RECOMMENDED FOR
Upper primary and lower secondary
(ages 10+; years 5 to 9)

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KEY CURRICULUM AREAS

- **Learning areas:** English; Humanities; HSIE; Geography; Health and Physical Education
- **General capabilities:** Critical and Creative Thinking; Ethical Understanding; Literacy; Personal and Social Capability; Intercultural Understanding
- **Cross-curriculum priorities:** Asia and Australia's engagement with Asia

REASONS FOR STUDYING THIS BOOK

- A story that opens up dialogue about Australia's refugee and asylum seeker situation, human rights, privilege and compassion.
- A fast-paced, thrilling read from the award-winning author of *Two Wolves* and *The Fall*.

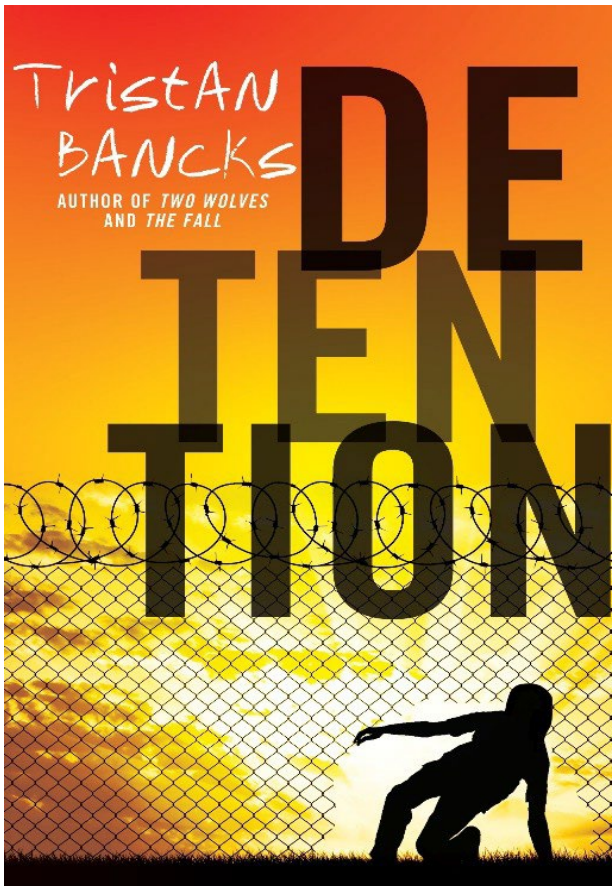
THEMES

- Refugee children and families
- Ethical dilemmas
- Empathy and compassion
- Public resistance and political change
- Resilience and bravery
- Human rights
- Opportunity and privilege

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Detention

Tristan Bancks

PLOT SUMMARY

A daring escape. A school lockdown. A thrilling chase. What would you risk to save a life?

Sima and her family are pressed to the rough, cold ground among fifty others. They lie next to the tall fence designed to keep them in. The wires are cut one by one.

When they make their escape, a guard raises the alarm. Shouting, smoke bombs, people tackled to the ground. In the chaos Sima loses her parents.

Dad told her to run, so she does, hiding in a school and triggering a lockdown. A boy, Dan, finds her hiding in the toilet block.

What should he do? Help her? Dob her in? She's breaking the law, but is it right to lock kids up? And if he helps, should Sima trust him? Or run?

THIS MOMENT, THESE DECISIONS, WILL CHANGE THEIR LIVES.

PRAISE FOR *DETENTION*

'*Detention* is a raw and authentic exploration of human connection. An unlikely union, Dan and Sima are confronted with some life-altering decisions as they are thrown into a very dangerous situation. The novel challenges readers to think about the complexities of a world that deems what is "moral" and what is "legal" as being polar opposites. It is affirming in its representation of a younger generation able to grapple with such contradiction and to stand up for what is right, and leaves readers with a sense of optimism that things might one day change. Tristan's writing is gripping, his characters are all-too-real and his symbolic use of the Australian landscape is a powerful weapon he wields to make his readers look more closely at the world around them.

'In the classroom context, *Detention* is ideal for study in the 12–14–year age range. It has strong ties to the Australian Curriculum and its contemporary themes add a level of connection for both students and staff which will lead to discussion, debate and analysis.'

– **Megan Daley**, Teacher Librarian and author of *Raising Readers*

'Just wow! Once again Tristan has crafted a sensational narrative with high-impact tension and thought-provoking themes which will keep readers eagerly turning pages . . . As the plot unfolds the reader becomes completely invested in the characters that are realised with a deft portraiture which is compelling and emotional without becoming cloying or stereotyped . . . It is certainly clear that one cannot categorise people as simply one thing or another – good or bad, sympathetic or callous, that there are dichotomies in everyone. This viewpoint alone would give rise to much worthwhile and meaningful discussion with young readers.

'Tristan points out that essentially he has written "a human story, rather than a political one" with the ultimate goal of exploring the reactions, observations and actions of those dealing with difficult situations. Despite this there is no doubt that for many readers there will be, like Dan's teacher Miss Aston, opportunity to discuss and debate various aspects of current social conditions.'

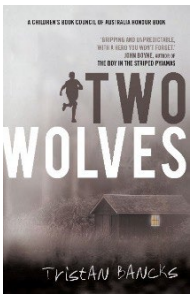
– **Sue Warren**, Teacher Librarian (full review at losangzopa.wordpress.com/2019/06/08/detention-tristan-bancks/)

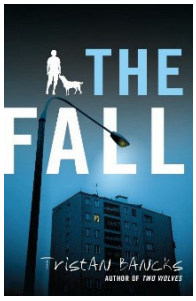
'I was thrilled to read *Detention* in just half a day and I simply loved it! It immediately drew me in and was fast-paced and thought-provoking.'

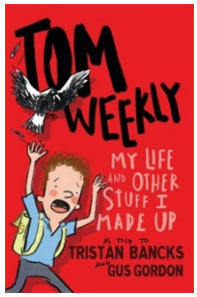
– **Julie Pagliaro**, Head of Libraries, St Kevin's College

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Tristan Bancks is a children's and teen author with a background in acting and filmmaking. His books include the Tom Weekly series, Mac Slater series and crime-mystery novels for middle-graders, including *Two Wolves* (*On the Run* in the US), *The Fall*, *Detention*, *Cop & Robber* and *Scar Town*. *Two Wolves* won Honour Book in the 2015 Children's Book Council of Australia Book of the Year Awards and was shortlisted for the Prime Minister's Literary Awards. *The Fall* was a Notable Book in the 2018 CBCA Book of the Year Awards and was shortlisted for the Adelaide Festival Awards for Literature.

