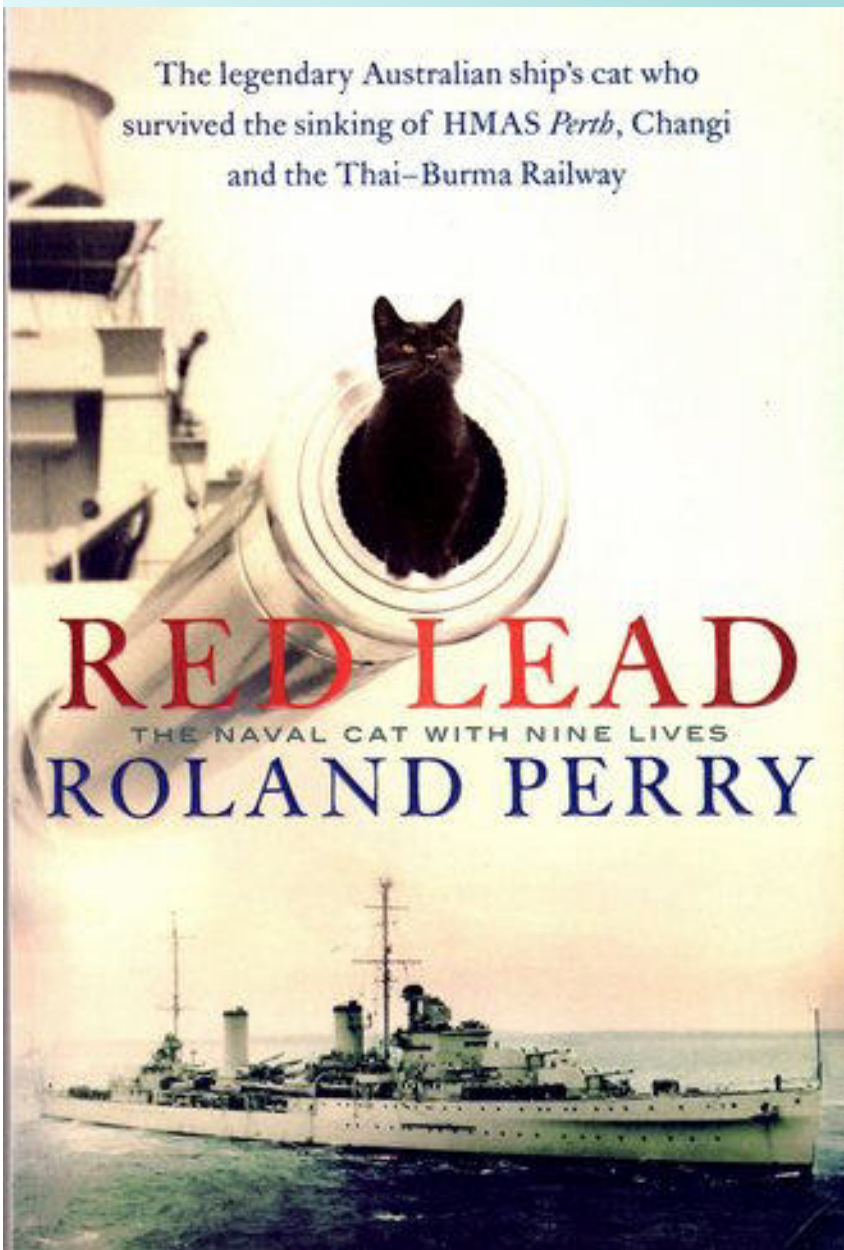


Cat's Eye Watch

Previously Cat's Eye Weekly

No. 147

1st September 2024



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Any excuse for stirring up the universe

*Edited by
Graham Price*

Once was weekly now highly irregular in more ways than one

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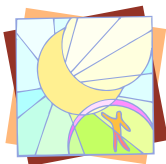
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The editor's desk



I'm ashamed of my country and its institutions for allowing this to occur—vile anti-semitism, which admittedly was always lurking in the background within certain ideologies, but yet unspoken, has now shaken the foundations of this country. Regardless of anyone's political position concerning Israel/Palestine, you do not tar a whole race of people for the actions of one country. My Jewish friends belong to a proud and eternal race of people who have contributed much to science, medicine, the arts, technology etc. more than any other people on the face of the earth. When Nobel prizes are handed out who do you think has the majority? Apart from those 'labelled' as Christians, Jewish people who only make up to 0.2% of the world's population, are the recipients of 20-22% of Nobel prizes, vastly outnumbering those of other ethnicities.

Recently an Officeworks staff member at the Elsternwick store refused to laminate a newspaper article for a Jewish person. Why? Because she was pro-Palestine and stated that it was her personal opinion and that Officeworks' position was that she had the right to refuse the service. Officeworks denied that and stated that the member would be given further training, but the cat is out of the bag revealing the anti-semitism that lingers in Australia. Julian Leeser MP, stated that his grandmother grew up in Germany and left in 1936 because at that point Jews were being refused service in shops. That staff member needs much more than a little training — she needs a total re-learning about history.

In my *Cat's Eye Watch* No. 145. 1 Feb 2024 I headed an article 'Is the New Left Anti-semitic?' which has now proven to be true. What used to be the dominance of far-right groups has now infiltrated to left-wing politics. At the time I wrote: 'The original ideological New Left was the product of the 1960s and 70s, but it too is in danger of becoming defunct with the decline of Western society within this 21st Century. The New Left has become infiltrated with the New Woke and at times there are not all that many degrees of separation between the two. Again, you don't have to look far to find that the new progressive woke movement is anti-semitic. It's there in colleges and universities, particularly in the USA, as has been highlighted recently at Harvard University and numerous others. It spreads itself all over the world; it has been there long before October 7. It is somewhat caused by colleges and universities initiating identity departments.' And that is exacerbated further by the decline of Western values and infiltration by extremist groups into university rallies and protest movements, such as the 'terrorist' group banned in Britain, Hizb ut Tarir.

Environmental voters no longer have any trust in this left-wing government and don't trust the right-wing coalition, and now have a certain aversion to the Greens of which they once held up as saviours of the planet. So, how shall they vote when the Australian parliament next sets itself up for election? Well, they are puzzled — they are unsure where to put their vote. A selection of Greens have shown their true colours coming out with anti-Semitic remarks and actions; in fact many of the recent university and public demonstrators can be shown up as nothing more than bigoted racists. When young Labor senator Fatima Payman came out with 'From the River to the Sea, Palestine will be free,' echoing that particular terrorist chant, the

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**Feedback to Cat's Eye Weekly
is always welcome.
Click onto my purrfect nose!**





The Cat with Nine Lives

Published in 2020 and still available for those who wish to peruse an almost magical and unbelievable tale of a ship's cat that survived HMAS Perth's sinking in the battle of Sunda Strait off Java in 1942 by superior Japanese naval fleets, then somehow managing to find shipmates on the sandy beaches of Java.

With ammunition running out, two battleships, the Australian cruiser HMAS Perth and the American heavy cruiser USS Houston, bravely took on a massive task force of Japanese superiority. The Allied Combined Commanders had placed a Dutch Admiral in charge of a fleet of six American cruisers and destroyers together with the Australian HMAS Perth. A clash of the two forces had left the fleet with only Perth and Houston to protect the Sunda Strait off Java, and during the night of the 28th February 1942, Perth and Houston commanders were facing a task force of three cruisers and seven Japanese destroyers—together with numerous patrol boats and minesweepers guarding 29 Japanese troopships.

The battle was swift and sharp, with the Japanese flotilla losing ships and troop carriers. But it was only a matter of time before Perth was sunk by Japanese torpedoes, followed by Houston. Both captains went down with their ships, while 357 men of the Perth were lost and almost 700 from the Houston. Those who managed to survive and reach Java's shores were eventually captured by the Japanese. Included was the Perth's ship's cat, Red Lead, given that name because of walking through red lead paint on the deck of the Perth and leaving a trail of paw prints. Captain Waller refused to have them cleaned off, stating "Leave the prints, Lieutenant, they will become a symbol of this grand ship."

The cat, as was it's nature early in the mornings, was often sighted strolling along the long barrel of the six-inch guns and sometimes disappeared into the mouth of the guns, popping out later to the amusement of the crew. Red Lead soon had the run of the ship, escaping down the gang-plank numerous times when in port, only to be captured by a small body of naval seamen ordered by the Captain to look for her. The crew soon adopted her as one of their own. Red Lead was a great swimmer, showing off her attributes whenever the ship docked. Some members of the crew thought it was bad luck to have a black cat on board, but Captain Waller pointed out that she was not black. If you looked closely you could detect the dark brown of her fur, an indication of where she had originally come from—Mae Sot, a town on the Burma-Thai border—rescued with other kittens and taken to live at a restaurant in Sydney where Captain Waller was dining one evening.

Red Lead was special. She soon cleaned up much of the ship's rodent colony, often leaving her bounty near the Captain's cabin. The bigger the rat, the easier it was for Red Lead to track down. Red Lead amazed the crew with her high jinks. This indeed, was a most superior cat.



HMAS Perth I was the home of Red Lead, her ship's cat.

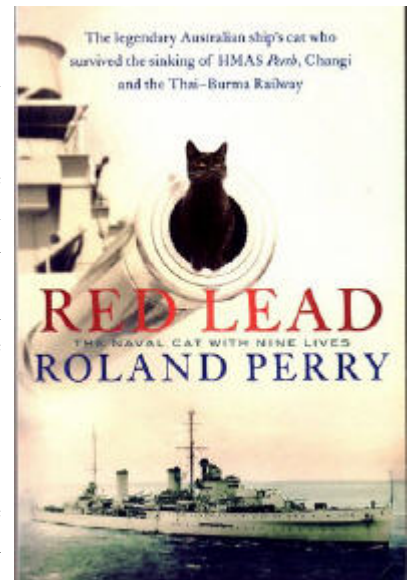
dangerously motivated by bumping against the fragile crafts. Red Lead leaned over the side and smacked the shark with her paw, claws out. Yes, Red Lead was a girl! The shark, taken by surprise, moved away from the canoe.

But in time the survivors of Perth & Houston were captured by the Japanese and sent to Changi prison camp in Singapore. Red Lead was with them. The cat had survived the oil soaked waters of Sunda Strait, several skirmishes on the coast of Java, the hatred of several hostile members of the crew on the beaches of Indonesia, and the long journey by ship to Malaya.

So, from Changi, Red Lead then accompanied the Australians into the very gates of hell—the Thai-Burma railway construction where under almost impossible conditions 90,000 civilians and 16,000 prisoners of war died at the hands of a cruel Japanese administration that was hell-bent on getting the railway built. The urgency was full on so as to confront the British strongholds in Burma (now Myanmar) and India. The small group of Australian sailors labouring under hellish pressure with little food or drink, vowed to keep Red Lead alive at all costs.

Roland Perry writes with fierce dedication not only during the torture, but the unbelievable good humour of the Australians under those murderous conditions, putting their lives on the line so that Red Lead would survive. And survive she did. Perry doesn't whitewash anything in his book—it's exceedingly raw and true to those brutal days. It's an absolute miracle that a cat as cheeky and up-front as Red Lead was, to have survived under such conditions. Stories such as this are much needed in this day and age, because they show that under the very worst that humans can do to each other, it is good humour, hope, and standing up for what one believes is right, that survives in the long run.

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Wilfred 'Chick' Smallhorn earlier days at Changi prison. Not yet showing the starvation process that was inevitable.
Photo *The Argus*.

If you only read one book this year, you'll be doing yourself a great favour popping your little peepers into Roland Perry's *Red Lead: The Naval Cat with Nine Lives*. And to top it all off, among the pictures within the book is one at Changi prison of my elder sister & brother-in-law's best friend Corporal Wilfred "Chick" Smallhorn—who was the 1933 Brownlow Medal recipient.

Many a meal was enjoyed with your editor listening to Chick's stories. Chick died in 1988, but in 2006 he was inducted into The Football Hall of Fame. My memories of Chick are among those of a true hero. Much the same as that small band of naval mates aboard the HMAS Perth who saved Red Lead time and again when there were those who would shoot her or slash her head off with a Samurai sword.

The main hero who looked after and protected Red Lead most of the time was Petty Officer Dan Bolt—a fictitious name given to protect the identity of the real person—who, we are pleased to mention, married, settled in Thailand and kept the naval cat of nine lives. A magnificent ending to a turbulent and at times horrific phase in the lives of millions of Asian and Australian people.

Red Lead: The Naval Cat with Nine Lives

Available online from numerous resources

But also from The Australian War Memorial

<https://shop.awm.gov.au/products/red-lead-the-naval-cat-with-nine-lives>

The Editor's Desk From page 2. >>>

next day in the Australian parliament, that particular phrase was condemned with a showing of support from both sides of the parliament, with numerous members crossing the floor to pass the motion 53 to 12. Those voting against included members of the Greens party. The vote was somewhat late in the day, but now welcomed by the Australian people.

As one holocaust survivor said: "You can imagine it all came back. I never expected all this to be happening in our wonderful country: the demonstrations, the anti-Semitism and racism. I hear hatred on the television. I read it in the press, I can feel it. And it pains me. My children were born here, and I have been here for 80 years. I saw a better Australia than I see now."

