that keeps readers saying, "just one more." Nearly every chapter ends on a cliffhanger or a pivotal piece of information, compelling you to continue. His writing is cinematic,

and his scenes play out like a script – action, revelation, twist, repeat. He writes to grip with momentum.

Locations and landmarks play almost as big a role as the characters themselves. From the Louvre in Paris to the Sistine Chapel, Brown uses real-world settings to ground his fantastical plots in a recognisable reality. Readers come away not just entertained but also educated – or at least inspired to Google.

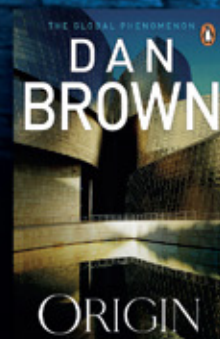
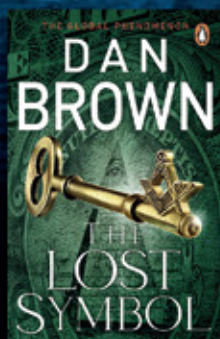
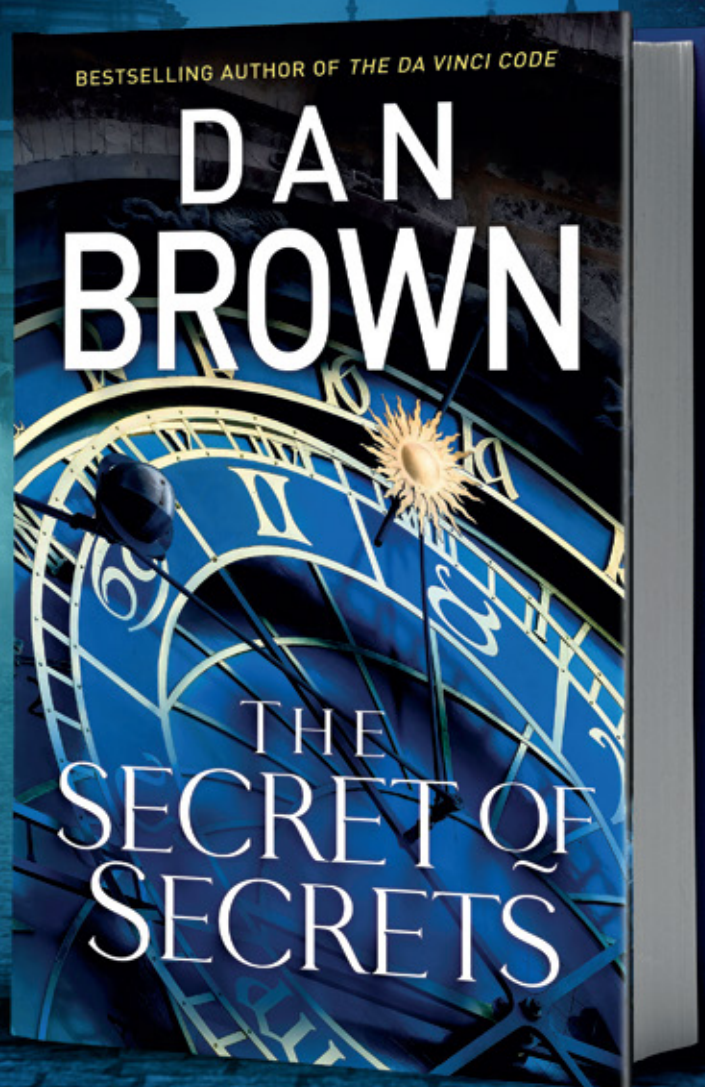
But perhaps what sets Dan Brown apart is his uncanny ability to tap into the universal human fascination with hidden knowledge. We all want to believe there's more to the world than meets the eye, that history holds secrets waiting to be uncovered, and that symbols we overlook every day might carry deeper meaning. Brown packages this desire into fast-paced thrillers that feel as enlightening as they are exhilarating.

Love him or loathe him, Dan Brown has created a literary formula that works. His novels aren't just stories – they're puzzles, races, debates, and revelations. And in an era of short attention spans and endless distractions, keeping millions of readers hooked for hundreds of pages is, in itself, no small feat. **P**



THE NEW ROBERT LANGDON THRILLER FROM
THE GLOBAL PHENOMENON

DAN BROWN



'N KOPPIE KOFFIE MET ...



Twee spanningskoninginne gesels oor inspirasie, donker karakters en die kuns van raaiselverhale. Van geskiedenis tot kopknikke aan kannibale – dis 'n onthullende kykie in hul skryfproses.



Chanette Paul

Hoe inspirasie tref, die vreugdes van navorsing, en die emosionele tol van komplekse karakters teen die gelaagde geskiedenis van Grootbrak.

Jou titels is altyd kriptiese verwysings na die tema wat in die boek figureer. Begin jy met die titel of die storie?

Met nie een boek werk dit dieselfde nie. In *Déjà vu* se geval, het ek nog net geweet ek wil my nuwe storie in die Grootbrak-omgewing laat afspeel, dat die geskiedenis van die dorp 'n rol moet speel en daar 'n herehuis en 'n vooraanstaande familie betrokke sal wees. Nog voor ek aan die skryf gekom het, was ek en Blom op 'n dag op pad George toe met die Blanco-pad toe ons verby 'n swierige ingang ry waar op *Déjà vu* staan. Ek het net gewéét. Dit het sommer ook die hele tema en aanslag van die storie verander.

Jou vorige paar boeke speel af in die Overberg. Is dit dieselfde vir *Déjà vu*?

Nee, dié keer speel my storie langs die Tuinroete af – hoofsaaklik

in die omgewing tussen George en Mosselbaai. Ons het drie jaar gelede Grootbrak toe getrek en die natuurskoon, uitleg en geskiedenis van die dorp langs die kronkelende rivier wat anderkant die treinspoor in die see uitmond, het my gefassineer. Ek het ook verlief geraak op die ou herehuise in die omtrek.

Die boek se saadjie lê in ware gebeure maar die storie is fiktief – soos ook met *Murasie*. Lees jy baie op oor geskiedenis, praat jy graag met mense uit 'n spesifieke omgewing of waar kom jy aan die stories? En hoe maak jy dat jy nie op (dooie) tone trap nie?

Ek het bietjie van 'n skaam aan my wat dit moeilik maak om vreemde mense te vra om tyd aan my af te staan sodat ek hulle kan uitvra. Ek lees egter intensief op. Veral twee boeke oor die geskiedenis van Grootbrak was vir my goud werd. Verder gebruik ek Google maar ek steun ook baie op my eie waarnemings. Die Grootbrak Museum se Facebook-blad het my ook geweldig baie gehelp en die museum self natuurlik ook. En gelukkig ken ek vir Daniël Lötter – 'n onuitputlike bron van kennis en 'n meesterstorieverteller. Maar uiteindelik suig ek meeste uit my duim.

