

**Ep #209: Wisdom from Ancient Goddesses  
with Jasmine Elmer**



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**Maisie**

**The Maisie Experience with Maisie**

## Ep #209: Wisdom from Ancient Goddesses with Jasmine Elmer

This is episode 209 and I have a really great conversation for you today because I am talking with Jasmine Elmer, who is a straight-talking ancient world expert. She decided that her subject needed a bit of a glow up and began her mission in 2020 to make the subject relatable, representative and also accessible, which you're going to hear her talking all about in our conversation.

Outside of writing, she spends her time bringing energy to our television screens. She's been on channels like Channel 4, Channel 5 and National Geographic, as well as hosting and appearing on many podcasts and indeed her own podcast. I brought her onto the podcast because her debut non-fiction work, *Goddess with a Thousand Faces*, recently came out. It is fantastic. It is a bold exploration of world goddesses, blending storytelling with historical fact. It is a great read and it follows from years of research as a student at universities like UCL, Cambridge and Exeter, and also on the back of a career as a secondary school teacher of classics.

Jasmine is of dual heritage, Pakistani and white. Her mother was born in Canada. She grew up in East London, but she now lives next to Devon with her husband and son. She's got five cats and, as she says, absolutely not ashamed of that fact. So, you are going to get to hear all about her book. I really recommend that you buy it. It's fantastic, very readable, enjoyable and interesting. But for now, enjoy our conversation where we didn't just speak about her book, we also spoke about becoming a writer and the writing process and all the things that you have to navigate when you decide to take that on. So enjoy it.

If you want to do things differently but need some help making it happen then tune in for your weekly dose of coaching from me, Maisie Hill, Master Life Coach and author of *Period Power*. Welcome to *The Maisie Hill Experience*.

Maisie: Okay, welcome everyone to the podcast. I have been so excited and just really looking forward to having this conversation because today's wonderful guest is the fabulous Jasmine Elmer, whose first book, *Goddess*

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with a Thousand Faces, recently came out. And as soon as you messaged me letting me know when it was going to be coming out. I like jumped straight on, got my pre-order in and was just so happy to have it in my hands and it has just been a delight to read. So, thank you for writing such a fabulous book and welcome.

Jasmine: Thank you so much. I'm more excited just for the record.

Maisie: Tell me about that excitement.

Jasmine: Oh my God. Well, I mean, where do we start? I mean, I've followed your work for a really long time and I've always admired your approach to everything and actually we'll probably get into this a little bit later but your tips about writing books were echoing in my brain when I was writing my first book. So you know in some ways you holding that book you've got a tiny weeny little bit of input into that book by cheering me on in my head by saying you can write any way you want.

Maisie: Oh my gosh okay I can't wait to get into this I had no idea.

Jasmine: Yeah I know you it sounds like we've set this up, eh? I've not been paid. This is not a paid advert for Maisie's work, but it's true. It's true. So you deserve some credit for it.

Maisie: Well, thank you. I mean, I'll take it. Right. I really want to know, and I'm sure everyone listening will want to know, where did Goddess with a Thousand Faces come from? Like, what was the book's birth story.

Jasmine: Yeah, that's a great question. And there's a slightly annoying start to the answer, because it was a moment of inspiration. I think a lot of people, especially because it's a mainly non-fiction book, people kind of like the idea or imagine an idea of like many thousands of hours of research cultivating in something but for me I was standing at the fridge. It was around.

Maisie: Where all good ideas happen. Yes.

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Jasmine: Yes, exactly and I had been playing around with book ideas for a while. I'd had one or two that didn't kind of get anywhere and weren't quite feeling right but I think they're an attempt of me responding to what I thought the industry wanted rather than what my voice was. I'd been ruminating on this and I stood at the fridge and I went, I know, let's do goddesses.

I can't really tell you where it came from. I think it comes from an undertone of being fascinated by the divine feminine in recent years as I've approached my middle age. And then it just, I just went, I'm going to call it Goddess with a Thousand Faces. And then I sat there and I went, right, I better write this down because I'll forget. and then I was like and then I'm gonna go with like what exactly do I want it to say but I was just really sure Goddesses and the title. I can't take full credit for the title because it's just like play on words it's like a I'm gonna call it like a 2.0 of a famous work by Joseph Campbell which is Hero with a Thousand Faces and I wanted to kind of do my own version of well it's subverting a little bit what he does by putting women at the front not the boys as usual so yeah that's kind of how it got born.

Maisie: I just have so many questions, but what I have to say is that I was really, because I was just, you know, when I first opened it up, I was like, oh, which ones are in here? And I have a kind of, I guess, yeah, anyway, let me calm my excitement. So as I was looking through the various chapters and the goddesses that you had chosen to include, I got really excited that you had included Inanna in it, because I'm familiar with her story somewhat through my previous work as a birth doula. And I think you mentioned in there that when you were writing the book and kind of figuring out the content of it, that you knew that her story was going to be a dead cert.