Flares, beating drums, and a chanting mob, are not part of an organised peaceful protest rally—they evoke dark memories of armed goose-stepping Nazi and SS divisions with the Gestapo watching in the background. They evoke hatred, they evoke racism, they evoke memories of concentration camps. This is how it began in the 1930's, with chanting crowds becoming more and more aggressive. This is how everything begins, from a small idea which spreads like wildfire until it becomes an all consuming blaze. It boils down to a simple phrase: "Whatever they want you to believe, you will believe." And so, youth and children's minds are warped to fit the current ideology, mainly because it is not simply university students arranging these protests—it is infiltration and leadership by members of a now banned group in Britain, the Islamic Hizb ut-Tahrir. The UK government has named the group **terrorist**. Here in Australia you may kindly refer to them as fundamentalist Islamic supporters until otherwise informed by the Australian government. But there is nothing tame about these Australian supporters. Members of the group were laughing, dancing, and cheering loudly at the aftermath of October 7 which now stands in history alongside 9/11.

How people forget so easily, never learn, or simply don't wish to know! I was at a Target store in June and was considerably shocked to find on sale men's thick striped pyjamas almost identical to the ones worn by Jewish inmates of the Auschwitz death camp. I emailed Target with pictures showing the uncanny resemblance. Naturally enough, there was no reply—people just don't want to know about it. •

How China intends to conquer Australia

In general the stature of Chinese men is smaller than Australian caucasians and Australian indigenous persons, therefore male trouser zips made in China which are flooding the departments stores of Australia, are a third shorter than those originally made in Australia. In addition Chinese imported men's briefs are tighter.

Therefore, there is some difficulty in retrieving the little bloke for peeing. In addition, the tightness of these briefs reduces the sperm count in the caucasian and indigenous males. Won't be long before generations of Australians are therefore reduced so that Australia won't be able to find enough troops to defend this wide brown land. And then, some singlets are so long they almost reach the knees. This government better get back to restoring Australia's textile industries before it is too late.

The joker is wild!





Almost fairies at the bottom of the garden

Recent warnings from medical practitioners to the Australian Chiropractor's Association concerning the practice of treating babies resulted in a ban, which was then overturned, and then re-instated. Most Australian pediatricians have never been happy about spinal manipulation of babies. In 2019 Victoria's healthcare safety and improvement experts, Safe Care Victoria, undertook research into the practice and came to the conclusion that given the lack of Australian-based clinical trial evidence, spinal manipulation of children under 12 years should not be permitted. There were other recommendations, but nothing was indelibly inked to say that this was a dangerous practice. Chiropractic for adults is generally known to be safe and on a sliding scale of 1 to 10, most people attending Chiropractic premises would tick in somewhere between 8 and 10. However, your editor had an experience that would rate somewhat lower. This was reviewed in CEW140 and is repeated here with an accompanying amusing article on the origins of chiropractic.

About chiropractic from the editor

Normally, I wouldn't be commenting on alternative health practices in CEW, but perhaps this is a 'need to know' info page! Trying to manage an apparent sciatic nerve pain in the left thigh over several years, including physiotherapy, osteopathy, acupuncture, with no resulting cure, I turned to chiropractic, because as you know, chiropractic centres throughout the country advertise help for sciatic nerve pain.

Perhaps they should clearly revise that thinking. The site will remain anonymous as I have no wish to bring down a storm upon the practitioners, but let me fill you in on some history.

Numerous decades ago I attended a local chiropractor for several months at a time, who apparently eased up my spine, helped keep my body in shape, and was a lovely bloke. Fine. When I was on a trip to Hong Kong I came down with a stiff and semi-painful neck; checked out the local Yellow Pages, found a Chinese gentleman chiropractor who fixed the neck in no time flat. One visit was all that was required, all back to normal and the holiday continued peacefully. No problems with the neck after that. That's the history. Fast forward to the present time and an appointment with a recommended chiropractic practice 2021, which advertised help for numerous complaints including sciatica.

The people in control were lovely, caring, and attentive — they required numerous X-Rays of my spine, more so than I had ever been asked for in a lifetime; did a physical run up my spine counting the vertebrae, and finally a digital scan of the spine, which looked rather beautiful when viewed on the coloured computer screen. There was also a digital questionnaire to be filled in, which I managed to the best of my ability, handling the iPad, the initial screen which kept dropping out on me. In one section I had entered a tick to the question of 'have you ever had Hepatitis?' I ticked YES. And later I was surprised to find that nobody questioned which variation, considering that Hepatitis has had dramatic effects upon society. This should have been queried. Fortunately for me at the time, it was the simple variation, caused by eating apricots off the tree, unwashed, in 1957. No drama, no recurrence, but the chiro people should have queried it.

First appointment. I attended — a light crack here, a light crack there, very gentle manipulation; after all this was the beginning, so that is what one would have been expected. Previously at an osteopathy clinic, the practitioner only caused further pain and made the situation worse. But that, surely, would not occur here? Treatment carried on, adjusting the spine, and a few weeks went by. I did consider that the chest press adjustments were far too heavy. Ouch! To which other clients also 'protested' while being manipulated. Anyway, after a number of appointments that would be it, I thought; appointments would now be fairly well spaced out, but no, I received a text for further Saturday morning appointments so close to the earlier



Image: theluckypup.com



Wednesday appointments. Really! Well, okay, better turn up — I enquired of the very lovely receptionist why my treatments were continuing like this instead of being gradually spaced out? She said I was booked in for (as far as I recall) 13 weeks twice a week, of which I had absolutely no knowledge of. Oh well, might as well continue. Why not? Several weeks later the pain and walking was no better, if not somewhat worse, and then during treatment the chiropractor touched or massaged into the very spot on my thigh where the pain was and rocketed me up through to the heavens:SHREEEEEEEEK!!!!

That's it, I thought, no more for now. We don't seem to be getting anywhere after about 16 visits. We talked, pleasantly, and the chiropractor mentioned several options apart from chiro. Lovely guy. We parted as friends, but I wasn't going to return in a hurry. Really, they were all very sweet people, probably doing their best to help those in pain. But all the same, there were some negatives. I thought that they would have advised me of the continuing close appointments (twice a week) at the beginning, but they did not. I thought their preparation requirements re. X-Ray etc., were handled well from their side but which they didn't appear to refer to at later treatments. The numerous chiropractic couches that one would lie upon had changeable protective paper rolls to protect one's face during Covid, or whenever, but the pads where everyone put the palms of their hands (and this during high Victorian Covid crisis) were not protected so that everyone touched the previous persons hand bacteria. The chiropractic centre was, perhaps, a 'new age' comfort centre, with much focus on natural therapies and written on the wall was the idea that standard medical practices would be almost unnecessary in the future. Certainly not what 21st Century doctors would agree with.

During my time there, people came from all ages, even small children, and all it seems were quite happy with the treatment. The atmosphere was almost electric, with laughs and happy stories told. But what amazed me was that it seemed like a conveyor belt process — with clients on the couch — each for seemingly no more than five minutes therapy. That didn't correspond to my experience of chiro of old where the treatment went on for approximately 15 to 20 minutes.

The happiness that exuded within the practice was real (though now and then there were some loud yells or screams due to manipulation) the enthusiasm for some was real as well, but for me the healing was not forthcoming, though perhaps my spine is somewhat looser now. Who knows? My back feels no different. No doubt there would be those who had responded to the chiro treatments that are given and may go on to live healthier lives. But one major item about my various treatments stood out: my doctor then called for an ultrasound of my left hip which revealed that it was not the sciatica nerve that was causing the major problem. The pain which had prevented me from walking properly for months at a time was caused by *gluteus medius* and *minimus tendons* having been torn away from the bone. The only apparent option — surgery. Chiro, with all its checks, had not diagnosed that, so is it any wonder that from the manipulations I almost screamed my head off?

Prior to my chiro treatment, my doctor said "No neck manipulations." I mentioned this to the chiropractor. At the last treatment the chiropractor gave my neck a crack and guess what? For weeks afterward I have a crick and light stab of pain in the right side of my neck when moving my head on a pillow. Nothing deadly serious. But, who can cure that? A chiropractor, perhaps? Ho hum! 😊

Interested in chiropractic? Talk to your doctor first.

The origin of chiropractic and some more

The origins of chiropractic are strange, perhaps weird to some folk. David Daniel 'DD' Palmer was a spiritualist, and during a spiritualist camp claimed he received advice from a dead doctor, some 50 years prior: Dr. Jim Atkinson, who Palmer stated had given him the philosophy of spinal adjustments. Previously he had been using what he called magnetic healing. Utilising this new found knowledge, Palmer adjusted the spine of a janitor in his office building. Harvey had lost the use of his left hearing and Palmer made an adjustment to the spine which is said to have resulted in Harvey gaining his hearing again.

Palmer considered that his book *The Chiropractor's Adjuster* was written under spiritual guidance. His one success in restoring hearing was never repeated with other patients. Palmer continued with his practice and was the forerunner of today's chiropractic studies which are taught at Australian universities, such as RMIT, Macquarie, Murdoch, and CQU. It may be of some interest to note that it is not taught at Melbourne University, Monash, or La Trobe. The earlier mentioned universities are sort of Johnny-come-lately campuses.

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William Lauretti, an associate professor at New York Chiropractic College who serves as an association spokesman, admitted that “D.D. Palmer was an eccentric.” Eccentric or not, it is a fact that he received his chiropractic instructions through a belief in spiritualism.

But spinal manipulation did not simply appear during 1895 when Palmer was carrying out his adjustments. From the middle ages there were persons known as bone brokers, who manipulated spines. Early writings reveal similar spinal adjustments taking place in ancient China and Greece. Even Hippocrates, 460-370 BC, that eminent Greek physician, is said to have written: “Get knowledge of the spine, for this is the requisite of many diseases.” •

Further reading:

<https://jamanetwork.com/journals/jamainternalmedicine/article-abstract/210354>

<https://link.springer.com/article/10.1186/2045-709X-19-25>

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chiropractic_controversy_and_criticism

<https://publichealth.jmir.org/2016/2/e153>

A DAY IN THE LIFE OF DONALD TRUMP

With apologies to Punch

The second coming



Pet Medical Crisis

A not for profit fund to save pets whose owners cannot afford their emergency care.

<https://www.petmedicalcrisis.com.au>

Email: petmedicalcrisis@gmail.com

PMC is now on Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/PetMedicalCrisis/>

Also, a walking harness — ‘Dog-A-Long’ — is available to assist your dog to become more mobile — supports dogs with hind leg problems associated with ageing, arthritis, hip & spinal problems. For suitability check with your Vet.

A DAY IN THE LIFE OF THE MEMBER FOR KOOYONG

With apologies to Punch



Hostess standing: “I hear you got annoyed with the opposition leader, Dutton, about him slinging names around . . . calling names and so on?”

Monique Ryan: “Yes, that’s so. He does that, you know.”

Hostess standing: “Well now, you called him a toxic potatohead not so long ago. You can’t have it both ways, you know.”

Monique Ryan: “Hmmp.”



OUT OF AUSCHWITZ-BIRKENAU

Schindler's Ark—it was the Booker prize-winning book for 1982 and in an afterword to the edition of 2016, Thomas Keneally wrote: “One asks oneself, could I have done what Schindler did? I wrote the book in part from a fascinated knowledge that I could not — I am not as talented at risk-taking and as reckless as Oscar [Oskar Schindler] was . . . but the question one asks oneself is this: if I had been raised in the Weimar republic and my family's neediness was blamed upon an international Jewish conspiracy, and I was inducted into the SS . . .? You can complete the scenario. What would you have done when faced with the obvious humanity of the victims? What could I have done?”

Keneally's book topped the international best-seller list. But why—when the book is so well known in various circles—is there so much anti-Semitism in this democratic Australian country and other so-called evolved nations around the world? I can give you the answer up-front. When people are dissatisfied with their own lives, they look for someone to blame. The Jews were the easy target in 1933 through the years to 1945—because they were successful. They were hard-working and they knew the value of coin, how it must be saved against poorer economic times, how it was absolutely necessary to educate one's children no matter how small that coin may be. Why? Because it may well be your son or your daughter who will use that precious coin to bring medical and scientific healing to not one, not ten, but hundreds of people during their lifetime.

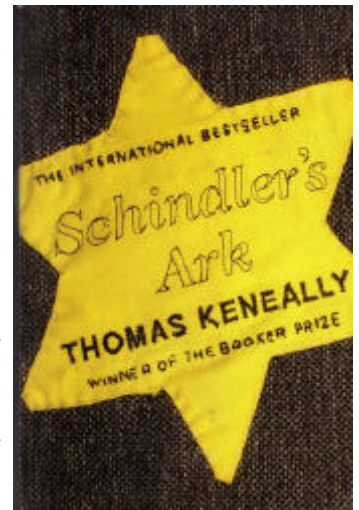
The names ring joyously throughout history—literally thousands of Jewish folk embracing the healing professions: **Ora Mendelson Rosen**, awarded the Banting Medal for her research into insulin. **Mary Lake Polan**, whose research into obstetrics led to how hormones and genetics-influenced endocrinology. **Robert Joseph Lefkowitz**, whose discoveries led to the inner workings of G protein-coupled receptors, was awarded the Nobel Prize in chemistry for 2012. **Sir Ernest Boris Chain**, Nobel Prize winner for his work on penicillin. **Ruth Arnon**, Israeli biochemist, co-developer of the **multiple sclerosis drug Copaxone**. **Konrad Emil Bloch**, Nobel Prize winner 1964 for discoveries concerning the mechanism and regulation of cholesterol and fatty acids metabolism. **Gerty Cori**, Nobel Prize winner for the discovery of the course of the catalytic conversion of glycogen. **Rudolph Arthur Marcus**, Nobel Prize winner for his contribution towards outer-sphere electron transfer. **Gerald Maurice Elderman**, Nobel Prize winner for his discovery of the structure of anti-body molecules. **Lina Stern**, whose medical discoveries saved thousands of people at the fronts of World War II. **Rosalyn Sussman Yalow**, Nobel Prize winner for the development of radioimmunoassay technique—the second woman to win a Nobel Prize. **Rita Levi-Montalcini**, Nobel Prize winner 1986 in physiology/medicine for the discovery of nerve growth factor (NGF). **Emil Adolf von Behring** Nobel Prize winner 1901 for his discovery of a diphtheria toxin. He was known as the ‘saviour of children’. Your editor has him to thank for saving me from death, having caught diphtheria at the age of five when it was like a plague roaming the streets of our cities. The infectious diseases ward in the Geelong Hospital was chock full of little children. I survived, the little bloke next to me didn't. My mother's little sister who was also four or five years old in 1892, didn't. You are reading this because of von Behring's dedication to science.

