

Are Any of Us Really Free of Trauma?

'Trauma is the response to a deeply distressing or disturbing event that overwhelms ...'[1]

As many as 75% of Australians will experience a potentially traumatic event at some point in their lives[2], and this statistic includes children. Author, Susan Fuss, has written about a topic that concerns her and that she has had to deal with during her three decades of teaching mostly primary school children and also, juvenile offenders. There are some children who cannot relate to others, cannot concentrate well enough to learn, have deep trust issues and show extremely guarded behaviour. Instead of asking, 'Why are you behaving this way?' we should be seeking answers as to what has caused such anti-social behaviour.

Fuss' debut psychological thriller, *I Am the Sand*, tells a mesmerising tale that could be true. Dark and challenging, at the heart of this story, is a vulnerable but courageous teenage girl, Chloe, held captive by an unhinged predator—yet, this same perpetrator has himself been a victim of childhood trauma. He shows a different face to the world ... shades of the notorious, Ted Bundy. As their two worlds clash, the perspectives of both characters unfold. How will this play out?

It is a skillfully woven narrative that drip-feeds data to the reader so creating nail-biting suspense. And even if Chloe escapes, having experienced such intense and repetitive trauma, can she really recover from this sort of violence and cruelty? Colleen Stan, dubbed 'the girl in the box'[3], a survivor of long-term captivity, abuse, and torture says in her autobiography, 'Two things most people don't understand are fear and evil.' Fuss creates a tense tale that draws us in as these two dark topics—that affect both characters so very differently—play out.

[1] UNYTE (2020), Trauma Defined, Karen Onderko, viewed October 2020, <<https://integratedlistening.com/what-is-trauma/>>

[2] Australian Government – Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (2020, Stress and trauma, viewed in October 2020, <<https://www.aihw.gov.au/reports/australias-health/stress-and-trauma>>

[3] Colleen Stan (2009), *The Simple Gifts of Life*, iUniverse

Contacts

Sue Fuss
0413402641
mailto: fussed7@bigpond.com