



Currawong Manor

Josephine Pennicott

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Currawongs appearing at the Manor in vast numbers had come to portend one thing...

Death was on its way.

When photographer Elizabeth Thorrington is invited to document the history of *Currawong Manor* for a book, she is keen to investigate a mystery from years before: the disappearance of her grandfather, the notorious artist Rupert Partridge, and the deaths of his wife, Doris, and daughter, Shalimar. For years, locals have speculated whether it was terrible tragedy or a double murder, but until now, the shocking truth of what happened at the Manor that day has remained a secret.

Relocating to the manor, Elizabeth interviews Ginger Flower, one of Rupert's life models from the seventies, and Dolly Shaw, the daughter of the enigmatic 'dollmaker' who seems to have been protected over the years by the Partridge family. Elizabeth is sure the two women know what happened all those years ago, but neither will share their truths unconditionally. And in the surrounding Owlbone Woods, a haunting presence still lurks, waiting for the currawongs to gather...

An evocative tale set in the spectacular Blue Mountains, *Currawong Manor* is a mystery of art, truth and the ripple effects of death and deception.

Currawong Manor Details

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Author : Josephine Pennicott

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From Reader Review Currawong Manor for online ebook

Cat says

I just loved this book so much!

You know those books you read that you just keep grabbing and reading whenever you get a moment because you love it just so much? this is one of those books; you become immersed in the story and the characters become almost a real part of your life.

Josephine Pennicott loves words and they love her. A beautifully written book by an author who just keeps getting better and better. I cannot wait until her next tale.

Debbie says

das buch war sehr schön geschrieben. ich mochte die geschichte und konnte mir die charaktere und deren handlungen gut vorstellen.

ich würde das buch immer wieder gerne lesen. :)

Polly says

Wow. Don't read if you don't like Main characters who are okay with child porn... I am so disgusted by the last five chapters. Gross.

Bianca says

Das Buch ist wirklich klasse. Ich hab es als Hörbuch gehört und die beiden Vorlesestimmen war super. Die Geschichte hat mich total gefesselt und ich hab immer weiter gehört, sobald sich die Möglichkeit für mich ergab. Ich lese sehr gern Familiengeschichten, bei denen Tragödien aufgedeckt werden. Die Geschichte um das alte Anwesen und deren Bewohner ist sehr spannend. Die Rückblenden sind flüssig und alles ist verständlich. Tolle Charaktere! Nur den deutschen Titel "Sturmtöchter" kann ich weniger nachvollziehen. Der Originaltitel "Currawong Manor" hätte es meiner Meinung nach auch im deutschen getan.

Karen Brooks says

In this atmospheric and historically detailed tale set in the Blue Mountains, Josephine Pennicott tells the story of Elizabeth Thorrington, a renown photographer, who's invited to the home her famous grandfather, the artist, Rupert Partridge, Currawong Manor, in order to photograph the house and some of the people that used to live there for a new book that's been commissioned. This book is set to celebrate the life and talents of Rupert. But Currawong Manor is a place of secrets and regrets, of lies and deceptions, of long-held

suspicions and is the place where a great tragedy happened many years earlier. A tragedy for which no satisfactory explanation has ever been provided... until perhaps now...

Knowing her family's tortured history, Elizabeth is a rather sad and quite prickly young woman, who has her own skeletons in the closet. Introduced to the current residents as well as one of her grandfather's muses, the still vibrant and sassy Ginger, Elizabeth is keen to commence the project for which she's been commissioned and delighted to be working with one of her grandfather's "Flowers" as the young women were known back then.

Back in the 1940s, Ginger was one of three young women who lived with her grandfather, his wife, Doris and their lovely young daughter Shalimar, and posed for his many paintings. Whispered about, the source of much gossip and speculation as well as desire, regarded as a "fallen woman", Ginger has risen above her origins as a "Surrey Hill rat" to become celebrated in her own right. Aware of the debt she owes Rupert and his legacy, grateful for the chance he once gave her, Ginger has agreed to be interviewed and photographed, but that doesn't mean she has to like it.

