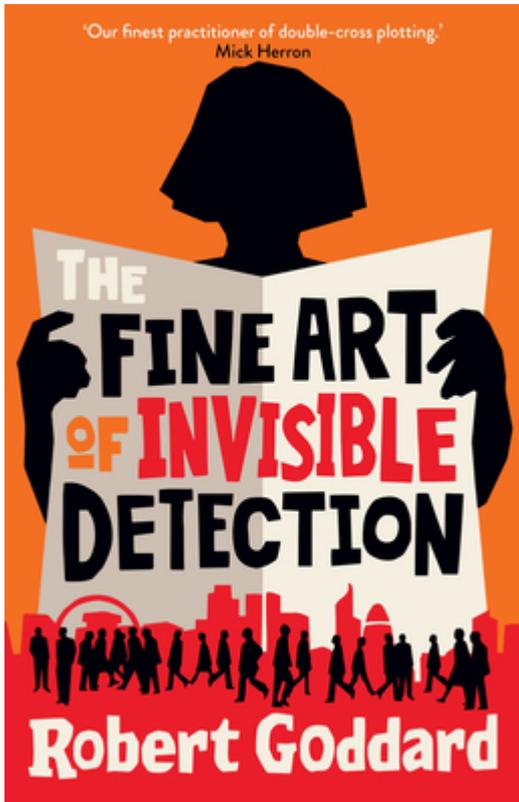


RECOMMENDATIONS FROM OTHER READERS

Fiction

The Fine Art of Invisible Detection by Robert Goddard (Thanks Steve)



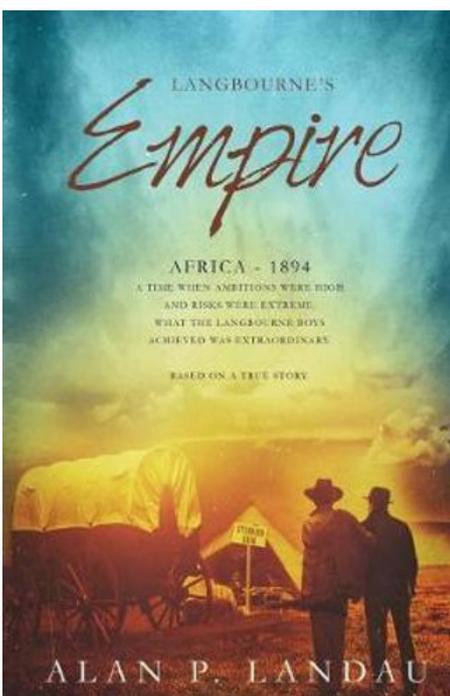
Umiko Wada has recently had quite enough excitement in her life. With her husband recently murdered and a mother who seems to want her married again before his body is cold, she just wants to keep her head down.

As a secretary to a private detective, her life is pleasingly uncomplicated, filled with coffee runs, diary management and paperwork.

That is, until her boss takes on a new case. A case which turns out to be dangerous enough to get him killed. A case which means Wada will have to leave Japan for the first time and travel to London.

Following the only lead she has, Wada quickly realises that being a detective isn't as easy as the television makes out. And that there's a reason why secrets stay buried for a long time. Because people want them to stay secret. And they're prepared to do very bad things to keep them that way...

Langbourne's Empire - Alan P. Landau (Thanks Georgie)

