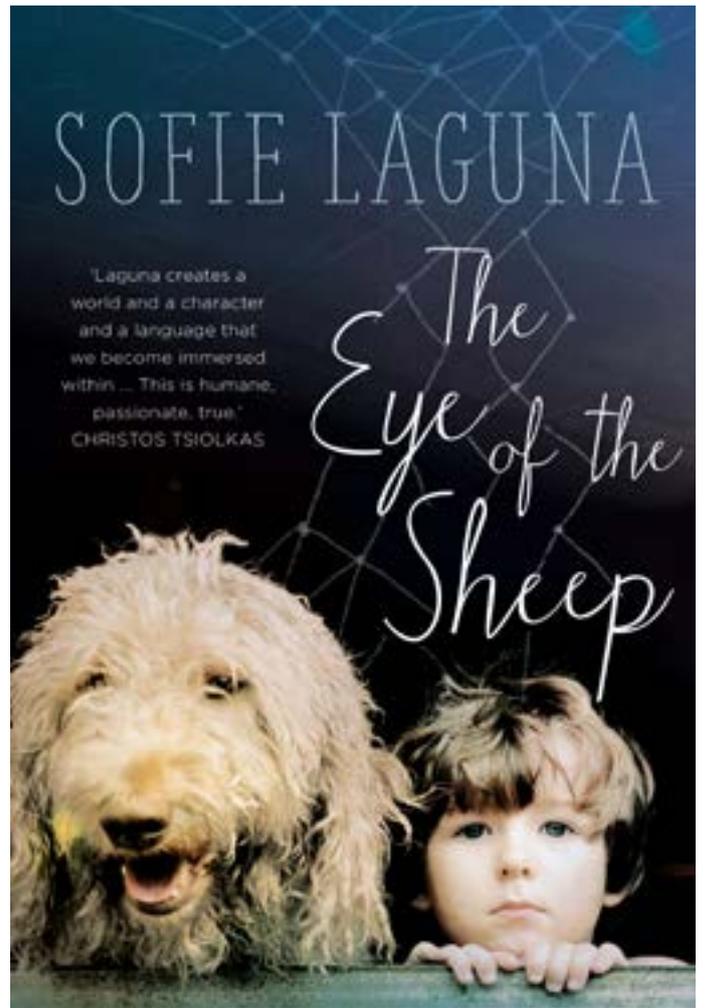


ALLEN & UNWIN



READING GROUP NOTES

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About the book

Ned was beside me, his messages running easily through him, with space between each one, coming through him like water. He was the go-between, going between the animal kingdom and this one. I watched the waves as they rolled and crashed towards us, one after another, never stopping, always changing. I knew what was making them come, I had been there and I would always know.

Meet Jimmy Flick. He's not like other kids - he's both too fast and too slow. He sees too much, and too little. Jimmy's mother Paula is the only one who can manage him. She teaches him how to count sheep so that he can fall asleep. She holds him tight enough to stop his cells spinning. It is only Paula who can keep Jimmy out of his father's way. But when Jimmy's world falls apart, he has to navigate the unfathomable world on his own, and make things right.

Sofie Laguna's first novel *One Foot Wrong* received rave reviews, sold all over the world and was longlisted for the Miles Franklin Literary Award and shortlisted for the Prime Minister's Literary Award. In *The Eye of the Sheep*, her great originality and talent will again amaze and move readers. In the tradition of *Room* and *The Lovely Bones*, here is a surprising and brilliant novel from one of our finest writers.

About the author

Sofie Laguna originally studied to be a lawyer, but after deciding law was not for her, she trained as an actor. Sofie is now an author, actor and playwright. Her books for young people have been named Honour Books and Notable Books in the Children's Book Council of Australia Book of the Year Awards and have been shortlisted in the Queensland Premier's Awards. She has been published in the US and the UK and in translation in Europe and Asia. Sofie's first novel for adults, *One Foot Wrong*, was also published throughout Europe, the United States and the United Kingdom. Sofie has written the screenplay for the film of *One Foot Wrong*, scheduled for pre-production in 2014.

For discussion

-  How does Jimmy's fascination with the mechanics of things help him understand his world?
-  Why do you think Robby had to leave?
-  '*...trying to get away as if the centre was our dad and we were spinning around him but the gravity was him and it dragged us towards him.*' (p. 17).

What role does Jimmy's father play in both keeping the family together, and tearing them apart?
-  Discuss the ways in which Jimmy physically absorbs the pain and joy of the people and things around him. As a reader, how do you experience these emotions through Jimmy?

- ☞ Throughout the book, many of the characters struggle with feelings of shame. How does shame affect their perception of themselves, their relationships with others, the choices they make?
 - ☞ What do you think Jimmy means by the 'invisible world'?
 - ☞ Consider the holiday that Gavin and Jimmy take to the island. What impact does this have on their relationship?
 - ☞ *'If he said one word, even one, the word made a space for the thing he didn't like or want to come crashing in and detonate him. It was the words that made the opening.'* (p.26)
- Consider the ways in which Robby, Gavin, Jimmy and Paula all invoke silence as a means of coping. What is it that is not being said?
- ☞ Discuss the role of imagination as a means of escape for the characters.
 - ☞ How does Jimmy use the visual of 'lines' to understand the relationships with and within his family? Where do these lines lead him?
 - ☞ *'The only place for me was in the water, in the light, with my mum where I had begun and where I ended.'* (p.300)
- Discuss the ways in which the recurring motif of water becomes significant throughout the book. In particular, discuss the power of water for Jimmy in the final section of the book.
- ☞ What does Jimmy see in the eye of the sheep?

Suggested further reading

One Foot Wrong - Sofie Laguna
Jasper Jones – Craig Silvey
The Slap – Christos Tsiolkas
The Town That Drowned – Riel Nason
Room – Emma Donoghue
The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time – Mark Haddon
Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close – Jonathan Safran Foer
Paddy Clarke Ha ha ha – Roddy Doyle
Carry Me Down – MJ Hyland
The Lucky Bones – Alice Sebold