

# **THE BOOKCLUB**

**Jane Miller**

Jane Miller

Email:  
[jane@blackcactus.com.au](mailto:jane@blackcactus.com.au)

**Version 7**  
28/07/2007

© *Jane Miller 2007*

## **THE BOOK CLUB**

### **Characters:**

Barbara: mid 40's to early 60's

Carly: early 20's to 30

Shirley: mid 40's to early 60's

Fiona: mid 20's to 30's

Sharon: mid 20's to 30's

Ray: mid 40's to early 60's

**A KITCHEN  
FIVE WOMEN SIT AROUND A TABLE.**

**SHARON:** Ladies, welcome to our third book club meeting. Thanks again to Barbara for having us here. Should we make a start?

**BARBARA:** Yes, yes let's start.

**FIONA:** I think we should definitely start with a bit of a summary of the book. The plot et cetera.

**SHARON:** Haven't you read it? I'd be disappointed if that was the case Fiona. You did choose the book this month.

**FIONA:** I've read it. I was thinking of others.

**SHARON:** Have others not read it?

**CARLY:** I read it.

**BARBARA:** I read it. Didn't think much of it but I read it.

**SHIRLEY:** I read it.

**FIONA:** I still think it would be helpful. An overview. A synopsis

**SHARON:** Well over to you then, Fiona. The book was your choice this month.

**FIONA:** No....I'd like to get your view on it.

**SHARON:** Fiona....It's your turn to lead the discussion.

**FIONA:** Really Sharon....You're so much better at this than I.

**SHARON:** Alright then. This month's book was "A Cry in the Wake" by Mary J Martinez. The story of Yvette, a brave woman who struggles to overcome self esteem issues due to a horrible disfigurement. How did we find it?

**BARBARA:** Ordinary. Decidedly ordinary. A bit of a dud.

*(RAY ENTERS. HE IS WEARING BINOCULARS AROUND HIS NECK AND CARRYING A LARGE TORCH.)*

**RAY:** Good evening ladies.

**SHIRLEY:** Hello Ray...Did you want to join us?

**RAY:** No bloody fear Shirley.  
Barb, I'll be out the back. If you hear anything....Dial triple 0

**BARBARA:** What?

*(RAY EXITS)*

Why am I dialing triple 0?....Ray.....What are you doing? Ray....

**CARLY:** Mum, what are the binoculars for?

**BARBARA:** No idea. It'll be something to do with next door. Convinced they're crime kingpins. All the talk for the last month has been bloody hydroponics.

**SHIRLEY:** It's more common than you think...

**BARBARA:** What?

**SHIRLEY:** Hydroponics.

**FIONA:** Hydroponics? Are they growing tomatoes?

**SHIRLEY:** Not tomatoes Fiona....Marijuana. Cannabis.

**FIONA:** They're not growing it next door? Are they? Marijuana? Next door to this house?

**SHIRLEY:** It's common. On the current affairs show the other night they-

**SHARON:** Perhaps we should get back to the book...

**BARBARA:** Good idea.

**SHARON:** Now....What about exploring the themes? Yvette's self esteem was a key issue-

**CARLY:** She had a huge scar across the middle of her face. Hadn't she heard of plastic surgery?

**FIONA:** Absolutely. Good point.

**CARLY:** She could afford it. She won all that money in the lottery.

**FIONA:** Definitely. Well said.

**BARBARA:** The whole story was far fetched.

**SHARON:** It had a lot to say about women. About the struggle to be accepted on your own terms.

**FIONA:** Absolutely. It said a lot ...About struggling and.... Being accepted.....The struggle to be accepted.

**SHARON:** Which character did people like?

**CARLY:** I liked Benedict.

**BARBARA:** They were all completely unbelievable....Except for Francine.

**SHARON:** Fiona?

**FIONA:** I liked....I admired.....The mother.

**SHARON:** Millie?

**FIONA:** Yes, Millie.

**CARLY:** Or Bernadette, Francine's mother?

**FIONA:** Yes.

**SHARON:** Who? Millie or Bernadette?

**FIONA:** Well...Millie. Yes. Millie.

**BARBARA:** I thought she was a pain in the proverbial. She never stopped being pious and self sacrificing.

**SHARON:** She had much to be self sacrificing about. What about Mickey and the stolen money?

**BARBARA:** I could see that coming. Mickey was no good from the beginning.

**SHARON:** Yes but Millie stood by Mickey. As she had to.

**CARLY:** I found Millie's death moving. I cried when she waited for Mickey to bring back the necklace.

**FIONA:** I cried too. It was very sad.

**SHARON:** But what made it sad? It resonated with me but I can't put my finger on why. Why did it move me? It was almost tragic.

