“Grief is the Thing with Feathers” – book review

“Grief is the Thing with Feathers” is a stunning debut book written by Max Porter.



I had seen several positive reviews about this book, and although I put it on my to-read list, I was hesitant to read a book about a family dealing with grief. When I was in a great local bookstore recently, I realised it was a physically beautiful book, and the layout intrigued me. Instead of being structured like a novella with pages of text, this book is presented almost like a series of poems, from three different points of view. This roped me in, I bought a copy, and I had read and finished it within hours of the purchase.

This book is set in London, and revolves around a man who has lost his wife, and two children who have lost their mother. And it revolves around a crow. Crow will be with the family until they no longer need him. He is horrible and funny and caring, and they can not deal with their loss without him.

This is a brutal and breathtaking look into the complex pain that is grief. The writing is superb – the words slap you in the face, and then make you laugh, and then bring you close to tears. It is the type of writing that makes you roll the lines around on our tongue repetitively while the meaning blows your mind. I have not read anything like this before. The poetic writing alone is enough to bring praise to this book, and then add in the relatable, hard-hitting, hair-raising subject matter, and you have one magnificent book.