

## [Lucy Springer Gets Even: The virtual tour!](#)

14 Jul, 2010

Hi All,

This month ***Lucy Springer Gets Even*** is doing a virtual tour with <http://www.pumpupyourbook.com/>

Why Lucy?

Well, all the blog spots, with the exception of Fleur McDonald's, are based in the States and ***Lucy Springer Gets Even*** is available in the States via <http://www.amazon.com/>

I haven't done anything like this before so thought it would be interesting to give it a shot.

It required quite a bit of prep work in June - writing blogs, answering questionnaires, sending out review copies, etc and often during that time, I'd shake my head and think, 'what can I write about? How can I make this tenth blog fresh and interesting?'

Now that the hard work's over, I am enjoying the tour.

If you want to have a look, I have listed the links below.

Who knows whether it will result in sales - after all, that's the aim here - I'll let you know when the tour finishes up at the end of July.

(In the mean time, I am working on more revisions to ***Claudia Changes Course***. More about that saga in early August.)

6-Jul Rex Robot Reviews <http://rexrobotreviews.com/>

7-Jul Writing Daze <http://rebeccasnotebook.blogspot.com/>

7-Jul Kathy Holmes <http://kathyholmes.blogspot.com/>

8-Jul The Plot <http://theplotline.wordpress.com/>

8-Jul Book Marketing Buzz <http://bookmarketingbuzz.com/>

12-Jul The Writer's Life <http://thewriterslife.blogspot.com/>

13-Jul Fodder for Fiction <http://lleibow.com/blog/>

14-Jul You Have How Many Kids??? <http://the-winfields-7.blogspot.com/>

15-Jul Mom's Not All <http://raynadeatren.blogspot.com/>

16-Jul FleurMcDonald.com <http://fleurmcdonald.com/>

16-Jul Proud Book Nerd <http://www.proudbooknerd.com/>

19-Jul Examiner <http://www.examiner.com/x-21649-Virginia-Beach-Publishing-Examiner>

20-Jul The Book Boost <http://thebookboost.blogspot.com/>

20-Jul The Hot Author Report <http://www.thehotauthorreport.com/>

21-Jul Beth's Book Review Blog <http://bethsbookreviewblog.blogspot.com/>

26-Jul Pump Up <http://www.pumpupyourbook.com/>

27-Jul Teresa's Reading Corner <http://www.teresasreadingcorner.blogspot.com/>

27-Jul Chick With Books <http://chickwithbooks.blogspot.com/>

28-Jul Literarily Speaking <http://literarilyspeaking.net/>

28-Jul The Book Connection <http://thebookconnectionccm.blogspot.com/>

29-Jul Literarily Speaking <http://literarilyspeaking.net/>

Posted by [lisa](#) | [Comment \(0\)](#) | *Untagged*

[Welcome Kylie](#)

[Ladd!](#)

16 Jun, 2010

I am thrilled to have my very good friend and writer extraordinaire, Kylie Ladd, guest blogging this week all about her brilliant debut novel, ***After The Fall*** (ATF), which is being released in the

US and Canada TODAY!!

A gripping insight into the anatomy of an affair, The Sydney Morning Herald called ATF "a subtle, moving and perceptive story of love, loss and hope." □

I was totally enthralled with **After The Fall** from the very first page and was not surprised when Kylie told me it had been picked up in the USA by Do  
ubleday (an imprint of Random House).

***Congratulations Kylie on the release of ATF in North America! This is a massive achievement and deservedly so. How did overseas publication come about?***

My Australian agent, Pippa Masson of Curtis Brown, knew there was a large market for commercial fiction (also known as women's fiction, a term I hate) in the US and sent the book to Stephanie Abou, who she had had contact with before, at Foundry Literary and Media Agency in New York. Thankfully, Stephanie liked *After The Fall*, and was also pleased that the novel had been Cosmopolitan's Book of the Month when it was released in Australia, and agreed to take it on.

***Wow! Isn't it almost impossible to get your hands on an American agent, especially one based in New York?***

I didn't realise at the time but yes, industry blogs and articles have since suggested that securing a US agent, is a ludicrously difficult, tedious and lengthy task, not to be undertaken by the faint-hearted. I was incredibly lucky I had an in- thank you Pippa! Maybe that's a salutary lesson when looking for an agent in Australia- what are their overseas connections like? Curtis Brown have a multitude of contacts around the globe, including a European office- which sold the Turkish rights of *After The Fall* for me just recently.