And I was like, yes, I am right there with you. But what was it like for you to go through that process of choosing which goddesses you were going to include and I guess even the elements of each chapter because you could write entire books on each of them so it's not just the kind of process of

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who are you choosing to keep and who are you intentionally leaving out and then kind of within each of the story and of course the historical context of them. I mean it just feels like such a rigorous kind of editing process from the very beginning.

Jasmine: Yeah, exactly. One thing you need to know about me is I always get a big idea. I'm not good at little tiny ideas. I always get like, I know, let's save the entire world as an idea. So for my first book, I chose something really tough and it was really tough because the idea felt really cohesive. But like you say, how are you going to choose the goddesses? What goddesses do you want to do and then obviously I'm an ancient world expert so I spend my life in these ancient cultures so then it was like choosing between children. It was like, oh my god, I'm obsessed by all of them. I'm like shiny thing over here, shiny thing over here, shiny thing and I was like how am I going to choose?

So that was a hard process. The way I started out with the goddesses is because I'm mixed race, I wanted goddesses especially from cultures of colour to be in the spotlight. I kind of started in more obscure and unknown cultures, especially here in the West, because I got kind of annoyed when I'm reading yet another Greek myth retelling, which I'm not going to slam because they are great and I do read them and I do love them, but there is this tendency to focus on white goddesses from well-known Western cultures and I just thought we're not getting enough of you know kind of a diversity of culture here and that kind of has always been my thing for like decades.

So I started with the goddesses thinking okay let's think about this from what culture do I really feel like we never really hear about and also what interests me and then I was thinking about okay what are their goddesses rather than I'll go with that figure or I'll go with that figure and then that you know there were some that I already knew of course. Some of these are new to me, I'm not going to lie. Some of them I have studied before but

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some of them were brand new and I was like I've never heard of that goddess.

So I had to research from the start and yeah it was feel your way and try not to think too much about what I'm doing in a wider sense. I mean I think you know this as an author yourself, sometimes if you step back and go I need to tell everyone everything about perimenopause you'll just run away and sometimes you need to just go, I'm just going to talk about, I don't know, hot flushes or whatever it is you've spoken about in that chapter because otherwise your mind explodes.

Maisie: Yeah, I agree and I think it's also you can kind of lose the impact of anything you're saying when you're trying to say too many things or to speak to too many people all at once. So there's a lot of decisions that are involved in writing and in editing and that constraints the necessary constraints.

Jasmine: That's exactly right. I think for me, I made a rule straight away. It had to feel authentic. Actually, it was a bit of a bodily experience because I thought if it doesn't feel right. There are a couple of goddesses where I got into the research and it just didn't feel right. I just thought I don't know why. I can't really give you a reason, but I'm learning about this goddess or I just don't know that either I couldn't do that goddess justice but not in a way that it was I couldn't, I didn't have the skills to but I just didn't gel. It was like dating, it's like not that one so I just kind of followed my nose a bit and that tended to help and I tried to write the book that I wanted to read and I thought that will be enough because if it's something I want to pick up then hopefully it speaks to the readers in the same way. Luckily it's worked.

Maisie: Yeah, yeah I know. Of course. Of course.

Jasmine: People actually like it, thank goodness. But you know, I did try to focus on that. So yeah, picking the goddesses was tough and the approach to it was quite, you know, kind of difficult at times, but fun too. Stressful and fun.

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Maisie: Yes, yes, I get that. I get that. Yeah, with Period Power we took a whole chapter out. Yeah, and that was...

Jasmine: Oh, I want to read that chapter now.

Maisie: Well, it's actually in the membership. I turned it into webinars to just teach everyone the stuff, but it was, you know, that phrase, kill your darlings. You know, it's like you kind of, you love them, but you know, it's for the better good that they get culled.

Jasmine: Yeah. Luckily I didn't get any of my goddesses coloured by my editor because that might have been too scary for a whole other story.

Maisie: So you mentioned that being mixed race really impacted just your approach and your decisions on which cultures and goddesses you wanted to include. Are there any other ways that being dual heritage kind of informed your process or how you told those stories or your approach to it.

Jasmine: Yeah, I mean isn't it funny how to separate out the influences in your life? It's hard to know where there's no, to me they're all melded together. Some of the approaches because I grew up in a council estate in East London and that was what was driving my need for accessibility because I'm someone that came from a background where ancient cultures were for posh white people and I didn't get a chance to do it, you know.

That drives me to kind of make something conversational and kind of bring history down from this lofty place, which it never has been in by the way, but people think it's in. I need to be really clever, I need to be like this, I need to be like that and I just hate that and I've spent my entire career trying to, you know, kind of subvert that. So that drives the accessibility but I think like what part of it is driven by my dual heritage is, like I said, it's a sort of fuzzy question isn't it? It's hard to know where one starts and one begins but I think that knowing that in the history world people from diverse cultures are not well represented is a really interesting point. Why does that happen?

