



 Mollie Blake explains how motherhood led her to self-publishing

*The publication of her romantic thriller has given her a new reason to smile*

**T**here's that old saying – there is a book in all of us. Well, as an A-level student and lover of English literature, I always believed there was. However, my path in life led to arduous accountancy training. Unless a book contained profit and loss, tax or Financial Reporting Standards, I didn't read it for the next ten years, let alone think about writing anything.

At thirty-four I became finance director of a very successful company with subsidiaries in France and South Africa. I loved the work, the travel, the responsibility, and the power of being on a Board of Directors with colleagues I respected.

I was surprised but delighted to find that at forty-one I was pregnant, and this news came as a huge shock to me and my partner, as well as all our family and friends. However, inevitably I changed. Everything changed.

I started maternity leave telling everyone I would be checking emails and back well in time for year-end reporting. But I found it really hard returning to work. I remember just before I was due back arranging a review meeting with the bank manager. He waited for me up in the boardroom, while I breastfed my baby in my office downstairs! I hated leaving my three-month-old son in a nursery full-time. I wanted more than just breastfeeding in the morning and at night.

For the first time in my life I didn't want to be at work, and I just didn't feel at the top of my game any more. I struggled. Like a lot of working mums, I had no

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*Keeping You* by Mollie Blake is an erotic romantic thriller, tracing the intense yet tender relationship between Suzy and her lover. You can find more information on Mollie Blake as well extracts and where to buy the book at [www.mollieblake.co.uk](http://www.mollieblake.co.uk).

choice; from a finances point of view, I had to go back to work and from a finance director's point of view, I was never going to be part-time.

When the opportunity arose to sell the company, I worked hard to make a successful transaction and then took the money and ran.

At forty-six I was a very happy, nearly full-time, mum and a very part-time Pension Trustee. Though I was older I felt like a proper parent, and once term time started I enjoyed getting involved with school and church.

By the time my son was seven, I thought about what I

wanted to do next with my life in the future. Although I loved being a mum, I needed something to challenge me as a person and I started to read a lot more. *War and Peace*, *Jane Eyre* (again!), *Crime and Punishment*, *The Life of a Short Gentleman* and many more eclectic reads slid across my iPad.

As the dreaded fiftieth birthday loomed, already feeling like the oldest parent on the playground, I started to think it was time I wrote, a children's book.

Then I read *Fifty Shades of Grey*, followed by *Confessions of a Sex Addict*, Sylvia Day's books, short stories of dark fantasies and other 'fun' reads. I devoured them, loved them. Now I wanted to write a book like these, an erotic book.

Characters and a plot started to develop in my head and my passion for them consumed me for the next nine months. Before I had shocked family and friends with news I was pregnant, now I had

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shocked those close to me by admitting that I was writing an erotic romance! They thought I was bonkers. But writing had completely consumed me, and I would wake in the night and sneak downstairs to write another chapter, or amend a particular scene or research part of my plot.

I remember one Christmas being surrounded by my family as I snuggled in the corner of the sofa, writing discretely in my notebook. Whilst everyone was watching a Christmas special on the TV, I was engrossed in my story – the characters were interacting after a sensual experience in the guy's gym and he had promptly handed her a box of ropes and cuffs.

They started to take on a life of their own and I could even start to hear the conversations they were having – their dialogue often surprised me and I continued down the path that they were leading me! If anyone had said that your characters could surprise you before I started writing my book, I would have been sceptical, but now I know how good it can be when they do!

But what do you do next with a finished manuscript? The thought of having my manuscript, synopsis and chapter summary going straight into a publisher's bin, was daunting, but I also didn't want to wait too long. Self-publishing seemed to be the answer.

Magazines such as this have been so helpful to me and other aspiring and established authors alike. You can go it alone, or you can seek help from those who know the industry, the contacts in it and the inevitable tricks of the trade. I self-published *Keeping You* (2013), and another book, *The Secret at Arnford Hall* (2014), under Live For Now Publishing, and they are both available as a paperback and ebook.

If I am being totally honest with myself, writing erotic romance has helped me cope with turning fifty. Now I am doing something I love and making people smile.

