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Wednesday, 9 November 2016

Book Review & Giveaway | Fearless | Fiona Higgins



In this, her third novel, Fiona Higgins introduces us to a disparate group of six people with one thing in common - they have all booked in to the Fearless Retreat in Ubud, which aims to address and perhaps cure them of the phobias and fears that are holding them captive.

Janelle, an Australian, is afraid of flying and it's taking her a lot of courage (and vodka) to get through this flight; Henry, our Englishman is a bird-watcher but has a fear of public-speaking; Annie is sixty, overweight and has a fear of snakes (or is it death); Remy, the lovely Frenchman, is afraid of heights; Cara, a twenty-nine year old who escaped from Australia to Bali four years before is still crippled with grief after a tragic accident; and Lorenzo, the Italian, is hoping to have his infertility cured to appease his wife, whilst he struggles to come to terms with a deeper issue that has long plagued him.

Placed together and working through various exercises either in groups or on their own, with the input of their mentor, Pak Tony, they slowly begin to form tentative friendships with one another as they revisit their pain in an attempt to cleanse and heal themselves.

On day four, however, it all comes to a head when they are faced with a situation that no class (or even Fear Factor for that matter) could ever have prepared them for.

Using a very real contemporary fear, Fiona goes for the jugular and gives us a twist that nobody is expecting, so don't let the innocent looking cover fool you because, beneath the façade lurks a crisis that is going to teach these characters the true meaning of living, loving and letting go.

All of her characters are interesting with amazingly distinct voices and, although having six narrators could easily cause confusion, I really enjoyed the structure of Fiona alternating between them.

Her setting of Bali is well evoked and, having never travelled there before, one of my favourite aspects was the vivid imagery that Fiona paints of the scenery and the people, giving me a real feel for the Balinese culture and customs.

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Marcia B

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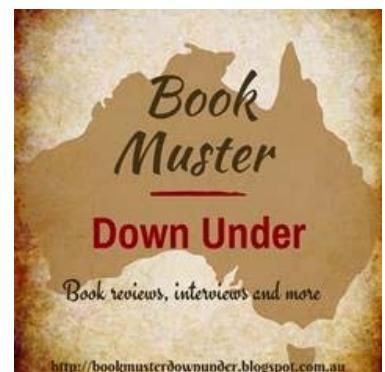
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"Don't cry because it's over, smile because it happened." —Dr. Seuss

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Whilst *Fearless* is a tense, suspenseful read that is smart and original and doesn't fail to entertain with a number of light-hearted moments (such as the "vagina cleansing ritual") which had me snorting with laughter, the story covers some serious issues from thoughts about paedophilia to religious extremism.

With a plot that can be translated into plausible reality, well-rounded characters who are relatable and complex, *Fearless* is a thought-provoking, riveting and emotionally powerful story about self-discovery, courage, transformation, resilience, survival and the pain that can be hidden in private while people try to find themselves amidst the circumstances that have shaped them.

Fiona captivates with this one and I have no doubt that you'll have a dose of agoraphobia to deal with as you struggle to put it down.

I wish to thank the publisher, Allen & Unwin, for providing me with a hard copy ARC for review.

About the Author

Fiona Higgins is the author of a memoir and three novels, the latest being *Fearless*, published by Allen & Unwin.

Her debut novel, *The Mothers' Group* (2012) was described by The Weekend Australian as 'a top-shelf novel about contemporary Australian life'. *Wife on the Run* (2014) was reviewed in The Sydney Morning Herald as 'a page-turning domestic melodrama for the social media age.' Both novels were published in Europe. Her memoir, *Love in the Age of Drought* (2009), was published by Pan Macmillan in Australia.



When she isn't writing, Fiona is active in the Australian for-purpose sector. She holds tertiary qualifications in the humanities and social sciences.

Fiona is married with three children, and recently returned to Australia after a three-year sojourn in Indonesia.

About the Book



A breathtaking new novel from the bestselling author of The Mother's Group and Wife on the Run.

Six strangers from across the world converge on the tropical island of Bali to attend a course designed to help them face their fears. Their backgrounds are as diverse as their fears – which range from flying, public speaking and heights, through to intimacy, failure and death.

Friendships and even romance blossoms as the participants are put through a series of challenges, which are unusual, confronting and sometimes hilarious. A week of fun in the sun suddenly transforms into something far more serious, however, when the unthinkable happens – a tragic disaster that puts the group in deadly danger and

tests the individual courage of every member.

Shocking, powerful and utterly gripping, Fearless takes you to the edge and makes you look down.

ISBN: 9781760294229

Publisher: Allen & Unwin

Pub Date: November 2016

Page Extent: 392

RRP: \$29.99

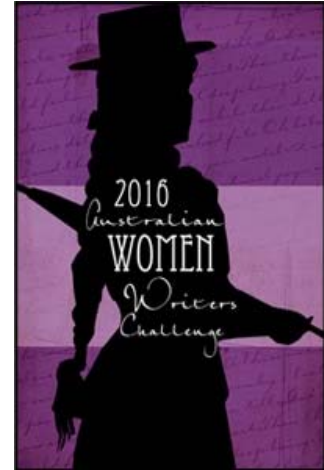


I'm offering ONE lucky reader the chance to win a brand new paperback copy of *Fearless*.

In order to enter, all you need to do is leave a comment below.

The giveaway closes at midnight (Australian Eastern Standard Time) on Wednesday, 16th November and one winner will be selected at random (using random.org) and announced here on the blog within 48 hours.

Australian Women Writers Challenge 2016



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Please note that you will be required to email me at marcia@bookmusterdownunder.com.au in order to provide your name and mailing address.

Apologies, but due to high international postage costs, this giveaway is open to **Australian residents ONLY**

Disclaimer: I reserve the right to re-draw if the winner doesn't contact me within 24 hours of them being notified.

Best of Luck!!!

Posted by Marcia B at 2:54 pm

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1 comment:



Mary Preston 9 November 2016 at 17:41

An interesting premise. We all have to face our fears one way or another. I kind of like the 6 narrators concept.

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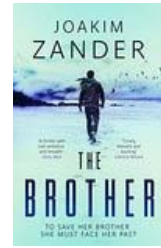
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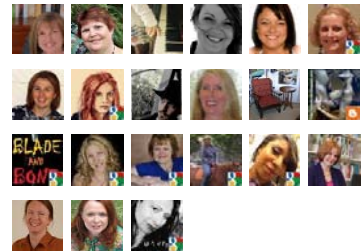
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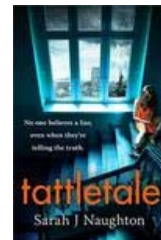
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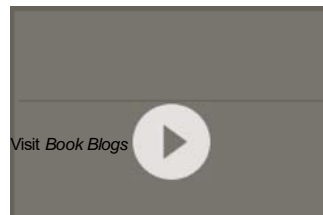
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