



The Tari - Kākā / Khandallah Literary Review

October 2023

Welcome to the October edition of our monthly newsletter. Our newsletter can also be found online at:

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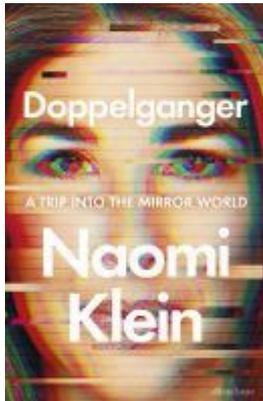
We'll review books, and some music, which appeal to us. Contributions come from library members and staff (basically, anyone who tells us about a Book, Movie or CD they like)

“Books often give me paths into conversations – more often with a question than an answer. Books have made me happier to say, “I don't know”, and books have made me more eager to listen. When books are not my “social life”, they enhance my social life”

“A bookseller tells me that one of her youngest customers calls books “your paper friend” Robin Ince

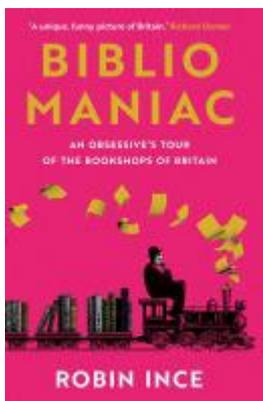
(Kākā design by Michelle Carlton Wilderness Collection)

Doppelgänger: A Trip into the Mirror World by Naomi Klein



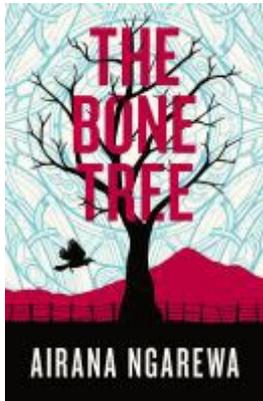
Klein is most well known for her political analysis on subjects such as climate change, 'disaster capitalism' (the practice of pushing through policy that takes advantage of natural and human-made disasters), and even wrote about personal branding in the 90s, something that we are all too familiar with in the present day. Her most recent book 'Doppelgänger' breaks away from the style of her previous works, playfully unpacking the strange phenomenon that has occurred for many years where she is constantly mistaken for author Naomi Wolf, who is also a political writer but with wildly different views. After years of hearing "I can't believe what Naomi Klein is writing about these days" on social media, compounded by the frustrating era of covid disinformation, she follows her literary doppelgänger down the rabbit hole to uncover what she describes as a 'mirror world' of conspiracy. Part memoir and part social critique, the book is as entertaining as it is useful to understand the strangeness of the times we live in (the image of her doing yoga while listening to Steve Bannon's podcast for research is an image that is hard to forget). Ultimately it is a deeply empathetic book, and while at times it can be overwhelming with the amount of ground it tries to cover, it offers comfort for what we have all been through these past few years, and some ideas for how to move towards a more caring world in the future. Alison

The Bibliomaniac: An Obsessive's Tour of the Bookshops of Britain by Robin Ince (Non-Fiction)



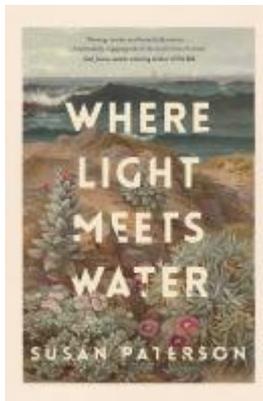
As lockdown lifts comedian and bibliomaniac Robin Ince goes on a speaking tour, through the towns (and bookshops!) of Britain. As he travels he finds stories, information and many weird and wonderful books. This is a charming and funny view of Britain but mostly it's about the author's lifelong love of books and bookshops. David

The Bone Tree by Airana Ngarewa (Fiction)



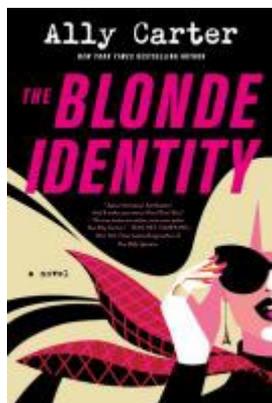
There's been a welcome flourishing of Māori literature in the last few years, and this is another fine example of it. A gripping novel set in "the wops" of Taranaki, *The Bone Tree* is about a broken family. Recently orphaned, teenage Kauri is determined he can raise his little brother on his own, afraid of what might happen if he's taken into state care. However, with the bills piling up and the cupboard running bare, there's only so much he can do. Drawn into town to find food, Kauri also begins to learn more about his family history. This book is incredibly sad, spotlighting the harsh realities of life in the margins - poverty, alcoholism, homelessness, and the effects of intergenerational violence are all strongly felt. Nonetheless, it's well-written, full of striking landscapes and strong Kiwi vernacular, and hard to look away from. Charlotte

