

In Conversation with Author of *Losing Kate* – Kylie Kaden

by Carolyn Martinez

She's hot, hot, hot on the charts, and best-selling international author [Kylie Kaden](#) is right on our doorstep. Brisbane based Kylie graduated university with Honours in a Psychology degree. Her debut book [Losing Kate](#) was a massive success. Multi-award winning author Helen Young called it a 'stunning debut ... a rich evocative read that kept me riveted right to the end'. Kylie is renowned for her cracking sense of humour and enthralling complex characters and relationships. Not only is this delightful author about to release her third book, she writes a regular column for [My Child](#) magazine where she vents (I mean writes) of the frazzled joys and pains of parenting three boys. Below she shares her insight on character development for aspiring authors, amongst other delightful tidbits including a possible upcoming domestic noir. I had a wonderful time interviewing this extraordinary woman. Since starting this blog I've been seriously impressed with the wealth of talent percolating in South East Queensland.

How many books have you written?

My first crack at a full-length novel happened by accident while on maternity leave with my third son. The product of my housework-avoidance/sanity saver was *Losing Kate*, which was published by Random House in 2014. Another suspense, [Missing You](#) followed a year later, and my current story *The Day the Lies Began* is about to be submitted. So, two books. Or three. Or even four, if you count the god-awful attempt written on on my brother's Commodore 64 in grade eight.

How do you define success for an author? Are you successful?

I reckon anyone's success in anything they set out to achieve

can only be judged by themselves, and pitted against what they hoped to get out of it in the first place.

In my case, I wanted a creative outlet while housebound with a new baby (achieved). I then realised I had something that looked like a book, and wanted someone with cred to validate my need to feel like it was worth printing (achieved). I then wanted to keep feeling good at it, justify the time it takes by being paid, and do it again (achieved). Anything else I may have picked up on the way – nominations, translations, festival appearances, wonderful friendships, were unexpected delights. But in general, when I can write something, and have another person connect with the story in exactly the way I hoped, that is magic. That is success.

Am I a success? I'm sure some of the faces in the crowds, seeing me frolic about at festivals see me as successful, but I still feel like a newbie impersonating a 'real' author most of the time, and have so much more to learn about this amazing craft.

What happens if you stop doing the thing that made you successful. Are you still a success? Life is about joy. If you enjoy what you do, you achieve your own goals, you're a Rockstar in my eyes.

How do you research your books?

Research? What's that?

Other than the odd Google search for trivial facts like what song was big in 1993, I just write what I know. I'm too lazy and time poor to do much else. But I do have a few mates (a detective, a pathologist, a social worker) who help me keep my plot points believable.

Do you have a favourite/s from the books you've written? Just like your first child makes you a parent, my first book made me an author, so Losing Kate will always have a special place in my book-shelf (even though I'm sure my writing has improved

in four years, and I would probably cringe if I re-read it now).

What's your writing schedule/habits?

My inspiration is totally dependent on the school bell. I generally write in fits and starts, devoting myself monogamously to a story for a few months, then leave it to ferment.

Do you believe in writer's block?

Creativity isn't like working in accounting. It is a diva. If you can't write, you just have nothing to say in that moment. So find something to say. Read. Walk. Observe. The world is full of beauty and bullshit in equal measures, you just have to tap into it. Even watching an old lady waiting for a bus might inspire a scene. Just get out there and take notice.

Do your fans influence future works?

Once you are published, you never quite go back to that blissful pre-debut anonymity where you write in a vacuum, without that invisible audience lurking in your living room, expecting, waiting. I love hearing from readers, but you can't write to not offend Aunty Marjory, or the reader that didn't like you swearing. You write what the story needs.

How do you come up with new ideas that haven't been written before?

I start with a premise then fit characters around it who will maximise the conflict. I then work backwards, and invent lives that would have developed the cast you need for your story.

What are your tips for aspiring authors in terms of character development?

- Read your dialogue aloud to make sure it sounds authentic.
- If the characters don't sound distinct, they are probably sounding like you.
- Gauge them against real people you've met. If the character

is like your second wife, would she say/do that?

- Write the things people are afraid to say. Even nice people think bad thoughts sometimes. Flawed characters are more easily relatable.

What's your background, how did you become a writer?

I studied psychology for six years, which I'm sure subconsciously informs my story telling and explains why my characters are all flawed. I worked in people-jobs in the public service for 15 years, had a few kids, then started to make things up...

What are you working on now?

Blogs like this for the lovely Carolyn!

Book three is currently being re-read by my agent (I haven't had an agent before now, and I feel posh saying 'agent' so see how I slipped that in there?), so I am actually getting to the mountains of washing that I've ignored, a few articles I've been putting off...before I invite new imaginary friends into my life.

What does the future look like for Kylie Kaden?

Darker! My stories have always been about relationships under strain and focused on some heavy issues, despite having romantic elements. My current book *The Day the Lies Began* (working title) is more of a crime mystery/domestic noir so we'll wait and see what direction I turn to next. Any ideas? I'm all out!

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