Give me the fattest exercise book you can find and I could fill it, page after page, with Jewish scientists and medical pioneers who have saved millions of lives the world over. As if I had the time!

And family, because the Jews of history were great family people where there was *The Torah* or *The Talmud* in almost every home and the seven candle or lamp *Menorah*, which symbolises the seven days of creation, with the centre seventh candle or lamp, representing the Sabbath. The Jewish folk of Australia fought in both world wars because this land is their land—no different from anyone born in this vast country or having been given that great and precious privilege of immigration.

Schindler's Ark is labelled a novel, yet it stays true to the facts. In his foreword to the book, Keneally writes: “I have attempted, however, to avoid all fiction, since fiction would debase the record, and to distinguish between reality and the myths which are likely to attach themselves to a man of Oskar's stature. It has sometimes been necessary to make reasonable constructs of conversations of which Oskar and others who have left only the briefest record. But most exchanges and conversations are based on the detailed recollections of the *Schindlerjuden* (Schindler's Jews) of Schindler himself, and of other witnesses to Oskar's acts of outrageous rescue.”

The astonishing fact is why and how did Schindler, a card-carrying member and spy for the Nazi party, a heavy drinker and womaniser, manage to smuggle 1,200 Jews out of Krakow in Poland during WWII? It's a fascinating true story. •



The Jewish War Memorial in the grounds of Ripponlea Station, Elsternwick, Victoria. It is often forgotten that many Jewish immigrants who fled Germany and other parts of Europe with their families prior to and during the days of World War II, joined the Australian armed forces to fight for their new country against the Nazi oppression. Many lost their lives and left behind them widows, girlfriends, and children without a father.

LEST WE FORGET

Schindler's Ark
By Thomas Keneally
Hodder & Stoughton
Paperback 416 pages
Various prices \$AUD17-23

The Promise

Turkish slaughter of Armenians 1915-1923

When the movie *The Promise* hit the screens on 24th of April 2017, there were survivors' dark tales of the Turkish massacre from Armenian people who remembered those days. Mihran Andonian's mother gave him away to an Arab family of gardeners to save his life. He was set to work growing vegetables and other chores and slept at night in a stable among horses and lambs. He was further saved by a chance meeting with a man who took him to an orphanage.



Samuel Kadorian, interviewed in America 1980, told of his family being taken by force to another town where, much the same as during the German Holocaust to come, women and children were separated from men and boys over the age of 10. During the night a fifteen-year-old boy managed to escape from where the men had been sent. He came to the women and children and said that all the men had been massacred in cold blood by the Turkish overseers.

Nium Sukkar, born 1911 and interviewed in 1999, recalls being taken into the desert where he saw numerous bodies with some still alive crying for water with mothers unable to breast feed their babies. Later, he discovered that those women and children were taken further out into the desert and as far as he knew, none survived.

It began in 1915, when Turkey was allied with the German government. The Turks saw their opportunity under the cover of the 1914-1918 war to remove the minority Armenian population, which was the largest Christian denomination in Turkey.



Ana and Mikael

Time Magazine of 21st April 2017 as a prelude to the film, published a feature article which included "[Turkey's] planned laws permitting the confiscation of all Armenians' property and the deportation of these citizens, by methods including marches to concentration camps in the Syrian desert during which many died along the way. There were about 2.1 million Armenians living in the Ottoman empire in 1914, and [only] about 387,800 left by 1922 . . . Armenians had become forces for social and political change within the empire and were asking the state 'Can a Christian be the equal of a Muslim in the Ottoman empire?' " Obviously not, from Turkey's point of view. The son of the American Ambassador to Turkey, Henry Morgenthau III, recalls his father's frustration and immense sadness when dealing with the Ottoman Empire's interior minister, Talaat Pasha. Morgenthau II mentioned to Talaat that he was not only killing men, but also innocent women and children. Talaat replied "Well, they may be innocent today, but who knows what they will be tomorrow." The estimate of massacres of Armenians by the Turkish government is 1.5 million. The Turkish government has never admitted to this genocide. It didn't happen.

The Promise has been given the thumbs up by historians for its accuracy. It is a film that rips into your emotions, centred upon a young man, Mikael, who is given a large dowry with the promise to marry later. The dowry is for him to survive as a medical student in the far city and then to return to his village as a doctor. Temptation waves its scented breath in front of him and he falls in love with Ana an Armenian woman living in Istanbul, but raised in France. Fate then takes a diabolic turn and the Turkish army steps in. His medical studies are interrupted and what follows is a courageous ride through time and the love from two women. The story is further complicated because of the love of two men for the same lady.



Mikael arriving at the medical school, Istanbul

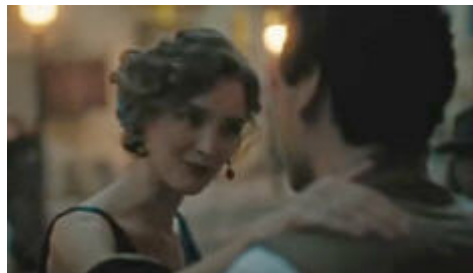


Armenians used as forced labour building railways in the Ottoman empire

This is a well-crafted film about the urgency of love under the most horrific conditions, but most of all it's about the survival of an ethnic race during a murderous war that should never have been. The film is shown at times on SBS Australia (Special Broadcasting Service) channel 32, Netflix, and SBS on Demand.

Further viewing:

<https://www.sbs.com.au/on-demand/movie/the-promise/2287024195539>
<https://variety.com/2016/film/news/promise-film-armenian-genocide-1201892838/>
<https://promiseinstitute.law.ucla.edu/students/the-promise-film-our-origin-story/>
<https://www.imdb.com/title/tt4776998/>
https://www.armenian-genocide.org/News.318/current_category.180/press_detail.html
<http://www.ethos.org.au/online-resources/blog/the-promise-film-review>
<https://www.thenation.com/article/archive/the-armenian-genocide-finally-gets-its-due-with-the-film-the-promise/>
<https://www.historyvshollywood.com/reelfaces/the-promise/>
<https://variety.com/2016/film/news/promise-film-armenian-genocide-1201892838/>



Credits: UCLA and Iwitness (USC Shoah Foundation 1999-2024)

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Numerous political parties around the world do not maintain a crucial balance—they are either solidly left or solidly right, and the temptation, when things are not always to their liking, is to swing either to the far-left or the far-right. There doesn't seem to be much joy or satisfaction in maintaining a middle of the road perspective. Human nature, sadly, tends to look for extremes to accomplish the wishes of the crowd. But the crowd cannot be and never will be, a stabilising force.

Certain political parties rely upon their own understanding of human nature so as to form policies, but often enough that understanding is really misunderstanding. The election of would-be politicians into parliament is often based on populism and not on what is vital for the country. That was seen during recent elections in Australia with the rise of numerous teals to parliament — people who have had no experience with politics, but who in some instances were somewhat egotistic and idealistic. i.e. misinformed.

From left-wing dictatorship to right-wing fascism

Which is not to say that some teals are fully encapsulated with naivety and are only there for self-aggrandisement. But human nature is complicated. Some philosophers in the past have attempted to separate human nature from nature itself, relying upon a single social context to explain humanity. But humanity cannot be separated from nature, wild as it often is. Nor can human nature be compartmentalised into social divisions without losing a sense of rationality.

It's the crowd that eventually determines what one thinks. Humans fool themselves that they are individuals, capable of independent thinking, but groupthink often overrides the individual's thinking process. The historian, Yuval Noah Harari, sets this out in his book *21 Lessons for the 21st Century* Jonathan Cape 2018, p219: 'People rarely appreciate their ignorance, because they lock themselves inside an echo chamber of like-minded friends and self-confirming newsfeeds, where their beliefs are constantly reinforced and seldom challenged . . . the power of groupthink is so pervasive that it is difficult to break its hold even when its views seem to be rather arbitrary.' Which explains the rise of people such as Hitler, Mussolini and Stalin, and in latter days Stalin's admirer, Vladimir Putin. And quite possibly, people such as Donald Trump and Jeremy Corbyn — opposite extremes, yes, but definitely extremists.

In Rutger Bregman's commendable book *Human Kind: A Hopeful History*, Bloomsbury 2019, the author warns about empathy, because too much empathy in the wrong direction can lead to incredible distortion. As stated in one of our earlier CEW's, 'even criminals have empathy for one another'. In certain situations, empathy can be downright dangerous. Within section 10 of Bregman's book under 'How Empathy Blinds' Bregman quotes numerous incidences of where empathy wanders into dangerous territory. In particular he pays attention to World War II, which the sociologist and political science professor Morris Janowitz 1919-1988, researched human nature of that particular period with his team of sociologists and psychologists. The conclusions reached were that — including the horrors of the Holocaust — it was empathy and comradeship that worked on both sides to keep the war running, and that allied leaflets dropped over Nazi Germany, when the situation for German troops was totally hopeless in 1945, had no effect on the German people. What kept them fighting against the allies when it was all too obvious they had lost the war, was empathy or *Kammeradschaft*. Solidarity!

Humankind p207: "Some truths are almost too painful to accept. How could it be that those monsters were also motivated by the good in humanity—that they, too, were fuelled by courage and loyalty, devotion and solidarity?" Yes, that's precisely what Morris Janowitz concluded. It takes people quite some time to come to grips with this truth. You think you have empathy only for the poor, the socially down-trodden, the refugee, but when it comes to political and territorial matters, where does your so-called empathy lead you?

Again, there is empathy within terrorist organisations. *Humankind* p210: "A large share of terrorist cells are quite literally 'bands of brothers': no fewer than four pairs of brothers were involved in the 2001 attacks on the Twin Towers, the 2013 Boston Marathon bombers were brothers, and so were Salah and Brahim Abdeslam, responsible for the Bataclan slaughter in Paris in 2015." It comes down to friends of like mind gathering together, having empathy together, and looking for the meaning of life together. Solidarity.

But why would we be suspecting empathy for causing much of the world's troubles, particularly in the field of political science? In comes Paul Bloom, Emeritus professor of psychology and cognitive science at Yale University, whose wide-ranging research on adults and children has brought him numerous accolades and awards in the field of science. Bloom doesn't particularly like empathy, considering it to be more of an emotion that people mistake for their own sense of morality. Bloom considers that there are vital differences between emotion and understanding, and in certain instances these differences are very wide gaps. So, surely we all need a certain amount of empathy, otherwise what's the point of being human?

Compassion. Ditch certain empathy feelings for compassion. *Humankind* p218: "One thing is certain: a better world doesn't start with more empathy. If anything, empathy makes us less forgiving, because the more we identify with victims, the more we generalise about our enemies. The bright spotlight we shine on chosen few makes us blind to the perspective of our adversaries, because everybody else falls outside our view." And so, the blinkers are often imposed when elections come



around — the crowd thinking it is educated to all the variances of every political party, will mainly vote accordingly left or right, based upon the ideology that is presented and therefore believed. Recent studies by the National Institutes of Health in Maryland, USA, when undertaken in Europe, indicate that right-wing thinking people are generally not as accurate as left-wing thinking people when it comes to ideology, with their sensitivity toward the environment being more negative than those of the left.

On the other hand, left-wing thinkers are likely to be more tolerant, but at the same time giving support to the rise of people such as the populist socialist Jeremy Corbyn without full *understanding* of where he sits in the political atmosphere. In the end, all parties practice discrimination. Not all people vote with understanding or conscience — the ideology of the party generally comes first, box and dice. And that is very dangerous. It's not such a far step, as George Orwell and Aldous Huxley put it so clear and firm, toward the suppression of rights from either side of politics, with what was once a democracy slowly sliding into near totalitarianism.

The following statement may shock: One of the most dangerous persons in the world had a certain empathy and that was the man named Adolf Hitler. Apart from his psychopathological tendencies, Hitler had empathy for animals and during the Nazi regime 1930s-1940's, efforts were made to ban people from hunting animals. He was also a vegetarian, refusing to eat animal meat and during the Nazi realm persons who were cruel to animals were sometimes sent to concentration camps. Hitler's architect, Albert Speer, writing in his memoirs *Inside the Third Reich*, MacMillan 1970, mentions that at the dinner table Hitler often railed his guests with gruesome stories about the killing of animals. He was strongly opposed to vivisection. But his pathological mind did not extend that empathy to certain humans. When the coin is reversed we see that numerous people during the 1930's-1940's had empathy with Hitler. It is a fact that Hitler did not create the atmosphere of war and subjugation by himself — the average German in the street was involved; many for their empathy toward a man they considered their saviour and re-builder of the 'down-trodden' Germanic nation. Make Germany strong again!

