



SISTERS IN CRIME 26th SCARLET STILETTO AWARDS CEREMONY
Rising Sun Hotel, 2 Raglan St., South Melbourne
6 for 6.30pm Saturday 23 November 2019

7.00: JANE CLIFTON: Sisters in Crime/Brothers-in-Law, my name is **JANE CLIFTON** and welcome to Sisters in Crime's 26th Scarlet Stiletto Award ceremony for best crime and mystery short stories by Australian women. Let's give the awards – and ourselves – a big clap.

[Pause for applause.]

[Indigenous welcome:] At the outset, on behalf of Sisters in Crime Australia, we respectfully acknowledge the Yalukit Wilam Clan [Yal-ick Wil-um] of the Boon Wurrung. We pay our respect to their Elders, past, present and emerging. We acknowledge and uphold their continuing relationship to this land. Thank you.

It's wonderful to see so many crime fans gathered here tonight to celebrate 26 years of top crime and mystery short stories by Australian women.

The name, Scarlet Stiletto Award, is, of course, in the grand tradition of crime writing awards, such as the Golden Dagger in the UK.

And we've always loved the way the name combines the femininity of the stiletto shoe with the deadly speed of the stiletto knife and the sauciness of scarlet women.

As it happens, I also performed in a band called *Stiletto* in the late '70s. Being here tonight was obviously meant to be. I also still have lots of clothes from even earlier, the 60s – as many of you do too, though I suspect some of you may have raided the op shops.

Over the past 26 years, 3655 short stories have been entered with 27 Scarlet Stiletto Award winners and other category winners going on to have books published. Not a bad record.

This year **184** short stories are competing for **15** awards and **\$10,060** in prize money and benefits. The first-prize winner also takes home a spectacular scarlet stiletto trophy.

[Unveil and lift up trophy and then re-veil.]

At around 8pm, after the main course I'll be interrogating **GERALDINE HAKEWILL**, star of *Ms Fisher's MODern Murder Mysteries* and *Wanted*.

GERALADINE will shortly be presenting framed certificates to authors of highly commended stories. Later tonight, she will launch *Scarlet Stiletto: The Eleventh Cut* (Clan Destine Press), an e-book of this year's winning stories. Major awards will be presented after the main course and the Phrock up for Peregrine Competition.

But first please now welcome **PAULINE MEANEY**, a Sisters in Crime national co-convenor, who will present the Judges' Report from **CHRISTINA LEE**, a double-shoe winner who flies down from Brisbane at her own expense each year to be part of the judging panel.

PAULINE MEANEY: "There are passions we all experience – love, loss, joy, hunger, an atavistic urge to smash someone's head in with a rock. Every time the conversation turns to crime fiction, someone will say to me "Oh, you ought to write a murder about [insert their occupation, hobby, or social group here], you wouldn't believe what goes on." Yes I would, love. Over the years the Scarlet Stilettoes have had murders in nursing homes and ancient Rome, in ballet schools and swimming pools, in libraries – many, many in libraries – on pirate ships and spaceships, in caves and kitchens and stables and yoga studios and post offices and submarines and op shops, in the midst of elections and bushfires and midlife crises. Murder, the ultimate transgression, happens everywhere and fascinates us all.

"Sisters in Crime is for everyone who identifies as female. It's a fabulous, supportive, collection of women who want to read and write crime with strong female characters. We want gutsy, determined female protagonists, be they women, girls, female aliens, she-wolves, or goddesses. We want women who are out there fighting crime, even if they can't walk unaided, even if they can no longer remember the name of the prime minister. Even, in some of this year's stories, if they're dead.

"This year's shortlisting was a joy. 184 stories, 29 shortlisted, 15 prizes awarded. Somehow there's always a theme – this year a lot were set in residential aged care, quite a few had a ghostly theme, and there were some deeply satisfying tales of revenge.

"To future entrants – please do read the conditions and FAQs. The stories require a central *female* protagonist. Stories for the Liz Navratil Award should involve a central female protagonist *with a disability*. If you're entering the 'Body in the Library' category, your story must include the words 'body in the library'.

"The stories must also involve a crime or mystery – it's not good enough to dust off that short story that's been lurking in your bottom drawer for years. And please don't re-enter last year's story. Someone is bound to notice. And lastly – do think which categories you're entering. It's not simply a matter of ticking all the boxes.

"That said, get cracking now for the 27th Scarlet Stiletto Awards."

