

Rural inspiration leads to publishing debut

By Fiona Palmer

I have lived in Pingaring for all of my thirty years and I love it. Hardly anyone knows where it is. If you blink you will miss it—but it is a surprisingly busy little community. And it is here I got the inspiration to write a book.

I wouldn't call myself a writer but rather a storyteller. I had a yarn to tell about our country way of life. It's easy to be inspired when you can walk out the back of your home into wide open paddocks that are surrounded by the huge blue sky with its many changing forms. I'm a proud country girl and love the rural life.

I was running the local shop five days a week with a baby and a two-year-old when I decided to write this story that had developed in my head. A year later I entered my manuscript into the Australian Society of Authors mentorship program and was awarded a prize. The guidance from my mentor, WA author Janet Woods, was a great help and a year later of fine-tuning and numerous drafts, I wrote an enquiry letter to Penguin publishers to see if the company was interested in publishing my story.

Penguin was my first choice, because it published Rachael Treasure's country-style novels. I am a huge fan of hers and hoped that they were after more of the same genre. Indeed they were and, to my amazement, asked for the whole manuscript and offered me a contract. I was a bit shell shocked at first but was soon jumping up and down in excitement like one of my children. I didn't even have an agent and Penguin doesn't usually consider unsolicited work. That day I really did feel like I had won Lotto.

The editing process started and more than six months later I was able to hold a copy of my very own novel. It's wonderful to have my book published and everyone is excited. I was lucky to have lots of support from family and friends who helped and encouraged me. I am very thankful to them all.

I was never very good at English so it is a bit of a shock to be the author of a novel. It just goes to show that if you have the right story, a lot of dedication and good support—anything is possible.

The Family Farm

Set under the blazing blue skies and in the golden wheat fields of WA, *The Family Farm* is a colourful story of family life on the land, and a heart-warming romance about finding true love and following your dreams. The story revolves around country girl Izzie Simpson, who dreams of taking over the family farm, despite her father's reluctance.

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Fiona Palmer celebrated the release of 'The Family Farm' at a July book launch at Pingaring.

