

Sally Thorne final.mp3

[00:00:00] Interviewer

Before we begin today, I would like to acknowledge the Gadigal and Wangal people of the Eora Nation on which this podcast is produced and pay my respects to Elders past, present and emerging from across all lands this podcast reaches.

Sally Thorne is the USA Today bestselling author of the office rom-com *The Hating Game* (2016) and *99 Percent Mine* (2019).

The Hating Game was named in the top 20 romance novels of 2016 by the Washington Post and was a top ten finalist in the Goodreads Choice Awards romance category. It has been cited as a book that has reinvigorated the romantic comedy genre. Production on the film adaptation, starring Lucy Hale and Austin Stowell began on November 21 2020.

Sally's much anticipated second novel, *99 Percent Mine*, was released in January 2019 by William Morrow Books. It debuted on the USA Today Bestseller list and was featured by Goodreads as one of the top 28 hit books for the first half of 2019.

Sally has signed another two book contract and is currently working on Book 3, *Second First Impressions*, which comes out in April 2021

Sally Thorne lives in Canberra, Australia and spends her days writing, reading, drinking cups of tea and obeying the every whim of Delia the Pug and her paint Quarter Horse, Louie. She lives with her husband in a house filled with vintage toys, too many cushions and a haunted dollhouse.

Welcome Sally!

[00:02:01] Sally

Well, I don't think it will be any surprise to you to hear that 2020 has been a challenging year to be a creator.

[00:02:08] Sally

I should say that I don't feel like I have too much to complain about because Canberra has weathered covid-19 pretty well. But I started this year dealing with a different problem.

[00:02:20] Sally

Canberra was having some bushfires coming very close to us and very close to my house. I could see from our suburb the flames getting closer. And there was one day where we packed our car with all of our essential, irreplaceable things and left the suburb and I had to evacuate my horse. And so it was unbelievably stressful and it wasn't a great place to start the year. You know, I wasn't feeling very creative at that time, as you can imagine. So I.

[00:02:52] Sally

I would say that the year didn't start off great and then it sort of seamlessly segued into Covid and the stay at home lockdown situation. And I guess in a sense, things weren't too different for me.

[00:03:06] Sally

I work full time now as a writer and I spend all of my time by myself at home. But I think what changed for me was that I no longer had the option to go out and catch up with friends or go on people watch, you know, at the local stores or do those kind of things that I think are really important to replenish yourself as a creative person. I always get a lot of ideas from talking to people and listening to other people's conversations and the way that they talk. And I couldn't do any of that. And I was also really stressed out because we didn't understand what this virus was. And so I was getting back from doing my grocery shopping, like dripping with sweat because I was so stressed out. But I would say that I have coped because I've got a really great publisher. They understood that. I think this is one of the first times when as an entire globe of people, we're all kind of in the same boat. Boats are different sizes and we are weathering this in different ways. But my publisher has always been very supportive and let me take the time that I need. Yeah,

[00:04:10] Interviewer

That's really great to hear it. It has been really hard because of the fires, which we were watching it from TV and that they were really scary. And then once we had that, then we had Covid and like you said, nobody knew what was going on. So, yeah, it's been hard for so many people, but luckily, you're safe and you've got that support.

[00:04:30] Sally

So, yes, I think another important thing was that I've made some good friends who are also authors. I would recommend, if you are if you were listening and you want to be a writer or you are a writer, it's important to make friends with other writers because they're the only ones who can get this. This is an unusual job, a really hard job, and you need to be able to send a message to someone and. Complain to them.

[00:05:01] Sally

Oh, I didn't get any words today or, you know, you just need someone else who's creative, who understands what you're going through. So if you are a writer and you can attend conventions one day in the distant future. When that sort of thing is possible, I would really recommend trying to make some connections or even just get a writing buddy for you.

[00:05:26] Sally

If you're not anywhere near being published, you just find a writing body, preferably someone local that you could meet up with. And you guys can sort of sit down and talk about your imaginary worlds. I think it's really important to do that.

