NEW LITERARY SOCIETY 7 / JULY 2025 ALGALIAR SPECIAL EDITION

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NEW LITERARY SOCIETY



SAL GALLAHER SPECIAL EDITION

INTERVIEW: DISCOVERING SAL GALLAHER

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ISSUE 7 – JULY 2025

Meet Sal Gallaher and Her Journey as a Writer

A story of passion, perseverance, and the magic behind the words.

We are thrilled to introduce Sal Gallaher

Meet Sal Gallaher — a Danish-born, Australia-based author, creative strategist, and coffee-loving storyteller.

Sal's debut novel *Secrets in the Lakes* (2024) brings romance and suspense to life, set against the backdrop of California.

Born in Denmark, she spent formative years in London before planting roots in Sydney—her writing reflects a blend of Nordic introspection, cosmopolitan flair, and coastal warmth

Between yoga sessions, family time, and strong-coffee breaks—she's refining her next novel and sharing short fiction, blog posts, and drabbles meant to inspire writers worldwide.



Sal Gallaher

Author | Speaker | Creative Mentor

Founder of Sal's Freelance Service

Author of Secrets in the Lakes and creator of Shorter Than a Coffee Break

The Joy of Signing



1. That Special Moment

One fine day, you started writing poems/stories. How did it happen exactly?

SG: I've been telling stories since childhood.

I grew up in Denmark, and with the long winters, we had plenty of indoor time for storytelling.

My younger sister was my very willing audience unless I made them too scary.

Which, of course, I took great delight in sometimes.

My writing started in my twenties when I moved to Australia and felt a strong need to document my new experiences.

Over my adult life, I have dabbled in poetry, children's books, and commercial women's fiction, but it was not till later in life when my own kids became adults that I had time to really indulge in writing.

2. Art Is Work

What does your work as a writer consist of? What are the biggest challenges of the present?

SG: When this interview was first done, I was balancing a day job four days a week and writing mostly early mornings and weekends.

Since then, I've made the transition to freelancing and writing fulltime, which gives me more freedom to focus on my passions.

3. Without Projects, There Is No Future

What are your representative projects? What projects are you working on?

SG: I am currently trying to find a home for my romance suspense novel, which I finished last year.

Been querying agents in Australia and the US for the last 6 months. The next step is now to go directly to the big publishing houses here in Australia and continue to expand my reach to US agents.

4. The Scent of Creation

Describe a scent that immediately transports you to a moment of inspiration or creativity. What emotions does it evoke, and how does it influence your creative process?

SG: Freshly brewed coffee.

There is something homely about this smell, safe and nurturing, and it kick-starts the creative brain cells every time.

5. Ink and Intimacy

If your writing style were a tactile experience, what texture would it be? How does the act of putting pen to paper or fingers to keyboard make you feel on a deeply personal level?

SG: Velvet.

Rich and luxurious.

It fills my soul with a value that is hard to beat and even harder to quantify.

6. The Harmony of Silence

Think about a moment when silence spoke louder than words in your creative journey. What were the circumstances, and how did it shape your understanding of your craft?

SG: A couple of years ago, I wrote a particularly emotional piece.

It was fiction, but based on many of the feelings I was going through at the time.

My first grandson had just been born.

It was late 2020, and we were living in different countries.

With all the travel restrictions and ongoing eruptions of COVID-19, seeing my daughter and her newborn was uncertain.

Dealing with both the immense excitement, the sorrow, and the fear, all came out in my story.

I read the story to my writer's group, and on several occasions, my voice would break.

When I finished, I looked around at their faces, eyes shining, and none of them spoke for what seemed like forever, but was just a few seconds.

At that moment, I knew my writing was strong enough to bring out emotions in readers. I knew I was a writer.

7. The Palette of Dreams

Imagine your creative mind as a painter's palette.
What colors dominate your artistic spectrum, and how do they represent the different facets of your imagination?

SG:

- **Pink** for my deep interest in love between humans, relationships, friends, and families.
 - **Orange** for my spirituality and belief in the universe and being part of something much bigger.
 - **Black** for my interest in thriller and crime, to delve into the human psyche and understand what drives a perfectly normal human to choose a criminal path.
 - Rainbow A mashup of all colours representing my curious mind and love of learning.