**CARLY:** I think it's that whole thing with the child returning to the parent...After many years

**FIONA:** Yes. Absolutely. That's definitely it. Well said.

**SHARON:** Or is it the loss symbolized by the necklace?

**FIONA:** That too. I think it was both things. Definitely both.

**SHARON:** That's so interesting that you say that Fiona. Can you expand a little bit more?

**FIONA:** Well...It was.....It was sad....Why don't you say something about it?

**SHARON:** I want to hear your thoughts. I'm intrigued by how similar our thinking is.

*RAY ENTERS HOLDING A PIECE OF TIN FOIL*

**RAY:** Barb. I need you to come outside for a minute.

**BARBARA:** Why?

**RAY:** Look at this.

**SHIRLEY:** Tin foil.

**RAY:** You know what it means....

**BARBARA:** Look Ray, we're trying to discuss the book-

**SHIRLEY:** Hydroponics. Tin foil...That means hydroponics.....

**RAY:** Exactly Shirley...Hydroponics. And they're in and out of that bungalow...

**SHIRLEY:** Bungalow? Suspicious....

**RAY:** My thoughts exactly.

**BARBARA:** For God's sake....

**SHIRLEY:** I saw a report about the tenants from hell. It was all bungalows, bright lights, insulation and tin foil on the windows. Hydroponics.

**RAY:** Barb, see...Shirley's on to it. Spot on, Shirley.

- BARBARA:** If there's tin foil on the windows, the binoculars won't be any use.
- RAY:** Come outside, Barb. I need your help for a few minutes while I try an experiment.
- BARBARA:** I have guests here and I'm not coming outside while you creep around like a demented peeping tom.
- SHIRLEY:** Ray....I'll help. I'd like to get to the bottom of it.
- SHARON:** Shirley...You can't just leave the discussion at this crucial-
- SHIRLEY:** I won't be long. Let's go Ray.....
- RAY:** Much appreciated Shirley. You see Barb.... Shirley's on my wavelength.
- (RAY AND SHIRLEY LEAVE.)**
- SHARON:** Shall we get back to the book.
- CARLY:** Back to Mickey and Millie.....
- SHARON:** And you were saying Fiona.....
- FIONA:** Well-
- SHARON:** Yes?
- FIONA:** They were estranged....Then they weren't....And then Millie died.
- SHARON:** I think we're getting close to some real insight. .Mickey and Millie-
- FIONA:** Were not speaking.
- SHARON:** They were estranged.
- FIONA:** Yes. That's right. Well. They weren't speaking and then Mickey brought a necklace to Millie and they were reunited.
- SHARON:** That is exactly how I saw it. It was very real.
- FIONA:** Yes it was real.... Very real. And sad. So sad. But real.
- SHARON:** Fiona. This is wonderful. You've obviously thought as deeply about it as I have.

- FIONA:** Oh I have. Very deeply.
- SHARON:** And that moment when Mickey apologizes and begs forgiveness....
- FIONA:** That was well done. I mean...Micky was pushing his luck. I think Millie showed real compassion in forgiving him after all he'd done.
- CARLY:** Who?
- FIONA:** Mickey.
- SHARON:** Did you say 'he'?
- FIONA:** Yes. He...Mickey... That's who we were talking about...Mickey... Millie's son.
- CARLY:** Mickey was a woman.
- SHARON:** Michaela.
- FIONA:** Oh yes...Sorry that's right. I was thinking of Bernadette's son.
- SHARON:** Bernadette didn't have a son.
- FIONA:** What about Yvette?
- SHARON:** Fiona...Correct me if I'm off target..... But despite your insights I'm starting feel that there may be a question mark over whether you actually read the book?
- FIONA:** Well I-
- BARBARA:** Not that anyone could blame you....I found the whole thing a bloody struggle to be honest.
- SHARON:** I'm disappointed. The whole point of the book club is to make the effort to read the book. And this month it was your choice.
- FIONA:** I know. I wanted to.
- SHARON:** And then to pretend-
- FIONA:** I had trouble getting a copy and then when I did get it was so thick and the print was so small. It was tiny. It must have been about a thousand pages.... It was very thick with tiny little print....It's very long.

