



Psychologists for Peace

# ***CHILDREN'S PEACE LITERATURE AWARDS***

*Psychologists for Peace (PFP) encourage the study of issues related to the promotion of peace and prevention of war, and advocate the use of peaceful rather than violent methods for the resolution of conflict. We believe that peace is possible through the application of alternative methods of conflict resolution, whether the conflict be at an international level or interpersonal level. Everything we do to encourage others to believe non-violent solutions are possible and to actively express their concerns helps to bring about changes that will ripple through all levels of society. By working together with understanding, we can all help make peace possible.*

PFP wishes to recognize authors who promote the peaceful resolution of conflict through their work. As our children live in an increasingly threatened world, it is important to present them with constructive alternatives to violence and hostility. We believe that literature has a significant influence on children's attitudes and behaviour. Therefore, we wish to support and encourage authors whose work promotes peace and the understanding of others.

The goal of this biennial Award is to promote the peaceful resolution of conflict by recognising and encouraging Australian authors of children's books with that theme.

**This award is coordinated by Members of the South Australian PFP Group.**

Past winners include:

- 1987: Gillian Rubinstein for Space Demons\*
- 1989: Victor Kelleher for The Makers
- 1991: Libby Gleeson for Dodger\*
- 1993: Isobelle Carmody for The Gathering and  
1993: Bob Graham for Rose Meets Mr. Wintergarten\*
- 1995: Brian Caswell for Deucalion\*
- 1997: James Moloney for A Bridge to Wiseman's Cove
- 1999: Phillip Gwynne for Deadly Unna?
- 2001: James Moloney for Touch me
- 2003: Irini Savvides for Sky Legs,
- 2005: Kirsten Murphy for The King of Whatever
- 2007: Michael Gerard Bauer for Don't Call Me Ishmael
- 2009: Christine Harris for Audrey Goes To Town, and  
2009: Kate Constable for Winter of Grace

\*Denotes books for which PPOWP has written discussion ideas for teachers and parents. These are included at the end of this document.

## 2009 WINNERS

### **Audrey goes to town by Christine Harris (Little Hare Books)**

Audrey and her family temporarily relocate to Beltana when Audrey's mother is expecting another baby. They board with Mrs. Patterson, known locally as Patterson's Curse (a noxious weed). She is a prickly woman who has strict rules and a list of dos and don'ts for the children. When Audrey's mother is taken suddenly to hospital, Mrs. Patterson declares that Audrey has become her "project". She wants to ensure that Audrey learns good manners, how to knit and how to behave like a lady. However she does not anticipate Audrey's perceptive response, "And you're mine. I'm looking for your good side."

A situation which could have developed into unpleasantness is slowly changed by Audrey's beguilingly honest, direct, humorous and compassionate approach to her carer. Audrey makes an effort to please. She is kind and thoughtful but does not allow herself to become a victim. Audrey acknowledges Mrs. Patterson's kind gestures and is prompt to express her gratitude. Indeed warmth and generosity are modeled by the Beltana community. Audrey's perseverance is rewarded when she realizes that Mrs. Patterson's grimness is mainly due to the sorrows she has experienced in her life. Mutual trust and appreciation develop. As Audrey says, "At first it was hard to find things on your good side. But then it got easier. You've got one, all right".

### **Winter of Grace by Kate Constable (Allen & Unwin)**

This book deals with the unusual but important theme of the role of religious affiliations for young people trying to understand the world and human relationships. Readers are gripped by an engaging story about two Year 11 girls who keep us intrigued with action and controversy and what might happen next.

The main character Bridie is searching for a set of beliefs or ideas to make sense of life. Her encounter with Christian fundamentalism brings her into conflict with her mother and her best friend Stella, who each have reasons for rejecting organised religion. A variety of religious beliefs is portrayed, and Bridie's quest is not over by the end of the book. The underlying message is that people with different religious beliefs including atheism can all be sincere seekers after truth and an honorable code of behaviour. Bridie comes to realise she needs to think and explore for herself. Her reconciliation with Stella is based on recognising that friendship and trust allow people to disagree about religious beliefs without damaging their relationship. The model of respect for diverse belief systems and their adherents is a timely one in our age.

