

THE BODECIA BOOK CLUB REVIEW

The Northern Clemency by Philip Hensher

Fourth Estate Publishing £17.99 ISBN 978-0-00-717479-9

The book follows the lives of two families which become intertwined over a period of 30 years. It follows the highs and lows of all of their lives and reflects the trials and tribulations of the three decades. It shows how seemingly insignificant events can have major effects on the people involved. Similar to recent books we have read it was interesting remembering the fashions and things that have changed over the different decades. For example Daniel and a friend regularly go to a nightclub in the eighties dressed in their best suits and swaying to wham flash forward 10 years and Daniel returns to the same club to find people in t-shirts and jeans high on ecstasy raving to music he doesn't recognise (making him feel very old).

There were various themes in the book of comparison e.g north versus south of the country, different social backgrounds and the differences between generations. Certain characters in the book e.g Katherine seemed very concerned with the fact that ultimately people pay the price for their guilt/sins however other characters e.g Sandra lived very carefree lives with no recognition of how their behaviour has an effect on others.

The pace of the book at times was slow especially at the beginning and a definite low point was the removal van journey up north. One of the high points was when Francis finally found a moment of happiness meeting someone on the train reflecting that it can happen when we least expect it.

It is a very large book which we all agreed would be better separated into three separate books. Although once you get into the book people found it very interesting, especially the difference in the north/south divide. There was also factual information weaved throughout the book giving the readers an insight into the 70s and 80s. Most of the group thought the book was very much like a soap opera – lives and loves of the street!

We gave *The Northern Clemency* **4.5 / 10**.

The book we are now reading is ***The Other Queen* by Phillipa Gregory**

Don't forget the first rule of Book Club!