

Cat's Eye Weekly

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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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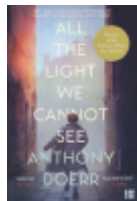
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The editor's desk

During the early Covid-19 crisis, and more recently, the Black Lives Matter protests, the homeless people of Melbourne and other cities have largely been forgotten. We've had Refugee protests over the years by the ton, Black Lives Matter protests becoming more numerous, but the homeless don't seem to matter much to today's generations. Refugee and BLM movements have numerous advocates — far more than any other disadvantaged group in Australia. What have the homeless got, apart from certain cash-strapped social organisations such as the Salvation Army, St. Vincent de Paul, the Council to Homeless People? The scale of engendered empathy is weighed down mightily in favour of the previously mentioned protest groups. When will there ever be a protest march for homeless people? It's time for this hypocrisy in Australian society to be shown for what it is. See page 4.

There is a cold war approaching and only the blind cannot see it. Dictatorial China is on a roll, using any excuse to find fault with any of its neighbours, and in particular the United States of America. That Australia has been caught up in this web of words and hidden threats, is not of our doing. Any country that stands up for freedom and democracy is going to be a target of the Communist Party of China. The CCP strategy is to place its operatives and influential media within the confines of democratic countries, more or less as fifth column directives.

Police forces throughout the world are under investigation and that is how it should be, without question. But there are two sides to every story or happening. In Victoria we have one of the best police forces in the world. The mistake previous governments have made is to import police commissioners from elsewhere in the world, or from other States. Of recent times we have seen commissioners being appointed from within Victoria Police ranks, which has engendered a more humane approach to policing in this State. This has given the police person on the ground more faith in their leaders and as a result, further humane interactions with the Victorian public has been achieved over recent years. However, you will find a few rotten apples in every organisation — in particular certain forces overseas. There are no guarantees concerning human nature.

History is not there for you to like or dislike. It is there for you to learn from it. And if it offends you, even better. Because you are then less likely to repeat it. It's not yours to erase. It belongs to all of us.

Nyungai Warren Mundine AO

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



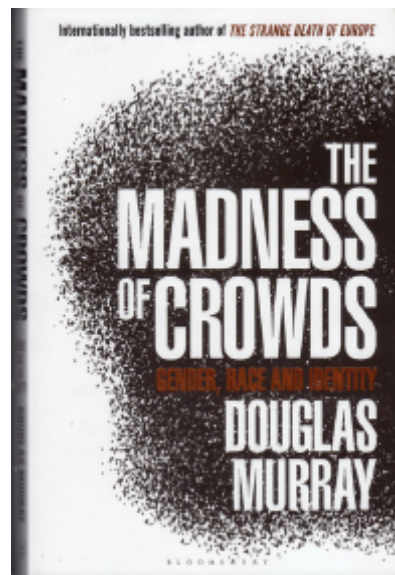


The Madness of Crowds

A gay author tackles and upturns ideas about gender, race, and in particular, identity politics

Douglas Murray has made quite a number of enemies with the publication of his book *The Madness of Crowds*. This is his second book to be published by Bloomsbury, following on from *The Strange Death of Europe* where he delicately incises the fragile and crumbling block that is the European Union.

This time, he has placed his heart wide open and sensitive to some of the most divisive ideologies that humanity has ever had to face in this postmodern era. Titania McGrath, author in *Unherd*, spits the dummy at Murray in her article of 18 Sep 2019, with “Douglas Murray’s *The Madness of Crowds* is an abomination. It’s a sustained invective against woke culture, an attempt to reverse all the hard work of passionate civil rights activists such as Rosa Parks, Mahatma Gandhi and Lily Allen.”. She goes on to state “Murray seems to believe that, as a society, we have gone “through the crash barrier” (a typically male *Top Gear*-style analogy) and messed everything up through our supposedly divisive obsessions with race, gender and sexuality. . . Murray’s ideas about gender and sexuality are so outdated that they are genuinely embarrassing to read. He relies on a whole range of pseudo-sciences such as “genetics”, “endocrinology” and “facts”. If he’d bothered to take even a basic course in Gender Studies he would realise that all of these superstitions have long been discredited.”



And, it is there that we realise that McGrath is only using an exceedingly racy form of satire. Did you recognise that? Other critics, however, are more serious. William Davies, writing in *The Guardian* 19 Sep 2019, considers that Murray is a clubbable conservative and that his stock in trade is one of genteel civility. “The bitter irony, as far as Murray is concerned, is that these new theories [intercessional feminism, gender studies, race studies and queer studies] of oppression arose at the precise moment in human history when actual racism, sexism and homophobia had evaporated. ‘Suddenly – after most of us had hoped it had become a non-issue – everything seemed to have become about race,’ he [Murray] writes. This seems to bug him more than anything else: Among the many depressing aspects of recent years, the most troubling is the ease with which race has returned as an issue.” Which brings up a question — is it more about disadvantage than about race?

Davies, who is the author of *Nervous States: How Feeling Took Over the World*, which in spite of Davies criticism of Murray, actually mirrors much of Murray’s thought. Feelings, not facts, are pushed into identity politics. It is difficult to take Davies seriously when he berates Murray for asserting that thoughts expanded into crowds are behind much of the postmodern movements, when he himself appears to have similar ideas, even though gender does not appear in Davies’ book. There is much in *Nervous States: How Feeling Took Over the World* that coincides with Murray’s book, though perhaps even Davies does not realise it.

Murray writes in an age of collapse — of the infiltration into institutions of propaganda groups. It is an age of identity politics where many dare not speak out lest they be black-balled from their own hallowed halls. Total agreement is required from numerous movements these days, and if not, then you are required to be silent. Murray and other independent thinkers are not willing to do that. Agree with him or not, he has the democratic right to speak out, to write about what he has seen. From his introduction: “. . . The new metaphysics took a further half-decade to work out how to intimidate its followers into the mainstream. But it has done so with huge success. The results can be seen in every day’s news. It is behind the news that the American Psychological Association feels the need to advise its members on how to train harmful ‘traditional masculinity’ out of boys and men. It is why a previously completely unknown programmer at Google — James Danmore — can be sacked for writing a memo suggesting that some jobs in tech appeal more to men than they do to women. [notice the word *appeal*]. *The New York Times* decides to run a piece by a black author with the title: ‘Can my Children be Friends with White People?’ And why even a piece about cycling deaths in London written by a woman can be framed through the headline: ‘Roads Designed by Men are Killing Women’. Such rhetoric exacerbates any existing divisions and each time creates a number of new ones. And for what purpose?”

The Madness of Crowds by Douglas Murray
Bloomsbury paperback 2019
Dymocks \$AUD32.99



The appalling rise of homelessness

It is systemic in our society — a society that appears to care for refugees and also feels that black lives matter 2020, while at the same time missing what is directly under our noses. Homelessness. This vast hole in care and sympathy for those sleeping rough requires a huge wake-up call.

Of the 116,427 people living homeless as gathered by the 2016 census, 42% were women, while 58% were men. Many of the women — some as young as 15 — had experienced homelessness as a result of violence from a male partner. People say there are charities to take care of these people, but the fact is that close to 250 homeless people are turned away each day by charities that are strapped for cash and accommodation. Meanwhile society goes on its way, daily commuting to work and returning home to warm conditions and loving families. The homeless, if she or he is fortunate, may simply have the companionship of a dog or cat while sleeping out on the streets, under a bridge, or in a park.

Summer-time is endured without complaint, and if one is lucky enough to find a spot near a building's air-conditioning outlet, that's a blessing. Winter, however, is another form of torture — wrapped up in thin blankets on icy cold concrete, often exposed to harsh winds and open to pneumonia and other diseases. Those not so young succumb to the low temperatures of winter and if not discovered quickly enough, die where they sleep. It is a cruel fate that awaits many homeless, and with the advent of COVID-19 another ogre threatens them. Most times they are semi-isolated, but it needs only one of their associates to become infected and the disease may spread through their group like wildfire. In general, they will not seek medical attention. To be taken from where they scrounge their living, where they know and feel reasonably safe, is not an option. And to make matters worse, those with a pet dog or cat are not going to leave their animal for anything, no matter what promises are made to them by caring health authorities.

Society is blindfolded by mainstream media and certain social media self-help groups that only see what they want to see. Like an in-grown toenail, certain social media pages concentrate on their own movement as an outlet for their purported emotional pain, while ignoring the reality of the homeless who do not have the infrastructure to put forward their case on social media.

People out and about in the cities — probably 95% of them — pass by homeless people, giving their sleeping bag or blankets a wide path, or the little hat that begs for some coinage, no matter how small. Walk around it, cast your eyes away. They're dirty, they smell, they stink, or so it is thought. Some even think that the homeless are not even human.

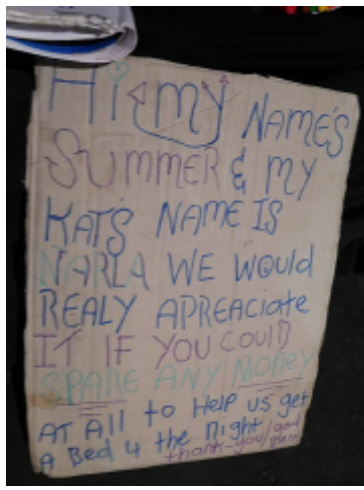
Records show that during 2017 five thousand children turned up at a homeless shelter in NSW seeking refuge. Some adult homeless sleep in cars, that being the only form of ownership they have left. The full number is not known due to their transience, but it is becoming more noticeable. Homelessness increases by a large percentage each year and though some governments are attempting to make housing available, it is never enough. Aisha Dow of *The Age*, once told of a nineteen-year-old woman found dead in Elizabeth Street, Melbourne. She had overdosed on heroin and was four months pregnant. Another man in his 50s had received a wound to his foot, lost his leg, and eventually died. He'd put a sock on his foot when it began to smell. Homeless people in the main, do not seek medical attention. These are the homeless who die on the streets or in a temporary homeless shelter. Road deaths in Australia are tracked and recorded, so that State governments that consider themselves to be efficient, have that data in order to bring about further safety infrastructure, but there is no record kept by governments as to how many homeless people die. Homelessness is a time-bomb, ticking loudly.

We'd (CEW) met Summer numerous times in past years. She was always entrenched at night on one of the corners of Melbourne's CBD with the cat she had rescued as a kitten in one of the smelly ill-lit lanes.



116,427 Australians
now have no home

Taken from the 2016 census, an increase in 13.7 percent from the previous five years.



She named her Narla, nursed her to health and with help had her neutered, vaccinated and registered. Summer knows what it is to be unloved, but in her own way she has dedicated herself to the care of a little one that gave her unquestioned love and comfort. Narla would be about three years old now and was quite at home with Summer as they moved around the city.

