Book Club Notes

*On a Bright Hillside in Paradise*

by Annette Higgs

Told from five different points of view, each one revealing something different, *On a Bright Hillside in Paradise*tells the story of a family of convict descendants in the back-blocks of Tasmania, on a farm in a place called Paradise. The drama begins when strangers arrive, Christian Brethren evangelists who hold big revival meetings in local barns. From the winner of the 2022 Penguin Literary Prize.

Discussion points and questions

* *On a Bright Hillside in Paradise* has an unusual structure, with the same events told from the point of view of five different characters. What was your experience of reading a story told this way?
* The central incident in the story is the arrival of Christian Brethren evangelists. Discuss how the author handles the theme of revivalist religion in the novel.
* There is a family at the heart of this story, including three generations of women. What did you make of the female characters and their hopes and dreams?
* The brothers Jack and Eddie have very different reactions to the preachers. Which did you find more believable?
* Paradise, Sheffield, and Mount Roland are real places in Tasmania. The landscape is like an extra character in this story. Discuss.
* The story of the Hatton family is based on the author’s own family. What do you think would be the effect of investigating your own family so closely, and imagining inner lives for them?
* Did the novel reveal anything new about colonial Tasmania, the white settlers, the Indigenous people or the relationships between the two?