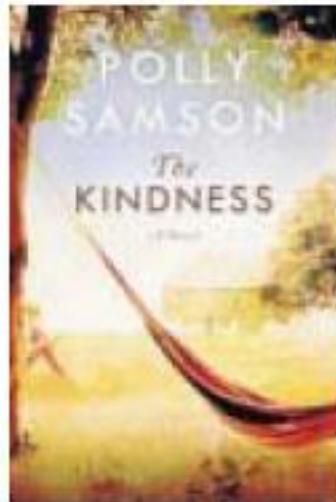


The Kindness

by Polly Samson
(Bloomsbury)

★★★★☆



SECRETS and misunderstandings fuel Polly Samson's involving, melancholy and cleverly constructed second novel.

It opens with Julia and Julian's first brief encounter.

When we next meet Julian eight years later, he is mourning the shattering loss of their daughter and their relationship. The story explains what went wrong. Or does it?

Certainly a single deception – first conceived as an act of kindness – reverberates through the apparently gilded lives of Samson's middle-class characters. But they are not the only ones who are duped.

At one point, Samson's skilful sleight of hand makes the reader question much of what they thought they had understood.

This is a mature and haunting novel about love and loss that asks if we all, in the end, see what we want to see.

PATRICIA NICOL