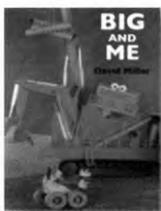


Big and Me



by David Miller
 Ford St
 ISBN: 978 1 87646269-7
 RRP: 26.95

Big and Small are machines that work together as a team but some days Big gets a bit wobbly. This hardcover book is aimed for readers over seven and is a metaphor for a child living with an adult who suffers from a severe mental illness. The characters that offer assistance are the Boss and the Mechanic and there is tractor medicine that helps Big keep on the right path.

Knowing how and what to tell children about mental illness is no easy task but there are many more children that live with parents who suffer from the disease than is common knowledge with research suggesting that 21-23% of Australian children live in families where at least one parent has or has had a mental illness. While many people parent very well despite their own mental health problems, the children are often relied upon to be their parent's primary carer and many children's lives are affected by the stigma associated with their parent's illness. It is important that these children understand that they are not alone and that support is available to allow them to maintain and enjoy the childhood, educational and social opportunities that their peers experience.

The children of parents with a mental illness have been described as 'hidden' or 'invisible', due to the stigma associated with mental illness, the lack of awareness on the part of health professionals of their needs and the misplaced fear (on the part of both parents and children) that if they ask for help the child will be removed from the parents' care. It is important for children in this situation to know that that they are not alone, that it isn't their fault and that there is support out there. This picture book, with its dramatic illustrations and simple text, is one way to get such a message across and is an excellent tool to assist with understanding a complex issue.

Contrary rhetoric: lectures on landscape and language



by John Kinsella
 Freemantle Press
 ISBN: 978 1 921361 05 0
 RRP: \$29.95

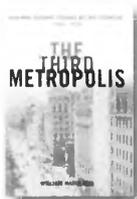
Academics studying the issue of national identity have been heard to say that Australia's national identity is constantly evolving and that being such a young nation, we are yet to cement ourselves in the international arena. The changes to how we see ourselves as Australians are evident in literature, art and dare I say all cultural representations of our nation. Where once our national identity could be considered to be pastoral—the conflict between man and bush are common themes, today the bush has been replaced by the urban jungle.

John Kinsella's essays are concerned with culture, place, and poetic language. From the 'city' to the 'bush', and with 'prospect' and 'refuge' of landscape in mind, his focus is up close. Looking at the region through an international lens, he examines subjects as diverse as the pastoral tradition, the flag, forest protests, the meanings of the letterbox, the Western Australian wheatbelt, racism and opera. Describing himself as an international regionalist, in contradistinction to a nationalist, he is always willing to challenge his audience.

John Kinsella is a major international poet, whose work is published by US and UK publishers. In 2008, the author was awarded the Christopher Brennan Award for Poetry, the Glenna Luschei Prairie Schooner Award and was appointed as an Extraordinary Fellow of Churchill College, Cambridge University.

This is an enjoyable and well written collection that has two themes providing a strong moral thread. These are Kinsella's commitment to a pacifist/anarchist/vegan ethic and the second is that of language and how influential and provocative it can be.

The third metropolis: imaging Brisbane through art and literature 1940-1970



by William Hatherell
 University of Queensland Press
 ISBN: 9780702235436
 RRP: \$45.00

Post-war Brisbane has been a powerful source for the literary and artistic imagination—perhaps more so than any other Australian city. The cultural journal *Meanjin* began in Brisbane in 1940, and a number of significant poets worked in Brisbane around this time. In the visual arts, a vibrant scene flourished into the 1960s. Most famously, the two decades after the Second World War proved a powerful imaginative source for 'literary' writers such as David Malouf, Rodney Hall and Thea Astley.

With a focus on the literary and visual arts—in particular poetry, the novel, and painting, *The third metropolis* considers the relationship of these works of art to the actual history of the city—political, economic and demographic.

For the first time, *The third metropolis* places Brisbane within wider debates about Australian cultural history.

William Hatherell lectures in professional and public relations writing at Queensland University of Technology

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QUENTARIS
 QUEST OF THE LOST CITY

The
Spell of Undoing
 Paul Collins

Due to a vengeful plot by warlike Tolrush, Quentaris is uprooted and hurled into the uncharted rift-maze. Lost and adrift in this endless labyrinth of parallel universes, encountering both friend and foe, the city faces a daunting task. Somehow, Quentaris must forge a new identity and find its way home.

