



THE PENGUIN POST

THE MAGAZINE ABOUT BOOKS FOR BOOK LOVERS

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A photograph of a man, Tebogobane Proverb, sitting on a dark, textured couch. He is wearing a dark suit, a black shirt, and a dark tie. He is smiling and looking towards the camera. The background consists of large, multi-paned windows with dark frames, letting in natural light. The overall tone is professional and sophisticated.

TEBOGO PROVERB THEKISHO'S MEMOIR

“Finally, my side
of the story”

**SEE THE
WORLD.
THEN MAKE
IT BETTER.**

**Inside David
Attenborough's
new book**

**AT MY
WRITING DESK**

with Siphiwe
Gloria Ndlovu

**COASTAL
CHARMS**

The hidden wonders
of the ocean

**OTTOLENGHI
FLAVOUR**

Divine recipes from
his new cookbook

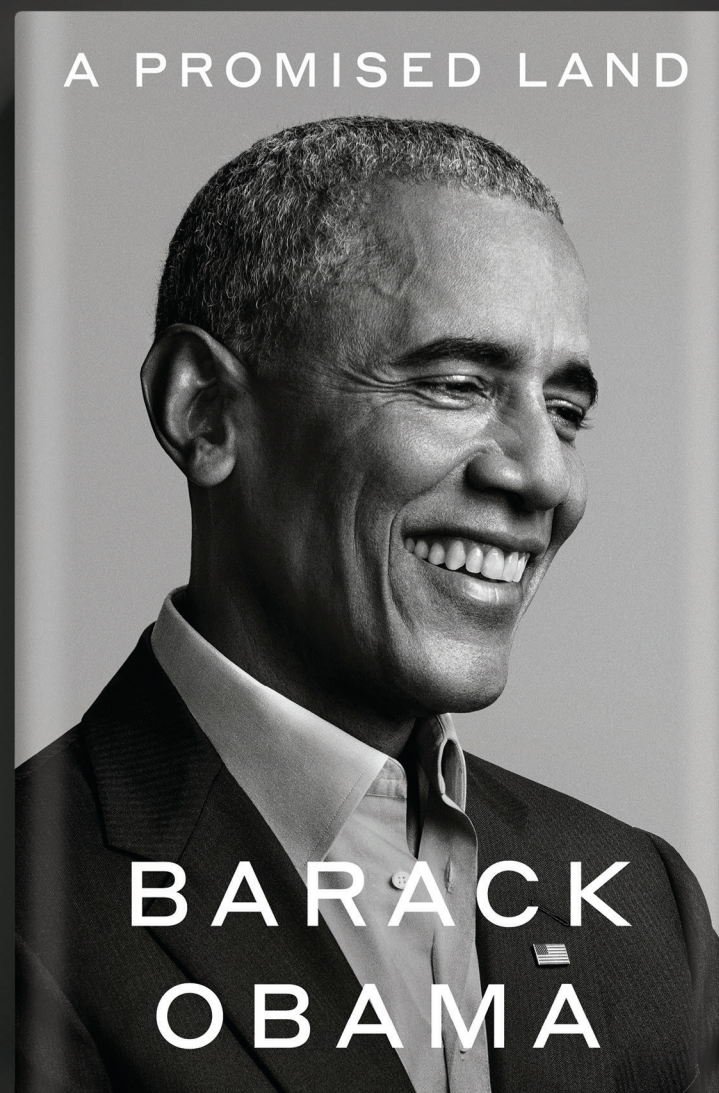
**EXCLUSIVE
BOOK EXTRACT**

My Only Story
by Deon Wiggett



NOVEMBER 17, 2020

THE PRESIDENTIAL MEMOIRS, VOLUME 1



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04 COVER *Idols'* ProVerb tacks author to his name with his brand-new memoir

02 BOOKSCAPE Jojo Moyes, Zoë Wicomb and the new Jack Reacher

07 ADVICE Author and motivational speaker Simon Sinek on harnessing an infinite mindset

08 AT MY DESK Siphiwe Gloria Ndlovu lets us in on the writing process for her latest novel, *The History of Man*

09 FICTION New from Patterson, Hornby and Backman, plus the latest paperbacks out now



17 FOOD See vegetables in a new light with three recipes from Ottolenghi *FLAVOUR*

10 INSIDER An extract and pics from *A Life on our Planet* by David Attenborough

12 NATURE This month, we're reminded of the incredible wonders of marine life

14 EXTRACT Meet the man exposed in Deon Wiggert's *My Only Story*

16 WELLBEING Try a calming meditation from Deepak Chopra's new book

20 IN MY OPINION Dewald van Rensburg unpacks the VBS scandal

Johannesburg | Rosebank Office Park, Block D, 181 Jan Smuts Avenue, Parktown North, 2193 | 011 327 3550

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

Lapa Uitgewers | Bosmanstraat 380, Pretoria, 0002 | 012 401 0700

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Editor Lauren Mc Diarmid **Designer** Sean Robertson **Sub Editor** Frieda Le Roux
Proofreader Catriona Ross **Contributors** Belinda van der Merwe, Ellen van Schalkwyk, Frieda Le Roux, Neilwe Mashigo, Surita Joubert

Welcome!

Now that balmy summer days are well on their way, I can't wait for elaborate all-day brunches with friends out in the garden. Each get together is a battle of the cooks, and by now, I know it's vital I don my maxi dress: pretty but, most importantly, spacious. This season, I'm very excited to have a secret weapon up my sleeve – Ottolenghi's latest cookbook, *Flavour*. We've included three scrumptious recipes (p. 17), including stuffed aubergine in curry and coconut dal. Oh my goodness...

Our cover star this month needs little introduction: Tebogo ProVerb Thekisho of *Idols* fame has just released his memoir, *The Book of ProVerb* (p. 4). It's a touching and honest account of his fascinating life so far. In it, he speaks with candour about his suicide attempt in 2015, and how no one realised the extent of his depression until he overdosed. With October being Mental Health Awareness month, it's worth knowing that this kind of scenario plays out more often than we think, particularly in men, who are three times more likely than women to take their lives. ProVerb was fortunate to come through, and he's used the experience to grow and home in on the most important parts of his life. A true inspiration.

There's so much more to enjoy in this issue, from a peek inside Sir David Attenborough's new book, *A Life on Our Planet* (p. 10), and an extract from Deon Wiggert's exposé (p. 14), to a round-up of some of our terrific new novels (p. 9), so I'll leave you to it. Until next month...

Happy reading!

Lauren

Lauren Mc Diarmid

ThePost@penguinrandomhouse.co.za



bookscape

news | snippets | events | what's new

Everyone's talking about ... the new Jack Reacher

Amazon Prime TV will be adapting the first of Lee Child's Reacher novels, *The Killing Floor*, into a series, and the announcement went out recently that they've cast Alan Ritchson (*Titans*, *Black Mirror*, *The Hunger Games: Catching Fire*) as the coffee-guzzling tough guy himself.

There's been some dispute in the past over who was cast in the role previously, but at 6 ft 4 and weighing just over 100 kilos, Ritchson definitely fits the bill as the popular ex-military cop, and the reader's perfect action hero.

In *The Killing Floor*, Jack Reacher is the only stranger in town on the day Margrave, Georgia has its first homicide in 30 years. The cops arrest Reacher and the police chief turns eyewitness to place him at the scene. As nasty secrets leak out, and the body count mounts, one thing is for sure: they picked the wrong guy to take the fall.

Of the casting, Lee Child said, "We searched the world and found the perfect guy! Happy and excited!"

Lee Child is one of the world's leading thriller writers. His next Reacher novel will be the 25th in the series, and is written with Lee's younger brother, Andrew Child. *The Sentinel* hits shelves this November. To read an extract, visit penguinrandomhouse.co.za.



