

### **Who are your editors, Tina Cavanough and Trisha Buckley?**

I, Tina Cavanough, worked in Children's and Youth Services for over 10 years in the NT and Victoria. A move to Qld in 2007 saw me take on the position of Branch Librarian and, for the past six years, Reader Services Librarian, with Moreton Bay Region Libraries north of Brisbane. I have been involved with CBCA for a long while. My involvement began when I was working as a Children's and Youth Services Librarian at the Alice Springs Public Library in the mid-late 1990's. My involvement with CBCA has included stints as Committee Member, Vice President and President in both Victoria and Queensland and, for the past four years I have been a Board Member on the National Board.

Trish Buckley is a Secondary School Teacher-Librarian, a former CBCA Awards Judge, CBCA Webmaster and has also held positions such as Committee Member, President, Vice President and Treasurer in the CBCA Qld branch. Trish has an interest in Older Reader fiction, as do I.

### **Our areas of responsibility and contact details**

I am taking on the role of Reviews Editor. So I will be sending you out books for review, receiving your reviews and loading them to the site.

Trish will be responsible for the interviews, news items, booklists and other value added content on the site – which she will source and load to the site.

You can contact us both via [readingtimeonline@gmail.com](mailto:readingtimeonline@gmail.com).

### **Reviews**

Although you may be a very experienced reviewer, but please bear with me while I outline my expectations for your reviews.

**The first thing to think about when writing your review is “Who is our audience?”** Our audience is primarily made up of teacher-librarians, though we are working hard to get the site seen and used by public librarians, parents, childcare workers and anyone with an interest in children's books. When writing your review, please keep the audience in mind and point out aspects of the work that you think might be of interest to them.

If, while you're reading, a great way to use the book in the classroom, or at storytime, pops into your head – please include it in the review. We want our reviews to be relevant and useful as well as interesting to our audience. E.g. <http://readingtime.com.au/rift-breaker/>

**The main thing is to make sure you don't just give us a synopsis of the story.** A sentence or two giving the basic storyline is fine at the beginning, but what readers want to know is what you thought of the book and if it is worth them reading it. You might want to talk about:

- **The setting** – is it set somewhere unusual? Historical? Does the author make the setting part of the story – is the city a character in the narrative, etc
- **Characters** – anything unusual about them? Are they well-developed? Likable? Hateable? Do they develop over the course of the story?
- **Writing style** – is it written in verse? A more literary style? Does the author make good use of dialogue? Chapter breaks? Etc...
- **Overall feel of the novel** – you might want to compare it to another book, recommend it for readers who like another author, etc
- **If you are reviewing a picture book** – do the illustrations work with the text? Do they add to the story? Is the style of illustration appropriate to the story?

Mainly though, we want to know that you thought of it. It's okay if you didn't like it, you just need to tell us why. What didn't work in it? How could it be improved? Did it have any redeeming features?

Some examples of really good reviews on the site include:

- <http://readingtime.com.au/poppy/>
- <http://readingtime.com.au/egg-spoon/>
- <http://readingtime.com.au/wrath/>
- <http://readingtime.com.au/lisa-absolutely-loves-art/>
- <http://readingtime.com.au/cursed-cup/>
- <http://readingtime.com.au/scales-time/> - example of a review of a not-so-good book
- <http://readingtime.com.au/emu/> - excellent review of a picture/information book

## Review length

I would expect that your review would be at least 200 words, but, as we're in an online format, there really isn't a word limit. Having said that, I'm not looking for a 2000 word thesis on the book! If you need to write 500 words to say all you need to say – go ahead. If you can say it all in 300 words, that's fine too.

## Voice

Because we are an online review site, there is much more space for your voice in your reviews. I won't be editing your voice out. We don't want to read a review of your family's day at the beach, but if you had a personal response to the book, please tell us. If you read it to your kids/grandkids

and that experience is worth including in your review – include it. Online reviews can be much less formal than printed ones. Write the way you talk – but please do remember that your voice is taken as the voice of the CBCA by readers. We want regular readers to the site to be able to recognise the author of the review before they get to the end and read the name. Some of you have a passion for a particular type of book. We want to hear that passion. We want our readers to be able to think, “that reviewer likes the books I like. If he/she recommends something, it must be good”. We want them to look out for you and your reviews.

