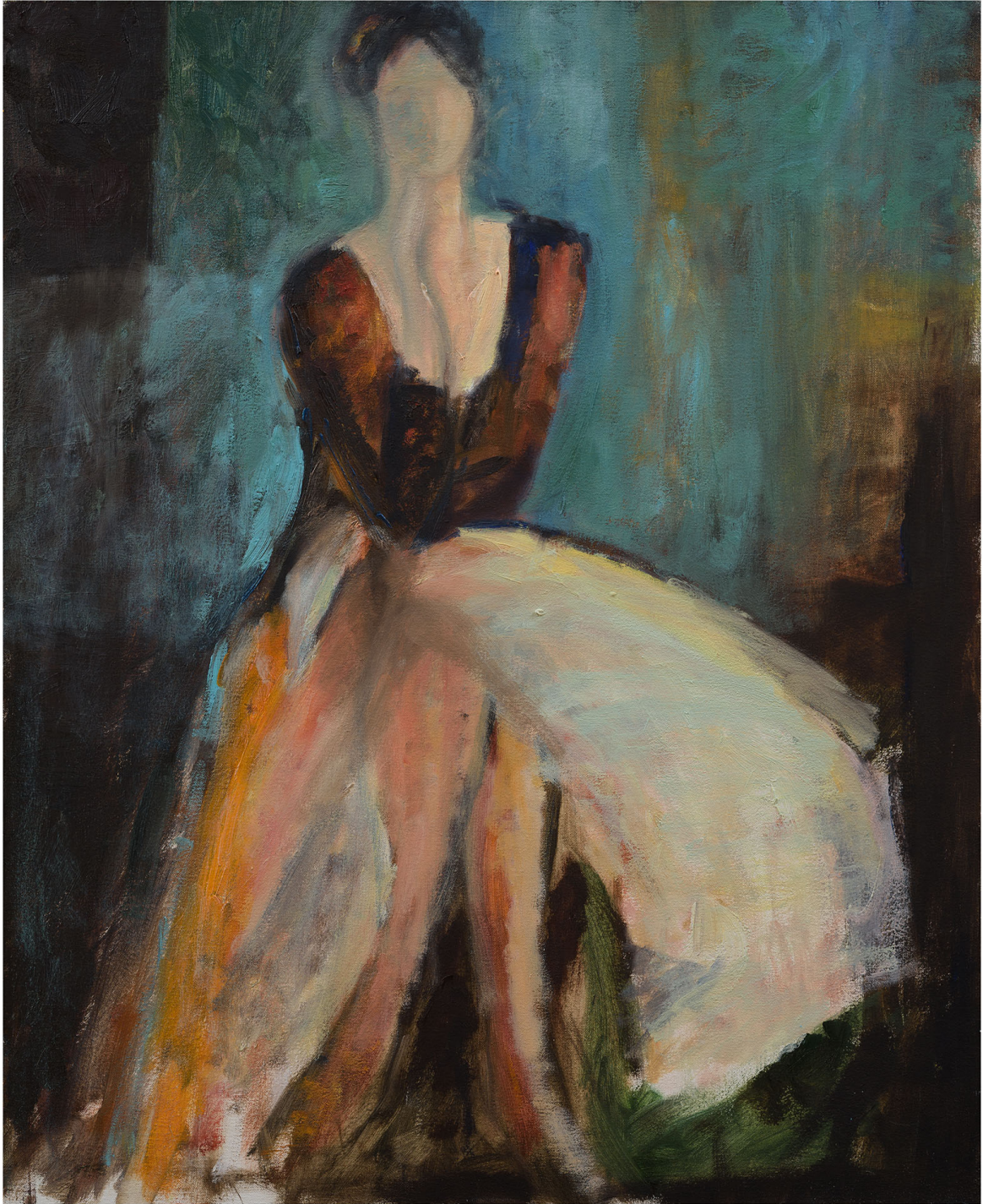


# Book Group Discussion Questions

## *The Telling Time*



Artist: Catherine Farquhar: [www.catfarquhar.art](http://www.catfarquhar.art)

## Introduction:

The author describes this novel as one that shines light on that fraught period in life when we identify as 'young adults'. Regardless of the era, it's a time when life-changing decisions are made, often based on little or no experience or information, bravado is required and especially resilience.