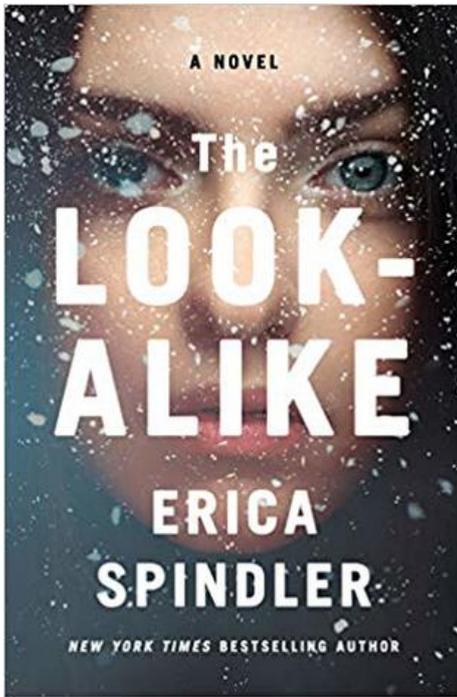


It is 1894 in the remote settlement of Bulawayo, in what later became Southern Rhodesia. Recent immigrants from Ireland, Morris and David Langbourne, throw body and soul into rebuilding their previously devastated business. Between Morris' brilliant business acumen and David's almost limitless energy, their future looks very promising, as they take massive financial and logistical risks, and look forward to a booming business in the backwoods of beyond.

Then the unimaginable happens: disease, a devastating plague, unforgivable stupidity in political designs, war, and starvation. And if this wasn't enough, Morris makes a very simple mistake with exponential consequences. Yet these are the Langbourne brothers, and they refuse to be beaten.

Based on a true story. (Part 3 of the Langbourne Trilogy.)

The Look-Alike - Erica Spindler (Thanks Kim)



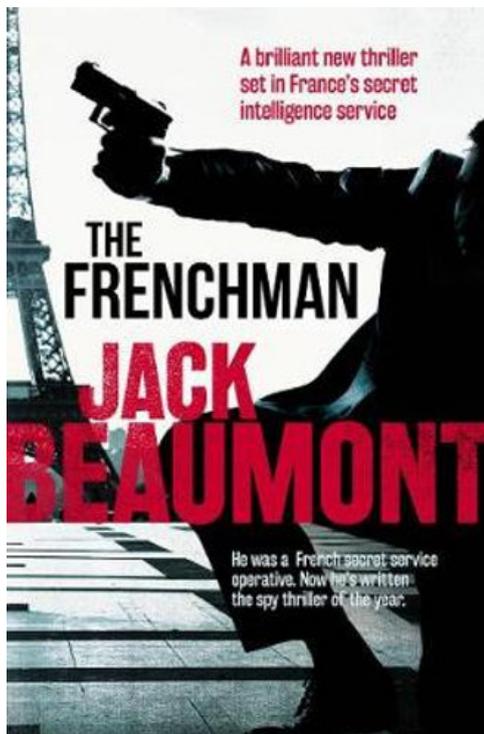
From the *New York Times* bestselling author of *The Other Girl* and *Justice for Sara* comes a thrilling psychological drama about a woman who believes she escaped a brutal murder years ago—but does anyone else believe her?

Sienna Scott grew up in the dark shadow of her mother's paranoid delusions. Now, she's returned home to confront her past and the unsolved murder that altered the course of her life.

In her mother's shuttered house, an old fear that has haunted Sienna for years rears its ugly head—that it was she who had been the killer's target that night. And now, with it, a new fear—that the killer not only intended to remedy his past mistake—he's already begun. But are these fears any different from the ones that torment her mother?

As the walls close in, the line between truth and lie, reality and delusion disintegrate. Has Sienna's worst nightmare come true? Or will she unmask a killer and finally prove she may be her mother's look-alike, but she's not her clone?

The Frenchman - Jack Beaumont (Thanks Pauline)



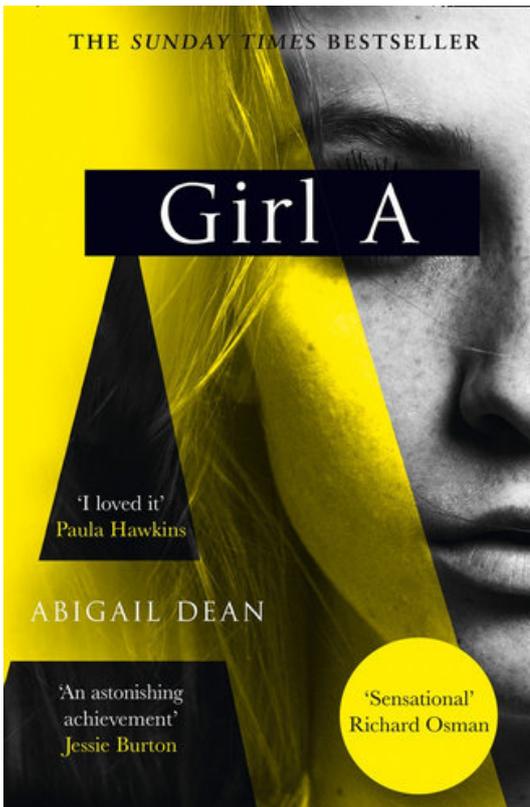
Alec de Payns is an operative in the secretive Y Division of the DGSE, France's famed foreign intelligence service. He's the agent at the sharp end of clandestine missions, responsible for eliminating terror threats and disrupting illegal nuclear and biological weapons programs. The element the missions have in common is danger - danger to de Payns, to his team and to those who stand in his way. But increasingly it's not just the enemies of France that are being damaged by de Payns' actions. His marriage is under strain, and at the back of his mind lurks the fear that haunts every operative with a family - what if they come after my children?

