

# 2007

# Trafalgar Bendigo Community Bank Writing Competition

Sponsored by:

Trafalgar & District Community Bank

Trafalgar-based architect, Audun Pedersen

Organised by:

*Traf News*

Rotary Club of Trafalgar

## INTRODUCTION

In many societies, the work of the story teller is an important and honoured position because these people are the guardians of the history, the "dreaming" history. Last year in Trafalgar, we were gratified by the successful establishment of a writing competition, organised by the *Traf News* and the Rotary Club of Trafalgar, sponsored by the Trafalgar & District Community Bank and Trafalgar-based architect, Audun Pedersen.

The judges were impressed with the quality of the entries that were submitted by local writers such as Ken Tatterson, whose anecdote, "Thorpdale Memories", appeared in the *Traf News* soon after his death. This was an excellent example of the type of community based story we were trying to find from the collective memory of our local people. A story that was sadly, to be read at his funeral.

The winner of the \$350 Audun Pedersen Prize for the best short story was Beth Edmondson of Trafalgar with her story, "Life Shards", which dealt with memories in a different and more challenging way than a brief anecdote.

For 2008 we will introduce a new category for writers of all ages. This will be the poetry section and this will be open to all residents, workers or students in the area covered by the former shire of Narracan.

Overall, the number of entries in the competition was not as great as we had hoped. Happily, the quality of the entries we received made up for the quantity. As the collection of the work by Mr. Tatterson showed, we believe that the timely collection of stories by and about local people is critical.

*Peter Cooke*

*Rotary Club of Trafalgar*

**T***raf News* has published the winning articles throughout last year, however, we, together with the Rotary Club of Trafalgar, thought that a consolidated publication would provide Trafalgar and district residents with a permanent record. Unfortunately, we cannot include the winners of the Children's Stories as their entries were in book form, and could not therefore, be incorporated into this publication. The winners of the Children's Stories category were:

First Prize of \$100 to Meagan McKelvie for Kara's Big Adventure

Second Prize of \$75 to Jaimi Byrne for Frizzi Lizzie

Third Prize of \$50 to Amy Chaplain for Why am I Brown?

Honourable Mention to Phillipa McKelvie for Easter Time

*Mick Bourke*

*Traf News*

*February 2008*



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**Bendigo Bank**

## Category One - Short anecdote

### First prize

#### *Thorpdale Memories*

By William (Ken) Tatterson



It's winter time in Thorpdale and I'm 10 years old and it's 1935, living at the house attached to the Butcher's Shop; the frost on the ground is snow white and the water in the tap and pipe leading from the water tank to the kitchen, is frozen. So I've got to break the ice on top of a dish of water to have a wash. Gosh it's cold but I've got to light the fire in the stove to cook the porridge and try to get some coals to cook some toast on a three pronged piece of wire with a long handle. No electricity in Thorpy in those days. My dad's been in the shop cutting up meat since 5am to send out, wrapped in newspapers, to farmers; thrown into an empty milk cans and picked up by Albert and Lizzy Rodda's trucks at 8am.

It's Monday morning and Dad has just started the Ronaldson Tippet engine to make sausages and you can hear the engine, for about a mile around Thorpy going POP, POP, BANG, for about half an hour. Dad smoked roll-your-own cigarettes and sometimes he couldn't find his butt and it used to come out of the nozzle on the sausage filter!

Before I go to school at 2966 I've got to sell the rabbits that Alan Stirling and I caught with our ferrets yesterday. Mr. George Gunn buys them, paying a shilling (10 cents) a pair for the big ones and sixpence (5 cents) for half-grown ones. So, it looks as though I'll have to find more beer bottles to sell, to keep my head above water. It's tough trying to make a bob these days with the Depression still on and I'm sick of eating rabbit with a strip of bacon on it, out of a pie dish. Although we owned the butcher shop we had our share of rabbits. Anyway, I've got to go to school this morning but I'll slip up to Bob Gunn's and go to school with him. His mum sells a billy of milk to Frank Peake, the Headmaster, every day. One day I remember Bob had to bring it home as the milk had dust on the top and "Frisly Pants" wouldn't take it. Bob had to tell him that his mum said, "If he didn't like it he could bloody well get it somewhere else".

