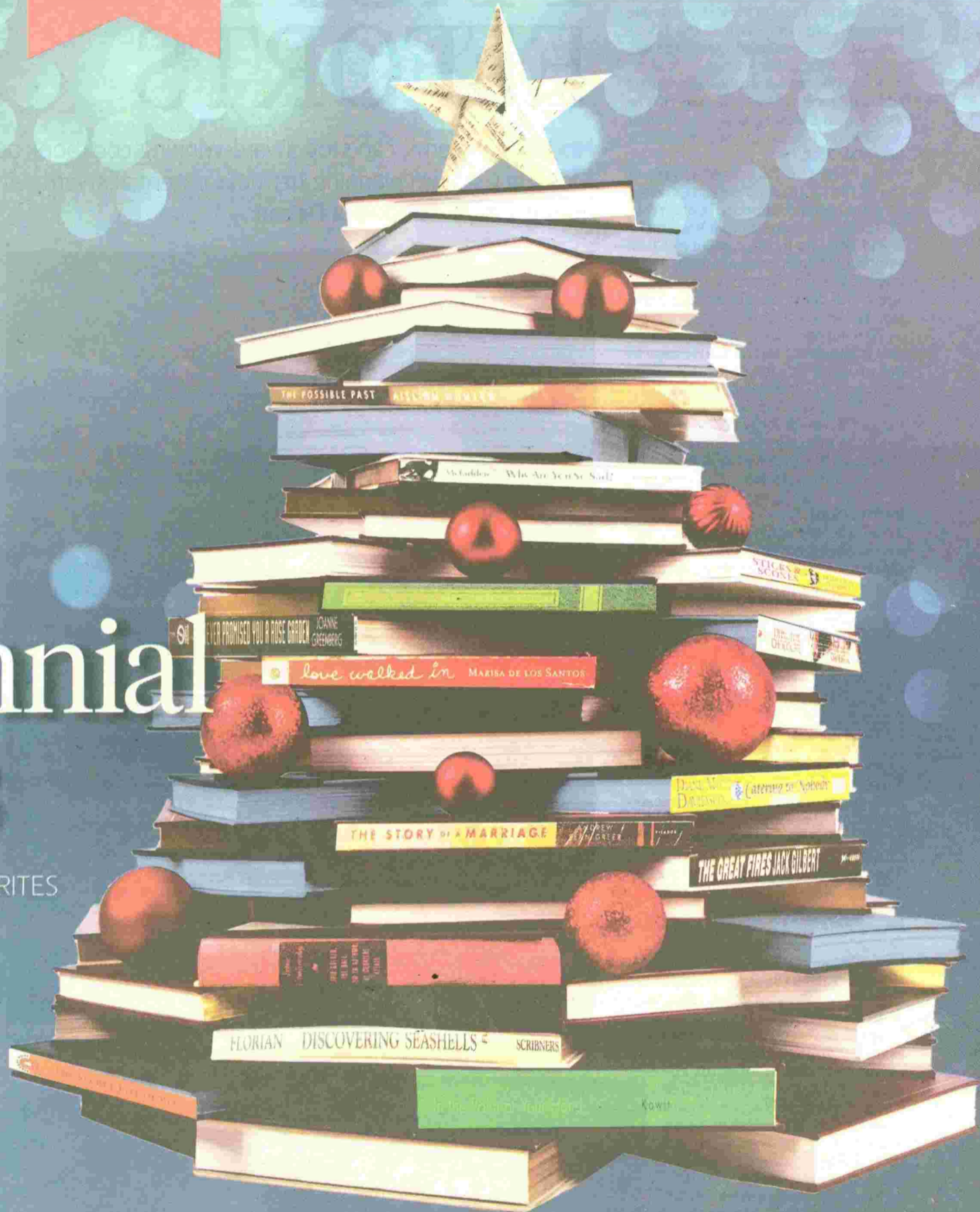


LIFE &
TIMES



SATURDAY, DECEMBER 12, 2015

PULSE



Perennial picks

REVISITING OLD FAVOURITES
THIS FESTIVE SEASON
PAGES 8&9

GREEN PAGE 6

REEF
CHECK

FAMILY PAGES 6&7

HELPING CHILDREN
WITH DEPRESSION

BEATS PAGE 12

FROM WEST END
TO ISTANA BUDAYA

BROUGHT TO YOU
BY LIFE & TIMES**PULSE** *well lit.*

FAVOURITE RESIDENTS ON THE SHELF

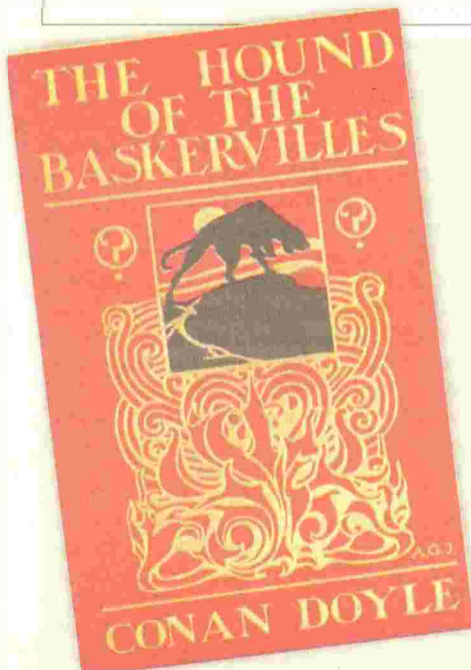
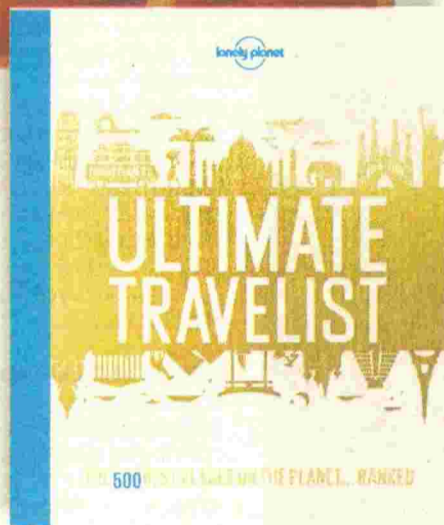
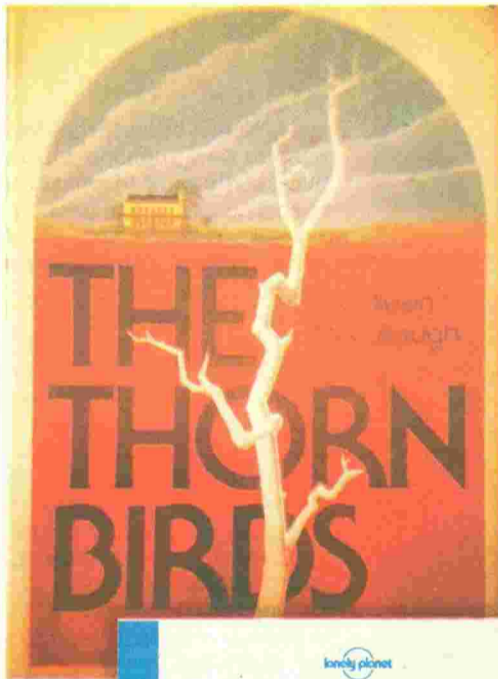
What books sit on the list of 'to books' this festive holidays? The w of Pulse and Plu. their favourite p

NTAN MAIZURA AHMAD KAMAL (EDITOR)

Books that I turn to again and again have somewhat been inspired by things I've seen on the idiot box or the silver screen. Case in point is my favourite all-time book, *The Thorn Birds*, by Colleen McCullough, the heart-rending epic saga centring on the dreams and struggles of three generations. At the heart of the story is the love of Meggie Cleary for parish priest-turn-Archbishop, Ralph de Bricassart. It was the TV series that hooked me first and made me seek out the book. The seamless interweaving of love stories from one generation to the next, the dramatic plotting, the sense of steadily mounting tension are perfect ingredients for a most compelling read.

When it's not priests and tormented women, I have a fixation for anything remotely connected to one of the most famous kings in English history, Henry VIII and Tudor history. Again, it was a film, *The Other Boleyn Girl* (2008) starring Scarlett Johansson and Natalie Portman about two sisters vying for the affection of King Henry VIII that drove me to seek out Brit author Philippa Gregory's novel of the same name. And I was hooked from then on. My bookstore jaunts are always driven by the desire to amass the latest Gregory novel or anything that's set against the backdrop of Tudor England. A big history buff, I also love works of non-fiction that offer me an insight into the tyrannical king's psyche and character.

Priests, tortured women, and mad monarchs aside, another type of book that gets me excited are travel books. Possessing a perpetual wanderlust, these books feed my need to soar to faraway places — albeit on virtual mode. A friend recently passed me a beautiful hardback tome, *Lonely Planet's Ultimate Travel List*. I can't wait to dive into that this festive break.



