

This first novel is a treat

A SUMMER TIDE

Tony Peake
(Abacus)

ONE of the best novels I have read for a long time, Tony Peake's *A Summer Tide* is a sensitive and subtle exploration of the forces which drive human lives.

If this novel is not nominated for at least one major literary award this year, there is no justice in this world.

Other writers may well find themselves unable to read this book without recourse to a glass of good brandy — the good ones in order to celebrate the sheer talent and inspiration Peake brings to his work, those less self-confident to drown the knowledge that they might never be able to reach the heights so

effortlessly scaled here by this author.

For ordinary readers, this is no less of a treat.

All the best aspects of the English literary tradition are brought together here and woven into a bright whole which invites total immersion in the tale.

South African-born Peake shows an absolutely uncanny ability to get into the minds of his character — there are not many of them, much as in a good play, but every one is alive in his or her own way and none would find it difficult to step off the printed page into real life and just continue living.

There is a very real feeling that Peake has allowed us the rare privilege of peering through a window at a short period in the muddled and utterly genuine

lives of actual people.

Properly understanding the subtler aspects of this book would require an education in the terminology of art — it is divided into chapter-like sections which bear, instead of numbers, names which, once properly understood, colour the contents of the "chapter" itself in terms of the whole of the novel (for example, a "bozzetto" is a less finished form of something many of us might more easily recognise as a "maquette" — a rough approximation of an idea for a finished statue).

Since the entire novel actually revolves around the sublimation of art into the lives of the artist and all those who touch his life, Peake's erudition, once the code is cracked, actually enhances the work instead of being merely an-

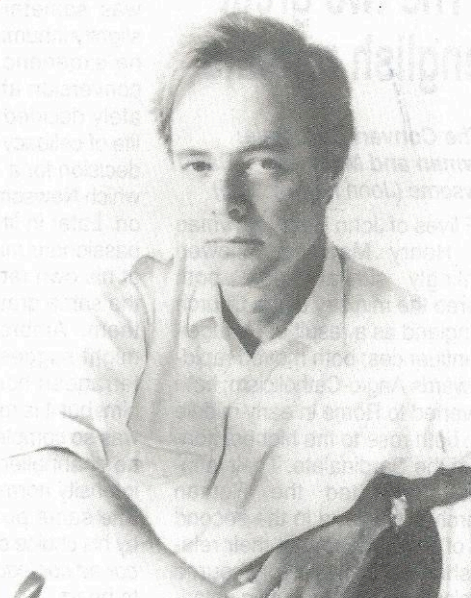
noying as a series of incomprehensible Italian phrases. It is a completion.

A compassionate yet controlled exploration of human lives, achieved, which is never easy, through a narrator of a different sex to the author, *A Summer Tide* is an elegant novel which is destined to become a kind of a classic.

It is Tony Peake's first novel, and it shows great promise for the future. He is an author who will always be welcome in my library — gallant, perceptive and wise, intelligent enough to craft a gripping story, courageous enough to let it go, let it find its own way into the readers' hearts without the author needing to explain anything or hold anyone's hand.

ALMA HROMIC

The worldly and the cloistered



TONY PEAKE
— 'engaging ...'

- **Narcissus and Goldmund** — Hermann Hesse (*Peter Owen*, £15.75)
- **A Summer Tide** — Tony Peake (*Abacus*, £8.99)
- **Occam's Razor** — Maureen Duffy (*Sinclair-Stevenson*, £14.99)
- **Under the Southern Cross** — Claire McNab (*Silver Moon*, £6.99)

FIRST published in 1957 and now reprinted in a new translation by Leila Vennewitz, **Narcissus and Goldmund** is undoubtedly one of Hermann Hesse's great novels. The story follows the life of Goldmund, sent as a boy to a medieval German monastery in order to train as a priest. Once there, he meets and becomes enthralled by his ascetic, handsome teacher, Narcissus, from whom he learns that his destiny lies, not in religious devotion, but in the carnal ways of the world. The sub-text of this subtle, thought-provoking novel is the examination of two extremes — the worldly and the cloistered — and illustrates that most successful human experience contains a mixture of the two.

