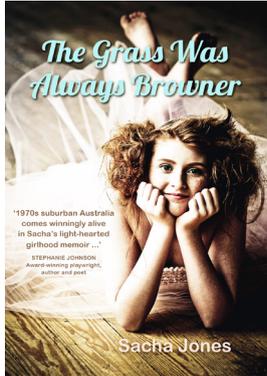




Memoir born of teenage angst a triumph of Australian comic voice



The Grass Was Always Browner by Sacha Jones is the story of a strong-willed, smart yet often less than sensible, curious and questioning girl growing up as the middle-child of three children. Her parents are old, and old-fashioned, deeply impractical, idealistic and naive, not best suited to negotiating the rough and rugged terrain of suburban Sydney in the 1970s-80s.

Sacha is not only the middle child, but she is stuck in the middle of the muddle and mess of her family's situation. She sees and suffers more than her siblings do – or so she feels. However, one advantage of her position is that she is sent to study ballet to treat her asthma, and through ballet she finds a way out of her predicament.

Sacha's determination to escape her humdrum existence and 'become Russian' saw her push through and succeed against the odds (wrong-shaped head, wrong feet, overall wrong build) and a father who is strongly against her becoming a ballet dancer. He describes ballet as 'a frivolous and selfish pursuit, too focused on appearances.' His own dreams are focused on a desire to save the Third World. However, in their very different ways, Sacha and her father are more alike than either would care to admit.

In becoming a dancing star, Sacha surprises no-one more than her legendary dance teacher – an actual Russian – Mrs P, Tanya Pearson. However, her father was right about ballet. Although it gives Sacha the escape she desires, there is a heavy price to pay. And when she sets off for London to further her dance career, it is in part because the Australian dance scene betrayed her trust.

Award-winning playwright, poet and novelist Stephanie Johnson says of *The Grass Was Always Browner*, "Nineteen seventies suburban Sydney comes winningly alive in Sacha's light-hearted girlhood memoir of boundless optimism, pink milk, tutus, triumph at the Eisteddfod and a horse in the back garden."

The Grass Was Always Browner is a laugh-out-loud memoir and a cautionary reminder that the grass is not always greener on the other side of the fence, even in Australia.

Author biography



Sacha Jones has a PhD in Political Theory from the University of Auckland and has variously taught politics, preschool and dancing. She lives with her family on the outskirts of a proper forest (in Auckland, New Zealand) and returns as often as it will have her to the land of fake forests and improbable fruits where she grew up (Frenchs Forest, Sydney). She blogs at OWW: One Woman's World (<http://onewomanswo.blogspot.com.au>).

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