

INTRODUCTION

And now for something completely different ... Screw Loose – a true comic novel for teenagers!

A brilliant comedy of manners, *Screw Loose* focuses an absurdist lens on a group of ordinary sixteen-year-olds with ordinary problems - kind of. It's about first love and new love, and boys who row, and dolls and dogs and football and baklava, and one helluva party at the end.

Told from multiple points of view, *Screw Loose* follows eight main teenage characters trying to navigate their way through the school year. Wheat maintains each character's unique voice and very deftly weaves their stories together in a fast-paced book of short chapters. The mood is joyously anarchic and the plot and characters humorous and entertaining; at the same time, the novel cleverly supports a compelling story arc for each character and engages with serious themes and sensitive teenage issues.

Screw Loose features the same characters as *Loose Lips*, published by Hyland House in 1998, but can be read completely separately.

PLOT SUMMARY

With this kind of novel, a plot summary is a bit beside the point: suffice to say, everyone has problems, and no one knows quite how to solve them.

The setting is Year 11 at Vistaview Secondary College and related locations. Rich girl Chelsea Dean talks to Barbies and fantasises about ruling the world. She is mortified that her mother appears to be having an affair with the down-market tradie father of Craig Ryan. Craig likes Matilda Grey, but Matilda prefers his dog, Arnold. This may be because Matilda was brought up by dingoes until rescued from the Australian desert. She is now famous – a cult figure in Japanese manga and the face of Dingoes' Dinner dog food. Meanwhile, Angelo has been selected into an AFL team but can't choose between his control-freak football club and his clean-freak obsessive-compulsive girlfriend, Zeynep: the club thinks it'd be a real media coup if Angelo went out with Matilda, and Zeynep must not be seen with a boy by her Muslim parents. In other sub-plots, Zeynep gets sent to live with the goats but is charged with terrorism; Joshua learns to love guinea pigs; Georgia slaps her principal, is expelled, and then slaps the principal of her new school; and Khiem, who is trying to go straight, meets his dream girl...

A hopeful forward path is indicated as the book culminates in a high-energy school formal.

STYLE

With its ironic humour, *Screw Loose* is in the vein of teen movies such as *Election* or *Mean Girls*. The story is loosely underpinned by the *Summer Heights High/Desperate Housewives*-style machinations of uber-Queen Bee, Chelsea. As with all good satire, it's ridiculous, fresh and original, with lots of quirky humour - and some distinctly Australian cheeky multiculturalism.

Wheat's keen eye for the teenage condition lends a striking realism to his prose: unpretentious, unashamed, unafraid and with razor-sharp perception, his writing speaks directly to teenagers.

Comparable authors could include Rachel Cohn & David Levithan (*Nick & Norah's Infinite Playlist*), Barry Jonsberg (*The Whole Business with Kiffo and the Pitbull*) or Randa Abdel-Fattah (*Does My Head Look Big in This?*).

Chris Wheat himself describes his novel as 'a kind of Australian comedy of manners for teenagers'.

DESIGN

The text is enhanced by a lively, funky text design, which includes specially commissioned manga cartoons, character lists and notes, invitations, photos, mock newspaper articles, and quirky, individually-designed chapter openers throughout.

The book's cover also reflects the anarchic humour:

- The front cover is a postcard, with title and author's name graffitied in the address space.
- The blurb is on the *front* cover in the place of a postcard message, in handwritten notes from the main characters, with a small two-line summary where we might expect a postcard description to be.
- The spine could have been doodled during class.
- And the back cover explodes in a colourful and ironic collage of the modern teen world.

REVIEWS

What teenagers said:

- "A book that captures the essence of high school life in a funny and fast-paced whirl of fantastic characters." Mallory, Year 9
- "With an Indian princess, budding AFL star and a girl raised by dingoes, high school will never be boring again." Anna, Year 11
- "I like how the comedy is introduced subtly, and then it erupts into madness, and I like the text messages. A laugh-out-loud book - be sure to read this!" Gabriel, 14
- "I got really into it! I read it for like four hours straight." Ellen, 17

What the reviewers said:

'Chris Wheat hasn't lost his sense of the ridiculous, or his touch for humour. The book is deliciously silly and laugh-out-loud funny. It can only be hoped that there will be plenty more of the same from this author.'

—*January Magazine*

'Chris Wheat is perhaps Australia's leading writer of YA humour... Just as Carl Hiaasen has Florida real estate in his sights and Tom Sharpe pursues the English aristocracy, Chris Wheat takes on all the big issues of adolescence: racism, consumerism, YouTube, private schools, public schools, AFL, new media, homophobia, etc... With such a wildly improbable bunch of characters anything could happen and does. All their angst, foibles, pretensions, desires, secrets and histories are comically and seamlessly interwoven...

There is not enough humour written for the YA readership. The immense popularity of Chris Lilley's *Summer Heights High* television series demonstrated that there is a huge craving for the humorous depictions of the teenage milieu. Would that more writers take up the challenge as Chris Wheat has.'

—*Magpies*

GLOSSARY

The author has written a glossary for the book, which students can download and use in conjunction with their reading. It will be available on the Allen & Unwin website.

THE PLAYS

Chris Wheat has written a series of plays based on the book's characters. None requires elaborate props and each play is based closely on particular chapters in the book.

The plays are all very short and suitable for both single sex and coeducational classrooms. They provide parts for a variety of reading competencies. As no play is longer than approximately six minutes, you might even complete all of them in one session as a single theatrical event.

Students might like to download a play themselves and form a performance group. They might like to innovate and add additional material.

Nutbush

Performance Time: approximately 2 minutes

Cast:

Chelsea Dean

Mrs Dean

Mr Ryan

Barbies: Rapunzel, Student Teacher, Hairdresser, Police Chief

Each actor could hold a Barbie doll in front of her as she delivers the lines, or each actor could pretend to be a Barbie doll. The actors don't need to be these particular dolls. Any doll would do.

