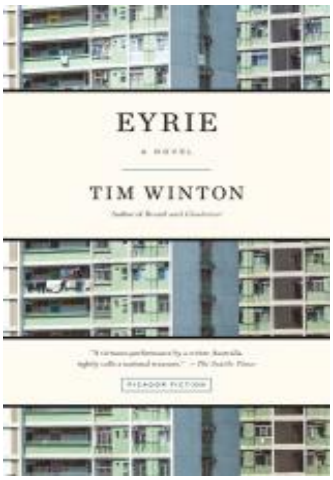
ReadingGroupGuides
The online community for reading groups

Eyrie

by Tim Winton



About the Book

Australia?s most decorated literary novelist Tim Winton brings to light the corners of humanity where hope prevails in even the most trying circumstances --- episodes that are by turns tough and tender, captured in scenes of unflinching realism. In EYRIE, Winton introduces us to Tom Keely, a man who has lost everything that matters to him. Once an ambitious environmentalist, Keely now finds himself embroiled in scandal, divorced and scraping together a bare-bones existence on the west coast of Australia --- until a chance encounter with a neighbor transforms his view of life. He remembers Gemma from childhood; she and her sister often sought refuge at his house. As she goes to war against the petty criminals and dealers who threaten to bring down her world, Keely finds a cause that will test everything he believes about himself and his place in the world.

Discussion Guide

1. Tim Winton is known for crafting highly evocative settings. Discuss the landscape of Fremantle and the grit of Blackboy Crescent, the street where Tom Keely?s earliest memories were formed. How do the novel?s locales affect the way the characters see themselves?

2. Discuss the title and its reference to an elevated bird?s nest or other secluded perch. What does Keely see from the eyrie of his apartment, and in the eyrie of his mind? What sort of eyrie is he able to provide for Gemma and Kai?

3. What does the novel say about the nature of evildoers such as Stewie and Clappy? Is addiction a cause or a symptom (or both) of the anguish experienced in their community?

4. Why has Keely been drawn to the natural world all his life? Which healing aspects of nature can he impart to Kai?

5. How is Keely affected by the memory of his biker-evangelist dad? What enabled Doris and Nev to become the safe

haven for the Buck children? Ultimately, what makes for good parenting in EYRIE?

6. How does faith (religious or otherwise) play out in EYRIE? What motivates Keely to launch a duel between the dollar sign and the cross?

7. Discuss the role of money and commerce in communities like Fremantle. What determines who will struggle to survive and who will thrive? Who are the characters who have power in this world? Who are the most vulnerable characters?

8. How does Keely?s relationship with Gemma compare to his marriage to Harriet?

9. Beginning with Bunker?s abuse of her when she was a child, what did Gemma learn to expect from men? As she begins to trust Keely, how do her needs change?

10. What brings Kai the greatest comfort? How does Keely transform his understanding of love?

11. When Keely thinks about his status as an outcast within the environmental movement, is he realistic when he sees no future for his career? Has he truly run out of ways to save the land he loves, or is he simply unable to see his own value? Have you ever stood at a similar crossroads?

12. What accounts for the differences between Keely and his sister, Faith? In what ways is he more successful than she is?

13. How does EYRIEenhance your experience of Tim Winton?s other novels? What is unique about his approach to human hardship and solace?

14. Is there a Gemma in your childhood memories --- someone you?d want to reconnect with because you share a powerful past?

Author Bio

The preeminent Australian novelist of his generation, Tim Winton is the author of the bestselling CLOUDSTREET, THE RIDERS and DIRT MUSIC, among many other books. He has won the Miles Franklin Award four times (for SHALLOWS, CLOUDSTREET, DIRT MUSIC and BREATH) and has twice been short-listed for the Booker Prize (for THE RIDERS and DIRT MUSIC). He lives in Western Australia.

Critical Praise

?EYRIE is a fine work by any standard. It tackles myths of prosperity and success in a way that is not always comfortable, but that stirs deep thought. It is rich in compassion and affectionate towards the unlovely. It has a strong

belief that no journey ends at the halfway mark. EYRIE is a novel for which our culture has been in urgent need.?

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