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February 2010

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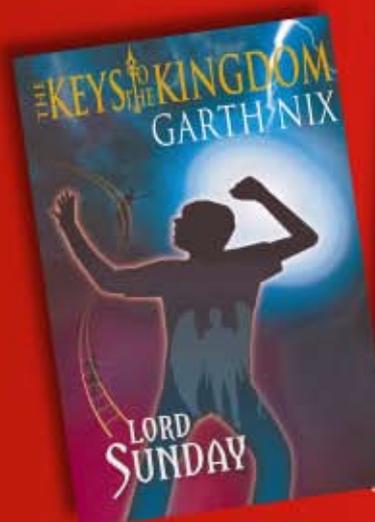
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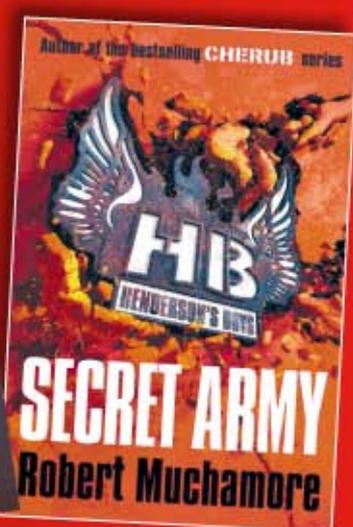
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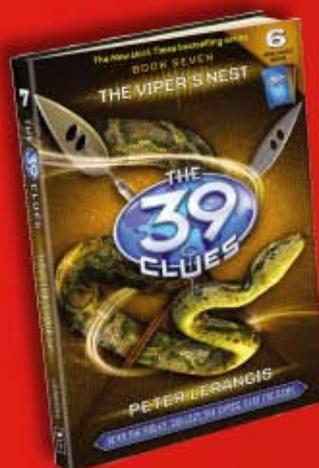
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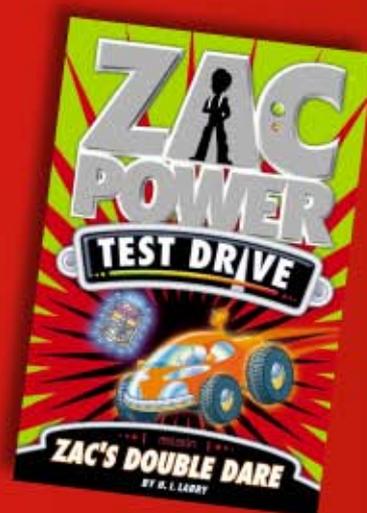
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# Oz Kids in Print

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## From the Editor's Desk

Another great year ahead. Hope you all had a lovely break from school and are ready to create more wonderful stories and poems.

This issue is jam-packed with articles from Authors and Illustrators. Elise Hurst has an exhibition on in a couple of months. A very talented artist.

**DON'T FORGET THE ENVIRONMENTAL WAY AND ENTER ON-LINE!**

**KEEP ON WRITING (TYPING)!**

*Carol Dick*  
Managing Editor



## BOOK REVIEW

by *Stuart*

### **The Slightly Skewed Life of Toby Chrysler**

By *Paul Collins*

'It wasn't even five o'clock and Milo had already murdered Mrs Appleby. Twice.'

I was hooked from this paragraph on. I had to know more and couldn't put it down.

This book is about the adventures of Toby Chrysler, aka Milo, as he tries to locate his missing mother. He is assisted in his endeavours by his best friend Fluke and a girl named Ginger, who's trying to find her own missing father.

It's aimed at kids of about nine and up, but its fast pace and entertainment value is an appealing read for all ages.

**CHILDREN'S CHARITY NETWORK  
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AND ORGANISATIONS WHO SUPPORT US!**

## **Elise Hurst Exhibition**

I'm excited to finally be able to give you news about my exhibition. Many of you have seen my collection of paintings growing over the last couple of years. It's been a pleasure setting up the easel and painting in front of you all. But it's time to put the whole collection together.

*No-Vacancy Gallery presents*

### **ELISE HURST paintings & etchings**

Opening Night: Thursday 20 May 6 – 9pm

Exhibition: 20 May until 2 June

Elise will be painting throughout the exhibition and will host a special family day on the first weekend.



## The Sands Beach

'Bang!' The stable door slammed behind me. It was a lovely sunny day and I was going for a ride on my pony, Star. We were going to the beach with my friend Jed, and his horse, Rusty.

I met Jed outside my house and we galloped to the shade of a big silver shed. As we dismounted we heard a soft whisper.

"Jamie Conjen was murdered by a group of men", a harsh voice repeated aloud.

He was repeating the words of a news reporter. We could hear it.

"That's the case the police are investigating", I told Jed.

"We know Master, it has been all over the news", I heard another voice saying.

"We'll be caught in a flash", another person suggested.

"Enough! There won't be any evidence left for them to prosecute us", the first voice said, now a lot louder and grumpier.

Suddenly, the shed door opened. Jed grabbed Star's reins and ran over into the bush. I hid behind some branches. Out of the shed strode nine bearded men.

"Mr. McCracken" I wondered aloud slowly.

"Shhhhhhhhhhh!" Jed whispered. I recognised his low, soft voice. Mr. McCracken was my dad's work colleague.

The next day I galloped Star back towards the shed. I was cautious after what had happened the previous day, and waited in the bush for 10 minutes, to make sure the coast was clear. There were no noises coming from the shed so I decided it was safe to go past and down the roadside towards the beach.

I finally arrived at the beach and noticed a big mark on the sand. I dismounted and went to have a look. My feet made gentle sounds as they landed on the soft sand. I ran over to the tall cross and noticed that something was buried there. I punched numbers into my mobile phone.

"I found a body" I told Jed. I looked down and froze. I saw an old, hard, worn out shoe. I stared at it, motionless. I was stunned; lost for words.

Just then I saw something shining further down the beach. I reached for my gloves from my pocket. I did not want to destroy any evidence. I put them on and grabbed the earring from the sand. As I placed it in my pocket, I noticed a drop of blood on the ground.

I galloped to Jed's house and told him the news. He was shocked. We decided that we would search for the killer – someone with one earring.

The next morning I was riding Star around the local lake when I saw a peculiar man walking through the trees. He was wearing an old white shirt and scuffed jeans. His shirt had a badge with a huge red stain and he had something black in his hand. He approached us. His badge read "Brian Lencard – at your service!". He had a sharp knife in his hand, with a red blade.

"Hey, this is private property. Nick off!" he said.

"I have permission to ride here" I told him.

"Some of us have personal business here. I'm not sure you should be taking your horse on these grounds" he explained. "I think that you should just go".

I snuck out my camera and took some photos of him. I galloped my pony across the property, onto the hard gravel road and home.

I looked at the photos on my laptop computer. I noticed that there was a red stain on his right ear. I was drawn closer to the screen. Something familiar shone in his left ear. I pulled the earring out of my pocket. It was identical! I checked his right ear. No earring! Brian Lencard had a role in the murder, and I had evidence. He was going to go to jail. I was sure of it.

Jed came over to my house and I showed him the photos and the evidence I had discovered. We decided that we should tell the police everything. Later that day the police arrested them and finally they were caught.

*By Baylie Woerner  
Year 5, Age 10  
Bellaire Primary School  
HIGHTON – VIC.*

# Reading and Gaming — It's All Cool!

By George Ivanoff

*Computer games will rot your brain!*

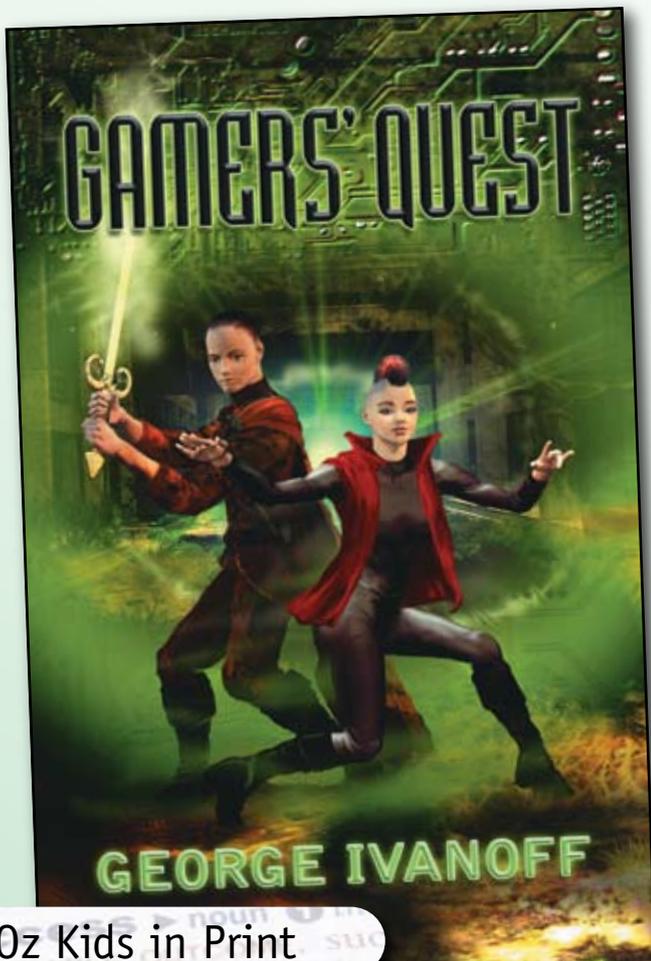
*Kids who play video games don't read!*

*The end of the world is here!*

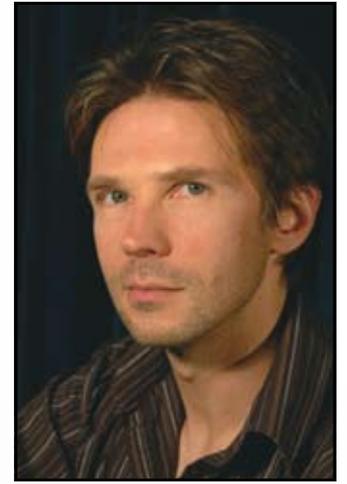
Hands up if you've heard people say things like this. Yes? Well, people have been saying things like this for years. People used to say it when I was a kid. And before that, they said that it was television that would rot your brain and stop you from reading. And before that, it was the movies...

Lots of people still seem to think that computer games are a bad influence on kids. I don't agree. In fact, I reckon there's quite a similarity between playing computer games and reading books. Actually, I'm counting on it — 'cause I've written a novel set in a computer game world. Yes, I think it will appeal to people who don't play games; but kids who do play computer games will get more out of the book than those who don't.

Let me start things off by telling you how I came to write *Gamers' Quest*. It actually began as a short story, 'Game Plan', which was published in *Trust Me!* (Ford Street Publishing, 2008), an anthology edited by Paul Collins. I was inspired to write the story by a documentary about online gaming, which showed how people all over the world were immersing themselves in fantasy games to the detriment of their real lives, which they considered boring. This doco concentrated on the extremes — the people who were obsessed with playing games. But most people aren't like that. Most people who play computer



Oz Kids in Print



games also do other things — they go out with friends, they go to school, they watch television and they read.

I asked a few kids in grades 5 and 6 at my daughter's school about games and reading. Guess what? They all liked playing computer games. And they all liked reading.

'It's fun!' was a comment made about both. Some preferred reading and some preferred games, but they all liked both. It's not surprising, really. There's a lot of similarity between the two things.

In both cases you're immersing yourself in a different world — a world of action, adventure or fantasy; a world where you get to see and experience things you would not normally do. Both reading and playing computer games are ways of escaping our real lives for a while, of forgetting about school, homework and chores, and of getting to experience something a little more exciting. Whether you're into fantasy and science fiction or action/adventure or even romance, games and books are doorways into other worlds.

Playing computer games and reading can lead on from each other. There are books based on games and there are games based on books. There is a whole range of novels based on the popular *World of Warcraft* game. Arya told me her favourite book was *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone*. Do you know what her favourite computer games are? The Harry Potter games!

Alex told me his favourite computer game is *Assassin's Creed 2*. It's a historical game set in the 15th and 16th centuries about a young assassin who uses a variety of amazing weapons. And Alex's favourite books? He said he loves the *Horrible Histories* books, which look back on all the nasty, gory, horrible elements of bygone ages.

My book, *Gamers' Quest*, is not based on a computer game; nor is there a game based on it. It's a stand-alone novel. But it's a novel that mimics a computer game.

It's set in a world with the pace and excitement of a game — a world in which danger lurks around every corner; a world with a variety of fantastical challenges and opponents, from powerful mages and fierce dragons to machinegun-toting guards and sophisticated security systems with trip lasers and automated drones; a world in which the players embark on a perilous quest.

This world has protagonists who readers can identify with... the sort of players they would want to be if they were playing the game. Enter Tark and Zyra, two teenage thieves — good-looking, fast, clever, determined and skilful in a fight.

## Reading and Gaming — It's All Cool! (Cont'd)

There are also lots of little things that try to capture the computer game flavour. There's no real sense of night and day in the game world, only a constant barrage of challenges. There are references to different classes and levels of player (knight second class; level 13 mage). These are things that will be familiar to those of you who play computer games — things that will, hopefully, give you some added enjoyment as you read the book. It's like a secret shared, a nod from author to

reader, saying 'I know you like computer games AND books... and I think that's pretty cool!'

Want to know more about *Gamers' Quest*? Check out the official website to download stories, music and a computer animated video: [www.gamersquestbook.com](http://www.gamersquestbook.com) or visit George at: [www.georgeivanoff.com.au](http://www.georgeivanoff.com.au)



## Moonshine

**T**HE trees stood still and solemn around the clearing, surrounding a clear pond where a little elf sat, skipping some round, white pebbles. Waiting.

The young elf was not much of a sight, though it would be surprising if you managed to catch sight of one in your life. That's because she is the only elf ever to be born, as was the case for many other mythical creatures. Al Ot had straight, dark hair that fell neatly to her shoulders, light violet eyes and, of course, unnaturally pointy ears.

As a very timid creature, there was only one creature she thought a friend. Draco, a cheery fluoro orange dragon, dipped into the clearing, crashing into the pond head on. Al burst into delighted laughter as she watched her friend. Draco was not especially experienced with his wings. After all, he was still a baby dragon.

With a burst of violet flames, Draco tumbled onto the banks, dripping. Finding a small vine, Al began to braid. In, out, around... Falling into the steady pattern of her hands' work, Al sighed, "I wish that an adventure would come my way. It's so boring around here!". Al waited for Draco to scoff at her pessimism. But when after a while there was still no response, Al looked up from her work. Immediately, she realised that something was wrong. Draco was not there any more.

Frantically, Al jumped up and scanned the clearing with her keen, sharp eyes. Ssst... The slight rustle caught her attention at once and she spun around. The only thing she saw was the end of a dark violet cloak and the bright fluoro orange of Draco's tail.

The wind rushed past Al's ears as she pursued the mysterious kidnapper. She had nothing to guide her apart from her sense of smell but that was enough. The hours passed by, but still Al could tell that the kidnapper was not slowing. It didn't matter though. She could go on forever and still not feel tired. Running was like hiding from humans, it was easy and effortless.

It was evening by the time Al felt him halt. The moon battled against the sun as it fought to gain the title of brightest thing

in the sky. Blood red rays of sunlight were the only hint that the sun was still there. Just as well. Elves felt more comfortable in the dark.

As she felt the heat radiating off the kidnapping creature getting warmer, she knew that she was very close. Finally, she stopped. Looming above her was the biggest tree she had seen in her life, and a huge, gaping hole split one side from the other. She didn't spend much time gazing at it though. Instead, she was looking at the figure standing at the mouth of the tree doorway. It was a centaur, and Draco was lying curled up on the ground next to it, fast asleep.

Anyone who was as shy as Al would have shrank away from such a situation, but this time, her anger overpowered her shyness. How dare someone be so cruel to another mythical creature!

Elves were not made to fight. Nor were centaurs. But they were made as mythical creatures, so they have a special way to interact, and therefore there was a way for Al to get Draco back with nothing to fear ever again. They fight by ways of the mind.

Al soon gained the upper hand. No matter how hard the centaur grappled with her consciousness, Al had lived longer and thus her mental skills were stronger. Soon, the centaur was lying on the ground, either unconscious or dead. Al had no time to check, because she blacked out.

Her vision flickered. It zoomed in on a brownish-yellow leaf, then on a speck of dirt on her bare foot. Slowly, she sat up. The sun blinked uncertainly on the horizon. Al stood up, and saw at her feet was the centaur she had defeated herself. And beside it, breathing a little dragon-fire on the centaur's already burnt tail, was Draco, healthy, living and totally healed of the sleeping potion the centaur had given him. The sun broke through the clouds and Al's strength returned.

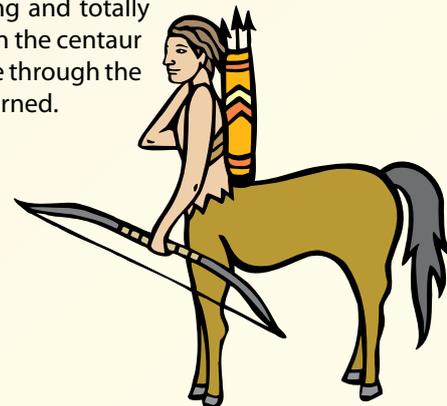
*By Clara Chen*

*Year 5*

*Lauriston Girls' School*

*ARMADALE - VIC.*

*Teacher: Miss Melinda Evans*



# My Private Pectus: stuck on the ledge

By Shane Tamm

One summer I tried to climb a mountain in New Zealand, but got stuck more than half way up. I was with a climbing buddy, and a Kiwi we had recently met. Sitting on a ledge, we watched the sun set. There were hundreds of metres of crumbling cliff below us, and more of the same above. We were stuck. Not because we didn't have the ability to climb on, but because we were losing light fast.

We were on a mountain in Arthur's Pass on New Zealand's South Island, where the peaks tower some 2000-plus metres above sea level. We were caught because we had followed our new friend's advice. He had said he had climbed the mountain before. He said we had plenty of time.

Sitting hundreds of metres below the summit, feeling the alpine air needle our skin, he admitted he had gotten something wrong. He pointed beyond a snow-less avalanche gully to a neighbouring cliff. "I think we're meant to be over there", he said.

For a while I pondered our predicament. Between urges to throw the Kiwi off, I wondered why we had followed his advice against our better judgement. I didn't know him that well, and my friend, who was a seasoned mountaineer, didn't either. We watched the jagged grey peaks around us turn into shadows like tombstones against the moonlit sky.

It's bizarre how advice can get us into the best and worst of situations. This for me was definitely one of the worst.

That night often makes me think about how advice is constantly thrown at us, how sometimes we take it on and sometimes we choose to ignore it. It can come thick and fast from parents, friends, the internet, or TV. You have to go to university to secure your future. Don't eat red meat, it gives you cancer. Look right then left then right again to safely cross the road. Or is it the other way around? I always forget. The point is, it can be very hard to work out what advice is true or useful.

