

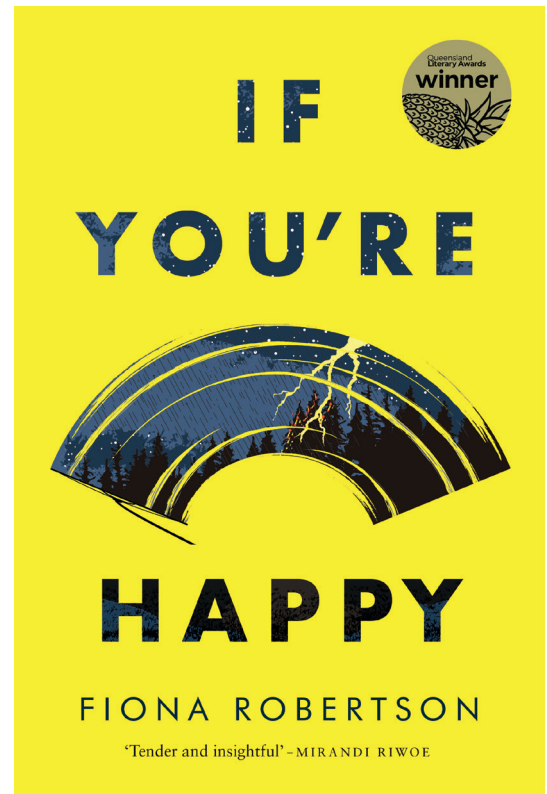
**UQP** **BOOK CLUB  
NOTES**

*If You're Happy*  
**Fiona Robertson**

From the 2020 QLA Glendower winner comes a timely and insightful collection of stories about how we pursue happiness in a turbulent world.

The stories in this impressive, thoughtful collection explore the human heart and its desire and capacity for joy.

A divorced woman discovers a growing sinkhole in her yard. A lonely man finds an abandoned toddler. A second wife in a fundamentalist community questions her religion. A young Australian veteran of the Afghanistan conflict is haunted by a memory from his last mission. Fiona Robertson's stories traverse the globe to reveal people at moments of change or crisis, as they struggle to repair fractures in their lives and search for something close to happiness.



**BOOK DETAILS**

C-format paperback | 978 0 7022 6346 0  
\$29.99 | February 2022

'Fiona Robertson deftly delivers the complexity of contemporary life in exactly the kind of clear-eyed uncomplicated prose that I most want to read.'

**Nick Earls**

'A tender and insightful collection. The beautiful stories in *If You're Happy* will move and transport you.'

**Mirandi Riwoe**

'Mapping a terrain of loneliness, compromise, ageing and tension, these short sharp pieces set across wide-ranging locales create pockets of surprise and solace in unexpected places.'

**Cate Kennedy**

## Questions

1. What does Shelley yearn for at the end of 'Tempest'? How does this differ to the way she feels when we meet her?
2. How is the concept of humans being neither wholly 'good' nor wholly 'bad' explored in the story 'If You're Happy'?
3. How do you predict Dylan will react to his father's question at the end of 'Descent'?

MORE QUESTIONS OVER PAGE

Questions

4. 'Sweet Bountiful' contains references to ideal qualities in the Bountiful community, such as being 'sweet' and 'good'. How do you feel about these ideals? How closely do the characters uphold these values?
5. How does the way Connor feels about Celia change throughout 'Shiny Things'? What prompts this change?
6. Who do you most relate to in 'Snowfall' and why?
7. How did your feelings towards Gertie evolve over the course of 'Aftershock'? Did you expect Tony's revelation?
8. What aspects of 'Last Game' (if any) remind you of your own childhood?
9. Why do you think Lana agrees to go with Mr Perron in 'Christmas Party'?
10. In 'Plume', how is the eruption of Mount Saint Helens reflected in Lori's life?
11. Which story in the collection most affected you and why?
12. Many stories in *If You're Happy* depict both personal and community crises. How do the characters change when they realise the problem doesn't just affect them, but those around them as well?



**ABOUT THE AUTHOR**

Fiona Robertson is a writer and doctor. Her short fiction has been published in literary magazines and anthologies in Australia and the UK, and has been shortlisted for international competitions. Her collection of stories, *If You're Happy*, won the Glendower Award for an Emerging Queensland Writer at the 2020 Queensland Literary Awards. Fiona lives in Brisbane with her husband and children.