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Why is it not a space that feels very inclusive for people of colour and I think one of the reasons for that is because they can't see themselves in the histories that we see out there. So I know when I was at school I was so lucky to go to a great state school that had a really diverse history curriculum and so we were learning about Indian independence, apartheid South Africa. I'm not bashing, like I love Britain between the wars, don't worry, but I want a bit more. We all know about the rations, all right, I love it, but I don't need 16 years on the rations, can I just learn a bit about, and for me, my family are Pakistanis, so Indian independence felt very real to me, the rest of my family is South African, white South African, so apartheid was real to me, and that's where it started, I was like, it feels real to me, it feels like my story, and so that's how my dual heritage comes into my work because I can't even see it in this kind of, I don't know what the right word would be for this, but I guess to me it feels like a bit like a tunnel vision at times and I don't blame the people that do that necessarily because it's you're the product of what you've experienced.

So if you're educating you need to widen out, it's the job of people like me to go. Have you heard of Huaytaca, the Colombian goddess, or not? Probably not. Let's learn about that, you know, because that's what my platform's about. So, yes, I'd say central to what I do.

Maisie: Yes. Agreed. And that that just really comes through. And I think just generally speaking, who you are, really, it's very clear that this is your book.

Jasmine: Yeah, it's my voice.

Maisie: Yeah, it really is.

Jasmine: Yeah. And there's, you know, very to me, it's like it's very playful, like this is very serious, but there's this playful quality to your writing and tone of voice that is very accessible and so I just wanted to celebrate that with you.



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Jasmine: Oh good, thank you. I love your celebrations. I'm gonna take that little bit out and just put it on a little soundbite just to listen back. Do you know what and that is actually the bravest thing I did because I've spent you know 20 years or more working in the ancient world in various ways in teaching or studying and I've been afraid to be like that. Afraid to use that honest voice that you read in the book for fear of it not being academic or for it sounding like I'm downplaying or history's got to be serious. Also the divine feminine is a so-called dodgy area because it overlaps. I say it's not dodgy, I don't think so, but the view might be because it overlaps spirituality and the people then poo-poo it and go well that's not real history. So I went into all of my not comfort zones. What are they called? Uncomfort zones? War zones? I don't know what they are.

Maisie: Expansive places?

Jasmine: Oh yes that's why you do what you do because you're very good at these things. Yes expansive places sounds like better terminology than war zone. Yeah and so using my own voice is probably the thing that I felt most vulnerable about doing, but was most committed to doing.

Maisie: Yes, I love that. And then so, how did you navigate that?

Jasmine: It's a really good question. I think the honest answer, slightly propelled by peri-menopausal rage and having been sidelined my whole life and told that, like, why is she speaking like that, you can't have that accent and speak seriously about history or you can't be fun and joke about it. And I honestly just thought I'll bugger that. I just can't be bothered anymore at this age, Maisie, to pretend. And I thought I'm strong enough to put that out there and take the criticism. There has been the smallest amount of criticism from the group of people I would expect, I was expecting to, that have come at it and analysed it through the lens of an academic piece of scholarship. I quite frankly say very overtly at the beginning, I've got a section that says this is what this book isn't, in my introduction, for those people, so that they don't go with their little nick combs going through it and

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going, I haven't seen the reference to this and the footnotes for that and I wanted to be...

Maisie: This is the important thing. The book isn't for those people in the same way that my books aren't for people who already have that knowledge. That's what's the point. Although I have had quite a few doctors come up to me and tell me how much they love the book and that they recommend it. I think when you or we as authors are clear on what the book is, what the purpose of the book is and who it's for. It certainly was my experience. It really anchored me into the writing process and increasing my security about how I was writing.

Jasmine: Yeah, I totally get that. I've got a hot tip, which is really good if you're writing, because I don't read books in my genre, which might shock people or not, I don't know, but I don't read them because I don't want my brain to have any comparisons and I want my creative voice to just be untainted. I do read books like this. There are some more historical fiction-y type books that I read, but I don't read any non-fiction ancient history books.

Maisie: I'm the same. I don't read anything and people, especially now that I have published my books, I get sent books all the time that are about that and I'm not going to read it. I just don't want to compromise my voice or start cause sometimes there might be something that you really want to say and then someone else has said it and you're like, oh no, now I can't say that when it was like kind of coming from you or it's just kind of what's the point in reading stuff you already know as well. For me, it's just not a good use of my time.

Jasmine: Yeah, that's so true. That's so honest. I love that. It's true. I don't, hilariously, I don't generally enjoy them either and that's why I'm writing my own books because I don't like those types of books because they're not my style. I honestly saturate so quickly with those books. I can't hear any more about an archaeology site, that same one. I want it to move on and be pacier. That'll get me cancelled among the history community. But never

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mind, I can support their work in other ways. It's not about not lifting up other historians that write in this space. It's more just like you do you and I'll put it on my stories or something. I don't know. There are other ways to support that don't have to be, you need to be a bit boundaried, I think.

Maisie: Yes, agreed. Okay, so what was it like for you to really step into the identity of being an author? I'm curious if it was like something that you'd already imagined for yourself and you were like already there, or did it take some work for you to claim that role?

