

●●● ADULT NON-FICTION VOLWASSE VAKLEKTUUR

BUTTERWORTH, Alex and LAURENCE, Ray **Pompeii: the living city.**- Weidenfeld, 2005.

An evocation and powerful portrait of what life was like in the ancient Roman city of Pompeii covering roughly a period of twenty years from 59 AD to 79 AD. Based on recent research, the reader learns about an earlier devastating earthquake that struck the city in 62 AD causing major destruction and which indirectly served as a warning for a far greater calamity to come some years later.

The authors create a viable scenario of the lives of various inhabitants from different strata of life, revealing an imagined scenario of their daily life in this vibrant and beautiful city. These fictional reconstructions printed in italics lend a more human and personal touch to the inspiring documented text. The reader also learns about Pompeii's past and former rulers who were of ancient Greek descent and of the original people of the area.

The gripping and imaginative narrative cannot fail to please armchair historians who will succumb to the charms of life in this ancient city and at the same time gain an insight into the wider Roman world of the time.

EB

The Complete guide to game development, art and design / by David McCarthy, Ste Curran, and Simon Byron.- Ilex, 2005.

This new guide to videogame development and design is co-authored by three individuals who all have good credentials in the industry. The book is divided into five sections: introduction to game development and history of game design; preproduction (concepts, budgets, tools, pitches, et cetera); production itself; postproduction (localising the game for different countries) - sequels and expansions are also discussed here, and business and financial side (alternative models, marketing and public relations).

Interviews with leading games industry players are spread throughout the book - these take a question and answer format. The book is large, filled with glossy colour illustrations, and includes a glossary, index and a bibliography and resources list. It is attractive, so makes an interesting browse, but it is also accessible, informative and practical enough to be of help to those wanting to get into the field of videogame development.

SG

FRIEDLAND, Linda **Self: die essensiële gesondheids- en lewensgids vir vandag se vrou.**- Tafelberg, 2005.

Vrouegesondheid word weer sterk in die kollig geplaas met die verskyning van Linda Friedland se boek **Self**. Friedland, 'n mediese dokter, internasionale spreker en konsultant, het bevind dat daar 'n tekort is aan gesondheidsgidse vir Suid-Afrikaanse vroue, en veral gidse wat moderne medisyne integreer met emosionele gesondheid, geestelike welsyn, spiritualiteit en 'n vrou se leefstyl. Friedland sê ook voorts in

haar inleiding die volgende: 'Jy hou geweldige mag in jou hande: die vermoë om die beheer oor te neem oor jou lewenspad en jou persoonlike gesondheid. Hierdie boek moedig jou aan om waarlik na jouself om te sien, optimale gesondheid te geniet, vir jouself te begin sorg, jou lewe te geniet, vrede te maak met jou liggaam, jou belangstellings en passies uit te leef en jou emosionele welstand te verseker.'

En dit is presies wat hierdie boek is: 'n goedvoel-oor-jouself tipe boek, wat vroue aanspoor om persoonlik beheer oor alle aspekte van hul lewens te neem. Die areas wat onder meer gedek word, is die volgende: selfbemagtiging; selfaanvaarding; verantwoordelike eetgewoontes; die kwessie van gereelde oefening; chroniese moegheid; stres en spirituele verryking. Die boek bevat ook 'n stel vrae vir self-assessering, asook 'n praktiese plan om beheer oor te neem. Die teks word voorts afgesluit met 'n A-Z afdeling oor vrouesiektes tesame met advies oor die voorkoming en bestuur van hierdie siektes.

Die boek belooft om beslis 'n treffer op ons rakke te wees. Soos Noeleen Maholwana-Sangqu van 3 *Talk* op SABC 3 sê: 'Self sal ongetwyfeld my daaglikse leesstof word. Dit het my bemagtig!' Dit is ook in Engels beskikbaar onder die titel, **Self: the essential health and life guide for today's woman.**

EMW

LOCHNER, Martie

Brei: 35 breiprojekte met 'n kinkel.- Human & Rousseau, 2005.