***How did Stephanie go about selling After The Fall to publishers?***

Stephanie sent *After The Fall* out to around 40 publishers in the US. Three weeks later she began chasing them all up. Thirty-eight said no. Yep, that sure felt bad, though it is a lesson in the subjectivity of all this, and that you should never take rejection too personally. Some of those publishers sent glowing emails, but passed on the book due to market factors; others hated it outright.

To my delight however, Grand Central (an imprint of industry giant Hachette, who publish the *T wilight* books) loved it and made an offer. I was thrilled and ready to sign up there and then, but a day later Random House also made an offer.

***What a dilemma! Did you do a Tom Cruise and jump up and down on the furniture?***

Interestingly, I wasn't actually consulted as to which I'd prefer- the Doubleday offer was significantly higher than that from Grand Central (significantly higher than anything I'd ever dreamed of for a first novel written by an unknown Australia, to be honest) and it was assumed I'd go with that one... I was asleep at the time the decision was made! That said, I have absolutely no complaints- Stephanie was just fabulous with negotiating the contract, and managed to retain audio rights to the book...

***Audio Rights? Tell me more.***

Two months after the Doubleday sale, Stephanie sold these to audio production company Tantor, who will release the talking-book version of *After The Fall* in the US this month. Another useful lesson- this made us all some extra money, and isn't something I would have ever thought to negotiate.

***Getting down to the nitty-gritty, how did the editing process differ?***

The editing process was surprisingly similar to that in Australia... my Australian agent and publisher are in Sydney, while I live in Melbourne (Broome in 2010), so I was already used to doing my edits electronically. The only real difference is that a lot of the language and spelling

in *After The Fall* had to be changed for an American audience... while the Australian setting was retained, most of our colloquialisms weren't. This was quite wrenching at times, watching 'Mum' turned into 'Mom' (it just doesn't look right to me!), 'university' become 'college' and words such as 'togs' and 'footpath' edited out. I had to laugh though when my editor had highlighted a phrase in a section of the book set at the Melbourne Cup: "Having a flutter".

"I don't understand", she wrote, "Are they going to the toilet?"

***Hilarious. Will never again say 'having a flutter' without thinking about bodily functions.***

***And the cover for After The Fall?***

It was a pleasant surprise! The cover Doubleday chose was far lusher and sexier than either of my Australian ones.

***Finally, how is After The Fall being marketed in the States and Canada?***

Not surprisingly, Random House has a large marketing department, and have been great about keeping me in touch with all their plans. Media reviews won't appear until after the book is released this week, but Random House have also distributed a lot of ARCs (advance reading copies, sent to the reading public, not professional reviewers) which are great for generating buzz and mentions on book blogs, as well as over 25 pre-release reviews/ratings at sites such as Good Reads.

Other things that Random House requested included a brief (300 word) essay on why I wrote the book, with a focus on my background as a psychologist, which has been posted on the Random House site and on Amazon; a reading guide to the book (posted on line for use by book groups); and also that I have a strong online presence, in terms of a website and Facebook and Twitter membership. As yet, I can't tell if any of this has made any impact at all, and will be watching with interest over the next post-release month!

***Kylie, I am so thrilled for you and wish After The Fall every success. I'm sure it will be a massive international hit, especially as Amazon has chosen it as a great summer read. Good luck!***

**Links:**

<http://www.kylieladd.com/>

<http://www.allenandunwin.com/>

<http://www.randomhouse.com/catalog/display.pperl?isbn=9780385532815>

<http://www.amazon.com/>

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[Editing, etc](#)

## **Part B**

02 Jun, 2010

You've been hanging out for this one haven't you?

Sadly, I think all my gems were handed out in Part A.

As you know, at the beginning of last week I ran away - not because I couldn't stand my family but because when I'm this close to handing in a manuscript I need to devote huge chunks of time to it...like sixteen hours a day. Not sixteen writing hours, just sixteen thinking, mulling, scratching hours. Thankfully, I have an accommodating husband.

