

Room To Read Book Group Report by Celia Chapple

Heat Wave by Penelope Lively

Pauline, a writer, is spending a hot summer at World's End and her daughter Teresa, her husband Maurice, and their baby son, Luke, are staying in the neighbouring cottage. Maurice is increasingly preoccupied with a book he is writing, and frequently goes up to London. Pauline suspects that he is having an affair with Carol, his copy editor, who is regularly invited, with her partner, to World's End. There is a tenseness between the characters. The scene is set for us, the reader, through Pauline's eyes, as her daughter begins to make the same mistakes in love as Pauline herself had previously made.

This story was generally liked by the group although at times, the author's rather pompous style was difficult. She moved between present and past time, describing the countryside and its esoteric characters, and Pauline's innermost ponderings and feelings. How far should she intervene for her daughter's sake? How far should she go to protect her daughter? Should she wake up Teresa to the obvious (to Pauline) situation particularly as their own relationship seems hollow, distant. Would any intervention leave Teresa without the opportunity to deal with it?

The group discussed these and other issues, some sharing their own experiences. The book is a slow burn with the end surprising but warranting the title, *Heat Wave*. I won't tell you. Let's just say most of the group thought Maurice deserved it! Recommend to a friend, and to a book group: 4/5.

Next meeting with the Poetry Group: Wednesday 10 December at 10am. Bring some literature to share.