[00:05:40] Interviewer

That's very good advice. Very excellent advice. Now we start the fun question, Sally.

Sally OK,

Interviewer

Your books are constantly flying off the shelves here at Inner West Libraries and our readers would love to know how do you think Josh and Lucy from The Hating Game and Darcy and Tom from 99 percent Mine would have coped with lock down?

[00:06:07] Sally

Great question I think I can imagine just Josh and Lucy from the dating game. I can imagine them very efficiently setting up their own workspaces within their apartment. And I think they're both pretty professional people. I think they would have just continued on working even if they were on top of each other a little bit in a small space.

[00:06:30] Interviewer

And is this where you're going to define the sentence 'top of each other'?

[00:06:36] Sally

I think that this is a family program, isn't it? And I think well, I mean, for Darcy and Tom, I think things definitely would be a little bit more adult rated.

[00:06:50] Sally

I think Darcy probably would keep Tom in bed for a lot of the time, and he would have to lever himself out however he could to try to get some more of his work done in whatever house they're currently working on together.

[00:07:07] Sally

But I think both of the sets of couples would deal with it. Okay, because that's an aspect of my writing that repeats. I really do best when I'm writing about two people in one room. So force proximity is, I think, probably always going to be an element that will be in most of my writing. And I mean, what is a lockdown? It's close proximity, isn't it?

[00:07:36] Sally

Yeah, I think it'll be interesting to see what books come out of this in the future, not just for me, but from other people. Yeah, yeah. So that was a very fun question.

[00:07:45] Interviewer

Author Emily Henry recently described your writing as the epitome of all things warm, sweet, relaxing and cozy, and said that she wanted to live in a world where she woke up to a new Sally Thorne book every day. Same here. How would you describe your own style? And can you tell us a little about what shaped you as a writer?

[00:08:07] Sally

Ok, well, that is very sweet of Emily to say she is lovely, and if she woke up to a new Sally Thorne book every day, I think Sally Thorne would be dead in no time at all.

[00:08:20] Sally

It seems to take me about 18 months to write a book. She could have a very short book every day. I always enjoyed writing even when I was a child. I had a really great primary school teacher in year six, and she always encouraged us to do creative writing. We always used to have a quiet time where we would do creative writing, and she always called on me first to read out what I had written. And it was just a real rush because I was obsessed with my teacher. I loved her so much that I was jealous of her daughter. Oh, I know I loved her. She was amazing. And I actually met up with her after I published *The Hating Game* and we had a coffee and I said basically, I don't think I would have written the *Hating Game* if there hadn't have been you. And she she was you know, she was really surprised. But I think it's true. Like really early experiences like that can shape what you believe that you're good at and what you were interested in doing. So it was a real privilege to be able to give her a signed copy and yet still totally jealous of her daughter. I will be her honorary daughter. She'll have me. And I really think that that was very influential. I loved writing all the way through high school. And then when you're at school, you start to get really sick of being in front of the computer and writing because you're forced to write essays and things like that. And all through my 20s, I didn't write anything. I was just trying to get through a succession of pretty crappy office jobs.

[00:10:00] Sally

And I think it was about 2009. I found *Twilight* and *Twilight* was very influential for many romance authors.

[00:10:13] Sally

I hadn't been obsessed with a book and in like, you know, more than ten years probably. So I found *Twilight* and a friend at work, Kate, who was reading it at the same time. So we suddenly had this thing that we could talk about together. Then I found that there was something called fan fiction, which I had never heard of. If you're listening to this podcast and you don't know what fan fiction is, it is a huge online world where people rewrite parts of TV shows and movies and books that in the way that they wish that it had gone. So they will take the original characters and they will put them in any and every situation that they can. And it's huge. It's a really big community. I I did a short writing course around that time because I was I was really looking for a cheap hobby. I, I wanted something that I could do just after work that didn't cost a lot of

money. I already had a laptop, so I took a short course about creative writing and I met my writing buddy in that class.

[00:11:22] Sally

Remember I was talking about that earlier.