Summer kept a diary of goings-on and perhaps one day it may well be published, spelling warts and all. There is no doubt that Summer was looking after Narla better than other humans were looking after her. Narla had

a fine carry bag and was somewhat protected from cold winds with her snug blue coat. Life on the streets is tough, but Summer always said she managed and that at times she had enough coinage to pay for a bed at night together with her beloved Narla. Sadly, Summer and Narla disappeared from the streets one winter, not to be seen again. We made enquiries, but to no avail. Either Summer and Narla had moved on to better times, or.....? •



Ohh, it's bitterly cold out there!

The Council to Homeless Persons

Established in 1972, the Council to Homeless Persons is the peak Victorian body representing individuals and organisations with a stake or interest in homelessness. Our mission is to work towards ending homelessness through leadership in policy, advocacy and sector development.

<http://www.chp.org.au/>

See our Consumer Participation Resource Kit at:

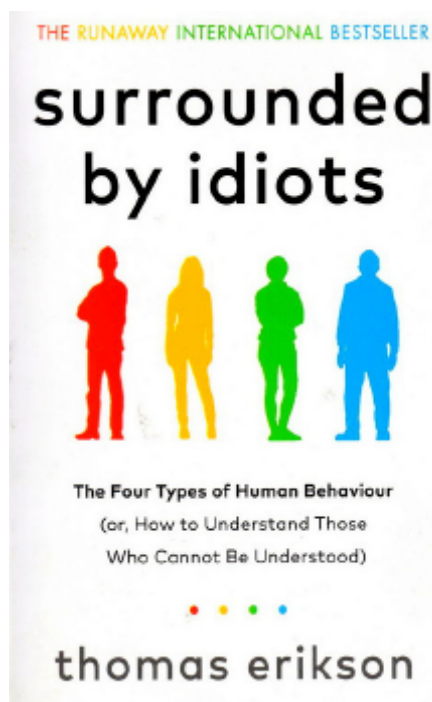
http://www.chp.org.au/public_library/cpkit/index.shtml

Letters to a young poet

On humility and patience: "These things cannot be measured by time, a year has no meaning. To be an artist means: not to calculate and count; to grow and ripen like a tree which does not hurry the flow of its sap and stands at ease in the spring gales without fearing that no summer may follow. It will come. But it comes only to those who are patient, who are simply there in their vast, quiet tranquility, as if eternity lay before them. It is a lesson I learn every day amid hardships I am thankful for: *patience is all!*"

Rainer Maria Rilke, Viareggio, Italy 23 April 1903.

A social science book for the Wiggles



This is one of the silliest social science books we've ever read. As we have cautioned in previous issues of Cat's Eye Weekly, beware of social scientists. Some of them are not what they appear to be. And if you are a social scientist reading this, then go back and overhaul your work; submit it to rigorous testing and criticism by others who are not of your immediate surroundings and who do not work within the universities of your choice.

Possibly, the author himself could be called an idiot for writing such untested theories. It's almost as if he has Karl Marx hidden somewhere in his head saying, 'categorise, that's what we have to do, categorise', so naturally, Erikson thinks this is a great idea. We can put people into classifications as if they are robots. You cannot categorise people! Humans are individuals, and to seek to place them into four distinct types is looking for trouble. You may as well believe in eugenics (judging groups of humans to be inferior or superior) or in phrenology (the psuedo-science of reading bumps on your lumpy pot-holed cranium).

This book is a runaway circus. And the wheels have fallen off the monkeys cage. *And yet, it is believed by hundreds of thousands of Swedish folk.* The author has also given training to employees at Microsoft, Coca Cola — probably informing the drink company to put back cocaine in the refreshment, or something else to help screw up the brain in the same fashion as he is doing with his book — and IKEA, to whom he could no doubt give tips on how nuts and screws are categorised into four

groups! Or which end you need to start screwing. Does the Philips head go in first, or perhaps you can insert the screw sideways. Oh yes, there might be four ways of doing it. Without doubt.

Now, here comes Monica Dux, a savvy journo with *The Age* newspaper, who writes a fairly decent column on Saturdays, whiling away her other time looking after her decent young family. She scribbles brilliantly about this book, stating "It's a bit like the Wiggles, where the purple one is always sleepy, while the blue one is most likely to be hit on by mums in the audience." She designates one of her sons as an example of this idiot categorisation. But we'll have to consolidate it 'cos it's rather long. We don't blame her! As a family person she's somewhat annoyed with this crap.

She quotes her boy's school which had initiated a body mass index or BMI test into the classes. The end result was that although her boy was fit, healthy, had a decent physique, he was troubled that he might be overweight. He wasn't, he was simply large-boned, but that was the perception he got when the school compared him with others. So, here we have a good example of categorisation running startlingly amok. And some readers will jump up and say "Yes, but we do have an obese problem with children in our schools!" Sure, but it's not the role of school teachers to be in the business of placing children into weight or figure groups.

No matter how Monica Dux talked to her son that he didn't have a problem, it was firmly implanted in his mind that he did. Which then led to anxiety. "What you're saying mum is fine, but . . . but it's not what everyone else is thinking." Oh dear, *what everyone one else is thinking*, social thinking, social media, social brainwashing and social categorisation. End of story.

Erikson's categorisation leads to writings such as "If a Yellow [person] is anything, it's a bad listener. They're really miserable at it, in point of fact." What point of fact has to do with anything, who would know, nevertheless he continues: "Many Yellows I have met say that they are very good listeners— and of course supplied entertaining examples of this undeniable fact—but maybe it could be their memory that was at fault." Maybe, eh?

When pointing out someone who had been waiting for him for some time and did not complain, he writes: "This is the second major dilemma of Green behaviour. They despise a squabble." How on earth can a social scientist — a pretend one, it seems — glean this as a fact simply from observing some people? He goes on: "This aversion to conflict also causes many other challenges, such as stubbornness, ambiguity and resistance to change. Because Greens are pronounced relational people, nothing is more important to them than keeping a relationship together. The problem is that their method doesn't work." Watch out Greens Party members, he's got you tagged! However, we think that could be revised because some of the Greens squabble a lot among themselves.

But we're not going to let him get away with just these two colours. What is he firing up about concerning the other two, Red and Blue? Would he be linking Red to the Communist Party? Oh, don't, that's just as silly. Red, in Erikson's rainbow dazzling mind is someone to steer clear of, like jump a fence if you see them coming. Bolt down the street like hell. Seriously, and he is deadly serious, Red is someone who talks the loudest. You're kidding? No, that's it, Red is bearing down



on your delicate ear-drums every second of the day with a megaphone of fifty thousand decibels. Red is also the person who explains everything dramatically while you hardly get a word in. Now you're beginning to agree with him, aren't you? You know people like that, don't you. Of course you do, but where Erikson fails in his categorisation is deciding that all those people with exciting ear-beltng symptoms such as that are the same as each other. Most people in the world have strong opinions about almost everything. This doesn't make them the same as half a billion other 'Reds'. Erikson goes on to label them as fearless. Oh come on, so everyone who talks loud and likes to explain everything in detail is fearless? Enough of this idiocy, let's go to Blue, which might or might not include the Blues Brothers.

Are you ready for Blue? We like the colour Blue, the Royal Air Force and the Royal Australian Air Force like it too. Even the Kiwis love it, though these days their Air Force blue has gone a little bit grey. But be impressed, here comes the Devil incarnate. The Blue guy always puts things back where they belong, and according to Erikson "He is also a pessimist, sorry: a realist. He sees errors, and he sees risks. He's the melancholic who closes the circle of behaviour. . . we all have a friend like that." Oh, do we now? Let's see. . . no, we certainly do not. Erikson's advice is to give up on this person, because Blue baby knows everything under the desert sun. Erikson gives an answer on what happens when Blue gets stressed and feels pressure. "He becomes excessively pessimistic. Oh yes. It actually gets worse than usual. Suddenly everything becomes pitch black, and he falls into a pit of despair." Yes, well, there's more and we don't really feel like quoting it. It is estimated that in Sweden alone, the book has brought in over ten million euros. Then there's the rest of the world. What a lovely Bank account he must have?

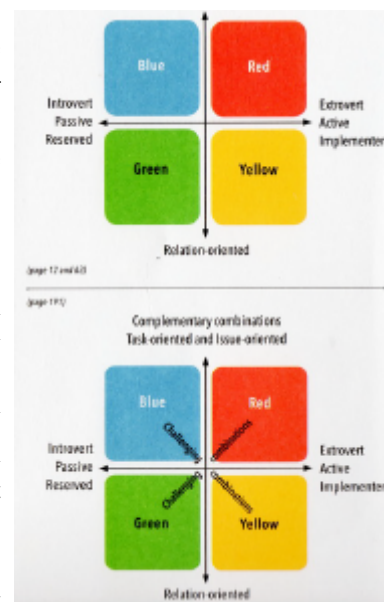
In January of this year, well known psychologist and psychotherapist in Sweden, Dr. Dan Katz, named Thomas Erikson the fraudster of the year 2018. He describes that some people after reading the book, came out with attitudes such as "I can't possibly live with a Yellow person." Or that they had been tested at a Human Resources department to be told "they needed to be moved to another team because their 'colour combination' was not working in their current team. This is how silly the influence of the book has become". In fact we should be using the word, dangerous — deadly dangerous.

In Sweden, school counselors have taken up the book and are using it to grade students into one or other of the four colours. Can you believe that! Erikson followed up his book with another: *Surrounded by Psychopaths*. As a result, the leading newspaper *Aftonbladet* gave him a weekly column for him to answer questions about psychology. Katz says psychologists were scratching their heads over the serious flaws in both books. Had the country gone mad, so enthused with works that were of dubious psychology?

Katz writes: "Erikson's description of his own results in the test are, at best, contradictory. He says "people can be many colours!". He later claims, without any evidence, that "80% have two colours!". And about himself he says, "I have three colours: red, blue and yellow!". Given the stated aim of the test to classify personalities such claims are bizarre. Indeed, by studying in more detail what the colours are meant to say about a person, my colleague Urban Fagerholm, found that Erikson must, based on his own claims, be both fast and slow in his reactions; both maximally and minimally interested in relations; and both careful and impulsive. Moreover, his lack of greenness implies that Erikson lacks patience, calm, stability, kindness and many other basic characteristics! Maybe the only positive thing that can be said about Erikson's theory is that it might help some people realise that not everyone thinks the same way they do. Psychologists call this "theory of mind", an ability to change perspective, which usually develops in early childhood. In other words, Erikson's book might help someone with the empathetic and intellectual level of a five-year-old".

