



[Australiana]

By Yumna Kassab

First published in

Genre and Subject

Small cities -- Australia -- Fiction
Country life -- Australia -- Fiction
Communities -- Australia -- Fiction
Interpersonal relations -- Fiction
Australian fiction

Synopsis

One small town, a multitude of stories. When the river runs dry, the town runs red.

This could be any small town. It aches under the heat of summer. It flourishes in the cooler months. Everyone knows everyone. Their families, histories and stories are interwoven and well-known by one and all. Or at least, they think they are. But no-one sees anything quite the same way. Perceptions differ, truths are elusive, judgements have outcomes and everything is connected. For better or for worse.

This is a version of small-town Australia that is recognisable, both familiar and new, exploring the characters, threads, and connections that detail everyday life to reveal a much bigger story. A tapestry that makes up this place called home.

From the acclaimed author of *The House of Youssef* comes this extraordinary and unique novel shining a light on Australian rural life.

Author Biography

Yumna Kassab was born and raised in Western Sydney. She completed most of her schooling in Parramatta, except for two formative years when she lived in Lebanon with her family. She went on to study medical science at Macquarie University and neuroscience at Sydney University. She currently teaches in regional New South Wales.

Discussion Starters

1. What was your favourite part of the book?
2. What was your least favourite?
3. Did you race to the end, or was it more of a slow burn?
4. What did you think of the writing? What passages strike you as insightful, even profound? Perhaps a bit of dialog that's funny or poignant or that encapsulates a character? Maybe there's a particular comment that states the book's thematic concerns?
5. How did you experience the book? Were you engaged immediately, or did it take you a while to "get into it"? How did you feel reading it—amused, sad, disturbed, confused, bored...?
6. Describe the main characters—personality traits, motivations, and inner qualities.
 - Why do characters do what they do?
 - Are their actions justified?
 - Describe the dynamics between characters (in a marriage, family, or friendship).
 - How has the past shaped their lives?
 - Do you admire or disapprove of them?
 - Do they remind you of people you know?
7. Are the main characters dynamic—changing or maturing by the end of the book? Do they learn about themselves, how the world works and their role in it?
8. What surprised you most about the book?
9. How did your opinion of the book change as you read it?
10. Has this novel changed you—broadened your perspective? Have you learned something new or been exposed to different ideas about people or a certain part of the world? Do you think you'll remember it in a few months or years?
11. If you could ask the author a question, what would you ask? Have you read other books by the same author? If so how does this book compare. If not, does this book inspire you to read others? How does the book's title work in relation to the book's contents? If you could give the book a new title, what would it be?
12. Is this book overrated or underrated?
13. Did this book remind you of any other books?
14. Would you ever consider re-reading it? Why or why not?
15. Are there lingering questions from the book you're still thinking about?
16. Did the book strike you as original?
17. Is the ending satisfying? If so, why? If not, why not...and how would you change it?

If you liked this book, you may also like...

- *The mother by Jane Caro*
- *Bodies of light by Jennifer Down*