[00:11:23] Sally

Yeah, it's important to find a buddy and I started writing fan fiction because I figured that it was a good way to get some feedback online on my writing style.

[00:11:35] Sally

And I started writing Twilight fan fiction. It's still online somewhere out there and it was amazing. Within 20 minutes of posting a chapter, you would get a notification that you'd received a review and it was really instant feedback.

[00:11:53] Sally

And I really quickly honed in on what romance writers like to read. They like to read the same that the two characters on the same page. That's what they like. They like it if it's intense, they like it. If there's some kissing, they don't like it if the characters are off the same page and not thinking about each other.

[00:12:14] Sally

So getting this instant feedback, I really just I think it really honed my. Sort of my. Instincts on how to write what people liked, and I also made some good friends who were also writing at the same time, so I met Lauren Billings and Christina Hobbs, who now write as Christina Lauren. They were writing fan fiction at the same time as me, a lot of very big name authors who are published today. Were writing in the Twilight fan fiction universe that time. So, for example, E.L. James, who is now the author of 50 Shades of Grey, she was writing at that time, I could give you a list as long as my arm of people who are now published and Christina and Lauren were one of those connections that proved to be really fortuitous and important for me later down the line, because they said to me, we love the voice, your voice in your writing.

[00:13:13] Sally

If you ever write anything original as far as into, say, with your own characters, let us know because we have an agent and we'll pass it on.

[00:13:23] Interviewer

That's amazing. Like you, I didn't know much about fan fiction. One of my colleagues at work, she educated me on fan fiction. But it's amazing that, like what the names that you've just mentioned, so many of them are now successfully published authors because they started off like that. It's just amazing. It's hard to get my head around it sometimes, but it's it's amazing.

[00:13:42] Sally

It is. It really Cristina and Lauren call it fan fiction boot camp. We all sort of were writing in that same period where we were basically writing just out of a spirit of generosity because you don't get paid for fan fiction that we were writing huge amounts of, you know, huge amounts of words. My fan fiction ended up being, I think one hundred and forty thousand words long, which if that was a book that would be like a three inch thick book. Oh. And we would upload it. I was also not writing ahead, so I would just write the chapter and upload it. So then if I'd written myself into a corner, I'd have to I couldn't go back and edit anything. I was just trying to build on my last chapter. It was just really writing on your feet and just really wanting that instant feedback. It was it was really great.

[00:14:39] Sally

And I think it really shaped my style because I learned what I liked to write. I learned what people liked.

[00:14:48] Sally

And I think you can still tell maybe when someone has written fan fiction, if you're writing a book where the writer really lets the moment sit in a romance and lets us feel what it is like to be in that room with that person and another writer in might sort of move on from that moment. But a fan fiction writer knows that that's what the reader loves. And that's the moment that the reader will also want to return and reread after they've had a really bad day. Yeah. So I think that there is a certain sort of really luscious, slightly self-indulgent, really intense, really emotion and sensory driven writing that how I aim to

write. So that's how I came to be. That was a long story. We started off when I was 12 years old and now here I am.

[00:15:41] Interviewer

We're very happy that you're here, all your readers are all your readers. Now, one of my favourite things about your characters is how vivid they are and how beautiful vulnerability you bring to them. Joshua's shyness that he masks behind his temper, Lucy's loneliness and fear that she'll never live up to her parents high expectations, Tom's endless search to repay and fit in with the family that took him in and never feeling good enough. Can you talk us through your character building process and how you find their voice?

[00:16:14] Sally

Ok, it's not easy for starters it doesn't turn out perfectly. First try. I'm learning as I am repeating each process of writing a book that it does take time and it takes layers. So I think a lot of first time writers who are working on something, they feel frustrated because it doesn't look on the page, how it looks in their head. That is normal. And that is why once you've finished your first draft, that is only the very, very beginning of the process. You've only just left the train station once you've finished your first draft. And so I have learned you just understand that process and just build on it layer by layer. So the first draft that will look like cardboard cut-outs pretty much. Then you start to manually hone them by working on the dialogue.

