

# Lady Loveday Investigates

by Kat Clay

The Melbourne Athenaeum Library  
Body in the Library runner-up prize (\$500)

as well as:

Kerry Greenwood Malice Domestic Award (\$750),  
Sun Bookshop Third Prize (\$500)  
(Scarlet Stiletto Award)

## Lady Loveday Investigates

My daughter is the most obstinate, wilful girl in all of England! When she found the dead body in the library, she couldn't faint like any normal girl. She had to go and prod it with a poker.

'Stop poking Mr Brighton,' I said. But would she listen? No! She kept examining him like she was Sherlock Holmes, searching his body for clues.

'Don't you dare lay hands on that body. Who will marry you if you smell like corpse?'

The 1901 Three Cheers for End of Year party was in full swing in the drawing room behind us; our friend Chookie was putting on her usual New Year celebrations and of course we had been invited, for a party without Lady Loveday is not a party. However, my Lucy seems intent on destroying the family reputation by swanning about poking dead men when she should be feigning interest in some insipid young man's conversation about wiener schnitzel.

If only she'd turn that brain of hers to getting a husband, then I wouldn't be in this predicament. Chaperoning her all over the place while she causes scandal after scandal. Don't even mention the time she wore bloomers and rode a bicycle! The mortification!

Regardless, Mr Brighton was in a state of solid mortification. One less eligible bachelor for me to introduce to Lucy.

'Mother dearest,' she said, turning those sweet blue eyes upon me like I didn't know she would say something quite terrible. 'I think Mr Brighton has been murdered.'

I pulled my body to full height, all five feet of it, ready to gracefully exit the room.

'It is none of our business if someone murdered him or not. That is between him and the murderer. We must return to the party and pretend nothing has happened, leaving this *problem* for Chookie to find later.'

'But *Mother*,' and oh how I have heard that tone a thousand times. It is always the start of mischief with her, cajoling her poor mother into some scheme. If only her father were still alive, although I suspect she gets many of her naughty ways from him. May he rest in peace.

But she had that look about her that she would not be stopped, and she appeared so particularly fine in a cream

gown embellished with gold bows and my diamond necklace that I knew it would not go my way and I would be forced to join her on another 'investigation'. How many of us mothers can say no to our daughters when they are well-dressed young ladies in the company of dead men?

On examination Mr Brighton was not in his usual state of fine attire. His muscles had swollen so much his tuxedo seams had ripped, drool emanated from his lips, and his hand held a crushed cream cheese tart. Tea drizzled onto the Turkish carpet from a porcelain cup. If the man couldn't keep himself together when he was dead, then he was no match for my daughter when he was alive.

'It looks like someone has poisoned him,' she said.

'Poisoned! How do you know about these things?'

'I read it in a book in father's library. Arsenic, curare, belladonna...'

I should have revoked her key to the library at once but it is one of the few things her father, an explorer, left to the poor girl after disappearing in the Himalaya. And I have sworn since that day, that I would find my daughter a nice, sensible, young man who has no desire for adventure whatsoever.

As my daughter was sniffing the cream cheese tart, the party's raucous game of Choo Choo McGoo burst into the library and a conga line of guests spilled over one another with glasses of wine, laughing and giggling, until all of them realized Mr Brighton was dead. At once the silliest of girls, Miss Herderberger, heiress to the Herderberger diamond empire, screamed and promptly fainted into the arms of three young men.

Of course, this scream brought every other guest at the party running towards it, for if there was a whiff of scandal we all wanted to be there to witness it. I am not the kind of person to enjoy other people's suffering, unless it is that of Lady Addersby, who is a notorious gossip and not the kind of woman with whom you would ever wish to make acquaintance. Then Chookie herself burst in, all a fluster with her red cheeks and jolly countenance, and fainted without a single person to catch her.

This was the moment my daughter declared 'Mr Brighton has been murdered! And one of you is the killer!'

Our family has never truly mastered the art of subtlety.

The music stopped; the musicians must've been listening to this exchange as well. A platter clattered to the floor; impertinent eavesdropping help. An audible gasp lifted

from the crowd. In the background, the butler had the temerity to lock the front door. If there was a murderer amongst us, it was oh so wise to lock them in with us. No, we couldn't just let everyone go their merry way and be done with it. Lucy had to point that finger.