## SHORT LIST

### **Cassie by Barry Jonsberg – (Allen & Unwin - Girlfriend Fiction)**

Life is not fair for Holly Holley. As if her name wasn't enough to cope with, she is displaced from her comfortable bedroom to a small, unpleasant, smelly spare room to make way for the arrival of her cousin Cassie who has cerebral palsy and needs the space of the bigger room. Cassie's parents have separated and Cassie and her mum, Aunt Fern, are coming to stay with Holly and her mother, Ivy. Holly is in love with Raph McDonald who hardly acknowledges her existence and she is desperate for acceptance by Demi Larson, the coolest girl in her school. Holly has much to deal with.

The story is told in a diary format and at various times from the perspective of all the main characters. The viewpoints are very realistic for teenagers and are raised with compassion and empathy. The conflicts as they occur for Holly are mostly related to her relationships with Ivy and Cassie but she is also confronted with decisions around shoplifting, wagging school, rejection, friendship, peer group pressure, trust and the self-deprecation that is familiar to many young teenagers.

Holly deals with conflict with sensitivity, humour and a sophistication that grows as do Holly's understanding and acceptance of what constitute honest and meaningful relationships. A well written book that will appeal to Upper Primary and Lower Secondary readers.

### **Finding Darcy by Sue Lawson (Black Dog Books)**

When her mother travels to the city for further study, Darcy is dislocated from her comfortable life and has to persevere through bullying, racism and family secrets whilst staying with her grandmother and great grandmother.

Darcy must research the war experience of her great grandfather for her high school project but her family refuse to talk about anything to do with the war. Because of the unusual circumstances of her great grandfather's death as a prisoner of war on the Japanese ship Montevideo Maru her mother, grandmother and great grandmother insist on silence. The situation is compounded by the fact that Darcy's best friend, Laura Tanaka, is researching her great-grandfather who is Japanese.

With the support of friends, her uncle and her great grandmother, Darcy's research promotes the non-violent resolution of conflict caused by secrets and mystery and the easing of major tensions that have been in the family for four generations. Finally the long-lasting impact of war is acknowledged and understood.

### **Ishmael and the Return of the Dugongs by Michael G Bauer (Omnibus)**

This sequel to the 2007 Children's Peace Literature Award winner Don't Call Me Ishmael continues to model effective and non-violent ways of dealing with conflict, including bullying and all the painful misunderstandings that can occur between emotionally awkward and vulnerable boys and the equally tentative girls they so desperately want to attract.

Ishmael Leseur and his friends at St Daniel's Boys College have graduated to Year 10 where the beautiful Miss Tarango is bravely introducing them to poetry. Ishmael is working seriously on his accident-prone relationship with Kelly Faulkner, discovers the positive results of responding to bully Barry Bagsley's aggression with humanity and is instrumental in getting his depressed father's old band together for a rousing anniversary performance. The characters, including the adults, are drawn with admirable depth and affection, the repartee is as clever and witty as in the first book and the embarrassments are nearly, if not quite as cringe-makingly hilarious.

### **Josie and the Michael Street Gang by Penni Russon (Puffin - Aussie Chomps - Penguin Group)**

Moving house is a stressful experience as 11 year old Josie discovers. Not only must she leave behind her best friend from primary school, but she also faces the problem of making friends in the new suburb where she will be starting high school, a challenge in itself. To her surprise she finds that Becca, the girl whose bedroom she now occupies, has left a 'treasure map' which provides her with information about life in Michael Street. Following the clues and finding the treasure helps her to overcome the grief of leaving Ellerslie and find some new friends, while looking forward to the future in Preston Heights. Importantly it helps her to build a bridge with Ella, a prickly neighbour who is sad that Becca, her best friend has moved away. The peaceful resolution is achieved through an understanding family, frank speech, acknowledgement of the grief process and the creative action of the girl who has moved away.