I hated school and couldn't get out of the place quick enough; what the devil that stuff they call Algebra was all about, I still don't know, as I have never seen anybody using it anywhere. First thing at school on a Monday we stand in front of the flagpole and salute, then inside to try and educate me, which was pretty hopeless as my mind was always on other things. After school it was to find the town cows out on the road, about eight or ten of them, and nobody seemed to know which way they went, Childers, Narracan or Traf roads. As there was no electricity in Thorpdale in the early 1930's, every home had to be lit by a kerosene lamp (which I still have) or candles. The grandfather of the Gunn boys, Mr. Miller, would go around the town and, with a ladder on his shoulder, put a light on top of a cast-iron pole, on the four main corners of the town. (The remains of one of these poles is in the Park today).

There always seemed to be something to do after school, like smoking pine needles or thistles under the pine trees that grew near the path down to the station; see birds nesting; climbing down from the top of the first railway bridge, about forty feet above the creek, checking out under Bradshaw's bridge to see if any swaggies were camped there or paying Bob Howe a visit, he lived in a hut and a tram between the town and the

Footy ground. Getting the lantern ready and square bits of paper to re-set the rabbit traps which we had to go round at 9 o'clock at night.

The big event in Thorpdale was the pulling down of Mick Holden's pub in about 1936 and building the present-day hotel, which my Dad reckoned he paid for every brick in it! He used to go down to the Pub about 10 o'clock every morning and if a customer came into the Butcher Shop they had to ring a bell outside the door to get him to come up from the Pub and serve them; could you believe it!

Building the original swimming pool was another big event of the mid 1930's with horses, scoops and manual labour, it was a tangled swamp of logs, tree ferns and stinking mud. The opening day with Pop Blackshaw diving off the tower was a sight to behold and never repeated. Frank Gunn's bullock team going through the town was a common sight, which we will never see again. All the male cats in town seemed to fade out of sight when Frank produced his pocketknife!! He always got dressed up in a suit and wore a tie on a Sunday, even if he wasn't going anywhere. I liked all the Gunn boys and their parents and spent a lot of time in their home of an evening; my Dad never worried where I was, as he knew I was always up at Gunn's place joining in the arguments with all the boys, mostly about football.

Mrs. Regan was a Thorpdale character and I remember her son Ray had his leg almost severed on the Railway turn-table (where the Bowling Club is now situated). After that accident every engine turntable in the state was locked. The train used to come from Moe a couple of times a week, and a motorized trolley on a Saturday. Willis Bloom had the garage in Thorpdale and he was a pretty smart bloke as he brought electricity to the town in the 1930's and also ran the local pictures in the hall. Some of us town kids used to watch the films for nothing as we cut a couple of holes in the lining boards at the back of the hall to look through and our eyes used to water with the air coming through; (if you look just inside the main door at the right hand side the patch was still there the last time I looked). Vandalism, that's what it was but it brought back some fond memories.

When I go to Thorpdale now I have sad feelings to see the way it is now, a ghost town. In my day there was a Hotel, Baker, Butcher, Post Office, Newsagent, two grocer's shops, Garage selling petrol, Banks, Men's Hairdresser, Pictures every Saturday night and dances as well, with Ma and Pa Blackshaw making beautiful coffee for supper after the dance.

All the days of the kids riding ponies to school with only a bridle and a chaff bag for a saddle; and all the town cows heading for the long pad-dock on the roads are just now memories to this 80 year old fossil, who loved living in the past.

## Second prize

*My Dad's a hero*

By Phillip Parfitt



Phillip with his hero

Some time in April of 1954, I was playing in the back yard, of our Childers farm, with my piece of railway iron, as a toy truck, I noticed Mum run from the house to the shed, were Dad was working.

After a few brief words, she come running back, yelling at me to stand out on the track. At the same time, I noticed Dad running to the tractor. Starting it, he came hurtling down towards me, yelling to jump on the back. Still not sure what was going on, I grabbed hold of the seat and mudguard and proceeded to ride out the bumps.