When Light Meets Water by Susan Paterson



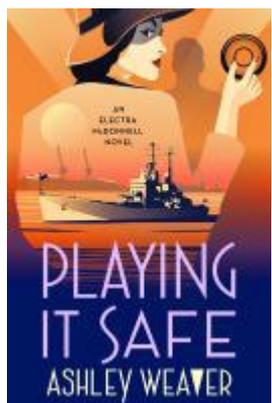
This is a debut from NZer Susan Paterson currently living in Melbourne. Set in the mid to late 1800s this is a beautiful novel about art, love and seafaring. The central character Tom, born into poverty in Scotland goes to sea as a young boy, eventually becoming a master mariner, captaining his own ship, a sailing/trading vessel. There are sailings to Port Chalmers and Australia towards the end of the book and glimpses of life here back then. Lots of nautical terms pepper the book- in a fascinating way. Life at sea was hard physically as well as mentally but Tom also paints wherever he goes, particularly ships and ships in stormy seas - perhaps inspired by trips to galleries in London to see Turner's paintings? Tom meets Catherine in London while his ship is in dry dock for repairs. He takes his easel out to Richmond by the Thames bank where she also paints with her chaperone. Painting side by side forms the slow and quiet love story. She is rich, quite opposite to Tom but their art brings them together as equals. Highly recommended. I loved it. Jill

Blonde Identity by Ally Carter (Fiction)



I never thought I'd say this but, I have read a Rom-Com novel and I loved it! It's the first non-YA book for this author, a delightful romp of mistaken identity, trigger happy assassins and hunky spies. A woman wakes up in the Paris snow bloody and bruised and with no memory. Escaping from an attack, Alex (that's not her real name) discovers she can understand French "Ooh! I speak French! Alex exclaimed, entirely too pleased with herself. But after hours of nothing, that felt like something. She wanted to make a T-shirt that said I SPEAK FRENCH. She wanted to stroll up to the first person she saw and stick out her hand and say, Hi! I'm Alex and I'm Bilingual!" The story moves from HER to HIM (secret agent/Mr Hot Guy) as the pair look for her twin sister. Frothy but never frivolous, with banter that Harry and Sally would be proud of, this is a high energy, charming salute to romance, no matter who's trying to kill you! Greg

Playing It Safe by Ashley Weaver (Fiction)



This cosy mystery is one of a series featuring feisty heroine Ellie or Electra McDonnell, a former thief. She's a fun, brave and likeable heroine who now puts her lock picking and safe cracking skills to good use to help the British intelligence services during the Second World War. The plot moves along at a good pace and leaves you guessing who's good and who's bad with a few red herrings along the way. There's intrigue, a potential romance and historical insights into life in London and England during the Blitz.

This is an easy read after a hard day at work and I enjoyed it. Fiona R

Spare by Prince Harry (Memoir)

Harry's autobiography as told to ghost-writer J. R Moeringer



“It was good to read his perspective rather than relying on the media articles. I really enjoyed it” Julie

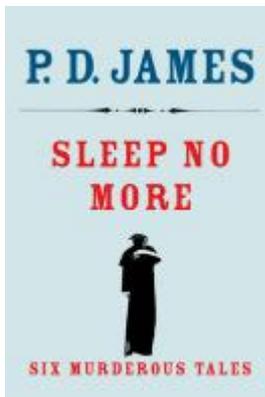
The Queen of Dirt Island by Donal Ryan (Fiction)



Young Saoirse comes from a line of strong women forced to fight for their land in this luminous story of prejudice and patriarchy

“I loved it! Beautiful use of language” Margaret

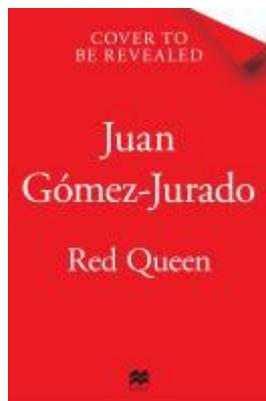
Sleep No More: Six Murderous Tales by P.D James (Mystery)



Six previously uncollected short mystery stories from one of the Queens of Crime Fiction.

