The Queerly Beloved BOOK CLUB



THURSDAY 16 JULY 6.30PM

Theme: Queer Aussie Fiction

Book: *Yeah The Boys* by Holden Sheppard

Blurb

Seven years after escaping their rural hometown, the boys – Charlie, Zeke and Hammer – are back, though not as we left them.

Charlie's fighting spirit has faded as he's struggled to make it as a punk musician in Perth. The opening of a new gay bar by Curtis and Ahmed, an older gay couple who have become Charlie's mentors, offers him a different way to make his mark – but the bar's opponents have other ideas.

Zeke is lost. He knows what he stands against – the closeted life and conventional success his strict Italian parents demanded of him – but doesn't know what he stands *for*. He surprises himself by joining a gay footy is it the mistake his friends think it is, or will playing footy finally give him what he's always wanted?

Hammer has it all – fame and fortune as a star football player – or so he thinks. He's still closeted, and can't stand the AFL stuffing diversity initiatives like Pride Round down everyone's throats, especially his. But when he opens his mouth, he ignites a furore that throws all the boys' lives into chaos.

Unapologetic and unforgettable, this is the story of three boys finding their way back to each other, and finding their own ways to become men.

Themes / Discussion Points

- Queer/gay fiction/literature as a genre
- Representation of community – realistic?
- Importance and relevance of Pride
- Importance of role models etc in sport and other visible industries
- Ideas about masculinity – right and wrong ways to be a gay man?
- Separate spaces for gay men, lesbians, trans & non-binary people
- Social media influencers as stylised versions of queer stereotypes
- Identification as gay vs queer
- Queer community vs “straighties”

Trigger Warnings

- Detailed sexual content
- Drug and alcohol consumption
- Suicidal ideation
- Homophobia
- Death

QUESTIONS TO THINK ABOUT

General

- What format did you read *Yeah The Boys* in?
- Which feature do you think was better? – plot, characters, writing or everything was equal
- What did you like about the book?
- What did you dislike about the book?
- What will you remember about this book a year from now?
- Would you recommend this book to someone? Why or why not?
- Would you re-read it? Why or why not?

Characters

- Who was your favourite character? What did you like about them?
- Which character would you most like to meet in real life?
- Were there any characters that you disliked? What did you dislike about them?
- Which character did you most relate to and why?
- Did you like what happened to the characters throughout the story? What would you have done differently?

Plot / Setting / Story

- Was there anything in the plot / setting / story that prompted you to discuss the book with others as you were reading or after you finished it?
- Did the book relate to you personally? Did it evoke any memories or feelings for you?
- Did you find any part of the book challenging or difficult to read or understand?
- How important was the setting to the story do you think? Could the story with the same plot and characters have been told in a different setting?
- If you could be dropped into the world of *Yeah The Boys*, would you want to be? Why or why not?
- Were there any quotes, paragraphs or parts of the story that you loved?

Author / Writing

- Have you read Holden’s other works *Invisible Boys*, *The Brink* and *King of Dirt*?
- Do you enjoy Holden’s writing style? Do you find it easy or hard to read?
- How much do you think the author’s personal views or biases influenced the book and how do you feel about that?
- Did your knowledge of the author effect your interpretation of the book?
- If you could ask the author one question about this book, what would it be?