

## Behind the Book – *Sweet Little Lies*



It's hard for me to believe that I first came up with the idea for *Sweet Little Lies* back in 2004 (seems like a lifetime ago!) and it was the second full-length manuscript I wrote.

While sometimes, I hear the characters of my books talking, in the case of *Sweet Little Lies*, it was the opening line that popped into my head out of nowhere one night. I was chopping vegetables and boom! – *The day Kelly Ross killed her husband, she'd gotten a fill and a pedicure, then met her girlfriend, Sheila, at Tavern on Rush for lunch.*

(I'm probably not supposed to say this, but... so far, it's my favorite opening line of any of my books 😊)

From that first line on, this book just flowed out of me – I wrote the first draft in 3-4 months. I had no real plan for what was going to happen and in a lot of ways, it was fun to go forward without any real roadmap. As I went along, I would jot down plot points, or things I wanted to make sure I included, but for the most part, I just drove (or wrote!).

I wanted to put some twists on the usual cheating husband scenario and I also wanted Kelly, a woman so confident and secure in herself (and frankly, a little arrogant), to be thrown into a complete and utter tailspin and have her question everything she ever believed in about herself and her marriage. This is a woman who's had everything come quite easily to her (beauty, brains, successful career, wealth) and for the first time in her life, she's knocked down a couple of pegs. To further put the screws to Kelly, I wanted the other woman to be the total antithesis of the glamorous supermodel – loud, lewd and crude.

While I wanted to mess with Kelly a bit, at the same time, I wanted her to use her smarts and ingenuity to foil those around her while she tried to untangle the

mysteries of her husband's past. It was kind of fun to watch her outsmart people so many people, particularly the other woman!

*Sweet Little Lies* is also my love letter to Chicago. When I wrote this, I was living in Austin, Texas at the time and really missing Chicago (I moved back the following year) and that definitely fueled a lot of what is in the book from a setting standpoint. Though I wasn't born here, I've lived here longer than I've lived anywhere so it is my home. Some of the world's biggest players in business, entertainment, finance and more, also call Chicago home and I wanted to highlight that glamorous, mover-and-shaker aspect of the city by making Kelly and Mark major celebrities. They could have lived anywhere and been big fish wherever they were, but those chose to live in the Windy City.

In terms of plot, *Sweet Little Lies* didn't give me the heartburn that *Killing Me Softly* did. While I of course made revisions as needed, I didn't have to pull it apart and rewrite it a hundred times or move a bunch of things around. In terms of plot, story structure and flow of events, what's in the final book is pretty close to what was in the first draft.

Since deception and disguise play such a huge role in the action (not to mention things go *really* sour), I thought *Sweet Little Lies* was the perfect title.

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