

Dirt by Sea

AUTHOR

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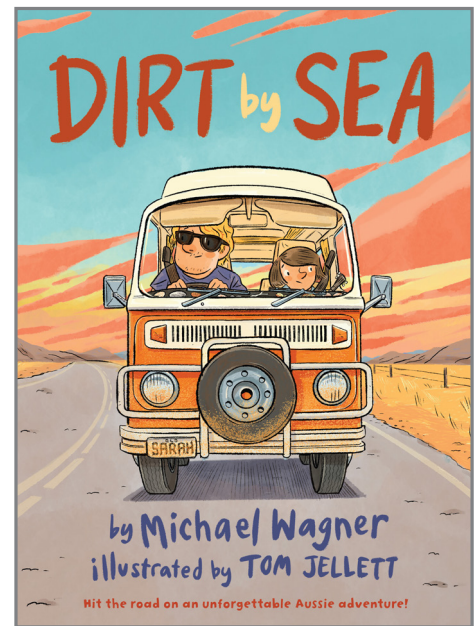
ILLUSTRATOR

TOM JELLETT

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RECOMMENDED FOR: Lower Primary



SYNOPSIS

Daisy lives in inland Australia with her dad and her grandparents. It's home, and she loves the red dirt land around her. But when her dad realises that she's never seen the beach and thinks the Australian anthem is about a country 'dirt by sea', he sets off to show her the ocean in a once-in-a-lifetime father-daughter trip along the Australian coast, inspired by the first holiday he took with Daisy's mum.

Along the way they will learn about Australia and much, much more . . .

ABOUT THE CREATORS

Michael Wagner and Tom Jellett are two of Australia's favourite children's book creators. Their much-loved picture books *Why I Love Footy* and *Why I Love Summer* celebrate the joys of two iconic Australian pastimes.

Michael is an author, publisher and speaker and also runs the publishing venture Billy Goat Books. Tom has been an editorial illustrator for newspapers and magazines, but now creates picture books and junior fiction.

Despite being raised in Victoria, Michael has tried not to dwell too much on how stunning his state's coastline is. Tom hails from South Australia and New South Wales and has done absolutely nothing to disguise how beautiful those beaches are.

Michael and Tom are yet to go on a road trip together but agree that if they did, it would definitely be in a vintage Kombi.

STUDY NOTES

- Look at the cover and the back of the book. What do you expect the book will be about? Do you have any questions? Are those questions answered?
- Find three words in the book that are new to you. Try to work out what they mean from the context (the way they are used and the words and pictures that surround them).
- Many Australians have a particular way of talking—Dad says he's going to the 'toot'. What do you think he means? Can you discover some famous Australian ways of saying things and put them in a sentence?
- Do you know any 'graphic novels' or 'comics'? What are the key things that make a book a 'graphic novel' or 'comic'? Think of a time you have gone on a holiday in the car and draw a line of 'cells' showing things you did with quote bubbles.