Brei is weer in! En in hierdie titel verduidelik skrywer Martie Lochner hoe maklik dit nou eintlik is om te brei en hoeveel genot jy daaruit kan put. Haar patrone is relatief eenvoudig en sluit projekte vir die slaapkamer, badkamer, woonkamer, asook breipatrone vir kinders en volwassenes in. Spesifieke projekte sluit in: moderne servettringe; 'n oorgooideken; kussings; warmwatersakoortreksels en nog vele meer. Die titel sluit voorts inligting oor breibenodighede, breitegnieke en spanningswenke vir projekte in. 'n Lys van plaaslike verskaffers word ook voorsien. Ideaal vir die beginner en meer ervare brei-entoesias.

EMW

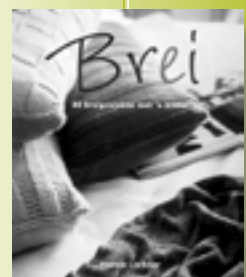
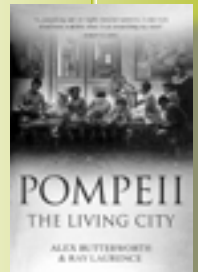
PHILLIPS, Jonathan

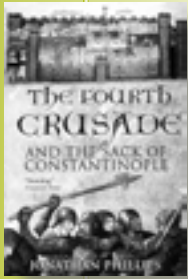
The Fourth Crusade and the sack of Constantinople.- Pimlico, 2005.

A new updated examination of the true facts and history surrounding the infamous Fourth Crusade. It was during this crusade that Constantinople was sacked and conventional explanation has always been that this crusade was hijacked by the Venetians to serve their commercial interests.

In reality what is revealed here was that the Crusaders made a contract with the Venetians to be shipped to the Holy Land and could not pay the bill. Instead they would subdue the Dalmatian city of Zara that had defected from the Venetian Republic.

It was during this period that the Crusaders were approached by Alexius, disinherited heir to the Byzantium Empire, for help to regain his throne in exchange for transport and financial help for the crusade in the Holy Land. But Alexius was murdered and the Crusaders were in trouble. The only safe option for the Crusaders was to seize control





of Constantinople. This academically respectable revisionist account is thoroughly documented by its historian author who tells an enthralling story in a detailed realisation based on extensive primary sources.

EB

SAVILL, Julie

101 bedrooms.- BBC Bks., 2002.

101 kitchens.- BBC Bks., 2003.

101 bathrooms.- BBC Bks., 2002.

These three titles form part of a most attractive and useful series of décor books by the British Broadcasting Corporation's (BBC) **Good Homes** magazine. They are sturdy, glossy paperbacks which will certainly stand up to public library use but are, unfortunately, rather small. As most interior decorating and design books are large, shelving these could be a problem. Each book contains 101 examples of actual rooms - a colour photograph on one page and alongside it text about the room (the look, colour, et cetera). The bedroom book also contains information and tips about the bed and bed-linen, et cetera, and the bedrooms are grouped by style into: bohemian, creative, country, contemporary, classic, and budget. The bathroom book contains information and tips about the bath, shower, basin, toilet, the floor, bathroom accessories, and so on. The bathrooms are grouped by style into: contemporary, classic, country, space-saving, creative and budget. The book about kitchens also contains information and tips about the stove and other appliances, the units, and so on. The kitchens are grouped by style into: contemporary, classic, Shaker, retro, country, and budget.

The books really are a good source of ideas, and would be helpful both for those wanting to change their rooms a bit and those wanting to completely redo them. Recommended but with reservations about size.

SG

Van Patrys-hulle tot Hanna Hoekom: 'n gids tot die Afrikaanse kinder- en jeugboek / redakteurs, Gretel Wybenga en, Maritha Snyman.- Lapa, 2005.

Met hierdie nuwe titel, **Van Patrys-hulle tot Hanna Hoekom: 'n gids tot die Afrikaanse kinder- en jeugboek** vul Lapa Uitgewers 'n leemte in die Afrikaanse kinder- en jeugliteratuur. Die titel, geredigeer deur Gretel Wybenga en Maritha Snyman verskaf 'n omvattende oorsig van Afrikaanse kinder- en jeugliteratuur. Die boek is verdeel in twee afdelings. Deel een bevat artikels oor: kinder- en jeugprosa, poësie en jeugtoneel, die geïllustreerde kinder- en jeugboek, jeugreekse, jeugboekvertalings, kinder- en jeugtydskrifte, en bekronings.