When a routine mission in Palermo to disrupt a terrorist organisation goes fatally wrong, Alec is forced to confront the possibility that they may have been betrayed by a fellow operative. And now he's been tasked to investigate a secretive biological weapons facility in Pakistan. Alec must find out how they're producing a weaponised bacteria capable of killing millions, and what they plan to do with it. But with a traitor in the ranks, it's not just Alec in the firing line. Soon he'll be forced to confront his worst fear - and the potential destruction of Paris itself.

This is fiction, but based on the experiences of a real French spy. The knowledge and tradecraft that lie behind Jack Beaumont's taut plotting and brilliant eye for detail enliven every page, making *The Frenchman* all the more plausible, and all the more frightening.

Jack Beaumont is the pseudonym of a former operative in the clandestine operations branch of the French foreign secret service, the DGSE. He joined 'The Company' after being an air force fighter pilot and later flying special operations and intelligence missions. Beaumont's background gives *The Frenchman* a level of authenticity that few other spy thrillers have been able to achieve.

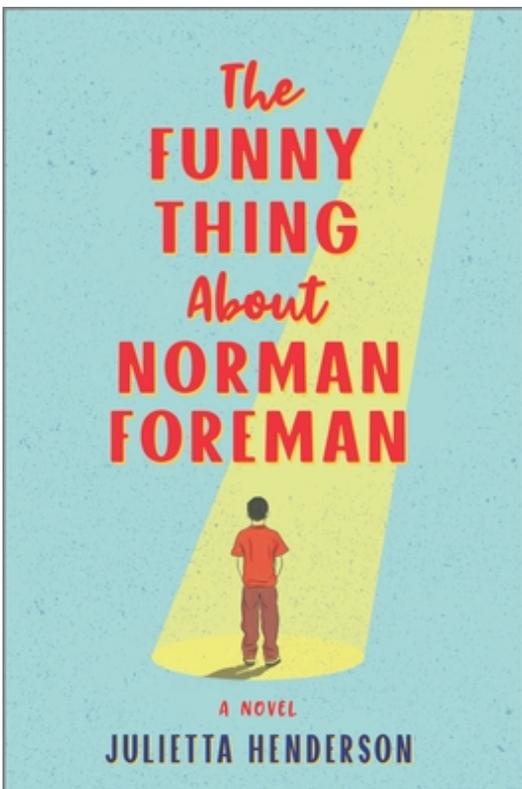
Girl A - Abigail Dean (Thanks Lois)



Lex Gracie doesn't want to think about her family. She doesn't want to think about growing up in her parents' House of Horrors. And she doesn't want to think about her identity as Girl A: the girl who escaped, the eldest sister who freed her older brother and four younger siblings. It's been easy enough to avoid her parents--her father never made it out of the House of Horrors he created, and her mother spent the rest of her life behind bars. But when her mother dies in prison and leaves Lex and her siblings the family home, she can't run from her past any longer. Together with her sister, Evie, Lex intends to turn the House of Horrors into a force for good. But first she must come to terms with her siblings - and with the childhood they shared.

What begins as a propulsive tale of escape and survival becomes a gripping psychological family story about the shifting alliances and betrayals of sibling relationships--about the secrets our siblings keep, from themselves and each other. Who have each of these siblings become? How do their memories defy or galvanize Lex's own? As Lex pins each sibling down to agree to her family's final act, she discovers how potent the spell of their shared family mythology is, and who among them remains in its thrall and who has truly broken free.