Lucy — the central character of Tony Peake's **A Summer Tide** — is also, like Narcissus, separated from the world. In this case, on an island connected to the mainland by a causeway that is only accessible at low tide. Lucy lives with her artist husband,

Charles, in a large house borrowed from wealthy, gay, gallery-owning Andre. Lucy's life is quiet to the point of tedium until Andrew sends the troubled Benedict — young, beautiful and enigmatic — to stay. Lucy is immediately infatuated and sets out to discover his secrets which, naturally, turn out to be more complex than she could ever have guessed. This is an engaging and haunting tale of a tired marriage threatened by the arrival of desire — with some intriguing twists thrown in along the way.

Maureen Duffy, sadly, did not surprise or engage me with her new novel **Occam's Razor**, the tale of two elderly men coping with serious threat — from the American-Italian Mafia and the IRA respectively. The action here is predictable and, therefore, lacking in tension. A pity, because the vignettes that are painted of each character's past are excellent and would have provided a fascinating background to a better story.

Claire McNab's **Under the Southern Cross** does not attempt to be anything more than romance of the read-it-on-the-beach variety — appropriately, as it is set in and around an Australian beach resort. Here, Alexandria — a closeted tour promoter — meets 'out' American tour company boss Lee Paynter, and the sparks start flying. A light read with its political heart firmly in the right place.

Sebastian Beaumont

LESLIE GLAISTER

Limestone & Clay



a conspiracy of silence and fraud. As the pressures mount from all sides, Nicholson is forced to face some rather unpleasant facts about himself. Part thriller, part love story, Parks says that *Shear* is based on a very complicated court case in which he

became involved as an interpreter. With a little less personal involvement perhaps, his intelligent tale of fear, intrigue and good old human weakness might have carried more of the impact that it seems to demand.

Lesley Glaister's latest novel **LIMESTONE AND CLAY** (Secker & Warburg £8.99) follows last year's highly acclaimed **DIGGING TO AUSTRALIA**. On the surface it's an everyday story of two mixed up folk called called Nadia and Simon - girl meets and marries boy, wants children, can't conceive. Nothing too drastic on the surface, but darker forces are at work. She is a frustrated potter, he a bored geography teacher with a passion for potholing. When one of Simon's married ex-lovers conceives first time and confesses to Nadia that Simon is the father, Nadia books herself into a remote and chilly hotel on the moors, and Simon flings

and man's bloodymindedness.

A SUMMER TIDE (Abacus £8.99) is literary agent Tony Peake's first novel. It's an intelligent, thoughtful account of a marriage that has soured through age and familiarity to one of emotional dependency fringed with bitterness.

Charles Hamilton is a successful painter who is offered a house on a small island off the Essex coast by his wealthy gallery owner Andre. He and his wife Lucy - the inspiration behind most of his work - settle there into separate worlds.

Lucy's loneliness and need reach an apotheosis when Andre introduces an enigmatic and beautiful young man called Benedict into the household, but Benedict (as you might have guessed) is not what he seems.

This brief synopsis makes the book sound romantic and fanciful, which it isn't.

Peake displays considerable control over his complex characters, and captures beautifully the atmosphere of the island and its eccentric inhabitants - forever at the mercy of tides and weather. The final revelation about Benedict is neither a surprise or a revelation, which may disappoint some readers, but he is the catalyst who forces Lucy and Charles' relationship back into itself, where it belongs.



AUGUST'S ■ HOTTEST ENTERTAINMENT GUIDE

Preview

Sarah Kennedy, *Company Magazine*, August 1993

movies

JURASSIC PARK An eccentric millionaire plus a team of genetic scientists have brought the creatures that once ruled the earth back to life. But when the dinosaur experts visit the tropical island adventure park, prehistoric hell breaks loose. Spielberg's cast bristles with big names, including Sir Richard Attenborough, Sam Neill and Laura Dern, but the real stars are the creatures – lovable one moment, blood-curdlingly terrifying the next. Spielberg's, and therefore Hollywood's, most monstrous hit. ★★★★★

APRES L'AMOUR Only the French could make such a beautifully shot film about relationships. Full of deceit, passion and sorrow, we follow the bizarre love affairs of the beautiful Lola (Isabelle Huppert). Both the men she loves have wives and children, hence the problems as Marianne loves David who loves Lola who loves Tom who loves Elizabeth...A refreshingly honest view of life seen through a veil of French style and cigarette smoke. ★★★

LAKE CONSEQUENCE Stunning scenery, beautiful music and steamy sex scenes set the picture for Zalman King's *Lake Consequence*. Joan Severance (Seventies supermodel)