### **Pearl Barley and Charlie Parsley by Aaron Blabey (Puffin Books, Penguin Group)**

*FPF is an Interest Group of the Australian Psychological Society - working to promote peace in the world and prevent conflict through psychological research, education and advocacy. <http://www.groups.psychology.org.au>.*

Pearl Barley is loud and brash. Charlie Parsley is quiet and shy. They are very different in all manner of ways but despite this they support each other in difficult situations and are the best of friends.

This delightful early childhood picture book contains no conflict but demonstrates how drawing on natural skills and qualities with goodwill and in cooperation with and concern for another person can produce concord and harmonious relationships. A wonderful model for young children.

### **2007 WINNER:**

#### **Don't Call Me Ishmael by Michael Gerard Bauer (Omnibus)**

Ishmael Leseur's parents had a sense of humour when they named him after the hero in the famous novel Moby Dick. Now 14 years old and in Year Nine, Ishmael is one of the targets for the class bully, Barry Bagsley and his followers, not least because of his name. When their new home class teacher, the young and beautiful Miss Tarango is able to give Barry back as good as he has given, Barry increases his torment of Ishmael. Except for one notable exception, Ishmael's response is to keep out of the way or simply to suffer the torture in silence.

Things change when new boy James Scoby comes to school and Ishmael is asked to look after him, a difficult task for Ishmael as Scoby's unusual behaviour and physical characteristics make him a prime target for harassment. Scoby, however, is made of tougher stuff and is able to counteract Barry's taunting and bullying. Led by Scoby, Ishmael reluctantly finds himself part of a debating team made up of a group of fellow misfits. Together they experience both spectacular but hilarious failure as well as great success and as a result Ishmael has the opportunity to give Barry a taste of his own medicine. The choice Ishmael makes is a win for both of them.

This novel about the challenges, embarrassments, friendships and exploits of young adolescent boys is written with great skill, humour and appeal. It shows the importance of sticking up for your mates and that serious conflict can be resolved by brain power, thoughtfulness and sensitivity to the position of others rather than through revenge.

### **SHORT LIST**

#### **The Goldseekers by Greg Bastian (Angus & Robertson)**

All nine year old Miju and her thirteen year old brother Kai dream about is making enough money on the goldfields of New South Wales in the 1850's to be able to return home to their village in China. They were brought to Australia against their will and they must save enough money for their passage home.

Sam, who is eleven, and his dad, Bill, are also trying to make their fortune on the goldfields to get the medical attention Sam's sick mother needs. Sam befriends Miju and Kai and tries to show his father that they are good people.

On the night Miju invites them for dinner at their campsite they all experience the violence and racial conflict of a group of drunken men against the Chinese. Kai and Miju are forced to hide in a cave in the hills for their own safety and Kai's distrust of Europeans increases. But not all people on the goldfields hate the Chinese and it is through the perseverance of Sam's friendship and the luck the little dog Ah-poo brings that they all find out what really matters in life.

The Children's Peace Literature Prize promotes the resolution of conflict by peaceful means and The Goldseekers demonstrates how this is possible in a way that also builds racial understanding and respect in a book for primary aged students.

### **The Story of Tom Brennan by JC Burke (Random House)**

Following an angry drunken night Tom's older brother, Daniel, crashes his car leaving two friends dead and his cousin paralysed. The small town in which they live is angry, and the family is forced to move in with Tom's grandmother in another town some distance away. The impact of the crash is far reaching and ongoing.

The journey for Tom and his family is a hard one. There are relationships and conflicts to be dealt with on many fronts. Through rugby and the support of his uncle, Tom (and his family) slowly rebuild their lives.

This is a powerful novel for older adolescents and young adults that illustrates the widespread impact that one unthinking act can have on the lives of many. The novel fits the theme of the Children's Peace Literature Award as all the characters learn to deal with their inner conflicts, and the impact that has on resolving the conflicts in their relationships.

