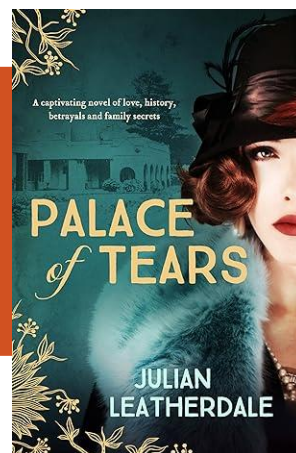




# Palace of Tears

Julian Leatherdale



## Author Background

Julian Leatherdale's initial passion was theatre. After graduating, he wrote lyrics for four comedy cabarets and a two-act musical.

He developed a keen interest in popular history while working as a staff writer, researcher, and photo editor for the 16-volume series *Australians at War* by Time-Life in the late 1980s. Julian also contributed to the research and co-writing of two Film Australia-ABC documentaries: *Return to Sandakan* and *The Forgotten Force*.

In 2017, he wrote a short play titled *A Life in Ten Meals* for the Blue Mountains theatre project *Breaking Bread*. The following year, his play *The Man Who Became Santa Claus* was one of three selected for workshop development and a public reading by Weatherboard Theatre Inc.

Julian passed away in April 2020 at the age of 59, following a challenging battle with liver cancer.

He is also the author of two other novels, *The Opal Dragonfly* and *Death in the Ladies' Goddess Club*.

## Book Summary

A sweltering summer's day, January 1914: the charismatic and ruthless Adam Fox throws a lavish birthday party for his son and heir at his elegant clifftop hotel in the Blue Mountains. Everyone is invited except Angie, the girl from the cottage next door. The day will end in tragedy, a punishment for a family's secrets and lies.

In 2013, Fox's granddaughter Lisa, seeks the truth about the past. Who is this Angie her mother speaks of: 'the girl who broke all our hearts'? Why do locals call Fox's hotel the 'palace of tears'? Behind the grandeur and glamour of its famous guests and glittering parties, Lisa discovers a hidden history of passion and revenge, loyalty and love.

A grand piano burns in the night, a seance promises death or forgiveness, a fire rages in a snowstorm, a painter's final masterpiece inspires betrayal, a child is given away. With twist upon twist, this lush, strange mystery withholds its shocking truth to the very end.

## Discussion Questions

- ❖ Did you enjoy *Palace of Tears*? Were you engaged immediately, or did it take you a while to become immersed?
- ❖ What feelings did this book evoke for you?
- ❖ Describe the main characters' personality traits, motivations, and inner qualities. Do you admire or disapprove of them? Do they remind you of people you know?
- ❖ Which character in this book would you most like to meet?
- ❖ How original and unique was this book?
- ❖ Did the revelation of the Australian internment camps for German "enemy aliens" come as a surprise for you, as it did for Lisa and Luke? Did it inspire you to follow up and learn more about this part of Australia's past?
- ❖ Is the end satisfying? If so, why? If not, why not... and how would you change it?
- ❖ If you had the chance to ask the author of this book one question, what would it be?

## References

- ❖ <http://www.julianleatherdale.com/>