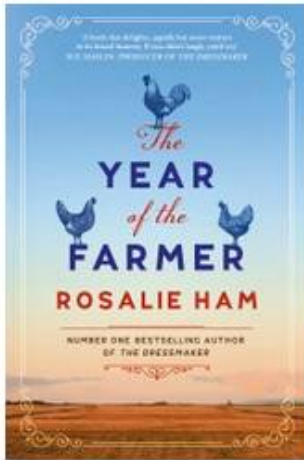


July 2019



This month we discussed [The Year of the Farmer](#) by Rosalie Ham.

Many of us have a fondness for Rosalie Ham and have read and enjoyed *The Dressmaker* and her other novels, so we were looking forward to reading her latest book, *The Year of the Farmer*. It has her wonderful descriptions of landscape and entertaining Dickensian names for her characters, and she is obviously very passionate about rural communities and the sustainability of water resources for the environment as well as for primary production. Water is the novel's primary theme and the whole district is on the brink of financial and social collapse because of years of entitlement, mismanagement, exploitation, and corruption as well as a prolonged drought. This is in fact the depressing reality for many farming districts and families throughout Australia but we found Ham's treatment light weight even frivolous. The story offers a cast of cardboard cutout characters and they interact with "passive aggression, old grudges and fresh pique". The narrative is reduced to a love story and a thinly veiled murder mystery.

So we were all disappointed to some degree and our ratings reflect that. Although most of us found it "a light and easy read", we felt it lacked credibility, was unsubtle with its political agenda, clichéd and predictable. While our hero Mitch was naively optimistic, he lacked in any self-determination or grit, his wife Mandy was wholly awful and he left all his problems to be solved by Neralie his childhood sweetheart. Ham goes on far too long about the technical details of irrigation and water trading but doesn't offer any insights into the issues raised

to be solved by Neralie his childhood sweetheart. Ham goes on far too long about the technical details of irrigation and water trading but doesn't offer any insights into the issues raised about who owns rivers systems or how to address ecological disaster. The barely token acknowledgement of Indigenous presence was an unacceptable oversight. Thanks to everyone for our bumper attendance and a great discussion.

Ratings: Cindy 3.5, Claudia 2.5, Di 3, Gail 2.5, Janet DNF, Jillian 2, Judith 2, Kim 3, Lynda 3, Margy 2, Nicola 3, Pauline 3, Rosemary 3.5, and Viv 2.5.

Our next meeting will be 12/08/19 at 6:30PM at [Preece House, 50 Nerang St Bischof Pioneer Park, Nerang \(next to 54 Nerang St. shops\)](#) to discuss [Draw Your Weapons](#) by Sarah Sentilles.

Hope to see you all there and happy reading!

About Us

Other Books We Read

July 2019

- Mennonites don't dance by Darcie Fiesen Hossack, 4
- The Happiness Glass by Carol Lefevre, 4
- The paper house by Anna Spargo-Ryan, 3
- Jonno by David Malouf, 4
- An Imaginary Life by David Malouf, 4
- Ransom by David Malouf, 4
- The Hidden Life of Trees by Peter Wolleben, 3.5
- 21 Lessons for the 21st Century, Yuval Noah Harari 4
- In the Garden of the Fugitives, by Ceridwen Dovey 4
- The Art of the Wasted Day, by Patricia Hampl 4
- Mr Wigg by Inga Simpson, 3.5
- Black Moses by Alain Mabanckou, 3.5
- A General Theory of Oblivion by Jose Eduardo Agualusa, 4
- The Master and Margarita by Mikhail Bulgakov, 4
- The White Girl by Tony Birch, 2.5