In deel twee word die leser bederf met 'n A-Z lys van outeursprofiële. Die teks word afgesluit met 'n onderwerpsindeks tesame met 'n bylaag van kinderboekillustrasies. 'n Teks waarby iedereen kan baat vind: of jy nou 'n vakkundige, 'n student, ouer, onderwyser of ywerige leser is.

EMW



●●● ADULT FICTION VOLWASSE VERHALENDE LEKTUUR

HENSHER, Philip

The fit.- Flamingo, 2005.

When John discovers that his wife has left him, he starts to hiccup. The only problem is that as the days come and go, the hiccups stay. During this time, John meets some strange and amusing characters, which in alternating ways bring him to a better understanding of himself, and of the reason for his wife's inexplicable departure.

All this is told with immeasurable wit. Although Hensher's humour is hard to define, his style of narrative is light and engaging.

A rather interesting and curious addition to this novel is an index. This index is supposedly the natural extension of John's passion and occupation as indexer for the Institute of Indexes and Indexing. Yet all is not light and frivolous. Two chapters shift from John's point of view to those of his wife Janet and mother respectively. One deals with the breakdown of a marriage, the other with the tragedy of losing a daughter in a notorious homicide.

These brief sidetracks into the narrative have the effect of bringing the reader back to reality, powerfully demonstrating the thin line between such reality and the double-edge sword of perception and denial. **The fit** is the author's sixth novel and is a remarkable effort. Its refreshing narrative style and subtle poignancy leave a deep impression, and remind us to take an objective look at ourselves every now and then.

EB

KOSTOVA, Elizabeth

The historian.- Little, 2005.

A teenage American girl living in 1972 Amsterdam unexpectedly discovers an unusual ancient book in the library of her widower father, a former academic historian, now diplomat. The cover of the book sports an illustration of a dragon and the word 'Drakulya' engraved on it. Blank inside, it contains a bundle of old letters addressed to 'My dear and unfortunate reader'.

This is the beginning of a vivid and atmospheric tale for the search of the truth behind the myth of Dracula.

The narrator goes to sly lengths to avoid revealing her name, leaving it open to speculation that the narrator could be the author herself. When the narrator approaches her father for answers, he slowly reveals his story while on tour of interesting places in Europe. We hear about his friendship with a Professor Rossi who happens to be the author of the letters contained in the book. Professor Rossi disappears unexpectedly during the 1950s shortly before the narrator's father's unusual meeting with the professor's illegitimate daughter Helen, who in turn ends up joining him in his search for her father.

The plot unfolds at a rapid pace, and is intelligently told through narratives, flashbacks and letters, never giving away too many clues at once. In this spirited



update and reworking of the Bram Stoker classic, it seems as if Dracula has developed a mysterious liking for librarians.

This spirited debut novel that has received praise-which worthy published reviews does not rely on shock tactics but is rather literary and suspenseful.

EB

MANFREDI, Valerio Massimo

The oracle.- Pan, 2005.

Popular author of classic novels usually set in the ancient world of Greece and Rome here offers a modern tale that is inspired by an ancient prophecy.

At the centre of the story lies a golden vase unearthed at an archaeological dig and upon which images are engraved revealing the history of Odysseus's journey to the realm of the shades. The secrecy and safety of this precious artefact is ensured by its dying discoverer, a Greek archaeologist.

The story opens in 1973 in Greece at a time when there is much dissatisfaction with the ruling military regime and many student demonstrations. When a peaceful student demonstration becomes violent, a group of student friends flee for safety into the basement of a museum. This happens to be the eve of the discovery of this golden vase that has been placed for safety there. The students notice it and wonder at its beauty, and in this manner become linked to it.

Because the girl called Heleni has been seriously wounded and needs medical attention, the students move on to a safer place. While trying to locate a doctor, one of the students is stopped by a military patrol and during a brutal interrogation reveals all. Heleni and her boyfriend, Claudio are captured and during interrogation Heleni is brutally raped. Both she and Claudio are declared dead, and their friends are forced to leave Greece.

