



A Dangerous Language

Sulari Gentill

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Volunteering his services as a pilot to fly renowned international peace advocate Egon Kisch between Fremantle and Melbourne, Rowland is unaware how hard Australia's new attorney-general will fight to keep the "raging reporter" off Australian soil.

In this, it seems, the government is not alone, as clandestine right-wing militias reconstitute into deadly strike forces.

A Communist agent is murdered on the steps of Parliament House and Rowland finds himself drawn into a dangerous world of politics and assassination.

A disgraced minister, an unidentified corpse and an old flame all bring their own special bedlam.

Once again Rowland Sinclair stands against the unthinkable, with an artist, a poet and a brazen sculptress by his side.

A Dangerous Language Details

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Author : Sulari Gentill

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From Reader Review A Dangerous Language for online ebook

Pamela Tickner says

4 1/2 stars. I really enjoyed this, the third I have read in the Rowland Sinclair series. The books have a similar feel to Kerry Greenwood's Phyrne Fisher, exceedingly wealthy and attractive protagonist, all the latest cars, planes, etc, and down to earth friends, but Gentill's books have more depth. I liked the history of Canberra in #8, and background of fascism and communism in Australia.

Ashleigh says

See review on my blog. A great book, an excellent addition to this series!

Crittermom says

A Dangerous Language is a profoundly affecting historical mystery. The amount of time Sulari Gentill spent researching shows. This is one impeccably plotted mystery. Politics, particularly the conflict between communism and fascism, play an important role in this complex story.

Rowland Sinclair has experienced firsthand the threat of fascism and seen the rise of the Nazis in Germany. His experiences have led him to support many of the communist ideals and he is friends with communists, although he is not a party member himself. There are two distinct but merging plotlines. A communist agent is murdered on the steps of Parliament House moments before meeting with a friend of Rowland's. The murder is clearly politically motivated, but anticommunist sentiment makes justice unlikely to occur. Rowland, has also taken it upon himself to arrange transport of a journalist targeted by the Nazi regime - but even if he is allowed in the country, he may not survive to speak.

Glamor, bohemianism, artistry and political activism all play a role in this wonderful novel. A Dangerous Language is a novel to read when you want to reflect on ideals in addition to enjoying an action packed plot. The characters are vibrant, complicated individuals - people you want to watch. Together it's an explosive combination.

5 / 5

I received a copy of A Dangerous Language from the publisher and Netgalley.com in exchange for an honest review.

--Crittermom

Kathryn MacDougall says

I adored this book. It's got all the qualities of a perfect madcap mystery, from a loyal quartet of artistic friends, nefarious political operatives, and a good family name that needs to stay out of the muck. Rowland Sinclair wouldn't feel out of place in the midst of a good Agatha Christie mystery.

I'll admit that I may be a bit biased, since I'm currently living in Australia, but it was an absolute delight to read a book which takes place in the Australia of the 1930s. There were so many developments (such as the communist/fascist conflicts) that I remained completely ignorant about and that this book did a brilliant job of introducing. Historical fact is masterfully blended with fiction. More than a few historical figures, from Egon Kisch to Stanley Bruce, grace the pages. None of the historical context feels didactic - it all feels startlingly pertinent to the characters' lives.

Even though I started with the eighth book in the series, I was able to pick right up and understand what was going on. The characters felt fully realized, each with their own little idiosyncrasies and attitudes (poor, long suffering Mary Brown!). The events of prior books were referenced in a way that provided context and more than a little intrigue without merely summarizing the series.

It is the relationships between the four main characters that drives the book. From Milton, the communist and poet (albeit one who spends more time quoting others than writing his own), to painter and handyman Clyde, to the irrepressible Edna, to the wealthy not-a-communist-but-maybe-a-sympathizer painter Rowly all feel honest. You can't help but root for them.

Brona's Books says

I had the pleasure of hearing Sulari Gentill talk about her books recently and was thrilled to hear that she has long term plans for Rowland and his friends that will take us all the way through to the end of WWII. Initially she planned to write a book set in each year from 1932 - 1945. However we have now just finished book 8...and we're still in 1935!

One of the things I love about this series is the mix of fictional and real life characters. Gentill talked about how she always sticks to the known facts but that her stories exist in the gaps in between.

A quick wiki search on the journalist Egon Kisch shows that he did in fact jump from his ship in Melbourne in 1934 and break his leg. Gentill has simply added Rowly and his friends to the picture with a plausible reason about why Kisch may have 'jumped'.

Having an historian as a husband has kept Gentill honest in all matters relating to these times. It's this authenticity that makes Rowland feel so real...and the fact that he is such a lovely, lovely man. It must be wonderful to carry him around in your head all the time, as Gentill does.

