

## Q&A for LoveReading by [@LucyVHayAuthor](#)

### **What inspired you to come up with the concept for your latest novel *The Other Twin* – was it a real-life event, a daydream, an issue you wanted to explore?**

I read a newspaper article about a young girl whose parents had deleted her blog, so she'd jumped to her death on the railway line. She'd said that deleting her blog had 'been like deleting her'. Around the same time, I read about the tragic case of another young woman who died by suicide, but left a note on her Tumblr that published after her death, which was shared widely on social media. As someone who also blogs, I'm always aware how important my blog is to my business, but this was the first time I'd considered how teens, growing up in the digital era, might become dependant on their social media presence, even leaving suicide notes on them. This gave me the seed for my original story.

### **Can you describe how you developed this initial idea into a full-length novel?**

I originally wanted to write this as a YA story, about self harm, depression and suicide. However, this seemed so dark and I was not sure how to approach the subject matter without it being a complete downer. So initially, I created a survey online, asking people a variety of questions about these subjects, as well as some scenarios they might (or might not) find of interest. Over a 2-3 month period I managed to garner roughly 200 or 300 replies. One thing that came up again and again was the notion of an interest in solving crimes over the internet. This created a spark in my mind: what if this story was about a woman, whose blog published after her apparent 'suicide' – but she had been murdered ... Who would look into her death? Why would someone have killed her? Was it to hide a secret? From there, my protagonist Poppy Wade and the plot for *The Other Twin* came into being, as she searched for the truth about her sister India's death.

### **What kind of research did you do for your latest work?**

Much of what interests me personally informs *The Other Twin*. I work in the social media and blogging world, plus I am very familiar with both Brighton and the LGBT community. I am also interested in class, especially the notion of 'rags to riches' scenarios. This doesn't mean I did NO research whatsoever, but rather the story grew out of my existing interests. The one element I had to check out specifically for the book – for which I had no personal experience of, being white – was black hair, specifically the relaxants that were on the market and how they are used. Many of my friends who are also women of colour told me very interesting stories about their own issues over the years with this stuff, especially how toxic it can be.

**How would you describe your relationship with your protagonists? Do you love them; do they irritate you; do they get under your skin?**

Some of my beta readers said Poppy was 'me', but I disagree. Poppy might be fierce and loyal, but she is exceedingly reckless. She makes bad and rash decisions, whereas I am cautious to a fault. Sometimes I could not believe Poppy did some of the things she did – even as I was writing them! Not because she was stupid, far from it; but because it's NOT something I would do. She is also a strange mix, because despite being quite reckless, she's led quite a 'vanilla' life until now before the story, whereas I have a much more – shall we say – checkered background!

My second protagonist is India, Poppy's dead sister. We only learn about her via her blog. Like Poppy, India is fierce and loyal, but that is where the similarity ends. She is much more thoughtful, insightful, philosophical than her sister. She's older than her years (she's six years younger than Poppy) and is very much an observer of life. She's also a champion meddler, which is how she gets drawn into this mess into the first place. I love India and wish she could have somehow survived *The Other Twin*, but of course if she had – there would be no story!

**What kind of books do you read: 1) when you're writing; 2) when you're not? Do you find you choose different genres/types depending on whether you're writing, or doesn't it matter?**

I read a lot more non-fiction when I'm writing. I may read actual writing books; or I may read about specific issues. I'm writing a book about a sociopath right now, so I've been reading psychology books to gain insight into the inner, twisted workings of brains that have gone awry. I may also read crime fiction I have identified as being 'like' my idea, to see how others have done it before me. You can't break new ground if you don't know what has gone before!

When I'm not writing, I may read crime too, but I may also read a smattering of romance and YA as well. I also love dystopian or apocalyptic narratives.

**What was the last book you read?**

Beneath The Skin by Kyla Stone. This is a YA book about a young woman who has to survive a horrific home life and understand how she is the only one who can take the reins in her own life and be happy. Though her life had been different to mine as a teen and it was desperately sad, it still had many themes and ideas in it I could identify with; I will be recommending it to many teens I know.

**And what's the next book in your reading pile?**

I have a huge reading pile! I like to do a 'lucky dip' though, so it could be ANYTHING – that's half the excitement!

**BIO:** [@LucyVHayAuthor](#) is a novelist, script editor and blogger who helps writers. Lucy is the producer of two Brit Thrillers, DEVIATION (2012) and ASSASSIN (2015). Her debut crime novel, THE OTHER TWIN, is due out with Orenda Books in 2017. Check out her website [HERE](#) and all her books, [HERE](#).