There were thoughts like these that led me to write my first novel, *My Private Pectus*, a story about Jack, a seventeen-year-old who feels like he's got nowhere to turn. He feels like he's stuck on that cliff, confused about who he is, or what he's meant to do.

Jack's main source of advice is his father, an ex military man who wants him to join the army and the school footy team, but Jack's not that keen. Jack has other concerns as well. He falls for a girl his mates can't stand. "A cellulite dump", they call her. And their advice only makes him feel worse because he's got a major body concern of his own. He has a chest deformity called pectus excavatum, a condition that causes his chest to concave and it gets worse during the teenage years. Worried about what other people might think, he hides it from almost everyone, especially his father.

The pressures Jack faces in *My Private Pectus* are actually not that unique. Many of them were mine when I was in high school, and I didn't have a deformity to deal with. They were real concerns about what other people thought of me; fears about what I looked like.

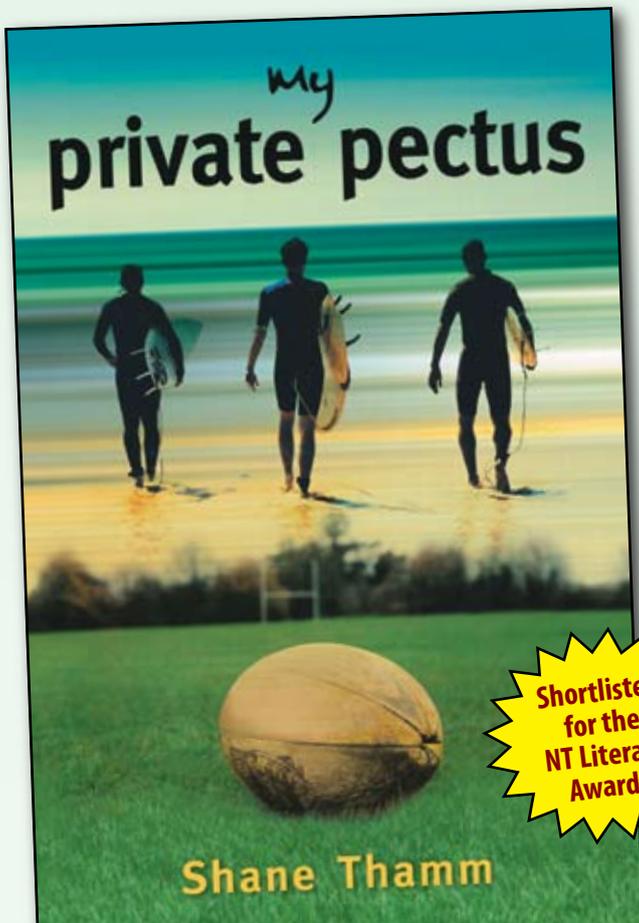
*My Private Pectus* reminds us that Australian teenagers are very concerned about their appearance, boys and girls alike. In fact, it's reflective of research that suggests one in five boys and one in four girls are seriously concerned about body image. It's a growing trend.

Yet despite this, when we turn on the TV or go to the movies, we're faced with false "advice" about how we should look. Nearly every celebrity, the people we usually admire, possesses a body that has taken years (and personal trainers and maybe steroids) to sculpt. Often we're left feeling that's how we are meant to look no matter how unattainable it might be.

So in *My Private Pectus* I chose to offer something contrary to the mainstream, but still deeply engaged with teenage life.

It is a story about learning to be comfortable in your own skin, about negotiating a way off that cliff of body image anxieties.

A high school teacher, who passed *My Private Pectus* onto her students told me, "The book held up a mirror, and instead of saying there is something drastically wrong with you, it said you are okay, you are 'normal'." I think that's an important message when you feel like you're too "different" to fit in, like I did at times in my teenage years.



*My Private Pectus* is by no means a sombre story. It's sharp, often funny, and in the end, deeply rewarding. It's a story that says there are often ways out, just as there were for us on that cliff in New Zealand.

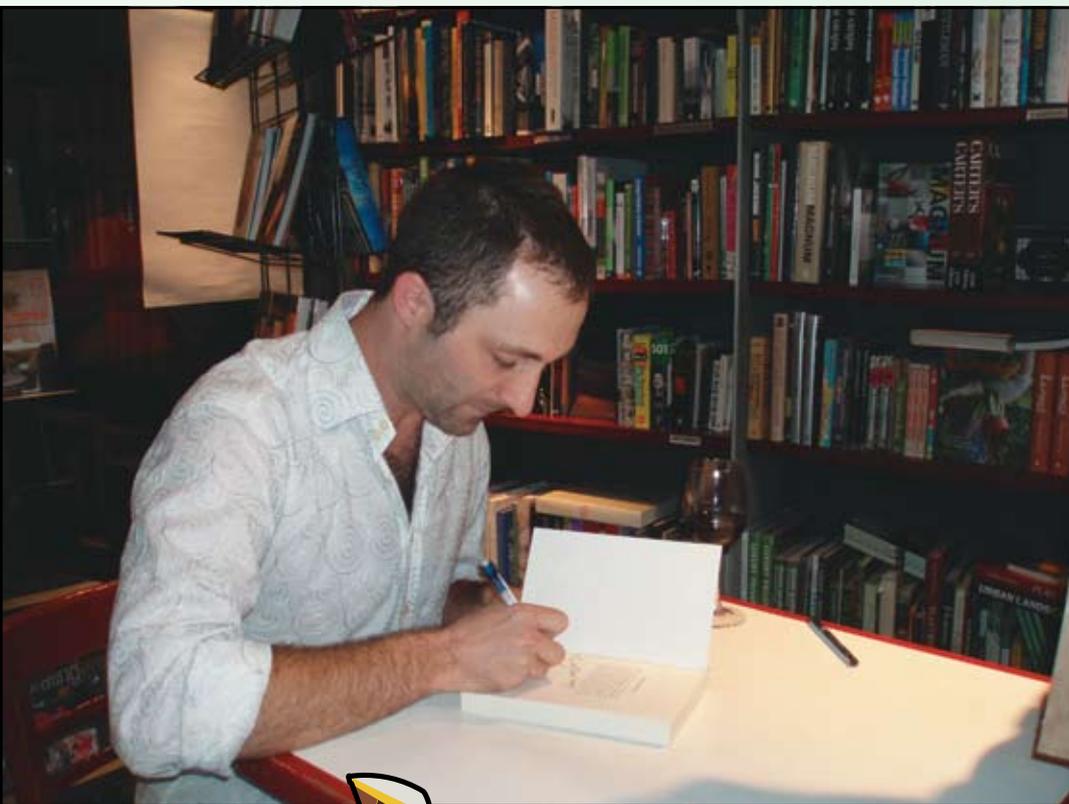
Fortunately, we had come prepared with a spare rope and head torches. We decided to abseil down. After we surveyed our options – go back from where we came, or descend into the avalanche gully where the ground was closest – we chose the avalanche gully.

Wrapping the rope around a boulder on the ledge, we used it to abseil one by one to another ledge below. We pulled the rope down and repeated this process three times. After 150 metres, we reached the steep avalanche gully, which was strewn with loose rocks and giant boulders of melting ice.

Despite getting off the cliff, nothing that followed was easy nor comfortable. For the next two to three hours we slid and hiked off that mountain and back to our car, which later broke down. To escape the cold, we slept in a Scout hall. And in the morning we hitched home separately, because it was easier to hitch alone than in a group. What was supposed to be a few hours rock climbing turned into a 36-hour round trip.

But what I like about that trip now are the difficulties we faced, and that when we overcame one there was always another. It was a bizarre day, so far removed from normal life, but with many strange parallels.

Jack's life in *My Private Pectus* is a bit like that day. He encounters all sorts of hassles. His friendships fall apart, but he learns to mend them. He is forced to confront his fears about his body, and realises that he has isolated his father, his best friend and the girl he likes. Then at the end he discovers that good advice – the best advice – often comes from the least likely place.



## Back at the Commonwealth Games



My heart was thumping,  
My hands were clammy.  
I had a strange feeling,  
Down in my tummy.

My jumpsuit was on,  
My shoelaces tight.  
And thanks to the sun,  
The stadium was bright.

My hand went up,  
When they called my lane,  
I jumped and smiled,  
When they said my name.

I was in position,  
Ready to go.  
And I knew that for this,  
I couldn't be slow.

We were off and running.  
Into the unknown.  
I had aches and pains,  
In nearly every bone.

Sweat was dripping,  
Down my face.  
I really had to,  
Win this race!

*By Vanessa Mae Cohen  
Year 5  
Lauriston Girls' School  
ARMADALE – VIC.  
Teacher: Mrs Ente*



## DARKNESS FALLING

People are screeching hawks,  
Houses burning to the ground,  
Babies crying, tears falling.  
Darkness falling.

Echoes of gun shots,  
Whaling and chaos,  
Bullet piercing delicate skin,  
Heaven's gateway is open.  
What will be left behind?

The heat penetrates bodies as they run,  
Screams from the Khmer Rouge dragons can be heard,  
Trees hunched like old men block the way,  
The shouting is getting closer.

The boat has left the dock,  
Thoughts of family and everything left behind,  
Land is up ahead, sands of white.  
Light has returned again.

*By Isaac Langford  
Year 3, The Essington School  
RAPID CREEK - NT  
Teacher: Kea Fletcher*

## Peacock

Scars of colour,  
Sincere beauty when I dance,  
To no tune do I choose to move,  
In my own nature,  
Steps that I retrace,  
From so many generations.

Gliding through the sky,  
Beauty weighs nothing.  
My tail,  
Do such complete rainbows exist?

Yet I am so rarely found.  
In my own decisions,  
I find my homeland amongst this,  
I find my love,  
My dreams.

They call it a 'Zoo',  
Those nasty beasts.  
Poor fauna,  
Small and innocent and weary,  
The monkeys locked up,  
While I roam free.

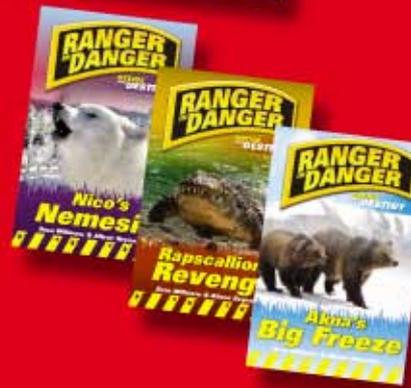
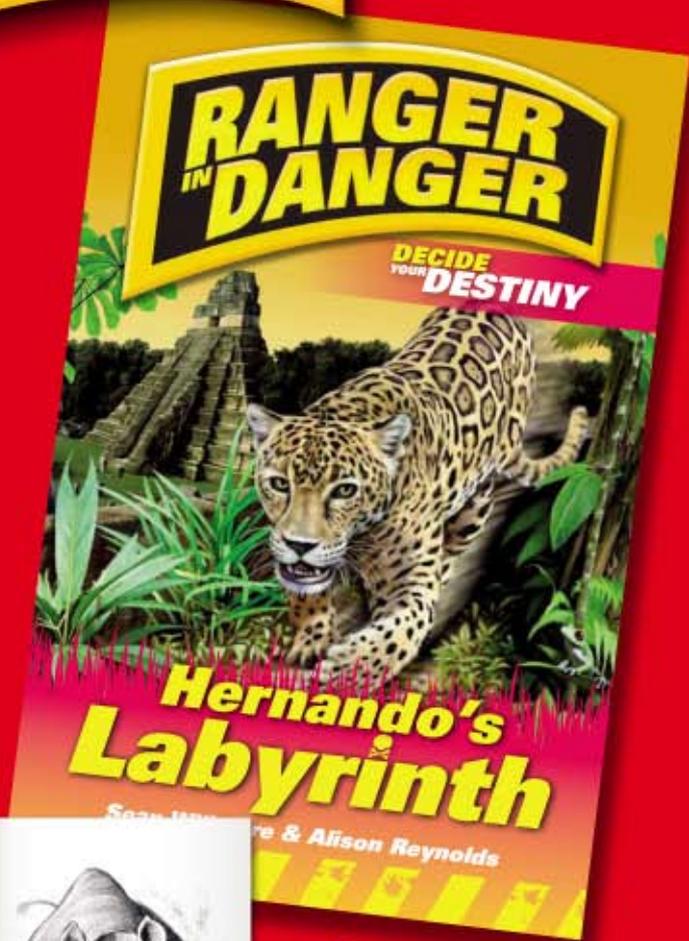
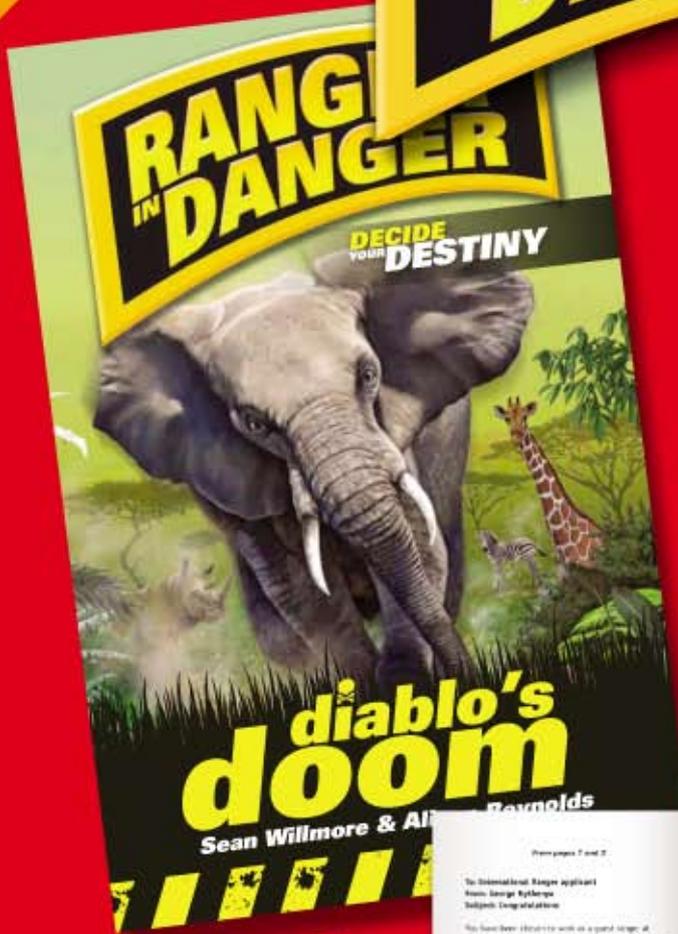
Is it so correct?  
For beauty to be let free.  
But if it comes back,  
Grab hold,  
For it will be yours always.

*By Cara Widdicombe  
Year 7, Shelford Girls' Grammar School  
CAULFIELD - VIC.  
Teacher: Alicenne Stevens*



You Decide  
Your Destiny –  
with 20 possible endings  
with 20 possible endings

# RANGER IN DANGER



Coming in early 2010 –  
an exciting new adventure  
series for 9- to 12-year-olds

This series is a collaboration between Melbourne author Alison Reynolds and conservation hero Sean Willmore, winner of the individual category of the 2009 United Nations World Environment Day Award. Sean is the founder of the Thin Green Line Foundation which supports rangers and their families throughout the world.



The Thin Green Line  
FOUNDATION

# Silent Music

**I**t was crazy to come back here; I was in enough pain as it was. It was only a week ago that I refused to see anyone, eat anything or even come out of my room. But as I hesitantly stepped out of the cover of the trees I could feel the wind swirl around me lifting my fears of returning to this place and blowing them away. I slowly walked to the centre of the meadow where I used to stand hand-in-hand with her. Rain was misting lightly around me but I didn't take any notice of it. As I looked up the sun shone playfully across my face, dancing with the misting rain. The light moisture felt nice as it slowly washed away all traces of the salty tears that had been falling freely down my cheeks.

**As I** came out of my thoughts I found that I was slowly dancing to the music that was encircling me. I felt as I was floating, gently flying over the clouds, and the sun shining through my hair making it shine golden. Once again I felt beautiful, my fears and worries had completely lifted and my sadness and grief were tucked away in the furthest corner of my mind. As I twirled gracefully I could feel my mother's spirit happily watching me. I danced for her happiness and for her peace. It was then that I knew that she was still with me as the emptiness silently dropped from my heart; I knew that she was still with me in spirit, even if I couldn't see her or hug her like I used to.



**I felt a quiet peace settle** over me as the rain slowed and the breeze dropped. As the sun moved behind a cloud I stopped dancing as my lullaby drew to its close, standing still for a long moment. Slowly the sun came back out and shone once again on our meadow. I silently said goodbye to my mother before stepping out of the meadow now framed by a beautiful rainbow. I knew that someday I would return to this place after living my own life, making my own mistakes and looking after my own children. I knew I would one day return to her waiting arms and we would once more dance together to my lullaby in our own beautiful meadow.

*By Aliya Jade Piper  
Age 15*

*McLAREN VALE - SA*

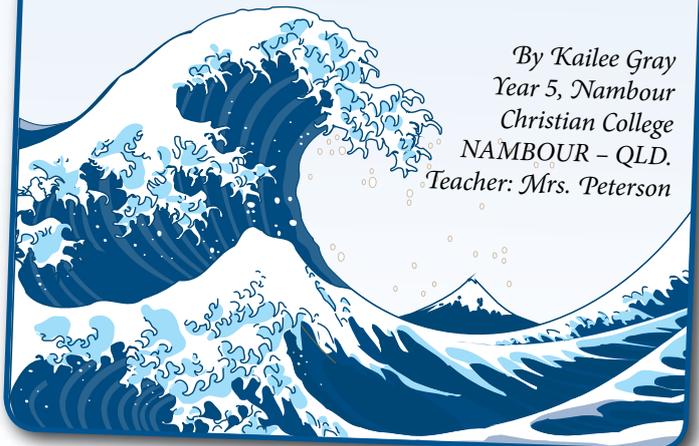
**I** stood frozen in the middle of the meadow listening to the sounds that surrounded me, the soft patter of the misting rain and the whisper of the breeze against the leaves of the surrounding trees. As I listened they began to meld together forming a soft, flowing melody. In the distance I could hear a babbling brook, songbirds singing and the quiet chatter of frogs. As I listened to the quiet melody I recognised it as the lullaby that my mother used to sing to me as we once watched the clouds floating by, laying on the soft grass of our meadow.

**Standing** there listening to the music that was only for my ears I remembered all the times we had shared together before she was taken from this world by the cruel disease that had been eating away at her for the past five years. We all knew that she couldn't survive it and yet it came as a shock when it finally took her into a world beyond ours. She had been so optimistic as she battled against it. She never once gave us the chance to feel sorry for her. She would frown upon my behaviour if she knew how I had acted since she left us although in some small way I was happy for the peacefulness of her passing.

