

Novella Launch Speech

I don't know why I thought it was a good idea to get up here and speak in front of everyone today when one of my biggest fears is public speaking.

But I guess that just goes to show how The Novella Project has changed the way I do things.

It has somehow given me the courage to test my own boundaries and overcome the very things I always told myself were impossible. If you told me a year ago that I would soon write a 93,000 word story that I'm actually proud of, that I'd learn to have faith in the good of people again, that I'd be this senselessly happy all of the time, then I'd probably laugh in your face.

But this is exactly what The Novella Project has done for me. Working on our novellas has taught us to listen to our own voices and trust that there's value in what we have to say. It taught us that stories can change the world, one person at a time. It taught us that stories can change the world, and the world begins with us.

At the start of the year, at the start of countless drafts and countless hours past my bedtime, I was just beginning to learn how to pour my heart on the page for strangers to read. Little did I know these strangers would become something like my own guardian angels.

Their names are Richard, Bilal and Alison. They were our mentors, which is to say they cherished, and nurtured and believed in us so wholeheartedly that they left no room for self-doubt.

It was through them that we found the confidence to keep writing. To know that there are people like them in the world makes me feel safe. It reminds me that it doesn't really matter what has happened to you, it matters that you have enough faith in your story to tell it.

These books that you see here today are our children. All of us have been pregnant for like the whole year so really, this book launch is a very big, joint birthday party.

Thank you for coming to help us celebrate today. We are so excited and slightly nervous to send our children off into the world. But hopefully, if we've done our jobs right, they'll find their home in all of your hearts.

Vivian Pham

Sunday 10 December 2017