

## *The Cave*



- **Powerful story**
- **Youth culture**
- **Universal themes**
- **Confronting, Contemporary, relevant**

The Cave is a gritty story of courage and hope ... Susanne Gervay takes us on a journey, eight days' camping with the hero Knox and his mates including Fat George, Bennie and Jones, and the evil Watts.

This journey was eight days of descending into fear, exhaustion, ravines and rivers, each in their own way carving out a sense of self-knowing and mateship; eight days of reverie where past and present ghosts comfort and perplex. Ultimately, in the cave, Knox comes to a sense of responsibility and authenticity that is more powerful than the mystery of the Rave Party or Watts metal tip leather boots. ... Susanne Gervay compels us, like the river that is part of her story, towards the rancid murky Cave, the final place of initiation. This ... goes right to the heart of young males in modern society.

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*The Cave* is a journey oscillating between the city culture of rave dances, beach parties, body piercing, soccer, girls, nipple piercing and the vast wilderness of the Great Dividing Range with its powerful physical challenges of hard trekking, abseiling, rock climbing, white water rafting and there are the flies, thousands of them and the freezing nights and the sweaty days.

Against these backdrops, "The Cave" exposes male culture as young men search for their place in the world today. It explores mateship, leadership, male humour and the way they speak, or don't speak. It's about girls – getting them, discarding them, wanting them. However, ultimately "The Cave" reveals the underbelly of peer group pressure and male capacity for violence and courage.

It's eight days without showers, with the "long-drop", sleeping on rocks, eating "shit", working out how to survive the camp. It's tough when Spano weasels out of doing anything, but there's pay back. There are other guys like Fat George who are just slow. Watts has it in for him. Bennie has the runs and stinks. Guys hate him. Sam doesn't.

There are scenes of exhaustion as everyone collapses after the Chimney climb. Hilarious scenes at the kangaroo attack and leech invasion. Rough humour as Robbo and Andrew go for each other in the physics lab. There are times of reflection overlooking the valleys and scenes of Sam's relationship with Laura. Ultimately the camp winds towards the Cave and the final place of initiation where Jones cracks and real leadership is exposed. Ultimately the camp winds towards The Rave, the rape and Sam's decision of courage.