



## BOOK OF THE WEEK

HALF BAD

BY SALLY GREEN, £5.99

It seems that every few months a new book is published with the tagline “the next Hunger Games” hopefully emblazoned on its cover – usually dystopian, usually with a cynical female protagonist and usually, just a bit disappointing.

This is why I am recommending Sally Green’s brilliant debut *Half Bad*. If you loved Suzanne Collins’s epic trilogy, then *Half Bad* is for you. There is no Battle Royale-style television show, it doesn’t feature a cynical teenage girl with a bow and arrow and there are no tortured love triangles with handsome bakers here, but stay with me. It’s got witches.

I mean that in the best possible way, because *Half Bad* is a re-imagining of a familiar concept.

In Green’s world, there are white witches and black witches. And in this modern-day Britain, humans and witches co-exist.

White (good) control and monitor their fellow witches, keeping them safe from their black (bad) counterparts.

This is where the book’s hero, Nathan, comes in. With a black witch



**AUTHOR...** Sally Green

for a father, and a white witch for a mother, Nathan is half good, half bad. Nathan is, in short, a problem.

Tense, gripping and bursting with originality, this is a story that will constantly surprise you. In a departure from the bleak realism of most dystopian fiction, *Half Bad* is about magic but it is magic unlike anything you will have read before, with strictly no broomsticks.

With a baddie to rival Lord Voldemort and a tenacious teenage rogue as its hero, *Half Bad* is sure to be a massive global success.

The film rights have already been sold, so you’d better get reading!

*Sarah Mitchell  
Edinburgh,  
West End*

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### STEVE HENDRY

**When Pam Ann flies into town, it’s usually best to duck for cover.**

The self-styled Australian “air bitch” mixes trolley dolly glamour with a sense of the outrageous and a wicked wit aimed at anyone in the audience who is deemed “economy”, which is just about everyone.

Brisbane and Melbourne are feeling the afterburn of her last flying visit and she is now bound for the UK to arrive at the Glasgow International Comedy Festival.

Pam, alter ego of the charming and straight-talking comedienne Caroline Reid, is not one to spare anyone’s feelings but Glasgow is a gig and a city that is very close to her heart.

She said: “Listen to me right now. To me, the Glaswegians are the heart and soul of comedy and, honestly, I don’t beat around the bush, I tell it like it is.

“I have always said New Yorkers are right on your tail but Glaswegians are one of the best comedy audiences in the world because they love a good time – and they love a good drink.

“I hear them from my dressing room and, in my head, they are all like pit bull terriers on leads who want to go for a walk but they are not allowed.

“Then I come out and let them off the lead and they are all like, ‘Raaar!’. I don’t say that about everyone. Glasgow, I adore.”

She will be flying to the UK, of course, but if she has her way it will be low-key and incognito, which is all for the benefit of her show, *Fly*.

She said: “I like to go under the radar. If I get recognised, fine. That makes my trip wonderful because everyone is so gorgeous and lovely to me but, if people don’t recognise me, I find that better because I can gather material.

“Pretty much the whole of the first act is based on my trip out to Australia, so it will be different when I come to the UK.

“Everything will be topical and will go into an hour of fresh, brand new material that hasn’t even been tried and tested.

“Everything is really off the cuff.”

She includes everything that affects the airline industry, so the disappearance of the Malaysian airliner will likely feature, but she makes no apologies for it.

She said: “I have to acknowledge everything that happens in the industry, especially when I am on tour and have a show on.

“You can’t ignore the elephant in the room. You may come out offending some people and you may not – but that’s the job of what I do.”

At 45, Pam is nearing vintage status and Caroline admits her longevity has come as something of a surprise to her.

She said: “I think when my first review said, ‘This is a one-trick pony, it will never work,’ I thought, ‘It has legs, I’ll give this a go’.

“Obviously the airline industry back then was so domestic – there were no low-cost carriers and people didn’t fly a lot when I started, especially in Australia.

“The character has evolved just as the airline and travel industry has evolved but I could never have foreseen that happening, along with social media and everything attached to that. I guess



**CHEEKY...** Caroline Reid playing her sassy character

people relate to it because they fly, they see different cabin crews, they fly to different destinations – everyone has an airline story.

“I always liked the airline industry but it’s a character that, to be honest, was a complete fluke.

