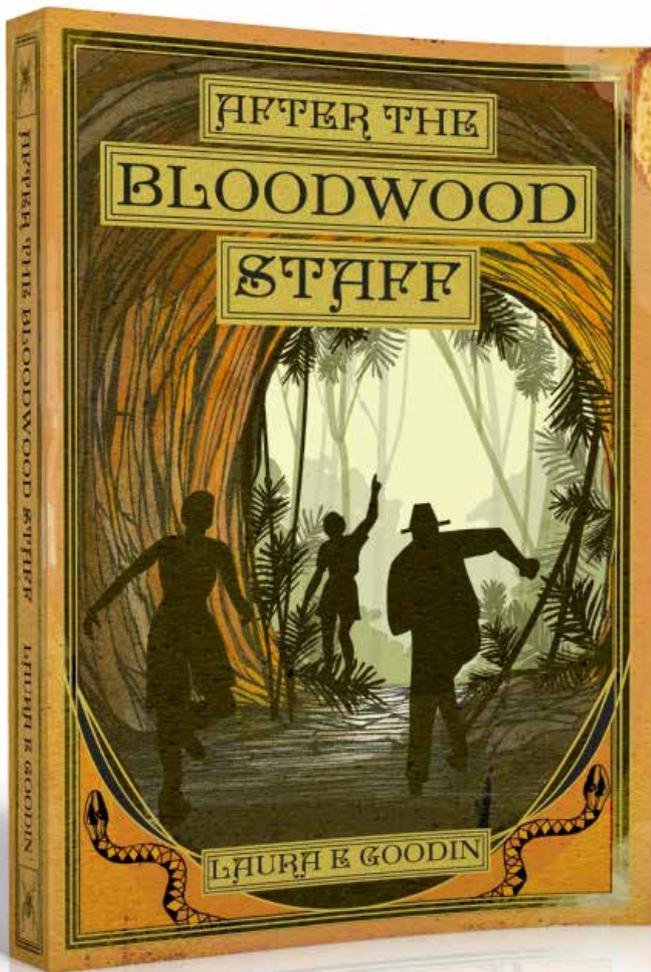




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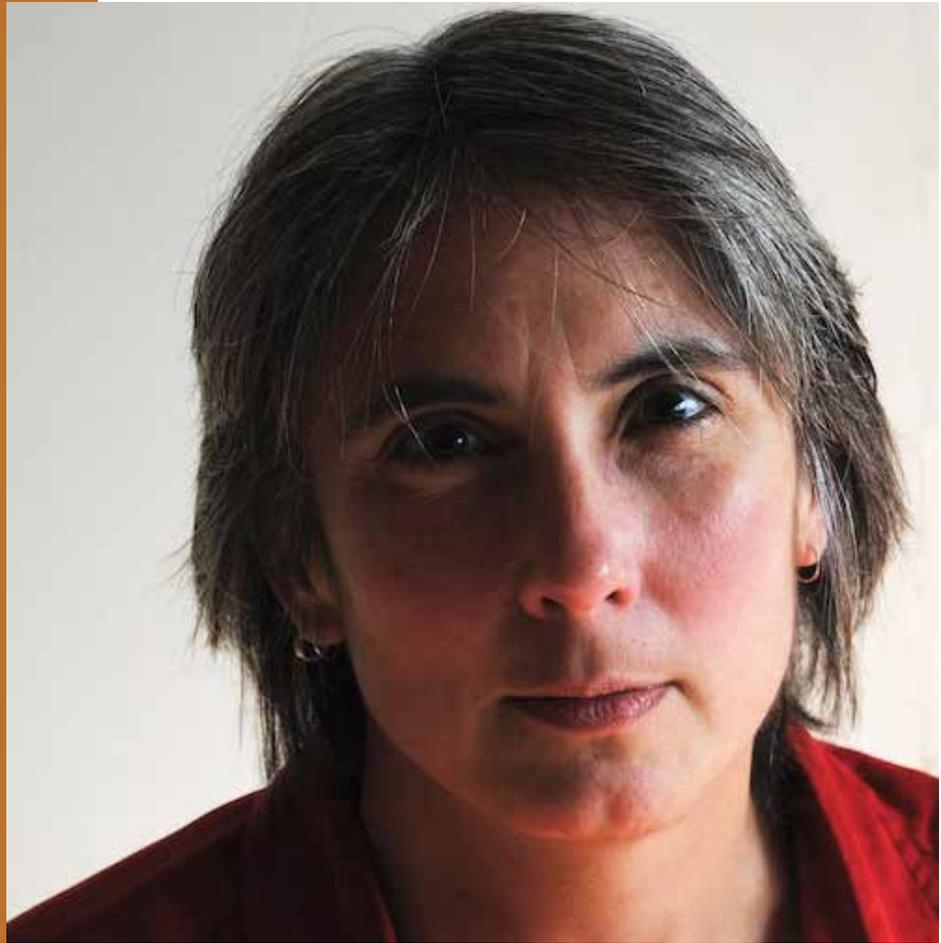
Genre: Adventure Fiction

