



# SOMETHING BORROWED,



something  
new

BY ISABELLA CREAN

Nestled in the Perth Hills is a town called Mundaring. It had a little library that was a quiet haven in contrast with the busy outside world. When winter gave a frosty kiss to rosy cheeks, the library was a toasty warm retreat. In summer, when everyone was fire plan ready against blazing heat, the library was a cool and refreshing respite. The crunchy hum of autumn leaves was silenced by the soft carpeting of the library. It was a place for everyone, whatever colour you were or liked, whether you went off road or crocheted, whether you played or watched football, whether you were just starting school or living the sunset years, the Mundaring library welcomed everyone.

Unknown to the borrowers, there was a hierarchy in this library. Like many libraries, there were the new books; the reserved ever popular, just can't wait to read them new books. The new books were found on the clean new shelves, where the in and out rhythm of constant borrowing kept the shelves pristine. Then, in the back, past the self-help gurus and the finance whiz kids, was an old unnoticed shelf. Layers of dust disguised the magic and wisdom of the books left in the old shelf. Huddled together somewhere between Black Beauty and Heide, two books down from Little Women and two up from Anne of Green Gables, was an old shabby copy of The Secret Garden.

Secret Garden and the classics always made sure that the veil of dust securely hid them from the borrowers because they were afraid of change. The classics clustered together claiming invisibility and clinging to the safety of their old shelf. The only sounds in the quiet library were the classics' shared memories and an unexplained distant but frequent beep.

The classics' friendship, like all epic friendships, endured years of change. There was a time when they were new and frequently re-borrowed from the return counter without touching their shelf. They shared stories about being rapidly devoured in the same homes, as they had once attracted the same readers. They had competed as to the number of stamp sheets neatly glued in their back cover, where the heavy thumping stamp imprinted the date they would be returned to each other.

After the borrowers and the librarians had gone home, the classics would reminisce. "I loved when mothers would borrow me to read to their daughters. There is a special kind of magic when a book is shared aloud" whispered Little Women. "Oh, I loved it when the little one,

wouldn't wait for bedtime to race ahead through the pages, only to pretend that it was for the first time, later with mother" confessed Black Beauty. "Being read and re read, without interruption, not even for walking or eating, or the bus or the well...giggle even there where everyone goes but we wouldn't mention" said Anne of Green Gables. "Well we wouldn't mention, but the 13 million trillion story treehouse that can't keep its pages dry from the outhouse" jeered Heidi. The classics also loved to share their observations of the new books.

"There are so many pictures in the new books – aren't the words enough to create a picture?" scoffed Black Beauty. "And all the space, and the big type, like the less words the better" announced Heidi incredulously. "I've said it before, and I'll remind you, it's easy to complain but the new books have to work very hard. There are more borrowers, different kinds of borrowers, not just the bookish kind, these new books make reading for everyone" Little Women reluctantly defended. "They do work hard" acknowledged Secret Garden "and they have the scars to show it".

Even though the new books were always chosen for book week, it came at an unenviable cost. Alice Miranda had been dragged through a school parade, drawn on, torn and ripped without a word of reading. Billy B Brown was another book week special that was drenched in juice, and ripped where the pictures were souvenired. It was usual these books spent weeks in the book hospital or never returned to the shelves. The sets missed their ailing volume until a newer version replaced the damaged one. It was as if there were never ending copies ready for battle. So overtime, Secret Garden and the classics began to fear being borrowed.

On an ordinary spring day, Secret Garden woke feeling a gaping hole to one side. The warmth created by the classics closeness had vanished. The cold set across Secret Garden's cover and panic rose with the realisation that Black Beauty was missing, borrowed. Secret Garden felt exposed by Black Beauty's absence, and feared for the missing volume. Afternoon sun sparkled on the old shelf. As sunshine tickled the classics' spines, they were unavoidably dozy. Sleep stole the classics away from their horror. In the afternoon haze, Secret Garden was awash with shame that Black Beauty had been borrowed instead of Secret Garden.