This particular story is mostly set in Victoria and Canberra as Rowly and his friends help the members the Movement Against War & Fascism get Kisch into the country to speak his 'dangerous language'. Naturally, Rowland's brother, Wilfred, is not happy about this turn of events, but there are many others even unhappier. This unhappiness quickly turns into violence and places our much loved characters in many dangerous situations.

Poor Rowly has been shot, stabbed, tortured, kidnapped and hit over the head so many times, it's amazing that he's still standing. It's getting a little harder to classify these books as 'cosy crime' or 'gentle crime', perhaps historical fiction that just happens to have crime and political intrigue is a more apt description.

Gentill is getting better and better with each of the Rowly stories. I love how she brings to light little known historical events for her characters to engage with. Fact and fiction are woven together seamlessly and gracefully and her main characters are being allowed to evolve into nuanced, complex individuals. Does anyone else feel that little break/ache of their heart every time Mrs Sinclair calls Rowland, Aubrey?

Sense of place is another thing that I love about these books. Gentill's good eye for detail brings 1930's

Sydney to life (or in this case 1930's Melbourne and Canberra). I have a real sense of walking beside Rowly and his friends, seeing what they see and feeling what they feel.

As for Rowly and Edna? It's so obvious that they adore each other, but will they ever be able to work things out? They are the Mulder & Scully or the David & Maddie of 1930's Sydney!

Full review here - <http://bronasbooks.blogspot.com.au/20...>

Karen says

If anybody could point me in the direction of a good condition Chrysler Airflow I'd be very grateful. I know there was one in the 1953 Redex Trial and there were a few in Australia at the time, so surely, somewhere, in somebody's shed... frankly I'm lusting... But I digress, and that's the problem with Sulari Gentill's Rowland Sinclair series, of which *A DANGEROUS LANGUAGE* is book number 8. It's easy to identify with the perfectly packaged little details, as you find yourself immersed in a time and place that's beautifully described, standing out from the pages, making the things that Sinclair and his companions get up to something you feel a part of. Reading this series is part history lesson, part time spent with good friends, part escapade.

Incorporated into all of these books are elements of fact. *A DANGEROUS LANGUAGE* continues the tension between Conservatives, Fascists and Communists in Australian Politics. Along the way it interweaves the sad story of the crime that became known as The Pyjama Girl Murder (for a really good outline of that story I can recommend Richard Evan's 2004 book *THE PYJAMA GIRL MYSTERY*), with that of the bizarre real-life story of Thomas Ley - Australian Politician, convicted murderer in England, into attempts to bring a well-known peace activist and anti-Fascist, Egon Kisch to Australia. Needless to say *A DANGEROUS LANGUAGE* revolves around a particularly political plot, with murder, mayhem and some hefty doses of romance and romantic shenanigans.

Told, as always, with Gentill's trademark light touch, this is not, however a book that requires the reader to be a political junkie. The history is nicely balanced against the action, and the ongoing development of the close friendship between Rowly and his companions, and the tension between Rowly and his uptight, older brother adds personal touches that don't overwhelm what is, after all, crime fiction at its core. There is a murder in Canberra to be solved. There's a peace activist to get into the country. There's a bunch of thugs to be averted. Along the way all the four companions come under threat, and at points, an under-whelmed older brother's influence is required yet again.

Being book 8 in this wonderful series, *A DANGEROUS LANGUAGE* is perhaps not the best place for new readers to start. There's so much back-story now to all of the characters, and their idiosyncrasies, that you really need to have started earlier on in the series. To say nothing of understanding all of the history and societal changes that have gone on in these people's lives.

For welded on fans of this series, A DANGEROUS LANGUAGE will not disappoint. On the other hand, if you're new to the series, then I envy you. Each of the books in the Rowland Sinclair series is about as good as historical Australian Crime Fiction is ever going to get.

<https://www.austcrimefiction.org/review/review-dangerous-language-sulari-gentill>

Denise says

I saw that this was 'Pick of the Week' in the Age yesterday, and I wanted to have not read it so I would have that delightful anticipation all over again. I'm thinking of beginning from 'A few Right Thinking Men' all over again, but I lent it to someone and they haven't returned it ?

Lyn Mcdonell says

Once again Sulari takes you on a non-stop adventure. The only problem is that I read it too quickly and have to wait for the next book.

Lynne says

This wonderful series continues to effortlessly blend historical characters from Australia of the 1930s with a group of delightful fictional characters while somehow dealing with a murder mystery at the same time. The setting for this one is the attempt of the government at the time to prevent anti-fascist Egon Kisch from landing on Australian soil and addressing the people. I'm hoping there will be many more books to come.