Do you feel that the novel embraces this theme?

How relatable in today's world are the decisions both Gabrijela and Luisa are called on to make?

Are these decisions easier for our 'young adults' today?

What if anything is different for our 'young adults' today?

## Gabrijela:

1. How aware were you of New Zealand's Croatian/Dally immigrant story/contribution to this country's history? Does the novel highlight anything you didn't previously know about this immigrant group? What aspects of the story might be transferred to any cultural group making their home in a new country?
2. Gabrijela is exiled to New Zealand by her father — sent away in disgrace. How realistic do you think Gabrijela's plight would have been in the 1950's? Can you imagine the same happening in today's world?
3. Is it realistic that Gabrijela held on to her secret for so long? What are the barriers today to disclosing such secrets and has the #MeToo movement helped this?
4. Why do you think Gabrijela was attracted to Ivan? Was this believable?
5. When Gabrijela finally realises she has been duped by Ivan why do you think that deep down she still held out hope?
6. Joy was a shining light for Gabrijela. How welcoming are we to new immigrants? Could we do more? What are the stumbling blocks/barriers to making new immigrants feel welcome/at home?
7. Gabrijela describes her marriage to Roko as having jagged edges at times – what do you think she means by this?
8. How do you feel Gabrijela's experiences would have influenced the way she parented Luisa and her siblings?
9. Luisa inferred that even years later, Gabrijela never considered herself an equal to the other Dally women at the club. Do you think this might be a common feeling or one that is unique to Gabrijela?

## Luisa:

1. Luisa is proud to call herself a Croatian Kiwi even though she is disparaging of many of the old ways. How typical do you think this is for second generation Kiwis?
2. Luisa is an intelligent young woman and yet she placed herself in a risky situation. How believable is this? Was it any different for young women in the 1980's than it is today?

3. Do you recall stories of the Moonies? What are the dangers/challenges facing our young adults today when setting off on travels? Are our young people any wiser today? Why?
4. Did the novel transport anyone back to their own backpacking adventures? Anyone keen to share stories?
5. How realistic was Luisa's reaction to her trauma? Why did she keep her secret close and why was it important for her not to disclose what had happened when she met her relatives?
6. If you were Luisa could you forgive Bex? Can you understand Bex's reaction/actions after Luisa's trauma.
7. Why do you think Luisa found it so hard to move on from Mike? Did this fit with her personality?
8. How would you describe Luisa's relationship with her mum?

More general questions should your group prefer:

**1. How did the book make you feel?**

- Were you amused, upset, bored, angry, intrigued?
- Did you have to force yourself to get through it or were you unable to put it down?
- Are you glad you read it?

**2. How do you feel about how the story was told?**

- Did it start too slow or end unresolved?
- Do you wish it had been told from a different perspective?
- Did it jump around too much or hold you in suspense?

**3. What did you think about the main characters?**

- Did you like them? Were they believable?
- Did you approve of their decisions and behavior?
- Who did you relate to the most/least?

**4. Which parts of the book stood out to you?**

- Are there any quotes, passages, or scenes you found particularly compelling?
- Were there parts of the book you thought were incredibly unique, out of place, thought-provoking, or disturbing?

**5. What themes did you detect in the story?**

- What were the main points you think the author was trying to make?
- Did you notice any symbolism?

**6. What did you think about the ending?**

- Were you satisfied or disappointed with how the story ended?
- Is anything left unresolved or ambiguous?
- How do you picture the characters' lives after the end of the story?

**7. What is your impression of the author?**

- Does the story seem to fit with what you know of the author?
- What do you think about the author's writing style?
- What do you think about the author's storytelling ability?
- Would you read another book by the same author?

**8. What changes/decisions would you hope for if the book were turned into a movie?**

- Which sections would you cut?
- Who would you cast to play the main characters?

**9. How does this book compare to other books you've read?**

- Did you like it more or less than other books in the same genre?
- Is the book different in any way from the books you usually read?

Connect with P J McKay Author



It has been my privilege to have you read this novel. To learn more about *The Telling Time* or about P J McKay Author, please visit my website where you can sign up for my mailing list and be privy to the latest news and events. Alternatively you can follow me on social media.

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