



Galahad Porter

# Best of the Blog

Issue 4

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## *Welcome to Galahad Porter Best of the Blog 4!*

If you follow me on Facebook, Twitter or on my blog at galahadporter.com you are pretty well up to date. For those who live by email alone, I have created this PDF file to bring you some edited highlights of the website section 'The Blog'. I try to publish this every 3 months or so, fitting in with publication milestones.

### *'At Reception' to be published by Matador*

I am pleased to announce that I have agreed with Matador, part of Troubador Publishing Ltd to publish and market the novel 'At Reception'. Release is expected this summer. More details will be available in the near future.

### *Finding a New Best Friend (first published 16/1/17)*

Monday

Someone invites you to a party. You hardly know the person, but hey, why not go. Maybe you'll meet a new best friend.

You arrive at the door feeling a little apprehensive. You don't know what's behind it. Will you enjoy yourself? Stop it you say, I'm an adult. You touch the door and it swings open. You stand there frozen. You look for a familiar face, anyone you can latch onto. Nothing. You feel nervous, you feel the stares of people. Maybe I should leave now, but if I walk away they'll think I'm weird. Get a drink, just get a drink, walk around a bit and sneak out later.

So, how many new potential best friends would you make that night? One, maybe two you think worth seeing again? Maybe everyone! Or maybe none. Maybe you would not invest the time to get to know anyone. You would politely chat, and then leave as soon as you no longer feel the eyes watching you.

The next morning you tell people there were so many people there you had no chance to get to know anyone. How you didn't feel that oh so necessary connection to anyone nor the event itself. It's going to be so hard to find a new best friend. I'll stick to the old ones.

Tuesday

Someone invites you to dinner at a new restaurant. You don't particularly know the person, but you would like to try the place so say yes. Maybe you will find a new favourite dish.

You arrive at the restaurant feeling uneasy. The decor is not familiar, it's supposed to be modern international, but to you it doesn't fit in any category. Not even fusion, which should cover everything. You push open the door and look around. You cannot see your host. You feel the stare of people looking at you, wondering why you are just standing there, frozen. You go to the bar to wait.

Your guest apologises for the late arrival, the traffic is so bad around here. Bollocks you think, everyone says that. You should have left earlier. You both take your table.

You look at the menu. Your host suggests you select from the 'Chef's Specials'. Nothing grabs your attention. Nothing familiar you feel you can relate to. Why did I bother making the effort you say to yourself. Eventually you select a couple of safe standard dishes.

The next morning you tell people that the menu was too varied to decide what to eat. How you never found a new favourite dish. How you'll stick to the old ones.

Wednesday

Someone gives you a book. You'll love it they say. You've read the work of only a few authors, you like them. Why would you try something new? But, hey, maybe you'll find a new favourite author.

You look at the cover. You already feel uneasy. It's not familiar. The name of the author, the design. No this is not your kind of book. You read

the back cover. No, I don't like realism, I only like old fashioned romance novels.

You sigh. Damn, I said I would read it, so I guess I have to open it.

The dedication page says 'To Laena and all Guest Service Agents, my thoughts are with you'.

You think, well, the author wrote it for somebody. Why would he write about a hotel receptionist? What's interesting about that?

The next day you tell people how you now have a new best friend. Not the writer, no, but that poor girl. The one... At Reception!

### *Extracts from At Reception*

I decided for my Season's greetings and Happy New Year cards to let the star of the novel provisionally titled *At Reception* offer the greetings.

#### Season's Greetings!

'Flowers, in the northern hemisphere it's snowing and the holiday season. Here summer is approaching and brings with it my birthday.'



Celebrations are not a part of my life. Living alone, with no family and friends, I only share special times with my stuffed toy pets and those poor animals at the rescue centre. At work we occasionally exchange gifts for the holiday season, but it's not personal, it's work. As much as my colleagues feel like family when I am there, I know they are not. They are never at my home. As I am paid a minimum wage, my rent and bills use up all my money. The glamour of the hotel is not the reality of life for the workers.