We travelled about half a kilometre to the neighbours paddock gate. Dad said to me to open the gate and not to let the bull out and he proceeded to drive in top gear towards the big dam, leaving me fighting to shut the tight shutting gate.

I could see him looking towards the back of the big dam. As he turned off the tractor, facing it out towards the paddock, he jumped off and was running flat out towards the dam wall.

From the gateway, I saw him jump the wide overflow in a single bound and raced across the dam wall, to where a new fence had recently been erected, jumped this as well, in one bound. He then ran along an old cow track, just above the water's edge, this was partly covered in blackberries.

Dad then stopped and got down on his stomach, reaching down into the water, through the blackberries, to where I could not see his head. When he stood back up, I could see he had hold of young Brian Fisher, the neighbour's boy in his arms. Brian had fallen into the dam somehow, but had managed to cling to an old rabbit-netting fence that had been in water for years.

The boy's father, Albert, had rang Mum to tell her, their three-year-old son was missing. He said he would check the top forest dam, and asked if Dad could have a look at the big bottom dam for him.

While he was at the forest dam, in the hillier paddock, Albert noticed what was going on, at the other dam, where Dad was. He and wife Topsy came running down to where Dad had now walked back to the new fence with the small boy all wet.

I could hear Topsy sobbing as she hugged Brian in her arms. In relief, the two men lent back against the fence and rolled a smoke each.

Dad had saved this small child's life.

So looking through the eyes of six-year-old kid, that's one of the reasons, why I reckon my Dad was a hero.



Wendy on her 21st birthday with Frisky

## Third prize

*Heart Wrenching Fear*

By Wendy Parfitt

I grew up on a farm at Moondarra, which was a small farming community, some growing potatoes, some milking cows and the rest running beef cattle.

I was the eldest of seven children, five brothers and one sister. I had

to baby sit, cook the tea and clean the house after school each night, especially in winter. My parents went to milk the herd of jerseys, feed the pigs and calves, and also feed out hay to the cattle and all the other jobs that needed doing at night.

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## Third prize

*Heart Wrenching Fear*

By Wendy Parfitt ...

*Continued from Insert page 4*

A few years later, the jerseys were sold off, because they became too much work to handle, with all the family commitments, so beef cattle took their place and we reared vealers and fattened up steers.

We attended the small state school, just down the road, with ten to fourteen students attending, in the six years I went, with the same teacher. All of us in one large room, heated by a big open wood fire, with only one teacher to teach the six grades. This worked well, with discipline and rules. We all had spelling, time's tables and reading every night and tested the next day on what we had learnt.

To start off reading at school, the "John and Betty book," which was only ten pages in all, was the first book we read for the first three years of school, reading out aloud to every one. The higher grades read "Amongst Friends" which consisted of a lot of short stories. Every one knew their readers, time's tables and spelling backwards, this way every one found learning easy, especially for me, all through my life.

As time went by, the youngest brother had grown up a bit, so I was then able to get out side to help and play. I became horse mad. I set up a rail that held the stock crate off the cattle truck, hanging a spud bag over it, I tied it with hay band to hold it on plus a pair of old stirrups, I'd found, tied on, used for a saddle, and string for reins. The rest of the time I would help Dad around the farm, doing all the nightly chores.

One day when I was eleven years old, I got home from school, my father had been to the Traralgon cattle market and had landed home with a small dapple grey pony. What a thrill.

I thought it was someone elses at first. Well, this pony we named "Queenie" she and I was inseparable.

I spent hours with her, grooming, plaiting the mane and tail. I even learnt to keep the hooves trimmed.

We rounded up the beef cattle, mainly Herefords crossed with Angus, for veterinary treatment or to sort out a load to go to market the next day, or went riding down the roads.

But in a couple of years, I had grown up and was getting a bit big for Queenie to carry me around. By this time I was attending high school. When I was about thirteen, Dad came home from the Warragul market, said he was talking to someone who had a two year old, fifteen hands, bay thoroughbred, for sale, that was too slow to win any races.

