

Gold Coast Book Lovers

It's all about good books...

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March 2018



At our March meeting, we discussed [The Life to Come](#) by Australian author [Michelle de Kretser](#). Born in Sri Lanka, emigrating to Australia at the age of 14 and being educated in Melbourne and Paris, the author threads keen observations of these places, their people and cultures throughout this novel.

The book's structure comprises five short related stories. Timeframes move around within each story but progress forward following the evolution of two writers Pippa and George. Each story is presented from a different point of view. Inner thoughts are conveyed quite seamlessly and

reveal sharp, and often cutting, cultural observations which expose the illusion of Australia as the lucky country downunder. There are also insights which surgically slice the pretentious and self-serving within the world of authors, books and publishing.

Themes of vanity, loneliness and apathy are explored through an array of different perspectives. Some of our group thought there were at times too many different characters presented. We also discussed how difficult it was to find a clear narrative. While this was frustrating for some readers, others found they enjoyed the book once they stopped looking for a plot and looked to what the characters were conveying. Amongst our group, views on this book varied considerably with some feeling quite disappointed and others enjoying the read, finding an interesting character, setting or observation to ponder.

Michelle de Kretser is a well-awarded Australian author. She is the author of *The Rose Grower*, *The Hamilton Case*, which won the Commonwealth Prize (SE Asia and Pacific region) and the UK Encore Prize, and *The Lost Dog*, which won multiple awards, including, the 2008 NSW Premier's Book of the Year Award, the Christina Stead Prize for Fiction and the 2008 ALS Gold Medal. *The Lost Dog* was also shortlisted for the Vance Palmer Prize for Fiction, the Western Australian Premier's Australia-Asia Literary Award, the Commonwealth Writers' Prize (Asia-Pacific Region) and Orange Prize's Shadow Youth Panel. It was longlisted for the Man Booker Prize and the Orange Prize for Fiction. Her novel, *Questions of Travel*, received fourteen honours, including winning the 2013 Miles Franklin Literary Award.

During the week of our meeting, "The Life to Come" was shortlisted for the 2018 Stella Prize.

Ratings: Claudia DNF, Denise 3, Gail 4.5, Janet 3, Judith 3, Kim DNF, Margie 3, Nicola 3 and Viv 3.5.

Next month we get together on the 12/03/18 at 6:30pm to discuss [Monkey Grip](#) and [The Children's Bach](#) by [Helen Garner](#) at [Preece House, 50 Nerang St Bischof Pioneer Park, Nerang](#) (next to 54 Nerang St. shops).

Other Books We Read

March 2018

Our book of the month was [The Life to Come](#) by [Michelle de Kretser](#), but we also read other books.

Maximum rating is 5.

[The Multiple Effects of Rainshadow](#) by Thea Astley, 3.5

[The Choke](#) by Sofie Laguna, 3.5

[My Brother Jack](#) by George Johnston, 4

[A long way home](#) by Peter Carey, 4

[The Craving Mind](#) (from cigarettes to smart phones to love – why we get hooked and how we can break bad habits) by Judson Brewer, 3.5

[The Swan Book](#) by Alexis Wright, 3.5

[The Leopard](#) by Giuseppe Tomasi di Lampedusa, 4

[Extinctions](#) by Josephine Wilson, 3

[Down in the City](#), Elizabeth Harrower, 3

[Song of a Captive Bird](#), Jasmin Darznik, 3

[Creativity Rules](#), Tina Seelig, 3