

## Catherine Chidgey

### Author

Catherine Chidgey is the author of *In a Fishbone Church* (1998), *Golden Deeds* (2000), *The Transformation* (2003), *The Wish Child* (2016), the 'found novel' *The Beat of the Pendulum* (2019), *Remote Sympathy* (2021), *Pet* (2023), *The Axeman's Carnival* (2024) and *The Book of Guilt* (2025).



### Agents

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### Publications

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#### Fiction

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Publication Details	Notes
<b>THE BOOK OF GUILT</b> 2025 John Murray	England, 1979. Vincent, Lawrence and William are the last remaining residents of a secluded New Forest home, part of the government's Sycamore Scheme. Every day, the triplets do their chores, play their games and take their medicine, under the watchful eyes of Mother Morning, Mother Afternoon and Mother Night. Their nightmares are recorded in <i>The Book of Dreams</i> . Their lessons are taken from <i>The Book of Knowledge</i> . And their sins are reported in <i>The Book of Guilt</i> . All the boys want is to be sent to the Big House in Margate, where they imagine a life of sun, sea and fairground rides. But, as the government looks to shut down the Sycamore Homes, the triplets begin to question everything they have been told. Gradually surrendering its dark secrets, <i>The Book of Guilt</i> is a profoundly unnerving exploration of belonging in a world where some lives are valued less than others.

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<p><b>THE AXEMAN'S CARNIVAL</b> 2024 Europa</p>	<p>Everywhere, the birds: sparrows and skylarks and thrushes, starlings and bellbirds, fantails and pipits - but above them all and louder, the magpies. We are here and this is our tree and we're staying and it is ours and you need to leave and now.</p> <p>Tama is just a helpless chick when he is rescued by Marnie, and this is where his story might have ended. 'If it keeps me awake,' says Marnie's husband Rob, a farmer, 'I'll have to wring its neck.' But with Tama come new possibilities for the couple's future. Tama can speak, and his fame is growing. Outside, in the pines, his father warns him of the wickedness wrought by humans. Indoors, Marnie confides in him about her violent marriage. The more Tama sees, the more the animal and the human worlds - and all of the precarity, darkness and hope within them - bleed into one another. Like a stock truck filled with live cargo, the story moves inexorably towards its dramatic conclusion: the annual Axeman's Carnival. Part trickster, part surrogate child, part witness, Tama the magpie is the star of this story. Though what he says aloud to humans is often nonsensical (and hilarious with it), the tale he tells us weaves a disturbingly human sense. The Axeman's Carnival is Catherine Chidgey at her finest - comic, profound, poetic and true.</p>
<p><b>PET</b> 2023 Europa</p>	<p>Like every other girl in her class, twelve-year-old Justine is drawn to her glamorous, charismatic new teacher, and longs to be her pet. However, when a thief begins to target the school, Justine's sense that something isn't quite right grows ever stronger. With each twist of the plot, this gripping story of deception and the corrosive power of guilt takes a yet darker turn. Young as she is, Justine must decide where her loyalties lie. Set in New Zealand in 1984 and 2014, and probing themes of racism and misogyny, Pet is an elegant and chilling psychological thriller by the bestselling author of The Wish Child, Remote Sympathy and The Axeman's Carnival.</p>

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<b>REMOTE SYMPATHY</b>	
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2021 Europa	
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	An exquisitely readable, polyphonic novel of domestic drama and human connection set in and around a concentration camp in Germany during the second world war and its aftermath.
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Moving away from their lovely apartment in Munich isn't nearly as wrenching an experience for Frau Greta Hahn as she had feared. Their new home is even lovelier than the one they left behind, and best of all—right on their doorstep—are some of the finest craftsmen from all over Europe. Frau Hahn and the other officers' wives living in this small community can order anything they desire, whether new curtains made from the finest French fabrics, or furniture designed to the most exacting specifications. Life here in Buchenwald would appear to be idyllic.

Lying just beyond the forest that surrounds them—so close and yet so remote—is the looming presence of a work camp. Frau Hahn's husband, SS Sturmbannführer Dietrich Hahn, is to take up a powerful new position as the camp's administrator. As the prison population begins to rise, the job becomes ever more consuming. Corruption is rife at every level, the supplies are inadequate, and the sewerage system is under increasing strain.

When Frau Hahn is forced into an unlikely and poignant alliance with one of Buchenwald's prisoners, Dr. Lenard Weber, her naïve ignorance about what is going on so nearby is challenged. A decade earlier, Dr. Weber had invented a machine: the Sympathetic Vitaliser. At the time he believed that its subtle resonances might cure cancer. But does it really work? One way or another, it might yet save a life.

A tour de force about the evils of obliviousness, Remote Sympathy compels us to question our continuing and willful ability to look the other way in a world that is once more in thrall to the idea that everything—even facts, truth and morals—is relative. A novel of devastating beauty that will leave readers shaken and exhilarated.

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<b>THE BEAT OF THE PENDULUM</b>	
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2019 Eye Books	
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	Every day for a year, Catherine Chidgey recorded the words and language she came across during her day-to-day life – phone calls, television commercials, emails, radio shows, conversations with her family, street signs and satnav instructions. From these seemingly random snippets, she creates a fascinating portrait of modern life, focusing on the things that most people filter out.
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Chidgey listens in as her daughter, born through surrogacy, begins to speak and develop a personality, and her mother slips into dementia. With her husband, she debates the pros and cons of moving to a new town. With her publisher, she discusses the novel she is writing. While, all around, the world is bombarding her with information.

In The Beat of the Pendulum, Chidgey approaches the idea of the novel from an experimental new direction. It is bold, exciting, funny, moving and utterly compelling.

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<b>THE WISH CHILD</b> 2016 Vintage	<p>Germany, 1939. Sieglinde lives in the affluent ignorance of middle-class Berlin. Erich is an only child living a lush rural life, aware that he is shadowed by strange, unanswered questions. Both children watch as their parents become immersed in the puzzling mechanisms of power. Drawn together as Germany's hope for a glorious future begins to collapse, the children find temporary refuge in an abandoned theatre amidst the rubble of Berlin. The days they spend there together will shape the rest of their lives.</p> <p>Winner of the New Zealand Book Award for Fiction</p>
<b>THE TRANSFORMATION</b> 2006 Picador	<p>Tampa, Florida, 1898: a frontier where the old world meets the new. Dominating the town is the new Tampa Bay Hotel, a fairy-tale castle by the water's edge, and a winter magnet for the rich and famous. But the hotel has one permanent resident, the enigmatic and exotic Monsieur Goulet III, amateur phrenologist and wig-maker to anyone with pockets deep enough. As the winter of 1898 nears its end, Goulet becomes entranced by the spectacular silver-blond hair of a beautiful young widow, Marion Unger, and determines that the transformation it inspires him to create will be his masterpiece. But the raw material he needs is hard to come by, and so he is driven to increasingly extreme efforts. As the fates of widow and wigmaker become ever more tightly entwined, Goulet's true nature begins to show itself, until it becomes clear that he will allow nothing to impede the progress of his ultimate transformation.</p>
<b>GOLDEN DEEDS</b> 2001 Picador	<p>A tale of murder, mystery and Meccano. Published in the US as STRENGTH OF THE SUN.</p>
<b>IN A FISHBONE CHURCH</b> 2000 Picador	<p>When Clifford Stilton dies, his son Gene crams his carefully kept diaries into a hall cupboard. But Clifford's words have too much life in them to be ignored, and start to permeate his family's world.</p>