

PRAISE FOR THE LAST BOOKSHOP

‘An entertaining, heartwarming story that captures our love of books and bookshops.’ *Liz Byrski*

‘There is a little bit of something for everyone in *The Last Bookshop*, from romance to pathos ... it is a delight.’ *The AU Review*

‘... a gently optimistic novel that celebrates both the joys of reading and the ways it can bring people together.’ *The Weekend West*

‘Tissues may be required, but this novel will undoubtedly leave your heart warmed and inspired.’ *Booklover Book Reviews*

‘Emma Young’s debut novel is for anyone who has ever worked in customer service and thought “these stories should be in a book”.’ *Perth Now*

‘There is much more to the novel than a plea, however justified, for physical bookshops; there is a charming and heartfelt story of love, growth, loss, betrayal and the kind of keen world-observation that you get only from someone whose life of wide reading has deepened their understanding of the layered complexities of the human condition.’ *The Sydney Morning Herald*

‘... a heart-warming read about the connections people make through the books they read and the power of local communities to save the places that matter most.’ *The Nerd Daily*

‘*The Last Bookshop* is the debut novel of bookseller-turned-author Emma Young, who has used her years of experience to craft a heartwarming story of love, family and, of course, how important bookshops are to us.’ *Good Reading*

‘Emma Young’s knowledge of literature wafts through this story of love, loss and loneliness like a warm breeze, reminding us that stories can help heal.’ *Australian Women’s Weekly*

‘This is a beautifully written heartwarming book with wonderful three-dimensional characters ...’ *Beauty and Lace*

‘... sweet and wholesome entertainment for those who, like Cait, simply love creative printed matter.’ *Weekend Australian*

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The
Disorganisation
of Celia Stone

EMMA YOUNG



FREMANTLE PRESS

2018 YEAR IN REVIEW

PEAK POSITIVE EXPERIENCES

- Activities/outings with 1-3 loved ones at a time
- Date nights with Jes
- Vietnam with Jes
- Working on the book and blog
- Running

PEAK NEGATIVES

- Overbooking weekends (e.g. weekend in which had date night, then breakfast do, then family thing, then girls' night)
- Obligation parties/large social gatherings (don't want to go, feel guilty, go anyway, have shit time, leave early, feel guilty)

TO SCHEDULE – BASED ON PEAK POSITIVES

- Schedule Jes' parents to dinner quarterly, Dad weekly, alternate fortnights for grandparents, Aubrey & Dave and Lili & Bennett quarterly each. Consider outings e.g. local tours & escape rooms, not just dinners
- Offer to babysit some of Jes' little cousins?
- More/regular date nights
- Solo creativity-nourishing activities for self
- Mid-year holiday
- Volunteer; to contribute to society?

NOT-TO-DO – BASED ON PEAK NEGATIVES

- NO booking 2+ events in one day
- NO bookings on Sundays AT ALL
- NO going to parties when don't really want to

AIM

- Make 2019 a qualitatively better and more efficient year

Tuesday 1 January

Life really doesn't get any better than a lovely sunny New Year's brunch with my husband, Diary; unless, that is, it's a lovely sunny brunch producing a really solid, actionable set of meeting minutes.

Jes looked a bit resigned when I got out my notebook, printouts and refillable ballpoint, pushing aside my long black to make room, but made no protest apart from saying, 'I thought you don't believe in New Year's resolutions.'

'I agree the traditional form of New Year's resolution is largely useless,' I said. 'But people who leave it at that are equal cop-outs to the people who make their resolutions only to immediately break them and go back to their old ways. In fact, I sympathise more with the people who made and broke their resolutions. At least they had some positive energy.'

'Right,' said Jes. He finished the remaining two-thirds of his flat white in one gulp and gestured for another to the waiter, who nodded across the crowd. I decided not to tell Jes that having so much milk and caffeine before his meal was going to destroy his appetite and that he should drink more mindfully. He looked a bit hungover, and I should be chill about this sort of thing during the holidays. I pressed on with my point instead.

