



Entertaining journey

Damaged family heads west as revelations trigger around-Australia trek

RELAX with John Grey

SEX and the internet are the background for *Wife on the Run*, a timely, family-based drama.

The wife in question, Paula – confronted with an obscene Facebook post about her teenage daughter, followed by the shocking revelation of her husband's online affair with another teenage girl – hits the highway to escape around Australia with her kids and elderly dad.

After a dramatic intro, the story gets bogged down a little in some awkward exposition, but it's worth sticking with. Once the road journey begins, author Fiona Higgins hits her

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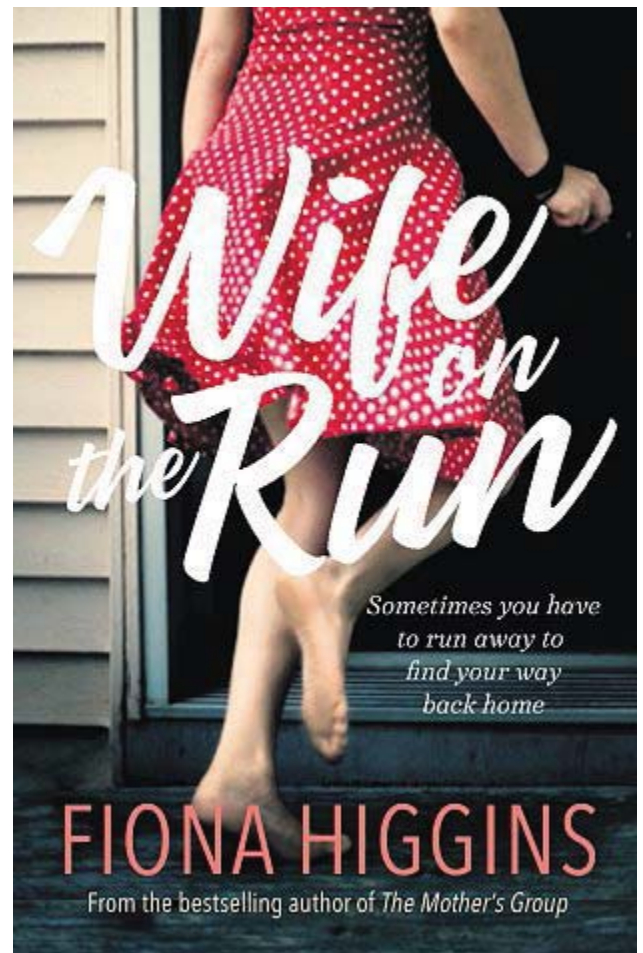
stride with humour and humanity.

Phones, social media and tech are banned (though everyone breaks the rules a bit) as the damaged family heads west and works on healing the hurt. Much is learnt on the road, especially when gorgeous Brazilian surfer Marcelo joins their journey and sparks Paula's imagination and pulse rate.

Some of the learnings are fun and funny, some are painful, some are surprising. Higgins' main characters are familiar and three-dimensional (though the passing minor characters tend to move in two dimensions – but isn't that how it seems in real life, too?).

Beware, there is adult content here – not gratuitous but certainly graphic. There is also an eye-watering description of a Brazilian wax. And there is strong language. Though I found Gramps's use of the word "bonza" more disturbing.

Wife on the Run is written by Fiona Higgins and published by Allen and Unwin.



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PHOTO: CONTRIBUTED