



all material provided is for personal or internal office use only. reproduction and distribution may infringe copyright.



Across My Desk

VIVIEN HORLER

These are some of the books that landed on our Book Editor's desk this week. Some will be reviewed later



A Walk in the Park, by Roxanne Reid (Aardvark Press)
White beaches, shady forests, rugged mountains plunging straight into the sea, the throbbing pulse of a cosmopolitan city... That's how Roxanne Reid introduces the Table Mountain National Park in this useful book that the publishers say will unleash the adventurer in you. It is based on a 10-month journey through 14 national parks, and is an account of a journey rather than a guide as such, although there is plenty of useful information in it. Aren't we lucky to have all this on our doorstep?



Pieterella, Daughter of Eva, by Dalene Matthee (Penguin)
This novel was first published in 2000 in Afrikaans by Tafelberg, under the title *Pieterella van die Kaap*, and has now been translated into English. It tells the story of Pieterella and her siblings, who are among the first mixed-race children born at the Cape. Their mother is Eva, a Goringhaicona woman who is an interpreter for the Dutch, and her husband is Pieter van Meerhoff, the Company surgeon killed by slave dealers in Madagascar. Matthee, who died in 2005, had a talent for taking incidents in our history and weaving them into fascinating tales – think *Fiela's Child*, *Circles in a Forest* and *The Mulberry Forest*.



The American Future – a History, by Simon Schama (Bodley Head/Random House) As we all know, Barack Obama has made history with his election to the White House. To the pundits' surprise, the American people, fed up with business as usual, decided they wanted change and made it happen. Now, says author and journalist Simon Schama, who has spent half his life in the United States, America is looking inward, trying to understand why it is facing multiple crises, and how these things came to this pass. He argues that if the world wants to know what is at stake, it has to understand America's history, for "understanding is the condition of hope".



Flesh and Bone, Jefferson Bass (Quercus/ Book Promotions)
One of my favourite books is *Death's Acre* by forensic anthropologist Bill Bass. It's a rivetting non-fiction account of the Body Farm, a facility attached to the University of Tennessee where Bass and colleagues watch corpses rot. As CNN once said in an article, nearly everything known about the science of human decomposition comes from the Body Farm. Bass was helped in the writing of *Death's Acre* by Jon Jefferson, and the pair have gone on to write murder thrillers, informed by Bass's vast body of knowledge. In this latest book, a male corpse, wearing stilettoes and fishnet tights, is found tied to a tree.