



# The World Without Us

*By Mireille Juchau*

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## **The World Without Us** By Mireille Juchau

Thirteen-year-old Tess Müller stopped speaking six months ago. Her silence is baffling to her parents, her teachers, and her younger sister, Meg, but the more urgent mystery for both girls is where their mother Evangeline goes each day, pushing an empty pram and returning home wet, muddy, and disheveled.

Their father, Stefan, struggling with his own losses, tends to his apiary and tries to understand why his bees are disappearing. But after he discovers a car wreck and human remains on their farm, old secrets emerge to threaten the fragile family.

One day Tess's teacher Jim encounters Evangeline by the wild Repentance River. Jim is in flight from his own troubles in Sydney, and Evangeline, raised in a mountain commune and bearing the scars of the fire that destroyed it, is a puzzle he longs to solve.

As the forest trees are felled and the lakes fill with run-off from the expanding mines, Tess watches the landscape of her family undergo shifts of its own. A storm is coming--and the Müllers are in its path.

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### Editorial Review

#### Review

"Powerful and poetic . . . The slow unfolding of the truth, layer after layer, is superbly done; though this novel is too classy to pigeonhole as a thriller, it has all the pace and invention of the classic thriller. What makes it unforgettable is Juchau's sensitive portrayal of a family poleaxed by grief." ?Kate Saunders, *The Times*

"In structuring its environmental themes around various mysteries, [Juchau] creates constant suspense . . . [She] artfully counterpoints personal loss with the destruction of the environment . . . The achievement of *The World Without Us* lies in its suggestion that our relationship to a changed environment is today's rather than tomorrow's story." ?*Financial Times*

"Juchau's style is perfectly poised, elegant and restrained. Almost any page of this astonishing novel offers proof of a writer of great poetic power . . . An extraordinarily vivid novel, elegant, convincing, intelligent and profoundly moving." ?*The Guardian*

"Thoroughly captivating . . . Meticulously researched and vividly described, *The World Without Us* is detailed and emotionally fraught, its portrait of love and loss possessing an almost timeless quality. Juchau confirms an eternal concept: when the past holds such pain, and the future such dread, sometimes all one can do is muddle through the present." ?*The Independent on Sunday*

"Reading the novel is akin to being inside a hive, a constant whirr of activity as plots are picked up . . . The honey comes in Juchau's wonderfully vivid writing and powers of description . . . lyrical." ?*The Irish Times*

"A revelation, a masterly story involving the refuge of silence, the fate of bees, and the shadows of old sins." ?Alberto Mangue, *Australian Book Review*, "Books of the Year"

"I was enormously impressed by Mireille Juchau's haunting exploration of an ecologically fraying world." ?James Bradley, *Australian Book Review*, "Books of the Year"

"A resonant, wise and achingly beautiful novel about loss, continuance, and the imagination." ?Felicity Plunkett, *Australian Book Review*, "Books of the Year"

"One of those novels that does everything right, all at once: gorgeous writing about people, place, grief, loss, and our changing environment. Juchau balances all these elements perfectly, raising questions rather than proposing answers to the big themes she explores." ?Jo Case, *Australian Book Review*, "Books of the Year"

#### About the Author

**Mireille Juchau** is an award-winning Australian writer, and *The World Without Us* is her third novel. Her first, *Machines for Feeling*, was shortlisted for *The Australian/Vogel Literary Award* in 1999, and the second, *Burning In*, was published in 2007. In 2008, it was shortlisted for the Prime Minister's Literary Award for fiction, the Commonwealth Writers' Prize, *The Age Book of the Year Award*, and the Nita B Kibble Award. She lives in Sydney.

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