JANE CLIFTON: [Thank Pauline.]

We won't keep you in suspense much longer in terms of the highly commended stories. I just need to outline the judging process:

- All 184 stories were judged blind.
- There were 13 judges – convenors, present and past, and three-time shoe winners. Each judge had a co-judge in arriving at a first short list. Every story in this final shortlist was read by 7 judges over a weekend at McCrae. Stories came from all states and territories.
- Authors of all 29 shortlisted stories will receive a framed certificate.

I will announce the author, the name of the short story, **GERALDINE** will tell us a little about you and then present the award and pose for photos while I give a very short synopsis provided by the author. When your name is announced, please make your way up here – quickly please.

Could you please join us on stage **GERALDINE**? I will properly introduce **GERALDINE** later.

We will announce every winner but bios and story synopses will only be read for those who are actually here tonight. Our beautiful assistant, **TARA MITCHELL**, a Sisters in Crime convenor, will hand us the framed

certificate. (Apparently, we can't call her a 'barrel girl' because she's from Adelaide...)

At the end of tonight's ceremony, we'll also call all short-listed authors up here for a group photo with **GERALDINE**. 17 of the 24 shortlisted authors are here tonight – give them a big hand!

Now for the Highly Commended stories, in no particular order.

Apologies from:

Nikki Thompson (Blackheath, NSW) for "DNA – Do Not Ask"

Christine Spence (Gungahlin, ACT) for "Shadowminds"

Jane E Lee (Kensington, NSW) for "I Hate Technology"

Diane Hester (Port Lincoln, SA) for "Reasons Why"

Faye Broberg (South Yarra, VIC) for "Tarnished Gem"

JANE CLIFTON: A special commendation for the Youth Award goes to Olivia de Lesantis (Thornbury, Vic) for "How to Frame Monet".

GERALDINE HAKEWILL: Olivia De Lesantis is a Melbourne based school student by day and a youth crime writer by night. In 2018 she was the recipient of the Fleuri Consult Award for Best Young Writer at the 25th Scarlet Stiletto Awards and has since gone on to represent Sisters in Crime at the Phillip Island Writers Festival in 2019. She is 16 years of age and currently completing Year 11.

[Present certificate. Pose for photographs.]

JANE CLIFTON: Violet Halliwell's life is a slight wreck. At 47 years of age and freshly divorced, her holiday in Periwinkle Bay was supposed to be a detox. Alas, upon her arrival Violet discovers the town rocked by the body of a traveller washed up on the shore. Deciding to abandon her quest for rest and relaxation, she sets out to solve the murder.

Also from Victoria is Sandi Wallace (Mt Dandenong) who is highly commended for "Abandon".

GERALDINE HAKEWILL: Sometimes dubbed a 'serial offender' at the Scarlet Stiletto Awards, Sandi Wallace has been excited to make the shortlist on six occasions since 2013 and to receive several awards. Sandi also writes rural crime thrillers. Her debut novel *Tell Me Why* won the Davitt Award Readers' Choice and is followed by *Into the Fog* and *Dead Again*, with her fourth rural thriller releasing in 2020. Sandi's collection of short crime fiction is *On the Job*. She is an avid reader of crime and loves life in the Dandenong Ranges with her husband.

[Present certificate. Pose for photographs.]

JANE CLIFTON: Downing beers outside the pub, journalist Chris Olden is pondering tough decisions, while she hears gunshots and chalks them up to the drought – just another local sacrificing stock they can't afford to feed and water, or hunting game to put food on the table. That's until reports of a body in the library, followed by Chris's discovery of a second male gunshot victim – a huge story by the valley's standards. But when Chris pieces together all the whys, she also knows who the killer is, and must decide if duty overrules sentiment.

Jenny Sinclair is also from Victoria – from Fitzroy North – and is highly commended for "Opportunity Shop."

GERALDINE HAKEWILL: Jenny Sinclair is a Melbourne writer of fiction and non-fiction. Her books are *Much Ado About Melbourne* and *A Walking Shadow*. Her writing has appeared in *Best Australian Stories*, *Meanjin*, *Griffith Review*, *Island*, *The Big Issue* and other publications. She was previously a journalist with Melbourne's

Age newspaper and is completing a PhD in creative writing at the University of Melbourne. Her essay “An Orchard for My Father” was joint winner of the 2019 Nature Conservancy nature writing prize.

[Present certificate. Pose for photographs.]