DOMINATING THE BESTSELLER LISTS

Nobel Peace Prize laureates His Holiness the Dalai Lama and Archbishop Desmond Tutu have survived more than 50 years of exile and the soul-crushing violence of oppression. Despite their hardships – or, as they would say, because of them – they are two of the most joyful people on the planet. *The Book of Joy* offers a rare opportunity to experience an astonishing and unprecedented week the two spent together in 2015, in celebration of His Holiness's eightieth birthday, and discover how to live a life brimming with joy.

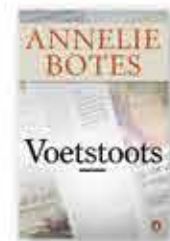


"Think about it: if you were a shepherd with one thousand sheep and you heard that there were two wolves in the vicinity, what would you want to know more about? The sheep... or the wolves? Of course you would want to keep track of the wolves. Even though there aren't that many, and even if they aren't going to kill all the sheep they come across, it's a good idea to understand how a wolf thinks and to know one when you see it. Because once it has decided to attack, it's already too late. Then it will take whatever it wants."

Thomas Erikson, author of *Surrounded by Psychopaths*

OP MY RADAR

Moet dit nie misloop nie



Voetstoots

deur Annelie Botes
'n Bontgejasde keur uit sestien jaar van Annelie se koerantrubrieke. Die temas is so wyd soos die Heer se genade.



Die heeal op my tong

deur Anoeschka von Meck
Die avonture van Willemien en haar suster, op reis om afsluiting te kry met hul pa, is dikwels skreeusnaaks en tref jou soos 'n reusegolf.



Nude 2

by Armand Aucamp
Fresh low-carb and keto dishes, that are simple and budget-friendly without compromising on taste.



Visit penguinrandomhouse.co.za to subscribe to our newsletter for the latest on releases, news, virtual events and so much more.

Jojo Moyes in numbers

Ever wondered what's behind the bestselling novelist and journalist? We broke it down.

12

countries where her novels have hit the number-one spot.

46

languages that her novels have been translated into.

14 million

copies of her romantic drama *Me Before You*, also a hit film, have been sold worldwide.

15

is how many books Jojo's written since becoming a full-time author in 2002.



The Giver of Stars is out now



Q&A

one minute with ...

Zoë Wicomb

A new book by the acclaimed South African author calls for celebration.



A book on Thomas Pringle, his adopted Khoisan son, a freed slave from the West Indies and a character from a Virginia Woolf novel... How did you come across this Scotsman and his highly entertaining entourage? Every local schoolkid of my generation knew of Pringle as the father of South African poetry. Indigenous poetry that preceded him was overlooked, so I wanted to approach Pringle from a different angle. Through Hinza and Mary Prince I focus on how he managed the contradictions in colonialism. Alongside the character from *Orlando*, these figures take turns to narrate, representing different points of view.

Do you set out to address certain societal questions that interest you? I explore characters in relation to the conditions of their times, but also in the light of the contemporary world. As they are shaped in the process of writing, they reveal social issues that I may not have had in mind. For instance, Hinza's reading of Pringle's representation of him in a poem constitutes his struggle with identity; it also raises the contemporary matter of black children adopted by white parents.

What is it about that place where past and present meet that interests you enough to make you pick up your pen?

I'm no good at inventing events and characters, hence my attraction to ready-mades. History and memory are central to my writing and fictionalising. As we see in SA, the story of the past continues to impinge on the present.

Still Life is out now.



MY SIDE OF THE STORY

The multitalented Tebogo ProVerb Thekisho, *Idols* presenter, Kaya FM radio host, producer, entrepreneur and ex-hip hop artist, talks to Lauren Mc Diarmid about his new memoir, *The Book of ProVerb*.

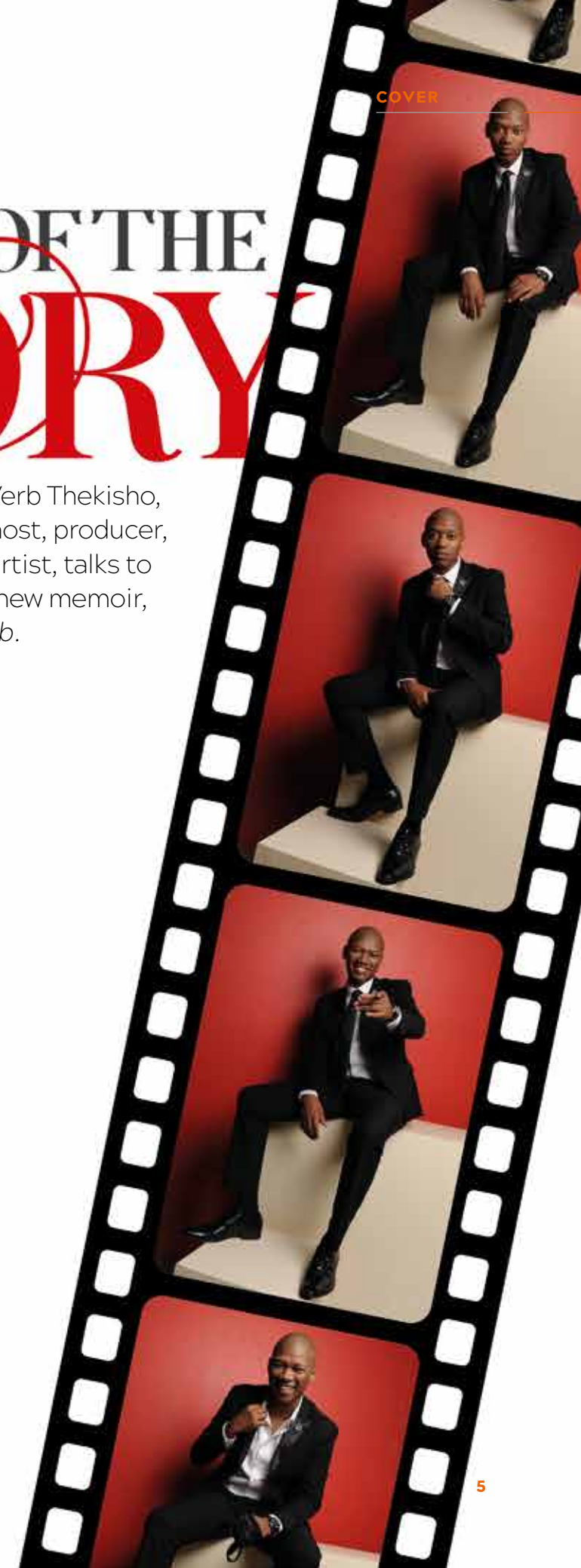
“It took a year to put this book together, and it was a process unlike any other. It was important to me that there were no holds barred, and I won’t lie, it was daunting at first. Every tiny detail about my life, both the good and the bad, handed to my supporters and critics alike on a silver platter...

My co-author, writer Paballo Rampa, was the perfect sounding board to my story. When we got together to work on the book, it often just felt like old friends catching up. It made getting out what I had to say that much easier.

There were details that were hard to surrender – such as my difficult divorce, and my attempted suicide as a result, and more recently, my kids going to live with their mom, and my grandmother’s passing – but I knew going in that I would have to confront these things in the book, going public with my side of the story for the very first time. I’m hoping the book will put a lot of discussions to rest – set the story straight, so to speak – and allow me to go forward with a clean slate.

Voicing these experiences helped me face them head-on. It gave me the space to be truly honest about how I felt, both to the reader and to myself, which was hugely cathartic.

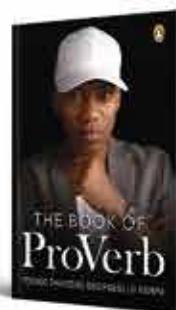
Not only that but I got to reflect on the positives as well. We often get so caught up



in daily life that we rarely stop to notice how much we've achieved. It's only when we do that we see how much good there is to life. I've had an awesome ride, and been lucky to realise many of my dreams, some of which I'm still living.

