

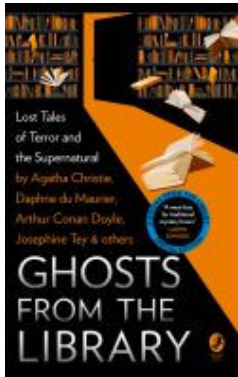
The Khandallah Literary Review

Welcome to the August edition of our monthly newsletter.

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)

" I had no money growing up, my dad was a labourer and my mum did everything to make ends meet. Men worked hard. Women worked miracles. But education was free. As was the local library. I knew books were my passport to a better life". Ricky Gervais-Actor

Ghosts from the Library: Lost Tales of Terror and the Supernatural
Edited by Tony Medawar (Supernatural anthology)

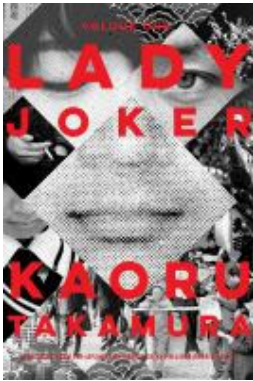


This collection of lost and long forgotten short stories, admittedly some deservedly so, were written by some of the most acclaimed mystery writers of the golden age of crime fiction. Some names we remember (Agatha Christie, Arthur Conan Doyle) some we may not. I enjoyed many of these stories not only for their classic tropes of ghosts, witches, and haunted houses but also for the precision of the language of the day-each word of the author's broad vocabularies chosen carefully to accurately and richly describe their story. Perfect for an enjoyable cold weather read by the fire, with a drink.....and the doors

locked! David

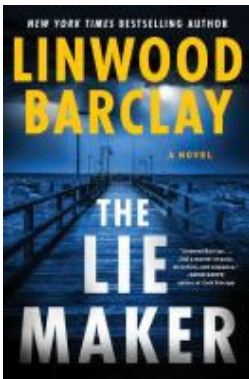
Fun fact: Christianna Brand is one of the authors in this anthology and although a prolific writer from the 1940's to the 70's she is probably most familiar to us as the author of the Nurse Matilda children's stories which were turned into the Nanny McPhee films.

Lady Joker by Kaoru Takamura (Fiction)



A modern classic in Japan, Lady Joker is a densely layered novel about the kidnapping of a CEO, inspired by the real-life 'Monster with 21 Faces' case. It's a hefty, 2-volume novel with a large cast of characters - definitely not light reading! Takamura presents a wide-ranging study of Japanese society, from the poor men who commit the crime to the wealthy victim to the jaded cops and reporters who investigate it. All struggle to find meaning in their lives, demoralised by the demands of capitalism. Although the novel is nearly 30 years old, the contemporary resonance is striking; the inequality and alienation it portrays have only increased since it was published. I occasionally got lost in some of the detail, particularly around corporate strategy and financial crime, but was blown away by the depth and complexity of the writing. If you have the time to get stuck into a doorstopper, I would highly recommend this one! Charlotte

The Lie Maker by Linwood Barclay (Thriller)



This bestselling author has written 22 novels as well as 2 thrillers for children! His stories are always well written, not overly complex or demanding and are fast paced. This has the intriguing premise of the son of a hitman who, when his father is put in witness protection is forced to stay with his mother and watch him go alone. Decades later, as a struggling author, Jack is approached by very organisation that spirited his father away when he was nine. They want him to create believable histories for the people they protect, lies they can rehearse. Jack sees this as an opportunity to find his father Michael. At the same time his girlfriend is a reporter on the trail of people who have disappeared. The intricate involving plot, written mainly in the first person from Jack's point of view with alternate chapters of events concerning the other characters, including Michael's chequered past works well. Greg

Skintelligent: What You Really Need to Know to Get Great Skin
By Dr Natalia Spierings (Non-Fiction Health)