Zabeth, die hoofkarakter, moet navorsing doen namens 'n krimi-skrywer. Wie doen jou navorsing? En wat behels dit?

Ek is beslis nie in die finansiële posisie om 'n eksterne navorser aan te stel nie! Maar selfs al was ek, sou ek nooit dié heerlike taak aan iemand anders wou oorlaat nie. Ek geniet navorsing amper meer as skryf. Dis vir my heerlik om oor geskiedenis na te lees, dinge te ontrafel, te ontdek en dikwels verras te word. Soos met die sampioensterftes in die huis wat tans as 'n boetiekhotel op die luukse gholflandgoed, Fancourt, voortbestaan. (Terloops, dit het in my storie opgeduik lank voor die saak in Australië aan my bekend geword het.)



Déjà vu is in Oktober 2025 beskikbaar.

Beleef jy jou karakters se emosies saam met hulle? Hoe hanteer jy die op-en-af van skryf wanneer dit by jou karakters se wel-en-weë kom?

Ja, ek beleef hulle en hulle emosies ten nouste. Dit kan vir my soms baie emosioneel uitputtend raak. Dikwels werk mens boonop met meer as een karakter se perspektief op een dag en ervaar dan elkeen se, soms teenstrydige, emosies aan eie bas. Jy weet naasteby waarop sekere gebeure gaan uitloop en dis meesal nie 'n iets wat jy selfs jou vyand toewens nie. Jy vrees nie net saam met hulle nie, maar ook namens hulle, want jy weet meer as hulle. Gelukkig kry jy ook saam met hulle lief en geniet saam met hulle die goeie tye. Waarvan daar tipies min is in 'n spanningsroman.

Erla Diedericks

Met (vals) leidrade en interessante karakters wat die teks deurspek, hou Erla Diedericks se skryfwerk 'n mens aan die raai begin tot einde.



Jy het jouself baie vinnig as een van die voorste krimi-skrywers in SA gevestig. Waarom hierdie genre?

Ek skryf in die spanningsgenre, maar binne daardie genre spring ek rond. Ek het al verskeie tipes rillers geskryf – gewoon, eroties, sielkundig en domestic noir. *Bonsaimeisies* is 'n kopknik in die rigting van 'n krimi.

Jy hou daarvan om te krap in dit wat mense motiveer om op te tree op 'n sekere manier. Waarom?

Ek was nog altyd gefassineer deur die donker kant in mense. Hoe ontstaan sadisme? Hoe word reeksmoordenaars gevorm? Waarom sal mense ander folter. Hoe gebeur marteling? Hoe gebeur oorlog? Hoe word jong seuns gemotiveer om oorlog te voer? Wat het in die Grensoorlog hier by ons gebeur? Navorsing toon dat sommige soldate net nooit sal moor nie, al word hulle ook hoe gebreinspoel. Om iemand te folter is egter 'n gans ander saak – ons almal het dit in ons ...

Samael de Kock is 'n baie donker karakter. Is hy op iemand gebaseer?

Samael de Kock se karakter is gegrond op die reeksmoordenaar en kannibaal Stewart Wilken, wat in Suid-Afrika 'n bloedspoor agtergelaat het, die kannibaal-psigopaat Ed

Gein, wat die inspirasie was van

Psycho en die Hannibal

Lecter-reeks deur deur

Thomas Harris, asook die

reeksmoordenaar Keith

Hunter Jesperson.

Bonsaimeisies – daar is baie donker belofte in die titel. Begin jy met 'n titel en bou jou storie daarom? Of andersom?

Bonsaimeisies is geïnspireer deur die gesegde 'buig die boompie terwyl dit jonk is,' en so is die titel *Bonsaimeisies* gebore. Vir hierdie boek het ek dus eers met die titel en die gesegde begin en toe het die storie daaruit gevloei. Dit is ook geskryf tydens die voortslepende Gasa-oorlog en al die marteling wat in sulke oorloë plaasvind. Die boek gaan nie net oor vroue wat ontvoer, gefolter en vermoor word nie maar bied ook 'n blik op wat in oorlogstye en SA se eie Grensoorlog gebeur het.

Jy hou ook daarvan om kopspeletjies met jou lesers te speel. Is jy 'n sadis?

Nee, 'n sadis speel nie kopspeletjies nie, hulle speel dikwels fisieke speletjies wat intense pyn veroorsaak. Ek weet dat lesers van die spanningsroman en al sy genres dit geniet om die legkaarte in mekaar te pas en die raaisel op te los. Die speletjies is dus meer 'n lekker raaisel waarin die leser hom of haar kan verlustig. Sadiste is gevaarlike mense. Skrywers is nie (glimlag, oogknip).

Dr Ann Marais is 'n besondere vrou. Is sy op iemand gebaseer? En is sy iemand na wie jy opsien?

Hierdie is die laaste boek waarin sy verskyn. Sy is gegrond op iemand op 'n ware persoon. In my volgende boek (2026) is daar 'n nuwe vrouekarakter, maar sy is, net soos Ann, eksentriek en sterk. Kriska, is 'n produk van my verbeelding.

Vertel ons iets meer van Speurder Marnus Mostert? Dink jy hy het 'n toekoms?

Nee, hy het nie 'n toekoms nie, die mans in dokter Ann se lewe kom en gaan. Ek het egter nogals baie van Samael gehou – dalk kom hy weer terug ...



Bonsaimeisies is nou op rakke.

'N STORIE WAT NIE KLOP NIE

Liezal de Jager se moord skok 'n nasie. Maar dis haar man se bloedige, ongeloofwaardige storie oor 'n 'lemmetjie-aanval' wat alles verdag maak. Lees hierdie uittreksel uit die nuwe onthullingsboek.

“Dis Junie 2015. Die polisie op Kanoneiland word die aand dringend na die pastorie ontbied. My bron vertel vir my dat die badkamer en die stoep rooi onder die bloed was. Dit was blykbaar 'n grusame toneel. Die polisie tref Werner aan met snye aan sy arms, sy lyf en in sy gesig. Werner vertel vir die polisie dat hy in die donker deur 'n groep mans met lemmetjies aangeval is toe hy die waterpomp wou gaan afskakel.

'Ek weet nie, iets was net nie vir my pluis nie, Anena. Dit het vir my te dik vir 'n daalder geklink. Watter aanvallers val iemand met lemmetjies aan?' sê my bron skepties. Dit was te donker om die toneel daardie aand te ondersoek. Die beamptes wou nie die gebied om en naby die waterpomp in die donker versteur en só moontlike bewyse vernietig nie.

