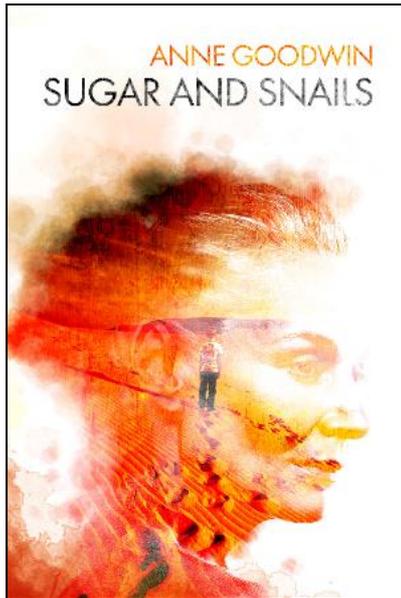


Media Pack



Sugar and Snails

ANNE GOODWIN

At fifteen, Diana Dodsworth made a life-changing decision. Now it's time to make another.

Paperback ISBN: 978-1-908600-47-9
eBook ISBN: 978-1-908600-48-6

About the title:

Diana Dodsworth, a Psychology lecturer, specialises in adolescent decision-making and, on the surface at least, her own decisions have led to a catalogue of successes: close friends, big house, good job. All that seems to be missing is romance, so when Simon crosses her path at a dinner party and proves to be the perfect partner, why is it so hard to tick the last box? In a marvellous twist, it soon becomes abundantly clear that one decision in particular, at the tender age of fifteen, still holds sway over Diana's life. Can she reconcile her past self with the woman she aspires to be, or will she lose everything that has been so hard won?

Sugar and Snails, the debut novel from accomplished short story writer Anne Goodwin, takes sensitive subject matter, handles it with all the force of a freight train and leaves behind nothing but a truly immersive reading experience. Taking place in both the present and the past, between the urban streets of Newcastle and the pyramids of Cairo, the story is one of startling honesty and emotional connections. It carries comfortably the mantles of literary and LGBT fiction but, at its heart, is nothing more or less than a superb piece of modern storytelling.

If you have any questions or queries about anything within this Media Pack, please do not hesitate to get in touch.

Warm regards,
~ Sara-Jayne Slack

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Press Release

What happens when you don't feel comfortable in your own skin?

July 23rd, 2015 sees the release of *Sugar and Snails*, the debut novel from author Anne Goodwin. When Diana Dodsworth meets Simon Jenkins, she thinks she has found her soulmate at last. He is smart, kind and funny; they have a lot in common and the world at their feet. Except Diana has a secret, one she's hidden for years, about a single, life-changing decision she made as a teenager. Now, thirty years on, old wounds are threatening to reopen and it looks like Simon isn't the only thing on the line.

Can adolescents really be trusted to make their own decisions, particularly the difficult ones? Do our identities boil down to a series of points on a passport? These are the kind of tough questions that Anne Goodwin embraces, and her answers are just as multifaceted. The pervading readability of the prose, however, is testament to her absolute command of the craft. As Diana's past unfolds and each puzzle piece slots into place, a truly powerful picture is revealed, one that threatens to engulf everything she has fought so hard for. Another decision awaits her, but even with age and experience on her side, it isn't an easy one to make.

Anne Goodwin's characters are solid and believable in their individuality, her settings beautifully rendered. *Sugar and Snails* is a story of both past hurt and future hope, told by a supremely talented wordsmith.

Heart-felt, Lucid and Entertaining ... A hard-hitting look at issues that modern society has so far failed to fully embrace, Anne Goodwin's offering is refreshingly candid and quietly tender.

MAIN THEMES

The themes found within this title include (but are not limited to):

- Womanhood
- Gender identity
- Adolescence
- Societal gender norms
- Female sexuality

Sell Sheet

Technical Information

Title: **Sugar and Snails**

Page Count: **342 (Paperback)**

Dimensions: **5" x 8"**

Genre: **Contemporary Fiction / LGBT**

Release Date: **July 23rd, 2015**

Paperback Price: **£8.99**

Paperback ISBN: **978-1-908600-47-9**

eBook Price: **£3.49**

eBook ISBN: **978-1-908600-48-6**

Distribution

As we use Lightning Source, (Ingram/Green's) books are available from almost anywhere that books are sold: Waterstone's, WHSmith, Barnes & Noble, etc.