Ten years later a series of macabre deaths occur to those responsible for Heleni's cruel death and each death is carried out according to the dictates of an ancient oracle.

EB

MOSSE, Kate

Labyrinth.- Orion, 2005.

The story opens at an archaeological dig somewhere in the south of France on Monday 4 July 2005. Doctor Alice Tanner chances upon a concealed tomb quite by accident, inadvertently setting off a chain of events that soon become life threatening. The discovery of the shattered bones of the two inmates sets off a series of police investigations resulting in the closure of the dig.

Doctor Tanner is aware of a sense of evil pervading the tomb when she discovers an unusual ring engraved with a strange design of a labyrinth. This ring disappears during the investigation and it is somehow linked to the mystery surrounding the tomb.

The story then switches to another time period, some 800 years earlier, on the night before a brutal war ripped apart Languedoc. Alais, a young herbalist and healer, is given a book filled with secret symbols and diagrammes by her father. This, together with two other books, is the basis for the Holy Grail legend, stemming from an ancient past. It is 1209, a

time of the crusade against the Cathars, a 'heretical creed'.

The story skilfully switches from past to present, carefully blending the lives of both Alice and Alais, who are united in a common destiny, in an exciting and satisfying conclusion.

Readers who enjoyed novels such as Dan Brown's **Da Vinci Code** will likely enjoy this clever and powerful atmospheric opus.

EB

SUSSMAN, Paul

The last secret of the temple.- Bantam, 2004.

The suspicious death of an aged hotel-owner Piet Jansen at a rarely visited archaeological site encourages Egyptian police inspector Khalifa to investigate. His findings link this case to an earlier case involving the murder of an Israeli woman at Karnak that led to the conviction of the wrong man.

Khalifa has to team up with a Jerusalem detective Arie Ben Roi, who is trying to recover from a devastating grief. At the same time the story focuses on a Palestinian journalist, Eva Town, who is summoned to meet 'Al-Mulaasam', a Palestinian extremist also known as 'The Veiled One'.

Set against the backdrop of escalating violence between Israelis and Palestinians, Eva Town pursues her investigations that centre round a mysterious medieval manuscript and letter, while Khalifa and Arie slowly uncover the truth about Piet Jansen.

As these investigations entwine, the protagonists discover that the web of intrigue they have stumbled onto is connected to an ancient artefact that could, if it landed in the wrong hands, plunge the Middle East in an all-out war.

This is another example of a new genre known as the archaeological thriller that is gripping and a pleasure to read.

EB

VALLGREN, Carl-Johan

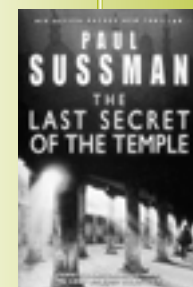
The horrific suffering of the mind-reading monster Hercules Barefoot: his wonderful love and his terrible hatred.- Harvill P., 2005.

Two prostitutes give birth simultaneously in a brothel in Konigsberg on a stormy night in the year 1813. To one a beautiful girl is born who is named Henriette, while the other gives birth to a monstrously deformed boy child. The boy receives the name Hercules Barefoot by the house madam who raises him as her own after his mother's death at childbirth.

As both children grow up together in the brothel, an incredible bond forms between them. Hercules uses his secret talent of mind reading to help others and to silently communicate with his great friend and lover, Henriette. But, alas, this idyll does not last, and after several years, they are separated.

It is during this period that both experience many misfortunes. Hercules makes good use of his special talents travelling through most of Europe on his desperate quest to find Henriette.

Happily, Hercules unites with Henriette, and after they conceive their first child, tragedy strikes. This leads our unlikely hero on a life mission of revenge, fuelled by a fierce hatred.





Although the tragedies and the dark brooding atmosphere of the narrative at times bear heavily upon the reader, the depiction of the beauty and the love between the two protagonists make it difficult to put down. This story is very similar to the adult fairy tales associated with writers such as Gabriel Garcia Marquez and Isabel Allende.

Readers with an appreciation for literary ingenuity and looking for something truly original will find that they will be rewarded with an unforgettable reading experience.

EB

VAN MIL, Ilona
Sugarmilk Falls.- Picador, 2005.

