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Book Club: Wife On The Run

November 19, 2014 by [Michelle 1 Comment](#)

Author: Fiona Higgins

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Wife On The Run is so completely relatable that I found myself drawn further and further into the narrative and didn't want to put it down. I think everyone in a long term monogamous relationship is going to find something in this book that speaks to them.

Paula and Hamish have been married 17 years and life has settled into a comfortable rhythm, or so it seems.

Technology bursts the family bubble in a spectacular way. First comes the Facebook scandal featuring their fourteen year old daughter, a situation that is the stuff of nightmares for any parent of teens. Soon after, Hamish has a bicycle accident resulting in hospitalisation and another technological disaster being uncovered.

Hamish and Paula are approaching 40, have teenaged children and have been together almost half of their lives. I am at a time in my life where I can relate to much of that so I found that I could identify with Paula and her situation a little, I could understand some of what is going on in her head at times.

As newlyweds Hamish and Paula had such big plans for the way they envisaged their life together. The scrapbook of holiday destinations, the early morning runs and exercise sessions together of the early years of their relationship, and the healthy libidos they shared. The years rolled on, the kids came along and these things started to fall by the wayside.

Paula threw herself into domesticity and motherhood, making the children her number one priority and not putting as much effort into the marriage as she had beforehand. The children were less than two years apart so the early days were extremely full on. She ran the household, ran the kids around and by the time of the technological disasters was back working part time.



Overwhelmed by the sudden crashing down of her world Paula decides to take some much needed time out and head off on her long dreamed of trip around Australia, without Hamish. She packs up the caravan, the kids and her dad and off they go leaving Hamish recuperating in the hospital.

Wife On The Run is told from both viewpoints so though we get inside Paula's rage and heartbreak we also get inside Hamish's head to see how things escalated.

Paula's time on the road gives her a lot of time for reflection and it forces an end to the precision routine and planning. It means she finally starts to sit back and relax a little, learns to go with the flow. Time to relax often means time to think and leads to self evaluation and this can be a good thing.

This trip ends up teaching everyone some very valuable life lessons as Paula's dad, Sid, decides that the time away from school doesn't mean the children should have a break from education and starts them on his life lessons. They spend their time learning independence – cooking, cleaning and socialisation without the benefit of technology.

I did find there to be a bit of predictability in the storyline but a couple of unexpected twists at the end added a new layer to the narrative. Following the storyline I thought I knew where it was going and how it would end but Higgins had some surprises in store which took me a while to fully appreciate.

Seventeen years is a long time to be married and it is easy to fall into a routine of convenience even when it isn't what you necessarily want. You spend so long together that you take it for granted, you take each other for granted, without even realising it. Life has a rhythm to it and it seems that no-one wants to rock the boat but without great communication who can ever know what's going on in their partner's head.

Hamish behaved badly, and managed to justify it to himself, there is no denying that. I found it very difficult to be sympathetic to him and I often wondered if he would have been able to justify it so easily had the shoe been on the other foot. As we saw him take off cross country to track down his family he would begin to redeem himself and then do something stupid to ruin it. All very realistic and I could certainly relate his actions and justifications to people that I know, though thankfully not my husband.

A long term relationship can see you lose a little of your individuality and identity, not always by any means but it's definitely possible, and that is what happened here but the routine flowed ever forward so that it wasn't noticed until the crash. Wife On The Run is Paula's journey back to herself. It was a story that I thoroughly enjoyed and I have to admit that it did make me sit back and think about my relationship a little.

A book that I will be recommending to anyone who enjoys a contemporary read and will have me on the lookout for more by Fiona Higgins.

You can also follow Fiona on her [Website](#) and [Facebook](#).

A selection of our lucky readers will be reading Wife On The Run as part of the Beauty and Lace Book Club so I will be interested to see what they have to say about the book.

Please be advised that there may be spoilers contained in the comments below.