



# Out of the Silence

*Wendy James*

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**Out of the Silence** Wendy James

**Winner of the Best First Australian Crime Novel, Ned Kelly Crime Awards 2006**

**I hold Jacky close, fix my eyes on the door and walk as fast as I can.**

**'Oh, please, don't run away. Think of your child, if you cannot think of yourself.'**

**'What we are suggesting is nothing,' the man mutters darkly, as I pass through the door and into the brightly lit hall. 'Nothing. Far worse can happen.'**

**Far worse.**

**I have a baby, two shillings, no reputation and nowhere to go, but even so I cannot imagine what far worse might be.**

*Out of the Silence* is a stunning debut novel about three women from very different worlds: Maggie Heffernan, a spirited working-class country girl; Elizabeth Hamilton, whose own disappointment in love has served only to strengthen her humanity; and the remarkable Vida Goldstein, the suffragist who was to become the first woman to stand for Parliament.

When Maggie's life descends into darkness after a terrible betrayal, the three women's lives collide. Around this tragedy Wendy James has constructed a masterfully drawn and gripping fiction. Based on a true story, it unfolds at the dawn of the twentieth century against the compelling backdrop of the women's suffrage movement and a world on the brink of enormous change.

The novel powerfully evokes the plight of women in the early 1900s – not least their limited options, whatever their class and education. However, at its heart this is a story of love – of love gone wrong; of its compromises and disappointments; but ultimately of its extraordinary transformative power.

*"This is a work of intelligence and talent informed by a deeply humane sensitivity." —Sydney Morning Herald*

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