

## **Parramatta Singles**

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## **Introduction**

The story begins where the biting, briny scent of the distant ocean finally surrenders to the earthy, damp breath of the hills, settling deep within the loud, heavily perfumed, and relentlessly beating heart of western Sydney. Parramatta is a city of blinding, fractured light and deafening, beautiful noise. In the breathless warmth of late spring, the encroaching Australian summer begins to beat down like a golden hammer. It bakes the grey concrete pavements until the air above them shimmers and dances, smelling sharply of hot asphalt, melting rubber, and the sweet, heavy exhaust of endless lines of traffic. The sky is an unforgiving, blinding canopy of bright,

aching azure, completely devoid of clouds, pressing a stifling, humid heat into every narrow alleyway and sprawling park. When the searing afternoon finally breaks and surrenders to the encroaching evening, the sky aggressively bleeds into a violent, bruised canvas of deep, throbbing purples, fiery tangerines, and melancholic, dusky indigos.

It is exactly in this golden, fading hour that the true sensory symphony of Parramatta loudly awakens. The dense, sprawling canopy of ancient jacaranda trees prepares to blanket the city in a soft, electric-purple rain of blossoms, their sweet, heady floral perfume masking the metallic, ozone scent of the industrial train lines. The Parramatta River, a slow-moving, thick ribbon of murky brown and olive green, catches the harsh, glaring white reflections of the city's towering glass monoliths, carrying the fractured light steadily onward beneath the shadow of stone bridges. The water slaps a rhythmic, wet, and echoing beat against the concrete embankments, a patient, ancient sound that constantly underpins the frantic, high-pitched screech of trains tearing into the station and the chaotic, echoing clamor of a million rushing commuters.

Amidst this blindingly colorful, wildly fragrant, and deafening suburban mosaic, a quiet but fierce revolution has begun to take root, blooming silently in the shadows of the towering office buildings and the brightly lit community centers. It is not a loud, marching rebellion marked by shouting crowds or violently shattered glass, but rather a profound, unshakeable, and collective withdrawal, enacted by women who have simply, definitively, and exhaustedly had enough. They are the brilliant, hyphenated daughters of the diaspora, women whose daily lives are a complex, vibrant fusion of their parents' heavy, spice-scented histories and the sharp, cold, glass-and-steel realities of modern Australia. They

navigate a world where the crushing, suffocatingly high financial cost of living in Sydney hangs over their heads like a dark, heavy storm cloud, turning every single life choice into a high-stakes, nerve-wracking ledger entry that must be meticulously balanced.

In the brightly illuminated, air-conditioned sanctuaries of local cafes, where the air is thick with the bitter, rich aroma of roasted espresso beans and the sweet, milky scent of boba tea, they observe the modern landscape of romance. They watch the younger Gen Z men congregate in their identical, slouched packs, sporting their characteristic, tightly curled broccoli haircuts. These boys cast passive, heavy-lidded stares across the tables, their faces bathed in the ghostly, pale blue light of their endlessly scrolling smartphones. The air around them smells vaguely of cheap chemical body spray and deep-fried food, and their presence is marked by a sluggish, grey passivity that the women view with a mixture of quiet amusement and a distant, cool-blue compassion. They are boys wandering blindly in a new, confusing country of half-formed, obsolete masculinities, completely reliant on loud anime openers to bridge the terrifying gap of human connection, yet ultimately failing to offer any real, grounded presence.

The glowing digital world, specifically the curated, brightly colored, and highly deceptive arenas of online dating apps, has completely commodified the human soul. Profiles shine with neon-bright promises of shared adventures and deep values, but the physical reality consistently dissolves into cold, grey, and excruciatingly awkward silences. The women have endured the painful, jarring dopamine hits of digital matches that lead only to agonizingly low-effort courtship: the hesitant, late-night text messages that ping loudly in the dark, the cowardly digital ghosting that leaves a cold, empty void, and the frustrating, draining monologues of men

entirely incapable of asking a single question about anyone but themselves. The dating scene has devolved into a suffocating, transactional space where the heavy, invisible burden of emotional labor and mental management is expected to flow strictly, exhaustingly, in one direction.

It was within this bleak, frustrating landscape that a single, glowing Social Media thread became a blazing, bright-orange beacon.

Discovered during sleepless, indigo-hued nights when the distant, bass-heavy hum of city traffic rattled the windowpanes, the thread acted as both a perfectly clear mirror and a sharply drawn map. Its raw, unfiltered, black-and-white text detailed the grim realities of modern relationships: the rampant, terrifying statistics of domestic violence that turned the concept of physical safety into a visceral, daily vigilance; the exhausting "man-child" phenomenon that forced vibrant, ambitious women into the dreary, grey roles of mothers and managers; and the deep, dark pits of depression, anxiety, and brutally low self-esteem that so frequently accompanied these mismatched partnerships. *"Women know they're better off being single than being with a dud,"* one anonymous commenter had typed into the void, a sentiment that resonated like a loudly struck brass gong in the hearts of those who read it.

This book is the colorful, loud, and deeply fragrant record of those who chose to listen to that gong, to step off the exhausting, spinning carousel, and to actively, fiercely reclaim their own luminous solitude. It explores the intimately woven lives of women who walk the sun-baked, noisy streets of Parramatta, smelling the intoxicating mix of burning temple incense, hot mustard oil, roasting coffee, and damp river earth. They have completely rewritten the old, tired narratives, deciding that true, lasting fulfillment does not require the heavy, often discordant addition of

romantic compromise. Singlehood, for them, is emphatically not a dark, empty waiting room bathed in flickering, sickly-yellow fluorescent light. It is, instead, a vibrant, meticulously cultivated, and brightly colored garden. It is a deliberate, joyful destination chosen with wide-open eyes and fiercely protected boundaries.

As the blazing sun sets over the loud, chaotic, and beautifully diverse suburb, painting the concrete skyline in brilliant shades of gold and crimson, these women step forward. They are fully present in their own incredible becoming, completely untethered from the grey weights of outdated expectations, and entirely ready to author their own brilliant, uncompromised futures amidst the ceaseless, electric hum of western Sydney.

## **Chapter 1: Sumitri**

Sumitri walked the banks of the Parramatta River at dusk, her shadow stretching long, thin, and uncertain against the water's bruised, violet light. The evening sky was a tapestry of fading bruised purples and deep, melancholic indigos, bleeding into the murky, slow-moving brown of the river below. The air hung heavy with the scent of damp earth and the sharp, medicinal tang of eucalyptus leaves crushing under her sensible work shoes. Above her, the sudden, leathery flutter of fruit bats taking flight provided a percussive soundtrack to the distant, mechanical hum of traffic grinding along Victoria Road. Twenty-eight years old, she possessed eyes that held the deep, torrential monsoon memory of her parents' village, contrasted sharply with the harsh, flickering fluorescent clarity of the Sydney offices where she spent her days; despite her age, she had never been in a relationship.