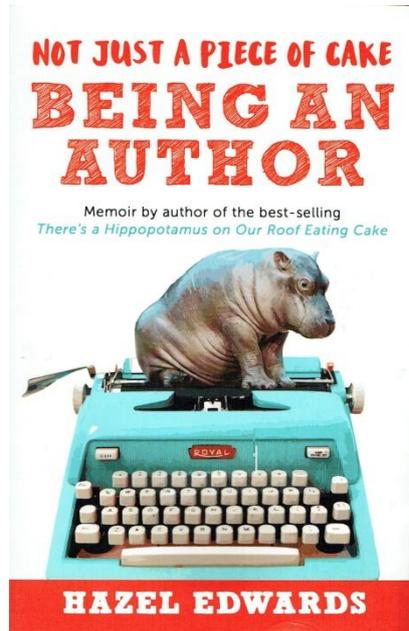


Hazel Edwards OAM, *Not Just a Piece of Cake: Being an Author*, Brolga Publishing, 2015, ISBN: 9781922175809, RRP \$19.95, 269pp, paperback. Available online at [Booktopia](#).



I have known [Hazel Edwards OAM](#) for some years, mainly through her [How To Write A Non Boring Family History](#) and I had the pleasure to review her book *Authorpreneurship* in 2013. Read that review [here](#).

Her latest book *Not Just a Piece of Cake: Being an Author* is a memoir and as seen in previous books, Hazel has a flair for words. We are introduced to 'questory', a blend of quest and history and Hazel's own term for story is 'anecdultery' which is not only memorable but apt.

This memoir has 28 chapters starting with Hazel's explanation of anecdultery and then looking at various aspects of her life and written in no particular order. It certainly is not a boring account of her life from birth onwards. In fact the chapters do not even have to be read in the order listed.

Interspersed between recollections of her childhood and school days are stories of how book titles came about, questions (and answers) from young fans, why writers need to collaborate, mentoring and other topics. Hazel's travels and writing adventures in far off and exotic places such as Antarctica and Nepal are also included. She has managed to combine her travels and experiences with her writing, not only in books but women's magazines and other publications.

There's a Hippopotamus on Our Roof Eating Cake is perhaps her most well known children's book and not surprisingly, there are many references to Hippo in this memoir. There are some funny moments when Hazel remembers the difficulty of travelling with her hippopotamus. If I ever decide to experiment with children's writing, I will be thinking of something smaller! Although that probably will not capture a child's imagination as much as Hippo has.

Throughout the book there are black and white photographs relevant to the chapter including many of her media appearances on television, at book signings, conferences and other events. We see Hazel as a young girl, a teen off on her first overseas trip, a bride and a successful author and mentor. I particularly loved the one of Hazel's home office showing a real author's workspace. There are shelves of books behind her as well as the computer on the desk, a blend of the old and the new.

Not Just a Piece of Cake is the story of Hazel's life and development as a writer and will be of interest to those who just want to know about the person behind the face on the book cover. But it is much more than that. Anyone who writes books, short stories, magazine articles, blogs and other works should also read *Not Just a Piece of Cake*. There is much for other authors to learn from Hazel's description of how she chooses titles, interacts with fans (children, teenagers and adults), collaborates with other authors, her life balance with family and friends and other aspects of any writer's life.

I always enjoy reading biographies and other people's memoirs. So often there is a link to my own life or life experiences. This was perhaps the most interesting element for me in that Hazel's

recollections triggered so many memories for me as I easily identified with some of her own life experiences growing up in country Victoria. While I grew up in Queensland, we still had the local general store , walking to school, making friends, school dances and so on.

Overall *Not Just a Piece of Cake: Being an Author* is interesting, entertaining and inspirational. Next time I struggle for that catchy title, I will remember that I am not alone. And it is not just the title but also the book cover that sells books. I simply love the hippopotamus on the typewriter. Eye catching and visually appealing, it easily identifies Hazel's memoirs with her bestselling children's book. A must read for aspiring or new authors or anyone thinking of writing their own memoirs.

Hazel is to be congratulated on another wonderful book that should be read by anyone that loves good anecdultery!

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