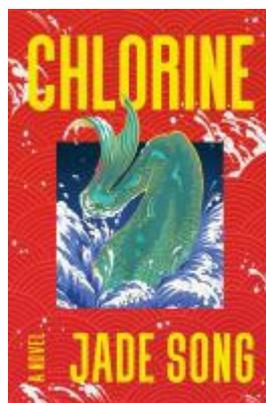
“Well-crafted and beautifully written” Neroli

Red Queen by Juan Gómez-Jurado (Thriller)



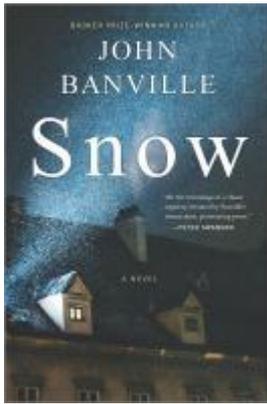
Shades of Lisbeth Salander, Spanish style. Antonia Scott is not at ease unless she's contemplating suicide. Her remarkable brain has solved many crimes, but now she's a recluse, avoiding as much stimulus as she can to stay sane. Jon is a disgraced Police Inspector, sent on a last-ditch mission to persuade Antonia to return to her special unit, and save his career. The case is bizarre- Kidnappings where no ransom is demanded, one resulting in a ritualistic murder. The first in a trilogy, translated from the Spanish, is matter of fact about the violence and gruesome deaths, but still manages to generate tension. The author has crafted an original story with vulnerable characters, a sinister protagonist and a twisted plot. How Antonia came to be discovered and trained is both compelling and tragic. Greg

Chlorine by Jade Song (Fiction)



Ren Yu is a swimmer whose life outside of the pool holds little attraction. When she's not in the water, she reads and rereads her book of mermaid tales from around the world - fascinated not by the mermaids who sacrifice the sea for a man, but those who are free of the burdens of being a teenage girl, burdens Ren is struggling to cope with. As the pressure of her human life mounts, she starts to dream of transforming herself into a mermaid and escaping. Chlorine is an unsettling novel, at times almost too unsettling for me - if body horror is a no for you, avoid this one! But the visceral depiction of girlhood is also the great strength of this dark, haunting fairy-tale. I definitely won't be looking at mermaids the same way again! Charlotte

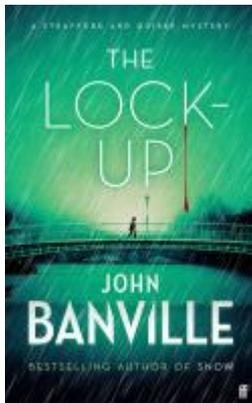
Snow by John Banville



the snow deepens. Jill

A murder mystery set in County Wexford and Dublin, Ireland in 1957. D.I. Strafford - “that’s Strafford with an R” is sent to investigate the death and horrible mutilation of a priest. This Whodunnit has an Agatha Christie type setting of...blizzard conditions, large manor house and entitled/bumbling characters within, each carrying their own secrets. The mighty Catholic church is at the heart of everything (as usual in John Banville novels) and we guess that the priest aka “Father Tom” has a few secrets of his own. These are revealed as the story unfolds...and

The Lock-Up by John Banville (Crime Fiction)

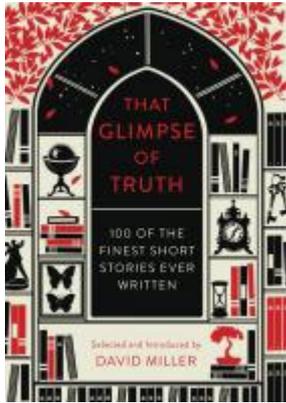


In 1950s Dublin, in a lock-up garage in the city, the body of a young woman is discovered, an apparent suicide. Pathologist Dr Quirke and Detective Inspector Strafford soon suspect foul play. The victim's sister, a reporter from London, returns to Dublin to join the two men in their quest to uncover the truth. But, as they explore the victim’s links to a wealthy German family in County Wicklow, and to investigative work she may have been doing in Israel, they are confronted with an ever-deepening mystery.