Well, when he came home, he was lazy alright, riding him down the hills he would fall over his own hooves, almost falling over, but in a few months, this horse I had called "Frisky", with a lot of tender loving attention given, he changed altogether. He began cantering up and down the hills, rounded up the cattle, and went trail riding everywhere. Every spare moment, I spent with my new horse. When it rained, I spent the days in the old cow shed, just brushing and talking to my best mate.

My couple of school friends ended up with horses too, and we spent nearly every weekend riding all over the district, especially in the pine plantations, that were next to our farm, we knew every track throughout the area. We could ride for miles, even in the dark, having no gates

or fences in our path. Other times I had to play cowgirl and round up the cattle, Frisky became an excellent stock horse as well.

He was the fastest horse in the whole district. We rode to the Erica township heaps of times. When the annual wood chops were on, they would have a horse race, for the local kids, Frisky won most of them. After the race we all gave pony rides to help raise money for much needed courses.

Frisky had become my best companion, so much so that I trusted him with my life. I was riding him bareback in a homemade rope headstall around the farm. The little dapple grey pony had died some time back from kidney failure. I was devastated when she finally died.

But the worst day of my life was still to come. In the summer, when I was fifteen years old, it was too hot to ride and too many snakes around, as I was petrified of them. So I spent the day in the old cowshed, washing and sprucing up the bay thoroughbred, he shone like a Melbourne Cup winner. When the day cooled off, I decided to ride down the road, about half a mile away, which we've done thousands of times, to get the mail. I jumped on bare back with just the rope halter on, it was almost dark.

We headed off, cantering down to the mailbox, got off and picked up the paper. I found a stump to get back on and off back home we headed. By the time we were approaching the gateway, I could see that he was going so fast he wouldn't be able to turn the corner, without running into the corner post or run into the fence. I pulled on the right side of the headstall to edge him to go past, thinking he would stop to go back home. Boy, was I wrong. He kept going faster, past the gateway and down the road. By now I was hanging on for grim death, shaking in my skin. I hung on to his mane so tight, and gripped my legs to his sides. My heart was beating so hard, it felt like it was coming into my mouth.

Soon we came to the corner that led into the pine plantations; he knew every track in here, which went for miles. Things were going through my mind, where would I end up in the dark?

No one knew where I was, should I take a chance and jump off, No, my heart told me, I would get badly hurt; the horse could break a leg in a hole at this speed.

The next turn came up, I could only just see where we were going, my mind was saying GOD HELP ME!

Then, in a spit second he turned down a track that I didn't recognise, fear came on ever more, but in an instant moment, we came to a sudden skidding halt. This track ended up a dead end, with a big hedge of blackberries covering the whole area. Thank God, I thought. I flew through the air, over his head, somehow still holding the rope and the paper, landing in the middle of the blackberries.

I was a total wreck, my whole body was shaking in its skin, scratches everywhere from the blackberries, I could hardly stand. I slowly took a grip on the situation, thinking that somehow I had to get home. So the paper got stuffed down the front of my pants, out off the way.

Going up to Frisky, in a frightened rage, I gave him a whack with the rope, so he knew he had done wrong. I altered the headstall, so some went through his mouth, to use as a bit, I gingerly got back on from a log, gave the rope a good pull to let him know he wasn't going too go fast again.

We headed back home with him still wanting to go. I kept pulling on the rope and made him walk back all the way, probably a couple of miles to home. I put him into the horse paddock and went inside for tea. I didn't dare tell any one, as maybe my father wouldn't let me ride him again. But after that I never rode him again without using a proper bridle and bit.

Over the passing years I've had many horses, but none of them meant as much to me as my first horse did, and all the fun we had together; even now twenty five years later, since he passed away.

# Category Two - Short story

## First prize - Auden Pedersen

### Short Story Prize

*Life Shards*

By Beth Edmondson

I was pretty badly winded when he fell in love with the exotic oriental princess. It was one of those unexpected accidents that you find yourself in the middle of before you realize you hadn't seen it coming. Shocking. Even before the shaking fear settles upon you, leaving you a wondering, shivering mess.