JANE CLIFTON: Opportunity Shop is a story about opportunities, past and present, and the meaning of the detritus of a life; it’s also a reminder that the most innocuous person may not be what they seem to be.

Darcy-Lee Tindall (The Ponds, NSW) is highly commended for “When I Ope My Lips, Let No Dog Bark”.

GERALDINE HAKEWILL: Darcy-Lee Tindale is a dramatic arts teacher, actor, author, theatresports player, director and has appeared in television commercials, film and on stage. She has written comedy for radio, stage, media personalities, comedians and theatre restaurants. Darcy’s short stories, articles and poetry have been published in anthologies and literary journals, her plays and humorous prose with *The School Magazine*, educational readers with McGraw Hill, and middle grade reader *Thumb Pickles and Other Cautionary Preserves* with Woodslane Publishers. Darcy visits schools to conduct creative writing workshops with students. Darcy has a BA in Creative Writing.

[Present certificate. Pose for photographs.]

JANE CLIFTON: Detective Giles is not having a good day. She’s not on her best game and desperately needs a coffee to keep focus. When she begins a search for a missing child her mind moves from kidnapping to maternal filicide. With the media and clock working against her, Giles needs to step up her game plan.

Claire McKenna hails from Seaford (Vic) and her highly commended story is “Monsternight”:

GERALDINE HAKEWILL: Claire McKenna is a speculative fiction writer from Melbourne who can’t help being drawn to (literary) criminality every once in a while. The author’s last Scarlet Stiletto nod was in 2012 when she took third place in the race for the coveted shoe (but managed to win the Cross-Genre Prize for her story so it wasn’t a complete loss!) Although it’s not about the strange little beasts of this year’s Scarlet Stiletto nominated story “Monsternight”, her first novel – the gothic fantasy *Monstrous Heart* – is due for release in April 2020 via Harper Voyager UK.

[Present certificate. Pose for photographs.]

JANE CLIFTON: “Monsternight” is a bit of a story melange, being the "rhetoric of crime and gun control meets grim-noir magic and monsters". It falls squarely in the Fantasy Police Procedural genre where our hard-bitten gumshoe inhabits a world of spellcasting and forensics, both co-existing as equals of each other.

Jacqui Horwood is a serial offender in these awards and lives in Seddon, Victoria. This time she was highly commended for “Death of a Crime Writer”.

GERALDINE HAKEWILL: Jacqui is a librarian and works at State Library Victoria. She lives with her family and geriatric dog in Melbourne’s inner west. Jacqui won the Scarlet Stiletto Award in 2003, the best crime in verse in 2005 and the Silver Stiletto in 2016. She was shortlisted for the Ada Cambridge Biography in Prose award in 2015 and 2016, and her short stories have been published in anthologies and ezines. **[Present certificate. Pose for photographs.]**

JANE CLIFTON: In life Colette wrote crime but in death, while waiting to be reincarnated, she must solve a murder before she can move on

Natalie Conyer (Mosman, NSW) is another serial offender. This year, she has been highly commended for “Police Story”:

GERALDINE HAKEWILL: Natalie Conyer has loved and read crime fiction all her life, so much so that six years ago she gave up a perfectly good career to write it. Her short stories have won several awards in Scarlet Stiletto competitions and her debut novel, *Present Tense*, has just been published by Clan Destine Press.

Natalie lives in Sydney with Henry, the world's most affable cat. She's in the last stages of a Doctor of Creative Arts in (of course) crime fiction.

[Present certificate. Pose for photographs.]

JANE CLIFTON: Policewoman Jazz Kovacs is on secondment to homicide. The team are investigating a serial killer and all they have to go on are emails from internet dating sites. Time's running out, so how can they find the murderer quickly? And will Jazz perform well enough to stay?

Philomena Horsley (Northcote, Vic) is highly commended for "Second-hand Death".

GERALDINE HAKEWILL: Philomena is a long-time member of Sisters in Crime and the winner of the 2018 Scarlet Stiletto. When she is forced to stop reading and work for a living, she is a medical anthropologist who works on issues of family violence; cancer, death and autopsies; and research ethics. She continues to split her time between the busyness of inner Melbourne and the stillness of her shack in the Otways.

[Present certificate. Pose for photographs]

JANE CLIFTON: DI Brenda Lars has talent and ambition, but she's frustrated by a number of murders involving a political adviser, a priest and a gynaecologist. Could there be a link between an Op Shop and a lopped penis?