“I just thought, ‘This is fun, I’ll dress up like an air hostess and verbally abuse people’.

“What’s not to love? I did it and it worked.

“It was just a little idea that grew out of something, which became a monster.”

Pam Ann’s appeal has stretched to sell-out tours, her own TV talk show, hosting a live broadcast of the Sydney Mardi Gras and even providing in-flight entertainment for the 40th birthday of Elton John’s partner David Furnish.

Her celebrity fans include Madonna.

Perhaps, not surprisingly, Caroline’s ambitions beyond Pam Ann are limited.

She said: “I’m not really interested, to be honest. I can’t be bothered. I’m 45.

“I just want to do her until I go to the grave. If she can keep me in the lifestyle and the travel world, then great.

“I really want to do a Pam Ann movie but I have no desire to become a serious actress.

“Not at all. Not even a serious comedian. I don’t know where I am placed.

“I didn’t even think I could do this in the first place, so for the character to have allowed me to achieve what I have is great.

“If I was really interested in doing other things, it would not necessarily be anything to do with the arts.

“I would love to be a jet ski teacher at St Martin in the Caribbean. That sounds like a great life. I think those things are far more interesting.”

**■ Pam Ann’s Fly is at the King’s Theatre, Glasgow, on March 25 as part of the Glasgow International Comedy Festival. Box office 08432086000 or www.atgtickets.com**

### JET-SETTING...

Pam Ann is now bound for the UK for the Glasgow International Comedy Festival

# Buckle up for some turbulence

**Comedienne Caroline Reid on winging it with alter-ego Pam Ann ahead of what’s set to be a raucous Glasgow gig**



**HAVE A SAY...** The National Theatre of Scotland wants your views

## Make a show of your views on the referendum

### STEVE HENDRY

**The deadline to take part in the National Theatre of Scotland’s The Great Yes, No, Don’t Know, Five Minute Theatre Show is fast approaching.**

A series of live scenes, songs, skits, rants and dramas, it will allow anyone, anywhere, to have their creative say on the most important decision in the country’s history in modern times.

Anyone can take part by writing, devising, directing, performing and producing a piece of theatre that is five minutes long.

There are no set skills requirements and no required qualifications, other than a good idea, dramatic flair and some bravery.

However, the closing date for submissions to the show is 5pm next Sunday, March 23.

The event’s co-curator, David Greig, said: “The Great Yes, No, Don’t Know, Five Minute Theatre Show will be an extraordinary celebration of the

democratic and creative spirit that exists in Scotland.

“Over one tremendous day in June we will bring together hundreds of plays, sketches, songs, polemics and poems made by groups around the country, as well as soliciting input from some of Scotland’s best writing and performing talents.

“At this key moment in the nation’s history it’s a way for Scotland to speak to itself – not in formal political tones but in a relaxed, rambunctious, celebratory and personal way.

“And, crucially, it’s a chance for everyone to contribute, not just a political or artistic elite.

“It’s going to be a special event and whether you find yourself listening to a song from Skye at four in the morning, watching a show in a live hub, or enjoying a laugh in the comfort of your own home with a dram beside you, it’s bound to be full of very memorable moments.

“Don’t just come along – take part.”

**■ To get involved visit: [www.fiveminutetheatre.com](http://www.fiveminutetheatre.com). Full details are available online at: [www.nationaltheatrescotland.com](http://www.nationaltheatrescotland.com)**

### LIVE DANCE

Licence to Thrill is the name of Cole’s 2014 tour, which focuses on Latin and ballroom dancing.

The Music Hall is an odd choice of venue – a rectangular hall with the stage at one end and no tiered seating in the stalls. The live band made up of it with, somewhat unsurprisingly, a number of Bond tunes.

Largely, the show features more

### BRENDAN COLE MUSIC HALL, ABERDEEN 11.03



upbeat numbers, with a few slow dances in between. Despite the phenomenal success of *Strictly*, this sort of thing surely has a niche appeal.

Ballet at least tells a story, this is really a display of technical proficiency and ‘Oh, isn’t he nice’, patter that Cole’s aged fanbase lapped up.

The highlight may have been the

Q&A session during the second half, which saw Cole meet his supporters – including a 100-year-old woman.

The penultimate number, rather predictably, was a version of the Dirty Dancing routine, before Cole and his troupe kept the 80s theme alive dancing to Footloose.

One for fans only.

KYLE REID