Fatherhood, for example. I like to say that while I'm raising my kids, they're raising me. Having them in my life – my daughter, Ditshupo, is 14, and my son Kgosi is 11 – has made me more mindful of the decisions I make, both personally and in my career, and the image I project, because I know that everything I do will reflect on them. I love who I am today, and who I am today is very much shaped by them. They're an inspiration to me in all I do.

But without a shadow of a doubt, my biggest inspiration is my grandmother. I spent much of my childhood in Mami's home,



The Book of ProVerb is out now

“Voicing my experiences helped me face them head-on”

and went to primary school where she was the principal. But don't think I got special treatment because of that – if I was late, I got lashings like everyone else!

I was full of mischief as a child – I didn't apply myself at school and would often push the boundaries – but Mami never gave up on me. Her unwavering belief in me and unconditional support pushed me to make the best of myself; to do her proud.

It was Mami's sense of calm determination that moved me to a similar space in my life. For many years as a young entertainer, eager for fame, my life was hectic. I was constantly surrounded by people, in the press, and it felt like my life wasn't my own. It took time for me to identify what's truly meaningful, and to separate that from the rest.

But it hasn't been as straightforward as it might sound. One of my most life-changing experiences came in 2015, when my ex-wife and I decided to divorce. Leading up to that point was all kinds of noise about it from the media, and my own very public declarations online. It made a difficult situation feel insurmountable to me, and feeling very much a failure at the breakdown of my marriage, I decided to take my own life.

I was so lucky that I had people fighting for me that night, among them my brother Mapoza. I think I gave my entire family a scare. I gave myself a scare. But it was an experience that helped free me from that version of myself, and gave me newfound clarity.

Now, I don't seek external validation. What's important to me is to be there for my kids, my family; rejoice in the good times, and support each other through the bad, but do so in our own way, and in our own space. It's helped me clear away the noise, and find the calm.

Definitely a big part of the message I'm trying to convey with this book is that no one is immune to hard times, but we can choose to see them as a lesson in becoming the best version of ourselves.

I've certainly seen my fair share of challenges, and sometimes, I had no choice but to throw in the towel. But deep down I know that no matter which direction things might go, I gave it my all.”

AN INFINITE MINDSET

Unlike in finite games, infinite games, such as life, have players that come and go, rules that are changeable, and no defined endpoint. In his book *The Infinite Game*, Simon Sinek describes the different factors that serve part of this game, one of which is to have a worthy rival, as he describes here in an extract from the book.



“Whenever I heard his name, it made me uncomfortable. If I heard someone sing his praises, a wave of envy washed over me. I know him to be a good person and a nice guy. I respect his work a great deal and he has always been nice to me when we've met in professional settings. We do the same kind of work – write books and give talks about our views of the world. Though there are many others who do work similar to his and mine, for some reason I was obsessed with him. I wanted to outdo him. I would regularly check the online rankings to see how my books were selling and compare them to his. Not anyone else's. Just his. If mine were ranked higher, I would smile a gloaty smile and feel superior. If his were ranked higher, I would scowl and feel annoyed. He was my main competitor and I wanted to win.

Then something happened.

We were invited to share a stage at the same event. Though we had spoken at the same events before, this was the first time we would actually be on the stage at the same time. In the past I would speak on day one of a conference, for example, and he on day two. This time, however, we would be on stage at the same time, sitting side by side for a joint interview. The interviewer thought it would be “fun” if we introduced each other. I went first.

I looked at him, I looked at the audience, I looked back at him and I said, “You make me unbelievably insecure because all of your strengths are all my weaknesses. You can do so well the things that I really struggle to do.” The audience laughed. He looked at me and

“I was attempting to compete in an unwinnable race”

responded, “The insecurity is mutual.” He went on to identify some of my strengths as areas in which he wished he could improve.

In an instant I understood the reason why I felt so competitive with him. The way I saw him had nothing to do with him. It had to do with me. When his name came up, it reminded me of the areas in which I grappled. Instead of investing my energy on improving myself – overcoming my weaknesses or building on my strengths – it was easier to focus on beating him. That's how competition works, right? It's a drive to win. The problem was, all the metrics of who was ahead and who was behind were arbitrary and I set the standards for comparison. Plus there was no finish line, so I was attempting to compete in an unwinnable race. I had made a classic finite-mindset blunder. The truth is, even though we do similar things, he isn't my competitor, he is my rival.

To anyone who has spent time watching or playing games and sports, the notion of a finite competition where one player or one side beats the other to earn a title or prize is familiar. Indeed, to most of us, it is so ingrained in the way we think that we automatically adopt an “us” against “them” attitude whenever there are other players in the field, regardless of the nature of the game. If we are a player in an infinite game, however, we have to stop thinking of other players as competitors to be beaten and start thinking of them as Worthy Rivals who can help us become better players.”

Extract copyright from The Infinite Game by Simon Sinek.

The Infinite Game is out now



at my desk

After winning the 2019 Barry Ronge Fiction Prize for her debut novel, *The Theory of Flight*, Sphiwe Gloria Ndlovu is back with *The History of Man*, out now. She tells us where and how the book took shape.



The perfect writing space for me is 'a room of one's own'. This room is filled with an abundance of books, paper and ink. It is a quiet room where dust is allowed to settle and begin to collect if it so chooses. It is not necessarily always a neat and tidy room – at certain stages of the writing process orderliness is helpful, at most others not – creation is supposed to be chaotic. Even though chaos is allowed to reign in this room, silence is golden, especially at the beginning, because I need to be attuned to the visitations that begin a story – a beautiful, fully formed sentence; an object on a table; a particular gesture that passes between two characters etc. As the writing progresses all becomes sound, movement, action etc., that I have to pay close attention to and, usually for me, the 'room of one's own' becomes messy... notebooks, papers and pens everywhere... again... creation is supposed to be chaotic.

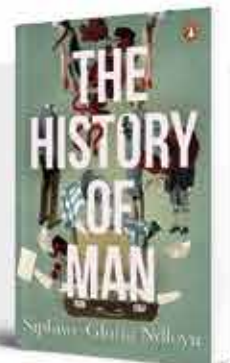
The inherent danger of all chaos is that you can be so immersed in it that everything begins to seem like a cacophony. Since I write the initial manuscripts by hand first, when it comes to typing up the manuscript, I tend to



WIN Stand a chance to win one of three copies of *The History of Man*. To enter, scan the code using your phone camera, or visit penguinrandomhouse.co.za/competitions. Entries close 30 November 2020

have my headphones on. I find that listening to music allows me to focus on the story and 'hear' it better. Because my writing is usually focused on particular historical moments, I like to listen to music from the eras that I am writing about. To this end, I have very long playlists that are categorised by decade. These soundtracks allow me to appreciate the 'texture' of the worlds my characters inhabit.

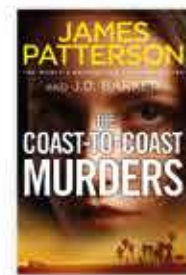
Music also helps me fully appreciate the inner worlds of my characters – to understand what drives them emotionally and/or psychologically. For this, the music need not be era-specific. For example, Emil Coetzee, my protagonist in *The History of Man*, has complicated relationships with women, but manages to fall deeply in love with Marion Hartley. I needed to find a way to convey the 'difference' in the relationship he has with this particular woman. Listening to Soha's *Mil Pasos* helped me to provide a rhythm (that is foreign to him) for his encounters with Marion, which then shows how out of his depth he feels when he is with her and how entrenched his longing for her is.