The Funny Thing About Norman Foreman - Julietta Henderson (Thanks Cynthia)

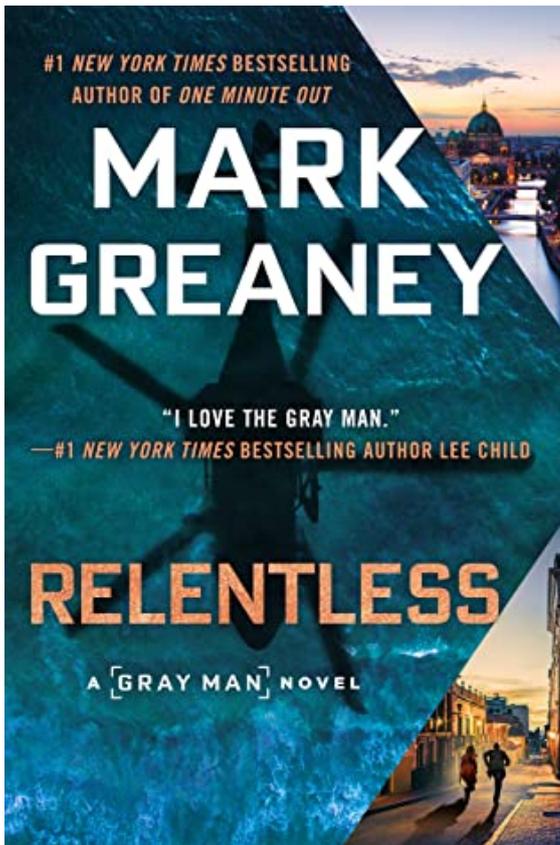


Twelve-year-old Norman Foreman and his best friend, Jax, are a legendary comedic duo in waiting, with a plan to take their act all the way to the Edinburgh Fringe. But when Jax dies, Norman decides the only fitting tribute is to perform at the festival himself. The problem is, Norman's not the funny one. Jax was.

There's also another, far more colossal objective on Norman's new plan that his single mom, Sadie, wasn't ready for: he wants to find the father he's never known. Determined to put a smile back on her boy's face, Sadie resolves to face up to her own messy past, get Norman to the Fringe and help track down a man whose identity is a mystery, even to her.

Julietta Henderson's delightfully charming, tender and uplifting debut takes us on a road trip with a mother and son who will live in the reader's heart for a long time to come, and teaches us that--no matter the odds--we must always reach for the stars.

Relentless by Mark Greaney (Thanks Steve)



The Gray Man's search for missing intelligence agents plunges him deep into a maelstrom of trouble in the latest entry in the #1 New York Times bestselling series.

