

Gold Coast Book Lovers

It's all about good books...

[Home](#)

[Blog](#)

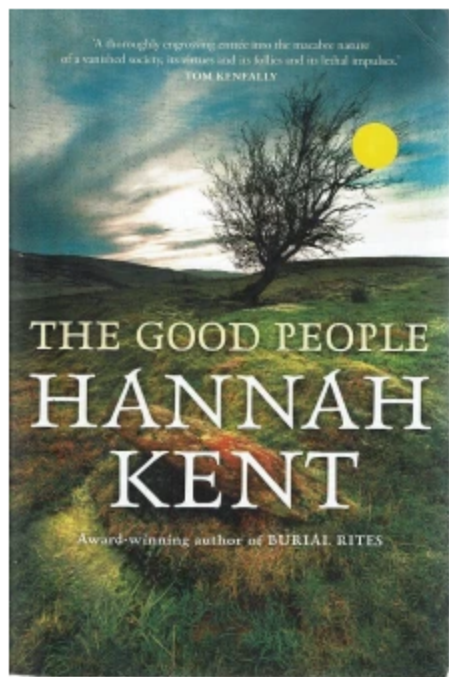
[Other Books We Read](#)

[Book of the Month Reviews](#)

[Links](#)

[Articles](#)

June 2022



The Good People is set in a perpetually soggy valley in 1820s County Kerry. But while folkloric beliefs and superstitions were a background presence in Kent's debut, *Burial Rites*, here they take centre stage. *The Good People* is pervaded with dark talk of curses and changelings, herbal remedies and rituals designed to ward off the mischief of the "Good People" (or fairies) of the title. This is a serious and compelling novel, based on a documented court case, about how those in desperate circumstances cling to ritual to cope with their own powerlessness.

The story opens when Nora Leahy's husband, Martin, drops dead for no apparent reason at the crossroads where the village buries its suicides. This

This is a world of freezing dirt-floored cabins, where the inhabitants subsist on a diet of potatoes and tobacco. During the wake an eccentric old woman – the “herb hag” Nance Roach – arrives to offer her keening services. Nance is blessed with knowledge not only of remedies provided by local herbs and plants, but also of the ways of the Good People.

Kent explores how competing ideas – religious, medical, folkloric – try to make sense of the bad stuff that happens. The characters are trapped in their crucible of mutterings and gossip by a combination of geography, ancestry and poverty. It is to Kent’s credit that she never passes judgment on her protagonists’ beliefs, even as they lead them to ever more extreme, even insane, behaviour.

The Good People moves more slowly – some thought TOO slowly - and more quietly than Burial Rites, exploring grief, desperation and ignorance with a tender heart.

The Booklovers Group generally enjoyed Kent’s richly textured writing, with the result of transporting the reader deep into the rural Irish lifestyle of the early nineteenth century. There was much discussion of the verdict reached in the court case, with theories about how and why these decisions were made.

With thanks to reviews on the Internet.

Ratings: Viv 2.5; Jen, Cheryl, Nicola 3; Janet, Jenny, Margie, Pauline 3.5; Lynda, Di, Dianne and Sandy 4.

Our next meeting will be Tuesday 12/07/2022 at 6:30pm at the QCWA Mermaid Beach Centre located in 43 Ventura Rd, Mermaid Beach.

Other Books We Read

June 2022

Paradise by Abdulrazak Gurnah, 3.5

More than I love my Life by David Grossman, 3.5

First Love by Ivan Turgenev, 3.5

By the sea by Abdulrazak Gurnah, 3

In Kiltumper by Niall and Christine Williams, 3.5

Love Stories by Trent Dalton, 2.5

The Seven Dials Mystery by Agatha Christie, 3

Nocturnes by Kazuo Ishiguro, 3.5

England,England by Julian Barnes, 4

French Braid by Ann Tyler, 3.5

Sons by Pearl S Buck, 3

A House Divided by Pearl S Buck, 3

The Imposter by Damon Galgut, 3

In a Strange Room by Damon Galgut, 3

Arctic Summer by Damon Galgut, 3.5

The Promise by Damon Galgut, 3.5

History of Rain by Niall Williams, 3

Warlight by Michael Ondaatje, 4

The English Patient by Michael Ondaatje, 4

Elizabeth Finch by Julian Barnes, 3.5

Pulse by Julian Barnes, 3.5

A Visit from the Goon Squad by Jennifer Egan, 4.5

The Candy House by Jennifer Egan, 4