



Rough Justice

by Lisa Scottoline, Harper Collins, 1997; 344 pp.

Thank god for lawyers with a sense of justice!! Have you ever wondered what lawyers do when they find out their client really is guilty? Marta Richter, the chic defence lawyer who is the central character in this book ends a trial successfully only to find out 'through a slip of the tongue' that her client was actually guilty. After a few minutes agonising she decides she cannot live with this travesty of justice and sets out to prove over the following 12 hours, that he did it. With the help of her two female associates and a lot of luck she ... no I won't give away the punch line.

Almost everyone, except Richter and her colleagues, comes out of this looking bad — the corrupt businessmen involved in property developments, the thugs who try to kill Richter, the judge

who is in it up to his neck, the incompetent police and other lawyers.

While the legal ethicists may have trouble with Richter's initial decision the dilemma she faces is real enough. Whether you agree with her decision is another thing. But regardless of those messy dilemmas Scottoline who is described on the jacket as 'The female John Grisham' has written a fast, action packed book. Great holiday read - ing. ● FR

Star Struck

by Val McDermid; Harper Collins, 1998, 240 pp; hardcover.

Star Struck provides a wide range of entertainment for McDermid's fans and first time readers alike. While the main plot is rather predictable, the side-line stories are a lot of fun, maintaining the reader's interest with a range of quirky twists. Using a diverse range of topical material including

racism, technology, horoscopes, recreational drugs, false arrests, murder, deceit and a long running soap opera the author offers an assortment of interwoven story lines sure to entertain the discerning (and not so discerning) reader.

The book offers an engaging peek into the private lives of a range of eccentric characters who are (maybe) just real enough to be believable. That is except of course for the main character, Kate Brannigan, who is just too cool, concerned, committed, capable and in control, to be anything but a character from a crime novel.

The contemporary setting provides lots of action with a range of unexpected diversions in the plot to keep the reader interested. Numerous clever light hearted 'digs' at authority figures suggest the author has a healthy scepticism of hierarchal power. She is, however, careful to ensure that these could never be considered offensive. Overall an easy and fairly entertaining read. ● MMCK

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quite possibly prepared to sacrifice personal pride and happiness for the opportunity of being part of a greater process and the possibility of facilitating change.

Girlie was not overwhelmingly convinced, but the image of a woman with a law degree, hair just so, smiling through gritted teeth and focusing on the greater good seemed strangely familiar. Hopefully we don't have too many Bills to endure before we get to make the important decisions.

Important voices

Girlie is very excited to announce the staging of a Tribunal on Women and Human Rights in May this year. Held in the Melbourne Town Hall, the Tribunal

will be based on the model established by the Beijing Conference on Women, drawing on the agenda established in the Platform for Action. Between 6 and 12 women will be invited to address the Tribunal about their experience and disadvantage. A panel of independent experts will then make recommendations to government based on these testimonials in an attempt to highlight the human rights abuses taking place in women's lives across Australia.

The Tribunal is being conducted by a working committee of the Women's Rights Action Network Australia (WRANA), a non-government organisation established in June last year. Organisations on the Board of Management include the Association

of Non-English Speaking Background Women of Australia; the Coalition of Activist Lesbians; International Women's Development Agency; National Women's Justice Coalition; OzRights; United Nations Association of Australia; the Women's Electoral Lobby and the YWCA.

WRANA hopes to increase community and government awareness of human rights abuses against women and invites *Girlie* readers to attend the Tribunal, or to consider membership. Contact *Girlie* with any queries regarding this and other events in the future! (Email: elena.campbell@wisewoulds.com.au)

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