Now for our last highly commended certificate. It goes to Sally Bothroyd, all the way from Milner in the NT for "Lingering":

GERALDINE HAKEWILL: Sally Bothroyd lives in Darwin with her partner and daughter. After years working as a journalist, she now works at the NT Writers' Centre. Her writing successes include being runner-up for the CALScribe Prize for an unpublished manuscript in 2011. (It's still unpublished.) This is her first time being short-listed for a Stiletto after two unsuccessful attempts.

[Present certificate. Pose for photographs.]

JANE CLIFTON: This story grew out of another story involving the cop character Jackie – also with a slight supernatural theme. For some reason Uncle Bob and his cold case took on a life of its own – with a nod to Sherlock Holmes in the way that the case is finally solved.

That's it for the highly commended certificates. Enjoy the main course. I'll be back at around 8pm to talk to **GERALDINE HAKEWILL** about her life in crime.

Meanwhile, you might want to buy a raffle ticket. On offer are 3 bumper bags of books.

[JANE and GERALDINE pose for photographs]

[MAIN COURSE. PLAY SHOWREEL]

[7.56 pm: Play *Ms Fisher Modern Murder Mysteries* and *Wanted* clips]

8pm: JANE CLIFTON:

It is now my pleasure to introduce **GERALDINE HAKEWILL**.

GERALDINE grew up reading Agatha Christie, Sherlock Holmes and Kerry Greenwood's Phryne Fisher mysteries. She graduated to *Wentworth* and co-starring with Rebecca Gibney in three series of *Wanted* and the title role of Peregrine Fisher in *Ms Fisher's MODern Murder Mysteries*.

A companion piece to the original 1920s' series, the new series jumps forward to 1964, where Peregrine Fisher bursts into the Adventuresses' Club in Melbourne as the members mourn Phryne's presumed death in a plane crash in New Guinea. Geraldine has described her character as "the love child of Miss Marple and James Bond".

Her performance in *Wanted* earned her a TV Week Logie Nomination for the Graham Kennedy Award for the Most Outstanding Newcomer in 2017.

[In conversation for 35-40 minutes.]

8.40pm: JANE CLIFTON: [Thank GERALDINE.]

Enjoy your dessert. And do buy some raffle tickets: You stand to win one of 3 big bags of books. The front desk will be opening shortly in case you want to buy a tote bag, tshirts, books and other goodies. Solve your Xmas present problem right now.

9.00pm: JANE CLIFTON: In 10 minutes, **MARIA PATTISON**, the series costume designer for *Ms Fisher's MODern Murder Mysteries* will be judging the Phrock up for Peregrine competition. If you'd like to participate, please go to the front desk and get a number.

There are fab prizes on offer:

1st: The full 3 series of *Miss Fisher's Murder Mysteries* (6 DVDs in all), kindly donated by Every Cloud Productions

2nd: DVDs of series 2 and 3 of *Wanted*, kindly donated by Matchbox Productions

3rd: Miss Fisher and *Crypt of Tears* earrings and hand cream, kindly donated by Every Cloud Productions.

9.10pm: JANE CLIFTON: While the contestants for the Phrock up for Peregrine competition line up, let me introduce **MARIA PATTISON**, the series costume designer

There is a fascinating interview with Maria on the Sisters in Crime website and Facebook page but you should know she was nominated for an AACTA Award for Best Costume Design for *Berlin Syndrome* in 2017 as well as for *Partisan* in 2015. In 2018 Maria was nominated for an APDG award for her work on feature film *Upgrade* and has recently has been nominated for an APDG award for her work on *Ms. Fisher's MODern Murder Mysteries*, with the awards taking place next month. And she has recently submitted her Masters in Visual and Media Anthropology in Berlin. Let's give her a big hand!

[MARIA PATTISON judges competition and awards prizes – TARA MITCHELL to hand over.]

3rd: Miss Fisher and the *Crypt of Tears* earrings and hand cream, kindly donated by Every Cloud Productions.

2nd: DVDs of series 2 and 3 of *Wanted*, kindly donated by Matchbox Productions

1st: The full 3 series of *Miss Fisher's Murder Mysteries*, kindly donated by Every Cloud Productions

[MARIA and winners to pose for photographs]

JANE CLIFTON: [Thank MARIA and present tote gift bag.]