Elizabeth also meets the former musician and journalist, Nick, who has made a living writing "true crime" stories and who has been hired to write the prose that will accompany Elizabeth's photographs for the new book.

Curious about what happened back in the 1940s when so many lives were cruelly cut short, and determined to uncover the truth, Elizabeth quickly realises that Ginger and another resident at the Manor, Dolly, know more than they are prepared to tell.

Determined to get the heart of the matter, to clear her grandfather's reputation and find out what really happened all those years ago, Elizabeth not only has to confront her family's past, but the toll that years of secrets and dissembling has taken upon her and those she loves most.

Dark, the story unfolds languidly, moving the reader backwards in time before returning to the present, weaving a tapestry of mood and affect. Different points of view dominate, but mainly Elizabeth and Ginger's and it's through these two women that the reader, like those who study the challenging works of art and photographs that pepper the narrative, telling their own story, comes to understand the truth. We have to look closely, delve deeper, read the imagery and the meanings that accrue around people, their actions and the objects they hold dear in order to uncover the secrets. Just as Rupert used symbols to expose the brutality and callousness of war and the human wreckage it leaves behind, so too, Pennicott uses the architecture of the house and the magnificent grounds with its abundant flora as well as the haunting and dangerous Owlbone Woods (which is a character in itself), to hint at what's to come, at what lies below the surface.

The settings are richly and beautifully drawn. You can smell the flowers, feel the cold press of the snow or the dewy warmth of a humid summer. Likewise, as the mystery unravels, you can feel the whispers of the past and the weight of guilt that hangs upon those who carry their secrets, determined to protect themselves and others. Like the birds that occasionally darken the eaves of the house, doom walks through the pages and reading Currawong Manor becomes a visceral experience – at once exciting and dramatic.

A Gothic treat for lovers of mystery, family dramas, history and suspense.

Rachael McDiarmid says

Thoroughly enjoyed this. I think Josephine is a fine writer and she continues to shine. Similar style to Poet's Cottage but this time the setting is the Blue Mountains and the story of an artist, his family and his muses. The history of the period (1940s) is well captured and I was intrigued by the current day events - yes I love having two periods captured in a story. Gives me my historical fiction fix that's for sure! I thought her characters were well written and her story was mystical and captivating. I think her writing style is beautiful, creative and poetic. Can't wait to see what she does next.

Elli says

So many times I wanted to stop reading but when I start a book, it's a rule I have to finish it. Unfortunately, it didn't get any better. And it wouldn't end!!!!

The most irritating thing was the fact that the author would describe something by citing someone else's idea. Like, "Rupert was like Sidney Nolan". Or the Flowers were comparable to The Sirens, like the Elle McPherson movie....she actually says that!!!

Big no from me and I won't be reading anymore of ms Pennicott 's novels.

Berny Carroll says

I really disliked the main character, Elizabeth in this novel. I found her to be childish, boring and annoying. I felt like this book could have had much more potential if it had been written better.

Amber Hassen says

The book is set in the beautiful Blue Mountains in NSW. The story takes place in a town called Mount Bellwood. Not sure where this is however the author uses town names such as Katoomba, Leura, Lithgow to give you an understanding of the general location.

The story is based around the main character, photographer Elizabeth Thorrington, who is invited to Currawong Manor (unaffectionately labeled "The Ruins") to document the history of the property. The manor had once belonged to her family and is said to have been cursed. Elizabeth is keen to uncover the truth about the deaths of her Aunty and Grandmother that occurred on this property and discover the reason behind the mysterious disappearance of her Grandfather, notorious artist Rupert Partridge.

With the help of Ginger Lawson, one of Rupert's models from the 1940s, Elizabeth and Nick Cash intend to publish a book featuring photographs, journals, letters and articles about the three young women who had posed for Rupert, titled "Flowers of the Ruins".