Jennifer (JC-S) says

'The 1934 Melbourne International Motor Show was in its final day.'

Rowland Sinclair, Clyde Watson Jones and Milton Isaacs are at the show. Edna Higgins, who prefers not to see 'grown men reduced to simpering lovesick boys by shiny machines' has not accompanied them to Melbourne. Rowly has purchased a new car: a Chrysler Airflow. The plan is to pick up Edna at Albury on their way to a house party in Yackandandah. What could possibly go wrong?

Ms Gentill weaves her fiction around facts, and quite a lot was happening in Australia and in Europe in 1934. A visit by Egon Kisch, an internationally renowned peace advocate is planned. It is possible that the government might refuse him entry, or delay his entry so that he cannot speak at the All Australian Congress of the Movement Against War and Fascism to be held at the Port Melbourne Town Hall, Melbourne between

the 10th and 12th of November 1934. Rowly volunteers to fly to Perth to bring Kisch to Melbourne. Additionally, Rowly Sinclair is approached by the Communist Party of Australia, which was quite active then, to observe proceedings at the Australian Parliament in Canberra. Rowly refuses: he may be broadly in sympathy with the party, but he's not a member. Milton Isaacs is, though, and the four friends decide to travel together to Canberra.

Against a backdrop of the struggle between Australian fascists and communists, the MacRobertson Air Race (part of Melbourne's centenary celebrations), the mystery of the 'Pyjama Girl' murder, life for Rowly Sinclair and his friends becomes complicated.

There's a murder in Canberra, on the steps of Parliament House. There's a woman from Rowly's past, and a trip to Perth to try to get Egon Kisch into Melbourne before he is banned.

It would be possible to read this novel without reading the earlier books, but I wouldn't recommend it. Ms Gentill has developed such richly three-dimensional characters that knowledge of their backstories is important as is immersion in the history of the 1930s. At this distance, it may be difficult to understand the struggle between the communists and the fascists within Australia before World War II. And, if you've never heard of Egon Kisch and the infamous dictation test, then you might be interested in looking up the Immigration Restriction Act 1901.

'A Dangerous Language' is the eighth novel in Ms Gentill's award winning Rowland Sinclair mystery series, and is set in Australia in 1934. I'd recommend these novels to anyone interested in a mystery series set in the 1930s which uses historical fact as its background.

Note: My thanks to NetGalley and Pantera Press for providing me with a free electronic copy of this book for review purposes.

Jennifer Cameron-Smith

Westgj says

For lovers of murder, politics and Australian history. This novel weaves our hero into the story of Canberra, the rise of fascism, and those working to expose it. It mixes fiction with real characters including a murderous MP and brings this era to light with a real affection for the period and a clear eye for the momentous events building throughout the world and the parallels today.

Diane says

And so concludes Book #8 in the Rowland Sinclair Mysteries. Loved this book as I have all in the series. Sulari's mixture of real people and fictional characters holds continuing fascination for me. Also of great interest is the politics of the 1930's which is an education in itself for me as I never had the interest so never learned just how critical the politics were at that time in our history. This story is set in 1934 and we all know now what happened to our world just a few short years later. That is not to say what occurred from 1939 onwards is something that happened over night...so many years before built up to the terrible events now so well known. Thank you Sulari for yet another wonderful book. Rowland, Edna, Milt and Clyde (oh and not to forget Wilfred) are like old friends now. I look forward to many more adventures.

Emily Wrayburn says

Review originally posted on A Keyboard and an Open Mind September 29, 2017:

Leaping into the eighth book in a series without having read the others is a risk. I have to admit the main reason I picked this ARC up on NetGalley was because I had seen Sulari Gentill host a panel at the recent Canberra Writer's Festival and was interested to sample her writing. I think I probably would have been a bit more engaged had I been familiar with the core cast of characters from books one through seven, but this book was enjoyable nonetheless.

In 1930s Australia, Rowland Sinclair finds himself caught up in intrigues between the government, and Fascist and Communist factions when he agrees to help a notorious anti-Fascist speaker get into Australia before the government can ban him. The journey takes him across Australia and nearly gets him killed on more than one occasion.

I enjoyed the characters in this far more than the mystery or the political machinations, really. The core cast are a really fun bunch, and hopeless romantic that I am, I also really enjoyed watching Rowly wrestle with romantic feelings and other related entanglements. I did enjoy the way Gentill wove actual historical events into the story, though at the same time, I am never quite sure how to feel about actual historical figures as characters in novels.

