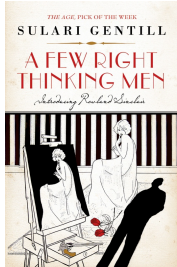


17 February 2010

## MEDIA RELEASE

**Pantera Press author Sulari Gentill's *A Few Right Thinking Men* shortlisted for the prestigious Commonwealth Writers' Prize for Best First Book.**



In the lead up to the launch of her latest book, *Chasing Odysseus* (out 7 March), an exciting new adventure series for young adults, Sulari Gentill was announced as one of six shortlisted writers in the South East Asia and Pacific Best First Book category of the 2011 Prize.

"I'm flabbergasted...happily flabbergasted...and deeply grateful to my publishers, Pantera Press, who were willing to take a take chance on a complete unknown with a manuscript about art and fascists," said Sulari Gentill.

"As a writer, having someone read and like your novel is a wonderful thing, regardless of who that person is. Of course, it's a bonus when that reader happens to be a judge of the Commonwealth Writers' Prize."

*A Few Right Thinking Men* is a rich, cinematic historical crime novel based on an intriguing and under-reported time in Australia's history – the rise of both Fascism and Communism in the 1930s, which posed a direct, tangible threat of revolution and violent social upheaval.

'Rowland Sinclair' is the central character of *A Few Right Thinking Men*. He's an artist, a gentleman, charming, wealthy, young, educated, handsome, and a major magnet for scandal. We follow Rowland Sinclair through the very real events that surrounded the rise and demise of multiple extreme right-wing movements across NSW, a little known but crucial episode in Australia's history. Laden with historical facts, riots, plots and murder, this book gives the reader a colourful insight into the political volatility of the time.

Laurie Steed from the *Australian Book Review* wrote: "It takes a talented writer to imbue history with colour and vivacity.... a devilish sense of humour helps buoy the novel's more historic roots... It is rare to find such an assured debut as *A Few Right Thinking Men*."

*A Few Right Thinking Men* also featured as *The Age's 'Pick of the Week'*: "*A Few Right Thinking Men* is ...a cut above much Australian crime. It's well researched and atmospheric, with a brisk pace, colourful characters and charming period dialogue."

Pantera Press is also launching a special edition of *A Few Right Thinking Men* in B-format with a unique cover painted by Sulari herself, who paints when she isn't writing.

"*A Few Right Thinking Men* was one of the first books Pantera Press published, and Sulari one of our first signed authors. We are absolutely over the moon to have one of our authors shortlisted for the best first book prize. It is such an honour and we are absolutely thrilled," said Alison Green, CEO of Pantera Press.

"Our mission at Pantera Press is to be 'a great new home for Australia's next generation of best-loved authors'. So our passion is to publish books that readers will rave about by discovering and nurturing the talented new authors who create them... previously unpublished authors of well-written, riveting reads in quality popular fiction or non-fiction."

"We are certainly looking for those 'hidden gems' in Australia and when we read Sulari's manuscript over a year ago, we fell in love with her beautiful, subtle and devilishly witty writing style from day one, not to mention the main character ...the very handsome... artist-as-amateur-detective Rowland Sinclair," she said.

The Commonwealth Writers' Prize is internationally recognised for its role in celebrating ground-breaking works from both new and established writers. Announced on 21 May at Sydney Writers' Festival, the Commonwealth Writers' Prize aims to reward the best of Commonwealth fiction written in English.

Dr. Paul Sharrad, South East Asia and Pacific Regional Chair of the Award commented that "The first entries are notable for their fresh ideas. They include ....a detective thriller involving an historical right-wing militia culminating in the opening of Sydney Harbour Bridge."

“Set to the backdrop of the 1930s and Australia’s Great Depression, the story is about art, money, crime and treason. Rowland’s adventures continue when its sequel, *A Decline in Prophets*, is released in July 2011,” added Ms Green.

“My plans for Rowland Sinclair are numerous. I intend to use him to take myself, and hopefully my readers, into the events of the interwar war years, both in Australia and abroad,” added Ms Gentill.

“He will become embroiled, enamoured and fall foul of some extraordinary figures in history as well as others I have simply made up. With each book he will mature and be tested as will his relationships and his convictions. I do already have an idea of the plot of the very last Rowland Sinclair novel, but I have many more to write in between.”

***A Few Right Thinking Men* by Sulari Gentill is out in all good book stores**

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**SULARI GENTILL:** Sulari Gentill lives and writes on a small farm in the foothills of New South Wales’ Snowy Mountains. Somehow, she feels like she has always been a part of this place, but that’s not entirely true. Sulari was born in Sri Lanka. She travelled through several continents and time zones before she was two years old. For a time, her family settled in Lusaka, Zambia, where she learned to speak English. She was six years old when she arrived in Australia.

Sulari grew up, or at least grew older, in Brisbane where she built cubby houses in the mulberry trees by the Brisbane River, embarked on various ill-conceived schemes of adolescent entrepreneurship and attended her local school.

She set off to the Australian National University in Canberra to study Astrophysics because the stars had never ceased to fascinate her. Imagine her disappointment when she realised that her professors thought stars were simply balls of gas, described by mathematical formulae, rather than the mythological, literary bodies described by the poetry of Homer and those who came after him. Sulari decided that she was perfectly happy with the story of Orion, and would leave it to others to analyse the gaseous masses that made up his constellation. And so she became a lawyer.

A series of accidental opportunities then saw Sulari end up as a corporate counsel in the water and energy industries. It wasn’t a bad life, and the legal profession is certainly not completely divorced from the production of fiction. Indeed Sulari now looks at her legal career as an apprenticeship of sorts. After a number of years however, clauses, codicils and amendments no longer held the same allure and Ms Gentill found herself strangely restless – not exactly unhappy, but increasingly aware that this was not what she was meant to do.

In 1997, Sulari and her husband, Michael, purchased a small farm outside Batlow in the Snowy Mountains. Of course being a town of 1500 people, Batlow doesn’t have a lot of call for corporate lawyers, so Sulari worked away for a couple of years, primarily in Tasmania, on the disaggregation of the Hydro Electric Corporation. Returning home, she founded a consulting company with a few friends, which allowed her to telecommute quite happily with only the odd trip interstate.

Sulari was also appointed to the boards of a couple of environmental management authorities, which saw her travelling widely through rural NSW. Around then, Sulari and Michael planted a trufferie on their property which inevitably cemented their image amongst Batlow locals as “mad blow-ins”. They have now had a successful harvest of A-Grade French Black Truffles...though the opinion of the locals probably hasn’t changed.

So, busy with truffles, a business, a persistent love of painting and two wild colonial boys, Sulari managed to ignore the feeling that there was something else she was supposed to be doing... until 2007. It was then she had an idea for a YA series and found a friend who was willing to write with her. The floodgates were opened. Suddenly Sulari found herself literally carried on a torrent of ideas, and excitement and sheer joy in the creative process. Writing is as natural as breathing now and the consequences of stopping would probably be as dire.

The future is now about writing, exploring other genres and stories, and happily revisiting the characters who have already become old and beloved friends. There will be other things of course, but in the middle of it all is writing. Her debut novel (the first in the Rowland Sinclair series of adult historical crime fiction) *A Few Right Thinking Men*, was published by Pantera Press in June 2010. The second in the Rowland Sinclair series, *A Decline in Prophets*, is to be published in mid 2011. *Chasing Odysseus* is Sulari Gentill’s first young adult novel, published 7 March 2011.