

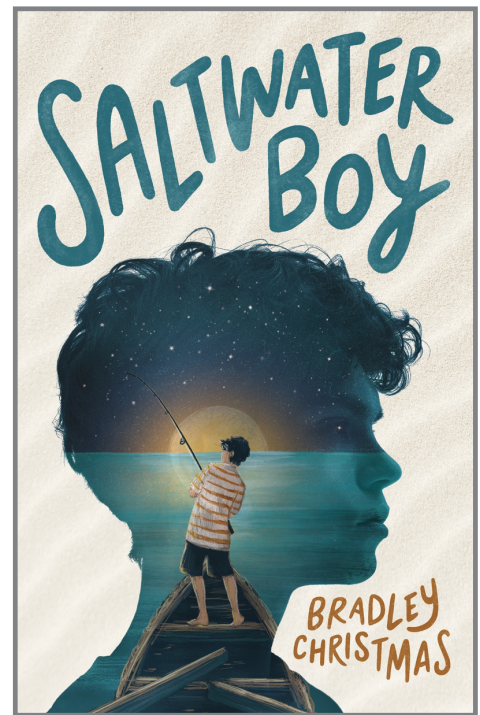
Saltwater Boy

AUTHOR/ILLUSTRATOR
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RECOMMENDED FOR: Lower Secondary



SYNOPSIS

When Dad goes to jail, Matthew and his mum move to the coast, so mum—an artist—thinks she can renovate her late father’s old place to sell it to get them back on their feet. Matthew strikes up a friendship with Old Bill, an Indigenous man who becomes a father figure to him, and teaches him how to find and eat pippis, fish (and to make a few dollars from it). Dad gets out on parole and moves back in with the family, but his anger fractures the newfound peace and everything is once again at stake, and in peril.

ABOUT THE CREATOR

Bradley Christmas is a full-time writer—and moonlighting musician—who splits his time between Sydney and his beloved beach shack on the NSW South Coast. While building his writing career he worked as a social worker, English language teacher and children’s entertainer. These days as a freelance copywriter he helps charities like Greenpeace, The Royal Flying Doctor Service and The Sydney Children’s Hospital Network share their stories. His short fiction has appeared in a number of magazines and publications including *The Big Issue* and received several award nominations. He can also regularly be found performing around Australia with his country band Copperline. *Saltwater Boy* is his first YA novel.

STUDY NOTES

- Based on the cover and title, what do you think this story is about? How do you think it will begin/end? Revisit your answer when you’ve completed the book. Was your answer correct?
- What are the themes in this novel? As a class, or in small groups, identify and list the themes.
 - Individually write a statement of belief about each theme.
- Identify the orientation, complication and resolution of the story. Ask students to identify this structure in other books or movies. As a class, discuss how these narrative features give further meaning to stories.
- We learn, live and dream on Indigenous land. As a class or in small groups, discuss the Indigenous land where you are learning from. What is the history of the land? How can we continue to commemorate elders past, present and future?
- Matthew develops a close relationship with Old Bill who steps in as a father figure. Ask students to individually identify inspirational figures in their life, apart from their parents and/or caregivers. What have they taught you? What characteristics of theirs is admirable?
- In small groups, explain how Matthew demonstrates the following character traits in the novel:
 - Courage
 - Persistence

- Compassion
- Resilience.
- Design your own cover for the book with new imagery and a new tagline that will persuade people to read the book.
- A novel will describe the setting and action in words, allowing the reader to visualise using their imagination. A comic strip or graphic novel uses illustrations to show the reader the setting, action and character's emotions. Create a comic strip of a key scene from *Saltwater Boy*.