

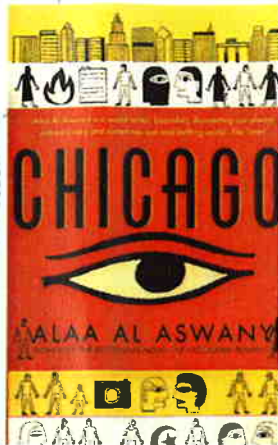
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### From Cairo to Chicago

BESTSELLING EGYPTIAN author Alaa AlAswany explores issues of social injustice, racial oppression, government corruption, and romance in *Chicago* (Fourth Estate).

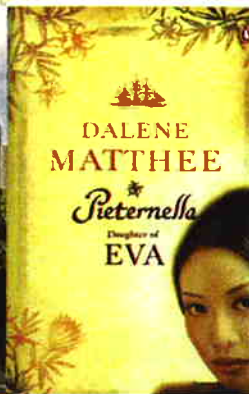
The novel is a montage of stories focusing on the problems faced by Egyptian immigrants in the US. The characters are connected to the Chicago University Histology department. A young woman, Shamaaya, rethinks her conservative upbringing. We are also introduced to a politically inclined Nagi. When he learns the Egyptian president will visit the university, Nagi rallies support against him – with severe consequences. Al Aswany chooses dramatic moments for his character shifts, leaving the reader infuriated but wanting more. *Chicago* is a glimpse into the influence the religion and culture of their homeland has on a group of people in an alien environment. –MARIN GORRIE



### A LIFE RESURRECTED

SET IN THE EARLY DAYS OF White settlement in the Cape, *Pieterrella: Daughter of Eva* (Penguin), by Dalene Matthee, deceased author of *Circles in a Forest*, is a beautifully written and well-researched historical novel recently translated into English.

It follows the life of Pieterrella, daughter of Eva Kratoa, one of the first interpreters between the Dutch and the Goringhaicona Khoikhoi tribe, and Pieter van Meerhoff, the Company surgeon. When they are orphaned, Pieterrella and her brother are shipped off to Mauritius to work as slaves for "foster parents."

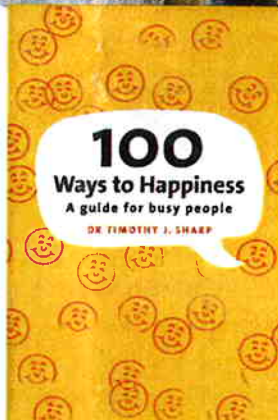


This book sheds light on the way the Cape was governed by the Dutch, what Robben Island was like at the time, and the harsh living conditions in Mauritius. But above all, it is a love story, which considers the identity issues Pieterrella struggled with, as one of the first mixed-race children in the Cape. At 548 pages, it's a hefty read, but well worth it. –D.D.

We have three copies of *Pieterrella: Daughter of Eva* to give away. For details, see Shop Guide on page 125.

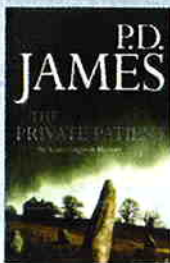
"Select something that is working well in your life and put energy into improving it ... There is no reason something 'good' can't become 'fantastic' with a bit of effort."

–From 100 Ways to Happiness: A Guide for Busy People (Penguin), by Dr. Timothy J. Sharpe.



## BibliO A murder mystery, an African tale, and a small-town librarian-turned-First Lady.

■ *The Private Patient* (Faber and Faber), by P.D. James, is a gripping read. When Rhoda Gradwyn has a scar removed by surgeon George Chandler-Powell at his clinic, Cheverell Manor, she doesn't live through the night. Commander Adam Dalgliesh is called in, and as another body turns up, it becomes clear the manor houses a lethal cocktail of complex personalities. –M.D.



■ Lara Santoro's *Mercy* (Other Press) swirls around an Italian-born journalist named Anna, the two wildly attractive men she attracts and deflects, and her self-appointed housekeeper, a force of nature named Mercy. The urgent message of this gorgeously written novel, which deals head-on with the ravages of HIV and Aids on a continent of grief: Open your eyes and look hard. –C.M.

■ *The American wife* (Doubleday) is a good saga. School librarian Alice Lindgren marries the wealthy Charlie Blackwell. But while she is serious and sensitive, he is frivolous and brash. Charlie becomes President of the US and Alice must deal with supporting his career while remaining true to her beliefs. Loosely based on Laura Bush's life, it is a riveting read. –L.R.



GALLO IMAGES/GETTY IMAGES, C.M.: CATHLEEN MEDWICK, D.D.: DEIDRE RABINOWITZ, M.D.: MEGAN DICK.