

***Fantasy . . . Romance . . . Adventure . . .  
SF . . . Crime . . . Horror . . . Humour . . .  
Poetry . . . Graphics . . . Historical . . .  
Twilight Zone . . . Thriller . . .  
Contemporary . . .  
Trust Me!  
Edited by Paul Collins***

This outstanding collection provides a diverse and contemporary set of stories, poems and graphics that will engage young people as it deals with topics and subjects that interest them and that they can relate to. Each story has its merits and can be studied and enjoyed separately, but there is much to be gained by examining the whole anthology.

Isobelle Carmody's wonderful introduction presents much information from an esteemed author in her own right. She tells of the personal inspirations of many of the contributors and we are privy to learning about their preferred genres and favourite titles. Her explanation of genre and references to more titles is helpful to point readers in the direction of more books that they would like to read.

Because the material in this title is already arranged in themes, readers can start at one genre they prefer, but without doubt they will soon be eager to dip into the whole feast that is presented here because of the quality of the stories or the recommendation of their peers.

Paul Collins has drawn together an exceptional range of modern Australian writers, poets and illustrators that showcases the talent and quality available to young people in this country.

### **Introduction**

***Trust Me!*** has an excellent introduction by Isobelle Carmody. This is well worth reading as it is most informative and interesting – a fund of information is contained within it. There is a valuable appraisal and explanation of genre –and much more!

### **Literacy**

Who does Isobelle Carmody say would head the list if brilliant intellect were a genre? (xiii)

What is the essence of classic horror, according to Isobelle? (xiv)

From this collection choose one story that particularly appealed to you

and examine it in detail.

- State what genre your story is.
- Comment on the tone of your story
- Relate how the story is told
  
- Write a review of it for your local newspaper.

List what you thought was:

- the most unusual story
- best story
- most satisfying story
- cleverest story
- one that you learned something from.

From ***Trust Me!*** find:

- a portion that involves emotions and feelings
- a piece that is: gripping, poignant, sad.

Look at 'Abandoned' on page 29

- From whose point of view is the story told?
- Find another story told in this way
- Look at other stories that are told in a different voice.

What questions would *you* ask if you were connected to *Answers* on the computer?

Consider what makes you:

- want read on
- not able to put a book down
- get involved in a story.

## **Anthology**

What is an anthology?

Talk about what constitutes a short story as distinct from a novel – compare what comprises an anthology and a novel and note what differences there are and why these exist.

For instance, consider how important plot is in a short story?

What about characters?

How are the structure and design different in an anthology from a full-length novel?

What ingredients are needed by an author to write a short story?

What ploys or strategies do writers of short stories use?

## **Genre**

This diverse collection is made up of:  
Comic sketches by Leigh Hobbs and Coral Tulloch  
Beautiful, delicate illustrations by Shaun Tan  
Superb illustrations by some of Australia's best illustrators  
Poetry that is very varied  
Newspaper articles  
An uncertain future  
Stories that take you somewhere else . . .

***Trust Me!*** presents a wonderful array of various genres to feast upon. In the introduction you get an insight into what genre is and other titles that may be to your taste are mentioned

When next you read a book, spare a thought to consider what genre it is. What genre do you like best?

What are the components of a murder mystery?

'The Fortress' has an afterword about the genre of crime fiction. Read this and talk further about it

## Graphics

This title contains brilliant, whimsical illustrations by Shaun Tan and others; funny comic sketches by Leigh Hobbs and Coral Tulloch.

Look at the particular illustrations in ***Trust Me!*** and make some observations about them and consider what they contribute to the book as a whole.

## Poetry

Jot down some impressions and some words that you feel capture the feelings expressed by Steven Herrick in 'The Country School'.

What is poetry?

What format does it take?

Why do people write poetry?

From ***Trust Me!*** choose one poem that appealed to you and write a critique of it.

Write a poem of your own

## Speaking

Choose one story from the collection that appealed to you. Briefly tell the story in your own words

From ***Trust Me!*** choose a story that:

- scared you
- involved you
- you found romantic
- a story that made your heart race and tell your classmates about it.

Pick out a portion from a story that you thought: particularly:

- apt
- poignant
- sad
- gripping

Choose a descriptive passage that you felt captured or created a vivid scene or image for you.

Recount your piece to the rest of the class.

Have you ever been haunted by a dream? If so, relate your experience  
Talk about what interests you.

### Discussion

Talk about the imagination and where it can take you.  
Discuss inspiration and where it comes from.

Talk about the following subjects using the stories in ***Trust Me!*** as a starting point:

- |                 |                  |                  |
|-----------------|------------------|------------------|
| - bullying      | - rivalry        | - fear           |
| - revenge       | - siblings       | - power          |
| - chance        | - guilt          | - being positive |
| - relationships | - dreams         | - memories       |
| - role playing  | - perspective    | - suspense       |
| - illusions     | - traits, habits | - coincidence    |
| - supernatural  | - contrast       | - miracles       |

### THE CRAFT OF WRITING

Consider what creative process writing is: it can be personal or passionate or for the enjoyment of others, but what *does* constitute a good story?

