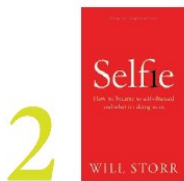


## 5 BOOKS IN 5 MINUTES



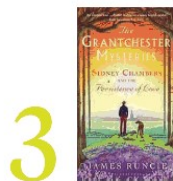
1

**Current Affairs**  
**THE LONG GOODBYE**  
 Anna Krien  
 Quarterly Essay No. 66 \$22.99  
 The Great Barrier Reef, the Great Artesian Basin, the great South Australian blackout - they are all connected by the wonder fuel of the 19th century: coal. Journalist Anna Krien set out to find out why there is so much fuss about Adani's planned mine in Queensland, which may become the largest export coal venture in the world. She visited the Barrier Reef, indigenous communities and farmers to investigate how far the industry's effects will spread. South Australia is at the pointy end of the debate - depending on who you believe, our soaring energy costs and shaky power supply have been caused by a rush to renewable energy. Krien unravels the threads of corporate spin, government buck-passing, locals' special pleading and the dark arts of lobbyists. It's a complex issue, but Krien makes it both accessible and gripping.  
**ROBYN DOUGLASS ★★★★★**



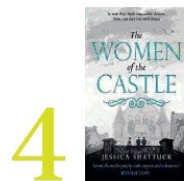
2

**Nonfiction**  
**SELFIE**  
 Will Storr  
 Picador \$32.99  
 It's easy to agree with Will Storr's central premise that the cult of "self" has gone too far. A modicum of positive self-esteem may be healthy but too much leads to narcissism and self-obsession. Storr describes the idealised "neoliberal self" as being "extroverted, slim, beautiful, individualistic, optimistic, hardworking, socially aware yet high-self esteeming global citizen with entrepreneurial guile and a selfie camera". He argues that the "age of perfectionism" has simply created new ways to make us all feel like failures. The book is based on an impressive body of research that segues from the foundations of Ancient Greek civilisation to the modern digital age, with detours via Ayn Rand and the misguided public policies of the 1980s that were largely based on California's official Self Esteem Task Force.  
**DIANA CARROLL ★★★★★**



3

**Crime**  
**SIDNEY CHAMBERS AND THE PERSISTENCE OF LOVE**  
 James Runcie  
 Bloomsbury \$28  
 Time has moved on since we first met English vicar and sleuth extraordinaire Sidney Chambers in the 1950s, and the series has grown with him. The sixth collection of stories spans the 1970s - a decade of upheaval both in the UK at large and in Sidney's own family. While there's less detective work and more musing on philosophical and ethical issues, the highlights include a beautifully evocative search for Sidney's missing nephew through the ranks of would-be anarchists in seaside Brighton; and a meadow ramble that ends with a body and ensuing investigation of psychedelic - and poisonous - plants. As always, jaded Inspector Geordie Keating is the perfect foil to the gentle clergyman or, as Geordie himself puts it: "You always see the silver lining, not the bloody great cloud."  
**SHELLEY ORCHARD ★★★★★**



4

**Fiction**  
**THE WOMEN OF THE CASTLE**  
 Jessica Shattuck  
 Zaffre \$29.99  
 Marianne's husband, a Nazi resister, is dead. Her life is in tatters but she is alive and she must keep her promise. Benita, saved from sexual slavery, is a shadow of her once carefree self. Her son provides the only reason for living. Ania, rescued from a work camp, remains strong but distant. She has a terrible secret. The castle, once home to lavish parties for German high society, is crumbling, along with the lives of these three unlikely friends who seek its shelter. It is here that the story unfolds and where the wartime horror on the German home-front becomes confronting. It's a compelling read, for these women also lost loved ones, faced terrible realities and made impossible choices in order to survive. But can they live with them?  
**CAROLYN JASINSKI ★★★★★**



