

9 March 2005

Literature Festival

Visit North Queensland, to go to a literature festival especially for young people.

MORRIS GLEITZMAN, CHILDREN'S AUTHOR: Part of our jobs as authors is to **enthuse** kids about the whole idea of reading.

NICK EARLS, QUEENSLAND AUTHOR: It's often finding the right book to **strike a chord** with someone.

REBECCA SPARROW, AUTHOR: I think it's incredibly important to realise that authors are absolutely normal people.

ALEX GRAHAM: By anyone's standards packing a school hall full of this many kids is **no mean feat**, making them laugh is something most wouldn't attempt and keeping them captivated, some would say, is impossible.

But not for author Morris Gleitzman. He's written three books about life through the eyes of a cane toad and he's talking to these North Queensland children about a subject they know very well: the best ways to kill one.

MORRIS GLEITZMAN: Get them in a jar put water in it and then freeze the whole thing. If you put a stick in the top of the jar when it's **frozen** you'd have a cane toad ice cream, yeah very nice.

ALEX GRAHAM: Morris Gleitzman's books have been enjoyed by primary school students for about a decade, ask them why and the answer's always the same.

NICHOLAS ANDREW, STUDENT: Because they're funny and I like funny books.

ELLIOT TWEEDIE, STUDENT: Yes he's got descriptive words and funny words in them.

ALEX GRAHAM: Meeting your favourite author is something young students outside big cities rarely get the chance to do; so **grabbing their signature is a must**.

MORRIS GLEITZMAN: I always trust that for every young reader there's one book in particular, it might not be one of mine, but there's one book that when they get their hands on it they're going to discover all the joys and fascination that stories can bring.

ALEX GRAHAM: In a marquee on the other side of the school, another well known author Nick Earls is giving senior students a taste of his work.

NICK EARLS [reading from book]: Look at it mate it's beautiful and look at what they're doing to it beau vista heritage bloody chase street of bloody dreams sounds like a bloody theme park not a place where you'd live.

NICK EARLS: I think we need to see people **growing up** today with a chance to connect with our stories, with stories set in their world, but also with the belief that being a writer is a reasonable thing to do, writing is something that is **done** by living human beings in their own state.

ALEX GRAHAM: That message seems to be rubbing off.

STEPHEN ALEXANDER, STUDENT: I think it's **inspiring** just to know that **published authors** can originate from **people just like us**.

LAUREN CAIRNS, STUDENT: They just seem like everyone else. You sort of think that they should be like high profile people but when you meet them they're just like everyone else.

NICOLA GARLAND, STUDENT: The experience of, I guess, seeing that they are **ordinary** people with **extraordinary** jobs and just finding that literature is recognised in society now, it's not just all sport.

ALEX GRAHAM: But at the end of the day, festival organisers say it's not about trying to **convert** hundreds of school children into best-selling writers but to give them the opportunity to meet some of their favourite authors and hopefully inspire them to pick up a new book and start reading.

JENNY GRANT, FESTIVAL ORGANISER: If they come and listen to Morris Gleitzman, Nick Earls, or James Maloney or Rebecca Sparrow and laugh at Marco Gliori then they may just go back to their school and go in the library and maybe just pick up a book and see what it's like and that could be the start to a whole new world for them.

story notes

enthuse

To **enthuse** means to make excited and interested.

strike a chord

To **strike a chord** means to create a strong feeling or emotion in someone.

Example: *This film will **strike a chord** with older people.*

no mean feat

not easy

Example: *Learning English is **no mean feat**.*

frozen

The past participle of the irregular verb **freeze**.

more information: [freeze](#)

grabbing their signature is a must

The word **grabbing** here is used to mean they are taking an opportunity to do something. They're getting the signatures of the authors.

A **signature** is a person's name, written down by themselves. Your signature is a sign that shows something really belongs to you. We usually call a famous person's signature an **autograph**.

A **must** is something they have to do.

growing up

becoming adult

For more on the phrasal verb **grow up**, follow the link.

more information: [grow up](#)

done

The past participle of the irregular verb **do**.

more information: [do](#)

inspiring

To **inspire** means to make people think they can do something, or to give them ideas to do things.

So to find it **inspiring** means that it makes him feel that he can achieve things like those published authors have.

published authors

Published authors are writers who've had their work printed somewhere such as books, magazines, newspapers or even on the internet.

people just like us

ordinary people

ordinary extraordinary

The prefix **extra-** means outside or beyond. If something is **extraordinary**, it means it's beyond what is ordinary. It's unusual, special or strange.

more information: [extra- prefix](#)

convert

change

Follow the link and listen to the way this word is pronounced when it means someone who has changed their beliefs.

more information: [convert](#)