Bulk orders (10+ copies), can be requested direct from Inspired Quill.

Official Blurb

The past lingers on, etched beneath our skin ...

At fifteen, Diana Dodsworth took the opportunity to radically alter the trajectory of her life, and escape the constraints of her small-town existence. Thirty years on, she can't help scratching at her teenage decision like a scabbed wound.

To safeguard her secret, she's kept other people at a distance... until Simon Jenkins sweeps in on a cloud of promise and possibility. But his work is taking him to Cairo, and he expects Di to fly out for a visit. She daresn't return to the city that changed her life; nor can she tell Simon the reason why.

Sugar and Snails takes the reader on a poignant journey from Diana's misfit childhood, through tortured adolescence to a triumphant mid-life coming-of-age that challenges preconceptions about bridging the gap between who we are and who we feel we ought to be.



Anne Goodwin



Sugar and Snails



Published by Inspired Quill

Excerpt - Chapter 6

"I'm sorry, Di." Venus closed the dishwasher with a thud. "Of course you'd be furious when I tried to set you up with Simon. In fact, the signs were there from the day we met."

I almost preferred her being cross with me. At least I knew where I stood. "I haven't the foggiest what you're on about."

Venus turned on the tap above the sink with her elbow. "Of course I'm a tad disappointed you didn't come out and tell me already."

Sweaty palms and a sinking feeling in my stomach: symptoms of the fight-flight response reporting for duty. I counted five paces to the outside door. I could grab my bike and be home in under an hour.

"Come on, Di, it's nothing to be ashamed of." Venus plunged her hands under the gushing tap. "It's obvious you're gay."

The idea was so preposterous, I had to laugh. "What?"

"Homosexual. Lesbian. What do you want me to call it?"

Ever since I was tiny, I'd hated to be categorised. Long before being introduced to labelling theory, I'd understood the tyranny of if you're *this* you can't be *that*. "What on earth gave you that idea?"

Venus rubbed her hands on a chequered tea towel and flung it into the washing machine. "One, the passionate friendship with – what was her name? – Geraldine, never mentioned, even in passing. Two, the football. Three, the fact that you haven't been out with a man in nigh on twenty years..."

"Mu-um." We both jumped as Josh poked his head round the kitchen door. "We're waiting for dessert."

Icy mist wafted from the freezer as Venus reached inside for a tub of ice cream. "Take that. We'll be along in a minute." As soon as the boy moved out of sight, she edged closer to me. "In fact it's quite common for folk to repress their true sexuality. Of course, you're brought up to think there's only *one* way. If you don't fit the norm, it takes a humungous amount of courage to admit it. You could waste your entire life contorting yourself into a mould that's not for you. But, Di, isn't it time to admit that it's making you unhappy?" She turned away, embarrassed perhaps by her rambling homily, and unloaded a stack of gaudy painted ceramic bowls from the pine dresser. "You let him go without fixing up another date already?"

Two minutes earlier she was convinced I was gay. It was all very well for her. A married woman didn't have to worry about making a fool of herself if she invited a man in for coffee. "It's not easy, you know. Not at my age."

About the Author

Anne Goodwin grew up in Cumbria and studied Mathematics and Psychology at Newcastle University around the same time as the narrator of *Sugar and Snails*.

She loves fiction for the freedom to contradict herself and has been scribbling stories ever since she could hold a pencil. During her 25-year career as an NHS clinical psychologist her focus was on helping other people tell their neglected stories to themselves. Now that her short fiction publication count has overtaken her age, her ambition is to write and publish enough novels to match her shoe size.

Anne juggles her sentences while walking in the Peak District, only to lose them battling the slugs in her vegetable plot. As a break from finding her own words, she is an avid reader and barely-competent soprano in an all-comers choir.

Sugar and Snails is her first published novel.