## The Sea

Restlessly Roaming searching for its dusting ever wandering,  
Where will it go?  
What will it be? I can not tell,  
Sandy sea footprints  
Who has been marking the shore?  
A crab? A croc? the sea will not tell,  
A curtain of spray, waves crashing against the rocks,  
Gulls call overhead.

*By Kailee Gray  
Year 5, Nambour  
Christian College  
NAMBOUR - QLD.  
Teacher: Mrs. Peterson*



# A Friend, My Life

Clip, clop, clip, clop,  
The smell of horse manure,  
And fresh hay,  
The sound of saddles hitting the back of a horse,  
This is my life,  
My home.

This is my passion,  
A passion for horses,  
Nature's wild beauty,  
Horses are my love,  
My life.

Each morning I wake,  
To a wonderful feeling,  
A feeling of knowing,  
Five great rides,  
Lay ahead of me.

What I feel out there on the track,  
You could never experience it anywhere else,  
But there and then,  
On that track,  
With that one special horse.

'Ellie',  
Is that one special horse,  
That makes every morning shine,  
She's the gentle giant that every stable has,  
She's the one that doesn't have a bad bone in her body,  
She's the one horse that can never put a foot wrong.

Every morning we take that step,  
Ellie and I,  
Out onto the dirt track,  
Of Flemington,  
The home of the Melbourne Cup.

Where we do our stuff,  
Where one day she'll be that horse,  
That horse that stops the nation,  
With me,  
Her best friend aboard.

I hear the pounding of her hooves,  
Against the hard dirt track,  
I sit propped up upon her back,  
Adrenalin pumping through my blood.

That's what makes me happy,  
Me, Ellie and the peacefulness,  
The peacefulness that surrounds us,  
In our own little world.

When you find a friend like Ellie,  
You hope that friendship will never end,  
You love them dearly,  
You nurture them every day,  
But sadly there is always an ending,  
To all these great friendships.

Now lying here in my hospital bed,  
I can't handle the facts,  
I've lost a friend,  
A friend I've always loved,  
From birth to death,  
She was my lifelong friend.

I try to remember,  
What happened that morning,  
But I can't remember a lot,  
I can remember her falling from beneath me,  
The sound of her hitting the ground,  
As soon as it happened,  
I knew something was really wrong.

No one ever wants to lose a great friend,  
No one will ever be able to replace those friends,  
Especially Ellie,  
She was my life,  
What I thrived upon,  
She was the only family I had.

Finding another friend like her,  
Won't be easy,  
But I know she'll always be up there,  
Looking down on me,  
Guiding me in the right direction,  
Waiting for me to join her.

Look after yourself Ellie,  
I'll be with you soon.

*By Laura Skipworth  
Year 7*

*King Island District High School, Tas.  
Teacher: Miss Sarah Mott*



# The Scarecrow That Ran Away!

ONE hot morning I woke up on the floor. Before I go on I must explain myself.

"Hi my name is Daisy, I am eight years old and I had two sisters but they do not live here, they are way too old and I also have a brother that is thirteen." "I live on a farm and let's just say we're not rich but my dad always says you don't need money to be happy". We got an award for the biggest veggie garden in Australia!



Back to the story. So I woke up on the floor. It was not a good start to the day. I started walking down the stairs and then there was even more trouble. My brother Josh was reading my secret diary! "Josh, give that back" I ran and snatched it off him. "Another bad thing just happened to me", I said in my mind. "This is definitely my bad luck day!" I started eating breakfast and you do not know what I saw, my scarecrow that I put in the garden was running away. I felt like I was going to faint but luckily I didn't!

I decided to run after it so I ran outside. I called out to the scarecrow a few times but I don't think it has ears. I started to get puffed out, she was so fast, so I stopped for a few seconds and started running again. I was trying to think where would I go if I was a scarecrow and then it hit me: I would go to the hills. So I had to run about a kilometre or two but that is all right; I had to get there sooner or later. So about ten minutes

later I got there and the scarecrow that I named Amy was sitting down on the hills. I went to say "Hi" and she started running again but I had put my foot onto her short dress (that I had given her) so she could not get up. I started talking to her. I asked her "Why did you run away?" and she said "Well, you don't give me anything to eat or drink and I always have to stand there even if it is raining or if it was a boiling hot

day. I would not even get a drink of water so I just made a run for it." "I am so sorry, I never even realised that you were even alive, I thought that you were just a statue." "Well, I guess I will forgive you but you have to promise to give me food, water and attention", said Amy. "OK, I promise." They started to walk back to Daisy's house and as she said this morning that it was her bad luck day it was because she fell and grazed her knee while she was walking home.

From that day on Amy and Daisy were very good friends and Daisy always brought her food and water.

One month later Daisy's family won WORLD'S BIGGEST VEGGIE GARDEN!

*By Paije Hocjings  
Year 5, Marymount Primary School  
BURLEIGH WATERS - QLD.  
Teacher: Mrs Una Deem*

The Moon  
Like a silver coin  
The stars  
Together they join  
The night  
The combination  
Draped over  
The Earth  
Breathe the dreams  
Over the silent nation

The Wind!  
Fly faster!

Glide over the silent nation  
Belly full of stars  
Like pearl dust  
True and just  
Inky tail  
Swish through the clouds  
White as snow  
Don't make a sound

The Wind!  
Fly faster!

## Dream Dragon



*By Kira Bradbury  
Year 5, Winterfold Primary School  
BEACONSFIELD - TAS.*

Moan like a whale  
Over the ocean  
Black as night  
Invisible to human sight  
Here comes

The Wind!  
Fly faster!

Snatch a passing seagull  
For dinner  
Al fresco  
On the way home  
To the Isle of Dreams  
Land on silver feet  
Time for sleep  
As Day creeps  
Over the horizon  
Dream Dragon  
To the forest cave  
Collapse after 500 years  
Of work  
And embrace Death  
Spreader of Dreams  
Sliver of the Sky  
Dream Dragon

# The Kit Kat Mystery!!!

ONE morning I woke up with one exciting sentence in my head, "It's school holidays!!!". Sorry I forgot to introduce myself, my name is Zoe and I'm seven years old. I have one big, annoying sister named Brie who is nineteen. I live in Melbourne and I go to Saint Joseph's School. I was quite excited this morning so I tried to go downstairs with one foot (hopping).



I wasn't quite successful. I fell downstairs but luckily I only had three steps to go so I only fell down three steps! When I called out to my mum and dad they didn't answer. They were nowhere to be found, then I found that there was a note on the kitchen bench. It said:

*To Dear Zoe,  
Your father and I have just gone to the shopping centre to buy some groceries because we are all out.  
If you have any problems just go into your sister's room and ask her to help you, we will be back soon I promise!!!  
Sincerely Mum and Dad. P.S. we love you to the moon and back again.*

"I would never go up to Brie's room even if I accidentally set the house on fire" I said quietly, then I had a little bit of a giggle. I went to get some breakfast and guess what? There was not one cereal out of Coco Pops, Weet-Bix, Rice Bubbles, Nutragrain,

Special K or Corn Flakes and there wasn't even any toast, bacon, eggs or ham!!!

Now I felt angry, then suddenly I heard mum and dad get home. A smile rushed to my face. I rushed out and gave them a big hug and helped them carry the groceries in, and then I helped them pack away the groceries. Then nothing could stop me when I saw the Kit Kats. I just had to ask Mum if I could have one Kit Kat and guess what she said – "YES!!!".

I quickly unwrapped the paper and had a bite. I realised that I wasn't in the kitchen any more. I was in another world. This world was strange. It had flowers but they were not flowers – they were Kit Kats but just shaped as flowers. The sun was a square shape and was made out of a Kit Kat that was the biggest Kit Kat I had ever seen! I had a look around and I realised I was the only one on this planet and then I realised I was on KIT KAT WORLD!!! I love Kit Kats!!!

Suddenly I had a short bad thought in my head. What if I can't get back? I ran around and I couldn't find a way to get back. I was thinking so hard of a way but I had tried them all. Suddenly I saw some flying things and they were Kit Kat spiders. They came up to me and I asked them "How can I get back to my world?". They told me a little quiz I had to try to work out. They said you must finish off what you started but then the spiders said goodbye and I said "Where are you going?" They told me "We go as we please, we blow in the breeze". I said "Goodbye and thanks".

Now I really need to figure out what that quiz means and then it hit me. I had to finish off my Kit Kat that luckily was still in my hand. So I finished my Kit Kat and then suddenly I was back in the kitchen helping mum. I took a deep breath of relief and I decided I would never have a Kit Kat for breakfast again.

*By Paije Hockings  
Year 5, Marymount Primary School  
BURLEIGH WATERS – QLD.  
Teacher: Mrs Una Deem*

## Sea Bird

Spray spattered high  
Sky soaring  
I'd like to fly with wings,  
Overhead a storm rolls in  
Gulls panic to a dry place, they swoop.  
The sunbakers turned, glowing red, barbecued by sunlight cooking,  
Well I'd think I'm better off as me.

*By Kailee Gray, Year 5, Nambour Christian College, NAMBOUR – QLD. Teacher: Mrs Peterson*



# The Werewolf

In a small clearing, a girl stood alone on the edge of a cliff. She stood still, looking out over the edge, past the abyss below her and into the single window of the fortress on the other side. The fortress was black and forbidding, seeming to be made of the darkest of shadows. In the window, a single candle flickered.

A figure passed the candle, making the flame splutter as the air around it moved. The figure had an angular and haunted face. Skin so white, that it seemed to glow stretched over the hollow and sunken cheeks. Bags hung deeply under the pit-like black eyes. A single, thin scar stretched from the right corner of his mouth to his right temple.

The girl flinched when she saw the figure, but continued to stand and watch as he looked out the window and into the night sky. Clouds stretched across the black backdrop, blocking out the comforting light of the stars and moon and making the night seem more sinister.

Suddenly, the clouds shifted to reveal a glowing sphere. The full moon bathed the clearing in a deathly, pale light. At the same time, a clock chimed twelve inside the fortress, each chime loud and menacing in the night's silence.

The figure in the window stepped back into the shadows fearfully, trying to avoid the moon's glow. Not a moment after, he let out a sickening roar and the girl saw him fall to the floor. She tried to turn and run, but her legs were stone. Her heart jumped into her throat and she could hear the blood rushing in her ears, though it wasn't until the great front doors of the fortress were flung open that she was able to turn and run.

The girl heard a howl from behind her as the figure, now transformed, followed her. She fled into the thick forest surrounding the clearing. Behind her, she heard the beast howl again. Then, silence.

She leant against a tree trunk and breathed deeply, trying to steady her heart. He hadn't got to her. There was no possible way that he could cross the abyss. He had made sure of that...

Though, she had no sooner thought those words than a blood-curling howl erupted from the clearing behind her.

The girl fled, hearing the beast crashing through the forest. She had no idea how he had done it, but had no time to dwell on the mystery. She was painfully aware that the beast's ragged breaths were growing louder, drawing closer.

Suddenly, the girl's foot caught on a branch and she fell heavily on the hard ground. She heard the beast howl triumphantly. This was it. All these years she had managed to track the boy, yet evade his beast. Now, it was over, and she would have to succumb to the monster.

The boy hadn't always been that way. He had been her friend. That had changed though. He had begun to avoid her and had told her to leave him alone. One night she had seen him running towards the park. She had been curious and had followed him there. That was when she had learnt his secret.

The girl still remembered his angry face when she had told him that she knew. He had yelled and run away. Since then, she had been following him. With each full moon he became more and more agitated with her. It was because of this that he constantly begged her to go away, to let him be and to protect herself. She had told him repeatedly that friends were important and that his secret didn't bother her. He had only shook his head miserably and walked away. His secret, and what it caused, disgusted him.

Now, for the first time, lying amongst the dead leaves and dirt with the beast looming menacingly above her, the girl felt afraid. For the first time, she realised why the boy had kept his distance. She realised why his secret scared him and made him miserable.

The beast roared and bent over the girl. She recoiled and stared at him. The beast's eyes were black and pit-like, his face angular. A thin, white scar stretched from the corner of his mouth to his temple, cutting through the matted, dirty fur.



As she looked at the grotesque monster and saw these features, the girl felt sorry for the boy. He wouldn't remember anything of what had happened when he woke in the morning. He would never know where she had gone. Certainly, he would guess, though he would never know the truth. His twisted thoughts and fears would torment him until his death.

The girl leant back and waited for her certain death. Her hand brushed a stone and she was struck with inspiration. The beast was moving forward, going in for the kill. As quick as lightning, she clenched her fist around the stone and thrust it into the beast's face. He jumped back, screaming in pain.

The girl sprung nimbly to her feet and ran blindly into the forest. She had no idea where she was going, nor did she know how much longer the seemingly endless night would last. Praying

that dawn was not far away, she found shelter under a large, flat rock. She crawled underneath it and curled up tightly. In the distance, she could hear the beast yelling in frustration and pain. She hoped that she hadn't injured him too badly.

It wasn't long before the girl drifted into a rough, interrupted sleep. Images of the beast swarmed her mind and she awoke at every sound. She spent the night drifting in and out of consciousness, afraid of the beast and the consequences should he find her.

To the girl, it seemed as if she had slept for centuries before dawn finally came. Only then did the howls of the beast finally cease. She crawled out from under the rock and looked around her. Rays of golden sunlight struggled to seep through the forest's thick canopy. Those that were successful shone as small dots on the shadowed earth.

The girl wandered through the forest, searching for the clearing. At one point, she noticed a blood stain on her shirt. A quick check told her that it belonged to the beast. She wondered at the fact that she hadn't been scathed during the night's ordeal.

During the night, while she had been trying to sleep, she had made up her mind. She couldn't afford to trail behind the boy any more, following him wherever he tried to hide. It was too risky. The girl realised that the only way she could really show friendship was to finally let him rest peacefully in the knowledge that he could no longer hurt her.

Eventually, the girl found herself in the clearing again. She stared at the fortress. It looked no less ominous by day than it had by night. A movement in the window caught the girl's eye. There the boy stood, with his pit-like eyes and pale skin. His left eye was bruised and there was a deep cut above his eyebrow. The girl cringed when she saw the injuries and her stomach squirmed sickeningly. She had caused this.

The boy caught sight of her and began to back away from the window, as he always did when he knew that she had found him again. Quickly the girl raised a hand, making the boy pause. Slowly and sadly, she waved goodbye. The boy seemed to understand. He moved into the sunlight and raised his own hand in farewell.

Scanning the boy's features one last time, so as not to forget them, the girl turned and slowly walked away into the forest. Her tears fell heavy onto the dishevelled earth and seeped into the dark soil as she walked. She would go home, back to the place she had lived before she had met the boy. For the first time, she did not wonder about him. Somehow, she knew he would cope well, now that he was alone. He would be free of his anxiety, now he knew that he could not hurt her.

The girl sighed as she stepped over a cluster of twisted roots. She would miss the werewolf.

*By Talia Walker  
Year 9, Cerdon College  
MERRYLANDS - NSW*

## Candy World!!

One dusty Saturday morning, after I had eaten my breakfast, I went into my bedroom. I was bored. I could hear my sisters in the room next door. I decided to go and find out what they were doing. They were eating the lollies that came from the night before, because we went to a party.

I sneaked into my sister's room as soon as she left. I put my hand into the lolly and magically entered a candy world. I found myself lying on a deserted beach. I looked at the sand and said to myself "This sand looks funny". I tried it, it didn't taste like sand at all, it tasted like sugar. I was so hungry so I took three big handfuls.



I looked down at the sea shells that were lying on the ground. I picked one up and took a little nibble. They were chocolate!! Then I started to get thirsty. I looked at the sea water. But then I remembered that sea water is salty and it would make me even thirstier. But if the sand was sugar and the sea shells were chocolate, I wondered if the sea water was different too. I took a little sip. It didn't taste like sea water at all, instead it was blueberry juice.

I started to feel homesick. Then I remembered my family. If I stayed here I would miss them and they would worry. Then in the distance I saw a playground. With liquorice slide, a toffee apple swing, and Milky Way monkey bars. I tried sliding down the liquorice slide but that did not work.

It was no use, we would never be able to get home. I sat on the toffee swing and started to cry!! As soon as my tear hit the ground the world started spinning. I woke up and found myself lying on my sister's bed. The sheets were pulled back and on the sheets there was sugar.

THE END!!

*By Bonnie Doyle  
Year 4, St. Paul's Primary School,  
MILDURA - VIC.  
Teacher: Mrs. Antonella Pollifrone*

# THE WOODCUTTER'S TALE

Once upon a time there was a woodcutter who lived in a brick house on the edge of the palace rubbish tip. The woodcutter was very sad, because he had no wood, to cut and sell in the market. Because of this he had no money and had to eat whatever he found in the tip.

One day, he found a hen roosting on an oven. When the hen saw him, she clucked at him, and then began to speak!

"You are the woodcutter who lives in the brick house. You can never find wood to cut and sell, and so have no money. Come and take this stove. Take it home and bake bread in it. Then, eat a slice. Tomorrow you will wake up in someone else's life." And with that the hen vanished.

The woodchopper did as the hen said, and took the oven home and baked bread with it. Then he ate a slice and went to bed.

When he woke up, there was sunlight streaming through the windows, and he was in the most comfortable bed ever. Suddenly, there was a knock on the door. Then a little girl came running in with a golden crown on her head and similarly coloured locks of hair streaming out behind her.

"Good morning Daddy", she said, panting for breath. "Breakfast time. Come down with me, Daddy. Come down."

The woodcutter came down for breakfast with the girl, and discovered he was King.

But the life of the King was not an easy one. All day he had to see to important business, and couldn't play with the sweet

little Princess. He discovered that there were revolts around the country, several war threats, and a multitude of life-or-death decisions had to be made.

That evening, worn out with the work, the King/woodcutter made his way downstairs, and went to the kitchen, lured there by the smell of baking bread. And the oven baking the bread was none other than the oven the hen had roosted on only the day before.

He took a slice of bread and went back upstairs to the King's bed, where he fell asleep.

Next morning he was a fox. He woke up in his den, a long tail wrapped around his face, with the cries of hungry baby foxes all around. That day was spent escaping from men with guns and trying to find food.

In the early afternoon he went into a farmer's kitchen, looking for food. To his surprise and horror he found a farmer. What was worse, he had a gun and was pointing it straight at him! At that moment what he wished for most of all was that he was back in his brick house. He closed his eyes, and when he opened them again...

He was home.

*By Larissa Bunker  
Year 9*

*Read, Write & Share  
NORTH LAKES - QLD.*

*Teacher: Gelly McAuliffe-Bunker*



## Ambassadors

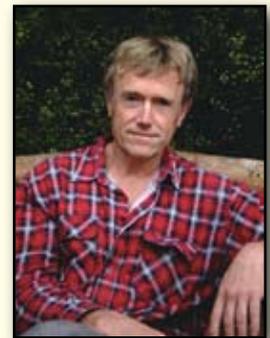


☺ **Krista Bell** is an award-winning author of twenty-one books for young readers. Krista has been professionally involved in children's literature for over thirty years, as well as being the mother of three sons, all of whom are good readers and writers! Krista's middle son, Damien, is the illustrator of her junior novels. Having grown up in Sydney, Krista had her own bookshop, was a publicist for a publishing company, then a book reviewer on ABC Radio for fifteen years, and during that time moved to Melbourne with her family.

