

05 Mar 2016

Weekend Gold Coast Bulletin, Gold Coast

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BOOKS

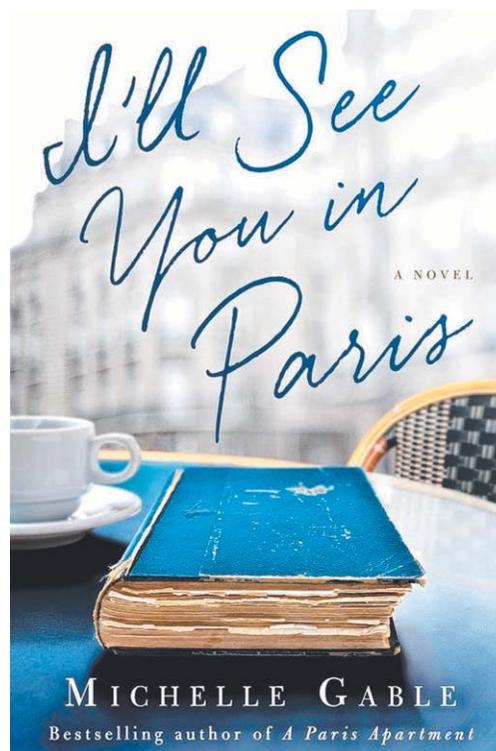
AN INTRIGUING MIX OF MIRTH, MYSTERY AND VIOLENCE ARE ON OFFER IN THIS SELECTION OF THE LATEST OFFERINGS FOR A LONG FLIGHT ...

I'LL SEE YOU IN PARIS

MICHELLE GABLE
ST MARTIN'S PRESS, RRP \$30

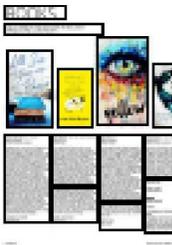
Sometimes, just as you're about to fling a book to the farthest corner of the room, something unexpected appears on the page. It may be a word, a phrase, something that takes it from the mundane to the readable. With this book, it was when the central character, Annie Haley, started to exert some authority on her surroundings. But it is still a book that has the attributes of something you've read before. It has all the usual makings associated with this type of mystery – stories told in two different times become ever more likely to be associated, a book hidden from prying eyes until our hero licks upon it, assorted characters who can fill in the family's backstory and, of course, a large rambling house filled with secrets. The story moves between 1972/3 (Pru and Win and the cantankerous Mrs Spencer) and 2001 (Annie and mother Laurel, and friendly, old Gus, Lord Winton, who has a long tale to tell). As well as the backstory, there are also typescripts and recordings for Annie to piece together while accompanying her mother from their home in the US to Banbury, near Oxford in the UK. If you ignore the holes in the plot and the longer-than-needed expositions, then this will keep you entertained during a long flight.

VERDICT: House of mirth
BARRY REYNOLDS



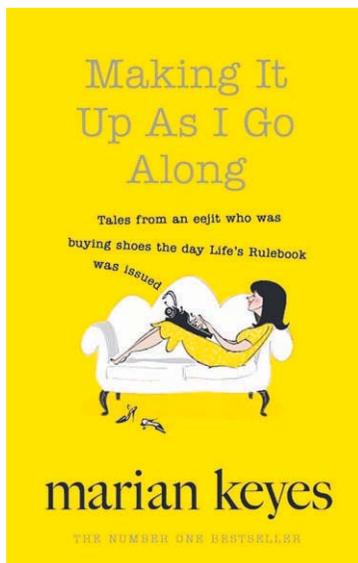
MAKING IT UP AS I GO ALONG
MARIAN KEYES
PENGUIN, \$33

Irish novelist Marian Keyes has made a name internationally over the past 20 years turning out humorous, easy-to-read chick lit that resonates well with her huge fan base. This latest offering is an autobiographical collection of articles and columns she has written for newspapers, magazines, her online blog and her own reflections over a number of years. It's full of Keyes' trademark humour, chatty writing style and endearingly honest take on many of the highs and lows she's faced personally. The good times include encounters with celebrities such as Led Zeppelin's Robert Plant and Myanmar political leader Aung San Suu Kyi, her extensive travels, joining the "Tweeters", her love of beauty treatments and, importantly, family. However,



those highs are tempered by dark times and an incredible willingness to touch on personal topics that other less courageous public figures may avoid. Chief among these is her battle with depression, described simply as "when everything went a bit pear-shaped on the mental health front". Keyes also opens up about her anxiety, negative thinking and insomnia, but often still finds a humorous angle to these serious matters. While it's no match for Keyes' novels, this is easy summer reading.