Place: CHELSEA'S home

[CHELSEA *enters the living room of her house to see her mother and Mr Ryan doing the Nutbush.*]

MRS DEAN: Chelsea! Home from school so soon, sweetheart?

[MR RYAN *looks uncomfortable.*]

CHELSEA: What's this? A wedding reception?

MRS DEAN [*sounding a little drunk*]: Darling! I've always wanted to learn the *Nutbush*.

CHELSEA: Mother, you're drunk in the afternoon!

MRS RYAN: This is Mr Ryan ...the sauna repairman.

[MR RYAN *wipes his hand on his overalls and winks at CHELSEA who looks daggers at him.*]

MRS DEAN: Mr Ryan fixed the sauna in a flash, so he had time to teach me the *Nutbush*. [MRS DEAN *repeats a few silent 'Nutbush' steps*] ... city limits.

CHELSEA: Mother, only people who go to McDonald's in their pyjamas do the *Nutbush*.

MRS DEAN [*shrieking with laughter*]: Don't be such a snob, Chelsea. I don't know how you turned out to be so la-di-da. You didn't get it from me. [*She smiles drunkenly at Mr RYAN.*] I love the *Nutbush*. [*She waves her hands in the air again*]... city limits.

MR RYAN: Don't like McDonald's; don't wear pyjamas!

[MRS DEAN *shrieks again, then staggers towards the sofa and flops down.*]

CHELSEA: Mother!

MR RYAN: You're a mate of my son's, Craig Ryan.

CHELSEA: Really? I doubt it.

[CHELSEA *storms off to her room. She sits down and looks at her Barbies.*]

STUDENT TEACHER BARBIE: If this man, Craig Ryan's father, is going to endanger your holidays and stop you being dropped off at the school gates each morning in the Merc, then he must be taken out!

RAPUNZEL BARBIE: Yes, sabotage the brakes on his maintenance van.

HAIRDRESSER BARBIE: Cut off that hair! Say no to ponytails on men!

RAPUNZEL BARBIE: Yes! Great idea! I'm not competitive but I hate men with ponytails.

CHELSEA: So do I!

RAPUNZEL BARBIE [*screaming*]: Then take the bastard out!

STUDENT TEACHER BARBIE: Get a hit man.

RAPUNZEL BARBIE: Khiem Dao.

POLICE CHIEF BARBIE: Attention the lot of you. Just tell your mother you're pregnant and you don't know how it happened. Mothers always drop everything when they hear that – including their boyfriends.

[CHELSEA *sits back and smiles, her face showing that this is what she will do.*]

Rather Keen on Elton John

Performance time: approximately 6 minutes

Cast:

Chelsea Dean
Joshua Yeatman
Mr Dunn

Place: Mr Dunn's office. A snake is mounted on the wall behind his desk. The snake could be drawn on the board.

[CHELSEA and JOSHUA walk up to MR DUNN'S office. CHELSEA knocks firmly on the door.]

MR DUNN: Come.

[CHELSEA and JOSHUA enter. MR DUNN signals that they sit. The actors should avoid having their backs to the audience.]

MR DUNN: Ah, President Chelsea and Secretary Joshua, it's good to have you aboard. I've heard a lot of very impressive reports about both of you from the staff.

CHELSEA: Well, thank you, Mr Dunn. We do our best. Did you really kill that snake all by yourself? That is so awesome.

[MR DUNN nods and swivels in his chair to look up at the snake above his head.]

MR DUNN: It is awesome, Chelsea: enough venom to kill the whole school.

[CHELSEA gasps.]

MR DUNN: Don't be afraid, Chelsea. It's long dead.

CHELSEA: Mr Dunn, you're one of the bravest principals I've heard of. [*She opens her folder.*] Thank you for giving up your valuable time.

MR DUNN: Always time for students who are prepared to go that little bit further.

CHELSEA [*smiling warmly*]: Now Mr Dunn, as you know I came from Mary Magdalene Ladies' College on the other side of the river, and Mary Magdalene – and many other independent schools – have rowing teams. The SRC has decided we should have one, too.

MR DUNN: Really? A rowing team?

CHELSEA: Yes. We have a river. Why not?

MR DUNN: That's a terrific idea. I'm agog.

CHELSEA: Thank you, Mr Dunn. My father would be prepared to procure two second-hand boats from St Ethelred's. He's an old boy.

MR DUNN. What a wonderful asset to the school you've turned out to be, Chelsea. I've been looking for someone with your initiative for years. A girls' rowing team.

CHELSEA: I'm prepared to coach the boys, Mr Dunn, but I can't cope with a girls' team as well.

MR DUNN. Most impressive, is all I can say. [MR DUNN *taps the tips of his fingers together. He looks at JOSHUA.*] Joshua, you're coaching the girls?

JOSHUA: I don't know anything about rowing, Mr Dunn.

MR DUNN [*purses his lips and turns to CHELSEA*]: Well, it looks like a boys' team to start with. Tell me, Chelsea, what makes you such an exceptional girl?

CHELSEA [*giggling and looking down modestly*]: Well, Mr Dunn, I think I've been influenced by Mary MacKillop – the famous Australian nun.

MR DUNN [*looking dreamy*]: Mary MacKillop.

CHELSEA: Shall I tell my father you're interested?

MR DUNN [*punches the air.*] Go girl!

CHELSEA [*laughing*]: Two more things before Joshua and I go, Mr Dunn. Firstly, bridging the social divide.

[MR DUNN *looks puzzled.*]

CHELSEA: Quite frankly, there's a desperate need for boyfriends at Mary Magdalene. I propose that this school and Mary Magdalene have joint social gatherings – with some of the boys from St Ethelred's who need girlfriends, too. This is a bit of charitable work for Vistaview towards schools more fortunate than ourselves.

MR DUNN [*looking confused*]: Go on, Chelsea. I'm not sure what you mean. Would those schools really want to mix with a government school? They're rather ...snobbish?