Jasmine: Yeah, the latter. I'm only laughing because I have a tendency to be a bit of a dreamer. And I think that there was a fantasy. There was the author fantasy in the brain of, oh, I'll be sitting here with cups of hot coffee and I'll be immersed in my beautiful world and then my book will be an international bestseller and then Hollywood will pick it up. I got carried away with my dreams, right? I was just like, oh, there's nothing wrong with the dreams.

Maisie: I think that part is really important, like that is really important.

Jasmine: It is, except when it turns into that's my measure of success, which is what happened to me. So I started writing, I mean I wasn't being unrealistic, I was sort of aware that that was not likely, but I wasn't like this is definitely going to happen, but I was just like oh maybe, but I was writing and I think sometimes I didn't believe I was an author until I held the book in my hand really. I'd written the whole bloody thing and done all the edits and I'd seen the manuscript and I held the book and even then I'd still don't it's right next to me right here as we speak and I still just go okay but I do that about my son as well I can't believe I've made him and he's the world so I don't know if it's just a thing but the identity as an author I think is something that I still am working on now but I am an author I've just signed my second book deal so I really.

Maisie: Congratulations!

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Jasmine: Thank you very much so I really am an author now. Second book coming. I think what I find hard about it is it's not something I had a very clear vision for myself in my life of doing. For me, I haven't had like years and years and years of wanting to be an author, trying to make it happen. I'm really fortunate that it just I went for it and it all came together for me and I believe I deserve that. It's not a deserving thing but it is a bit like, oh, I'm catching up now on the fact that I'm doing this. Here I am writing it and it's murky, it's a bit murky for me.

Maisie: So on that note, how did you create that result for yourself? Getting the book deal, writing it, all of those things.

Jasmine: I feel like there's a good saying here that I felt at the beginning, which is my ego's writing checks that my body can't cash. Do you know that saying? It's from Svetlanka. It started out with I have such self-belief and things that I can do that I just go for it and I haven't really caught up with myself is really kind of how I interpret that as like not as harsh as it sounds right. So I will get an idea and I will go for it and I've learned actually recently to do that but slow it down.

So what I did to get my book deal is I already had an agent because I was doing TV work and some other and I had a podcast already and other things. Actually, she said to me, hey, you should write a book. I went, all right. Then I thought about it a little bit and that's when I came up with some of the ideas. I had one idea that went around to different publishers that didn't fit with anyone. Then there was an idea for a children's book because my previous job was as a secondary school teacher, so teenagers are pretty easy to me. I thought I could write something, but I just didn't really feel that right. Probably because I've been a teacher for long enough that I'm like, I kind of thought I'm done with that, but I was like, well, I just want to do something different. I want to do something like a different space, you know.

And that's when I came up with Goddesses. And so I came up with the idea and then I went away from the fridge and got the outline and I sent it to my

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agent and she said, yeah, that sounds really good. And so I wrote up a proposal and a sample chapter and my agent sent it around. So I bypassed the bit where I think most writers begin, where they're not known. so the first step is sometimes it's writing the whole book or writing a sample and proposal and finding a literary agent and then they have to take you on the gatekeepers to the great publishing industry and then they will go to the publishers for you but for me I was already in there so that was the sort of step that was already done and then it got picked up really quickly like I think the second person looked at it my publishers went yep we want this and then there's knocking around for ages on the contracts where you don't know if it's real or not and you're really confused because they've said they want it but you haven't signed anything and you're just like is this going to go away or is this real? Then I wouldn't write then Maisie. I refused to start writing until it was real. It was like I didn't believe it and then I signed.

Maisie: What was getting in the way of you believing it?

Jasmine: Yeah it was, I don't know, obviously a bit of lack of trust. I just thought oh I don't know and it took me time. I think this is that thing about me getting out of the starting blocks too quick without just having a bit of contemplation and clarity about what, like this time around it's completely different. I've learned so much from my first experience of writing a book, like I spent time with this second book, I was clear about it, I've trusted it, but the first time was a bit like oh what, it's because it's almost like it's more I think to do with the fact that publishing history is really obscure and you don't know what's going on because it's not something out in the public domain. You just, what's this about? I didn't really know what to do. I think I was procrastinating as well a little bit. I'm a bit scared to start. Like we said, writing a whole book. Even now, I'm like, how does that even happen?

Maisie: Well, we're going to get onto that in a moment. I remember with Period Power, that in-between phase of even when the contracts were agreed, but they hadn't necessarily been sent around and signed, but also waiting to have my first meeting with my publishers and I was just kind of of

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the opinion of, well, what's the point in me writing if we're going to have a meeting where the outline of the book changes or something in the kind of bigger picture, we're going to switch a bit?

And actually, they didn't want anything changed, but I just, I don't know. I think it was also that moment for me of kind of like really pulling back the arrow in the bow and it's that kind of going backwards and kind of building so that then you can write, like I would say I wrote *Period Power* ferociously, like it was really just like coming out of me. I had a short, you know, my deadline wasn't far off. But so I think there was, you know, especially with Nelson, I guess, I don't know, he was about a year old or something like that then. So it was kind of like, yeah, it was, I think taking a few weeks of like, this is when I can pause before I am going to need to charge forward with this.