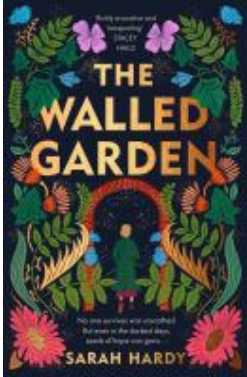
Do you have FOMOOS-Fear of missing out on skincare? Are you constantly tempted by that new cream or serum? Dermatologist Dr Spierings appraises the clinical evidence of what is proven to give better skin, and possibly more importantly, what high profile ingredients have no supporting proof of their efficacy. A little heavy, naturally, on the jargon of the medical profession but still a practical guide which could save you time and money. You may be comforted by how simple her suggested skin care regime is and that one of her recommended moisturisers may already be in your bathroom cabinet and is certainly at the local supermarket. This is a very different skin care book from the plethora already on the market written by influencers and celebrities. David

All Sorts of Lives: Katharine Mansfield and the Art of Risking Everything by
Claire Harman (Non-Fiction)



Published to coincide with the Mansfield centenary, All Sorts of Lives is part biography, part literary criticism. Structured around 10 of Mansfield's stories, each chapter discusses the story and then the background behind it - what was happening in Mansfield's life at the time it was written. The author is English and has taught at English universities, so her introduction gives an interesting impression of how Mansfield is regarded outside of New Zealand. It's rather fawning, working hard to convince people they should read her, which no New Zealander needs to be told! But the main text was enjoyable, packing a lot into its relatively brief length while still being very readable. It's tricky writing criticism for an audience that may not have read the stories, but Harman strikes a good balance between explaining what the stories are about while still making you want to read (or reread) them afterwards. A good option for anyone with an interest in Mansfield who doesn't feel like tackling the much longer Complete Stories or standard biographies. Charlotte

The Walled Garden By Sarah Hardy (Fiction)



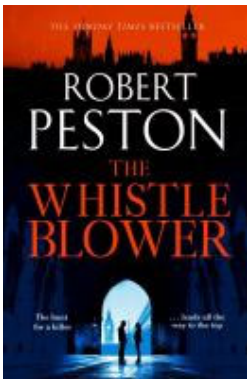
The Walled Garden isn't an easy read but there is something beautiful and hopeful about it. It's in 1946 after the war when the men have returned home to Oakbourne Village carrying mental and physical scars and dark memories from their war time experiences, which continue to haunt them.

The story is mainly told through the eyes of their wives who've had their own challenges in war time. They're exhausted, or they've gone from having purposeful jobs to being a housewife again. Victory seems bittersweet to them.

Peacetime has its challenges for all of the men and women of this Suffolk village. as they try to fit back together into the domestic life they knew before the war. But their edges are sharper, they've all been changed by the trauma they've witnessed or experienced and it's not easy for any of them to go back. The plot unfolds very gently, and the focus is on the complex characters who are beautifully written, particularly nurse Jayne Davies the wife of the local doctor and a former surgeon. He has returned a bitter, angry man with a hand tremor and an amputated leg. Meanwhile the main character Lady Alice Rayne is dealing with the dilapidated Oakbourne Hall which is falling down around her while her marriage also crumbles. She's deemed lucky that her husband Stephen has returned physically unscathed by the war but he hates himself for the atrocities he's had to carry out and the secrets he carries. It takes the new vicar - fresh out of the East End of London - to gently draw the demons out of the villagers.

