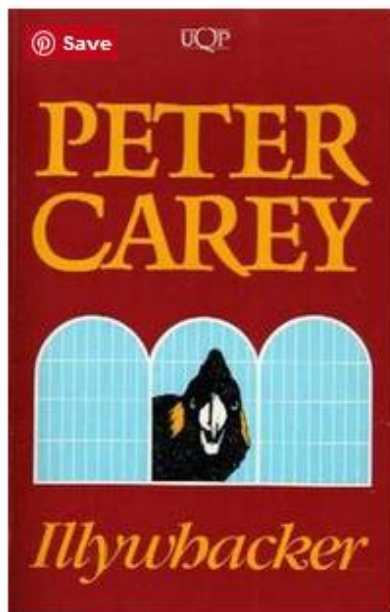


November 2018



Our November book was the 1985 Peter Carey novel "Illywhacker".

The illywhacker; an outdated Australian colloquialism meaning small-time confidence trickster; of this novel is Herbert Badgery. Our hero, using that term very loosely, at the ripe old age of 139 years spends the 600 pages of this novel looking back at the past 106 years of his life. Naturally there is the occasional foray into the previous 33 years that have elapsed before our story starts. Carey's ability to interweave meticulous detail and engrossing backstory are some of the most enjoyable elements of this book.

The narrative begins with Herbert, a post war aviator and aforementioned conman, making an emergency landing in a paddock where Jack McGrath, his wife and daughter are picnicking. Jack is a man of simple tastes who has made a fortune on the goldfields and now lives in some eclectic style in Geelong. It should be mentioned here, for no other reason than it was remarked on more than once in the early part of the novel, that although Jack was a deft hand with a bullock team, his handling of anything mechanical left a lot to be desired. However, whatever Jack lacked in skill, he more than made up for with enthusiasm and so he becomes ensnared in Badgery's vision of manufacturing an Australian aircraft. Unfortunately while Jack is out chasing prospective investors, Herbert is busy chasing Jack's daughter Phoebe.

It was never going to end well and Jack commits suicide. Herbert and Phoebe marry and have two children. Phoebe eventually leaves Badgery and the children to live with a former lover in Sydney.



Photo Credit: Gail

About now, those who have not read this book, may be wondering if this seemingly intricate but rather conventional narrative is about to reveal itself as Australia's answer to the Forsyth Saga or others of its ilk. Admittedly there are some similarities. It is generational, however, this is a story that unravels rather than unfolds and what we

gradually see emerging are the frayed edges of an alternate reality. In fact, a magical one. Although there are only three generations of the Badgery family, as opposed to the Buendía's seven, the latter part of this book has more in common with Garcia Marquez's masterpiece "One Hundred Years of Solitude".

Ratings: Gail 3.5, Janet 4, Viv 3.5, Claudia 5, Nicola 5, Sandy 3.5, Janet 4.5, Margie 4, Kim 4.5.

Next month we will meet on the 10/12 at 6:30PM at [Preece House, 50 Nerang St Bischof Pioneer Park, Nerang \(next to 54 Nerang St. shops\)](#) for a general discussion about reading and reading habits.

Hope to see you all there and happy reading!

Gold Coast Book Lovers

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Other Books We Read

November 2018

Our book of the month was *Illywhacker* by Peter Carey, but we also read other books.

Maximum rating is 5.

Blowing the Bloody Doors Off by Michael Caine, 3.5

Clock Dance by Anne Tyler, 3.5

The Cow Book by John Connell, 3.5 and 3.5

Overstory by Richard Powers, 4

French Exit by Patrick de Witt, 2.5

The Tobacconist by Robert Seethaler, 3.5

The Ravenmaster by Christopher Skaife, 3

A Gate At The Stairs by Lorrie Moore, 3
