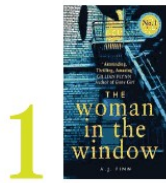
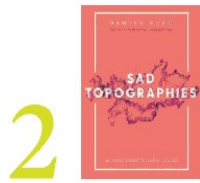


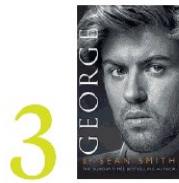
5 BOOKS IN 5 MINUTES



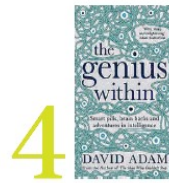
1
Thriller
THE WOMAN IN THE WINDOW
A.J. Finn
HarperCollins \$29.99*
Severely agoraphobic child psychologist Anna Fox hasn't left the house in nearly a year. For entertainment, she watches old black-and-white movies and spies on her neighbours, among them a family that has moved in across the road.
One day she meets the gregarious mother, with whom she drinks copious amounts of wine. Soon afterwards, she sees Jane being murdered. The police don't believe her, seeing the empty bottles - of alcohol and pills - that litter her home. There are two puzzles in the author's debut: what happened to Jane and what caused Anna's paralyzing illness? Finn uses every trick in the book to deliver a gripping tale, name-checking all the classic film thrillers, including *Rear Window*, with which it shares its premise.
SHELLEY ORCHARD ★★★★★
*\$19.95 from News Shop, 31 Waymouth St, city, 8206 3317



2
Travel
SAD TOPOGRAPHIES: A DISENCHANTED TRAVELLER'S GUIDE
Damien Rudd
Simon & Schuster, \$45
"Suicide Forest", "Cape Grim" or "Misery" would not be the desirable destinations you'd find in a glossy brochure at your travel agent. But such repellent place names carry a burden of history as well as geography. Finding Mt Hopeless on a map of South Australia sent Australian expat Damien Rudd on a search for "miserable" places, and this collection of his discoveries is delightful to dip into.
Beautifully illustrated, the book brings together stories of European adventurers, bravery and failure at the far corners of the Earth. It's not all dark tides of colonialism, there are colourful stories from the UK and Germany - World's End in London harbours a sobering glimpse into a global future. Rudd could have added some footnotes or bibliography - some of the facts worth checking - but it's a great ramble.
ROBYN DOUGLASS ★★★★★



3
Biography
GEORGE
Sean Smith
Harper Collins \$29.99*
Casual music lovers might dismiss George Michael as the Wham! lightweight who disgraced himself in public toilets.
However, prolific biographical author Sean Smith teases out the often complex character of the singer-songwriter who was into nature and biology, but after a bad fall at school that cracked his skull, he became obsessed with music.
As teenagers, he and Wham! cohort Andrew Ridgeley loved the Two Tone ska scene, and Michael developed a self-deprecating humour and hard-nosed business acumen that contrasted with his shyness and generosity.
His coming-out and the losses of loved ones are treated without the tabloid hype that hounded him to his grave.
NICK HOPTON ★★★★★
*\$19.95 from News Shop, 31 Waymouth St, city, 8206 3317



4
Science
THE GENIUS WITHIN
David Adam
Picador \$29.99
This book is much less conceited than the title would suggest. After documenting his treatment for obsessive-compulsive disorder in *The Man Who Couldn't Stop*, David Adam now attempts to enhance his brain further. He wants to see if he can turn himself into a genius, and he's willing to try a surprising amount of self-experimentation to get there.
Between reviews of brain stimulation and cognitive enhancement drugs, he delves into the neuroscience of intelligence. These technologies are not well tested and their use is ethically ambiguous, but that can be said of almost all research on brains. The book spends a long time on IQ tests, for instance, and how useful they are as indicators of wit.
Adam does occasionally wander into smugness, but the book largely stays on track. This is a well-written look at some of the messiest neuroscience.
ELLEN PHIDDIAN ★★★★★