Erikson describes himself as a behavioural expert, and his publishers *Penguin* seem to agree, for that is what they print on the rear cover. But, there are no answers forthcoming from Erikson as to how he got that 'qualification'. Virtually, almost none of Erikson's 'further reading matter' quoted at the rear of his book has anything to do with behavioural science. They are popular self-help books, such as Dale Carnegie's *How to Win Friends and Influence People*. And where is the extensive bibliography for his research, and the appendices of his numerous notes? None. Nothing. Not one ounce. Erikson is a fraud and unfortunately you will probably find his book in Australian schools, with possibly recommended reading. But that's democracy my dears. And that's fine as long as we don't have teachers shoving it in the faces of pupils.

Erikson reckons Bill Gates is a Blue, and so is Albert Einstein, and even Mr. Spock from *Star Trek*. CEW again warns, beware the soft social 'scientist'. Yep, the editors of *Penguin* should be stood up against a wall and fired at by kids armed with stinky Durian fruit guns. •



***Surrounded by Idiots*
by Thomas Erikson
Penguin Vermilion paperback**



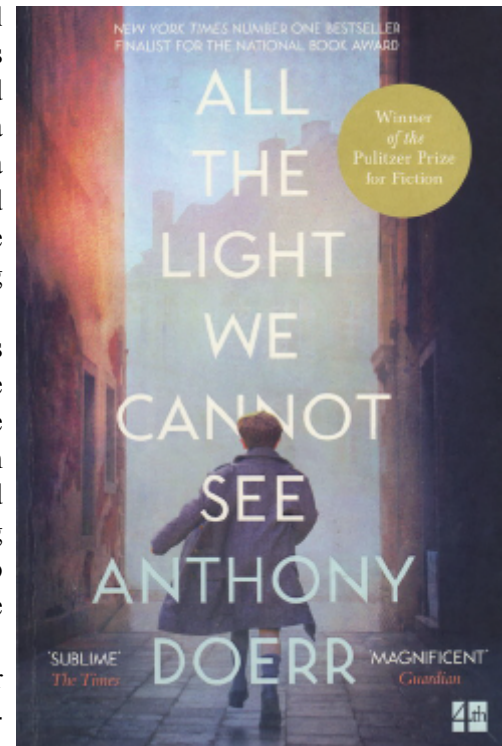
The hidden light

This book whispers at you, of things seen and unseen, of darkness and light — of dreams lost and dreams realised. It is a magical book, It takes us back to the 1930s when storm clouds were on the European horizon and children were being subject to indoctrination. Anthony Doerr weaves a delightful fictionalised history between the pages with concentration on a little blind French girl and an wildly imaginative German boy. Childhood takes up much of the book, but then comes the war and they are soon to be teenagers, living within their own countries while their armies are snarling and spitting at each other.

The most critical question is how to survive — how to live on one's own terms and moralities within a world gone mad? The restrictions that are imposed, the necessities of trying to remain as an individual personality, are deeply explored in this scintillating novel. Breathtakingly simple in exposure, the book takes us through the war, up to the peace of 1945 and beyond. Two minds, two sides of life, and yet at the same time, both existing as heroine and hero; both feeling the world more beautiful than it appears to others. And all the while, hiding a secret, which takes until the end of the book to resolve.

All the light we cannot see p44: "Sixteen paces to the water fountain, sixteen back. Forty-two to the stairwell forty-two back. Marie-Laure draws maps in her head, unreels a hundred yards of imaginary twine, and then turns and reels it back. Botany smells like glue and blotter paper and pressed flowers. Paleontology smells like rock dust, bone dust. Biology smells like formalin and old fruit; it is loaded with heavy cool jars in which float things she only has described for her. . . She follows cables and pipes, railings and ropes, hedges and side-walks. She startles people. She never knows if the lights are on. The children she meets brim with questions: Does it hurt? Do you shut your eyes to sleep? How do you know what time it is?"

It doesn't hurt, she explains. And there is no darkness, not the kind they imagine. Everything is composed of webs and lattices and upheavals of sound and texture. . . Color—that's another thing people don't expect. In her imagination, in her dreams, everything has color."



All the light we cannot see by Anthony Doerr

Fourth Estate, London

Harper Collins paperback

Available from Dymocks

\$AUD19.99

Wire

Women's Information Referral Exchange

One in three calls WIRE receives from women are related to family violence. Wire: 372 Spencer Street, West Melbourne 3003. Telephone Support Service Line 1300 134 130 Mon-Fri 9.00-5.00. <http://www.wire.org.au/>

MS Australia

Multiple Sclerosis needs your help

Log in for the latest news at:
<http://www.msaustralia.org.au/>



Protest movements, often with good intent, sometimes take the bad with the good. The following is from CEW 118, 7th November 2016. Worthwhile repeating during this time of dragging down statues, adjusting films, stories, and paintings now defined as prejudicial to modern life, to fit a new perception.

When Hitler burned books

and Islamists murdered cartoonists

~Defending our freedom of speech~

In 1933 a crowd of Hitler's supporters set fire to thousands of books; many of the demonstrators being students from some of Germany's finest universities. The books were considered to contain anti-German ideas, just as today books containing supposed anti-indigenous, anti-Jewish or anti-Islamist ideas may be burnt by certain activists or agitators.

Among the books were works by eminent authors John Galsworthy, Ernest Hemingway, Andre Gide, Thomas Mann, and even the blind women's rights author, Helen Keller. Certain professors from German universities also joined in promoting the destruction, which shows that even scholarship is no protection from bigotry.

The German Students' Association published a propaganda directive against this un-German spirit manifesting itself in literature, which included among the 12 points *"We wish to eradicate lies, we want to denounce treason, we want for us students institutions of discipline and political education, not mindlessness."*



Helen Keller confronted the students with an open letter: **"History has taught you nothing if you think you can kill ideas. Tyrants have tried to do that often before, and the ideas have risen up in their might and destroyed them. You can burn my books and the books of the best minds in Europe, but the ideas in them have seeped through a million channels and will continue to quicken other minds. I gave all the royalties of my books for all time to the German soldiers blinded in the World War with no thought in my heart but love and compassion for the German people ... I deplore the injustice and unwisdom of passing on to unborn generations the stigma of your deeds."**

On the 7th of January 2015 an armed attack was made on the satirical newspaper headquarters of Charlie Hebdo in Paris, France, in which the editor-in-chief and eleven other people were murdered, with another eleven badly injured. This was in response to a cartoon Charlie Hebdo had published as — in the eyes of certain Islamic people — denigrating to their prophet Mohammed. Charlie Hebdo had previously published satirical cartoons depicting Christian and Jewish leaders, and though there may well have been some comments made about the cartoons, no violence was initiated by any leaders of those religions. Satirical cartoons have been with us since

time eternal and often used as a wake-up call in the face of greed, corruption, homelessness, and political bastardry. Cartoonists are the life-blood of democracies, calling for investigations into the unrighteous, the turncoats, the sly cover-ups that exist in all societies. That certain Islamists saw it their right to murder cartoonists because of a perceived slight, is horrifying in its imagination. So, from an Islamic point of view, did they have the right to do that? Of course there are verses within the Qu'ran (the Koran) that may be used to justify such an atrocity, but even the news giant Al Jazeera condemned what occurred.

There are people in Australia today who would burn Bill Leak's cartoon (see page 7) if they got their hands on it. Indeed, some furore has taken place concerning that cartoon and complaints have been made to the Human Rights Commission, which still has to review the situation. The HRC president, Gillian Triggs, recently stated that she is determined to see it through, after several complaints were forwarded to her for what certain individuals considered was offensive, even though many indigenous leaders disagree.

Now, as of the 4th of November, Federal judge Michael Jarrett has dismissed the Human Rights case against three Queensland University of Technology Students who were taken to the Human Rights Commission for supposed vilification under section 18C. Having attempted to enter a computer room at the university in 2013 they were advised by QUT staffer Cindy Prior that they could not be there, because the area was only for indigenous students. Naturally, startled by such



vilification under section 18C. Having attempted to enter a computer room at the university in 2013 they were advised by QUT staffer Cindy Prior that they could not be there, because the area was only for indigenous students. Naturally, startled by such a claim, they took to their Facebook pages to express their frustration. One of the students, Alex Wood, posted “Just got kicked out of the unsigned indigenous computer room,” and “QUT stopping segregation with segregation?” As a result Ms Prior took offence, claimed hurt and nerves shattered, and sued for \$250,000. Other students were involved in commenting on Facebook pages and they settled out of court, rather than be sued, with the amount of moneys still not revealed. Should that money now be returned? But the three students mainly involved refused to settle, claiming in return, discrimination against them. It has taken almost three years for them to be cleared of the charges, but this ludicrous situation should never have been pursued by the Gillian Triggs and her out of control. Human Rights Commission in the first instance.

Jumping on the bandwagon for financial compensation are a few people who consider themselves slighted or hurt by cartoons. The enshrined Section 18C — instituted by the previous Labor government — has a lot to answer for, where it states that persons may take action if they are offended or insulted. When many of us were children it used to be “Sticks and stones may break my bones, but words will never hurt me.” Now, we are living in a world diametrically opposed where almost anyone can sue for several hundred thousands of dollars for being “hurt” by words or drawings. There are enough laws to take care of true racial hatred or vilification without the need of 18C.

Bill Leak’s so-called offensive cartoon is yet to be reviewed by the Human Rights Commission and Gillian Triggs confirmed this week that she was determined to carry it through. This is farcical in its design, with West Australian Police Commissioner, Karl O’Callaghan, giving evidence a few days ago of a 10-year-old indigenous boy whose father refused to come and collect his son, which depicts Bill Leak’s cartoon perfectly. O’Callaghan considers that this is what his officers see day after day when dealing with children from Aboriginal communities, which virtually destroys Trigg’s ideas of pursuing charges against Bill Leak. Leak, however, is determined to push ahead drawing cartoons, as depicted below, compliments of *The Australian* newspaper.

Ramesh Thakur, professor at the Australian National University, states “Because Leak’s cartoon of paternal neglect of indigenous children in remote outback communities was essentially true (satire doesn’t work without the kernel of truth) it hurt, and some people take offence at truth that hurts.... a Queensland University of Technology staffer has done more harm than good to the cause of reconciliation by her too precious claims of racial hurt that requires \$250,000 to be assuaged.... Free speech is meaningless if in practice it does not include the freedom to offend.” •



“If liberty means anything at all, it means the right to tell people what they do not want to hear.” George Orwell

Leak’s cartoon on page 7 of CEW118, which depicts a police officer berating the father of an indigenous boy for not wishing to know the child. Certain progressives in our society viewed it in another light — black discrimination, but other black folk said it was not, simply a true rendition of the obvious. Sadly, Bill Leak passed away not long after, undoubtedly a contributor to his death was the stress of the probable case to be brought against him by the HRC.