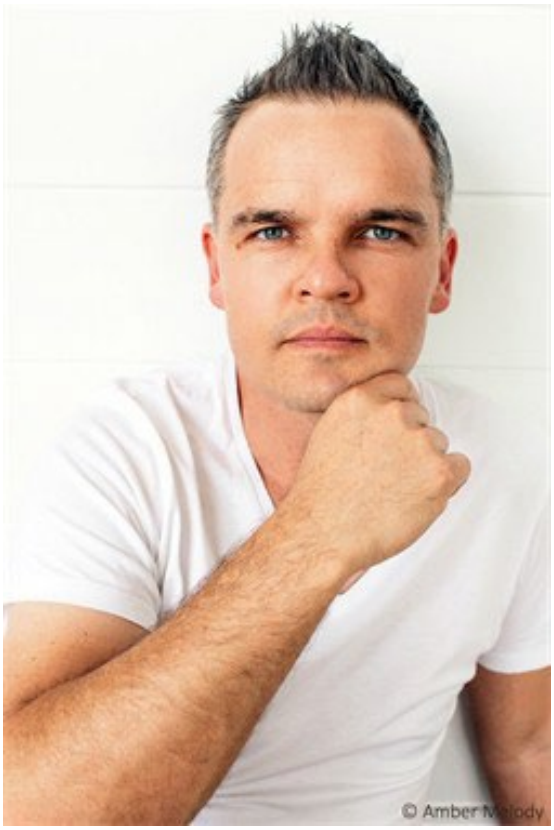






Tristan is currently working with producers to develop several of his books for the screen. He's excited by the future of storytelling and inspiring others to create.

You can connect with him, learn more about his books, play games, watch videos and help him try to change the world at tristanbancks.com.



Q&A WITH THE AUTHOR

What was your inspiration for *Detention*?

Ten years ago I was presenting at a school in Queensland and there was a fire drill right in the middle of my talk (this has happened several times since). We were all evacuated, 1200 kids and maybe 70 staff, to the school oval. While we were there, a few of the teachers and kids told me about lockdown situations they'd been in and I was fascinated. Escaped prisoners, wild animals on the loose, mistaken sightings of suspicious characters on school grounds.

While lockdowns could be scary for kids, I felt that I could write a book about a class being forced to pull together with their teacher in order to overcome whatever it was that caused the lockdown.

One of my favourite books as a teen was Gabrielle Lord's *Fortress* and I love stories that take place in contained spaces. It provides a great challenge for the writer and is a good scenario for suspense and tension.

I thought about this idea for years but I was busy writing *Two Wolves*, *The Fall* and the Tom Weekly books. Then I read a news item where a group of Vietnamese asylum seekers had been forced to head out on the run from community detention in South Australia. And I wondered . . . What if some of those people had to take refuge in a toilet block? And what if the school went into lockdown and one of the students found them? And what if that kid had a choice to either dob them in or help them get away? It seemed like a way I could explore one of the biggest and most pressing issues of our time in a really human and personal way, and I started to explore this idea to see where it would take me. I knew going down this path for the story wasn't going to be easy, and I knew that I didn't want a story featuring refugees and their experiences to feel in any way sensationalised or overstated or stereotyped.

The story was initially told entirely from Dan's point of view, but it just didn't seem right to only show Sima through Dan's eyes. Sima needed a voice, just as much as Dan. She and her story needed to feel real for readers. To achieve this, I needed to know what her experience was from the inside. After coming to this realisation, I spoke to a lot of people and they warned me how much more challenging it would be and that I would really need to do my homework in order to do the character justice and depict what this experience might be like for Sima.

I didn't feel that I had a choice in terms of the story. I needed to know. And it was the best decision I could have made. I had fantastic advisers, people who pushed me to research and explore and understand more deeply what Sima's experience might have been. I may have made mistakes. Some people may question that I wrote an Afghan Hazara girl character and I am not a Hazara girl. My feeling is that the act of writing a character, no matter who they are, is an act of empathy for that character, that person, and I want my books to be populated by a broad range of humans, not just people like myself. The challenge, as a writer, is to stay curious, to speak to people, to read and listen and research, to take time to try to understand, and then to write the character as authentically as possible. The lesson that this has taught me is that our similarities as humans are far more powerful than our differences and I think that comes through in the story.

One of the major difficulties I faced in researching the book was trying to navigate all the changes in immigration law. I wanted the story to reflect history, for the timeline to be right, for Sima's story to be possible on the date the story is set. The challenge was that Australia has changed its immigration laws so rapidly from month to month over the past few years that it was very, very difficult to ensure I had everything in order. It gave me a great sense of compassion for the people fleeing war and torture in their homelands and coming to Australia as refugees. It must be incredibly difficult to stay on top of exactly what they have to provide in order to be given refugee status.

(For more information about Sima's background, see **About Sima and her journey** and **Appendix 3** below.)

How did you research Sima's experience?

I read a lot about Afghan Hazara people. One of the most well-known episodes in Australia's history of working with with stateless people was the 'Children Overboard' disaster (See: nma.gov.au/defining-moments/resources/tampa-affair), which involved many Hazaras. The more I learnt about Hazara people, about their resilience, intelligence and ability to survive, the more I knew that I wanted Sima to be Hazara. I read books like Kon Karapanagiotidis's *The Power of Hope* and an extraordinary book called *They Cannot Take the Sky*, stories of detention from people who have lived it and survived. I also watched Ai Wei Wei's film *Human Flow* about the mass movement of stateless people.

Was it difficult to write a character so different to yourself?

The more I read about the Hazara experience, the more conversations I had, the more interested I was and the more moved I was by the stories of these people who were coming to Australia to save their lives and the lives of their families. I started to appreciate my own life more and how lucky I was to be born in a country like Australia in a time of little conflict on our shores.

Writing the story and engaging with these ideas and characters has definitely made me more empathetic to people who have to flee their homes. I have learnt that there are around 70 million displaced people in the world right now. I've learnt about the often dire consequences when people are sent back to the country they have fled from. And I've learnt about the long-term effects of detention on children. These were things that I only had a passing understanding of previously.

So, it was challenging to write Sima but my goal was to write a human story about a boy and a girl in a life-threatening situation. And I came to feel that when people's lives are at stake, the differences between girl and boy, between nationalities and races, become less pronounced and our humanity is more important. I hope that comes through in the story.

There are many people thanked in the acknowledgements of the book. How did those people help shape the story?

Jasmina Bajraktarevic and Hassan Rezayee from STARTTS (NSW Service for the Treatment and Rehabilitation of Torture and Trauma Survivors), were my advisers from very early on. They answered my emails, met with me, and read parts of the book. I asked them questions about Sima's name, her clothing, the timeline of her journey to Australia, the effects of detention on children and many, many other aspects of what her experiences might have been. Their advice was invaluable.

