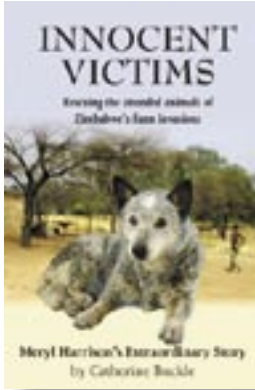


ADULT NON-FICTION
VOLWASSE VAKLEKTUUR



BUCKLE, Catherine
Innocent victims: rescuing the stranded animals of Zimbabwe's farm invasions.- Merlin Unwin Bks., 2009.

This is the poignant story of Meryl Harrison who became the reluctant hero in Zimbabwe's darkest times when she undertook the upsetting task of rescuing thousands of animals left stranded on invaded farms during Zimbabwe's land re-distribution. Meryl, now retired and living in

England, was at the time the chief inspector of the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals during the infamous land grab in Zimbabwe in the early 2000s. While there are several excellent titles on this chain of events, little has been written on the plight of the thousands of animals who were caught up in this madness.

Meryl, in her sixties and with a heart condition, always travelled with one or two young SPCA inspectors and together they would face mobs of men who were often drugged or drunk, and usually armed with weapons. They would drive to remote areas to visit abandoned farms and Meryl soon gained a reputation that would precede her. She never took sides and her only mission was to gather these abandoned and estranged animals.

All of the stories in *Innocent victims* are original first hand accounts taken from Meryl's diaries. Some of the rescues are gruesome and heartbreaking while others reveal great courage, ingenuity and passionate reunions. The book is at times an emotional read because of the tragedies Meryl and her team had to deal with on a daily basis, but author Cathy Buckle has balanced these beautifully with uplifting and often humorous accounts of rescues.

In 2002 Meryl received international recognition and was awarded the BBC Special Award for Outstanding Work in Animal Welfare. EB



GRANN, David
The lost city of Z: a legendary British explorer's deadly quest to uncover the secrets of the Amazon.- Simon, 2009.

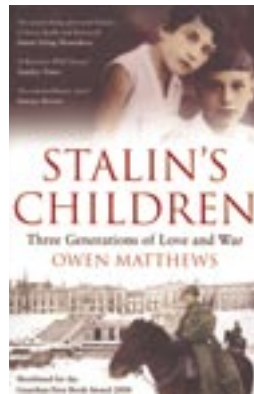
Intrigued by the mystery surrounding the disappearance in 1925 of the British explorer Colonel Percy Harrison Fawcett in search of a lost civilisation hidden in the Amazon jungle, and that

of subsequent expeditions to trace the missing Fawcett, the author decided to go on a journey of his own in the footsteps of the missing explorer. This resulted first as an article in *The New Yorker* where the author recounts Fawcett's life and exploration, as well as his own journey, and later in his riveting new book.

At first it was just a story filled with a great deal of adventure, but when the author discovered a chest full of Fawcett's diaries and logbooks, which held unprecedented clues to what happened to him and the mysterious location of the City of Z, Grann became consumed by the mystery and its romantic nature. Fawcett marked the end of the age of terrestrial exploration, and Grann provides an animated report of Fawcett's remarkable life.

He renders a fascinating reconstruction of Fawcett's journey into the Amazon jungle, giving the reader a suspenseful account of his own efforts and finishes off his visit to the architect Michael Heckenberger, who had been excavating a vast ancient settlement in the very area that Fawcett was believed to have vanished.

This is a wonderful piece of travel writing and detective work, and reads at the pace of a movie thriller. There is even talk that this book is to be filmed – it certainly has the right ingredients. EB



MATTHEWS, Owen
Stalin's children: three generations of love and war.- Bloomsbury, 2009.