This is a really well written books with nuanced characters that draw you in. I recommend it. Fiona R

The Whistle Blower by Robert Preston (Thriller)



Author is ITV's political editor. A Journalist has a personal reason to investigate governmental wrongdoing when his estranged sister is killed in a suspicious hit and run. Did she know one secret too many? "Intriguing story about the dirty reality of Politics. A lot of swearing but really very good". Robert

Jamilia by Chingiz Aitmatov (Fiction)



This novella is a simple but beautifully told love story of a neglected wife and a wounded soldier, seen through the eyes of 15-year-old Seit, her brother-in-law who also loves the fiery Jamilia. The author gives few clues to the time and place but lyrically describes the feelings and passions of the people involved. Jamilia is constrained by the traditions of the small agricultural community, but when the war effort puts her and Seit in the company of Daniyar, change is irresistible to both. *“If only I could recreate his song. It contained few words, yet even without words it revealed a great human soul. I have never heard such singing before or since. The tune was neither Kirgiz nor Kazakh, yet in it was something of both. It was a song of the mountains and the steppe, first soaring up into the sky like the Kirgiz mountains, then rolling freely like the Kazakh steppe”*. Louis Aragon called this “The most beautiful love story in the world” and he could be right. Greg

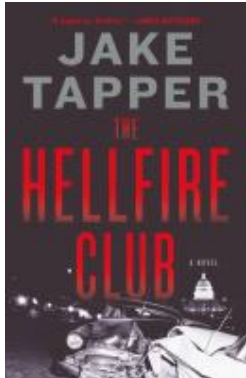
Y/N By Esther Yi (Fiction)



The narrator of Y/N is an aimless millennial living in Berlin, caring little about her job or relationship. Everything changes when she goes to a k-pop concert and becomes obsessed with Moon, a singer in the boyband. She moves to Seoul to meet Moon, all the while writing an elaborate fanfiction about her fantasy life with him. This is a spiky, surreal novel that won't be to everyone's taste. It's full of unsettling images and intense sensory descriptions, and though it begins plausibly it soon develops a tenuous relationship with reality. I enjoyed it very much - Yi has an incredibly original voice and I could never tell where the story was going. Recommended if you're looking for smart, strange contemporary fiction. Charlotte

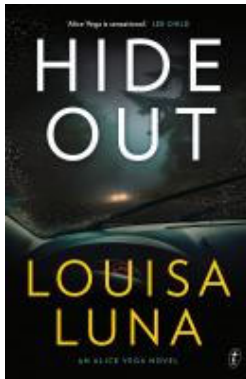
Incidental Fun Fact: Only 11 per cent of professional authors make a living from their writing. Quoted from Quite Interesting things about authors (The Oldie April 20)

The Hellfire Club by Jake Tapper (Thriller)



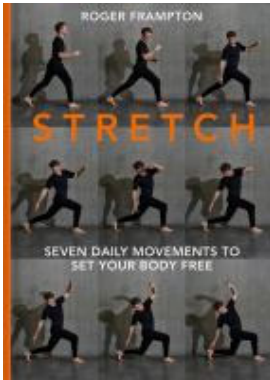
The author is CNN's chief Washington correspondent with twenty years' experience as a political reporter. For his first fiction book he has crafted a tense thriller with his fictional characters interacting with historical figures such as John F Kennedy, Estes Kefauver, Joseph McCarthy, Roy Cohn even President Eisenhower. They are caught up in the actual events of 1954, the Red Scare hearings and the Puerto Rican nationals attack on Congress on 1 March, against a background of corruption and decadence. Charlie Marder newly appointed congressman and his pregnant wife Margaret are struggling to adapt to the Washington lifestyle. When Charlie runs afoul of the 'Hellfire Club' he is set up in car accident and suborned to comply with their agenda. Also told from Margaret's point of view, as they work their way through their changing relationship and circumstances. There is danger both physical and spiritual as they try to solve clues from Benjamin Franklin about the sinister nature of the club. The double dealing and political shenanigans evoke the 50s as does the dialogue and attitudes. *"It's both reassuring and disconcerting to see them all friendly like", Margaret said, waving her cigarette towards the circle of the Kennedys, the Nixons and McCarthy.* Very entertaining. Greg

Hide Out by Louise Luna (Mystery)