### **One Whole And Perfect Day by Judith Clarke (Allen & Unwin)**

Sixteen-year-old Lily Sansom sees her family as thoroughly dysfunctional. There's her grandfather, bristly, outspoken Pop, who threatens his grandson with an axe because he thinks Lonnie is not knuckling down to life, her sweet grandmother May who is in the habit of talking aloud to an invisible friend, and her psychologist mother Marigold, who works in a daycare centre for the elderly and is in the habit of bringing even dementia patients home so that their carers can have a break.

Lily is tired of being the sensible one in the family, the reliable daughter who cooks and cleans and does well at school, and she's tired of family gatherings that end in storms from Pop, or waywardness from older brother Lonnie. She longs for the family to have just one whole and perfect day when nothing goes wrong, and decides that it should coincide with the 80th birthday party May is planning for Pop.

The conflict in this delightful young adult novel is interpersonal, intergenerational and interracial, and Clarke shows how such conflicts can be defused by empathetically imagining oneself in another person's shoes and by listening carefully to what people are actually saying – including oneself.

### **Born to Bake by Phillip Gwynne (Penguin – Aussie Bites)**

Rick Bickworth is in Year Six at Cobdolla Primary School and is rated by everyone, including himself, as 'average'. One day he finds he has a definite talent for baking cakes. His mother also prides herself on her baking ability, only her cakes are rated second-best at the local Agricultural show. When one of Rick's cakes is secretly entered into the competition by a friend, and beats his mother's entry to win first prize, Rick is astounded and his mother devastated.

This story, suitable for years 2 to 3 at Primary school, is told with humour and sensitivity. It explores issues of self-esteem and assertiveness in children. The conflict between Rick and his mother is resolved by them assisting each other to bake a cake for the state final of the competition.

The resolution of conflict by peaceful means-cooperation, respect and mutual support-fits the theme of the Children's Peace Literature Award.

### **Lost Property by James Maloney (Penguin)**

Lost Property tells the story of 17 year old Josh and the family's relationship with his estranged brother, Michael who left the family home two years ago and has not returned since. Josh works at the Lost Property office at the main city railway station during the school holidays.

A surprise event at the Lost Property Office leads Josh on a quest to locate Michael. This journey for Josh is not without its risks and set-backs but ultimately leads Josh to a reunion with his brother.

The novel is well written, humorous and passionate, and explores the issues between the family members with integrity and humility. The range of emotion from the mother's anxiety to Michael's need for separateness and particularly to Josh's desire to resolve the family conflict is all dealt with realistically.

This novel fits the theme of the Children's Peace Literature Award with its specific focus on the protagonist making his own decisions in order to effectively manage the conflict. In a sense, it's a rite of passage for 17 year-old Josh with some of his choices not necessarily being the most productive but with outcomes that are relevant at the time.

### **The Worry Tree by Marianne Musgrove (Random House)**

Sensible and sensitive Juliet is stressed about many aspects of her family and school life. Sharing a room with her little sister, Oaf, brings its problems. Her two best friends compete for her friendship, grandmother is bored and mother is frustrated by father's junk always cluttering the house. Nothing seems to be easily solved and Juliet is confirmed as 'Worrywart'.

When Juliet is relocated to her father's study as a way of helping to relieve some of the family tensions, she discovers an old mural which her grandmother calls the Worry Tree. "You hang your worries on the tree each night so they don't keep you awake". Nana explains to Juliet. This simple and pleasurable strategy provides a focus for Juliet to acknowledge her individual worries and focus on discovering positive and creative solutions.

The novel is fresh, lively and humorously written. It focuses on a loving family which although confronted with the usual tensions of daily life, is prepared to work together to seek positive outcomes for all. It is a most suitable book for middle primary years

### **2005 WINNER:**

#### **The King of Whatever**

Kirsten Murphy Penguin Books Young Adult Fiction

Intrapersonal— and interpersonal—conflicts are resolved in a variety of peaceful ways as interactions between the characters drive the story about finding your own worth in your family and friendship groups. Their humanity, sense of humour and warmth draw you into their world for the duration of the book and beyond.

