



**Mandela Day warmth**

Teachers Kayla de Wet and Amy Basson of Macassar's Educare, right, were on hand to receive the wonderful warm goodies donated over Mandela Day, which included beanies, blankets, scarves, ponchos, jerseys, socks and toys. They had been packed up and distributed to over 20 ECD centres - bringing much joy to hundreds of small children. Masikhule extends their thanks to everyone who made this possible and gave so generously for their Cast On 4 Kids on Mandela Day.

Left: Snug little ones... PICTURES: MICHAELA FORTUIN; AMANDA BANGANI; MASIKHULE



Pictured above are representatives of Somerset West's Apex Jijitsu Academy, where junior students and their coaches participated in the Interclub Jujitsu Tournament, held recently at Renzo Gracie gym in Cape Town. Several medals were proudly earned.

**Read of the week**

**Water and Earth**  
 John Boyne  
 Penguin Random House  
 Review: Karen Watkins

Irish novelist John Boyne recently released the first two of a quartet of interlinked novellas.

Two of them are currently on our bookshop shelves. Named after the elements, *Water* and *Earth* will be followed with *Fire* in November and *Air* in May.

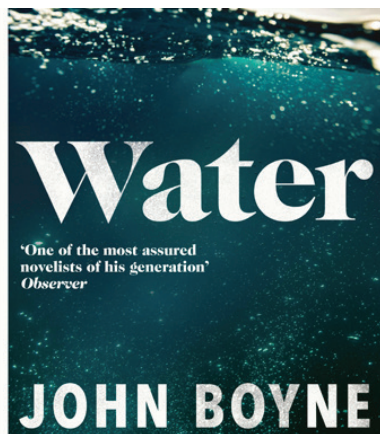
The books work well as standalones with a continued theme of an island off the Irish coast with characters intersecting and overlapping.

The blurb reads: "These are four individual stories with four very different narrators, all of whom have either been involved in, complicit with, or found themselves the victims of trauma and whose experiences have been affected by the elements that give each book its title."

In *Water*, Vanessa Carvin experiences it as her undoing, from floating in the womb to marrying her swimming teacher. The story begins with her changing her name, chopping off her hair and moving into a cottage on an isolated island.

There is intrigue from page one. Why has she left Dublin? Why has she changed her name? What is she fleeing from? Is she hiding something?

She is treated politely but with curiosity by some of the island's 400 inhabitants who, she hopes, aren't too up to date with the news.



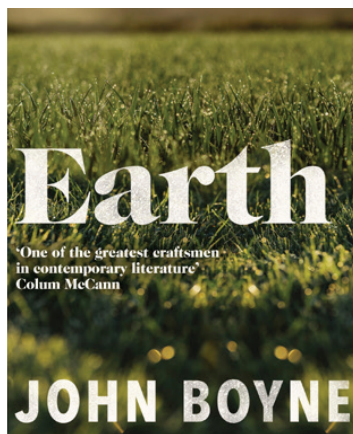
Struggling with guilt, confusion and a determination to chart a different, more honest future for herself, she confronts how and why her life and family have collapsed.

As the story unfolds a family member is convicted of heinous crimes and Carvin is assumed to be complicit. This opens up family secrets.

Off grid with a few books for company, she immerses herself in the island community where the old ways are starkly in conflict with the new: A gay couple has been run out of town and a youngest son has to stay on the island to help on his family's farm.

It's a quick read but lacking in depth with the story never going beyond the surface of what it tries to explore.

In *Earth*, the musty grey soil of the island and the sweet perfume that it emits are reminders of a life that Evan Keogh ran away from.



Escaping his father's clutches, he pursues his dream of becoming an artist only to fail. Instead he fulfils his father's dream of him becoming a great footballer, which he does effortlessly.

The dual story structure follows a tabloid sensation of the year as Keogh and another footballer become embroiled in a court case of sexual assault.

In the other story, he reflects on events that led him to this crisis.

In this story, Boyne addresses a variety of topics, from the pressure of parental expectations to homosexuality, prostitution, corruption, hypocrisy in sports, sexual abuse, toxic masculinity and judicial manipulation.

Although I enjoyed reading *Earth*, I found the story unconvincing.

Boyne is best known for *The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas* (2006) and has won four Irish Book awards, including Author of the Year in 2022.



PICTURE: MICHAELA FORTUIN, MASIKHULE

Snug in their blankets and ponchos, the little ones can enjoy the classroom activities, despite the icy weather that has defined July, gifted by warm-hearted members of the public.

	5		3			
	3		1		8	6
				8		
2			3			5
9		7			4	3
	1			2		7
			5			
1	9	5		6		4
			4			9

**Sudoku**  
 No 83;  
 Level: Tricky

**How to play:**  
 Fill every column, row and 3x3 box so they contain every number between 1 and 9.

**Solution on page 2**