8. The Quill of Vulnerability

If your creative expression were a handwritten letter to yourself, what truths and vulnerabilities would it unveil? How does the act of exposing your innermost thoughts contribute to your identity?

SG: A letter to myself would include a stern talking to.

I would ask myself why it took so long in my life to believe in myself, and why I still, at age 65, have moments of doubt about what I should and can write about.

When I write about my innermost thoughts, I feel lighter. It feels good to put it down on paper.

I publish what I feel comfortable with, as I enjoy how it connects me on a deeper level with my readers.

Hopefully, they also enjoy getting a peek into my life.

9. Symphony of Shadows

Consider a character or theme in your work that embodies the shadows of your own psyche. What does this shadow teach you about your fears, desires, or unexplored dimensions?

SG: Absolutely.

Our writing is littered with characters who possess traits from ourselves and from people we know or have met in life.

My characters, through writing about their experiences, have taught me about love, trust, and being true to yourself.

10. Echoes of Childhood Whispers:

Recall a childhood memory that resonates with you as a writer. How do the echoes of your early experiences manifest in your work today?

Devouring Enid Blyton's 'The Famous Five'.

I loved their tales of adventure on the island without adults.

Books are still a big part of my life, though now most are audiobooks to give my eyes a rest.

11. Melodies of Memory:

If your memories were composed as a musical score, what instrument would represent your most cherished creative recollections? How does the melody of your past influence the composition of your present work?

Guitar – To this day, I love acoustic guitar music.

Music plays a big part in my life, but from a listener's point of view. I have yet to master an instrument, even though I come from a family of very musical people.

I remember our gatherings with my father's family, and every occasion would end up with a jam session and songs.

I'm drawn to how music connects across generations, and my characters reflect that desire for connection, though not always via music.

And within that duality lies the gift: the chance to release unconscious victimhood, quiet the mental chatter, reclaim our power, and finally live life on our own terms, unapologetically.

12. The Dance of Syntax:

If your writing style were a dance, what would be the rhythm and tempo? How does the cadence of your sentences mirror the beating of your creative heart?

I guess it depends on the story.

Sometimes it might be a tango, an exciting dance between lovers.

Or a fun tap leading up to a twist.

My creative heart loves dancing to any good tune.

Life is a dance, and dance fills my creative heart.

13. Admiration Exercises

Which writers do you admire? What are your favorite books? So many!

Right now, I'm listening to 'Someone Else's Shoes' by **Jojo Moyes**. I do love her books.

Colleen Hover is another favorite.

My favourite Australian writers would be **Sandie Docker**, **Pamela Cook**, and **Joanne Nells**.

Their books are full of warmth and beautifully woven stories.

Trent Dalton for his beautiful open heart that just speaks to your inner soul.

And **Dinuka McKenzie** a fantastic crime writer and part of my writers' group.

I love it when I catch up with any of them at literary events. Great writers and wonderful humans.

But you may also find me reading **Stephen King** for some horror thrills. And his book 'On Writing' was a fantastic and inspiring read.

I like to read across many genres. Just love books.

14. A Favorite Fragment from Your Works

Marc gazed at Mandy, his eyes moistening, and she saw something that made her warm all over.

He genuinely cared for her.

Was interested in what she had to say.

Her heart swelled.

It had been a long time since any man had made her feel like this.

She caressed his hand and whispered:

'I'm so glad I had the nerve to ask you out.'

His face lit up, and in his eyes, Mandy noticed what looked like reflections of her own emotions.

She wondered: Does he feel the same?

The moment — and her thoughts — were interrupted by the server bringing their champagne.

Marc raised his glass.

"Cheers, Mandy! To a great night and a new friend."

She sighed as his words echoed in her mind.

Friendship. Is that all he's offering?

15. A Story in Ten Words

One night, two hearts, three words. A never-ending love story.

16. An Indiscreet Question

With which influential author or inspirational figure from life, past or present, would you most like to share a cup of tea and a captivating conversation?

Can I pick two?

I think a get-together with both **Jojo Moyes** and **Stephen King** would be ridiculously delicious.

A mix of great minds.

That conversation would be wonderfully intriguing.

17. Contact Information How can you be contacted?

I work as a freelance writer and business administrator. You can contact me via my website for any collaboration or questions you have.