Print ISBN: 978-1-922200-72-3

Publisher: Odyssey Books

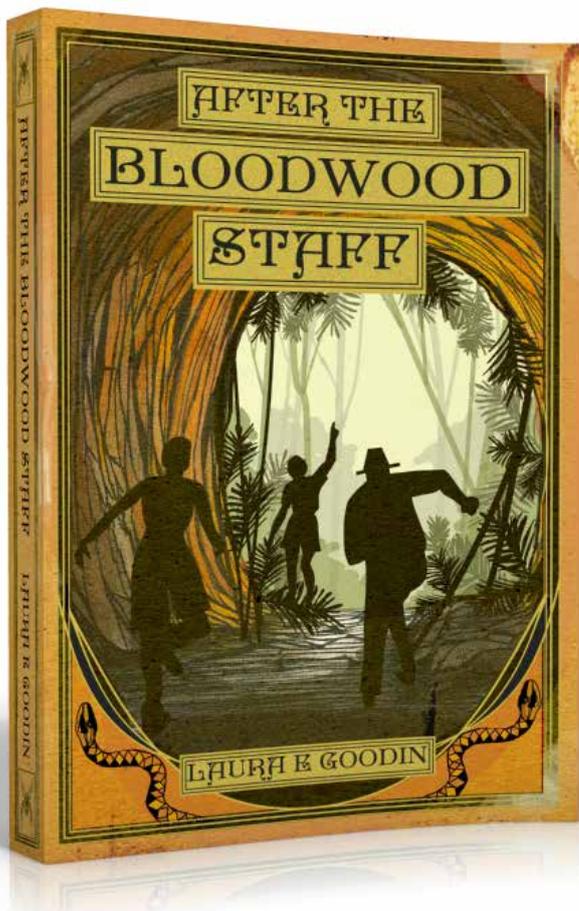
Author Bio

American-born Laura E. Goodin decided at seven years old to be a writer. Over the decades, she has worked as a reporter, editor, technical writer and media manager, but it was only as she entered her 40s that she decided to return to her childhood dream. She went on to gain a PhD in creative writing from the University of Western Australia. Her stories have appeared in Michael Moorcock's *New Worlds*, *Review of Australian Fiction*, *The Lifted Brow*, and *Daily Science Fiction*, among others, and in several anthologies. Her plays and libretti have been performed on three continents, and her poetry has been performed internationally. Laura lives in Melbourne with her husband, composer Houston Dunleavy, and spends what little spare time she has in trying to be as much like Xena, Warrior Princess as possible.



Laura E. Goodin

About *After the Bloodwood Staff*



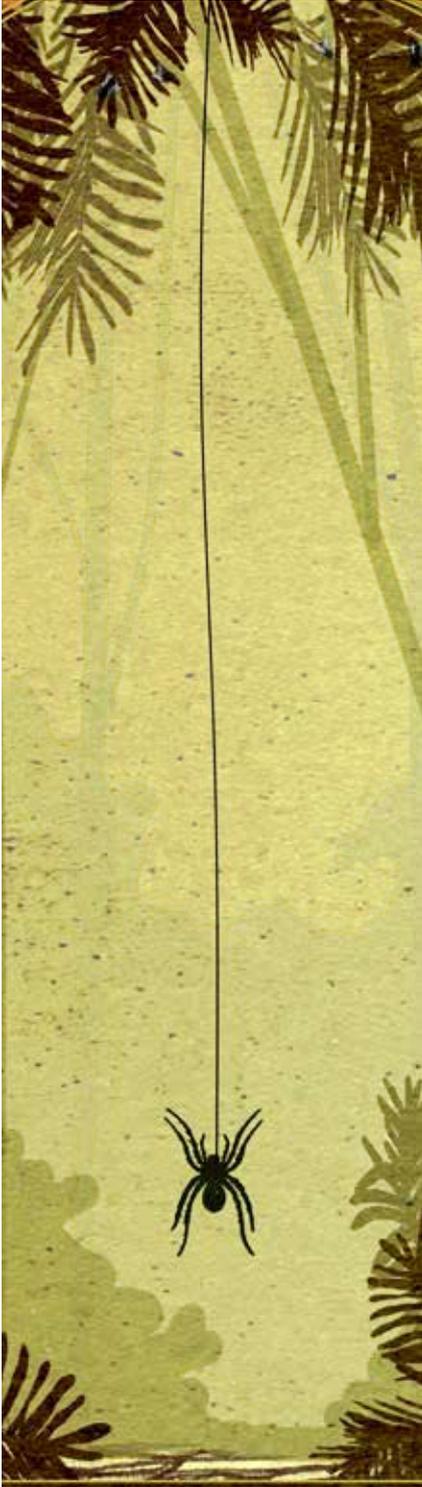
The sedentary and impractical Hoyle meets Sybil Alvaro in a used bookstore, and she invites him to follow in the footsteps of her favourite author in a search for the mysterious Bloodwood Staff. He's spent his entire life reading vintage adventure action, and thinks he knows how these things should go.