Jasmine: Yeah, I don't know what my... I think it was a disconnection. I think it was, like I said, not slowing down enough and not really feeling like I could start. I think it just daunted me. It's a whole bloody book. How do you start writing a book? I've got no writing background. I've got degrees in ancient cultures and stuff and obviously I've written a dissertation. So I'd written 20,000 words before. That's the most I've ever written and my book's 70,000 and I was just like nope. I think I have a thing where I'm like if I haven't got the qualification in it I'm like how do you do it?

And books aren't really like that. I now know this but books aren't like that at all but it's the first time I've done something I guess professional without some kind of certificate saying you've done this or you know how to do it or like this is how you do it. You sit down and you do this and this is how you plan it and really it's a bit of a, I'm going to say the process is a bit of a shit show if I'm real, if I'm going to be real. It's all over the place. You have to sit down and it always comes together but maybe other people have a much more cohesive approach to it. I don't know but for me I love to just explore. I think that's what makes it raw and authentic but that for me.

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Maisie: Yeah I would agree. I mean it it might just be the bubble of female authors that I happen to know who are all kind of fairly similar in our approach. But I think to go back to the idea of that kind of fantasy idea of what writing a book means and the idea of what that looks like, I just don't think it is. There's something about kind of reckoning with that reality and accepting what works for you. So we're kind of getting onto this next question that I wanted to ask, which is often when I'm coaching people who are aspiring writers, whether it's a book or any body of work that is theirs that they want to put out in the world in some way. They'll often bring up lack of time as the biggest obstacle to them getting going. So was that something that you faced and how did you overcome that?

Jasmine: It isn't something I faced because this is my full-time job already. So I don't have another job. I don't moonlight. Where I'm really proud of myself is I made the space for this kind of work before it happened. So, I mean, look, I got an announcement privilege here, I financially am able to do that. So I could say, right, I'm just going to allow space and let it be filled and go for the things I want to go for and let it evolve. Obviously, I was terrified about that, but I did it anyway. Let's just acknowledge that privilege, but I wouldn't have been able to do this when I was younger, but now I can.

So I had got my podcast deal randomly. And then that made me think, well, maybe this is a job you can do, like podcasty things and stuff in the public eye regarding history. So then I just let, I just went, right, I'll just go down that road then and just see what comes about and start making connections and then things like coming together. And so I made the space first. So I knew that I had space to write when I decided to do the book. So that wasn't really an issue, but I definitely understand that time pressure thing and this is where I get to do the bit of advice that you gave which is really helpful.

I kept trying to find perfectionist ways to write the book like I need to get up at this time and I need to do some yoga and then I need to meditate.

Things that I do anyway but I need to do them in this way and then I will sit

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down at my desk and I'll pour out x number of thousands of words or whatever it is and then I'll have done it properly. Then I'll be writing a book and then you get in my head with, I don't know which of your books, I'm sure you'll elaborate possibly all of them, that you wrote one of, I think you famously said something along the lines of, you wrote one of your books for five minutes here and five minutes there and you were rushing about and then a whole book eventually came.

Maisie: Yeah, that was Perimenopause Power because when I started writing it was two weeks after the first lockdown during the pandemic. So we had a then four year old at home, both of us trying to run our own businesses. I needed to write the book and I would just, you know, I had this big thing in my head of, I never get any time alone, right now that my family's at home. And so I'm not, how am I going to be able to write the book? And then actually I picked it up from another mum who had her own business that it was just like, write down on post-it notes things, tasks that are going to take you like 5 to 15 minutes.

That way when you do suddenly have a little bit of time, you're not spending that time thinking, oh, what should I do? You can just literally pick a post-it note and do the thing. So I just wrote a list of paragraphs that I needed to write. And then when Nelson did happen to play on his own, or was busy with Paul, I would just be able to write a paragraph and I would take my laptop fully charged, sit in the car outside the house right until the battery ran out. It was a nightmare to edit.

Jasmin: I'm sure the editing was. Editing's my worst bit actually. I'm really stressed at editing. Everything else I'm pretty chilled out but that. Yeah, but that made a massive difference to me and I'm sure, I don't know how many other people come out with this, but I kept thinking of your messy imperfect action and you're just like, just write it any way you want. And so I started to loosen off a bit with, do you know what, like some days I'm uber productive and I will smash out a few thousand words in like a few hours and that has



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got to be as good as a day where I've written three words or just stared at the screen.

Another friend of mine, Damian Barr, who's another author, he gave me some great advice and he said even when you're not writing, you're writing and I love that. You take a walk and you're looking at trees and you're talking to a friend but it might inspire you in some way or you're still processing and considering. So like taking a coffee is writing, bugging off for a walk down the forest with your mate is writing and I think that those two things combined.

I think that people that are going I haven't got time, it's just start and I would say start off with a rule and say and do it shit. Like make it a rule that you're going to do it a bit shit. I'm just going to do it like in the way that I think I'm not supposed to do it on purpose because then you'll give yourself the pressure will come off and I think then that's when your creativity because obviously we all know that pressure and stress it will just dampen the creativity and I think that that just start and not like doesn't matter if you've written it's all over the place eventually it comes together but I also think where possible this might not be a very popular point to make but try and make the space first for it. It might mean making some tough decisions.

