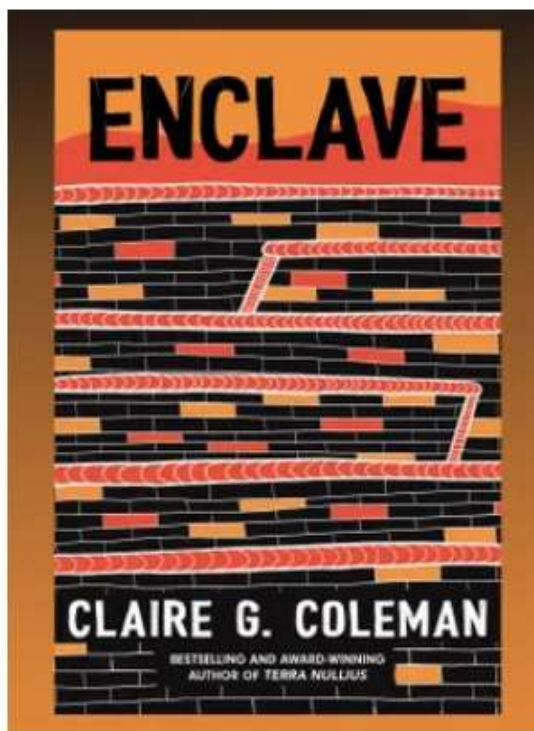


Gold Coast Book Lovers

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January 2023



for a while.

To say we were disappointed in *Enclave* by acclaimed indigenous writer Claire G. Coleman would be a massive understatement.

The main character, Christine, is a wealthy and increasingly alienated young woman, living in the hyper-controlled, soulless and repressed enclave of 'Safetytown', her every move monitored via a network of human and AI surveillance. Christine's needs are met by the army of silent, brown-skinned servants, and the ever watchful Safetynet, which tells her she needs a haircut, orders her clothing based on the latest fashions and picks out her musical tastes. It's safe, but only if you follow the rules and don't slip. The fear keeps her in line,

The themes of the book hover just at the edge of our current lives – algorithms, crafted personal advertising, CCTV surveillance. However, the book would have benefitted from judicious editing and the stronger development of characters and themes. With the exception of Christine, every character is just a caricature – a cardboard cut-out and stereotype. Being told in the third person, the book also lacks any real concept of Christine’s emotions, motivations or thoughts, which makes it hard to engage with her story. As well, huge plot holes and glaring inconsistencies jar the reader. It feels like Coleman has identified a grab-bag of issues – homophobia, transphobia, colonialisation, climate change, AI surveillance, the plight of indigenous peoples – and thrown them all at this book. She has tried to do too much and, in doing so, has failed to develop any cohesion or believability. We thought the book was unsophisticated and poorly-structured, damaged by a lack of depth and character development.

Enclave is a novel that inclines towards the hope that we can do and be better but it could have been, should have been, a much better book than it is.

Our next meeting will be Tuesday 8/02/2023 at 6:30pm at the QCWA Mermaid Beach Centre located in 43 Ventura Rd, Mermaid Beach.

Come and join us to discuss *My name is Asher Lev* by Chaim Potok. Hope to see you there and Happy Reading!

The 2023 Reading List can be found [here](#).

January 2023

- The South by Colm Toibin, 3
- One Italian Summer by Pip Williams, 3
- Lucy by the Sea by Elizabeth Strout, 3.5
- The Story of the Night by Colm Toibin, 4
- From Heaven Lake by Vikram Seth, 2.5
- Horse by Geraldine Brooks, 2.5
- Lessons in Chemistry by Bonnie Garmun, 4
- The seven moons of Maali Almeida by Shehan Karunatilaka, 4.5
- The Bullet That Missed by Richard Osman, 3
- The Giver of Stars by Jojo Moyes, 3.5
- Oh William! by Elizabeth Strout, 4
- Demon Copperhead by Barbara Kingsolver, 4
- Bulldozed by Niki Savva, 3
- Foal's Bread by Gillian Mears, 3.5
- Beyond by Stephen Walker, 4
- The Ride of her Life by Elizabeth Letts, 3.5
- The Rain Heron by Robbie Arnott, 4
- The Pearl by John Steinbeck 4
- The House of Unexpected Sisters by Alexander McCall Smith 2.5
- Gravel heart by Abdulrazak Gurnah, 4
- To the lighthouse by Virginia Woolf, 4
- Phospherence by Julia Baird, 3
- The Heart's Invisible Furies by John Boyne, 4