

Nothing Stock-Standard about this Writer – David Bobis and his alter ego Dean Blake

There is nothing stock standard about writer David Bobis and his alter ego Dean Blake. I'm not going to spoil anything with preamble. I'm awarding him an honorary 'most honest writer' I've interviewed. I hope you enjoy reading this as much as I enjoyed talking with him.

You're quite diverse in your writing. Describe the projects you work on.

In terms of work that's commercially available, my short story, [Child](#), has been published in a number of anthologies in Singapore and the United States. A special edition of *Child* is also available on Amazon and iBooks for a few cents.

I've published a book of short stories, [Surface Children](#), under a pen name, Dean Blake. It contains stories I'd written as a young adult, stories that I'd give to my friends to read whenever they were bored. It contains stories about love, horror, vanity, stories about my friends themselves.

I'm working on a full-length novel. It's still in its infancy, but it'll be a story about magic and everything that's beautiful and dangerous about it.

Full time, I'm a co-owner of a digital marketing agency, [Studio Culture](#). It's a great job, because I get to help craft brands and stories for a number of different businesses, both in Brisbane and around the world. I also get to work with an amazing, super-creative team.

Besides that, I write for a design magazine called [No Cure Magazine](#), which allows me to interview some of the greatest

artists in the street art / skate / surf scene.

I also publish my short stories on [my blog](#).

As you can probably tell, I don't get much sleep.

Which of your works are you most proud of, and why?

I'm proud of everything I've released to the public. I remember once in uni, a friend of mine was giving his most treasured books to other friends, and I asked him, "How about me? Don't I get a book?" He turned to me and said, "You're too simple for books." One day, when I see him again, I'm going to shove a copy of *Surface Children* up his arse and email him an invoice for it the next day.

Although I'm proud of everything I've done, I'm also ashamed of everything I've done, if that makes any sense. I believe that I should always be improving my craft, and that my newest works should always surpass (and ultimately embarrass) their predecessors.

Which has been the most commercially successful?

Surface Children has been the most commercially successful. As it's my first "book", it's been sold at the higher price point. It's also received the most marketing attention.

How did you choose the pen name Dean Blake? When do you write as David Bobis, and when as Dean Blake?

Back when I was studying, a company paid me to write a blog about the nonsense I'd get up to in my life. As I didn't want potential employers to google "David Bobis" and see a treasure chest of dirt, I opted for a pen name instead that contained my initials – hence "Dean Blake." That blog (now called [Generation End](#)) then developed a bit of a following, so I couldn't exactly let Dean Blake go. Plus, I was becoming quite attached to this alter ego of mine. Someone in a book signing once commented, "You've chosen a really white name." There's

nothing wrong with that, right?

As a general rule, my professional and G rated stuff go under my actual name. The rest belongs to Dean Blake.

Why are you a writer?

Reality can be a turd sometimes. I believe it's my job to help people escape, or live another life, or travel to a distant planet, or laugh, or see things from another perspective, through the stories I write for them. I wrote my first story at the age of six – it was actually a comic about kids who loved to fart, and I gave it to my friends and family so that they could smile a little.

How do you define success as a writer? Are you successful?

I think success as a writer, or success in any aspect of life can be narrowed down to this question: are you happy with what you have? Well, reader, *are you?* Are you happy with what you have?

There is a lot I am grateful for and am proud of, but I have a long way to go. So I would say I'm far from successful. But I suppose you'll never really know how truly successful you are until you reach the end of your life.

What aspects of your personality or background make you the writer you are?

I grew up in the Philippines, where we had to pump water out of our backyard, so all the crazy stuff that happened to me in the past adds a bit of colour to my personality.

Also I'm not a normal person. If you talk to me, I'll probably be smiling and nodding, but deep inside I'll be somewhere else, like in a canyon, or in a drive in cinema, or in a cabin inside the moon or something. Through my writing, I believe I can take people with me, to where my mind goes, and we can go on a few hiking trips.

What's next for David Bobis?

I'll be speaking with a number of authors in Brisbane about how to get published ([link here](#)) so please do come along. I'm also working hard on my next novel, so please subscribe to my mailing list at davidbobis.com to be kept in the loop.

Carolyn Martinez is an [author](#), [editor and author's coach](#).

Sh*t Asian Mothers Say – Best Title Award – In Conversation with Michelle Law

Your writing is diverse – theatre, TV, film, newspapers, journals and magazines. How did you diversify so early in your career?

I think I was able to diversify because I remained open to and searched for all kinds of opportunities, from playwriting programs, to self-structured mentorships, to pitching ideas to literary journals. For instance with grants, I applied for many of them and kept applying for them despite being rejected a lot, so you need to be persistent. Diversifying my skill set was a strategic move, because I wanted to build a sustainable career, but also a result of me loving all different kinds of writing.

I've heard you speak of your frustration when an aspiring writer says they don't read much. Please elaborate.

It frustrates me when aspiring writers don't read because you can't be a writer if you're not a reader. I tutored writing at university and the number of writing students who didn't read

always astounded me. We learn how to write well by reading the works of better writers, so if you're not reading you're not going to get far.

I love the title of your book, Sh*t Asian Mothers Say. I understand you co-authored this book with your brother. What was your Mum's reaction to the book?

Mum loves the book and can identify the parts we've written that are almost direct quotes from her! My brother and I write about Mum and the family quite a lot and I think for Mum, who's always been very creative but didn't have the opportunity to go to uni herself – she really enjoys that we document stories from her life.

Where can people purchase your book?

They can order it at Avid Reader Bookshop (my favourite bookshop in Brisbane) or directly through the publisher Black Inc's website:
<https://www.blackincbooks.com.au/books/sh-t-asian-mothers-say>

What was it like seeing your play Single Asian Female come alive on stage?

Amazing! I'd been developing it for years so to finally see it come to fruition on stage was surreal and extremely exciting. I also love how actors make your words sound better than they look on the page!

Writers often struggle prioritising writing when they're working at home. Is this an issue for you, and how do you manage it?

It can be an issue when I have a lot of projects on and they're clashing, but generally I try to deal with the most pressing deadline first, and if I get stuck working on that, then I hop onto another project and back again.

What's coming out next from you ie. what should we look out

for?

A web series that I've co-created, co-written and am acting in called *Homecoming Queens*. There's some more info on it here: https://www.screenaustralia.gov.au/sa/media-centre/news/2017/08-11-homecoming-queens?utm_source=social&utm_medium=twitter-1&utm_campaign=homecoming-queens

Photo by [Tammy Law](#).