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Brief: HGRANT



- 1 Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows (Children's Cover)**
J.K. Rowling
Allen & Unwin - \$49.95
- 2 Harry Potter & The Deathly Hallows (Adult Cover)**
J.K. Rowling
Allen & Unwin - \$49.95
- 3 James Halliday's Australian Wine Companion 2008**
James Halliday
Hardie Grant - \$32.95
- 4 A Thousand Splendid Suns**
Khaled Hosseini
Allen & Unwin - \$32.95
- 5 The Dangerous Book for Boys Australian Edition**
Conn & Hal Iggulden
HarperCollins - \$45.00
- 6 The Memory Keeper's Daughter**
Kim Edwards
Penguin - \$29.95
- 7 The Secret**
Rhonda Byrne
Simon & Schuster - \$34.95
- 8 High Noon**
Nora Roberts
Hachette Livre - \$32.95
- 9 Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince**
J.K. Rowling
Allen & Unwin - \$19.95
- 10 Island of the Devil**
Peter Robinson
Hachette Livre - \$32.95



God is Not Great: How religion poisons everything

Christopher Hitchens
Allen & Unwin, \$29.95

WELL, religion certainly seems to have poisoned Christopher Hitchens's view of the world.

Unlike others of the recent rash of "anti-God" books, however, this book is quite readable and even interesting in parts.

Blaise Pascal thought that since it is impossible to prove either that God exists or doesn't exist, we would be better off believing that He does.

Hitchens, with a wealth of historical anecdotes covering every deity from Yahweh to the Great Ju Ju, seems to make a pretty good case that Pascal was wrong.

But then Mother Teresa gets a good deal of stick whereas "Vinnies", working among the down and out, fails to get a guernsey. It is a bit like reading a BHP Annual Report where someone's forgotten to add the profit side of the ledger.

At about page 200, where Hitchens starts to get stuck into the Dalai Lama, I threw the book across the room and read no more.

— David Christie

Ian Botham My Illustrated Life

Ian Botham
Cassell Illustrated
255pp, \$45

IT is hard to believe 30 years have elapsed since the greatest English cricketer of the modern era, Ian Botham, burst spectacularly on the international stage known as Test cricket.

But time flies when you're having fun, and there is little doubt that "Sir Beefy" has had his share of fun over that time.

Since his cricket career ended in 1993, Botham has continued to live life to the fullest: travelling the world, playing in celebrity golf tournaments, appearing in pantomimes and carving out a successful career as a TV commentator.

Not forgetting his long-distance charity walks, which have raised millions for leukaemia research and earned him a knighthood.

A coffee-table publication, this offering contains enough glossy pictures and anecdotes to ensure it would be a worthwhile addition to any cricket tragic's library.

— Robert Dillon

Time For Bed, Isobel

David Bedford and Leonie Worthington
Little Hare, \$14.99

WE love bedtime stories in our house: the kids love books, I do too, don't get me wrong but I really love the thought that peace and quiet is imminent.

The adorable *Time For Bed, Isobel* is a blessing and a burden wrapped up snugly, and perhaps a little smugly, in one.

My three-year-old toad finds a kindred spirit in Isobel, the wide-eyed panda who's not about to surrender to the night without a fight.

Isobel has given her ammunition, you see quotes (verbatim) with which to tease her mother when her mother smells solitude just around the corner.

"I don't want to go to bed," said Isobel.

"I want to be with you."

I, on the other hand, find it harder to relate to Isobel's mother, whose patience and gentle reassurances to the indefatigable Isobel have me simultaneously in awe and incredulous.

But it all ends happily everafter, of course, as Isobel's eyelids draw to a close.

— Gina Cranston

The End of Innocence

Estelle Blackburn
Hardie Grant, 338pp,
\$29.95

THIS is a book that is very hard to put down once you begin reading it, especially if you enjoy true crime.

It is a sequel to the best-selling *Broken Lives*, which covered the story of the last man to be executed in Western Australia, serial killer Eric Cooke, in October, 1964.

Two other young men, John Button and Darryl Beamish, were also convicted of murder and jailed.

Almost four decades later they were exonerated from the crime, released from jail and received financial compensation.

Their acquittal was due to the persistence, hard work and passionate belief of the author that the criminal justice system had wrongly convicted these two young men.

The system got it very wrong, especially in relation to shoddy police evidence.

By story's end we feel a huge sense of relief that truth and justice has prevailed.

— Paul Kraus