CHELSEA: Mr Dunn, have some pride! Once some of the students at Mary M. and St Ethel's get a chance to meet our students, enrolments at Vistaview will soar. But we'll need to speak to their principals – you'll need to.

MR DUNN: These sorts of activities need careful arrangement, Chelsea. I will have to contact my superiors in the Department of Education before I contact the principals of the other two schools.

CHELSEA: Of course, Mr Dunn. I even have a date in mind: the seventh of September.

MR DUNN: Well done! Efficiency indeed.

[MR DUNN *jots in his diary.*]

CHELSEA: We will, as you realise, also require a complete overhaul of the way the boys at Vistaview conduct themselves.

MR DUNN [*pursing his lips and nodding*]: They certainly need hankies, I'll admit that. It's amazing how few students have hankies nowadays, isn't it, Chelsea? I've been thinking about that a lot. Whatever happened to the handkerchief? It's gone the way of the tiepin.

[*Silence. JOSHUA and CHELSEA stare at MR DUNN in confusion.*]

CHELSEA: Absolutely, Mr Dunn. And so to my last point: the introduction of etiquette classes.

MR DUNN: Etiquette classes?

CHELSEA [*smiling*]: I'm happy to give them free of charge to anybody interested.

MR DUNN: Give a job to a busy person and it gets done. [*He claps his hands.*] Chelsea Dean for honorary staff member! [*He raises his fist again and laughs.*]

CHELSEA: Thank you, Mr Dunn. You might get back to me when you've spoken to the authorities at both the other schools, and then I'll get underway with my multiple projects.

[MR DUNN *makes notes.*]

CHELSEA: I may need secretarial services.

MR DUNN: And secretarial services you shall have, Chelsea.

CHELSEA: And one last thing, Mr Dunn. [*She pauses dramatically and looks at JOSHUA.*] Homophobia.

[JOSHUA *looks startled.*]

CHELSEA: There are gay students in this school, Mr Dunn, and some of them are having a terrible time. Joshua here is gay, and he is constantly humiliated. And there's Georgia Delahunty, too; she's often ridiculed for being a lesbian.

CHELSEA [*turning to JOSHUA.*] Tell Mr Dunn what's it's like to be gay in this school, Josh.

JOSHUA: Well, Mr Dunn, there are lots of jokes and stuff. Gay this and gay that.

MR DUNN [*waving a hand in the air*]: I know, I've heard it too. Gay lockers, gay shoes. [*He laughs.*] Gay subjects. [*He looks at the ceiling.*] Gay light fittings. [*He leans over the desk to JOSHUA.*] Rather keen on Elton John? [*He winks.*] I used to be a very big fan of Elton's when I was younger. Didn't know he was gay of course. Just thought he liked way-out glasses. So, Elton John is hot, eh Joshua?

JOSHUA: Not exactly, Mr Dunn. He's as old as my dad.

CHELSEA: I think you should call an assembly and order them all to stop calling everything gay. You should stamp out homophobia, Mr Dunn. It's your duty.

MR DUNN: Well, yes. You're quite right again; we should stamp out this gay business. I'll call the assembly, Chelsea. I'll tell them all about your rowing team and the etiquette classes, then I'll warn them not to call things gay.

CHELSEA: Exactly, Mr Dunn.

MR DUNN: Good. So let's have a high five!

[MR DUNN *and CHELSEA slap hands.* MR DUNN *turns to Joshua and hesitates, his hand suspended.*]

MR DUNN: Joshua, do gay people high-five?

JOSHUA: Of course.

[JOSHUA slaps the principal's hand hard. He marches out of the office ahead of CHELSEA, shaking his hand from the pain.]

The person sitting next to you

Performance time: approximately 5 minutes

Cast:

Mr Dunn	major part
Georgia Delahunty	minor part
Joshua Yeatman	minor part
Angelo Tarano	very minor part
Chelsea Dean	minor part
Teachers	very minor part

A participating audience of any size. The class could join in as the Vistaview students in their assembly.

Place: Vistaview Assembly Hall

Note: This play is almost a monologue from Mr Dunn.

MR DUNN [*standing on stage*]: Complete shoosh, Vistaviewers! Quiet now! A breathless hush in the close tonight, ten to make and the last man in. [*His eyes move over the students.*] Sir Henry Newbolt!

[*Groans from some students, and some of the teachers move toward them.*]

MR DUNN: I'm sure your English teachers will explain the significance of that quotation. It's a fine morning, and our school motto tells us to thrive, strive and get ahead. I hope this is what is uppermost in your minds right now. This morning I have an unpleasantness, a celebration, some good news from the SRC, and I want to tell you about a very special week we have coming up. The unpleasantness first. What is black? Some boys and some girls have been wearing trousers that are not true black! To rectify this, I have issued all staff with a black card. If your trousers do not match the black on this card, you will be sent home. We will not truck with shades of black! When I was your age, the Rolling Stones used to say that black was black and they wanted their baby back. In this school, we are going to live by that lyric. Black is black!

[*Pause.*]

Next, something pleasant. I would like Angelo Tarano to come up on stage.

[*Applause as ANGELO gets up and walks down the aisle to the stage.*]

MR DUNN: Angelo, as I'm sure everyone knows, was selected in the National Draft to play for the Hobart Cockatoos. I saw his face on the front page of the paper following his first game recently, and I'm sure you did, too.

[*Cheers.*]

MR DUNN: I remember Angelo, in Year 8, crying outside my office because someone had taken his football. Now look at him! No crying now. No one is going to take his football today. [*laughs*] But remember, in our school Angelo Tarano is just an ordinary Year 11 student who lives an ordinary life. The fact that he is earning more money than me does not mean you can ask him for a loan. [*laughs*] So I want us all to wish Angelo's little finger a very speedy recovery.