Towards the end of the writing process Sarah Dale, a lawyer from Refugee Advice and Casework Service, and Shukufa Tahiri, a Hazara woman and former refugee who is now a policy officer at the Refugee Council of Australia, read the manuscript and gave me positive feedback and good advice to ensure that I had portrayed Sima's situation accurately.

Where did the character of Dan come from? How much is Dan like you?

Like most of my characters, Dan grew as I drafted the story. The characters are one-dimensional in the first draft and they gain dimensions as I place them in difficult situations and watch what they do. My mother has owned caravan parks and I have always wanted to set a story in that location.

I had seen an *Australian Story* once about a kid growing up alone, without his parents living at home, and he went to great lengths to ensure that his neighbours and teachers did not find out.

In schools I sometimes work with students in low-literacy classes and I meet some pretty inspiring teachers working hard to give kids faith in themselves. These three elements collided to create Dan. He is unlucky in many ways by the standards of middle Australia, but his problems are put into perspective when he meets Sima, who has been locked up and whose life is on the line.

What do you hope readers will get from the novel?

I hope they get an engaging read with characters they care about in a high-pressure situation. I hope they read it as a human story rather than a story where an author decided he wanted to teach them something. For me, story and character always come first. But I hope that, after the reading, it provokes questions and conversations that might lead readers to learn more about kids like Sima and Dan. (See **Top 5 things you could do** on page 13.)

How long did the book take you to write?

The book took me about seven years of thinking and note-taking and two years of writing. As with *Two Wolves* and *The Fall*, I didn't outline the book before I began. I had a sense of where I was heading but I like to write like a reader in the early drafts, to follow my nose and see where the characters take me. Of course this is time-consuming and results in lots of dead ends but it also allows me to uncover gems that I might not have discovered if I outlined from the beginning. I do outline at about third draft stage when I know the characters and story world.



Can you share anything else about the writing process?

When I'm writing a book, I throw out more words than I keep. So I actually write enough scenes and chapters to fill three books. Anything I delete I put into a 'Holding Bay' file, so I never really delete anything. I always have it in that file if I want to go back and retrieve it. But I never do. And the more words that go into the Holding Bay the better I feel. Because it means that the words still in the manuscript have had to work hard to earn their place.

Can you share anything about the drafting process?

Detention started life as a Frankenstein zero draft – part type-written, part Scrivener app, part Notes on phone, part-hand-written.

I wrote a collection of scenes, ones that I felt inspired to write wherever I was and with a variety of tools. I was trying to shake the process of the last book that I had written, so that this one would have its own identity. And I think it worked. I like to think that the book has the pace of *Two Wolves* and *The Fall*, but its own thumbprint, energy and ideas, partly due to that unique approach to the zero draft.

Why do I call it a zero draft? I actually first heard writers Justine Larbalestier and Scott Westerfeld mention the term and I tried it – giving myself the chance to make huge mistakes and try lots of crazy things the first time I wrote the story because it's not even a first draft.



Here's a blog post about zero drafts:

tristanbancks.com/2012/11/the-writers-notebook-2-get-lost.html

You often use images, music, video and other tools to assist the writing process. Was this the case with *Detention*?

Music is very important in creating a mood for writing and the tone of the story. I listened to a lot of Angus and Julia Stone. I couldn't quite work out why this music felt like my story in some way. I think it was the fact that they're a male / female duo and this story is told from the POV of a boy and a girl. Sima and Dan aren't in love just as Angus and Julia aren't in love (they are siblings) but that brother / sisterly affection felt just right for the friendship and trust that blooms between Dan and Sima.

I also loved the mystery of a band called Hang Massive who play an instrument called the Hang, a kind of steel drum. Their music was a great way to get down into the writing day, particularly because the songs I chose have no lyrics and nothing to distract me.

Tash Sultana, Powderfinger, Bon Iver, Bertie Blackman and others also make an appearance on the *Detention* playlist / soundtrack. Here it is (note some songs may contain explicit content):
open.spotify.com/user/bancks/playlist/62Pd5ZxQDfuCaRP7QXWAPS?si=FxIBT3OrR8a_dNOnVeCF8w

BEFORE STUDYING THIS BOOK

Detention offers a means to understand the plight of refugees within a learning context and this in turn generates empathy and understanding.

Before studying this book, it's important to consider whether you may have students with refugee backgrounds in your classroom. You may be aware of the refugee backgrounds of some of your students, but not others. Even students who were born and raised in Australia can still be impacted by the refugee experiences of their parents or other relatives. Some of the themes explored in this book may trigger traumatic responses in these students. Even students without refugee backgrounds may find some of the themes sad or distressing.

There are many things you can do to reduce the chances of students feeling overwhelmed by the text's contents. For suggestions on helping students who may be triggered by a story dealing with ideas around refugees, and more information about how trauma can affect young people, please see **Appendix 1** and **Appendix 2**.

ABOUT SIMA AND HER JOURNEY

One of the two main characters in *Detention*, Sima, is a refugee. She was born in Afghanistan. Her family are Hazara, an ethnic group who have been persecuted and affected by conflict and violence in Afghanistan and Pakistan. Due to the unstable political and economic situation in Afghanistan, many Hazara people have migrated to other countries, including the United States, Canada, Australia and countries in Europe.

You can find the **Timeline** of Sima's journey that Tristan used to inform the story in the Author's Note on pp. 224–227 of *Detention*.

For more information about the historical and current situation for Hazara people in Afghanistan, see **Appendix 3**.

The **Further resources** section also contains links to articles and personal stories of Hazara refugees and their experiences coming to Australia.

What is a refugee?

Teachers can find excellent resources on how to explain the situation of refugees and migrants in the UNHCR's Teachers' Toolkit, which includes: understanding terms such as refugees, migration and asylum; facts and figures; access to media material; and animations and class discussion sheets.