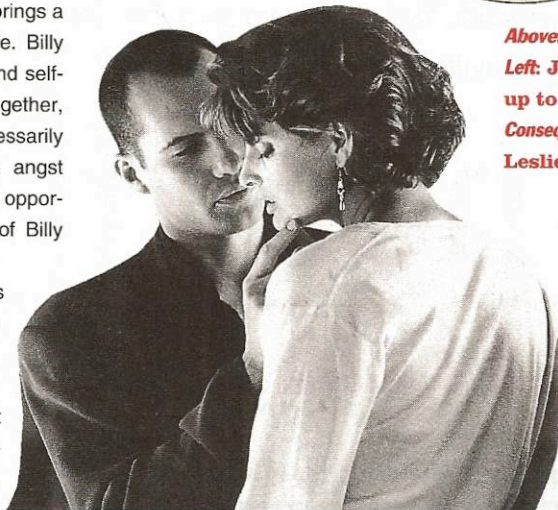
plays Irene, an American housewife bound by a conventional marriage and lifestyle. The entrance of rough and rootless Billy (Billy Zane) brings a dramatic change to Irene's life. Billy teaches her about love, lust and self-acceptance. They run away together, but happy endings don't necessarily follow. Middle-aged women's angst with a sexy edge and a great opportunity to study every aspect of Billy Zane. ★★★

DENNIS More cartoon classics hitting the big screen. This time it's small American boy Dennis, possibly the most obnoxious brat ever turned out by TV. Once a staple of Channel 4's *Big Breakfast*, he's now been brought to life in the form of cute little Mason Gamble as Dennis Mitchell. Written and produced by John Hughes (*Home Alone*, *Ferris Bueller's Day Off*), the film is good, clean family fun. Walter Matthau as Mr Wilson, the much-put-upon next-door neighbour, is hilarious, but *Dennis* the movie offers no more than any other brat-movie! ★★

MADE IN AMERICA Sarah Mathews (Whoopi Goldberg) became a mother through a sperm bank. Everything is fine until a biology lesson 16 years later, when her daughter Zora realises her dead father was not her father at all. The search for her missing parent leads to something – or someone – neither had expected: a white man in the form of womanising car salesman Hal Jackson (Ted Danson). The gags hit the funny mark but the film slides too earnestly into mushy / in



Above: dinosaur delights. Left: Joan Severance faces up to Billy Zane in *Lake Consequence*. Below: author Leslie Kenton.



books

A SUMMER TIDE by Tony Peake Lucy Hamilton's life takes a sudden turn when she falls in love with and marries artistic, obsessive Charles. Isolated on an island on the east coast of England, they begin to drift apart – she figures less in his paintings and in his life – so when André, owner of the island, turns up with an unexpected guest, Lucy becomes infatuated. A vivid and touching study of human nature. (Abacus, £8.99) ★★★★★

VIRGINS OF PARADISE by Barbara Wood A sweeping novel of hidden secrets, powerful love and the anguish of a culture in crisis. Born into the family home on Virgins of Paradise Street, aristocratic Yasmeena Rasheed heralds a time of change – the crossover from monarchy to democracy and the emergence of women's rights in the Muslim community. Vivid and passionate. (Little, Brown, £15.99) ★★★★★

mystery of Beethoven's life and death, he is drawn into a dangerous world of supernatural happenings and dark spirits. Baffling and hard-going at times, *Ludwig* is a work of astounding imagination. (Heinemann, £14.99) ★★★★★

THE LADYKILLER by Martina Cole When a sadistic rapist begins a series of shocking murders, DI Kate Burrows is hot on the case. With a young daughter herself, Kate understands the grief of Patrick Kelly after his daughter's death. Kelly, a known villain, is out for revenge. Complications emerge when Kate finds herself drawn into a fiery relationship with him. You won't be able to put this one down! (Headline, £5.99) ★★★★★

THE FAVOURITE by Meredith Daneman Rosalind is her father's favourite child. When her parents are about to split up, she is given the task of persuading her father to stay. When she is

Notices

A DEPARTURE FROM YOUR USUAL READING MATTER MAY HERALD THE START OF YOUR HOLIDAY.

