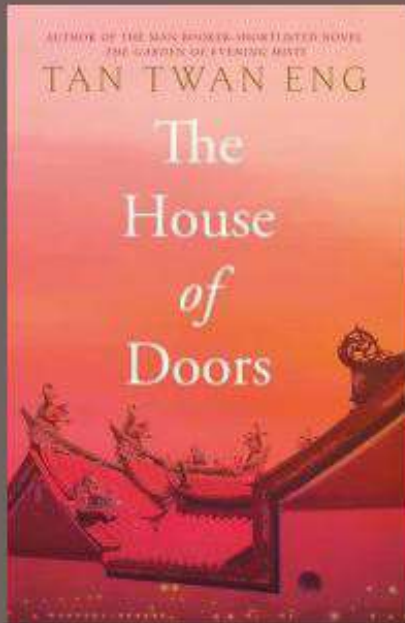


February 2024



The House of Doors by Tan Twan Eng

This is a fascinatingly layered novel, drawing upon a range of different modes and themes – patriarchy, political turmoil, illicit love affairs and concealed sexuality—with a courtroom drama at the heart of it. It is based on real events, and traces the fault lines of race, gender, sexuality, and power under empire, and dives deep into the complicated nature of love and friendship. The House of Doors encompasses at-the-time risky interracial and homosexual love stories, a scandalous murder trial. It is a tribute to the art of transforming life experiences into literature.

The book is Tan's first since the publication of the Booker-shortlisted *The Garden of Evening Mists* in 2012, and like its predecessor it moves between different time

periods while immersing us in the history of 20th-century British Malaya.

Tensions between the public and the private lie at the heart of the novel predominantly set in Penang in 1921 and immersed in the social mores of the British Empire.

From Tom William's review: 'What is most wonderful about this book is the lush, luxuriant descriptions of Penang, a land of "cloying humidity". The sea is "emerald and turquoise, chipped with a million white scratches", while on Penang Hill, "dragonflies with stained-glass wings stitched invisible threads in the air". Through this deceptively lulling atmosphere, Tan has woven a superb, quietly complex tale of love, duty and betrayal.'

Here is a complete [review](#)

Ratings: Pauline 2.5, Janet 3, Nicola 3, Sunita 3.5, Sandy 3, Margie 3.5, Suzy 3, Hetta 3.5, Kim & Viv 2.5, Dianne 4.0, Jenny DNR.

We look forward to seeing you again at our next meeting 6:30pm on Tuesday 11th of March 2024 **Room 2.1 in the 2nd floor of the Robina Community Centre**, when we'll talk about ***The Seven Moons of Maali Almeida*** by Shehan Karunatilaka. Hope to see you there and Happy Reading!

Other Books We Read

February 2024

Night Blue by Angela O’Keeffe, 3.5

This is happiness by Niall Williams, 4

Jazz by Toni Morrison, 4

Prophet Song by Paul Lynch, 4

They Came to Baghdad, Agatha Christie, 2.5

How to Build a Boat by Elaine Feeney, 3.5

Water by John Boyne, 3

Man by Kim Thuy, 3.5

Em by Kim Thuy, 4

My Father’s House by Joseph O’Connor, 4

People of the Book by Geraldine Brooks, 4

On a Night of a Thousand Stars by Andrea Yaryura Clark, 3.5

The naturalist of Amsterdam by Melissa Ashley, 3.5

The bee sting by Paul Murray, 4.5

Sapiens: A Brief History of Humankind by Yuval Noah Harari, 4

Prophet Song by Paul Lynch, 4

Yoga by Emmanuel Carrer 3.5

Jerusalem by Simon Sebag Montefiore – 5

The Last Colony: A Tale of Exile, Justice and Britain’s Colonial Legacy by Philippe Sands 4

365 Wishes by Richard Glover, 2

The Heart’s Invisible Furies by John Boyne, 4

The End of the Affair by Graham Greene, 3.5