Find more information about the UNHCR Teachers' Toolkit here: unhcr.org/teaching-about-refugees.html

KEY THEMES AND MOTIFS

- Refugee experiences
- Statelessness and belonging
- War and persecution
- Opportunity and privilege
- Ethical dilemmas and choices
- Class
- Diversity
- Public resistance and political change
- Laws and their fairness or unfairness
- Resilience and bravery
- Friendship and family relationships
- Empathy, compassion and acceptance
- Family relationships
- Literacy
- Human rights

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS AND ACTIVITIES

Refugee experiences

- What might some of the experiences be that young people similar to Sima have gone through in places like Afghanistan?
- How do you think these experiences might influence people's ability to settle in Australia?
- How might it specifically impact on their learning and ability to integrate into an Australian school?
- How do you think the experience of immigration detention of young people might impact on their lives after release into the community?
- Do you know of any famous people in Australia who come from refugee backgrounds? What do you take from their specific journeys?
- What is asylum? What does it mean to 'seek asylum'? What is the difference between a refugee and an asylum seeker?
- Find out more about the history of Afghanistan and the conflicts there in recent decades. Why have so many people fled Afghanistan? Where have they sought refuge? What challenges might they have faced in finding safety and a new home?
- What other people have come to Australia as refugees? What world events or wars over the past century contributed to displaced persons needing to find asylum in Australia?
- People living in Australia have diverse backgrounds and lived experiences. How might these compare to the experiences of those fleeing war-torn countries?
- What is the current situation for asylum seekers wishing to resettle in Australia? What are the regulations regarding detention in Australia? Here are some websites where you can find more information:
  refugeecouncil.org.au
  startts.org.au
  asrc.org.au

Ethical dilemmas

- In the book, Dan chose to help Sima. Is it okay to help someone if it means being dishonest? Is it okay to help someone if it means breaking the law?
- What do you think you would have done if you were in Dan's place, deciding whether to help Sima? Would you have done anything differently? Why or why not?
- What do you think you would have done if you were in Sima's place, deciding whether to run? Would you have done anything differently? Why or why not?
- Did the protestors at the start of the novel do the right thing in helping the detainees escape? What would you have done?
- Why do you think Tristan's books always feature an ethical dilemma – such as whether Ben should dob in his parents in *Two Wolves*, or who Sam should tell after witnessing a possible murder in *The Fall*? What do our responses to ethical dilemmas tell us about ourselves? How do our experiences in life shape our responses to ethical dilemmas?
- Tristan puts his characters in time-sensitive situations, but often in our lives we have more time to consider our choices and decisions. What are some strategies we can use to help us make decisions when we face a dilemma? (For instance, talking to a friend or family member or teacher; making a list of pros and cons.)

Laws, public resistance and political change

- Are laws always 'right'? Is it okay to question or take a stand against the law?
- What are the international human rights laws that States are obliged to respect? Research some of the international treaties and agreements on human rights that affect treatment of refugees. For example:

  - Convention on the Rights of the Child
  - 1951 Refugee Convention
  - 1967 Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees
  - Universal Declaration of Human Rights.
  - The Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (OPCAT)
- There are certain refugee conventions that Australia chooses not to follow – what are they?
- Is it legal to shelter immigration fugitives? Research the situation for those who help fugitives.
- What is a bridging visa? Do you think this system is fair? What messages are being told to people who receive a bridging visa?
- Laws can change, reflecting changes in society and government over the years. What laws can you think of that have changed since your grandparents were young or since Australia became a nation in 1901?
- What laws would you change if you were in the government? Why?
- What actions can young people take to help change laws – and to change the world?

Empathy, compassion and emotions

Tristan says, 'As a writer, and just as a person, I'm interested in understanding what it's like for people in very difficult situations. Sima and Dan are two people I wanted to understand. But I think that they each wanted to understand and help one another, too.'

- In what ways do Sima and Dan try to understand and help one another?
- What do Sima and Dan find they have in common? What do they talk about together?
- What do you think Sima is thinking and feeling when she sees Dan giving water to Rosco?
- Why does Dan help Rosco?
- What other examples can you find in the story of characters having empathy for others (or conversely not having empathy)?
- Do our opinions about a group change once we have the opportunity to meet someone in person? Why? For instance, when Sima is confronted by the guard chasing her, she thinks about how he 'once let Sima and Sadia have extra ice-cream after dinner even though he wasn't supposed to' (p. 10). When Dan meets Sima, he thinks, 'She's just a kid, like me' (p. 107). Why do you think Mum changes her mind and decides not to dob Sima in to the police or Border Force? (pp. 176–182) Are there any clues as to her change of mind in the scene where she meets Sima? (pp. 171–175)
- What judgements do people make about others in the story? For instance, consider how Dan thinks those who live in the caravan park are seen by others (pp. 39–40). Find other examples of characters making generalisations or assumptions about another person based on where they live or where they are from.
- The ability to recognise our own emotions and those of others helps us to manage and self-regulate our emotions. Find points in the story where characters are feeling multiple emotions simultaneously and many different thoughts about one thing. What different (and possibly conflicting emotions) are they feeling?
  - For instance, look at the chapters where Dan first finds Rosco, and wants to help but is afraid of the dog biting him (pp. 11–21).
  - What do you think the various 'Reading Superstars' are feeling about being in Miss Aston's class (pp. 38–49)?
  - What different emotions do different characters feel about the school lockdown? How do these emotions change at the beginning of the lockdown, during it, and when it ends?
  - How do Dan's feelings change in the final chapters (from pp. 208 to 218)?
  - What is Sima feeling at the end of the story (pp. 219–222)? Have all of her problems been solved? If not, what is helping her to feel free, and hopeful?

Opportunity and privilege

Thinking about the book through the prism of opportunity and privilege is important in terms of how we fit within a global context. By virtue of being born in Australia, we are privileged and have opportunities that others do not. Opportunity can also reflect a motivational factor for refugees seeking asylum and a new, safe home. Considering the privileges and opportunities we may have compared to others helps us to have empathy for others, and to take into account how our own biases and worldviews may affect our views.

Tristan Bancks says, 'There's an idea I read about a few years ago, "Noblesse Oblige". It's a Latin phrase that suggests that if you are a lucky person with a fortunate life you should try to understand what it's like for other people who might not be so lucky.'

- How can we navigate our privilege, especially when others would like what we have, yet cannot due to circumstance?
- What does privilege look like? What different forms might it take?
- Are the prospects of success mostly determined by chance?
- What are some of the motivations and barriers behind people seeking a better life?
- What should those who have, do about other children like Sima who are otherwise stuck in their countries of origin?

CREATIVE WRITING EXERCISES

Write what you know – but don't stop there

We're often told to write about things with which we're familiar. This is good advice because it helps lend authenticity to a scene and gives the writer some points of reference to build on. So, if you're into netball, you can mine that knowledge and create characters and stories from moments or events in your own life. Likewise, if you're into surfing, or if you ride horses, or if you've travelled overseas.

But what if you're a girl and you want to write from the point of view of a boy? Or what if you want your protagonist to be a pilot and you've never flown a plane? How do writers create characters outside their own experience?

Try this:

Draw a table with three columns.

