



Love
in the age of
DROUGHT

A career girl, a cotton farmer
and an unlikely romance

FIONA HIGGINS



QUESTIONS FOR BOOK CLUBS

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1. This is a book about relationships.

- a) How does the love between Stuart and Fiona change over the course of the book?
- b) How does Fiona's relationship with farming and rural life evolve over time? How does Stuart's?
- c) As individuals, to what extent do Fiona and Stuart fulfill or subvert stereo types of a typical romantic hero and heroine?
- d) Does this book have a happy ending?

2. This book is part of a genre of city-meets-country tales.

- a) How is rural Australia depicted in this book? Do you agree with this depiction?
- b) What do we learn about the psychological impacts of farming over the course of this book? How is farming different to other vocations?
- c) Are rural communities different to urban communities? If so, in what ways?
- d) Before meeting Stuart, Fiona had limited experience of farming and farmers. Did this book change or confirm your own view of farmers?

3. Humour plays a role in this memoir. What type of humour is deployed (irony, satire)? Who is the focus of this humour and what is its purpose?

4. Faith and ambivalence are dual themes of this book. Discuss how they play out in the choices Fiona and Stuart make, and the issues raised about purpose and meaning in life.

5. The author discloses personal emotional issues in this memoir. How did this affect your reading experience?

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6. Ethics is a recurrent theme in this book.
- a) Are consumers just as accountable as farmers for the environmental consequences of some farming practices?
 - b) Should genetically modified (GM) crops be feared, outlawed or accepted?
 - c) If you had been present at the dinner party in Adelaide, would you have been satisfied with Stuart's response to Jason's questioning on water resource management? In your view, should cotton be grown in Australia at all?
 - d) After her separation from Stuart, Fiona reflects: 'Sometimes all it takes to be unethical is to just do nothing.' Discuss, drawing on your own experience.

**Love in the Age of Drought by Fiona Higgins (Macmillan Australia, \$34.99)
is available from all good bookstores.**