17-year old Joe King is a master of under-achievement in all areas of his life despite the fact that he is talented. Feeling overshadowed at home by his older brother studying medicine and at school by his best friend and school captain, has not helped his self image. Nevertheless when life takes some unexpected twists, Joe is forced to make decisions and face his demons, finally demonstrating his inner personal strengths.

### **SHORT LIST**

#### **Being Bindy**

Alyssa Brugman Allen & Unwin

This story keeps you turning the pages to find out how the situations are resolved. Bindy has just started high school. She needs to find how to cope with the break-up from her best friend, who then makes life very difficult for her at school, her

parents' separation, and coming to terms with her new family relationships. Bindy develops understanding for others and importantly, awareness that she needs to value herself.

### **Catland**

Ruth Starke A Puffin Book

A delightful and very realistic account of a girl's first holiday with her dad's new partner and her family which forms one part of the conflict resolution. Rose helps resolve some neighbourhood conflict: she gets to know their next door neighbour and brings her stepmother to a better understanding of other people. The story is well suited to young readers in mid— to upper—primary.

### **The Ballad of Cauldron Bay**

Elizabeth Honey **Allen & Unwin**

This family holiday story features believable characters and relationships. Henni, a 13-year-old girl becoming adolescent, and her family and friends are in a holiday house at the beach. They are asked to have Tara, who they don't know, to come and stay. She changes the dynamics of the happy group. Conflict smoulders between Henni and Tara and is resolved through their own efforts. Both poetry and illustrations create atmosphere.

### **The Spare Room**

Kathryn Lomer UQP Young Adult Fiction

This tender, haunting tale takes the reader on a journey of discovery into two cultures. Akira has been sent by his family in Japan to learn English in Hobart, a journey into a new world. His homestay family is not what he was expecting. It is a journey into belonging, understanding and empowerment of people whose lives are connected by grief and uncertainty but who have hope in common. The device of writing in the first person, allows Australian customs to be depicted through fresh eyes. This allows positive and negative features of the Australian culture to be considered. Akira becomes a catalyst after finding a new sense of freedom for himself and an understanding of his own grief and that of his homestay family.

## **2003 WINNER:**

### **Sky Legs**

Irini Savvides Hodder Headline Australia

This is an engaging story of how Eleni responds to the challenge presented by her family's relocation from inner Sydney to the Blue Mountains during her final years of schooling. We meet Eleni first in a school for clowns in Byron Bay. We learn that she responds to landscape, writes haiku, enjoys the company of friends, and that she is talented. At her new school, her background and abilities do not attract other students to her. She says "I am that deadly combination. Different, new – and good at something." Eleni finds her inner clown, learns to 'walk on clouds' and challenges the fear that perpetuates intolerance. Sky Legs is most suited to older teenagers and young adults.

## **SHORT LIST**

### **Dark Wind Blowing** by Jackie French (Angus & Robertson)

This book is full of suspense. When everyone has been invited to a birthday party except one boy in a class, a tense situation provides an opportunity for the community to act cooperatively and assertively.

### **Tom Jones Saves the World** by Steven Herrick (University of Queensland Press)

Written in Herrick's trademark spare, effective, easy-to-read verse, this entertaining primary school novel follows the developing friendship between a young boy and girl as they work out creative and ingenious ways to bring about a family reconciliation and gently nudge a father into relaxation and trust.

### **Two Weeks in Grade Six** by Anna and Mary K Pershall (Puffin)

Kaitlin has been accepted because of her friendship with the popular Shelley. When she is allocated to a new table group with the school's top five 'losers', she finds herself vulnerable. With the wise help of her visiting English grandmother, Kaitlin emerges from the experience a stronger person, ready to face the even greater challenges of life in secondary school.

#### **2001 WINNER:**

**Touch me** by James Moloney (University of Queensland Press).

A moving novel about young love and young death. Xavier comes to appreciate friendship, and to suspect the 'win at all costs' principles of his rugby coach

#### **HIGHLY COMMENDED:**

**The simple gift** by Steven Herrick (University of Queensland Press).

A verse novel about Billy the runaway, Old Bill the hobo, and Caitlin the rich kid who mops at MacDonaldis; a story of love, friendship and survival.