[MR DUNN *claps as the school cheers. Angelo raises his little broken finger, then jogs off the stage, head down and grinning.*]

MR DUNN: Now, three exciting new SRC initiatives: firstly, Vistaview Secondary College is going to have a rowing team. Chelsea Dean, your president, has kindly volunteered to coach a rowing team and has already procured the boats and started to train our group. But she needs more boys! She'll be running a meeting for interested young men at lunchtime today in Room 27. Vistaview Secondary College is a school that is striving and thriving, as you can see. We are certainly going to get ahead.

[Pause.]

MR DUNN: Next year our rowers will be competing against all the other rowing teams from those big expensive private schools. And we will beat them! Yes! [MR DUNN *throws back his head and raises his arms.*]

[*Subdued applause.*]

MR DUNN: Next ... shoosh ... next, Chelsea Dean has very kindly offered to organise a combined formal for senior students at Vistaview and our two neighbouring schools, St Ethelred's Boys' Grammar and Mary Magdalene Ladies' College. This formal will put our school on display. To that end, Chelsea has also offered to run lunchtime etiquette classes. Quite a student, our Chelsea. She will offer some good advice on correct manners. That way, no Vistaview student need feel embarrassed when he or she meets a student from one of those other schools. A round of applause for Chelsea Dean's initiative!

[*Booing, cheering, laughter and applause.*]

MR DUNN: 'Shoosh! Shoosh! SHOOSH! Finally, I have another very serious matter to deal with. Pay absolute attention! You all remember how we celebrated Deaf Week by not making any sounds for an afternoon? And before that we had Quadriplegic Week, when we didn't use our arms and legs for an hour? Well, this week we will be celebrating Gay Week!

[*Uproar.*]

MR DUNN: Quiet! Quiet at once!

MR DUNN: Now I'd like to call to the stage Georgia Delahunty and Joshua Yeatman, two of our gay students!

GEORGIA [*turns furiously to Chelsea.*] You told him!

CHELSEA: Well, why not? There's no use hiding, Georgia. I told him the school was full of homophobia and he had to do something about it. Go on. Go up! Be proud and gay.

[*GEORGIA and JOSHUA get up and move to the front.*]

MR DUNN: We are living in modern times, and as such we don't want to have phobias. One of the worst modern phobias is homophobia. [*Spells*]: H-o-m-o-p-h-o-b-i-a. You see before you two fine young people: one looks like a boy, and one looks like a girl. In fact, Joshua, here, and Georgia, here, are just like the person sitting next to you – but they are gay! For one week, we are going to celebrate these two students - and those students like them who are also gay but hiding it - by playing songs by Elton John over the public address system at lunchtimes! Quiet! QUIET!!

GEORGIA [*turning to JOSHUA who is on the stage with her*]: It's Chelsea's fault.

JOSHUA: I know.

MR DUNN: To start our Gay Week celebrations, the school choir is now going to come up on stage and sing an Elton John classic: *Rocket Man*. And as they sing, I want every one of you to imagine what it's like to be gay!

[*Uproar.*]

GEORGIA: Excuse me, Mr Dunn, you can't do this! It's not allowed. Will you stop it!

MR DUNN [*cupping one hand to his ear*]: What's that, Georgia?

[*GEORGIA hesitates then slaps MR DUNN across the face. MR DUNN staggers away from her.*]

GEORGIA [*grabbing JOSHUA'S hand*]: Come on! [*They run off.*]

Is this about you or is this about me?

Performance time: approximately 6 minutes.

Cast

Chelsea Dean
Zeynep Yarkan
Matilda Grey
Georgia Delahunty

Place: *On a seat in the school grounds. CHELSEA and ZEYNEP talking. MATILDA is behind them at a distance, listening.*

CHELSEA [*drinking from a water bottle*]: Where's Angelo?

[ZEYNEP *shrugs*.]

MATILDA [*creeping closer*]: Angelo Tarano smells like deodoriser.

[CHELSEA *ignores* MATILDA. ZEYNEP *turns around and smiles*.]

CHELSEA: Why don't you ask me why I look so depressed?

ZEYNEP: Why do you look so depressed?

CHELSEA: Because my parents have split.

ZEYNEP: Oh, Chels. [*She slides closer to CHELSEA and puts her arm around her friend*]: How come?

CHELSEA: It's so terrible I can hardly speak about it. [*CHELSEA indicates with a nudge and a glance that she doesn't want to talk about it in front of MATILDA. ZEYNEP hugs CHELSEA.*]

MATILDA: My parents split up, too. My dad says they didn't leave me in the desert and my mum says they did. Don't think you're special.

CHELSEA [*whispering*]: What a pity you were found. [*Stands up suddenly*]: What was that? [*She shades her eyes and scowls across the oval*]: I hope it wasn't one of those damn feral cats prowling along the river again.

[MATILDA *rushes off*.]

CHELSEA [*sitting down*]: My mother is having an affair with Craig's father. I couldn't say that in front of her. I'm so, so devastated. I've booked up the school counsellor every day next week.

ZEYNEP: Poor Chels. [*Hugs her hard*.] Does your father know?

CHELSEA: Probably. He's having an affair, too. He's going off to live in Sydney – it's just dreadful. Zeynep, I could end up on welfare benefits. My father's friend has a house with views of the harbour, which is my only consolation. But Craig's father is so utterly feral. It's too embarrassing. [*She begins to cry*.]

ZEYNEP: Poor, poor Chels. Angelo and I have relationship issues, too. [ZEYNEP *rubs* CHELSEA'S *arm.*]

CHELSEA: Is this about you or is it about me? We can talk about you and Angelo later. Consideration, Zeynep.

ZEYNEP: Sorry, Chels. It's about you.

CHELSEA: I feel so abandoned. And when I get home that man, Mr Ryan, is in the house pretending to do repairs.

ZEYNEP: Oh, Chelsea, you'll hate being poor. You get everything you want.

CHELSEA [*annoyed by that remark*]: Don't go overboard. I will cope. [*She sighs.*] But we must carry on. What is the problem with you and Angelo?