The British historian, Laurence Rees, writes in the introduction to his publication *The Dark Charisma of Adolf Hitler*, Random House 2012, "It's also important to state emphatically that people who accept the 'charisma' of a leader are most definitely not 'hypnotised'. They know exactly what is going on and remain completely responsible for their actions . . . While this work is about Hitler, I do believe that it has relevance today. The desire to be led by a strong personality in a crisis, the craving for our existence to have some kind of purpose, the quasi worship of 'heroes' and 'celebrities', the longing for salvation and redemption: none of this has changed in the world since the death of Hitler in April 1945."

Even today, there are people who have some empathy for Hitler. Often called the Queen of Soul, the humanist rapper and singer Erykah Badu, who says she fits the role of an empathetic person, states that she sees the good in Hitler. In 2010 the well-known film director, Oliver Stone, said he had some empathy for Hitler, whom he looked upon as being a 'scapegoat of history'. "I've been able to walk in Stalin's shoes and Hitler's shoes, to understand their point of view. You cannot approach history unless you have empathy for the person you may hate." Today, there are Hitler worshipping groups in Australia that the Australian Security & Intelligence Organisation (ASIO) is watching. Yes, Hitler may have died in 1945, but certain people still have empathy for him.

The social psychologist Jonathan Haidt, in his book *The Righteous Mind* Penguin 2013, finds empathy discolouring his thoughts. When he was a twenty-nine-year old liberal atheist with "definite views of right and wrong", he was at a live-in conference with other anthropologists. He dined with men whose wives served them and then retreated to the kitchen, without speaking for the remainder of the evening. "I was told to be stricter with my servants and to stop thanking them for serving me. I watched people bathe and cook with visibly polluted water that was held to be sacred. In short, I was immersed in a sex-segregated, hierarchically stratified, devoutly religious society, and I was committed to understanding it on its own terms, *not on mine*." Haidt liked these people who were helping him, teaching him, because "when you're grateful to people it's easier to adopt their perspective." Wherever he went they were kind to him, and he had empathy with them. But then, as the weeks went on, he began to realise that his own thinking had become dangerous — that his empathy was all wrong. He was pandering to an age-old moralistic society. And morality which often binds, also blinds, together with empathy without understanding also being blind.

Playing around with empathy tasks in schools is, again, dangerous. Several years ago at the Moriah College in Queens Park, Sydney, a 'well-meaning' teacher had invited students to dress up as Nazis for an empathy training exercise. Learning of this activity, the school's administration clamped down on it. Even though the school was a Jewish one, there is always the chance that misinterpreting and misunderstanding could have arisen from that exercise. An example of empathy gone wrong showed up in an incident at Brauer College in Warrnambool, Victoria, when twelve year old boys were asked to stand up and apologise to females on behalf of the boys gender for male misbehaviour in rapes and sexual misconduct in an attempt to force empathy from the children toward, what . . . some kind of forceful 'understanding' of something they had no part in. Not only was that empathy misguided, it was intolerant, coming from teachers who themselves, obviously knew nothing about how empathy works. •



Down the drain with Victorian Labor?

There wasn't much love between them: the Victorian premier Daniel Andrews and the Ombudsman Deborah Glass OBE. In general an ombudsman discovers and reveals hidden agenda that is not available to the public. Glass, it seems, was an expert in that. But even an expert cannot do the impossible. While Andrews was still in office, Glass in her report to the Victorian parliament September 2022, blasted the Victorian Labor government for its unjust handling of 3000 residents of nine inner-Melbourne housing towers, which CEW wrote up in our September issue No. 144 2023. At the time we wrote: "The Victorian Labor government is like a runaway train with an imperfect robot in charge. The mighty Big Build projects, instead of being carefully spaced out, were lumped together in one bullish rush, developing into one hell of a roller coaster, which has helped to put the state into a never before debt of \$117 Billion as of June 2023, while approx \$30 Billion was certainly due to the Covid crisis, approx \$90 Billion reflects the cost of the Big Build at present with interest rates peaking at approx \$5 Billion in the 2023-24 financial year, and according to economists rising to \$8 Billion by 2026-27. To help fix this, the Andrews government has increased taxes on people and small businesses already struggling under the load of high prices, particularly in the power generation field. It's no joke to realise that your grand-children and great-grandchildren will be the ones burdened with paying this huge debt off."

With the departure of Andrews from State parliament and the insertion of Jacinta Allan as premier, more discrepancies of Andrews' time as premier have come to light. At the time 2023, CEW wrote: "The Andrews government has done little to avoid Ambulance crises, long hospital queues, lack of police resources, bad pothole roads, overcrowded schools, massive shortage of teachers, country railway lines neglected, and much more. Deaths of people waiting for ambulances reached 33 during 2022. If one of those had been your loved one, how would you have coped? The editor of CEW, suffering from a Covid infection in April 2023, had to wait two hours for an ambulance to assist. If he had been suffering a heart attack, he may not have lived to edit this journal. The system is shatteringly broken and efforts to fix it are slow and cumbersome. The Big Build seems to be more of a priority to this government, while ambulances are on Code 2 (**Urgent**) much of the time, and hospital beds are full. While concentrating on his 'amazing' Big Build, the Victorian premier has neglected necessary and vital support mechanisms for the Victorian people. Figure it out!"

Well, that was 2023. Now it comes to light that things are far worse than imagined. Under heavy debt and unsure where any funds are coming from, the Jacinta Allan Labor government is looking at the average ratepayer to help pay off that massive debt. Up go land taxes for a start where the average land-owner is hit with massive bills. Most land holders will be looking at around \$6000 per annum on top of their rates. For single family owners one wonders where they will find the cash. A landlord tax is also muted, so that landlords — often single family owned — are eyeing to sell off. Numerous landlords have already done that, selling off and investing in other means, which is having a profound effect on available renting. Large queues are formed outside of rental properties with many stating they have not much chance of obtaining a rental. So, Jacinta Allan, where will they live? Rents have recently jumped 22%-30% sky-high in Victoria as landlords seek to recoup charges laid upon them by the Victorian State government. Renters are cutting down on their food purchases to survive and don't ask them about holidays or a night out at the flicks or the football. Where's that extra money going to come from?

Hospitals: Victoria's 2024 state budget reveals the massive reduction of funds to the Victorian Comprehensive Cancer Alliance, swiping from \$3.5 million to \$7.5 million over four years. The proposed roll-out of mental health hubs has been put on hold due to a lack of funds. Northern and Western Health have imposed full stops to recruitment, with elective surgery reductions due to government demands, and this looks like spreading to other districts later this year. Pathology and pharmacy are feeling the bite. Surgeons are seeing the waiting list that has come down over recent years to commence spiraling out of control again. Hospitals should have been receiving the money that has been unrealistically spent on the Big Build. But does this government care about that? You would have thought that during 2022-2023 Victoria's ambulance crisis could not become worse, but it has. Whistle-blowers have come out and revealed a grave shortage of senior paramedics and other ambulance staff, so that some are working double shifts and that the recent accident of an ambo working almost 18 hours of overtime duty, which could have been fatal, highlights these deficiencies. This has had little effect on a government hell bent on Big Build at the expense of health services.

This is not a government seeking for balance. Health services MUST come first before any other infrastructure. Why do you think Gough Whitlam made certain that Medicare came first during his time as PM? Then we have Victoria Police bemoaning the fact that they are about 800 members short. Recruitment drives need to be stepped up in the face of current rising levels of crime. Vicpol is closing police stations at night due to the shortage. The force is stretched almost beyond its limits and again, overtime reduces the alert effectiveness of front-line police. Why is it that this government is so slow in solving this situation? And then you have fire trucks that are ageing rapidly, even to the extent that some have failed when called upon to fight fires.

All the above is what basic governments should be attending to before they ever consider anything like a Big Build, because these are the nitty-gritty hands-on issues that affect the average person in the street. Traditionally, Labor goes to the polls with it's eye firmly set upon promises to the average working person, the little bloke, the little dame struggling to make ends meet. But this is not how it works in practice. When Labor comes into power it's quite often "That's a terrific idea,



let's do it!" And often you have university educated people who have no working knowledge, given a portfolio with which they struggle to understand. When coming into power its a resounding trumpet blowing to show the opposition what it missed during it's time of rule. And on some issues, it works, but not all. The frantic rushing idea to get Big Build Victoria out and about has blinded the current government to what it's real purpose is—looking after the average Aussie battler. Not only are they making it more difficult for the average working class Victorian to survive, they are scratching at pennies in the hope they can save millions while they sit back and watch young criminal teenagers committing crimes day after day, given bail so they can go out and simply do it all over again.

The justice system in this State is shot to blazes but hardly anyone seems capable of coming up with answers. Victorian Labor comes on with fabulous ideas such as the decriminalising of drunks without proper support to go with it. A man is dead because of this. The drunk person was lying on a road when the police spoke to him for some considerable time—some sources say it was almost one hour when they stayed by his side—but they were required by recent law NOT to take him to a secure police station where he could have slept the night away. No, the recent law has denuded the police of any powers other than to contact the associating power Cohealth, which advised police that they could not take the man to a sobering up centre. According to *The Age* June 29 2024, the police took the man to his home and stayed with him for about one hour before answering an urgent call. Later police received a call that the man was lying on the road at the intersection of black Forest Road and Brimpton Grove, Wyndham Vale, where he was struck by a car and died.

Deborah Glass, you were onto Daniel Andrews and his government—you were tough and incorruptable, but sadly, you could not be tough enough, hamstrung as you were. • •

NB: Due to leaked reports concerning the health system, premier Allan has since rescinded some of her cut-back requirements to hospitals, but it shouldn't take action by whistleblowers for her to do that.

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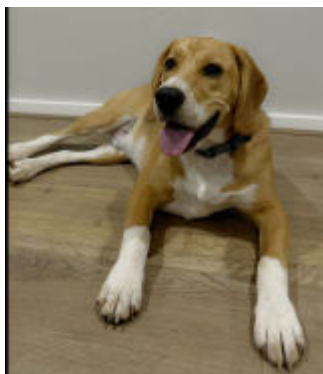
Simba is a 10 month old desexed, vaccinated, wormed and microchipped 23kg male Tricolour Beagle x Harrier, who's looking for a loving home. Please note, he's bigger than your average beagle due to his Harrier side.

He's a very affectionate, cheeky, playful, cuddly and active boy who'd suit an active and experienced family, in an all-adult home or one with older, dog-savvy children. He'd love to be a cherished member of the family and included in their daily lives.

Simba looks forward to his daily walks, as well as time at the local dog park. Given his breed(s) and their habit of following their nose, his recall isn't great... unless there's treats involved. Then his recall suddenly improves ??

He loves other dogs and would definitely enjoy a home with another friendly and active, medium to large sized dog for company. He's not been tested with cats. Simba's been to puppy school and is well trained. He enjoys an indoor/ outdoor lifestyle, sleeping indoors.

Simba's adoption fee is \$650. Microchip Number: 95600001670451. Pet Exchange Register Source Number: RE100709. If interested, please call Michaela on 0409213131 (Tarnet based, but we go to you).



Charlie is a 7 old desexed, vaccinated, wormed and microchipped 9kg male Maltese x Jack Russell Terrier, who's looking for a loving home.

He's such a little character — very smoochy and loving. He even talks. Charlie's also a bit of an action man who loves his daily walks, runs and even going for a swim. After that he usually enjoys a sleep. He'd suit a devoted, experienced and active family, in an all-adult home or one with dog-savvy teenagers.

Despite having lived with a Labrador, Charlie would suit a calm, confident and experienced owner who can teach him to relax around other dogs. A home with another submissive dog should be fine (there's always a meet and greet, plus a trial period with all of our dogs). Otherwise someone home during the day, either working from home or retired but active, would also suit. He's not good with cats.

Charlie has had his teeth cleaned, enjoys being groomed and is also fine on road trips. He enjoys an indoor/ outdoor lifestyle, sleeping indoors. A home with a dog door would be great. Charlie's adoption fee is \$600. Microchip Number: 956000015965438. Pet Exchange Register Source Number: RE100709.

If interested, please call Michaela on 0409213131 (Bonbeach and Metung based, but we go to you).





When eye and mind are at odds

Travellers: they came, they saw, they enjoyed the Germany of the late 1920s-1930s — many concluding upon their return to their homelands that Germany struggling to re-build after the 1914-1918 war, had achieved a magnificent change.

The streets were clean, the trains were running on time, the towns and villages had been untouched by the war and presented a picture of great charm. Restaurants and hotels welcomed everyone with civility and diligence. All in all, tourists from across the world were welcomed to a culture of courtesy and respect. The war seemed forgotten. In contrast was Soviet Russia, which after the civil war, had descended into chaos followed by famine where close to five million people died. Then came rule by Joseph Stalin whose 'one country socialist leaning' further caused mass poverty and major ethnic cleansing. Visitors to Germany, who may have held unsure thoughts about this new rise of Germany, had them quickly quashed when they visited Russia — there was simply no comparison. The classless society and arrogance of Russia when compared to the new Germany was a deciding factor in visitors to both countries coming away with good feelings toward Germany—in particular, a large number of Britons whose ancestors were of Germanic blood, which included the British royal family.