It was in Melbourne that her first book, *JEZZA*, a picture book illustrated by Kym Lardner, was published in 1991. Krista calls the way she writes FIBTION, because she takes real life experiences, embroiders them with fibs and turns them into stories.

Krista lives with her sons and transport planner husband next to a railway line so she can quickly catch a train to the MCG to watch a football match, or go to the theatre, a concert or the National Gallery in town, or visit South Bank or Federation Square where she can be a professional "stickybeak", collecting story ideas. Visit [www.kristabell.com](http://www.kristabell.com).

**Paul Collins** was born in England, raised in New Zealand and moved to Australia in 1972. In 1975 he launched *Void*, the first professional science fiction magazine Australia had seen since the demise of the joint Australian and British production *Vision of Tomorrow*. His first fantasy novel for younger readers was *The Wizard's Torment*. Paul then edited the young adult anthology *Dream Weavers*, Australia's first heroic fantasy anthology ever. This was followed by *Fantastic Worlds*, and *Tales from the Wasteland*. Paul's recent works include the highly successful fantasy series (co-edited with Michael Pryor), *The Quentaris Chronicles*, to which Paul also contributes titles (*Swords of Quentaris*, *Slaves of Quentaris*, *Princess of Shadows* and *Dragonlords of Quentaris*); *The Jelindel Chronicles*, in which *Dragonlinks* was the first title, and *The Earthborn Wars* trilogy, of which *The Earthborn* was the first title. Visit [www.paulcollins.com.au](http://www.paulcollins.com.au) for more. ☺



☺ **Anna Ciddor** has always been fascinated by the question, 'What if I lived in another time or place?'. She changed career from maths teacher to author so she'd have the excuse to spend lots of time doing research. She has written and illustrated over fifty books, including the highly popular and exciting Viking Magic trilogy: *Runestone*, *Wolfspell* and *Stormriders*. Bravery, friendship, and a dash of magic are the keys to these adventure stories, which are based on real Viking history. *Runestone* was chosen as a Children's Book Council Notable Book in 2003 and has been shortlisted for many awards. You can find out more about Anna and her books at [www.annaciddor.com](http://www.annaciddor.com).

Anna keeps in touch with her readers through school visits and her website, but she is also keen to encourage the writing efforts of budding young authors through the Young Australian Writers' Awards.

**Meredith Costain** lives in Melbourne with a menagerie of pets: five chooks, a cat, a kelpie and a red heeler, which often feature in her stories. Her work ranges from picture books through to popular fiction and non-fiction for older readers, and she is the literary editor of national children's magazines *Challenge*, *Explore* and *Comet*. Meredith's books include the series *A Year in Girl Hell*, *Dog Squad*, *Bed Tails* and *Musical Harriet*, which was adapted for television by the ABC. Her picture book *Doodledum Dancing*, illustrated by Pamela Allen, was an Honour Book in the 2007 Children's Book Council of Australia awards.

Meredith regularly presents writing workshops for kids and adults in libraries and schools, and enjoys helping writers create stories based on their own experiences. To find out more about her books, pets and early writing years, visit [www.meredithcostain.com](http://www.meredithcostain.com). ☺



☺ **Jeni Mawter** (J.A. Mawter) is the best-selling children's author of the hilarious 'So' series: *So Gross!*, *So Feral!*, *So Sick!*, *So Festy!*, *So Grotty!* and *So Stinky!* (HarperCollins) as well as the Freewheelers adventure series: *Unleashed!*, *Launched!* and *Extreme!* (HarperCollins). Jeni's picture book *There's a Sun Fairy in Our Garden* was based on her family life with her three children. She has also published fiction, non-fiction, poetry and verse narrative for the education market.

Jeni's enthusiasm for words and books is infectious. She inspires both children and adults. With a Master of Arts in Children's Literature Jeni has taught creative writing at Macquarie University, the NSW Writer's Centre and the Sydney Writers Centre. She presents at numerous other schools, conferences and festivals and is a speaker for the Lateral Learning, Show & Tell and Speaker's Ink speaker's agencies.

If you'd like to find about Jeni's books or to get some hot writing tips please visit [www.jenimawter.com](http://www.jenimawter.com)

## Amy and Sally – Part One

Amy Brown was nervous. She was going to a new school where she didn't know anybody. It was the first day and she could see the girls and boys on the playground quietly talking and playing like perfect little angels.

'Have a nice day Amy', Amy's mother said in the car and then noisily drove away. Amy stubbornly waved good-bye. It was her mother's fault that she had to go to a new school. She was changing jobs and told Amy she had to go. Amy missed her best friends and her nice teachers.

Amy walked into the school, face down. Her mother couldn't come with her, since she had to go to work early. She never had time for Amy. Amy was mystified. Where was the office? Weren't there any signs? Amy decided to look for a teacher, but there weren't any. Weren't there any teachers on playground duty?

Reluctantly, Amy walked to one of the girls talking on the bench-seats.

'What do you want?' spat one of the girls rudely. The girl had perfect blonde, long hair, with pretty but cold eyes.

'Um, excuse me but do you know where the office is?' Amy asked shyly.

The girl smiled slyly, 'Sure. It's just, um, to the left into the building and on the right'.

'Thanks!' said Amy eagerly as she followed her directions. She got into the building, and without bothering to look on the sign on the door she went in.

First, she saw a boy.

'What are you doing here?', the boy asked.

Amy looked around. It looked like a school toilet's room. And she was in the boys'!

Amy put her hands on her head and scrambled out of the room. Why did the girl lie to her? What did she do? Amy hated this school. She felt like crying but didn't.

Then, she saw a room with the word OFFICE. Amy walked there, and saw three ladies typing away on computers.

She knocked on the glass door. The ladies ignored her, so Amy knocked louder.

Still, they ignored her. Amy was so frustrated, she yelled, 'Can any of you hear me!?!'

Finally, they all looked up.

'What is the meaning of this? How dare you interrupt us working?', one of the ladies said harshly.



Amy blushed, but was still angry and annoyed. She wanted to say that she knocked two times quite loudly but they didn't hear her, but instead she said, 'I'm the new girl!'

One of the ladies got up and walked to Amy.

'What is your name?'

'Amy Brown.'

'Okay. You are in 4M with Ms Mill. Now, where is your parents?'

'My mother is at work and she can't come. And I don't have a father,' Amy said.

'Well it is very inappropriate to not have a parent here, but I will accept it. Have you got all your things for school?' The lady asked.

'Yep.'

'Don't just say, "Yep" in that tone. Speak up.'

'Yes,' Amy said loudly.

'Here is a pamphlet on the school. Read it and you will eventually know everything about the school. There is a map of the school too. Now sit quietly and tell me when you are done,' the lady said, handing over a book that was not so fat and not so thin. Then she walked away to her computer, typing away.

Amy sat on the floor and pulled out the map. She studied it and made sure she knew where 4M, the girls' bathroom, eating area and other rooms were. Then she put the map on the floor and began to read the pamphlet.

*L. W. Shell Private School is a highly educated school with boys and girls. The founder of this school (Lauren West) made this school 200 years ago. This school is only for Grades 4 to 6, with 10 classrooms, an art room with high quality art equipment, a computer room with 35 new computers, a Library with over 2000 books and many other essential rooms. The school has a cottage for music lessons. The school is also known for sports; it has a 1.5m x 12m swimming pool with a diving board, a tennis court, a netball and basketball court and a grass oval for playing soccer and other grass games.*

*This school has a Grand Hall, which students attend to Assembly every Tuesday morning, finding out all the events going on, the Principal's announcements, class awards and many more. The school has about 50 high educated teachers, teaching for classes, computers, art, different kinds of sport and many more, with a professional librarian.*

*Here, in this book you will find out more about the Learning Points, Events, Rules and more information. Please check the Contents to see what you want to know. Thank you.*

'It will take me forever to read this!' Amy sighed silently and flicked to the Rules page.

*If you disobey these rules, you will be suspended or expelled.*

1. Never copy someone else's work.
2. Don't litter.
3. No violence.
4. Play nicely and be nice.
5. Always listen to the teacher.
6. Never push someone.
7. Never lie.
8. No earrings on noses, chins or mouths, including boys.
9. For girls' hair, only wear a pony-tail, pigtails, plaits or hair out.
10. For boys, shirts are always tucked in.
11. Wear socks up to knees for girls, socks up to ankles for boys.
12. Always wear white socks.
13. Never wear anything besides blue (the school uniform colour) even hair bands.
14. Never talk back to the teacher.
15. Never argue with the teacher.
16. Always pay close attention to the teacher.
17. Concentrate on work.
18. Always come to school early.
19. Never run in hallways, corridors, classrooms and on the playground during school time.
20. -



Amy's reading was interrupted by the sound of a bell.

The office lady came again and said, 'I don't think I've introduced myself. I am Mrs Smith. Now, you just keep reading until all the students go into their classes, which will be in about ten minutes. I will come back.'

Amy nodded, and looked at the book. She went to the Events page.

'Cool! There's a Pyjama day, Valentine's Day Dance (ew!), Prank Day (on April Fool's day), an Easter Parade, Dress-Up day, Food Stalls, Swimming Carnival, Moon Festival, Stewart House Fete, Sports Contest, End of Year Play-Day and other things in between, with a Talent Show at the end of each term. This will be awesome,' Amy said excitedly. There was also other important events, like music concerts and the Kindy Orientation and Presentation Night.

Suddenly, Amy heard students coming in, in two straight lines behind the teacher and as they walked on the stairs, they kept to the left. It was quiet and the children were well-behaved.

'Now, Amy, please follow me.'

Amy turned to Mrs Smith, and got up. 'You can have the book for more information,' Mrs Smith said and she walked to the stairs.

Amy tucked the book into her new school bag and quietly followed her into 4M.

Cont'd...

## Amy and Sally – Part One (Cont'd.)

'Good greetings, Ms Mill. This is your new student – Amy Brown. She will be joining you this year.'

'Hello Amy! I am Ms Mill. You're a bit late to start in, right now since it's March but I'm sure you will fit in with plenty of friends!' Ms Mill beamed. She had short brown hair, and was wearing a shirt with a tie and jeans.

Amy smiled and scanned the room. She spotted the girl that made her go into the boys' toilet. She was snickering – and then Amy realised the whole class was laughing quietly but not in the nice way. She saw the boy that was in the boys' toilet. He must have told the whole class! 'How embarrassing', Amy thought, and her cheeks were like tomatoes.

Mrs Smith left, and Ms Mill said, 'You can sit next to Laura over there', and she pointed to... the mean girl who lied!

Amy couldn't sit next to her! But she had to. She walked over there reluctantly and sat down, unpacking all the stationery she needed for class.

Laura was whispering to her three friends, who were on the same table. Amy hated her. She hated all of them. She loathed the whole entire school.

'Please take your Math Text books and work on Page 10, on Fractions. You all know the top is the numerator and the bottom

is the denominator, and how to add them and multiply them so I trust you know all the answers. Laura, you good girl, please help Amy', Ms Mill said.

'Of course, Ms Mill', Laura said politely and smiled sweetly.

Ms Mill nodded, but when she turned her back on her Laura said, 'I'm not going to help you. I'm sure you know all the answers unless you're so dumb, because this work is so easy', and with that she pulled out her book and starting working.

The truth was, Amy wasn't good at Fractions or Decimals or anything in maths, but she was really good at spelling.

She got out her text book and flicked to page ten. She looked at it and thought, 'I can't do this!'. She tried to look at Laura's book but she hid it well away from her.

So Amy put her hand up.

'Yes, Amy?'

'I can't do this work because I need help and Laura isn't helping', Amy said.

'Laura, weren't you helping her?' Ms Mill asked sternly.

'Oh, I was. I kept on explaining to her but she couldn't understand it so I think that's why she asked you', Laura replied like a good little angel.

Amy looked at her then Ms Mill, and opened her mouth but couldn't say anything.

'Amy! No lying is allowed here, but I will let you go away with this since you're new. Apologise to Laura immediately.'

'Oh no, no, Ms Mill. I'm sure I wasn't explaining clearly enough so I guess it was all my fault', Laura said sweetly and sighed a big fat fake sigh.

Amy was so irritated! It was sure Laura's fault!

'Oh, Laura! How very kind of you, but I'm afraid Amy has to say sorry. And for all your sweetness you can have one of my lollies. What would you like – a lollipop or a cookie?'

'A cookie please', Laura beamed.

Ms Mill handed her a cookie, then glared at Amy. 'Apologise.'

'Sorry Laura', Amy mumbled.

'I forgive you', Laura smiled.

Ms Mill grinned at how Laura was always so well-behaved and kind, but she was totally wrong. Laura Cross was a nice, little girl on the outside but a mean, selfish girl on the inside.

**Sorting Equivalent Fractions**

Place the fractions in the correct position on the Venn diagram

$\frac{10}{50}$   $\frac{9}{16}$   $\frac{6}{16}$   $\frac{80}{80}$   $\frac{13}{4}$   $\frac{25}{50}$   $\frac{10}{16}$   $\frac{18}{12}$   $\frac{24}{48}$

$\frac{14}{21}$   $\frac{6}{16}$   $\frac{27}{72}$   $\frac{12}{3}$   $\frac{100}{100}$   $\frac{4}{8}$   $\frac{35}{8}$   $\frac{1}{2}$   $\frac{19}{24}$

Show any working here

$\frac{10}{50} = \frac{2}{10}$   $\frac{9}{16}$   $\frac{6}{16}$   $\frac{80}{80} = 1$   $\frac{13}{4}$   $\frac{25}{50} = \frac{1}{2}$   $\frac{10}{16} = \frac{5}{8}$   $\frac{18}{12} = \frac{3}{2}$   $\frac{24}{48} = \frac{1}{2}$

$\frac{14}{21} = \frac{2}{3}$   $\frac{6}{16} = \frac{3}{8}$   $\frac{27}{72} = \frac{3}{8}$   $\frac{12}{3} = 4$   $\frac{100}{100} = 1$   $\frac{4}{8} = \frac{1}{2}$   $\frac{35}{8}$   $\frac{1}{2}$   $\frac{19}{24}$

'Don't you know anything about this? I learnt this when I was like, six!' Laura whispered nastily to Amy in the ear and turned to her work.

Amy felt tears in her eyes. Once she had tears she couldn't get rid of them.

She turned away so no-one could look at her, but Laura noticed it and put her hand up.

'Ms Mill, Amy's crying. I think Sally Mitten made her cry,' Laura said. Sally was a kind girl who sat one seat away from her. Laura and Sally were enemies. They loathed each other since the beginning of school.

'Dear Amy, don't cry. Big girls don't cry! Now wipe away your tears this instant. What did you do Sally?'

'I didn't do anything, Ms Mill. I believe Laura was lying,' Sally replied.

Amy spoke up. 'Yes, Sally didn't do anything. I just caught something in my eye and I just couldn't get rid of it, so I suddenly had tears.'

'Well, I'm sure we have sorted this out. Laura thank you for caring about others, and Amy and Sally – please don't cause little problems,' Ms Mill said.

'But I didn't do anything wrong!' cried Sally.

Ms Mill turned to her computer, ignoring her.

'Cry-baby,' whispered Laura.

'Why do you have to be so mean to me? I didn't do anything wrong,' Amy whispered, spitting on her.

'Yuck. Hey, I will call you Yuck! Yuck, yuck, yuck,' Laura said and turned to her work.

At recess, Amy quietly sat on a bench away from others and looked at her recess she packed. There was a packet of chips and a brownie with chocolate milk for recess, and fruit salad for lunch.

'Yum, that looks delicious,' a voice said nastily. It was one of Laura's friends.

'I agree,' Laura smiled. 'Won't you be nice enough to share it with us?'

Amy zipped her lunchbox so they couldn't get anything.

'Yeah!' Laura's friends chanted.

'Katie, Emma, Olivia – quiet. Now, Amy. You don't want any more trouble from us do you?' Laura asked in her sweet tone. As Amy shook her head, rolling her eyes. 'Just give me your chips and brownie and chocolate milk and we will leave you alone.'

'Promise?'

'Cross my heart and hope to die.'

'Fine, whatever,' Amy sighed and opened her lunch box, giving out her recess. At least she wasn't going to be bullied any more.

Laura got all the food and started to eat the chips.

'Ooh, can we have some, dear dear Laura?' Katie with the brown swirly hair asked.

'Yes, please?'

Emma had short hazelnut hair while Olivia had glossy black hair.

'No guys. You have your own recess. You can't finish both of them!' Laura said greedily.

'What about your carrot sticks?'

'Who cares about vegetables? This is much better. Now go away and don't bother me,' Laura said then turned to Amy, 'You better have yummy food tomorrow or else.'

Amy, with her mouth open, said, 'But you promised to leave me alone!'

Laura rolled her eyes. 'Who cares? Promises are for babies – like you. You're not the boss of me and I can do whatever I want.'

Amy couldn't help it. She burst into tears and ran to the girls' toilet.

When she got home, her mother was still at work. She worked on weekdays and on Saturday – on weekdays 9:00a.m. – 5:30p.m. as a dentist. On Saturday she worked 9:00a.m. – 2:00p.m. so Amy never really saw her. Her mother was rich and earned lots of money and had a big house with a cook, maid and dog trainer. She ran to her room and burst into tears on her bed. Her dog Coco ran to her and licked her face.

She hugged Coco and sobbed. She wished her mother didn't work so much. She could have been in her old school right now. It just wasn't fair and Amy didn't want to go to L.W. Shell Private School.