This is the third adventure featuring uncompromising rescue specialist Alice Vega, easy going private detective Max Caplan and his more mature than her years daughter Nell. Their attraction is still unrequited and neither has made contact for months. When Alice turns up unexpectedly, Cap is reluctant to get involved at first. *"Cap laughed once more, but this was a laugh Vega remembered and associated with him, no longer with the shroud of bitterness from before. This was him being shocked by her but delighted about it".* Tasked with finding a missing football star, Alice encounters a faded television star from the 70s and white supremacist group which may or may not be related to her case. Alice is formidable, tough and focused. She's a thinker, finding inventive ways to compensate for her small stature when her and Caplan's family are threatened. One of the great thriller heroines. Greg

Stretch: Seven Daily Movements To Set Your Body Free by Roger Frampton
(Non-Fiction)

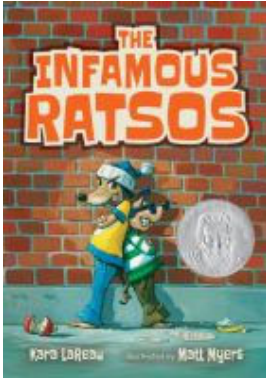


The authors philosophy is definitely move it or lose it! He is a professional movement coach whose Ted Talk has been viewed over 4 million times. He believes stretching is not the precursor to the workout, Stretching is the workout! *“Tightness in the body forces you to move in ways you are not supposed to. It puts unnecessary pressure on your spine, wrecks your hips and shoulders and prevents you from doing basic tasks without the onset of pain”*. There are a variety of exercises for the seven essential movements, which are Spine Rotation, Spine Extension, Spine Flexion, Lateral Flexion, Hip

Mobility, Shoulder Rotation and Balance. There a colour photographs and detailed instructions to enable safe exercises although some look like you would need to be a Yogi to do them! Maybe with time. Well worth checking out. Greg

Junior Page

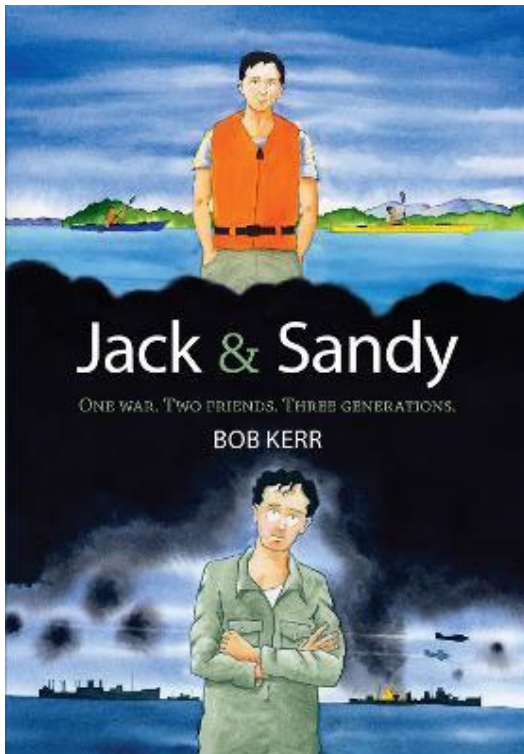
The Infamous Ratsos by Kara LaReau



Louie and Ralphie want to be tough. They are brothers and they want to be like their dad. Do you think they can make it? Read this book to find out. You will have lots of fun.

Haris (aged 7).

Jack and Sandy: One War. Two Friends. Three Generations. by Bob Kerr



This wonderful book is by an artist and author who lives in Wellington. The story was inspired by finding a suitcase full of photos that his father had taken in World War Two. He had been in the Merchant Navy and taken part in Operation Substance which took supplies and food to Malta and Gibraltar despite being bombed and torpedoed by the Germans. Bob Kerr uses some of the actual photos his father took, as well as his own graphic novel type art to illustrate the story of a young adult who goes looking for his grandfather to heal family wounds and to find the story behind the photos. The story moves from 1930s Scotland, Berlin and London through the war years to New Zealand 2001. Lovely art and a lovely story. Greg