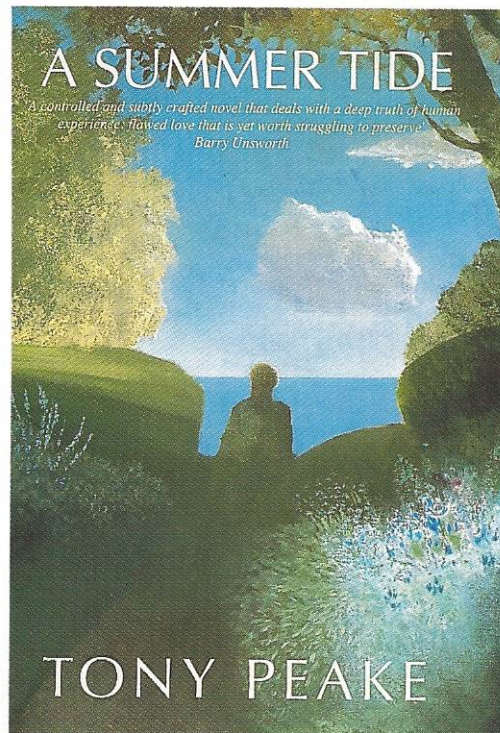
MADELEINE KEANE ON THE BEST BEACH BOOKS.

ROSE SHEPHERD



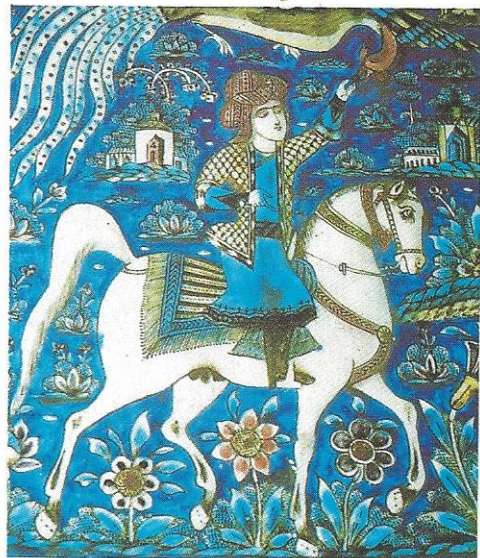
TOO RICH TOO THIN

'Very funny and very readable, this debut out-classes what has gone before. If I were Jilly Cooper I'd be eating my heart out' SUNDAY TELEGRAPH

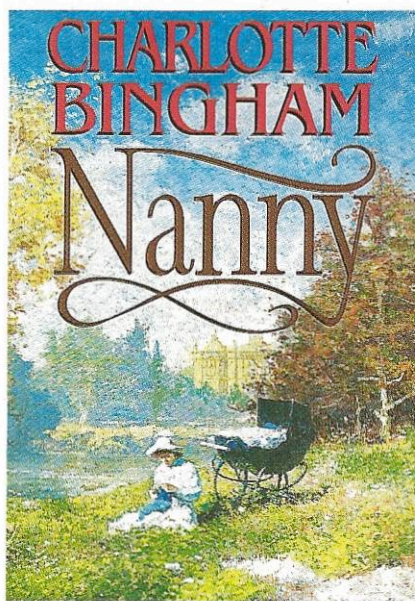


'All human frailty and nobility is here ... an imaginative tour de force'
SUNDAY TELEGRAPH

TARIQ ALI



Shadows of the Pomegranate Tree



This hugely praised childhood memoir so moved Dirk Bogarde that he wrote of it, "This is a radiant book and one I beg you not to overlook." The reliable Mr Bogarde was, as usual, spot on. An English teenager is dispatched to Flanders to the French side of his family and all kinds of gentle adventures ensue. Basically it's a *Year in Provence* out of Alain-Fournier. Take Bogarde's advice.

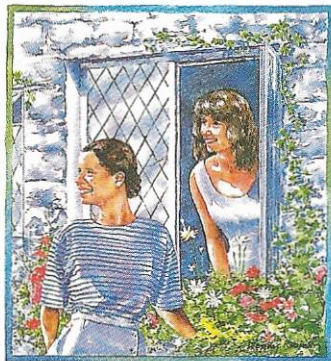
Italian Neighbours: An Eng-

A

SOFT TOUCH

by the author of *The Pineapple Tart*

ANNE DUNLOP



lishman in Verona, Tim Parks (Mandarin, £5.99 stg).

More Mayle but this time an Englishman and his lady swap Surbiton for the joys of Tuscany. Parks cuts out the Elysian lies to demonstrate instead how to cope with the foibles and follies of life in another country, in this case glorious, maddening Italy. A truly stunning book.

Rachel's Daughter, Janet Haslam (Corgi, £4.99 stg).

"An inspiring new saga of a

woman who overcomes tragedy and finds fulfilment" runs the strapline on this first novel. The tragedy in this case is a raging father and (again) rape (though not by the father). In the style of such sagas, Rachel is a woman of substance and strength. Hence she overcomes tragedy ...

