

# Introducing S.A. Partridge



**WHAT SHE HAS WRITTEN:** *The Goblet Club* (Human & Rousseau)  
**WHAT IT IS ABOUT:** Set in a remote boarding school in the Platteland, this gothic-style novella embraces magic, mystery and dark intrigue.

The author spoke to *O*:

**Q: What inspires you?**

"For this story, I was inspired by my friends' and my school days. Many of them attended boarding school and the stories they told stayed with me."

**Q: What do you say to people who liken you to**

**J.K. Rowling?** "It's very flattering. Rowling has made people read books again, which I think we should all be thankful for."

**Q: When you aren't writing, what do you do?** "I still write. I am a copywriter."

—KIRSTY CORDELL



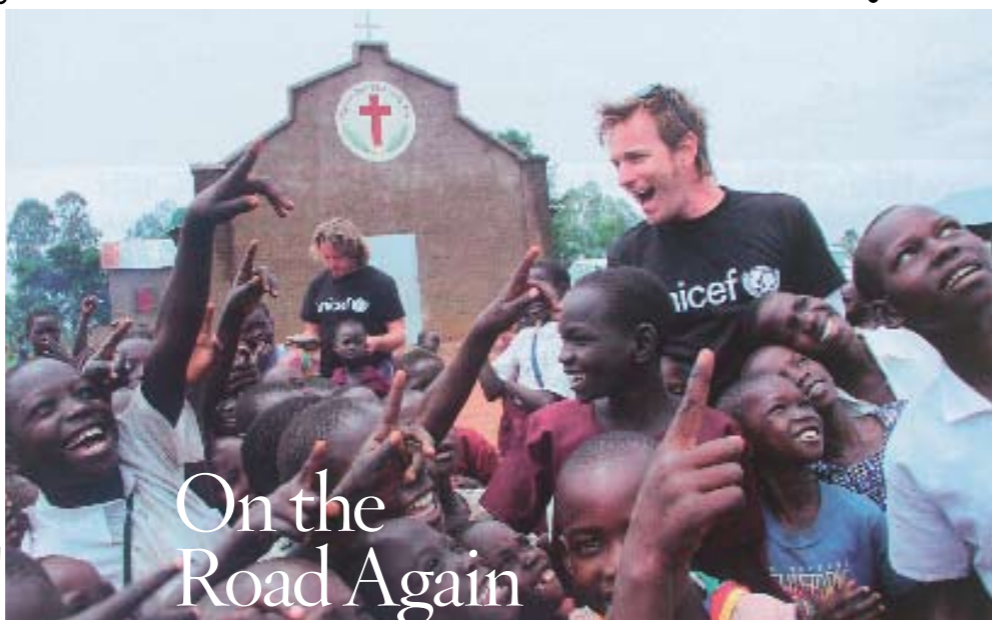
## O Wows!

**O'S GUIDE TO LIFE: The Best of O, The Oprah Magazine**

(Oxmoor House) is filled with the most irresistible articles published in *O* US in the past two years, on dieting smart, dreaming big, taming your inner critic (down, girl), pumping up your biggest sex organ (your brain, of course) and sharing the strength of heroes. Live your best life, from cover to cover.

## Have I Measured Up?

In *The Measure of a Man: A Spiritual Autobiography* (Simon & Schuster), by Sidney Poitier, he states: "I have no wish to play the pontificating fool, pretending that I've suddenly come up with the answers to all life's questions. Quite the contrary. I began this book as an exploration, an exercise in self-questioning. I wanted to find out, as I looked back at a long and complicated life, with many twists and turns, how well I've done at measuring up to the values I have set." We have four copies of *The Measure of a Man* to give away. For details, see Shop Guide on page 163.



I'VE BEEN WAITING TO READ *THE LONG WAY DOWN* (SPHERE) – AN account of the motorcycle journey taken by actors Ewan McGregor and Charley Boorman – since their fundraising trip through Africa ended. (The book spin-off from their first biking endeavour in aid of charity, *Long Way Round*, was a bestseller; and the DVD series was popular in the UK as a geography teaching aid.)