To set the scene, here's a pseudo back cover blurb bit: - three main characters - all women, are off to Santorini for a two week sojourn, as you do ... they all have issues, major issues and, come hell or high water, these issues have to be resolved during their holiday. Won't spoil the story by telling you what these issues are, however the story is told through the main character,

Claudia's eyes. Suffice to say there's lust, betrayal, marriage, hate, love and dead dogs in the mix.

Away from the family, day one, I'm reading through the manuscript and thinking *it's not quite coming together*

. Not a great start. Having written and revised the 85,000 words, I thought something was still missing but couldn't pinpoint it no matter how many times I mulled over the chapters.

So assuming each character's identity, I wrote a letter to a dear imaginary friend I hadn't seen for ten years telling them what had been going on in my life for the last 3,650 days. (Great friends hey, given that I hadn't seen them for ten years!) My God! These women have problems, I just didn't realise how many!

Using this device, I was able to stretch my narrative further and really think about the lives these women had been living up to this point. I know what you're thinking - do you really need a back story that stretches all these years? Especially one that you're not going to include in the manuscript? - Well, frankly, YES! And a damn good one too, if you're going to create believable characters...a lot of the writing and thinking you do for your story won't appear in the final draft but you need a realistic and compelling back story for each of your characters.

Armed with the new information I had about each of the women's lives, I fleshed out their characters a tiny bit more, and by the end of the week, after checking spelling, and other incidentals (time difference between Santorini and Brisbane, for example), I hit send.

Ah, sweet relief for a good five minutes...until the panic set in.

I felt decidedly uneasy ...sure I had the dead dog in there, But what else could I have done to improve the plot, characters, voice?

To distract myself, I went for a run (I am capable, just not inclined), ate an excellent dinner and put myself to bed. I was exhausted and it was late - 8.30pm. I fell asleep thinking good thoughts: *all is okay. I made deadline!* Yippee for me.

Well, I had this dream all about **emotional depth**. I sat bolt upright at two in the morning - I'm normally awake then, anyway. Epiphany! My main character lacked emotional depth. Garr! Thanks. Why couldn't I have shown this brilliant profundity of insight six months ago?

Bloody dream is right. That's exactly what main character is lacking! Over the weekend, I debated whether to pull the manuscript back from the publisher's paws...and decided against it.

The manuscript, tentatively titled ***Claudia Changes Course*** is in the hands (we hope) of a brilliantly skilled editor who has taken leave of Elizabeth Gilbert's latest and all the other best sellers she (could be male. I doubt it though) is working on to concentrate on my prose.

When the 85,000 words comes back to me at the end of the month, I'll sagely nod to the editor and nonchalantly say, 'Emotional depth?'

And she'll say, 'Yep! Add some!'

She might also say to me, if you knew your character lacked depth, why didn't you bloody well do something about it before we're just about to go to print?

Good question.

I can hardly answer, 'It came to me in a dream, eight hours after I pressed send', or she might dob on me and tell the publisher I'm unstable!

'And one more thing,' she'll say, as she's sauntering out of the room. 'Get rid of that damn dead dog.'

Posted by [lisa](#) | [Comment \(3\)](#) | *Untagged*

[Editing,](#)

[re-writing, and staying sane - Part A\\*](#)

20 May, 2010

So, what have I been doing since the London Book Fair? Trying to whip a manuscript into shape, that's what. It's due at Allen & Unwin on May 31. (Actually, my contract stated May 15, but after appropriate weeping, this has been amended

until the end of the month.)

Despite requesting an extra two weeks, I wasn't overly daunted - in the beginning. I'd written the 85,000 words, had what I thought was a damn good plot, great characters, and a few amusing lines, so I was confident the manuscript would just need a guiding hand, some fine tuning here and a bit of love there.

**Wrong!** Please allow me count just how many ways I was wrong.

To begin, I started writing this manuscript six years ago. Since then, my writing has developed - I'm not being smug - if it hadn't developed over six long years then I'd be having a stern talking to myself. It used to take me ten words to get my point across, now it takes four.

**First task:** reading and slashing unnecessary words.

Easy and a great deal of fun. I love tightening a story - cutting out banal conversations and pointless observations makes for a snappier read and keeps the story focussed, on track and continually moving forward.