- Write a 'diary entry' about the first time you saw the ocean or went to the beach. (You can include drawings if you like or photos.) OR have you ever felt 'full of love' like Daisy? Write a 'diary entry' about that occasion.
- Daisy does some classic 'road trip' things like playing driving games like 'I-spy' and singing along to songs. Write a 'text message', 'post card' or 'letter' from you to a friend or family member about keeping yourself entertained on a long drive.
- Write an 'autobiographic story' about a time you have played beach soccer or beach cricket or made sandcastles.
- What's the most exciting thing that's ever happened to you on holiday?
- Have you ever felt afraid and then brave like Daisy does jumping off the jetty?
- What is your favourite scene in the book? Re-tell the scene from the perspective of another character in the scene or from Daisy's point of view. (Don't forget that a story needs a start, a middle and an end.) You can write it as a picture book if you like and include drawings.
 - Re-tell the Byron Bay part of the story from Akiro's point of view.
 - Write the Bondi Beach part of the story from the 'famous' person's point of view.
- Have you met someone famous? If so, where did you meet them and how did you feel?
- What is the most beautiful place in the book (in your opinion)? Write a poem or lyrics about the place.
- Think about Daisy and Dad's favourite foods in the book. What is your least favourite food? What is your most favourite food? Write a poem or lyrics about them.
- Interview your friends—what is their favourite place ever and why?
- Seagulls always seem to show up when there's fish and chips. Write a humorous interview finding out why and how they plan to steal your chippies.
- Write a list of things that Dad and Daisy would need to pack for their very long road trip.
- Write a list of instructions about how to play I-spy (or another travel game you and your family enjoy).
- Daisy wants to come back to the amusement park the next day after a whole day on the rides. Write all the reasons she might have used to convince Dad.
- Dad wants to go in the shark cage. Write all the reasons Daisy might give to stop him.
- Make a poster helping people to understand why they have to swim between the flags and convincing them to do it.
- Research the history of the Kombi van and make a poster explaining why they are the best cars ever!
- Write the first line of a song (to any tune you like) and ask your friend to write the next line. Then continue in this way until the song is complete. You can share the song with the class if you like.
- Why do you think the lyrics of the second line in the Australian Anthem were changed from 'young and free' to 'one and free'? Are there any parts of the anthem you would change?
- If you were writing a new anthem, list three wonderful things about Australia that you would want to include. Share these things with the class.
- Find all the buskers in the book. Have you seen a busker performing? Write a paragraph describing the best busker you have ever seen.
- Australia has some of the world's deadliest spiders, but although the huntsman is big and scary it's not one of them (it will give you a nasty bite though so don't pick one up). Create a poster of Australia's spiders. Include at least one labelled diagram.
- Not all sharks are scary. Compare and contrast whale sharks and another type of shark using two labelled diagrams.
- Snakes of Australia are mostly shy and usually only bite when they're scared, but what happens when one does bite and what should you do? Create a poster telling people what you should and shouldn't do if you encounter a snake. Include a list of instructions explaining the first aid response if someone is bitten.
- Sadly, there is no way that Daisy saw a Tasmanian Tiger. Research this amazing animal and create a poster explaining what made it unique: <https://australian.museum/learn/australia-over-time/extinct-animals/the-thylacine/>.
- Split into pairs and discuss why you think that looking after the environment so wild animals can survive is important. Do you know what the words 'extinct', 'endangered' and 'threatened' mean? Write the definitions down. Can you think of ways that we are putting Australian animals at risk of extinction?
- A fossil is any preserved remains, impression, or trace of any once-living thing from a past geological age. The

footprints that Daisy sees in Broome are ‘fossils’. Australia had some amazing dinosaurs. Research them and create a poster with interesting information on your favourite, including at least one drawing and one timeline.

- Find all the Australian animals in the book. Draw a picture of your favourite Australian native animal. Label the major features that help them survive in their environment. Do they hide in their environment in any way?
- Camels and rats and dogs are non-native animals. When they are loose in the wild they are called ‘feral animals’ or ‘pests’. Do some research and write a ‘compare and contrast’ explaining why non-native animals are problematic—using rats versus quokkas, or camels versus kangaroos as examples.
- Do you know what ‘constellations’ are? One of the most famous constellations in the Australian sky is the Southern Cross. Ask a parent or guardian to take you out tonight to see if you can find it in the sky, like Daisy and Dad. Ask them if they know any other constellations.
 - The Southern Cross is so famous that it’s in our anthem and on our flag, but did you know that it can also be used to tell us where south is?
- First Nations Peoples in Australia saw different shapes in the sky to Europeans. Look at the pictures in this article and listen to the story of the emu in the sky. <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2017-04-05/aboriginal-astronomy-basis-of-dreamtime-stories-stargazing/8413492>. Ask a parent or guardian to take you out tonight to see if you can find it in the sky.
 - Can you draw the story in comic-book form?
- See if you can find Australia on a globe. Can you draw the shape of Australia on a piece of paper and label the states and territories? Once you have done that, plan a journey to visit all the places in the book. Use the map on the endpapers to help.
 - Using a different piece of paper, draw the places you have been and where you live.
- Have you seen the sunset or the sunrise? The sun seems to ‘rise’ in the East and ‘sink’ in the West. Do some research and find out why the sky looks red and pink at those times
- Find all the animals in the book. Can you write a list of their names?
- What do you call your parents or guardians? Have those words changed as you’ve got older? Do your older or younger siblings call them something different to you? Draw a picture of your family and label the pictures with what you call them.
- People love to take photos of themselves with quokkas. Draw a picture of you with a quokka!
- For show and tell, bring in your favourite holiday picture. Tell the class why it is your favourite.
- Does your family have a name for their car? Do you know anyone who has named their car? What would you call your family car and why? If you don’t own a car, what would you call a Kombi if you had one?
- Is there anyone in your family that you miss? Split into pairs and tell your friend all the very best things about them.
- When you come home from time away what are you looking forward to? Draw the best things about home.