She was gorgeous, of course. And young. But mostly I think, she was intriguing. Different. Hard to fathom. Not at all like me. With me you know exactly what's on my mind. Up front, declared, fully paid in advance - that's me. No secrets. Nothing worth hiding, I guess. Earthy, anyway.

But we've been married for more than thirty years, so you'd think by now I'd have had time to see most things coming. And usually I have.

But I didn't see this bloody great brick wall of groomed, manicured, well turned out exotica/erotica that my head has slammed into. And now I'm on the verge of senselessness. Not a skerrick of common sense left to manage myself with and all I am sure of is that I'm not sure who I am any more.

So, it's back to basics for me. I think I'll just deal with simple things awhile. Like how old am I again? And what to cook for tea. Nothing bigger than whether to make a roast or maybe lasagne on Sunday when the kids and their kids come home.

I hope I'm feeling more myself by then.

If I'm not feeling better I hope at least I feel more real. Less like a hollow shell, membrane-thin, tenuously connected to reality in grubby, baggy, gardening gear as a perverse advertising campaign to promote fitness among the retired. I hope I'll feel more like me. With a brain and body parts at least loosely connected.

I'm trying to hold it all together, to keep what the therapists call a sense of perspective. I've gardened up a storm, massacred weeds at every turn, pruned, trimmed and mulched everything in sight. I've even reached over the fence to trim a few ugly, unruly, over-reaching branches from next door. But the only perspective I still have is my own.

It doesn't seem much changed for all my efforts.

So here I am, a saggy, bitter bag of bones, in the kitchen, listening to the kettle buzz and burble its way to boiling point. It doesn't take me beyond my own limited perspective. It doesn't take me beyond dissatisfaction. I've put in a lousy performance and grumbling about this not being one of the best character roles is a less than convincing excuse. I've put in the hours all right. But they're never any guarantee of nailing a convincing, character-identified, or at least authentic-looking performance.

And there he is, smiling and nodding his way through conversation after conversation in the lighter than air mid-afternoon warmth in the glassy garden room.

As the tea brews, steaming itself redder, browner, darker under cover of china, I lean against the doorframe and eavesdrop. Tuning my ear to their cadences, I escape all too briefly to my own conversation with

myself. Their words cannot quite be captured. There is a steady flow of conversation shifting back and forth, back and forth, between them. I try harder to trap the words, but they slide away, slippery as wet soap.

His turn, her turn. One listening. One talking. Free from interruptions, distractions or responsibilities.

I am desperate to break their world. Raging jealousy rushes through me, pummeling my senses. All ideas of perspective rush from reach, retreating from the attempted grasp of my storming brain. There they go, blown right away out the window, up over the hill on their sudden rush towards the sea.

I pour the tea and take it to the garden room. It was once my favourite indoor space. Now it is occupied to exclusion by them. The flowers, huge elaborate dangling blooms on suspended fuchsias seem cheap, garish. Floral sluts. Chorus girls of the plant world, their skirts lifted high providing a perfect backdrop to unfaithful acts.

He looks at me. He smiles at my familiarity. My heart leaps, instantly full of foolish schoolgirl hopes. I want him. I want him still.

He continues to smile, eager to please me, to include me a moment in his world. It's a gift. I hold the moment, inhaling its calm generosity.

Then she speaks. And he is lost to me.

The kids and their kids come and go. They tell me not to take it so hard. Humour him. Keep him happy, it'll be all right, they say.

Sweet little they know. They know nothing of how it is to be reduced beyond the point of soul destruction by something so futile. They know nothing of the layers of impact of bathing and wiping the shit from the one-time world's greatest lover. He was agile, sensitive, a genius of erotic pleasures. They know nothing of that, too, I think.

It's unravelling before me. The weeds have grown back in the garden. The mulch has lost all springiness. His eyes have grown more and more glazed. He is more remote and each day becomes less familiar. His smile is all but gone. Only when she speaks to him now does his smile return, responsive to her coaxing. Their easy to and fro conversations have fallen away. There is neither pleasure, nor relief, in this.

I had imagined I'd find some relief, some more space for breathing and hearing myself breathe, when he stopped hoping for her appearance at each twist and turn of days and nights. There are new depths of emptiness and fewer moments of hope.