Pet medical crisis

from Jennifer Hunt

‘Aria’ – Emotionally supports this young family like no other.



Stacey is a single mother of two young children who is now out of work thanks to COVID-19. Along with her other life challenges one of her children suffers autism and has large expenses that come with that. Stacey believes that the best thing for her child is having their wonderful dog ‘Aria’ there to share support and love. Stacey has had 8 year old ‘Aria’ the Rottweiler girl since she was born and the family adores her.

When Stacey noticed that her loved dog was unwell she took her to our good friends at The Lort Smith to get a diagnosis and see what could be done. After the vets told Stacey that ‘Aria’ had plyometra due to not being de-sexed, she would need an operation to save her life. The added expense for the treatment and the surgery would be beyond what Stacey could afford, however she knew how much ‘Aria’ means to the family and that she is a very necessary to their well being. PMC were contacted to manage, due to the families circumstances we knew we could make the difference.

“She’s our family! I met her when she was moments old and have loved her quirky cheekiness ever since.” Stacey told our team.

The Lort Smith vets have since operated on the beautiful Rotti girl and we are told she is home and doing well as she recovers. Thanks to the Vet team for their help and all of you who donate or share our mission it all truly helps. •

Jade’ – Life would be a dark place without her for Trish.

Trish is on an aged pension and as we know there isn’t much left over from those payments to do much else other than the basic living expenses. ‘Jade’ is a stunning 12 year old Sheltie terrier who Trish adopted once she was no longer able to be a show dog. Trish loves her dearly and can’t imagine her life without the dog as part of her family.

After noticing that ‘Jade’ was barely eating and could barely even touch wet food, Trish knew there was an issue with her mouth and she would have to seek some veterinary advice in order to help the loved dog. Trish took ‘Jade’ to be examined at the Greencross Vet Morwell who were fantastic and managed to help set Trish up on there program which instantly helped her financially, however the entire amount would be beyond what Trish could afford and therefore PMC were contacted to manage the case.

“My pet is my companion Jade is my life. Without her I would be in a very dark place. If you could please help.” Trish asked us at Pet Medical Crisis.

‘Jade’ had several teeth extracted and cleaned, which will be vital to her ongoing health. We thank Greencross Vet for the help they have given PMC and ‘Jade’. Pensioners are a very vulnerable group and the comfort and companionship pets offer is unmeasurable, and that is why we find it so very important to help them give their pets the best they have of survival. •



Pet Medical Crisis

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

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.



Amber was referred to the **SafeCare®** program as she was struggling with the day-to-day parenting of her daughter Nara who was two and a half and son Roman who was one and a half. Amber had been diagnosed with depression and anxiety and has dyslexia.

From the beginning, Amber was willing to commit to completing the program. She undertook each of the three modules, Parent Child Interaction, the Health module and the Safety module.

As Amber progressed through the modules, her confidence in her parenting improved and the home went from a chaotic environment to a structured and calm one, with age appropriate activities, routines and suitable bedtimes for the children.

“Having a **SafeCare®** Program in your own home helps to break the cycle and get you and your children into a good routine.”

Amber also improved her health and safety knowledge, learning to identify child illnesses and identifying hazards around the home. Upon completion of the **SafeCare®** Program, Amber was incredibly proud and had a renewed confidence in her parenting skills and her ability to care for her two children.



SafeCare®

SafeCare® is an evidence-based parenting program for parents of children aged 0-5 who are at-risk of, or have been reported for child neglect or physical abuse. **SafeCare®** Educators work with families at home to improve their parenting skills.

<http://ozchild.com.au>

The Big Issue

24 years of community service to the homeless through paid work

Cover Story: HOME GROWN: THE RISE OF URBAN FARMING

“Gardening is cool again,” says Costa Georgiadis, Australia’s favourite green thumb and host of Gardening Australia. “Spending some time in the garden puts your mind into another place, which is the kind of therapy that people need at this point.” Indeed, the vegie-gardening craze has swept the nation, with seed suppliers reporting a sudden 10-fold surge in custom during lockdown. And little wonder: growing your own fruit, veg and herbs is meditative, sustainable and cultivates community.

In this edition, we speak to the people who are helping us rediscover the joys and possibilities of urban farming and community gardening. And Costa also shares his tips for those wanting to get their hands dirty for the first time

Also in this edition: • Since the killing of George Floyd, many around the globe have joined the **Black Lives Matter** movement against systemic racism and police brutality. **Vendors from street papers** in the US and *The Big Issue* share their stories about the impacts of the movement on their lives and their communities. • With the rebooted AFL season now kicking off, we talk to *Yokayi Footy* host **Bianca Hunt** about the show’s fresh look at Aussie Rules from a young, Indigenous perspective. • Actor **Cameron Daddo** talks lucky opportunities, second chances and his famous family’s acting dynasty in his **Letter to My Younger Self**. • One writer explores the meditative calm and collective joy of knitting with friends, just in time for **World Wide Knit in Public Day** on 13 June. • In **Big Picture**, Sydney photographer **Matthew Abbott** saddles up and heads to the Kimberley to capture the lives of Australia’s **jillaroos**. • And in **Tastes like Home**, **Lara Lee** shares her Timorese grandma’s recipe for **Chicken Nasi Goreng** – best eaten in your PJs.



Digital subscription to The Big Issue is only \$9.00 at:
https://issuu.com/thebigissueaustralia/docs/tbi_614_book_1



For further information, please log onto <http://www.tars.org.au/>
The Animal Rehoming Service Inc. is a registered charity.
Donations over \$2 are tax deductible. (ABN: 51 275 837 567)



The Animal Rehoming Service

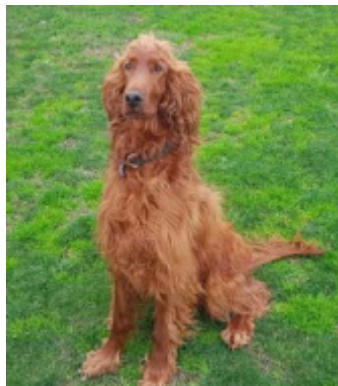
Jake is a 3 year old desexed, vaccinated, wormed and microchipped 30kg male Irish Setter (aka Red Setter)

who's looking for a loving home. He's a very affectionate, playful, active and dare we say, very regal looking boy, who would suit an active family, happy to exercise him daily.

He loves attention and company so would thrive being a cherished member of the family, ideally in an all adult home or one with older, dog savvy children.

Jake loves other dogs and would greatly enjoy a home with another friendly and active dog for company. He's also lived with a cat and several horses. He enjoys an indoor/ outdoor lifestyle, sleeping indoors. Regular brushing and grooming would also be required.

Jake's adoption fee is \$750. Microchip Number: 956000006254511. Pet Exchange Register Source Number: EE100709. If interested, please call Michaela on 0409213131 (Seymour based, but we go to you).



Tess is a 4 year old desexed, vaccinated, wormed and microchipped 21kg female Kelpie x Border Collie who's looking for a loving home.

She's a very energetic, intelligent and affectionate girl who would suit an active family happy to exercise her daily (she loves her walks and beach runs). She would love a home where she'd get lots of cuddles and be treated as a cherished member of the family.

An all-adult home or one with older, dog savvy children would be great. (She'd bowl over younger ones). Tess can be a little bit dominant, but is otherwise fine with other dogs and would suit a home with a desexed male dog for company.

She's great on and off lead and is also fine in the car. Tess enjoys an indoor/ outdoor lifestyle, sleeping indoors. Tess' adoption fee is \$450. Microchip Number: 978102100266774. Pet Exchange Register Source Number: EE100709. If interested, please call Michaela on 0409213131 (Somerville based, but we go to you).

Phoebe is a 6 year old desexed, vaccinated, wormed and microchipped 24kg female Staffordshire Terrier x who's looking for a loving home.



She's an affectionate and cuddly girl who thinks she's a lapdog and just loves attention. She's great with people and would suit an all-adult home or one with dog friendly teenagers.

Phoebe would also suit a home with a compatible desexed male dog. Otherwise a pet free home with someone working from home (beyond this Covid period) or an active, retired person would be great.

She's keen to please and is now walking better than ever on lead. An experienced owner however, who can further improve her socialisation with other dogs would be just what she needs. Phoebe dislikes thunderstorms and other sudden loud noises. She enjoys an indoor/ outdoor lifestyle, sleeping indoors.

Phoebe's adoption fee is \$350. Microchip Number: 953010000221292. Pet Exchange Register Source Number: EE100709. If interested, please call Michaela on 0409213131 (East Brighton based, but we go to you).

Happy Adoption Tale!

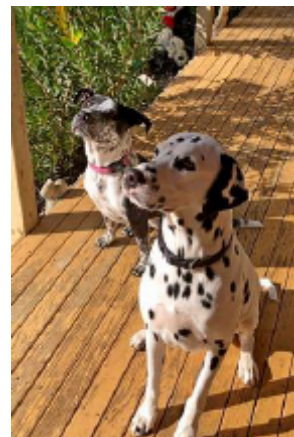
Jon the Dalmatian has found a beautiful new home

Here's his new mum Tina. 'We had been searching for the perfect companion for our fur baby. We had missed out on so many rescue dogs that we were getting ready to give up, but it was obviously meant to be, because when we got a phone call back from *The Animal Rehoming Service*, we knew we had found our perfect match!!

Jon Snow is an absolute gentleman and has fitted into our family flawlessly. Our young girl Zoe (their rescue Border Collie x Blue Heeler) adores him, giving him constant kisses. He has really made himself at home both inside and out. The kids can't get enough of him and he loves our early morning walks with Zoe.

The whole process has been so easy and meeting Jon and his family has brought something extra special to all of our lives. Thankyou Michaela for all your help.'

Thanks Tina! We're so glad Jon found such a great home with you and your family.



**We are now much loved in our new home
and very grateful to TARS Inc.
Such a new lease of life!**





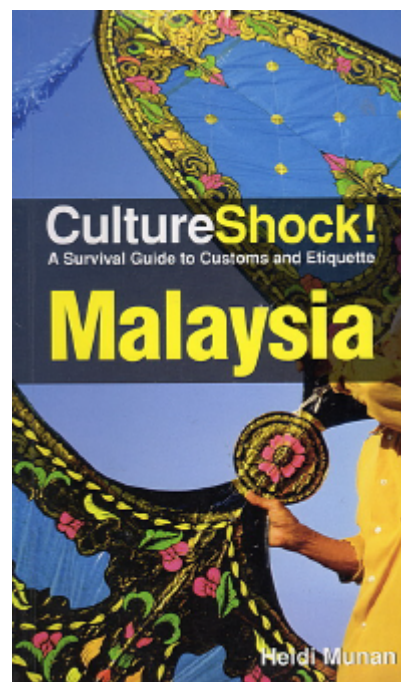
Traveling Malaysia

When COVID-19 has lost its grasp upon us, and the world has returned to some kind of normal state, holidays will still be necessary. You could do much less than travel to Malaysia where a variety of experiences awaits you.