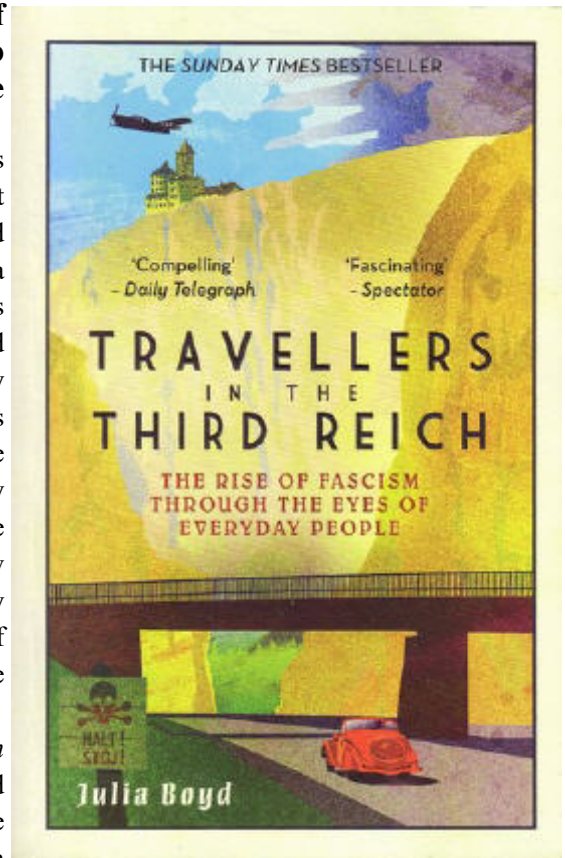
Julia Boyd's *Travellers in the Third Reich: the rise of Fascism through the eyes of everyday people*, doesn't whitewash what occurred during WWI, nor the starvation of the German people soon after the 1914-1918 war and certainly not the restrictions that were set upon Germany by the Allies after having signed the Treaty of Versailles. And in the minds of numerous Germans remained the thought that the treaty should never have been signed and that proud Germany was still undefeated.

However, within the courteous and civil front that Germany put on for visitors, there remained a certain resentment against Germany's post-war treatment by those governments who would see themselves as victorious, in particular France. The occupation by Allied forces of the German territory east of the Rhine from December 1918 to June 1930 galled the German citizens, with France among the coalition of British, American and Belgium being the most hated. But even the tourists during the early 30's could see a difference with what they considered was France's businesses ripping them off, compared to that of Germany's which kept prices reasonable and exact.



Many British travellers compared the new Germany with some of England's dull suburbs and thought that Germany was onto something which Britain didn't have. Feelers had been put out for an Alliance between Germany and Britain, so as to stave off any further European wars. Officials on both sides of the channel were keen for this to occur, even though some considered it unworkable. Even the British DSO and Military Cross winner, Lieutenant Colonel Graham Seton Hutchinson was keen on a merger. *Travellers* p190: "After the war he served in Germany on the Inter-Allied Commission, was a founder member of the British Legion and became a successful writer of adventure fiction. More surprising, by the time Hitler came to power, he was on the Nazi payroll as a publicist and had founded an extreme anti-semitic fascist party, the National Workers Movement." Hutchinson had written to the American poet Ezra Pound, stating that he had studied Germany for 12 years. "Among Englishmen, probably none is listened to with greater respect in Germany than myself, especially in Bavaria. Germany isn't militarist today. I am certain of it."

Another military man who had the wool pulled over his eyes by Hitler and his subordinates was Vice-Admiral Sir Barry Domville, KBE, CE, CMG. *Travellers* p197: "Relieved to have left behind 'gloomy' Croydon, he found Berlin, with its street cafes and colourful window boxes, refreshingly cheerful. Even better, there was no speed limit, no 'early closing' and motorists could park where they liked. So much 'for this *verboten* [forbidden] country and England the land of the free',





he commented in his diary.” So enamoured was Domville of the new Germany under Hitler that he even accomplished a few ‘Heil Hitler’ salutes. He further wrote in his diary *Travellers* p201: “The English press have been disgraced lately with their lies about Germany.”

Julia Boyd in delineating through 410 pages some considerable travellers to Germany from the Aga Khan III to Louis Zamperini, an American athlete, shows how the Third Reich with its cunning publicity, sucked in not only the famous and the rich, but the average person such as Rhys Jones, a Welsh teacher. Jones kept a lively account of his 1937 holiday in the Rhineland. After arriving he wrote in his diary “First impression — a sense of the massive and solid. People’s physique definitely better than ours. Fitness put before perfect looks . . . Do not stare at you like the French . . . No litter baskets yet no litter on roads . . . No slums or slummy shops . . . People extremely honest. No need to count change. No tipping. Harmonicas, accordions everywhere, love of music . . . Books, posters etc. exceptionally moral . . . People doing everything they can to curry favour with England.”

But Jones, with his keen eye, wasn’t so fooled as many. He also wrote: “Women terribly plain, carry packs in blazing sun. Would try any man! . . . Men walk upright, military fashion, keeping knees almost stiff . . . Language vigorous, almost militant . . . Perturbed by thought of being taken for a Jew given my slightly aquiline features . . . Have only seen one Jewish shop since I have been here and cannot say I have wittingly seen one Jew.”

Overall, it is disturbing to find that numerous visitors to the Third Reich during the 1930s held good thoughts about Hitler’s Germany including the abdicated King Edward VIII and his divorcee wife to be, Wallis Simpson. Boyd gives examples of warnings that should have alerted travellers, including the 1933 book burning, the opening of Dachau concentration camp just a few weeks after Hitler became chancellor, the street violence in later years, the Jewish dilemma and more. Many saw, but didn’t want to see. Truth had become something else because the propaganda was so subtle and persuasive. Among many, there was always the thought that even if there was some ill thoughts about Hitler’s regime, then surely time would iron out those faults and that responsible government would eventually come to pass. Which gives the lie to what citizens are willing to accept on their behalf, because nothing has changed today — we see the same dangerous motions at work in the Middle East, in Africa, in Russia, in North Korea, in South America, and beginning to breed in democratic Western nations. •

A book for our times—the past is returning

Travellers in the Third Reich

By Julia Boyd, 488 pp paperback

Elliot & Thompson Ltd, London

Dymocks \$AU22.99



The Anglo-German review, sympathetic to Nazi Germany until their eyes could no longer avoid the truth.

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Mercury O'Proud

Political correspondent

It was inevitable that someone was going to be killed due to teenagers stealing cars and attaining incredulous speeds through suburban streets in Victoria. Had the Victorian government been sitting idly by watching the growing hi-jacking of cars, breaking into premises with violence, and allowing the courts to give bail to teenagers time after time?

Well, the fact is that the Victorian government sought to amend bail laws put in place by the previous Coalition government 13 years ago, mainly due to a death in custody. No one wants deaths in custody. But the change in bail didn't solve the increase in juvenile crime with the bail laws allowing teenagers to be given bail time and again — arrested, go before the children's court, given bail, does it again while out on bail, and again, and again. What was going on in Victoria—and still is—was something more akin to a Monty Python charade, with one 14-year-old teenager having wracked up 400 charges and given bail at least 388 times — mainly due to car theft and violent home break-ins. Smack on the wrist,

kiddo, don't do it again. It doesn't matter if you are causing undue mental grief to hundreds of Victorian people. No, that doesn't matter. They can live with that, can't they?

This is not some kid stealing toffee-apples or blurring in someone's face, this is criminal. But the law as it stands, or even stood, mustn't label him as that. Never! Not a criminal, even though the scurrilous acts are criminal. The bail changes in 2023 were a laugh. At the time of deliberation—March 2023—the Victorian attorney general, Jaclyn Symes, stated that they had “no plans to weaken the laws” for offenders who pose a serious community safety risk. Monty Python at it again! The fact is that the 14-year-old, among numerous others, was a serious community safety risk and what did the government do? Allowed him to be that way because of the soft bail laws. A couple of months ago a life-long Labor supporter posted on Reddit “Enough is enough. I do not believe that the Labor party can or wants to solve the issues around youth crime and crime in general. I am f...ing over it. It's going to be a Conservative Party in this state that does it, it may come at the cost of having Dutton in the feds and Libs in the state. Because I would rather deal with all the other crap that comes with dealing with the libs than what is going on at the moment.”

So, Jacinta Allan, where's the balance? We were promised a balance. Here is a lifetime supporter of the Labor party, willing to put up with what he considers is some kind of crap from a Coalition government — quite willing to vote them in, together with a conservative federal government at the same time. And he has growing support within the community—people simply fed up with all this destruction going on day after day and an absolute waste of police resources.

Losing support? It's staring you in the face, Jacinta, and was staring Daniel Andrews in the face prior to his resignation — how support is peeling away from the Victorian Labor Government, not surprisingly in Labor's heartland of the west and the north-western suburbs, where there has been a ‘shocking’ drop in loyalty.

Where Labor once ruled with almost impunity, there now lingers a strange phenomenon of disenchanted voters who are saying that there is a chance next elections both state and federal, to resolve the cost-of-living crisis and the heavy debt due to Big Build Victoria. A recent Resolve poll undertaken by *The Age* showed Labor's primary vote collapsed below 30 percent “slipping to the bottom of the ‘Danslide’ built by her predecessor, Daniel Andrews.” If Jacinta Allan's Victorian Labor falters at the next election, it will be the west and the north-western suburbs that will bring them down together with south and south-western voters fed up with crime. And that, with a totally disorganised Victorian Liberal party acting like the straw man in *The Wizard of Oz*.

Writing in *The Age* 10 July 2024, Australia's media hall of fame recipient, John Silvester, has given the Victorian government clear and safe recommendations for resolving the teenage crime crisis, including “We need to triage these cases in the way medical staff deal with patients in hospital emergency wards; magistrates who remand young offenders in custody alleged to have committed multiple crimes mark their cases as **red files**; a dedicated magistrate and children's court for **red files** that **must** be dealt with within three months; a government boarding school for troubled kids that can't be controlled by parents or teachers be established. Finally, Sylvester urges the government to **drop the spin and acknowledge that the problem exists**. The government reckons it is just a small group of teenagers, but Sylvester reckons it is hundreds of them. As Victoria's top crime reporter, I'd believe Sylvester on this one.

And as CEW has re-iterated in the past, set up numerous boot camps for these errant teenagers. Why do boot camps work? Because they take away all ‘toys’ and remove the child from bad influence. Boot camps work — upon conclusion, these young people rarely fall back into their old habits.

How does a Victorian state government sit by with blinkers on while crime runs rampant through the CFMEU? Why does it take investigative journalists from *The Age* and *60 Minutes* to bring the CMFEU's involvement with criminal gangs to light, and how many Labor ministers were aware of such goings on and decided to shut their mouths? Surely, the government must be implicated simply because ‘we don't wish to know about it.’ •



The Cat Burglars

A short story by Graham Price

Mira was looking over the rooftops of Melbourne City, watching the lightning strike at the palms lining Albert Park Lake. Any minute now the torrent of rain will come. She shrugged her shoulders and shivered a little, remembering that close encounter last night. Sebastian had been somewhat offish, didn't wish to go with her on her adventurous tour of some of the better rooftops in Melbourne. She found that difficult to accept, after all he was one of the best cat burglars around. His history of entering and thieving was world renowned. Hadn't he taken the best and left the mediocre behind — scraps as he had called it. Not worth pinching. She'd been with him when the cops almost nabbed them the other night, but they were fleet of foot and had run down through the wet alleys, keeping Victoria's finest at bay. Lost them! No match for Mira and Sebastian. She laughed at that, for they were the best; there were no other cat burglars in Melbourne that even came close to their activities, simply none.

She could see the deep grey cloud formation sweeping across the bay, headed for her. The lightning strike came again, this time too close for comfort. Better find some shelter, she thought — the old boat shed where the gang met and planned the next burglary was close by. Better get there fast.

Someone had said that the old shed was up for demolition. She hoped not, because it had been the gang's home for many years, just kind of out of sight from the inquisitive public and the Port Phillip Council. She hoped that it was simply a rumour, which had no substance in fact, because where would they go? What new hiding place could they call their own, the ginger haired Sebastian, the calico torty Misty, and the black jester Orlando. had shaken their heads at the news. Many years ago they'd all belonged to some families who didn't care for them enough; left them alone when the families went on holidays, and they had escaped. Somehow, they had all met in the vicinity of the boat shed, formed a gang, and made it their home.

What name shall we go by?" Orlando had said, brushing his whiskers with his left paw. The others put forward various names, but in the end it was the one that Mira liked — Shadow, the Shadow gang. And like shadows they were— creeping, sliding, soaring into the night air when most humans were tucked up in their warm beds. Sebastian was known for his clever planning of heists, Misty for her ability to find food when required, and the black Orlando just like a shadow for his invisibility at night. As for Mira, the Egyptian goddess Anubis had come to her dreams of the night and had conferred upon her a special status—she could now read the human mind. Other cats could read humans emotions just fine, but only Mira could tell exactly what humans were thinking. This attribute was useful in determining what night watchmen or security staff were thinking. Anubis had also conferred upon Mira a variety of other powers—x-ray and infra-red vision night and day, the ability to tell the time, together with an injection of superior leg muscles which allowed her to almost fly through the air from one rooftop to another. No one could perform on the rooftops of Melbourne like Mira. Her speed was a phenomenon in cat society. Even the old tom with the scars around his nose who they bumped into now and again, Great Caesar, the leader of the Blackpaw gang, grudgingly gave her heed. The Siberian fence and valuer, Nero, also watched his words when Mira was around. Secretly, he admired her, always keen to clap his eyes on her deep brown Tonkinese coat and those swimmingly jet blue diamond eyes. He shivered when he was near her, not from fear but from devotion.