5
Young Adult Fiction
THE CENTRE OF MY EVERYTHING
Allayne L. Webster
Random House, \$19.99
With an epigraph from Bec Willis's *Alcohol and Loneliness* and a Mildura setting, Adelaide author Allayne Webster paints an all-too-convincing picture of a teenage culture adrift on alcohol, vomit and sex, where every indiscretion is filmed and shared.
Four well-drawn characters tell the story: part Aboriginal Margo wants to get into uni and put her town and racist schoolmates behind her; Tara wants someone to love her since her mother doesn't; dropout Corey wants a job, any job; and newly responsible Justin has come home after beating ice addiction.
Sex is a commodity demanded by boys and bestowed by girls - until the night of Kylie's 18th when Tara finds she isn't given the option of refusal. As the global #MeToo campaign ramps up, this authentic and memorable novel could hardly be better timed.
KATHARINE ENGLAND ★★★★★

Men, women and the whole vexed thing

WORDS LAURA KROETSCH

Set in Boston, Cape Town and Mudgee, *In The Garden of the Fugitives* opens with an email sent by a now elderly Royce, to his former protégée Vita, after a 20-year silence. In the message he asks if she is willing to be his reader, and for him to be hers, in an effort to "anatomise" the past. She agrees.
Vita first meets Royce as an undergraduate. She has come to the US to study, and is a potential recipient of the fund Royce has set up in memory of his lost love Kitty. Vita soon realises Royce's attention is unusual, but she plays along in hopes of securing the much coveted grant. Until, that is, his attention tips over into a silent stalking, after which she forbids him to ever contact her again.
Royce can't stay away, as Vita is a connection back to Kitty. Royce needs Vita because as she nears death he wants to once again tell the story of his unrequited love for the long dead Kitty, the story of their two summers in Pompeii at *The Garden of the Fugitives*, and he wants to explain her mysterious death.
While Royce's love story is one of sinister ambition and profound loss, Vita's is less straightforward. Vita's quest is one for identity, what she seeks is to understand what it means to be a white South African after Apartheid. She returns to South Africa to be a filmmaker, but can't find a subject. She

discovers a world that no longer conforms to her memories.
The novel is richly imagined and Dovey is a terrific writer. What works best is Royce, both his account of trying to woo Kitty and his shared past with Vita. He is at ease with wealth's power, but his health is failing, so his need is great. Vita is the seemingly weaker of the two, and her story can at times appear to verge on the didactic, but she is not to be underestimated. *In The Garden of the Fugitives* is very different to Dovey's collection *Only the Animals*. It is as inventive, but darker and more sinister.
Like Dovey's novel, Lionel Shriver's novella *The Standing Chandelier* tells the story of a relationship between a man, Weston, and a woman, Jillian, one that begins at university. In Shriver's version the relationship is loving, only briefly sexual, and has endured with affection over two decades.
Weston is a quiet and successful man, one who is at ease with Jillian, a woman who is loud, unruly and chooses not to work. Instead she makes things, objects that lack pretence, but are always sincere. There is a friendship based on shared secrets, a love of tennis and a platonic fondness for each other.
When Weston begins a relationship with the younger Paige it is clear from the onset that she loathes Jillian and her friendship with Weston, a situation that Jillian cannot



Fiction
THE GARDEN OF THE FUGITIVES
Ceridwen Dovey
Penguin \$32.99

see and Weston would prefer to ignore. When Weston proposes to Paige, Paige has a single demand - that Jillian be banished.
If Shriver is asking, "Can straight men and women be friends?", her answer seems to be no. Paige's response to the friendship is short, sharp and almost painful to read.
Once again Shriver captures the ugly



Fiction
THE STANDING CHANDELIER
Lionel Shriver
The Borough Press \$19.99

pettiness of middle-class life, in a way that is distinctly hers.
Ultimately both *In The Garden of the Fugitives* and *The Standing Chandelier* are about gendered battles, notions of power, desire, failure and triumph. Powerfully told, both will leave you satisfied but unsettled, and if you must choose, choose Dovey's book.