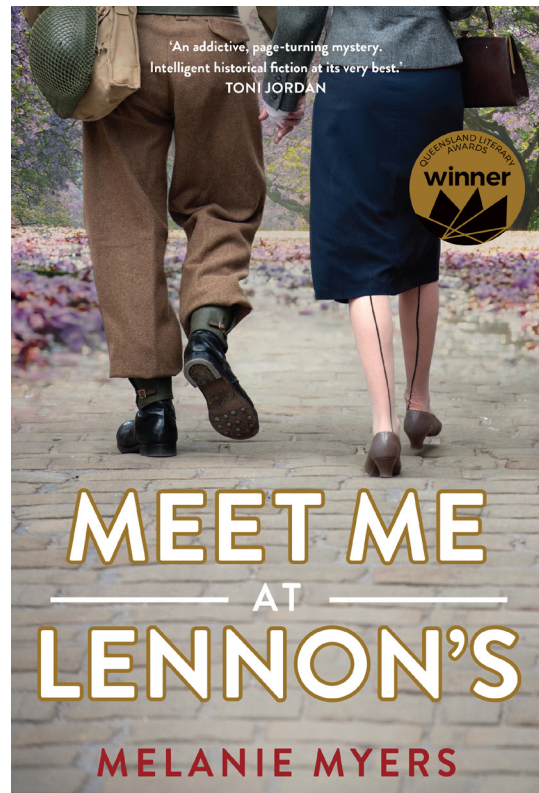


Meet Me At Lennon's Melanie Myers

Olivia Wells is struggling with her university studies, her relationship with her father and her love life. Throwing herself into her thesis research, she stumbles across details of a young woman found murdered on the banks of the river in wartime Brisbane. Suddenly her studies – and her personal life – become much more interesting.

The River Girl murder leads Olivia into the world of 1940s Brisbane: a world of ration books and penny candy; of nylons and lunches at Lennon's; but also a city where tensions between Australian soldiers and the American GIs who were stationed there regularly erupted into jealousy and violence.

The deeper Olivia investigates, the more she learns about the dangers women faced back then, while also realising how little has changed. And then, of course, there's the situation with her own boyfriend to address. Can Olivia solve the River Girl murder and get her own life back on track?



BOOK DETAILS

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Q U E S T I O N S

1. *Meet Me at Lennon's* is a dual narrative set in World War II and contemporary Brisbane that explores issues of sexism, misogyny and violence against women across generations. In what ways have things improved for women since the war and in what ways have they not improved?
2. The war years were a time of both hardship and opportunity for Australian women. What sort of opportunities for women are presented and explored in the novel?
3. The saying 'overpaid, over-sexed and over here' was used to describe American soldiers stationed in Australia during the war. It was an era characterised by much tension and even violence between American servicemen and Australian soldiers returning from the Middle East, which culminated in the infamous 'Battle of Brisbane' in November 1942. What factors contributed to this tension?
4. Olivia has a complex relationship with her boyfriend Sam. In the past, she has downplayed or excused his abusive behavior and even physical violence towards her. How should we interpret Olivia's responses to Sam's behaviour and what do they suggest about the nature of abusive relationships?
5. Many women who worked during the war years, including in the armed services, were forced postwar – both willingly and unwillingly – back into the domestic sphere to become wives and mothers. Why do you think this happened and how did this ultimately affect the women's liberation movement of the sixties and seventies?

MORE QUESTIONS OVER PAGE

————— Q U E S T I O N S C O N T . —————

6. We learn in Gloria Graham's story who Olive's killer must be. What evidence does Olivia embed in Gloria's story that leads to that conclusion? How did Olivia obtain this evidence? And is the evidence strong enough to confirm the killer's identity?

7. In her final letter to June, Gloria expresses her frustration at being unable to 'undo what had been done to Olive' or 'rewrite her story'. Though Olivia writes the stories of six women who lived during wartime Brisbane, she does not attempt to write Olive's story. Was Olivia right to not include Olive's story? Should she have written another story for Olive and, perhaps, given her a different ending?

8. Gloria writes in her final letter to June that 'there are some evils that no art form can make better, fix or even soothe' (p. 157). Considering the themes of sexual violence and reclaiming women's voices from history, what do you consider is the role of art and storytelling in society?

'A captivating mystery set in wartime Brisbane, framed by an evocative present-day investigation.'

Mandy Sayer

'A vivid portrayal of wartime Brisbane'

Kristina Olsson

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Melanie Myers is a Brisbane-based writer, academic, and occasional actor. She has a Doctorate of Creative Arts. Her short fiction and articles have been published in a variety of publications, including *Kill Your Darlings*, *Overland*, *Arena Magazine*, *Griffith Review* and *Hecate*. In 2018 she won the Queensland Literary Awards Glendower Award for an Emerging Writer. She is the former artistic director of Reality Bites Festival, a non-fiction writers' festival based on the Sunshine Coast.



V I S I T

<http://www.melaniemyers.com.au>

<https://www.booktopia.com.au/blog/2019/09/03/meet-me-at-lennons-melanie-myer-on-the-women-behind-world-war-ii/>

<https://www.booksandpublishing.com.au/articles/2018/10/24/118112/queensland-literary-awards-2018-winners-announced/>

F U R T H E R
R E A D I N G

