

## **Author Interview: Charlotte Ward**

### **Why did you decide to write the book?**

It was something I'd always wanted to do. I'd already started on a fiction idea when I was approached by Headline to write *Why Am I Always The One Before 'The One'?* so I jumped at the chance. My book editor had seen an article I wrote for Grazia magazine on the same subject and thought it would make a good book. When she tracked me down she was concerned I'd think she was some weirdo stalker - in fact I was so excited I was almost hyperventilating down the phone!



### **Did you find writing a book very different from an article in a magazine?**

Absolutely! It's the hardest thing I've ever done. The average article I write at The Mirror is 1,500 words long and this was 80,000! Plus I only had four months to do it on top of my full time job!

Every day when I commuted to and from work I sat on the bus or the tube typing frantically on my blackberry. Then every evening and all weekend I'd try and craft my waffle into something readable. I didn't even get out of my pyjamas on a Saturday, I was such a slob.

There was even a time when I had a fleeting thought about trying to type on my laptop in the bath. But thankfully common sense prevailed.

### **How did you persuade your friends to part with their stories?**

I sent out appeals by email and on Facebook with a list of questions promising them anonymity. Thankfully I have some very trusting friends so they took me for my word and began to reply with their stories of woe, wickedness and wanton behaviour.

It made me realise that pretty much everyone has horrific or hysterical dating stories lurking in their past - even my Mum offered a few!

Strangely, at first, my female friends replied with dozens of stories, observations and insights - but the men were deadly silent.

I was feeling rather disappointed with mankind when suddenly, a few weeks later, the blokes also started to respond with gusto.

In my experience women love to talk about this stuff - we're always doing relationship quizzes in magazines and the like - so I think it came quite naturally for the girls to answer my questions.

But men don't necessarily have big discussions dissecting every little thing of a love affair, so for them it took a bit more time to decide what exactly they wanted to tell me.

### **What's your favourite story from the book?**

There are dozens that cracked me up, but there's one I absolutely love about my friend hiding under a bed dressed as a bearded lady to escape her ex and his 'slutty' new fiancée. It's just the ridiculous of how the situation panned out.

There's also a very funny story from a male friend telling how he had a one night stand with a bonkers girl who completely startled him the following morning by looming over to take a photo of him half asleep, dribbling and with 'fear in his eyes'.

### **Did any of the stories shock you?**

Not really. I have plenty of horror stories of my own which still leave me cringing to this day, so I think I'm fairly unshockable.

Although there is one story about a friend's psycho ex-girlfriend which, in all seriousness, was awful.

### **How do your ex-boyfriends feel about being immortalised in print?**

I think they're pretty OK about it. I managed to get in touch with most of them and warn them. Plus names and details have been changed so I think that helped. Adam, who features the most, has a fantastic sense of humour so just found the whole thing very amusing.

I think he quite likes the notoriety!

### **And what about your present boyfriend 'The Beau'?**

Before I agreed to do the book I asked his permission and although he did have his reservations, he knew it was a dream come true for me so he told me to go for it.

I think the important thing is that while I have been very open in the book revealing how our relationship has panned out, and a lot of the ups and downs, I've also kept back something for us.

We still have plenty of private moments and memories that are very much ours, so I think the balance is right.

### **Are you still worried you'll always be the one before 'The One'?**

Writing the book has actually given me a lot of clarity on things and has left me feeling very optimistic.

I might be 30 and not have a ring on my finger but I've realised I should be having fun and not worrying about how everyone else is doing.

I'd like to settle down, and I'm sure it'll happen one day, but there's no point getting worked up about it.

I'm very fortunate in so many ways, so instead of always looking for the next thing to tick off on my life check list I'm going to enjoy myself and live for the moment.