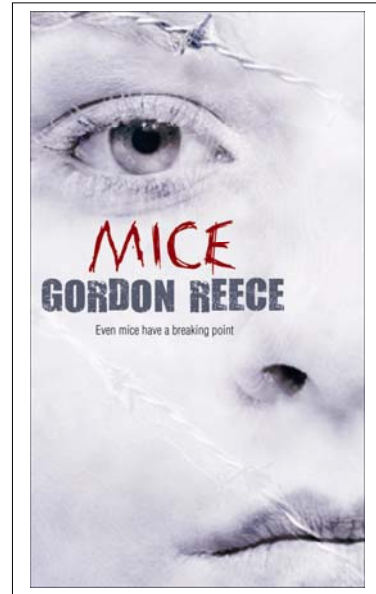


# Mice

By Gordon Reece

September 2010 ISBN 978 1 74237 235 8 pb \$19.99



## Summary

*Mice* is an electrifying book that readers won't want to put down. 16-year-old Shelley is the victim of severe school bullying, but her reaction to a separate incident means that she won't be treated as a mouse for much longer...

***Mice* is contemporary crime fiction, with a real moral twist.**

## Use in the curriculum

- Suitable for students aged 16+ (particularly years 10 and 11)
- VELS level 6 and year 11 VCE (Victoria), Stage 5 and 6 (N.S.W.), Standard 5 - stages 13–15 and year 11 (Tasmania), Year 10–11 (Queensland), Late adolescence (Western Australia), and SACSA Standard 5 (year 10) and SACE Stage 1 (year 11) (South Australia), Band 5 (year 10) and NTCE (year 11) (Northern Territory) and Early and Late adolescence (years 10–11) (A.C.T.)

Using *Mice* as a class text (either in English, Psychology or Philosophy) would lead to invaluable discussions about bullying, good and evil, right and wrong, and morality. It is suggested that *Mice* be studied:

- As an English text:
  - as an example of crime/thriller fiction;
  - as an example of the question of the reliability of the first person narrative;
  - as a basis for detailed discussions on the responsibilities of the author to the audience;
  - as a basis for a detailed piece of work on how bullying and violence may have lifelong psychological effects.
- In Psychology as a basis for detailed work on the psychological effects of bullying and violence.
- In Philosophy as a basis for detailed discussions on right and wrong, good and evil and the worth of a life.

Teaching tools to support the study of *Mice* could be *People Might Hear You* by Robin Klein and the *CSI* or *Silent Witness* television programs. A study of *Macbeth* may also prove useful due to several references to that text.

**Sample discussion questions overleaf.**

Visit [www.allenandunwin.com/teaching](http://www.allenandunwin.com/teaching) for free down-loadable teachers notes, reviews by teachers, extracts and more. And sign up to the Allen & Unwin e-newsletter to receive monthly updates on new resources!

Contact Kate Justelius -Wright, Educational Marketing Department  
Ph: +02 8425 0150 Fax: 02 9906 2218 Email: [KateJ@allenandunwin.com](mailto:KateJ@allenandunwin.com)

In the classroom...

# Mice

by Gordon Reece

## Discussion Questions

1. "Yes, Miss...Everything's fine, Miss." (p. 28). Why does Shelley protect her tormentors?
2. Shelley reads *Macbeth* and likens her tormentors to the three witches (p. 31). Can you see any of Macbeth or Lady Macbeth in Shelley or her mother?
3. Shelley says "It's what we can't share with others that really defines who we are." (p. 35) Discuss.
4. "I looked at my reflection and was unable to recognise myself. The face of a *savage* stared out at me..." (p. 115) and "Does the way we look affect our personality? Or does our personality affect the way we look?" (p. 18). What are your thoughts on the influence of one over the other?
5. Shelley says "Only if there was intelligence, real intelligence, could there be any sympathy for the victim." (p. 200) What are your thoughts about this statement? Explain why you feel that way.
6. *Mice* uses animals as symbols. Can you compare animal characteristics with at least five characters in the book?
7. Shelley discusses the "the clash between good and evil" (p. 159). Are Shelley and her mother good or evil? Justify your opinion with quotes from the book.
8. "I don't feel guilty about what we've done... I don't feel guilty about any of it..." (p. 304) How does this statement paint Shelley? Do you agree that all of the actions of Shelley and her mother were justified? Why or why not?
9. What devices does the author use to get the reader to side with Shelley and her mother, even though they have committed one murder and plan another? What are your thoughts on how the author uses these devices?
10. Are authors responsible to teach their audience something? If so, what did you learn from *Mice*? Are there moral issues with that?

Curriculum recommendation and discussion questions prepared by **Judith Way**.

Judith Way is a teacher-librarian with a Graduate Diploma of Children's Literature and a Master of Arts. She was the recipient of the School Library Association of Victoria's John Ward Award for outstanding contribution to teacher librarianship in 2007 and the SLAV Innovators Grant in 2009. She was awarded the Children's Book Council of Australia Eleanor E. Robertson prize in 2003. She has presented at conferences locally and internationally. Judith writes the Bright Ideas blog (<http://slav.globalteacher.org.au>) for the School Library Association of Victoria and has compiled the Readers' Cup blog (<http://readerscup.globalteacher.org.au>).