Nero's human associate in shifting the stolen valuables on, Narki Beezle, had tried to capture Mira several times but Nero had thwarted him by rushing between his legs, threatening to topple him over. Narki cursed the cat. He was determined to get hold of Mira and lock her up in his dwelling, a large rusty tin shed at the rear of an aged Victorian home where strange incantations came at night. A witch lives in the house, thought Mira. She had seen the dark, sharp-faced woman once or twice through the front cobwebbed windows, where on the windowsill sat a large black cat almost twice the size of Nero. He had said to Mira one day that the cat's name was Dremora—Demon of Dark Chants and Whispers.

"Don't look into her eyes," said Nero. "Because she will ensnare you to be her slave forever, and not only in this life, but forever."

And Mira had felt the coldness of the stare and quickly averted her eyes. Just as well, she thought, because even in that instant she felt the sting in her own eyes. She had sat and licked her paw, quickly wiping across her eyes, but the sting remained with her for the remainder of that day. She shuddered. What kind of power was this that caused her so much distress? She must commune with Anubis about this strange development.

On the following Saturday night when most humans were out and about drinking, partying, dancing the night away, the Shadow gang met on the rooftop of the Palais Theatre to carry out their next heist. The ginger-haired Sebastian slapped his paw onto a plan of Chapel Street, pointing to a multi-storyed building on the east side. "It's a bit too close to the police station for comfort, but as it's a Saturday most of them will be out on patrol. I think we can safely say that there won't be much to bother us. We'll go in from the building next door." He moved his paw and pointed to the second building, much



older and slightly shorter. “It’s an easy climb on the associate building as the bricks are all cracked with movement across the years. The high-rise, also no problem; the architects had given us joy with lots of inbuilt ridges to grip on, easy peasy. Are we all set?”

“Raring to go,” said Orlando. “Should be a fruit cake, this one. We checked it out last Saturday and most of it was in the dark, and of course some of the more scaredy-cats left lights on inside to pretend they were at home. No movement inside, so what do they take us for, eh? Don’t they realise that our hearing is ten times theirs?”

Nero touched his right paw to his head. “Brainless chooks.”

“Let’s go,” said Mira. “I can’t wait to relieve some of them of their jewels.”

The Blackpaw gang were lounging about in Carlisle Street, having a party in the garden next to the town hall. Great Caesar was holding sway, giving a speech as was his wont under the shining of the moon. After all, what else was there to do on a Saturday night except to run around near the police station and annoy the coppers at St. Kilda. He’d once slipped inside the sliding doors of the station following after some inebriated human, jumped over the counter before the duty cop could prevail, whizzed around the inspector’s office and taken a look at what was on the desk, before catapulting himself out the rear door. Ah, but that was in younger days. Now, he was content to let some of the more juvenile ones of the gang carry out those high jinks — in particular his grandson Louie the light-fingered Torty, known for slipping into the fish and chips shop and nicking a bit of fillet now and then. Sure was scrumptious the others had thought, as he spread it around the gang for them to get their fangs into. Nice one, thought Great Caesar. He will go far.

Nero thought the kid was a bit of an upstart, trying to take away his position as lieutenant to Great Caesar. He gave the kid a few smacks over the head when he knew Caesar wasn’t looking, knowing that the kid wouldn’t spill on him — for that was the code of the gang. Never dob in your mates no matter what. Anyway, he thought to himself, the kid’s still in diapers, so even though he might try and slip one over on me, he still doesn’t have the intelligence to be lieutenant. Well, that is, I surely hope not.

Come near nine-o’clock with the full moon shining down upon St. Kilda, the Blackpaw gang were considering moving on to South Yarra where there might be more superior pickings, but Great Caesar put a hold on that—his joints were creaking somewhat and he didn’t wish to be seen falling behind on such a journey. The young ones were keen, but as leader his word was not to be queried. No, they would slip over to Luna Park and cause some havoc there—especially in the Ghost Train. With what he had dreamed up in the dark tunnels, those humans who were silly enough to venture late at night, would pee their pants.

Mira had scaled the old building and was about to jump across to the high-rise with her super new leg muscles when her eyes picked up a dog in the window opposite. Sebastian said “What are you waiting for?”

“What? Oh, nothing much. There’s this Rottweiler over there looking somewhat sad. Seems the humans have gone out and left it all alone.”

“I can’t see a thing, but then I guess it’s those powers you’ve been given that allow you to see through almost anything.”

“I expect so, but he really does seem so sad. Shame we can’t go in and liven him up a bit.”

“Mmm, if it’s a Rottweiler as you say, then I think it better to leave well and truly alone.”

Mira chuckled. It’d be a challenge, wouldn’t it?”

“What?”

“To get in there with that guard dog and steal something, just to show who’s in charge here.”

“You’re mad . . . let’s get on with the plan.”

“Yes, the plan . . . okay, but on the way back, perhaps . . .”

Using the strength of her new-found muscles, Mira leapt across to the high-rise, landing on the balcony above where the Rottweiler was. The apartment was in darkness, but the one above yielded a slightly dimmed light. Mira and the gang were not interested in those with lights out which could indicate simply that the occupants had gone to bed. No, the plan was to spy out one of those with dimmed lights — simply just security lighting left on after going out. No one at home. She leapt up and with her new magnified eyesight she scanned inside. Nothing was moving. There was no indication of anything living within. She noted the rich furnishings, the expensive stereophonic gear, the large wall TV screen—there was money here and probably a wall or floor safe. This would do. As was almost normal among the high-rise apartments, the balcony door was not locked. She slid her paw into the corner of the frame and slid the glass door open. Something moved behind her and she turned with eyes blazing and claws out, but it was only Sebastian, huffing a little from the exertion of having followed her across.

“It was so easy for you,” he said, trying to regain his breath, “but boy, that was a hard leap. For one moment, I thought . . . well, if it had been a few centimetres further . . . !”

“Wimpy boy,” she said. “We’ll have to toughen you up, kiddo . . . get you out more at night.”



Sebastian gave a little blurt. “My mum said I was born in the daytime, so I guess I’m more active around then. The night shadows now worry me a little, not like you. Night is more of a friend to you and the others. Besides, my age is showing; little grey hairs mixed in with the ginger.” He patted the little pouch that was slung around his left shoulder, making sure he had not lost it during the great leap. By the look of this apartment they might be able to fill it to the brim tonight. He stared at some of the paintings on the wall of the living room and then his eyes, having adjusted to the light, caught sight of a three-dimensional picture of an African male lion. He shivered, was it alive? It was staring at him with those large eyes, chilling him out. On the opposite wall was the head of a zebra and next to it an antelope. Shock—these people were hunters! *I’m not going in there.*

“C’mon,” said Mira, “What’s holding you up?”

“I’d rather stay out here, keep a lookout this time, just in case. Not as young as I used to be.”

“Please yourself. I don’t really see the point, after all, Orlando is keeping watch below.” Mira scanned the room. The wall ornaments didn’t impress her, but one of them might be hiding a wall safe. She scanned them with her new vision. Nope, nothing there. Now, where can it be? Suddenly the antelope head cracked with a sharp bang and fell off the wall. Mira looked at the broken pieces on the floor and wondered—had Anubis given her more powers than she thought? If so, she would need to temper them somewhat while around the gang, otherwise who knows what harm might befall them. If a simple eye scan through objects could destroy them, what else could be accomplished? She turned her attention to the zebra head and began the scan. It cracked in three places and fell to the floor. My my, she thought, what if I up the power a little? She concentrated her vision upon the three-dimensional painting of the lion. Nothing happened. She tried again—nothing.

“Hey, what’s going on in there?” called Sebastian.

“It’s alright, everything’s under control.”

“You’re making a lot of noise.”

“It’s fine . . . settle down. You’ll bring attention to yourself.”

“Mmmfff!”

And then there was this roar which seemed to come from nowhere as the painting fell to the floor. Mira jumped back, half expecting a real lion to spring forth from the painting. But there was nothing, nothing but the broken glass and the painting undamaged. Her eye caught something floating in the air . . . a piece of paper, which a light draft was sucking toward the balcony. She leapt and grasped it between her teeth, placed it on the floor and turned it over. There were numbers written on it—four sets of them, which spelled out loud and clear to her that it was a safe combination. But no key. Where was the key? Perhaps there wasn’t a key? She memorised the numbers and made her way into the interior of the apartment, checking behind every painting or wall hanging. She even checked the edging of the wall-to-wall carpet where it appeared to be loose. Nothing. Where could it be . . . in plain sight perhaps, where one would not expect it. That was a trick people often used. The bathroom or the kitchen, perhaps. Ah yes, plenty of places there. Inside the handle of a hollowed out toilet brush, or hidden in the lining of the shower curtain. A myriad of places where one would not normally look.

She was turning from the hall into the kitchen when she heard something . . . heavy breathing behind her. She jumped and spun herself around, practically one twist movement to face the way she had come. The eyes that looked deep into hers were unfamiliar. Oh, she recognised the breed of course, but it had been many years since she had seen one—a male Maine Coon, and twice the size of her. Underneath all that startling grey and black fur she could imagine strong muscles rippling . . . she would be no match if it came to a physical confrontation. Even Anubis could not have prepared her for this.

“I presume,” said the Maine Coon, sitting back on his haunches and giving his whiskers a quick wipe with his paw, “that you are an intruder. In fact, I would go so far as to say that you are one of those ragged street urchins that run in gangs. Well, I am not interested in who or what you are, but only why you are inside my home? Just as well my humans are not at home, my sweet, just as well, otherwise . . .”

Mira sat back and stared at him. A silence reigned. “Well,” said the Maine Coon, “Has a mouse got your tongue little pretty?”

“I . . . I didn’t know you were home.”

“You didn’t know I was at home? You didn’t know! I thought cat burglars such as you would have known that, after all my scent is all over this place. I brush up against everything I see in front of me. If you come a little closer I might brush up on you. After all, it seems to me that you are quite a living doll.”

“Yes well, I’ve had a bit of a cold lately and . . . and.”

“And what, my dear?”

“Look here, you caught me fair and square whatever your name is, so why don’t you just move aside and I’ll be on my way. You see, they’ll come looking for me if I don’t make an appearance soon. And you know the stories about the Blackpaw gang . . . well, I can tell you they’re not just stories and they don’t take lightly to one of their own being held captive.”

The Maine-Coon shook his head. “Haha, good one my sweet. You don’t look like a member of the Blackpaws . . . I know all about them and their mad ways. You see, I am an honorary member of Darkness Security and we keep tabs on what the gangs in this neighbourhood are up to. Blackpaws indeed. What a laugh. You’re a long way down the list from them,



sweetheart. And if you insist, they call me Regent. And no, you're not going anywhere. "I'll nick up and close that balcony door."

Their ears pricked up as the sound of a lift issued through the wall, followed by a click as a key slid into the hallway door.

"On second thoughts, come with me. They mustn't find you here. We'll blame the mess inside on some human cat burglar. Won't be a problem."

Mira had no option but to follow the Maine-Coon. Well, she could still flee through the balcony door but something told her that she was not in any danger from this Regent bloke. Besides, perhaps he knew where the safe was located. She felt the gust of air that followed the front door being opened and she leapt after him. He led her through several passageways into what appeared to be a storeroom. As soon as she was inside, Regent pushed the door closed.

"They never come in here, like . . . well you know, once a year perhaps."

"Oh, so what's all this rubbish then?" Mira eyed the heap of cardboard boxes piled one on top of the other.

"It's stuff they couldn't find room for, left over from their last move. Behind those boxes there's a rug I sometimes sleep on. C'mon. You'll be safe here."

Mira nestled down beside him. She couldn't help but notice that his paws were twice the size of hers and that great big bushy tail that flicked over her ears, was like a broom coming at her. "There's not much room here."

"There's enough if you stop wriggling about."

Mira sighed. It sure has been a weird night. Now what? She couldn't stay here forever; what if the humans had locked her in? Wow! The very thought of humans unleashed her new powers—she could hear them talking. As clear as . . .

Male voice: "I don't believe this. Here we are ten flights up and some cat burglar has broken in! The mongrel must have come down from a helicopter!"

Female voice: "I told you not to bring those trophies back from Africa. I knew they were bad luck. Nothing's gone right since we acquired them."

Male voice: Oh don't go on . . . bloody superstition . . . but looks like they couldn't find the safe, so took out their vengeance on the trophies, and my lion, my poor, poor Leo."

Female voice: "Did you check the safe?"

Male voice: "I'm about to . . . give me a chance for god's sake."

Female voice: "Just asking. No need to get into a huff."

Mira, forgetting where she was, murmured "Ah, now we'll find out."

Regent turned toward her. "What's that?"

"Oh, nothing, just saying hope they don't find us."

"No, they'll be too busy cleaning up."

Mira listened to the humans quarrelling and then heard Regent snoring. It couldn't have worked out better—she could sneak out and watch the humans checking the safe. She eased her body away from him, stopping to check, but he was sound asleep. The inside handle on the door wasn't a problem and soon she was out into the corridor. The voices were close by and she scooted along the carpet-lined passage, stopping at a laundry door. It was half open and the two humans were in there, moving a floor-mounted dryer to one side. It slid easily, revealing a small steel safe which required no key. Bingo, thought Mira, there it is and I have the combination. She eased herself back out of sight, listening to the humans and hearing the tumblers click into place. There was a tiny squeak which was probably the sound of the safe door being opened, then several sighs of relief from the humans. All was well.

