



[Exiles] By Jane Harper

First published in 2022

Genre and Subject

Country life -- South Australia -- Fiction

Australian fiction

Criminal investigation -- Fiction

Thrillers (Fiction)

Synopsis

At a busy festival site on a warm spring night, a baby lies alone in her pram, her mother vanishing into the crowds.

A year on, Kim Gillespie's absence casts a long shadow as her friends and loved ones gather deep in the heart of South Australian wine country to welcome a new addition to the family.

Joining the celebrations is federal investigator Aaron Falk. But as he soaks up life in the lush valley, he begins to suspect this tight-knit group may be more fractured than it seems.

Between Falk's closest friend, a missing mother, and a woman he's drawn to, dark questions linger as long-ago truths begin to emerge.

An outstanding novel, a brilliant mystery and a heart-pounding read from the author of *The Dry*, *Force of Nature*, *The Lost Man* and *The Survivors*.

Author Biography

Jane was born in Manchester in the UK, and moved to Australia with her family at age eight. She spent six years in Boronia, Victoria, and during that time gained Australian citizenship.

Returning to the UK with her family as a teenager, she lived in Hampshire before studying English and History at the University of Kent in Canterbury.

On graduating, she completed a journalism entry qualification and got her first reporting job as a trainee on the *Darlington & Stockton Times* in County Durham.

Jane worked for several years as a senior news journalist for the *Hull Daily Mail*, before moving back to Australia in 2008.

Jane lives in bayside Melbourne with her husband and their two children.

Discussion Starters

1. Were you familiar with this part of Australia's history before reading? Was there anything new you learned that particularly surprised you?
2. Mathinna and Evangeline are both orphans, and Hazel has a difficult relationship with her mother. What impact does this have on their characters, and how do you think their stories would have been different if their families were still alive?
3. Compare the different treatments of male and female convicts aboard the Medea. Though the male convicts are also being punished, they are still in a position of authority over the female prisoners. What does this say about British society in the 1800s?
4. The Franklins make Mathinna feel like she doesn't belong in Hobart Town, yet Mrs. Wilson tells Mathinna that they are the ones who don't belong. What does it mean to belong to a place? Who decides who does and does not belong?
5. Were you surprised by Evangeline's fate? Why or why not?
6. What is the significance of Mathinna losing her language? Of all the ways she changes after leaving Flinders, why does this loss feel the most important to her, and mark such a clear divide from her old life?
7. Throughout the book, multiple characters reference and find comfort in Shakespeare's *The Tempest*. If you've read *The Tempest*, why do you think the author chose this play in particular? What connections and common themes does it share with *The Exiles*?
8. At one point, Mathinna thinks to herself "She was tired of feeling as if she lived between worlds. This was the world she lived in now." In what way does Van Diemen's Land act as a "between world" for the different characters? How do they each struggle with leaving behind their old lives and adapting to new ones?
9. Do you think Hazel really could have forgiven Buck if he had let her? Would you have been able to forgive him after everything he did?
10. Ruby thinks about her "many mothers," and how each played a key role in taking care of her and making her the person she became. What role do found families, and found mothers in particular, play throughout the story?
11. Dr. Garrett reflects on the privileges granted the residents of Van Diemen's Land, saying, "It is my sense that, despite its hardships and limitations, living in a new world accords one certain freedoms. Social hierarchies are not as rigidly enforced." In what ways is this both true and not true for each of the characters in *The Exiles*? What are the limitations of these freedoms – which characters are allowed them, and why are others excluded?

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- *The Paris apartment* by Lucy Foley.

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