A Summer Tide, Tony Peake (Abacus, £8.99 stg).

Life on the isolated island is still and quiet until a provocative stranger comes into the lives of Lucy Hamilton and her painter husband Charles. Peake's voice is individual, lucid, moving.

A Place of Greater Safety, Hilary Mantel (Penguin, £6.99 stg).

Mantel's epic opus may not be everyone's glass of *sangria* but her fictional history of the French Revolution is, for those who have the patience to stick with her ambitions, meticulous narrative, a magnetic read.

The Invisible Woman, Susan Knight (Poolbeg, £5.99).

Another first novel and a strangely compelling one. Lucy

sits alone reminiscing over the oddities of her disquieting life. A starkly beautiful and memorable read.

The Hearts and Lives of Men, Fay Weldon (Flamingo, £5.99 stg).

And who better than the indomitable, intimitable Ms Weldon to lay bare the souls of same? As ever, Weldon never falters in her frenetic narrative and her breathtakingly cutthroat prose. Wicked, wise, wonderful, witty Weldon: what would we do without her?

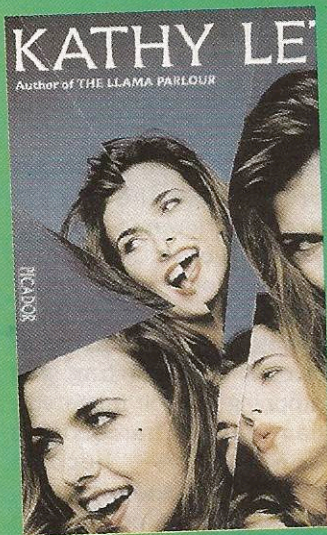
Strange Fruit, D S Sheridan (Poolbeg, £5.99).

The narrator lets her bijou Dublin home to a woman who subsequently commits suicide in its environs. What adds to the power of this quirky, mysterious tale is the fact that it is based upon fact.

Shadows of the Pomegranate Tree, Tariq Ali (Picador, £5.99 stg).

If the word pomegranate is not enough to send you all off to your travel agents forthwith, then I must tell you that Tariq Ali's parable of life in Muslim Spain had this reviewer rivetted with its intoxicating blend of humanity, splendour and survival.

passion in print



Girls' Night Out
Kathy Lette Picador
£5.99

Foetal Attraction
Kathy Lette Picador
£9.99

Funny, punchy, painfully perceptive tale of one acid Aussie female's introduction to the tight-arsed two-faced, class-ridden culture called England - not to mention that surreal in-body experience



called pregnancy. Maddy might be sassy, sexy and smart yet she still managed to get suckered by a mere man, and it hurts - but not half as much, she discovers, as childbirth. Following her dream boat to England, she soon learns he's nothing but a sinking ship - or should that be a stinking shit - and after a bit of feeble floundering in the shallow waters of his personality, strikes out into the amniotic current for the wilder shores of womb water - and single parenthood. Hormonally hysterical. Picador have also re-issued *Girls' Night Out*, by Kathy

Bloomsbury Guide to Erotic Literature
Edited by Jane Mills £19.99

Voluptuous, elegant and eclectically elite collection of erotica with a strong leaning to the literary. The entries range in tone through lyricism and licentiousness to overt obscenity. The volume is arranged chronologically and includes rare, astonishingly beautiful verse from Ancient Sumeria, China and Arabia, medieval bawdy and some choice examples of refined Renaissance Romance. The contemporary section is the most explicit and deliberately "depraved" sex in the head, with taboo, transgression and surreal sensuality. Interestingly some of the most antique examples are fresher and filthier than their contemporary cousins. This is a handsome volume learned, lewd and indispensable.

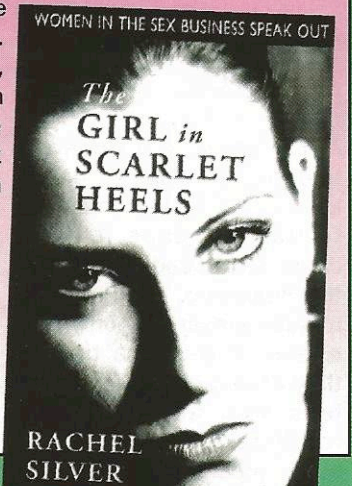
Edited by JANE MILLS

Lette, a collection of stories dealing with friendship, dating, hating and mating, that are ridiculously funny, awesomely acute and distinctly dangerous for those with weak bladders.

canvas of her marriage, exposing old pains but also revealing hidden depths and pockets of light, that repeated viewings, over the years, have made her blind to. This is a subtle, well-crafted love story, that has a curious and attractively old-fashioned feel to it.