The first agent disappearance was a puzzle

The second was a mystery

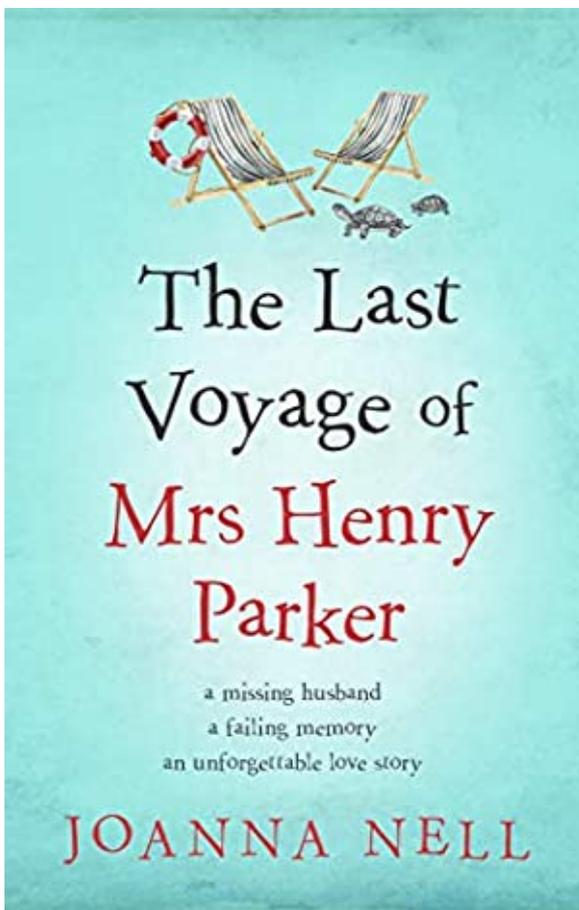
The third was a conspiracy

Intelligence operatives around the world are disappearing. When a missing American agent re-appears in Venezuela, Court Gentry, the Gray Man, is dispatched to bring him in, but a team of assassins has other ideas. Court escapes with his life and a vital piece of intelligence.

Meanwhile, CIA agent Zoya Zakharova is in Berlin. Her mission: to infiltrate a private intelligence firm with some alarming connections. The closer she gets to answers, the less likely she is to get out alive.

Court and Zoya are just two pieces on this international chessboard, and they're about to discover one undeniable truth--sometimes capturing a king requires sacrificing some pawns.

The Last Voyage of Mrs. Henry Parker by Joanna Nell (Thanks Judy)



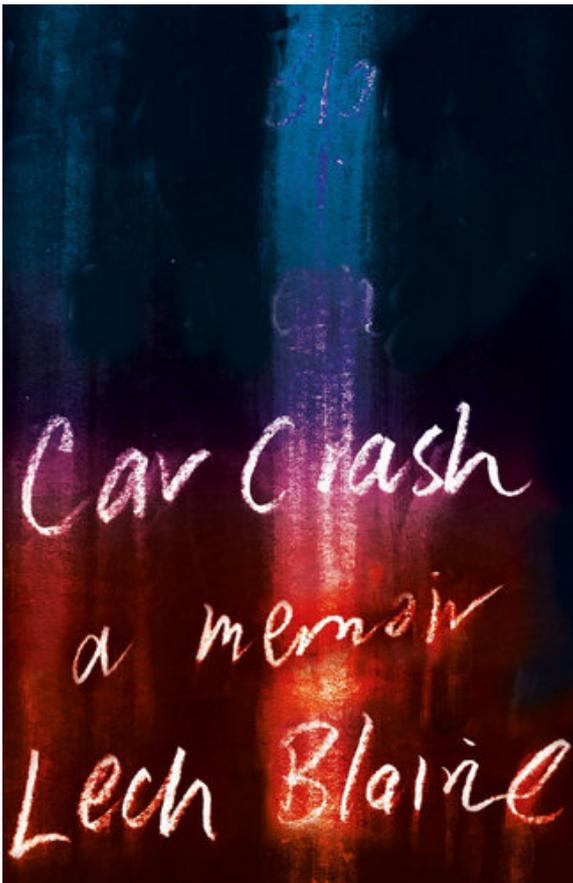
As the wife of retired ship's doctor Dr Henry Parker, Evelyn is living out her twilight years aboard the Golden Sunset. Every night she dresses for dinner and regales her fellow passengers with stories of a glamorous life travelling the world. The crew treat her with deference. And forbearance.

But when Henry goes missing, Evelyn sets off to search every part of the ocean liner to find him; misadventures are had – all new to Evelyn. If only she could remember the events of the night before as clearly as she can recall the first time she met Henry on a passage from England to Australia in 1953 and fell in love – abandoning her dreams to become a midwife to be a wife instead – and the long-ago painful events that left Evelyn all at sea.

Why is it so hard to remember some things and so hard to forget others? And where is Henry?

Non Fiction

Car Crash: a Memoir - Lech Blaine (Thanks Kate)



What is it like to survive a crash that kills your best friends, and how do you move on? From an exceptional debut writer comes a stunning memoir about grief, perseverance and courage.

Lech Blaine was just seventeen when he was in a crash that killed his best friends and changed his life.

On an evening in 2009, seven teenage boys piled into a car to go to a party. They never arrived. The driver - who was not drunk or high - made a routine error and then overcorrected. The vehicle flew off the road. One passenger died on impact. Others were flung from the car. Lech walked away uninjured. In the aftermath, two more died in hospital and one was left disabled, in an incident that convulsed their rural community.