[00:17:17] Sally

So working out how people talk, everybody speaks in a different way. And everybody reveals things about themselves in the things that they say in the way that they say them. Yeah, so dialogue is a really good way to differentiate your characters. If you've done it well enough, the reader should really know who was speaking just by the dialogue. Even if there was no tags like he said, or she said, they should still be able to feel who is speaking. So that's what you're really going for? Yeah. And so it's just layer by layer. And for example, in *The Hating Game*, everybody loves that. Lucy grew up in a strawberry farm, and that is something that has become really synonymous with the dating game. A strawberry. People still will take a photo of a nice punnet of strawberries that they've seen at the market and they will send it to me in a message.

[00:18:15] Sally

Sally I thought of you. I never anticipated that.

[00:18:19] Sally

That was a fairly late addition to the book I realized that I just really wanted something unique in Lucy's past that kind of just colours her in a little bit more and makes her just a different person to every other person. I'd once been to a strawberry farm and gone strawberry picking and I thought it was completely magical. And so just by using that experience from my own past, I lived in fairly easily that that was where she grew up on a strawberry farm. And from that it has become part of her. And the fact that Joshua is so desperate to know her that he's even looked up the directions on how to get to her strawberry farm where she grew up. For me, that's very romantic.

[00:19:11] Sally

And so that's just an example of how you can use just like a small thing from your past, something you love, something that you collect. What is it that makes anybody who they are? It's usually the things that they love to do in their spare time and the things that they do and no one else is around. You need to just start to collect and cherry pick little things. And like I said earlier, you know, I listen a lot to how people talk I am the person in the conversation that will be listening and filing, not not necessarily filing things away, because I don't base things on people I know.

[00:19:48] Sally

I don't want anyone to freak out. Yeah, you know you know what I'm saying

[00:19:50] Interviewer

Yes you are listening that you're trying to keep quiet at the same time because you want to see how people talk and. Yeah, yeah, yeah. People watching. It's great

[00:19:59] Sally

People watching. I just find it very interesting. And I also make up a lot of stories and narratives in my own head. So I will do something like I will hear one line of conversation between two colleagues in a restaurant. They'll say something really out of context to each other. And then in my mind, I'll sit there and I imagine what that meant and what is going on out in the kitchen, in the restaurant. So I'm always imagining and

sort of creating real stories, narratives for myself and giving things the personality. You said I at the start that I collect a lot of vintage toys. So, yeah, you know, a lot of them have a character and a backstory as well. It's just, you know, some people are just this way and that's how I am.

[00:20:48] Interviewer

And there's so many people that are still looking for Josh out there in the real world. You know that.

[00:20:54] Sally

Well, you know what? There's plenty of people out there that are not what they first appear to be. So maybe some people just need a little bit more patience to trying to work out who they are underneath the surface.

[00:21:09] Interviewer

That's absolutely right. I'll have to say that to the next person who says, where can I find Josh? I'll have to say to them, you have to be a little bit more patient.

[00:21:17] Sally

Well, out of the two, I would always take Tom. Tom for me Tom Valeska is husband material through and through.

[00:21:24] Sally

He's a he's just a thoroughly, deeply good person.

[00:21:29] Sally

And for me, maybe as I'm getting a little older, I think I would always take the Tom over the take the Tom over the snarky Josh.

[00:21:39] Interviewer

Yeah, that's just me though. Oh, dear. I'm having so much fun.

[00:21:45] Interviewer

One of the most powerful things about your books, is the relationships you build between characters. You explore complicated family dynamics, including the added

layer of twin sibling rivalry, friendships and beautiful romantic partnerships. How much world building planning do you do before you start, or does this all just come out as you write?

[00:22:10] Sally

I don't do a lot of planning. I wish that I did. I once did outline a full novel, but I couldn't get started on it because I felt too bored with it. I felt like I.

[00:22:22] Sally

Already knew how it ended, and I didn't really feel interested in writing it all out, it felt like a job rather than something I wanted to do.