AUCTION OF PICCOLI PORTRAIT \$350 PHOTO VOUCHER

9.30PM: PRIZE PRESENTATION

JANE CLIFTON:

Now for the prize presentation. As before, winners please make your way quickly to the stage as your name is called out.

GERALDINE HAKEWILL will give your backstory and pose for photos with you while I will read a synopsis of the story. Our beautiful assistant, **TARA MITCHELL**, will hand us the framed certificate and cheque.

Firstly, to the Elephant Tree Publishing Young Writers' Award under 19. It's worth \$500 and goes to Lyra Philp (Apollo Bay, Vic) for "Death by Couch"

GERALDINE HAKEWILL: Lyra Philp turned 13 in October. She 'sort of' likes writing. The reason she wrote a story about a killer couch was because she went to a crime writing workshop at the Apollo Bay Word Fest and the presenter [Angela Savage, whom incidentally won the Scarlet Stiletto in 2011] was talking about someone with a name like David Kellercowel or something like that and she thought it was David Killer-Couch. Then she decided that would be a good story. Lyra has never witnessed any crimes. When Lyra grows up, she doesn't know what she'll do.

[Present certificate & cheque. Pose for photographs]

JANE CLIFTON: A series of mysterious and tragic deaths have been occurring in a pocket of suburban Australia. There doesn't appear to be a murder weapon. Can the case be solved before anyone else becomes a victim? Could sitting down really be that bad for your health?

The Scriptworks Great Film Idea Award (\$200) has been won by Janette Ellis (Sunshine Coast, Qld) for "Lifeboat."

GERALDINE HAKEWILL: Janette Ellis was a high school science teacher and textbook author for far too long. She recently fled the classroom and turned to other kinds of writing, winning an award in the 2019 Grieve Project. Crime is her true love and her laptop is (thus far) her chosen murder weapon. In a bid to never be cold again, Janette continues to migrate north—from Melbourne to Sydney, and then Lake Macquarie. She now resides on the Sunshine Coast, where she works as an editor and rarely wears a jacket.

[Present certificate & cheque. Pose for photographs.]

JANE CLIFTON: What could be better than a ten-day South Pacific cruise? Pretty much everything, according to Janis Parker, who finds herself trapped on stormy seas with murderous passengers, terrible food and an extremely attractive security officer. Who will make it back to Sydney alive?

Now to the Queensland Chapter of Sisters in Crime's Liz Navratil Award for the story with the Best Disabled Protagonist.

The award goes to Philomena Horsley, whom we heard earlier won last year's Scarlet Stiletto. This time it is for her story "Dead End".

[GERALDINE to present certificate & cheque. Pose for photographs]

JANE CLIFTON: Kaz is 52 years old, and an angry, ageist ex-cop. Josie is an 87-year-old Suzi Quatro devotee with a rebel heart. Foul language and mutual frailty bond them as they investigate the suspicious deaths of residents in a local aged care home.

Now for a brand-new award – the Terror Australis Readers & Writers Festival Award for Best Bushranger story (\$500). And the award goes to Missy Jane Birch (Werribee Vic) for “The Emerald Lady”.

GERALDINE HAKEWILL: With eight direct ancestors who were convicts, and at least five others in her extended family, Missy Jane has always been fascinated with this part of Australian History. When it came to writing “The Emerald Lady”, she was inspired by these ancestors and felt comfortable using her knowledge to make her story historically accurate. She has previously been published with non-fiction works exploring World War Two and Ned Kelly. The honour of being shortlisted for the Scarlet Stiletto Awards is the greatest success that she has had in the world of fiction, having previously won the Knox Historical Society short story competition.

[Present certificate & cheque. Pose for photographs]

JANE CLIFTON: Molly Murphy declares that despite having the most common Irish surname, she is anything but ordinary. Being a young Irish girl who has suffered from the injustices of British rule in her homeland, she steals a watch in order to help her family survive. Sentenced to seven years transportation, she meets Mother Bell on the voyage to Van Diemen’s Land. Taken into Mother Bell’s care, a carefully planned trail of retribution is enacted and thus begins her new life and adventures in Australia. Encountering good and evil along the way, will Molly eventually find happiness in her new homeland?

Now to the Clan Destine Press Award for Cross Genre (\$500). Normally it would be presented by the publisher, Lindy Cameron, who is also Sisters in Crime’s President, but Lindy is unable to be with us tonight. It’s a great shame as the award actually goes to one of her authors, Natalie Conyer, for her story “Manny”.