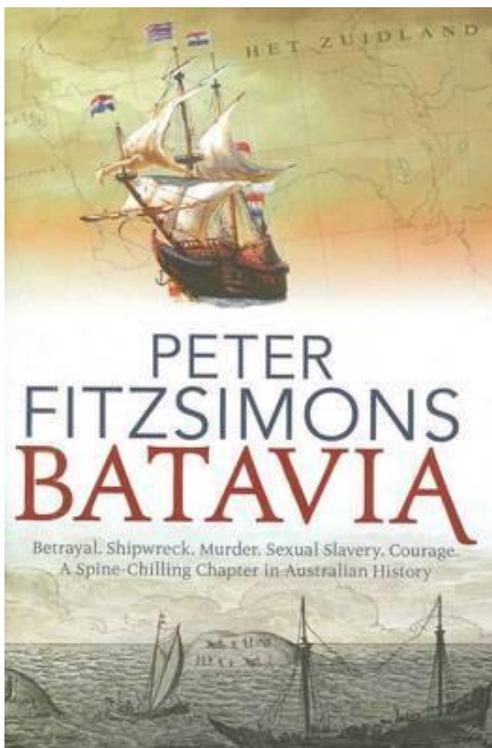
Crippled by guilt, Lech turned to social media, cultivating a persona as the ultimate 'grateful survivor'. Over time, he spiralled into risk-taking and depression. His public bravado fell away as he tried to accept how an accident - one wretched error of youth and inexperience - had changed the trajectory of so many lives.

How do we grieve in an age of social media? How does tragedy shape a community? And how does a boy on the cusp of manhood develop a sense of self when his world has exploded? This stunning memoir pulls no punches. It marks Lech Blaine as a writer to watch.

About the Author

Lech Blaine is a writer from Toowoomba, Queensland. His work appears in *The Best Australian Essays*, *Meanjin*, *The Guardian* and *The Monthly*, among others. His work has been nominated for several prizes and he was an inaugural recipient of a Griffith Review Queensland Writers Fellowship.

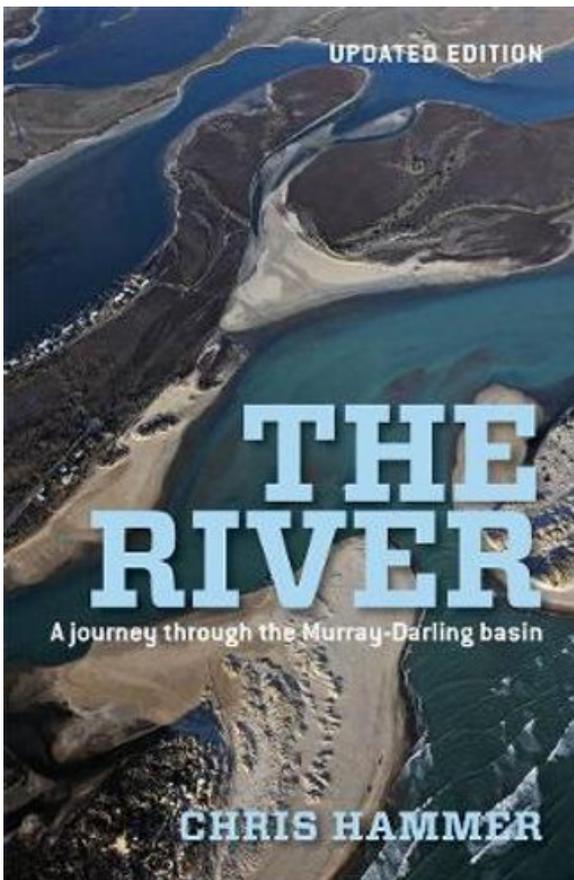
Batavia - Peter Fitzsimons (Thanks Fred)



The Shipwreck of the Batavia combines in just the one tale the birth of the world's first corporation, the brutality of colonisation, the battle of good vs evil, the derring-do of sea-faring adventure, mutiny, ship-wreck, love, lust, blood-lust, petty fascist dictatorship, criminality, a reign of terror, murders most foul, sexual slavery, natural nobility, survival, retribution, rescue, first contact with native peoples and so much more.

