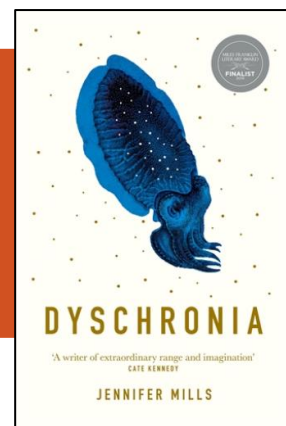




Dyschronia

Jennifer Mills



Author Background

Jennifer Mills is the author of the novels *The Airways* (2021), *Dyschronia* (2018), *Gone* (2011) and *The Diamond Anchor* (2009) and a collection of short stories, *The Rest is Weight* (2012). In 2019 *Dyschronia* was shortlisted for the Miles Franklin Literary Award, the Adelaide Festival Awards for Literature, and the Aurealis Awards for science fiction.

In 2012 Jennifer was named a *Sydney Morning Herald* Best Young Australian Novelist and in 2014 received the Barbara Hanrahan Fellowship from the Adelaide Festival Awards for Literature.

Jennifer has been the editor of *Overland*, a literary magazine showcasing progressive fiction, poetry, non-fiction, and art since 1954.

Jennifer lives on Kurna yerta (Adelaide).

Book Summary

An electrifying novel about an oracle, a small town, and the end of the world as we know it...

One morning, the residents of Clapstone, a small coastal town somewhere in South Australia, wake to discover the sea has disappeared. Sam, a young woman afflicted with 'dyschronia' – a psychic disturbance in which she experiences or inhabits several timeframes simultaneously – has been plagued by troubling visions of this cataclysm for years. Is she a prophet? Does she have a disorder that skews her perception of time? Or is she a gifted and compulsive liar?

And who is Ed? A dodgy developer or someone who really cares about improving the prosperity of Clapstone?

Oscillating between the future and the past, *Dyschronia* is a novel that tantalises and dazzles, as one woman's prescient nightmares become entangled with her town's uncertain fate. Blazing with questions of consciousness, trust, and destiny, this is a wildly imaginative and sometimes unsettling novel.

Discussion Questions

- ❖ What role does the natural world and in particular, the annual migration of the giant cuttlefish that breed in the Clapstone area each winter, play in the novel?
- ❖ Are the town's health and economic woes due to industrial pollution? Has climate change caused the sea and sea-life to disappear? Is it just "bad luck" that Clapstone is facing economic and environmental collapse? Who is to blame?

Discuss.

- ❖ Why do the townspeople of Clapstone believe Sam is an oracle who can save their town? Does Sam have any control over what will happen? Is Sam a saviour or scapegoat for the town's financial salvation?
- ❖ The common concerns of the everyday lives of the townspeople are the themes that drive the plot of this novel. Do these concerns accurately reflect those of real-life small towns in Australia? If so, how?
- ❖ *Dyschronia* is described as dystopian fiction with traces of magical realism. It outlines a very possible near future, in which the effects brought on by climate change have accelerated. This is a future of petrol shortages, a lack of resources, forced relocations and the dissolution of communities.

Do you think the book is pure fantasy or quite possibly a searingly lucid look at what might be just around the corner for our planet?

- ❖ Is it literature's job to offer hope in the face of global adversity? Does *Dyschronia* offer a chance to unveil valid anxieties which humans have repressed in order to go about our lives?

References

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