*TO BE CONTINUED IN Amy and Sally – PART TWO*

*By May May Yang, Year 4,  
Chatswood Public School, CHATSWOOD – NSW  
Teacher: Ms K. Murphy*



# The Young Australian Writers' Awards 2009

The BIC Australia  
Young Writer of the Year Award



**ASHLEIGH MAIHI**

*Castle Hill High School, Castle Hill, NSW*



◀ **Shane Warne Literary Award**  
*Short Story – Secondary*

**CAITLYN LIGHTNER**  
*Westminster School, Marion, SA*

**Dymocks Literary Award** ▶  
*Short Story – Primary*

**BLAKE LOVELY**  
*Curl Curl North Public School, NSW*

**DYMOCKS**  
FOR BOOKLOVERS



The Five Mile Press



◀ **The Five Mile Press Literary Award**  
*Poetry – Secondary*

**ELIZABETH WALDRON**  
*Newtown High School of the Performing Arts,  
Newtown, NSW*



**Lions Club Literary Award** ▶  
*Poetry – Primary*

**ELOISE HIRSHMAN**  
*Reddam House, Woollahra, NSW*





◀ **ASG Short Story Award**  
**JOANNE BUI**  
*The Mac. Robertson Girls' High School, Melbourne, Vic.*



**ASG Poetry Award** ▶  
**STEPHANIE BAROUDI**  
*Korowa Anglican Girls' School, Glen Iris, Vic.*



◀ **Helen Handbury Achievement Award**  
**RUBY TRIBE**  
*Aquinas College, East Ringwood, Vic.*

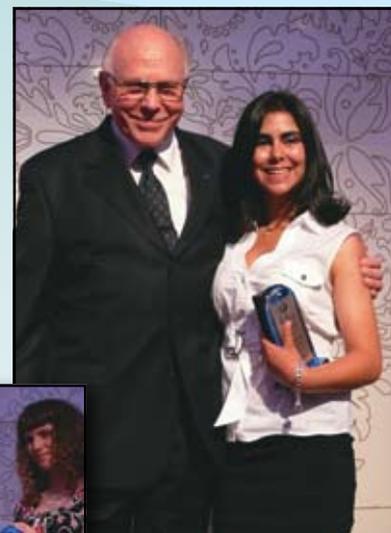
**Helen Handbury Literary Award** ▶  
**JUANITA MARIE QUINLAN**  
*Mary McKillop Catholic Primary, Highfields, Qld.*



(Left) Bic representative Heath Dickinson with the Bic Australia Young Writer of the Year, Ashleigh Maihi.

(Right) ASG representative Dr. Gordon Young with Stephanie Baroudi, winner of the ASG Poetry Award.

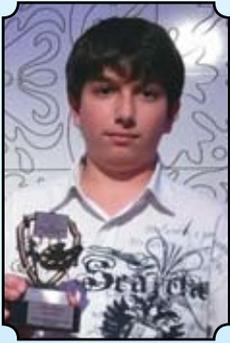
(Below) Proud winners of the Literary Awards at the Awards Night, 27 November 2009.



All photos Carol Dick



**Trust Company Art Award  
Painting – Senior**  
LIAM VAN DETH  
*Holy Cross College, NSW*



**Percy Baxter Trust Art Award  
Painting – Middle**  
ALEC SARIAN  
*Whealers Hill Secondary College, Vic.*



**ASG Art Award  
Painting – Junior**  
DARCY WATERS  
*Wellers Hill Primary, Qld.*



**ASG Art Award  
Computer Art – Junior**  
JESSICA SLATTERY  
*Kingswood College, Vic.*



**ASG Art Award  
Drawing – Junior**  
BRYAN H LEE  
*Essex Heights Primary School,  
Vic.*



**Train Trak Art Award  
Photography – Senior**  
DANIEL BORNSTEIN  
*The King David School, Vic.*



**Qantas Flight Catering Art  
Award: Computer Art – Senior**  
SAHIBAJOT KAUR  
*Glenwood High School, NSW*



**Sentinel Foundation Art Award  
Photography – Middle**  
DAISY GOODWIN  
*Lindisfarne Anglican Grammar  
School, NSW*



**Lions Club Art Award  
Drawing – Senior**  
DEN L SCHEER  
*St. Hilda's College, WA*



**Marc McBride Art Award  
Drawing – Middle**  
SHEHA BASTE  
*Willoughby Girls' High School, NSW*



**Train Trak Art Award  
Computer Art – Middle**  
TENILLE GASU  
*Home School, Tas.*



**ASG Art Award  
Photography – Junior**  
CHARLI PATULLO  
*Huntly Primary School, Vic.*

# Young 2009 Australian Art Awards



**MIRUNA RIZESCU**  
*Sacred Heart Girls' College, Oakleigh, Vic.*

## Dip With a Trout

I was out at Rainbow Lake trying to catch my very first trout. The day before I had gone to buy two \$50 lures, a \$200 fishing rod and a \$30 blow up boat. When I got there I could tell that it was going to be my week. I could see the trout jumping like an Olympic high jumper.

I went down to have a quick fish. And on my sixth cast I hooked a fish. I knew it wasn't big because it wasn't fighting hard. I was reeling it in and it would pull the line back. It wasn't pulling that hard any more and it was about ten metres out. Thirty seconds later I had caught it. It was too small so I had to put it back in the water.

I started setting up my camping gear and then decided to go for a swim. I was in the lake for about half an hour and then I saw the biggest fish I had ever seen. So I decided to call it Stanly. It was about one metre long and about 3.78 kilograms. I knew this was the fish I wanted.

I finished setting up my tent and bed and went down to fish. I would cast and then reel in over and over again. Cast reel, cast reel, cast reel. I didn't catch anything for the rest of the day. The next day I woke up early to fish.

Stanly jumped out of the water so I decided to fish there. On my very first cast I caught a fish. It pulled the line about ten metres out. I was 95% sure it was Stanly. I would reel it in and it would pull the line back out. Suddenly the line snapped and flew through the air and whipped me on the leg. It left the biggest red line on my leg.

I was sitting down with an ice pack on my leg looking at a map for Rainbow Lake and then I noticed that there was a spring about 200 metres away from here. I went down there to have a look and I brought a fishing net with me. I saw Stanly near the bank of the spring so I ran after him. I put the fishing net in the water and then suddenly I tripped over a root and got tangled on the fishing net. I looked at the trout and it looked at me with a little smile on his face. I went back to the camp site and cut the line. That was it for the day.

I woke up and unpacked my blow up boat and went down to the lake. I rowed to the middle of the lake and started to fish. On my fifteenth cast I hooked Stanly. He was pulling so hard I lost my balance. I was slowly falling in. Splash! I fell into the water. I hit a stick and it jarred my hand.

It was getting hot so I went for another swim. When I was ten metres in I stepped on a rock. I was hopping back to the land and then I tripped over and landed on my face. When I recovered I had a look at my foot and there was still more pieces of rock in my foot and when I fell over I broke my nose, so I went to bed.

The next day I went down to the spring and I started to fish. I was casting to the other side of the spring when once again I had hooked Stanly. This time he wasn't fighting as hard. I was reeling him in and he wasn't fighting back. I had him one metre out. With one last pull I had him on

the ground. I lifted him up and he bit me on the face I dropped the line and Stanly fell to the water. Suddenly I realised that Stanly wasn't just any old fish. This fish was playing games with me.

I went back to the tent and decided to have a camp fire. When I got it to the perfect size a huge gust of wind came and it blew the fire on to me. I jumped to the ground and rolled and the fire was gone. After that I went to bed.

I woke up nice and early to go fishing. I went to the spring again and on my very first cast I got the lure stuck in a tree. I was pulling as hard as I could and then it flew out of the tree and hit me right in the face. I tried to pull the lure out but it wouldn't budge. So I went into the nearest town which was Berry. I went into the medical centre and they cut it out and gave me four stitches.

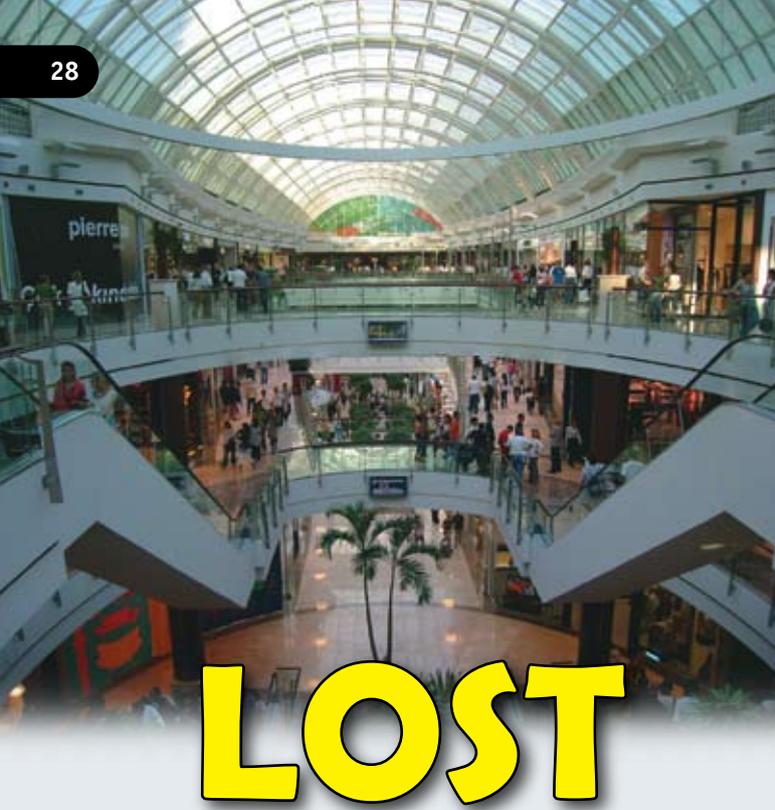
I went back to the lake and started to fish again. Is today the day I catch Stanly?

Two days later...

I was on the couch with a whip mark on my leg, fishing net still around me, a cast on my hand and my leg, bandages around my head, burns on my chest, four stitches on my left cheek and bite marks on my right cheek. I was looking at Stanly stuffed and hanging on the wall and although I have all these injuries I still know that I won.

*By Jason Baurycza  
Year 9, Menai High School  
ILLAWONG - NSW  
Teacher: Miss Beckman*





# LOST

"But Mum! I don't want to go shopping!" I whine.

"Why? I am going up there for you. So that you can get some much needed new undies."

"I will only go if you buy me a lolly!" I demand. I look at my mum and she gives me a crooked smile.

"Deal!" she sighs and begins walking to the car. Yes! I always knew I could win any battle with bargaining. As I walk to the car, I spot Tim riding up the road on his bike. I simply wave and trudge into the car. My mum seems unusually quiet, making every moment of the car trip awkwardly silent. The car drive seemed endless, so when we arrived the sound of hustle and bustle of the daily shoppers broke the silence.

The shops seemed overly crowded today. It was like a maze to get to the shop you wanted. Lunging through the crowd and hoping that you wouldn't arrive at a dead end. All that I could see was legs of hurrying shoppers. The only thing keeping me from being engulfed in the sea of shoppers was the firm grip of my mum's hand on mine. I knew that I would never let go of it. Never in a million years. I tried to call out to my mum, to ask her where we were going, or what we were going to do. However the booming sound of loud voices coming from all directions drowned out my voice.

As we entered a shop, and the door closed behind us, the sound of voices dimmed slightly. I peered around me to find aisles and aisles of food, appliances, and other shopping needs. We must be inside a big supermarket. As she plucked a trolley from a counter I climbed into the small seat in the trolley. We begin moving through the aisles, my mum taking things from the aisles every now and then and placing them in the trolley delicately. Once she began moving in the opposite direction, towards the counters I sighed in relief. The shopping was over! Nevertheless, I could never forget the promise she had made.

"Mum!" I shouted up to her. She doesn't react.

"MUM!" I bellow and she glares down at me menacingly.

"What, honey?" she answers.

"Mum, what about my lolly?"

"Oh! Yes your lolly. Um well I'm going to get in the queue at the counter so you can go to the lolly aisle and get yourself a lolly and then come straight back and meet me at the counter. Ok?"

"Yep!" I call and start running towards the aisle. As I spot the aisle I run down it. Once the lollies come into view I stop and look at all of them with pleasure. Which one should I get? They all look so good. Out of the corner of my eye I spot an old man. He looks at me and then with a hint of a smile begins walking down the aisle towards me. He stops right next to me. As I reach up to take a sherbet, the lolly I wanted, he grabs my hand.

"Hey, kid. You hungry?" he asks. A jolt of fear surges through me. I am kind of hungry though I guess.

"Yeah, a bit hungry", I reply.

"Look. I've got heaps of lollies in my car. It's parked just outside here. There'd be heaps for you if you wanted to come", he asks.

I'm not sure if I should go. I mean I don't even know him. But I am really hungry and that does sound really good. Maybe I'll go just for a little bit, to give me time to get back to mum.

"Sure! But just for a little bit OK?" I state.

"Cool!" he replies enthusiastically. As he tightens his grip on my hand we begin walking out the back exit of the shop. I spot my mum waiting patiently at one of the counters. I begin to wonder about this. Maybe I should have said no.

Outside I spot his car in a disabled parking spot. He's not disabled. He owns a white van. The windows are tinted so dark that you can't see anything inside. Separating the driver's seat from the back seats is a metal cage. As I enter the car I realise that this wasn't such a good idea. I suddenly am very eager to get back inside the shop. My mum must be getting worried by now.

"Actually Mr, I think I'll just go now. I'm not that hungry any more", I say. As I turn to get out of the car he puts out his arm and blocks me from getting out.

"You're not going anywhere", he says.

"What?" I say, confused.

He slams the door in my face and jumps into the driver's seat. He begins driving, unusually fast.

"Help", I mumble.

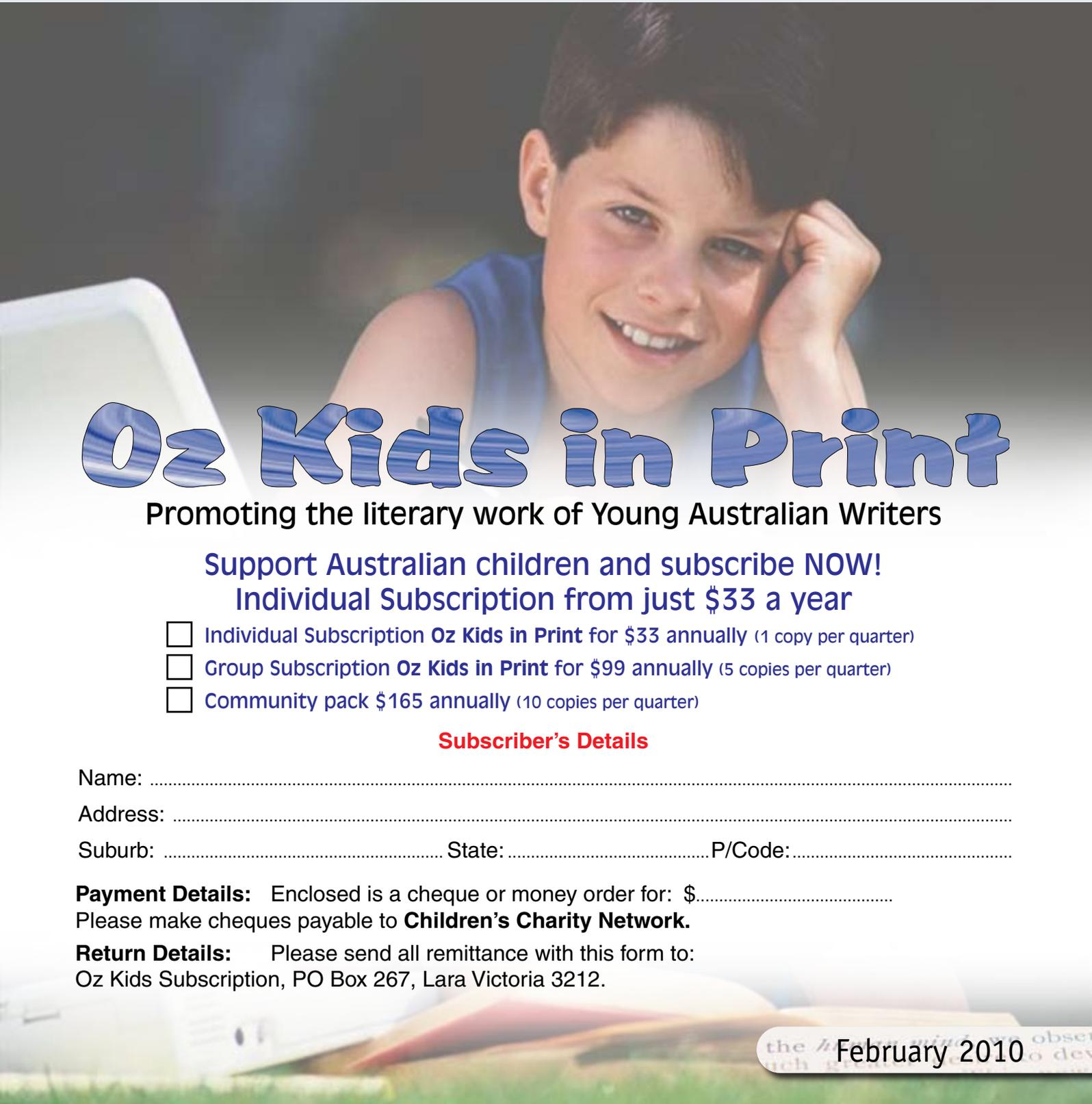
Once I realise we've been driving for over an hour, it finally sinks in, I'm not getting out. I'd seen reports on the news about this, how children are being abducted. Only they said that the children never come back, and they don't say what happens to them. I don't know what to do; jumping out of the car would mean certain death. Why did I have to insist that I get a lolly? What would have happened if my mum had asked me to get the lolly at the start of the shopping? The man wouldn't have been there then.

It feels as if the walls of the van are closing in on me. A soft siren in the distance rings in my ears, only it's getting louder, louder, louder. I look behind me and my heart skips a beat. Two police cars are racing up the empty road. Sirens blaring. I release an enormous sigh of relief.

"No!" screams the man and I feel the van lurch forward even faster. The police cars are closing in, signalling us to pull over. The van moves faster. I peer forward and see a large intersection coming up. Suddenly the lights turn orange, then red. But the man is determined to escape. As he goes through the red light and crosses the intersection I look to the left just in time to see a semi-trailer hit the van.

The van flies to the right. I feel my body hitting every side of the van possible. I feel my head smash into the top of it and suddenly everything goes black.

*By Blake Lovely, Year 6  
Curl Curl North Public School,  
NORTH CURL CURL - NSW  
Teacher: Mrs Jenny Pickering*



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# A Foreign Land

He landed down at Melbourne,  
His black hair in a plait.  
With his hopes of wealth alive,  
He left for Ballarat.

Ballarat, a rich gold field,  
That's just where he was bound.  
Gold! It lay in rivers,  
Like money in the ground.

He was an odd man indeed,  
His mates all called him Lan,  
Cone shaped hat and strange cloth shoes,  
He was a Chinaman.

Those miles of endless trudging,  
At last they soon arrived,  
Lan and all them Chinese lads,  
Their energy deprived.

Such a mighty shock it was,  
To see that bare terrain,  
Huh! The land of mountain gold,  
A dusty, sandy plain.

There were crowds and hordes of men,  
They'd stripped the forest down,  
Where, forever growing, lay  
A solid canvas town.

Everything was different,  
The people for a start,  
Blue, green or brown eyes, it set  
The Chinamen apart.

They saw tents for miles around,  
And shops and stores as well.  
All just huts of wood and bark,  
Weird sorts of things to sell.

How lost the Chinamen felt,  
But still they steadied on,  
Soon they found the Chinese camp,  
And all their nerves were gone.

In the Chinese part of camp,  
Men spoke in tongues they knew,  
In the Chinese part of camp,  
The men had long plaits too.

There the shops sold nothing strange,  
Just things like tea and rice.  
Not mutton, but fish and pork,  
Now that was something nice!