Delusions of recovery have seeped away. There are now few moments, snatches of time, when bright, shiny, new mornings of normality break the impending death mask. Life is growing numb.

He doesn't look for her any more. He just sits. Sometimes when she appears, he listens to a few odd, random, shards of life.

I bring him tea as the programme ends. The theme music begins. The credits distort her too perfect, beautiful face, fleeting scars shadowing her nose and eyes and lips. She has vanished again and he is momentarily confused. Then he forgets her. I turn off the television and hope to distract him.

When I turn back to his chair, the outdoor light through glass behind him creates a grander aura than his now feeble hold on life warrants. I have grown rock cold.

I notice that the roses need pruning again.



## Second Prize

*New Beginnings*

By Margaret Clarke

I remember well the day a couple of years after the end of World War Two when dad came home and said, "I think I'll write to your Uncle Jack in Australia and see if he will sponsor us to live there. I think the opportunities will be better for everyone." Dad had been a prisoner of war in Germany after being captured at Dunkirk and he had found himself a little restless. So a complete change of location would help him to recover too.

Uncle Jack and Aunt Amy had paid us a recent visit on their trip to England. Dad had not seen Uncle Jack for many years. I think dad realised how much he had missed his brother and Uncle Jack gave him a glowing report of conditions in Australia.

After a great deal of discussion and advice from Uncle Jack, and a lot of correspondence, a decision was reached to emigrate. Lots of forms had to be filled out, and we had to go to London for an interview and medical clearance. We then had to wait for acceptance by the Australian government.

Once we had a sailing date Uncle Jack acted for dad in the purchase of a house in Trafalgar. Suddenly, leaving England became a reality.

A number of farewell parties were held for the family, lots of hugs and tears. I was especially close to my maternal grandmother and hated the fact I might not see her again. This is always the problem of course when families move to another country to live.

It must be so difficult when people come on their own to start a new life in a new country. I was so lucky to have a wonderful family for support.

On the day of leaving our hometown of Aylesbury it was extremely hard saying goodbye to relatives and friends, as we were going such a long way from all that was familiar and dear to us. We left from Southampton, having caught the boat train in London. Every time the wheels turned on that train they seemed to be saying, 'you are going away, you are going away', and to be honest after looking at the map of the world it really looked like we were going to the end of the earth.

The sun was shining on the white cliffs of Dover, which brought back memories of Vera Lynn who was loved by all the men who had been fighting for our freedom. The scene brought many a tear to strong-minded people. Many broke into song, everyone knew the words.

The Asturius was a large ship, and we shared a four-berth cabin. My mum, sister Brenda, myself and one other lady. The menfolk were in another section of the ship. So dad and my brother Cyril shared with two other fellows. Meals were taken together in the large dining areas. I'm afraid I only had bread and water for the first week as I was terribly seasick, and spent all the time in our cabin.

To pass the time there were deck games to play, quite a few played

## Third prize

*Maybe*

By Cassandra-Elli Yiannacou

children in my town had been telling their parents.

Sometimes having a dynasty of lies spun like a spider's web was not the smartest thing even if it was for protection. Sometimes not having trust over your other dynasties was not a good thing either but what if they betrayed you and you trusted them so much you hadn't suspected them. They knew all your secrets because you told no lies and you hadn't prepared at all. So maybe, just maybe, you should have a balance.

Maybe sit and just listen to the trees, the water and the flowers. She

remember well the day a couple of years after the end of World War Two when dad came home and said, "I think I'll write to your Uncle Jack in Australia and see if he will sponsor us to live there. I think the opportunities will be better for everyone." Dad had

cards, lots of reading and swapping of books, many talked of their hopes and dreams of a new life in Australia. Others just lazed away the time relaxing on deck. I became friendly with a lass who was going to Western Australia, we are still in touch today.

Although the voyage was long it was enjoyable, and we got on well with many folk eager to start afresh in a new country. There was only one time that the wild weather brought most of the passengers undone. The warning came when sliding utensils went whizzing across the dining room tables. Many of the staff were as ill as the passengers. The rails were lined up with bodies feeding the fish following the vessel.