GERALDINE HAKEWILL: We’ve heard a bit about Natalie before – and her debut novel, *Present Tense*, just out.

[GERALDINE to present certificate and cheque. Pose for photographs]

JANE CLIFTON: According to science fiction writer, Isaac Asimov, the rules of good robot behaviour are: don’t harm humans, obey orders and protect yourself. But what happens when these rules contradict each other? It’s up to Zia Aristotle, PI, to find out.

The HQ Fiction Romantic Suspense Award (\$500) again goes to Sandi Wallace (Mt Dandenong, Vic) for “Sweet Baby Dies” Sandi is a serial, serial offender and was highly commended earlier tonight.

GERALDINE HAKEWILL: We’re all looking forward to her 4th rural mystery due out next year.

[Present certificate and cheque. Pose for photographs.]

JANE CLIFTON: Mickey Fox is the firm’s best PI—sometimes thanks to, rather than despite being wedded to her sports wheelchair—and she thinks her luck is in when she lands both a priority job and a newbie investigator to shadow her at work. While things heat up with the new dude, she should’ve touched wood when she wished for an exciting case because Vaocluse versus Vaocluse turns ugly.

Now for a newish award, Writers’ Victoria Crime and Punishment Award for the story with the most satisfying retribution. The winner gets to sit in a cell for 3 months. It’s a residency at Old Melbourne Gaol. Angela Savage, Director of Writers’ Victoria can’t be here tonight so the award will be presented by her

colleague and our beautiful assistant, TARA MITCHELL. The lucky winner is Kristin Murdock from Warooka, SA, for “Plenty More Fish”.

TARA MITCHELL: Sharing a birthday with Agatha Christie, it’s no surprise Kristin turned to a life of crime – writing, that is. Kristin works as a freelance journalist and teacher by day and crime writer by night, with a handy degree in psychology and sociology. Poisons are generally her weapon of choice and having lived in rural SA for most of her life, her next project is a farm-based crime novel. Like all writers, her dream is to nab a book contract and make writing her sole occupation. Kristin was runner-up in the Scarlett Stiletto Awards in 2010 and winner of the malice domestic section, with her story, “Sally’s Sea Change”.

[TARA and GERALDINE present certificate and Writers’ Victoria Certificate. Pose for photographs]

JANE CLIFTON: Former veterinary science student, Anna, spends her days with an angry Japanese chef and a wise cracking work associate as she whiles away her time as a waitress at Tokyo Ocean. Enjoying her mundane life, things are thrown into turmoil with the arrival of hunky customer, Ryan Hartwell. A dark shadow on Anna’s past, he ultimately dies on the restaurant floor, despite Anna’s efforts to save him.

Fiona Egger from Every Cloud Productions, the producers of *Miss Fisher’s Murder Mysteries*, is here tonight and could present their 4th Mystery with History Award (\$750) which goes to Eugenie Pusenjak (Theodore, ACT) for her World War 11 story, “Loose Lips”, but alas Eugenie was unable to make it.

And now for the popular Kerry Greenwood Malice Domestic Award (\$750). And the award goes to Caroline de Costa (Cairns, Qld) for “Screwed”.

GERALDINE HAKEWILL: Caroline is an obstetrician and gynaecologist based in Cairns but increasingly living in Melbourne, where she plans to retire (soonish). She has written many non-fiction works for women about their reproductive health, as well as textbooks and medical handbooks. Having always loved to read crime fiction, she has recently taken to writing it, as part of her retirement plan. She has now published three novels in the Detective Cass Diamond series, set in Cairns; the first, *Double Madness* (2015), was shortlisted for the Davitts in 2016 and this was followed by *Missing Pieces* (2018) and *Blood Sisters* (2019).

[Present certificate and cheque. Pose for photographs]

JANE CLIFTON: “Screwed” features Cairns Detective Cass Diamond and is set in suburban Cairns, where a tropical paradise may conceal the disappearance of a local woman. When Cass’s partner, Detective Borgese, is taken ill, Cass has to work on her own – using some novel methods.

Could GEORGINA HEYDON please come to the stage? Georgina is President of the International Association of Forensic Linguists which sponsors the newish award, Best Forensic Linguistics Story, worth \$800. The award goes to Jaimee Sharrett (Lynwood, WA) for “Marie’s Voice”.

GEORGINA HEYDON: [Two sentences about the award.]