My simple existence is all I can afford. Not having to buy gifts is one less stress in my life. I am happy to keep it that way.

#### Happy New Year!

Well, here we go again, another week at work, another week like all the rest in the year. Definitely a red and black check ribbon day today!



Nothing in my life has changed in the last week, month, even years. Every week like all the others. I don't mind that, I know where I stand. No doubt this week will bring a new set of events, characters, chat up lines and challenges to exhaust me. Having to be nice to people all day, which I take seriously as it is my job, is mentally tiring. The constant barrage of having to say one thing, but really thinking another is tough. You know me, when I get tired I am tempted to let rip, but I always seem to hold on and just make it to the end of the day without upsetting anyone! I'll be OK, I will make it through.

### *Going round and round in circles! (first published 12/11/2016)*

How many times do you read the same book? Once? Maybe twice after a year or two? Not only did I write the manuscript for the book provisionally titled '*At Reception*', I now have to repeatedly re-read it, note the errors and make changes that improve it, and then type it all up again. THEN I have to repeat that cycle all over again and again. If you find the novel boring the first time, imagine how I might feel? Fortunately I like the storyline and am absorbed into the events and characters. They come alive in my keystrokes, and for me it's a delight.

But I am under immense self-inflicted time pressure. The manuscript should have been off to agents and my self-publisher a month ago and, I own up, it isn't. Once again, as with every stage of the book writing process, I am finding everything takes much longer than expected. Hopefully it will be ready by the end of November.

Do you recall when you wrote your first short stories for English classes at school? The ones that were no more than a page or two of handwriting? Every sentence had to be carefully constructed. You could only rub pencil out one or two times, and rewriting the whole thing would delay watching TV. By the time you got to the end of the page you knew you had finished. This was reinforced by submission deadlines that were immovable, and there were dire consequences if the work was not given in on time!

Using a computer you type away, riding a torrent of ideas. You rack up thousands of words of text with no thought of submitting it to anyone any time soon, and definitely not at school tomorrow. The words flow onto your screen in a raging stream. You even panic when you have too many ideas at once and fear you will forget one whilst still typing up previous inspirations.

In the world of fiction you are left with a novel, yes, but it's really only a mass of words that, if you don't edit correctly, could turn into a literary compost heap.

I worked for a number of banks in The City in London. I would read investment documents to check the spelling etc. Every word was important, some people may invest a lot of money based on your exact phrasing. As a consequence my editing reading speed is slow. How fast do you read? For me it's around 30 typical novel pages an hour. That may seem slow to some, but I've always tried to pick up the nuances, the secret lines between the lines. After all, the writer has spent time stressing and thinking about every word in every sentence, why should I just skip over them?

'At Reception' is not a light novel. Like many writers first novels it's concentrated and intense. If you try read it quickly you will miss many of the key points. As it's written in first person, it should be read as if you are there, in conversation with a friend. A sip of coffee or wine between every paragraph. Take it in, absorb the ideas and build your relationship with the lead character.



*Before and after 10 years of English lessons at school*

I suffered as a teenager for making that kind of comment! As a school kid one English teacher set an exercise asking the class to each write a poem and bring it to the next lesson. I wrote my poem, but it seemed to come across a bit flat. I wrote a note at the top of the poem to the reader saying that it should be read more quickly as it went along. In my mind that captured the spirit of it. At the next English lesson the teacher stood in front of the class. 'Porter has suggested I read his faster as I go along'. Everyone laughed when he made a rolling of the eyes expression. I don't think he actually read it out.

That's a bit of a depressing thought to end on. If agents and publishers are no more than school teachers then I have no chance. However, in my experience, there is always someone who can look around the corner of the current market, and spot a new commercial opportunity coming rapidly up from behind. I hope so. If not, with the world of self-publishing and an inspired marketing campaign, anything could, and probably will, happen!

### *Final word.....*

Just because the novel is basically finished doesn't mean there will be a lot of time for the trilogy. There's marketing, interviews, promotional programs and a launch party guest list for At Reception to do!

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