When we reached Fremantle we were allowed ashore for a few hours. Although it was only August we were introduced to the Aussie flies when we sat down in a park to eat lunch.

Arriving in Melbourne we were met by Uncle Jack and his sister in law Aunt Eunice. I found that actually leaving the ship made me feel sad, I guess because it was my last link with England. Aunt Eunice suddenly screamed, "I've lost the diamond out of my engagement ring". Luckily my brother Cyril found it on the floor of the car. Aunt Eunice insisted in rewarding him, so Cyril had his first Australian money in his hand. He was very chuffed about it too.

We started on our journey to Gippsland and made very good time to Yarragon. Coming into Yarragon reminded me of scenery in cowboy films. Remember this was the late 1940's. The buildings were very similar. Yarragon can be so proud of how it looks today.

We stayed with Uncle Jack and Aunt Amy for six weeks until the house in Trafalgar that dad had purchased was vacated. In the mean time I started work in an office in Warragul, and dad started work on the railways.

My sister Brenda and brother Cyril were enrolled in school. They had enjoyed the time without lessons of course. So there was a bit of groaning when reality checked in.

Our trunks arrived for unpacking, and there was not a thing broken, much to my mum's relief.

When we moved to Trafalgar we discovered there was an outside toilet. We had only known sewerage, so of course it was a bit of a shock to the system but we coped very well with all the changes in our lives.

On our second day in Australia we got to meet Geoff who later became my husband. He was working with his father and brother as sharefarmers on my Uncle Jack's farm. That is of course the next chapter in my "New Beginnings" life in Australia.

wrote her name all over the dirt carefully joining it using a stick for a pen. Wondering why. Why had her parents chosen such and absurd name? It's not like it was pronounced M-A-Y-B-E-E the e was silent so it was pronounced M-A-Y-B, but still. A creeper had been slowly stretching towards Maybe as she was pondering this, gently tickling her face like her mother had done when she was little. She brushed it away gently and began to head back over the valley. Her hair black hair billowing over her as she walked.



*Continued on Insert page 8*

## Maybe ...

*Continued from Insert page 7*

Maybe kicked the dust with the toe of her Converse sneaker, her pixie ears poking out from under her beanie. When she arrived back to her home she found her satchel just as she'd left it ready for school wondering if she should risk being slaughtered and wag today, a familiar face popped up from behind a barrel.

"You can't wag today," informed her friend Leyla.

"And how did you know that?"

"Well you always contemplate it EVERY DAY." Maybe chose to ignore her friend on the basis that she was right.

"Where's Kian?" she asked.

"Oh behind the barrel." Maybe looked behind it to see Kian's bleached blond hair. She felt it was necessary to kick him, so she did.

"OW."

"Whatever, like that hurt?" Kian looked up and down at Maybe, then he smirked for a while.

"Nice uniform," he said referring to her black Levies, hoddie, and connies.

"Thanks nice monkey suit." True the school had uniform in way. You were required black pants but you also had to wear a white shirt, tie, and black shoes.

"Well, I guess you are wearing black JEANS, white TEE-SHIRT and black CONNIES, but where's the tie?"

"Right here." Maybe pulled out a daisy chain she had fashioned to fit around her neck.

"Okay let's get going." Kian paused for a second and then added,

"if you want another detention to add to the list." The three went to school making sarcastic remarks about their teachers, a perfectly innocent morning.

As the three stepped into the school Maybe shivered. "What's wrong?"

"I felt a chill go up my spine like I've stepped into evil." Receiving a few shoves they walked into class.

They sat down, Kian across from Maybe and Leyla on the other side of the room. Their teacher walked in and silence preceded the lesson. By second period Maybe was called to the office. She walked in fifteen minutes later and sat down. Leyla wasn't in Kian and Maybe's art class, she took woodwork instead. As soon as she sat down next to Kian she took out a compass and began fiddling with it. Kian was about to open his mouth and say something. He knew that when she started fiddling with things she was hiding something; she had trouble keeping a poker face. As soon as he began to form the words "are you okay?" their teacher told them to start work. Kian looked over Maybe's picture. As soon as he saw it one word had come to mind. Sad.

