

## w&h book club

or L, get to the end and then go back to the beginning.

### **I don't want my readers to feel cheated when they read my books.**

I like to think that they can work out what's going on if they look closely enough. Everything in my books is there for a reason. I do go over it again and see if the story requires more clues or whether the reader needs to know more about the person. That's the beauty of having been a subeditor, an editor and a journalist. I'm good at taking out anything that doesn't need to be there.

### **Researching subjects for my books always surprises or throws me. With *The Ice Cream Girls*, I thought I had a complete hold on domestic abuse and violence until I started**

**talking to people.** I then realised I had no clue at all. I thought it was all about physical violence, not realising it was so much about emotional violence. Isolating a person and making them feel alone means they begin to distrust themselves and others. That happens way before the physical violence starts. If it was just about the physical, the person would walk out so much earlier.

**One of the most exciting things about being an author is not knowing where your story will take you.** I often take up different activities as part of my research so I can write authentically about a subject. In *That Girl From Nowhere*, my character is a jewellery maker, so I went on a jewellery-making course and made an extra wedding ring for my husband. I loved that and wanted to convert

haven't picked a winner but I know it's going to be difficult, as I loved all the books. I'm not just saying it – I felt such an affinity for the characters and stories.

### **A lot of my books are set in Brighton.**

I moved there 16 years ago. I used to live in south London, then went to live in Australia for a couple of years. When I returned, I knew I wanted something different. My friend, who's now my husband, lived in Brighton. It's liberating – the sea is just there and you get to walk along the beach. Even when it's rainy, it's great.

## **'I used to go into bookshops and imagine seeing a book of my own in there'**

**I've had lots of wonderful moments as an author, but I think one of the main ones was going on the Tube to Borders on London's Oxford Street, and seeing my book for sale on the shelves**

**for the first time.** That was special. I used to go in and imagine seeing a book of my own there. That was the first time it was real for me and not just in my head.

**My podcast is called *The Happy Author*, as that's what I am.** Even when I'm cross, and angry and fed up, I'm still happy. I wanted something that encapsulated what I felt about writing. There are times when I'm not happy with the industry – there are flaws but, in general, I'm a happy author. And I decided to do it as I like to help people. On a Wednesday, via my newsletter, I run something called Word Count Wednesday, where I give writers advice. There are so many books being published but people still find it hard to get the information they need. There is so much mystique around publishing

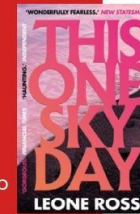
## **Dorothy's CURRENT READS**

### ***FANTASY ISLAND***

#### **THIS ONE SKY DAY**

**by Leone Ross**

Set on a mythical Caribbean archipelago, this is a rich, brilliantly told fantastical tale with characters that jump off the page. I loved how it felt like I was right there as the story unfolded. This was on the Women's Prize for Fiction longlist.

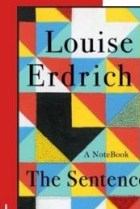


### ***HAUNTING READ***

#### **THE SENTENCE**

**by Louise Erdrich**

This was on the Women's Prize for Fiction shortlist, and is about a woman who comes out of prison, trying to restart her life... and ends up working in a haunted bookshop. Set in 2020, it deals with that year's difficult issues with humour and sensitivity.



### ***HEART-WARMING***

#### **The Second Time We Met by Frances Mensah Williams**

This is a great romcom. Two people from very different backgrounds fall in love and want to be together – unfortunately, no one in their lives wants that to happen. Will they find a way to make it work?