Through one on one interviews and prerecorded tapes, you learn of Ginger's early days at the manor and meet the residents of "The Ruins", including Shalimar who is said to have "accidentally" drowned in a glen within the forest. Could it be that Ginger knows more about the young girl's death than she is letting on? And is that the real reason Nick Cash is so interested in writing this book?

The mood of this whole story is one of foreboding, with a strong sense of impending danger as shadows and unexplained noises emanate from the forest. With such a dark storyline, and the suspense that is maintained throughout the book I believe that it is very well thought out.

Jennifer (JC-S) says

‘Fate can be a dangerous mistress.’

A book has been commissioned about Currawong Manor, once the home of Rupert Partridge, a famous artist. Elizabeth Thorrington, a renowned photographer, and Rupert’s granddaughter, has been invited to the house to take photographs of it and of some of the people that used to live there. The book, to be written by true crime writer and former musician Nick Cash, is intended to celebrate Rupert Partridge’s life, and to showcase his talents.

‘But there’s still time to leave, my girl. There’s always a choice of path – and sometimes it’s wise to take the less exciting one.’

But Currawong Manor, in the picturesque (Australian) Blue Mountains, with its own history and secrets, was the place where a great tragedy occurred in the 1940s. In the space of a single day, Rupert’s wife Doris and their daughter Shalimar died separate tragic deaths. The only member of the family who survived was Elizabeth’s mother. Rupert himself disappeared. Elizabeth meets Dolly Sharp, who was a child living at Currawong Manor in the 1940s, and Ginger, one of her grandfather’s ‘Flowers’ as the three young women who lived with the Partridge family and posed for Rupert’s paintings were known.

Ginger has agreed to be interviewed and photographed, but she does not seem particularly enthusiastic. Elizabeth realises that both Ginger and Dolly know more about the mysteries of Currawong Manor than they seem prepared to share. Elizabeth is keen to find out more about her family’s past and to uncover the truth (or truths) behind the tragedy. Her own mother wants nothing to do with Currawong Manor, and warned Elizabeth against going there. So, what is the truth behind the tragedy? And will Ginger and Dolly tell Elizabeth what they know?

What is the truth of Owlbone Woods, and does a gathering of currawongs signal impending death?

‘Are you up for an adventure?’

The story of Currawong Manor and its previous inhabitants unfolds as we move between Elizabeth’s present and Ginger’s past. If you like dark, brooding, atmospheric novels, this is one to savour. Secrets abound, and while some may appear obvious to the reader, others take time to be revealed.

‘Revenge is a lit match in a summer bush- you destroy everything around you as well as yourself.’

I confess that I did not like this novel as much its predecessor, ‘Poet’s Cottage’. The story is well written, the setting well described but at times it was a little too dramatic for me. Perhaps I prefer not to have the loose ends tied up quite so completely.

Jennifer Cameron-Smith

Tamara says

★Currawong Manor ★ Josephine Pennicott ★ 3.5 stars★

This is the second novel I've read by Australian author, Josephine Pennicott, the previous being, Poet's Cottage. Like its predecessor, Currawong Manor takes us on a journey of discovery of long held family secrets and tragedies.

Elizabeth Thorrington a young photographer has been invited to document the history of Currawong Manor, the family home of her grandfather, Rubert Partridge, who mysteriously disappeared shortly after the tragic death of his daughter, Shalimar and wife Doris. Currawong Manor is located in Mount Bellwood, Blue Mountains, NSW, with many of the locals still speculating around the tragic events from the past.

Elizabeth meets with Nick Cash and together they relocate to Currawong Manor, and join other characters including Ginger Lawson, one of Ruperts life models with the aim of unravelling the historic mystery. This book had so many well drawn characters from the larger than life Ginger, the little bit different Dolly Sharp, former childhood friend of the beautiful Shalimar.