Vroeg die volgende oggend was die polisie terug op die toneel. Die ondersoekbeamptes kon egter geen verdagte voetspore of bloed by die waterpomp of in die omgewing daarvan vind nie. Nie 'n enkele lemmetjie wat per abuis laat val is nie. Nie 'n enkele druppel bloed nie. Niks. Die enigste tekens van bloed en bloedspore was in die huis, die badkamer en op die stoep.

'Jy weet, ons het daardie saak maande lank ondersoek, maar daar

was nie 'n enkele verdagte nie. Ons kon niemand weens die voorval in hegtenis neem nie. Behalwe vir sy ooglopende beserings, was daar doodeenvoudig geen bykomende bewyse wat kon staaf dat Werner deur 'n groep mans aangeval is nie.'

Maande later dien Werner 'n klag by die polisiekantore in Upington en Kimberley in teen die ondersoekbeamptes van die Kanoneilandpolisiestasie omdat hulle steeds niemand weens die aanval op hom in hegtenis geneem het nie. Hy eis dat die voorval, waarin hy ernstig aangerand is, verder ondersoek moet word. 'Kyk, ons het gehoop hulle sou iets optel wat ons gemis het, want op daai stadium was ons gatvol vir die hele storie.' My bron vertel dat Werner se weergawe van die gebeurte vir hom absoluut geen sin gemaak het nie. Hy was behoorlik keelvol. 'Ek het besluit ek gaan hom voor stok kry. Hom in 'n hoek druk sodat die waarheid 'n slag kan uitkom.'

En so word Werner toe versoek om hom by die Kanoneilandpolisiekantoor vir verdere ondervraging aan te meld. My bron vertel dat hy Werner daardie dag goed laat verstaan het dat indien hy vir die polisie oor die voorval gelieg het, hy weens meened vervolgt sou word. Werner was arrogant en wou nie bes gee nie. Hy is deur 'n klomp mans met lemmetjies aangeval en basta!

Nie lank nadat die polisie hom voor stok probeer kry het nie, probeer Werner en Liezel om die saak terug te trek. Die Kanoneiland-polisiekantoor weier egter volstrek. 'Ons het die saak verwys na die staatsaanklaer op Keimoes, wat toe moes besluit of die staat Werner sou vervolg of nie.'

Daar is toe besluit om hom, weens sy geestesongesteldheid, nie te vervolg nie en die dossier is gesluit. My polisiebron het sy bedenkinge oor Werner. Dit spruit veral uit die feit dat hy, kort nadat hy sy polse daardie September by Oranjerus gesny het, een Sondag in trane in die kerk gebieg het dat hy gelieg het oor die lemmetjie-aanval op hom. Daar was geen booswigte op die erf nie, niemand het hom aangeval nie. Hy het homself met lemmetjies gesny, het hy voor die Kanoneiland-gemeente bely.”



Die moord op Liezel de Jager is nou beskikbaar.

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We're delighted to welcome a new member to our Penguin family
PIPPA THE PENGUIN!

In partnership with **SANCCOB Saves Seabirds**, Struik Nature has officially adopted our very own penguin as a symbol of our commitment to raising awareness for South African seabird conservation. We believe every positive action can help to turn the tide.

Photograph: Dan Calister

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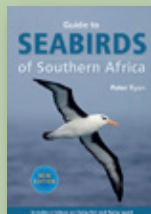
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SANCCOB is a registered non-profit organisation whose primary objective is to conserve South Africa's seabirds - especially critically endangered species like the African Penguin.



ICONS IN PERIL

From the roar of lions to the song of birds, these two powerful pieces – by David Quammen, Alan Lee and Shamiso Banda – explore what’s at stake when iconic wildlife faces extinction. They’re urgent reminders of what we stand to lose, and calls to action to protect what’s wild, vital, and wondrous.

LONG LIVE THE LION

Lions are more than icons of power; they’re wild, vulnerable – and vital. This moving tribute by David Quammen reveals why saving them isn’t just conservation, it’s a stand for wonder itself.

“The importance of lions includes – but transcends – the cold rational metrics of how a big predator fills its ecological role: consuming prey, cropping herbivore populations, converting meat to energy and

growth ... Those metrics apply also to such estimable creatures as tigers, leopards, saltwater crocodiles and Komodo dragons, as well as other large flesh-eaters occupying the highest consumer rung within their respective communities.

Lions are different. Special. They are supreme on their landscapes and iconic in human minds. They reside atop what I call the ‘Food Chain of Power and Glory’, as registered in the esteem of people all over the planet. They are seen as regal, imperious. It didn’t take a movie

called *The Lion King*, grossing billions of dollars worldwide, to prove that.

And yet, almost paradoxically, lions also embody the ineffable quality of ‘wildness’ to a maximum degree. They seem unpredictable and highly inconvenient if you share a neighbourhood with them, and downright scary – they are unquestionably dangerous.

You can read about lions as agents of ferocious menace in the Biblical book of Daniel, chapter six. You can see them portrayed, sublime and beautiful, on the walls of Chauvet

Cave, as those walls were painted by some lion-besotted artist roughly 30,000 years ago. You can view them in the brilliant, sometimes searing, photographs of Brent Stirton and others, as sampled in *The Last Lions*. And you can judge for yourself.

So, lions are majestic and formidable, yes. But contrary to appearances, they are also quite vulnerable, both individually and collectively.

Individually, the life of any lion in the wild – cub, juvenile, adult male or female – is a precarious journey amid mortal hazards. Foremost among these hazards for a lion population under natural circumstances are other lions. As the veteran lion biologist Craig Packer once told me: ‘The number one cause of death for lions, in an undisturbed environment, is other lions’.

Cubs are often killed by new males taking over breeding privileges with a pride of females. Males kill other males in disputes over those prides. Even females sometimes kill cubs or other females of a competing pride. It’s important to note immediately, though, that ‘an undisturbed environment’ for lions, free of human-caused pressures and threats, is a rare idyll nowadays.

Collectively, lions are vulnerable to long-term population decline caused by loss of habitat, fragmentation of remaining habitat, disappearance of native prey, conflict with farmers and pastoralists, hunting in all forms by humans, and local use and international traffic of their body parts. These are some of the factors that have catastrophically reduced their total numbers and left many small, isolated populations in peril of inbreeding depression and other

secondary problems that can push those small populations to oblivion.