Contact Information

To learn more about Anne Goodwin, why not visit her corner of the web:

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Blog: <http://annegoodwin.weebly.com/annecdotal>



Anne Goodwin

INTERVIEW TOPICS

In the event of an interview request, here are a few ideas for topics that the author would be happiest to discuss:

- The Writing Process
- Themes (see previous)
- Research in Writing
- Gender themes in modern fiction



Author Q&A

HOW DOES WRITING A NOVEL COMPARE WITH WRITING A SHORT STORY?

The years (in my case) it takes to write a novel means that you're a different person when you finish it to who you were at the start. That's both an advantage and disadvantage: the personal development enables you to see different things with each draft, but it can make it more difficult to maintain the consistency of voice and tone. Of course, that can happen with short fiction too; it's a wonderful experience to be able to put a problematic short story aside for several months and come back to it with a fresh perspective.

"YOU'RE A DIFFERENT PERSON WHEN YOU FINISH [A NOVEL] TO WHEN YOU START."

"THE OTHER CHALLENGE WAS WHERE TO START DIANA'S STORY."

WHAT WAS THE GREATEST CHALLENGE FOR YOU WHILST WRITING THIS NOVEL?

Relating Diana's childhood without giving away her secret until I thought she would be ready to do so. Originally, I had two additional points of view: those of her parents, struggling with their own relationship as well as a child who didn't behave the way they expected. But it over complicated what was already a complex story and I was advised to write the whole thing from Diana's perspective. I'm glad I did, although I still miss the voices of the parents.

The other challenge, which I think is a struggle for many emerging writers, was where to start Diana's story. We're conscious of the need to grab the reader's attention from the first page, but there's often a lot of information to get across in the early chapters.

HOW DOES YOUR PROFESSIONAL BACKGROUND AS A CLINICAL PSYCHOLOGIST IMPACT ON YOUR FICTION?

I hope it contributes to creating credible characters with emotional depth, as well as reflecting the lengths to which we go to defend against uncomfortable feelings. But that's for others to judge! When I first started taking my fiction seriously, I envisaged it as "me time" and kept it very separate from my day job.

"...REFLECTING THE LENGTHS TO WHICH WE GO TO DEFEND AGAINST UNCOMFORTABLE FEELINGS."

Primary Reader Demographic:

Sugar and Snails is aimed at readers over the age of sixteen, due to mentions of sex and self-harm. This title also has themes of interest to LGBT audiences.

TRIGGER WARNINGS: Mentions of Self-Harm, Physical Violence

Reviews for this author:



Average review rating
across all IQ titles.

I loved this book. Sugar and Snails is beautifully written and a truly impressive debut by Anne Goodwin. It reminded me a little of Claire Messud's The Woman Upstairs. A beautiful and gripping read.

- Fleur Smithwick,
author of *How to make a Friend*

Sugar and Snails is a brave and bold emotional roller-coaster of a read. Anne Goodwin's prose is at once sensitive, invigorating and inspired. I was hooked from the start and in bits by the end. Very much to be recommended.

- Rebecca Root,
actor and voice teacher

An absorbing, clever and heartening debut novel.

- Alison Moore,
author of Booker-shortlisted *The Lighthouse*

A very moving portrayal of how paralysing the shame of one's identity can lead to lifelong isolation and secrecy. A gripping, compelling and moving read.

- Dr. Victoria Holt,
Consultant Psychiatrist

A probing debut novel and, like its protagonist, not what it first seems.

- Gavin Weston,
author of *Harmattan*

Vivid and visceral, Anne Goodwin's debut novel provides an astute and fascinating portrait of a protagonist struggling with unusual demons.

- Victoria Best,
blogger, *Shiny New Books*

AS RATED



About the Publisher

Mission Statement

Inspired Quill strives to showcase writing talent and set a new standard in ecologically friendly, people-oriented publishing by providing a quality drive, positive experience for all of our stakeholders. Inspired Quill (or IQ for short) operates on two primary levels; quality publishing, and a genuine interest in the skills development of anyone we work with – authors, volunteers, bloggers etc.

As a Social Enterprise, Inspired Quill is already looking toward the future, where we aim to develop and present creative writing workshops in socio-economically disadvantaged areas. Our Social Enterprise mission is to develop sustainable workshops, bringing individuals together both locally and globally and inspiring them to achieve beyond their expectations.

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IQ is staffed by a dedicated team:

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