

# Pan<sup>ic</sup>



Moira  
Dartley

SOCIETY COLUMNIST  
& SOCIAL CLIMBER





SKILLS

Anything for the Story.....	3
Befriend Source .....	4
Extract Gossip .....	5
Guilty Catholic .....	4
Journalistic Instinct.....	3
Naked Ambition.....	2
Poison Pen .....	2
Resent Men.....	3
Deep Faith .....	5
Withering Eye.....	3

HEALTH

- ☐ Dead as a Maggot
- ☐ Crook as Rookwood
- ☐ Completely Rooted
- ☐ Sick as a Dog
- ☐ A Bit Bugged
- ☒ Hearty
- ☐ Absolutely Stoked

VITALITY

- ☐ Unconscious
- ☐ Woozy
- ☐ Dazed
- ☐ Head-achy
- ☐ No Worries
- ☒ Magnetic
- ☐ Masterly

STABILITY

- ☒
- ☒
- ☒
- ☐
- ☐
- ☐

NON-CONFORMITY

- ☒
- ☒
- ☐
- ☐
- ☐
- ☐

QUEER

- ☒
- ☒
- ☒
- ☐
- ☐
- ☐

SENSUAL

- ☒
- ☒
- ☒
- ☒
- ☒
- ☐

MYSTIC

- ☒
- ☒
- ☒
- ☒
- ☒
- ☐

RAW TALENT (SECRET)

- ☒
- ☒
- ☒
- ☒
- ☐
- ☐

What is your ecstasy, in art or in life? What is your life's intended masterpiece? What would you sacrifice to achieve it?

Give this girl a chance. Watch her shine.

Yesterday you attended a fête at Government House. Your shoes had cardboard soles, your dress was second-hand. Your hair was nicely curled and dyed, but it cost a full days' wage.

Everyone smiled. They spoke carefully. They tolerate, even fear you. They use you to their social advantage. Oh, the irony. Miss Leila Waddell performed violin at the event, and was politely applauded by all. Waddell, former lover to the sex- and drug-addled Aleister Crowley, who called her the Scarlet Woman! Waddell now teaches in a convent school.

Sometimes you hate this town.

There are many names for the Sydney *Sun* 'Women's World' on page 8, few of them flattering. 'The little ladies page', 'the kitchen chronicle', 'the tennis club tattler'.

Moira writes the page, often using various pseudonyms to protect herself. Her editor stays mum. Her male colleagues though, look down at her with patronising disdain. The womens' page is not real news, and Moira is not a real reporter. She is the 'gay illiterate' (to repeat once particularly humiliating put-down) a mere woman who has no place in the boozy, aggressive male world of a journalist, the Inky Way.

Moira endures these spites, for her dream is to investigate real stories, and to write real news, for proper respect and a semi-decent wage. As a woman, of course, this is almost impossible. Her frustration and resentment grow, as does her anger.

Moira reports on the personal lives of theatre people, minor British aristocrats, colourful racing identities, politicians, artists, entitled queers in exile and the catty wives of beef exporters. She chronicles private parties, bush picnics, church fêtes, deb balls and days at the races. Plus recipes of course, mainly for pumpkin scones and woofy poofy lamingtons.

Male journalists report on arrests and divorces. More speculative gossip stories, rumours, and innuendo about affairs, pregnancies and dipsomania are not fit for the pages of the *Sun* (though they might be leaked for a few pounds to the aggressive and disrespectful *Bulletin* or that sordid yellow scandal sheet, *The Darlinghurst Whisper*).

Occasionally, and always under a pseudonym, Moira has destroyed reputations with a few short sentences.

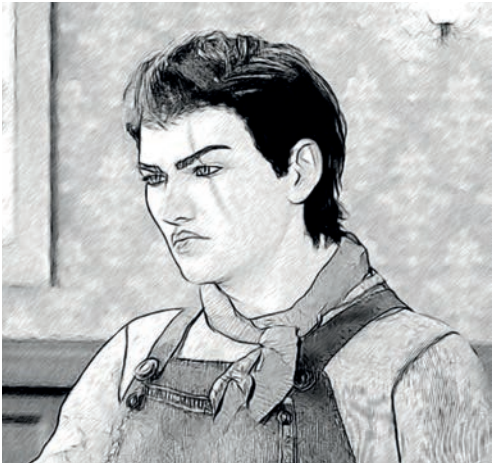
*It is good to be feared, even if only by the guilty.*

More often, she or her editor maintain discretion. It is what is *not* printed, of course, that an be most as important. It is a form of power, quid pro quo. Moira knows the value of *not* expressing an opinion.