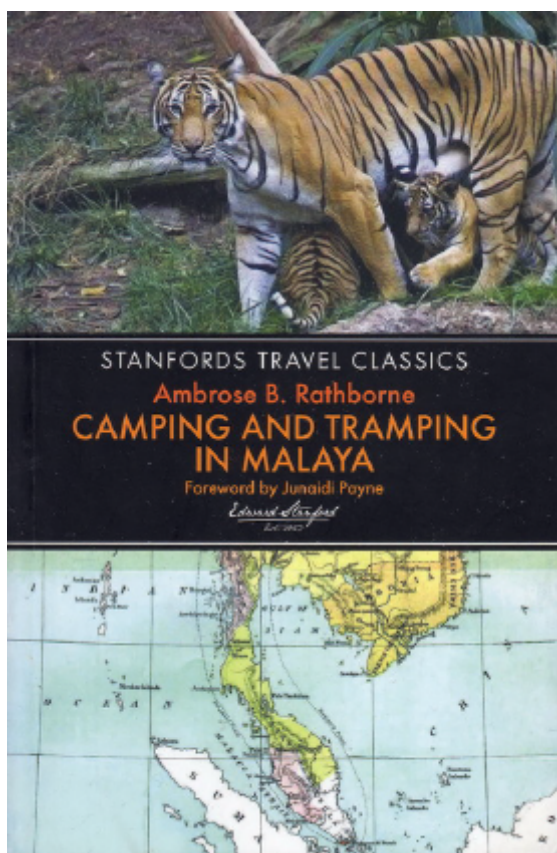
Malaysia is one of the world's most successfully integrated countries. Its balance of mostly Malay, Chinese, and Indian people makes for a kaleidoscopic mix of cultures. No matter what time of the year, there is always some celebration going on: The Chinese Moon Festival, the Feast of the Hungry Ghosts, Ramadan, Thaipusam, Chinese New Year.

This Marshall Cavendish guide covers most of the customs and culture of Malaysia's people. There are lessons to be acquired as to etiquette — in fact, this guide will give one an insider's knowledge to living with a local family. There is a section on food and what it means to the different races that make up the country. Culinary customs are described together with some information concerning taboos.

Compared to Thailand, Vietnam, Indonesia, Malaysia is different in numerous ways, not the least an ability to get on with neighbours of mixed or different race. If you're tired of Bali and tired of Kuta, give Malaysia a try. You'll not regret it.



***Culture Shock! Malaysia* by Heidi Munan**
Available as an eBook from Dymocks \$AUD14.73



Not much has changed since the 1850s-1890s in some areas of Malaysia, or the old Malaya. You can still visit a land that was colonised by the British in the 1800s. Rathbone's *Camping and Tramping in Malaya* is the stuff of exotic adventuring, not without its dangers. There are real tigers, stampeding elephants, floods, fires, you name it. Much is written, talked about today re. the colonisation of Asian countries by European powers, but reading Rathbone's rendition, a new light is gleaned. What the British did in old Malaya was to bring about peace between warring Malay tribes.

The times were murderous with Malay fighting Malay and Chinese fighting Chinese, together with an abundance of pirates. The author is an Australian, who lived with the Malays, Indians and Chinese for decades, and who sheds a fascinating insight into the warring cultures of early centuries. The evidence, when presented by Rathbone's experience, is that the British did — at least in one of their so-called 'colonies' — bring about peace and stability. But anyone wishing to read this book as an adventure novel will be disappointed. Rathbone was far too specific in his detailing so that paragraphs spin out longer than necessary, and only the very dedicated will read to the end. •

Camping and Tramping in Malaysia
By Ambrose B. Rathborne
Stanford Travel Classics
Glossy paperback
Available from Booktopia \$AUD 20.15 plus postage



Mercury O'Proud

Political correspondent

It is said that the new Greens senator, Lidia Thorpe, wishes to change the name of Victoria and Queensland, as she regards these names as associated with colonialism and unfitting for this country. Well if that is true, you cannot simply stop there with this attempt to change history, you will need to change the name of Melbourne because it was named after Lord Melbourne, another colonial. Then, you will need to change the majority of Melbourne's street names because at least 95% of them are 19th century British, including those of them that are from Scots, Welsh and Irish of colonial times. Then there are town names associated with Dutch and German colonial times. Where does one draw the line? The trouble with this country is that it is now embroiled in a culture that wishes to remove anything that may offend feelings. A country

doesn't run on feelings.

Fortunately, that is not exactly what Lydia said, though others of ilk have those very same thoughts. The *Herald-Sun* newspaper simply decided to make a beat-up of her ideas about colonial Australia. Shame on their editors. Will they apologise? Ha ha, come off it.

But it was inevitable that discussion would centre upon the sudden surge in destroying statues throughout the democratic world. You can't do that in Russia, China, or North Korea, or many others under the firm boot of dictatorship. Wonder why? So, this recent world-wide movement against anything that seems to offend must be tumbled down. The statues are not alive, they cannot speak for themselves, they simply have to rely upon other humans to ask 'Hey, is this mob rule at it again'. So, some statues appear to represent slavery, colonialism, repression, but why would you wish to tumble down or deface (as has happened) a statue of Winston Churchill whose strength was a vital ingredient in saving the British people from rule by German Nazis? Mob rule. I'll say it again, Mob rule. Blinkered thinking. At times, Churchill showed that he may well have been racist, but that is no excuse to tumble down or deface his statue. Wording could be added to show he was not without his faults. And who shall throw the first stone?

Numerous progressives have taken up a war against history and say statues must go. Even Lidia Thorpe doesn't wish to see that. "I am worried about more statues coming down because people are angry, people are hurt, people don't feel like they're being heard — I don't want to see that."

So, what's to be done? If during a democratic process, a majority agree that certain statues ought to be taken down, then fine — put them somewhere else, preferably in a museum, with appropriate wording attached giving the full history of the statue in the light of modern times. Destruction is like a rolling stone, it builds up in people's minds and leads them to further destruction. So, when will the mob go into Australia's (and the world's) art galleries and begin destruction there, because there are hundreds, if not thousands of paintings and sculptures that depict views not accepted by all. Then, my destructive friends, perhaps turn yourselves to our libraries and rip out pages that offend, or light a match to certain books, for this is what you are — a group destroyer of humanity's creative art. But, of course, you are blind to that. It's so easy to tumble down, to burn, to wreck, to destroy, but it takes courage to create. Think on that.

Australia was unprepared for World War II — inadequately equipped militarily and heavily reliant upon British, then later, American planes, tanks, guns and other armament. But we rallied around and began to build our own ships, planes, and military vehicles. After the war we fell into lax ways again, but it was Korea that woke us up from our post-war dreams. Under the auspices of the United Nations, Britain, New Zealand, Australia, America and numerous other nations joined to stop the Communist threat to South Korea. It was another wake-up call.

We have been slow again in recognising the threat that comes from the Communist Party of China. Almost too late this country has realised that the dragon is superbly cunning; spying, and intent on pushing its influence (so far non-militarily, but warming up) into the South Pacific. It is known that the majority of cyber attacks onto our government agencies and large businesses come from Communist China. Even though you may have the largest army in the world, why would you use it when you may well bring down infrastructure such as electricity grids, hydro-electric dams, gas, iron ore and aluminium smelters simply by using cyber attacks? There will be more on this in the next edition of CEW, meanwhile interested people should get their hands on the new publication *Hidden Hand: Exposing how the Chinese Communist Party is reshaping the World* by Australian Asia researcher Professor Clive Hamilton of Curtin University and Mareike Ohlberg, of the Mercator Institute for China Studies and Senior Fellow in the Asia program of the German Marshall Fund.

The book is heavily referenced with notes from pp288-402. Published by Hardie Grant. Our copy from The Avenue Bookstore. •



The courage to be

Two books that resurrect hope

Can hope flower in hell? This book will show that it can, when a sixteen-year-old athlete and ballerina is sent to Auschwitz.

The axis powers got to Hungary a little later in the war and the round-up of Jewish folk then began. The Jewish folk thought they were going to a work camp, but that did not exist. Auschwitz and Dachau did.

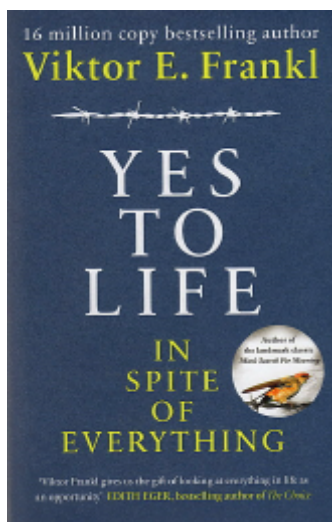
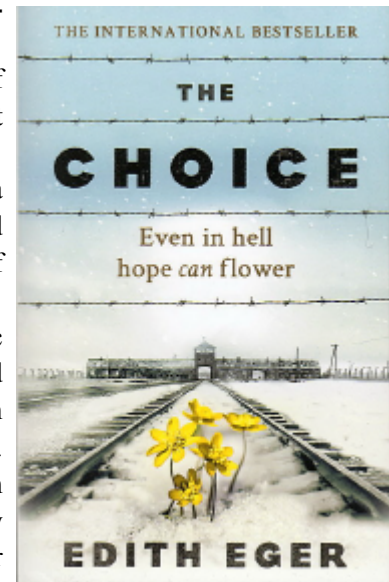
So, if you had not already been selected for extermination, you had a choice in a death camp — succumb to the misery that engulfed you, or look for hope where it could only be, *within your own mind*. And that is what pulled Edith Eger through years of torment and starvation, while always looming in the background were the gas chambers.

The selection process, or even de-selection, began in 1943 when her athletic coach took her aside and said: “I don’t know how to tell you this. . .” And then proceeded to tell her she was dropped from the Olympic team [because of her ethnicity]. From thereon it snowballed, even when her particular Hungarian family thought they were safe. The selection process continued. Her parents were exterminated in Auschwitz, and Edith with her sister, Magda, slid away to skin and bone in various death camps, eventually ending up among a pile of corpses. But always, Edith knew she had a choice, and her choice was to dream of the future — what would be, not what was. They made it through to freedom in 1945. Yes, hope can flower in hell.

