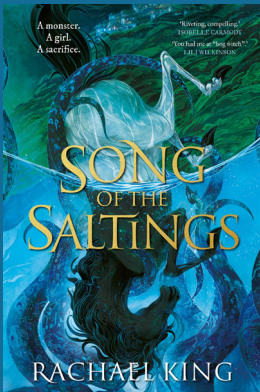


# MAY HIGHLIGHTS



## Song of the Saltings

Rachael King

Allen & Unwin | \$27.99

An atmospheric folk horror fantasy set in a world both terrifying and mysterious, from the award-winning author of *The Grimmelings*.

On isolated Brack Island, an ancient pact demands a yearly sacrifice to the marsh-dwelling Glimm. Spared once, sixteen-year-old Lotta lives on the fringes, tending the Council's horses as whispers follow her. But the island is failing, and a haunting call draws her back. When she meets fellow outcast Moss, they uncover buried secrets that could save—or doom—Brack. To survive, they must trust each other and face a truth more dangerous than the monster itself.



## BOOK OF THE MONTH

I loved the adventure in this story and the sense of hope Lotta and her young friends bring as they challenge the status quo. The arc of the book keeps throwing up surprises and hints there could be more adventures to come.

After *The Grimmelings*, it looks like Rachael King is becoming a leading author of YA fiction.

Reviewed by Andrew Poppies Books, Howick

## FICTION

### The Things We Never Say

Elizabeth Strout

Viking | \$38.00

Artie Dam, a high school history teacher, appears content but feels deeply isolated. When a shocking revelation upends his life, he must reassess his marriage, friendships, and sense of self. As he confronts long-buried truths, Artie searches for connection and meaning in an unpredictable, changing world.

### The Bookshop of Buried Pasts

Sarah Clutton

Allen & Unwin | \$37.99

When beloved bookseller Phyllida Banks dies, she leaves her granddaughter Lottie a cryptic request: "Find Francis." Tracing clues from an Australian village to England, Lottie uncovers a hidden fortune and a decades-old mystery. As secrets surface, she discovers her grandmother's past is tied to a long-buried disappearance.

### The Midnight Train

Matt Haig

Canongate | \$37.99

Wilbur is given a rare chance: board the Midnight Train and revisit the defining moments of his life. Drawn to his honeymoon in Venice with Maggie, he hopes to undo past mistakes—but changing the past could cost him everything in this magical, time-bending love story. From the world of *The Midnight Library*.

### The Calamity Club

Kathryn Stockett

Fig Tree | \$38.00

In 1933 Mississippi, orphaned Meg Lefleur trusts no one—until she meets Birdie, who is confronting her sister's hidden past. As the Depression deepens, they join forces with a group of determined women. Together, they challenge a town built on secrets, risking everything to reshape their futures. From the bestselling author of *The Help*.

### Ironwood

Michael Connelly

Allen & Unwin | \$37.99

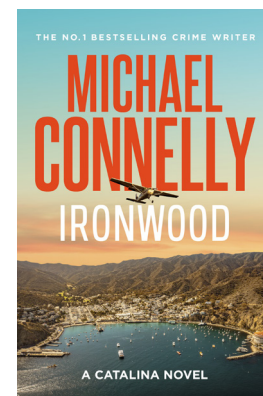
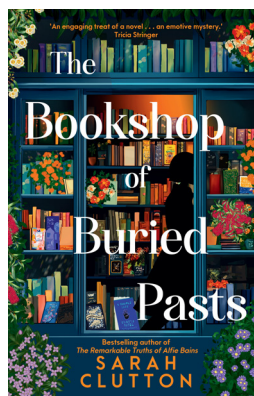
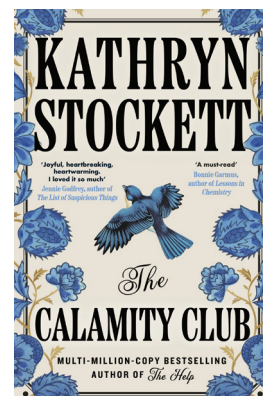
After a botched drug sting on a remote island, Detective Sergeant Stilwell is sidelined—but continues investigating in secret. A crucial clue leads him to LAPD detective Renée Ballard and a taunting criminal. As the case expands, Stilwell uncovers a far-reaching conspiracy more dangerous than he imagined.

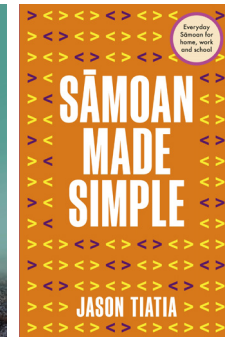
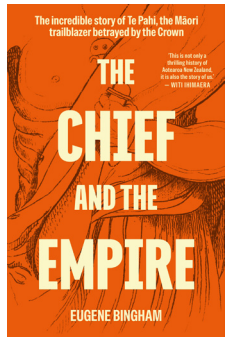
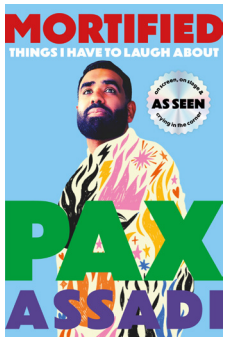
### Slash

Gavin Strawhan

Allen & Unwin | \$37.00

A year after a traumatic shootout, ex-sergeant Honey Chalmers is barely holding on, working for a dubious PI firm while haunted by the past. Hired to find a missing murder suspect, her search spans storm-ravaged New Zealand to Fiji, drawing her into a violent web of secrets—and a deadly final confrontation.





