

Summer Change

AUTHOR

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RECOMMENDED FOR: Mid to Upper Secondary
(Sexual References)

SYNOPSIS

A secret. A holiday. A summer like never before.

Shae knows her parents are keeping something from her and she is determined to find out what. But nothing can prepare her for what they are hiding.

Shae is learning that relationships, deception, secrets and love can all blend together and change everything.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Melissa is an Australian author who lives on the Bellarine Peninsula with her husband and two children and she enjoys walks along the beach. She has always loved reading and grew up near a cosy little library where she spent most of her younger years reading.

Melissa is passionate about education, in particular literacy, and believes the ability to read and write gives power to change. Her novels include, *The Ruby Locket* and *Destiny Road*. Melissa's writing has also won honorable mentions and featured in several anthologies.

Melissa loves to travel and has seen some incredible places including America, Egypt, Italy and Africa. She has also travelled closer to home and visited every Australian state and territory. Her bucket list is still long, both home and abroad! Melissa enjoys writing fiction with snippets of fact blended within her work. Her style is constantly evolving and she is looking forward to sharing her stories and spending time creating new ones.

Melissa believes everyone should *Dream Big . . . Read Often*.

THEMES

- Peer group pressure
- Deception
- Relationships
- Family
- Forgiveness

STUDY NOTES

- Who are the most developed characters in the story? Do we understand what these characters want, and how the story's conflict stands in their way?
- Are Shae, Lexi, Callen, Stella and Simon round or flat characters? Why?
 - Ask students to expand on this discussion of flat characters in table. Use the following headings:
 - Character
 - Round
 - Flat
 - Justification.
- Does Shae undergo a change throughout the story. Discuss why or why not, and evaluate the points at which she might have changed.
- Peer pressure can be represented in many ways. How does the author represent peer pressure in *Summer Change*?
 - Are there any metaphors or symbols used to represent peer pressure, or instances where Shae makes a choice that clearly is a result of peer pressure?
- Shae and Lexi's relationship has already changed at the beginning of the novel. How do readers come to know and understand their relationship, both past and present? How does the author communicate this?
- Why is the cancellation of the trip overseas about so much more than a missed holiday? What does the cancelled trip represent and what does it say about the way in which Shae's relationship with her parents is under strain?
- Pretend you're Shae. How would you describe Callen at the beginning of the novel, and how would you describe him towards the end? Why is there a difference and what does this say about our first impressions of people and how we judge them?

THEMES**Peer Group Pressure**

- Explain peer pressure in your own words. Why do you think kids and teens are so easily influenced by their friends and peers?
- There are many kinds of negative peer group pressure. List as many examples that you can think of. Which one would be the hardest to resist and why?
- Peer group pressure is not always negative. Friends can encourage and inspire their friends in a positive way as well. Give some examples of positive peer group pressure. Why might these inspire people? Expand.
- There is a scene in the book where Shae is offered alcohol. Discuss other ways Shae could have responded and what the outcomes might have been.
- Simon is new to the town and admits he finds it easier to just fit in sometimes and succumb to peer group pressure. Have you ever experienced being new to something? Discuss your experience of this.

Deception

- Shae tries to uncover a secret her parents are hiding. Do you think she went about it the right way? What would you have done differently?
- Parents and caregivers often have to make choices for young people without their input. Do you think Shae's parents made the right choice for her? Discuss.
- Callen was keeping his own secret from Shae. He had opportunities to tell her but chose not to. Do we always have to be honest with our friends?
- Shae's aunty and uncle knew the secret and protected it along with Shae's parents. Are they as guilty of deception as Shae's parents? Give reasons why/why not.
- Stella took drastic action to uncover her mother's secret. Were her actions deceptive or justified?

Relationships

- There are many kinds of relationships between people. Think about the people in your world. What kind of relationships are there? Make a list.
- Shae and Lexi have always been close but something changed in their relationship. Discuss reasons that relationships can change.

- ‘Blood is thicker than water’ is a saying that has been around for centuries and in various forms. It suggests that family ties will always be stronger than any other connection. Give reasons why you agree or disagree.
- There were many kinds of dynamics in the relationships in *Summer Change*. Discuss the following:
 - Callen and Kai
 - Shae and her mum
 - Lexi and Blake.
- Out of all the characters, which one would you form a friendship with and why?

Family

- Shae was very close to her cousins and often stayed with them over the school holidays. Share some information about your family and things you do together.
- Families are made up of many combinations of people. How would you explain what it means to be a family? Finish this sentence: A family is . . .
- How well do you remember the families in *Summer Change*? Create a family tree for each of the characters in the book.
- Some people can trace their family tree back in history over generations of people. What is the history of your family?
- In what ways did Shae’s family change from the beginning to the end? What might be some reasons that families change?

Forgiveness

- Callen is angry at his parents but eventually accepts his father’s apology. Write a scene, with dialogue, around this conversation taking place. You can choose to write in the point of view of Callen or his father.
- Is it necessary to forgive the wrongs done to you by others? What are some effects of forgiveness (positive/negative)?
- People offer forgiveness for different reasons. Some offer it quickly while others need more time. What steps do you think need to be taken before forgiveness can be offered?
- Shae must find it within herself to forgive her parents. Write a scene, with dialogue, around the parents’ fear of Shae never forgiving them. You can choose to write in the point of view of Shae’s mother or father.
- Are there other characters in *Summer Change* who should be held accountable for their actions? Who are they and why should they be held to account?

HISTORICAL RESEARCH

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander history

- Yunbenun is the traditional owners name for Magnetic Island. Can you research some other geographical features near your location and identify the traditional owners’ names?
- The Wulgurukaba people are the traditional owners of the island. Can you identify the traditional lands on which you live, learn and play?
- The Aboriginal Dreamtime tells the story about Gabul, the rainbow serpent. It is linked to the island off the coast of Townsville. Research and summarise this story.

World War II

- In 1942 Townsville became a military base for the war efforts. Was Townsville ever attacked during this time of war?
- Jezzine Barracks is a popular destination in Townsville to visit and learn about Townsville’s military past. What other name is it known as?
- There was also a military camp created on Magnetic Island where you can still see the remains of this time. Why was this island chosen as a defense base?

NARRATIVE STRUCTURE AND PLOT

- Why do you think the author chose to narrate the story the way they did?
- Fill a narrative ‘gap’ by writing a 500–1000-word scene from the perspective of any of the main characters eg. Shae, Simon, Callen, Stella, Lexi or even one of Shae’s parents. Consider the narrator’s motivations and backstory. How will

these things influence their voice?

- Identify different plot points in the narrative, using Freytag's pyramid. Discuss differences of opinion in the class.

ACTIVITIES

- Shae was looking forward to a family holiday of a lifetime by going to New Zealand. She had even talked her dad into going white water rafting with her. Create a piece of writing about your perfect summer holiday. Where would you go? What would you do? Who would you take with you?
- Create a character that is hiding a secret. Include intrigue, tension and wondering without explaining what the secret is. Once written, share it with a friend and see if they can guess the secret.