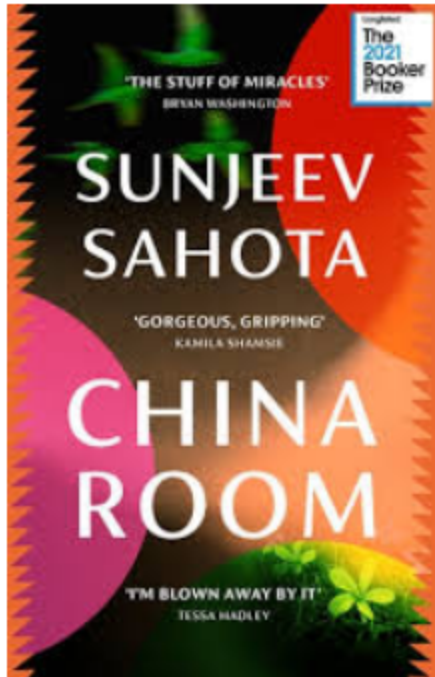


Gold Coast Book Lovers

It's all about good books...

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April 2022



China Room by Sunjeev Sahotra was longlisted for the 2022 Booker Prize. The book is set in a remote village in Punjab of 1929 in an India rife with revolutionary tensions. Mehar is a child bride who merely wants to know whom she is married to – her controlling mother-in-law, Mai, sends her sons to their wives only in the dark. But Mehar is audacious and she pays for it: her love is crushed by those who see the unfolding events—a case of mistaken identity, love and adultery—as an act of transgression. In an interesting juxtaposition, we also follow the story of her great- grandson, who in 1999, in the throes of a debilitating heroin addiction, has been sent to India to recover.

The stories come together at the family's abandoned farmstead. In both past and present this is where the drama has played out. The story flips backwards and forwards between the 1920s and 1999 in short chapters that give an urgency to the pace of the book and, as it progresses,

The stories come together at the family's abandoned farmstead. In both past and present this is where the drama has played out. The story flips backwards and forwards between the 1920s and 1999 in short chapters that give an urgency to the pace of the book and, as it progresses, they become shorter and more urgent, like a train gathering speed, although you know it's not going to end well.

There was a lively discussion at the meeting about the disposability of women in both past and present in India and the way this is played out in the book. We also talked about the use of tenses as a story-telling tool. Mehar's story is told in the present tense – we get the feeling that her story is timeless and similar stories have been progressing for countless generations. Meanwhile, her great-grandson's story is told in the past tense and it's a very modern story of a disaffected youth in the clutches of drug addiction.

The book has a lot of potential but the story-line and characters were not well-developed. There are very moving descriptions of generational trauma and the place of women in India but we felt it was quite a light read with a fairly predictable ending. The focus on the farm and village cuts out the outside world and lets the reader focus on the story which, while well-written fails to match the works of other writers looking at similar issues and time period.

Ratings: Cheryl 3.5, Lynda 2.5, Margie 3, Jenny 3, Dianne 3.5, Sandy 3.5, Pauline 3.5, Norma 3, Janet 3, Jo 3, Di 3, Nicola 3.5, Viv 3.5

Our Book Club has moved day and location, and our next meeting will be Tuesday 10/05/2022 at 6:30pm at the QWCA Mermaid Beach Centre located in 43 Ventura Rd, Mermaid Beach.

Come and join us to discuss *The Lincoln Highway* by Amor Towles. Hope to see you there and Happy Reading!

The 2022 Reading List can be found [here](#).

Other Books We Read

April 2022

Bruno by Heather Rose, 2.5

Love Stories by Trent Dalton, 2.5

Case Study by Graeme Macrae Burnet, 3

Devotion by Hannah Kent, 3

Letter to My Daughter by Maya Angelou, 3.5

The Good People by Hannah Kent, 4

Cloud Cuckoo Land by Anthony Doerr, 4

The Passion, by Jeanette Winterson, 4

The Underground Railway by Colson Whitehead, 4

The Tale of Genji by Murasaki Shikibu, 2.5

Booth by Karen Joy Fowler, 3

Confession with Blue Horses by Sophie Hardach, 4

An Artist of the Floating World by Kazuo Ishiguro, 4

Away with the Penguins by Hazel Prior, 2.5

The Alchemist by Paulo Coelho, 2.5

This is Happiness by Niall Williams, 4

Born a Crime by Trevor Noah, 3.5

Piranesi by Susanna Clarke, 4

The Drinker by Hans Fallada, 4

The Sentence by Louise Erdrich, 3.5

The Mother by Jane Caro, 3

The Vanishing Half by Brit Bennett, 3.5

A Girl Returned by Donatella Di Pietrantonio, 3