ZEYNEP: I think he doesn't like me any more. I returned his shoelaces and he snatched them and walked away. I'm trying to keep him, Chelsea. I'm feeding him and kissing him like you said, but I don't think it works any more.

CHELSEA [*shaking her head*]: You're a fool to lose him, Zeynep. If he goes back into circulation he'll be snapped up. I'd probably snap him up myself. [*She looks across the courtyard.*] Oh, no! Lesbian alert! Georgia Delahunty approaching. Do you want me to get rid of her?

ZEYNEP: No, Chelsea! I like her.

[GEORGIA *sits down. She is drinking from a bottle. CHELSEA does an air kiss from her seat, and GEORGIA returns it with her mouth full.*]

ZEYNEP [*smiling at GEORGIA.*]: Georgia, I need some advice about Angelo. He used to like you – you know how his mind works.

CHELSEA: Ha! I think I'm the boy expert here.

ZEYNEP: But you've never had a real boyfriend, Chelsea.

CHELSEA: Excuse me, Zeynep! Stick in the knife when I'm wounded, why don't you? And you know nothing of my Mary Magdalene years. I've been told my name is carved into desktops at St Ethelred's. Is yours?

ZEYNEP: Sorry.

CHELSEA: My parents have just separated, Georgia. [CHELSEA *pulls out a tissue and dabs both her eyes.*]

GEORGIA: I'm sorry, Chelsea. That's unfortunate for you.

GEORGIA [*speaking to ZEYNEP*]: I'm going to leave the school and go to Mary Magdalene. I thought I should tell you first.

ZEYNEP: No! Don't do that. Why?

GEORGIA: They have a better hockey team.

CHELSEA: Muggers? They're very choosy, Georgia. Have you enrolled? You won't survive the hair Gestapo, and you live in, like, Clifton Hill, don't you? I mean...

GEORGIA: I have an interview in a fortnight. They'll accept me. I'll survive.

CHELSEA: You won't.

GEORGIA: What's up with Angelo, Zey?

ZEYNEP: I don't think he likes me any more.

GEORGIA: Why do you think that?

ZEYNEP: I think maybe because I'm Muslim. Or maybe because I boiled his shoelaces.

GEORGIA: It wouldn't be because you're Muslim. He's not like that.

CHELSEA: It's probably your parents that are the problem. But at least they aren't separated.

GEORGIA: I don't really understand Angelo, but I'm kind of Hindu – well, my parents are at least – and that didn't stop him from chasing me. Don't worry. He's maybe worried about footy. Perhaps he was embarrassed when he broke his finger? It's just a boy mood, probably. He'll come round.

ZEYNEP: I suppose you're right.

[MATILDA returns. She is cross. ZEYNEP and GEORGIA move up to give her space on the seat. CHELSEA makes a small noise of protest and doesn't move. GEORGIA pats the seat and MATILDA sits down.]

GEORGIA: Even Matilda has problems, don't you?

CHELSEA: Ha! Did you get the cat?

MATILDA [*shaking her head and looking at CHELSEA suspiciously.*] I'm on *60 Minutes* tomorrow and I'm going to talk about you.

CHELSEA [*shrieking with laughter*]: As if, Matilda. Go and chase cars. We're discussing important issues.

GEORGIA [*to ZEYNEP.*] I can say one thing for sure about Angelo. I'd stop boiling his shoelaces. You're not his wife.

CHELSEA: Your problem is your kissing technique, Zeynep. You need to get on the internet and check out kissing sites.

MATILDA: You should lick him.

[*The bell goes. They all rise except ZEYNEP who sits looking confused.*]

At the Gym

Performance time: 2 minutes

Cast:

Khiem Dao
Angelo Tarano
Craig Ryan

Place: School gym. The gym equipment could be imaginary.

ANGELO: You a Muslim, Khiem?

KHIEM: Nope! [*Khiem is preparing to do some bench presses.*] Buddhist – but resting.

[*ANGELO gets behind the apparatus. KHIEM grabs the bar and lowers quickly.*]

ANGELO: That's a crap way to do it. Slow is better.

KHIEM: Why'd you ask?

ANGELO: It's Zeynep. She's just so neat and tidy, and I was wondering if it was a Muslim thing.

KHIEM: I don't know. I think it's just a Zeynep thing.

ANGELO: Girls.

[*CRAIG RYAN enters from playing basketball bouncing a ball. KHIEM stops and looks at the clock.*]

CRAIG [*addressing KHIEM.*] Working tonight?

KHIEM: Yep. You?

CRAIG: Yep.

[*KHIEM continues working out. Angelo is ready to help him. The bell goes.*]

KHIEM: Girls. You never want to obsess over them.

ANGELO: Who's obsessing? Got your Lynx?

[*KHIEM stops and gets up. He throws the Lynx to ANGELO who sprays all over his clothes and his backside and throws it to Craig who does the same thing.*]

ANGELO: Hey, Khiem, do me a massive favour, buddy?

KHIEM: Sure.

ANGELO: Get your contacts to put someone in hospital.

KHIEM: Who?

ANGELO: Zeynep's old man.

KHIEM: How come?

ANGELO: He chucked a cake at me.

[CRAIG *snorts with laughter.*]

ANGELO: Hey, I'm Angelo Tarano. [*Jabs his chest.*] No one throws a cake at me.

KHIEM: Haven't you got mafia contacts? You're Italian.

ANGELO: No, man. Don't be racist.

KHIEM: Hey, don't you be racist.

[ANGELO *laughs and packs his bag.* CRAIG *chucks the Lynx back and KHIEM sprays all over, even his hair.*]

KHIEM Come on. Now we're late.

[*They all walk off to class looking happy.*]

Craig and Matilda in the Supermarket

Performance Time: 3 minutes

Cast:

Craig Ryan
Matilda Grey
Four or Five Shoppers

Place: Supermarket aisle

Props: Packets of food

[CRAIG RYAN *is down on his knees stacking shelves*. MATILDA *arrives and jumps on him and he spills some packets*.]

