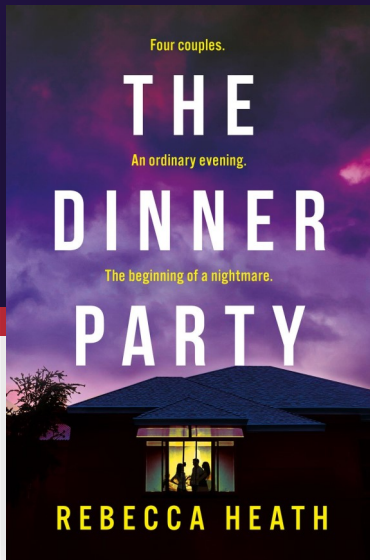


# The dinner party

By Rebecca Heath

First published in 2024



## Genre and Subject

*Friendship — Fiction*

*Secrecy — Fiction*

*Missing children — Fiction*

*Neighbours— Fiction*

*Thrillers (Fiction)*

*Australian fiction*

## Synopsis

### Four Couples.

It's Summer 1979 in the idyllic suburban neighbourhood of Ridgefield, during a scorching heat wave four couples gather for their weekly dinner party.

### An ordinary evening.

It's a chance for friends to catch-up, to show off their perfect marriages, to have a break from the kids... but secrets hide behind the lit-up picture windows and carefully curated lawns.

### The beginning of a nightmare.

When Frank Callaghan checks on the sleeping children, he finds an empty crib where his 4-month old daughter Megan should be sleeping. The party-goers swear they didn't see anything. No one left the dinner table.

Forty years later, Megan's sister Amanda is still searching for answers when a stranger knocks at her door claiming to be Megan. The family are sceptical until they see what she is holding – Megan's blanket, taken the night she disappeared.

This shock appearance unearths many questions: Where has Megan been all of this time? Who knows what happened that night? And how well do you really know your neighbours?

A dark and twisty domestic thriller set in a seemingly idyllic suburban neighbourhood, where family secrets are best kept buried...

## Author Biography

**Rebecca Heath** studied science at university, worked in hospitality and teaching, and wrote obsessively whenever she could find the time. She wrote several young adult novels as Beck Nicholas, published in Australia and Germany.

She lives in Adelaide, Australia, halfway between the city and the sea with her husband, three children and a much-loved border collie.

Her debut adult novel, *The Summer Party*, was released in 2023. This is her second adult novel.

## Discussion Starters

- ⇒ What is the significance of the dinner party and the role of community in the context of Megan's disappearance?
- ⇒ What drives Amanda Callaghan to seek answers about her sister Megan's disappearance after 40 years?
- ⇒ How did the perceptions of family and community change from the time Megan disappeared to the present day?
- ⇒ How do themes of jealousy and competition manifest in the interactions between the characters? What themes of loyalty and betrayal emerge?
- ⇒ What emotional significance does the concept of 'the forever home' hold within the context of Megan's story?
- ⇒ How does the dinner party reflect the complicated dynamics of the neighbourhood friendships?
- ⇒ How does Ruby Costa's podcast influence public perception of the cold case?
- ⇒ In what ways do secrets shape the interactions and decisions of the characters?
- ⇒ How does the resolution of the story reflect the theme of healing after trauma?
- ⇒ What overarching message does the story convey about identity and belonging?
- ⇒ How does the element of family legacy play a role in the characters' development throughout the story?
- ⇒ In what ways does the theme of forgiveness manifest in the relationships between characters?

## If you liked this book, you may also like...

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*Author biography from <https://www.rebeccaheathauthor.com/about>*

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