[00:22:32] Sally

I if you are asking me, am I a plot or a panther? I am definitely a pencil.

[00:22:38] Sally

And and I, I don't really know a lot. Before I start, I'll often just know the opening scene or how the two characters will meet. And for example, 99 percent mind. I had a two book contract with Harper Collins and it was it felt like having a blank check. It felt like they just said write us a story and which is an amazing privilege. And my agent suggested to me, why don't you pick out a trip that you like? And I have read every single romantic trip that there is. I used to sneak Mills and Boon novels. That's what we call them in Australia. Yes. Over in the US, they call them Harlequin. But I used to sneak them from my grandma, who was a prolific romantic. This is something a lot of romance writers will say, that they were really influenced by Mills and Boon, and they are usually an absolute masterclass in storytelling in a short number of words

Interviewer And we used to hide them too Sally

[00:23:46] Sally

Oh, yes, definitely. Yes.

[00:23:48] Sally

We would just find them lying around and then you sort of furtively read it that they usually a sixty thousand word book and they have to set up how they meet, what their

conflict is, have a really strong beginning, middle and end. And there is not a word to spare. So I will never hear a bad word against Mills and Boon. Now, I think that it's such a criminally underrated type of writing in books. So I tip my hat to all of those authors who do it so well. And so I was reading those books. I've read every trope that there is. And one of my favourites was a forced proximity and hate love, which is The Hating Game for 99 percent mind. I decided to write a brother's best friend book. So that's that's a trope. But I wanted to create my own take on that trope. So usually in those type of books, it's the brother saying to his best friend Tom stay away from my sister in 99 percent mine.

[00:24:54] Sally

It is the brother saying to his sister, stay away from my best friend. So it's really fun to try to like just take a trope and then like twist it a little.

[00:25:07] Sally

And I also really wanted to give my main character Darcy the qualities that are usually reserved and gifted to the male hero in romantic straight storytelling. So that's what Darcy is. She is she's like a hero. She's passionate and sexual and intense and protective. And she has all of those really strong traits that usually the male character has. And she she sweats with lust over him and she she sacrifices her own happiness because she wants the best for him. And so the combination of twisting that trope a little bit and also giving Darcy those really strong traits made the book feel exciting for me to write and fresh for me to write.

[00:26:03] Sally

So I think in answer to your question, I built the world by finding opportunities to do things my way.

[00:26:13] Sally

And in my voice, people often tell me that my writing is quite voicy and it doesn't sound like anyone else. And there's good reason for that.

[00:26:23] Sally

There's only one Sally Thorne and, if there's anyone out there that is currently working on the draft and they think that this is a very saturated market, oh there's so many so

many thousands of romance books out there, I would say that there's only one you and only you can tell your story in your way. So it's really important.

[00:26:45] Interviewer

I totally agree. There is only one. Sally Thorne, absolutely beautiful. Couldn't have said it better myself.

Sally

Thank you.

Interviewer

Something that we know to be true in the library world, is that readers are fiercely passionate what what's it like visiting book clubs and connecting with readers online and hearing how much your characters mean to them?

[00:27:07] Sally

It's always very surreal. You need to imagine me. I'm in Canberra, Australia, and I got my book fill in Harper Collins in New York, which was really big and frightening for me. I was imagining.

[00:27:22] Sally

Lots of really intimidating people in a very big New York office, and I thought, how can this possibly work? And most of my readers are in the US as well. That's where I sell the majority of my books. I have been an author on a time delay. Everything happens for me when I'm asleep.

[00:27:47] Sally

I will wake up in the morning and I'll have all my emails have come in at 2:00 in the morning. And it wasn't really until I went over to the US last year to do my book tour for 99 percent mine, that it actually fully hit home.

[00:28:04] Sally

What I had achieved, and that was that I had put out *The Hating Game* three years earlier and it had made a big splash and people knew who I was in those sort of writing circles.

