



Quality fiction from Scribe
paperback
RRP \$32.95 (NZ\$35.00)
ISBN 9781921372186



Vivienne Kelly is a freelance writer based in Melbourne. Her fiction has appeared in *Best Australian Stories*, and in 2008 she won *The Australian Women's Weekly*/Penguin short story competition. *Cooee* is her first novel.

book club notes



Cooee

vivienne kelly

1. The novel is told entirely in Isabel's words. Is this a strength or a limitation?
2. The book examines different kinds of love – for example, Isabel's love for Dominic and Max and Sophie; Kate's and Zoë's love for Isabel. Everyone's love seems flawed in some way. Does this make the book seem negative or pessimistic? Is it possible to have an unflawed love?
3. If Dominic were to write an account of (for instance) the lunch he has with Isabel (pp. 52-6), how do you think he would describe it? Whose version would you be more likely to believe?
4. Why is the book called *Cooee*? Is it a good title?
5. Does Isabel's blind egotism make it impossible to sympathise with her? Does she have any qualities you admire?
6. Isabel is certainly an unreliable narrator. But are there ways in which you trust her? If so, in what ways do you think she is trustworthy?
7. Would you prefer the book to finish on a more definite note? Why (or why not)? How do you think Isabel's story will end?
8. Do Isabel's meditations at Zoë's funeral help to give you a new perspective on her?
9. Do you think the scene of Sophie's 'reception' or 'fairy godmother party' has a particular function in the book (pp. 153-66)? What is it?
10. At the end of the book Isabel says: 'Surely, surely, I have deserved better than this. Haven't I?' Has she?

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