

## ADULT FICTION – 16 books

### **Shaeden Barry, *At Café 64*, (Echo Publishing)**

“Without any warning, Justin Kowalski drives his vehicle across a line of traffic and through the front wall of Cafe 64, killing himself and three other people - and taking the reasons for this shocking act to the grave.” Nearly two years after this ‘isolated incident’, three women attend a meeting being held by the 'Victims of the Cafe 64 Tragedy' support group. It is when these women come together that the question of what it means to be a victim is raised. Shaeden Barry forces the reader to ask themselves what defines a victim, who do we place the blame at and what is the correct way to grieve.

<https://www.echopublishing.com.au/books/at-cafe-64>

### **Jane Caro, *Lyrebird*, (Allen & Unwin)**

“Lyrebirds are brilliant mimics, so if they mimic a woman screaming in terror and begging for her life, they have witnessed a crime. But how does a young, hung over PHD student and a wet behind the ears new detective, convince anyone that a native bird can be a reliable witness to a murder, especially when there is no body and no missing person? And what happens when they turn out to be right?” This is the reality facing Jessica Weston and detective Megan Blaxland, when a body is discovered 20 years later in the exact spot the Lyrebird was ‘heard’ making the sound of a women screaming.

<https://www.allenandunwin.com/browse/book/Jane-Caro-Lyrebird-9781761471537>

### **Shankari Chandran, *Unfinished Business*, (Ultimo Press)**

“Sri Lanka, 2009. Decades of civil war and bloodshed are being brought to an end at last—by any means necessary. In the capital, Colombo, tenacious journalist Ameena Fernando is murdered, execution-style, on a busy street near her home, with no witnesses.” Shankari Chandran depicts the international scheming and hustling that took place in order to make a claim for a part in post-war Sri Lanka, which is the backdrop in which protagonist CIA Agent Ellie Harper is tasked with solving the murder of journalist Ameena Fernando.

<https://publishing.hardiegrant.com/en-au/books/unfinished-business-by-shankari-chandran/9781761151309>

### **Pip Fioretti, *Skull River*, (Affirm Press)**

“*I was like a man washed ashore on an island, half mad and only my warrant card and blood-soaked uniform to vouch for me. But I had to act as if I knew what the hell to do.*” In Autumn of 1912, mounted trooper August Hawkins arrives at his new post in the fading gold town of Colley, NSW. On his first day, he is ambushed by a hidden gunman, his junior officer is killed before his eyes, and he escapes back to town to find the police station burning to the ground. Someone has it in for the mounted troopers.”

<https://www.simonandschuster.com.au/books/Skull-River/Pip-Fioretti/Gus-Hawkins/9781923046788>

### **Sara Foster, *When She Was Gone*, (Harper Collins Australia)**

“*Rose was torn away from her daughter. Now, is she the only one who can save her?*” Called upon to help find her daughter who has disappeared from a Western Australian beach, former London police

officer Rose Campbell arrives in Australia to unravel the mystery disappearance of Lou and the two children in her care.

<https://harpercollins.com.au/products/9781460713754>

**Susan Francis, *Revelation Beach*, (Wild Dingo Press)**

“When Eleanor Freeman’s enigmatic stepmother, Ida, dies in a suspicious fire, a lifetime of secrets begins to unravel. Was Ida an Indonesian spy entangled in the murders of the Balibo Five and unspeakable war crimes?” Susan Francis’ novel forces the reader to ask themselves just how far would you go in order to uncover the truth?

<https://www.wilddingopress.com.au/shop/p/9781925893892>

**Zeyneb Gamielien, *Learned Behaviours*, (Ultimo Press)**

Zaid Saban, who is about to become a barrister, is pulled back to his schoolyard days when in his final year of school his best friend, Hass, was arrested for murder. Now confronted with the past he had put behind him; Zaid is forced the reality that perhaps Hass was innocent all along whilst also asking himself what the ugliness of the past means for who he is today.