'Stay calm,' said Lucy. 'I have this investigation under control. If you would all retire to the drawing room, so I might finish examining the body.'

This is not the first time she's done this, as you might surmise. There was that adventure with the bejewelled tiara and the mystery of the missing groundskeeper. But what simply won't do is my daughter making a name for herself as an investigator of crimes like an American Pinkerton. Next she'll be jumping from trains. Then she'll have a gun.

To clear witnesses for my daughter's shocking behaviour, I shooed everyone out of the room, directed Chookie's butler to ring for the local constable and to provide a brandy for the host. Not that this has ever happened at one of my parties and don't you believe a word of what Lady Addersby says.

Lucy used the poker to turn back the collar of Mr Brighton's tux, which slipped to the side as if there was something heavy in the pocket.

‘What’s this?’ she said, fidgeting around in his jacket before she removed an elaborate gold key.

‘What are you doing child? Leave that man’s brocaded tuxedo alone!’

‘I’m looking for clues. It’s what all the detectives do in novels.’

Novels. They are to blame for so many of our young women going astray. Alas, my attempts to wean my daughter off such trivialities resulted in a recounting of *The Mysteries of Udolpho*, and I should never wish to hear of such horrors again.

‘I wonder what this opens?’ she said, putting the key in her purse, which was already weighing heavily on her shoulder. I wondered how many handkerchiefs she’d put in there.

‘Most likely it will be the key to his intimates and we will all be shamed. Better you’d run off to Gretna Green!’

‘There’s still time...’ she said, picking up the tea cup. Whatever was left in the cup had soaked into Chookie’s carpets. The poor chap on the floor looked like he could use a reviver.

‘We must question his closest acquaintances,’ said Lucy. ‘Murders are often committed by those known to

the victim and this was a subtle and well thought out crime. Who at this party knew Mr Brighton?’

Ask anyone and they would tell you Lady Loveday is a font of society news. I opened the library door a smidge and pointed to three insipid young people standing around Miss Herderberger. That silly girl with her over-the-top diamond earrings - not to mention awful taste in corsages, for who wears wild carrot flowers to a party? - was still feigning sleep on the fainting couch. I say feigning, for surely she was elongating her figure to be most attractive to the growing pile of useless men around her. They should all go faint on a couch.

I pointed as gracefully as I could, for one never points in public, and explained: ‘Mr Brighton was good friends with Cecil Candleblatt, of the baked beans empire. Next to them is Miss Camilla Ellingsworth, the daughter of Mr Brighton’s mother’s sister’s closest friend.’

‘And who’s that strapping lad?’ she asked, pointing to the man next to Miss Ellingsworth. He was a good three feet taller than anyone else, built like a rugby lad and appeared rather uncomfortable in a dinner jacket.

‘I have no idea...’ I said, and that could not be good,

for if I do not know who someone is, then they are not worth knowing.

Or they are a murderer who has infiltrated this party.

Before I could stop her, my Lucy was striding towards the group without a proper introduction. She harries me this girl! I hastened to her side, walking as fast as I could without catching my glittering train or losing a golden slipper. It would not do to be improperly dressed while interrogating a group of potential sons-in-law.

‘My dears,’ I began. ‘I know this is an untimely circumstance, what with the death of Mr Brighton in the other room by heart attack ...’

‘... murder,’ interrupted my rude daughter.

‘... heart attack. Allow me to introduce my daughter, Miss Lucy Loveday.’

Mr Candleblatt held out a shaking, knobby hand. His eyes ticked away from us, his skin clammy to the touch, as if he were the dead. Miss Ellingsworth was more interested in licking the remaining bacon grease from her fingers before introducing herself. Not the behaviour I’d expect from someone whose family friend had been murdered but one must stay well-fed in the most trying circumstances.

‘And you are, sir?’ I asked of the tallish stranger, in my most pointed manner reserved for potential murderers.

‘Madam, I believe we have met before, although I may have been much smaller than my current state. I am James Addersby, son of Lord and Lady Addersby. My mother has told me so much about you.’

Well I never. That little pile of sugar was all grown up. ‘You’re Jimmy Junior, who used to run around and urinate on my pot plants?’

He laughed a little, ‘I’ve come a long way since those days. I’ve been off exploring the Arctic.’

