

## Food, sex, money and quilting

We say it again and again here at 'get creative': the aim of this magazine is to inspire people, try new creative things and see what it brings to their lives. We love to meet men and women who took the chance on following a dream and have made a new life for themselves as a result. Liz Byrski is one of these people.

A journalist for many years and the author of a number of successful non fiction books, Liz had wanted to be a creative writer since the age of 16. A reunion with her first love (they'd been separated when she was 18), whom she hadn't seen for 37 years, led to the publication of 'Remember Me' in 2000. Through writing this much more personal story Liz says

she segued into fictional writing and, thank goodness for readers, that she did. The results have been the much loved 'Gang of Four' with quilter, Grace, as a central character, and the new novel, 'Food, Sex and Money' populated by three women who create a gallery-come-café with sewing and craft studios.

Liz's books explore the bonds of female friendships. Refreshingly, they are written from the perspective of women in their fifties who have



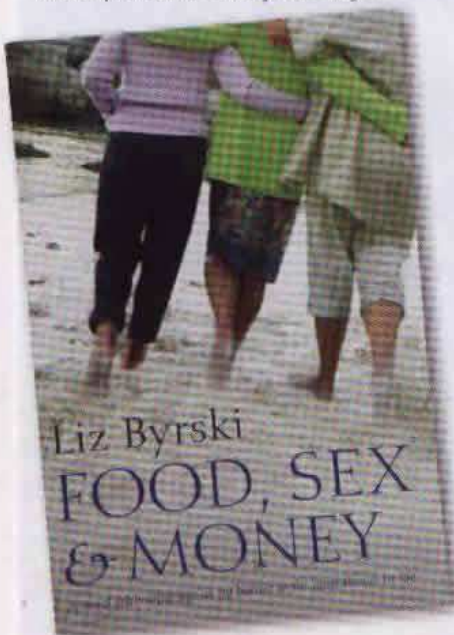
In 'Food, Sex and Money' we meet Sylvia, a talented seamstress and fashion designer who sacrificed her career for the sake of her husband and we meet Fran, a skilled and creative cook and writer who has never been able to turn those skills into real financial success. These two women, along

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spent much of their lives caring for others and find themselves ready for new adventures and new phases in their lives. Frank, female observations on life, love, family and housework are interspersed with conversations about parents, geriatric sex, the demands of adult children and the loss of love and of loved ones. Throughout both books, however, are also strong creative themes. Liz's characters are like the author herself - smart, witty, capable and brave - and able to maintain creative hobbies amidst demanding professional and personal lives.

with a third friend, Bonnie, have been separated for almost 40 years. A reunion lunch sees them re-establish their close ties and eventually they open us a business together.

Liz's spot-on depiction of complicated family relationships is remarkable. Having raised her own two children, gone through two divorces, cared for parents with Alzheimer's, worked as a journalist and served on the boards of a number of aged care establishments, she knows a bit about shouldering responsibility



and says she has often been struck by how much more of "the share" women are expected to carry.

"I see that women are often expected to take on more responsibilities for aging parents or for grandchildren than their brothers, often at a time in their life when they should be enjoying some freedom," she says. She calls herself a "thief" of other

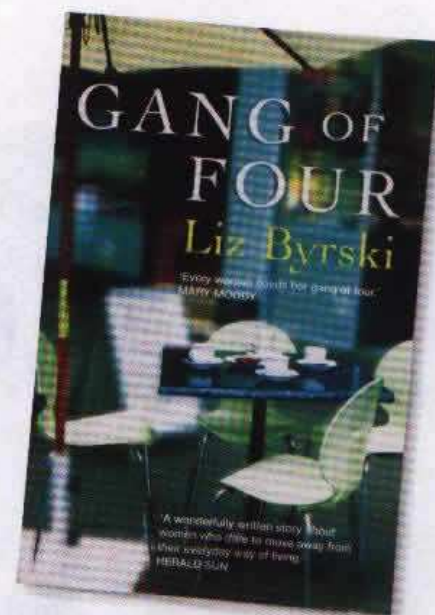
Part of the reason she has given her characters creative hobbies and careers is because of the social side of these pastimes for women.

"I love the idea of women working together, I value that," says Liz. "I've never understood why patchwork and so forth is called craft and not art. I think it's all because women did it and not men. I find myself interested in discovering what such creativity means in people's lives."

In her own life Liz obviously gets to express herself through her writing


although she has done a lot of knitting, crochet and patchwork in the past and says she still has a quilt she started 20 years ago that is waiting to be finished.

Originally from England, Liz also initiated a special patchworking fabric charity scheme whilst working in second hand shops as a young woman over there and



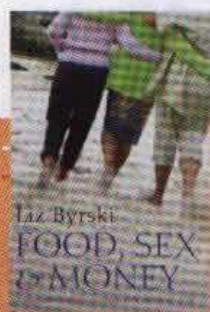
readers of 'Gang of Four' will recognise a similar scheme in that book.

"A lot of women came and helped on that scheme just for the company," says Liz. "I think as women we can always find something to unite us. We are not as competitive with each other as men."

Liz is currently working on her next book which will, once again be about women friends but this time, she says, "with a few more male viewpoints". We look forward to reading it. 

*"I've never understood why patchwork and so forth is called craft and not art" – Liz*

people's life stories, picking up fragments of real life tales and secreting them away for future use. Having lived on her own for the past 15 years Liz says she values her women friends more than ever, saying that they are truly like family to her.



## win a copy of Liz's book

Thanks to the good people at Pan Macmillan Australia, 'get creative' has six copies of 'Gang of Four' and 'Food, Sex & Money' to give away. Send us a photo of you with your best girlfriends and 100 words or less telling us what these friends mean to you. The best six stories and photos will be published in the May, Issue 8 Volume 2 of 'get creative' and the sender will win a copy of both novels.

**Note: Photos will not be returned and competition closes Friday 27 January 2006.**

Send entries to: **Get Creative Friendship Competition, Locked Bag 4321, South Melbourne, VIC, 3205**

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