The classics usually woke to hear the end of borrowers' days. Today was different. Secret Garden woke early unexpectedly and was flying away from the old shelf. As sleep untangled itself from the pages, Secret

Garden realised with terror that a borrower had derailed the day. Secret Garden stole a floating glance at the trembling classics before the library desk loomed ahead. The power and permanence of the stamp seemed certain. Instead, and surprisingly, Secret Garden was wiped over transparent glass. A red beam tickled the black stripe tattoo. Without a stamp there was no return date! The only familiar thing was the sound of the beep. Secret Garden was confused.

When the clear library doors opened Secret Garden was fogged by rumoured narratives of destruction and abandonment. Fear of the outside world gripped the pages and Secret Garden braced for impending doom. Secret Garden's words surfaced bravely, "*So long as I know what is expected of me I can manage.*" With that Secret Garden looked out to the world and the majestic view was too overwhelming to bear. After years of municipal library seclusion, the sunlight sprinkling on the kaleidoscope of wild flowers was blinding. The beauty was unexpectedly breathtaking and had almost vanquished the fear.

After a baffling and rough journey, Secret Garden was birthed from a large bag and placed onto a small cluttered table. The borrower sighed as she stroked Secret Garden. Hearing that sigh, Secret Garden instantly remembered what a borrowers' sigh caressing old pages felt like, and what it meant. To be a comfort and confidant was what Secret Garden had missed. The words began to stir. The woman blinked. "Dinner will be ready in ten, so finish up your homework" and with that Secret Garden was alone.

Later that night Secret Garden pondered that sad sigh, and knew there was a story there. "Look, its old school cool" giggled a voice. Secret Garden froze. "It looks like a loaner has come to visit" grumbled a voice in the dark. Secret Garden remained still. Then a calm voice of authority said "Greetings and Salutations. Welcome to the living room. Let me introduce you. You've met Style, like all fashion zines it's all about the Look! for Style. Here's Swipe, the way of the future. Swipe can hold thousands of books, music and games" informed the large book. "Not to mention the whole internet, including Wikipedia, making you obsolete Pedi" bragged Swipe. Secret Garden stared at the thin flat screen called Swipe with awe. "And then there's Blah Blah. Wrap your spine around this. Imagine a talking book, like the ones in your library. Now imagine a collection of talking books that can move by invisibility cloak between phones, swipes, car stereos, anything with a speaker

really. Blah Blah reads books to time poor multitaskers who still crave words over the raucous noise of modern life.” Secret Garden was stunned. “Last but not least, our elder, holder of all facts, the answers to all our questions and more correct than Wikipedia” listed Blah Blah “not to mention leather bound with gold lettering” flattered Style. “Pedi the Encyclopaedia” announced Swipe. Secret Garden, knowing what it feels like to be flung out and landing somewhere strange inhaled bravery, deeply and whispered Secret Garden’s own words “*I am sure there is Magic in everything, only we have not sense enough to get hold of it and make it do things for us*”. There was a hush. “Well, aren’t you exactly what the doctor ordered” Pedi responded with respect. “It’s time to fold the corner everyone” said Pedi. Secret Garden was too exhausted to respond, and drifted into slumber, wondering about that doctor.

The next day, Secret Garden was gently nudged awake in the bag. Secret Garden could feel the borrower walking a steady pace, and there was a waft of disinfectant and mass prepared sad food. People were asking for updates and there was some distant whimpering. A loud speaker called “Code Blue” and running and beeping followed. With a halt that made Secret Garden jostle, the borrower had arrived. Any more swaying and Secret Garden’s letters might wobble off the page.

Secret Garden listened “There is nothing more we can do now. We will keep her comfortable, all she needs is company and to be distracted from her pain.” This was the source of the borrower’s sighs! Secret Garden was taken out. “Oh Mum, I loved this when you read it to me” the borrower whispered to an old lady. *When Mary Lennox was sent* ...the daughter began in a quiet voice. Secret Garden remembered what it was like to be loved and read. Secret Garden gave up the words gently. The words whispered into that room steadied the dying lady’s breath. Pages turned, chapters finished and the old lady opened her heart as the daughter prepared to say goodbye. The words floated like butterflies around the sick room. She was slipping further from life, in the comfort of a much beloved story book. Secret Garden pushed all the miracles of writing to these women throughout the night.