My harrumph doused any fires lit within the eyes of my daughter. This gentleman, with his tanned skin and ghastly rugged scar across his forehead, was wholly inappropriate a suitor for my daughter, notwithstanding being a potential suspect in a murder investigation. I’m sure that *some* women would call him handsome but I could not see the attraction in his altogether outdoorsy look and trim moustache.

Lucy, to her credit, held herself well.

‘You were all close to Mr Brighton. Did you know of any circumstance that might have led to his untimely demise?’

At the mention of Mr Brighton’s demise, Mr Candleblatt looked as if he were about to expel his undigested canapes. He swallowed and spoke.

‘Mr Brighton was a quiet fellow who spent most of his time as a valuer for auction rooms. Antiques, jewellery, that sort of thing. I met him at Miss Ellingsworth’s annual croquet tournament across the summer. We’d been invited to spend the week with Chookie for New Year.’

‘I’m very upset,’ interrupted Miss Ellingsworth, plucking at a custard tart. ‘Mr Brighton owes me three pounds from that game of croquet and now he’s gone and got himself killed. I’ll never get that money back.’

Mr Candleblatt ignored the obnoxious young woman and continued. ‘We used to spend a lot of time together, but last month it was as if he was avoiding me. When I asked him about it, he said he was looking into something that would affect us all, but he didn’t want to cast aspersions until he’d confirmed his suspicions.’

Miss Ellingsworth interrupted with her nasal voice. ‘If you ask me, it was the butler. The old man’s been hovering around the library all evening.’

Mr Addersby leaned into the conversation, a little too closely to Lucy’s shoulder for my liking. ‘I only met Mr Brighton this evening, but if you ask me, someone at the party had a beef with him.’

‘Or a cream cheese tart,’ said Lucy.

And he had the gall to wink at my daughter! Winking!

Mr Addersby bowed and offered Lucy his arm. ‘Shall we find the murderer together?’

She refused. Good girl! ‘I’d rather solve this one myself. In any case, you’re a suspect too.’

‘I look forward to my interrogation,’ he said.

‘Mr Addersby! The impertinence of your language!’ I said, whacking his rather broad frame with my fan and whisking my daughter away. I became determined to solve this crime, so they might never meet again. Lucy could get in less trouble with a dead man, or so I thought.

First things first. ‘We must talk to the butler and examine Mr Brighton’s chambers. If he was staying with Chookie, surely there will be some of those pesky clues you need in there.’

‘Mother, I’m impressed. Since when did you become interested in solving crimes?’

I pretended not to hear her question and summoned the butler from his alcove. ‘Oh Mr Butler! Might we have a word with you in private?’

‘Madam,’ he said bowing and entering the hall which led to the bedrooms, at which he burst into tears. Well I never!

‘Goodness chap, why are you crying?’ I said, producing a handkerchief from my purse.

‘Every time there is a murder, people always point the finger at me! Don’t they think I have feelings under this veneer of service? I’m not a killer! I enjoy crochet, cups of tea and Jane Austen novels.’

Ugh, men and their repressed feelings. I patted his arm for reassurance.

‘Darling we don’t think it was you. It was most likely that cad, Mr Addersby. So buck up and tell me how long Mr Brighton has been staying here.’

His sobs subsided to a muffled whimper. ‘I’m so glad to hear it, madam. The staff here love Chookie and would never want her shamed. Mr Brighton has been visiting since late yesterday. He was so fond of Chookie’s cream cheese tarts we would make extras whenever he came.’

My daughter interrupted with her ridiculous questions. ‘Does your cream cheese tart recipe include a crunchy topping?’ The butler shook his head.

‘Why are you asking about tart recipes at a time like this? It’s not like you’ve ever been interested in cooking.’

‘Because the tart I found included an unusual decoration: crushed seeds.’

I sighed, waving my hand away as if a fly had bothered me, and turned back to the butler. ‘Did you notice any

unusual behaviour in the library before his unfortunate demise?’

‘I heard raised voices between a man and a woman - something about an engagement ring. I thought it best not to enter. She must have left by one of the north entrances, otherwise I’d have seen her.’

‘That’s enough for now Mr Butler. Might you direct us to Mr Brighton’s chambers?’



The antiquarian’s room was neat as a pin, his bed unruffled. I bent over the pillowslip. Not a sliver of skin, not a hair, not a dent in the pillow from fluffing. No household service was that careful, not even my own.

‘What are you looking for mother?’ asked Lucy, searching for some clue I had found and she had not. Dearest Lucy, as smart as she is when it comes to sciences, lacks a little understanding when it comes to social graces.