<https://publishing.hardiegrant.com/en-au/books/learned-behaviours-by-zeynab-gamielien/9781761152191>

**Fiona Hardy, *Unbury The Dead*, (Affirm Press)**

“*Unbury the Dead* is a superbly fresh and pacey high-stakes drama with two irresistible heroines.” Teddy has been tasked with finding a missing teenager, whilst Alice is making sure one of Australia's richest men is laid to rest before anyone finds out he's dead. Yet when their cases collide unexpectedly, Teddy and Alice turn the tables on their wealthy employers to unravel the truth.

<https://www.simonandschuster.com.au/books/Unbury-the-Dead/Fiona-Hardy/9781923046771>

**Sally Hepworth, *Mad Mabel*, (Macmillan Australia)**

“Once upon a headline, she was Mad Mabel Waller—Australia’s youngest convicted murderer. But was she really mad, or just misunderstood? Either way, she’s kept her secret buried for decades.” Sally Hepworth weaves an intriguing narrative that explores the themes of justice and redemption, whilst also depicting Mabel as an irrepressible woman who is not to be underestimated.

<https://us.macmillan.com/books/9781250284549/madmabel/>

**Elise Janes, *The Canvas Killings*, (JETT Books)**

“The perfect next-read for fans of psychological crime thrillers..., *The Canvas Killings* is guaranteed to keep you guessing 'til the end. No kangaroos, no dust storms, and not a single bushfire. Just complex characters, a heinous crime, and a plot more twisted than a strand of macrame.”

<https://jettbooks.com/#b6dffeb7-b09d-4994-8f85-981dc08c3221>

**Joanna Jenkins, *The Bluff*, (Allen & Unwin)**

“An unputdownable thriller of deception and greed, *The Bluff* reveals an enmeshed web of family and community loyalties, set in the lush rural hinterland of east coast Australia.” Ruth Dawson, who is spending a few months working at a friend’s small-town legal practice in Myddle, finds herself involved in unravelling the mystery of the murder of Dash Rogers and disappearance of Bea Boulderstone.

<https://www.allenandunwin.com/browse/book/Joanna-Jenkins-Bluff-9781761470646>

**Angie Faye Martin, *Melaleuca*, (HQ Fiction) Debut**

“A country town, a brutal murder, a shameful past, a reckoning to come... The injustices of the past and dangers of the present envelop Aboriginal policewoman Renee Taylor, when her unwilling return to the small outback town of her childhood plunges her into the investigation of a brutal murder.”

<https://harpercollins.com.au/products/9781867270898>

**Laura McCluskey, *The Wolf Tree*, (Harper Collins Australia) Debut**

“*There's always someone whispering about something.*” Set in Scotland, DIs Georgina Lennox and Richard Stewart, find themselves tasked with investigating the apparent suicide of Alan Ferguson who is found at the foot of the lighthouse on a small island off the coast in Scotland. George and Richard soon discover that the village is filled with superstition and secrets, some of which someone wants to remain buried.

<https://harpercollins.com.au/products/9781460717349>

**Fleur McDonald, *The Prospect*, (Harper Collins Australia)**

“*No matter how much or how little you find, you will never, ever own the gold. It will always own you.*” Relocating to the mining town of Kalgoorlie, investigative reporter Zara Ellison and her partner, policeman Jack Higgins, are each struggling with this fresh start. However, they soon find themselves embroiled in digging into and investigating the devastating accident of a pair of grey nomads on an isolated stretch of highway, and they soon discover that in the outback, some secrets are buried deep.

<https://harpercollins.com.au/products/9781460718100>

**Tanya Scott, *Stillwater*, (Allen & Unwin) Debut**

“A gritty Melbourne crime thriller where old secrets collide with deadly new threats.” Finding himself back in Melbourne, Luke Harris has worked hard to bury his violent past. However, after crossing paths with Gus Alberici, the crime boss Luke worked for as a teenager, he finds himself being pulled back into the dark world of his past. As secrets begin to surface, Luke is faced with the challenge of outsmarting a man who will stop at nothing to get what he wants.