There even stood a joss house,  
A sacred place to pray,  
Where men went to worship gods,  
On every single day.

All that time on the diggings,  
A week soon flew right by,  
But Lan he learnt a lesson,  
Don't get your hopes too high.

For the life he'd always dreamed,  
A life of finding gold,  
Was none like he'd imagined,  
Was none like he'd been told.

For his life of finding gold,  
Was blood and dust and sweat,  
From dawn to dusk he worked each day,  
Still, no big finds yet.

The goldfields, if truth be told,  
Just weren't very clean,  
Diseases spread all around,  
The whole place lacked hygiene.

There were five men to a tent,  
A home on bamboo poles,  
Beds, just straw mattresses and  
Hessian bags filled with holes.

There were many ways to search,  
And tools to put to use,  
All to find the fortune, gold,  
A cradle, pan, or sluice.

Lan, he used these tools, to find  
Gold that lay in rivers.  
Kneeling down, sifting gravel,  
Spotting dust that glimmers.

Time has passed since he first arrived,  
A month or maybe more,  
Still he dreams of finding gold,  
Exactly like before.



*By Vivienne Bear  
Year 6  
Huntingtower School  
MT. WAVERLEY - VIC.  
Teacher: Mrs Margaret Jones*



# Creatures



**G**ROUND floor. The elevator music ceases, the doors slide open with a whoosh.

Jack steps from the metallic surface that lines the interior of the elevator, onto the vast concrete expanse that reflects every other underground car park of the western world. Familiar and comforting.

Unfortunately, Jack did not share the inanimate mood of the car park.

His eyes were bloodshot, his clothes torn and dirty. He walked with a limp, quite obviously a manifestation of the enormous gash which ran from his lower calf to his waist. The gash which appeared crude and jagged, unlike a wound caused by any weapon crafted by man.

In front of Jack, and indeed to all sides, the car park resembled exactly what one would expect from this kind of environment. Vehicles in black, grey, and other equally drab colours. Concrete, concrete and more concrete. Concrete on the ceiling. Concrete on the walls. Concrete pillars dividing the many lanes of cars. Jack didn't stop to view the monotonous decor. Time was against him, he knew, and he had to get away from those things. Those creatures. He shuddered at the thought. What the hell were they? Mutants? Genetic disasters? Or some other evil manipulation of nature conceptualised by the minds of mankind?

An animal howl abruptly split the silence, echoing down the elevator shaft.

Jack needed to move.

He broke into a run. Or rather a stagger, given his current condition. His breathing was, and had been for the last hour, ridiculously faster than any other working day he had experienced.

But this wasn't a normal day, he reminded himself.

Everything that had happened was real.

The danger was real.

He cut a zig-zag through the rows of cars, making his way for an exit sign he had spotted on the north end of the cavernous car park. He was about a quarter of the way there.

Half way there.

Three quarters.

Almost...

His foot caught something.

He stumbled to the ground, landed hard on the concrete, spun to face danger.

A metal rail he hadn't seen, dividing two rows of cars.

Not a creature. He relaxed a little.

He shouldn't have.

Another animal howl, closer now, terrifyingly close.

He heard it again.

It was in the car park, near the elevator.

A third howl. A howl of pain, anger, and unrelenting animal rage.

Jack didn't move. Didn't breathe.

Slowly, steadily, he crouched lower, and shifted his gaze underneath the car he was concealed behind.

Far across the space, although not far enough, he saw two pairs of legs. They were muscular, hard, evil. Covered in reptile-like scales. Huge, protruding claws, as sharp as knives, but cruelly jagged. Jack's hand unconsciously drifted to his wounded side. He winced at the pain that the creature before him had undoubtedly caused.

The creature stood still, motionless.

It appeared to be... searching?

Did it know he was here?

Jack desperately wanted to get out, but he knew he had to wait. He had seen the speed and agility of the creatures, seen them charge down the halls of his office in seconds, seen them leap desks and tables. He knew he couldn't outrun even a single example of this race of grotesque, reptilian monstrosities, his only option was to hide. He was glad that only one creature had opted to follow him down the elevator shaft.

Suddenly, the creature stiffened.

It seemed to have found what it was looking for, latched onto it.

A scent, perhaps, or just the smell of fear.

Jack knew exactly where that smell was coming from.

The creature, having seemed to reach a decision, began to move steadily forward, and to the right.

Steadily towards the terrified being that was Jack Newman.

Panic gripped him. What was he going to do? Should he run? Should he remain in his current position?

The creature was six rows of cars away.

Jack was alone, indecisive.

Four rows.

His legs began to shake, his breath came even faster, something he previously thought impossible.

Two rows.

Decision time.

Jack got to his feet, ignored the pain. He cut a bee-line for the exit sign, sliding over cars, leaping signs, dodging obstacles. He could hear the creature behind him, its strong claws crumpling cars.

Gaining on him.

His mind went into survival mode, his primeval instincts took over. All that mattered was reaching that sign, and that exit.

The creature, or whatever it was, was right behind him.

He could hear it, all the more infuriated that its prey was attempting to outrun it.

The exit door was just twenty metres away now, but it seemed like miles.

Ten metres.

Jack felt the ground shake behind him.

Five metres.

He could practically feel the breathing of the creature on his neck.

But then he was out. Suddenly, spectacularly, amazingly, he was out. Through the door, slamming down the wooden latch that served as a lock behind him, although it was difficult to see in the darkness of the corridor. He let out a cry of relief. A laugh. It was all over. He fumbled for a light switch.

Turned it on.

Spun around to face his freedom.

Saw scales.

Saw claws.

Saw a face so full of menacing rage, merciless hatred.

Another creature, waiting for him.

He hoped death would come quickly.

*By Jackson McCulloch  
Year 10, Portland Secondary College  
PORTLAND - VIC.  
Teacher: Claire Walsh*

What hurts more,  
a fatal wound  
or a best friend's death?

**You are lying on the floor,  
Struggling to stay conscious.  
The pain shooting through your body,  
Like a shooting star.  
The deep, dark emptiness of death,  
Creeping towards you like a ghost.  
Your chain to life is severed.  
You know this is the end.**

**You see his body.  
Exactly the same, but completely different.  
You remember his joy and warmth,  
Enveloping you like a blanket.  
Yet it fades away as a memory.  
You are caged in sadness,  
Frozen in time,  
Numb.  
You see the dirt fall over the coffin.  
Your friendship becomes a memory.  
You know this is the end.**

*By Jordon Maxton  
Year 6, Reddam House  
WOOLLAHRA - NSW  
Teacher: Sharon Shapiro*

## SULLEN BIRD

Wishing for another day  
 Living for tomorrow  
 A happy song for the quiet bird  
 That always feels so sullen  
 Sunshine shining on the rooftops  
 Blocked out by the rain  
 Happiness climbing up the treetops  
 Blocked out by the pain  
 And what has tomorrow got to bring  
 except sadness all the same  
 And when the sun starts shining  
 And the sullen bird picks up his game  
 I wonder if he will realise  
 That happiness is the way.

*By Nick Antoniak  
 Year 6, Mittagong Public School  
 MITTAGONG - NSW  
 Teacher: Mr. Perry*



## My Christmas Poem

Eating Christmas ham and wanting to jam, to the music to the beat,  
 everybody's loving the Christmas heat.

Christmas is finally here, and we're all loving it,  
 but the mosquitoes and flies, only a bit!

As we run to the tree, we try not to push and be kind,  
 Mum and Dad are the ones who lag behind!

Mum opened a ticket to Beijing,  
 Dad opened a book about "Baking".

Me... a book, a pool,  
 a chook and a pair of sunnies that make me look cool!

But the pets you might say? Well the dogs opened some new toys,  
 The fish opened some miniature buoys!

I thank thy lord for giving us this day,  
 without this I wouldn't be so gay!

*By Shanique Sjogren  
 Age 11, Carcoola Primary School  
 CARCOOLA - WA*

## Australian Walk

I was going to go for a drive right round Australia  
 But I think I'm a real failure because you see,  
 I lost my car key.  
 So now I have to walk and here's the way I went.  
 Straight to a farm and I walked into a barn.  
 I asked the farmer, 'Can I have some cotton?'.  
 He offered me some cheese but it was rotten.  
 I climbed a wattle tree and found a possum.  
 I climbed another tree and saw lots of blossom.  
 Then I jumped and jumped with the kangaroos  
 And a few minutes later I lost my shoes!  
 Next I played games with a wombat and let him win.  
 I did some paper work and chucked it in the bin.  
 A few days later I played in a creek.

I went all the way to Brisbane and stayed there for a week.  
 I cooked a nice Barbie the real Aussie way  
 But the rest of the time I just played all day.  
 I stood on Sydney Harbour Bridge,  
 I walked and walked until I came to a ridge.  
 Next time I go on an Australian walk you should come with me  
 But you can only come if you find my car key!



*By Bridget Rankine  
 Year 2  
 Eastwood Primary School  
 RINGWOOD EAST - VIC.  
 Teacher: Robyn Cox*

# Relaxing Kids

## Meditations for Children

### — Moon Prelude —

I want you to look at the moon. This moon is filled with lovely light.

This light is filled with love that glows. I want to see this light filling your heart with love for all the animals and the people. They are your friends.

Now I want you to look behind you.

There is your angel that loves you and takes care of you.

Your angel is going to take you into your house that is filled with love.

Before you enter your house, I want you to look at that box over there.

It is there for you to put all your worries in. The way you do this, is using your special key to open the box and just say all your worries into it.

When you have done this, your angel will take you into your house that is your very special place. You seem very happy with all the love in your heart. It seems to be making you very happy. When you go into your house the colours are like nothing you have seen before. The carpet is the most beautiful grey in the world.

The lounge is the most beautiful red, and the perfume coming from the bathroom is exquisite. Even the clouds are smiling at you. You are dazzling with all the love that is in you. All the animals are really excited to see you. The love in your heart make them want to be closer and I think they want to hug you.

Isn't it wonderful when you get that feeling in your heart.

It makes you feel so special.

The flowers and the perfume make you feel just right.....

### — The Birthday Cake —

In the world there is a time of year when people have a birthday.

It is very special to you today because it is your birthday tomorrow.

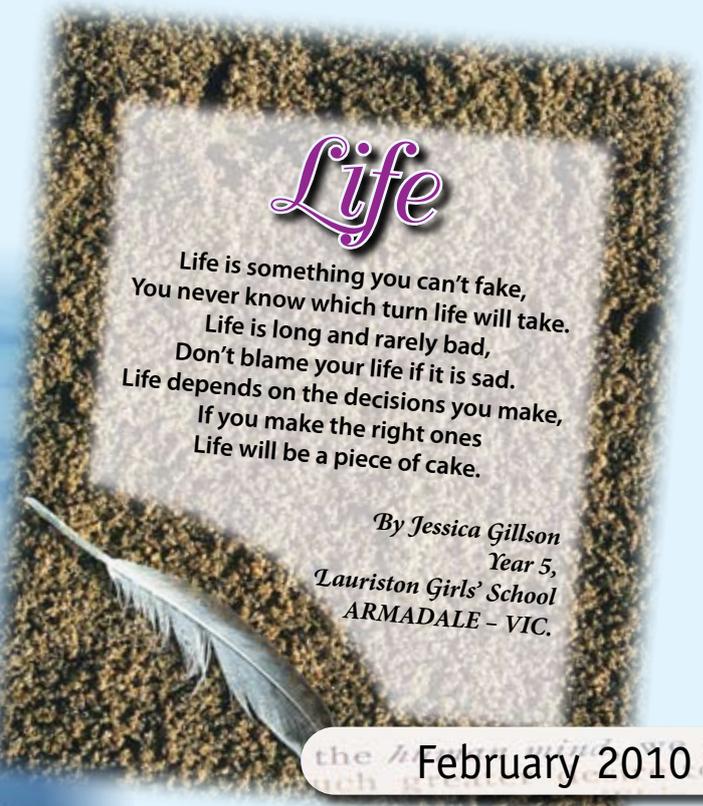
It is when you celebrate when you were born and what day?

As you think about it, you know everyone is very happy for you and everyone loves you. Your heart is getting very large because it is so excited for you and it has so much love in it. There is another special thing to you and that is the birthday cake. Don't you love the feeling when you are having a beautiful piece of cake that is very yummy and is very special to you. When you are making the cake it is very soft and the mixture is very fiddly for your hands. As you crack the egg into the mixture, it smells very good and this smell is a very special to you.

This smell is the best smell you could possibly imagine. When it is ready it goes into a lovely hot oven. When it is baked, you get it out and it smells very beautiful and everyone is ready to have a piece of cake. You can hear your heart saying "I love you" and it is so happy to have some of your cake.

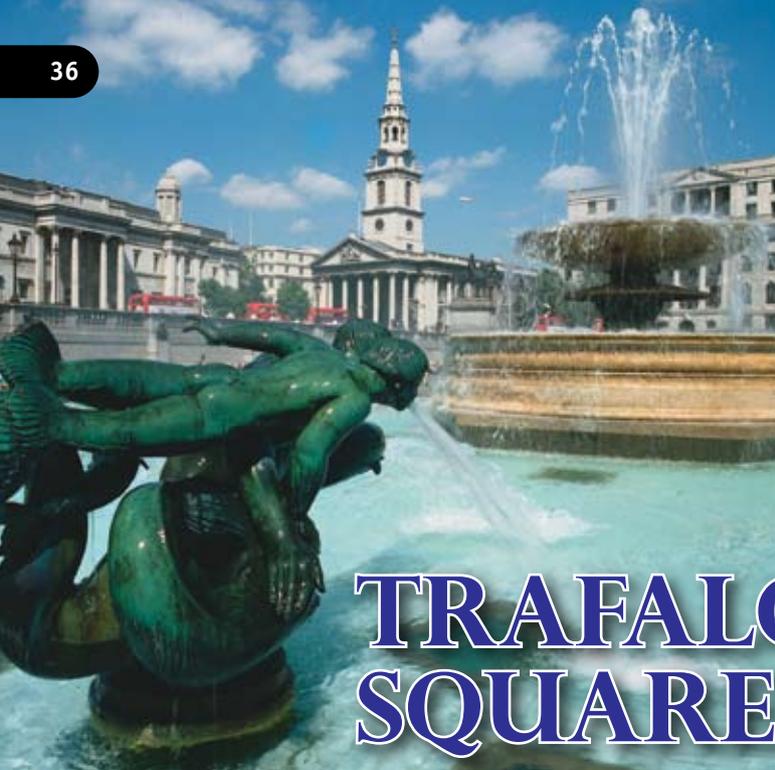
I shall leave you now to have that beautiful cake.

*By Findlay Donaldson, Age 9*  
ANNANDALE - NSW



*Life*  
Life is something you can't fake,  
You never know which turn life will take.  
Life is long and rarely bad,  
Don't blame your life if it is sad.  
Life depends on the decisions you make,  
If you make the right ones  
Life will be a piece of cake.

*By Jessica Gillson*  
Year 5,  
Lauriston Girls' School  
ARMADALE - VIC.



## TRAFALGAR SQUARE

RED crossed the foyer of the National Gallery, Guns, Cannons and Pecs following close behind. Though he was the youngest in the group, Red was clearly the leader. He had joined the British Security Service – more commonly known as MI5 – only two years ago and had quickly become a respected agent, even though he was small in size.

Red's surname was Cardinal. That was where his codename had come from – the red Cardinal Bird. Slightly lame, yes, but at least it was better than his real name, Bob.

Red shuddered. He hated that name. It was so... old.

"You a bit chilly, Red?" Guns grinned. "Do you need a coat?"

Red sighed. He may be respected, but that didn't mean that the other agents let slip a chance to remind him of his lack of size.

When they reached the wide front door of the Gallery, the four men checked that their guns were secure in their holsters. They were Browning HPs, and had been used in the Regiment for over forty years. The 9mm handguns were reliable and accurate, and had for some time been a favourite weapon of the SAS. The men were dressed normally, in jeans and loose-fitting shirts. They kept their guns around their waists, hidden by their shirts. Each agent also carried a radio communications watch that would also serve as a tracking device if they were taken hostage or went missing on the mission.

The men peered around the door. Trafalgar Square stretched across the road before them, Nelson's Column towering over the tourists that milled about the Square, taking photographs and reading maps.

"Okay, is everybody sure of what we're doing?" Red asked.

Cannons rolled his eyes. "You've only asked us five times."

"It's best to be sure –"

Pecs cut in, anticipating an argument. "We're looking for Samantha Hethiel. She's five foot three, has blonde hair down to her waist, blue eyes and tanned skin. She talks with an Australian accent and is on the run after murdering the Prime Minister's secretary. Today she's going to try to leave the country, so we're going to stop her."

Red nodded. "Good." The radio built into his watch beeped and he pressed the answer button, disguised as the crown of the watch. "Talk to me."

"The target has entered Trafalgar Square", a female voice said. "We have four cameras following her every move, and a back-up team in case she causes trouble."

"Where's the back-up?" Cannons asked. "I can't see anyone."

"We placed every person in Trafalgar Square purposefully."

"Geez, Jazz babe, what did you do to all the normal people?"

"We had them moved", she replied smoothly. "And that's Miss Stewart to you, Cannons."

Red snorted. It was well known that Jazz had refused each of Cannons' date offers. "Nice going."

Cannons shot him a withering glare. "Shut up."

"Enough talking", Jazz said. "This is where we leave you. We'll be watching everything that happens. Good luck."

The radio went silent.

Red immediately burst into action. "Let's go." They set off across Trafalgar Road towards the Square, not worrying about being hit by a car – MI5 had already taken care of that with several roadblocks. When they reached Trafalgar Square, Guns checked the electronic map on his specially-adapted mobile phone. It told them that the target was standing under Nelson's Column. The men moved swiftly across the Square.

"There she is", Pecs muttered. "To the right of the Column."

Red nodded. Samantha Hethiel leant against Nelson's Column, waist-length blonde hair shining in the sunlight. She had her back to the agents. As the men approached, a woman with dark, cropped hair beside her moved away from them, not meeting their eyes. Red ignored her, and he put his hand on Samantha's shoulder. She spun around fearfully.

"Samantha He—" Red stopped. It wasn't Samantha.

"Red, the target is moving fast!" Jazz screamed through the radio. "Get after her!"

The agents experienced a moment of disorientation. Red was thinking furiously. The dark-haired woman! She must have been Samantha!

"Hold her!" he called to Pecs. The agent grabbed the blonde

# TRAFALGAR SQUARE *(Cont'd.)*

woman as his three colleagues tore across Trafalgar Square. Where had the woman gone? Red's eyes darted constantly.

Red's eyes darted constantly.

"There!" Cannons called.

Samantha was getting into a sleek, black SUV. Red put on a burst of speed. The car door closed and the vehicle began to pull away onto the road. No! Red couldn't let that happen. An old woman stood at the edge of the Square holding a trolley bag. The SUV was about to pass her. Pushing himself to his limits, Red sprinted to the woman and, using the trolley bag for leverage, jumped.

