

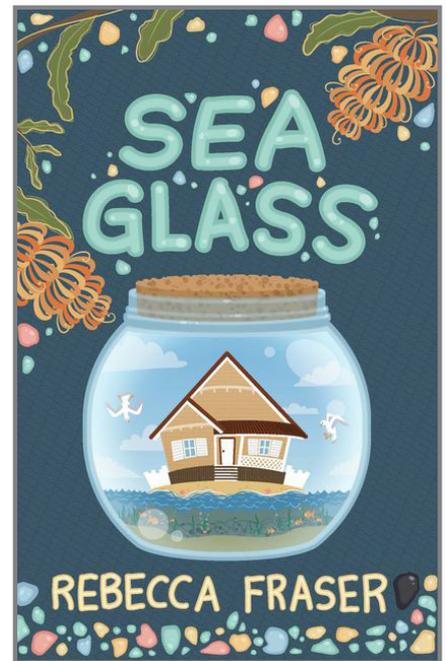
Sea Glass

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RECOMMENDED FOR: Mid Primary



SYNOPSIS

When eleven-year-old Cailin's mother takes a contract job on Victoria's eastern coast, Cailin's holiday plans are ruined. Worse, they're staying at her eccentric grandfather's shack at Whitefoam Cove. Cailin barely remembers him, let alone knows him. Grandpa doesn't have Wi-Fi, and his television is older than him. The memories of her father are everywhere and, to make matters worse, she's left her cricket bat at home. How will she make the team now? And how will she keep in touch with her best friend, Josie? It's going to be the worst summer ever.

But life with Grandpa proves to be anything but boring. There's treasure to be found at Whitefoam Cove, and Cailin's collection of sea glass is growing rapidly. But just when cricket-mad Cailin and her estranged grandfather finally feel like they're making a connection, disaster strikes . . . and Cailin knows it's all her fault. Will Grandpa ever forgive her?

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Rebecca Fraser is an award-winning Mornington Peninsula-based author who writes genre-mashing fiction for children and adults. Her work has won, been shortlisted for and honourably mentioned for numerous awards and prizes. Rebecca's publications include over sixty short stories, poems, and articles in Australian and international anthologies, journals and magazines. Her longer works include a middle grade fantasy adventure *Curtis Creed and the Lore of the Ocean*, and a collection of short fiction *Coralesque and Other Tales to Disturb and Distract*. The first in her middle grade trilogy *Jonty's Unicorn* (Book 1 of The Irrawene Chronicles) will be released in 2023 (above titles IFWG PublishingAustralia).

Rebecca holds a MA in Creative Writing, and a Certificate of Publishing (Copy Editing & Proofreading). To provide her muse with life's essentials she copywrites and edits in a freelance capacity and operates StoryCraft Creative Writing Workshops . . . however her true passion is storytelling.

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THEMES

- Acceptance and Open-Mindedness
- Grief and Loss
- Family & Friendship
- Nature and Environment
- Female Sports

STUDY NOTES

- Before reading the story, show the cover to the class and ask the students what they think the book might be about.
- Read the back cover blurb. Does this give them more of an idea of what the book could be about?
- After reading the story, discuss the following questions:
 - Ask students if Cailin reminds them of anyone they know: a friend, a sibling, themselves perhaps.
 - What is their first impression of Cailin?
 - How does Cailin change over the course of the story?
 - Ask students how they perceive Cailin's situation. Does she come through in the end?

ACCEPTANCE AND OPEN MINDEDNESS

- Before Cailin meets Grandpa, she has a stereotype in her mind of what he might look like. Compare and contrast Cailin's expectations of Grandpa's appearance to what he actually looks like. Why is it important to avoid stereotyping someone?
- Cailin's mother describes Grandpa as 'eccentric'. What does eccentric mean to you? Is there anyone in your family that could be described as eccentric? What behaviour or characteristics do they have?
- While Cailin initially thinks Grandpa's house and Whitefoam Cove are boring, each day brings a new opportunity to learn. What are some of the new ideas and concepts Grandpa introduces Cailin to? (eg. The science of sea glass, a new card game 'Racing Demon' and shuffling technique, how global shipping channels impact what is washed ashore, insights into how Grandpa feels about the Vietnam War, patience, new literature: Treasure Island, new information about her father, etc.)

GRIEF AND LOSS

- As the story evolves, it becomes clear that Grandpa still carries a great sense of grief and loss for his son (Cailin's father), Marcus, even though he is a man of few words. What are some examples from within the text that illustrate this?
- Why doesn't Grandpa say anything when he receives the gift of the Memory Book on Christmas Day? How does Cailin later come to realise how much the gift means to Grandpa?
 - Make a Memory Book of your own. Memory Books are a great way to preserve meaningful moments in your life, whether as a gift for others, or as a personal keepsake to turn and return to in years to come. Consider the items Cailin's Art Teacher, Miss Hislop, recommended in Chapter Four. What milestones, special memories, 'favourite things' and treasured photographs will you use in yours?
- When Grandpa gives Marcus's sea glass collection to Cailin, what does he mean when he says: "I've been holding onto things so tightly for so long, I didn't even know I was drowning. Sometimes you've got to let things go to be able to breathe again."

NATURE AND ENVIRONMENT

- Cailin lives an urban lifestyle in inner Melbourne. Whitefoam Cove is a (fictional) small, regional, coastal environment situated on Victoria's Gippsland coast, a good half an hour from the nearest town of Waratah Crossing. Compare and contrast these two locations from Cailin's point of view? How do they differ? How do their differences impact Cailin?
- Sea glass are nature's 'jewels and treasures' forged by the ocean, and one of nature's greatest 'trash to treasure' phenomena. Consider the lifecycle of sea glass. What is the cycle it goes through to transform into 'true' sea glass—from being discarded in the ocean to washing up on the shore?
- Name some different colours of sea glass and their origins (what it started off as / came from before being lost to the ocean)?
- Sea glass hunting and collecting has many benefits. Apart from fresh air, exercise, and exploring your shoreline and others, finding sea glass is a simple and cost-free joy which can lead to an interesting hobby and collection. Why not start a sea glass collection of your own? Like Cailin, Marcus, and Grandpa . . . all you need is a beach and a jar with a lid.
- Research some of the inventive and creative uses for sea glass today. Think about the way the concept of

environmental sustainability have been applied, along with the philosophy of 'reuse, recycle, repair'. Can you think of any additional ways you could use sea glass?

FAMILY & FRIENDSHIP

- What is the relationship like between Cailin and her mother? Do you think they have a strong relationship? Use examples from within the narrative to support your argument.
- Why does Cailin send the postcard to Josie? What was her motivation? What are some better ways she could have communicated her thoughts and fears?
- Pretend you're Cailin and write a postcard of your own to Josie. How would you rewrite the postcard in order to have a better outcome than Cailin did?
- Grandparents play many roles in family dynamics. They can be mentors, caregivers, teachers, companions, even historians! Often they are 'generational bridges' and custodians of culture and family rituals and traditions, passing down stories, wisdom, memories and proverbs. Can you think of an example within the narrative where Cailin passes on Grandpa's teaching or sayings? What are some things you have learned from your grandparents?

FAMILY

- Cailin has a love of cricket. How does that love of cricket bond her with her grandfather and her dad? How can playing sports make your relationships better?
- Cailin is upset that she can't participate in group practices while she's away. What's the benefit of practising as a team? Were there ways that Cailin could have practised on her own?
- Cailin's family are all very supportive of her love of cricket. How does supporting people in their passions, like sport, help them grow?