CRAIG: Matty, behave! [*He pushes her off*.] That hurt, Mat!

MATILDA: When do you finish?

CRAIG: Not 'til eight. And stop sniffing me. [*He cleans up*.]

MATILDA: [*sitting beside him*]: I love your smell. It's one of my favourites.

CRAIG: Well I don't like your sniffing, it embarrasses me.

MATILDA [*sympathetic*]: You're droopity. Are you hungry?

CRAIG: I'm not droopity – droopy. I've got problems. And you're one of them – I don't want to see you at the moment. Go away, now.

MATILDA [*hanging her head*]: No more telling about your tongue.

CRAIG: Yes, no more. It's not bloody big!

MATILDA: Sorry, sorry, sorry. [*She looks regretful*.]

CRAIG: Chelsea Dean's mum and my dad are going to live together.

MATILDA [*sitting up on her haunches*]: 'No!'

CRAIG: Yes. And Chelsea told her mum I got her pregnant, and her mum told my old man, and my old man went ballistic.

MATILDA [*shouting*]: PREGNANT! [*She jumps up*.] How did you get her pregnant? You can't have babies with that throwback. I want you to have babies with me!

CRAIG: [*whispers*]: Shut up! She's not pregnant. Keep your voice down, Mat. Chelsea made up the story to stop her mum and my dad getting together.

MATILDA: You'd better not have been fooling around with her.

CRAIG: I told you, I can't stand her.

MATILDA: She'll be at the bottom of the river by the end of the week!

CRAIG: Trust me, we have never fooled around.

MATILDA: Did you show her your tongue?'

CRAIG: [*sounding indignant*]: No way!

MATILDA [*bending over and patting CRAIG on the head.*] There, there. Do you want your tummy rubbed?

[CRAIG *shakes his head.*]

MATILDA: I need a big bin-liner. Big enough for a girl.

CRAIG: Matilda, you can't throw Chelsea in the river.

MATILDA: Yes, it would be easy.

[CRAIG *goes back to stacking.*]

MATILDA: We can live together. I know where.

[*A crowd has been slowly forming around them, pretending not to listen.*]

CRAIG [*murmurs*]: At your place? I don't reckon your mum would agree.

MATILDA [*vehemently*]: My mum! She's so wonderful-excellent when you're around, but when we're alone she trains me.

CRAIG: Trains you?

MATILDA: Yes. Otherwise no royalties.

CRAIG: You never told me.

MATILDA: I have a secret place for you and me to live. I made it out of old blankets.

CRAIG: A cubbyhouse?

MATILDA: We can have fun and no one will find us. No more school! No more bitches! We can hunt and sleep.

CRAIG [*speaking softly*]: Matilda, you're famous. If you disappear it will be major news.

MATILDA: Too bad! I'm sick of Japanese photoshoppers. I want to be private. Please come and live with me. You can bring Arnold.

CRAIG: You sure it's not Arnold you really want to live with?

[MATILDA *shakes her head vigorously.*]

CRAIG: What if it rains?

MATILDA: Easy – we've got plastic and a box a TV came in. We can sleep in it together.

CRAIG [*thinking*]: Maybe. I got to see it first, though.

[MATILDA *jumps on him again and licks him across the face. The crowd claps.*]

MATILDA: Lick me back, Craig! Please, please, please, please, please!

A SHOPPER: Go on, lick her, mate.

CRAIG: No, Matilda. Act human!

ANOTHER SHOPPER: Lick her, mate!

[CRAIG *licks her.*]

MATILDA: Extra-tough bin-liners, in case she struggles.

Etiquette Lesson

Performance time: 5 minutes

Cast:

Chelsea Dean
Khiem Dao
Craig Ryan
Matilda Grey
Young Enthusiastic Student 1
Young Enthusiastic Student 2
Zeynep Yarkan very minor part
Mr Dunn minor part
Mr Ireland very minor part
A Year 10 Girl minor part

Place: A classroom at Vistaview Secondary.

Props: A bin-liner.

Note: This play might be performed with the actors sitting among the audience and the whole audience joining in the lesson.

CRAIG [*eating an apple*]: It's friggin' etiquette lessons every day with her.

KHIEM: Chelsea's house is pretty nice, but.

CRAIG: You only think that because you don't have to live in it with her. I don't know how you can stand doing her pool and sweeping and stuff.

KHIEM: I'd live there any day: pool, Brenda, intercom, Merc, sauna, fountain. Man, she's got it totally made. She's going to let me drive the Merc, too. I'm the emergency chauffeur.

[CRAIG *laughs*.]

KHIEM Hey, don't laugh! Don't tell her I told you but she wants me to take her to her old school.

CHELSEA [*speaking from the front of the room*]: We'll start. But before we do, Craig, Joshua and Khiem, don't forget rowing practice has shifted to this afternoon. Meet me at the sports room after school to carry down the boat and oars. [CHELSEA *unfolds some notes*.] We begin. [*Sounding bright and positive*.] Manners maketh the man, and maketh the woman too. The students at Mary Magdalene and St Ethelred's have better manners than most of you, and I don't want them turning their noses up at Vistaview students at my formal because Vistaview students are yawning without covering their mouths. [*She looks at CRAIG*.] So, this is what I'm going to teach you in these lectures to get you ready for the formal: good table manners, how to cough and sneeze, and how upper-class people instantly know you're not one of them. [*Looks at the audience*.] Okay. Let's start with table manners. Elbows in. [CHELSEA *sticks her elbows out and brings them in a few times*.] Why do we have elbows in at the table?

YOUNG ENTHUSIASTIC STUDENT 1 [*puts up her hand*]: So you don't jab the person sitting next to you!

CHELSEA: Good. Next point. What if food gets stuck between your teeth?

[A hand goes up. Same student.]

CHELSEA: Yes?

YOUNG ENTHUSIASTIC STUDENT 1: Brush them?