Kian looked over his shoulder, no one was coming over to tell him to "get on with it," so he decided to ask.

"What's wrong, I mean what happened in the office?"

"Nothing just the whole blah blah blah uniform is atrocious blah blah blah thing."

"A ha," Kian said slowly. How dumb did she think he was?

School passed that day without anything happening. After school Maybe had run off to the lake and Kian had followed. He watched her sit down at the bank, hug her knees to her chest and start to cry.

Kian considered her for a moment. Even smudged with dirt and teary eyed there was something about her that intrigued him. She seemed brighter than everything around her. It was as if she was lit within by a lantern that shone faintly through her skin.

He bent down next to her.

"Okay, what's wrong?"

Maybe took a deep breath "They're coming."

"Who are? Who's coming?"

"The soldiers, from my realm. I don't want to go though." Kian stared at her.

"But you have to, you're an enchantress." Maybe gave him a smirk.

"Yeh an evil one." Maybe raised her hand and sent Kian flying against a tree, manipulating the vines so they strangled him.

"Bye," she said disappearing on a black horse with a small guard of two soldiers

Several days passed of riding into the countryside until they got half way.

"Shouldn't be long now my liege. We are approaching the portal almost as we speak. But there is the small matter of our reward for taking you this far. I mean we are your partners are we not?" asked a foolish soldier.

"Oh thankyou really for taking me this far, but as far as anyone is concerned I work alone."

An hour later Maybe entered through the portal, her only company, her horse.

Maybe stared into her bowl filled with black ink, from there she could see her village searching for Kian calling out his name in vain.

"Fools," she muttered.

Maybe drummed her fingers on her chair in annoyance.

"How am I ever meant to take control of the world if you and your band of ignoramus soldiers can not do the simple task of capturing the princess!"

"I am sorry my liege, we will do better next time," covered a soldier.

"Yes you will or there won't be a next time!" "Now leave me!"

A few days had passed before the soldiers returned with the princess.

"Ah, at last princess, you grace us with your presence."

"What is going on? How dare you summon my presence here before you!"

"Oh. I'm hurt. Here I was thinking you knew a ruler when you saw one. On your knees!" Maybe barked.

The princess threw balls of light at Maybe but they were easily blocked by a black forcefield. Maybe laughed.

"You can't beat me. I am superior, stronger, and better. Lock her up."

"Why are you doing this?" the princess asked.

"Oh because I'm petty, vindictive, but most of all I always get what I want."

"If you're thinking of killing me and taking the throne....."

"Nonsense my princess I won't kill you, yet." The princess had a blank look on her face.

"You see, I need a certain potion ingredient that will make your murder look like an accident. So you can live, for now." Moments later the door swung open and in stepped Maybe's soldiers.

"My liege your dragon is ready."

"Hmmm. Maybe, just maybe, sooner than you think."

It was cloudy good cover as a black dragon is kinda obvious. Suddenly a fireball shot through the clouds narrowly missing Maybe's hair.

"Rebels," she muttered. A second one came this time singeing her collar. A young rebel named Saxon appeared.

"That was my favourite dress," Maybe said, throwing lightning bolt after lightning bolt.

Saxon threw another fireball, Maybe ducked and put up her force field. Saxon threw ball after ball getting weaker and weaker until Maybe let her force field down and threw one last fatal lightning bolt, killing Saxon almost instantly.

After that battle Maybe searched for more rebels but Saxon had acted alone. After she was sure that she was safe Maybe flew quickly through the canyon in search of the ceiclone root.

She had got it. She had fought through thorns, quick sand, man eating plants but she had got it. And now the princess would taste it.

"I won't eat it," the princess pouted.

"Oh you'll find I can be very persuasive," Maybe replied darkly.

She was dead. Of course Maybe had her minions bury her. But the thing was, as the princess died, the hope inside the villagers died as well. Now they were filled misery and despair. This was all the more brilliant, she thought to herself, as she stared sadistically out the open window.