[00:28:21] Sally

I was I remember being in Chicago, at a big romance writing convention and walking through the event and realizing that people were looking at me and saying that's Sally Thorne like moments like that has never happened for me because I'm all the way here in Australia sleep when anything happens. So I, I couldn't believe it. And it still to this day, I'm talking to someone in person at a signing and they're telling me what the book means to them.

[00:28:52] Sally

It's a real out of body experience for me, because finally, at long last, I'm speaking in person to a person that has read me. You know, this goes back as far as my fanfiction days. I never met any of those people either that loved that piece of work.

[00:29:10] Sally

So it is really humbling and really overwhelming. And the signings take a lot out of me because I'm not used to speaking in person with anyone. I mean, I sometimes will chat to my friends in real life. My mom is my biggest fan, and so she will often tell me what she likes about a certain scene. And I'm just filing it all away. I guess I'm just trying to continually phone the antenna of, you know, you don't want to say what was your favourite bit because it sounds like you're fishing for a compliment. But I also do really want to know, like, which bit hit differently so that I can use that in my next book.

[00:29:53] Interviewer

They usually come up to you and say, this was my favourite bit. Don't they? Some of them, do

[00:30:00] Sally

I guess some do. It's just always every single time I met anyone, it was just really exciting and a real privilege. And I felt as excited to meet them as they were to meet me. And yeah, it was the whole trip over to the US, it was ten days and it was a new city every day.

[00:30:19] Sally

I was very jet lagged, which felt like being hung over.

[00:30:24] Sally

It felt like the worst hangover I'd ever had for ten days straight.

[00:30:29] Sally

But I just met so many really exciting people, excited people who just are the reason why writers write anything.

[00:30:39] Sally

So if you're listening and you are a reader and you really, really loved an author's book, it probably will make the day to send them a message or comment on one of their social media posts saying you loved their book and the bit that you liked it will top them up creatively.

[00:30:57] Interviewer

Sally what can you tell us about your highly anticipated third novel, *Second First Impressions*? What can readers expect without giving too much away?

[00:31:09] Sally

Sure. Well, I really enjoyed writing *Second First Impressions*. I did not really enjoy writing 99 percent mine because there was a lot of pressure for that book. That was.

[00:31:23] Sally

Very hard to write. I actually compared myself to Beth from *Little Women* in my author's note saying that I had writer's block so badly that I'd started to die. And it's true, I.

[00:31:37] Sally

I had a hard time with that book and people were expecting it to be just like *The Hating Game*, but the second book is the author's opportunity to tell readers how things are going to be from now on. Are you going to get the same kind of book from me every time, or are you going to get something that's really different every time? So that was a piece of advice that another author gave to me. A second book is going to be the hard one, and it's going to be the one that's going to be the hardest book of your career to write. And it will also tell people this is this is how it's going to be.

[00:32:14] Sally

I knew that I wanted to always write really different things. And so I took a huge risk with it and it didn't completely work out. There are still people that didn't like the book. They really wanted *The Hating Game*. Again, I think of, you know, the musician Lorde. She's like a New Zealand musician. Yes. Yes. You know her. OK, so she had a great first album. Her first album was *Huge Monster* Smash hit. And when her second album came out, I put it on and I thought, I can't wait. Can't wait for more of that same sound that I really enjoyed from that album. And her second album was completely, totally different, sounded different.

[00:32:57] Sally

And I thought, I don't know if I like this. Maybe I'll go back and listen to the first album for a bit longer.

[00:33:03] Sally

And this is what happened with 99 percent mine. It's the same thing. People thought, oh, this doesn't sound the same as *The Hating Game*. I'll go back to *The Hating Game*. So the third book is now me kind of getting out of that whole period of pressure and pre-orders and just telling a story. Again, it's a story that I've had in my sort of folds for over 10 years. And *Second First Impressions* is based on a story that a friend and I used to tell each other when we worked in an office. We used to tell each other when we were really old and our husbands have died.

