



## What Empty Things Are These by JL Crozier

Print ISBN: 9781947548121  
329 Pages  
£12.90 / €14.60

Epub ISBN: 9781947548138  
£5.50 / €6.00

Release Date: Nov. 14, 2018

**Distribution in UK, EU, the  
Baltics and Eastern  
European Countries,  
Scandinavia, South Africa,  
the Middle East and Asia:**

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## Can soon-to-be-widowed Adelaide Hadley stave off the social suffocation of genteel poverty in London of 1860, a world of contradictions, of patriarchy, culture and corruption?

In 1860s Britain there is nothing unusual in a man beating his wife. When George Hadley's aggression triggers his own stroke and coma, his wife discovers all she thinks of as hers is to pass to her young son Toby. Adelaide seems as powerless as her lady's maid, Sobriety.

Beyond the strictures of domestic and social expectation, these two women of different class remake the rules to discover what lies beneath the drapes and tassels of Victorian Britain. Life, they find, is urgent, exciting... but cheap. Even as they adventure into alleyways, a tunnel and a séance, their innocence is gone.

*What Empty Things Are These* is about what happens to women who look into the face of this newly industrialized and still patriarchal age. Change is everywhere, exhilarating, corrupt, terrifying.

Fraud and farce abound. Spiritualists prey on the confused; women are encased in clothing that implies both modesty and sexuality; the powerful prey upon the weak. Adelaide and Sobriety, in their way, show us that every era has secrets that must be uncovered for real social progress.

But the truth of the age is encapsulated for them in the underlying tale of the vulnerable urchin girl, the nameless victim of this pitiless society.



"*What Empty Things Are These* is an exquisite story of friendship across class, the realisation of self worth, and the delicate emergence of female solidarity in the face of society's disdain. Crozier has created a glorious Victorian London that creaks and groans and gasps in its smoky, damp darkness and stifling corsetry. A stunning debut and a triumph of imagination and historical voice."

- Alison Goodman, NYT bestselling author of *Eon*, *Eona* and *The Dark Days Club* series

"Elegant, witty and sharply insightful, *What Empty Things Are These* is a mid-Victorian riff on the intellectual and actual freedom of women – one that cleverly begs the question of what has, and what hasn't, changed today."

- Kim Kelly, author of the novels *Black Diamonds*, *This Red Earth*, *The Blue Mile*, *Paper Daisies*, *Wild Chicory* and *Jewel Sea*

## About the Author:



JL (Judy) Crozier's early life was a sweep through war-torn South East Asia: Malaysia's 'Emergency', Burma's battles with hill tribes, and the war in Vietnam. In Saigon, by nine, Judy had read her way through the British Council Library, including Thackeray. Home in Australia, she picked up journalism, politics, blues singing, home renovation, child-rearing, community work, writing and creative writing teaching, proof reading and editing, and her Master of Creative Writing. She now lives in France.

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