## **Links**

Because we’re online, we can include links in the reviews. You may notice that some recent reviews link to the publisher’s site for classroom ideas. If you would like to include links to publisher’s sites, author sites, other relevant sites in your review, please include them.

## **Highly Recommended Titles**

You will also notice that we have a Highly Recommended category of reviews. All reviews go in their age group category, but can also go in the Highly Recommended category. If you review a book that you think should be in this category, please let me know. We should use this category sparingly though. You are the voice of the CBCA. If we highly recommend every book we review, it dilutes the potency of our recommendations. So please only put it on truly stellar books.

## **How often will I be sent review books? What are the deadlines?**

In this online world, deadlines are not what they are for a print journal. When I send you books I will give you a deadline of roughly six weeks. If you read and review the books sooner, please send your reviews straight in. Once I receive your reviews, I will send you more books. (Books will be sent in bundles of 2-3 depending on what books I have in for review at the time). If you are an avid reader/reviewer, you could easily review 6 books a month. However, if you need a break – you’re off on holidays or similar – just let me know and I’ll wait until your nominated date before sending more.

## **Digital Reviews**

I am exploring the possibility of reviewing books in digital formats with publishers. This will most likely be Older Reader fiction. You would probably need to sign up to Netgalley. Then I would send you a code that allows you to download the ARC of the title to your device – and you read and review as usual. If you’re interested in this, please let me know your preferred reading device, iPad, Kindle, etc and your preferred format, e.g. EPub, PDF, etc.

## Preferences

Please ensure your list of interests and preferences is up to date, as I use it to send you suitable books. Likewise let us know if any of the information you supplied changes – i.e. you move house, take a position as a Judge, etc.

## Series Titles and Sequels

We do full reviews of books in a series and of sequels at Reading Time. Where possible, I will attempt to send the sequel/next in a series to the same reviewer who read the previous title/s. If you receive a sequel or series title for which you haven't read previous titles, and if the title isn't stand-alone enough for you to grasp the storyline, please let me know asap. We can often get earlier books in the series from the publisher, so you can use them as background for your review.

## Judging conflicts

If you take a position as a judge for a literary award while reviewing for Reading Time, please let me know asap. You will not be able to review books that may be submitted to the award for which you are judging.

## Exclusivity - Reviewing for other publications, websites or blogs

We know all our reviewers love children's books – and love to talk about children's books – so we expect you may well be reviewing for other websites, journals, blogs, etc. ***However, we must ask that the reviews you write for Reading Time are ours exclusively.*** You cannot publish your Reading Time review in any other place, or format. Once your review has been published on Reading Time, you may comment on the book in other arenas, but we'd love it if you linked back to your Reading Time review at any opportunity.

If you have a blog, or a GoodReads profile, etc, feel free to link to Reading Time to share your review, but it must always be acknowledged as a Reading Time review and the copyright of Reading Time.

You are welcome to talk about the books you review, but anything in writing must link back to Reading Time. Perhaps if you're doing a radio spot and want to mention a title you've reviewed for us, you could suggest people visit the site for the full review?

If you are receiving review books for another source, please let me know titles so I don't send you the same titles to review for us. If you do receive a book from us that you've reviewed for another source, please let me know asap.

If you have any questions about this, please don't hesitate to ask.

## **Other Reading Time content**

Reading Time includes interviews and news items. We hope to expand that to include book lists, classroom ideas and other useful material. Trish and I would like to invite you to contribute other content to the site. Perhaps you'd like to write a list of the best Christmas books, books about dogs, etc? Or maybe you'd like to write an article about reading to toddlers? If you're a CBCA member (and I hope you are!) maybe you'd like to write an article about a CBCA event you've attended? Maybe there's an amazing author in your local area that you'd like to interview? We'll take any content you'd like to submit. Trish looks after this part of the site, so please contact her to discuss your ideas.

We're very excited about the possibilities that lie ahead for Reading Time and we're looking forward to working with you to make it bigger and better than ever.

As always, if you have any questions, concerns, etc, please contact us.

Thanks,

Tina and Trish

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