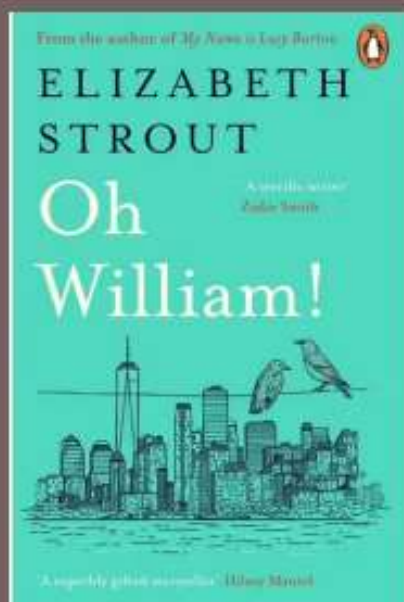


Gold Coast Book Lovers

It's all about good books...

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November 2023



Oh William! is the third novel in Elizabeth's Strout's series of Lucy Barton books and was shortlisted for the 2022 Booker Prize.

In *Oh William!* Lucy, now 64, is mourning the death of her second husband, David, a cellist who was a very different character to William, her first husband. In her grief, Lucy finds some welcome distraction in reconnecting with William.

Although their marriage has been over for many years, Lucy and William have remained on friendly terms. William, at this time, is also experiencing a period of unwelcome change and turmoil in his life, with the collapse of his third marriage.

During this difficult and emotional period, Lucy agrees to accompany William on a road trip to Maine, in a mission to uncover the truth regarding a startling discovery that has recently come to light concerning William's family; a revelation about his mother, and Lucy's ex-mother-in-law, Catherine Cole.

The road trip gives Lucy and William plenty of opportunity to look back on their 20 years of marriage. William's infidelities both during and after their marriage are laid bare, along with the effect these had on Lucy's self-esteem and feelings of worth.

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Lucy's childhood of deprivation, not just of basic necessities, but also of love, is a focal point of the book. Lucy's experiences growing up are so awful that she often cannot bring herself to recount them in her narrative.

This childhood deprivation leaves Lucy feeling deeply unworthy of love and with such low self-esteem that she describes herself as feeling "invisible" and never truly belonging. This is despite her long and successful career as a writer living in New York and her healthy and loving relationships with her own daughters.

The book deals sensitively with the issues of childhood neglect and the lasting effects of childhood trauma that carries on into adult life.

The book explores Lucy's relationship with her ex-mother-in-law, Catherine Cole, who was outwardly kind and generous to Lucy while making her question her self-worth. Yet Catherine's own humble beginnings are exposed as the details of her previously hidden life prior to William's birth are revealed.

Oh William! explores William and Lucy's long relationship, past and present. Both William and Lucy confront their childhood memories, and the impacts their upbringings have had on their own marriage, subsequent marriages, their relationships with their daughters, and their present lives.

The members of our group appreciated the quality of the writing, the depth of the characters and the author's insightful understanding of the human condition, although some members felt there were other titles from this author which would have scored higher.

Ratings: Margie, Nicola and Jenny 3, Di, Vivien, Dianne, Lynda and Sandy 3.5, Hetta 4

We look forward to seeing you again at our next meeting 6:30pm on Tuesday 12th of December **Room 2.1 in the 2nd floor of the Robina Community Centre**, when we'll talk about ***This Devastating Fever* by Sophie Cunningham**. Hope to see you there and Happy Reading!

Other Books We Read

November 2023

The conversion by Amanda Lohrey, 3.5

How to loiter in a turf war by Coco Solid, 4.5

Aue by Becky Manawatu, 3.5

Birnam Wood by Elanor Catton, 3.5

The Covenant of Water by Abraham Verghese, 4.

Edenglassie by Melissa Lukashenko, 5

Song of the Sun God by Shankari Chandran, 3.5

Battle Hymn of the Tiger Mother by Amy Chua, 3

The Satanic Verses by Salman Rushdie, 4

Wifedom by Anna Funder, 4

Nine Parts of Desire by Geraldine Brooks, 3.5

Chai Time at Cinnamon Gardens by Shankari Chandran, 3

The Soulmate by Sally Hepworth, 3

History of Loneliness by John Boyne, 4

Ru by Kim Thuy, 4

The Bee Sting by Paul Murray, 3.5

I Heard the Owl call my Name by Margaret Craven, 3.5

Thirst for Salt by Madelaine Lucas, 3

The Bookbinder of Jericho by Pip Williams, 3.5

Pineapple Street by Jenny Jackson, 3

Cut Out by Michele Robert's, 3.5

Brooklyn by Colm Toibin, 3.5