

Book: Tangled Toes, Pins and Needles

Author: Richard Pike

Publisher: TerraNova

Review: DEBBIE REYNOLDS

MUCH like the title suggests, this is a book about the physical hurdles one man has to overcome following a freak car accident.

Talented oarsman and cocky 19-year-old Richard Pike had just started his first year at Wits University when he and five mates climbed into the boat club's Chevy V8 pick-up truck with a trailer in tow.

They headed off for the Buffalo

Regatta in East London, a carefree bunch. That changed when the trailer jack-knifed, causing the truck to roll.

Thrown from the vehicle, Richard recovers consciousness only to find he can't feel or move his legs. And so begins a long, painful, frustrating but ultimately uplifting journey for a young man who was at the pinnacle of his life.

With a broken back and unable even to sit, the energetic teenager is told by doctors that he will never run again and may even never walk again. With supreme courage

and sheer bloody mindedness, he sets out to prove them wrong.

Pike infuses his harrowing story with candid humour and wickedly acerbic insights.

While tending towards being an inspirational you-can-learn-from-my-hard-luck-life book, Pike's warts-and-all honesty is refreshingly intriguing.

Strangely, I didn't feel sorry for him, but I certainly applaud him. There is something to be said for that old saying that what doesn't kill you makes you stronger. Ask Richard Pike.

