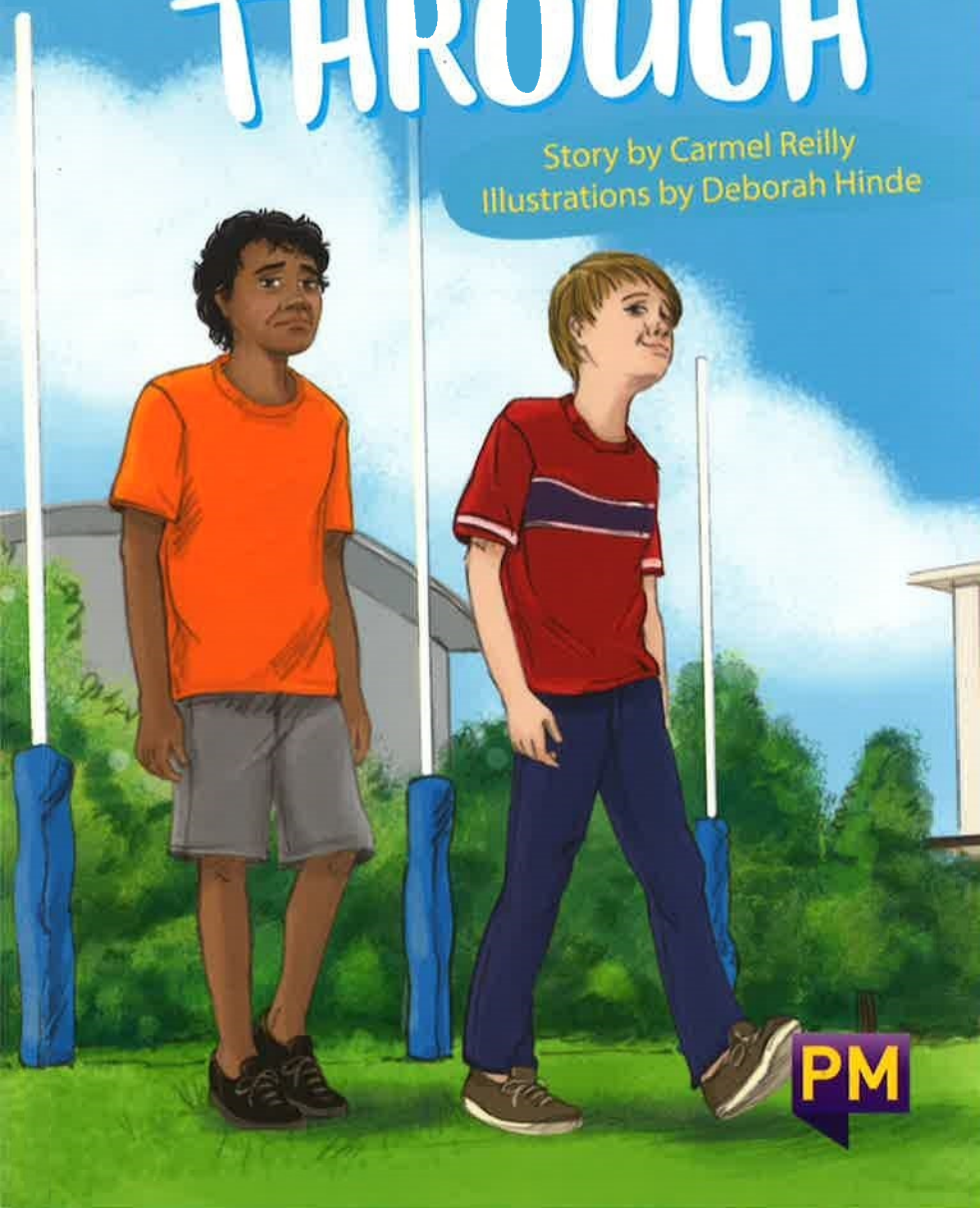
PASSING THROUGH

Story by Carmel Reilly
Illustrations by Deborah Hinde



PM

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Passing Through

Level 30

Running Words 8259 **Text Type** Narrative (Imaginative)

Curriculum Areas Literacy; Personal and Social Capability

Oral Literacy Focus for Students

Key issues from the text to encourage critical thinking and stimulate group discussions:

1 Explain the purpose of Helen's role at the school.
2 Compare Lewis's life at home with his new life at boarding school
3 Hold a debate: it is better to achieve at sport than classroom subjects
4 Expand on the old Aboriginal saying that Tilly recited in Lewis's dream
5 Design a timeline about Lewis's achievements during and after his time at boarding school.

