

Miles Franklin Literary Award 2007
Shortlist

Careless
Deborah Robertson
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Pearl and Riley closed the door behind them. From inside they could hear their mother crying. They were four storeys in the air and it was a hot day. She was eight, he was five.

Riley's lips quivered. 'What will we do?' he said.

She looked down. And then she smiled for him the madonna of all smiles; serene and consoling, a smile so at odds with her own true feelings that only a grown woman should be capable of it.

Eight-year-old Pearl tries very hard to get things right. She watches over her small brother and manages her mother's happiness, while carefully guarding her private passions. But the events of a summer's day are about to change Pearl's life, and nothing may ever be right again.

In a cooler, greener suburb, Sonia is learning to live alone after the death of her husband, and at the edge of the city, close to the beaches, the young artist Adam Logan is hoping that his recent celebrity will open the doors to a new life. In ways connected but unforeseen, Pearl's tragedy will soon affect the worlds of these two strangers.

Combining the intimacy of a family's heartache, with the suspense of a thriller, *Careless* is a gripping, seductive novel about the ties of caring and responsibility that are formed, and broken, in our society.

It is a novel about our times.

About Deborah Robertson

Deborah Robertson was born in Bridgetown, Western Australia. Her first book, *Proudflesh*, won the Steele Rudd Award for the best Australian short story collection in its year of publication, and her stories have been published widely at home and abroad. She teaches writing at Murdoch University and lives in the port of Fremantle.