

The Hand That First Held Mine by Maggie O'Farrell

The novel is set in 1950s bohemian Soho and present day London. O'Farrell successfully moves the story between the two time frames with a final intriguing link between them.

Lexie Sinclair a young, free spirited graduate escapes family life in Devon in the 1950s to make a new life in bustling bohemian Soho under the guidance of the flamboyant Innes Kent, a magazine editor who quickly becomes her lover.

Meanwhile in present day London Elina and Ted are coming to terms with the traumatic delivery of their first baby. While Elina finds the demands of new motherhood exhausting Ted struggles with panic attacks and disturbing memories of his own childhood. Ted's relationship with his own parents becomes strained and confused as the arrival of Jonah causes him to question his own origins.

Interesting features:-

The two stories are clearly connected but what binds them together?

O'Farrell keeps the reader intrigued to discover what is behind the disconcerting flashbacks of Ted and the heartbreaking events that are played out as the novel unfolds.

Comments from the reading group:

The Combs Book Club members really enjoyed this book. Although not challenging reading it makes for a good holiday read.