I felt quite let down when I finished this book. It ends just before an event which would bring a certain finality to a long chain of happenings in a small, isolated community in the Canadian 'outback', and you will never know how it turned out. I assume Van Mil uses this ending to illustrate a theme throughout the novel, that so much of life is up to chance, that almost everything is a gamble, and that there are no neat endings to anything, only changes.

Sugarmilk Falls is the name of a town in Canada's maple country, where everyone knows everyone else's business and where they all listen in to conversations on the town's communal telephone line.

The story begins with a stranger coming to the town in the remote valley, on a quest to find out about 'that terrible time' 20 years earlier that had affected the lives of so many of the townsfolk. It is a cold, snow-swept night when the locals gather in one of the houses to tell the stranger the story of the unsolved murders, the fires, the love affairs and the jealousy. And the gambling, where huge tracts of valuable maple forest are lost and won with the throw of a dice.

We meet fascinating characters - Grand'mère Oswekan, an old Indian shaman whose people originally owned the maple forests; Zack, a loner who lives in the woods and hunts for a living; Mathieu Souris, a Catholic priest with deep secrets and Marina Grochowska, an 'outsider' who causes a stir when she comes to Sugarmilk Falls to take up the post of school teacher.

It is a good yarn, with a plot that twists deeper and deeper. For those who do not mind a story which leaves the reader guessing, it is well worth reading.

MG
 Cape Times

●●● JUVENILE FICTION
 JEUGLEKTUUR

DONALDSON, Julia
Charlie Cook's favourite book / illustrated by Alex Scheffler.- Macmillan, 2005.

From the creators of *The gruffalo* comes a hugely original picture book, that I would use to inspire creative work with children in a classroom situation. It is basically about a book within a book within a book within a book. The end papers show a shelf of books, from *A country childhood* to *Incredible stories of real birds*, *Joust joking*, *Shiver me timbers*

and *Fairy tales from a forgotten island*.

The story starts when we see Charlie Cook reading his favourite book, curled up in a chair in the lounge. When we turn the page, we, the readers, are now reading that favourite book entitled *Shiver me timbers*. The double spread depicts a double spread from this other book and we read there that when the pirate opened the treasure chest that he found on the island, he found a book. We then turn the page to find ourselves reading from the pages of that book, entitled *Fairy tales from a forgotten island*. What a book this is! It is sophisticated, fun and appealing all at the same time with a supremely neat ending.

JdeB

GRAHAM, Bob
Oscar's half birthday.- Walker Bks., 2005.

Bob Graham really is a masterful picture book creator - his new book tells the gentlest loveliest story of a mixed race family celebrating baby Oscar's half birthday (he is six months old) with a picnic in a city park where all the other picnickers join in with the singing of 'Happy Birthday'.

Milly is Oscar's almost four-year-old sister, a real individual who wears fairy wings on her back and a dinosaur glove on her one hand. And it is she who is the star, if there are any in this book, where every member of the family gets love and recognition from Graham.

There is a quiet and a calm in this family story when so often those in this picture book sub-genre are frenetic and overly busy. The text is measured and quite lovely at times. As they walk beneath the trees in the park and listen to the wind, 'Oscar frowns up against the light - six different expressions on his face in the time it takes a leaf to fall.' It is the details that Graham chooses to highlight in his text and/or his illustrations that make this such a pleasure, and a deep rich one at that.

JdeB

ROBERTS, David
Pooh! Is that you, Bertie?!- Little Tiger P., 2004.

This is the sequel to *Dirty Bertie*, which won the Nottinghamshire Children's Book Award 2004 and was short-listed for the British Book Design and Production Awards 2003. In this new picture book the incorrigible Bertie discusses the joys of farting. His family complains when he farts, not only because he delights in letting rip any and everywhere, but also because they are so extremely smelly; but Bertie knows that they all fart too, surreptitiously perhaps, but their farts are just as smelly as his. Children will be delighted (and perhaps a bit shocked) with all the lavatorial humour and some adults may even recognise themselves in Bertie's descriptions of the other members of his family.

SG

Note: At the time of going to press, some of these titles were still on order.

EB	Erich Buchhaus	JdeB	Johanna de Beer
MG	Melanie Gosling	SG	Sabrina Gosling
EMW	Ethney Waters		

