



Some topics to consider while reading Leaving Elvis

- Changing Australian Society
- Family Histories
- Intergenerational Narratives

LEAVING ELVIS

by Michelle Michau-Crawford

We're travelling light, without excess, into our future. Gran had been rough as she uncurled my hands from their position, gripped around the open car doorframe, and shoved me into the passenger seat.

A man returns from World War II and struggles to come to terms with what has happened in his absence. Almost seventy years later, his middle-aged granddaughter packs up her late grandmother's home and discovers more than she had bargained for. These two stories book-end thirteen closely linked stories of one family and the rippling of consequences across three generations, played out against the backdrop of a changing Australia.



About Michelle Michau-Crawford

Michelle Michau-Crawford's short fiction has been published in Australian Book Review, Westerly and Spiny Babbler, and she has also published poetry and non-fiction and had one of her plays performed. In 2013 she won the prestigious ABR Elizabeth Jolley Short Story Prize. She has also worked as a university lecturer, speechwriter, researcher and public relations officer, and has a PhD in Comparative Literature. Michelle lives with her menagerie in a house surrounded by vegetable gardens and fruit trees.

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Discussion Questions

- 1 What does '1948 - Getting On' say about the effects of war on Australian families?
- 2 Len describes himself as 'half a man with a hobble'. What insight does this give to his character?
- 3 In '1956 - Unchained', how do you feel about Evelyn's marital choices?
- 4 Does Olive/Natalie as a teenager remind you of anyone you know?
- 5 How has the author portrayed Olive/Natalie's relationship with her daughter?
- 6 How does Leaving Elvis construct family life in a small town? Are there repeating patterns? Is it any better for the characters who travel more?
- 7 How do you think Evelyn changes and develops through the stories?
- 8 Leaving Elvis is constructed of intergenerational stories, and each story is closely linked. How has this affected your ability to empathise with the characters?
- 9 Although the stories are all connected, the family in Leaving Elvis is fractured by various traumas and grief, and full of partings and separations. By the end of the book, is there a sense of unity/closure?
- 10 What do you think about the way the book finishes? How does it echo the themes of the other chapters?