

## *Small Mercies*

RICHARD ANDERSON

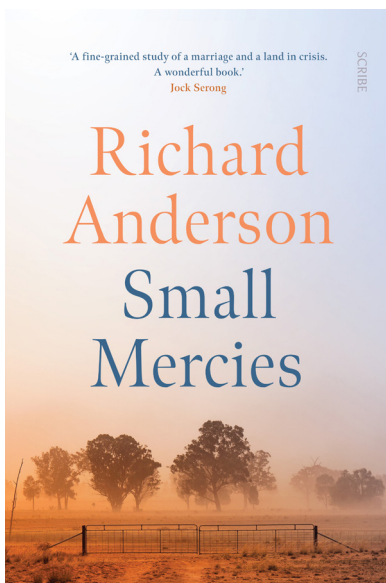


### BOOK DETAILS

Format: Paperback

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### AUTHOR'S BIOGRAPHY

Richard Anderson is a second-generation farmer from northern New South Wales. He has been running a beef-cattle farm for twenty-five years, but has also worked as a miner and had a stint on the local council. Richard is the author of two rural-crime novels, *Retribution* and *Boxed*, both published by Scribe. He lives with his wife, four dogs, and a cat.

A husband and wife living on a severely drought-afflicted property take a brief break, only to find that their relationship is parched, too.

After enduring months of extreme drought on their modest freehold, farming couple Dimple and Ruthie face uncertain times on more than one front. Ruthie receives the news every woman dreads. Meanwhile, a wealthy landowner, Wally Oliver, appears on the local radio station, warning small farmers like Dimple and Ruthie that they are doomed, that the sooner they leave the land to large operators like him, the better. Bracing for a fight on all fronts, the couple decide to take a road trip to confront Oliver. Along the way, not only is their resolve tested, but their relationship as well.

Desperate not to dwell on the past but to face up to the future, Dimple and Ruthie make a crucial decision they soon regret. And when the storm clouds finally roll in across the land they love, there's more than the rain to contend with.

Told with enormous heart, *Small Mercies* is a tender love story. It is a story of a couple who feel they must change to endure, and of the land that is as important as their presence on it.

## REVIEWS

A fine-grained study of a marriage and a land in crisis ... A wonderful book.'

— JOCK SERONG

'An undemanding read for those who enjoy human stories with a rural setting, *Small Mercies* is the tale of a man and a woman who have weathered many trials by taking each other for granted, and who come to realise that familiarity doesn't necessarily mean they know everything they should about one another.'

— LINDY JONES,  
*BOOKS+PUBLISHING*

'This novel is a perceptive study of marriage, of family farming, and of women's lives, as well as a sombre look at the people in Australian society who have money and power, and at the way they wield those things to their own ends.'

— *THE AGE*

'This engaging story ... is one to remember for its credibility and timeliness.'

— CHRISTOPHER BANTICK, *THE WEEKLY TIMES*

'Anderson writes in an engaging manner, with just enough humour to lift the black to grey, without attempting in anyway to gloss over the seriousness of the subject matter ... Moving, perceptive and very readable.'

— KAREN CHISHOLM, *THE BLURB*

'Wholly engaging — a character-driven novel where the unforgiving Australian climate is an unpredictable character as well.'

— LISA HILL, *ANZ LITLOVERS*

## QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

1. Is *Small Mercies* just a love story?
2. Was Ruthie really going to leave Dimple?
3. What is the significance of history in terms of land ownership?
4. Why do Dimple and Ruthie take the trip to visit Wally? Is it from a need for justice or has the long drought distorted their thinking?
5. Is the story only applicable to rural readers or does it have wider appeal?
6. Is the novel 'undemanding'? Or are there subtleties worth considering?
7. What part does the river play in the story? How significant is landscape?
8. Are Dimple and Ruthie's problems just 'first world'?
9. Is there humour in the book?
10. In Australian society does the big end of town get to play by different rules?