I put aside the fact that people need to work financially, of course that's really important, but is there anything they can do? Can they get rid of a particular thing that they think they're supposed to do that can be delegated away and just allow, actually, do you know what, I'm going to write during that space. I think that books are very, very self-motivating things and that's the thing that can be quite tough. You've got to...

Maisie: Yeah, I think so.

Jasmine: Be your best friend to yourself, yeah.

Maisie: Yeah, I think with the making space, even just making space inside yourself that you are someone who has a book in them and that you are

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going to do this, just making space for you because once you do that, then that is going to inform everything else that you've just mentioned and you know, certainly for me, I mean, I suppose I could have still written *Period Power* if I didn't have a book deal in place. But the fact that I did and I'd received an advance meant I could pay for Nelson to be in childcare, which meant I could then write the book and have the money for him to do that.

So that does come into it. But interestingly, I think the time issue, although there is that very real practical element to that, often I feel like it's a superficial layer that is the kind of first thing that someone will say, but then actually when we get down to it and I'm like, well, let's just say that you didn't have to work for the next six months. How would you feel about writing? And then we get into the real issues, which is like, oh, I don't know if I'm qualified to do it. No one's going to buy it. How do I just get started? And that, you know, then we get into actually, is it about time possibly and to some degree for sure, but where is any procrastination coming from in terms of fears that you have? What are your thoughts on that?

Jasmine: Yeah, I mean that's why I did do a bold move. I had a job and I quit it at the sniff of my podcast because I thought I'm going to follow this trail. That's one of my greatest strengths as a person. I just believed I could do it and I believed I could write this book even when I had all the other things going on. I'm going, oh I don't I don't know about this, I don't know about that. I was like, I can definitely, I'm going to do this. And I think that the reason I'm like that though, isn't just because I've got an amazing, my mind is like everyone else's, it talks all sorts of crap all the time. It doesn't even mean that I'm very good all the time at managing my thoughts, because I would say that I'm 50-50 on that.

But what I am really good at is listening to my intuition, following it. And when I know something's right, I can feel it in my body and that's enough for me to go, I need to go all in, I need to make this work. And then everything else sort of follows it. And so that thing about time and creating it, it's like, you know, like you say, it can be unpopular to say that, you know,

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we all have the same amount of time. You know, we all have a day and you get to choose what you do with that day. And I know that there are obstacles and people have difficulties. They have, I mean, I have a son, same age as yours.

And, you know, we have dependents, we might have parents we're looking after, especially at our age or whatever. Those are real things, but then within all of that, there are choices to be made. And I think it's really hard for people to own up to choices that they've made, because I want to make the point, it's really important I make this point. I made these kinds of choices when I had no money and I had no security. And I'm not reckless, I'm smart with it. I would save money or find a way to do something where I felt secure and I could pay my bills, but I would still follow that, even if it was difficult.

So it's a bit easier now, not gonna lie, but at the same time, I did this when I had nothing. And I don't have, you know, I come from a very poor family, we don't have, I don't have backup. So I just think taking ownership for what you want is not easy. Get help, get support, take your time, but be real about when you're not creating something and delve into it. And that's why I love your work because that's what you do. I feel like you're like the, you're like an excavator, like a mind excavator. I feel like you get into someone, not into someone's mind and you dig down and down until you get to the bloody core issue and then you go right well let's talk about that because that's the thing and people need help with that because we don't always know, we're walking around not always knowing what's the real reason I'm not doing X or Y.

Maisie: Yeah and that's the stuff that interests me. I love going down to the depths of people. I absolutely love it. I'm like, okay, yeah, this surface level stuff, sure, it matters to some degree, but let's get underneath and really take a look at what's going on.

Jasmine: I think that people need to start, you might want to write a book, but start with your mindset. Alongside all of this, I've been on a big personal

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journey. I've been through therapies. I've dealt with some trauma. I've dealt with some childhood issues. I've done some of your work with mindfulness and my thoughts and my patterns and my core beliefs. I think when you have any kind of evolution to be whatever you want to be, that work is part of it. It has to be part of it. If there are things blocking you, you've got to look at why and where it's come from, feel some feelings as much as you don't want to and then you can evolve.

I think that in lots of ways authors, especially like you and I, who really are using our own voice in our work, I think we kind of owe it to our readers to be as authentic as possible as well. So I know that when I write something that I'm being like the best expression of myself so my readers can get like the message kind of as unpolluted as possible. Like I'm a person, I'm not saying I'm perfect but just you know like I think that so for me that work became part of it and I think that that could be quite important, especially with writing where it's very exposing because it's either your own story. Most of it's usually influenced by your life experience in some way. I've written about trauma in the book. This book is personal to me and so they intertwine.

