

## Reading group questions

Feather Man spans a period of over twenty years, and two countries, Australia and the United Kingdom. How does Rhyll McMaster succeed in giving her story such scope, while at the same time ensuring we remain connected to her characters? What does this 'long view' perspective add to our understanding of her characters?

Does Sooky develop emotionally during the book? Do we think she will ever overcome her vulnerability?

Marriage is one of the most powerful themes of the novel – what struck you most about Rhyll McMaster's depiction of Sooky's first marriage?

By the end of the novel, Sooky is on her own in London, a different person from than the one we encountered in the opening pages of the book. What are the positive – and the negative – effects of this transformation?

Redmond displays a very narcissistic personality. Did you understand why Sooky found him so attractive?

The underlying sexual abuse from the start of the book is key, but what did you think about Rhyll McMaster's portrayal of the victim as attracted to her abusers? Did this make some sense to you? How does it connect to present day worries about internet grooming?

## Praise for Rhyll McMaster

'Moving from a sleepy 1950s Brisbane to a grubby London of the 1970s, McMaster's narrative is at once both intense and detached; she renders the lived experience of both cities and the characters in them with painful clarity. ... the search for identity in all the wrong places. ... an impressive first novel – rich, darkly funny and disturbing.'  
Rachel Slater in *Australian Women's Book Review*, Vol.19 No.1 2007.

'McMaster achieves many brilliant effects...a *tour de force* of vivid and surprising imagery and allusion ... Her eye for detail, for recognizing the exceptional in the most mundane of things, illuminates these pages. The seedy ordinariness of life in London is superbly conveyed.'

Andrew Riemer, Review of the Week in *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 28 April 2007

'A highly original first novel...'

*The Daily Telegraph*, 12-13 May 2007