Author Lynette Noni with aspiring young writer and fan Abbey Anderson, 11. Picture: RICHARD GOSLING

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NONI JUST CAN'T HELP BUT WRITE

For this talented young Queensland author success has come quickly – but she's only just getting started in her magical new world

JESSICA HUXLEY

QUEENSLAND'S darling of fantasy writing, Lynette Noni, is still coming to terms with being named Supanova Australia's highest-selling author in 2015, just months after releasing her first novel *Arkanae*.

The 28-year-old from the Sunshine Coast topped the likes of Peter F. Hamilton and Traci Harding in book sales at the annual pop culture expo, which is unheard of for a debut author.

"It was incredible, it blew my mind and I'm still on a high," she said. "To be named the highest-selling author of a single title was almost crazy. The others were like 'What is going on here'.

"But they (the other authors) were so encouraging – Peter F. Hamilton is the highest-selling sci-fiction writer in Britain and he gave some great advice.

"And so did Justin Woolley and Alan Baxter, they were just full of wisdom and advice."

Noni said she was "like a sponge" for 10 days.

"Anything they said I absorbed," she said. "One of the best pieces of advice I got is people are going to hate you, just deal with it.

"Peter also gave me advice about getting invited to events and having to know which ones to turn down, as you really can't go to everything or you won't get time to write.

"Being an Australian author, Traci gave some really good advice about tax things to be aware of as an author."

The novel is the first of Noni's Medoran Chronicles, fusing magic, wonder, willpower and technology, where Harry Potter meets Narnia meets the X-Men, set in the enticing parallel world of Medora. "It's escapism at its finest," she said.

Noni said there were only a few fans who had read *Arkanae* before Supanova.

"A couple of them had contacted me and said we can't wait to meet you and they were really excited," she said. "It just humbles me so much when people ask for me to sign their books.

"And straight after the weekend there were a lot of fast readers who contacted me straight away to say how much they enjoyed it."

Lynette Noni is the youngest author signed to Pantera Press, a boutique publisher formed in 2008 to discover the next generation of Australian authors.

She says the second instalment is already written, plus the first book from another series.

"For me, I don't think I could ever not write – it's a continual thing and I need to keep writing to stay on top of it," she said.

Noni said she was inspired by all the people – the fans and the crowds – and all the kids who took part in a library workshop she conducted at Helensvale last month.

"I did not expect their responses, the kids were really in tune with creative ideas and passionate about what they want to do," she said.

"I guess my biggest piece of advice to aspiring writers is just you do it because you love it, and don't let anything come against you – have strength through adversity.

"It's hard to be a writer and get published, so that can't be the end game. You have to be willing to write regardless."

Abbey Anderson, 11, who took part in Noni's writing workshop at Helensvale library, said she had already started work on her first novel – about a young girl who has to recover her memory in order to discover her identity.

"Lynette has given some really good feedback in the workshop – she's really energetic and gets excited when you do good work," she said.

AUTHOR IN BRIEF

LYNETTE NONI'S TOP TEN CREATIVE WRITING TIPS

JESSICA HUXLEY

LYNETTE Noni, author of *Akarnae*, book one in the *Medoran Chronicles* from Pantera Press, recently led interactive creative writing workshops at libraries around Australia.

Here are Lynette's top ten creative writing tips from the workshops:

1. Read. A lot. You can't write well if you haven't read books and books full of good writing examples for comparison.
2. Healthy body, healthy mind. Do something active at least once a day. It'll clear your head and enable you to have a fresh approach to your writing.
3. Get to know your characters. You need to know them as well as – if not better than – yourself, so that when plot twists come, you can keep their reactions realistic.
4. Flaw your favourites. It's easier for readers to connect with characters who have flaws because it makes them seem more real. They're just like us. And we love them all the more for it.
5. Keep your dialogue realistically casual. It can help to read it out loud and see if it flows well when actually spoken.
6. Don't overdo your dialogue tags. "Said" is almost always enough.
7. Avoid detail overkill. Allow your readers to fill the gaps with their own imaginations. This will help them connect on a deeper level with your story and characters.
8. If you're bored writing it, people will be bored reading it. This is a good rule of thumb to remember, especially during the editing process.
9. Trust your words. You're the one telling the story, and that means you can do what you want with it.
10. Have fun! Remember to write because you love writing.