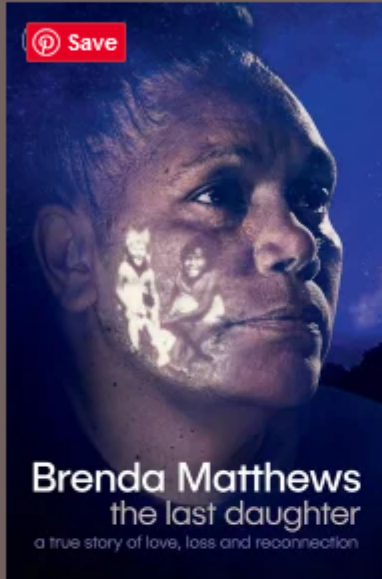


# January 2024



## The Last Daughter by Brenda Matthews

Released in 2023, this is an autobiography about Brenda's journey to discover the truth about her past.

At two years old, Brenda was taken by social services from her loving Aboriginal family and given to a white family. At age 7, she was again taken away from them and returned to her black family. The story is her attempt to come to terms with her history, discover her culture to reconcile the conflicting love she feels for both families.

We follow Brenda through her transition back into her black family, her teenage years, marriage, motherhood and divorce. Following her all the time, though, are thoughts of her beloved little white sister and her white family. Did they miss her? Did they think about her? What emotional harm would reconnecting cause her black parents? Putting it off, Brenda goes for decades without making any contact with them.

This is not a book for the faint hearted. Brenda lays out the trauma that her ordeal has caused. Compounding this, the lies and fabrications in official reports, the gross paternalism of social services and government officials and the refusal to acknowledge the lived experiences of the Stolen Generation is a shocking indictment of the treatment of Aboriginal Australians.

We had a very long discussion about the book, about the Stolen Generations and the importance of truth-telling. While the book isn't great literature and could have done with some judicious editing or even a ghost writer, we wondered whether that would detract from the very real voice of Brenda telling her story in her own words. Her gentle yet sparing writing

Every Australian should read this book, but it is a sad fact that those who most need to read it and understand the lessons of the past probably won't.

Ratings:

Lynda 5, Dianne 4, Cheryl 4, Hetta 4, Suzy 3.5, Kim 4, Pauline 3, Nicola 3, Janet 3, Sandy 2.5, Vivienne 2.5, Margie DNF.

We look forward to seeing you again at our next meeting 6:30pm on Tuesday 13th of February 2024 **Room 2.1 in the 2nd floor of the Robina Community Centre**, when we'll talk about ***The House of Doors*** by Tan Twan Eng. Hope to see you there and Happy Reading!

The 2024 Reading List can be found in the sidebar, or below if you're on your mobile device.

# Other Books We Read

January 2024

A Guide to the Birds of East Africa by Nicholas Drayson, 4

Night Blue by Angeela O'Keeffe, 3

A bird in the house by Margaret Laurence, 4

Romantic comedy by Curtis Seddenfeld, 4

Uprooting by Machelles Farrel, 3,5

Edinglassie by Melissa Lucashenko, 3

Travels with Charley in search of America by John Steinbeck, 4

This is Happiness by Niall Williams, 4.5

Last Devil to Die by Richard Osman, 3.5

The Escapades of Tribulation Johnson by Karen Brooks, 3

The Humans by Matt Haig, 2

The Bookbinder of Jericho by Pip Williams, 4

Chai Time at Cinnamon Gardens by Shankari Chandran, 4

Between a Wolf and a Dog by Georgia Blain, 4

Admiring Silence by Abdulrazak Gurnah, 4

The Conversion by Amanda Lowrie, 3

Anything is possible by Elizabeth Strout, 4

Half A Life by V.S. Naipul, 4

This is Happiness by Niall Williams, 4

Aliss at the Fire by Jon Fosse, 4

Water by John Boyne, 3

The Night Travelers by Armando Lucas Correia, 3.5

Sapiens by Yuval Noah Harari, 4.5

Small Things Like These by Claire Keegan, 4

The Covenant of Water by Abraham Verghese, 5

Wifedom by Anna Funder, 4.5

Red the Queen by Abdulrazak Gurnah, 4

By the Sea by Abdulrazak Gurnah, 4

The Luminous Solution by Charlotte Wood. 3

Prophet Song by Paul Lynch, 4.5

Chai Time at Cinnamon Gardens by Shankari Chandran, 4

The Conversion by Amanda Lohrey, 3.5