There is much to learn from this collection about how writers write.

By looking at the craft of writing you can use many of the ploys and strategies of published authors to make your own writing come alive.

From the stories that make up ***Trust Me!*** you can make a detailed examination of how established authors tell their tales.

'Humble Pie' by Phillip Gwynne is written in the present tense. Consider what this achieves.

Find examples of stories written in a different way.

Stories often rely on the creation of atmosphere, as in 'The Fog'. How does Allan Baillie achieve his effect?

Authors use mix-ups, misunderstandings, details that are implied but not spelt out – all have a place in stories – find an instance of each of these from the collection.

Look at clues authors give in their writing and how these are used.

Find examples of: suspense, humour, climax anti-climax, from different stories.

## Opening

You can begin a story in a multitude of ways.

Look at how stories start:

Read the opening of 'The Fortress' and see how Lucy Sussex establishes atmosphere.

Look at the opening of some other stories and ascertain how the author gets the reader involved.

## Characters

Short stories often do not develop characters fully. Choose one that you thought made a character come alive and identify how the author has done this.

Do a profile of the protagonist of your choice stating what you know about the narrator.

## Tension

Find a story that had tension and outline how the author builds this up. Outline the situation and how you felt whilst reading this story.

## Humour

Find some instances of humour from the stories in *Trust Me!*. What place does humour have in the story? What is its effect?

## Time

What is your idea of the future? Compare it with Sally Rippin's in 'The Red Shoes'.

Stories can be told in retrospect, like "Trust Me!" by Deborah Abela

In what ways is the passing of time handled in writing?

Look at different stories to examine how time is conveyed in stories.

### Setting

List two stories that are set in: the future, ancient times, contemporary society.

Look at what details alert you to where a story is set.

Choose a portion from a story that establishes a setting that you thought was worth relating to others and read it to the class.

### Language

Words are the mainstay of writing.

It is however, not just ANY words that make up a story. A writer has to choose carefully and put an apt word or expression to involve the reader or to make a good story.

Look at several different stories from this anthology and the range of language used to tell them.

What does the choice of tone and language depend on?

Stories can be told in the first person or may use third person narrative.

Direct speech or dialogue is when characters speak.

'Out of Time' by Jenny Mounfield begins with direct speech in the form of a question.

Consider the place of questions and answers in writing.

#### **Look at:**

The use of body language in writing.

Feelings and emotions, how they are conveyed, and to what effect.

Find some examples from the text and talk about them.

### Ending

The conclusion of stories is very important. Choose one from *Trust Me!* that you felt was effective or had an impact on you and make some observations about how this was achieved by the writer.

### Writing

Writing is a product of the imagination, personal experience and perspective and interests, intellect and feelings.

Reflect on what things were important to you as a child.

Write about letting go . . .

Growing up . . .

Do you ever wake up not knowing where you are, like Billy in *The Firedrake*? Write about it.

Isobelle Carmody says in her introduction, 'At its heart, all good writing is anarchic'.

Give your views on this comment.

***Trust Me!*** shows you can express yourself in a multitude of ways.

Look at articles:

'Monster Thawed From Ice'

'Mass Hallucinations From Volcano' by special correspondent Marc McBride

Comic sketches by Leigh Hobbs on 'The Joy of Being an Author' and Coral Tulloch's piece: 'The Uncertain Future of Len Bean' and its moral.

Make up your own contribution in this style.

## **Design and layout**

### **Type fonts**

There are breaks in 'The Key' by Kate Forsyth.

Consider what the breaks found in this story and 'The Fortress' are for.

Look at the headings in 'Abandoned'.

What are they designed to do?

What do they achieve?

On p38 *italics* are used.

Look at the use of different type and fonts and what they are used for.

What do they contribute to a story?

## **Research**

Find out more about:

- genre
- myths, as in 'Andromeda'
- bullying and strategies to overcome it which is the subject of several stories
- artificial intelligence, as referred to in 'Answers'

- the expedition of Burke and Wills and King as in 'The Thrill-Seekers Club'
- archaeology- Egyptian, Celtic remains as in 'Relic'
- the Russian scientist who worked with dogs (p154).

### **Further reading**

Look back at the list of books Isobelle Carmody mentions in her introduction. You may wish to follow up by reading some of these if you liked the story of the author that was inspired by a certain title.

Make a list of these for further reference that the class as a whole can use.

Read further about the contributors and look for books they have written.

These stories can be a starting off point to explore other authors as well as further work by the authors and illustrators in this collection.

**Notes:** Nancy Mortimer