**TIP:** If slashing, it's best you have a cheeky 100,000 words up your sleeve so that you end up with 85,000 words. You don't want to be in my position and arrive at 60,000. Stressful!

**Second task:** building said 60,000 up to 85,000.

How? I didn't want to add in whole new characters, themes and storylines. But the thing with computers these days is that they provide the reader with a concise word count. I send in 64,950 words to my editor and questions are going to be asked.

This time, I needed to give myself a good talking to. 'Let's be honest, Lisa have you skimmed over certain plotlines that you thought the audience would happily skip over too.

'No,' I answered, outraged. How dare I ask myself such questions!

So I left my writing self alone (God! She can be dramatic!) - drank cups of tea, dead headed gardenia flowers, de-fleaed the cat...got on with life. After a couple of days contemplating the manuscript, I could see definite holes in my plot. Not insurmountable publish-threatening dramas, but enough to know all was not well with my third manuscript.

The upshot is I've written in a dead dog! I'm not giving away anything more. Suffice to say, he's there and he's staying. I am also in the process of fleshing out other scenarios, but I think you'll agree that adding a dead dog - whom might I add, is a much loved pet, is a definite leap forward.

**TIP:** When editing your manuscript, make sure you give yourself enough time to step away from your masterpiece so that you can critique it objectively. You'll never be able to read it with totally fresh eyes, after all, this is your baby, but take a long enough break so that you can see the angry red rash on her otherwise exquisite and angelic face!

**Third task:** remaining engaged with your family.

Whoa! Tough call. But I really do try. Today, I went to my daughter's assembly - her class did a mighty fine Survivor skit (Same music, Jeff Probst was looking slightly younger and a lot girlier) but I got it. I was engaged but at the same time was conscious of being on a time schedule. I'd allowed one hour and fifteen minutes for this activity (Chapter 22 needs a lot of work!) - but it quickly turned into two hours and twenty minutes. (Note to mother in silver suburu, it's called a road for a reason! Grr! - Must avoid car line for next four weeks.)

But I digress, which is exactly what I do when on a deadline. I can cook the dinner, get the kids to school on time but ask me anything beyond that and I'm incapable. I'm all about time, manuscript time - exactly how many minutes of the day I can devote to it.

'You want me to help you with Japanese?' Okay, I am a mother first and foremost...'What do you mean &quot;we have no food in the house?&quot;...'You need me to drive you,

where?' And then something totally bizarre happens, I turn into this raging monster...then I get depressed and cry. And then my husband arrives home from work!

Needless to say that next week, for the final few days before my manuscript is due, I am running away. Don't ask me where, just know that I'm safe, I'm writing and I won't be adding any more dead dogs to the mix!

**TIP:** For your family/friends/pets sake, it's best you're not around other living beings while going through this process. (But perhaps I only speak for myself...)

\*I have called this Part A because there are many more things I can tell you and I will...next week!

Posted by [lisa](#) | [Comment \(13\)](#) | *Untagged*

[What I learnt](#)

### [at the London Book Fair!](#)

23 Apr, 2010

Despite 900 exhibitors being unable to attend because of Icelandic ash, and the stands more often than not resembling ghost towns, the fair was well attended by mainstream leading publishers such as HarperCollins and Penguin as well as controversial ones like L Ron Hubbard (interesting, the times I walked past the stand it was full to capacity. No, Tom Cruise wasn't in attendance) as well as agents negotiating mega deals in hushed tones.

I attended as an eager bystander, keen to snout out publishing booths, eavesdrop on interesting

characters, learn hip new promotional ideas, check out the latest book offerings, mingle with rising literary stars (didn't happen) and finally, glean any info I could from the author seminars. Here's what I learnt:

- 1. Confidence:** Despite the attendance being down, my well honed flapping ears heard many people talking the fair up...'yep, going well, too well...closing several lucrative deals...don't know how we'll handle all the new business...' When all else fails, puff out your chest! (My understanding is that between 50%-80% of all meetings were cancelled.)
- 2. Drink up:** The several bars were always full - promptly at midday. Publishers and agents drowning their sorrows or perhaps talking up imminent deals? Either way alcohol was being consumed in large quantities.
- 3. Authors:** Unless you're a celebrity or an established author, you need to hire your own publicist or an 8-week period (at least) to promote your book to the media, libraries, festivals etc. Even the big publishers don't have the marketing budget to spend on your book. (I guess I already knew that but even so, slumped into my chair at hearing the news.)
- 4. Publicity:** When it comes to garnering publicity, it helps if you have an amazing and heart rendering back story - i.e. you're a writer but have no arms (true story).
- 5. Website:** Having a dynamic author website helps...here's where you can display your writing skills by posting blogs, writing articles, and showcasing the first few chapters of your forthcoming novel.
- 6. Blogging:** If you're going to do it, do it properly. Blog three times a week and make sure your blogs are always well-written, funny and relevant to your audience. (No pressure!) If you're primary audience is angora sheep breeders, fine! There's a market for angora sheep breeding bloggers but make sure you speak directly to your audience...imagine coming up with three entertaining blogs a week on that topic! Don't get disheartened! Look at Julie Powell who blogged about Julia Childs. She stayed on topic and got a book deal and a best-selling movie starring Meryl Streep.

7. Twitter: Hailed as THE new social medium, twitter is an invaluable tool for bloggers, writers and anyone wanting to build their profile.

Rule number one: limit the in-joke banter between your five closest followers unless you actually only have five followers. It's great that you are deemed hilarious (within your inner circle) but if you have 500 followers, 495 are going to feel left out and quickly lose interest in your tweets if they're not privy to your musings. Going back to my sheep analogy, if all your followers are angora sheep breeders, stay on topic 90% of the time. Followers are there to interact but also to learn and exchange info. If you're keen on swapping jokes with your best cyber friend, instant message them instead.

8. Twitter 2: Having said that, Twitter is a great way to stay informed, promote your writing, make contacts in the publishing industry, share ideas and market your ideas to other writers.

9. Apple: If you didn't already know, Apple is taking over the world. As much as I hate to commit this to print, i-publishing and iPads are the way of the future...the competition to win an iPad was hands down, the most popular, as were their seminars. Limbs were twisted, promises made and deals done. Those reading Kindles (usually in bars) were viewed with a mixture of envy and distaste depending on which side of the fence you were swinging from. (Apple analysts expect Apple to sell roughly 5 MILLION iPads this year. Cheers!)

10. Frankfurt: Finally, for those of you who missed out on coming to London (Becky James, you have a right to feel pissed off!) the next extravaganza will be Frankfurt in October 2010. Even though I am reliably told many deals were done online during cyber cocktail hour, nothing beats a face-to-face meeting. So if you're keen for a trip to Germany in autumn, the Frankfurt Book Fair will be an event not to be missed.

What are your thoughts? Are you a keen blogger, tweeter, or just someone who is under the delusion that once a publisher publishes you, your work is done? What are your experiences with marketing and promotion? Or the London Book Fair if you were there?

BTW: Apparently Stieg Larsson (RIP) is very last year...am sure he'll be rolling in his grave...

Posted by [lisa](#) | [Comment \(5\)](#) | *Untagged*

**[Books that](#)**

**[changed me...](#)**

06 Apr, 2010

It's hard narrowing it down to a few books and I'm sure if I really thought about it, I could come up with many because they remind me of being a particular age, they remind me of a friend, an event... But for now, these are my chosen few:

**Enid Blyton. *The Magic Faraway Tree***

This is the first book I remember mum reading to me. I must have been all of four-years-old. I couldn't wait for her to read the next exciting chapter about Dick and Fanny, the Angry Pixie and Moonface. Loved the magical Land of Tempers, and the Land of Do-As-You-Please. After the Faraway Series, I moved on to *The Naughtiest Girl in School*. I was definitely an Enid Blyton devotee. I adored the mysterious settings and have been searching for my very own Pop Biscuits and Faraway Tree in the Enchanted Wood ever since.