Written Literacy Focus for Students

Key issue from the text to present in visual and written form to an audience:

1 Research the topic 'Living in a Community'.
2 Prepare an exposition: 'Why Living with Others Is Important'.
3 Edit and revise the text.
4 Present the text to an audience.
5 Critically evaluate the presentation.

Links with other PM Guided Reading Books and Cards

Level 30	Book	Narrative	*Beware of the Mist*
Level 30	Book	Narrative	*Friends Forever!*

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CONTENTS

Chapter 1	The Big City	5
Chapter 2	Back Home	10
Chapter 3	Welcome to School	13
Chapter 4	Too Quiet	18
Chapter 5	A New Room-mate	22
Chapter 6	New Friends	29
Chapter 7	Settling In	34
Chapter 8	Strange Noises	41
Chapter 9	Friday Night	45
Chapter 10	A Good Sport	52
Chapter 11	Time to Talk	56
Chapter 12	Sharing	62

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Chapter 1

THE BIG CITY

Lewis sat in the passenger's seat of the car as it sped away from the airport, onto the freeway that headed towards the city.

He stared out at the unfamiliar landscape – flat, yellow countryside out one window, vast car parks for the airport out the other.

The road unrolled in front of them like a thick strap of liquorice. Cars, trucks and motorbikes whizzed past in both directions.

"I don't suppose you have so many cars up where you live?" said Helen, who was driving.

Lewis, who lived in a small community in remote central Australia, shook his head and laughed. "No, not this many. There are only a few hundred people in Mira River."

"But you've been to the city before, haven't you?" asked Helen.

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"I went to Alice Springs for my interview to come here for school," Lewis responded. "But that wasn't really very big."

"No," Helen agreed. "Not compared to Melbourne."

Soon, they turned off the freeway and into the city centre. They passed shops and larger buildings, before turning into another street where the buildings were so high that everything was completely in shadow.

The people on the footpaths nearby all seemed to be in a hurry, with most using their phones. Lewis noticed that, even on a hot day like this one, most of them were wearing dark clothes – even the ones who didn't look like they were going to work.

And everyone was wearing shoes. Lewis wiggled his cramped toes inside his runners, and smiled as he thought about pulling his shoes off as soon as he could.

"These buildings are tall, aren't they?" said Helen. "Some of them are more than eighty storeys high."

"Eighty storeys …" he echoed, turning his head upwards, and pressing his face to the window to see if he could glimpse the tops of the buildings.

Lewis came from the desert. Everything was flat there as far as the eye could see.


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The only buildings at Mira River were all single storey. Even in Alice Springs, the tallest buildings were only a few levels high.

Soon, the car had moved through the dense traffic and out of the city centre. Once again, Lewis could see the sky.

They passed shops, car yards, petrol stations and hotels. Helen told Lewis about his new school and a little bit about her job as a boarding-house supervisor, looking after students like him who came from all over the country.

They drove alongside a park that seemed to stretch for miles. Lewis became distracted and stared out the window. Everywhere he looked, there were people running, people cycling and people walking their dogs.

It occurred to Lewis suddenly that nothing here in the city seemed like home, even though he was still in the same country. It wasn't just that the city was so enormous. It was the colour of the land and the sky, the smells, and the feel of the air around him, as well.

He felt like he was in a foreign place, and he shivered a little at the thought of being so far from home. Everything felt different. Weird.

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But then, everything had been feeling weird in one way or another since he'd stepped into the truck yesterday morning … even since before then, really, if he thought about it.

Perhaps since his mum first mentioned the idea of going to boarding school in Melbourne last year – since she suggested doing something no one else in his family had ever done before.

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Chapter 2

BACK HOME

Lewis's mum's name was Tilly. She was a tall, slender woman, with dark, glowing skin and a brilliant smile. When Lewis thought of her, the word "kind" came into his mind. She was the sort of person who never changed, no matter what.

She was almost always cheerful and positive. It wasn't that she didn't become angry sometimes. She would certainly always tell Lewis if she wasn't content with something he'd done – or more likely something he hadn't done. But once she'd let him know this fact, her annoyance passed and she was back to being her usual self again.

Lewis was glad she was his mother. He hadn't seen his dad for years now, and really didn't know him at all. Having one outstanding parent seemed to him to be just as acceptable as having two parents who were merely satisfactory.

For as long as Lewis could remember, his mum had always said that she wanted him to achieve

15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25
26
27
28
29

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Lewis has moved to a new school in a big city from his home in a remote Indigenous community. It is his first time away from family and friends, and Lewis feels very homesick. He is also struggling to keep up with his school work.

But as time passes, and remembering words from his mum, Lewis begins to learn that he is just passing through a new place, and that soon it may feel like home, too.



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Narrative (Imaginative)

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