<https://www.allenandunwin.com/browse/book/Tanya-Scott-Stillwater-9781761471391>

**Patricia Wolf, *Nemesis*, (Echo Publishing)**

“The fourth gripping instalment in the bestselling DS Walker series – full of shocking twists and thrilling turns – follows Lucas to an explosive showdown, far from home.” On assignment for the Australian Federal Police, DS Lucas Walker is determined to take down Stefan Markovich, leader of the Vandals outlaw motorcycle gang, and a man who has managed to evade justice ever since Walker

uncovered his drug operation. Walker finds himself travelling to Berlin to lure out Markovich and reunited with Barbara Guerra.

<https://www.echopublishing.com.au/books/nemesis>

#### **NON-FICTION – 3 books**

##### **Sonia Orchard, *Groomed*, (Simon & Schuster)**

In *Groomed*, Sonia Orchard shifts between memoir and research to highlight how often allegations of child abuse and sexual assault were minimised, justified and rarely brought to light. At the same time as she facing her own court case as a result of her own experiences of being a victim of abuse, Orchard is forced to ask how as a society had we allowed this to happen, and what would it take to fix it? Orchard “delves into culture, neuroscience and evolution, unpicking the enduring narratives that fuel these issues. As she navigates her way through a legal system stacked against victims of sexual assault, the obstacles to justice become clearer and more confronting than ever.”

<https://www.simonandschuster.com.au/books/Groomed/Sonia-Orchard/9781922863829>

##### **Lucy Sussex & Megan Brown, *Outrageous Fortunes, the biography of Mary and Geroge Fortune*, (Black Inc Books)**

“When Mary Fortune arrived in Melbourne with her infant son in 1855, she was determined to reinvent herself. The Victorian goldfields were just the place. After a time selling sly grog and a bigamous marriage to a policeman, Mary became a pioneering journalist and author. *The Detective's Album* was the first book of detective stories to be published in Australia and the first by a woman to be published anywhere in the world... She wrote using pseudonyms, often adopting the voice of a male narrator to write about 'unladylike' subjects... In *Outrageous Fortunes*, Megan Brown and Lucy Sussex retrieve Fortune's astonishing career and discover an equally absorbing story in her illegitimate son, George. While Mary was writing crime, George was committing it, with convictions for theft and bank robbery.”

<https://www.blackincbooks.com.au/books/outrageous-fortunes-0>

##### **Kate Wild, *The Red House*, (Allen & Unwin)**

“A young Aboriginal man and a white police officer face each other in a house in the desert. The violence that passes between them carries the pain and anger of generations of unfinished business. This is not simply a book about the fatal shooting of Kumanjayi Walker and the murder trial of Constable Zachary Rolfe; it is an exploration of the inseparable connections between this country's past, present and future, and the chance to change that story. In *The Red House*, Walkley Award-winning journalist Kate Wild exposes the potent power of race in Australia.”

<https://www.allenandunwin.com/browse/book/Kate-Wild-Red-House-9781761069291>

#### **YOUNG ADULT – 3 books**

**Amy Doak, *What Have They done to Liza McLean?*, (Penguin Randon House Australia)**

Meg McLean, and her younger sister Liza, are scholarship students at the ultra-elite Douglas College. However, everything Liza has done since they arrived is putting their chances of success at risk. That is until one day, when Liza's behaviour is in stark contrast that Meg knows something is not right. And when more that one murder occurs, just who can Meg trust in helping her to unravel not only what has happened to Liza, but unmask the murderer.

<https://www.penguin.com.au/books/what-have-they-done-to-liza-mclean-9781761350641>

**Kate Emery, *A Murder Is Going Down*, (Allen & Unwin)**

*"This is what happens when you put a pair of unemployed teenagers in charge of a murder investigation. What we lack in investigative skills we make up for in free time."* Heidi finds herself returning to Perth from Switzerland upon hearing of the death of her brother Felix. Upon arriving home, Patrick, the younger brother of Felix's widow, convinces Heidi that they need to investigate her brother's mysterious demise.

