



The Death of Superman **A Novel by Judith Thompson**

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Through a young Anastasia's eyes we experience the rarified world of post-war academia in the sixties: nightly cocktail parties, John Cage, Hannah Arendt, William Manchester, every adult smoking and drinking to excess, the beauty of the four seasons in the Northeast US, and the dangers lurking all around, from babysitters, family friends, the rushing Connecticut River, and from her grand-mal epileptic seizures, which are life-threatening.

During a raucous outdoor birthday party, Ana and her friend, Patty, are attacked by the sons of her parents' friends. Patty disappears. After several days' search she is found drowned in the river. Ana remains silent. She is the only one who knows the drowning is connected to the attack.

When Ana is compelled to tell the truth, there is no result, the boys' lives and futures are more important than Patty's lifeless body or how it got that way. Ana retreats once again into silence.

On the brink of adolescence, the family moves to small town Canada, in 1967. Everyone seems to be smiling, celebrating 100 years of Confederation. For Ana this feels like safety, freshness, a new start.

Like many girls growing up, Ana faces threat after threat. She thinks about the superhero games she used to play with Patty: one had to have a superpower to defeat the enemy. She understands that in a way, they are after her very life, and she needs to grow a superpower. That superpower is the power of words. One summer evening, the necessity arises, and Ana must choose: stay safe or speak up and risk everything.

The Author

Judith Thompson is a playwright, screenwriter, and author. Her plays include *The Crackwalker*, *White Biting Dog* (both winners of the Governor General's Literary Award for Drama), *I Am Yours*, *Lion in the Streets*, *Sled*, *Perfect Pie* and *Capture Me*, among others. Her work has been produced in English-speaking countries throughout the world and translated into several languages; they have received numerous citations and awards. She was named an officer of the Order of Canada, and won the prestigious Walter Carson Prize for Excellence in the Performing Arts.



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