MY PROTAGONIST	THINGS I KNOW	THINGS I NEED TO FIND OUT

Start with MY PROTAGONIST. Give yourself 2 minutes (no more!) to brainstorm points about your protagonist. Consider things such as gender, age, background, likes, dislikes, quirks, hopes and fears. And be sure to think about what this character wants more than anything else in the world. Once that's done, sit back and look at your list, share it with a partner or small group, and add a couple of details if you want to (but not too many).

Next up is the middle column, THINGS I KNOW. This time you get 3 minutes. List everything you can possibly think of that you already know, and which can help you create your main character. Even things that don't seem linked to your character can be useful later. (For example, you might be into football and your protagonist isn't, but what if their brother or a friend or a parent is?) Also, don't discount the obvious – you might not be a pilot, but you know what it's like to be afraid, so you can research the 'how to fly a plane' aspects for your story but draw on your own experiences of fear or trepidation to create an engaging scene. Once that's done, share it with your partner or group – sharing ideas strengthens and multiplies them.

Now you're up to the final column, THINGS I NEED TO FIND OUT. When he was working on *Detention*, Tristan had to do lots of research – reading books and online material, watching videos, listening to podcasts, meeting people – to write the characters, especially Sima. What kind of information and details might you need to know to write a story from the point of view of your character? Give yourself 3 minutes to come up with your list of research – the actual research will come later.

With your table finished – and then your research complete – have a go at writing a scene for your protagonist. Bring together everything you know about your character, all the bits of your own experience that are relevant, and aspects of the research that will make your writing even more credible. Once you've got a first draft under your belt, read it and ask yourself: does it flow? does my character seem real or am I resorting to stereotypes? can I add or delete things to make my character and scene even better? (Remember, Tristan wrote seven or eight drafts of this book before it looked the way it does now!)

Point of view

Point of view can be a tricky thing to master. Even seasoned writers sometimes struggle with it. These exercises are all about learning how to identify point of view, as well as knowing how to create a story with multiple points of view.

Point of view lets us know who is telling the story. Even when there isn't a narrator, a story will usually be told from the point of view of a certain character. Point of view is important in storytelling because it gives the reader a sense of perspective and informs the way we interpret what's happening in a story. Writers use various tools including person (first person, second person, and third person) to help shape point of view.

Try this:

Write the story only you can write, about something true that has happened to you in your life. Feel free to embellish but aim to keep the core of the story true and to use yourself as the character in your piece (even if you decide to write it in third person).

Focus on refining the point of view in your story. What does the character see, hear, smell, feel, and do as the

scene progresses? All these details reinforce point of view and bring your story to life.

And try this:

Feel like trying your hand at writing a short story that moves from one character's point of view to another's? It can be fun, but it isn't as simple as just switching back and forth. Shifts in point of view can be disconcerting for a reader, so you need to do it carefully and you need to give the reader clues to ensure they know which character's point of view they are in at any given time.

So how do you do this? Firstly, don't shift point of view mid-paragraph. Make sure you give each character at least a couple of paragraphs in their own point of view before switching. Better yet, devote each scene to one character's point of view, and wait for a scene break before switching into the other character's perspective. Think about whose point of view would be most interesting and intriguing to hear in each scene. How can you switch point of view smoothly?

Now see if you can build a story in which two characters are about to meet. They might be strangers or family members or long-lost lovers or whatever – it's up to you. What happens as the meeting gets closer? And what happens when they're finally face to face?

Show don't tell

You've probably heard of 'show don't tell', but what exactly does it mean? Show don't tell is essentially about conveying thoughts and emotions through action – it means having your character *do* something which reveals how they're feeling rather than simply *telling* the reader that a character is sad or afraid or happy. To show what a character is thinking or feeling, it's important to first become a keen observer of human behaviour. Play charades in class and try to guess how the characters portrayed are feeling based on what they're doing. The better you get at deciphering behaviour, the better your writing of character and action will become.

Try this:

Write a scene about a character who is frustrated or elated or terrified. You cannot *name* a single emotion in your piece; you can only *show* how your character is feeling through *action*; that is, through the way they behave and the things they say. Try to make the scene as engaging and credible as possible. Now give it to someone else to read and see if they can identify the character's emotional state, based purely on the way you've depicted them.

The role of setting in story

Writers choose the setting for their story very carefully. This is because the setting needs to engage with the themes of a story. Why do you think Tristan chose to set so much of *Detention* in a school? What does the school context give this story that another context (for example, a shopping centre) would not?

Try this:

Select a short story you've already written and look closely at the setting you chose. Why did you choose it? What does it add to your story? Now have a go at rewriting your story – with the same character and the same basic premise – in a different setting. Perhaps your story was originally set on a farm. Can you set it in the city? Or on an army base? Or in a wilderness park in the middle of a dense rainforest that is a day's drive from the closest town? How does this new setting impact your character and the story as a whole?

Building tension

Tension is part of what drives a story. It's the thing that hooks a reader in the first place and then keeps them turning pages until the end. Tension in a story relies on two things: the first thing is clues; the second thing is timing. In much the same way that a good joke needs a bit of a build-up, a good story requires that the writer drop some clues to pique the interest of the reader, but not give away too much too soon.

Bits of information should ideally be revealed at different stages of a story, but a writer should avoid overloading the reader with too much detail at any stage (and especially at the start) because this can give away the ending. For example, let the reader know your main character is in trouble but don't let them know that everything will be okay in the end, because once you give this away (or even hint at it) the tension in the story disappears.

Try this:

Detention works because Tristan has revealed bits of information only as they became necessary for the story.

Work in small groups to create a timeline of the novel. Select key points in the story (timing) and at each of these key points identify what it is that we've just found out (the clues). This map will show you how Tristan managed to build tension into every chapter of *Detention*.

FURTHER RESOURCES

Videos

- Watch a powerful video featuring Hazara refugee Shukufa Tahiri: theguardian.com/australia-news/series/dear-australia
- *Human Flow*, the documentary film by artist Ai Wei Wei

- STARTTS Schools Program lecture on trauma informed ways of working with schools: startts.org.au/services/children-and-young-people/schools-program/

Tristan has created a series of videos on the writing and research behind *Detention*. These will be useful in the classroom for giving students insight into the writer and the creative process and thinking behind the book. The videos include:

- Book trailer
- How Tristan uses a Vision Board to develop the world of the story
- Creating a book soundtrack and how students can create one for their own story
- Research – the articles, books, movies and advisers that inspired Tristan on the journey of understanding more about the world of *Detention* and its characters

You can find the videos at: tristanbancks.com/2019/03/detention-book-videos.html

You can explore Tristan's other book trailers here and five short Writing Tips For Kids videos here.

