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STSELLERS

PICK OF THE PAPERBACKS

N-FICTION

rbbacks

ek's ratings in brackets

(1) **The Storm: the World Economic Crisis and What It Means**

nce Cable
 ic, £14.99)

(2) **Forever in My Heart: the Story of My Battle Against Cancer**

ade Goody
 er Collins, £15.99)

(3) **Upfront and Personal: the Autobiography**

leen Nolan
 ick & Jackson, £16.99)

(-) **Home to Roost: and Other Peckings**

borah Devonshire
 Murray, £10)

(-) **The Secret**

by Rhonda Byrne
 n & Schuster, £12.99)

perbacks

(1) **Dreams from My Father**

arack Obama
 ngate, £8.99)

(2) **The Suspicions of Mr Whicher: or the Murder at Road Hill House**

ate Summerscale
 msbury, £7.99)

(-) **Amazing Tales for Making Men Out of Boys**

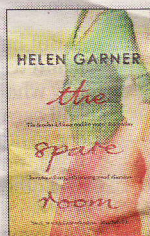
eil Oliver
 uin, £8.99)

(3) **Proms Guide 2009**

£6)

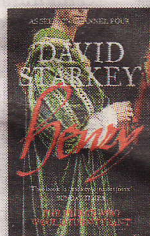
(-) **Bad Science**

by Ben Goldacre
 er Perennial, £8.99)



The Spare Room
 by Helen Garner
 Canongate, £7.99

When Helen offers her guest room to a friend so she can undergo alternative cancer treatments at a clinic in the city, she is prepared to take on the role of dedicated nursemaid. What she does not expect is her friend's stubborn refusal to acknowledge the consequences of her illness. Nicola transfers her anxieties to Helen and an enormous strain is put on their friendship. Helen Garner's style is informal, but there is no denying the force of her storytelling. She reveals the ugliness that accompanies terminal illness. This is a novel that will stay with you, perhaps against your wishes.
Jo Caird

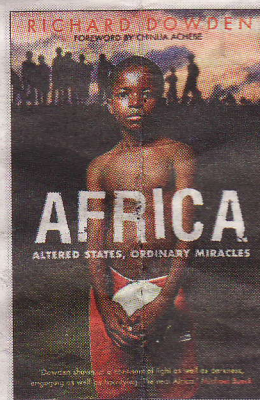


Henry: Virtuous Prince
 by David Starkey
 Harper Perennial, £8.99

"The truth is that the old Henry - with the horror, the soap opera and the drama - is immediately fascinating in a way the young Henry is not." This sentence, taken from the introduction to David Starkey's biography of the young Henry VIII, highlights the book's twin problems: the first is that *this* Henry is not as interesting as *that* Henry; the second is Starkey's sloppy prose. If you can ignore these, though, this is a lively, closely argued history, containing detail and colour. It is a worthy opener for *Henry: Model of a Tyrant*, published this autumn, which we hope will be superb.
Toby Clements

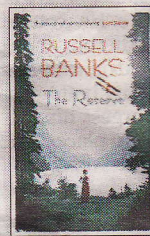
Africa
 by Richard Dowden
 Portobello, £9.99

For too many Britons, Africa is not so much another continent as it is another planet; it's the exotic home of coffee and chocolate, but also of conflict and famine. In Richard Dowden's fine overview, those stereotypes are examined and the limited truths that make it to Europe are revealed in finer, evocative detail. What emerges is a portrait of a series of very different nations, from Nigeria to South Africa, each of them more complex than any single volume can cover.
Matt Warman



The strength of Dowden's book lies in his depiction of small details alongside broad brush strokes: on Rwanda, for instance, he examines a country that is at once the "darling" of Western governments and aid agencies, yet also still coming

to terms with a genocidal conflict that it is trying to cast as a product of colonial rule. Inevitably, his assessment mixes the downbeat with the hopeful, but here and elsewhere Dowden's greatest asset is that he knows better than to think he has any final answers.
Matt Warman



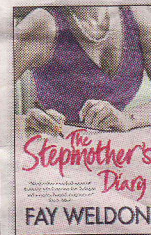
The Reserve
 by Russell Banks
 Bloomsbury, £7.99

The Reserve is a wilderness in the Adirondack hills kept pristine for wealthy families to get back to nature, and it is here, some time in the early Thirties, that chance brings together a fabulously beautiful divorcée and the sort of slim-hipped hard-handed successful artist that Americans admire: he carves woodcuts, he flies his own plane. It looks as if romance beckons, but Russell Banks plays with you, and his novel develops into an adventure, thanks to various family secrets, a betrayal or two and a carelessly handled shotgun. The whole is very satisfying, if never very urgent. **TC**



St Peter's
 by Keith Miller
 Profile, £8.99

It's not easy to visit St Peter's without being overwhelmed by "the unique vastness of the space". Keith Miller's outstanding study of the basilica reaches beyond the awe of its baroque interior to provide a wry, erudite account of how the structure evolved. The building stands for what it stands on: the tomb of St Peter is said to lie below the papal altar. But the original church was swallowed up during two centuries of ambitious architectural work. Miller combines this complex history with clear architectural descriptions and delicate analysis of how the space captivates pilgrims and tourists alike.
Thomas Marks



The Stepmother's Diary
 by Fay Weldon
 Quercus, £7.99

Fay Weldon's 28th novel focuses on Sappho, a writer, who is the second wife of Gavin and stepmother to his daughter Isobel. Looking on is Sappho's mother, Emily, a psychoanalyst, to whom Sappho has entrusted her diary to avoid Isobel getting her hands on it. The confessional tone of the diary is balanced by Emily's wit, as she presents it in random chunks. Weldon writes about the pitfalls of "these modern, all-inclusive families of ours" with panache. She avoids sounding stuffy or didactic, making this a superbly adroit and funny examination of where family loyalty lies.
Alex-Peake Tomkinson



The Lost Dog
 by Michelle de Kretser
 Vintage, £7.99

Tom Loxley puts the finishing touches to his book on the uncanny and Henry James and takes his dog out for a walk. The disappearance of the animal and subsequent search lead Tom to re-evaluate many things in his life. With seeming effortlessness Michelle de Kretser weaves into this simple tale the history of a mixed-race family's emigration to the New World, a frustratingly sex-free love story and the disappearance of a successful financier. Her use of metaphor is original, and the richness of her prose and the deceptive simplicity of her storytelling make this novel deserving of repeated readings. **JC**