## NON-FICTION

### Mortified Pax Assadi

Penguin | \$40.00

A joyfully chaotic memoir from award-winning comedian Pax Assadi, revisiting moments from his West Auckland upbringing to cultural clashes abroad. With humour and honesty, he examines embarrassment, resilience, and storytelling—asking what we gain by confronting the experiences we'd rather forget, and when pain becomes something worth sharing.



### The Chief and the Empire Eugene Bingham

Allen & Unwin | \$39.99

This gripping history recounts Te Pahi, a visionary Māori rangatira who forged early ties with colonial Australia. Celebrated in Sydney, he showed compassion and leadership—yet was wrongly blamed for a deadly attack and killed. Blending history and investigation, it reveals a misunderstood life and a legacy shaped by injustice.



### Te Kaikaukau | The Swimmer Witi Ihimaera Smiler

Auckland University Press | \$45.00

At eighty, acclaimed writer Witi Ihimaera decides to study te reo Māori full-time at Te Wānanga Takiura. This memoir follows his year of immersion, exploring language, identity, shame, and connection. Through teachers, elders, and whakapapa, he reclaims his voice and deepens his commitment to writing in te reo Māori.



### The Secret Life of Fungi Jay Lichter

Allen & Unwin | \$49.99

Photographer Jay Lichter explores the hidden world of fungi, revealing the vast underground networks that sustain life on Earth. From tiny fruiting bodies to sprawling mycelial webs, he uncovers their ecological power, beauty, and strangeness. Blending striking imagery with curiosity, this book celebrates fungi as nature's essential, unseen engineers.



### Samoan Made Simple Jason Tiatia

Penguin | \$35.00

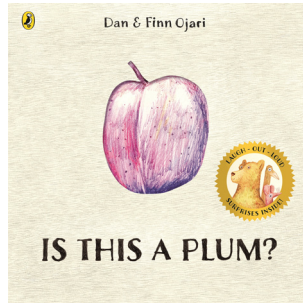
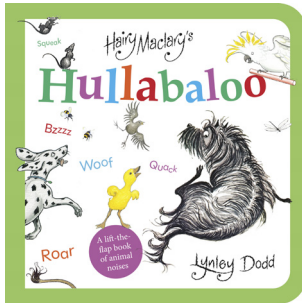
A user-friendly guide to learning basic Samoan, designed for modern readers of all backgrounds. Following a simple, step-by-step format of short, practical exercises, this resource helps build everyday language skills. It empowers learners to progress confidently through accessible lessons that make Samoan easier to understand, use, and enjoy in daily life.



### BBQ Jamie Oliver

Michael Joseph | \$70.00

Chef Jamie Oliver shares 90 recipes designed to elevate everyday barbecuing beyond the usual sausages and burgers. Covering charcoal and gas grills, he offers practical tips on heat control, marinating, and setup. From skewers and salads to flatbreads, tacos, and feasts, this guide helps readers master the BBQ year-round.



## KIDS' & YOUNG ADULT

### Hairy Maclary's Hullabaloo Lynley Dodd

Picture Puffin | \$19.99

Join Hairy Maclary and friends in a lift-the-flap adventure to discover which animal is making a mysterious, noisy hullabaloo. Is it a duckling, goat, or lion? Young readers can guess, lift flaps, and learn animal sounds in this interactive board book filled with playful characters and noisy fun.



### Is This a Plum? Dan & Finn Ojari

Puffin | \$24.00

A playful picture book full of visual tricks and rhyming surprises. Through cut-out holes, children see partial images—like a plum or spoon—only to turn the page and discover unexpected reveals. With bold art and call-and-response text, this father-and-son creation delivers a fun, interactive read-aloud for young children and adults.

### Bluey: Copycat Bluey

Puffin | \$17.99

Bluey copies everything Dad does in a playful game of imitation, but things change when they find an injured bird and take it to the vet. Through the experience, Bluey learns that not everything can be controlled. A gentle board book about imagination, care, and accepting unexpected outcomes.

### The Girl and the Ghost: Grand Opening Jacqueline Harvey

Penguin | \$21.00

A hotel opening turns chaotic for Josephine Eloise Thomas as her family prepares their chateau for guests. A priceless locket linked to Louis XVII draws danger, while a vengeful criminal plots revenge. Amid sabotage, a possible ghost, and romantic tension, Josephine must protect her family and keep secrets hidden too.

### Astromancer 3: Ariā and the Monster Island Witi Ihimaera & Isobel Joy Te Aho-White

Picture Puffin | \$25.00

In this illustrated fantasy adventure inspired by Māori myths, the Astromancer and her apprentices face a looming invasion as rats swarm their tribe. When a time-travel mission to ancient Hawaiki goes wrong, Ariā must step up, uncover hidden paths through time, and attempt a daring rescue to save her people.



AVAILABLE IN TE REO MĀORI

### Te Kōkōrangī 3: A Ariā Me Te Motu Pouākai Witi Ihimaera, Isobel Joy Te Aho-White & Hēni Jacob