18. Blog/Author Page/Social Media Profile Where can we read your works?

Freelance Website – https://salsfreelance.com https://salgallaher.substack.com/ Medium - @sal.gallaher Facebook - @salgallaherwriter WordPress: https://salgallaher.com/

19. What exactly would you like to convey to a fellow writer/editor/screenwriter/film producer?

Keep writing and keep creating.

Keep being you.

Creativity feeds our souls and brings something beautiful to a world that can be challenging at times.

Present your writings in a few words.

With a passionate and down-to-earth writing voice, my writing tackles everyday issues. It enlivens them with a vivid imagination, leaving the reader eager to turn each page for more.

20. Embers of Endings

Envision the conclusion of a significant project. How do you feel as you pen the final words or brush the last strokes? What is the emotional resonance of completion, and how does it influence your anticipation for the next artistic endeavor?

Enormous relief.

A sense of achievement and pride.

Often followed by a need to binge on mind-numbing movies, I usually need a break from writing after I finish a big project.

That's when I spend time with my camera, read books, and enjoy social activities with friends and family.



Creative Spotlight: Drabbles

Bite-sized stories to spark your imagination

The Joy of Signing



What Are Drabbles

Bite-sized stories to spark your imagination

by Sal Gallaher

A drabble is a story told in exactly 100 words.

No more - no less.

A lightning flash of a narrative.

These micro stories are like glancing through a window, seeing a brief moment, intense, and often surprising.

In a paragraph or two, these tiny stories capture a moment, a turning point, or a twist of emotion.

I invite you to spend time in these small worlds. They may just linger a little longer in your world after.

Drabbles

Bite-sized stories to spark your imagination

Teach, by Sal Gallaher

'I teach you, Grandma.'

His angelic face beamed up at me as he promptly put one leg up on the other, wobbling a little.

'You do this and hold on.'

He looked at me, waiting for me to copy.

My balance is crap. I do yoga, but ever since breaking three ribs during a fall a few years back, my mind is fearful of falling.

Without thinking, I moved my leg up to my knee and my hands out for balance.

In that magic, playful moment, my mind conquered my fear, and I did a wobbly but beautiful Tree pose.

Drabbles

Bite-sized stories to spark your imagination

Arch, by Sal Gallaher

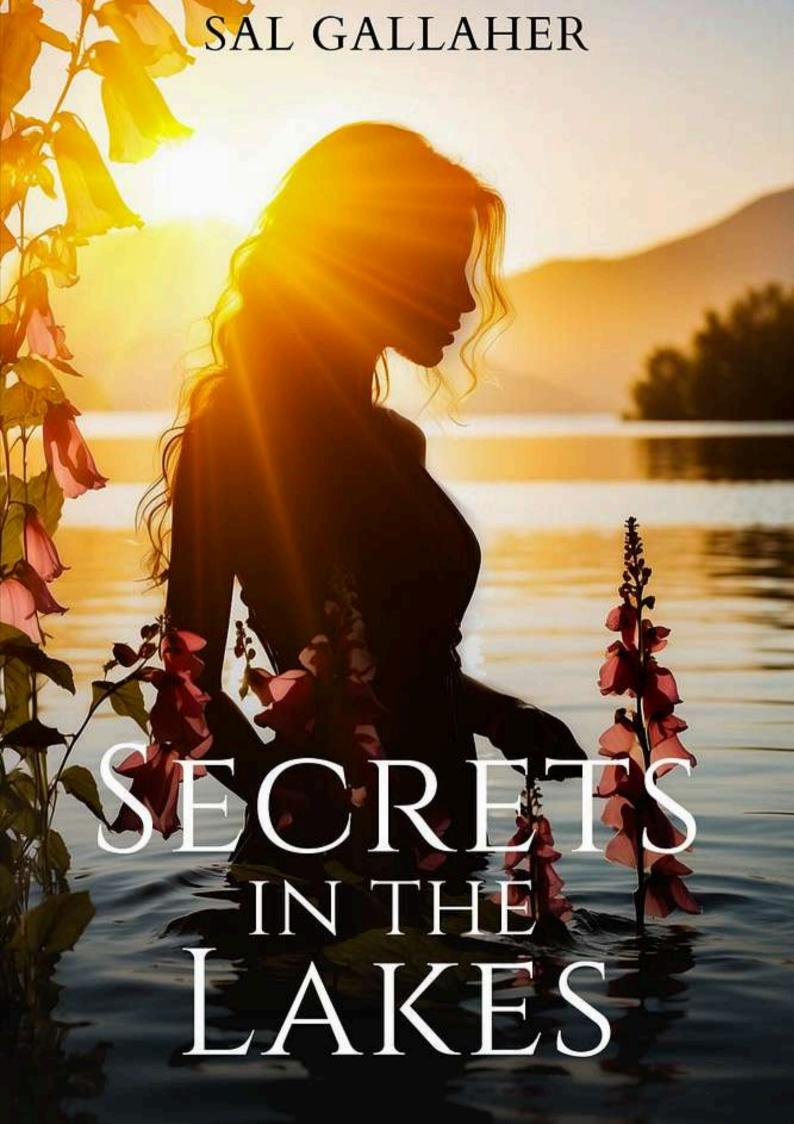
The colourful flower arch at the end of the garden path blurred through the tears brimming in my eyes as I walked my daughter down to the waiting groom.