Male voice: "I'd better change the combination, just in case."

Oh no, thought Mira. Don't do that.

Female voice: Leave it. I'm tired, you're tired. Let's clean up and go to bed."

Mira skipped back down the hall, waking Regent as she snuggled close to him.

"Where have you been? It's not good to be roaming around while those two are awake. If they find you, you'll end up in the pound, and then . . ."

"They won't find me, besides, I heard the female say they're off to bed."

Regent stared at her. "You can understand them? That's more than I can do. How come?"

"I was given some special powers by the goddess Anubis."

"Really! Do you think . . . perhaps, I can be as blessed?"

"Mmmm, maybe. What is it that you would wish for?"

"Well, there's lots of things. For instance, stronger claws that would open a can of sardines. Sharper hearing when they're out so that I can tidy up before they get back and pretend that I've not been naughty."

"Doing what?"

"Oh, sleeping on her pillow. She doesn't like me doing that. And the feather duster—I like playing with it but sometimes the feathers fall out and she'll get mad if she sees them lying around the floor. If I could hear them driving into the underground car-park, that would be wonderful . . . what's that noise?"



“Oh heavens, it sounds like my lookout rattling the balcony door. Excuse me!”

“Where are you going?”

“I’ve got to stop him before the humans hear him.”

“I’ll come with you, just in case they do.”

They rushed into the darkened hallway, which proved that the humans had gone to bed, but at the corner Regent held up his paw. “Just making sure,” he whispered. “Okay, seems safe. Let’s go.”

Mira arrived at the balcony door first and there was Sebastian with his front paws on the glass. She was shaking her head. “Quieten down . . . you’ll waken the dead!”

“When you didn’t come out I was worried. Oh my lord, what is that behind you?”

Mira stuck her paw into the frame edge and slid the door further back. It rattled slightly and she looked around to see if the humans had been woken. But there was only Regent standing behind her, swishing his fluffy tail. “I’m Regent, and you are?”

Sebastian was in awe of the seeming giant in front of him. “I . . . er . . . they call me Sebastian.”

“Hmmm, handsome little fellow are you not, with all that fine ginger coating. You’d better not come in; it’s enough having to put up with your fiery friend, Mira. What a mess she made of this room. It seems that these powers that have been given to her cannot be fully controlled.”

“What p . . . oh, of course. Yes, she’s special and you better not harm her or you’ll have me to answer to.”

The Maine Coon tittered. “Oh you do make me laugh, little fellow. You will have to grow some before you can take me on, do you not think?”

“Well, I . . . it’s just that we watch out for each other and you’d better be careful, otherwise we’ll have our friends the Blackpaw gang up here.”

Regent sniggered. “Haha, will you now? Your Mira has already tried that one on me. I know of the Blackpaws and they won’t be coming to help you or anyone else around here. Now, you are causing a draft, so are you going away or what?”

Mira frowned. “I don’t think . . .”

“I’ll come in.” And before she could stop him, Sebastian leaped over the threshold and into the living room.

“Now,” said Sebastian, “where’s the safe?”

Mira hissed “Whoa, that’s not . . .”

“So that’s what you were looking for, eh?” said Regent. “I’m a bit slow on the take up, but now I see what your little game is.”

“Well,” said Sebastian, lead the way prince Regent. The sooner we get this done, the sooner was can get some shut eye before dawn.”

“I don’t know where it is,” said Regent.

Mira and Sebastian looked at each other in surprise. “Holy catfish” said Mira, “you’ve been living here all this time and you don’t know where that safe is? I don’t believe you.”

“No, no . . . I really don’t.”

“I think he’s telling the truth,” said Sebastian. “He hasn’t got a clue.”

Mira chuckled. “Well, I do. I know where it is.”

Regent blinked. “You do?”

“Yes. Follow me!”

Before anyone could change her mind, Mira had leapt away, spinning down through the corridors and into the laundry.

“Can’t be here.” said Sebastian, looking disheartened.

“Oh yes it is.”

“Where?” said Regent, his tail swishing wildly until it hit Sebastian in the face. “Ouch, watch what you’re doing big feller.”

“Sorry, it’s just that I can’t see anyone hiding a safe in a laundry.”

“Best place of all,” said Mira, “Now, we’ll all have to put our paws and claws here on the edge of this dryer and pull it away from the wall.”

“Crazy,” said Sebastian. “Just crazy.”

Mira sighed. “C’mon, it’s on some kind of hidden wheels. Pull!”

Six paws gripped the edge of the dryer and six paws pulled. “Pull harder . . . harder!” said Mira. The dryer squeaked on the linoleum floor, then squealed loudly and came away.

“Well I’ll be a cat’s whiskers!” said Regent.

“Shush,” said Mira, “Just checking to see if we woke the humans, or not. Be quiet and listen.”

Something rustled. Mira, with her superior hearing could detect it, followed by a click, then some scraping or shuffling noises, which Mira put down to someone searching for their slippers.



“Quick,” she said, “Shut the door!” Regent slowly moved the door to close. “Now,” said Mira, “no noise, I think one of the humans is awake . . . yes, it’s the male human, he’s out of bed now and walking toward us. Oh dear, he has to come past us if he wants to check anything untoward, unless he simply wants something from the kitchen. Shush now.”

There were more rustling noises. “I can pick up what he’s thinking if I concentrate hard enough . . . oh yes . . . yes, here it comes. He’s feeling irritable, not quite angry but almost. He’s now in the living room and he’s spotted the balcony door open. Heavens, we should have closed it. Now he’s looking at all the mess on the floor. Seems they didn’t clean it up prior to going to bed after all. Oh, here comes trouble. He’s looking for you, Regent! He’s out on the balcony, looking down I think. Probably looking everywhere . . . only a matter of time before he discovers us here. I think he yawned just now. Oh, and he’s calling his female human some names. I’ll not repeat them to you blokes, too rude. Oh, he’s slammed the balcony door shut. More rustling noises, he’s coming back.”

Sebastian sneezed. Regent clamped his paw across the ginger cat’s nose. “Not now,” he whispered. “Not now! Look, I’m going out to greet him. That way it will save you from being discovered.” He looked at Mira. “Is that okay with you, boss?” She nodded. Regent simply reached up with one of his paws and opened the door, then quickly sneaked out, waving his bushy tail. He heard the human male in the kitchen, wandering about. Probably had too much liquor that night, thought Regent. Wish he’d tone it down.

With Regent gone, Mira and Sebastian stared at the steel wall safe in front of them. Did they dare open it? “It’s what we came for,” whispered Mira. “If Regent doesn’t care, then why should we? This could give us tons of independence to set ourselves up in the country, far away from the Blackpaws. Perhaps the Maine Coon will come with us, eh? That would be a cool thing to do . . . get him away from those annoying humans who don’t seem to care much about us animals.”

“Open it.”

Mira spun the tumbler, then set about slowly clicking off the numbers she had memorised from the paper. “Here goes!” She pulled the handle down with both her front paws and with a sharp clack the door opened.

“Bingo!” said Sebastian.

“Ooh lookee here!” said Mira. “Bright and shining!”

“All that glitters is not gold,” said Sebastian. “Knowing these people, there could be fake stuff in there.”

“But why would you put paste jewellery in a safe, Seb? Doesn’t make sense.”

“Hmmm, is that a ruby on that ring, or just glass? Sink your teeth into it and see if it marks.”

“We don’t have time to waste. Get your little bag up here and I’ll shovel all of this into it.”

“Okay, here goes.”

Mira emptied the safe, including a thick wad of \$100 bills, together with some foreign currency. She handed the bag back to Sebastian who instantly complained. “It’s so heavy. I won’t be able to leap back to the lower building with all this lot.”

“Don’t worry, we’ll find another way out.”

There was a light tap on the door, then it opened to reveal Regent. “He’s gone back to bed. So, what have you discovered, eh?”

Sebastian huffed. “You’ll have to help me with all of this. It’s just too much for me to carry.”

“Yes, it does seem to weigh you down,” said Regent. “Perhaps if you give the bag to me?”

Mira’s pupils widened. “I’m not sure that’s a good idea.”

“Oh come now,” said Regent. “How do you think he’s going to get out of here with all that weight on his shoulders?”

“We need his help,” said Sebastian. “Otherwise, we might as well forget it.”

“Well . . . I suppose . . . all right, if you two stay together. Now,” she said staring at Regent, “How are we going to do this? It’s time we left, and you are coming with us, are you not?”

“Yes, I can’t stand these humans any longer. For me they are on the lowest level of human society, going off to Africa as they do and bringing trophies back to show off to other humans. Disgusting, murderous, nihilistic, heathen, pagan, totally unwholesome.”

“My word,” said Sebastian, “you do have a vocabulary!”

“Right then,” said Mira, how do we get out of here?”

Regent brightened. “This building has an option which not many have. In fact the idea is so new yet so old, not many humans know about it, but this architect sure knew his onions, so to speak.”

“What do you mean?” said Mira.

“Have you heard of the utility called the dumbwaiter?”

Oh, you mean that little . . . well not so little . . . elevator thing that is at the back of apartments and goes all the way down to the basement or whatever?”

“Spot on, Mira. We have one here.”

Sebastian’s eyes widened. “You do?”

“Yes, I’ve ridden in it a number of times. Piece of cake. It’s becoming the in thing these days.”



"A blast from the past," said Sebastian.

"Exactly, little creature."

"Don't call him that," said Mira, "Just because you're a different breed, doesn't give you the right to call us names."

"My profound apologies, sweet one."

"Yes well, it's not nice. Now, where is this thingamajig?"

"The dumbwaiter? Follow me."

Mira couldn't believe how easy it was. They jumped in after Regent had made some adjustments to the keypad on the wall, then the hinged door slowly closed in on them. "I'm not happy with these confined spaces," said Sebastian, "Are you sure this will work?"

"It's a breeze, watch."

There was a slight thump and the dumbwaiter slowly moved downwards, passing through kitchen after kitchen. There was a loud scream at one of the floors as they came past. A human female was washing dishes in the sink and saw the cats go by. She dropped a plate which smashed to pieces on the floor, spilling scraps of food onto her bare feet. She screamed again as the dumbwaiter moved out of sight and several floors down the trio could hear her calling out "Robert! Robert! Someone's put some cats in the dumbwaiter. Come quick!"

"Five . . . four . . . soon be there," said Regent, "Cosy, isn't it?"

Sebastian was holding the pouch tightly, squeezed as he was between the other two. "I can hardly wait."

The dumbwaiter made a rumbling noise and settled to the basement."

"How do we get out?" said Sebastian, shivering slightly.

"Easy peasy," said Regent. "This model has a safety feature. If it's empty nothing happens, but see, the door opens automatically because of our weight. C'mon, let's go."

"There's someone in that security van," said Mira.

Regent paused. "Yes, but it's going out. Quickly, we can follow."

Within seconds they were out of the building, watching the security van disappear down the street. Then there was a sudden screech as another van pulled up beside them. Mira froze — the driver was Narki Beezle, and the passenger Nero of the Blackpaw gang. What were they doing here?

Narki got out of the van and faced Mira. "We got a tip-off about you lot, that you'd be somewhere around here with a bag full of jewels. Someone wishes to meet you, so you'd all better come with us — into the back of the van if you don't mind."

"In your boot," said Sebastian. "We ain't going anywhere with you lot." Nero translated this to the human.

"Well, you'd better," said Narki, "We've got one of yours tied up in the back. I believe you know him, goes by the name of Orlando."

Mira whipped her tail sideways. "Orlando! I don't believe you."

"Smart ass aren't you. See for yourself." He walked to the rear of the van, opened the door and there was Orlando trussed up, blindfolded and gagged.

Narki stood in front of the rear door. "Now, he's not going anywhere soon, but if you lot don't come with me then he's going to look like a very damp cat when we throw him into Albert Park Lake. Now, get in."

Mira looked at Sebastian and Regent. "I don't think we have much choice — come on, it can't be all that bad."

Sebastian jumped up followed by Mira. Regent sat on the footpath, making no attempt to move. Narki stared at him. "You too, otherwise you'll never see your mates again."

Regent slowly padded around to the rear of the van. "As much as I dislike humans telling me what to do, for the sake of friendship, I'll come. Just another experience to notch up."

With the rear door closed and locked behind them and the van then heading off to who knew where, they attended to Orlando, freeing him of his bindings.

"How did this happen?" said Mira to Orlando. "You're almost invisible at night."

Orlando look sheepish. "I was waiting for you two to come back and could smell some fish cooking just around the corner. But before I could get my teeth into it, Nero had spotted me and then that Beezle fellow had thrown a net over me. It seems someone in our Shadow gang has ratted on us."

"Can't be," said Mira, "Unless . . ."

"Unless what?" said Sebastian.

"Oh, never mind. We must concentrate on how to get out of this mess. We don't want to end up in Albert Park Lake, do we!"

Sebastian pointed his paw to the floor of the van. "There's a hessian bag there. You don't suppose . . . ?"

"That he means what he says?" said Orlando.

"Frankly," said Regent, "I wouldn't trust that fellow as far as I could throw a litter box."

"Me neither," said Sebastian, "I wonder who is this someone he is taking us to — could it be Great Caesar?"



Mira sighed. "I don't think so, Caesar I can handle. He's no threat to me. It has to be someone higher up in the chain of command. I always thought Great Caesar was the top, but now I'm beginning to think he's not, that there's someone or something else behind all of this."

"What's that smell?" ventured Regent.