#### **SHORT LIST**

**I am Jack** by Suzanne Gervay, illustrated by Cathy Wilcox (Harper Collins).

Jack has problems with bullying at school, but has many helpers together with his own sense of humour and coping skills.

**Bossy big boots' blister** by Wayne Gilholm, illustrated by Lisa Coutts (Macmillan Education Australia).

Jemima is bossy especially to her two friends. They argue over who will wear Cinderella's shoes, but later become friends again.

**Omega** by Christine Harris (Random House).

Adventure, meetings with alien minds and attempts to find negotiated solutions, in a post-nuclear future.

**Something's fishy Hazel Green** by Odo Hirsch, illustrated by Andrew McLean (Allen & Unwin).

A Hazel Green detective story: Who stole the giant lobsters, and why?

**The frog family** by Pamela Rushby, illustrated by Elizabeth Alger (Rigby).

A step-family and a green frog!

#### **Other Recommended Books**

**Butterflies** by Suzanne Gervay (Harper Collins).

Katherine who is almost eighteen, was severely burnt at three years of age. She refuses to be a victim and struggles for her own identity and independence.

**Dolphins dance** by Jutta Goetze (Black Dog Books).

Told by Ali about her brother Max who is autistic. The family copes, with the help of several people and some friendly dolphins. A thoughtful book.

**I don't want to go to school** by Christine Harris, illustrated by Craig Smith (Random House Australia).

A delightful picture book about two children confronting their fear of going to school.

**Mahalia** by Joanne Horniman (Allen & Unwin).

Matt is seventeen and raising his baby as a single parent. He is unemployed and often lonely, but has good friends of both sexes. The story is told with realism and with moments of joy and of despair.

## 1999 WINNER:

**Deadly Unna?** by Phillip Gwynne. (Penguin Books).

Gary struggles against in-grained racist attitudes in the local population. With dry humour, he paints himself as a coward on the football field, but shows strength of character in facing up to the more abstract challenges off the field and away from the safety zone of the country football culture.

## SHORT LIST

**Sink or Swim** by Ron Bunney. (Fremantle Arts Centre Press).

Earl, a cray fisherman takes Bazza under his wing, giving him on-the-job training as a deck-hand. On the way, he also teaches Bazza life skills, presenting him with positive examples of successfully dealing with interpersonal conflict.

**The Biography of Gilbert Alexander Pig** by Gael Cresp & David Cox. (Benchmark Publications Management).

A slightly zany picture book story based on "the three little pigs". The resolution of conflict makes use of some catchy language that might encourage some constructive behaviour in real-life situations.

**Soldier on the Hill** by Jackie French. (Angus & Robertson - HarperCollins).

A Japanese soldier is in hiding in the Australian landscape. Individuals whose countries are at war with each other show that it is possible to rise above the situation and give help where it is needed.

**More than a Game** by Peter McFarlane. (Penguin Books).

An AFL football team has Tammy's wholehearted support. Tammy struggles with teasing, bullying, harrassment, competition from her peers, and family pressures. Experience with Tammy, some of her growth as a result of dealing successfully with these challenges.

## Other Recommended Books

**Leaves for Mr. Walter** by Janeen Brian and David Cox (Margaret Hamilton Books).

An attractively illustrated book for the younger audience about potential conflict between neighbours. The quiet persistence and a positive attitude of a child stops the conflict from developing and there is a better outcome for both parties.

**Hazel Green** by Odo Hirsch. (Allen & Unwin).

The quirky Hazel Green is no angel but she is likeable. Hazel goes to considerable effort, as she tries to reach a satisfactory resolution of a conflict that was not really of her own making.

**Buzzard Breath and Brains** by James Moloney. (University of Queensland Press).

There is a conflict and bullying theme throughout this book. Various attempts and efforts are made to resolve conflict.