**B**ack on the old dusty shelf, Secret Garden was reporting back to the classics. “No really, I met Blah Blah, who can hold thousands of audiobooks and move from a phone to a car invisibly!” The classics shuddered. “We are just pleased to see you home safe and bound” said Heidi. “I’m more than safe. I’ve been borrowed and made

new friends. I've been read, and the world is different from this old shelf, but it's also the same. Secret Garden recalled the myriad of colour in the vivid wildflowers and looked out across the dazzling book spines in the library. They were ripe for the picking. Secret Garden shared the words. *If you look the right way, you can see the whole world is a garden.*

**a** few weeks later, a mother brought her reluctant daughter to the old shelf. "Mum, can't I dress as Alice Miranda? All the other girls are dressing as Alice Miranda". "Well you know I'm not interested in all the 'other' girls. I have just the book for us" announced the mother with a smile. The classics had defensively huddled but Secret Garden nudged forward eagerly. The young girl burst out "I can download that on my phone, I'm not carrying that old thing around". "Well I'm going to carry it. In fact I'm going to read it to you." The girl stared at the mother. The Secret Garden isn't old. It's new to you, and new to everyone who reads it for the first time. Secret Garden hummed as it headed towards the familiar beep at the loans desk. Secret Garden wasn't afraid. *And the Secret Garden bloomed and bloomed and every morning revealed new miracles.*



LARA BECKETT

*THE LIFE OF A TREE*



**I** couldn't imagine living somewhere other than Perry Lakes.

In the summer days, people and their dogs rest in my shade and stare up at the beautiful sky. Picnickers will stay there all day under me whilst eating to their hearts content. In the evenings, joggers come past me, brushing the tips of my branches and all my leaves tickling them.

In autumn, my leaves start to slowly wither and drop off. Children love it when this happens. They hide in my burgundy leaves and scatter them all over the lush grass. Then they push them all into a pile and jump on top of it. When children laugh, my heart sings with joy. If you go to the top of my branches, you can see Rottneest Island, a great view of the city and the deep, sapphire ocean containing mysterious depths.

In winter it's chilly and my branches are bare, but I don't mind so much when people come to the park. Even a few stray dogs are better than nothing. I get fewer children, but when they do come it's for longer because hardly anybody else is climbing me. Flowers and many plants look as if they will die from the cold, but I know that they will make it through until spring.

Spring is my favourite season. Birds begin to build nests and new baby birds are born. Sometimes, all that can be heard is the baby birds chirping hungrily, waiting impatiently for food. Many disgusting dogs come and wee on me. I hate it when that happens. I have new leaves and its perfect weather for climbing me. All day my arms are full of excited kids clambering all over me, racing each other to the top and even just finding a spot and resting. They especially love going on the rope swing a dad and his two children put up in one of my lowest branches to swing on. They always squabble over whose turn it is to go on it. When this happens, I feel that I'm the luckiest tree alive. I love being a tree.

**O**ne sunny spring day, a man and woman in uniforms and high-visibility vests start walk purposefully over to me. Every child saw and each one left the tree. I wonder what's happening. Everybody looks afraid and all eyes are on the man and woman. As they approached me, the woman told everyone that I was to be chopped down because they needed room to build more apartments.

I was outraged. So many people used me and loved me. I looked around. Not one single person was sobbing their heart out like I was. Wait a moment, there was a boy and his grandmother. The freckle-faced boy was thoughtful and his grandmother always cheerful. They both looked upset, especially the grandmother. I now remembered who they were; they both came every Monday to the park and the boy loved me. They stood as close to me as the new florescent fence would allow and looked very melancholy. Then they started to leave wearing long faces.

Not many people have come to Perry Lakes this week and hardly any children. But I did see the boy and his grandma. I overheard their conversation. "This tree has been here since I was young. This was my favourite park, and this was my favourite tree. I loved to climb in its broad branches. All year round, I watched it grow, until it became this towering, wonderful giant. I used to take your mum here all the time when she was little and I think she loved it as much as I did," the old lady told her grandson. He was listening intently.