Edith emigrated to the United States and in 1966 came across Viktor Frankl’s *Man’s Search for Meaning*. Of this she writes “I take the book in my hand. It is slim. It fills me with dread. Why would I willingly return to hell, even through the filter of someone else’s experience?” But again, she takes courage in her hands and opens the book.

“I begin to read. *This book does not claim to be an account of facts and events but of personal experiences, experiences which millions of prisoners have suffered time and again. It is the inside story of a concentration camp, told by one of its survivors.* The back of my neck prickles. He is speaking to me. He is speaking for me. . . I am staring directly at the thing I have sought to hide, I find I don’t feel shut down or trapped, locked back in that place. To my surprise, I don’t feel afraid. For every page I read, I want to write ten. What if telling my story could lighten its grip instead of tightening it? What if speaking about the past could heal it instead of calcify it?” Once again, Edith Eger realises she has a choice. And that choice led her to becoming a consulting psychologist. •

The Choice
Penguin paperback
\$AUD22.99



The author of *Man’s Search for Meaning*, Viktor Frankl, gave several lectures in 1946, nine months after being released from a concentration camp in Germany.

It is somewhat of a miracle that this book, now published in English by Rider, is available to world readers. It was apparently published in German during the 1940s or 50s, went out of print and was largely forgotten about.

Frankl speaks of his experiences in concentration camps. The book affirms — as did *Man’s Search for Meaning* — that in the midst of suffering there is life, no matter what terrors are before us. While undergoing severe illness there is still meaning to life. It doesn’t disappear simply because we are in pain or are incapacitated

When speaking about the usefulness or otherwise of the elderly who enter into what may be determined by some as an unproductive era of their life, Frankl states: “Just think how the existence of an old woman is, sitting there at home, dozing and half paralysed in the armchair by the window, and yet: how she is surrounded and cosseted by the love of her children and grandchildren! Surrounded by this love she is this particular grandmother — no more no less. But, as such, within this love she is as indispensable and irreplaceable as another person who is still working.” •

Yes To Life
In Spite Of Everything
Rider Penguin hardback
\$AUD24.99



Saigon Sunset

A saga in several episodes by Graham Price

Chapter three

The story so far: It is 1959 and widower, James KcKinnon, with his three children Michelle sixteen, Samantha thirteen, and Jules eleven, have recently settled in Saigon having arrived from Kuala Lumpur in Malaya. James is with Asia Barr, a company that excels in buying up rubber plantations and other likely mining investments throughout South-East Asia. James has employed a French governess, Charmaine Curtaine, to attend to his children, but is encouraged to send Michelle to a prestige school in Saigon named the Nguyen Académie. Michelle is excited by the prospect and not quite by accident the family is introduced to the English teacher — the elegant Vietnamese-French Phuong Duval at the market place in Cholon. Also entering the scene at Cholon and being introduced to the family is an inspector of the secret French Sûreté, Claude Bastein. James is at first suspicious of the inspector's intentions, but then comes to accept the big man as a friend. Arrangements are made for a dinner at James' French colonial home in Saigon, with invitations to both the inspector and Phuong Duval. The inspector is attacked by a Viet Cong sympathiser, Phan Van Kim, with intentions of kidnapping him in return for Kim's imprisoned cousin Phan Van Dong, but the inspector turns the tables and Kim is incarcerated, awaiting possible torture. Meanwhile, other members of the Cong are close by, with intentions of attacking American aid transports.

James was in his office on Rue Catinat contemplating lunch, followed by a siesta back home, when the telephone rang. His secretary said, "It's for you sir. Mr. Trevallyn in Hué."

"Put it through. . . Hello Justin, how's things up there?"

"Oh, fair enough, fair enough. Sorry to disturb you so close to lunch, old fellow, but I have some business for you to attend."

James stiffened. "And that would be?"

The voice faded at little at the other end, as if Justin was distracted by something. "Hello," said James, "Are you there? Hello!"

Something rattled down the line and Trevallyn's voice became strong. "We've got a plantation for you to look at. . . Needs some verification to see if it is worthwhile adding to our folio."

"How come it's on the market?"

"Some French people own it and wish to leave the country. I can't understand why because it is in a very fertile area, and well away from any trouble."

James nodded. "So there may be a catch. . . something not quite right with the books, eh?"

"Well, something like that. I need you to go take a look. It's not all that far out of Saigon. You could make it a sight-seeing tour. Take the children."

"When do you want me to go?"

"Anytime this week. I think you are having school holidays down there. Should fit in perfectly for you."

Lunch was at the Aurora Club. James had invited Charmaine to join him. He was seated at a table for two, near a window looking out on Rue Tabert when he saw her silhouetted against the glare of the mid-day sun. She was coming up the marble steps, dressed in a casual pink blouse and matching skirt, with pale pink sandals on her feet. She holds her age well, he thought. You could take her for 25 not 35. . . her curly auburn hair molded around her head never seemed to be out of place, and she had the figure of a teenager. Something shifted inside him as he looked at her heading in his direction, but then the face of Phuong Duval came before him and he felt somewhat confused.

"Sorry I'm late," she said, slipping into the chair in front of him. "There was a mix-up with the fruit that was delivered. . . not what I'd ordered, so I had to send it back."



“Oh, I’m sure you’ll have that sorted out. I’ve had instructions to check a plantation out of Saigon, so perhaps the children might like to come. . . and yourself also? We could arrange a picnic hamper, after all, it won’t take all day to inspect the place and their books.

“Sounds delightful. When do you think?”

“As soon as possible. I was considering. . . let’s see. today is Tuesday, perhaps Thursday as long as the weather holds.”

The Vietnamese waiter came up with the menu and James sighed a little.

“So, Charmaine, take your pick. The food here is always delightful. I personally know the chef, Victor. Not all that long out from Bordeaux. You may recall a write-up of him in *Le Matin Nouvelle* the other week.”

“Oh yes, I remember. Isn’t he the one with that beautiful Vietnamese wife. . . the writer. . . what is her name?”

“Isabelle Tran. She had her recent novel reviewed the other month in *La Femme Premiere*. There’s a copy at home in my study if you wish to read it.”

“Thanks. I read her earlier book. . . so descriptive and poetic.”

“She’s the talk of the town at the moment. Just returned from Paris where the book was launched.”

Charmaine shrugged. “Should have launched it here in Saigon, after all, it is about Vietnam.”

“I’ve no doubt they will, now that she has returned. Would you like me to invite her and Victor for dinner one evening?”

“Are you that close?”

James laughed. “How close can you get?”

Claude Bastein, the inspector of the secret French police — the Sûreté — seconded to the newly formed Vietnamese secret police of Saigon, stood in front of his bathroom mirror on the third floor of the Wanlee Hotel. It was a small building, tucked away behind a small park. On both sides were alleys where vendors plied their wares. It was somewhat noisy at night with the open windows pouring in the last heat of the day, but Claude considered it rather intoxicating. On lower levels there was some prostitution and drug dealing, but he turned a blind eye to that. He was after bigger fish.

He stared at himself, not yet forty, no grey hairs. Some slight disfigurement from childhood smallpox, but other than that he thought a fairly Hollywood-type handsome face. Not quite a somewhat younger representation of Gary Cooper, but close. He smoothed the shaving cream over his face, took the brush and whipped up a lather. Santa Claus, he laughed to himself. Yes, I’d make a good Santa Claus, although I’d need a pillow for a stomach. He was proud of his physique, knew that he was a terror at squash, and had kept up his karate, already reaching brown belt status. And he was looking forward to obtaining black in the not too distant future. Don’t mess with me, he thought. Just don’t mess with me. He picked up the cut-throat razor and began to slice the hairs away. Yes, he thought, not too bad looking at that, and there was Charmaine Curtaine, a vision of loveliness. He must ask her out, to a show or to dinner as soon as possible. Better get her on board before someone else does. She is a treasure. He’d had a few relationships in the past which were bitter-sweet, but from what he had seen and felt so far, Charmaine walked all over them all. It has to be, he thought, it just has to be.

The banging on his door alerted him as he was wiping his face clean. Sure to be one of the Vietnamese officers with some information. He threw the towel into the bath and went to the door, holding the 45 calibre pistol behind his back. The spy hole in the door revealed, as he had suspected, a Vietnamese police officer. He tucked the pistol into the back of his trousers and opened the door.

“Yes, what is it Sergeant?”

The young man hesitated, then smiled. “Good morning, sir. My Captain has asked me to report concerning the prisoner 1157.”

“And?”

“He had to be transported to the hospital, under guard, of course.”

Claude sniffed. “And why is that, Sergeant?”

“They say he is dying, sir.”

Claude stood forward. “Dying my arse! Get me some transport and we shall visit this hospital and see whether he is dying or not. And, I mean now, Sergeant, right now!”



It took all of 20 minutes to get to the hospital through the heavy traffic, and Claude Bastein was sweating profusely. It was not only the heat of the day that caused this, but it was a certain anxiety that loomed up within him, because he smelt a rat. None of the prisoners of the old Sûreté headquarters had ever been evacuated to hospital — none ever, in his recollection. This smelled of an inside job, and he was determined to get to the bottom of it. There were traitors within the police. He was sure of it. So, it had come down to this. . . who could you trust?

They bowled in through the open doors so fast that the receptionist had no time to register who or what they were. She froze, not knowing what to do or who to call. They whisked past her — the Caucasian man in white clothes with four armed Vietnamese police, two of them carrying machine guns.

“Up the stairs.... up the stairs...” bellowed Claude Bastein. “Bugger the elevators... too slow. Up the stairs.”

They arrived on the first floor landing where a security guard reached for his revolver, then froze as he saw what confronted him. Claude Bastein grabbed the man by his shirt collar. “Which ward the Viet Cong prisoner?”

“I... uh... three.”

Claude and his four Vietnamese police raced down the corridor. Ward three loomed up. A nurse came staggering out with blood streaming from her neck and fell to the floor in front of them.

“Shit!” said Claude, “dive in.”

The double-bed hospital room was empty, save for a young male nurse lying on the floor moaning.

“He’s gone!” cried Claude, “They’ve rescued him! Get some help for this poor fellow here and the woman outside, and check the perimeters. go... go....!”

When he had recovered his breath, Claude came to the realisation that it was all too late, and that indeed there had to have been some inside betrayal for Pham Van Kim to have been rescued so easily. He stood at the edge of the bed where broken handcuffs were hanging loose from the iron bed-head. “Shit! Shit! Shit! So this is how it all ends, is it? Traitors within who undermine our best efforts. Well, we’ll see. We’ll just see how far you get, you bloody bastards.”

