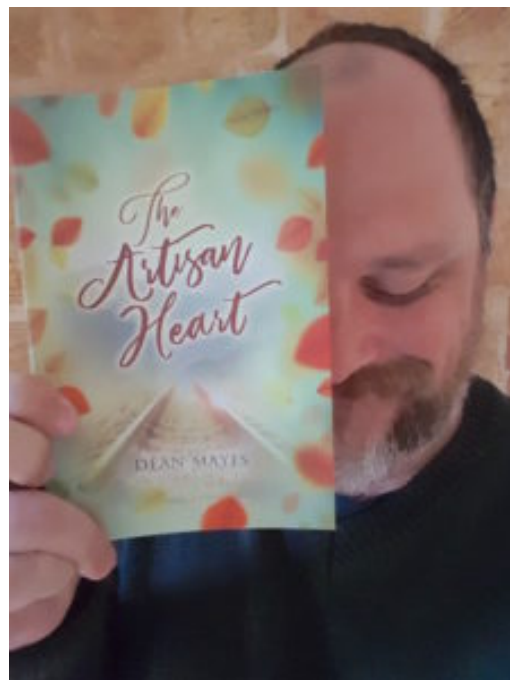


The Artisan Heart – Book review

Dean Mayes is an author who continues to show his talent with his latest novel, *The Artisan Heart*. Dean has stepped into the romance genre with this compelling book, and though this varies from his other great books, this style fits Dean perfectly.



I have a not-so-secret confession. I am not a fan of romance books. But did I enjoy this book? Yes! I definitely believe that any romance lover will be bowled over by this book, and at the same time, the character development, intrigue and setting will immerse any reader into the story.

I received this ARC from Central Avenue Publishing, and I'm lucky enough to count Dean as a friend of mine. Regardless, this is an honest review of *The Artisan Heart* and contains my own thoughts and opinions. This novel comes out on the **1st of September, 2018**.

Summary:

The *Artisan Heart* follows respected paediatrician, Hayden

Luschcombe. He lives in Adelaide with his wife, Bernadette, a goal-oriented and driven event planner. One day, his seemingly idyllic life is turned on its head and he decides to travel back to his childhood home in Walhalla. This is a beautiful town surrounded by the mountains of South Australia.

As Hayden works on his old and dilapidated family home, he must try to get back on his feet. He spends time with the town people he grew up with and meets Isabelle, a determined single mother and artisan baker. These two, firm in their own mindsets and caught up with their struggles, begin to reveal what has been long hidden in each other's hearts.

However, both their pasts loom and threaten to crush their happiness. If they ever want to have a chance at the future they deserve, they must confront what they have buried behind them. Is it possible?

Review:

The atmosphere and settings in this book are so intricate and real. It was exciting for me because the beginning of the book is set in an area of Adelaide in which I worked and lived years ago (and where I met Dean). It's always interesting to read about a place that you know well. Dean transitions cleverly between the city and the small town that Hayden moves to and his different lives in each with a change of pace and mood that is clear and immersive. I could immediately tell that Dean has a passion for and connection with Walhalla as he truly brings out the beauty of this town.

I greatly enjoyed the character development in this book. These characters are multifaceted with their flaws and struggles, kindness and strength. It is clear that Dean has paid close attention to each of them. The fact that they felt so real has meant they have stuck with me long after finishing the book.

As you would expect from a romance book, this beautiful story

is sweet and charming, but at the same time it has tension, mystery and drama, which, for someone like me who doesn't typically read romances, helped to keep me hooked. There are some on-the-edge-of-your-seat moments, which, if you're a fan of Dean's previous work, you will know he delivers skillfully and powerfully.

It is great to see another well written book added to Australian literature, and *The Artisan Heart* is one that you should definitely check out. I gave this book 5 stars.