



Melody Trumpet

By Gabrielle Tozer

Book Summary

As the daughter of global music superstars, Melody Trumpet was supposed to be extraordinary - a melodic genius to carry on the Trumpet legacy.

But, as was discovered when Melody screamed her first out-of-tune note as a baby, this wasn't to be.

Ten years on, Melody is still kept away from the world in Trumpet Manor.

If only secrets could stay hidden ...

For Melody Trumpet, it's about finding the extraordinary in ordinary!

Key Learning Outcomes

Language and Literacy

Themes

Family, Friendship, personal, social and community health

Recommended Ages: 8+

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Gabrielle Tozer is an award-winning and internationally published author and freelance writer based in Sydney, Australia. She has published five books, including the young adult novels *Remind Me How This Ends*, which was on the Children's Book Council of Australia's 2018 Notable list and longlisted for the State Library of Victoria's 2018 Gold Inky Award, *Faking It* and *The Intern*, which won the 2015 Gold Inky Award.

Her first picture book, *Peas and Quiet* (illustrated by Sue deGennaro), was published in 2017, as was her YA contemporary short story 'The Feeling From Over Here' (featured in *Begin, End, Begin: A #LoveOzYA Anthology*, the Book of the Year for Older Children at the 2018 ABIA Awards). *Melody Trumpet* is her first children's novel, and she is currently working on another young adult novel and picture book. (Yes, that's why she still hasn't brushed her hair.)

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Themes

- Family
- Being yourself
- Friendship
- Pressure and anxiety
- Loneliness
- Fear of failure
- Secrets and lies
- Creativity

Curriculum Links

- ACELA1493
- ACELT1603
- ACELT1607
- ACELT1794
- ACLEY1695
- ACELT1610

Classroom Activities

- *Sometimes you have to be brave, she thought. You have to do the thing you don't want to do. Tell the truth, even if your heart's thumping so fast you think it might burst straight through your chest. (150)*

Write about a time when you had to tell the truth, even though you were afraid (or a time that you didn't tell the truth but wish you had). How did you feel before you told the truth? How did you feel after? How did the person you told react? Discuss secrets and lies in the classroom. What are the differences between each? Are there times when it is best not to tell the truth?

- *When Mr Trumpet sees Melody 'laughing, smiling relaxed' he thinks that she has 'all the signs of a child who has found her talent' (86). In fact, these are signs of something else.*
 - What is making Melody happy? Do you think that Mr Trumpet will see these reasons as worthwhile?
 - What difference does it make to Melody's life to have friends? How do your friends make you feel?
 - Write a letter to a friend telling them why you are happy to have them in your life. Share with them a time that they have helped you overcome a problem that you couldn't have dealt with alone.
- How is the world of The Workshop different to Melody's own house? What language does the writer use to describe each place? Think of two places that you're familiar with that are very different from each other. Make a list of words that you would use to describe each of them. Try to include things like the way each place makes you feel, the people you encounter, the colour, shapes and light of each place, and what happens in each. Try to imagine what kind of stories you might set in one or both of these places.
 - What do the places in the book tell you about the people who live there?

- Mr and Mrs Trumpet want Melody to be just like them, but she is special in her own way. What makes you smart? What are you proud of knowing how to do that others might not know? Share with a friend in class something about yourself that you are proud of and invite them to do the same with you. Now share something that you've noticed the other person is good at. See if you can work together to teach each other something new, and share your new knowledge or skills with the rest of the class. Create a smart board for the classroom — stick a photo of yourself to the board, with a speech bubble that says 'I am smart at _____' to share your smarts with the rest of your classmates.
*a good book to pair this activity with might be *All the Ways to be Smart*, by Davina Bell (Scribe, 2018)
- 'I look at that blank wall and think of the endless ways I could colour it in. Isn't that exciting? We can all make the ordinary extraordinary in some way.' (120) Take a blank piece of paper — this is your blank wall. What would you create if you could create anything? Draw a picture/write a poem/write a story. Fill the blank wall with your extraordinary thoughts.
Melody shares her talents with her friends, and together they create something that none of them could have created alone. Share your work with a partner or a group, and see if you can combine your ideas to come up with something even more spectacular.
- Why do Melody's words abandon her (126)? What makes you feel nervous or uninspired? What inspires you? Make a collage of things that inspire you — these might be images, colours, quotes or photographs. What does your collage inspire you to create? Come up with a short creative work (it can be writing, drawing, anything at all) inspired by your collage.
- In order to write her poem, Melody thinks about everything that has happened to her in the last few days. Make a list of everything that has happened to you in the last twenty-four hours. What have you done? What have you seen? How have you felt? What have you said? Choose ten things to write a list poem that describes your day. Try to include one of the following in each line: a colour, a smell, a feeling, a sound, the temperature, the time, a person's name or an object.

- Mrs Trumpet refers to herself as a 'loving, supportive parent' (149).
 - Do you think this is true? Why/why not?
 - How do you think parents should behave to their children?
 - Can you find examples of good parents in the book? How do they behave differently to Mr and Mrs Trumpet?
 - How do you think the story might be different if Mrs Trumpet was the person telling it? Try writing a chapter from the book from the perspective of one of the other characters.
- The author has named the characters in the book based on what they do — Mrs Sprinkles, Mr Bloom, Mrs Trumpet.
 - Does Melody's name suit her? How is she different to the characters listed above?
 - Some of the characters use only their first name, and towards the end of the book Melody chooses to do this too. How does this choice free her from the expectations of her parents and their fans?
 - Think about the people in your life — your mum, dad, teachers, siblings and friends. If you could name them the way the author has, who would they become? What kind of story might you write about these characters?