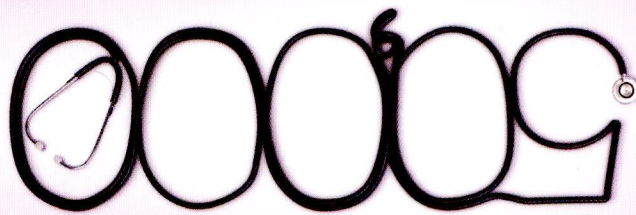


READING ROOM



When Catherine Sanderson started *Petite* difference between the real woman and her online persona? *Petite Anglaise* is a slightly improved, enhanced version of me," says Sanderson. "I write about my weaknesses and faults, so people think I'm giving them the real me. But I definitely hold back some things, too. The aim is to seduce the readership, not repel them." And it worked - thousands read *Petiteanglaise.com* every day. Sanderson's ex, known on the blog as Mr Frog, accused her of "repackaging our life into some sort of soap opera" for the entertainment of her readers. "It's surreal hearing that a couple of strangers have been discussing your love life over the phone!" she admits. "What some readers - those who leave judgemental or unpleasant comments - seem to forget is that I'm not a character, I'm a real person."

Having split up with James, Sanderson is now happy with a new partner. But she's not writing about it online in quite the same way. "I've learned from some of my mistakes," she says. "It's tempting to use a blog post as a way of apologising after a row, for example. But that's a discussion you should be having in private, not in front of thousands of strangers." Now she's concentrating on writing a novel. "It's refreshing because at last I can turn the spotlight away from myself! It's time to stop gazing at my own navel and focus more on the world around me..." ■



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