VERDICT: Vintage Keyes
CARINA BRUCE

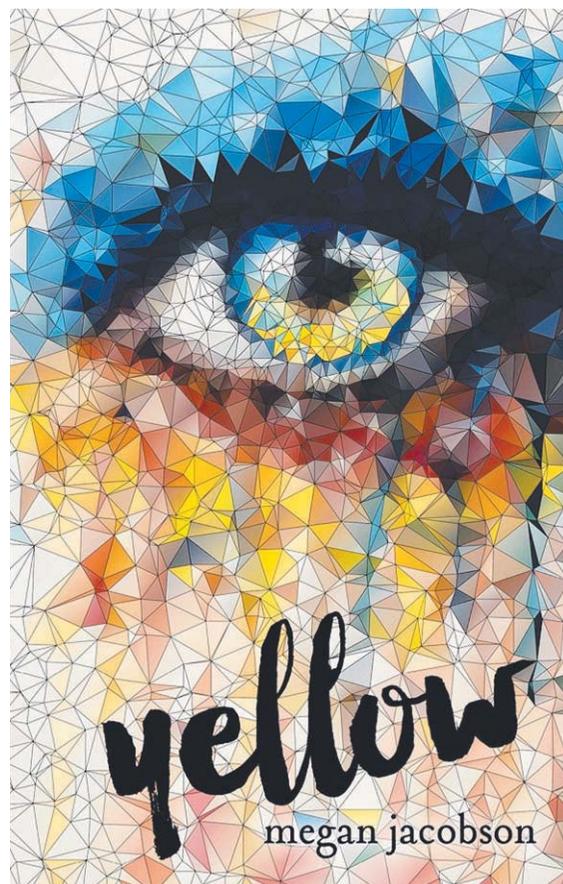


YELLOW
MEGAN JACOBSON
PENGUIN, RRP \$20

I raced through this book, reading it in great big, wonderful chunks. It's a ripping story with fabulous characters and an imaginative plot. The dialogue is smart and sassy and rings with a strong teenage truth. Teenage girls will love it. Kirra's world is falling apart. The 14-year-old's surf-loving dad has moved out of the family home and moved in with his pregnant girlfriend. Her mum is coping by getting drunk every day, her friends are bullying her and a ghost wants Kirra to help him catch his killer. Kirra is a wonderful mix of teenage angst and contradictions. She's smart, funny, pretty and brave. But she's also worried about appearing too smart, has low self-esteem and hates her amber-coloured eyes because she thinks they make her look like a freak. The power of the story comes from its first-person present-tense perspective. Intimately, and moment by moment, the reader experiences the agony and ecstasy of her life. Kirra agrees to help the ghost boy, if he does three things for her – makes her popular, gets her parents back

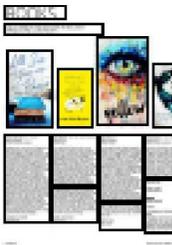
together and promises not to haunt her. The ghost agrees and, following his advice, Kirra attempts to turn her life around. It's a really wonderful teenage story, with just the right amount of grit, adventure and emotion.

VERDICT: Terrific
REBECCA GREEN



THE NORTH WATER
IAN MCGUIRE
SIMON & SCHUSTER, RRP \$33

The brutality of the first few chapters of this novel nearly saw me toss it aside as mindless violence wrapped in the respectable cloak of a period piece. Thankfully, I steered my stomach and pressed on, because what was to follow is one of the most absorbing, riveting and original books I've read for some time. Yes, it's violent, but it's also a stunning portrait of a 19th-century sociopath. Henry Drax is a harpooner, signed on for a voyage to the Arctic Circle on the Volunteer. On his last night on shore before setting sail, we get an immediate and shocking picture of just how morally bankrupt this



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man is. It's a thriller, a crime novel and a historical portrait all in one.

VERDICT: Brilliant
CLAIRE SUTHERLAND

TOP READS

NATIONAL

- 1 ALL THE LIGHT WE CANNOT SEE, BY ANTHONY DOERR
- 2 THE DRESSMAKER BY ROSALIE HAM
- 3 ME BEFORE YOU BY JOJO MOYES
- 4 ROOM BY EMMA DONOGHUE
- 5 REVENANT BY MICHAEL PUNKE

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