

READING GROUP NOTES

CUL-DE-SAC
ELEANOR LIMPRECTH

HOW FAR WILL A MOTHER GO TO SAVE HER CHILDREN FROM A PICTURE-PERFECT LIFE?

In the manicured suburbs of Northern Virginia, Jacquie is living the dream: a beautiful neighbourhood, a successful American husband, Brandon, and two happy children. But behind the doors of their family home, all is not as picturesque as it seems.



September 2026
Paperback: \$34.99 | 9781761154447 | 352pp | TPB
Ebook: \$17.99 | 9781761154454

What does Jacquie see in Brandon—why do you think she is attracted to him? Why does she marry him?

What are some aspects of her childhood which have influenced what she seeks as an adult? Does she want a similar or different childhood for Maisie and Isaac?

Brandon says at one point that it is his turn to live where he is from, to live near his family. Do you think this is fair?

In Arlington, Jacquie’s work and her home life expose her to vastly different worlds. How does she bridge these divides? Does she seem comfortable with them? What are some examples?

Does Jacquie seem settled in the USA? What about Maisie and Isaac? How similar or different would you say the cultures are?

The two main settings of the novel, suburban Arlington and rural NSW, are very different. How does this affect their daily lives?

Do you think that Jacquie planned to stay with the children in Australia when she left Arlington at Christmas? Do you think that she took Brandon’s passport intentionally or accidentally?

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Jacquie thinks about the phrase Portuguese word saudade when she is back on the South Coast of NSW—that feeling of longing and nostalgia. Do you think this is a common feeling in emigrants? Have you ever felt this way?

Do you think that Suzie is a good mother? Do you think that Jacquie is a good mother? How are they different and similar?

Why was Leaf important to Jacquie and Max? Do you think that discovering his death influences Jacquie’s decision to stay, or do you think she already knew she would? What role do you think Max plays in this decision?

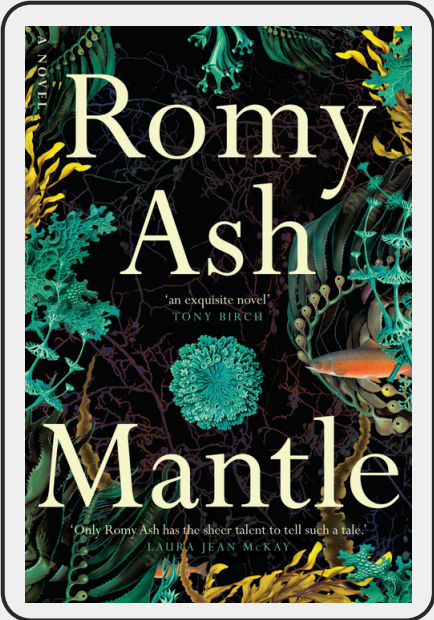
Is it wrong of Jacquie to keep the children away from Brandon, to keep them in Australia? Are her concerns about Brandon sufficient reason to stay in Australia?

Do you think that it is fair that Brandon is able to use the Hague Convention on the Civil Aspects of Child Abduction to have the children returned? Were you surprised that the court did not give more consideration to the evidence of abuse?

Does Jacquie’s changing sexuality surprise you? What do you think she sees in Andi?

What do you think about the ending of Cul-de-Sac? How does it make you feel?





Nature has another evolution in store for us.

Deeply moving and utterly original, *Mantle* is a powerful novel that shows us our fate is intertwined with the people around us, and the fate of our world.

May 2026
Paperback: \$34.99 | 9781761154768 | 320pp | TPB
Ebook: \$17.99 | 9781761154775

On page 123 Ursula thinks about how, ‘our bodies are hosts; we’re always living communally’. Have you ever thought about your body in this way? The gut bacteria, the microbes on your skin? Do you think about your body differently after reading this book?

How do you feel about climate change after reading this book? Have you experienced what might be termed ‘climate anxiety’ or ‘climate grief’? Did reading about Ursula’s experiences give name to, or allow a closer connection to your own feelings of grief around the changing climate and its impact on the world around you?

Did the ending surprise you? How did you feel at the end of the story?

This book is about a romantic entanglement, and also our entanglement with the natural world we are all a part of. Did the way that these characters interact with the natural world change the way you thought about the natural spaces you encounter?

Have you ever been changed by a relationship with someone, whether romantic or a close friend? What do you think it says about how responsive humans are to others?

The first part of this story confronts the intimacies of palliative care and the end of a life. How do you think this relates to the more speculative aspects of the later narrative?

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MANTLE
ROMY ASH

Did this book make you hungry; and if so, did you find this hunger disconcerting?

Do you eat farmed salmon? Would you eat farmed salmon after reading this book?

Why do you think this book is titled Mantle?

Sporification, a reproduction structure of fungi, means that the air around us is filled with microscopic spores. Have you thought about the air we breathe being a sort of 'wildlife'?