



The Watchful Wife **by Suzanne Leal**

Publication date: July 4, 2023

'The Watchful Wife is assured and engrossing. As our crisp, clear-eyed narrator with more than one cross to bear, Ellen guides us through a tangle of ethical and emotional quandaries that feel both timeless and immediate, keeping us on her side the whole way through.' - **Jacqueline Bublitz, author of *Before You Knew My Name***

The Watchful Wife is the story of Ellen Wells, a sheltered young woman brought up in the austere Free Church of Kirkton, where women are required to serve, dress soberly and never draw attention to themselves. There is a life of few pleasures and little freedom.

Managing to make her escape, Ellen becomes a teacher at a girls' high school where, despite a rocky start, she gradually finds her place. No one is more surprised than she is when Gordon, a fellow teacher, shows interest in her and they fall in love.

When Gordon is promoted to head of English at a prestigious private school, Ellen is both proud and delighted. Life is beautiful and for a time nothing can diminish their happiness. Everything unravels, however, when Gordon is accused of a crime he swears he didn't commit. Ellen believes him; of course she does. And even as the evidence against him mounts, still her faith in him stays strong.

Gripping and intriguing, *The Watchful Wife* draws the reader into a world swirling with suspicion and accusations where nothing is quite as it seems and not everyone can be trusted.

Talking points include:

- This is Suzanne's second book set in a school. What is it about this setting that appeals to readers?
- Suzanne is the daughter of a theologian. What else inspired her to include a storyline about religion?
- Suzanne's work as a lawyer inspires her writing. What is the nature of truth and how it is revealed or hidden in the courtroom? What is the effect of the criminal justice system on the families of those who find themselves embroiled in it?
- Suzanne is interested in the lives of children who are ostracised and how they make their way through a society that can be hostile to them. How is it that some damaged children are lost, and others manage to navigate life more successfully?

PUBLICATION DATE: July 4, 2023

RRP: \$32.99

IMPRINT: Allen & Unwin

CATEGORY: Contemporary fiction

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Praise for Suzanne Leal

'Suzanne Leal's books always grab me from the very first sentence and *The Watchful Wife* is no exception. It is intriguing, engaging and deeply moving from beginning to end. I loved *Ellen* from the first moment I met her.' – **Jane Caro, author of *The Mother***

'Leal's unusual perspective on the destructive force of an allegation gives this book real moral complexity ... Nuanced, troubling and convincing.' – **Jock Serong, author of *The Settlement***

'Leal delivers an intriguing page-turner with emotional depth, nuance and moral complexity: *The Watchful Wife* is a truly gripping read from start to finish.' - **Mark Brandi, author of *Wimmera***

'Mesmerising, heartbreaking, honest.' - **Nikki Gemmell on *The Deceptions***

'Suspenseful. Moving and full of heart. I couldn't put it down.' - **Richard Glover on *The Teacher's Secret***



About Suzanne Leal

Suzanne Leal is the author of novels *Running With Ivan*, *The Teacher's Secret*, *Border Street* and *The Deceptions*, for which she won the Nib People's Choice Prize and was shortlisted for the Davitt Awards and the Mark and Evette Moran Nib Literary Award. A legal member of the NSW Civil and Administrative Tribunal, board director of BAD Sydney Crime Writers Festival and interviewer and facilitator at literary and corporate events, Suzanne is the online host of Thursday Book Club.

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