Described by author Peter FitzSimons as "a true Adults Only version of *Lord of the Flies*, meeting *Nightmare on Elm Street*," the story is set in 1629, when the pride of the Dutch East India Company, the Batavia, is on its maiden voyage en route from Amsterdam to the Dutch East Indies, laden down with the greatest treasure to leave Holland. The magnificent ship is already boiling over with a mutinous plot that is just about to break into the open when, just off the coast of Western Australia, it strikes an unseen reef in the middle of the night.

The River: A journey through the Murray-Darling Basin - Chris Hammer (Thanks Pam)



Australia's major river system is collapsing. Parts of it are dying; parts of it are already dead. Australia's most significant river no longer reaches the sea. I look out into the dim autumn light and wonder once again how it has come to this . . .

In *The River*, Chris Hammer takes us on a journey through Australia's heartland, following the rivers of the Murray-Darling Basin, recounting his experiences, his impressions, and, above all, stories of the people he meets along the way. It's a journey punctuated with laughter, sadness and reflection.

The River looks past the daily news reports and their sterile statistics, revealing the true impact of our rivers' decline on the people who live along their shores, and on the country as a whole. It's a tale that leaves the reader with a lingering sense of nostalgia for an Australia that may be fading away forever.

Local Book Review

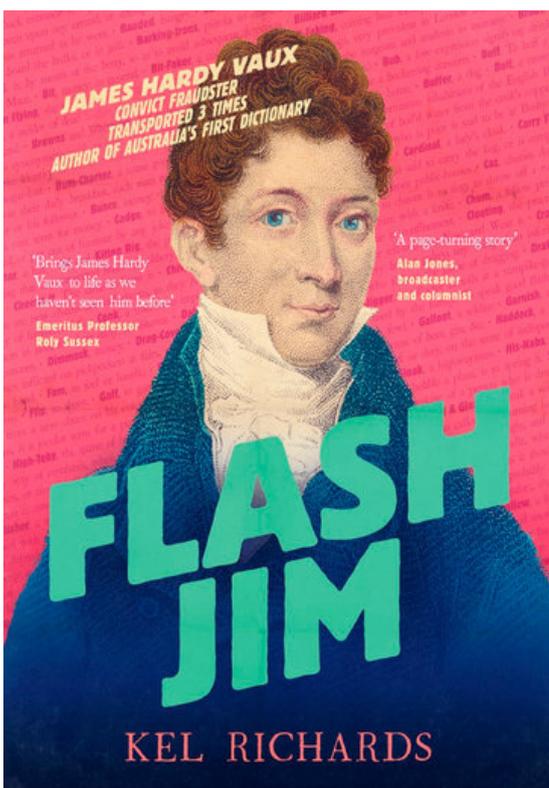
A non-fiction account (2009) of the Murray-Darling River system. An exploration of its origins, history and current usage, told from first-hand exploration and observation, and interviews with many stake-holders. Brilliantly researched and unbiased. Hammer gets down to the basics – the REAL condition of the Murray-Darling system and the reasons behind its current parlous state.

Anyone who cares about water in this country should read this book.

I thoroughly enjoyed this book – a lot I already knew or suspected, but much more to discover and think about.

Pam

Flash Jim by Kel Richards (Thanks Judy)



If you wear 'togs', tell a 'yarn', call someone 'sly', or refuse to 'snitch' on a friend then you are talking like a convict.

These words, and hundreds of others, once left colonial magistrates baffled and police confused. So comprehensible to us today, the flash language of criminals and convicts had marine officer Watkin Tench complaining about the need for an interpreter in the colonial court. Luckily, by 1811, that man was at hand. James Hardy Vaux - conman, pickpocket, absconder and thief, born into comfortable circumstances in England - was so drawn to a life of crime he was transported to Australia ... not once, but three times!

Vaux's talents, glibness and audacity were extraordinary, and perceiving an opportunity to ingratiate himself with authorities during his second sentence, he set about writing a dictionary of the criminal slang of the colony, which was recognised for its uniqueness and taken back to England to be published.