

Book Review: Looking for Alibrandi by Melina Marchetta

By Rachel Loveday

Melina Marchetta's *Looking for Alibrandi* is a story of crossroads, self-acceptance, freedom and growing up.

Looking for Alibrandi is the story of Josephine Alibrandi—a seventeen year old Italian-Australian girl who is completing her final year of school. Throughout the year she meets and forms a stable relationship with her estranged father, unexpectedly falls in love, loses a friend, discovers a major family secret and ultimately learns to accept herself for who she is and enjoy life.

Marchetta's use of first person point-of-view makes it easy for the reader to empathise and connect with the protagonist, it also makes the novel flow well and an easy read.

Marchetta has an ability to accurately portray a teenage girl, as well as the life and the problems that teenage girls face, such as; constantly being embarrassed by family, a need to be popular and a desire to date the wealthy, popular boy. Marchetta also has the ability to accurately portray and raise awareness of serious life issues affecting teenagers today, such as the pressures of the Higher School Certificate (HSC), teen suicide and parental influence. The combination of these abilities, which is vital in writing teen fiction, is what makes the book such an easy, believable and enjoyable read.

It is also easy to see why the book was widely acclaimed and successful, so successful that it is now a compulsory text to extensively study in the Higher School Certificate—it is one of the texts I studied myself when I was completing my Higher School Certificate in 2008. I have studied and read it many times and I have enjoyed it every time and I will never tire of it.

I thoroughly enjoyed the humour, romance, tragedy, heart-warming moments and most importantly, the realism that is present in *Looking for Alibrandi* and I highly recommend it to girls aged from thirteen to eighteen.