Jaimee Sharrett is a young writer studying Speech Pathology at Curtin University, with a special interest in child developmental disorders, autism and disability within the justice system. Between classes, she works on writing her adventure novel for kids and spending time with family.

[GEORGINA HEYDON and GERALDINE present certificate and cheque. Pose for photographs]

JANE CLIFTON: An elderly woman is robbed in daylight. She sees her attacker and all visitors have been catalogued. Yet, no one knows what was stolen, what the criminal looked like or how it happened, because she cannot say the words. “Marie’s Voice” is about a young speech pathologist who tries to help an elderly woman get justice, and a compassionate detective who takes the time to listen.

We now come to the Melbourne Athenaeum Library Body in the Library Award which is also always popular.

The Melbourne Athenaeum has once again generously sponsored two “Body in the Library” Awards and we are delighted that Vice-President **BARBARA GLIDDON**, is here tonight to co-present them. Please come forward Barbara.

BARBARA GLIDDON: The \$500 runner-up prize is awarded Kelly Gardiner for “Death in the Catacombs”.

Kelly Gardiner’s new series is the time-slip trilogy, *The Firewatcher Chronicles*, which begins with *Brimstone*. Her previous novel, *1917: Australia’s Great War*, was shortlisted for the NSW Premier’s Young People’s History Prize and the Asher Award. Kelly’s other books include the young adult novels *Act of Faith* and *The Sultan’s Eyes*, both of which were shortlisted for the NSW Premier’s Literary Awards and CBCA Notable Books; the Swashbuckler pirate trilogy; and *Goddess*, a novel for adults based on the life of the seventeenth century French swordswoman and opera singer, Mademoiselle de Maupin. Kelly teaches creative writing at La Trobe University.

[BARBARA GLIDDON and GERALDINE present certificate and cheque. Pose for photographs]

JANE CLIFTON: “Death in the Catacombs” is an attempt at a classic whodunit, set deep in the bowels of the State Library, where Kelly worked for ten years, and later was a Creative Fellow. The narrator, Cat, finds a body in an isolated chamber, and helps – or possibly hinders – the police investigator sent to track down the killer. As far as Kelly knows, no actual murders have taken place in the Library, although there are rumours of ghosts. And as far as she know the catacombs house nothing more dastardly than broken furniture. But you never know...

The Body in the Library First Prize of \$1000 goes to Blanche Clark (Preston, Vic) for “At Length I Would Be Avenged”.

BARBARA GLIDDON: Blanche Clark is a journalist and former Books Editor of the *Herald Sun*. She’s foolhardy enough to keep writing fiction in spite of being awed by all the great writers in the world. She attributes her perseverance to winning the Melbourne Review Short Story Competition in 1995 (yes, that’s nearly 25 years ago), plus the highly commended certificate she received in the Scarlet Stiletto Awards in 2010. She is grateful for the unconditional support of her family and friends.

[BARBARA GLIDDON and GERALDINE present certificate and cheque. Pose for photographs]

JANE CLIFTON: The title of Blanche’s short story, “At Length I Would Be Avenged”, comes from Edgar Allan Poe’s *The Cask of Amontillado*. As a teenager she loved Poe’s Gothic rage and his words were in keeping with my setting, which was inspired by a photo of an abandoned American library that she found on the internet. The voice of the dead librarian came to Blanche when she looked at the photograph and she wouldn’t go away until she wrote her story. As much as it’s a whodunnit, it’s also about the friendship that develops between the dead librarian and a homeless girl, who helps her find her killer.

JANE CLIFTON:

Third Prize (\$500) is co-sponsored by long-time supporter, Sun Bookshop, and new supporter Wild Dingo Press. It goes to Bridgitte Cummings (Adelaide, SA). Unfortunately, Bridgitte is unable to be here today.

Could ANTHEA BARIAMIS from Simon & Schuster Second Prize please come forward. The Simon & Schuster Second Prize (\$1000) goes to Philomena Horsley for “Dead End” which also won the Liz Navratil Prize

Please put your hands together again!!!

ANTHEA BARIAMIS: [two sentences]

[ANTHEA BARIAMIS and GERALDINE HAKEWILL present certificate and cheque. Pose for photographs.]

I'd now like to ask **DR CAROLYN BEASLEY** from Swinburne University of Technology co-present the 1ST Prize of \$1500. The 2019 Scarlet Stiletto Award and the shoe goes to... [drum roll please]

CAROLYN BEASLEY: And the winner is Blanche Clarke for "At Length I Would Be Avenged"!!!

