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weekender

A PASSAGE
FROM EUREKA

BEN ELTON'S
SERIOUS SIDE

SUMMER STYLE:
FLOWER POWER

RARE BREED

Raised in the circus: A photo essay by Natalie Grono

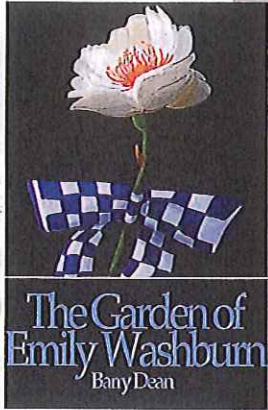


SPARKING FICTION



THRILLING: Barry Dean may be nearing retirement, but he has more page turners in store.

Working as an expert witness turned this engineer to creative writing, ANITA BEAUMONT finds



Speers Point electrical engineer Barry Dean might be looking down the barrel of retirement, but his future is looking as bright and as busy as ever following the release of his first published novel, *The Garden of Emily Washburn*.

The fantasy-comedy-thriller, released by Hague Publishing as an ebook in April, is now available as a hardback via online stores.

Dean, 63, made the jump from engineering to writing while working as an expert witness for the legal fraternity in 2002.

"During that time I would write reports to turn technical jargon into something that other people could understand," he says.

"One of the barristers asked me if I'd ever considered writing fiction," Dean laughs.

"I thought he was having a go at my report.

"But he was saying he thought I had a nice turn of phrase."

With an interest in crime writing, Dean soon

enrolled in a class to learn more about the craft.

In 2008, his unpublished crime novel *Men Of Honour* was shortlisted in the nation-wide Genre Fiction Awards, run by the NSW Writers Centre.

Dean never imagined he would publish a fantasy novel.

The Garden of Emily Washburn, set in part during the Cannes Film Festival, began as a short story called *The Rose*.

"I had to write a short story based on the theme of a little black dress for one of my writing classes," Dean says.

"I was watching the Cannes Film Festival and there was this beautiful young woman on the arm of a guy who had to be in his eighties."

Their pairing was so incongruous that Dean considered, paid escort aside, that the woman must be other than human.

The short story "languished in the forgotten

spaces of a computer file" until Dean was inspired to flesh out the story by the people and places he saw while living in Italy and France over the course of a year.

The Garden of Emily Washburn follows math teacher and amateur detective Scott Mawson as he investigates why an Australian film director stepped in front of a car within hours of winning a Cannes Film Festival leaf.

"The basic premise is that Emily Washburn is a woman who creates beauty for the film festival," Dean said.

"She does this with 'flowers' that turn into beautiful women."

Dean's original short story, *The Rose*, forms the final chapter of the book.

But there is plenty more where that came from.

Dean hopes to publish further novels during retirement, including a serious crime-thriller called *The Runner*.

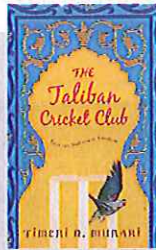
ON THE SHELF

EDITED BY
ELVIRA SPROGIS

TALIBAN CRICKET CLUB

Timeri N Murari
Allen & Unwin,
\$29.99

You don't have to know the difference between a googly and a doosra to enjoy this tale of courage and defiance set in war-torn Kabul. Rukhsana, a free-spirited journalist desperate to escape the clutches of the Taliban, is betrothed to an evil Taliban minister and with all hope appearing lost, finds solace in the noble game of cricket.

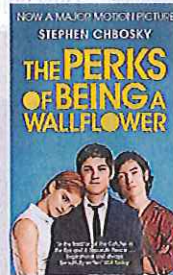


Martin Walker

THE PERKS OF BEING A WALLFLOWER

Stephen Chbosky
Simon and Schuster, \$19.99

In the *Catcher in the Rye* vein, a modern coming of age story about a teenager – Charlie. His experiences of relationships, study, drugs and family are a roller-coaster of events he has to process, and are sometimes a little disturbing and raw. For older teens, with a movie version to complement the novel.



Judith Whitfield

THE DAYLIGHT GATE

Jeanette Winterson,
Hammer
Set amidst witch trials in 1600s

England. The poor and downtrodden, suspect and out-of-favour individuals, and those that dare follow a different religion or defy the king are targeted. Alice Nutter is the heroine, powerful and independently wealthy, but with a mystique and willingness to help others that leads to some unwelcome attention.



Jacqui Jones