Maisie: Yeah, and I think it's when our authentic voices, whether you're an author or you're just going about your business day-to-day in the world is we all kind of transmit at a certain frequency, a certain signal. When we're transmitting at a kind of fuzzy signal, people don't receive that and they just kind of switch off and go somewhere else. But when we're really tuning into the most coherent version of ourselves and the most authentic, then that signal is clear.

Yes, there might still be people who don't listen because that's not what they want to hear. But for the people who are ready to receive that and they are wanting that and enjoying it and needing it, then what you're putting out can really be received and also amplified. So there is really something about the clarity of that signal and that authentic voice, which Jasmine, you have really achieved.

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Jasmine: Another little soundbite, two soundbites. Thank you.

Maisie: It is just so clear, you know, and of course I know you a little bit, not a lot, but I know you a little bit from our work together. I just think you've achieved such a fantastic book and I know there's going to be another one. Are you allowed to say anything about that yet?

Jasmine: I am, it's not officially announced so I can like dabble in, I can do that sort of like pussyfooting version of it where I can tell you a bit. I'll tell you about that in a minute, but I just want to respond to something because I think the thing I've learned the most, especially I'm about to turn 42 and I feel like what I've learned, which I hope will really help everyone, you're always in a constant state of evolution. So this work is, you know, being authentic is something that you need to have an open heart to because you're changing, especially at our age, my goodness, like you're changing a lot.

And I used to be out partying and drinking and now I love a cup of tea looking out the window. You have to track yourself and I think especially when you're working in creative industries like you say this is for everyone and whatever you do it doesn't matter what job you do if you want to enjoy it because the point about this is you're supposed to enjoy it like the writing a book should be enjoyable. I think any job you do you should enjoy it and yes there are emails sometimes you don't want to deal with from your boss or whatever but mainly enjoy it and I think that tracking that evolution and getting to know yourself all the time is key.

Maisie: Yeah. To be authentic.

Jasmine: Yeah, I know you do.

Maisie: Okay, so to come back to the goddesses and Goddess with a Thousand Faces, I'm curious about how with your deep knowledge of goddesses, how do they exist in your daily life?

Jasmine: Do you mean do I do I worship some of them or do you mean?

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Maisie: No. I don't actually but you know if you do feel free to talk about that. I mean just like in terms of you know them from writing the book and from all your you know everything that you've done but how do you think of them like how do they just show up and I don't mean necessarily kind of like Freya Freya appearing like it?

Jasmine: That would be cool.

Maisie: It would be very cool.

Jasmine: It would be cool.

Maisie: I'm just curious about when you have that understanding and that knowledge, how does that kind of just show up in your life.

Maisie: Yeah, no that's really, and that's again, this is what I love. I'm a bit, I'm curiosity central over here. I love learning and I love exploring because some of these goddesses I know. My background is mainly as a classicist, so ancient Greece and Rome is the main cultures I've studied. So I've got a Greek goddess in there Artemis but a lot of the other ones I've either got a bit of study in from my undergrad or just thought they were cool. And what happened is I think that this whole book, because as you know it's not just here's some goddesses and here's some stories, it's all about reclaiming your femininity.

So what this all started with me is my interest in the divine feminine and how disconnected we are as women but as men too because we all have feminine qualities it's not to do with your your gender and I felt like where is this like why is this not everywhere? because when you start looking at these goddesses, what you're really doing is you're looking at that expression of the divine feminine in history, in different cultures. You're looking at qualities that these goddesses had, usually as a reflection of the society they come from. And it gives you like, it's like a reclaiming of your past because what's happened is we've kind of forgotten what the divine

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feminine is about. And it's why we're out of sync with nature, with ourselves.

So the goddesses to me are all individual parts of this big idea of the divine feminine and how we need it. We need more nurturing and care. I don't care what you believe religiously. Some of my goddesses are actively worshipped in the world today. Some are ancient cultures that aren't around anymore. So I'm not asking people to believe these things. What I'm asking them to do is go, hang on a minute, this used to be all over the world. All these goddesses everywhere. I mean, every culture there was a goddess and then through our favorite word it starts with P, ends in patriarchy, changes the landscape and we lose this connection to what's amazing about the divine feminine and look we rush around too much, we don't care about ourselves, we're not looking after the planet, we're not slowing down, those things are not really acceptable in a modern world.

And I think by going back to these goddesses and spending time with them, so in their stories, in reflection whatever it might be for you you start uncovering pieces of yourself that you've lost so it's so much more than oh there's some cool facts about a goddess which is still great but it's really my brand of history I call it history with soul it's about experiencing history through your heart not your head. So there'll be facts, don't worry I haven't made stuff up but my point is that you go through the heart it's just like oh bloody hell actually this speaks to me and the feedback is, the readers, it's really speaking to people and that's what I want from it.

Maisie: Yeah, as you said, I think the qualities of those goddesses and all of those elements coming together in a representation and exploration of the divine feminine, it really, each chapter in each goddess I just felt gave me a really good opportunity to reflect on my own life and think about where are these qualities, where are these struggles, where are these themes existing in my life and how have I encountered them in my life so far? And I think just that unique blend of historical fact with storytelling and exploration of

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those cultures just is such a gift, such an opportunity to reflect on our own experience of the divine feminine and who we are.