**Richard Adams: *Watership Down***

I'm a huge fan of rabbits, having owned them throughout my childhood. I think my sister gave me this book when I was about ten and I devoured it in one weekend. The book's been described as a fable with the labors of the rabbits reflecting the ageless struggles between cruelty and kindness, reason and blind emotion. But I think I just fell in love with Fiver, Hazel and Bigwig and an extraordinary tale about friendship, love and compassion. I remember talking to my own rabbits for years after, hoping they'd respond and let me inside their secret rodent world. I'm still waiting.

**Charlotte Bronte: *Jane Eyre***

I read this book in my late teens - possibly for an English subject at university. The story resonated with me probably because I was angst ridden at the time! I was captivated by the sweeping melodrama and romance, the highs and lows, and Bronte's intricate weaving together of secret lives and private passion - Jane falling in love with Edward Rochester, then running away, and her ultimate reunion and marriage to him. Yes, indeed! *Jane Eyre* has it all. I'm a huge Bronte fan but *Jane Eyre* and *Wuthering Heights* (Emily Bronte) are two of my all-time favourites.

### **Marian Keyes: *Watermelon***

I love Keye's sense of humour, her take on modern life and her first person confessional tone of writing. I think she is a very funny and clever writer. I have read all of Keye's books and admire her down to earth nature and generosity in talking about her setbacks and personal demons she's had to conquer during her life. I also admire her ability not to take herself too seriously. She's fabulous.

### **Stephen King: *On Writing***

When I read this book which is part memoir, part tutorial, on the craft of writing, it all clicked for me. I've always loved story writing but King's book really opened my eyes to the craft. His anecdotes and personal struggles as well as his practical advice on writing have been invaluable to me. At least once a year, I'll go back and reread *On Writing* and I always learn something new. He's an inspiration.

There you have it. What are some of the books that have changed you?

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[Writing](#)

### **through the BLAH!**

25 Mar, 2010

I have written blogs on this topic before but surprisingly haven't posted any of them on my own website - I'm talking about writer's block, not that I believe in such a thing, so let's call it writer's BLAH!

I have to say it's been a shirty couple of weeks, writing wise...and I am at a loss as to say why. Okay, so I had a leg wax earlier in the week but I haven't been sick, my kids are healthy, the cat loves me...there have been no significant traumas in my life apart from the day-to-day grind of having to wake up (!) and then set about my daily domestic chores, like pulling the kids out of bed, making lunches, cleaning, cooking dinner. Blah!

But big deal. Most of us have to do all that.

So what's the problem?

Every time I sit down to write, I fidget...check emails, Facebook and Twitter at least a dozen times every ten minutes. This week I've taken to writing a to-do list in the hope of getting more organised and focussed. Still no good.

So I read back over some of my previous posts claiming that *'when I'm feeling lazy or uninspired, I'll go for the easiest option to get my word count up for the day. I'll write new scenes or perhaps research a character.'*

That's reasonable advice but at the moment I think all my characters are fools and should all die a slow and painful death.

I've also said that *'when I'm writing a first draft I have a daily word count of 2000 words that I try to stick to, five days a week. That way I find the momentum builds and an interesting plot and complex characters develop and I find I get into a rhythm and pace I'm comfortable with.'*

Hello! Who wrote that? I did, obviously - but I must have been drunk at the time.

The one mantra I've focussed on before and continue to, is *I don't care what I write, just write something!*

However, there are some days when the writing doesn't flow, when it feels like you're pulling teeth and that even when you do put pen to paper, it all seems totally banal and pointless.

So this week, I'm granting myself a leave pass. Am taking the family to see *Wicked!* tonight and

tomorrow, I'll celebrate my mum's birthday by taking her to the Art Gallery and having a great lunch in the city.

Once I'm through the BLAH I'll be back again!

Posted by [lisa](#) | [Comment \(5\)](#) | *Untagged*

[Welcome to](#)

[guest blogger Fleur McDonald!](#)

15 Mar, 2010

It's a huge pleasure this week to have my friend Fleur McDonald, as my guest blogger to tell us a bit about her books and writing process. Fleur is a full time farmer, mother and writer extraordinaire, living near Esperance in Western Australia.

Welcome Fleur! Your second book, **Blue Skies** is about to be released. Congratulations. Can you tell us a bit about it?