5

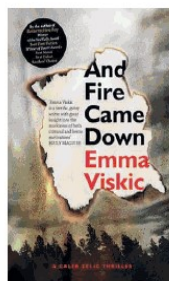
**Junior Fiction**  
**A CARDBOARD PALACE**  
 Allayne Webster  
 MidnightSun \$17.99  
 Adelaide author Allayne Webster has managed to fit a number of modern issues into a Dickensian tale set in the slums of Paris: trafficked children, forced child marriage and even the popular ubiquity of Australian chefs. The landmarks and well-evoked atmosphere of the French capital make a telling contrast with the life lived by 11-year-old Jorge who has been bought from his Romanian parents with promises of work and money to be sent home. The work is begging and picking pockets, accommodation a rat-infested cardboard-lined shed in a shanty town. When his best friend is sold to be the wife of a 40-year-old Russian Jorge tells the friendly young Australian apprentice in a neighbourhood brasserie. Life-threatening incidents end productively - one hopes the same might be true for the many real-life trafficked children.  
**KATHARINE ENGLAND ★★★★★**

# Return of PI with an ear for a mystery

WORDS MARGOT LLOYD

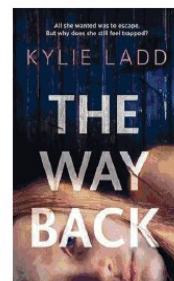
If there's one thing that would make it next to impossible to be a private detective it would be being deaf. Right? Well, no, as readers of Emma Viskic's Caleb Zelic series will tell you. It just makes things more interesting. *And Fire Came Down* is the second Caleb Zelic book, and it takes up several months after the conclusion of *Resurrection Bay*. Not to spoil anything for you Zelic-virgins out there, but Caleb is dealing with a lot after the events of the first book, and things are not looking good. His bachelor pad in Melbourne is still a mess, his wife doesn't want to have anything to do with him, and his last job has given him nightmares. When a terrified stranger stops him in the street and asks for his help, before running into oncoming traffic, Caleb is already at the end of his tether. But, like all good private detectives, it's work that keeps him going, and he's a part of this case whether he likes it or not. Trying to track down this young woman's history and piece together what happened to her will take him back to Resurrection Bay and into the racial tensions at the heart of the town. It will also bring him back into contact with his mother-in-law, also a terrifying prospect. From Sherlock Holmes to Jack Irish, the stubborn sleuth has been around for a while, but Viskic has managed to breathe new life

into an old formula with Caleb Zelic. He refuses to let his hearing difficulties stop him from doing anything. Conversations are pieced together using lip-reading and sign language, as Caleb processes the oral quirks of every character he meets. But it's not just Caleb that makes these books sing: it's Viskic's ability to make the small town of Resurrection Bay into a living, breathing thing, a place being consumed by drugs and racism, despite its heart of gold. And then there's Kat, Caleb's estranged wife. It's refreshing to read about a private investigator who doesn't seduce every woman he meets. For fans of *Resurrection Bay*, *And Fire Came Down* offers more of the great characters and thrilling storytelling as the first book. For crime fans unacquainted with Caleb Zelic, I would recommend setting aside a weekend and settling in. Kylie Ladd, always intrigued by family dynamics, explores disturbing territory in her latest book, *The Way Back*. Charlie is 13, and in the twilight zone between girlhood and adolescence. An animal-lover and a dreamer, she is adored but occasionally overlooked by her busy parents and her brooding brother. When she goes missing while riding her horse, life as they know it grinds to a halt. As hours turn into days, Rachael, Matt and



**Crime Fiction**  
**AND FIRE CAME DOWN**  
 Emma Viskic  
 Echo \$29.99

Dan have to confront the possibility of never seeing sparky young Charlie again. Having completed a PhD in neuropsychology, Ladd is probably better qualified than most to explore the effects of trauma on victims and their family members. Charlie's story is difficult but still absorbing, as is the parallel story of what happens to her



**Fiction**  
**THE WAY BACK**  
 Kylie Ladd  
 Allen & Unwin \$29.99

family in her absence. But the novel feels like a case study that has been stripped of all its defining parts. The characters all fit a little too neatly into their boxes: the busy-but-guilty mother, the hero fireman father, the brooding teenage brother. This stops the characters from truly coming to life - and keeps the horror from fully hitting home.