Emil Coetzee, a civil servant in his fifties, is washing blood off his hands when the ceasefire is announced. How to reconcile this with parents who spent cheery Friday evenings dancing the foxtrot, of childhood days wading through the singing elephant grass of the savannah? The story traces Emil's life from boyhood to manhood - from his days at a privileged boarding school to his falling in love with an ever-elusive, free-spirited woman - all the while showing how Emil becomes a man apart. Told with empathy and generosity.

PHOTOGRAPH: Joanne Olivier

THIS MONTH'S TOP FICTION



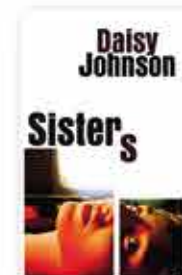
The Coast-to-Coast Murders by James Patterson

When a woman is found murdered in Michael Fitzgerald's apartment, he is quickly apprehended. But then there's another killing that is strikingly similar. And another. And not just in LA - as the spree spreads across the US, the FBI become involved in a manhunt for a cold-blooded serial killer. A stunning psychological suspense thriller with a twist you'll never see coming.



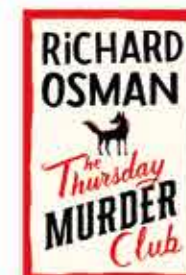
Just Like You by Nick Hornby

The person you're with is just like you. The perfect match. And it is an unmitigated disaster. Then, when you least expect it, you meet someone new. You seem to have nothing in common and yet it feels totally right. A tender but brutally funny new novel that gets to the heart of what it means to fall surprisingly and headlong in love with the best possible person - someone who is just not like you at all.



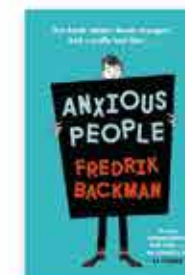
Sisters by Daisy Johnson

Sisters July and September move with their mother to a long-abandoned family home. In their new and unsettling surroundings, July finds that the deep bond she has always had with September is starting to change in ways she can't understand, and tension builds among the three women. With its roots in psychological horror, *Sisters* is a taut, powerful and deeply moving account of sibling love.



The Thursday Murder Club by Richard Osman

In a peaceful retirement village in Kent, four unlikely friends meet up once a week to investigate unsolved killings. But when a local property developer shows up dead, octogenarians Elizabeth, Joyce, Ibrahim and Ron find themselves in the middle of their first live case. A page-turning murder mystery and a joyful, laugh-out-loud celebration of the power of friendship.



Anxious People by Fredrik Backman

A bank robber on the run locks himself in with an over-enthusiastic estate agent, two bitter IKEA-addicts, a pregnant woman, a suicidal multi-millionaire and a rabbit. In the end the robber gives up and lets everyone go, but when the police storm the apartment, it's empty. Afterwards, the witnesses tell their version of events and it's clear we have a classic locked-room mystery on our hands. A riotous comedy.

OUT NOW IN PAPERBACK



The Grace Year by Kim Liggett

A critically acclaimed page-turning feminist dystopia about a young woman trapped in an oppressive society. For fans of *The Power* and *The Handmaid's Tale*.



Who Did You Tell? by Lesley Kara

Astrid seeks out a fresh start in a quiet seaside town, but someone knows about her sketchy past, and is out to teach her a lesson. An addictive psychological thriller.



The Warehouse by Rob Hart

In a world ravaged by bankruptcy, Cloud is the only company left worth working for. But at what cost? A thriller about what happens when Big Brother meets Big Business.



The Starless Sea by Erin Morgenstern

Join Zachary on the starless sea: the home of storytellers, story-lovers and those who will protect our stories at all costs. The magical new fantasy from the author of *The Night Circus*. **12**



ABOVE: Aerial shot of Chernobyl, Ukraine (taken from the Netflix documentary).

LEFT: David Attenborough with Benjamin, a Malaysian sun bear, Zoo Quest

FAR LEFT: Wildlife photographer Charles Lagus filming Zoo Quest in Guyana.

SEE THE WORLD. THEN MAKE IT BETTER.

Sir David Attenborough is renowned for his commitment to the natural world, and his phenomenal documentaries. In this extract taken from his new biography, *A Life on our Planet*, he describes his extraordinary first interaction with the mountain gorillas of Rwanda in 1978, during the filming of his ground-breaking television series, *Life on Earth*.

“There is more meaning and mutual understanding in exchanging a glance with a gorilla,” I said quietly, “than with any other animal I know. Their sight, their hearing, their sense of smell are so similar to ours that they see the world in much the same way as we do. We live in the same sort of social groups with largely permanent family relationships. They walk around on the ground as we do,

though they are immensely more powerful than we are. So if there were ever a possibility of escaping the human condition and living imaginatively in another creature’s world, it must be with the gorilla. The male is an enormously powerful creature but he only uses his strength when he is protecting his family and it is very rare that there is violence within the group. So it seems really very unfair that Man should have chosen the gorilla to

symbolise everything that is aggressive and violent, when that is the one thing that the gorilla is not – and that we are.”

I wished people to know that these animals were not the brutal wild beasts of legend. They were our cousins and we ought to care for them. The awful truth was that the process of extinction that I had seen as a boy in the rocks was happening right here around me, to animals with which I was familiar – our closest relatives. And we were responsible.

When we found them the next day, they were not far from where we had left them. They had settled on a slope on the far side of a small stream. Martin Saunders set up his camera, Dicky Bird the sound recordist fixed a small radio microphone to my shirt. The time had come, John [Sparks, the director of the episode] said, for me to say something about the evolutionary significance of the opposable thumb.

I crept down a slope to a small stream, crossed it and crawled up the opposite slope to a point where I thought that Martin and his camera would be able to see both me and them. John gave me the thumbs-up. But before I could say anything, something

“I was in a delirium of happiness.”

landed on my head. I turned and found that a huge female gorilla had emerged from the vegetation immediately behind me and put her hand on my head. She looked straight at me with her deep brown eyes. Then she removed her hand from my head and pulled down my lower lip to look inside my mouth. This was not, I thought, the moment to talk about the evolutionary significance of the opposable thumb. Something then landed on my legs. Two infant gorillas were sitting on my feet and fiddling with my bootlaces.

How long, in terms of minutes and seconds, this interaction continued I have no real idea. It was certainly several minutes. I was in a delirium of happiness. Then the youngsters got bored with my bootlaces and ambled away. Their mother watched them, heaved herself to her feet to lumber after them.

I crept back to the film crew overwhelmed with a feeling of extraordinary privilege. 📺

Extracted from *A Life on our Planet: My Witness Statement and a Vision for the Future* by David Attenborough, out now. The film, *David Attenborough: A Life on Our Planet* will launch on Netflix later this year.

A Life on Our Planet is out now



Extracted from *A Life on our Planet* by David Attenborough, out now.

OF OCEANS AND SHORES

October is Marine Month in SA, for raising awareness of the country's marine and coastal environments and the benefits that oceans bring.

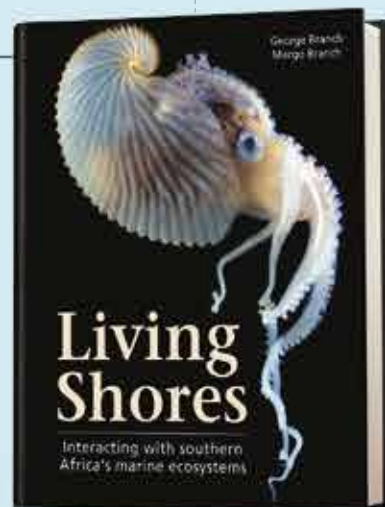
Did you know that only Antarctica and New Zealand have a higher rate of marine endemism than South Africa? According to the classic tome on marine life, *Living Shores*, our seas are rich in marine life, with over 2 300 fish species, 13 000 invertebrates and 870 seaweeds. We also have the second-oldest marine protected area in the world, the Tsitsikamma National Park.

We've gathered some books on the topic – dive right in!