Thanks for having me here, Lisa! **Blue Skies** is due out on the 1<sup>st</sup> of April. It tells the story of Amanda Greenfield, who is a head strong and stubborn girl, but full of determination to run her family's farm, Kyleena. Her father, battling grief and depression wants to sell Kyleena and get away for the variance of crop yields and stock prices. Amanda finally gets him to think about it, and she begins to think that things are looking up, when she experiences fear, like she never has before. The source behind it, is not only mysterious, but terrifying.

Wow! Sounds intriguing! **Red Dust**, your first novel is still selling very well. Where did you get your idea for that book? Does anything/anyone in particular inspire you?

The idea for **Red Dust**, just hit me one day. I had not long begun a writing course and my mentor said that he thought I could write a novel. I had read *Jillar* by oo

**Rachael Treasure and knew that country stories had their place in Australian fiction, but I wasn't sure how I could be any different to Rachael. I knew I loved crime so I started to think about what crime happened in the country... that led to stock stealing, which is really entwined in Australia's history.**

That's great. So is that how your writing career began?

**Yes. This may sound silly but I just sat at the computer and wrote. I don't have any writing qualifications - I started a writing course, but I never finished it, because I got the *Red Dust* contract and didn't have time. I decided that I would write a book I wanted to write, so I did!**

Any tips regarding common mistakes aspiring writers make?

**Hmm, interesting question. Probably not re-writing and re-reading their work enough. You can't hand anything sub-standard to a publisher.**

Definitely good advice. Do you have any advice on how to handle the writing process and how not to get discouraged by rejection?

**It's very easy to get distracted by outside influences. Marketing my books is something I try very hard at - I write my blogs, Facebook and Twitter but, at the moment, that's okay, because I have *Blue Skies* coming out. I'm going to get to a stage, when I start the next book, that I won't have the time to do that as often as I do now. So a single focus, for my writing, is what I need. I tend to only have two hours a week that I know I can write, so I have to make the most of that time.**

**As for rejection letters... well, when I submitted *Red Dust* to Louise Thurtell from Allen and Unwin, for the first time, she told me it wasn't what she was looking for. I re-submitted about six months later and got a contract. Just because a publishing house isn't looking for what you write today, they may well be tomorrow or next week. Don't**

**give up, keep going until you get what you want... a publishing contract!**

Fleur, it's funny you mention Facebook and Twitter. I'm struggling with both. They can be quite addictive and before you know it, you've spent three hours updating your status and tweeting sweet nothings! Very interesting that you submitted to A & U and then re-submitted six months later. A good tip for budding authors! Tell me what you love about being a writer?

**The fact I get a break from my own mundane life! I get to live a life that maybe I wanted to (whether I knew it or not!) I name my characters; they become my (new) babies then friends! I also love that I can come into the office and shut out the world - if it's not raining in real life, I can make it rain in my book, if the stock are hungry in real life, I grow grass in my book! It is a real escapism for me and at times, I need that.**

There are certainly many of us who love disappearing into that fantasy world! What do you find the most challenging about being a writer?

**For me, it's finding the time. I still work full time on the farm and I have two children (ten and nine). My youngest has a learning disability, so there is a lot of work to put into him. The two hours I get are snatched from my day in Esperance (when I go to do the shopping.) I park myself in our accountants office and write, write, write! It's wonderful!**

Fleur, given that you only get two hours a week to write, your output is incredible. You must have a very quick, determined mind, not to mention nimble fingers and extraordinary discipline! What are you working on now? Future plans?

**Well, *Purple Roads* is well under way, with a forth idea lurking in the background. (That one is tentatively called *Silver Fences*.) After that we'll have to wait and see, but I guess I'd still like to be writing in ten years time and loving it!**

Thanks for dropping by, Fleur. Sounds like you have a very clear direction with your future

books and a great theme with titles!

Fleur has very kindly offered to give away three signed copies of *Blue Skies* to readers (Australian readers only, sorry!). Please leave a comment and you could be a lucky winner. Competition closes Monday March 22

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Also, click on the link to check out Fleur's website and learn more about her books and amazing life on the land. The photos are pretty awesome, too!

Update: March 25 Congratulations to Allison, Amy and Klaire who have each won a copy of Fleur's new book, *Blue Skies*.

