



## **Book Club Book of the Month: September 2020**

### ***Living on Stolen Land*, Ambelin Kwaymullina (Magabala Books)**

#### **Summary**

*Living on Stolen Land* is a prose-style manifesto that asks the reader to consider the cost of living on stolen land. In this latest work by talented writer and artist Ambelin Kwaymullina, we are, by turns, informed and challenged and invited to understand “ancestor stories, resistance stories, life stories” without judgement and preconceived biases. “Change-makers understand that colonisers occupy space and decolonisers yield it”, says Kwaymullina. Tackling the big lie of settler societies and terra nullius, the writer’s concerns are squarely with country, memory, ancestry and culpability. This joyous and unflinching book from a brave and resistant voice makes a valuable contribution to helping our nation move forward.

#### **About the author**

Ambelin Kwaymullina is an Aboriginal writer, illustrator and law academic. She comes from the Palyku people of the Pilbara region of Western Australia. Ambelin works across a range of storytelling forms including non-fiction,

young adult novels, science fiction and children's picture books. Her work has been published in the U.K., the U.S.A., France, Russia and China. Ambelin Kwaymullina has won the Victorian Premier's Literary Award as well as the Aurealis Award.

## Questions for discussion

1. What do you think of the way this book is presented, in its prose-style manifesto? Why do you think this format was used for the themes it tackles?
2. The burden of history, landscape and settler societies are all themes that are explored in this book. What other books have you read that are similar?
3. In the book, the writer addresses the reader directly about the burdens of settler colonialism. How did this make you feel?
4. There is both an attempt to inform as well to educate the reader. What is the most appealing aspect of this style of writing and how do you respond to it?
5. What are some of the myths that lie at the heart of our nationhood and how does the writer pull those myths apart?
6. This is the literature of resistance, of storytelling that centres the Aboriginal perspective, that does not flinch from truth-telling. How different was this perspective from your own? How did reading a book written from this perspective make you feel?
7. What does the writer mean when she speaks of sovereignty, struggle and inheritance and how does she illustrate her point of view?
8. A sense of the interconnectedness of species runs through this narrative. Everything has value and is connected, not just plants and

humans and animals but also the wind and rain and stars. What do you think of this perspective? Is it similar to anything you have encountered through experience or through other literature?

9. What is at the heart of Indigenous ways of knowing?
10. How has reading this book changed your viewpoint about the violence inflicted on Aboriginal people by colonial settlement?

### **If you liked this book, you may also like...**

*Taboo*, Kim Scott, Pan Macmillan

*My Place*, Sally Morgan, Fremantle Press

*The Wounded Sinner*, Gus Henderson, Magabala Books

*Tracker*, Alexis Wright, Giramondo Publishing