In the mountains west of Sydney, his expectations are almost immediately derailed, as nobody—not Sybil, and certainly not the irrepressible Ada Drake, stand-in for the obligatory plucky urchin—behaves the way they're supposed to.

As they gradually realise that their lighthearted adventure has put themselves and their loved ones in dire peril, Hoyle is forced to face the fact that he is woefully unsuited to be the stereotypical hero.

A deliberate subversion of adventure, fantasy and satire tropes, *After the Bloodwood Staff* is a brilliant and unexpected ride.

Sales Points



- *After the Bloodwood Staff* reworks the classic tropes of the adventure novel in a fun and refreshing manner which will appeal to fans of the genre
- With its easy humour and well-developed characters, the novel has the potential to kickstart an adventure novel renaissance
- Goodin capitalises on the lack of middle-aged protagonists in contemporary fiction to set her characters apart from the average hero
- Goodin's skilled descriptive imagery creates a setting that readers will instantly fall in love with
- *After the Bloodwood Staff* is both written and set predominately in Australia, and is a wonderful contribution to the Australian fiction market
- The book will be the first in a series of novels, creating the potential for a fan base that will increase over time



Book trailer:

<https://vimeo.com/192767816>

Praise for

After the Bloodwood Staff

Laura E. Goodin's *After the Bloodwood Staff* is a rousing, rollicking adventure that simultaneously celebrates and deconstructs rousing, rollicking adventures. By adding modern depth and humor, Goodin takes the old H. Rider Haggard template and creates something utterly fresh and fun. Anyone who loves classic derring-do (or loves rousing and rollicking, for that matter) shouldn't miss it.

—*Steve Hockensmith, New York Times bestselling author of Pride and Prejudice and Zombies: Dawn of the Dreadfuls*

{ A great Christmas read!
— Christine Madaffer,
Melbourne's Channel 31 }

After the Bloodwood Staff explicitly pays homage to classic adventure tales, but at the same time cocks numerous snooks at them. With its thoroughly unheroic hero, its obsessive expedition leader, its colourful ensemble of hangers-on and antagonists, and, at its centre, the enigmatic, capricious staff itself, the novel rollicks along, maintaining a delicate, hilarious balance between twenty-first-century pragmatism and a yearning for a nobler past. Good fun.

—*Margo Lanagan, award-winning author of Sea Hearts, Black Juice and Red Spikes*

Book Excerpt

The drive to the bookstore barn was a bit of a challenge on no sleep: winding roads and sudden turnoffs, and always the danger of a chicken or a cow or something wandering into the road. But he got there at last. He stepped inside; it was as it had been on the weekend, except that the coffee shop was less crowded.

He picked up where he'd left off on Sunday, gently took books from the shelves and leafed through them, giving each one an affectionate tap with his fingertips as he replaced it.

He reached the end of a row and turned to go around to the other side—and bumped into Sybil, leaning casually against the end of the bookcase. She didn't move, just stared at him with an odd expression. She'd been ... *waiting* for him. "I leave for Australia on Thursday," she said conversationally.

"Oh, well, good. I hope you have a nice vacation."

"How'd you like to come with me?"

"What?" *Fat, unemployed, out of shape, how would I stand up to pirates or savages or wild beasts or even just leeches? Even leeches?*

"Would you like me to say that I see hidden greatness in you, and you should come along so that you can blossom into your true and valiant self? I don't see it at all, frankly, but I could say so if that would help."

"No. No, it wouldn't."

"All right, the truth. I want you along because you'd get it. You'd get what I'm doing and why." She looked away. "And there's no one else."

"I'm not good at any of that stuff."

"What stuff?"

"Camping. And stuff. Saving you when you fall over a cliff."