Living Shores by George Branch and Margo Branch

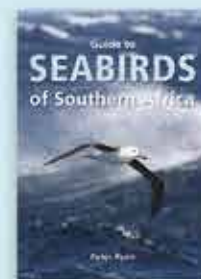
The standard reference for marine science students, but also embraced by a popular market for its fascinating insights into marine and coastal habitats and the life they support. Revived and thoroughly reworked to incorporate the many dramatic changes that our oceans and coasts have undergone over the past few decades.

This book is the first of a two-volume set, and examines the different marine ecosystems and how humankind interacts with them. It discusses the evolution of the sea and continents and looks at the ecology of coastal systems, including intertidal zones, beaches, dunes, estuaries, islands, kelp forests and reefs. Richly supported by full-colour photography and numerous explanatory illustrations, diagrams and graphs, this book will prove invaluable to students and teachers but will also appeal to anyone with a fascination for nature and our marine world in particular.



Orca: The day the Great White sharks disappeared by Richard Peirce

Gansbaai has become synonymous with Great White sharks, creating a flourishing shark-cage diving industry and benefiting the community by bringing jobs and money. But one day, the sharks disappear. Slowly at first, but with gathering momentum, and it's not long before shark carcasses start washing up on the beaches. These, together with some coincidental sightings of another apex predator in the vicinity, are the first leads to the possible causes and culprits, the Orca.



Guide to Seabirds of Southern Africa by Peter Ryan

An authoritative, first-of-its-kind, essential volume for birders' libraries. It focuses exclusively on the nearly 1 000 birds that occur around the southern African coastline and adjacent Southern Ocean. Primarily an identification guide, the book also includes information about these birds' fascinating biology and behaviour. Information, photographs and distribution maps are included for all the birds. A detailed introduction covers, among other topics, seabird origins, havens, feeding, breeding and conservation, as well as how best to watch and photograph these enigmatic birds.



Two Oceans by George Branch, Charles Griffiths, Margo Branch and Lynnath Beckley

For over two decades *Two Oceans* has been the pre-eminent book to which scientists, students, divers and beachcombers turn to identify and learn about marine life, from sponges to whales and seaweeds to dune forests. In this exuberantly colourful, fully revised fourth edition, over 2 000 species are now covered, names and other details have been updated to reflect the latest taxonomy, and many new photographs have been added.



Beachcombing in South Africa by Rudy van der Elst

Enhance your experience of beachcombing, satisfy your curiosity about finds, and contribute to a better understanding of the life in our oceans and along our shores with this friendly guide to the seashore's rich pickings. Short chapters detail what can be found and how to interpret or identify specimens. Items may reveal links to activities or biological events in the nearby ocean – or, perhaps, thousands of miles away. They may relate to human activities, or be oceanographic instruments separated from their moorings. Or they may be part of the growing menace of flotsam and jetsam from the planet's burgeoning human population.



NATURE'S NOTABLES

Pippa Parker is the publisher for Struik Nature, a post she's relished for 25 years.



What are some of your most memorable experiences working with the Struik Nature list? Working with authors on new titles is among my most exciting and rewarding experiences. When I started out, the thought of working with specialist academics (most of our authors) filled me with dread, but it is the part of the job I love most. The passion they have for their individual subjects is infectious (and it turns out that they are really great people).

Is there a particular book you enjoyed working on most? The *Field Guide to Insects of SA* tops my list. That book opened up the endlessly diverse and fascinating world of insects to me.

How do you personally enjoy nature in your own time? I love the great outdoors, be it hiking up a mountain, strolling along the beach (especially one with rock pools), or driving through a game park. I love hiking, running and cycling – all of which allow me to experience nature close up.

What's the next big title you're looking forward to seeing on shelves? Now that *Sasol Birds* 5th edition is out, it has to be *Pollinators, Predators and Parasites* (out in 2021). It is a magnificent tome on the insects across southern Africa's biomes. It offers an in-depth look at the crucial roles insects play, and is brimming with brilliant photographs, too. 



Visit struiknatureclub.co.za to join the Struik Nature Club for the latest on releases, news, virtual events and special pre-order discounts.

EXTRACT FROM MY ONLY STORY

In November last year Deon Wiggett and News24 co-published a series of podcasts called *My Only Story* in which Wiggett exposed Willem Breytenbach, a former Media24 executive, teacher and digital entrepreneur, as an alleged sexual predator.

Now, with Wiggett's new book, *My Only Story*, he goes into more depth to expose Breytenbach's enablers. In this extract taken from the book, Wiggett introduces us to the man, and describes how the memory of him resurfaced, after years of being repressed.

“Willem has not crossed my mind in two decades, but now the memories of him bullet thick from the ocean floor. A few weeks after the death of Dadda – the late, great Mannie Wiggett – I am suddenly forced to think of a man who could not be more different from him.

It is time I introduced you to Willem Breytenbach, who is one of the men this story is about. Before I knew him, Willem was a teacher. An excellent teacher, most of his students will tell you.

‘If none of this had happened, and this was an interview about my school days, he is one of the teachers that really stood out,’ Anton Visser tells me. We are at the back of Table Mountain in a windy suburban park.

“Until we become part of the solution, we can only be part of the problem.”

Willem was Anton's debating coach at the famous Grey College, and was a teacher unlike anyone Grey had seen before.

Anton, who now directs TV ads, tells me about an afternoon in 1990, when Mr Breytenbach ran the debating society. Outside, it is conservative Bloemfontein in apartheid South Africa. Just a few weeks ago in Parliament, President F.W. de Klerk announced the unbanning of the African National Congress, signalling the dying days of white minority rule.

But in Bloem, nothing has changed yet. The whites-only boys of the debating society are sitting in Mr Breytenbach's classroom. He is a teacher so creative, so unconventional, that you just never know what will happen.

For debate, Mr Breytenbach shows the boys something they were never supposed to read: the Freedom Charter, which states that ‘South Africa belongs to all who live in it’ – including, appallingly, the nine-tenths of South Africans who are not white. But Mr Breytenbach is not done! He has also brought the lyrics to ‘Nkosi Sikelel’ iAfrika’, the banned hymn that will

become the national anthem. These are grave things to be discussing in Bloem.

‘At the time, as a white kid you were cut off from that kind of stuff, so we knew it was quite daring [of him],’ says Anton. ‘In a school where most of the teachers were cut from the same cloth, he brought a totally different energy to things. He was a big influence on a lot of people.’

But for all the magic that he brought, there was something Willem could never shake: he is a deeply unattractive person. More than anything, I have always thought he looks like a bullfrog. He is a large, flabby man; he sweats by the gallon; and when he sits, he plonks.

And then there is the problem spit.

Due to an overactive gland, perhaps, Willem produces more saliva than he can swallow. A steady streamlet is always damming up in the corners of his mouth. When he speaks loudly, which is often, the volume of his speech propels the spit forward, and drops of it land on faces and on keyboards and in hair.

Combined with the sweating, it creates the impression of a man overfull of liquid. Like there is no way for Willem's bulky mass to contain all the fluids it produces.

By the time my memory returns, Willem lives in the picture-pretty Cape Town neighbourhood of Three Anchor Bay. On the left-hand side is Devil's Peak and Table Mountain; on the right, the Atlantic Ocean.

It is the nestled district where Willem shares a house with Danie van Rooyen, his life partner. They bought the property together in 2010 and have done it up nicely. The years since Willem left teaching have been good to him.

I do not know it yet, but it was an unfortunate affair that saw this natural-born teacher cast out of education. It was the same problem as always: Willem does what he does.

I know what he does, because I suddenly remember it all.

On a warm spring afternoon in Stellenbosch and a cool autumn morning in Minnesota, Dr Anna Salter talks to me on Skype. She is drinking coffee while an enormous black cat balances everywhere around her, demanding relentless petting.

