

Gone series a thrilling success

DREW TURNEY

Michael Grant's *Gone* series has swept the Young Adult world with its dystopian, post-apocalyptic themes and colliding needs of characters barely equipped to deal with the world they've inherited. There are now four books in the series (*Gone*, *Hunger*, *Lies and Plague*) with two more (*Fear and Light*) to come. The series tells the story of a small Californian town where everyone aged 15 or older suddenly disappears and a mysterious barrier of energy cuts the town off from the rest of the world. A whole town of children — each with their own story and agenda — is a deep well to be mined, which explains not just why Grant originally envisaged a six-book series but why kids (and plenty of adults) the world over are as hooked as they were on Harry Potter 10 years ago. To fans of popular fiction who don't know Grant's work, the above premise might sound familiar. Didn't we see similar ideas in Australian author John Birmingham's *After America* series and Stephen King's most recent thriller *Under the Dome*? *Gone* predated both by several years — time for a couple of high-profile lawsuits? "Stephen King actually reached out to me," the California-born author says, referring to the fact that King's original idea is actually far older than *Gone*. "He read *Gone* on vacation and got in touch to say he didn't want me to think he'd ripped me off. After I bowed, grovelled and otherwise abased myself I responded 'Dude, you're Stephen King'. He invented dread — I just borrow it." But Grant's also quick to point out that the individual author makes all the difference and *Gone* will give you a very different experience from *Under the Dome*. "Every writer writes his own book. If you gave King and me the identical premise you'd still end up with a Stephen King novel and a Michael Grant novel, and nobody would confuse the two." Proof that there's no such thing as an overnight success, Grant's CV was



CROSSING GENRES Michael Grant

jammed full before he ever put pen to paper on *Gone*. Often writing under pseudonyms or with his wife, JCA Applegate, he says he's co-authored "something like 150 books", including three YA romance series, the sci-fi series *Animorphs*, *Everworld* and *Remnants* and what he describes as a "gross-out humour" series. But his stunning success with *Gone* also prompts the question of literary typecasting. R.L. Stine never quite got away from the *Goosebumps* name, and J.K. Rowling seems to be in a post-Potter twilight right now. Will *Gone* define Grant forever? "So far I've got away with hopping from series to series," he says. "I refuse to be trapped into one genre or become so identified with one series that I can't do another. My goal isn't to be famous; it's to tell good stories." So far, the biggest question hanging over the *Gone* series is about the Hollywood interest that seems inevitable in any series of hit books these days. Grant says he's had some but identifies a unique problem. "No adult roles. I occasionally talk to people in Hollywood and their first question is always 'So what are the major adult roles?' They like movie stars in Hollywood — they think in terms of Will Smith or Jake Gyllenhaal and neither of them can pass for 14." So for now, Grant is content to thrill us on the page, something he's very careful to get right. "I often picture the reader as someone I have to out-think, out-manoeuvre. I worry that they'll guess what I'm up to, that they'll be able to predict where the story is going, and I'm determined they not do that. Sometimes when I come up with a nice twist I cackle 'Ha, that'll make their heads explode' in an evil voice. I don't want that kid to be able to stop reading. I don't want that kid putting my book down. I don't want that kid to be able to breathe." **Plague** is published by Egmont (\$22.95)

To Taking aim at life's stresses

Art Gallery of WA

THE SECRET LIBRARIES OF WA

The Turks have a saying: "Calligraphers are Paradise for copyists while painters will most likely go to Hell." Director of the Art Gallery of WA and Islamic art expert Ray Mancini would most probably disagree with this as he's as passionate about Islamic art as he is about Islamic calligraphy. Though some might find pride in his collection of books bordering on the I think, the best library of Islamic art you will find here. From where I'm standing, Ray Mancini's spacious office looks impressive, shelf-lined, colourful, large-format exhibition catalogues and many in Carboni's native Arabic he studied at the Islamic Art at the University of Melbourne during which time he did Islamic glass, on which he considered a leading authority. And yet, says Carboni, not enough. As we discuss the rise of digital publishing, he agrees traditional books are best but admits the internet has become an indispensable tool. "If you're an art historian there are different approaches," says Carboni, who before being the 11th director of the Art Gallery of WA in late 2009 and administrator in the Islamic Art at New York Museum of Art. "If you want to appreciate art it's preferable to have it in the flesh," he says. "The best thing is a printed word which is still better than a computer screen." He admits he grew up so has a particular appreciation for printed word and image.



SPIRITED APPROACH Ray Mancini

you; it's also all those things running through your head that stop you from performing at your peak," he says. "It doesn't matter how much training you do — if you don't pay attention to the kinds of things I write about in this book, you're going to struggle."

These things include relaxation, concentration and visualisation, all of which are essential to success in any endeavour. "There are different ways to put the mind at ease and relax your internal environment," Mancini says. "I teach a lot of simple techniques that work every time. They've never failed me once."

The book includes chapters on the definition and history of Zen, simple tips on how to meditate, Zen and shooting, meditation and shooting, and firearms training and shooting terminology.

Mancini says he still encounters sceptics in a sport that is still considered macho. "You get people saying things like 'What does meditation have to do with shooting?' The more I looked into Zen and started applying its principles, the more everything started to come together and I realised there was something magical about it. This stuff actually works." **Zen, Meditation and the Art of Shooting** is available from raymancini.com.au (\$30) and bookstores. All proceeds of sales donated to the Leukaemia Foundation in WA.

