



A Child's Book of True Crime: A Novel

Chloe Hooper

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Kate Byrne is having an affair with the father of her most gifted fourth grader, Lucien. Her lover's wife has just published "Murder at Black Swan Point," a true crime story about the brutal slaying of a young adulteress in a nearby town. When Lucien begins to display violent imagery in his crayon drawings, Kate wonders how well her pupil understands his mother's grisly work and why he's been exposed to it. Suspecting this account of Black Swan Point's murder to be inaccurate, Kate imagines another version of the story -- for children, and narrated by Australian animals. But will her fixation with the crime -- and Lucien's family -- align her fate with that of the murdered girl? In "A Child's Book of True Crime," Chloe Hooper brilliantly portrays a young woman reluctant to enter or conform to the world of adults. Kate Byrne is enthralled by the lives of her nine-year-old students, while remaining a misfit among their parents. And though Lucien's father brings her to life sexually in encounters of escalating eroticism, he cannot dull her obsession with the past. Fixated on the crime of passion that occurred years earlier, Kate is becoming less and less aware of her own reputation in the present, an unraveling that Hooper captures so chillingly in this intense, superbly crafted first novel.

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