I am at [an old friend] Nella's house and we have been drinking white wine since

lunchtime. My interview with Anna, who is seventy-three and an indefatigable expert on men like Willem, has crept up on me. I now have to Skype Minnesota from Nella's booky study.

I have, professionally, ensured that my wine glass is not in the shot, and as Dr Salter drinks her coffee, I discreetly sip my wine by leaning out of frame.

I am talking to her because my therapist said something I would like to confirm more widely.

‘Could it have been an accident,’ I ask, ‘or did Willem plan the whole thing from the beginning?’

‘Typically, it's a plan,’ she says. ‘It's not like he becomes friends with a kid and gets carried away by it. He's planning, thinking ... it's on his mind absolutely all the time.’

It is like my therapist said: I was not Willem's only target, and I am not his only survivor. I was one of the boys he wanted, but not an aberration or an anomaly. It was not particularly exceptional when he raped me in the mouth when I was seventeen.

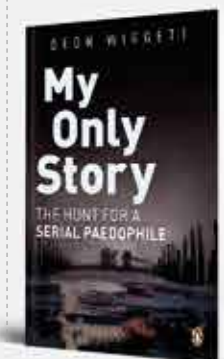
This is not a story of rape and molestation. It is not *Leaving Neverland*, where two men about my age talk about how they were raped by Michael Jackson. I am supposed to say that James and Wade ‘allege’ they were raped by Jackson, but they look and talk like men who remember. If paedophiles do exist, and Michael Jackson was one, these two men are what his survivors would look and sound like. They are James Safechuck and Wade Robson, and it feels to me like they are my brothers.

But *Leaving Neverland* is not what this is. I am not going to tell you all the engorging details of what Willem did to me – and neither will the other men in this story. Each instance was thoroughly illegal and a devastating personal invasion, and let us not dwell overly on teenagers' penises.

This story is not about that. It is about how we might go about catching a bullfrog like mine. Once you know what to look for and where, you begin to spot the common bullfrog.

It cannot be too hard, I think in 2018, three months after Dadda died. I am sitting on my stoep, or terrace or veranda, and I am on my laptop. For the first time in decades, I want to know what Willem has been up to.”

My Only Story is out now



The Path to a Quiet Mind

World renowned for revolutionising meditation for modern life, Deepak Chopra offers a life-changing path to a quiet mind with his new book, *Total Meditation*. Below is a guided meditation taken from the book, which also offers practical awareness exercises and programmes.



THE MASTER MEDITATION

When meditating, it is important to have a vision of your goal. Otherwise you cannot achieve it. If the goal of total meditation is to be completely awake, here and now, once and for all, can we envision it? I believe we can, through one final meditation. It's like a master meditation that includes all other meditations. In it, you don't disappear into the ocean of consciousness, but the opposite. You experience quite clearly that you are present everywhere, right this minute.

You'll need 5 to 10 minutes to do the complete meditation. Close your eyes and try to remain centred throughout.

STEP 1: "I am present in everything I see." Sit quietly with eyes closed and centre yourself. Take 5 minutes to meditate on the following mantra: Aham (pronounced Ah-hum). When you feel calm and settled, open your eyes but remain in your inner place. Let your eyes land on your surroundings without focusing on any particular object.

Say to yourself, "I am present in everything I see. Nothing is visible without me."

STEP 2: "I am present in everything I hear." Let the sounds in your surroundings come to you for a moment.

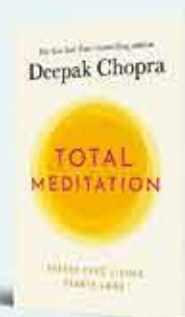
Say to yourself, "I am present in everything I hear. There is nothing to be heard without me."

STEP 3: "I am present in everything I touch." Let your fingers lightly touch your skin, clothing, and any object nearby like the chair you are sitting in.

Say to yourself, "I am present in everything I touch. There is nothing tangible without me."



With meditation, you experience quite clearly that you are present everywhere, right this minute.



Extract copyright from *Total Meditation* by Deepak Chopra, out now

STEP 4: "I am present in everything I taste." Taste the inside of your mouth.

Mentally see a lemon being cut in half with a knife, spurting drops of juice. Taste the lemon's sourness.

Say to yourself, "I am present in everything I taste. Nothing has a taste without me."

STEP 5: "I am present in everything I smell." Gently inhale the smells in your surroundings; it doesn't matter what they are.

Say to yourself, "I am present in everything I smell. Nothing has an odour without me."

STEP 6: "I am present in everything I think." Let your mind go wherever it wants for a moment, to any random sensations, images, feelings, or thoughts. It doesn't matter what they happen to be.

Say to yourself, "I am present in everything I think. There is no mind without me."

STEP 7: "I am present everywhere." With your eyes still closed, remain centred for the last step. Put your attention in the region of your heart. See invisible waves pulsing out from your heart in all directions. Follow them as far as you can until they fade away. For a moment expand how far the waves reach in all directions. It might help to envision the still surface of a pond. A raindrop strikes the surface, sending circular waves spreading out as far as the eye can see until they subside, and the pond is totally still once more.

Say to yourself, "I am present everywhere. Nothing can be without me."

To end the meditation, sit in the awareness of your being, which is silent, unmoving, unbounded, and present as the real you.

BURSTING WITH FLAVOUR

Prepare a feast with these mouth-watering recipes taken from Ottolenghi *FLAVOUR*, the latest from Yotam Ottolenghi, with co-writer Ixta Belfrage.



I have never been shy about my love of vegetables. I have been singing the praises of cauliflowers, tomatoes, lemons and my old friend the mighty aubergine for over a decade. It's become my mission to present vegetables in new and exciting ways and I have embraced it with nothing but enthusiasm.

Still, in the spirit of openness, I must confess to a small niggling doubt that creeps in now and then: how many more ways are there to roast a cauliflower, to slice a tomato,

to squeeze a lemon or to fry an aubergine? How many more secrets are there to be discovered in a handful of lentils or a bowl of polenta?

The answer, I am delighted to report, is many. My journey of discovery into the world of vegetables – by which I mean anything, really, which originates from a plant – has taken me in all sorts of directions that I simply hadn't imagined. If my first vegetable book, *Plenty*, was the honeymoon period, a great big party where certain vegetables

– peppers, tomatoes, aubergines, mushrooms – got a whole chapter to themselves, *Plenty More* was all about process; recipes were divided into the ways in which the vegetables were treated: mashed or tossed or grilled and so forth. *Flavour* is the third book in the series: it's about understanding what makes vegetables distinct and, accordingly, devising ways in which their flavours can be ramped up and tasted afresh; it's about creating flavour bombs, especially designed for veg.'

PHOTOGRAPH: Jonathan Lovekin

Super-Soft Courgettes with Harissa and Lemon



SERVES FOUR as a side or mezze

The courgettes are very good hot, but are better still after 15 minutes or so, or even at room temperature, once the flavours have had a chance to get to know each other.

85ml olive oil
6 garlic cloves, finely sliced
1 tbsp rose harissa (adjust according to the brand you are using)
1 red chilli, finely chopped
½ preserved lemon, finely chopped, discarding any pips (10g)
1½ tbsp lemon juice
1kg courgettes, finely sliced
10g basil leaves, roughly torn
salt

1. Place a large, non-stick sauté pan on medium-high heat with the oil and

garlic. Gently fry for 4 minutes, stirring often, until soft, golden and aromatic. You don't want the garlic to become at all browned or crispy, so turn the heat down if necessary. Remove 3 tablespoons of oil, along with half the garlic, and transfer to a small bowl with the harissa, chilli, preserved lemon and lemon juice. Stir together and set aside.

