

The Waiter and the Author

There are fifteen women watching the speaker. I am their waiter. They acknowledge me here and there but their focus is on the host and the speaker; as it should be. I have the perfect viewpoint of the group and their fixation.

It's a gathering for a newly published book. The Author is wearing a loose leopard print top but she reminds me of a cheetah. The tufts of hair on the animal's cheeks are the same shade as her impeccable bob. It's sprayed down so intently that when she moves describing the intimate lives of her characters it remains perfectly still. It's mesmerising. Not a single strand dares move out of place. It's as unrealistic as the romance plot she's describing.

She is a slight woman, sitting on a stool, looking like a statue. Fragile. All limbs, bob and nose. She is a flamingo perched on one leg listening to the questions being asked her. Then, she responds. There is a focus, a fierceness; the cheetah returns.

Her accent screams of South Yarra or Toorak. It's an elongated nasality that's clipped by a high-pitched squawk of excitement.

Ingrid Taylor-Moss

“And then my editor asked how many books I plan to release per year. I am so organised I could definitely manage more than one.”

The other women look inwards on themselves. I can see that they don't understand how this woman can have a husband, three kids, release a book per year, teach writing classes and keep a daily updated writers blog. The amethyst woodstar hummingbird can flap its wings eighty times per second. As research for her book she tells the group how she made her own lipstick. “It's really rather easy, if you have time. A bit of wax, some almond oil and some sort of pigment – berries will do.” The Author is someone that flaps hard and fast, always finding the time.

At a ‘Meet The Author Wine Night’, she has no wine. Accomplishments are mutilated by inebriants. But there's a nervous energy stored in her limbs. Maybe she's a nervous public speaker? Her shoulders are clenched, her elbows remain locked at her sides. Her forearms, hands and fingers jerk widely as she speaks. I see a fearsome tyrannosaur brought down by laughter, simply by trying to use its stunted claws to pick something up.

It's a success of an evening and the questions and answers keep flooding forward.

The Author speaks of how excited she is by fashion. She holds these glossy white postcards that feature elegantly stroked ladies in 1920s high fashion. The Author commissioned the postcards from a Western Australian artist. They are beautiful. She talks about the clothes and the lives they led back-in-the-day.

The clothes find their way onto The Author in my mind. They fit her perfectly. She is elegance and class. And then a squawk of excitement shatters the illusion.

If a cheetah, a flamingo, a hummingbird and a tyrannosaur had a baby, it would be this author. She is a willowy force of a woman. With me, a woman waiter, watching and waiting.