



INTRODUCTION

Thank you for choosing *The Manuscript* for your book club. Every author receives a supersonic tingle of joy when a title of theirs is chosen by a book club. What a thrill!

Here is a little on the background of writing this book and some questions for discussion.

Once you have read *The Manuscript*, please head over to [Goodreads.com](https://www.goodreads.com) to leave your review. Five stars!

BEHIND THE SCENES

- **The working title for this book** was *The Book of Men: part memoir, part fantasy, part killing spree*. I changed the title to *The Manuscript* because *The Book of Men* sounded like a relative of *The Book of Mormon*. And Edith's manuscript ties every single character together.
- **I developed the idea** after a dreadful break up and I thought, 'One day I'm going to write a book so I can kill off a character that reminds me of that arsehat.' I'm not a violent person but I have a vivid imagination and that felt like a satisfying thing to do. I collected a few more arsehats and when I had an arsehat collection big enough for a fat book, I began writing.
- **The character Sione Sutcliffe** is inspired by an ex-boyfriend who signed off on using a few of his war stories and his physical likeness in this book. He had wild military experiences to share, and I have never met anyone else quite like him. I still adore him which makes me the arsehat because he's 100% trouble. He chose the character's name and signed a release contract without even reading it, saying, 'I trust you, Luc!'
- **Writing a novel was more fun** than writing my memoir. A memoir is so personal, and I had to keep considering what my mum would think. How much of myself can I really reveal? A novel is challenging in that you create something from absolutely nothing, but that is also why I found it easier - because you just make it up! The truth is harder to do justice.
- **I wrote this book during lockdown**, 2021 when I was limited to a 5km radius of my house. These were perfect conditions to bang out almost 100,000 words. I wrote the opening chapter last, then I added the final final chapter just before the book went to print in late 2022.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. Who is your favourite character and why did you love them so?
2. At what point in the book were you hooked?
3. Which character or moment prompted the strongest emotional reaction for you? Why?
4. Did you reread any passages?
5. What do you think were the central themes in *The Manuscript*?
6. If this were a Netflix series, who would you cast as Edith? And Rachel?
7. What scene in this book resonated with you most on a personal level?
8. What did you learn from *The Manuscript*?
9. Discuss the double-whammy ending and how that landed for you.
10. If the Manuscript had a sequel, what do you think Edith would do differently?



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AUTHOR BIO

LUCY BLOOM is an award-winning international keynote speaker and consulting CEO. She has a professional background in the advertising industry, running a boutique agency for 20 years before she moved to the not-for-profit sector as the CEO of two international aid charities.

Her first book, *Cheers to Childbirth* (2010, 2020), is the much-loved man-manual on the tricky business of childbirth support, recommended by midwives and obstetricians all over the world.

Lucy's memoir, *Get the Girls Out* (2019, 2021), dives into her life and career working in women's health and education in Ethiopia and Cambodia. Hers has been a life of fighting for the underdog only to find that, sometimes, the underdog is her.

Lucy Bloom was born in Africa. She is the mother of three teenagers and lives by the beach in Sydney. She is an Ambassador for Australia Reads and is a member of the Australian Society of Authors and the Country Women's Association.

While some find Lucy's memoir hard to believe, *The Manuscript* is her first work of fiction.