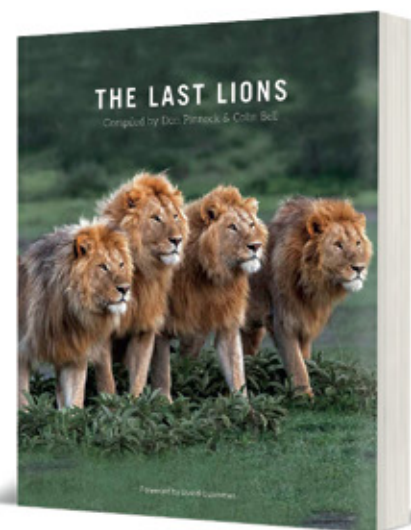
Their distributional range once spanned not just most of Africa (encircling the Sahara) but up into Europe, including the Ardèche valley of southeastern France (where Chauvet Cave is located), across the Middle East (as testified by the prophet Daniel, among other sources), and further eastward as far as Balochistan (in what is now Pakistan) and northern India to the very outskirts of Old Delhi.

Those far-flung lions and their offspring are now gone, reduced to a remnant of about 20,000 animals (or maybe as few as 10,000, according to Pieter Kat) existing within a handful of large habitat strongholds and a few score of smaller enclaves scattered across Africa, plus roughly 700 of the Asiatic population holding out in the Gir Forest region of western India. As human population growth has exploded upward, in all those places, lion population size has plunged. It doesn’t take a PhD in ecology to comprehend that relationship.

And it doesn’t take me, chattering here, to elaborate on the factors that drive the downward trend, because those factors are all addressed,

with authority and in detail, by the scientists, conservationists and other lion experts whose voices are gathered in *The Last Lions*.

These deeply informed reports will give you a broad understanding, with some fine local focus, of what has happened and is happening to this great kingly and queenly beast. Equally important, they will alert you to what should happen – what must happen – if our world is to be graced by a continuing presence of wild lions into the indefinite future. You’ll read, not just of loss



The Last Lions by Colin Bell and Don Pinnock is out October 2025.

and decline, but of ideas, solutions, projects and efforts to stanch the losses and curtail the decline. You'll read of new ways that ingenious, dedicated people are finding to say *Yes* to wild lions and *No* to the prospect of their final extinction, which is a grim possibility but by no means inevitable.

This book will also help remind you that, without wild lions, planet Earth would be a lonelier, uglier, more boring place, a sorely diminished spheroid of rock, carrying humanity into a lionless future. The first step towards averting that outcome is to embrace lions a little more knowingly, in their wondrous and difficult complexity, their majestic inconvenientness, their beauty and their glorious roar. They seem obvious, in a way: Lions, yeah, of course, lions. But we should never take them for granted."

SAVING WHAT SINGS

Alan Lee and Shamiso Banda reveal the urgent threats facing Southern Africa's birds – and the vital efforts offering hope for their survival.

"Bird populations the world over are in decline. According to BirdLife International, nearly half of all bird species are trending downward, with more than one in eight at risk of extinction. While this trend is largely generated by human action, there is still hope that birds can be brought back from the brink. In this, science is showing the way, first by understanding the threats imperilling birds, and secondly by implementing strategies to help safeguard them. The book, *Birds on the Brink*, combines scientific

rigour with compelling storytelling to detail the vulnerabilities of birds most at risk in South Africa and its neighbours, Lesotho and Eswatini, and to spotlight the people whose efforts are helping to save them.

In an era of unprecedented environmental change, the survival of countless species hangs in the balance. Birds, along with other animal and plant groups, are victims of human activity that is driving climate change and habitat loss. Birds are excellent barometers of the health of our environment – their visibility, wide distribution and rapid response to changes in habitats make them key indicators of ecological well-being. Declines in bird populations often signal broader environmental issues that need addressing.

Birds are integral to the environment. They provide key 'ecosystem services' that include insect population control (by insect-eating species), clean-up functions (such as those performed by vultures and other scavenging species), and pollination of both food and ornamental plants (by nectar-

loving birds). As apex predators, large birds of prey play a critical role in the food chain. Diminishing populations of species such as Bateleur and Verreaux's eagles, now largely restricted to protected areas, point to the disruptions caused by human activity and signal knock-on disturbance to the greater natural order.

Despite the decline in numbers, birds continue to connect us to nature. Their presence brings joy to millions, from casual observers to dedicated birdwatchers, and they spark fascination across cultures. Birding tourism, a significant contributor to South Africa's economy, shows how much people around the world value these creatures for the wonder they evoke.

Birds also hold a special place in the cultural heritage of many nations. The near-endemic Blue Crane is South Africa's national bird and the Secretarybird adorns the country's coat of arms. The Southern Bald Ibis, the national bird of Lesotho, is an important part of that country's natural heritage and is featured in Basotho blankets. The Purple-crested Turaco is the national bird of Eswatini.



But appreciation alone is not enough. Despite their ability to survive Africa's naturally harsh environment, many bird species are being pushed to the brink. The very birds that shape our natural and cultural landscapes are among those facing mounting threats. Their survival depends on the actions we take now.

Vernon Head and Mel Tripp conceived *Birds on the Brink* as a way to bring the red listing process of categorising extinction risk to a wider audience, with a special focus on those individuals who undertake the invaluable conservation work to save threatened species. Vernon and Mel's work – reimagining the *Regional Red Data Book of Birds* – culminated in *Birds on the Brink*.


It is our wish that the stories in *Birds on the Brink* will inspire you to take action – no matter how small it may be – to help slow the extinction crisis facing so many species because of a declining natural world. It could be something as simple as recycling your waste at home, or thinking carefully about what you buy on your next shopping trip, or perhaps taking a minute to make a considered and regular donation to your favourite conservation organisation. Whatever you do, make a small change today!

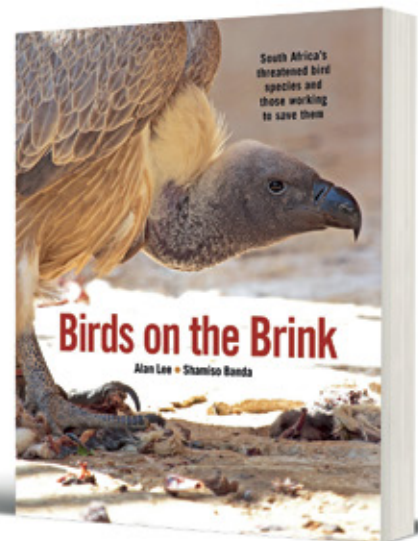
Birds on the Brink underscores the critical importance of conservation. The threats faced by these birds are emblematic of the broader challenges confronting wildlife globally. By drawing attention to these issues, we hope to foster

a deeper understanding of the interconnectedness of all life forms and the urgent need for collective action to preserve our natural heritage.

