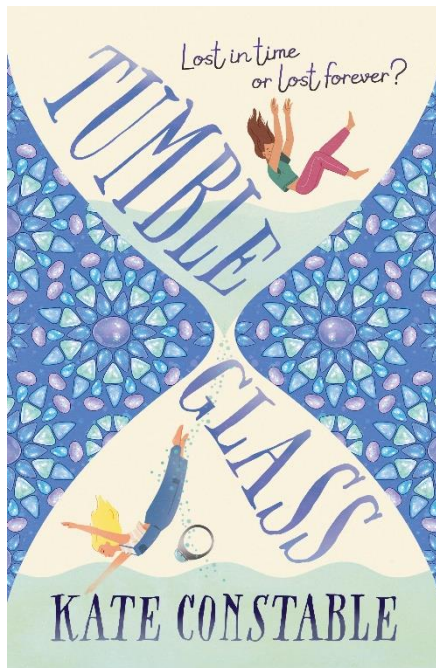


Tumbleglass

By Kate Constable



Thirteen-year-old Rowan is helping her older sister Ash paint her bedroom when she discovers a mysterious ring that transports them both back in time to 1999. To a party being held in the very same house!

While Ash dances, Rowan unwittingly disrupts the laws of time, and when she wakes up back in the present day, her sister is missing, and – even worse – everyone in their family seems to be forgetting she ever existed.

With the help of her magical neighbour Verity, Rowan must find the courage to travel back through the history of the house. But can she find everything she needs to rescue Ash before her sister disappears forever?

A warm and beautifully told time-slip novel, brimming with secrets, gentle magic and the strong bonds of family, from one of Australia best-loved children's book authors.

RECOMMENDED FOR

9 – 13 years old, Years 4-7, Primary/Lower Secondary

THEMES

Time-slip, family, siblings, history, resourcefulness, resilience

ISBN (AUS)

9781760525026

Classroom Activities

- **Characterisation:** *'Tansy thought Verity's workshop was scary, Ash found it chaotic, but Rowen was entranced.'* (page 54).

Sisters, Tansy, Ash and Rowen are three very different people. (a) In your own words describe each character's strengths and weaknesses, using examples from the book to illustrate your point. (b) Create a Venn diagram to illustrate their shared characteristics and differences.

What does Rowan learn from her travels to different points in Australian history?

- Attending the party in 1999
- Taking part in a Land Rights march in 1972
- Meeting Ernie and Jack in 1940
- Eating lunch with Edith and Flora Whitecross in 1900

Sometimes a simple trait can help define a character. (a) Take for instance Laurel and her mangled sayings. What did they suggest about her character? (b) Make a list of her mangled sayings in the novel and the correct version of each. (c) Can you think of any other traits that make a character in the story stand out?

- **Literary Terms:** What do the terms *time-slip* and *magic realism* mean? What incident or incidents in the story could be described as an example of one or both of them? Why do you think the author decided to use *time-slip* and *magical realism* in her story? Did they make the novel more interesting for you?
- **Point-of-View:** Retell the story from Verity's POV. How might her description of Rowan and her adventures in time differ from Rowan's POV.
- **Comprehension:** *' "Your house is built on...Let's call it a crack, a crack in time, a vulnerable place, where the boundaries of time are thin, We call it die Schwäche."* (page 57)

'This was a happy family, thought Rowan. Like her own family had been, up until a week ago when Ash had disappeared and everything turned weird. She's never understood before how fragile happiness was, how it could shatter so quickly.' (page 144-45)

In your own words explain the idea of *die Schwäche* and why it sent Rowan back to 1999, 1972, 1940 and 1900.

'“It doesn't have to be perfect. That isn't the point. The point isn't what you end up with. The point is the making”...' (page 275) What do you think Verity means here? What 'point' might Rowan discover painting the mural on her house?

'Made by humans, perfected by nature, Verity said. Born from sand and fire, smoothed by sand and water, tumbled in the ocean for years.' (page 12) Why do you think the book is called *Tumbleglass*? Other than the ring, what other objects in the story relate to the title?

(a) What do you think is the significance of the tiny folding knife that Rowan finds on her bedside table at the end of the story? (b) What do you think might happen to her after she becomes 'the guardian' of the house?

