



Best books... Kate Veitch

Kate Veitch's new novel, Trust, follows the success of her debut Listen. Trust asks the question: What if your perfect life was based on lies?

The Master and Margarita by Mikhail Bulgakov (Penguin Classics, \$24.95). A Russian novel like no other. The devil, accompanied by a wacky entourage, comes to 1930s Moscow to throw his annual ball, and his search for a beautiful hostess leads him – and us – on a journey that's rich, wild, funny, and enormously moving.

The Bog People by P.V. Glob (NY Review Books Classics, out of print). My (brief) childhood yen to become an archaeologist was prompted by this strangely compelling book about ancient bodies preserved in peat bogs. Possibly the author's weirdly apt name fascinated me as

much as the eerie photographs of people sacrificed a thousand years ago.

The World Beneath by Cate Kennedy (Scribe, \$32.95). The best Australian novel of 2009 – in my humble opinion. Acclaimed for her short stories, Kennedy's reach in this terrific story of a teenage girl and her long-separated and disastrously inept parents never exceeds her grasp.

Mr Paradise by Elmore Leonard (Penguin, \$22.95). Maybe not the finest example of the quirky crime master's massive output, but this is the one that most influenced my own (very different) novels, as I tumbled to how he develops

character and advances plot through dialogue alone.

Black Beauty by Anna Sewell (Puffin \$9.95). It made me want to be a vet. As influential in its day (1877) and its purpose – bettering the treatment of working horses – as *Uncle Tom's Cabin* was in altering attitudes toward slavery. It's still remarkably fresh and vivid reading.

Monkey Grip by Helen Garner (Penguin, \$9.95). When this ground-breaking novel was published in 1977, there was disdainful sniffing from many critics. How wrong they were! Garner's lucid, distilled prose now sees her rightly acclaimed as one of our finest writers.