<https://www.allenandunwin.com/browse/book/Kate-Emery-A-Murder-Is-Going-Down-9781761182211>

**Carla Salmon, *We Saw What You Started*, (Pan Macmillan Australia) Debut**

*"Otto was a star surfer back in California, but now he just wants a fresh start. When fires break out in Red Sands, the locals are suspicious. It's no coincidence that Otto's at the scene every time. Is it? Milly isn't so sure. Small town talk isn't always right - especially when it comes to her 'perfect' brother, who doesn't deserve to become captain of the surf lifesaving club. What if the new boy is innocent? Can Otto and Milly trust each other to find the truth behind the fires? And what happens when you do the wrong things for the right reasons?"*

<https://www.panmacmillan.com.au/9781761906701/>

**CHILDREN'S BOOKS – 6 books**

**Sarah Armstrong, *Run*, (Hardie Grant Children's)**

Cas is a twelve-year-old boy who runs away to avoid a reunion with his estranged father, and he soon after finds himself lost in the tangled Australian bush. Cas had given up all hope of rescue, until he comes across a strange family hiding out in the wilderness. Whilst he won't survive without their help, Cas very quickly realises that this family is also on the run and that his problems have only just started.

<https://publishing.hardiegrant.com/en-au/books/run-by-sarah-armstrong/9781761214561>

**Gisela Ervin-Ward, *True South*, (Midnight Sun) Debut**

*"When twelve-year-old Nell crashes her sailboat into a submerged house in the lake, she stumbles into a treasure hunt that plunges her into a generations-old family feud. Things begin to take a sinister turn as the adults get involved, and Nell has no choice but to team up with her neighbour and family rival, Charlie. As friendships begin to morph and stretch, can these two unlikely allies end the feud and work out the treasure's secrets, or will their rivalry lead to one last epic betrayal?"*

<https://midnightsunpublishing.com/2025/01/true-south/>

**Jacqueline Harvey, *The Girl and the Ghost*, (Penguin Random House Australia)**

“She snaps the locket shut. Just as quickly as he appeared, the boy is gone. Josephine’s heart is hammering. Her skin feels prickly and hot. Surely, she’s imagined him. That’s the only possible explanation. Because boys don’t live in lockets. Not unless they’re ghosts. And ghosts aren’t real. Or are they?” When Josephine Eloise Thomas moves from Sydney to a chateau in the southwest of France, she unexpectedly discovers a gold locket with the ghost of Louis XVII trapped inside. And with the aid of her neighbour Gabriel and Louis XVII’s help, Josephine sets out to discover what her neighbours are up to and solve the mystery of the gold locket.

<https://www.penguin.com.au/books/the-girl-and-the-ghost-9781761349409>

**Amelia Mellor, *Oceanforged: The Wicked Ship*, (Simon & Schuster Australia)**

“The realm of Aquinta has fallen into a dark age. And no one knows that better than thirteen-year-old Cori, who is fighting for her life in a pirate crew more beastly than Aquinta’s sea monsters. But Cori’s life changes when she finds the Oceanforged Gauntlet - a piece of armour belonging to the legendary Champions who once ruled the islands. Whoever wears the armour wields the Champions’ magic and has the power to return Aquinta to its lost glory. Cori must begin a treacherous journey to find the rest of the armour. But first, she’ll have to escape from her captain, who craves the gauntlet’s magic for himself ...”