'Just because the old formula of making resolutions is ineffective doesn't mean we should squander the opportunity. Especially one that conveniently comes at this point in the calendar year and festive season. It's a time we are naturally reflective, so it's

a logical opportunity to assess our activities over the past year, and their impact, so we can identify actionable improvements for the next.'

'We should make one of our resolutions that you have to put a dollar in a jar every time you use the word "actionable", said Jes, which I ignored. The incomparable Tim Ferriss, author of *The 4-Hour Workweek* and other bibles, has a great method for this process: the past-year review. I proceeded to explain.

'Basically, we look over our entire calendars for the past year, everything we did. Obviously, you need to be able to refer to a diary or calendar where you have faithfully and systematically recorded all events and activities for 2018.'

'Ummm.'

'I printed them out,' I said, handing him his, and taking a sip of my coffee. God, it was good. Coffee out is such a treat. 'So use this to identify your peak positive and negative experiences. You can analyse this information through the lens of the 80/20 rule.'

Jes looked blank.

'The Pareto Principle?'

'Sorry.' He shrugged.

'In this context, the 80/20 rule means roughly 20% of people, activities or commitments will have triggered 80% of your peak positive or lowest negative points last year.'

'Right,' Jes said, scanning his printout. His fresh coffee arrived and he immediately drank half of it.

'Then, based on knowing what is good for you and bad for you, you can actually schedule in more of the positive leaders for the year ahead in a concrete fashion and get them on the calendar. You can book and pre-pay. It's solid and it's actionable!'

'Right. And what about the negatives?'

'Yep, that's the second part. You take the negative leaders and

make them into a not-to-do list and put it somewhere you can see it for a while, theoretically until you learn to stop doing them out of guilt, or FOMO, or whatever it is that made us do them. This is where I fell down in 2018. It's a lot easier for me to schedule more positive stuff than to do less of anything.'

'Really?' Jes said.

'But this is why I want you to do it with me this year,' I said. 'Help keep me accountable.' I looked at my beautiful husband, his messy brown hair and his melty brown eyes and his funny smile. His expression was brightening, because our food was arriving: bacon, eggs, toast and chipolatas for him, house-cured salmon bagel for me. 'Yay,' I said. 'You can do your review while you eat!'

'Yay,' said my patient beloved. 'Where's yours?'

'I already did mine.'

I looked over mine while we ate and Jes flicked through his printed-out Google calendars and made notes. Then we swapped and looked at each other's.

'Running,' Jes said in disgust, looking at my list.

'You like hiking.'

'Hiking's *nice*. It involves stopping and smelling the roses.'

'Roses?'

'Well, trees.'

'Running also involves enjoying scenery,' I said.

'We already catch up with friends and family a lot,' Jes said, reading down the page.

'Yes, but the scheduling of it takes up a lot of my mental real estate, so if we do that in advance then it's easier.'

'If you say so. But this looks like a very full schedule.'

'Too much? Maybe I drop couples dinners with Lili and Bennett and Aubrey and Dave to twice a year each?'

'Maybe. And why is keeping up with my grandparents and sister on *your* list, anyway?'

'Well, is it on yours?'

Silence.

'That's why.'

'And babysitting my cousins?'

'I don't know ... it would be nice to be part of their lives, get to know them better?'

'Yeah, let's put that on the maybe pile. Along with volunteering.' He drank the rest of his coffee, and said, 'OK, now we're talking: holiday! But only one?'

'Well, I might need the rest of my annual leave to work on the book.'

'OK ... I'm down with not overbooking weekends and going to obligation parties. I put that as a negative, too. It's you scheduling all that in, though.'

'This year I won't!'

Jes' peak positives also included Vietnam, date nights, and small get-togethers, as well as a couple of big hikes he did and some of his work field trips, which amazed me – imagine listing any work day as a really *positive* experience.

Thoroughly satisfied by our session, I sipped my cold but still delicious coffee and was at the point of packing up when Jes said, 'Wait. I've got one more item.'

'What is it?' I said, excited. I was already thinking, maybe he wants to do pottery classes with me! Or go horseriding! Or abseiling? Learn to whittle?

'It's time to reopen discussions on whether we try to have a baby,' Jes said.

This time it was my turn to stare blankly at him. I felt my hands

scrabble for something to do. They found my coffee cup.

