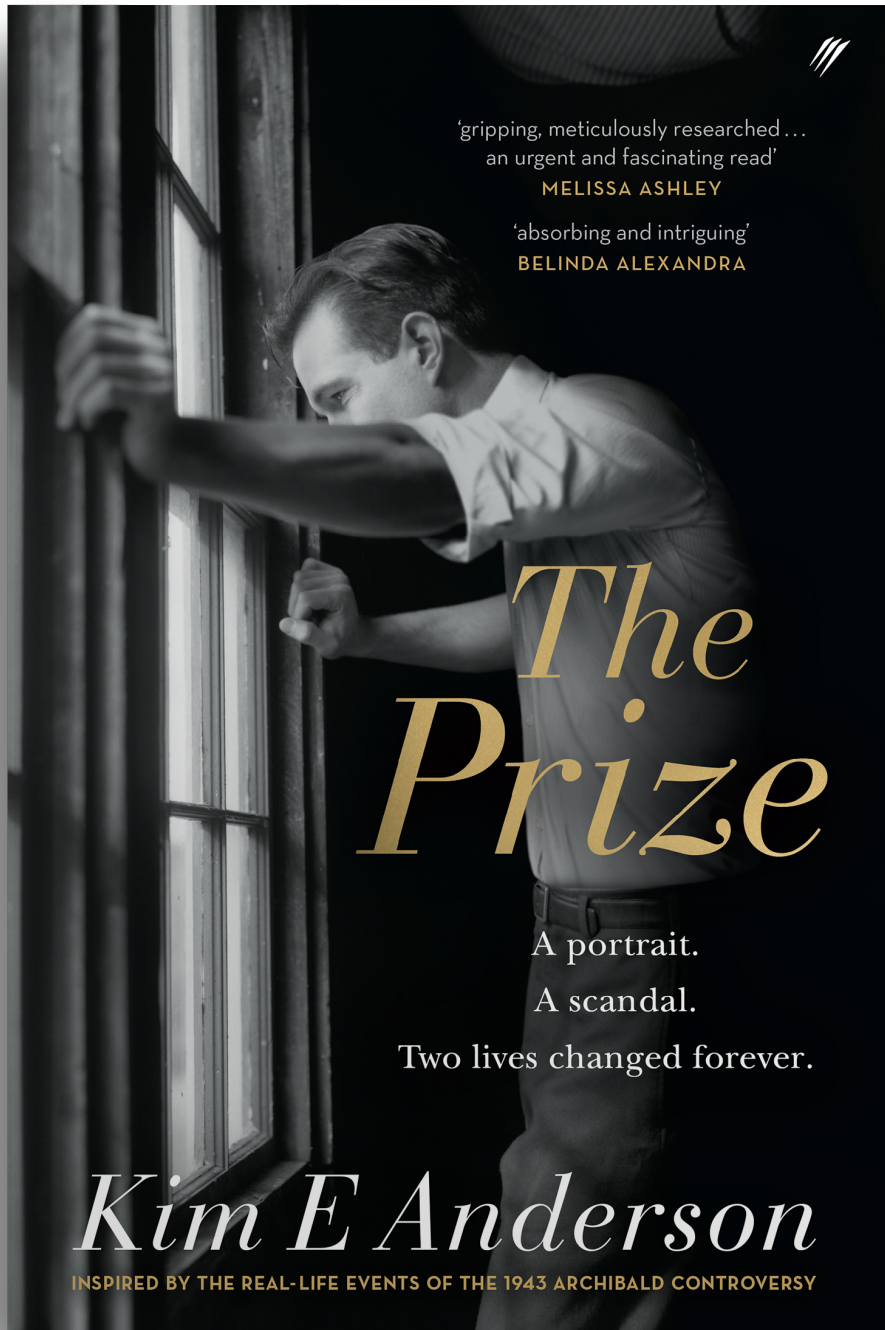
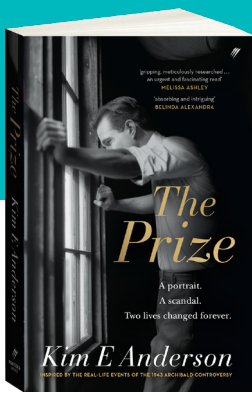


BOOK CLUB NOTES





THE PRIZE

By Kim E Anderson

ABOUT THE BOOK

When two artists enter the 1943 Archibald Prize, a scandal erupts that grips not only the art world, but the nation. A poignant love story with shattering consequences, inspired by real-life events.

'Is that what you want to do? Peer into my soul and capture my flaws, for all to see?'

As World War II draws to a close, Australian society is still deeply conservative. Homosexuality is illegal and the scourge of Modernism is infecting Australian art.

When William Dobell paints a portrait of lover and fellow artist Joshua Smith, he is awarded Australia's most prestigious art prize. However, Dobell's celebration is cut short after a protest is lodged by his competitors, who claim the painting is a caricature. Both artist and sitter soon find themselves in the glare of the spotlight when a court case to determine the matter turns into a public spectacle.

Bill and Joshua's relationship is put under pressure and at risk of being exposed as they are caught in a world where they must choose between love and art: between acceptance and exile.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Kim E Anderson grew up in Sydney and has worked for a variety of book publishers and media organisations. She set up a new media division for HarperCollins in New York before returning to Australia where she joined PBL Online to set up Australia's number one online portal ninemsn.com.au. She joined the Nine Television Network followed by Southern Star Entertainment. In 2009 she founded a social media site for readers based in New York. An avid reader, she now lives in Sydney and is also a non-executive director of a number of ASX listed companies and a director of the Sax Institute.

1. Should Joshua have stood up to the critics and defended the portrait? What do you think changed his mind?
2. Could Bill and Joshua have repaired their relationship after the court case?
3. Describe the relationship between Louisa and Joshua. How do you think their relationship affected the events in the story?
4. How much do you think the fear of being outed as gay (homosexuality was a criminal offence in 1943) impacted the decisions of both Joshua and Bill?
5. What do you think of Mary Edwards? Was she fairly treated by her male peers?
6. Why did Bill have such an issue with Mary Edwards? Do you think their relationship affected Mary's decision to contest the award?
7. Do you think Bill should have respected Joshua's request to remove the portrait from the gallery?
8. Can you imagine any changes to art culture, like the arrival of modernism in the story, that would shock society today?
9. When fiction is inspired by true events, how important do you think it is for an author to follow facts? How would you balance fact and fiction?
10. Who would you like to see painted in an Archibald portrait?

PRAISE FOR THE BOOK

'An absorbing and intriguing story that will appeal to art and history lovers alike.' **Belinda Alexandra**

'Gripping, meticulously researched ... an urgent and fascinating read.' **Melissa Ashley**