

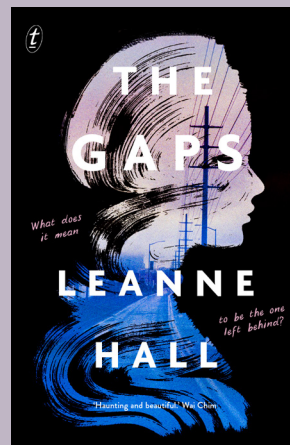
The Gaps



Leanne Hall

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FICTION, PAPERBACK

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PRAISE FOR *THE GAPS*

'A powerful, compelling read about the fragility, resilience and fierceness of girlhood. Unputdownable.'

LILI WILKINSON

'Hall's characters are meticulously drawn, brave, fierce and vulnerable. A stunning achievement from an Australian treasure.'

WAI CHIM

'A creeping psychological thriller about loss and fear and guilt and the fractured relationships that are left behind. Brilliant.'

ROBERT NEWTON

'Hall's writing is breathtakingly good. *The Gaps* is a lightning bolt of a novel about power, privilege, race, art and identity.'

NINA KENWOOD

ABOUT LEANNE HALL

Leanne Hall is an author of young adult and children's fiction. Her debut novel, *This Is Shyness*, won the Text Prize for Young Adult and Children's Writing, and was followed by a sequel, *Queen of the Night*. Her novel for younger readers, *Iris and the Tiger*, won the Patricia Wrightson Prize for Children's Literature at the 2017 NSW Premier's Literary Awards. Leanne works as a children's and YA specialist at an independent bookshop.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. How did *The Gaps* impact you? Will the story stay with you and, if so, why?
2. What do we gain from hearing both Chloe and Natalia's points of view? Which character did you relate to, or empathise with, the most?
3. At the beginning of the novel, Chloe describes having a 'chaotic collage' of 'photos and drawings and magazine pages' blu-tacked to her bedroom wall. This collage, she explains, is reflective of her inner thoughts. Did you adorn your teenage bedroom with posters? What did they signify about who you were at that time?
4. Chloe says her mum reads a lot of crime novels. How do the depictions of women in crime novels reveal the broader societal issues facing women? Do you think violence against women could be taken more seriously in Australia?
5. How does the book's title work in relation to the book's content?
6. 'Maybe the public will be more sympathetic if she looks young and cute. If she looks older or closer to being a woman, then it's too easy to say: oh, she was talking to guys online. Or dating older men, or going out and being a bad girl.' (p. 44) Do you agree with Chloe's mum? Are some women scrutinised more harshly than others in the media?
7. What are some ways that a community can come together to support one another in the face of a tragedy?
8. Describe in three words what it is/was like growing up in Australia as a young person. Are the experiences in your group similar or different?