Chu Lam Long was pleased with himself. The operation to rescue his sister’s boy-friend, Kim, had succeeded. It was somewhat of a diversion from usual operations, but he considered it necessary because who knew what torture they carried out in the old Sûreté headquarters in Saigon? Better to rescue against all odds rather than take the chance that somehow Kim might spill some information, however loyal to the cause. They had smuggled him out of Saigon and into a small village where he could recuperate. Long’s sister, Cuc, had been informed and Long had organised her to visit. It was best that they not be kept apart, even though a certain risk would be if any surveillance of Cuc had been organised by the police. But Long was sure that the detours they had in place and the disguises they had implemented would have totally prevented anyone from the Saigon police or militia from following Cuc. We are too clever for them, he mused. And then thought, how stupid they are to think they can win this war. Tomorrow, as his intelligence had informed him, he would intercept a large transport of what could only be weapons and munitions supplied by the Americans to the AVRN regiments in the provinces under the cover of American aid. There was so much streaming out of Bein Hoa these days, that it had to be arms and not aid. All of it was headed for the districts where there were AVRN regiments and where American advisors were present. He shook his head. Do they think we are blind, or what? Their intentions are just so open. They cannot hide their own stupidity. Oh, how blind *they* are!

The morning was crisp and bright. They were up early before dawn, before the transport left Bien Hoa. As it weaved its way through the provinces, northward, on a long journey to the north-east, it was tracked by various Viet Cong cadres, who radioed the positions of the convoy. 12 trucks, guarded by several troop carriers and armoured scout cars front and rear and interspersed after the first six trucks. It seemed to Commander Chu Lam Long that no chances were being taken by the Americans to get their goods to the waiting regiments in the northern provinces. There was only one point of attack, considered Long, and that was in the hilly region when the convoy would attempt to wind through the pass. This would slow them down so that they would be vulnerable from attack.

Long had joined with two other cadres, and they squatted at the bend of the road in the elevated hills and waited. The convoy was expected around 10.30 a.m. And Long and his men with the other cadres had settled into position. Long’s brother, Lung, came up to him. “How much longer, dear brother, do we have to wait?”

“Don’t be so impatient, brother. Maybe one hour, maybe less. Everything depends upon our cadre members a couple of kilometres or so back there, waiting to give us warning. Are you excited, younger brother? This will be a great feather in our caps and a blessing for Ho Chi Min. We knock off this convoy and any others that follow and that will send a very powerful message to America to keep out of our business. You can see where this is going, can you not? They are only



interested in grabbing all they can from this country for their own use — our rubber, our minerals, our spices, all that we produce will be theirs for the exporting if they succeed, same as the French. They wish to become rich. They will take what they want and we shall be left with nothing. That is why we fight.”

Hung shared his paddy rice-cakes and tea with Long and Hung’s girl-friend, Linh, who was second in command. It would be a long wait, but surely by 10.30 or so their time would come. And then it was almost mid-day and still they had received no notification from the early warning cadres. Long had barked into the radio numerous times, attempting to ascertain where the convoy was, but to no avail. His requests came back negative. No sign. Around 11.20, apart from a steady stream of pedicabs, bicycles and carts, among the few vehicles that were moving up the hill, they noticed a black Citroen 15 coming towards the pass. Long took out his field glasses and focused on the windscreen of the Citroen, which was now labouring up a steep incline.

Possibly French people, he thought, as he studied the driver. He signaled to Linh to get some men down there and stop the car. Whoever was there could be questioned as to knowledge of transports, of what was on the highway, what they may have passed, or if the convoy had turned off to secondary roads. Any information would be welcome at this late time, considering that the convoy was not where it was supposed to be.

James and Charmaine had hustled the children into the car. A large picnic hamper was stowed in the back and no matter how many times he was told not to, Jules insisted on bringing his pet puppy, Harry, a small cream poodle of dubious genealogy. But Harry was no trouble during the voyage, merely sitting on Jules’ lap or at times sneaking up to the window and sniffing at the breeze. But after an hour’s driving the children were become bored and restless, so James pulled the car over at a roadside stall, where he shouted everyone to coconut juice drinks.

An armoured scout car cruised by, followed by a tank., which was followed by another scout car. Probably just on local manoeuvres, though James. Nothing to be concerned about.

“C’mon you lot, we have to get moving. I don’t wish to be at the plantation during high noon.”

Jules piped up “Did you see that tank, Dad. Looked like an American one to me. Too big for French.”

James ushered the children back to the car. “In your dreams, son. I think it was an old German one from World War II.”

“No Dad, there were no Germans here then, only Japanese. You’ve got it wrong.”

“As you wish,” laughed James, “Now hop on board.”

They had come around a bend, surrounded on each side of the road with palm trees and forest, when Charmaine said. “Oh my lord, I think we may be in some trouble.”

“Not a friendly looking lot, are they?” whispered James. “Children, just sit where you are, say nothing, and Jules, keep that dog quiet.”

There were four of them. Two with AK47 automatic rifles, one with a sub-machine gun, and the fourth a woman with her right hand on an open holster containing a revolver. Her left arm was raised with her hand flat and high in a gesture that meant only one thing — stop! James slowed the car, bringing it to a halt on the side of the road. He shut the engine down. He thought that the woman, who was bare-headed, may be the leader. It was a Cong patrol, he was sure of it, and he whispered “Be on your best behaviour, everyone.”

The woman came up to his open side window, looked quickly at the occupants and spoke in French: “Good morning monsieur, have you come from Saigon?”

James scrutinised her. Quite attractive, he thought, and very young. Perhaps no older than 20. “Yes, we are out on a tour of the countryside.” The woman switched to English. “Ah, a British visitor to our fair land, no?” She stepped back, eyeing the car, her right hand on the butt of the revolver, while the three men surrounded the car, weapons pointed skywards so as not to unduly frighten the occupants.

“I need to know, *monsieur*, if you have seen any army trucks on your journey?”

James shook his head. He was perspiring somewhat, with his hands still on the steering wheel. The children in the rear were frozen into silence. “No, only civilian ones.”

The woman placed her hand on the door handle and swung it open. “I need, *monsieur*, to know if you are telling truth. Step out, please.”



Charmaine, who had been quiet so far, could not help herself. “We are no harm to you. Why do you treat us as enemies?”

The woman nodded to one of the men. “Lung!”

The one with the machine gun came around to Charmaine’s window, tore the door open, and barked in French: “Out!”

Charmaine scrambled out of the vehicle, while James did the same opposite. Both of them raised their arms above their heads. Someone in the rear of the car was crying. “You may lower your arms,” said the woman. “We mean you no harm, but you must tell the truth.” She shouted across to Charmaine, “You, with the smart answers! Were there any army trucks? Tell us the truth, or my comrade will take you prisoner.”

Bicycles and a bullock cart went by, with the Vietnamese people keeping their heads low under their conical hats, not wishing to know what the scene was all about.

“If we do not get truth,” said the man named Lung, “You walk back to Saigon, for we confiscate and burn your car.”

“It is the truth, shouted James. Look at us, we are just civilian people. We have nothing to do with anything military.”

“It’s true,” said Charmaine, now shivering somewhat with the menace of the machine gun pointed at her. “There were no army trucks. I swear, there were no army trucks.”

Trinh shook her head in a sign of resignation. She called out “Lung!” and waved him away. The other two men stepped back.

“You may go. I believe you.” She pulled out a small pad from a shirt pocket. “This will give you safe pass for the rest of your journey.” She tore off a sheet, pulled a pen from her shirt sleeve and signed the small piece of paper. “My name is Du Trong Linh. If any issues with further journey, please mention my name, or name of my Commander, Chu Lam Long. *Au revoir* Englishman, or whatever you are.”

Charmaine quickly hopped back into the car, but James stood there watching the foursome disappear into the forest. What had just occurred? He felt some kind of shock, a daze, and he stood there not hearing Charmaine calling to him to get into the car. Was this how it was going to be in the future? Were they to be kept within the boundaries of Saigon for as long as they were here? Was it going to be safe for his children?

The sobbing in the rear seat of the Citroen finally brought him out of his daze. It was Samantha. Charmaine reached over into the rear compartment and smoothed the girl’s cheek. “It’s all right, my little love, the bad people have gone. It’s all right.” Jules was holding Harry so tight that Harry yelped and struggled to get out of his grasp, while Michelle was sitting there staring, just staring.

They reached the turn-off toward Tan Uyen around mid-day. Things had settled and James was determined not to let the earlier confrontation prevent them from continuing their journey or further messing up their day. There were mostly rice fields on either side of the road with patches of forest now and then; the tarmac was in reasonably good condition and they were making good time — should be at the Loyer Plantation by 12.30.

They pulled in at a roadside clearing where there was a small café and a view of the rolling hills to the north. In spite of everything, he thought that lunch was a necessity. But the children only picked at the food, instead swallowing reasonable amounts of orangeade. Samantha, in particular, seemed listless and not interested in anything. Even so, James thought the scenic beauty of the place was exhilarating. The dense green of the forest which gradually merged with surrounding jungle, and the misty blue of the hills in the background was captivating. There was peace here.

Charmaine sat on a grassy verge under several palms next to Samantha and saw what James was looking at. She too was captivated by the scenery. “Oh, isn’t it such a beautiful land? But now somewhat spoiled by all the turbulence that goes on almost hidden within. Do you think, James, that we should report that confrontation to the police?”

He seemed to breathe out rather strongly. It was much more than a sigh. . . it was something within himself that years of growth and determination had built up. . . it was as if to say why this, why now? Instead he said: “And what good would that do us? Here we have, as fortune has favoured us, a safe conduct pass which may well be useful to us in the future. Others, no doubt, have fared less than us when they have met up with the insurgents, but you know Charmaine, I think there is something of value in their uprising.”

Charmaine seemed shocked. “Surely you don’t agree with their politics? Look what they have done to my compatriots, killed and maimed them by the hundreds of thousands. How is it that people such as that can be forgiven for what they have done? It is so one-sided *mon ami*.”



“Ah, but you are looking at it with jaundiced eyes, Charmaine. You only see the French side of things. After all, they were the conquerors, same as some of our British legions across the centuries. I’m not making excuses for my country, but it seems to me that most of the predominant countries of Europe, have at one time or another, sought to impose their military might over peoples of lesser strength.”

“But, you saw how those Cong people stopped us, interrogated us, frightened the children without any care. You saw all of that and had yourself placed in danger.”

“Yes, but after they checked, they gave us free pass.”

Charmaine shook her head. “I don’t understand. . . I just don’t understand. Now you are looking to purchase a rubber plantation on behalf of your British company, so are you not also into a certain exploitation?”