[00:33:43] Sally

We are going to be really rich and we're going to live together in a retirement village and we are going to hire gorgeous young men to do all of our errands. And they will do whatever we say, no matter how obscure. They'll cut up our Big Macs into little bite sized bits and they will go to Chanel to pick up new ballet slippers for us.

[00:34:03] Sally

And this is the beautiful, rich, elderly lady lifestyle that we're going to live.

[00:34:09] Interviewer

Can I join you?

Sally

Absolutely. You can take the room down the hall. So this was the story.

[00:34:16] Sally

And I said earlier that I have a lot of stories running through my life that I tell myself just for my own amusement. So this was one of them where we used to make up all these stories about what our boy would do for us when we when he turned up for work that day. This book is me writing down that story. It's about a girl who works at a luxury retirement villa called Providence and she works in the front office. She's currently acting as the manager of the site and her boss is away on a cruise and she wants everything to go really well. And up the hill, she has two of her richest residents and they are very eccentric. And they always hire young men to be their assistants. They come down the hill and say that they've just broken the last one and she needs to get them a new one. And she says to them, look, this has to be this has to stop now. I really want to fix this problem before my boss comes back. Can this be your last ever boy? And I say, yes, OK, this will be our last one, but we're really going to break this one in and meanwhile, the son of the owner of the site turns up and he needs a place to crash.

[00:35:35] Sally

He also needs a job to save up something that he's working towards and Ruthie thinks to herself, excellent. Here's a job for him. Here is a job that will get him out of my hair as soon as possible because no one has ever lasted more than a week. And this is also payback, because when he saw her, he had a very insulting first impression of her that hurt her feelings. So this is her this is her payback, her revenge. So she sends him up the hill to work for these two nightmare old ladies. And to her surprise, he's basically he just won't quit no matter what they throw at him. And he's also extremely friendly, extremely adorable, and basically is her instant best friend. So this is a friends to lovers book. It's very funny. It's got a big age range of characters.

[00:36:29] Sally

And I think if people like The Hating Game, this one is certainly feeling back towards The Hating Game sort of vibe, it's very cozy.

[00:36:41] Sally

I would describe it in words like wallpaper and cardigan and cheese boards. There's some endangered tortoises that roam the hillsides and it's just a story about a young woman who feels very, very old and she has to learn how to become young again.

[00:37:04] Interviewer

Oh, I can't wait. Can't wait. Sally, what are you reading at the moment?

[00:37:09] Sally

Um, I've just finished *In a Holiday* by Christina Lauren, which is a book that is set at Christmas time, but you could read it any old time. But I think that it will be a perfect holiday read and also a perfect present. Basically, it's kind of like *Groundhog Day*. It's a story where a girl is stuck in a time loop at Christmas and she has to keep beginning this Christmas gathering over and over again and build up the nerve to tell her lifelong crush how she feels about him. And I've also got the twilights. Do you call it a sequel? *Midnight Sun* by Stephenie Meyer. I've got that one started, but I'm finding it. Maybe it's sort of 10 years too late. I've already explained that I was into *Twilight* and had she finished *Midnight Sun* 10 years ago when she intended to, maybe it would have hit a bit different. So I'm I'm trying to get into that one. But I also have to admit that when I am working on a book, I often don't do a lot of reading because you're reading someone else's final product. It's always really good. And then you look back at your draft and you think, oh, my God, I'm a fraud.

[00:38:29] Interviewer

That's interesting. An author has never said that to me. That's quite interesting.

[00:38:33] Sally

Maybe they're better than me.

[00:38:42] Sally

I guess I'm a beginner too, you know, like I'm only just having my third book out, so I need to manage myself between, you know, how I feel about myself in my writing and then try to separate that out from I feel about when I read someone else's,

Interviewer

I wouldn't call you a beginner Sally And I think your listeners would call you a beginner either.

[00:39:06] Sally

Well, it's only been sort of five years that I've completely changed my entire life with my writing before this. I worked in an office, in a public service job. And I hated it I absolutely hated it. Not the people. You always find good people wherever you go whichever job you have. But I was miserable. I lived for Friday night and from Monday morning until Friday afternoon, I was wishing my life away.