The central story is that of the author's parents, Lyudmila and Mervyn who met in Cold War Moscow in the 1960s, immediately fell in love and, before they had a moment to get to know each other, were separated by Mervyn's deportation from Russia. He had previously been courted by the KGB, eager to

recruit him to the service of International Peace. Mervyn had refused and this ensured that he would never be allowed back in the country. He and Mila (Lyudmila) spent six years writing passionate letters to each other, during which time Mervyn desperately tried everything to have Mila sent out from Russia. During this time he delayed publishing his book for Oxford University Press about Soviet youth because it could jeopardise Mila's chances to leave the Soviet Union, thus ruining his successful academic career and resulting in the loss of his Oxford tenure. When the opportunity eventually arrived for the lovers to be together, the relationship had cooled somewhat and the marriage was never a happy one. Matthews goes back and forward from his parents' romance, reconstructing the circumstances surrounding the death of his

grandfather Boris Bibikov, one of the vanguard of Stalin's murderous collectivisation of the farms.

Highlighting his mother's and aunt's (daughters of Bibikov) dep-
rivations in World War II, the author contrasts his own fascination
with the changing Russia of the 1990s. Some of Matthews' most
vivid pages evoke the children's inconceivably brutal experiences
during the war, and what it was like to be one of Stalin's children.
The final element of the book is as remarkable and reflects the
author's opinions on the new Russia. This is a fascinating mixture
of part memoir, part family history, and part meditation on an
ever-changing Russia, combining emotion with drama that would be
worthy of a family saga novel.EB



MESSENGER, Charles

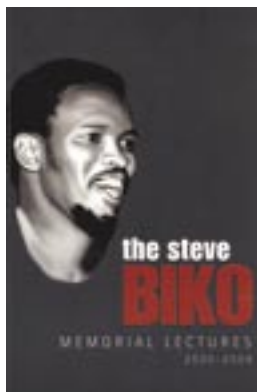
Wars that changed the world.-
Quercus, 2009.

A look at the background history
of twenty-five major war conflicts
starting from the great Pelopon-
nesian War some 2500 years ago,
and closing with the ongoing war
on terror. Military historian Charles
Messenger skilfully delivers read-
able accounts of military campaigns
and confrontations, which are not

only enlightening, but also provide an accessible overview of world
history. Included in this book are profiles of Alexander's conquests,
the Spanish conquest of Mexico, the Seven Years War, the Ameri-
can War of Independence, the Napoleonic Wars, the American
Civil War, the First and Second World Wars, Vietnam, and many
other conflicts that have had a decisive impact on the world.

The book is well illustrated and also includes useful timelines,
maps covering sites of major battles, iconic images and important
personalities associated with particular events.

What a pleasant way for readers to discover how key wars have
altered the course of history!EB



**The Steve Biko memorial
lectures 2000-2008. - Steve Biko
Foundation, 2009.**

This is a collection of nine lectures
given by different prominent
African political leaders, scholars,
religious figures and artists since
its invention of the memorial
lectures up until 2008. Each year
prominent individuals have been
chosen to prepare a paper based on
the legacy and leadership of Steve
Biko. The individuals who have

given lectures are: Njabulo Ndebele (2000), Zakes Mda (2001),
Chinua Achebe (2002), Ngugi wa Thingo (2003), Nelson Mandela
(2004), Mamphela Ramphele (2005), Desmond Tutu (2006), Thabo
Mbeki (2007) and Trevor Manuel (2008). Anyone who has been
following the lectures on television will appreciate this slight yet
very thought-provoking book. It forces one to ask questions that
on the surface seem easy yet difficult to answer. What one may
find appealing about this book is the fact that the speakers come
from different spheres, each with his or her personal imprint. This
is a book that one wants to own, especially in times when one
wants to discover the essence of being an African, and the trails
and tribulations and responsibility of being one.LN



WALKER, Sylvia

**Dealing in death: Ellen Pakkies and
a community's struggle with tik.**
- Oshun, 2009.

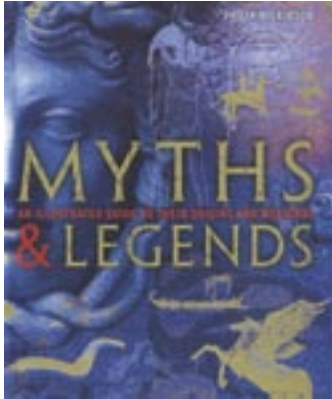
When everything fails whom do we
blame? Do we blame the mother
for not taking care of her children
by not being there because her
first priority is her work rather than
her children? Or do we blame our
communities or society, our back-
grounds, law enforcement, poverty,

illiteracy? This is a book that will get people talking. Although she
has written numerous articles this is the author's first book and
was intended to be a biography about Ellen Pakkies.