<https://www.simonandschuster.com.au/books/Oceanforged-1-The-Wicked-Ship-From-the-bestselling-author-of-The-Grandest-Bookshop-in-the-World/Amelia-Mellor/Oceanforged/9781761820861>

**Jessica Townsend, *Silverborn: The Mystery of Morrigan Crow*, (Hachette Children’s)**

In the fourth instalment of the Nevermoor series, Morrigan is invited into Nevermoor’s wealthy Silver District, upon which she soon discovers a world of extravagance and a family mystery she’s eager to unravel. Morrigan leaps headfirst into a murder investigation, while also grappling with her ever-growing Wundersmith powers. Can Morrigan find a killer and solve the mystery in her own past, all before the clock strikes midnight?

<https://www.hachette.com.au/jessica-townsend/silverborn-the-mystery-of-morrigan-crow-nevermoor-4>

**Sue Whiting, *Promises and Other Lies*, (Walker Books)**

“One year on from a devastating bushfire, the small coastal town of Wangaroo Bay is still reeling. Fletch’s family lost their home, and his best friend Immie lost her beloved dad, a volunteer firefighter.... Immie’s grandparents push for the Bayfire investigation to be reopened, but Fletch’s mum, dad and elder brother Cooper want to put the past behind them. And when a local, one of their own, is charged with arson, emotions flare, sides are taken, and promises – and secrets – are at stake.”

<https://www.walkerbooks.com.au/book/9781760658649/>

**DAVITT JUDGES’ WILDCARD ENTRIES – 4 books**

**Kerry Greenwood, *Murder in the Cathedral*, (Allen and Unwin)**

Phryne Fisher does not expect the investiture of her old friend Lionel, who is being made a Bishop, to include a murder. Phryne applying her quick wits and magnetic charm, discovers the murky layers of church politics, social scandals and business scams and blackmail. Will Phryne be able to bring to light the proof she needs before the murderer strikes again or disappears completely?

<https://www.allenandunwin.com/browse/book/Kerry-Greenwood-Murder-in-the-Cathedral-9781760879341>

**Kelly Gardiner & Sharmi Kumar, *Miss Caroline Bingley, Private Investigator*, (Harper Collins Australia)**

“Two years after the events of *Pride and Prejudice*, Miss Caroline Bingley is staying at her brother's country estate close to Pemberley, wondering if there's more to life than cribbage and paying calls. So when Georgiana Darcy's maid, Jayani, vanishes and Georgiana disappears in search of her, Caroline races after them to London, only to discover a shocking, cold-blooded murder... As Caroline exercises her superior powers of investigation, she finds out exactly what an accomplished, independent woman with a sharp mind and a large fortune can achieve – even when pitted against secrets, scandal, and a murderer with no mercy.”

<https://harpercollins.com.au/products/9781460717530>

**Lyn Yeowart, *The Hollow Girl*, (Penguin Books Australia)**

“HARROWFORD HALL, A safe haven for lost girls? Or a breeding ground for revenge?” Set in 1973, Detective Sergeant Eleanor Smith is assigned her first homicide case when a woman's body is discovered at Harrowford Hall, a home for unmarried mothers deep in the Victorian countryside. However, when Detective Smith arrives at the once-grand gothic mansion, she finds it deserted and the home's overgrown graveyard indicates that this is not Harrowford's first suspicious death.

<https://www.penguin.com.au/books/the-hollow-girl-9781760895747>

**Helen Garner, Chloe Hooper & Sarah Krasnostein, *The Mushroom Tapes*, (Text Publishing)**

“In July 2023, in the quiet Gippsland town of Leongatha, Erin Patterson—stay-at-home mother and true-crime devotee—invited her husband's devoutly Christian family to lunch. Within days, three of her guests were dead and the fourth was in a coma. They had all been poisoned by death cap mushrooms. Two years later ... the court case gripped the nation and fascinated people all over the world. Among those drawn into the drama were three renowned writers: Helen Garner, Chloe Hooper and Sarah Krasnostein. Together, they joined the daily media scrum at the Latrobe Valley Law Courts and spent long days immersed in the case's sinister and complex themes: love, hate, jealousy, revenge, marriage, money, mycology and murder.”

<https://www.textpublishing.com.au/books/the-mushroom-tapes-9781923058750>