
~ 5 QUESTIONS ~

with

DARREN LEE

of earth shattering importance

1. If you could take one book to a deserted island, what would it be?

That's a tough choice. I guess it would have to be something large and complex to keep me entertained. I'm tempted to say Murakami's *The Wind-up Bird Chronicle* because it's enigmatic as hell and I've been meaning to re-read it for years, but I think I'd prefer a Dickens- since I'm a fan of the underdog so I'd have to go for *Barnaby Rudge*, which I've always liked and doesn't get as much love as it should.

2. What is your writing space?

Home is too distracting, but I have been known to prop myself up in bed and write on occasion. I'm more of a cafe person and I find I can get a good fifty minutes of work done in the time it takes to drink a latte- anything longer and I start to get distracted again. Cafes in bookshops are normally best because you're surrounded with thousands of books, and each one is a reason to get motivated with your own writing. Plus, you can always buy a book when you're done.

3. If you are in a writing rut, how do you get yourself out of it?

At the moment I'm only writing short stories, so the ruts are not as terrifying as they would be if I were a novelist. The chief cause of my rutting is getting bored with the story, and if that's the case I just walk away from it- if I'm bored then the reader certainly would be as well. I still keep everything I give up on because you never know what might come in useful at a later stage.

4. Pen, pencil, computer, typewriter, lipstick on a mirror - what is your preferred tool of trade?

I use pen and paper while I'm brainstorming ideas, but when it comes to the nitty gritty I'm armed with an ipad mini that comes with a bluetooth keyboard. The only downside of this method is that it's really easy to be distracted and play *Plants vs Zombies* instead of doing anything constructive: my favourite weapon is the *Chilli Bean*- it causes the zombies to explode in a cloud of flatulence... See? Distracting isn't it?

5. If the world was going to end in a week and you had to choose between a small remote island or a metropolis to live out your last days, which would you choose?

The island sounds idyllic, but depending on your Armageddon

scenario I'd have to be brutally honest and say I'd stay in the city, playing my favourite music at full blast, drinking, binge-eating and indulging in acts of consequence-free depravity. I'd like to think that the week would be so hedonistic that my actions might end up being the very thing that brings about the end of civilisation- If I had a choice about how to go, it would certainly be as a part of a self-fulfilling prophesy.

~ About the author ~

Darren Lee lives in London and has had stories published in the *Lover's Lies* and *Fifty Stories For Pakistan* anthologies. Several of his stories have appeared in the pages of *Open Pen* and have also been performed at *London's Liar's League* salon. In 2011 he won copies of the Booker long list in a Twitter fiction competition, thus enabling him to legitimately claim that he has won a booker prize for his writing.

You can read his story, *The Assembled Self* in **Islands and Cities: A Collection of Short Stories from Tasmania and London**

T