‘You said you’d maybe revisit the issue. You’re 34 this year.’ Undeniable. ‘And you’d want a nice long time to plan and prepare, knowing you.’

‘OK, you can flag that,’ I said, slowly. My coffee cup was empty. How did that happen? I put the cup down. ‘That’s logical.’ But I felt my heart pounding, thinking of how I’d just spent half an hour contemplating our current difficulties in trying to shoehorn everything necessary into life.

‘Celia, are you all right? You’ve gone white,’ Jes said.

‘No I haven’t,’ I said, faintly.

‘We don’t have to talk about it now. I’m only putting it on the table.’

‘No, you’re right. This whole exercise is about designing the future, after all. Thanks for communicating with me,’ I said, ineffectually tidying the breakfast mess on the table. ‘I’ll take it on notice.’

Now Jes has fallen asleep on the couch, sleeping off the load of artery hardeners he just consumed, happily oblivious to what he’s done.

Thursday 3 January

Have baby? Think about having baby? I really don’t know how to classify this. Jes doesn’t want it on the backburner, but I am certainly not putting it on the active projects list. What would the corresponding first action be? Go off birth control, I suppose. Do you get fertile the second you go off the Pill? I suppose you would. Ugh, imagine getting a period again. Simply wanted to enjoy day, but now too twitchy. Might go for run.

7pm. Went for a run with podcast. Only semi-effective distraction – The Minimalists are getting a little repetitive. Maybe it's time for a new podcast. I could try the Mad Scientist again, get back into the whole Financial Independence Retire Early crowd. Only trouble is they are all so *American*. The financial detail is largely irrelevant for Australian listeners. Well, this is why I'm writing my own FIRE book.

There is really no other way to get that post-run feeling. Like my lungs and my brain are freshly oxygenated with joy and achievement, the sight of a sunset on the river imprinted on my retinas. I feel better now.

Friday 4 January

Went for a hike with Jes. Nice being on leave and having time to do something like this together. I was hoping he wouldn't bring up the baby thing again, and he didn't.

Don't wanna go back to work on Monday. The feeling is tightening like a noose already.

Saturday 5 January

SHOPPING

- Dirty Clean Foods: beef bulk order
- Farmers market: eggs, fish, produce, chicken, bread
- Loose produce store: flour, pumpkin seeds, rolled oats, sunflower seeds, quinoa (remember containers)
- Coles (unavoidable): tinned stuff, toothpaste, tissues

TO DO

- Water pots
- Fill birdbath
- Feed food scraps to worms
- Washing: clothes, towels
- Tidy weekly mess-plosion
- Vac, mop
- Granddad
- Track and classify expenses for week

3pm. New Year limbo well and truly behind us. Clock ticking through our last 48 hours of freedom. And of course tonight is inevitable social commitment that seemed a good idea to Celia's of Christmas Past: dinner at Aubrey and Dave's. More eating and drinking!

Jes awoke from post-lunch sleep in front of TV and asked what needed doing.

'I have to make a salad and buy wine and do my hair,' I said.

'I can get wine,' he said. 'I can't do hair.'

'Really?' I said, smiling, reaching out and ruffling his.

'And I know better than to get in the way of the salad.'

'Correct.'

‘What are you up to, anyway?’ he said, leaning over and kissing my neck in a way clearly calculated to make me lose focus.

‘I’m doing my 2019 productivity planner and calendarising our friend and family catch-ups as per our Year in Review.’

‘Sexy,’ he said, kissing down to my collarbones. ‘Tell me more.’

‘I’ve still got the artist dates with myself and date nights with you to schedule,’ I said, pulling bits of paper and highlighters out from under his butt and laughing. ‘Don’t distract me! Ah, damn it!’ The bloody washing machine was beeping again. Jes got off the couch. ‘OK, I’ll go get wine,’ he said.

‘Thank you,’ I called, as he shut the door behind him. I heard him splashing through my pot-watering puddles to the car.

Washing now wafting gently about in the lovely warm air, coming in fragrant through the window to me in my happy place, on the couch, laptop open to Evernote, and blissfully synced across phone and desktop, for sacred last Saturday of holiday.