Books

- *They Cannot Take the Sky*, edited by André Dao and Michael Green
- *The Power of Hope* by Kon Karapanagiotidis
- *Half the Sky* by Nicholas D Kristoff and Sheryl WuDunn
- *Room on Our Rock* by Kate Temple
- *The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas* by John Boyne
- *Fortress* by Gabrielle Lord
- The Felix books by Morris Gleitzman

Articles, websites and magazines

- 'Najeeba's Story': abc.net.au/news/2012-06-18/najeebas-story/4062186
- Najeeba Wazefadost on Q&A: http://www.abc.net.au/tv/qanda/txt/s3194365.htm
- 'Refugees find hope in classroom despite uncertain future' (an article featuring Hassan Rezayee, one of the key advisers for *Detention*): dailytelegraph.com.au/newslocal/parramatta/refugees-find-hope-in-classroom-despite-uncertain-future/news-story/81f5db6dde05d08b4f61c03e72d65a1f
- 'Day One Stories' (Migrants and refugees tell of their first day in Australia): sbs.com.au/news/storystream/day-one-stories-my-first-day-australia-was-culture-shock
- 'My working week, by Sarah Dale, Refugee Lawyer': tristanbancks.com/2019/06/sarah-dale-refugee-lawyer-adviser-on-detention.html
- Statistics on People in Detention in Australia: refugeecouncil.org.au/detention-australia-statistics/
- 'School's In for Refugees' – a whole-school approach to supporting students and families of refugee background, by Foundation House: foundationhouse.org.au/schools-in-for-refugees/
- STARTTS Schools Liaison Program: startts.org.au/services/children-and-young-people/schools-program/
- startts.org.au/resources/refugee-transitions-magazine/

TOP 5 THINGS YOU COULD DO

Here are Tristan's top 5 things you could do to help and understand more about refugees.

1. **Get the facts.** You could learn more, read more, like I did. Try Googling 'Najeeba's Story' and discover what it's really like to be a child refugee coming to Australia from Afghanistan. Or Google 'What would you take?' for a video on what it might be like to be forced to leave your home. Or check out: refugeecouncil.org.au/get-facts

2. **Give a little.** You could fundraise for refugees or donate a few dollars of pocket money to:
   - Refugee Council of Australia – refugeecouncil.org.au
   - STARTTS – startts.org.au
   - Asylum Seeker Resource Centre – asrc.org.au
   - Refugee Advice & Casework Service – racs.org.au

3. **Speak out.** Maybe you could invite someone with a refugee or migrant background to come and speak in your school and share their story. You could start by contacting the organisations above.

4. **Reach out.** Google 'Refugee Organisation' and the place you live and click through to see how you could volunteer or get involved locally. There are lots of amazing organisations doing big and small things to help.

5. **Read all about it.** Check out Room to Read's amazing list of *35 Children's Books to Read for World Refugee Day*: roomtoread.org/35-children-s-books-to-read-for-world-refugee-day/

APPENDIX 1: TIPS FOR STUDYING MATERIAL WITH POTENTIALLY UPSETTING THEMES

The following material has been provided courtesy of STARTTS.

You may have students with refugee backgrounds in your classroom. You may be aware of the refugee backgrounds of some of your students, but not others. Even students who were born and raised in Australia can still be impacted by the refugee experiences of their parents or other relatives. Some of the themes explored in this book may trigger traumatic responses in these students. Even students without refugee backgrounds may find some of the themes overwhelmingly sad or distressing.

There are many things you can do to reduce the chances of students feeling overwhelmed by the text's contents. If a student is distressed by the themes explored in this book, there are things teachers can do to reduce the severity and duration of the reaction.

This is not to say that students from refugee backgrounds cannot enjoy the book and/or gain valuable insights and learning from studying *Detention*. Each individual is unique in their response to traumatic experiences. Material that can be triggering for one student with a refugee background may be beneficially explored by another.

Before the class reads the book, introduce the book, its themes, some details about the characters and some of the potentially upsetting things that happen to the characters.

Acknowledge that some of the contents of the book could be upsetting to readers and that part of engaging with any text that contains upsetting themes is learning how to recognise signs that it is time for you to take a break from the text, or in some cases, not engage with it at this point in your life.

Explain that having been through experiences similar to those of the characters, or knowing someone who has been through some of these things, can make you more sensitive to this story. But also, even for people who haven't been through these things, our empathy and compassion can sometimes make it difficult to read stories of hardship that are based on real events.

Teach students the signs that they are being adversely affected by texts (not just *Detention*, but other books, films, news stories, etc) they engage with:

- Having intrusive thoughts about the text while doing other fun or day-to-day activities
- Having nightmares about what you've read
- Having trouble falling asleep
- Feeling guilty about enjoying human rights that other people aren't able to enjoy
- Feeling detached, numb or unable to think clearly (foggy)
- Feeling panic, wanting to run away

More severe reactions include:

- Having flashbacks
- Feeling out of touch with what is going on around you (dissociating).

Tell the whole class that there are things they can do if they are feeling overwhelmed by the text. Depending on your particular setting and school resources, you may be able to offer:

- Students can take a break in a Classroom Calm Corner (perhaps with headphones available with relaxing music)
- Students can request a short break from the classroom to get some fresh air
- Students can request to see a Student Wellbeing staff member
- Teachers can take time-out breaks to follow teacher-led discussions of distressing themes
- Students should be encouraged to inform the teacher if they are finding it difficult to read or study the text.

If you are aware of students with a refugee background (particularly those who arrived in Australia as asylum seekers and have spent time in a detention centre), it is usually best to speak to these students privately to make sure they are aware of the text's themes and the options available to them if they are finding the contents too difficult to engage with.

Tips for supporting students who are expressing intense emotional responses to the text

- When the student expresses intensive emotion, your role is to be a buffer against the person being overwhelmed by that emotion.
- Offer comfort and support. This will help the person to understand that their expression of emotions does not result in a complete loss of control.
- Be sensitive to the student's sense of what was most overwhelming for them. For example, it might be a seemingly insignificant aspect of the text that triggered their strong emotional or trauma response.
- If the student starts to discuss their own traumatic history, give the student the choice of continuing to discuss their story in front of the class or, alternatively, let them know that you are ready to listen during a break time.
- Ask if the student if the needs anything that you are in a position to provide.

Grounding techniques

- Sometimes, when people feel overly anxious, they can feel like they are losing touch with the present (the here and now). The anxious thoughts and bodily sensations may make some students feel like they are losing touch with reality.
- Grounding techniques can help to get mental focus back and anchor students to the here and now.
- Grounding strategies that you may wish to use with students are listed below. They have been adapted from Living Well and RCIP (see references below).
    - Asking the student to focus on someone's voice that they can hear
    - Ask the student to slowly sip a cold drink or notice the coldness and wetness of a cold water bottle
    - Ask the student to stroke their hands over something with an interesting texture
- Guide the participant through the 54321 Game:
    - Name 5 things you can see now
    - Name 4 things you can feel ('chair on my back' or 'feet on floor')
    - Name 3 things you can hear now
    - Name 2 things you can smell right now (or, 2 things you like the smell of)
    - Name 1 good thing about yourself.

