



First Tuesday Book Club: Glenna Thomson & Lindy Schneider: Dymocks Camberwell

Is Your Book Y.A. or Adult?

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Maybe I was wrong about the audience?
I thought my murder/ mystery ‘[Celebrant Sleuth; I do or die](#)’ novel was aimed at an adult readership. But at

the first bookshop talk, audience assumed it was YA partly because the dramatic, silhouetted cover appealing to late teen as well as adult readers.

Secondly, I'd written several YA novels and they didn't know I also wrote adult crime.

The topicality of Same Sex Marriage laws changing and the media emphasis on weddings rather than commitment services has moved my novel's setting into NEWS rather than fiction. That was unintentional as I started writing 2 years ago. I wasn't being opportunistic in choosing a diverse gender sleuth who was a celebrant. Five years earlier I co-wrote about trans youth in '[f2m the boy within](#)' which was the first YA about an ftm (female to male) co-written by an ftm, Ryan Kennedy. Adults have also found that novel helpful for starting gender discussions within their families. Literature 'distances' social issues and enables personal discussion.

What happens when who you are
on the inside clashes with what
you are on the outside?

Skye plays guitar for the all-girl Chronic Cramps, and is part
of the punk scene. Then a life-changing decision turns her world
upside down.

Skye becomes Finn, transitioning from female to male.
How will Finn's friends and family cope?



f2m

f2m

the boy within

Hazel Edwards and Ryan Kennedy



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And I've always been keen on the theme of coping successfully with being different, which I see as a strength not a weakness in my fictional characters and also in real life.

I'd chosen the occupation of celebrant for the versatile settings of weddings, funerals and other celebrations like naming or recommitment. And the fabulous locations from hot air balloons to beaches. I assumed that my asexual sleuth Quinn might appeal to the LGBTQI audience, but hadn't considered the YA and especially the LBGTQI+ YA readership. Even if these acronyms

tend to confuse some.

I didn't think 'Celebrant Sleuth' had youth appeal although I do have a minor 18 year old character Zac. But my sleuth is around 40. And the country community has people of all ages including the vintage millionaire Flora who is the secret owner of the retirement resort.

Character age doesn't always match readership but it's a good indicator.

Of course, there are adult novels written from the 'reporter' viewpoint of a child, where the reader has to interpret the significance of what the character is relaying to the readers. 'Scout' in 'To Kill a Mocking Bird' is the classic example.

Subject? All ages are involved in the ceremonies conducted by celebrants: funerals, weddings, name-givings and re-commitments. Extended family, blended, divorced or separated. Even if not the major players, most YA readers have been involved in these family events and seen celebrants in action.

The degree of violence is another variable in whether a novel is relevant for a particular group. But having just experienced 'Game of Thrones' which is extremely violent but with naked motivations ...and this appeals across the age groups, I may reconsider. Mine is 'village noir' rather than violent.

I think it is the problem-solving sleuth who appeals across the age groups. And the series of mysteries.

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If a parent and adolescent offspring both read the same book, that's a way of starting a discussion. My grandson and his father recommend science fantasy books to each other and talk about them. Good way of staying in touch.

How about a list of books which appeal to adults and their YA offspring? They don't all have to be mysteries. Adults can enjoy well constructed 'younger' books.

Jessica Townsend's 'Nevermoor' for starters?

Hazel Edwards OAM is best known for the children's classic '[There's a Hippopotamus on our Roof Eating Cake](#)' but has written for all ages including YA, adult and pre-schoolers. www.hazeledwards.com has details. Book Discussion notes, reviews of '[Celebrant Sleuth](#)' [here](#). 'F2m;the boy within' is published by Ford Street.

Glenna Thomson author page [here](#).