SULYN CHONG (SPECIALIST WRITER)

This festive hols, I will settle for a glass of iced Milo and the original unedited version of *Sherlock Holmes* — the ever intuitive detective who has many times solved problems that stumped even the cleverest at Scotland Yard.

My high regards for the greatest detective of all began when I was merely a teen. It was his quick wit, extraordinary intellect, and thorough methods of deduction that caught my imagination.

Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's portrayal of Sherlock Holmes was the pinnacle that shaped my desire to be who I am today — a perceptive individual who picks up on minute details and my deep sense of curiosity about everything that I come across. Not to mention, I thrive on the simple satisfaction of solving mysteries as minute as "who took my pen?" or "who ate the last cookie?"

Having lapped up every mystery from *A Study In Scarlet* to *The Hound Of The Baskervilles* and even witnessing his so-called "death" in *His Last Bow*, my love for Sherlock Holmes has never waned. It is a series I will forever revisit, without doubt.

ZULIANTIE DZUL (JOURNALIST)

My favourite all-time book and one that I'd like to revisit this festive period is *If Only It Were True* by Marc Levy, a book that was adapted into a film in 2005 called *Just Like Heaven*. The story is about a young San Francisco architect named Arthur who finds a stranger in his closet. The stranger, a woman named Lauren, can appear and disappear at whim, but somehow only Arthur can see her. She tells Arthur she is in a coma and that her soulless body has been left in the hospital. It's up to Arthur to help her get back into her body.

It's a heartwarming love story filled with adventure as well as some funny moments. I'm a hopeless romantic and am always imagining myself as being invisible (i.e. not good enough for anybody). I hope one day a guy can come up to me and say "I see you". He'll see the real me, with all the flaws and still love me anyway. Move aside Nicholas Sparks! This should be the new bestselling tear-jerker novel!



ANEETASUNDARARAJ (CONTRIBUTING WRITER)

It is customary to read a book starting on page one. There are also books I'll read repeatedly like *Joseph Anton* by Salman Rushdie and *Discovery Of India* by Jawaharlal Nehru. But there's one book I have read from start to end, end to start and picked chapters out at random: *Autobiography Of A Yogi* by Paramahansa Yogananda.

It's the story of a man's singular search for Truth and an introduction to the science and philosophy of yoga. It starts with the birth of Mukunda at the end of the 19th century. His early life was full of the usual adventures with one difference: Mukunda's sole quest was to find a guru to guide him on his spiritual path.

When he was 17, Mukunda found his guru, Yukteswar. In time, Mukunda took his formal vows to enter the Swami Order and adopted the name Yogananda. He spent a good part of the rest of his life travelling the world to disseminate his teachings on India's ancient spiritual practices.

What's particularly inspiring is his first-hand account of meeting people like Luther Burbank (the legendary botanist), Rabindranath Tagore (the famed poet) and Mahatma Gandhi. Yogananda also had audiences with Therese Neumann (a Catholic Stigmatist), Babaji (the ageless saint)

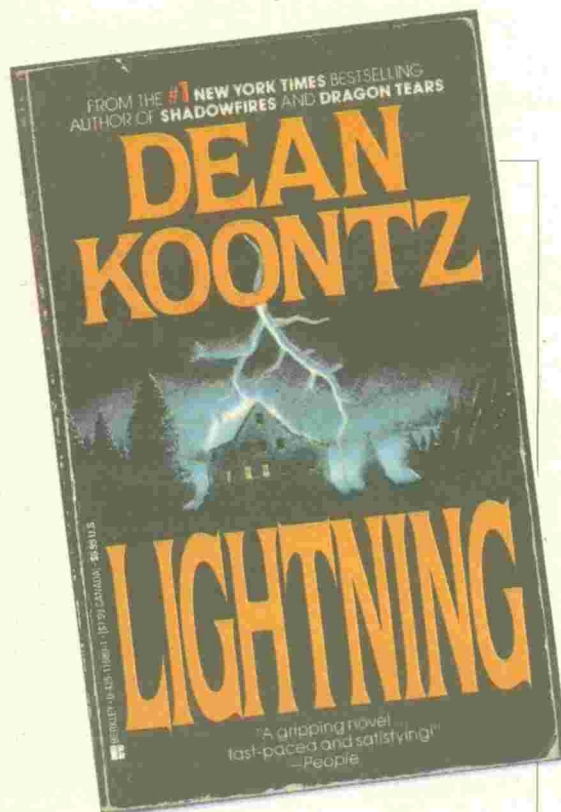


and Giri Bala (the saint

There are fantastic materialising a palace in and funny ones about the called Hazrat who can fulfill slightest wish and a Yogananda's cauliflower lyrical prose showcase humility and filial piety

In all, *Autobiography* forever be a book that I soul.