"I love it too," he said softly.

**F**inally the day has come for my life to end. I see that many people are spread around the glorious park to watch. But the only people I want to see are the boy and his grandma. I know how sad they will be.

A truck arrives with several men. Then there's this huge machine which is used for chopping down trees as gigantic as me. People look at us with interest and start milling around. Then something brave happens, just as I am about to be cut down, the boy runs forward and throws his arms around me. "Billy, no!" his grandma screams. "You can't cut it down. I won't let you!" he cries. His grandma bustles towards him. "Stop right now. Build your silly apartments somewhere else!" she shouts. For a moment, it feels as if the whole world has frozen. More joggers come over to see what is happening.

"Move away," one man demands. They both stay stock-still, arms around me.

"If you don't we have to call the police," another man threatens. Both grandma and boy cautiously slink back into the crowd and watch in sorrow as my life ends. The boy sobs loudly and his grandma sheds lots of tears. The men draw out the sinister chainsaw and get ready to start

hacking through me. A chainsaw is shoved into my thick trunk as I fall to the ground, lifeless.

# PIRATES NEW NECKLACE

---

---



*Written by Leah Duxbury*

**M**any years ago there was a disgruntled pirate named Spence who lived on an antiquated wooden ship. It had clearly once been a thing of beauty, however, neglect had led to worn floors, sagging sails and a distinct smell of rotten wood. He lived a solitary life by choice, with no one to talk to and nothing to do except count his many bejewelled necklaces. Although this was a melancholy life, the one thing that made him happy was jewellery, or more specifically the theft of jewellery.

One day, a beautiful mermaid called Kelsea arrived at the pirate's ship. From neck to waist she was covered in glistening necklaces that sparkled like stars. In a lilting voice she called to the pirate, "I have found the most beautiful necklace in the entire world. I will give it to you in return for your protection." The pirate jumped at the chance, feeling that soon he would be as rich as a king. "That is fine mermaid. Return it in a few days and we shall strike our deal." Little did the mermaid know that the pirate had his fingers crossed behind his back. He had no intention of giving up his solitude to help this mermaid!

For days and days Spence schemed how he could set a trap to steal the mermaid's necklace. Finally he decided on his plan. He would capture the mermaid and sell her to other pirates for even more jewels! With delight he sent a seagull with a message to a neighbouring ship, inviting them to come. Then, from the bow of his ship he called to the mermaid. Eagerly she appeared, a great wave lifting her up to sit upon the ship's dilapidated hull. "I agree to give you me protection mermaid." Said Spence trying desperately to control his glee. "Now where is my necklace?!" Kelsea stretched her hand out, the gorgeous necklace dangling tantalizingly from her fingertips. It was even more beautiful than Spence had ever imagined. Mesmerised, his hands turned to jelly. Crudely he tried to gather up the net at his feet and toss it over the mermaid. Realising the pirate's sinister intentions Kelsea snatched the necklace back and dove into the safety of the ocean.

**N**ow, safely away Kelsea flew into a rage at the pirate's deception. "How dare he try to trick me?!" She thought furiously. Hastily she swam back to her cave where she found the most dangerous necklace in her collection. "This will teach that brainless clod a lesson!!" As night came Kelsea silently slipped on to the sleeping ship. Carefully, balancing on her tail she hopped to the slumbering pirate and slipped the cursed necklace around his neck. As

the clasp clipped into place its power was activated. “BZZ, AAHH!!” Spence woke up screaming in agony! The necklace had an electrifying jewel at its centre. Kelsea looked at the pirate with satisfaction. “Now every time you try to steal, you will get electrocuted.” With that she disappeared into the immense ocean, looking for a new, more honest protector.

**F**rom that day on Spence was unable to enjoy his jewellery, as when he touched the stolen items he received a sharp ZAP! He spent the rest of his days alone and sad, learning the costly lesson: crime doesn't pay.