The book aims to inspire a new generation of conservationists. Through the vivid accounts of researchers working on the front lines of conservation, readers gain insight into the dedication, innovation and skills required to safeguard these precious species. It also highlights the pivotal role of local communities and citizen scientists, demonstrating how grassroots initiatives and public engagement can drive meaningful change.

Ultimately, *Birds on the Brink* is a call to action. It is a reminder that while the challenges are immense, so too is our capacity for change. By celebrating the beauty of these birds and the efforts to protect them,

we hope to ignite a passion for conservation in readers, empowering them to contribute to a sustainable future where both humans and wildlife can thrive. What can *you* do to make the world a better place?" 



Birds on the Brink by Alan Lee and Shamiso Banda is out now.

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THE WINNING FORMULA

From podiums to personal battles, Greg Mills, Tebogo Thekisho and Myan Subrayan show how grit, purpose and character – not talent alone – form the true foundation of winning.



REDEFINING SUCCESS

What drives people to succeed against the odds? Greg Mills explores the traits that set extraordinary achievers apart.



“Success is defined in many different ways. For some, it is defined by wealth; by the quantitative metrics of accumulation. Yet money is only a single and somewhat misleading metric in defining success, and paradoxically, a rather narrow, binary and impoverishing one.

For others, success is about the pursuit of a set of values or ideas, and seeking to judge your contribution by those qualitative conditions or by the process itself. For Greg Minnaar, a multiple world champion in downhill mountain biking, success meant ‘conquering the challenge’, and for Michèle Mouton, the only woman to have won a World Championship rally, ‘Success is the feeling that I have done everything to meet the challenge in front of me to achieve my goals, to reach my limit, and did the best that I could.’ This was as much about the journey

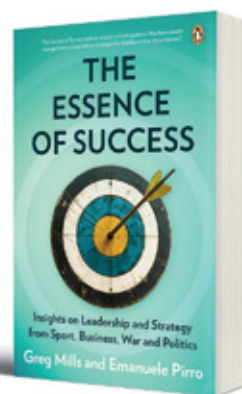
as the result. ‘Success’, she adds, ‘was in the incredible experience that I had.’ The great Olympic cyclist Chris Hoy highlights this aspect, realising, at his ‘aha’ moment in his journey to sporting greatness, ‘The only person you have to beat is yourself, yesterday.’ In other words, then, success means satisfaction at a job well done.

Innate human competitiveness drives self-improvement. Phil Kerr, then the joint MD of the McLaren Formula One team, put it 50 years ago: ‘The name of the game is to win, of that there is no doubt ... We hate, like anything, being beaten.’ Froneman admits that he has been a bad loser since he was young, whether this be in sports, board games or business, a man who has only established and run companies with ‘One’ in the title. ‘No one remembers who comes second. One means winning. But,’ he adds, ‘it also means we are a team, and reflects the way we think, and how we go about our business to achieve success.’

This highlights how winning means different things. It’s not necessarily about putting a piece of silverware on the mantelpiece, or still more money in the bank, but about making a difference. If finishing first

or making more money was the sole metric for winning and success, then the world would be a terribly boring (and possibly uninhabitable) place.

A consistent set of leadership attributes emerge, around personal organisation and dedication: maintaining attention to detail while keeping an eye on clear and realisable long-term goals, assiduous planning and careful prioritisation. Building a team that delivers institutional capacity and personal support, compiling experience and building skills. Focusing on changing yourself rather than others, always maintaining a sense of ethics and integrity, and thinking things



Greg’s book, *The Essence of Success*, with Emanuele Pirro is out in October 2025.

through to the finish. All these factors contribute to the achievement of success over different areas, and in diverse settings.

Napoleon said he preferred ‘a general who was lucky than one who was good’. There are exogenous aspects that influence how things turn out, of course. But luck, as we show, plays little part in success. There are moments of good fortune in producing the circumstances from which one can benefit, but it requires a level of preparation and proactivity to be the right person in the right place at the right time. Perhaps the riposte by Gary Player, the golfing great, is more on the mark: ‘The more I practice the luckier I get.’

There is no miracle, then, behind success, and less of requirement for unearthly, magical talents than the need for serious application and personal organisation.

In exploring these conditions and the limits of human endeavour, the overall message in *The Essence of Success* is one of empowerment. We would like people to say at the end of reading it: ‘I could do that if I ...’

THE LIFE EQUATION

Success in one area can’t mask neglect in another, as Tebogo ‘ProVerb’ Thekisho learned first-hand.

“For the longest time, I operated under the belief that success in one area of life could somehow make up for deficiencies in another. I believed that if I was thriving professionally, I could overlook my emotional health. That if I was financially stable, it didn’t matter if I was spiritually disconnected. That if I was pushing my body to its limits physically, I could ignore the mental toll. But

life, as it often does, taught me otherwise. There have been times when I was at the peak of my career but felt empty inside. Times when I was in the best shape of my life physically, but my mind was weighed down by stress and anxiety. Times when I was financially secure but emotionally bankrupt. And in those moments, I learnt that true well-being is not just about achieving one thing; it is about achieving harmony across all areas of life.

Realise that your health is interconnected. You cannot truly be fulfilled if you are excelling in one area but suffering in another. A brilliant career means little if you are too exhausted to enjoy it. A strong body cannot compensate for a mind that is filled with doubt and negativity. A wealth of financial resources is meaningless if your relationships are strained or your spirit depleted. Every aspect of our health feeds into the next, and when we learn to nurture them collectively, we create a life that is not just successful but truly fulfilling.

Think about it: when you are physically active, you have more energy, which enhances your productivity at work. When you are financially secure, you reduce stress and anxiety, which positively impacts your mental and emotional well-being. When you prioritise your relationships, you build a strong support system that helps you navigate life’s challenges. When you engage in creative expression, you foster innovation, problem-solving and personal growth. None of these elements exists in isolation; they are



all pieces of a larger puzzle that, when properly aligned, create a picture of holistic well-being.

I have personally experienced the consequences of neglecting certain aspects of my health. There have been times in my life when I focused so much on my career that I let my personal relationships suffer. There have been times when I chased financial success so relentlessly that I forgot to nurture my own happiness. There have been moments when I ignored my body’s signals, pushing through exhaustion and stress, only to pay the price later. And in each of those moments, I was reminded that balance is not a luxury but a necessity.

The good news is that we all have the power to create balance in our lives. We are not victims of circumstance; we are the architects of our own well-being.”



To Health with It hits shelves October 2025.

BEYOND TALENT

Drawing from years alongside sporting legends and everyday heroes, life coach Myan Subrayan shares urgent, hope-filled truths on raising resilient kids through presence, discipline, and values that cost nothing.