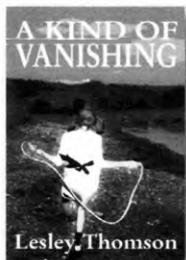
RRP \$15.95

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A kind of vanishing



by Lesley Thomson
Spinifex Press
ISBN: 1-876756-68-3 / 9781876756680

Whenever you hear of a missing child, there would be few of us that do not feel despair in the pit of our stomachs. It is unpalatable on so many levels. However such events are often used as the basis for suspense fiction such as in this case of *A kind of vanishing*. Although this novel is not autobiographical, at times the narrative takes on a very personal voice. This is in part because the author has chosen to set the novel in locations with which she has had a personal connection as well as including details such as Parkinson disease—something again of which the author has knowledge. It is because she can write with such authority that allows her to convince her readership that her tale has depth. It is also obvious in her writing, that Thomson is greatly affected by places and the sense of past events they hold.

Time is another device used by the author with positive results. The initial part of the story is set in 1968 against the political backdrop of assassinations and human rights. However this just adds flavor to the narrative—it does not dictate action.

The characterisations within the novel are sound and walk well off the page. The character of Kath in particular is realistic in its evolution within the plot. Kath is a brave, yet flawed woman, determined to face the rigours of the world whilst living with a degenerative disease that constantly undermines her and as such, Kath's illness is one part of the intricate fabric that makes up the story.

A sound and well written tale that will keep you wanting to turn the pages to find out exactly what happens.

Give me truth



by Bill Condon
Woolshed Press
ISBN: 9781741663310

This novel all too well reflects modern day marriage, family, life, love and separation. Written for the teenage reader, this novel comprises two stories that overlap. It is sad to think that so many young readers will be able to identify with this story about the breakdown of marriage and family.

Caitlin's mother has just found out that her husband has been having an affair. Caitlin tries to comfort her and is willing to keep quiet for the sake of her younger brother. But she has trouble talking to her father, and feels the whole family is about to erupt. David's family has had a major argument ending with David being hit by his father. His mother and the two children leave the house and move in with their grandmother.

David feels he wants to talk to his father but his mother is adamant that he does not see him.

The two stories of Caitlin and David intersect when both teens and their friends audition for a school play. Both the protagonists are angry with their parents but have to hold some sort of secret within themselves while outwardly behaving normally. It puts an incredible strain on their friendships and time spent at school.

Caitlin and David have much in common. They're the same age, they go to the same school, they're both in the school play. And each of them is watching their family fall apart. It's a violent situation, but violence isn't always physical. Caitlin and David are in it together, but separate. And somewhere, somehow, inevitably, it all has to come to a head

There is no doubt that Condon cleverly contrasts the two situations: Caitlin's where her parents are reasonably controlled and civil, David's where his parents are antagonistic and the father is out of control. The reader can see for themselves the choices being made by each family in a situation not conducive to making informed and reasonable decisions.

It is at times a scary read, but adolescent readers will see themselves and/or many of their friends in this story.

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Dealing with natural disasters in libraries

edited by William Miller and Rita M. Pellen
Haworth Information Press
ISBN: 978-0-7890-3610-0

Co-published as *Public Library Quarterly*, Volume 25, Nos. 3/4 2006.

This volume provides a comprehensive overview of the effects that natural disasters have on libraries, and the action that has been taken in particular cases to rebuild and restore libraries and their collections. An interesting selection of academic articles provide practical advice for dealing with mould, fire, floods, and the complete destruction of catastrophic disasters such as Hurricane Katrina.

The lessons learnt from these libraries emphasise the importance of disaster planning, and highlight the key factors to consider. The case studies provide value to those studying in emergency management, highlighting some of the key points to consider in preparing for, responding to and recovering from disasters in libraries. An extensive reading list provides a solid starting point for further research. Overall, this is a particularly useful reference for librarians with an interest in preparing their library for disaster.

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A Kind of Vanishing

by Lesley Thomson

This is a spellbinding mystery of obsession and guilt. It is also the poignant story of what happens to those who are left behind when a child vanishes without trace.

www.spinifexpress.com.au

