



## The Right Wrong Thing

**Ellen Kirschman**

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*Those looking for a meaningful story forged against the backdrop of a relevant social construct will enjoy going on this adventure.*

In *The Right Wrong Thing*, a novel by Ellen Kirschman, police psychologist Dr. Dot Meyerhoff discovers that things aren't always what they seem and that allies can come from the most surprising of places. In this fictional yet realistic account of women endeavoring to challenge societal and professional norms, characters and audiences alike can delight in small victories and incremental progress, even in light of inevitable setbacks.

As so many of her male family members did before her, young police officer Randy Spelling, fresh from the police academy, is eager to make her mark in her new career. However, she encounters immense challenges personally and professionally as a woman in a man's world struggling to be taken seriously by her colleagues and by her husband, also an officer. In the aftermath of a life-or-death decision, Randy captures the attention of Meyerhoff, who tries to help her confront the experience and deal with the trauma. Things go horribly awry for them both, but Meyerhoff slowly comes to realize that her experiences with Randy are more therapeutic for herself than they ever could be for her patient.

On two fronts, and with impressive clarity, the author lends wonderful insight to her writing. An understanding of police work is evident, such as when Meyerhoff muses, "What other profession mandates that you attempt to resuscitate a person you've just tried to kill?" Further insight is demonstrated regarding the inner workings of the human mind as decisions are made following an incident where Randy needs to recount what occurred. "You'll get more accurate information from her when she's rested. Sleep promotes memory consolidation. Better recall."

Artful writing ensures a smooth and well-paced reading experience. Two examples: "as the commute traffic melts into the airport traffic" and "enormous mortgages precariously balanced on the undulating waves of an uncertain economy."

Small victories have been won for women in the male-dominated world of police work, but it is still largely powered by men. *The Right Wrong Thing* is brilliantly written with this dynamic in mind. Those looking for a meaningful story forged against the backdrop of a relevant social construct will enjoy going on this adventure with Randy and Meyerhoff. Not only is this a compelling read, but it is profoundly realistic.

LAURA MAHON (August 3, 2015)

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