Ewan and Charley take turns to describe each stage of the journey: the scenery and sociopolitical climate of each country; the riding challenges presented by the heat, sand, wildlife and poor roads; and the emotions experienced along the way.

It's a great gift for the man in your life, as it's a real "boy's adventure" (complete with references to their GPS gadgetry, mechanical problems, sore bums and stinky feet).

Although I'd prefer to watch hunky Ewan, the narrative gives insight into Ewan the family man, the humanitarian and the animal-lover, which is probably lost in filming.

And to the inevitable question, "so what's next?" *The Long Way to Go*, in aid of UNICEF projects in Africa, is in the planning stage. Says Ewan: "There's so much more to learn about Africa. I know I'll be back, and I can hardly wait. It feels more like the beginning of a journey than the end of one."

—DEIDRE DONNELLY

PARTRIDGE: SIMONE SCHOLTZ

## Out from the Shadows

*Exit Ghost* (Random House) sees Nathan Zuckerman, Philip Roth's long-standing literary alter ego, bowing out. Nathan is now an incontinent, nappy-wearing, impotent curmudgeon who has been hiding from the world after a series of death threats. The seventy-something is dragged back to the city for surgery that may improve his quality of life. His body may be giving up the ghost, but his mind is still sharp and focused. As memories of his past existence rise to the surface, Nathan faces issues he put to rest a lifetime ago. Before long he becomes absorbed by a flurry of rash judgments, as well as the rapid pace and distractions that define city living. He begins, again, to make life choices based on emotion, as opposed to rational thought. Roth's writing style is crisp, dry and insightful. If you have ever craved solitude and protection from the world outside, this one is for you. A challenging, rewarding read.

—K.C.



*THE DREAM DEFERRED* (Jonathan Ball), by Mark Gevisser, is an exceptional and very courageous biography. It is almost unheard of in Africa to have a writer publish a biography on a head of state who is still in power. It is encouraging that the author was able to write it completely independently, without interference. The research is meticulous, and though the book is very long – over 700 pages – the writing is so fluent that one hardly notices the length. As yet, it is still too soon to make conclusive judgments of his successes or failures. In future years, when historians look back in hindsight at the legacy of Thabo Mbeki, this book will be one of their most valuable resources. *The Dream Deferred* is an extraordinary biography of one of the most paradoxical and enigmatic politicians of our time.

—ELINOR SISULU

## BibliO

Mother-daughter relationships under strain, and the new family – friends.

■ Hilary Maraney has brought her story, *I Married My Mother* (Dinky-Bloc) – a memoir of a girl growing up during the 1950s in Cape Town – to life. A mother-daughter relationship fraught with animosity is not a new theme, but Maraney presents fresh angles with surreal imagery and poetry. The sting of betrayal, the legacy of living with a depressed mother



and the disillusionment of a daughter makes this a powerful psychological treatise from a woman who looks back and presents lessons she learnt in a fascinating way. A worthwhile read.

—S.P.

■ *The Miracle of Grace* (Pan MacMillan), by Kate Kerrigan, tells the story of an only daughter, Grace, who is confronted by her mother Eileen's mortality when they discover she has terminal cancer. The reader

is drawn into Grace's shifting emotions: anger, at having found out accidentally on one of her mom's many "to-do" lists and because Eileen

surrounds herself with friends instead of having one-on-one bonding with her; and, of course, fear. Grace has to draw on her own strength when her support system fails her. Eileen, meanwhile, recalls



her Catholic upbringing in Ireland, and the burden of a family secret that must be revealed before she dies. Readers who've been affected by cancer within their immediate family may take more from this book than I did. For me, it was lacking a certain "binding ingredient." I enjoyed moments of it, but found the characters to be somewhat loosely formed and unconvincing.

—D.D.

■ Central to Jane Green's *Second Chance* (Penguin) is the concept that friends are the new family. Brought together by Tom's death, the characters, all in their thirties, come to realise none of them is as "together" as they would like the world to believe. For Holly, this means realising her marriage is shaky; Saffron has to challenge an addiction that has haunted her for years; Paul is struggling to support his wife as they deal with infertility; and Olivia finds that meeting up with a former colleague of Tom's will change her life forever. It is a fast-paced, poignant and fun read.

—K.C.