**A WRECK OF SEABIRDS**

**By Karleah Olson**

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**Publisher’s blurb**

When Briony first meets Ren, he is standing in the freezing sea at the edge of their tiny town.

Ren hasn’t been home for a decade but has returned to be with his dying father.

Briony won’t leave, hoping that Sarah, her missing sister, will one day reappear.

But Sarah and her friend Aria have been stranded on a desolate island far off the coast. The longer they’re trapped there, the less alone they seem.

How many secrets in this town have been swallowed by the brooding sea?

**Review**

**by Jennifer Cameron-Smith**

The duality of the Australian coast is at the centre of this novel. A place of beauty, which can also be a place of terror. I’ve been inspired by the coastline (particularly in Tasmania) and have also witnessed its destructive nature.  From the first page, I could smell the salt, hear the waves and feel the restlessness in the cold water.

Briony and Ren are the two main characters. Briony first meets Ren as he stands in the freezing sea at the edge of the small town they are both living in. Ren, who left the town after his brother Sam died, has returned to be with his dying father. Ren feels both obliged to care for his father and trapped in memories of his childhood. Briony has not left the town: she is trapped by concern for her missing sister, Sarah. Both Ren and Briony focus on the coast. Both are enthralled by their memories and, in Sarah’s case, by hope. Briony hopes for Sarah’s return, Ren mourns his brother’s death.

The story shifts, between short sharp chapters entitled ‘The Shore’, ‘The Shallows’ and ‘The Deep’.  Three different but connected stories unfold moving between past and present. And through it all, the moods of the sea ebb and flow inexorably, giving and taking.

I am caught, as if by an undertow, wondering about Sam, about Sarah and her friend Aria. What happened and why? So many questions to consider but the sea rarely reveals answers. And in the present, Ren and Briony grapple with their own realities.

I am stranded, with Sarah and Aria, on their desolate island. Wondering.

I shift between the stories, wondering if either Ren or Briony can find what they need.

And I am swept back, on ‘The Tide’ to an ending which feels both perfect and incomplete. Every stage of life is complicated.

I finished this story, wiped the salt from my face and feet, and wondered about the secrets held by the restless sea.

An engrossing story brilliantly told.