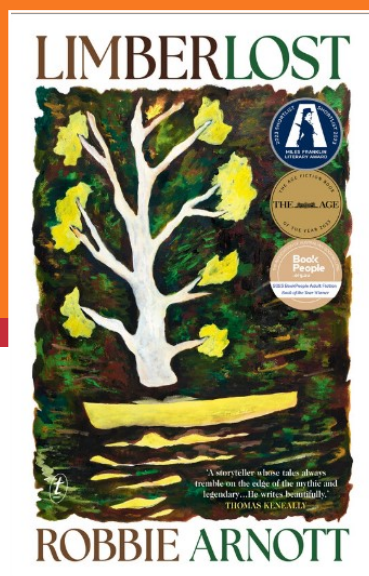# *Limberlost*

By Robbie, Arnott.

First published in 2022

Genre and Subject

Australian fiction   *Domestic fiction*
Farm life -- fiction
Loss (Psychology) -- fiction

Synopsis

In the heat of a long summer Ned hunts rabbits in a river valley, hoping the pelts will earn him enough money to buy a small boat.

His two brothers are away at war, their whereabouts unknown. His father and older sister struggle to hold things together on the family orchard, Limberlost.

Desperate to ignore it all—to avoid the future rushing towards him—Ned dreams of open water.

As his story unfolds over the following decades, we see how Ned's choices that summer come to shape the course of his life, the fate of his family and the future of the valley, with its seasons of death and rebirth.

The third novel by the award-winning author of Flames and The Rain Heron, Limberlost is an extraordinary chronicle of life and land: of carnage and kindness, blood ties and love.

Author Biography

Robbie Arnott's acclaimed debut, Flames (2018), won a Sydney Morning Herald Best Young Novelist award and a Tasmanian Premier's Literary Prize, and was shortlisted for a Victorian Premier's Literary Award, a New South Wales Premier's Literary Award, a Queensland Literary Award, the Readings Prize for New Australian Fiction and the Not the Booker Prize. His follow-up, The Rain Heron (2020), won the Age Book of the Year award, and was shortlisted for the Miles Franklin Literary Award, the ALS Gold Medal, the Voss Literary Prize and an Adelaide Festival Award. He lives in Hobart.

Discussion Starters

1. The novel weaves together the past and the present, focusing on the life of Ned and his experiences interspersed with scenes from one summer. How does this narrative structure enhance the storytelling and our understanding of Ned's character?

2. Ned's connection to the natural world is a central theme in the book. How does the author use lyrical language to convey the relationship between Ned and his environment, particularly in his interactions with animals and landscapes?

3. Ned is deeply attached to his brothers, Bill and Toby, who are serving in World War II. How does the fear of losing them shape Ned's character and his aspirations throughout the story?

4. The novel explores the themes of love, fear of loss, and joy. In what ways do these themes manifest in the lives of the characters, especially Ned and his family?

5. The removal of Captain Cook's statue is a significant subplot that allows the reader to delve into issues related to history, symbolism, and colonization. How does this event impact the characters and the broader narrative?

6. Ned is portrayed as a quiet and observant character who often struggles to express himself verbally. How does this aspect of his personality shape his relationships and interactions with others, including his family?

7. The novel introduces elements of magical realism, such as the man made of fire and the bird made of rain from Arnott's previous novels. How does this magical realism enhance the storytelling in "Limberlost"?

8. The story is set in both Australia and England. How do the descriptions and imagery of these settings contribute to the overall atmosphere and themes of the novel?

9. Robbie Arnott's use of enchanting language and metaphors adds depth to the narrative. Discuss some of the evocative language and imagery used in the book and how it enhances the reader's experience.

10. Ultimately, "Limberlost" is a novel about discovering the magic of love within one's family. How does Ned's journey throughout the story lead to this realization, and what does the novel convey about the power of familial bonds?

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