2. Return the pan to high heat and add the courgettes and 1¼ teaspoons of salt. Cook for 18 minutes, stirring often, until the courgettes are very soft, but are still mostly holding their shape (you don't want the courgettes to brown, so turn the heat down if necessary). Stir through half the basil and transfer to a platter. Spoon the harissa mixture over the courgettes. Leave to sit for 15 minutes, then sprinkle with a pinch of salt and finish with the remaining basil.

Extract Copyright from *Total Meditation* by Deepak Chopra PHOTOGRAPH: Todd MacMillan, Not Far Now Studios

Stuffed Aubergine in Curry and Coconut Dal

Soft paneer makes the most satisfying filling for the grilled aubergines here, as it soaks up the coconut sauce.

3 large aubergines, stalks removed, each aubergine cut lengthways into 6 x ½cm-thick slices (750g)
3 tbsp olive oil
220g paneer (or extra-firm tofu), roughly grated
2 limes: finely grate the zest to get 1 tsp, then juice to get 2 tbsp
45g hot mango pickle, roughly chopped, plus extra to serve
5g coriander, roughly chopped, plus extra to serve
100g large (not baby) spinach leaves, stems removed (60g)
salt and black pepper

COCONUT DAL

3 tbsp olive oil
5 banana shallots, peeled and finely chopped (250g)
45g fresh ginger, peeled and finely chopped
2 red chillies, finely chopped
30 fresh curry leaves (if you can't get any, you can also do without)
1 tsp black mustard seeds
1 tsp ground cumin
1 tsp ground coriander
½ tsp ground turmeric
2 tsp medium curry powder
2 tsp tomato paste
100g dried red lentils
1 x 400ml tin of coconut milk (at least 70% coconut extract)

1. Heat the oven to 220°C fan.

2. In a large bowl, toss the aubergines together with the oil, ¼ teaspoon of salt and a good grind of black pepper. Spread out on two parchment-lined baking trays

and bake for 25 minutes, flipping halfway, until softened and lightly browned. Set aside to cool.

3. For the coconut dal, put 2 tablespoons of the oil into a large sauté pan on a medium-high heat. Once hot, add the shallots and fry for 8 minutes, until golden. Add the ginger, half the chilli and half the curry leaves (if using), cook for 2 minutes, then add the spices, tomato paste and lentils. Stir for a minute, then add the coconut milk, 600ml of water and ¾ teaspoon of salt. Bring to the boil, then reduce the heat to medium and leave to simmer for 20 minutes, stirring once in a while, until the lentils are soft and the sauce is thick. Pour into a medium baking dish, around 28cm x 18cm, if making the aubergine rolls, and set aside.

4. In a small bowl, toss together the paneer, lime zest, mango pickle, 1 tablespoon of lime juice, the coriander and ½ teaspoon of salt.

5. Place one spinach leaf on top of each slice of aubergine. Put a heaped teaspoon of the paneer mixture in the middle, then roll up the aubergine, from the thinner end at the top down to the thicker bottom end, so the filling is encased. Put the aubergine roll seam side down in the lentil sauce, and repeat with the remaining aubergine slices, spinach and paneer. You should end up with about 18 rolls, all sitting snugly in the sauce. Press the rolls gently into the sauce, but not so far that they are submerged, and bake for 15–20 minutes, until the aubergine is golden-brown on top and the sauce is bubbling. Remove from the oven and leave to rest for 5 minutes.

6. Heat the remaining tablespoon of oil in a small pan on a medium-high heat. Add the remaining chilli and curry leaves and fry for a minute, until the curry leaves are crisp and fragrant. Spoon over the aubergine rolls, drizzle over the lime juice and serve with the coriander sprinkled on top.

**SERVES
FOUR
as a main**



Berry Platter with Sheep's Labneh and Orange Oil

This display of the season's best can double up as a light dessert or as a brunch centrepiece. You can make your own labneh but it requires draining the yoghurt for a good 24 hours, or you can make everything easily on the day using shop-bought labneh or some Greek-style yoghurt mixed with a little double cream.

900g sheep's yoghurt, or cow's yoghurt as an alternative
½ tsp salt
100ml good-quality olive oil
10g lemon thyme sprigs, plus a few extra picked thyme leaves to serve
1 orange: finely shave the skin to get 6 strips
200g blackberries
250g raspberries
300g strawberries, hulled and halved lengthways (or quartered if they're larger)
50g caster sugar
1 lime: finely grate the zest to get 1 tsp, then juice to get 1 tbsp
200g blueberries
150g cherries, pitted

1. Put the yoghurt and salt into a medium bowl and mix well to combine. Line a colander with a piece of muslin large enough to hang over the sides and place the colander over a bowl. Transfer the yoghurt to the muslin and fold over the sides to completely encase the yoghurt. Place a heavy weight over the muslin (a few tins or jars will do), and transfer


**SERVES
SIX**

to the fridge to drain for at least 24 hours (and up to 48).

2. Meanwhile, put the oil into a small saucepan, for which you have a lid, on a medium heat. Heat gently for about 7 minutes, or until tiny air bubbles form. Remove from the heat, add the thyme and orange strips, then cover with a lid and leave to infuse, ideally overnight, though half an hour will also do the job.

3. The next day, put 50g of blackberries, 100g of raspberries and 100g of strawberries into the small bowl of a food processor along with the sugar and lime juice and blitz until completely smooth. Put all the remaining berries and the cherries into a large bowl along with the blitzed fruit and gently combine. You

can serve it straight away or leave it in the fridge for a few hours, bringing it back to room temperature before serving.

4. Spread the labneh out on a large platter. Spoon over the berries, then sprinkle with the lime zest. Drizzle with 2 tablespoons of the infused oil, along with a couple of the orange strips and the extra picked thyme leaves. 



Recipes extracted from *Ottolenghi FLAVOUR* by Yotam Ottolenghi and Ixta Belfrage, out now.



In my Opinion

The prosecution of the VBS scamsters would set the bar for other high-profile cases

Investigative journalist Dewald van Rensburg reflects on the case of VBS Mutual Bank, the subject of his new book. The fallout from the defrauding of the bank from Limpopo has played out in a very particular way and he has some thoughts on why.

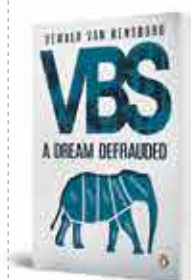
In the public mind, the defrauding of VBS Mutual Bank by its own shareholder, board members and executives between 2015 and 2018 gets pretty close to the ideal scandal. The 'mastermind' of the scheme, Tshifhiwa Matodzi, and his accomplices are seemingly the perfect villains. This is justified to a large extent: Elderly pensioners were robbed to buy sports cars, after all. We journalists have sometimes flattered ourselves that we are the heroes on the other side of the equation.

It is, however, also the special and very particular mix of corporate malfeasance and politics that has driven the VBS story into the national consciousness for over two years.

First, the corporate story. People forget how tiny VBS was. The big banks pay out dividends larger than the entirety of VBS's balance sheet. What made VBS important was that it was a 100% black-owned bank – the first and the only. It was run by a highly qualified set of young professionals who by all appearances had very grand and laudable ambitions. Maybe too grand given its actual capacity, something that became obvious once correspondence between the bank and the South African Reserve Bank became accessible after VBS had imploded in March 2018.

Now that the world knows what was going on, people would like to keep it quiet and forget that there was an enormous amount of perfectly understandable excitement about the little bank that was seemingly pulling itself up by its bootstraps. But VBS was just making its growth up while its bosses stole deposits. The fraud was especially remarkable for how simple and daring it was. It is more

What made VBS important was that it was a 100% black-owned bank – the first and the only



VBS: A Dream Defrauded is out now

remarkable for how much of a betrayal it was after the perpetrators had become torchbearers for a particularly important part of the ongoing transformation project.

Then there is the politics of it. Despite members of the ANC being far more implicated in the alleged network of bribery that sprung up around the ill-fated bank, it has almost become an Economic Freedom Fighters scandal. The reason is simple. A multitude of low-level ANC employees are implicated with the most senior figures in the cross-hairs being provincial bosses Danny Msiza and Florence Radzilani.