Jasmine: And that's what I want the whole book to be about. Like, you know, yeah, great, you picked up some facts along the way. Probably most people forget them, which is fine. It's not the facts that people want. It's like, how did it make me feel? It's why it reads, you know, in a kind of tone of self-reflection. And I'm really glad that it spoke to you in that way. And you thought, oh, and some of these goddesses, you'll have read them and gone, oh my God, that really hit me in my heart. I felt that one because you feel you read this goddess's story and you felt seen. You feel seen in a way that women aren't feeling seen and men and any gender because this divine feminine is in all of us. It's really just I've made my life a reflection of what I've learned from that book. I've slowed down. I take time in nature.

I put my body and myself first. I'm learning how to not conform to things that don't feel correct to me. It's not easy sometimes because I think well should the shoulding your favorite should I should do this or this or whatever and and so for the rest of my life I want to spend like my life kind of in that flow it's in a flow really of putting those things first and they've become kind of like my filter for the world and I think that that's if we all did that, oh god, it would be so good because it's not that you don't need the divine masculine, you do need the masculine. It's not about not having the masculine, it's just there's too much of that.

We're coming back, it's about coming back into balance. It's not about rejecting all of that, it's just finding a place and so that's my deepest wish for people reading the book. They read it and go, oh there's a little forgotten history there, a little forgotten ancestry, a little forgotten, a whole load of forgotten stories that help me realize the truth of what you know you yearn to be which is like with yourself, calm, not 75,000 whatsapps a day, I mean let's leave it there with the whatsapps, you know what I mean, just like you have to make a choice.



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I hope that book helps people see the value in history and help them make their choices for themselves and that's the kind of stuff I'm going to keep writing. I didn't say about my book yet did I?

Maisie: No.

Jasmine: So my next book is about female dragon slayers. Similar vibes, same sort of style as my writing and my storytelling and history, but it will contain a great deal about female power, female rage, which I've spoken about already today, and facing your dark side and the monsters within. So that would be the sort of like tone of it for us and it'll be a deeper exploration probably than this book. So I'm excited. I've written 1,000 words of it.

Maisie: Congratulations. That's what it starts with. It literally starts with one word.

Jasmine: There was about four weeks where I just had the title and I just stared at it. So that's fine nowadays, but it'll be officially announced soon.

Maisie: Okay, we'll be eagerly looking out for that. Thank you so much for coming on today. It's just been a really interesting, insightful conversation and I know it's just going to be a really useful one. I think so much of what you shared is really practical and helpful for people to apply whether they're wanting to write a book or just step into something that is kind of requiring them to expand and grow into in order to do that thing.

And I hope all of you go to wherever you like to buy your books and order the book because Goddess with a Thousand Faces has, I just loved reading it, you know, and I am a bit of a book snob. I don't say this about all books.

Jasmine: I want to take that for the jacket, you know, when they take the quotes for everyone, the endorsements. I'm a bit of a book snob, but I really like this one.

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Maisie: But it's true. And I have to say this year I have really got back into reading fiction and I don't think there's been any nonfiction other than yours that I've read this year.

Jasmine: That's another quote for the book.

Maisie: I mean, these days it takes a lot to drag me away from Sarah J Maas.

Jasmine: Totally understand. Yeah, I do read quite a lot, but I totally get you. So I'm honoured. First of all, I'm honoured. Thank you so much. And I need to say thank you for your work, because like I told you, you were pivotal in my writing. You really helped me. I did go to your podcasts and various tidbits that you've got around about approaching writing, so it made a difference. So I appreciate it. I'm sure if there was a little applause button, we could do a little applause, do a little one here, because I know you help so many people. So thank you.

Maisie: Well, thank you for being so generous in your sharing for this conversation because it has an impact. Each of these conversations that we have and that we share, it has a ripple effect and we, I think, can forget the impact of these conversations. Thank you so much. Where can people find you on social media? Tell us about your profile.

Jasmine: I do the Instagram because I don't like social media in general, so I've honed it down to one so I'm authentic and I actually go up there properly rather than just like kind of like pepper spray a billion places of rubbish. So Instagram's my place and I'm @legitclassicist or just Jasmine Elmer, you'll find me. I've got a website, but I mean, yeah, just that's where I put my stuff. So follow me there.

Maisie: And what's the name of your podcast?

Jasmine: Oh, it's called Legit Classics. It's not active anymore. So you can go and listen to the old ones.

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Maisie: Amazing.

Jasmine: But one day I might come back to podcasting. I'm waiting to see what I fancy doing next.

Maisie: Yeah, well it's an amazing resource just to have it there and ready for everyone to listen. So everyone go find Jasmine, check out her stuff, buy the book, listen to all the backlog of episodes on the podcast and I'd love for you to share how you found this episode, this conversation. So hit us up on Instagram and tell us all the things and we will see you over there. Jasmine, thank you so much.

Have a fantastic week everyone. We'll be back next time.

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