Guns and Cannons stopped in their tracks, watching as Red hurled himself through the air. The young agent smacked spread-eagled onto the roof of the car. Then the SUV turned down St. Martin's Place and disappeared from view. The two men looked at each other then ran down the road. A Bentley was waiting for them and they threw themselves inside.

"Follow the SUV", Guns ordered, not bothering to strap himself in. The driver pulled out so slowly that it was painful and Guns lost his nerve. "Faster! Drive FASTER!"

On the roof of the car, Red was struggling not to fall. He slid around hopelessly. Quickly digging his hand into his pocket, he produced a flip-knife. It was an invention of MI5's. The knife appeared to be perfectly normal, but had a reinforced diamond blade that could cut through any metal. Red plunged it through the roof of the car, using it as a hand-hold. He was just trying to decide what to do next when the SUV stopped at a traffic light and the driver door opened. A broad, tall man stepped out and leered at Red. In his hand, he held a Sig Sauer P230 handgun.

"Nice day, isn't it?" Red asked, gesturing to the sky with a hand.

The driver fired a bullet – only millimetres from Red's hand – in response. It was a clear warning. Back off or I'll shoot you.

Red shrugged, ignoring the warning, and stood as the larger man climbed onto the roof with youthful agility that his bulky frame hid. The driver moved forward, holding out the

gun. Red balanced himself, for the SUV had begun to move again, and drew his Browning.

The driver was faster. He fired three shots and Red dropped flat on his stomach as they whizzed over his head. Lying on the roof with the driver hovering over him, Red should have felt dispirited and afraid. Instead, he was enjoying himself. The action was what he always loved about his missions; Red was addicted to it like a drug.

Before the driver could aim, Red swept his legs across the roof of the SUV, smashing into his ankles. The driver lost his balance and fell, crashing into the bonnet. The SUV veered dangerously to the right, two wheels lifting from the road. Red grabbed hold of the diamond knife to stop himself from rolling off. The driver had had the same idea and both men glared at each other, grappling for space on the knife handle.

They were on Charing Cross Road now, passing St Martin's Court. Tourists and Londoners alike lined the roads, fearfully watching the spectacle before them.

The SUV righted itself and the two men jumped up simultaneously. Red ducked as the driver threw a punch at him and realised too late his mistake. As he had thrown a punch at Red's head, the driver had positioned his gun so that Red fell onto it when he ducked. He had Red completely at his mercy, the Sig Sauer pressing against the young agent's heart.

Red looked up into the driver's hard face. Would he really shoot? He answered his own question almost concurrently. Yes, he would all too easily shoot. The driver – if that was really his occupation, and Red very much doubted it – was the sort of man who could shoot ten people dead in cold blood and sleep soundly on the same night. Red closed his eyes. So much for his favourite part of the mission. Now what he loved was going to get him killed.

Something suddenly exploded next to him. Red felt himself fall and opened his eyes, but it did him no good – he couldn't see a thing. A thick, dark mist clouded his vision. The gun had left his chest. Had the driver shot? Red had expected it to feel different...

"Get up, you idiot!"

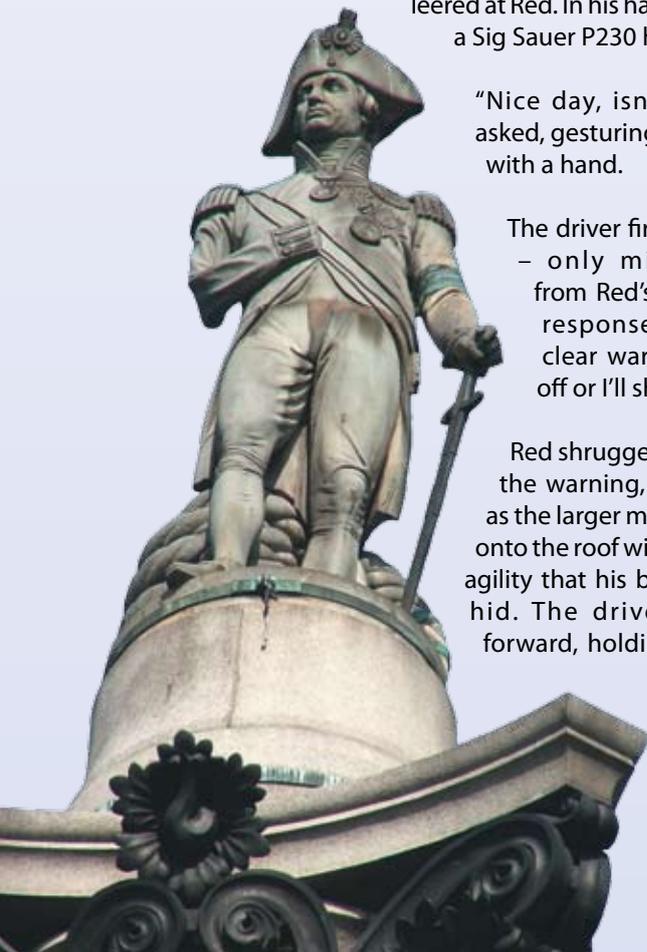
Red could hardly believe it. "Pecs? Is that you?"

"No, it's Queen Elizabeth. Who do you blooming think it is?"

Red grinned in spite of himself and crawled towards the side of the car. A dark shape loomed from the mist and Red made his way towards it, thinking it was Pecs. That was his second mistake.

The gun shots resonated in the air. Charing Cross Road exploded with yelling and screeching. Bystanders screamed

*Cont'd...*



# TRAFALGAR SQUARE *(Cont'd.)*

and ran, diving for cover. Someone saw the body fall and called an ambulance, shouting over the sudden noise. Pecs searched in the clearing mist hastily, knowing what he would find and hating it. Red felt as though everything in his life was slowly slipping away. First, the gun wounds to his chest, then Samantha had escaped, and now this. "You're firing me?"

"No, Red, we're not firing you." Jazz shifted in her seat uncomfortably.

"Is it about Samantha? I'll go after her, I swear –"

"No. It's not the mission."

"Then what is it? The witnesses?"

"You're just... no longer any use to us."

"I see."

"Do you?"

"No."

"Red, we just can't risk you getting hurt again."

"Or failing again", Red muttered.

Jazz said nothing, but her cheeks reddened deeply. "You've admitted that you can't move too well."

"But surely there's something that I can do?"

Her eyes were downcast. "I'm sorry."

Red nodded, his jaw set. "Right. I'd better go then."

As he walked home down Liverpool Street, Red thought about his situation. He had no idea what he was going to do. Working for MI5 had been his life. What did he have without his career? Perhaps he could open a business. Red had always had a knack for DIY projects. He sighed heavily. Great ... the DIY lifestyle ...

"Excuse me?"

Red looked down at the small girl before him, surprised. "What's up?"

"Aren't you that spy who got shot? Aren't you Red?"

Red hesitated then shook his head. "No. My name is Bob. Red isn't in London any more. He left this morning."

Bob walked away briskly and disappeared around a corner, leaving the girl puzzling over why his eyes had glistened when he spoke.

*By Talia Walker  
Year 9, Cerdon College  
MERRYLANDS – NSW*

## ASH SMOKE AND HEAT

The harshness of heat  
The crackle of flame  
The cruel, frying air  
It's arson to blame  
A horizon of red  
A sky of ash grey  
The trees black silhouettes  
Memories fade away  
Houses were burnt  
Tears were wept  
And the dwellings became  
A heap of wrangled iron but yet  
All are relieved  
To see green on the trees  
And the sky cool and clear  
And the birds singing near  
But etched in their minds  
Is the arson complete  
Though recovery's right  
More flame they may meet.

*By Mary Baras-Miller  
Year 4, Lauriston Girls' School, ARMADALE – VIC.  
Teacher: Chris Toms*



# A Year in Girl Hell: Crushed; Dumped; Burned; Trashed

by Meredith Costain (Hardie Grant Egmont)

Series fiction is fun, both to read and to write. For anyone interested in creating their own series, here are some tips about the process I used when creating the series *A Year in Girl Hell*.

**1** Decide on a theme and setting for your series. I'm always fascinated by how people relate to each other when under pressure. I invented a group of girls who'd been best friends all through primary school, and were about to start high school. Then I threw a whole lot of problems at them: separating them into different classes, making them wonder whether they had what it takes to hang with the 'cool' crowd, sending in a new friend to split up two best friends, introducing a group of girls who made their lives hell through cyber-bullying.

**2** Work out how many books there will be in your series. I had four main characters: Lexi, Mia, Alysha and Michi. I decided to give them a book each, to tell their own story.

**3** Decide on point of view and tense. Point of view means who the story is being 'told' by. I decided to use what's called 'first person point of view', as it suited the style of my series. It meant I could show what my main character was thinking, as well as what they said and did. If you are writing something with lots of characters and action, you might prefer to use 'third person point of view' where an unseen narrator describes what everyone is doing, and you use the terms 'he/she/they did this or that' rather than 'I'. I chose to write in the present tense rather than the past as this keeps the action and emotions fresh and immediate.

**4** Think about how you will structure the series. I set the events of each book at the start of a new term in the school year. This meant I had to do a brief 'catch-up' at the beginning of each book to show what had happened to the various characters since the last term. I also ended each book on a dramatic 'cliff-hanger', so that readers would want to read the next book in the series to find out what happened.

So, what are you waiting for? Choose a theme and style of writing that suits you best – and go for it!



## Book Review by Tatiana Frances, Year 12, Princes Hill Secondary College

High school is supposed to be the best time of your life. You'll get a boyfriend, become the most popular girl in the year, be invited to wild parties and, most of all, have your all-time best friends with you every step of the way.

This is what best friends Lexi, Mia and Alysha think when they step through the gates of their new school on the first day of Year 7. Then Mia is put in a different class, Alysha starts to drift away and Lexi begins to feel threatened by new girl, Michi.

High school is shaping up to be hell!

Join Lexi, Michi, Mia and Alysha as they try to deal with the making and breaking of friendships and families, body image, bullying, grief, love and heartbreak.

These are fantastic books with entertaining insights into what to do – and what not to do – when encountered by the problems and struggles many girls face throughout high school.

I see a lot of myself in all four girls and even now, at 17, I still have many of their problems. But I can relate to their good times too – hanging out, talking about clothes and music and laughing together – which is what makes these books so awesome. They're real girls, with real lives – good parts and bad – whose stories will stay with you for a very long time.

Who knows, maybe high school will end up being okay after all!

# Capturing a Sense of Adventure

By Jeni Mawter

*Life is either a daring adventure or nothing — Helen Keller*

Do you dream of being stranded on a desert island? Would you like to live in a tree, or experience adventures on the high seas? Battle mysterious creatures, or stop a crime ring? Then adventure writing is for you!

In creative writing we must use all five senses to bring the story to life – sight, sound, smell, taste and touch. However, there are two other senses that I also use in my writing: the sense of adventure and the sense of mischief.

When we think of the adventure story, we think of a tale filled with excitement and danger, a tale that will keep us on the

edge of our seats, turning pages from beginning till end. In the adventure story the main character goes on a quest but along the way they encounter many obstacles. The writer Robert Louis Stevenson said that when your character is confronted with great fear or danger they must use their imagination and courage to deal with it. Put your characters in unfamiliar or uncomfortable situations. They will need to take risks. Don't avoid the risks when writing adventure.

The quest is a long and difficult search for something. It may be quite real (survive hardship and terror to deliver this ring to an ancient wizard), or something more in the mind (finding a way to improve a relationship). The traditional quest involves: treasure, a mission, an exploration, or even survival.

As a reader, the quest is something we can all identify with. It represents our inner hopes and dreams. Like the main character we've quested with, we all hope to find that certain something – or someone – that will change our lives.

Jeni Mawter – New Ambassador

## BIOGRAPHY



Jeni Mawter (J.A. Mawter) is the best-selling children's author of the hilarious 'So' series: *So Gross!*, *So Feral!*, *So Sick!*, *So Festy!*, *So Grotty!* and *So Stinky!* (HarperCollins) as well as the Freewheelers adventure series: *Unleashed!*, *Launched!* and *Extreme!* (HarperCollins). Jeni's picture book *There's a Sun Fairy in Our Garden* was based on her family life with her three children. She has also published fiction, non-fiction, poetry and verse narrative for the education market.

Jeni's enthusiasm for words and books is infectious. She inspires both children and adults. With a Master of Arts in Children's Literature Jeni has taught creative writing at Macquarie University, the NSW Writer's Centre and the Sydney Writers Centre. She presents at numerous other schools, conferences and festivals and is a speaker for the Lateral Learning, Show & Tell and Speaker's Ink speaker's agencies.

If you'd like to find about Jeni's books or to get some hot writing tips please visit [www.jenimawter.com](http://www.jenimawter.com)

## Writing Adventure

Adventure stories are a thrilling ride through landscapes of the mind. They're not to be explained, they're to be experienced. Adventure leads the reader to astonishing places they have never imagined, or to places where they would never normally go. Genre doesn't matter. It can be fantasy, mystery, horror, or anything. What matters is that the reader wants to go on the journey with the characters. The readers must care about the characters, be willing to follow them to the ends of the earth, live through the adventure with them.

Heroes and heroines are only as impressive as the forces hurled against them. They are at their best when pitted against strong, resourceful and dedicated forces of darkness. A fully rounded baddie fascinates us by their total disregard for the rules. The reader loves to see the baddie defeated because it satisfies a deep-rooted human need to see order reign within our universe.

In the Freewheelers series (*Unleashed!*, *Launched!* and *Extreme!*) I used a group of friends as the protagonists, who all shared a love of bike riding. I also included the 'baddie' characters and sometimes mysterious 'other' characters who were important to the stories.

Your adventure story has to be driven by action, by some event or sequence of events. The action is like a line of falling dominoes where one thing impacts on another, then another, then another. Always keep in mind: What happened before? What's happening now? What will happen next? It is said that adventure writing is the literary equivalent of the Newtonian laws of motion – every action brings about a reaction (though not necessarily equal or opposite). The writer must follow through from event to event in a believable and consistent manner.

Throw in some jaw-dropping and surprising events to keep the characters (and readers) on their toes. Describe the action

scenes in a way that is believable. Dialogue is important but it must not get in the way of narrative tension.

## Elements of the adventure story

Factors to consider when writing your story include:

- **A likeable protagonist.** Takes on some sort of heroic quest, where they must prove their own worthiness. The protagonist faces dire consequences to themselves or to others should they fail their quest.
- **An unlikable antagonist.** Tries to do everything in their power to stop the protagonist on their quest.
- **Obstacles.** These can be:
  - 1) human (the enemy; savages; criminals; corrupt police);
  - 2) the elements (the ocean, the jungle, the ice, the desert);
  - 3) institutions (the army, the CIA, the KGB) or;
  - 4) obstacles the main character discovers within themselves (pride, physical weakness, desire for luxury or comfort, greed, or fear).
- **Physical action.** Characters are often placed in extreme or dire situations.
- **Fast paced.** The story must have action, action, and more action.
- **Violence.** A character cannot use violence for personal gain. Violence is only justified in defence of others, in defence of oneself, or in defence of a wider moral order.
- **Setting.** The setting helps us as the writer to decide the danger and obstacles to be overcome. It is often far away and exotic, or else in underworld areas closer to home.
- **Danger.** Danger lurks in every corner. Anything can happen. The danger will be as extraordinary as possible.
- **Not necessarily lawful.** However, the goal of the action must meet society's standards of what is acceptable or not.

When writing your story you must hook your reader in a way that compels them to want to read more. Build your adventure story so that each sentence introduces a new twist or turn, assaults the reader from a new direction, and moves the narrative in unpredictable, though interconnected, ways. Keep the sentences terse and lean, the style stripped, and try opening your sentences with action verbs to put the reader directly into the real time in the story. And, last but not least, don't be tempted to solve a character's problem by using an obvious solution. Rack your brains and go for a solution that is totally unexpected and exciting.

Jeni Mawter's Freewheelers adventure books *Unleashed!*, *Launched!* and *Extreme!* are published by HarperCollins Publishers Australia.

To find out more about Jeni and her books come and visit [www.jenimawter.com](http://www.jenimawter.com)

## A Refugee's Life



A refugee's life,  
Is like the economy,  
It can rise and fall,  
At any time.

A refugee's life,  
Is full of rebels,  
Whose hearts are made of stone,  
Running through town with guns,  
Like maniacs on the run,  
Killing anyone who gets in their way,  
But that's just a refugee's life.

A refugee's life,  
Living at camps,  
In horrible conditions,  
The water is as muddy as a warthog.

A refugee's life,  
Is a group of stars,  
That falls every day,  
For they are shot,  
Or wrestled down,  
Or sometimes taken away.

A refugee's life,  
Is a sorrowful bird,  
Who has lost its way,  
Family, loved ones,  
And what they knew as home,  
Gone forever,  
Like a swatted fly,  
Never again to be seen.

A refugee's life,  
Trying to find the border,  
For if they do,  
They will no longer,  
Live a refugee's life.

By Connor Randazzo  
Year 6, The Essington School  
RAPID CREEK - NT

# To Mt. Everest and Beyond

**I**T WAS a cold, frosty morning in the city of Kathmandu. The sun was just rising and the villagers were slowly waking up. Amongst the town folk were tourists who had come to do the hike up to Mt. Everest. This rock climb had a reputation of being incredibly difficult and treacherous and was known as the hardest rock climb in the world. Many people had lost their lives in the pursuit to reach the top. The very slippery ice was extremely dangerous and so too were the animals that live up there. Animals such as wild dogs, Asian bears and man-eating white tigers are just some to name a few and to make matters worse, the villagers tell of the legendary Yeti. Some say that somewhere in the hidden caves of Mt. Everest, lives the beast. It is believed that he is 40 feet tall and 20 feet wide and if anyone dares to disturb him, let's just say they won't come out alive. On the other hand, there are also those who say that the Yeti is a friendly creature filled with wisdom and knowledge that only a few have been privileged to receive.

It was the very first time that John and Luke had been to Nepal and they were both eager and excited to start the trek.

"Luke, we need to visit the Nepalese Government before we start the trek" said John.

"Why?" asked Luke, his smile turning into a frown.

"We need to get the registration forms and there are some important papers that must be signed for our expedition", replied John.

Luke was really annoyed as he hated being told what to do and he always thought he knew everything. They hailed a taxi and made their way to the government offices. The road was bumpy and the inside of the taxi smelt of old, dirty socks. They

couldn't wait to get out of the taxi. When they arrived at the offices, there were guards standing outside holding huge M16 machine guns. They walked up a set of stairs and approached the gates. John explained to the guard how they needed some papers signed by President Pushpa Kamal Dahal so that they could climb Mt. Everest. The officer looked at his paperwork and then spoke into his walkie talkie.

"You may go through", the officer said to the boys.

"Namaskaur", replied Luke and John.