Posted by [lisa](#) | [Comment \(17\)](#) | *Untagged*

[And you](#)

[thought your rejection letter was bad...](#)

05 Mar, 2010

Now that I'm published I could say that *Lucy Springer Gets Even* and *What Kate did Next* were easy to write and easy to get published, but I would be lying!

For both books, there were too many drafts to count, many tears and many times I wanted to give up. Writing is a solitary pursuit and when no-one is encouraging you or interested in what you're writing it's easy to feel despondent/suicidal/angry or insulted, depending on your mood.

For years, I'd send manuscripts or partials (three chapters and a synopsis) to publishers and receive generic rejection letters back, along the lines of 'thanks but no thanks.' I think I've been rejected by every mainstream Australian publisher and several North American ones too.

After each rejection, I'd stomp around the house and tell myself to give up. 'Why bother?' This was especially true when my children would tell their friends and their friend's parents, I loved my computer more than them. (And that's not true ninety-six percent of the time.)

But after a day or two of feeling sorry for myself, I'd turn on the computer and either rework a manuscript or start something new.

My best rejection letter? The one that started with '**brilliant first line, but it's all downhill from there.**'

But I figure I'm in good company. Here are a few other rejection letter excerpts:

**The Diary of Anne Frank:** "The girl doesn't, it seems to me, have a special perception or feeling which would lift that book above the 'curiosity' level."

"I'm sorry, Mr. Kipling, but you just don't know how to use the English language." Editor of the San Francisco Examiner to Rudyard Kipling.

Classic writer Colette was told in a letter of rejection: "I wouldn't be able to sell 10 copies."

H.G. Wells, **The War of the Worlds:** "An endless nightmare. I do not believe it would "take"...I think the verdict would be 'Oh don't read that horrid book'."

**The Spy who Came in from the Cold:** by John le Carré. "You're welcome to le Carré - he hasn't got any future."

**The Deer Park** by Norman Mailer. "This will set publishing back 25 years."

Stephen King's **Carrie:** "We are not interested in science fiction which deals with negative utopias. They do not sell."

So, what's the best rejection line you've received from a publisher?

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[Is it Chick-lit?](#)

22 Feb, 2010

**Recently, I was asked whether my books fell into the chick-lit category and what my thoughts were on that genre:**

I've heard my books called contemporary women's fiction, chick-lit and hen-lit. To tell you the truth, I really don't mind what people call them as long as they're reading my books!

I guess chick-lit is instantly recognisable and suggests that my books, ***Lucy Springer Gets Even Next*** and ***What Kate did*** will be holiday reads. And that's fine by me.

Most chick-lit books have several of the following elements:

- The heroine is either looking for Mr. Right or getting over Mr. Wrong.
- She's in a dead-end job or is looking to climb the corporate ladder.
- The tone is often light and funny.
- The story usually is told in the first person.
- By novel's end, the heroine usually has worked out all (or most of) her problems and has learned important lessons about life.

Certainly the term chick-lit has its fans and detractors:

Jennifer Weiner, author of best sellers ***Good in Bed*** and ***In Her Shoes***, finds the term dismissive and sexist. 'It's something that says chicky, fluffy, inconsequential, of no importance and no literary quality,' she says. 'But at the same time it doesn't bother readers, and I have to be mindful of that.'

But ***Shopaholic*** series author Sophie Kinsella, who has more than 7 million copies of her six books in print, says she's not bothered by the label. 'To my mind, it means a fun, light book, often with humour, often featuring a contemporary heroine that women of today can relate to,

often addressing an issue of today,' she says. 'I would probably prefer the term 'romantic comedy' or 'wit lit,' which I once saw in a bookstore. But I can't get too het-up about it. It hasn't done me any harm.'

The spin off's of chick-lit include hen or lady lit, which is where I see myself because the heroines have been replaced by women in their 30's and 40's who have married and perhaps have children and are now struggling with issues such as infidelity, divorce and career slumps, as well as raising a family.

My main characters are thinking, 'what happened to the dreams I had?' and 'how did I get here?'

Basically, I write women's fiction and hope that my books resonate with readers because they're true to life but still light in that there's comedy and generally if not a happy ending then at least a hopeful one. My main characters do tend to 'find themselves' by the end of the books I write.

What books do you like reading?

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