[00:39:37] Sally

And I could never have imagined that I would completely change my own life just by writing *The Hating Game*, which was a gift for a friend for her birthday

[00:39:47] Interviewer

I read that yes, yes.

[00:39:51] Sally

Yeah. It wasn't written to publish I never intended on publishing it. It was written in a fan fiction way, as in is a free thing that had no expectation.

[00:39:59] Interviewer

And she pushed you to publish it.

[00:40:02] Sally

As she just said to me, this is really good. I think you should. Yeah, I think you should consider what you want to do with this. And I just worked on it whenever I felt like it for the next 18 months in the afternoons when I felt like it, which might have been one one Sunday out of every four. And from there passing it on to Christina and Lauren's agent, then getting the call from my agent in L.A. saying, Are you considering any other representation or thinking?

[00:40:39] Sally

No, I've I'm sitting here in my room in Canberra, Australia. So it's just really interesting how each little step that you take can build up into a bigger picture. And I saved myself, I save myself from wishing my life away. So good job Sally

[00:40:57] Interviewer

Very good job, Sally. We've had some very exciting news last week that the film adaptation of The Hating Game will begin shooting on November 21st, what can you tell us about the project and how does it feel knowing that your creation is being adapted for the screen?

[00:41:13] Sally

Well, yes, it's really exciting. Obviously, I always have had no expectations of my book. When the book came out, I didn't do any particular promotion event of it or anything like that. I thought if it's a good book, people will tell their friends.

[00:41:32] Sally

And when the film option sold. I was told, you know, just take it for what it is, the option sold, and that means maybe something will happen with it in the future, maybe not just take it as a good little piece of news and don't think about it anymore. So I did. But then they developed a screenplay for it and. I think that it's a really good book for a movie, because so much of it is taking place just in one room, that's really easy.

[00:42:07] Sally

Yeah, it's almost like a play and relying really heavily on that backwards and forwards dialogue.

[00:42:14] Sally

So the project for the screenplay was written by Christina Menghert and I got some input into it. I didn't expect that I would. They sent me the script and said, what do you think about it? And I read it and I thought it was great. And I you know, I tweaked a few little bits and I've had another chance to make input a couple of weeks ago.

[00:42:38] Sally

And how does it feel knowing that it is being adapted to the screen? It feels like an immense honour and a privilege to be able to spark an entirely new project.

[00:42:53] Sally

You know, this movie, people say to me all the time, are you afraid are you worried that they can screw it up? I'm not, because well, I've read the screenplay and I think it's really good. But also, this is a new thing. This is a different thing. And it is giving jobs to a lot of people who this is their dream, and this is their passion. And everyone from the actors to the cast, the crew, they're all going to be working on a project that they're going to be really excited about. So it's a privilege to be a starting off point that gives people jobs and helps them.

[00:43:34] Interviewer

And I know someone and they asked you whether the elevator scene was going to be in the movie and you replied back and you said, yes, it is.

[00:43:43] Sally

Yes, that's right.

[00:43:43] Sally

I do get asked a lot about that scene, which is very funny to me, because I even say in the book that there's been you know, there's been like a million kisses in elevators, books and movies. And it goes to show that you shouldn't be too afraid to do something your way, even if you think it's been done a lot of times before, because, yeah, that was my version of a kiss in an elevator and people still bring it up to me.

[00:44:13] Sally

So, yes, that is in the movie script.

[00:44:16] Sally

Don't worry, guys. I got you.

[00:44:19] Interviewer

All right. Thank you Sally for your time and for a wonderful chat. We wish you all the best with your new book, *Second First Impressions* and with all future publications. Sally's books are available at any of our Inner West Libraries ready for you to borrow. Log on to our catalogue and place the reservation at any time. If you'd like to purchase any of Sally's books, please visit your favourite independent bookstore online or in person. Bye everyone. And thank you for listening and look out for upcoming digital content through the Inner West Library What's on and social media channels.