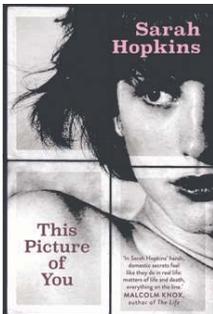




## great reads

### SNAPSHOTS OF CHARMED AND TROUBLED LIVES

**THIS PICTURE OF YOU**  
SARAH HOPKINS  
ALLEN & UNWIN, RRP \$30



Sydney lawyer Sarah Hopkin's first novel, *The Crimes of Billy Fish*, was one of the finest and gutsiest debuts I'd ever read. Her third book proves she had much more than one book in her. In it she dips again into a world she knows well from her work at the

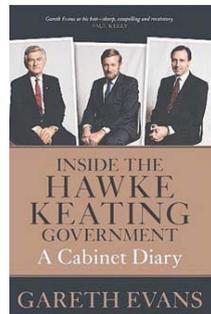
Aboriginal Legal Service. Martin and Maggie have lived together for 37 years, since an explosive meeting in New York in the 1970s. Now Martin, a retired judge, is finding his memory is fading, and even he can't remember what he was doing in an unlikely street in a down-at-heel part of Sydney when he had a stroke. As Martin retreats into the past, becoming fixated on the day he met Maggie in Manhattan, Maggie forms a deep friendship with an Aboriginal woman whose house Martin was in front of when he had his stroke. As Martin's past emerges it becomes clear the sins of the father have visited the son, as their son Ethan makes some dangerous decisions. This is another fine novel from an author whose loss to the legal world is literature's gain.

**CS**

**Verdict:** multidimensional

### INNER WORKINGS OF TRULY REFORMIST POLITICAL ERA

**INSIDE THE HAWKE-KEATING GOVERNMENT**  
GARETH EVANS, MUP, RRP \$50



What a timely antidote to the cynicism of the current political life. Here is Gareth Evans, in full voice, recounting a vital period of the Labor government, detailing the policy battles, the personalities and the sheer bloody hard

work of being a Cabinet minister in a reforming government. Evans is perhaps best remembered as a former foreign minister but these diaries cover his final days as attorney-general and then as minister for resources and energy, from 1984 to 1986. The tensions between Prime Minister Hawke and Treasurer Keating are clear to see but what is more eye-catching is the sense of purpose and commitment that overrode personal ambition during those years. Evans' diary entries can be pretty dry but there is always something — an observation, a conversation, an aside — that leavens that. At a time when numerous political tomes are hitting the bookstands, this is a compelling record of a government that created great things within its multi-talented Cabinet.

**NR**

**Verdict:** memorable

### ALLERGIES RULE IN AN ALTERNATE UNIVERSE

**TRIAL BY FIRE**  
JOSEPHINE ANGELINI  
MACMILLAN, RRP \$17



Young-adult fantasy authors have to work hard to come up with an original plot. Though all the familiar ingredients are here — an unusual girl, a love triangle, resident evil and a world that needs saving — Angelini has conjured up some

new intriguing environmental elements in *Trial by Fire*. Lily's life is fraught. She has to contend with allergies and seizures, a mentally ill mother and humiliation at the hand of her only friend, Tristan. When an inner voice asks her if she wants to leave it all behind, her affirmative response transports her to a parallel Salem where her alternate self, Lillian, rules and her allergies are actually special powers. What unfolds is a tale of new love, desperation, evil mutants and powerful witches. Extensive research has gone into the construction of this supernatural world, which holds up a mirror to the environmental problems of the 21st century. Lily's transformation from weakness in one world to strength in another is dynamic and the plot is compelling.

**XG**

**Verdict:** pure escapism