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William Yeoman reports.



PICTURE ASTRID VOLZKE

"Absolutely not," he says. No flattery here. "Calligraphy is a serious business. In order to get your diploma, you have to spend about 12 years studying under a master. "Just to give you an idea: in Ottoman Turkey, the final exam for a calligrapher was to take a page from a master, look at it for a few minutes, and then put it aside and try to copy it from memory. "How did you know you passed? Once you finished, you put the two sheets against the sun, one on top of the other. They matched perfectly, you were a calligrapher." **FICTION The Novel in the Viola** By Natasha Solomons Hachette, \$29.99 REVIEW JENNIFER PETERSON-WARD

Best-selling British author Natasha Solomons' latest novel — a bright, fast-paced historical saga — is saved from melodrama by its inviting spirit. Set in 1935, the novel charts the trials and tribulations of Elise Landau, the cosseted youngest daughter of a wealthy Jewish family who is forced to flee Nazi-occupied Austria to work as a seamstress at Tynaford House on the Dorset coast. Despite Elise's initial denial by falling madly in love with her handsome young master Kit, her romance is soon overshadowed by the tragedy as the looming war threatens to tear the young lovers apart.

WORDS' WORTH

Taking aim at life's stresses

WILLIAM YEOMAN

Whether we wield a bow or a gun, the real target is always the self. Like Eugen Herrigel's classic *Zen in the Art of Archery*, Joondalup-based security specialist Ray Mancini's *Zen, Meditation and the Art of Shooting* shows how ancient meditative techniques can be used to master not just a specific sport, but anything at all. "That's the beauty of this book," says Mancini as we sit in his sparsely furnished office. "I've focused on the sport of shooting but really these principles apply to any sport or any situation where you have to perform. By increasing your awareness and enhancing your state of mind and fitness levels, you improve everything in your life." Mancini is a security trainer and consultant, as well as a sports coach, taekwondo expert, boxer, wushu master and feng shui practitioner. An expert in closer personal protection, closer quarter combat and firearms tactics, he has worked as a private contractor in Papua New Guinea, Africa and the Middle East, as well as providing personal security for celebrities such as Mariah Carey, Ice-T and Zoe Badwi. He also runs SIG (Security Intelligence Group), a security company specialising in risk assessment, management and crime loss prevention and is operations director of the SIG SAUER Academy, which provides firearms and security training. Mancini says that after nearly 20 years involved in shooting and the private security industry, he felt there was a need for a book that helped people to cope with the stresses involved in dealing with live-fire situations, especially at a competitive level. "It's not just the spectators watching



SPIRITED APPROACH Ray Mancini

you; it's also all those things running through your head that stop you from performing at your peak," he says. "It doesn't matter how much training you do — if you don't pay attention to the kinds of things I write about in this book, you're going to struggle." These things include relaxation, concentration and visualisation, all of which are essential to success in any endeavour. "There are different ways to put the mind at ease and relax your internal environment," Mancini says. "I teach a lot of simple techniques that work every time. They've never failed me once."

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THE WEST'S TUESDAY BOOKCLUB



Don't miss the Dymocks voucher on page 33 of *The West Australian* today giving you 50 per cent off *Above Suspicion* by Lynda La Plante in August.

SHELF LIFE



There's something brutally efficient about Karin Slaughter's writing. If that sounds like a criticism, it isn't meant to be. When former Atlanta police chief Evelyn Mitchell is snatched from the home of her daughter, who just happens to be Special Agent Faith Mitchell of the Georgia Bureau of Investigation, Faith's partner, Will Trent, and Dr Sara Linton are forced to make some hard decisions. Faith has already shot dead two of the intruders, while Evelyn's shady past seems to have come back to bite her in the most violent fashion imaginable. Who to trust? You'll read this in one sitting.



Whether Minimalism at MoMA at the Tate is your thing, the vade mecum contains all you need to navigate your way around the art and museums of two of the greatest cities for art. Each is packed with full-colour reproductions and analyses of famous artworks as concise histories, maps, a tour suggestions. The works presented chronologically, a summaries of major styles and movements are included alongside biographies, while cross-referencing allows you to track a particular style or artist from gallery to gallery.



Embassytown and all its human inhabitants. his works but fails to interrogate his artistic achievement or his life decisions. tragedy as the looming war threatens to tear the young lovers apart.

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reader. Retailing at \$19.95 each, the first 12 titles to be released include Jasper Fforde's *Shades of Grey*, Stephen King's *Misery*, Peter Robinson's *Piece of My Heart*, Charles Frazier's *Cold Mountain*, David Mitchell's *Cloud Atlas* and David Nicholls' *One Day*. For a chance to win a copy of either of the last two titles mentioned, email your name and address, with the subject line "Flipback", to Mt Hawthorn's Chapter & Page bookstore: chapterandpage@westnet.com.au. **Sound and image collide in the second Bodhi Beats concert at Mt Hawthorn's Bodhi Tree bookstore and cafe this Sunday at 3.30pm. Watch Buster Keaton's silent movie classic, *The General* as the Viola Dana ensemble perform Kathy Corecig's new soundtrack to the film. To book call 9444 9884 (cappuccino-concerts.com.au). william.yeoman@wanews.com.au**