‘Darling daughter. When I see a perfectly made bed during a visitor’s stay, I know that someone has been doing the sneaky winky wink of an evening with another guest.’

‘What pray tell is a sneaky wink?’ she asked.

‘When you are married, you will understand.’

‘What? You mean sex?’

At that, I began singing the first act of Gilbert and Sullivan’s *The Mikado* while searching the room. There was nothing in the exquisite leather luggage monogrammed with BB, nor the wardrobe where his immaculate brocade suits sat with a tailored tweed. His hat hid no clues nor his toilette, which smelled rather of mannish cologne.

It was Lucy who found the jewellery box, bedazzled with rubies and emeralds, hidden at the back of a drawer under his unmentionables. She turned the key in the lock and the latch sprung open to reveal an engagement ring and a pile of letters.

I held the ring up to the lamp. ‘Pfft, how cheap! A paste diamond. It doesn’t refract the light. If a man ever proposes to you, it had better be with three-carats.’

‘Mother are you using science?’ asked my daughter.

‘If science can value your offers of marriage, call me Charles Darwin.’

Below the ring was a packet of returned love letters! My heart raced aflutter with the juicy titbits it might contain.

The note on top read:

*Dearest Benjamin, I cannot keep lying to my fiancé. Herein I return the letters you gave me. We cannot continue to see each other this way.*

Signed with a single letter, C.

‘Chookie?’ I said. ‘She’s a fair bit older than him, but stranger things have happened.’

‘No mother, Camilla. Miss Ellingsworth. But it still doesn’t prove she murdered Mr Brighton. Only that she dallied with him.’

‘I doubt Miss Ellingsworth would have it in her noggin to poison anyone. More to the point, who would be engaged to that custard tart when they could have you?’

Lucy ignored me and continued to search while I perused the letters. There were some saucy details, including some rather creative euphemisms for the sneaky wink. However I will not go into those here as it is all rather uncouth. Needless to say, there were a lot of references to snakes, hunting attire and cream cheese. I will say no more, for it would scandalize you. But, if you ask me at a party, maybe I will tell you the rest...

There was another brief letter at the bottom on a sheet of Mr Candleblatt’s letterhead. While it was far less salacious, it seemed more relevant to the crime at hand.

*Despite your investigations, my fiancé is not the devil you make her out to be. She will explain all in the library at 7pm and we will be friends once more. She is even bringing a cream cheese tart as a peace offering.*

‘So, Mr Candleblatt is engaged to Miss Ellingsworth but Mr Brighton was investigating her while having an affair with her?’ I said. ‘Each to his own I suppose.’

My daughter got that quizzical brow she always did when she was thinking.

‘Did you feel any warmth between them at the party? It seems strange for two people to be secretly engaged but express no feeling whatsoever.’

‘People marry for different reasons. Money, land, the way a certain gentleman might appear when he is carrying lumber...’

‘More concerning is the animosity between Mr Brighton and Mr Candleblatt,’ said Lucy. ‘If Mr Candleblatt was angry with Mr Brighton, could it be motive enough to kill him? Shall we have a look in his chambers?’

Of course, Lucy wouldn’t be dissuaded, which is how we ended up in Mr Candleblatt’s room after sneaking across the hallway. Sneaking! A lady never sneaks.

Immediately, Lucy swooped on the hideous dried carrot flower in the vase on the dresser. Was there some fashion at court for wearing weeds?

‘Really daughter, haven’t you seen Queen Anne’s Lace before? Miss Herderberger was wearing the most repulsive corsage tonight.’

‘It’s the murder weapon,’ she said, examining the stalk.

‘A little flower? Shouldn’t we be looking for a strangler’s rope? A candlestick?’

‘Hemlock. Someone tainted the tart with the seeds. It’s a fast-acting poison from a flower easily confused with Queen Anne’s Lace. The Greeks used it for executions.’

I threw up my hands in the air. ‘Who will marry you when all you do is talk about poisons and executions? You only learned needlepoint so you could ‘suture an open wound, if it came to it’. I blame your father for putting these silly ideas in your head.’

‘Mother, a knowledge of toxic plants is vital to the running of any household. It looks like Mr Candleblatt has some explaining to do.’