We glanced at each other, our eyes reflecting the shared emotions of nervous excitement, tender affection, and love.

Dressed in a flowing white lace gown, her beauty and joy on that day still linger in my heart as one of my most beautiful moments in life.

As we hugged, I whispered the words 'I love you, Sweetie' before releasing her to her future partner to start her own journey of love.

Memory, Connection, and Emotional Renewal



Sal Gallaher's novel is an exploration of memory, identity, and interpersonal connections, set against the picturesque backdrop of a small lakeside town.

The story follows Mandy's emotional journey as she revisits old friendships, family issues, and experiences new love.

However, the novel never unfolds predictably; its modest surprises and emotional depth distinguish a debut that defies expectation and genre convention.

Intro

A line like "Karl is dead" serves as an opening to the book and generates an instant feeling of shock and a compelling mystery.

We are treated to a masterful blend of nostalgia, romantic anxiety, and muted dread, all of which is evenly tempered.

The novel mixes simple storytelling with complex character development, resulting in an intriguing and emotionally resonant read.

Thematic Integration: Memory and Identity

At the heart of the novel lies the exploration of memory's power and fragility.

"So many wonderful memories. But our innocent childhood did not last."

Mandy's often blurry memories of Ian and Marc, when contrasted with others' clearer memories, highlight the subjective and selective aspect of how people recall and rebuild their histories.

This selective, unreliable memory pattern creates tension and empathy as Mandy confronts what she chooses to remember or forget, so creating her growing identity.

The presence of Diana, the enigmatic woman by the lake, provides a subtle element of intrigue and distrust, illustrating how perceptions and truths can remain hidden, much like the misty lake scene, which reflects emotional ambiguity.

Character Dynamics and Emotional Complexity

The relationships presented, particularly those involving Mandy, her mother Joyce, Marc, and her estranged brother David, are intricate and layered with emotions.

The description of a mother and daughter together paints an image of unwavering support as well as an authentic challenge that embodies ancestral wisdom.

Mandy's encounters with others lead to timid but hopeful steps

toward healing and acceptance.

These expanding connections are at the center of the story's emotional journey, culminating in moments of great insight and rebirth.

Symbolism and Setting

Nature imagery, including fog, the awakening of birds, and peaceful lakes, serves as metaphors for the protagonist's emotions throughout the story.

Mandy's uncertainty, grief, clarity, and connection throughout her journey are illustrated by the lake's varying moods.

The motifs of binoculars and photography highlight the concepts of observation, perspective, and the wish to truly "see" oneself and others as they are.

Narrative Style and Psychological Depth

Gallaher's use of contemplative stretches during Mandy's runs and silent reflections enhances the story with psychological aspects, bringing readers into her head and enabling them to witness her vulnerabilities and emotional strengths.

Dialogue scenes are deliberately designed to convey character motivations and tensions while striking a balance between

external action and internal processing.

The progressive reveal of relationships, particularly Mandy's gradual opening to Marc and David, adds to the novel's emotional impact and authenticity.

Community and Social Fabric

The small-town setting operates as a microcosm of intertwined lives in which people share their past, exchange quiet conspiratorial secrets, and communal suffering is illustrated through the subplot of Karl's death and funeral.

The backdrop enriches the personal stories by portraying the relationship between self and society.

