



## KIRSTY BROOKS

"I'm a shameless eavesdropper," says Kirsty Brooks, "and when I'm out, I am often sneaking off to the toilets to write down things people have said." It's a quality that doesn't seem at all out of place with the goings-on in her book *The Vodka Dialogue* (Hodder, \$29.95), a light, cheerful blend of chick lit and crime fiction. The latter genre is close to Brooks's heart: "I love the nosiness and voyeurism that come from trying to unravel something within a book."

The same fondness for unravelling plots is evident in Brooks's heroine, Cassidy Blair, a girl with a penchant for matching underwear who finds herself drawn into a job as a sexual sleuth as a way of paying her Visa bill. In a glamorous but gormless fashion, Cassidy tries to get to the bottom of some naughty neighbourhood mysteries. "She uses her wits and just makes up stuff as she goes along," says Brooks proudly. "She is my heroine and alter-ego – she says and does a lot of things I do and, more importantly, things I *want* to do."

Brooks, who has written two non-fiction books and contributes to several publications, always dreamt of creating a kind of "Trixie Belden for grown-ups", where the sleuthing heroine had a group of close friends and an exciting life – "but also wore good clothes, kissed boys and made mistakes. Oh, and drank beer and sneaked M&Ms," she adds. The boys and the drinks are certainly more grown-up here, with a dashing love interest and a lurid cocktail that is also the book's title. With two more books to follow, both Brooks and her heroine will be able to further their eavesdropping and investigating skills respectively. – **Fiona Daniels**