

Gold Coast Book Lovers

It's all about good books...

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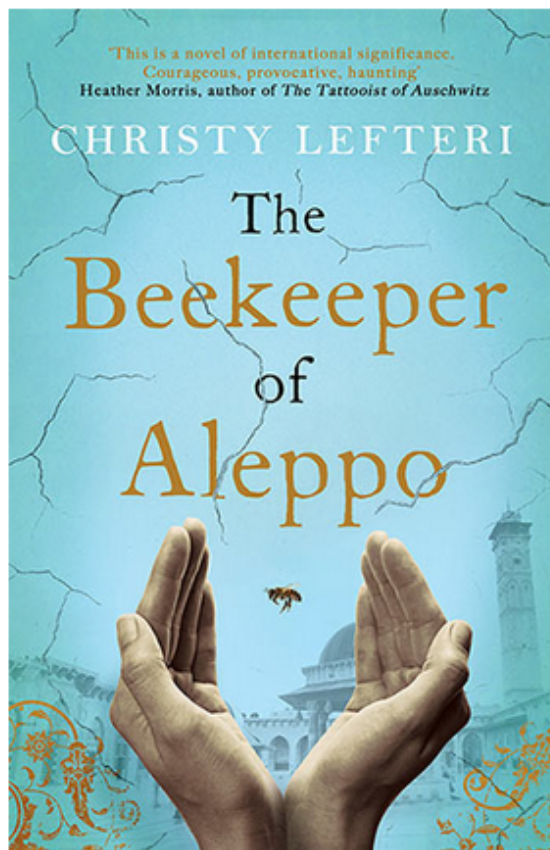
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July 2021



We had an interesting discussion of *The Beekeeper of Aleppo* by Christy Lefteri which is a relevant text in view of the universal refugee plight. The book follows the journey of a Syrian couple, Nuri (a beekeeper) and Afra (a blinded artist), who are forced to flee to the U.K. to seek refuge from war. The book offers a personal story of one couple's choice to leave their home country in search of a life safe from conflict. It offers an individual connection to the stories that we often see on the news. There is a balance between love, hope and exploitation. Balance between heartache and struggle. The resilience of humans to be able to continue as one barrier after another is encountered.

We felt the book worthwhile and thought the author, with her experience of volunteering in the refugee centres, brought a real depth to the

characters, with all the stresses and dangers that refugees encounter when fleeing countries. One of our readers felt that the danger of the smugglers, the costs of human sacrifice and the trauma of what's been left behind was very evident. She particularly liked the characters in the boarding house in England. Such a mix of nationality and stories of their refugee plight and the difficulty of the immigration officer interviews, as well as the difficulty ahead of learning to live in a new country with a different culture and trying to fit in. A few of our readers would have liked more background to the Syrian conflict.

The titular link between bees and climate change refugees is evident – our lives are intertwined.

Lefteri takes a personal story and makes it universal, showing the complexities of individuals. There is horror along the way, but also hope. In terms of refugee plight, 'No Friend But the Mountains' by Behrouz Boochani is beautifully poetic as well as painful.

These books give one a greater appreciation of every single person who takes a boat, taking a risk in desperation. They don't want to be there and the host country doesn't want them either.

You can find a great review of this book here: [Naina Bajekal "A New Novel Sees Beyond the Abstraction of Today's Refugee Stories"](#)

Ratings : Pauline, Janet and Nicola 3, Lynda, Dianne, Viv and Margie 3.5, Diane and Jenny 4, Robyn-4.5.

Our next meeting will be at Preece House on 9/08/21 at 6:30PM to discuss *A Good Man* by Ani Katz

Hope to see you all there and happy reading!

Other Books We Read

July 2021

My family and other animals by Gerry Tyrrell, 2.5

Phosphorescence by Julia Baird, 3.5

Dishonesty is the second best policy by David Mitchell, 3.5

Thames sacred river by Peter Ackroyd, 4

The Labyrinth by Amanda Lohrey, 3.5

Transit by Rachel Cusk, 4

A Parrot in the Pepper Tree by Chris Stewart, 2.5

The Happiest Refugee by Ahn Do, 3.5

The Sea, the Sea by Iris Murdoch, 4

The Dutch House by Ann Patchett, 4

Commonwealth by Ann Patchett, 3

One Life: My Mother's Story by Kate Grenville, 3.5

Coda by Thea Astley, 4

Drylands by Thea Astley, 3.5

The Recovery of Rose Gold by Stephanie Wrobel 2.5

The Animals in That Country by Laura Jean McKay 3.5

In A Free State by V.S. Naipaul, 4

The Committed by Viet Than Nguyen, 3.5

Mister Pip by Lloyd Jones, 4

Between a Wolf and a Dog by Georgia Blain, 3.5

Priestdaddy by Patricia Lockwood, 4

Nest by Inga Simpson, 3.5

The Drowned and the Saved by Primo Levi, 4

Coda by Thea Astley, 4

Tell Me Why by Archie Roach, 3.5

The Dictionary of Lost Words by Pip Williams, 3

Letters of Note: Grief by Shaun Usher, 3

On the Line – Notes from a factory by Joseph Ponthus, 3

Two Women in Rome by Elizabeth Buchan, 3

Seed to Dust by Mark Hamer, 4.5

Songdogs by Colum McCann, 3