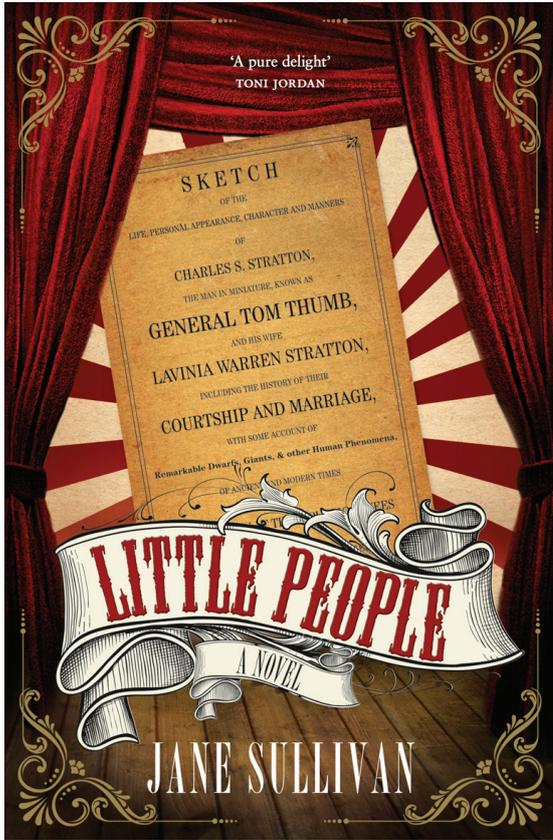


Little People

JANE SULLIVAN



BOOK DETAILS

Format: Paperback
 ISBN: 9781921640964
 RRP: \$32.95



AUTHOR'S BIOGRAPHY

Jane Sullivan came to Australia from England in 1979 and worked for *The Age* as a reporter, feature writer and editor of various sections, including the books pages. She won the inaugural Australian Human Rights Award for journalism. At present she writes a Saturday column, 'Turning Pages', and features about books and writing for *The Age*. Her first novel was *The White Star*. Her second novel, *Little People*, was shortlisted in the CAL Scribe Fiction Prize. She lives in Melbourne with her husband and son.

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

1. Does knowing that the book is based on a true story enhance it for you? Did the real-life images of the little people help you to understand and appreciate their story?
2. Were the little people successful performers in charge of their lives, or exploited as a freak show?
3. What do you think it did to General Tom Thumb to be discovered and trained and put on stage as a performer from the age of four? Are there any parallels with modern celebrities?
4. Why do you think the author has told the story mainly through Mary Ann's eyes? Can you identify with Mary Ann?
5. Why is Mary Ann's baby so important to so many people?
6. What conflicts are going on in the troupe? How have they arisen?
7. Do you feel more sympathy for some of the characters than for others? If yes, which ones, and why?
8. What do the adventures of the little people on the tour tell you about Australia in 1870? How does the nineteenth-century audience's response to them differ from our own fascination with 'different' people, in TV reality shows and so on?
9. How does the changing landscape — desert, flood, cities, gold towns — influence the story and the characters?

REVIEWS

‘A pure delight — I fell in love with this glorious novel from the very first page.

Little People is vibrant storytelling at its charismatic best.’

— TONI JORDAN

‘A startling feat of the gothic imagination, made wholly convincing by lucid and controlled storytelling.’

— AMANDA LOHREY

‘Filled with surprises and splendidly told, *Little People* is a big achievement.’

— *Sun Herald*

‘Clever ... irreverent ... fanciful ...

Sullivan’s Gothic take on the world of Barnum is very winning. The characters leap off the page, each in narrative turn running with the story baton, scattering to the wind lovely Victorianisms.’

— *Sydney Morning Herald*

‘Set in a fascinating milieu ... a most enjoyable read.’

— *Bookseller and Publisher*

‘With even characters of the shortest stature being larger than life, *Little People* is a great read.’

— *Northern Star*

- I0. *Little People* has been described as a melo- drama. Does that intensified emotional style still speak to us today?
- II. Why do you think Dr Musgrave is so obsessed with collecting? How does he act as a counterpoint to the little peoples’ great mentor, P.T. Barnum?
- I2. What themes particularly strike you in this book?



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