

LightWorkers breaks family curse

It's like breaking a family curse.

That's how Australian debut novelist Anna Sarelas described seeing her first book in print.

The "curse" she broke wasn't scary or damned, but the realisation of generations of love for writing.

"I'm a fourth generation wannabe author – from people who were writing in the dark by themselves, between wars and political exiles and military juntas and population swaps," Anna explains.

"My father, my mother's father, my father's grandfather. All of them. There are stories told throughout the family of horrific poverty and horrendous circumstances, but they still wrote throughout."

This puts into perspective the magnitude of the achievement represented by Anna's newly published upper middle grade and young adult fantasy novel, *LightWorkers: The Genie, the Hero and the Siren* (Hawkeye Publishing, RRP \$27.95).

"I don't know if I've started something, but I know I've stopped something. At one stage it almost felt like a curse, but this is just what we do. We have a burning story inside of us."



Her debut novel has attracted high praise from the likes of bestselling author, Jaclyn Moriarty, who played a major role in bringing the novel to life.

Seeing her story in print brought some sense of celebration for Anna, but also of relief.

"It almost felt like a sense of peace. Like, okay, all is well. We did what we had to do."

"I have slayed so many demons inside."

The analogy between writing a book and giving birth was true for Anna, who developed her story between full-time work and mothering.

"I guess it was baby #2 in 2015, or maybe baby #3... I would churn out 10,000 words each month, with my belly getting bigger. And along the way there was new jobs, and enterprise agreements to negotiate..."

"It was always a dream, but then other dreams came true, and it became a dream on the side."

Anna's heritage and strong family connections inspired her story telling, with much of *LightWorkers* set in and around Sydney.

"We had a coffee shop in Surry Hills, which ended up being the shop featured in the book," she said.

"I was initially inspired by a house in Surry Hills where I grew up. It looked like the most extraordinary house that was hiding beautiful secrets. I'm sure a Genie lived there. The story really developed from the house."

The Jenolan Caves and the famous Snake Pit at La Perouse featured prominently in Anna's childhood memories, and come to life in the pages of this coming-of-age story.

Writing allowed Anna to reflect through adult eyes on some of her childhood memories while balancing the demands of her full-time role in the corporate sector.

"I pride myself on my work," Anna said. "I didn't want to just flop on the couch at the end of the day and watch Netflix after the kids had gone to bed. I felt there was juice inside me. I wanted that sense of achievement and productivity that I have (at work) and that I almost feel rewarded by, to go into something that was very beautiful."

While aimed at 12 to 14 year old readers, LightWorkers doesn't shy away from adult themes of conflict and finding yourself facing things that feel so much bigger than you. That, says Anna, is a true reflection of life.

"For me, especially working in corporate environments, to shy away from conflict, that is a statement in itself. You just can't ignore the difficult things in your environment."

Set in modern-day Sydney, the book weaves the story of different 'tribes' of LightWorkers, hiding among us, in plain sight.

With LightWorkers now available for pre-order and hitting the shelves of independent bookstores in June, Anna is looking forward to hearing reviews and building a community of readers through her [website](#).

And what do her children think of the book – apart from absolute pride in her achievement?

"My eldest finished reading it three months ago. And her reaction was: 'When's the next one?'"

Read more about Anna's debut novel, LightWorkers, on page 55 or visit www.light-workers.com.au



Great reads

LightWorkers

the Genie, the Hero and the Siren

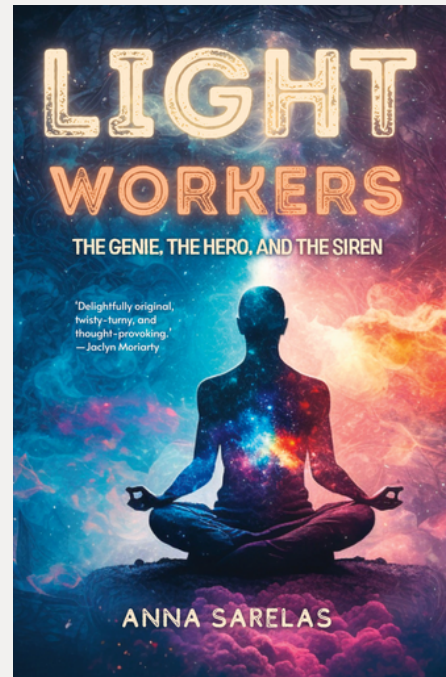
LightWorkers live among us, tasked with keeping Earth from falling into darkness.

Written for upper middle and teen readers, but equally enjoyable for all, this fantasy coming-of-age story brings together a collection of young people with extraordinary gifts.

Alex is a Genie who struggles with his gift for granting wishes. Jason is a Hero who loves flexing his muscles and Serena is not your average Siren, she's a hacker on a mission.

When Alex's parents leave to visit the Home Star, a world-ending vision plagues his mind: the portals are closing! But why now? Who would want to cripple their connection with off-world? And why won't the Council listen to them?

Friendships are tested and doubts soar as Alex, Jason and Serena try to stop the portal from closing and somehow keep attending school.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Anna Sarelas writes upper middle grade and young adult fantasy that Jaclyn Moriarty describes as 'Delightfully original, twisty-turny, and thought-provoking.'

Anna leads a double life. By day, she has a serious role managing complex workplace scenarios. By night, Anna writes about LightWorkers and kids doing cool things like saving the world and fighting to be heard.

Living in Sydney Australia, and close to great cafes, bushwalk trails and in an area with thousands of bats that come out at night, Anna tries hard to not mix her days and nights, because then that would be a little too hard to explain.

If Anna is not writing, she is chasing laughter – with friends, shows, or wherever laughter is to be found. Oh, and beauty, she can be found chasing beauty! Crunchy leaves, white sand, incredible clothes, fashion parades, and the eyes of people she loves.

Anna has a Graduate Diploma in Creative Writing. LightWorkers is her debut novel.

Order online from Hawkeye Publishing, or good bookstores.

RRP \$27.95

www.light-workers.com.au