



Science

Feeling the Heat

Jo Chandler, *Melbourne University Publishing, \$36.99*

Award-winning Australian journalist Chandler explores the critical issue of global climate change. Travelling to the Great Barrier Reef, Queensland rainforests and Antarctica, she accompanies scientists at the cutting edge of the issue as they work. Her penetrating, insightful questions create, piece by piece, an objective, evidence-driven picture of what we are actually facing: imminent global catastrophe. There is overwhelming evidence that it has already started, and only an immediate, science-based global effort can lessen the effects. But timid politicians, special interest groups and crackpot commentators have muddied the waters; little is being done.

Rick Sullivan * * * * *

Fiction

The Spoiler

Annalena McAfee, *Harvill Secker, \$32.95*

It is 1997 and newspapers are on the cusp of forced change as the internet makes itself felt. The founder and former editor of the *Guardian Review* has written a wicked insider's romp about a clash between two journalists – Honor Tait, a crotchety but venerable war correspondent with a large ego and a new book to promote, and Tamara Sim, a brash and wily young reporter with boundless energy but no real clue. McAfee has fun with her detailed portrayal of their follies. Ultimately, Tait wants to be worshipped as she pronounces from on high about her role in history while Sim just wants to know who she slept with. It is an archly written story by a fine writer who one suspects has much more to say than this.

Penelope DeBelle * * * *

Science fiction

Spiral

Paul McEuen, *Headline, \$29.99*

Cornell physics professor Paul McEuen has produced something with his debut novel that has eluded others of his ilk – an accessible science-based story. The science here enhances, rather than overwhelms the tale. And what a story it is – Liam Connor, once a germ warfare expert, has a secret which could be deadly for the entire globe. As World War II entered its last days, he encountered Uzumaki (spiral), a vicious biological weapon. Fast forward to the present day and a mysterious assassin is trying to acquire the lethal pathogen, thought by most to have been destroyed. International intrigue, cutting-edge science and murder combine in a fast-paced, clever thriller.

Scott Moore * * *