CAROLYN BEASLEY: Swinburne is so very very **honoured** to be able to support the **incredible** work of Sisters in Crime and the short story awards. Who could resist getting involved with an award which has the coolest name and trophy EVER. Getting one of these is the best motivation in the world to crack open the laptop and get some killer words down.

We all know that the short story can be an **incredibly** challenging form – you'd think that planning a murder, solving a kidnapping or in the very least pulling off a decent heist would take far longer than 5000 words. But here we are tonight and here we have lots of how to manuals...oops I mean completely fictional totally make up narratives and film ideas, each holding a whole little universe with its own reality and own logic and own form of justice in small moments of epiphany across a few snappy pages. Whether it's a comic story, a tragic tale, or poignant moment, each story makes a statement to the world about how the voices of women writers can't be ignored,

As always, remember that Swinburne would like to help your stories be heard by offering you free use of our media and communication facilities or to offer us students to help with projects. We have excellent new radio and podcasting studios that we are happy to offer for use for no fee if you're interested in working on audio projects and we have a vibrant masters and PhD programs that let you create stories or a novel as part of your research project.

So regardless of who wins, thank you to every sister who entered and shared a slice of the world with us and thanks to Carmel, and Lindy and Tara – our voices would be lost without you.

[CAROLYN & GERALDINE: Present certificate, cheque and trophy.]

BLANCHE CLARK: [Short speech about the Award]

[Pose for photographs]

JANE CLIFTON: We're almost there. **GERALDINE HAKEWILL** is going to do us the honour of launching *Scarlet Stiletto: The Eleventh Cut*, which has been edited by Phyllis King.

GERALDINE HAKEWILL: All the winning stories from tonight are available in *Scarlet Stiletto: The Eleventh Cut* for \$5.99 from Booktopia, Amazon, and iTunes or \$5 from direct from Clan Destine Press as an e-book. You may have seen the promotional postcard - if not grab one on your way out.

All shortlisted authors and sponsors will be emailed about their preferred format and sent details shortly.

JANE CLIFTON:

Let's now acknowledge the generous support of our sponsors of the prizes:

- Swinburne University
- Simon & Schuster
- The Sun Bookshop
- Wild Dingo Press
- The Melbourne Athenaeum Library
- The International Association of Forensic Linguists
- Kerry Greenwood

- Every Cloud Productions
- Writers Victoria
- HQ Fiction
- Elephant Tree Publishing Pty Ltd
- Clan Destine Press
- Terror Australis Readers and Writers Festival
- The Qld Chapter of Sisters in crime
- Scriptworks

Please join me in thanking them.

Finally I'd like to ask **GERALDINE HAKEWILL** to draw the raffle.

[Draw raffle 3rd, 3nd, 1st (bags of books). Pose for photographs.]

JANE CLIFTON: I would again like to thank **GERALDINE HAKEWILL** for their contribution to this special evening and present them with some gifts, including *Scarlet Stiletto: The First Cut* and *The Second Cut*, t-shirt, stiletto cards and the stiletto champagne stopper.

[Present GERALDINE with gifts – pose for photos]

Big thanks also to **CHELE COOPER** for her administration of the awards and **HELEN COOPER** for assistance on the database; **TARA MITCHELL** who undertook author liaison and bookings and beautiful assistant duties tonight, plus **CARMEL SHUTE**, **LINDY CAMERON**, **CAZ BROWN**, and **SARA HOOD** for their work in getting this ceremony together.

Thanks to other convenors who worked tonight: **ROBYN WALTON**, **LESLEY GILLIS**, **KARAINA KILMORE-BARRYMORE**, **KELLY GARDINER** and **PAULINE MEANEY**.

Don't forget to start writing now if you want to get your stories in for the 27th Scarlet Stiletto Awards by 31 August, 2020.

Some event news:

- Tara Mitchell will be launching Emma Viskic new Caleb Zelic novel, *Darkness After Light*, at 6.30pm next Tuesday 26 November, at Readings St Kilda. Just turn up – no need to book.

Sisters in Crime will also be organising a group outing to Every Cloud's film, *Miss Fisher & The Crypt of Tears*, out late February. We will keep you posted.

Thank you all for coming.

Please leave your name tags in the box as you go out.

See you again next year!

Could all the short-listed authors now join us on the stage for some group photos with GERALDINE and me?

Thank you everybody! **ENDS**