



# ENTERTAINMENT agenda

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## WHAT A BEAUTY

### CHICK-LIT GETS AN EXPERT MAKEOVER IN *AIR KISSES*

**H**aving done time at the beauty desks of numerous glossy magazines, author Zoë Foster is well placed to deliver a fluffier-than-thon novel about the machinations of the lip-gloss world. Where many writers have been content to make the excesses and vanities that accompany this industry the substance of their book, Foster's insights and deft way with prose allow her to use this as a mere backdrop for a tale of more weight. She also skewers many a chic-lit convention and in so doing takes a few knowing pot shots at a genre that has come to rely on trite formulas and "then he finally realised she *was* the one he truly loved" plot lines. For all its smarts, this book also has heart. Protagonist Hannah Atkins is a likeable creation in whose foibles readers can see their own, while Foster's narrative makes for an enjoyable literary ride. Although Foster's satire of mag-land is spot-on and her humour is abundant, the true strength of this book is that you find yourself caring about its cast. In the unlikely case that some further convincing may be required, head to [zoefoster.com.au](http://zoefoster.com.au) for a gratis sample of her infectious insouciance – which is delivered in the form of a telephone menu: "To see if you are eligible for two pretentious dots over your name, dial 5." Her blog is also posted here and makes for an entertaining read. →

*Air Kisses* by Zoë Foster (\$32.95, Penguin) is out now.





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**ENTERTAINMENT**  
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LINE YOUR SHELVES WITH BEAUTIFUL BOOKS THAT ARE BOTH RICHLY IMAGINED AND ILLUSTRATED



Where fashion illustration was once a finely-wrought masterclass in pen and ink, new technologies have had a stirring impact on the art form. Martin Dawber's *Big Book of Fashion Illustration* (\$49.95, Anova Books) blends traditional watercolours, acrylics and pencil drawings with technology – Photoshop, Macromedia FreeHand and digital photography. Collage and embroidery also feature in the 1000 illustrations by over 250 artists. What's more, their wide cultural backgrounds – Norway, South Africa, America and Russia – bring a sense of place to the work. Inspiration leaps off every page and you will never view fashion illustration in the same way again.

**SEPTEMBER'S SHORTLIST**

**CHARLIE & ME IN VAL PARADIS** BY MAUREEN CASHMAN (\$29.95, SIMON & SCHUSTER) Books about Aussies finding themselves in Mediterranean enclaves are over-done; it was only the subtitle, "How my dog learned to bark in French," that merited a second glance. Cashman and her poodle Charlie weave a tale that's part *Almost French*, part *Marley & Me*.

**THE GARDEN OF LAST DAYS** BY ANDRE DUBUS III (\$32.95, RANDOM HOUSE) The author of *House of Sand and Fog* has crafted a searing novel that blends tension with insight. Set in a strip club, Dubus mines anguish with aplomb and somehow makes this a backdrop for the most human of yearnings. For those who want more from a book than froth and frippery.

**WHEN WILL THERE BE GOOD NEWS?** BY KATE ATKINSON (\$32.95, RANDOM HOUSE) Although she has won the auspicious Whitbread Book of the Year Award, this author doesn't have the profile she deserves. Funny and utterly engrossing, this novel should change all that. Blending several concurrent storylines, Atkinson is a master at shifting pace to keep the reader enthralled.

