

MY FAVOURITE BOOK[S] EVER

A difficult question indeed, and one I found very hard to answer.

Having been an avid reader all my life, there have been many books from many genres that have made a lasting impression on me.

From “Mates at Billabong” which I was sneakily, [at age 7], reading instead of getting on with my Correspondence School lessons, to the latest thrillers by a variety of popular authors, the delights, horrors, knowledge and challenges that books present have entertained, comforted and educated me.

So, to address the question of favourite, I resorted to the comments of the people that I used to teach and read to every day.

The Complete Adventures of Snugglepoot and Cuddlepie—May Gibbs

I think I learned more about the Australian Bush and its flora and fauna from this cleverly written and illustrated book than from any other source. It taught me to be observant of my surroundings, to look for nature’s hidden treasures, and to use my imagination to weave my own stories into my environment. I still remember my delight the first time I saw a real Flannel Flower, and my joy at the abundance of Boronias flowering secretly in the Piliga Scrub.

I like to think some of my students over the years shared my enthusiasm for Australia’s natural wonders or learned to be curious and appreciative of their environment, and not too scared when they first encountered a Banksia tree.



February Dragon—Colin Theile

Colin Theile was the author of over 100 beautifully written books on life in Australia. Perhaps his most famous is “Storm Boy” of which a popular movie was made and recently re-made.

But amongst the vast volume of his writings, of which I have read only 10, February Dragon remains my favourite, and despite re-reading it many times, [also to my students], it still reduces me to tears.

Theile's vivid descriptive writing, knowledge of the Australian landscape and intimate understanding of human nature, guide the reader through experiences to which most of us can relate personally.

Even if you are not familiar with the landscapes and personalities that inhabit his books, you soon feel that you know these people and have been to the places he describes. February Dragon brings close to home the unpredictable horrors of bushfires and the awful emotional toll they take on their human victims and the destruction of the environment.