She waved a hand dismissively. "If I needed that kind of help, I wouldn't go. I'm sure you'll learn quickly."

She's already decided for me, Hoyle thought. *Should I feel upset?* He tried to feel upset. Instead, he felt the tiniest glow in his stomach: part "Somebody wants me!"; part "Could I really?"; and part sheer, glorious mystery. He locked eyes with Sybil, and as he saw a small smile flicker on her face the glow began to flare, then blaze.

"Sure, okay," he said casually. "Give me the flight details and I'll go home and buy a ticket."

Sybil's smile broadened for an instant into a genuine grin. She took a piece of paper out of her pocket and put it in his hand. "Don't be late," she said. "In fact, be early." And she was gone.

Hoyle stared at where she'd stood, his mouth slightly open. The glow in his stomach felt fantastic. Sybil's smile made him feel fantastic. The paper with the flight details made him feel fantastic. And panicky. Home. He had to get home and get his ticket. And pack! A backpack. He couldn't very well go pulling a suitcase through the, what was it in Australia, the bush. Did he even own a backpack? And when had he last renewed his passport?

He darted back to his car. Under his windshield was another piece of paper. On it was written, "Thanks."

“Fat, unemployed, out of shape ... how would I stand up to pirates or savages or wild beasts or even just leeches?”

Interview Questions

1

What inspired you to write an adventure novel with middle-aged protagonists?

As I myself have gotten older, I've grown tired of the relentless uniformity of many adventure heroes: young, male, white, fit and capable. While there has been some progress in increasing the diversity of heroes available to readers, there's a huge demographic gap where no one seems to want to go: middle age. This is tragic, because I, at least, am finding middle age to be a time of thrilling possibility. Who better to go off on a hare-brained adventure than someone with no children at home, perhaps a bit of money in the bank, and the uncomfortable feeling that their life to date hasn't quite worked out as expected?

2

Are adventure novels a dying art form?

If you squint hard, most speculative fiction has an element of old-fashioned adventure in it. There's an artifact to seek, or a missing person to find, or an ancient riddle to solve; there are worlds and characters that evoke the eerie, the sublime, and the grotesque; there's someone who has to reach into the depths of their own soul to find courage and determination. In other words, I think the adventure novel is alive and well—it's just dressed differently.

3

Describe your writing style in five words?

Bold, with lots of humour.

4

You're a well-travelled individual, what made you decide to set this novel in an Australian National Park?

I think adventure novelists from the 19th century on have tragically overlooked Australia. There's at least as much potential for weirdness here as in the stereotypical jungles of India and Africa. When I've been hiking in the Wollemi area, I've been enchanted by the unique landscape and the sense of depth and wildness. Perfect for the story I wanted to tell, and a good way to escape the all-too-familiar tropes of much adventure fiction.

5

Finally, tell us why we should pick up *After the Bloodwood Staff*?

If you love action-packed stories with morally complex characters; if you're a little tired of grim, joyless novels featuring grim, joyless people; if you'd like to see the good guys win once in a while; if you enjoy a bit of humor in your reading; if you cheer at the thought of people finding greatness within themselves; if you wish some author, somewhere, would finally surprise you as you read—*After the Bloodwood Staff* is for you.



Product Information

Order Information

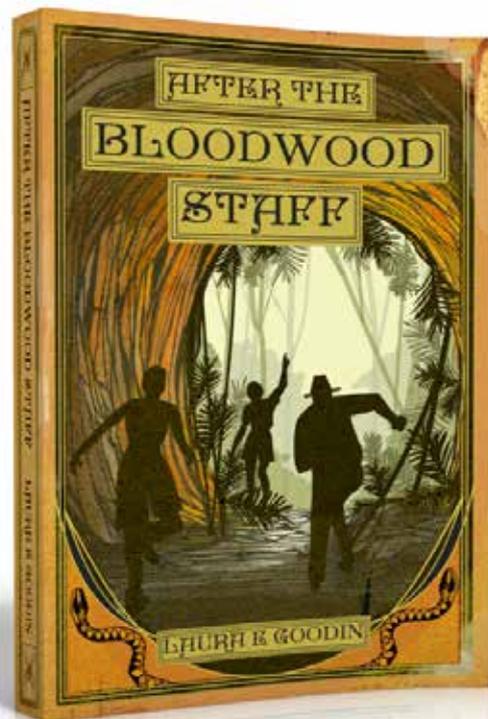
Title: After the Bloodwood Staff
ISBN: 978-1-922200-72-3 (paperback)
978-1-922200-73-0 (ebook)
Price: \$23.95 (paperback)
\$5.99 (ebook)
Format: Trade paperback and ebook

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