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INSIGHT CAREER PROFILE

Zoë Foster, author

The beauty editor-turned-author gives us the lowdown on life as a writer.

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I only ever write on Saturday mornings, from 6am to 12pm. I've had to be exceptionally disciplined because if I'm not, I'll cheat. I'll go for coffee with a friend, and I'll accidentally buy some clothes and books and have some lunch and then, bizarrely, my watch says 5pm, and I've written nothing but 16 text messages. And there's no writing at night. Or after work. Or on Sundays (laptop-free day). So that leaves only Saturday morning. And I have to, because I have one terrifying deadline and one titanic word count.



Sometimes on a sparkling summer's day, when everyone is outside throwing frisbees and eating gelato, I think I'm missing out. But then I remember how stupidly lucky I am to have someone believe in my writing enough to publish whole books of it. Of course, one day I'll employ a wonderfully expeditious typist (who'll probably also love to cook and present me with a plethora of pastry-based treats each session), so I can recline languidly on my sofa and dictate my stories instead. One day.

MY BIG BREAK

When I was halfway through my book, *Air Kisses*, a friend put me in touch with her literary agent who, luckily for me, took me on. Once the manuscript was finished, my agent pitched the book to an array of publishers. We ended up going with Penguin, the masters of commercial women's fiction, which was a huge moment for me. I've committed to three books; the next will be out in 2009, the third in 2010.



Zoë's CV

- 1999-2001: Bachelor of Arts in Media and Communications at UNSW
- 2002-2003: Deputy editor, *Mania* magazine
- 2003-2004: Deputy editor, *Smash Hits* magazine
- 2004-2007: Beauty & lifestyle editor, *Cosmopolitan*
- 2006-2008: Founder, Fruitybeauty.com.au
- 2007-2008: Beauty director, *Harper's Bazaar*
- 2008-present: Editor-in-chief, Primped.com.au; debut novel, *Air Kisses*, published

WHAT I NEED TO GET INTO THE WRITING ZONE

Definitely music (usually something without lyrics) and a good-quality, aromatic candle (Burn or Diptyque). I need to be warm, to have a drink, lip balm and hand cream within reach, and for my phone to be on silent. I also require my character board, a collage of faces I cut out of magazines, which I then attribute to the personality they represent. It helps me to see the person I'm writing about, or as.

THE WRITER I ADMIRE

Dave Barry, a dorky columnist/humourist from Miami, who's probably, definitely the funniest writer in the universe. He's won a Pulitzer Prize and he writes about car parks and toilet lids. My kind of writer." *Who and* Zoë Foster's debut novel, *Air Kisses* (Penguin Books, \$32.95), is available now in all good bookstores.

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