

# Robert Brace — Biography

Robert Brace is an Australian-born American author of seven novels.

## Early Life and Education

Brace was born in Sydney and educated in public schools until the age of fifteen, when he joined the Royal Australian Naval College, Jervis Bay (RANC) as a cadet midshipman. He completed the final two years of secondary education and the first year of tertiary education at RANC, where he graduated with the mathematics prize and was second overall in his class. He played on the naval college rugby team and captained one of their two 24-foot Endeavour yachts.

At that time, before the Australian Defence Force Academy was founded, midshipmen completed their degrees on campus at the University of New South Wales in Sydney. Brace resided at New College. He double-majored in Pure Mathematics and History & Philosophy of Science but put off taking his BSc until, after a period of duty at sea, he was assigned ashore and completed an additional honors year while also working full-time.

The title of his honors dissertation was “Realism, Objectivity and Incommensurability: a Cognitive Analysis.”

## Naval Career

Brace became a surface warfare officer specializing in anti-submarine warfare (ASW). He first served on the aircraft carrier *Melbourne* as a midshipman, and last on guided-missile frigate *Canberra* as the ASW Officer. Shore appointments included Fleet Headquarters, Sydney, and a period of instruction at the USN Surface Warfare School, San Diego. As part of his ASW training, he also spent a week at sea (mostly under it) in a submarine.

## Wall Street

After leaving the navy, Brace began a career in investment banking. He became a foreign exchange options trader, firstly at Citibank in Sydney, then at AIG and Fuji Bank in New York. At the latter, he worked on the 80th floor of the World Trade Center’s tower number two before its destruction on 9/11.

## Post-trading Career

Brace is currently a managing director at, and a limited partner in, a global financial services firm specializing in hedge fund administration. The company began as a startup in 2008 with zero assets under administration; today, it administers around half a trillion dollars.

## Books

Brace has produced seven novels.

The first two were mass-market paperbacks featuring ex-marine captain and reluctant recruit to the world of espionage, Lysander Dalton: *Black Tiger* (Berkley, 2005) and *Iron Butterfly* (Jove, 2006).

The next two—*Floreat Lux* (privately published, 2021) and *Andromeda Graphika* (privately published, 2022)—were literary novels. In *Floreat Lux*, a woman becomes the amanuensis to a man who is, or believes himself to be, the Devil. In *Andromeda Graphika*, a journalist is tasked with tracking down a teenage runaway.

Both novels were somewhat experimental, written in a third-person present-tense style meant to invoke in literary form the objective neutrality of a movie camera. The narratives are punctuated by extensive dreamscape passages intended to mimic the trance-like rhythms in the Gnawa music of interior Morocco. This technique takes as its starting points the prose of James Joyce and the poetry of T.S. Eliot, masters of subtle variation within repetition, like Gnawa. The stories are original but have roots in two poems—the first canticle of the *Divine Comedy* and Milton's *Paradise Lost*—plus one play—Marlowe's *Dr. Faustus*.

These books were followed by *Speed Graphic*, a third Lysander Dalton novel, and *Ash Wednesday*, a stand-alone, near-future, neo-noir thriller imagining a world in which China has gained effective political control of a prostrated United States.

A seventh book, *Journal of the Supernova*—a murder mystery—will be released in October 2025.

## Reception

In reviewing the second Lysander Dalton novel, *Publishers Weekly* noted the “page-turning action” and concluded that “With plenty of surprises in the layered story, Lysander’s adventures

deserve a wide readership.” Reviewing the same book, *Houston Community Papers* commented on the “exciting ending with a shrewd plot,” and concluded that “This is a fast moving book that you will enjoy.”

Of the literary novels, *Floreat Lux* was especially well received. *Blue Ink Reviews* called it “...a wild, complex novel that blurs the line between the real and the supernatural...a psychedelic trip through literature, history and art,” and *Kirkus Reviews* noted “Brace...displays such eloquence and such a firm control of pacing...artful coup de grace...an intriguing and multilayered supernatural thriller.” *Foreword Clarion Reviews* characterized the novel as “...a cosmological search...literary and rhetorical...a theatrical celebration.”

*Andromeda Graphika* also garnered praise. *Booklife Reviews* commented, “Stylish and polished, Brace’s literary thriller abounds in evocative description, crisp and engaging dialogue...A sense of playful unease suffuses the novel, as Brace toys with expectations.” *Kirkus Reviews* noted that “The author’s canny prose finds sharp, inchoate conflict” and summarized the novel as an “...atmospheric and psychologically rich tale of erotic and philosophical enigmas.”

A review of *Journal of the Supernova* from *Booklife Reviews* concluded that “Brace... excellently weaves many threads—the end of the world, curiosity surrounding Urquhart, the eccentricity of the voyage he hosts, the abandon that dictates most of the tour—to form a compelling narrative. Despite juggling apocalyptic anxiety, artistic rebellion, and Mediterranean decadence, Brace never loses sight of the central plot: a murder mystery set against humanity’s final days. While the world may remember the cruise for its provocative calendar, Evans and his fellow passengers will remember it for far more sinister reasons—and therein lies the heart of this captivating novel.” *Indies Today* characterized *Journal of the Supernova* as “a beautifully restrained and cerebral mystery...a conceptually brilliant novel” and the writing as “controlled and confident...every moment is elegant, restrained...beautifully subtle and psychologically rich...the narrative pacing is riveting... dialogue interchanges sparkle with intelligence and wit,” and summarized the novel as “an engrossing story that lingers long after the final page.”

## **Personal life**

Robert Brace lives in New York City. Although born and raised in Australia, he has lived the majority of his life on the island of Manhattan.

## **Website:**

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