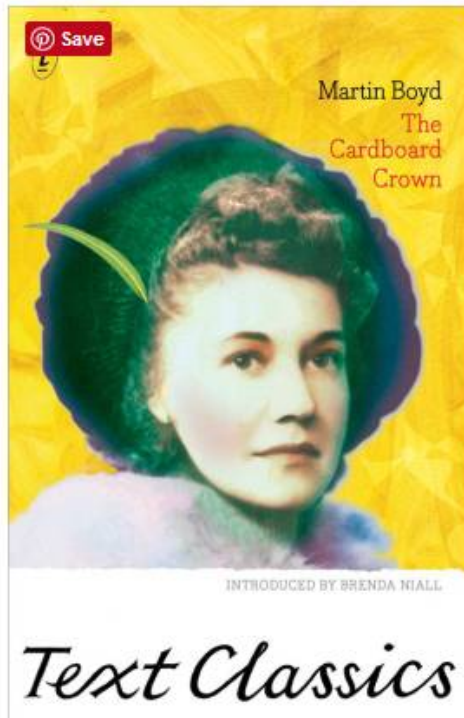


August 2018



The group got together at the August meeting to discuss [The Cardboard Crown](#) by Martin Boyd. This is the first book in the 'Langton' quartet of books, a family saga set in Melbourne in the late 19th and early 20th century around the wealthy Langton family, told through the diaries of Alice Langton. A contemporary critic commented that '(Boyd's) real interest is in the contrasting strains which appear in his oddly-mixed family and in the interaction between human frailty and unearned wealth.'

Another critic wrote in 2004, 'Boyd's subject matter is no doubt the principal reason for his neglect. By any standards, his prose is strong and luminous and his novels are beautifully crafted and

immensely readable. But the late twentieth century had little patience with the scandals and vicissitudes of Anglo-Australian aristocratic families, with no apparent connections with convicts, sealers or whalers, or the indigenous people. Boyd was admittedly something of a good old-fashioned snob.'

The general consensus in the meeting was that the language was indeed beautiful and some parts of the book were immensely funny, even satirical. If read as a sardonic commentary on the people and the times, it was quite enjoyable. We weren't really sure that this was what the author had intended, however. We found the storyline dull and a bit turgid, it being involved in the minutia of a wealthy family without many endearing characters.

This book may have been written for the English market, where the considerations of class and elements of snobbery (paragraphs in untranslated French, for example) may have been better received. We felt that this wasn't a true Australian voice, and was perhaps an attempt to make a saga out of the fairly bare threads of a diary.

Ratings: Claudia 3, Di 2.5, Janet 2.5, Judith 2.5, Michael 2.5 and Viv 3.5.

Next month we will meet on the 14/8 at 6:30PM at [Preece House, 50 Nerang St Bischof Pioneer Park, Nerang \(next to 54 Nerang St. shops\)](#) to continue with this years' list of Australian books. The book to be discussed will be [Voss](#) by 1973 Australian Nobel Winner [Patrick White](#).

Hope to see you all there and happy reading!

Other Books We Read

August 2018

Our book of the month was *The Cardboard Crown* by Martin Boyd but we also read other books. Maximum rating is 5.

I Feel Bad About My Neck, Nora Ephron, 4.5

The Late Show, Michael Connolly, 4

In the Skin of a Lion, Michael Ondaatje, 4

Captains Courageous, Rudyard Kipling, 3.5

The Choke, Sofie Laguna, 3

An American Marriage, Tayani Jones, 3.5

Flames, Robbie Arnott, 4

Be My Enemy, Christopher Brookmyre, 4

We Have Always Lived in the Castle, Shirley Jackson, 2.5

Stern Men, Elizabeth Gilbert, 2.5

Think Before It's Too Late, Edward de Bono, 3

The Brain that Changes Itself, Norman Doidge, 3

Everything Here is Beautiful, Mira Lee, 3

The Butterfly Man, Heather Rose, 3.5

Written in my own heart's blood, *Outlander Book 8* by Diana Gabaldon, 3.5

Winter by Karl Ove Knausgaard, 3.5