We swanned back to the party, where I jabbed Mr Candleblatt between the shoulder blades with my fan. He jumped a mile - guilty man! The whole party clustered in when we said we’d like to discuss a private matter with him in the library.

‘But that’s where Mr Brighton is!’ he said. ‘Can we not talk out here?’

Using my fan as one would herd sheep on a farm, I whittled him into the library where his pale face grew rather peaky looking at the swollen body.

‘Oh, it’s too much!’ he said, promptly vomiting on a Wilkie Collins novel. He slumped against the reference section, resting his head on the ladder.

‘Pull yourself together man!’ I said, slapping him with my fan. ‘Have you never seen a dead body before?’

Young people these days have no life skills. When I was his age, I’d seen at least two dead bodies from all the raucous parties mother used to throw. They’d passed having an extremely good time. With each other.

‘How do you explain the hemlock on your dresser?’ asked Lucy.

‘What’s hemlock?’ he asked, with such a quizzical face I was inclined to believe him.

‘The flower, you ninny!’ I said.

‘The one Miss Herderberger gave me? She’s the sweetest young woman, giving me flowers like that. It’s not official, but we’re soon to be married.’

Lucy and I both shook our heads. Even I would prefer Mr Addersby to this twit-brained dimwit.

‘How long have you been engaged to Miss Herderberger?’ I asked.

‘A month or so. I’d only told my closest friends: Mr Brighton, Miss Ellingsworth.’ Looking at the deceased caused Mr Candleblatt to renew the vigorous excretion of his luncheon.

After he had finished, I asked, ‘And how were Mr Brighton’s feelings towards the engagement?’

‘Heaven knows they didn’t get along. Miss Herderberger wanted to make amends this weekend. She said there had been some terrible misunderstanding causing animosity between them.’

I’ll say. Having an affair with another gentleman is always a *misunderstanding*.

Lucy withdrew the less-scandalous letter from her cleavage. Could she not have used her purse?

‘Why did you send this to Mr Brighton!’ she said, giving it to him.

Mr Candleblatt scanned the letter.

‘This isn’t my handwriting! All I know is Mr Brighton wanted to speak with me this weekend, but we hadn’t got the chance as he arrived late yesterday. Then Miss Herderberger wanted me to teach her croquet, then she wanted to go on a boat ride, even though the lake is freezing. I couldn’t say no;

who can say no when you're in love?'

I resisted the urge to slap him with my fan again. My poor fan would need repairs by the time this party finished, there were so many stupid men here.

Lucy stood over the baked bean heir, who was still languishing on the floor.

'Did Miss Herderberger leave the party at any point?'

'She said she was unwell and needed to eat something, but she returned to the party not long after. She has a delicate constitution as befitting a good woman.'

That was enough from this insipid twit.

'Delicate constitution!' I shouted. 'I'll give you delicate! I suspect your fiancé killed Mr Brighton.'

At that I grabbed him by the collar and hauled him to his feet. While I may be short and rather curvaceous, no silly man can tell me I need a delicate constitution when he can't even look at a dead body without expelling his din-dins. I kicked him in the shin with my slipper, which has a rather excellent pointed toe.

'Tell me, what is Miss Herderberger's Christian name?' I asked.

'Catherine,' he groaned.

That was enough for me, and it was certainly enough for Lucy, who strode back to the drawing room with an

intent I'd not seen since Miss Sinestra laid eyes on the Marquess de Medea at the 1896 debutante ball.

When Lucy threw open the sliding doors to the library, half a dozen people fell over from listening at the door.

'Pick yourselves up the lot of you,' I said. 'We have uncovered our murderer!' Everyone who's anyone loves a good game of point-the-finger at the murderer, especially after a few drinky-poops. I was merely thinking of our Lucy, for the sooner we got this done, the sooner we could go home, and that would be the end of Mr Addersby for good.

Guests filled every available space, squeezing into couches, lazing on ottomans, even one gent sat cross legged on the floor hoping to get a view of the killer. Every eye was upon my stunning daughter, and thankfully I'd loaned her my emerald studded tiara which complemented her complexion perfectly.

'It was you!' shouted Lucy, pointing in a most unladylike manner at Miss Herderberger, still unconscious on the couch.

One by one, Miss Herderberger cracked her eyes open. I was right! The girl had been parading all along.

'You were having an affair with Mr Brighton while you were engaged to Mr Candleblatt!' said Lucy.