They entered the offices. It was exquisite inside. The halls were filled with beautiful paintings and gold statues. They saw a huge door with the name Pushpa Kamal Dahal on it and knocked.

"Approach if you dare", barked Pushpa.

"It is us, Luke and John, your Highness", said the hikers.

"Oh, I've been expecting you", snapped Pushpa.

Quite a few hours went by before the boys finally emerged from the office. Just as they were leaving, Pushpa said, "Maybe I should accompany you boys. Neither of you know the mountain as I know it. It is full of hidden traps and it is very, very dangerous".

"We don't need you to guide us. We are very capable and we'll be just fine on our own", said Luke arrogantly.

John wasn't so sure. "Are you sure we can do this on our own, Luke? It wouldn't hurt to have someone like Pushpa guiding us."

"No way. I'm doing this on my own. All the paperwork is signed. Are you coming?" grunted Luke.

"OK", replied John.

The next day the two boys set off. It was a bitterly cold morning. They felt incredibly excited, but apprehensive at the same time.

"Are you ready to climb the biggest mountain in the world?" yelled John.

"Oh yeah!" screamed Luke.

It was a three hour drive to Mt. Everest and the hikers were almost jumping out of their seats because they couldn't wait to get there. As they were driving across a bridge, in the distance, they could see Mt. Everest. It was truly breathtaking. It looked so beautiful and majestic covered with snow.

It wasn't long before they arrived at the campsite. All of the hikers were called to the hut.

"OK", shouted the leader. "I have very important news to tell you. There have been sightings of the Yeti near the top of the mountain. Footprints the size of a house and bits of fur have been seen along the track. Each of you will be going in different directions, so you better watch out!"

"Yeah", mumbled the hikers, shaking their heads. No-one believed in the Yeti. It was a myth to them.

"Now onto the safety procedures", said the leader.

"We don't need to stay and listen to this", whispered Luke. "We already know what to do. Let's get out of here John."

The two boys quietly crept out of the hut with their belongings and started their hike up the mountain. They didn't want to wait for anyone as they wanted to be the first ones to reach the top of Mt. Everest. The hike was difficult and tiring, but they were determined to keep going.

As night-time fell, they found shelter in a cold, dark cave. They had something to eat and then Luke wanted to explore the cave, so he lit a torch and off he went. John stayed back and kept watch of the cave. After a few minutes, John heard loud screams. He followed until he came to a large section of the cave. It was full of stalactites and stalagmites. He also noticed lots of Nepalese carvings in the big rocks. John was scared. He saw a small opening and ran towards it. There was Luke, lying on the ground with a wound so big on his arm, that it looked like it was about to fall off. Then, next to him was the most frightening thing he had ever seen. The Yeti!! It was huge, hairy and he looked angry.

"Hold onto me", screamed John. He grabbed Luke with all his might and ran toward the opening. The Yeti was stomping right behind him. As John reached the outside of the cave, the Yeti got stuck. He couldn't get out, so he started banging on the walls with so much force that it caused an avalanche! It sounded very loud, like a bomb had been dropped. Large

chunks of ice fell all around them. It was so slippery that John fell hard onto the ground. He picked himself up, grabbed Luke who was barely conscious and ran.

John didn't know where he was going. He felt confused and desperate. All he did know was that Luke was in a lot of pain and needed help.

All of a sudden, amongst the darkness of the night, he saw a faint glimmer of light. With all his might, John picked Luke up and carried him on his back. The light was coming from a small hut in the middle of nowhere, made of rocks and bits of wood. He knocked on the door. Slowly, the door opened and standing in front of them was a tiny, frail old lady. She didn't speak very good English but she could see that Luke was hurt, so she let them in. She got some bits of material and handed them to John. While John bandaged up Luke's arm, the little old lady got them some soup and bread. She was so helpful and kind and said they could stay for the night.

Around 5am the next morning, John and Luke awoke to the disturbing sound of a foghorn. "What do you think that noise is?" whispered Luke.

"I don't know, but we sure are going to find out", John said in a scared and shaky voice.

They left the hut quietly as they didn't want to disturb the little old lady who had been so kind to them. After a 2km walk down the track, they came upon a clan of Yeti sitting around a campfire roasting yak meat on a spit.

*Cont'd...*



Bhaktapur, Kathmandu

## To Mt. Everest and Beyond (Cont'd.)

"Oh my God!" shrieked John.

"What's going on here?" said Luke.

"Shhhhh", whispered John. "We can't let them see us otherwise who knows what they'll do to us!"

"Makane, makane, jujuan!" shouted the Yeti leader. Oh no! It was too late. They had been spotted. Before they knew it, they were being dragged into a magical portal going to another dimension. Their hands were tied and John was really scared. Was this the end for them?

When they awoke, Luke was in a daze. John lay still, as though he was frozen, in fear of what may happen next. But to their surprise, they heard the sounds of birds singing and children laughing. Luke walked around bewildered. He had never seen a place like this before.

His arm had been properly stitched up and he was speechless. This place was so peaceful and beautiful.

"Welcome to Zunubia, where everyone lives in peace and harmony", chirped the Yeti leader.

"Wow!" said John, stunned.

"We have been watching over you and have seen that you take a lot of things for granted. You don't listen to others, especially those that want to help you and you both have little respect for the people around you. It is a great thing to be ambitious and strive for your goals, but what price are you prepared to pay for that?" questioned the Yeti leader. John and Luke just looked at each other and realised that what the Yeti leader was saying was true.

"I am so sorry for what I have done", said Luke. "I was so determined to be the first person to reach the top of Mt. Everest, no matter what, that I put my life, as well as my friend John's life, at risk."

"We are so sorry", replied John, bowing his head.

John and Luke spent the night with the Yeti clan. They laughed and they sang and when it was time to go they thanked everyone for their warm hospitality. "It is now time for you to go back to your world on one condition only", said the Yeti leader.

"And what would that be?" asked Luke.

"That you promise not to tell anyone about this", he said.

"We promise", answered John and Luke together.

"You may go", shouted the Yeti leader.

When they got to the real world again, they started making their way back to the campsite. Neither man spoke. They were both deep in thought trying to make sense of what had just happened.

As they approached the campsite, they were overwhelmed by a sense of relief that they had made it back safely and were happy to be back with their colleagues. They both now knew never to take things for granted and to help others whenever possible. They realised that life was short so it was important to try to be the best person you could be.

*By Roman Delo*

*Year 6, The Essington School, DARWIN - NT*

*Teacher: Kia Fletcher*

# DIRTY

"Take me! Take me!" we all yelled as a short customer walked in through the door. As you see, I am a toothbrush with a cute bunny face on me. Every day, people come in through the door and buy a toothbrush but they NEVER EVER pick me so day after day I stand there waiting. But one day, something changed my whole life.

I was waiting for someone when I saw a cute little girl's face pop up. I was so glad so I tried to look the best I could.

"I want that one! The one with the bunny on it! Yes that one!" yelled the little girl. I was so glad that I could have cried! Finally I was going to get out of this place which had been home to me for many years. It was sad to leave my owner but this was going to be extremely exciting. As we drove past many stalls and houses, I was snuggling up and sleeping in a plastic bag.



As I woke, I was in a cup and out of my wrapper. I could finally smell fresh air and see other interesting things. There was another toothbrush that looked like an expert toothbrush. We quickly made friends and he told me all about the owners. I was extremely happy to find out that the owners were nice. Night came quickly and the child picked and started brushing her teeth with me! It was DISGUSTING! I was getting incredibly dirty.

Day after day I was used to brush her teeth; soon my hair was all bent, ugly and dirty. After 1 month being this girl's toothbrush, I saw her coming into the bathroom with another toothbrush that I recognised from the toothbrush shop. She took me out and threw me into the horrible rubbish bin while the other toothbrush sneered at me. In a few days, I was being driven away from my friends and into the stinky dump.

*By Tian Xiao Shi*

*Year 5, Lauriston Girls' School*

*ARMADALE - VIC.*

*Teacher: Miss Evans*

# World Creation – The Quentaris Chronicles

by Paul Collins

Isobelle Carmody, Margo Lanagan, Gary Crew, John Heffernan, Anna Ciddor, Lucy Sussex, Jenny Pausacker, Justin D'Ath, James Roy, Alyssa Brugman, Michael Pryor, Karen R Brooks, Pamela Freeman, Sheryl Clark, Sean McMullen and Paul Collins.

What do these Australian authors have in common? Read on... There's more to creating a world than simply snapping one's fingers. Paul Collins gives us the behind-the-scenes story and tells us how *The Quentaris Chronicles* evolved with the help of sixteen Australian authors who co-share the fantasy world of Amlas.

The city of Quentaris was originally conceived back in 2002. My co-editor, Michael Pryor, phoned me and asked me if I was interested in participating in a shared world scenario which had never been attempted in Australia before.

Michael had the shell of Quentaris, and wondered if I'd like to join him in creating the world, and then seeing if we could find a publisher for it. The first publisher we took it to accepted it. (As an aside, one of the pluses was that we had on board Marc McBride, cover artist for the highly successful Deltora Quest series by Emily Rodda.)

A Shared World is a series of stand-alone novels all set in the same fantasy world which is created by one or two writers – the World Masters, if you like. Once the fantasy world – with all its characters, creatures, customs, culture as well as its geography – is created, then new writers are invited to contribute to the series by each writing their own novel.

A 'bible' containing all this vital world-building information is given to the contributing writers. It contains the scenario, outline of main characters and an idea of the overall tone of the series.

## Quentaris – General Background

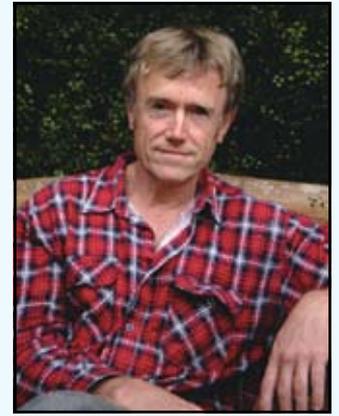
Quentaris is similar to the independent city states in Renaissance Italy, particularly Florence. Rivalries, wars and trade between the cities is natural, even though they share much in terms of language and culture. The nearest cities are Hadran, Simesian, Tolrush and Brunt. The warlike state of Tolrush would like to conquer Quentaris.

Quentaris exists mainly by commerce. As such, the merchant class dominates it. Trade with neighbouring city states (and more far flung trading partners) means many travellers visit Quentaris and thus provide plenty of opportunities for fresh narrative threads and fresh characters. Quentaris is, after all, very cosmopolitan. It's the New York of the ancient fantasy world!

## The Fantasy Element

Much of the commercial activity of Quentaris comes from its proximity to a series of mysterious caves. These caves are

situated high in a sheer cliff face overhanging the town, and the caves provide access to magical shifting rifts that lead to other worlds. These other worlds are the source of many exotic, valuable, highly prized and occasionally baffling trade items. But they can also be the source of peril as the rifts sometimes open on hostile races and unknown dangers, allowing them access to this world. In *Slaves of Quentaris*, I described the rift like this:



'The only incident to break their monotony was in passing through the rift itself. It billowed like a sail — a luminous green curtain of air through which Scipiak passed and returned several times to demonstrate how harmless it was. Even so, the clanspeople shrank back from it as though it might envelop them and swallow them whole.'

The rifts are inside the caves, and can open and close at the most inopportune moments, making adventuring quite a risky business. They're the source of much wealth, and they also attract many heroes who are willing to face death to win great fortune (parallel with the mariners of the middle ages, risking their lives for trade to the Spice Islands).

The whole scenario is classic high fantasy. In essence, *The Quentaris Chronicles* is a standard quasi-medieval Europe, low tech, but with magic. The inhabitants ride horses, drink beer, eat the food we are familiar with, the weaponry of this time and so on. The 'otherworldliness' is due to the magic system and the many magic objects that have been imported from the rift caves over the centuries.

Guilds control most crafts and trades in the city, and wield considerable political power and influence. Practising a craft or trade without being a member of the appropriate guild is very difficult, and the guilds do not hand out membership willingly. Membership is hereditary – parent to child. However, guild members without heir can nominate others to become guild members.

## Magic System

The magic system of this Shared World is based around the fundamental elements of Earth, Air, Fire and Water. A single magician (either sex) can practice Earth magic, Air magic, Fire magic or Water magic – never more than one. The practitioners of each type of magic are hostile towards each other. Each order is headed by a Grand Master, often spoken of, rarely seen. The magicians are quite mercenary and hire themselves out for all sorts of tasks, and travel widely. They are rarely citizens of any city.

One powerful aspect of such magic – and one only practised by high order mages – is the summoning and control of elementals. These monstrous creatures are physical manifestations of

the element they represent. Fire elementals are creatures of pure fire, water elementals are raging water monsters, earth elementals formed of the earth, air elementals as insubstantial as the air, but as powerful as a hurricane. They range in size from tiny to gigantic.

### Other Races

Quentaris is a human world. However, other standard fantasy races (elves, goblins, dwarves etc.) periodically visit from the rift cave worlds. At times, small populations of these other races live in neighbourhoods of Quentaris as refugees from their original worlds.

### Politics

Two families dominate the affairs of the city, and have done so for centuries. They are the Duelpths and the Nibhellines (as an aside, these were both ruling classes in Renaissance Florence – we've just changed the spellings). They exist in a constant state of tension, bickering and contesting wherever possible in city politics and society, and occasionally breaking into outright armed conflict. The Duelpths are known as the Blues, and the Nibhellines as the Greens, due to the dominant familial colours. These two families provide internal tension within the city and more opportunities for narrative threads, exploring the history of the enmity and the ongoing effects.

Quentaris has roughly the same population as Florence in the early fourteenth century – just over 100,000. The diameter of Quentaris (within the walls) is about 3 kilometres.

### Consistency

The hardest part of our job is to make sure the authors don't over-step the boundaries. Some try to add a little bit of parody, which sort of makes a mockery of a character, creating a cliché. Some authors might have a character arriving at the docks and getting to the Idler's Gardens in five minutes – an impossible feat. It would take at least forty minutes. Yet another author set his palace with acreage smack bang in the middle of Quentaris (there is no spot in Quentaris that has acreage). To get around that one, Michael and I suggested they put the estate in a rift world. Quite often authors will use modern words that we have to change. Since the first series comprised stand-alone novels, we had to ensure that Quentaris was left exactly as the author found it. If authors got away with killing a main character, we'd have a massive continuity problem. If Pandro's Tower gets demolished in a book, the author has to have it being rebuilt by the end of the book, for instance. So all this stuff is what we, as co-editors, have to look out for when the manuscripts first arrive.

Readers can find different characters from any of the Quentaris books popping up anywhere in the series. In fact, we encourage writers to use the characters they we originally created.

### Speech

The characters in *The Quentaris Chronicles* don't speak in thees and thous. Deliberate, hackneyed 'fantasy speak' is right out.

Some slight archaism of speech is permissible, especially from the nobility, but the standard diction is slightly formal English. Contractions (can't, won't) are allowed, especially from young characters, but modern slang is not. The prose, and especially the dialogue, in Quentaris novels don't use modernisms such as 'okay', 'hassled', 'kid' etc.

### The Finale

Towards the end of the first series I had decided to return to publishing, and started Ford Street Publishing.

I set up in my last Hachette title, *Vampires of Quentaris*, a plot that allowed the series to segue into a completely new location. In *The Spell of Undoing*, Book #1 of Quentaris – Quest of the Lost City, I have Quentaris ripped out of its bedrock and thrown into the rift worlds.

Quentaris spends the rest of the series trying to find its way back home. Whereas the first series was in the stand-alone format, the second series is sequential and illustrated.

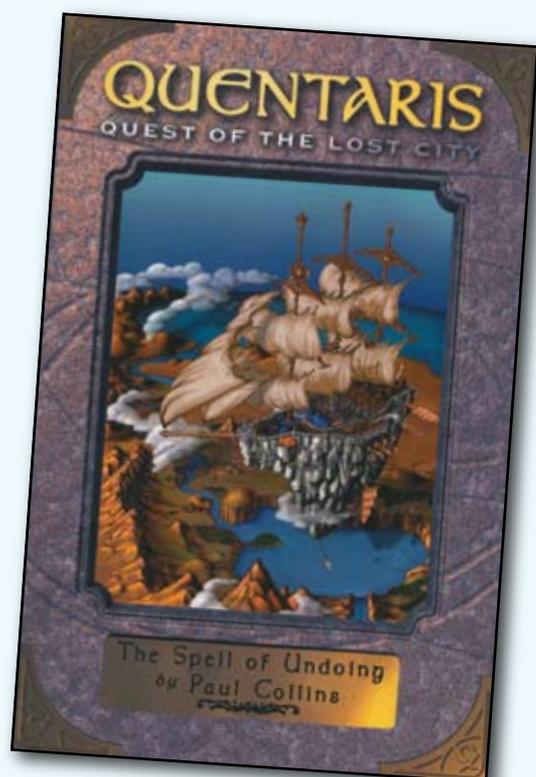
Alyssa Brugman wrote book #2, *The Equen Queen*, and James Roy has written book #3, *The Gimlet Eye*. Check out the website at: [www.quentaris.com](http://www.quentaris.com)

Paul Collins's other books include *The Jelindel Chronicles*, *The Earthborn Wars* and *The World of Grrym* trilogy in collaboration with Danny Willis. Paul's latest book is *The Slightly Skewed Life of Toby Chrysler*.

Paul has won the Aurealis, William Atheling and the inaugural Peter McNamara awards. He has had two Notable Books in the Children's Book Council of Australia Awards. He is currently the publisher at Ford Street Publishing.

He gives writing workshops in schools and libraries and can be contacted at [fordstr@internode.on.net](mailto:fordstr@internode.on.net)

Visit Paul's websites: [www.paulcollins.com.au](http://www.paulcollins.com.au), [www.quentaris.com](http://www.quentaris.com) and [www.fordstreetpublishing.com](http://www.fordstreetpublishing.com).



# FORD ST

Title	Author	ISBN	Price	Qty	Sub Total
<b>Before the Storm</b>	Sean McMullen	978-1-876462-50-5	\$19.95		
<b>Pool</b>	Justin D'Ath	978-1-876462-51-2	\$19.95		
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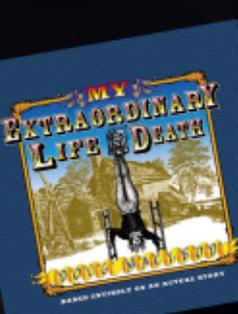
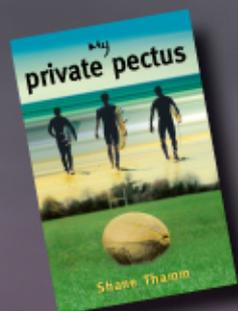
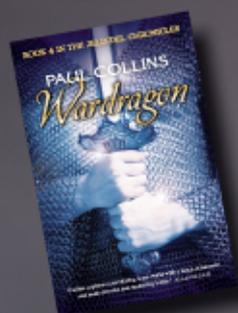


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