Your book *Raising Champions* speaks deeply about character over talent. From your perspective as a life coach and writer, how have you seen this principle play out in the lives of Bert le Clos, Shaun Bartlett, CJ van der Linde and their children – beyond the arena of sport?

This book is built on the timeless truth that character outlasts talent. I've had the privilege of walking alongside Chad, Shaun, and CJ for over a decade. Each of them reached the summit of global sport – Olympic gold, World Cup glory, English Premier League and AFCON titles. But what left a lasting impression wasn't just their ability, it was their integrity, humility, and grit. That's the foundation of their legacy, and the example that now shapes their children. *Raising Champions* reminds readers that long after the stadiums fall silent, it's character that carries you through the unseen battles of life. Talent may win medals, but character keeps you standing when life knocks you down. In the South African context – where shortcuts, corruption and dysfunction are sadly all too common – this kind of integrity,

discipline, and faith isn't just admirable, it's essential. That's what will rebuild our families. That's what will restore hope.

You've worked closely with elite athletes and their families, but also engage with everyday South Africans. What do you think are the most urgent lessons for parents raising children far from the spotlight – especially in communities affected by crime or poverty?

One of the most urgent lessons is this: your child's future isn't defined by your circumstances; it's shaped by your choices. No matter where I go in South Africa, one thing remains true: when a child knows they are seen, loved, and guided, they rise. This book isn't just for parents of elite athletes or top students. It's for the parent walking their child through dangerous streets to school. For the father worried his son might be pulled into gang life. For the grandmother raising her grandchild on love more than money. *Raising Champions* offers practical tools – rooted in faith, discipline, and identity – to help any child stand strong in a difficult world. You don't need wealth to raise a champion. You need presence, consistency, and belief in your child's purpose. This book empowers parents, teachers, and coaches to become that steady hand, instilling values that shape resilience, not just results. You are not powerless. You are the difference.

The book includes your "10 Things That Don't Require Talent." Which of those do you think South African

children most need to hear right now, and how can parents start instilling them today?

Without question: attitude, work ethic, and respect. These are game-changers, especially in South Africa, where so many young people face massive obstacles: unemployment, crime, and a lack of trustworthy role models. In this climate, talent alone isn't enough, but these qualities – available to every child – can change the trajectory of a life. And they cost nothing. Success isn't about being the most gifted. It's about consistency, humility, and kindness – habits that anyone can learn. Greatness begins with character, not opportunity. For parents, the message is clear: you don't need private schools or elite coaches to teach your child how to be honest, how to work hard, or how to shake a hand. These things require no money, but they do require intention. *Raising Champions* gives simple, daily ways to model and reinforce them. Because in the end, we're not just raising athletes. We're raising good humans. And South Africa desperately needs more of those. 📖



Raising Champions releases October 2025.



A TASTE OF SPRING

Celebrate the season of renewal with fresh, flavourful dishes to nourish, impress and energise from plate to palate.

Nectarine Salad

"I'm not a huge fan of fruit in salad, but this one is wonderful. Try it and then we can chat. This takes 5 minutes to throw together. It's as simple as layering rocket, red onion, fresh nectarine, burrata and roasted pistachios, and drizzling olive oil, balsamic glaze and honey all over."

1 Tbsp pistachio nuts

1 ½ cups rocket, washed and drained

½ medium red onion, thinly sliced

1 large ripe nectarine, cut into wedges

1 large burrata cheese, torn into bite-sized pieces
olive oil, balsamic glaze and honey to drizzle

In a small saucepan, roast the pistachios until fragrant and then give them a rough chop.

In a serving dish, layer the rocket, red onion, nectarine wedges, burrata and roasted pistachios.

Finish off with a drizzle of olive oil, balsamic glaze and honey. That's it!

SERVES
4



This recipe comes from *The Big Tasty Bite* by Lila Lerie (@thebigtastybite), on shelves October 2025.

Chickpea and Tuna Stuffed Sweet Potatoes

2 large orange sweet potatoes
olive oil
course salt
1 x 400 g can chickpeas, drained and rinsed
¼ tsp ground cumin
½ tsp onion salt
½ tsp paprika
sea salt and black pepper to taste
200 g baby spinach
1 x 170 g can tuna in water, drained
¼ cup diced peppadews

SERVES
2

PREP TIME
10 minutes

Preheat the oven to 200 °C.

Wash the sweet potatoes and trim both ends, then roll in olive oil and then coarse salt. Place on a baking tray and roast for about 45 minutes or until cooked through.

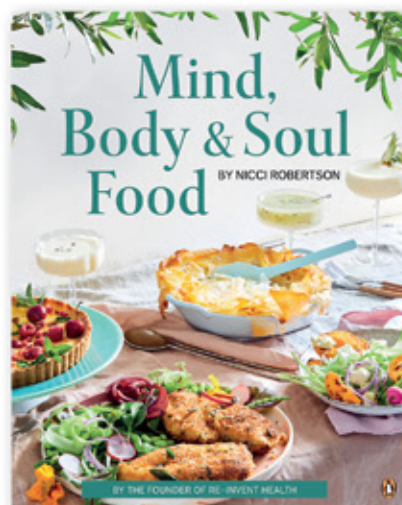
While the potatoes are roasting, heat a large non-stick frying pan and add a little olive oil.

Add the chickpeas, cumin, onion salt, paprika, sea salt and pepper, followed by the baby spinach. Sauté over low heat for 2–3 minutes or until the spinach has wilted.

Remove from the heat and transfer to a large bowl. Add the tuna and peppadews and mix thoroughly.

When the potatoes are cooked through, remove the coarse salt with a clean cloth and halve lengthways.

Pack each half with the chickpea and tuna filling, and drizzle with a little more olive oil.



Nicci Robertson's stuffed sweet potatoes combine spiced chickpeas, tuna, and peppadews in a hearty, flavour-packed dish that nourishes mind, body and soul.

This recipe comes from *Mind, Body & Soul Food* by Nicci Robertson, out now.

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Zucchini Carpaccio

“A great plant-based alternative to the fillet carpaccio. Take your time and plate this lovingly – it will be a showstopper for your guests.”

2 large (400 g in total) zucchinis
40 ml extra-virgin olive oil,
divided

Juice and zest of 1 lemon

Salt and freshly ground black
pepper, to taste

20 ml homemade or good-
quality mayonnaise

80 g roasted sweet peppers,
seeds and skin removed,
and sliced

20 g red onion, sliced

40 g shimeji mushrooms, dressed
in 5ml white wine vinegar

10 ml balsamic vinegar reduction

40 g parmesan, thinly shaved

Fresh rocket leaves, to serve


30 ml toasted pine nuts

Micro herbs, to garnish

Using a mandolin, slice the zucchinis very thinly into rounds. Add the slices to a large bowl with 15ml of the olive oil, the lemon juice and zest, salt and black pepper. Allow the zucchinis to marinate for 15 minutes.