"Mmmm," sniffed Mira, "I hadn't noticed, but now . . . yes, it's candle-wax!"

Orlando gave a little hiss. "And we know who uses candles, don't we?"

"Holy mother of Moses!" Sebastian licked his ginger paw. "Not her, surely?" He lifted his blue eyes to those of Mira's and saw her give recognition in return. "Yes, the one of the crystal ball, the incantations, and the darkest cat you have ever met—Dremora, Demon of Dark Chants and Whispers."

Sebastian jumped up and pawed at the rear door. "I'm out of here . . . c'mon, we have to get out. If everyone pushes we can get this door open."

Nice try," said Regent, "But I heard him snap a padlock onto the door back there. Fifty of us couldn't get it open."

"Well, what do you suggest?"

"When he gets to the destination and goes around the back to open, we'll all rush him together."

Mira blinked. "I have a better idea. When he opens the door he's going to have a plan. He'll have some weapon or a net or something. I'll go first and head-but him where it hurts those humans, you know, down below. With the extra strength Anubis has given me it'll be a breeze."

"And Nero?" said Orlando.

Mira chirped. "Ha ha, he'll melt. Not a problem, I think he has a soft spot for me."

"As long as you don't have a soft spot for him, eh?" said Sebastian.

But the plans came to nothing as the van eased into the drive of the old Victorian villa. Out of the side window they could see half a dozen cats from the Blackpaws gang surrounding the van. "Looks like we're cornered again," said Orlando.

Regent looked out. "Hmmm, does seem so. Perhaps, if we put on a submissive look they'll leave us alone until we are inside the lair of she who gets her powers from the full moon."

Mira looked up from washing her front paws. "You seem to know much about that witch."

"Oh, in my former life I met many witches. She won't be any different; all we have to do is to find her vulnerable point."

Orlando flicked a scrap of paper away from him. "And how will we do that, maestro?"

"Well, Mira could help there, since she is the one with special attributes. She should be able to see right through the witch's outer skin. There has to be a vulnerable part of her that we average cats cannot see."

"In your dreams," said Sebastian. "Well, the sooner we get this over, the better. This bag is dragging me down . . . so heavy!"

The rear door swung open revealing Narki with five Blackpaw gang cats surrounding him. "Come along my little thieves; the Queen of witches wants to see you, so you'd better be on your best behaviour, otherwise my little angels she will make you disappear in a puff of smoke, ha ha ha! Oh I do find that highly amusing, ha ha ha. Just jump down here and if you try to escape, these Blackpaw mates of mine will hunt you down."

Mira couldn't see Great Caesar among the Blackpaws, but there was Nero in the background casting his eyes to the ground. Feeling guilty, are you, thought Mira. You've ratted on us and here we are to meet the real underworld ruler of the Blackpaws. She stared at him and with her new and powerful eyesight didn't realise that she'd almost sheared off the tip of his left ear. Crumbs, she thought, look at that! It's smoking! I wonder if I can do the same to the witch?

Guarded by the Blackpaws, Narki herded them around the back of the house where vines grew unhindered, where the windows sank at crazy angles and where there was a deep well with a sign: DUMP YOUR NUISANCE CATS IN HERE.

"See that!" said Narki, "that's where you lot will end up if you don't behave."

Sebastian unconsciously moved as far away from the well as was possible. The door into the house resembled a cave opening where a black crow sat on top, repeating "Fools in, never out! Fools in, never out!"

"Shut up Sylvester!" said Narki. "Get away with yer!"

The crow flew to the top of a pine tree, where it sat crying out NARK! NARK! NARK!

"This is creepier than Luna Park's tunnel," said Orlando, staring at skeletons embossed into the dark walls, of possums, rats, mice, and other unidentified animals.

"I don't like this," said Sebastian, hardly seeing where to put one paw in front of the other. "I know you're in front of me Orlando, but 'cos your coat is so dark you've become invisible."

"As black as," said Narki, "Some say black cats are lucky, some say not. Well, you're about to meet the one black cat who will change your lives. Ha ha!"

At the end of the corridor was a massive oak door, fortified with iron studs and copper edges. There was a keyhole, but no key. Narki looked down at Nero: "Say the word, kid. Let's get on with it."



Nero spat out a few syllables and the massive door creaked on its hinges, slowly opening to reveal a darkened room with the smell of candle-wax and incense. Narki pushed the cats forward.

The furnishings of the room were mostly dark green with all windows covered over with what appeared to be ancient scrolls, the letters of which stood out in a golden light that flickered in the darkness. There was a cauldron in one corner where a foul-smelling liquid bubbled over the edges. The enormous black witch's cat named Dremora was asleep on a scarlet cushion near an open fire that never required feeding due to the magic coals that would burn for all eternity.

And next to the fireplace was the object of their captivity, a grey-haired witch in a stark black robe with a tiara on her head which glowed in the dark and emitted tiny silent flashes of light, similar to lightning. Her eyes were hollows of darkness with a tiny red spot in the centre, which contrasted to the pale green colour of her face. She was seated on what appeared to be a highly-polished wooden throne, with a footstall inscribed with hieroglyphics. She was holding a sharp-pointed sword in her left hand. The cats froze, while Narki and Nero stayed in the background. The silence was something that Sebastian never wanted to feel again — it settled around them like a blanket of grey fog.

The eye sockets of the witch moved from left to right, surveying the three newcomers. "I am Queen Narcissora." It was as if her lips had never moved—the voice appeared to have come from all around, full of vibrancy, sharp as a butcher's knife, thundering deep within their eardrums. Sebastian felt faint.

The queen's voice thundered again. "I am able to speak your cat language, so easy, oh so very easy. Now then, I know of you three from the thieving Shadow gang, but who is this large fellow who dares to come here with you?"

Mira nudged Regent and whispered, "She's talking about you, mate."

Regent had been looking around the room, but now those red specks were firmly centred upon him.

"I am Regent."

"Oh, are you now! And pray tell me how you have managed to procure that royal name? You are not of my kingdom."

"No, your kingdom is of charred ashes, so how could I belong there?"

The red spots flashed. "You are rude and you try my patience."

Sebastian, standing on the right side of Regent, whispered. "Hey, knock it off, will you. She'll have us all fried for dinner."

"I am waiting," said the queen, leaning forward on her throne. Mira looked at Regent and noticed that his eyes had taken on a warm amber glow. But he didn't seem to be in a hurry to answer the witch.

"Speak!" thundered Queen Narcissora. "Speak now, or I'll have you thrown into that well outside, from which there is no escape from the thousand snakes that live down there."

Mira nudged Regent again. "You have to do something or we're all dead. Do something."

Regent sighed. "Before I continue, great Queen, let me introduce to you the powers that my good friend, Mira, has. Let her demonstrate before you, oh adorable Queen, what she has been blessed with by the goddess Anubis."

"Anubis! You dare speak of Anubis in my presence?"

"Oh, I assure you, great Queen, this is true. Mira is loved by Anubis so much so, that the goddess has given her special powers."

Sebastian whispered out of the side of his mouth "You'll get us all killed, stupid."

"What tricks are these?" roared the queen. "Show me, then!"

Regent whispered to Mira, "Concentrate on everything you've got and just like a laser beam, pin that concentration onto Dremora . . . fry her fur . . . you can do it, because when asleep she's vulnerable to your powers."

Mira remembered what had happened to the trophies back at the apartment, how they had split and fallen to the floor. Now she was to try her special powers on something living. But what if Dremora awoke before the powers worked? She heard Narki shuffling in the background. "Don't let her do that, my Queen. It could be dangerous."

"Don't interrupt Beezle, or your head will be off by my sword. Go ahead cat. Just go ahead with your magic trick, whatever it may be."

Mira turned her head slightly, so that she could see Dremora asleep on the scarlet velvet cushion. She concentrated, remembering how the technique worked before with hardly any effort. But now the stakes were high. If she failed she would not only have the queen to answer to but also one of the most fearsome creatures that ever lived.

At first there was nothing; she concentrated deeper upon the sleeping body, remembering how it didn't work with the Lion in the beginning, but still nothing was happening. She could feel the queen getting irritated, but dared not take her concentrated gaze away from Dremora. She could also feel Regent beside her, urging her on, when a globule of light appeared on the forehead of Dremora. She concentrated harder and the light grew. It was not a flame but an ever growing and dazzling pure white light. Harder and harder she thought and then she was thinking, larger and larger, until the light covered the whole of Dremora's body. Suddenly there was a bang and the scarlet cushion was empty. Dremora had gone.

The queen screamed. "What have you done! What have you done! Where's my Dremora?"



Mira, her concentration still strong within her eyes, turned to look at the black queen to beg her forgiveness, but immediately a small globule of light appeared on the witch's forehead. Oh, I can't stop it, it's growing larger and larger. Stop it, stop it, please stop it! She'll kill all of us. There was an uncanny silence in the room followed by a loud bang.

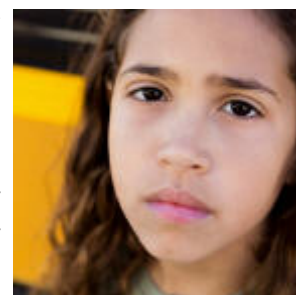
Later, when they had come out of the darkened house, complete with Sebastian's bag of jewels and notes, Mira looked at Regent with a smile on her furry face. "Regent, there's more to you than meets the eye. You knew what was going to happen, didn't you? No more Dremora, no more Queen Narcissora, no more Blackpaw gang. Shadows rule now . . . three cheers for the Shadows! And, you're really not from here, this earth, are you?"

Regent laughed. "No, my ancestors didn't come from America where they first bred Maine Coons. My people came from far away. We came from the planet Zellarin and I am he of the nine thousand nine hundred and ninety-nine lives. And all of you," he said, sweeping his paw around to encompass Sebastian and Orlando, will be the same one day. Because we are royalty and all of the humans on this earth are our servants." •



Residential care is the last place a child should live

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The Quiet Corner

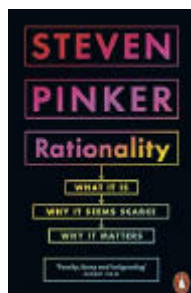
It's a long time ago, but the words of Paul Tournier still reverberate in my mind.

This renowned Swiss psychologist wrote a book titled *Guilt and Grace*. The central theme of the book was false guilt—a thorough interpretation of repressed guilt and what it does to the human body mind and soul. We all carry some of this within us, often an overload from childhood. Tournier considers that this is an illness which some humans never shake off during their lifetime.

He even has an answer for those who feel the need to join protest movements continuously, by acting out their activism some are helping to assuage their own personal shortcomings, or by replaying the sense of guilt one experienced as a child. "I must do more."

Make no mistake, this false guilt is dangerous. It has nothing to do with your feelings about something "Oh, I don't care about that." That's not false guilt, but what it can be is wanting and seeking approval from adults, and this childhood conditioning if followed through in one's life, often leads to feelings of inferiority and guilt, which is false. False guilt often leads to one denouncing others for their guilt, hence the oft-quoted line "Physician heal thyself."

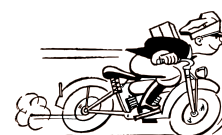
In his closing pages, Tournier states the obvious: "There are only endless torments and a vicious circle of misfortune if a [person] represses their guilt and denounces the guilt of others. The only peace within oneself and others lies in accepting one's guilt and confessing it . . . thus a parable like that of the Prodigal Son expresses a religious truth that the Church formulates in dogmas or in sacraments of penance and absolution. But it also expresses in quite a general way the condition of [persons] as we observe it as doctors. All [persons] are exiled, impoverished and all feel guilty; all yearn for the wealth of the home they have abandoned . . . it is a human problem, a form of suffering peculiar to [persons]." False guilt can be dealt with by seeing a therapist. •



Con Clusion



the week that was



Wild winds here in Victoria, homes damaged; sadly a man driving and hit by a falling tree is no longer with us, his passenger in intensive care. CFMEU construction division hitting back at the government, wishes to see prime minister brought down. More 'scandal' revealed in the Victorian state government. A landslide win for Coalition team in the Northern Territory's election — mainly due to people fed up with crime statistics. Baby Rhino, white calf, born in Melbourne.

Overseas: Russia's president Putin in shock at Ukraine's advances. No solution forthcoming re. Israel/Palestine trauma, nor what Iran is going to do. Australia's Tom Gallagher winning gold in the Paris Paralympics. America's presidential hopefuls somewhat off beam with Donald Trump losing it over Kamala, calling her names, becoming somewhat nasty. Harris still rather wobbly about her promises if elected.

India shocked with massive rape victims revealed. The United Kingdom not so united because of immigration in gigantic proportions. Question on lips—will they assimilate? New prime minister Keith Starmer already weakening on some of his promises. The Pacific Island Forum, of which Australia is a member, gives a slap in the nose of China's leader Xi Jinping. The US donates 10,000 shots to help combat the mpox virus in Africa. That won't go far enough.

Oil tanker explodes in the Red Sea due to Yemen's Houthi terrorists firing upon it. CIA states that Taylor Swift's attack suspects at her Vienna venue were planning to kill thousands of people. Star shaped sand found on Japan's beaches. 15-year-old Vietnamese boy found after being missing for 150 days. An enormous diamond of 2,292 carats discovered in Botswana. Cafe staffed by people with disabilities to open shortly in Mayfair, London. After declining for decades, Tigers are now thriving in northern China thanks to new government-backed efforts. Breakthrough in treating lung cancer using a liquid biological test.