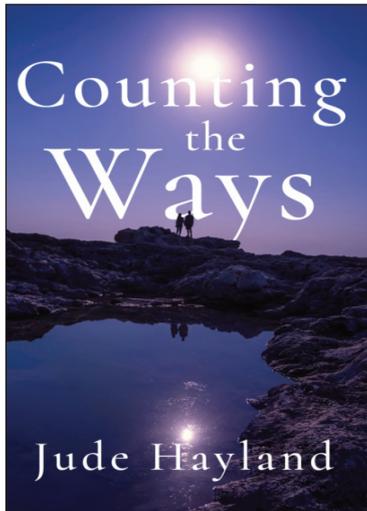




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## COUNTING THE WAYS

Jude Hayland's contemporary novel, viewed from the perspective of two different generations, also explores the fears that shadow our lives

Set in the eighties, *Counting the Ways* paints an authentic picture of a time before easy communication – without internet and mobile phones. “I have a certain nostalgia for a time when letters were written, automatic contact was impossible and secrets could be easily harboured,” explains Jude Hayland, of the inspiration for her novel. “I know people like the ones in my novel – I know the life Grace was living before she met Archie. I once heard someone telling someone else about a friend whose husband had concealed for over a year that he had lost his job and I stored this away and used it,” adds Jude, speaking of how she developed her protagonists.

In the novel, Grace Barnes meets Archie Copeland and is gratified to have found a man who shares her obsession for reading and seems more fascinated by Shelley than shifting share prices. In Oxford, Hester, Grace's mother, considers her estranged marriage to Fergus, who left her thirty years before to go and live on a remote Welsh hillside. His subsequent appearance at Grace and Archie's quiet wedding is a surprise. Soon, Grace is troubled by a distance in Archie, and a tendency to covert actions even though his faithfulness appears absolute. Moving to the countryside seems to offer relief, but the recession of the late 1980s impacts upon them both professionally and Grace is aware of a growing inadequacy in communication between the two of them. A spontaneous holiday on the Mediterranean island of Kronos provides a respite for them both and they begin to consider a permanent move away, but then Archie suddenly disappears. In the shadow of his absence, Grace, Fergus and Hester find themselves facing the truth of their fractured relationships and considering how, so often, it has been the unspoken words rather than those uttered that have contributed towards conflict and separation.

“Initially, Hester and Fergus were very minor characters – however, their importance grew for me as I was writing the first draft and I began to see their story as far more closely reflecting that of the younger couple,” comments Jude, on writing her book from the perspective of two different generations.

A teacher of English and Drama, **JUDE HAYLAND** has additionally written commercial short fiction for women's magazines since 1984 and has been widely published in the UK, Scandinavia, Australia and S.Africa. Gaining an M.A. with Distinction in 2007, she has been a runner-up in the Bridport Short Story competition.



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