Writing Style

Sal Gallaher's writing is akin to that of Liane Moriarty and Kate Morton because it deals with families and personal history, though in a quieter and more intimate register.

While Moriarty and Morton frequently use tension and plot twists, Gallaher's writing emphasizes the emotional nuances and ordinary moments that build her characters.

In comparison to their writings, hers is more about gradual meditation and character development than startling revelations.

Outro

Sal Gallaher's novel is a masterfully crafted journey that combines nostalgia, mystery, and the refreshing piece of emotional renewal.

With detailed characters and elaborate settings, readers get to traverse through the maze of memories in search of love and a sense of belonging.

The emotional ending leaves the readers with more than just a sense of closure.

Readers are left with the notion of hope, which provides us with an ultimate sense of fulfillment while highlighting the healing power of connections.

What distinguishes Sal's writing is her exceptional ability to engage the senses.

She fully immerses readers, appealing not just to emotional memories but also to their desires and imaginations.

I've revisited her novel multiple times, enveloped by delightful flavors, and the depth of love and yearning.

That is the type of story you want to experience time and time again.

Procrastination: Why & How

Guilty as charged

Bookin Hand



We have all been there.

Cats do it all the time!

The deadline is looming, and the to-do list is growing. But cleaning the oven or bingeing on a second-rate Netflix series seems so much more enticing and even important.

We do not procrastinate because we are lazy. It's more complex.

A mix of overwhelm, boredom, and fear sometimes.

I have been there many times. I'm guilty as charged.

My Day Job

My decision to finish up in my day job was not made overnight. I thought about it for a long time, going over the pros and cons many times, with the same result:

I'll stay in the job a little bit longer and then revisit.

It was a thought on a merry-go-round in my brain.

I worked hard.

I was not lazy.

I was overwhelmed and feared the unknown.

When I finally decided and put my notice in, a massive weight lifted off my shoulders.

I could breathe again.

My Will

Another personal example was updating my will.

Most of us put that one off.

It's about our mortality, and that in its own is a topic most avoid.

I did it all online over 2 years ago.

Just had to nominate an executor.

I even checked in with the person I wanted to nominate to make sure they would agree.

Then the almost finished will just remain online forever.

I procrastinated with a myriad of reasons.

Too busy, launching my book, going overseas, and family commitments.

Whatever came to mind.

But really, what could be more important than your will?

One less thing our family has to worry about when we are no longer here.

It should be something we do out of love for them.

And yet, we put it off.

I finally found the two minutes it took to add the executor details and submit for approval.

Within 24 hours, I received the will and now just have to sign it in front of two witnesses.

A step I promise will not take another two years to do.

My WIP

Even writing the first draft of my current WIP.

I was procrastinating due to the overwhelm of having to write at least 75000 words.

I have now plotted it out and can tackle it one chapter at a time.

My Research

So, I researched a little about procrastination because it is such a fascinating human characteristic.

And I like to learn.

It is how we grow.

Why We Procrastinate

According to a <u>Melbourne University Psychology paper</u>, there are two types of procrastinators, but both are associated with our mental mood.

Anxiety-driven

- We fear we lack the skills to do the job
- We feel overwhelmed by the task

Boredom/frustration driven

- We think we need a crisis to perform
- We dream of better lives and hate doing the tasks to get there

Most of us are probably a mix of many of these types

Strategies to Deal With It

- Break down the task into smaller bite-sized tasks.
- Use the two-minute rule if a task takes less than two minutes to finish, then do it straight away.
- Set a timer and focus on the task, then take a short break.
- Change your work environment, maybe take yourself to a cafe and finish the task there.
- Be kind to yourself and don't judge when you find yourself in the procrastination cycle.

Procrastination is a normal human behaviour.

The aim is not to eliminate it.

That would be perfection, and striving for that has its own complications.

The trick is to learn to manage it so it doesn't hurt our lives.

So next time you feel the urge to procrastinate, take a deep breath and ask yourself, 'What can I do right now?' Then do that.

Often, just starting the task is enough to turn the tide.

