



Listen (Kate Veitch, Viking, \$32.95 tpb, ISBN 0670029440, September) ★ ★ ★

It's Christmas Eve 1967. Rosemary, a Brit unhappily transplanted to suburban Melbourne, makes a decision that has an impact on her life and the lives of her four children forever. Forty years on, Deborah, James, Robert and Meredith (now adults with their own families) are forced to face a past they have each concealed, in one way or another. *Listen*, the debut novel by Kate Veitch, is pure family drama in a contemporary and local setting, however, the dialogue, replete with many a 'gosh', 'darn', and 'golly', often belies the contemporary nature of the novel. Do people really speak like this? Clunky dialogue aside, there is sufficient drama going on within this well-plotted novel to keep the reader

engaged. While some of the characters appear a little too heavily rendered at times, their stories are beautifully interwoven and there is an honesty to their relationships that brings an authenticity to this book. There is a truthful quality to *Listen* that will engross the reader until the final page. Abandonment, infidelity, dementia, alcoholism, loss, growth, love, and all the stuff of life cram the pages of *Listen*, and as such, it will appeal to anyone in need of a good family drama fix.

(For an interview with Kate Veitch, see page 47.)

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