The story unfolds primarily through the memories of Ginger, who feels compelled to have the truth exposed to lift the "curse" of Currawong Manor. The story is emotive, mystery of long held secrets

Shelleyræ at Book'd Out says

An atmospheric novel of mystery, drama and tragedy, Currawong Manor has a similar tone and premise to author Josephine Pennicott's previous novel, Poet's Cottage.

Photographer Elizabeth Thorrington has always been eager to learn more about her grandfather, Rupert Partridge, a well known, controversial artist who mysteriously vanished in 1945 on the same day his beloved daughter, Shalimar, and wife Doris, met their tragic deaths. Invited by the current owners of Currawong Manor, the Partridge's former estate, to collaborate on a book about her grandfather's life and art, Elizabeth is excited by the opportunity to meet with one of Rupert's notorious muses, Ginger Flower, and Dolly Shaw, the daughter of the Partridge's housekeeper, once Shalimar's playmate. Elizabeth is convinced these women know what happened on that fateful day and hopes they will share the secrets they have kept for more than half a century... but perhaps some mysteries are best left unsolved.

The narrative moves between the past and the present as Elizabeth, along with true crime writer, and former muso, Nick Cash begin to piece together the history of the manor and its former residents, aided by Ginger's recall of her time at Currawong Manor as one of Rupert's three life models, known as the 'Flowers'. Slowly Pennicott unravels an intriguing story of love, art, scandal and betrayal that reveals the truth of the tragedy that befell the Partridge family.

The writing is evocative, with lyrical phrasing creating a haunting, oppressive atmosphere. Set in Mt Bellbird, a small village in the Blue Mountains of New South Wales, there are definite gothic overtones to this novel. The grand, partially restored Currawong Manor looms from the bush, surrounded by barely tamed gardens and bordered by the forbidding Owlbone Woods, in which something unseen lurks.

An impressively crafted literary story, Currawong Manor is an absorbing and dramatic tale.

Robyn Gibson says

Elizabeth is excited to return to her grandparents' estate in the Blue Mountains. Her grandfather Rupert was an artist who had three models living on the estate. In his studio he would create what sounded like really weird art with the models, whom he called 'Flowers'. This seems closely related to Norman Lindsey who also lived at Springwood in the Blue Mountains. Elizabeth is about to create a coffee table book with her beautiful photography and while she is there, hopes to learn more about her family history. The family history is really intriguing.

The story is set in 1945 and 2000 and I struggled to keep up as there are a lot of characters.

Dale Harcombe says

This is a brooding atmospheric book. Rather gothic in tone. I was looking forward to reading it. I liked the way the setting in the Blue Mountains of Australia was portrayed and other descriptions. For a while that got me in, along with wanting to know what had really happened with the deaths of the artist Rupert's wife and daughter and his own disappearance. But in the end it wasn't enough to keep me interested. I felt detached from all that was going on. Instead of being eager to pick up the book I was bored and struggled to keep reading. I usually like books about artists and about places with a history and secrets, but this one just didn't do it for me. I found it weird. It was not helped by the fact that I didn't like any of the characters. This is the second book I have read by this author and neither have grabbed me. Yet I know others have loved both of them, so I suspect it is just a case of me not clicking with this author. Best idea is read it and make up your own mind. You may like it better than I did.

Corey says

I was really looking forward to this book after reading and enjoying another of Josephine Pennicott's books, Poet's Cottage.

Her latest, Currawong Manor takes place in the Blue Mountains in NSW, a place I have spent quite a bit of time in, which really added to my enjoyment of this story.

The main character, Elizabeth, is a photographer who is hired to take photos at her grandfather's house, where the whole family died or mysteriously disappeared one night decades ago. Her grandfather was a famous artist, and we have flashbacks through one of his muses, Ginger, who is finally telling her story.

I loved the descriptions of the Australian bush and the whole house, and enjoyed the art references. The cover captures the atmosphere of the novel with its moody colours and the house seen through the mist.

The mystery was compelling and at some points quite spooky, I found myself racing through the second half of the novel to discover what had happened in the past. Very suspenseful with lots of twists.