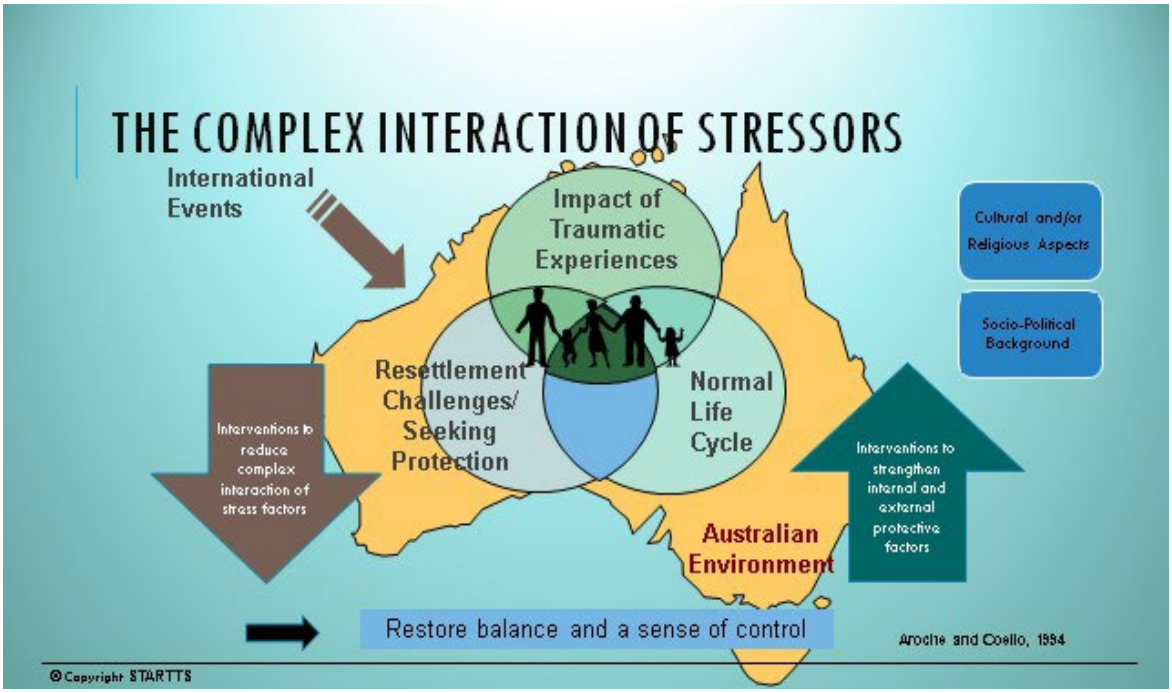
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APPENDIX 2: THE IMPACT OF TRAUMA

The following material has been provided courtesy of STARTTS.



Reference: Aroche & Coello (1999)

This model provided by The NSW Service for the Treatment and Rehabilitation of Torture and Trauma Survivors (STARTTS) shows the complex interaction of multiple experiences that refugee young people go through, and it allows us to conceptualise issues faced by people of refugee backgrounds and develop strategies to assist them. Young people from refugee backgrounds sit in the middle of a complex interaction between: **(1)** the impact of the traumatic experiences they have been through (violence, deprivation and loss); **(2)** the challenges and problems related to exile, migration and resettlement processes (resettling in a new country, learning the language, understanding the system, etc); and **(3)** the normal life challenges that we all face (relationships, illness, employment, ageing, etc).

Additional factors that affect young people from refugee backgrounds include: the socio-political climate in Australia; what services are available in Australia; how refugees are accepted; and how international events and conflict in the country of origin can continue to impact on the refugees post arrival.

When normal life cycle challenges alone play a large impact on the psychosocial wellbeing of young people, with everything else going on for those fleeing conflict, it's important to reflect on what they might be experiencing. There is hope! Schools offer a safe environment for people to recover from past experience, through care, connection and community.

'What traumatised children [and families] most need is a healthy community to buffer the pain, distress and loss caused by their earlier trauma.'

'What works to heal them is anything that increases the number and quality of [their] relationships.'

Read the above quotes from Bruce Perry, psychiatrist and Senior Fellow at the ChildTrauma Academy (childtrauma.org/Academy), and discuss:

- What does it mean to have a healthy community? What makes a community healthy?
- How can we increase the number and quality of relationships in our lives?
- More specifically, how can we increase the number and quality of relationships for young people who have had traumatic experiences or faced resettlement challenges in addition to normal life cycle stressors?

APPENDIX 3: ABOUT THE HAZARA PEOPLE

The following material has been provided courtesy of STARTTS, and has been adapted from a STARTTS information sheet by former trainers Mekita Vanderheyde (prepared 2015) and Dr Belinda Green PhD (updated 31 July 2017).

General information



Country of origin: Afghanistan

Population: Hazaras make up 9% of Afghanistan's population.[1]

Language(s): Hazaraghi (a Dari dialect) in rural areas and regional versions of Persian in urban areas, as well as Pashto and Urdu.

Religion(s): Shi'a Islam

Ethnicity: Hazara

Reasons for persecution: Being Shia Muslim in a mainly Sunni country; racial and ethnic differences and historical grudges.

Hazara culture

The Hazaras originate from Afghanistan's central highlands. Their heritage is contested[2]. One idea is that they are believed to be descendants of Genghis Khan's Mongolian forces who invaded in the 13th century. They make up the third largest ethnic group in Afghanistan after the Pashtuns and Tajik.[3]

Hazaras follow Shia Islam, which is the main reason of historical discrimination against them in majority Sunni areas.

Hazara are progressive about gender equality and women's rights to education and participation in public activities, seeing education as a way out of long disadvantage and powerlessness. Hazara women, especially those who returned from exile in Iran, are active in civic and political life.[4] The Ministry for Higher Education in Afghanistan acknowledges that two Hazara-dominated provinces, Bamian and Daykondi, have the highest passing rates on admissions exams for the country's top universities, with girls making up 43% of students.[5]

Hazaras value education highly. Their literacy rates are higher than the national average, as well as their university acceptance rates and levels of voter turnout and political participation.[6,7]

Socio-political and cultural context – political conflict, organised violence and human rights violations

Along with other Shia minorities, Hazaras have faced long-term persecution from the Sunni majority and Pashtun expansionism into their lands.