**SHARON:** It's only five hundred and sixty two pages. Including the prologue.

**BARBARA:** It seemed like more like a thousand

**FIONA:** I read the last page but couldn't make head or tail of it. I kept seeing the name Mickey and I just assumed it was a man.

**SHARON:** Assumed? Oh Fiona, assumptions are always fraught with danger.

**CARLY:** Aren't you taking this too seriously?

**SHARON:** Not at all. What is the point of the book club, if people don't read the book?

**BARBARA:** The social element.

**SHARON:** Then start a social club. I joined a book club. I would like to occasionally discuss the book... I think we have to be firm on this.

**BARBARA:** Firm. It's a bit of fun on a Friday night.

**SHARON:** But people don't prepare. They don't make the effort to read the book. There's no sense of commitment. I went to a lot of trouble this month-

**CARLY:** What trouble? You read the book. So did I. I also went to a lot of trouble if that's the criteria.

**BARBARA:** Let's have a cup of tea. And a bit of a chat.

**SHARON:** What about? We can hardly discuss the book....Now that we know...What we know... About Fiona.

*(A POLICE SIREN IS HEARD)*

**BARBARA:** Perhaps Ray is not completely out of his tree. Perhaps there is something going on next door.

**CARLY:** *(CARLY GETS UP AND GOES TO LOOK OUT THE WINDOW)*  
I can't see anything. Wouldn't it be funny if it was hydroponics?

*(CARLY SITS DOWN)*

**BARBARA:** Don't you start.  
Now come on girls... Let's not lose our sense of humour.

**SHARON:** I'm sorry. I see that this group is .....Actually determined not to take the book seriously...There's no sense of commitment.

**CARLY:** It's a book club.

**SHARON:** If it's worth doing...it's worth taking seriously. That's how I feel. I think I'm going to have to reconsider my position.

**FIONA:** I promise to read next month's book.

**SHARON:** Fiona.....You can't really be blamed. You not reading the book is merely symptomatic of the general laizes fare attitude that permeates through this group. It's not your fault...

**FIONA:** Really? Thanks.

**SHARON:** Clearly Carly, Barbara and Shirley are no better....

**CARLY:** No better...At least we read the book....

**SHARON:** I'm sorry but I can't deny the general malaise. It's plain for all to see.

*SHIRLEY RUSHES IN*

**SHIRLEY:** Carly..... Barb...You'd better come. Quick.

**BARBARA:** What's going on next door? We heard a siren....

**CARLY:** Was it a raid?

**SHIRLEY:** The police have arrested Ray.

**BARBARA:** Ray.

**SHIRLEY:** Breaking and entering. He fell through the roof of the next door bungalow.

**BARBARA:** What?

**SHIRLEY:** He was trying to get a good look at what was going on with the neighbors. I was up on the fence trying to shine the torch on the roof so he could see.

**BARBARA:** Is he hurt?

**SHIRLEY:** He's limping. And I think his balaclava got caught on a roof nail so he's twisted his neck a bit.....

**BARBARA:** Balaclava?

**CARLY:** What about the drugs?

**SHIRLEY:** Drugs?

**BARBARA:** Next door....The reason for this whole debacle.

**SHIRLEY:** No drugs. Apparently...And this is quite humorous.... It's a photography studio...Dark room, lights for photo shoots and the like...Amusing really....

**BARBARA:** No hydroponics?

**SHIRLEY:** Not so far.

**BARBARA:** No criminal activity...No Marijuana....Just photography.....

**SHIRLEY:** Just a lot of photographs of clothes...And shoes....Photographs of shoes.... Funny isn't it? How you get the wrong end of the-

**BARBARA:** I see.  
Sharon. I think we should just get on with our discussion about the book.

**CARLY:** What about Dad?

**BARBARA:** What about him?

**SHIRLEY:** Barbara, I assumed you'd want to go down to the police station straight away to pick him up.

**BARBARA:** Oh Shirley, assumptions are always fraught with danger. We're in the middle of book club. It's far more important that we go back to the question of Millie and the necklace.

**SHIRLEY:** But Ray-

**BARBARA:** I have a commitment to the book club. To discuss the book.

**SHARON:** Bravo. Sanity finally prevails. Fiona, you'll just have to try to keep up. Where were we? Yes...Back to Millie's death .....

**SHIRLEY:** Who's Millie?

**LIGHTS DOWN**