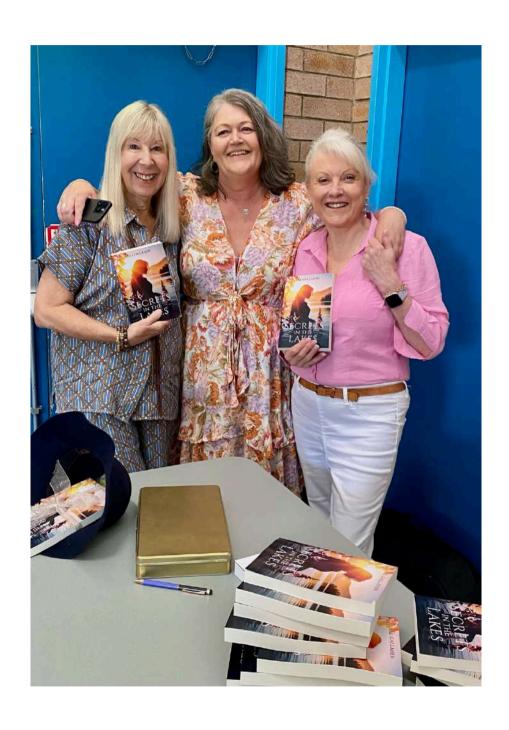
What are you procrastinating about right now?

Sunlit Smile



Inspiration Flows Whenever It Wants To

Authors United



It's a never-ending treadmill this writing thing.

A merry-go-round that keeps going.

As a writer, it just never stops.

There is no such thing as a day off.

Right?

I'm sure I'm not the only one.

Am I?

Let me explain with a real-life example before you answer.

Today I woke up early, eager to get out of bed and join my local community gardeners for a working bee.

It had been ages since I was there last.

In fact, the last time was around April last year.

I missed the camaraderie, the physical work around the garden beds, and the tea and chat at the end.

Working around outdoor plants, when you live in an apartment with just veranda plants to tend to, is bliss.

I love seeing the bugs and bees buzzing around, the frogs in the pond, and, yes, I even love the smell of cow manure.

Ok, maybe I don't love it, but there is something really satisfying and grounding about the fresh aromas of nature.

So this morning I lathered myself in bug spray and suntan lotion, dug out my garden gloves, my cap, and my water bottle, and took off on foot to the gardens.

It was only 9 am Sunday, and it was still quiet; the sun beaming down from a bright blue sky, promising a hot day.

Only a short walk.

I was at the gardens within 5 minutes and was greeted by two beaming women.

'Hey Sal!! So great to have you back!'

Now, if that didn't set the tone for the morning, nothing would.

Familiar faces joined within minutes, and some new ones, too.

All friendly women, eager to have a chat and get some work done.

I joined the newbies tour to get an update on what had changed since I was there last.

Overall, still the same with a few changes to the allotments.

A few more raised beds had been set up to allow for people in wheelchairs or for the elderly to access easily and be able to enjoy some gardening.

We had one more garden bed to do that morning, and I joined the team washing the rocks to layer the bottom of the bed.

It was hot and dirty work, and the water from the hose was a welcome relief from the heat.

Another lady joined us and we chatted as we washed the rocks. I remember her from last year as a really kind and friendly woman. She lives close to the gardens and often pops across and checks on the state or does some watering for everyone.

She would often bring a large flask of chai tea for everyone over the winter months.

Absolutely to die for kind of Chai.

She is also the one who sends out messages for everyone with meeting updates, so I have stayed in touch with her the most in my 9-month absence.

With them all being aware of my recent book launch, she seemed keen to talk about writing.

And of course I obliged.

Never one to not want to talk about my writing or just writing in general.

There is an instant connection when two writers meet.

Now my day job is in planning, as in stock inventory planning, and I never recall getting excited about meeting another planner.

Ok, sometimes I do get excited about a good spreadsheet!

No kidding, that is a fib!

Anyhow, this lady starts telling me about how she wants to write her memoir.

I know many of us, when we get to a certain age, have a desire to leave our legacy for our family to read.

I dabble with the idea myself from time to time, but till now I prefer to indulge in my blog or my novel writing.

I mentioned to her that I have a couple of writer friends who are in the middle of writing their memoirs, and maybe it would be good for her to connect with them.

I'm always an advocate for finding your tribe.

It helped me so much when I first started writing.

She then starts telling me part of her story, and that's when my writer brain really kicked in and went into overdrive. It was so fascinating.

She was adopted as a little girl and had no way of finding out about her biological parents.

Not till fairly recently, when she did the gene test and went online. After many months of searching, she finally connected with her mother's family in Europe and went to meet them in 2022.