CHELSEA: I meant at the table.

YOUNG ENTHUSIASTIC STUDENT 2: Use a toothpick.

CHELSEA: Yes, but how does one use a toothpick?

[Silence.]

CHELSEA: I will now demonstrate how to use a toothpick. Imagine I have a toothpick. I raise my left hand and place it in front of my mouth, fingers closed, as if I was about to yawn. Taking the toothpick delicately in my other hand between my thumb and index finger, I bring it around behind my left hand and then stick it between my teeth. Don't talk to other people while you're doing this, or you could end up on a hospital reality show. Now, I'd like you all to pretend you have something stuck in your teeth and practise getting it out.

[The girls put their hands up to their faces. KHIEM, CRAIG and JOSHUA don't. MATILDA GREY appears at the door now. She is looking at CRAIG. CRAIG swears softly. MATILDA has a bin-liner under her arm.]

MATILDA [calls out.] Craig. Come to me.

[CRAIG shakes his head.]

MATILDA: Is Arnold's nose still dry?

CHELSEA: Excuse me, Matilda. I'm teaching etiquette. We're not interested in Arnold's nose. Although, actually, it isn't dry, Matilda – I saw Arnold this morning. Perhaps you two could discuss this matter after my class.

MATILDA: What's etiquette?

CHELSEA: Manners – like not interrupting people. In fact, you should come in and learn a few, since you will be accompanying Angelo to the formal.

[MATILDA moves stealthily into the room, watching Chelsea the whole time.]

CHELSEA: Do you know what a toothpick is, Matilda?

MATILDA: I know what a Quickpick is. [MATILDA sits down near CRAIG.]

CHELSEA [referring to her notes]: Let's continue. Next we have eating and speaking. They do not go together! Never, ever speak with your mouth full! Why not?

YOUNG ENTHUSIASTIC STUDENT 1. People can see the food.

CHELSEA: Yes. [She winces.] How horrible!

YOUNG ENTHUSIASTIC STUDENT 1: You might spit it out accidentally.

YOUNG ENTHUSIASTIC STUDENT 2: In someone's eye.

CHELSEA: [*Looking at MATILDA.*] What about you, Matilda? Did you know that?

MATILDA [*slumped in her seat.*] I don't talk when I eat, I just eat.

CHELSEA: That would be right. Gobbling your food – even from a bowl – is very bad manners. Now, the next important aspect of etiquette is not using your cutlery to point with. Some people gesticulate with their cutlery. How uncouth!

YEAR 10 GIRL: What does gesticulate mean, Chelsea?

CHELSEA: Gesticulate means pointing.

YEAR 10 GIRL. And uncouth?

CHELSEA: It means vulgar, common, gross, no manners at all. Maybe someone in the room is a little like that? [*CHELSEA rolls her eyes.*] So, never point your knife at someone when you're speaking to them. [*She raises her eyebrows and smiles at KHIEM.*] Or a chopstick. Am I right, Khiem?

KHIEM: Right.

CHELSEA: Next, leaving the table. It is polite to always excuse yourself when you wish to leave the table. Do you do that, Matilda?

MATILDA: I don't sit at a table.

CHELSEA: Where do you sit?

MATILDA: On the floor.

CHELSEA: You eat your dinner on the floor? No invitations to Government House for you! Well, if you ever do sit at a table, then when you want to leave you should excuse yourself. You wouldn't need to ask anyone to leave the floor. [*She giggles.*] All right?

MATILDA: I leave when I want to leave, and no one stops me. You stuck-up poodle!

CHELSEA [*shocked.*] Matilda, that was not necessary!

MATILDA [*standing up, knocking her chair over, shaking out the bin-liner and advancing towards Chelsea.*] Stay away from Craig! He didn't make you pregnant.

CHELSEA: What? I'm not pregnant. I'll sue!

[*MATILDA lunges at CHELSEA, trying to throw the bin-liner over her head. CHELSEA dances backwards and shrieks.*]

CHELSEA: Down! Bad! Khiem, you're my bodyguard. Stop her!

[*KHIEM and CRAIG leap out of their seats and try to stop MATILDA.*]

CHELSEA: Get the police! She's trying to suffocate me!

[*MR DUNN and MR IRELAND appear at the door.*]

MR DUNN: What on earth is going on?

ZEYNEP: It's an etiquette lesson, sir. Matilda is trying to put Chelsea in a bag!

[MATILDA *growls.*]

MR DUNN: Not too much screaming. A little quieter. Now, what's the right etiquette in this situation?
[*He laughs.*]

CHELSEA: She should be put down! Khiem, escort me out of the room!

MATILDA [*yelling.*] I'm going to bag you up – and river you!

CHELSEA: Call a dog catcher!

[KHIEM *and* CRAIG *hurry her out of the room.*]

Fruitloops Attract

Performance time: Approximately 5 minutes.

Cast:

Angelo Tarano
Ashley Waugh
Coach Davis Beck
Paul Vasilevski

Place: The Hobart Cockatoos' clubrooms

[ANGELO *is sitting at a table with* ASHLEY WAUGH, *a senior club official,* COACH DAVIS BECK *and* PAUL VASILEVSKI. *They all have folders open in front of them. Angelo is nervous and lets out a loud, slow whistle.*]

PAUL VASILEVSKI: What's the matter with you, Angelo? I'm starting to wonder if we've made the wrong draft pick. What was all that mouthguard cleaning? A serious footballer sticks it right back in, mud and all – delicious.

[ANGELO *is silent.*]

ASHLEY [*playing the good guy*]: Nice goal, mate. How's the lip?

ANGELO: It's just a stitch. It's fine.

COACH BECK: Gooooood! [*Coach Beck flips a folder open.*] We've got your personality test – Myers Briggs; the psychologist's update; a report from your school. [*Pause while he looks at them.*] We're impressed, Angelo. And we're not impressed! A few concerns. A few...concerns.

ASHLEY: How are you liking the club? Good club? Happy club?

