

# Still Waters

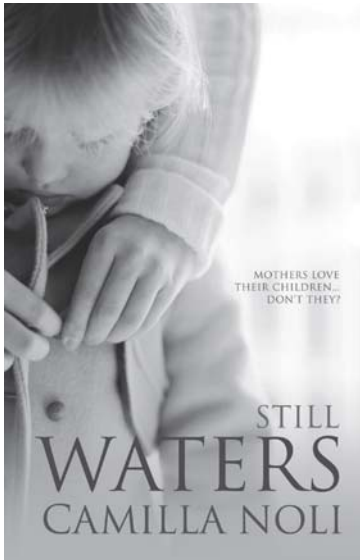
Camilla Noli

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Prepare yourself for one of the most confronting novels of 2008: *Still Waters* is a provocative, unconventional debut novel that explores one of society's last great taboos – the idea that there are women who simply do not love their children.

“I worried that even if I decided to have kids, my ambivalence [about having children] wouldn't go away. We're told that the biological clock is ticking and suddenly you're supposed to experience this mindless desire for a baby. And it doesn't happen to some people. I believe that my decision not to have kids is entirely selfish. It's out of protection of the kind of life that I now lead that I don't want to give up.”

– Lionel Shriver, author of *We Need to Talk about Kevin*, on *salon.com*



*Still Waters* is a chilling novel about what happens when a woman who should never have had children, does. In it, debut novelist Camilla Noli – herself the mother of two children – explores the idea that not all women are naturally maternal or nurturing. *Still Waters* also examines the possibility that society sees mothers as second-class citizens, somehow diminished in status, whilst presenting a chilling 'what if' scenario: what if you wish you hadn't borne your children? What lengths would you go to in order to reclaim your identity? How evil can a mother be?

The main character and narrator, a woman in her early 30s living in the suburbs of an unspecified city with her husband and children, remains unnamed throughout the novel. Before marriage and babies beckoned, she was a glamorous over-achiever – a formidable woman with a stellar career, a powerful intellect and a potent sexual confidence which men found impossible to resist. Two principles – power and control – sat at the core of her identity and, upon becoming a mother, she feels that both were snatched away.

*Still Waters* traces her struggle to accept her new, diminished identity as *merely a mother* and her frustration at the lack of power the role confers. Whilst her children flourish, she rages inwardly at the slow, almost imperceptible disintegration of her marriage, the constant sacrificing of self for others, the blunt-around-the-edges existence she now leads. At the novel's climax, she reaches a chilling decision...

About the author: Camilla Noli lives on the Central Coast of NSW with her husband and children. She is a graduate of the Varuna Writing Program in Sydney's Blue Mountains and this is her first novel. For more details see: [www.camillanoli.com](http://www.camillanoli.com) and [www.varuna.com.au](http://www.varuna.com.au)

\*Camilla Noli is available for interview and commission\*

For more details, please contact Emma Noble at Hachette:  
02 8248 0849 or [emma.noble@hachette.com.au](mailto:emma.noble@hachette.com.au)