**Homestrung** by Helen McKerral. (Hyland House Publishing).

A girl struggles with the adjustments she is forced to make after her mother dies. She is confronted with both personal and interpersonal conflicts, but is supported by a loyal friend.

**Too Much to Ask For** by Katherine Pershall and Mary K. Pershall (Puffin Books).

On the theme of changing friendships and conflict between schoolgirls, this book is relatively easy to read. It may suit children in the middle primary years, a time when their friendships and relationships can be particularly challenging.

## 1997 WINNER

**A Bridge to Wiseman's Cove** by James Moloney (UQP).

At fifteen Carl finds himself responsible for his wayward younger brother, and struggling to earn respect both for himself and from a community which scorns his family. The plot is strong and the writing compelling, with excellent characterizations. Resilience and forgiveness are shown by different characters and the ending is both believable and optimistic.

## SHORT LIST

**Surfing Mr Petrovic** by Colin Bowles (Penguin Aust.)

A highly commended and appealing story for primary-school aged children. Three mischievous boys cruelly harass an elderly European man, then it gets out of control. Tao tells how he gets into more and more trouble both at school and with his family, partly through not wanting to feel left out. However he comes to understand Mr Petrovic, and makes amends with his father and his mother's new partner too.

**Asturias** by Brian Caswell (UQP).

A moving and complex story for older children, about the members of a band who are threatened by conflicts amongst themselves and also between themselves and commercial interests. They keep their integrity through courage, their supportiveness towards each other, and their ability to learn from the lessons of the past.

**Through the Witch's Window** by Caroline Macdonald (Penguin Aust.).

Four children whose lives have been dislocated by their parents' search for work meet Rose Tattoo, an eccentric artist. Should they regard her as a witch, and whether they do or not, how should they treat her? A subtle and tightly-written story for primary schoolers.

## Other Recommended Books

**Last Refuge** by Dianne Bates (Hodder Headline Aust.).

Clearly portrays the damaging effects of domestic violence on the victims' self-confidence and all the family relationships, with a positive eventual outcome.

**Only the Heart** by Brian Caswell & David Phu An Chiem (UQP).

A story about refugees from Vietnam and their efforts to make a new life, which shows the importance of not giving up hope.

**Favourite Live Thing** by Jean Chapman (UQP).

Suitable for middle-primary school children, the story concerns how positive acts and cooperation towards a common goal can break down antagonism.

**Trivia Man** by Laurine Croasdale (UQP).

A bullied boy shares his isolation with another, until his talent for quiz games and forward planning brings a positive solution.

**Angel** by Phil Cummings (Random House).

Very real family members try to deal with their grief over a son's death, until his re-appearance fresh from angel school helps them learn to survive life without his presence.

**The Apostle Bird** by Garry Disher (Hodder Headline Aust.).

Set in the time of the Great Depression, there are conflicts in a gold-mining community between ethnic and social groups, which Neil has some part in resolving.

**Summerland** by Jackie French (Harper Collins).

A girl has developed a fantasy alternative world as a way of coping, as some children do, and the story tells how she learns to face things and take the initiative in order to save herself and others.

**Streetwise** by John Maddocks (UQP).

Tom is learning to deal with his parents separating and with the unexpected discovery of having being adopted. He must adjust to a less protective environment and take new responsibilities for his life.

**Soula the Ruler** by Peter McFarlane (Harper Collins).

The recognizable bullying of a teacher by her class leads to her breakdown, and her replacement looks set for a similar fate before Soula steps in to take charge. By involving everybody she succeeds in bringing fame to the class as well as in helping their former teacher.

**Johnny Hart's Heroes** by David Metzthen (Penguin Aust.)

Endurance, tolerance of social differences and the power of friendship help a diverse group of people who go droving, saving their sheep and also gaining publicity for the strengths and plight of country people affected by drought.

**Mr Biffy's Battles** by Richard Tulloch (Penguin Aust.)

Two clowns come to realize the benefits of cooperation. Great illustrations extend the text and there is plenty of appropriately slapstick humour.