The EFF had far less involvement. To be honest, it is hard to see what the party actually did for VBS although it is disproportionately powerful in Limpopo – Julius Malema's home province and the party's major support base. However less implicated the EFF as a whole might be, the important thing is that it is the top two leaders of the party who stand in the firing line for allegedly directly benefiting from funds stolen from VBS. The fallout from VBS threatens the party while it presents nothing more than one embarrassment among many to the ANC.

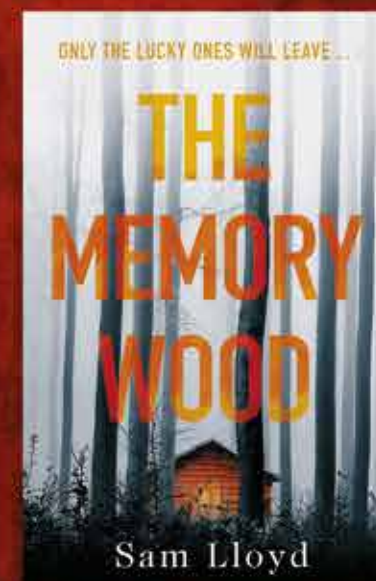
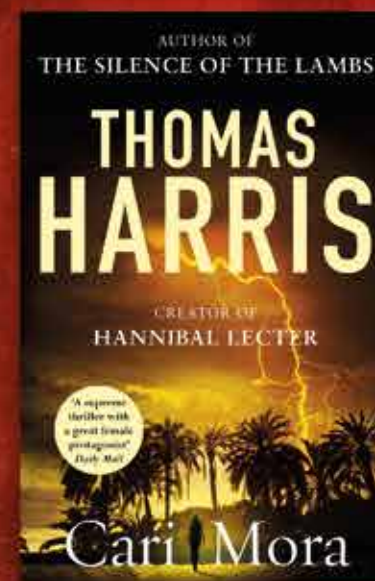
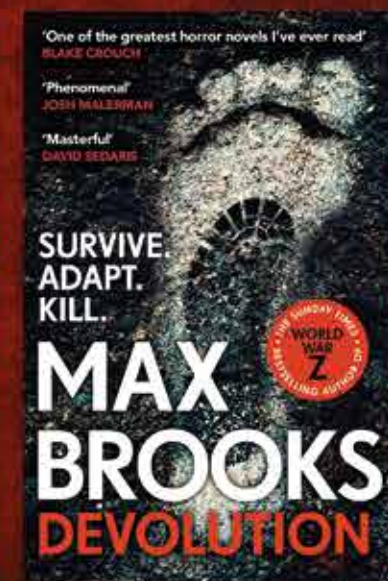
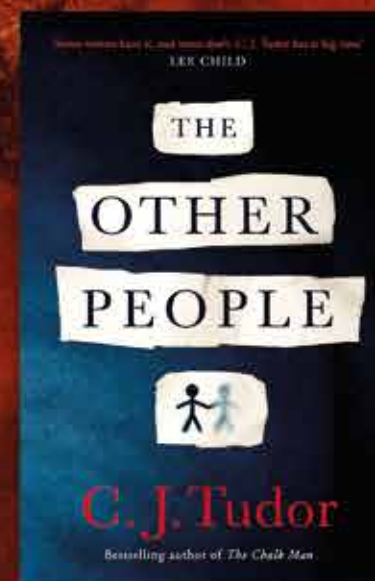
This is why South Africa will – and should – keep watching the VBS scandal unfurl. The prosecution of the (alleged) VBS scamsters will be a watershed for corporate accountability and set the bar in the public mind for other high-profile cases that will almost certainly occur, not least Steinhoff.

Future prosecutions of the municipal officials allegedly bribed to fund VBS with public money will also show the country how much, or little, accountability there really is, at least at the infamously venal local government level. **U**



PHOTOGRAPH: Alain Proust

FOR THAT CHILL FACTOR...

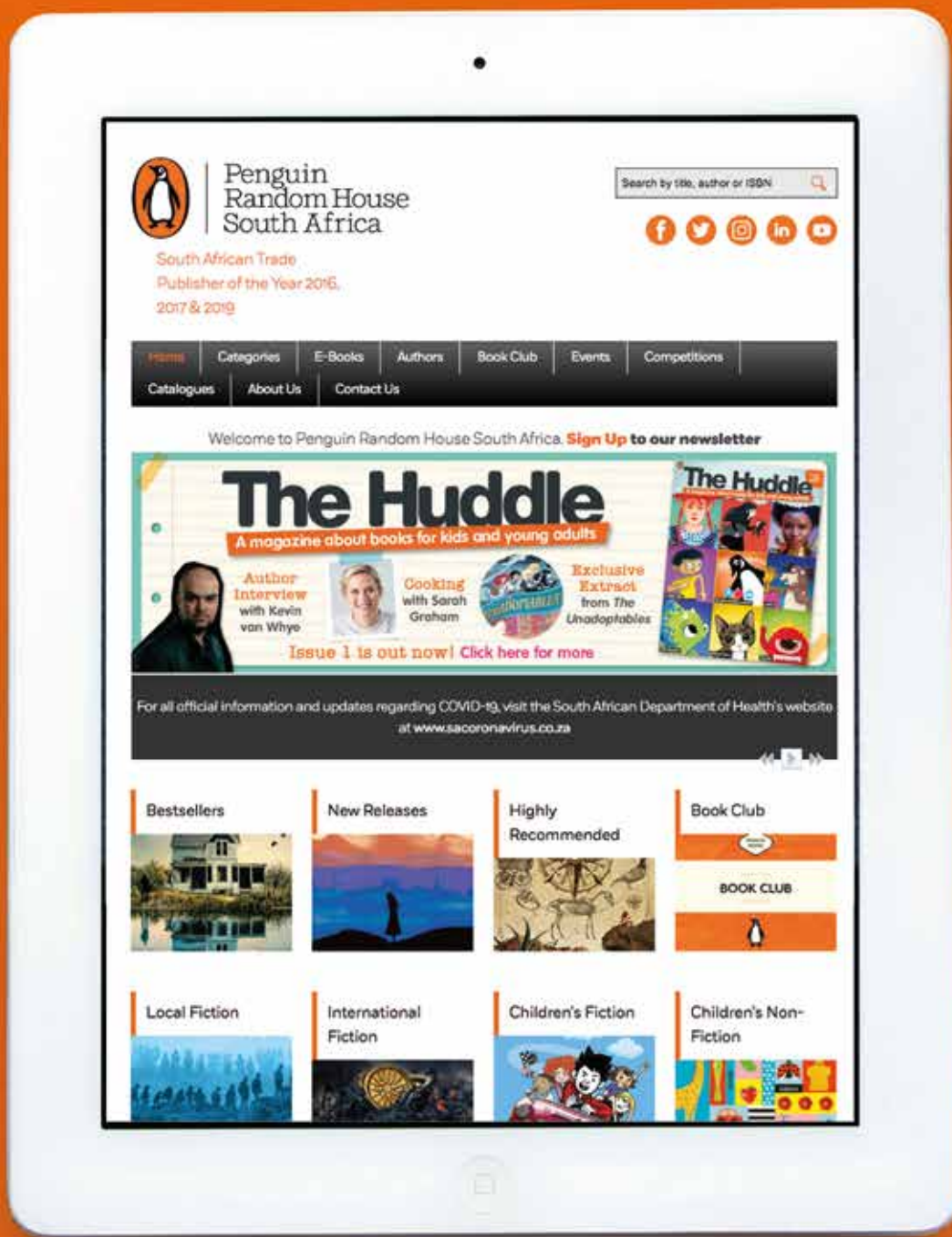


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