- **History:** (a) What period in time would you choose to visit in Australia's history? (b) Who would you most want to meet in all of history (it doesn't have to be an Australian)? (c) Explain your reasoning for choosing (a) and (b).
- **Structure:** Many of the most famous stories in books and film share a common structure. One popular structure is called the Hero's Journey and is based on a theory by Joseph Campbell. Another is called Pixar's Story Spine. Map the major events of *Tumbleglass* against both methods. Do the events fit either? Is one better than the other? Explain your reasoning.
- **Visual Literacy:** After finishing the novel design your own cover for *Tumbleglass*. Carefully consider the image you would like to use, as well as the colours that would be appropriate and the best font for the title. After completion, write a short paragraph explaining your choices.
- **Find Your Own Sea Glass:** If you live near the coast you can visit a beach and see if you can find your own sea glass. There are many websites devoted to suggesting the best beaches to look, as well as providing helpful tips on timing.

Other Recommended Time-Slip Novels:

- Constable, Kate. *Cicada Summer*, 2009. Eloise doesn't speak, but can she see into the past? An exciting and atmospheric mystery, poignant and gripping at the same time, exploring themes of family, friendship and grief.
- Constable, Kate. *Crow Country*, 2011. When Sadie is tumbled back in time to view a terrible crime, she is pulled into a strange mystery. Can she, along with boys she befriends, figure out a way to right old wrongs, or will they be condemned to repeat them?
- Farmer, Penelope. *Charlotte Sometimes*, 1969. Charlotte finds herself travelling back to 1918, where she is known as Clare. Charlotte and Clare change places each night, alternating between 1918 and Charlotte's time; although Charlotte and Clare never meet, they communicate through diary notes in an exercise book.
- French, Jackie. *Somewhere Around the Corner*, 1994. A girl travels back to 1932, a time when Australia is in the grip of the Depression and finds a true friend and home.
- Kane, Kim. *When the Lyrebird Calls*, 2016. Madeleine finds herself transported back to 1900 Australia, where she befriends a family of girls and is witness to a family secret and a family tragedy.
- Murray, Kirsty. *The Four Seasons of Lucy McKenzie*, 2013. Lucy travels across the river of time to fight fires, battle floodwaters and discover the meaning of true friendship.
- Murray, Kirsty. *Market Blues*, 2001. A time-slip adventure novel about a boy who goes busking at the market and finds himself transported back to a century ago.
- Park, Ruth. *Playing Beattie Bow*, 1980. Australian classic set in The Rocks, Sydney, in the 1870s and 1970s. CBCA Book of the Year 1981.
- Pearce, Phillipa. *Tom's Midnight Garden*, 1958. Tom is a modern boy living under quarantine with his aunt and uncle in a city flat, part of a converted building that was

a country house during the 1880s–1890s. At night he slips back in time to the old garden where he finds a girl playmate called Hatty.

- Robinson, Joan G. *When Marnie Was There*, 1967. A young girl temporarily moves to Norfolk to heal after becoming ill. There she meets a mysterious and headstrong girl named Marnie who lives in a house overlooking the marshes.
- Uttley, Alison. *A Traveller in Time*, 1939. A child goes back into Derbyshire in the time of Mary, Queen of Scots. Penelope is sent to stay with her great-aunt in an old Derbyshire house where she discovers she can slip in and out of time.
- Wynne Jones, Diana. *A Tale of Time City*, 1987. A girl, Vivian Smith, is kidnapped while being evacuated from London during World War II and is caught up in a struggle to preserve history.
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About the Author



Kate Constable was born in Melbourne but spent much of her childhood in Papua New Guinea, without television but within reach of a library where she 'inhaled' stories. She studied Arts/Law at the University of Melbourne before working for a record company while she began her life as a writer. Kate had stories published in *Meanjin*, *Island* and other literary magazines before realising she was actually a children's and YA author. Kate has written eleven novels for young people, including the internationally-published Chanters of Tremaris series and the CBCA award-winning *Crow Country*. Kate lives in a northern suburb of Melbourne with her family, a bearded dragon and a dog.