PREP TIME
30 minutes

SERVES
4

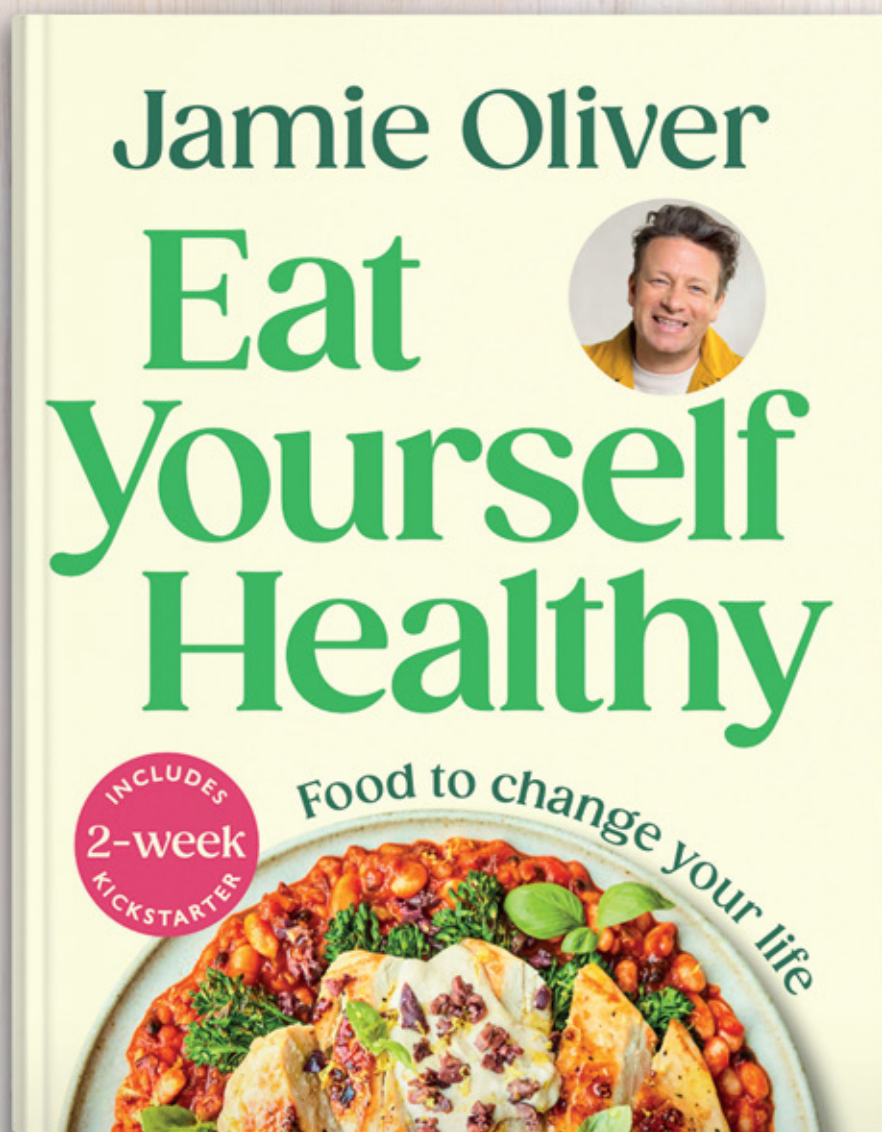
Arrange the marinated zucchini slices on a plate, top with dots of mayonnaise, roasted peppers, red onion and dressed shimejis. Drizzle over the remaining olive oil, as well as the vinegar reduction. Season with salt and lots of freshly ground black pepper, then top with the shaved parmesan, rocket leaves, pine nuts and micro herbs. 

This recipe comes from *JAN Voyage* by Jan Hendrik van der Westhuizen, on shelves October 2025.





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A MELTING POT OF GLIMMERS

Bridget McNulty reflects on how leaving South Africa revealed the deep, joyful threads of home woven into everyday life – reminding us that heritage lives in the smallest, most meaningful glimmers.

“I never knew how South African I was until I left the country. I was just 19, and with all the confidence of youth, I jetted halfway across the world to Lancaster, Pennsylvania – to a country and culture I had never experienced – to study towards my goal of becoming a movie star. (I later decided to be a writer instead).

It was only when I was lifted out of the culture that we breathe like air every sunny, friendly, slightly chaotic day here in SA that I realised how much that culture was baked into my cells. I missed everything: the small, daily rituals, like a morning cup of tea with a rusk to dunk into it, or a warm morning greeting, delivered in an accent that made sense to me, peppered with familiar slang (‘Howzit!’). And the broader, more sweeping South Africanisms – limitless horizons and wide-open skies, the warm crush of cultures and languages and types of people every way you look, the casual disregard for rules we all seem to agree is fine.

I left for America thinking I might make it my home. I returned fiercely proud to be South African, and never wanting to live anywhere else. What I didn’t realise at the time was that these small moments of connection with my country were actually glimmers.

Glimmers are micro-moments

of connection and ease: tiny three-second slices of joy that calm your nervous system and lift your spirits.


These glimmers can be the tiniest things. Sometimes they’re rooted in the physical: the smell of your mom’s bobotie, the songs your family sings under their breath as they go about their day, the way you always sit in the same seats at the table to eat a meal together.

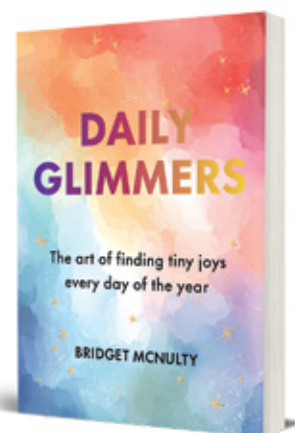
But they can also be more intangible ... Being able to laugh at yourself when your loved ones tease you, walking down memory lane together, the way one bite of a specific food acts as a time capsule but also, somehow, a culture capsule. You may explore the world and think yourself quite debonair (I certainly did!) but give me a piece of lightly charred boerie, a blackened braai potato and some boring watery salad and I am a teenager again, wrapped in the endless teasing of my three older brothers, laughing at some terrible story my dad has told us roughly two hundred times.

Heritage and cultural memory can seem like such lofty concepts – woven from memory and lived experience and family and geographical history. What they boil down to, though, is that feeling of connection when you’re with your people. The way you feel when you see a familiar face after a long

absence, when you share a secret smile that has years of history built into it, when you can use your own version of linguistic shorthand because you are so known to these people that you don’t have to explain yourself.