Now everyone was listening in. This was juicier than the time Mr and Mrs Debalier were found in the company of an Italian on the dining room table.

‘You had sex with Mr Brighton last night but decided to call off the affair!’

Chookie fainted again at the mention of the three-letter word ending in x. Everyone was so scandalized they almost tripped over one another trying to lean in.

Lucy, had she not been a lady’s daughter, would have been fit for the stage, the way she theatrically removed the half-eaten tart from her purse. I hoped it hadn’t smeared the silk lining, it is *so* difficult to get out oily stains.

‘He threatened to tell your fiancé, so you killed him! You knew he was partial to cream cheese tarts, so you took him one to make peace. Except it was laced with hemlock!’

Miss Herderberger stood up in the middle of the accusation circle.

‘I didn’t have an affair with him, you discombobulated nincompoop! I killed him because he found out my family was selling paste jewellery instead of diamonds!’

The crowd gasped. Miss Herderberger’s hands shot to her mouth. The cardinal sin of amateur criminals:

confessing to the crime out of anger. More shockingly, several people turned to examine their brooches and hairpins.

In the moment we’d all been distracted, Miss Herderberger drew a dagger from her hair and waved it at the crowd. ‘Back off!’ she shouted.

To my utmost horror, Lucy pulled her father’s gun from her purse, crusted with the remains of the tart. Goodness gracious me! I’d not seen that dirty old thing for years and here it was in her diamante bag. It was meant for carrying handkerchiefs and love letters, not a military issue .476 calibre Enfield Mark II revolver with ammunition!

At the sight of the gun, Mr Addersby mooned puppy dog eyes at Lucy. I gave him a stern death stare, then continued my stare across to Miss Herderberger who was still rudely threatening all the guests with her hat pin cum dagger.

‘Drop your weapon!’ my daughter snarled.

Miss Herderberger, sensing she was done for, dropped the dagger straight onto the floor, which I thought very inconsiderate for Chookie’s décor, leaving a pointy dagger mark in her parquet.

I turned and slapped Miss Herderberger with my fan.

‘You’re a very naughty girl! I’m placing you under citizen’s arrest and sending word to your mother.’

I looked at Lucy, proud of her intelligence and how she’d solved the crime. At least I didn’t have a ninny for a daughter, and if Lucy ever murdered someone, no one would ever find out.

After Miss Herderberger had been removed by the local constable and the butler had served a round of non-toxic tarts, Lucy pointed her fingers together thoughtfully. ‘One mystery remains. If Miss Herderberger wasn’t having an affair with Mr Brighton, then who was?’

My eyes fell on the despondent Chookie, who had recovered from her fainting spells.

‘Some mysteries we need not solve,’ I said, turning my daughter quickly towards the canapes.

As the clock neared midnight, Mr Addersby hovered around us like a tropical infectious disease. At least he’d stopped winking. He said to Lucy, ‘I’m rather disappointed you didn’t interrogate me. I hear you’re an avid cyclist. Should we go for a ride tomorrow? I’d so love to see you in bloomers.’

If that wasn’t code for a sneaky wink with my daughter, then I didn’t know what was. There are times you must sacrifice your dignity for the sake of your

children, and so as the clock struck midnight between 1901 and 1902, I fainted.

At least enough to hear the ongoing conversation as Lucy fussed over my body.

‘I must get her home,’ she said. ‘That murder has taken a terrible toll on my mother. She’s rather sensitive.’

She should have seen the time I had to remove the body of Winston Whitehall under the nose of two hundred guests. This investigation was a proverbial walk in the park.

Still, I lay there, elongating my figure on the fainting couch. If my daughter couldn’t make a suitable match, perhaps some older gents would be up for a sneaky...

...wine and game of bridge.

## **Kat Clay**

### **“Lady Loveday Investigates”**

Kat Clay is the author of *Double Exposure*. In 2017, she was longlisted for the CWA Debut Dagger award for her unpublished novel, *Victorianoir*. Her fiction crosses noir, horror and the weird, exploring topics such as sinister cities, psychogeographies and the representation of women (although from time to time, she loves a dash of satire).

She has been shortlisted for the Aurealis, Ditmar and Australian Horror Writers Association Shadows Awards and her short fiction and criticism has been published in *SQ Mag*, *Crimson Streets* and *Weird Fiction Review*. She is represented by Paul Stevens at Donald Maass Literary Agency.