Ellen killed her son Abie, a tik addict, and was sentenced to
three years imprisonment, suspended for three years plus three
years community service. When Ellen and Sylvia (the author) met
in preparation for the biography Ellen, after consultation with her
husband, had a change of heart. The author and publisher then
decided to discuss a broader picture about the struggle with tik in
our communities. The author still writes about Ellen, her back-
ground, her son and the trial, including other mothers who have
also been through the same suffering. She tries to highlight the
trauma that families experience, the role of one's background and
environment; the *nature versus nurture* argument. It gives a glimpse
of Ellen's background: how she was exposed to sexual abuse
and neglect from an early age, how she internalised everything
and never received any counselling, and how her sons were also
exposed to physical and emotional abuse. Abie (real name Adam
but changed it to Abraham and shortened it to Abie) died at the
young age of 20 years but had exposed his mother to seven years
of torture and fear. He dropped out of school in grade 7 but his
mother wanted something better for him as she had also dropped
out of school in standard 2.

We have many titles on drug addiction but this one brings
the problem much closer to home. It is for all those ordinary

individuals who see the signs but are in denial, all those who feel helpless and have nowhere to go. This is for all those who want to be in touch with reality, to really understand the pain, abuse, conflict, confusion, suffering, loneliness, disappointment that families go through, especially the mothers. It is well researched, well written and could have been one of the best local biographies to read in 2009 if it had gone deeper but despite that it still is a must-read book for everyone. LN



WILKINSON, Philip

Myths & legends.- Dorling Kindersley, 2009.

Myths and legends will continue to fascinate mankind for many years and the latest offering from Dorling Kindersley will ensure that this trend continues.

The book offers a global look at mythology, revealing its meaning, context and cultural significance. Char-

acters and stories are explored within their cultural, psychological and religious meanings, and the author shows how different cultures dealt with many deep-rooted questions.

By using striking colour illustrations and informative captions, the author ensures the book's tremendous appeal for the reader. Paragraph-sized 'asides' aid in illuminating this field of interest.

As with most DK publications the material is far from exhaustive, but still contains a wealth of information set out in an easily accessible format with enough colourful illustrations to please both the amateur and the seasoned reader.

This title can be considered as one of the best to appear on this timeless subject in recent years and certainly has universal appeal. EB

Norwegian stave churches. His journey also leads him to Egyptian tombs, antiquarian book stores in Rome, and even across the Atlantic to America and a mysterious palace in the Caribbean.

Unfortunately others are interested in the parchment as well and Bjorn is tailed by Arab henchmen sent by a mysterious South American billionaire and collector of ancient relics.

Despite obstacles Bjorn discovers that during the year 1013 Viking warriors raided an Egyptian tomb and unknowingly stole the mummy of Moses, the original text to the *Books of Moses* and even a previously unknown Sixth Book. These relics hold a secret clue to relevant information to the *Book of Genesis* that, if made public, could unveil a religious cover-up and affect the three main religions: Judaism, Islam and Christianity. Compared to Dan Brown's works, this is an engrossing and original thriller exploring biblical and historical myths which will grip readers from the start and keep them guessing until its unexpected finale. EB



MORAN, Michelle

Cleopatra's daughter.- Quercus, 2009.

This is the author's third historical novel and follows the adventures of the children of Marc Anthony and Cleopatra, Queen of Egypt. Narrator Kleopatra Selene and her twin brother, Alexander, are just ten years old when Egypt falls to the armies of Octavian. Rather than submitting to the humiliation of Roman rule,



their parents commit suicide. The surviving three children, Selene, Alexander and Ptolemy, are taken to Rome to prevent them from ever rising to power and challenging Rome. Ptolemy does not survive the sea voyage but his sister and brother are adopted into the household of Octavia, Octavian's sister, who was once the wife of their father, Marc Anthony. There they must quickly learn to adapt to Roman customs and culture to survive in a court rife with rivalries and political conspiracies.