Her mother is part Croatian and part Italian.

Now this is where my memory goes a bit vague.

But I love this bit.

Her mother came out of one of the boats from Europe to Australia, and her father worked on the boat.

They fell in love, and her mother ended up pregnant at a very young age and with no means to support the baby, who was adopted out.

This was my gardening friend.

As she was telling me this story and about meeting her family, so much better than I retelling it, I had goose bumps, and I urged her to write it down.

'It's such a beautiful story. I want to write a romance novel about it.' I said, laughing.

She looked at me with an appreciative smile, happy that someone had found her story captivating, and I could see that my genuine interest had fertilised the writing seed in her.

'Yes, I do really want to. But I have no idea what to do next. Maybe that's where I might need your help, with you having just published your own book.'

All I could say was:

'Absolutely. That story deserves to be heard and read by others.'

I was hooked.

So hooked it germinated into this writing session about working nonstop.

Even when it's Sunday and we try to enjoy other activities, our writing minds do not stop.

Life never stops presenting us with ideas that germinate into stories.

I ABSOLUTELY LOVE THAT!

I love the passion that lives in me to write, to let my thoughts and words out on paper, and to share with others.

To sit surrounded by books and a coffee, letting the words form on the page.

Even if that means never having a day off.

Because writing never feels like work to me. It's the sustenance that keeps me going.

Now, back to the question in the beginning.

Am I the only one who feels like that?

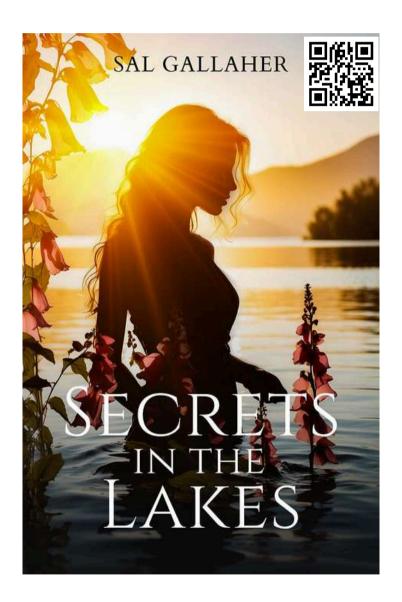
I think I know the answer, but I am throwing it out there anyhow.

Order Now: Secrets in the Lakes

Secrets in the Lakes - Order Now

A heart searching for the truth beneath the lake's mist

By Sal Gallaher



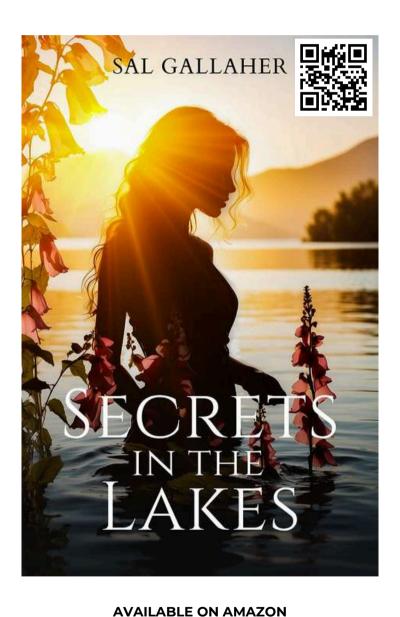
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Secrets in the Lakes - Order Now

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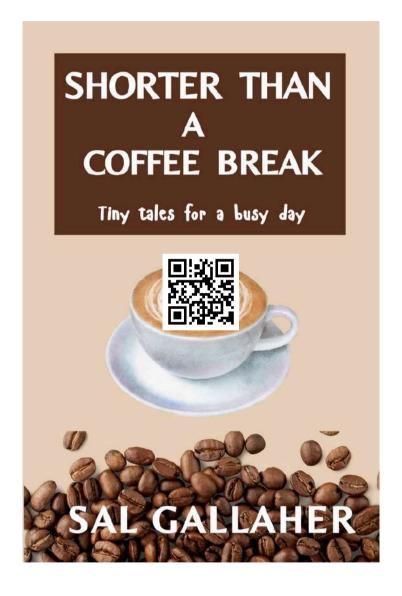
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Shorter than a Coffee Break

Tiny Tales for a Busy Day

By Sal Gallaher



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