The comment silenced James. He was not willing to answer it because he had been coming to the realisation of late that all foreign companies — no matter who they were — were in Vietnam, and indeed in the whole of South-East Asia, for profit and gain. Of course, it was his livelihood; it was his children’s future. He had a need to sustain a goodly manner of life so that the children could prosper. It was not about himself, it was about what was ahead, so that a foundation must be laid for his future generations. He wished to see the children enter noble professions and make good marriages. Of course it was not for himself, never, but if the gods were somewhat kind to him, perhaps he might find some happiness with Phuong Duval? He was not aware of Charmaine, nor the children, as he sat there and looked at the misty hills in the background. Phuong, the lovely, the intelligent, the exquisite, someone who would give one a reason beyond his own small family, for carrying on for decades to come. Someone, perhaps, would bear him more children of a class almost beyond reality. How strong would be the infusing of blood-streams, so different yet so similar, that could produce a cleaner and sharper brood of children than otherwise, for he had long held the opinion that the mixing of different racial blood-types was the way to a future of much care and acceptance. East and West, the mingling of like souls, the coming together of centuries old lineages, which could only mean one thing — adaptation and creative splendour.

Charmaine noticed the smile on his face and thought. He’s not quite with us at the moment. I wonder what is going through his mind? There’s something deep within him that keeps him going in a more relaxed frame of mind than any other Englishman, or rather Scotsman, I have known. I wonder, perhaps, if there *is* a better future for us? I really didn’t wish to be a mother, or step-mother, of his children, but then I could do worse. He is such a caring man. Of course, there seems to be a little competition now. Perhaps I made the mistake of introducing him to Phuong Duval? Difficult to compete with a woman such as that, she is so smooth and delicate, yet at the same time strong of mind. I wonder. Should I pin my flag to the mast?

Inspector Claude Bastein stood outside the old Sûreté headquarters in Saigon — out of earshot of any of his companions within the heavily fortified brick and stone building. He was talking to Major Do Dinh Thanh about the recent escape of Phan Van Kim, and offered advice that there had to be a traitor or traitors within the Vietnamese public security police.

“What do you think?” said Claude.

The Major puffed on his pipe, stretched himself a little higher than his five feet six inches, and smiled. “Of course, dear friend. Three or four or maybe more. But how to root them out, that is the question. We need to lay a trap.”

Claude nodded. “We could use that clerk, what’s his name. . . Chew something. You know, the one who shot his mouth off and was given the sack. Word him up a bit, furnish him with some fake documents, and allow it all to be spread through the building.”

“Oh, you mean Chung! Hmm, yes, that might work. Could bring the responsible one or ones out of the cracks. I’ll go down to his home and have a word with him tonight. We could bring him back on duty with some excuse. . . of course, we would have to offer him a bribe. I think I can raise that without any problems. Sadly, you my friend, wouldn’t have such access to funds that you had in the old days.”

Claude laughed. Yes, I remember very well, you as a lowly Lieutenant and spending more than you earned. I’m still waiting for that loan I gave to you back in ‘53 to be re-paid”

“Really, Inspector, I thought that was in the interest of goodwill!”

Claude laughed again. “Just joking, Thanh. It was money well spent because you managed to nail some spys for us. Anyway, it wasn’t my money, but the French government’s. Shame I don’t have access to it these days.”

The Major knocked out his pipe on the heel of his shoe, “It’s so good to have you back here again. Oh, by the way, if you need a couple of girls to play with tonight, I can arrange it.”



"I'll bet you can. No Thanh, those days are over for me. I've set my sights on something really worthwhile. I'm not sure how long Diem will be wanting me to hang on here, but I really can't see it being more than another year. I'd like to settle back somewhere near Paris and raise a family."

The Major blinked. "Truly! I never thought I'd see the day when you would knock back some free entertainment."

"Ha ha, your guests always come with a price, dear Thanh. They have sticky fingers. More than once have I found money missing."

"Oh don't be such a wimp. Besides, all that goes around comes around."

James swung the Citroen through the gates, up a bumpy trail through the rubber plantation. The darkness fell upon them, sun blocked out within the deep green cathedral of rubber trees at the Loyer Plantation. The Citroen climbed up a low hill and came to rest outside a bungalow that looked as if it might be an office and a residence combined. Two other huts of smaller appearance skirted the main building. There was a balding Chinese man in his forties standing on the verandah, dressed in khaki. He came down the steps to meet them. Charmaine noted the heavy cane stick he carried.

He spoke English. "Ah, Mr. McKinnon, so very nice to meet you. I am Chun Li, manager's assistant. Mr. Marchand having siesta, could not wait for you. Please excuse me while I wake him. Very distressing." The Chinese went back up the steps and disappeared. Charmaine looked at James, both still sitting in the Citroen. "I have a strange feeling about this. There's something not quite right here."

James laughed, stepping out of the Citroen. "Your imagination is running wild, Charmaine. It is a totally different existence here in these plantations. Seems a little spooky as the sun cannot penetrate as it does normally, so you have to take it for what it is. I know these plantations of old, and from what I see so far, this one looks as if it is managed correctly. Look, there is no undergrowth or leaf litter around the rubber trees. The planting is uniform, the cups in their places, cuts through the bark at the correct angles, not too shallow not too deep. No spooks here. All seems normal. Of course, I'll need to check the books to see that the amounts of collected rubber are exactly what is exported, but that shouldn't be a problem."

The children piled out of the car. Jules let Harry loose and the dog scampered around, barking at birds that were pecking the ground, tearing through a small vegetable garden in front of the main house and coming back to jump into Jules' arms.

"Hey," said James, "put the dog back in the car. I don't want the owner upset by any of your shenanigans, Jules. Put the dog back. . . now!"

Samantha laughed and hopped out of the car. "Woo, scary place this. So dark. So mysterious."

"No darker than the Malayan ones you've seen," said James. What is the matter with you lot? Have you suddenly forgotten where we came from?"

Michelle sat with the door open on the slim running board of the Citroen with her hands to her cheeks. She sat there, saying nothing, until Charmaine came around the side of the car and sat beside her.

"You okay? Been quite a shock back there on the road. You sure you are okay?"

Michelle nodded. She turned to Charmaine and smiled. "It's just that. . . I saw something different today. I thought we had it made, that life in Saigon was going to be a blessing for us, but then there are these people out here in the country who are so different. I'm not sure what to make of it all."

Charmaine held Michelle's hand. "You know, as you go on through life you are going to be confronted with other ideas and other minds, many that are different from what you have been brought up to believe. Even I, as a French woman, don't fully understand what is going on here with this adopted country of mine, but there is only one way to face things, Michelle, and that is to be honest with oneself. You can have your dreams, of course, but at the same time you need to be aware that some people don't want you to have those dreams, and they will fight to take them away from you. You have a good father, who has done well and is still doing well, but this country is becoming like a volcano that may well explode over all of us and change our way of living. We have to prepare ourselves for that, just in case."

The Chinese assistant manager took James up the steps and into a fairly barren living room. There was sparse furniture — a desk, a sofa, several cane-backed chairs, and little else. Through a dark hallway came a man of around sixty years of age, slightly stooped, excessively thin, a gallic face with a small whitish moustache and the grey wisps of a beard.

"The master, Mr. Pierre Marchand," said Chun Li. "He welcomes you, Mr. McKinnon. Please take a seat."

The Frenchman moved behind the desk and sat down. He stared at James for a moment, his pale blue, somewhat watery eyes determined and fixed. "McKinnon, eh? I knew a McKinnon, once. Served with me in the Legionnaires in Africa. They reckoned he was an escapee from a British prison ship that had floundered off southern Africa. We'd take anyone in



those days, as long as they were strong. Didn't matter to us who their previous allegiance was to, and he might have been a relative your yours, eh? Ha ha ha. Well now, let's get down to business. Your people, Asia Barr, are interested in buying me out, is that not so?"

James perceived that the man was slightly drunk, and wondered how he could conduct his investigation under such a situation. There was something very odd going on here, but even so, his first inspection of the plantation had shown good results. It was difficult to coincide the efficiency outside with what was going on inside. Something didn't add up.

"Very pleased to have your acquaintance, Marchand. On first inspection it would appear that you have a flourishing plantation. However, I should like to get to know the employees and their conditions, if that is acceptable to you?"

"Ah, 'tis their time for rest, but if you insist, Chun Li will take you to their quarters so that you can see we have an amenable workforce. I am looking forward to retirement, so you will know that is the main reason for selling up. But there is great fortune to be had here, McKinnon, if you play your cards right. This district is extremely fertile and the workforce very content in what they do. You will find it so, my friend. Forgive me if I do not join you. Chun Li is very capable." He reached for a decanter of whisky and poured some into a glass.

James left Charmaine in charge of the children, and moved with Chun Li through the massive Loyer plantation, taking notes as he went by. Soon they came upon the quarters of the workers. James looked at the cane and bamboo huts that seemed to spring out of nowhere — there were dozens of them, and around their perimeters sat numerous Vietnamese, mostly dressed only in loin cloths or trousers. Chun Li had been joined by a tall Vietnamese who had a scar across his left cheek. He did not speak, but followed the men. Like Chun Li he carried a long heavy cane stick. James thought that this was somewhat unusual, but then there could be some of criminal nature among the tappers. In Malaya, all the tappers had been of Indian extraction and fairly calm of nature, but as he came closer to the huts all he could see were the smaller Vietnamese. James walked up to one of the huts, then turned to Chun Li. "I'll just have a look in here, to see what their conditions are like."

The Chinese waved his cane stick. "Not a good idea, sir. Is very private."

"I'm sure they won't mind," said James, pushing his way through the canvas flap that served for a door. It took his eyes a few moments to become used to the darkness within. There were two young men squatting around an upturned wooden crate playing cards. An oil lamp gave off a certain subdued light. The only other furniture in the one-roomed hut were two untidy bunks against a wall. The men looked up at James. One of them squinted at the newcomer. He had heavy welts on his shoulders and some bruising around his chest. The other man had some bruising to his left shoulder and forearm. The men said nothing, simply staring at James.

He came out of the hut with his hand to his mouth. Chun Li looked at him with blinking eyelids. "We go now, further up, eh."

"Those men in there, they look as if they've been beaten."

Chun Li gave a quick glance to his Vietnamese companion, swung his cane stick over his shoulder, and shook his head. "Fight. Some of them fight. . . nothing better for them to do than fight when not working."

"I see," said James. "Does that happen very often?"

"They get drunk — very, very drunk."

James wondered where the men would obtain liquor out here so far away from stores, but he kept his thoughts to himself. "I'd like to see the factory and the smoking houses. And then the loading and trucking facilities. Shall we go?"

To be continued

Feedback to Cat's Eye Weekly
is always welcome.
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