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SARAH NH VOGELER (CONTRIBUTING WRITER)

My favourite pick would have to be Dean Koontz's *Lightning*. Written in 1988, it is 351 pages of absolute horror and faith, of being broken, shattered and miraculously put together again.

The protagonist, Laura Shane was born during a rare lightning blizzard, almost maimed by a doctor who attempted to deliver her while intoxicated.

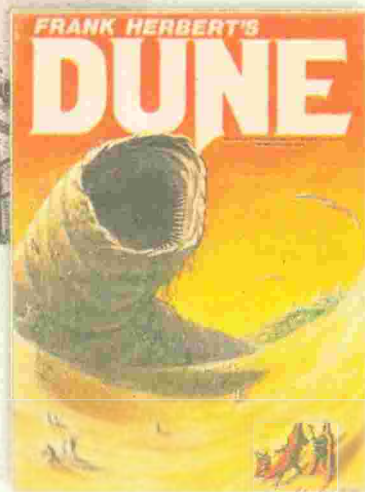
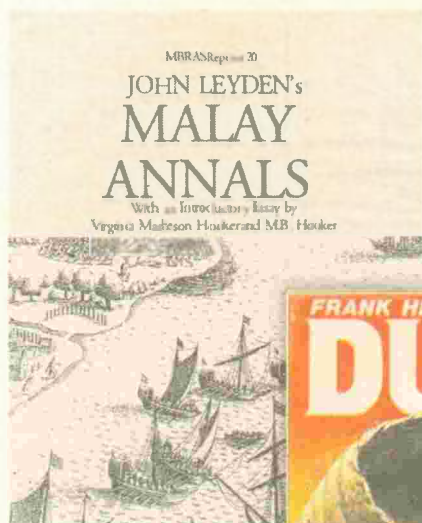
Then there's the enigmatic stranger Stefan who shows up every single time her life is in peril, and there are many. Why in I read it every Christmas? Because it fills me with this inexplicable fervent zeal, because in my mind, I'm vehemently convinced that this crushed world would never be whole again unless it's read over and over again.

NINOT AZIZ (CONTRIBUTING WRITER)

Time and again, I read books that define the different stages of my life. The most memorable novel I read in school was Emily Bronte's *Wuthering Heights*.

In the 1980s, science fiction was immensely popular. Frank Herbert's masterpiece, *Dune* created a whole new universe and manipulation of dimensions, space and time.

As a writer and PR consultant, revisiting old books is a respite from the busy world. There is one book I read and reread with the same fascination year in year out. *The Malay Annals*.



SIMON SEZ (CONTRIBUTING WRITER)

Shocking, visceral and beautifully crafted, my favourite read of all time has got to be *Water For Elephants*, the award-winning historical fiction by Sara Gruen.

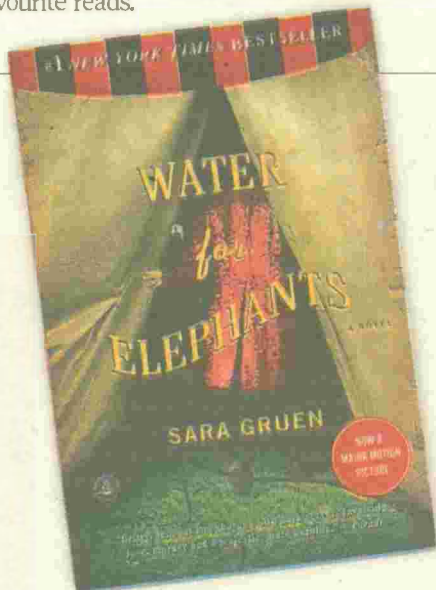
A novel that pulsates with emotion and told in sombre tones of the Great Depression, Gruen transports readers back to the 1930s to trace Jacob Jankowski's footsteps in his quest for purpose and happiness.

In Jacob's capacity as the circus's vet, we come to

know of the show's star horse Silver, and Rosie, the traumatised elephant that Jacob eventually forms a bond with.

Though usually more psyched about crime novels, Gruen's ingenious approach to storytelling, moving back and forth between the present day nursing home where Jacob resides and the rowdy circus scenes of earlier days, has me captivated.

As with the many rich scents that come with Christmas, this book makes for an enriching experience. A book that affected me deeply, *Water For Elephants* is perfect for anyone seeking an endearing albeit slightly unorthodox read this hols.



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