The author, John “the Irish master” Banville lives up to his reputation as ‘one of the best novelists in English’ (The Guardian) in this crime novel. His use of perfectly chosen words and finely crafted phrases are matched by his sense of atmosphere, richly realised characterisations and his understanding of the complexities of human nature. This paragraph made me think of Wellington’s gusty Spring weather. *The storm outside had intensified. There was a thrilling sense, even in this cosy room, of the night all around in turmoil, great whorls of wind spinning through the darkness and the stars shivering’*

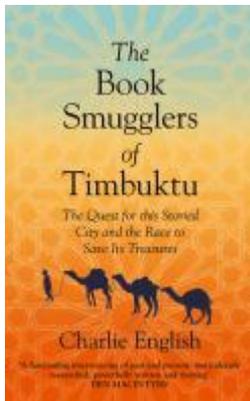
There are written scenes that beautifully mask a threat within seemingly polite conversation and the descriptions of the grief experienced by the recently widowed Quirke are unequalled in their originality. David

That Glimpse of Truth: 100 of the Finest Short Stories Ever Written
Ed. David Miller



Obviously what stories qualify as the finest is subjective. As the editor says, “I am still irritated by what I have not been able to include.” The stories here run the gamut from the well-known such as Poe’s *The Tell Tale Heart* to the obscure such as Willa Cather’s *Consequences*; famous writers (Dickens - *The Signal-Man*) to the never heard of (Delmore Schwartz - *In Dreams Begin Responsibilities*) From the humorous (Roald Dahl - *Parson’s Pleasure*) to the strange (Samuel Beckett – *Ping*) Traditional (Katherine Mansfield – *A Married Man’s Story*) to the surreal (Nikolai - Gogol *The Nose*). A mixed bag of stories, some excellent, some dated, but just as interesting are the facts and quotes noted in the mini biographies for each author. Arthur Conan Doyle was buried twice, Saki (H. H. Monroe) just before being shot by a sniper said, “Put that bloody cigarette out”. I liked the quote from P. G. Wodehouse – “I know I was writing stories when I was five. I don’t know what I did before that. Just loafed I suppose”. Greg

Book Smugglers of Timbuktu: The Quest for this Storied City and the Race to save it’s Treasures by Charlie English (Non-Fiction)



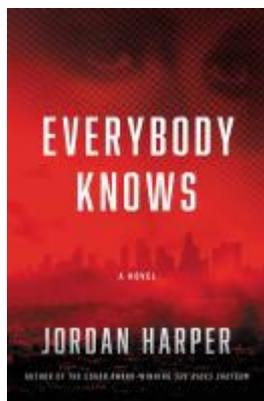
The historical search for the legendary city, and the contemporary battle by librarians and archivists to save ancient manuscripts from al Qaeda.

Not only really good, but an indictment of the incredible arrogance of colonialism and the lack of respect for African Culture. Such a good writer! Gail M

Angels and Queens Part One by Gabriels CD (Soul/R & B)

The trio cover a range of styles, classic R & B, soul, gospel and jazz. The lead singer, Jacob Lusk, channels Nina Simone and Billie Holiday, wringing every drop of emotion from these songs of love and loss. The songs and lush orchestrations range from dramatic to surprisingly tender and are a perfect platform for Lusk’s remarkable voice. David

Everybody Knows BY Jordan Harper (Mystery)



Hard boiled L.A. Noir is not for everyone/an acquired taste but it can be rewarding. This an involving but bleak story of people whose jobs mean they do horrible things. Mae works for a PR firm with high profile clients. She is the Magician, conjuring cover ups and misdirection out of thin air. When we meet disgraced ex-cop Chris, he is pummelling a client's associate who sold the wrong story. He is the Fist, in service to what they both call The Beast, celebrities, lawyers and politicians who hold the real power in L.A. It's a tough read, a tale of corruption, murder, blackmail and statutory rape. Written in the 3rd person, brief alternating chapters propel the action. I almost put it down, until I found the rhythm of the staccato style of narration, and I'm glad I persevered. Mae and Chris used to be an item once, and now they reconnect, at first to survive themselves, but then to save lives and find a form of redemption. A brutal and uncompromising book that delivers a real rollercoaster ride. Greg

Freckles by Cecelia Ahern (Fiction)



Allegra Bird is a parking warden in a suburb outside of Dublin. She likes the routine. She likes the rules. She's also a life model. Obsessed with meeting her estranged mother, the story takes us through a tumultuous year of her crazy heartfelt life. A joy! Anon

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