

INTO THE BLUE

CRISTY BURNE

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YEAR LEVEL: Y3–6

ABOUT THE BOOK

What starts as a fun snorkelling adventure quickly becomes a test of character and conscience when Blair loses his brother's beloved camera under the sea. Terrified to confess, Blair becomes increasingly wracked with guilt until two very different conversations – one with his great-grandmother and one with his cousin – help him find his way. A rare gem of a story that perfectly encapsulates the emotional minefield of a mistake and its consequences.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Cristy Burne is an award-winning children's author working on the intersection of story, science, technology and creativity. She loves snorkelling on the *Omeo* with her two boys, visiting her 98-year-old Nan (who is related to the Mews family of boat builders), and once, on a day she was absent from school, Cristy scored zero on a HASS test that someone else wrote her name on.

THEMES

- Relationships
- Family
- Secrets
- Responsibility
- Ocean/snorkelling

AUSTRALIAN CURRICULUM OUTCOMES

Y3–6 English

Y3–6 Humanities and Social Sciences

Y3–6 The Arts

Y3–6 Health and Physical Education

USEFUL WEBSITES

- Author's website: cristyburne.com
- Western Australian Museum, Omeo shipwreck: museum.wa.gov.au/maritime-archaeology-db/wrecks/omeo
- Coogee Maritime Trail: cockburn.wa.gov.au/Recreation-and-Attractions/Trails-Tracks-and-Lookouts/Coogee-Maritime-Trail
- In 2020, the theme of National Science Week was 'Deep Blue'; you can find a booklet of ocean-related resources and teaching activities here: scienceweek.net.au/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/2020ASTA-DeepBlue_ResourceBook_FINAL.pdf
- There are also some wonderfully comprehensive teaching resources available from the Marine Stewardship Council at msc.org/en-au/for-teachers, including specifically science-based resources at: msc.org/en-au/for-teachers/ocean-literacy/saltwater-schools-ocean-lesson-plans-Australia/science-lessons



CLASSROOM IDEAS

Discussion questions

1. Before reading, discuss what the title *Into the Blue* could mean. What feelings does it evoke?
2. What is a GoPro? Has anyone used one before?
3. Have you ever been snorkelling? Describe the experience.
4. What literary devices has the author used in her descriptions on pages 14–15? (For example: similes, metaphors, personification, alliteration and hyperbole.) Why has the author included these devices?
5. After losing the GoPro, Blair tries to blame both the instructor (p. 17) and his brother (p. 21) for his mistake. What justifications does he use?
6. After Blair loses the GoPro, his description of the underwater scenery changes. Compare and contrast how Blair describes the ocean in the first chapter with his descriptions in the second chapter. What do the following words from the story mean? Try to guess based on context clues, then use a dictionary to check and use each word in an original sentence.
 - a. acrid (p. 16)
 - b. dosh (p. 18)
 - c. distorted (p. 21)
 - d. mope (p. 26)
 - e. nefarious (p. 30)
 - f. insufficient (p. 35)
 - g. supernova (p. 36)
 - h. barricade (p. 36)
 - i. incriminating (p. 36)
 - j. catastrophe (p. 49)
 - k. heinous (p. 53)
 - l. conundrum (p. 55)
7. Create a character profile for Blair, Marcus, Drew, Mum or Nan. Include their personal details, physical characteristics, likes/dislikes and personality descriptions.
8. Who is your favourite character in the story? Which character do you most relate to and why?
9. What is the significance of Nan's story about the *Omeo*? What message do you think she's trying to convey to Blair? Why do you think she doesn't answer when he asks her what he should do? (p. 82)
10. Have you ever found it difficult to own up to something you did wrong? Discuss why you think this was.
11. What does Blair mean when he says, **'Actually, picking up dog poop is way better than thinking about picking up dog poop'** (p. 93).
12. What was Blair's punishment for taking and losing the GoPro? Do you think it was a fair or unfair consequence?
13. Read the About the Author section after the end of the story. How has the author's own life influenced the story?

Creative Writing

1. On page 97, Blair reveals that Drew had to write an apology letter to Sean. Imagine you are Drew and write the letter to Sean.
2. Write an alternative blurb for the story. You'll need to entice the reader without giving away too much.
3. Write a poem or short story based on one of Nan's quotes:
 - a. **'When you live a life of adventure, you have to expect a few mistakes'** (p. 80).
 - b. **'If you haven't made mistakes, you haven't lived'** (p. 82).
 - c. **'... the hardest part is what comes after the mistake'** (p. 82).

Humanities and Social Sciences

1. The *Omeo* wreck is a real shipwreck located at Coogee Beach in Western Australia. Research online to discover more about the wreck and create a multimedia presentation to share your findings.
2. Plot the *Omeo*'s route on a map, according to Nan's story on pages 77–82.
3. What was life like for sailors on a ship like the *Omeo* in the late 1800s and early 1900s.
4. On page 13, Blair suggests the ship might have been filled with **'doubloons'** and **'pieces of eight'**. What are they?

The Arts

1. Reread Blair's initial description of the underwater scene on page 11. Create an artwork based on the description.
2. How do the images included in this book help tell the story?
3. Create a poster advertising the *Omeo* Shipwreck Dive Trail. The poster should entice people to visit and explore the wreck, as well as provide key information such as the location and distance.

Health and Physical Education

1. Success, failure and challenges can strengthen identity. What effect do you think Blair and Drew's experiences in this book have on their identities?
2. In what ways does a snorkelling excursion or other outdoor activity during the school holidays support good physical and mental wellbeing?
3. Throughout the book, the author describes Blair's physical responses to emotions. What feeling is the author describing in these examples?
 - a. **'cold floods his body'** (p. 16)
 - b. **'the tight feeling in his chest twists tighter'** (p. 19)
 - c. **'He's hardly breathing'** (p. 78)
 - d. **'The ants should be everywhere, crawling all through Blair's body. But the ants have gone'** (p. 87)
4. How does Blair's relationship with his family (including his Nan and cousin) change throughout the story? Which behaviours weaken these relationships? Which behaviours strengthen them?

Science and Technology

1. When Nan talks about the *Omeo* rusting in the ocean she says, **'Sometimes things are like that ... They can't be undone'** (p. 51). Rusting is an example of an irreversible change. So is mould growing on bread. But some changes, like water freezing into ice, are reversible. Can you list other examples of reversible and irreversible changes? What features of a change make it irreversible?
2. Blair notices the ocean currents **'push fish and weed this way and that'** (p. 99). Water's ability to exert a force can be used to generate electricity in hydroelectric schemes, tidal turbines and even old-fashioned water wheels. Can you research, then design and build a working model water wheel?