Moira Dartley



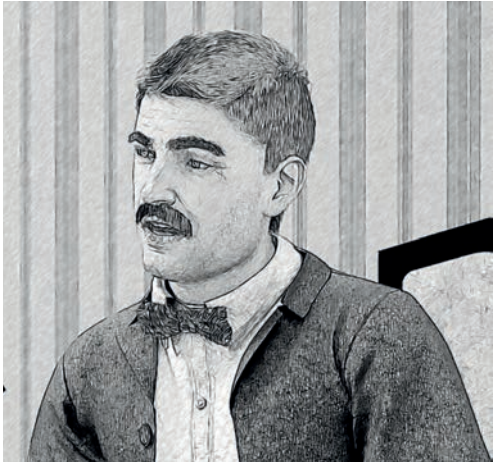
DULCIE DEAMER  
'The Queen of Bohemia'. A close friend, fellow writer, and constant companion. She has been a great comfort over the last months.



HOPE  
Enigmatic sculptor and street tough. He hides so much about himself, but despite your suspicions you believe him a friend. He is good company.



JACK LINDSAY  
Headstrong and charismatic poet. A source of gossip. You have a strong attraction to Jack, though he is a married man.



KEN SLESSOR  
Dapper poet and *Sun* journalist. A good and gentle man, who encourages your work. Married.

MOIRA: THE WOUND, THE SCAR, THE LIE

Moira's Wound: Resentment

*I know my talent. I could achieve so much more, become a real reporter, if not for men constantly putting me down.*

Moira's Scar: Suspicion

Edginess, being judgemental of men and suspicious of their motives, sarcasm, fantasies of vengeance, an inability to forgive or forget.

Moira's Lie: Unwomanly

Moira's wound is based in social reality, yet sometimes she believes her career aspirations are unfeminine and vain.

Associated Attitudes

Mistrust of others. Anger, envy, frustration, jealousy, resentment, scorn.

Positive Aspects

Moira tends to be cautious and wary, protecting herself from hurt. She is grateful for the support of loved ones who won't betray her. Her cynicism is advantageous in tracking down scandal.

Negative Aspects

Moira can be bitter and rancorous, withholding praise or encouragement. She has trust issues and is suspicious even of people who don't deserve it. Happiness is often fleeting.

Healing

Moira's religious faith helps balance the inner turmoil and assists in finding a temporary peace. She understands the power of forgiveness.

Breaking a page one headline story will silence both her internal and external critics.



Yet some scandals should be made public! In the last few months alone there has been the National Party pro-family MP McDonald, found dead outside a Woolloomooloo brothel, the Prohibitionist Newbridge descending into drug-addled madness, the fascist Old Guardsman Campbell terrorising his family after discovered in a sordid affair. And not a word printed in the Sydney press. The utter hypocrisy.

Moira is ambitious, but cannot see herself settling down to motherhood, even though she meets plenty of the right sort of men. There must be more to life than a cottage on the North Shore.

At 28, Moira feels old. She married early, but after only three months together her husband Andrew enlisted as an ANZAC. He was killed in 1916 at the Battle of Pozières. Devastated, Moira found acceptance and a degree of peace through her Catholic belief.

Moira's faith encourages kindness, though she never preaches. It has also led her to glimpses and fleeting feelings of deep peace, the sense of another world beyond the veil, a greater reality, a consummate beauty. Three times now she has experienced brief visions of Zion, of the New Jerusalem, cast amongst the folds of Surry Hills. These moments of comfort can lift her from deepest despair.

Moira now attends mass almost daily, and confesses once a week. She longs for another glimpse beyond the veil.

And yet she sins. Despite her faith, Moira is not a wowser. Social and sensuous, she finds it difficult to stay with the bounds that Sydney society sets for a grieving war widow. Her companionship with Dulcie means she has a boisterous social life, but her relations with men have been tentative. Despite meeting many of the better sort, and dreaming of a good marriage, Moira still regards herself as a fake playing at being better than herself.

Six months ago, Moira began a discrete but passionate affair with the artist Demitri Meryck. He enjoyed a controversial reputation at best, as befits an artist out to scandalise society. (Meryck was a experimental painter of the sort that Jack Lindsay hates). Their emotions ran hot and cold. After three months, her lover dropped contact, and a week later took a midnight swim at Manly from which he never returned. They pulled his body out of the ocean three days later. Recovering a sense of balance has been slow. Dulcie keeps Moira distracted. Hope offers companionship, despite the darkness he holds within. Ken Slessor is kind, and gentle, one of the few journalists who accepts what she does. He encourages her work and has had some of her articles printed under a male pseudonym. And there is a definite chemistry between Moira and Jack Lindsay, despite his sometimes grinding pretension.

Life beckons. Friends bring joy. Storms pass. This is the Golden Decade.