Hazaras traditionally lived in Hazarajat in the central mountains of Afghanistan.

Before the 19th century they made up 67% of the total Afghan population but half this number was massacred in a Sunni jihad against Shias in 1893. During the 19th century they were sold as slaves. Since then their numbers have gradually decreased. During the 19th and 20th centuries, they were marginalised and discriminated against to such an extent that they were mainly employed in unskilled labour and hard and dangerous work rejected by other Afghans, which further segregated them from other Afghans through socioeconomic disadvantage.

The 1979 Soviet invasion of Afghanistan temporarily changed the fate of the Hazara. While they were opposed to the Soviet occupation, the conflict at that time allowed them to organise politically and gain political and financial support from the Shia community in Iran. This was lost when Afghanistan descended into civil war in 1989 and the country fell under the Taliban in 1996.

The Taliban targeted the Shia Hazara as infidels and subjected them to gross human rights abuses, causing them to flee to other countries as refugees. When Hamid Karzai came to power in 2002, persecution of the Hazaras decreased in urban areas and they were able to regroup politically and gain a large number of parliamentary seats in the 2005 election[8]. From 2007, the Taliban built itself back up from their base in Pakistan and expanded back into Afghanistan. Once again, the Hazara were targeted for persecution. Since western-backed reform, they have gradually been able to gain more political power and representation at polling stations.

Although Hazaras have been given full rights under the 2004 Afghan constitution, they still face discrimination in many areas of the country and are vulnerable to attack and death on Afghanistan's road network, particularly on the roads to and from Hazarajat that are targeted by criminals, insurgent forces and the Taliban and more recently by ISIS affiliated organisations.

Many Hazaras fled to the Balochistan province of Pakistan, mostly in and around the city of Quetta, with a sizeable number also in Iran. Hazaras have also fled to western countries such as Canada, the US and Australia.

Resettlement in Australia

Hazaras have come to Australia in large numbers on boats from Indonesia since 2000, regarding the journey as a safer option than staying in Afghanistan or Pakistan waiting for UNHCR resettlement. After the overthrow of the Taliban in 2001 the Howard Government forced a number of Hazaras to return from Nauru to Afghanistan. Most fled immediately to Pakistan and some returned to their villages in Afghanistan. Some of them have since been killed by the Taliban who, though no longer in government, nevertheless have substantial power in Afghanistan. Hazaras from Afghanistan still form one of the major groups of boat arrivals in Australia seeking asylum.

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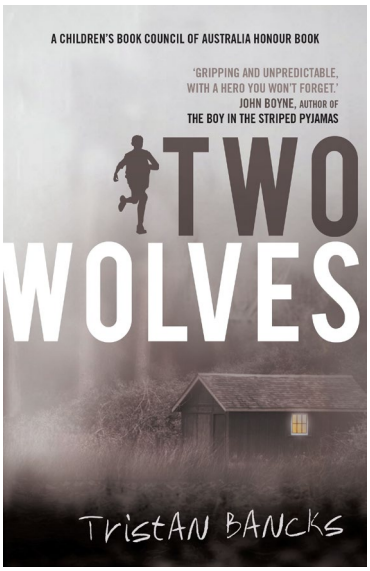
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NOTE: *Penguin Random House Australia and Tristan Bancks thank STARTTS (NSW Service for the Treatment and Rehabilitation of Torture and Trauma Survivors) for their feedback and help in the preparation of these Teachers' Resources, and gratefully acknowledge the assistance of STARTTS in providing supplementary resource materials to assist in the teaching of* Detention. *You can find out more about STARTTS at startts.org.au.*

FURTHER READING FROM PENGUIN RANDOM HOUSE AUSTRALIA



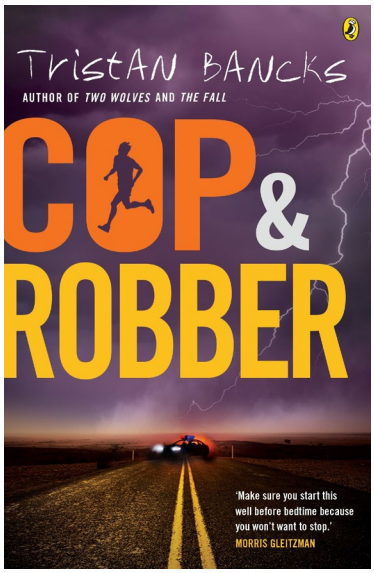
Two Wolves
by Tristan Bancks

One afternoon, police officers show up at Ben Silver's front door. Minutes after they leave, his parents arrive home. Ben and his little sister Olive are bundled into the car and told they're going on a holiday. But are they?

It doesn't take long for Ben to realise that his parents are in trouble. Ben's always dreamt of becoming a detective – his dad even calls him 'Cop'. Now Ben gathers evidence and tries to uncover what his parents have done.

The problem is, if he figures it out, what does he do? Tell someone? Or keep the secret and live life on the run?

Suitable for years 5–9

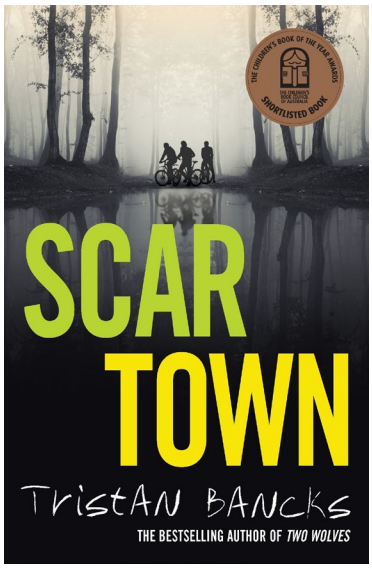


Cop & Robber
by Tristan Bancks

If your mum was a cop and your dad was a crim who needed your help to commit a crime, would you do it to save him? At what cost?

Nash Hall's dad is a criminal who just can't seem to go straight. He wants Nash to help him commit a robbery. A big one. The trouble is, Nash's mum is a cop. And the robbery is at Nash's school. But Dad owes a lot of money to some very dangerous people and if Nash doesn't help him do the job, it could cost both their lives..

Suitable for years 5–9



Scar Town
by Tristan Bancks

Seven years after Old Scarborough was drowned, a house is emerging from the water. Will and his friends Dar and Juno dare each other to explore it.

But when they find bones – and a stash of cash – they realise they're not the only ones interested in its secrets.

Now they're fighting for their lives against the men who want what they found. Will can't leave the mystery alone, though. What if the bones belong to his missing dad?

A dangerous journey to uncover the truth in a town that wants the past to stay buried.

Suitable for years 5–9

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