This intoxicating story is vividly narrated by Selene who captures the times and intrigues of her new life. The period is brilliantly brought to life and readers will be engrossed by our charming heroine who eventually finds love and a kingdom of her own. Although this is fictionalised it is based on historical fact and readers who enjoy historical fiction will certainly not be disappointed. EB

ADULT FICTION
VOLWASSE VERHALENDE LEKTUUR

EGELAND, Tom

The guardians of the covenant: an epic quest for the Bible's darkest secret/ translated by Kari Dickson.- J Murray, 2008.

A young Scandinavian archaeologist, Bjorn Belto, leads a fairly conservative and dull existence until the day he discovers some ancient Viking parchments containing mysterious rune ciphers and core riddles. To discover their meaning Bjorn embarks on an adventurous quest which takes him to remote places in the Icelandic wilderness and to obscure and out-of-the-way antique



MUIRHEAD, David

The clamour king.- Snowbooks, 2008.

In this strange, ethereal novel, author David Muirhead explores issues of youth, obsession, and the intense allure of beauty across all boundaries of age, gender, and preference. The story is set in a boarding school in the south of England during the 1960s. Its protagonist is the thirteen-year-old Peter Chapman,

recently relocated to this school after a teacher at his previous school kissed him in mid-lesson and then committed suicide soon after. Considering Peter's exceptional, almost asexual beauty, one begins to understand why adults, both women and men, and children are all in the thrall of the young learner. Yet beauty also brings out the worst in those who envy it, and thus Peter suffers a series of violent and degrading acts by some of his fellow students. The most compelling aspect of Muirhead's novel is the way in which he questions the fine line between being charming and being beguiling. Although Peter Chapman seems to be fully aware of the power he wields over people due to his exceptional good looks, he at the same time possesses an uncanny sense of innocence.

Yet it is here that the drama of this entrancing novel lies. Is Peter Chapman the victim of his own beauty, or does he deliberately use his charm to manipulate those around him? The answer to this question is never fully answered, but that adds to the mystique and charm of **The clamour king**.EB

When Maya falls pregnant by someone she refuses to name, Sera arranges and pays for an abortion so that Maya can continue with her studies.

On the other hand, when he was still alive, Sera's husband used to beat her up and it was Bhima who rubbed oil on Sera's bruises. Despite the intimate bond forged by mutual suffering there is an intangible space between the two women. Both accept it as normal that when they have tea together Bhima squats on the floor at her mistress's feet and drinks from a special cup, just for her.

Disaster unfolds when the father of Maya's child is revealed. The space between Sera and Bhima intensifies and with dismay the reader sees that the bond between them counts for nothing in the face of race, class and culture.

Some of the issues in the novel can't help inviting comparison with Khaled Hosseini's **Kite runner**, namely betrayal and the complex, unequal relationship between master and servant. But **The space between us** is not sentimental, it is tragic. It is Bhima's determination not to abandon hope of a better life that saves her and the novel from descending into blackness.PD

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

EB..... Erich Buchhaus
LN Linda Ngaleka
PD Penny Dommissie



UMRIGAR, Thrity

The space between us.- Fourth Estate, 2006.

The novel is set in Bombay (now known as Mumbai) where the author lived until she emigrated to America at the age of 21, living there as a novelist, journalist and creative writing teacher.

The character of Bhima, the Hindu servant, is based on Thrity's childhood housekeeper in Bombay. 65-year-old Bhima is an illiterate,

poverty-stricken slum dweller who works as a house servant for Sera, an educated, comfortably-off Parsi widow. Bhima's husband has run off, taking with him their only son and the family savings. Moreover Bhima has been left to bring up her daughter's child alone. (Maya was orphaned when both parents died of AIDS).

Ignoring warnings from her friends against familiarity with servants Sera pays for Bhima's granddaughter's college fees.

'Die bose kom selde toevallig oor ons pad. Ons nooi hom gereeld uit.'

Hennie Aucamp
(1934-)