I was the only South African in my American college – the only one most of my peers had ever encountered. I was met both with a kind curiosity and an incredulous fascination as our many cultural differences came to light. It wasn’t just the words I used, or the way I said them, but the expectation I held (and still do) that anything is possible.

When I think of my South African heritage, that’s the thing that shines most brightly for me: the biggest glimmer. We are a people of possibility, fuelled by all the micro-moments of joy our beautiful country offers us.” 

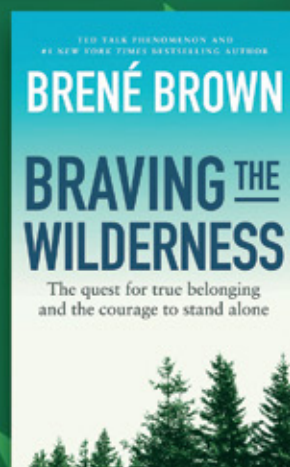
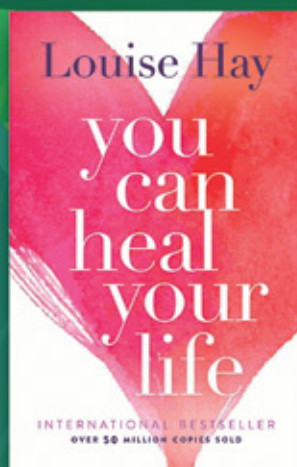
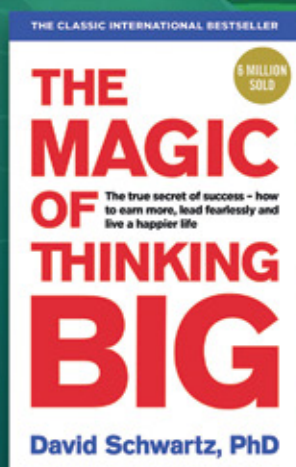
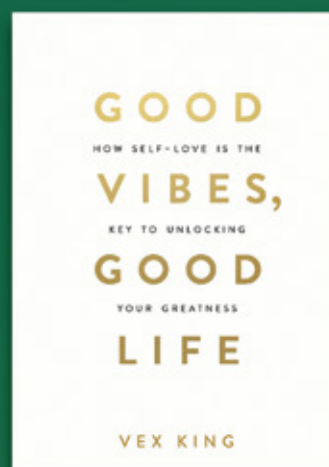
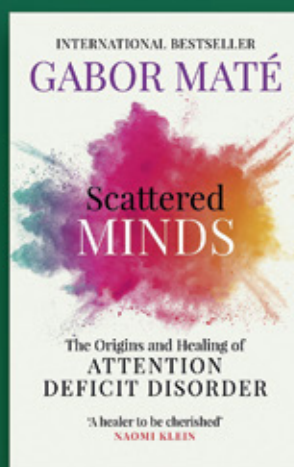
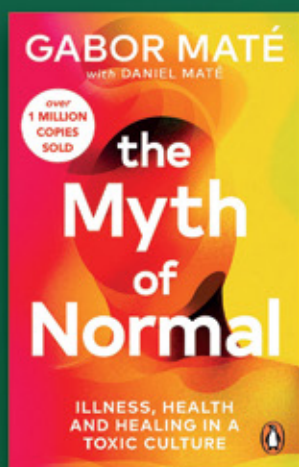
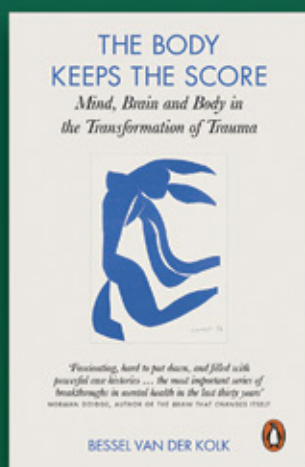


Bridget’s book, *Daily Glimmers* is out now.



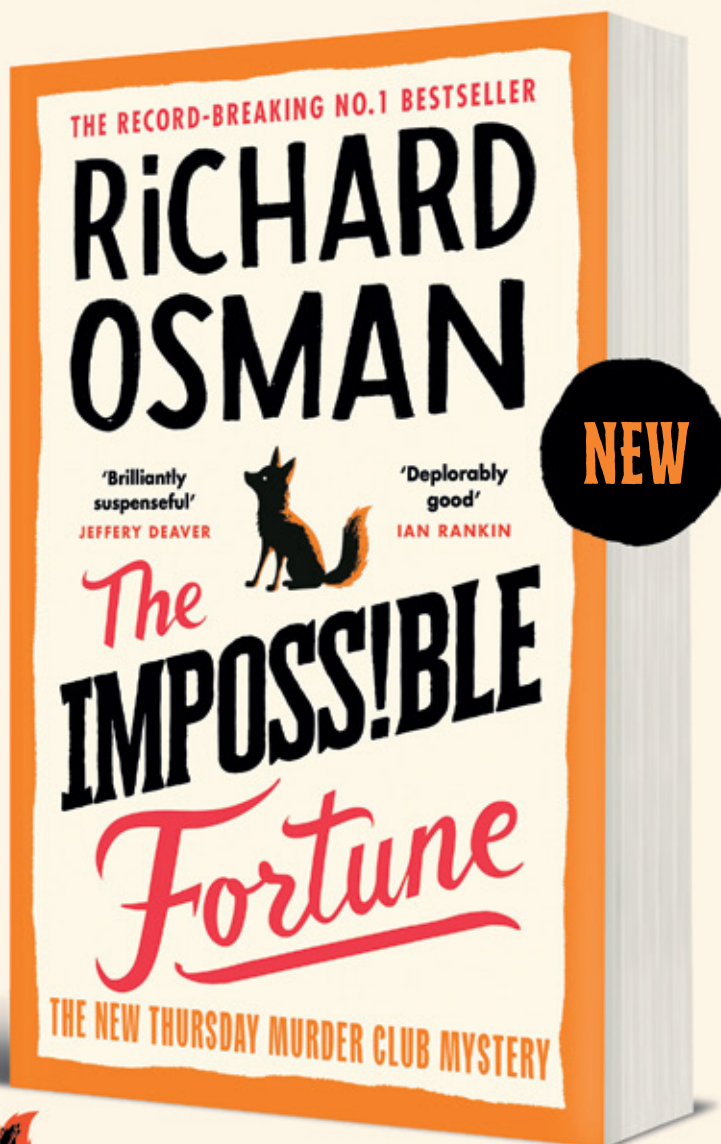
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