There were two murders featured in the story, though they felt like window dressing for the political machinations, which seemed to be more of the focus. For a significant portion of the book, there was no focus on either death. One of them was solved towards the end, but the other one was just concluded via a note in the epilogue, and I think was mostly there to create some tension at the beginning of the story, when Rowland and his friends thought the victim might have been their friend and colleague, Edna. Once it was established that Edna was safe, there was no real reason for the main characters to give the death any more than a passing interest.

That sort of peripheral focus on the murders is something I am not sure isn't a feature of the series. I have no idea what form the mysteries take in the other books and so I don't know if it is just that I wasn't used to it, being a newbie. Ditto the excerpts from newspapers and other publications of the time at the beginning of each chapter. I have no idea if this is a stylistic feature present in all the books; if it is, I would probably bear with it a bit more, though as it was, I felt they weren't always necessary and at times, I even skipped them.

Still, I can definitely see why this is a popular series, especially with those who are big readers of historical fiction.

(Thank you to the publishers and NetGalley for providing a free copy of this book in exchange for a review)

(This review is part of the Australian Women Writers Challenge 2017. [Click here](#) for more information).

Annie says

Originally published on my blog: Nonstop Reader.

If someone had told me that A Dangerous Language was an authentic heretofore unknown classic golden age mystery, I would have no trouble believing it. It's beautifully plotted, taut, and meticulously researched. With most modern period mysteries, there's a polite suspension of disbelief which allows the reader to enter the story in whichever time period whilst reading a modern feeling narrative. This book (and the others in the series) absolutely resonate with the spirit of the 1930s. I was transported. Terribly trite, but the settings and story really came alive for me.

There is something very quintessentially Australian about this book. Many (most?) of the wealthy social upper class in Australia still had close ties to England, and that's the case with Rowland. He's on the outs with his ultra traditional (stuffy!) brother, Wilfred, who disapproves heartily of Rowland's bohemian friends, and feels that Rowland's escapades are willfully designed to embarrass.

Sinclair is affluent, self-deprecating and genuinely likeable. He's loyal to his friends and dashing and not above a bit of derring-do and can be relied upon in a tight spot. With fascists and anti-communist thugs as well as disapproving family members and an old flame trying to make life difficult, Rowly and company have their work cut out for them.

Such a fun read. The dialogue is wonderfully written and pitch perfect. There are sidebar news bits providing current (1934) headlines and backstory history along with an epilogue at the end of the book with real-life backstory, with which I was previously unfamiliar. The historical sidebars and chapter intros make up roughly 10% of the page content and are cleverly interwoven into the plot seamlessly.

Five stars, brilliantly written, flawlessly executed. I want to go re-read the series now.

As an aside. I do think the book could be read as a standalone, but definitely benefits from being read as part of the series.

Disclosure: I received an ARC at no cost from the author/publisher.

Elaine Tomasso says

I would like to thank Netgalley and Pantera Press for an advance copy of A Dangerous Language, the 8th novel in the Rowland Sinclair series set in 1930s Sydney.

Rowlie is enjoying life and his new car when he is approached by the communist party and asked to observe proceedings at the Federal parliament in Canberra on their behalf. He declines as he is not a member of the party but his friend Milton Isaacs who is accepts. All 4 of the friends decide to go to Canberra with Milton to pass the time before Rowlie flies to Freemantle to bring famous communist writer Egon Kisch back to Melbourne before he is barred from entering the country as a subversive. They have hardly arrived in Canberra when the man Milt is to replace is murdered.

I thoroughly enjoyed A Dangerous Language. It is an exciting adventure which blends fiction with historical fact. It is tense in parts when Rowland & co seem to have no way out of dangerous situations but something always happens to save them and it makes for a rip roaring read. I like the mixture of fact and fiction as it gives the novel context and this is enhanced by pertinent excerpts from contemporary newspaper articles which give the reader a real feel for the era.

I must admit that the struggle between Australian fascists and communists, while deadly serious at the time, seems laughable nowadays and this theme didn't really hold my attention. It is interesting to see the polarity

between the two positions at the time but not to the extent it occupies in the novel. What I find more interesting is the ruling elite's refusal to believe what Rowlie saw in Germany as true and to shun his paintings of it as left wing propaganda.

I like Rowlie and his friends. They are very "modern" in their left wing politics, disregard for social conventions (unless it upsets Rowlie's straight laced older brother Wilfred) and egalitarianism. They have a real friendship and are like a family in their mutual support. Not one of them lacks courage in doing what they perceive to be the right thing. Unfortunately Wilfred doesn't always view their actions in the same light.

A Dangerous Language is another fine addition to the series which I have no hesitation in recommending as a good read.