#### \* DISCUSSION IDEAS FOR TEACHERS AND PARENTS

**ROSE MEETS MR WINTERGARTEN** by Bob Graham (Puffin)

A delightful picture book for 2 to 7 year olds. This simple story tells how Rose's family – the Summers – move next door to the dark house of the frightening Mr Wintergarten. By personal contact and fairy cakes Rose wins Mr Wintergarten over. The beautiful illustrations are an integral part of this happy book.

1. Does Rose believe the evil tales told about Mr Wintergarten?
2. Is it a good idea to be nice to everyone?
3. Did it make a difference to Mr Wintergarten that Rose gave him a present?
4. Why do you think this book won a prize?

**DODGER** by Libby Gleeson (Turner & Chambers – 1990)

A novel for late primary/early secondary school years. This book relates the story of an adolescent boy at high school who struggles with a range of issues including: his mother's death, his acceptance of the need for his truck-driving father to be away a lot, his reputation with some teachers (and the sports teacher in particular), personal doubts, and trying to accept and respond to the positive expectations of a new teacher to the school. The story is told through an oscillation between narrative and the new teacher's letters to her friend (a fellow beginning teacher). Mick is cast as Dodger in the play "Oliver", although he is not sure he wants to take the part. Mick learns to deal with the conflicts both within himself and with the others in his world. And the teacher also does some growing up.

1. What are the conflicts and what is the range of emotions that Mick goes through, and how does he deal with them?
2. How do you think Mick felt after the play was finished? Why?
3. What was the critical difference that helped Mick in this story?
4. What difference do you think Mick's struggles will make for him in the future?
5. What elements of this book do you think the judges identified to award the prize?

## **DEUCALION** by Brian Caswell (UQP)

A science fiction thriller for High School Students. This thought provoking story has overtones of the colonization of Australia. Deucalion is a planet that is light years from earth but by 2200 space travel is sophisticated enough for it to be populated as it has a similar climate to earth. However there is already life on Deucalion – the Elokoi who are regarded as inferior to humans even though they possess empathic qualities the earthlings lack. The Elokoi are treated very badly particularly in the first years of settlement and are placed on reserves. Deucalion is very rich in mineral reserves that are being exploited for the benefit of Corporations on Earth. Jane, Denny, Eleni and Daryl are caught up in the political and economic machinations of powerful forces which, with help from the Elokoi they manage to overcome.

### Questions:

1. What do you most admire about the Elokoi?
2. Why didn't Jane like her previous self?
3. Do you think the principles of non violent protest apply to all situations?
4. Do you think this book deserved a Peace prize?

## **SPACE DEMONS** – Gillian Rubinstein, (1986). .

This book will appeal to 12-16 year olds.

### **The main themes:**

- Computer games/isolation and competitiveness
- Peer pressure
- The power and seductiveness of guns and violence
- The different worlds of parents and teenagers
- Acknowledging the dark side of human nature, but promoting the positive side as a higher level of functioning

Questions about the book to stimulate discussion and thought about non-violent conflict resolution.

- Do we have choices in how to respond or are there situations where there is no choice but to engage in violence?
- If there are choices, are the answers always clear whether to take a violent path or a non-violent path?
- What was the most exciting part of the book? If it was during some of the violent parts, what does this mean for our awareness of what is stimulating and the choices we make?
- There seemed to be a big separation between the parents' experiences of what was going on and the experiences of the people playing the game. How could the parents of the people playing the games have shared some of the experiences they were having, without reducing enjoyment of the experience or without reducing learning from the experience.
- What, if anything, does this book say about human nature?
- Were there any parts of the book you found disturbing or frightening? If so, why?
- What age group do you think the book is suited to and why?
- Why do you think the judges selected this book as a good example for the Children's Peace Literature Award? Are there any reasons you can think of that make the book less suitable for such an award? How could it have been improved if it was being written specifically to win such a prize?
- The book was first published in 1986. Do you think it has stood the test of time? Has it been dated by the technology described in the book? Is there anything else which dates the book from your point of view?