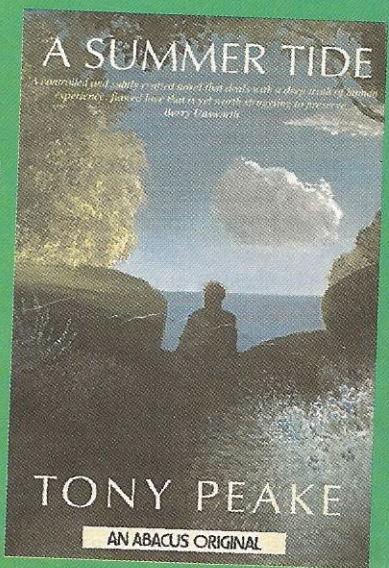
The Girl in Scarlet Heels
Women in the Sex Business Speak Out
Rachel Silver, Century £9.99

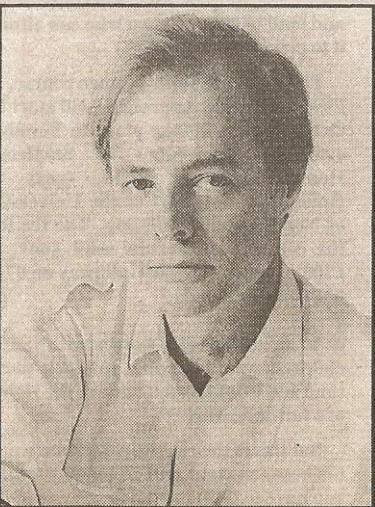
Based on interviews where women speak for and about themselves, this book began as an investigation into prostitution and broadened to include the variety of careers, and attitudes, of women in the sex industry as a whole. Prostitutes, pornographers, publishers, strippers and porn stars talk with admirable candour and honesty about why, and how they earn a living. These are women who have self-respect and financial independence and who, by owning their own sexuality, feel no shame in exploiting it. After all, men have been exploiting womens' sexuality forever.



A Summer Tide
Tony Peake
Abacus £8.99

Lucy Hamilton lives a life of quiet desperation with her artist husband on an isolated island off the Essex coast. Once upon a time her marriage was a fairy tale of love and success, a picture of perfect happiness. But now the brightness has faded and the flaws are all too apparent. Enter Benedict, young, beautiful and enigmatic - Lucy is lost - and saved - alive again. But the light of love illuminates the faded, and shaded





● Tony Peake

Peake paints the female picture

SEX, as experienced by women at least, remains a mystery as huge as ever to men, I discover from Tony Peake, a 42-year-old literary agent whose debut novel, *A Summer Tide*, to be published by Abacus next week.

For he has daringly written it from the point of view of Lucy, a woman who seeks release from her stagnant marriage in the form of a handsome yet enigmatic young man named Benedict.

His portrayal was convincing, it appears, in all departments except the bedroom. Here some coaching was required from one of his clients, the writer Alison Fell, who studied one of the drafts of the novel.

"She was hugely helpful," Peake told me at his home in Grafton Crescent, Ken-

tish Town. "There is not a great amount of sex in the book, but she said a couple of the scenes did not ring true. It was very male in the way it was constructed, concentrating too much on penetration."

Writing is, after all, he reminded me, a leap of faith. "Quite how sex is for a woman one does not quite know," he admitted. "Alison was very helpful about it."

The reasons he has spent some four years writing the book from a woman's point of view were two-fold: it was a challenge and also the best way to communicate one of the key themes of the book, loss of identity.

"I think that it is an experience more familiar to women: being seen as an object, something that belongs to someone

else...if that does not sound politically incorrect," explained South African-born Peake, who has lived in London for 14 years.

The second essential strand to the book is the belief that we must come to terms with imperfection, in love and life. "Life is a bitch and a lot of the time you hate it, but it's also the most perfect thing there is."

This philosophy perhaps reflects his feelings since finishing the book. "After it was accepted I wandered the streets of Kentish Town on a cloud, but the actual publication is quite upsetting. It's like being taken down to Trafalgar Square, taking all your clothes off...and no-one notices."