ANGELO: Very happy, thanks, Ash. Really happy. [ANGELO *is tapping his foot.*]

COACH BECK: No need to tap your foot, Angelo. We're your friends.

[ANGELO *grabs both his knees.*]

COACH BECK: Happy with yourself in the calendar shoot?

ANGELO [*trying to sound positive*]: I looked okay. Pretty funny playing footy without any clothes on, but.

PAUL VASILEVSKI: It's called publicity, Angelo. It's called income. Remember that.

COACH BECK: Melanie told us you had a few problems with the make-up. Bit of a panic about the eyeliner, we heard. Screamed a bit with the hair removal?

ANGELO [*looking worried*]: It's okay. I'm just not used to that sort of stuff.

COACH BECK: You'll need to get used to it if you want to play footy.

ASHLEY WAUGH: Don't mind the travel up and down to Hobart?

ANGELO: No worries. I like flying.

COACH BECK: But not charity performances? You still don't want to be in the Cockies' production of *Cinderella*, I hear?

ANGELO: Sorry, I can't.

COACH BECK: Can't is not a Cockatoos' word, Angelo.

PAUL VASILEVSKI: One minute, Davis, before you get into that. Angelo, have you been using Manlee?

ANGELO [*nodding*]: Sure.

PAUL VASILEVSKI: Daily?

ANGELO: Sure, Paul.

PAUL VASILEVSKI: You don't look moisturised at the moment.

ANGELO: I was worried about the lip. Normally I would. I missed a few times at school. The other guys comment.

PAUL VASILEVSKI [*angry*]: Moisturise twice a day. Got it? We've got a major sponsor to keep happy.

ANGELO: I know.

PAUL VASILEVSKI: Back to you, Davis.

COACH BECK: You told the psychologist that you have a hang-up about clowns ...and drag queens.

[ANGELO *nods*.]

COACH BECK [*exhaling loudly*]: This is fruitloop stuff, mate!

ANGELO: If guys are dressed up like clowns or ladies I can't look at them. I kind of lose it for a bit.

ASHLEY WAUGH: Lose it?

ANGELO: I hyperventilate.

COACH BECK [*shaking his head*]: You hyperventilate?

ASHLEY WAUGH: But you don't mind the ladies dressed up like ladies, I hope?

ANGELO: No, I like that.

ASHLEY WAUGH: What about ladies dressed up like men, then?

ANGELO: No, I like that too?

ASHLEY WAUGH: Just men dressed up like ladies are the problem?

ANGELO: Yes. It's the make-up.

ASHLEY WAUGH: You don't like make-up on guys?

ANGELO: No. Not too much.'

ASHLEY WAUGH: But you moisturise?

ANGELO: I do. It's different. It's okay if it's invisible.

[*The three men look at one another.*]

PAUL VASILEVSKI: That's pretty weird stuff, old chum. Pretty weird stuff indeed. Most blokes like to dress up like ladies: it's a sign of mental health. You a bit low on testosterone or something?
[PAUL flicks through the reports.] Medicals...

ANGELO: I don't really like Santa, either!

[*The three men look shocked.*]

COACH BECK: Are you saying you believe in Santa Claus?

ANGELO: No way! Of course not. But I don't like fake beards.

PAUL VASILEVSKI: Scared of hair pieces as well, are we?

ANGELO [*glances at Paul's hair*]: No way. Hair pieces are cool. But not ladies' wigs on guys, or fake beards.

COACH BECK: Hmmm! [COACH BECK looks at the reports.] Well ...we're expecting you to start seeing the team psychologist more regularly.

ASHLEY WAUGH: Daily.

PAUL VASILEVSKI [*sarcastically*]: Hourly.

COACH BECK: You can't be a professional footballer and refuse to dress up like a woman. That's out of the question. We have players' reviews every year. It's a bonding thing. We want well adjusted young lads in the Cockatoos, not fruitloops!

PAUL VASILEVSKI: Angelo, Candibelle what's-her-name, you're going to drop her? Or have you dropped her?'

ANGELO [*telling a lie*]: Dropped her.

PAUL VASILEVSKI: Good thing.

COACH BECK: You rejected all our girls, though?

ANGELO: Not really.

PAUL VASILEVSKI: Not really? We were told you said no to the lot.

ANGELO: Um, no time?

COACH BECK: There's always time for a nice girl, Angelo. Always.

ANGELO [*smiling nervously*]: After my exams, maybe?

COACH BECK: This Candibelle, the ex, she had you straightening wheelie bins along her street, we heard. What a great sight that would be if a TV van just happened to be in the vicinity! She's an obsessive-compulsive.

PAUL VASILEVSKI [*mumbling to the other two men*]: Fruitloops attract.

[COACH BECK *smirks*.]

ASHLEY WAUGH: You go to school with Candibelle?

ANGELO: Zeynep's her name, actually. It's hard for her. The publicity. She's Muslim. Her parents are traditional – strict.

ASHLEY: She's Muslim? Not that it's a problem. Some of the Cockies are Muslims: Hakan, Omar. Great blokes.

ANGELO: Great blokes.

COACH BECK [*raising his voice*]: So this is the current state of play: you've now dumped the girlfriend; you're attending training regularly; you're the May recruit in the forthcoming AFL calendar; you're moisturising; and you'll have a bit of psychotherapy so that you can wear make-up without hyperventilating [*pause*.] The world's a perfect place – but maybe we'll drop you from this year's review.

ANGELO [*relieved*]: Thanks.

ASHLEY WAUGH: We've got to be tough on you, Angelo, for your own good. You're a young bloke and you've got a bit to learn about the Cockies' image.

PAUL VASILEVSKI: We need to do some work on you to bring you up to scratch. We've arranged a new girlfriend for you.

ANGELO: Really?

COACH BECK: Your contract stipulates we can declare it null and void if you bring the club's name into disrepute. We've drawn up a contract with the mother. It'll cost us a pretty penny, but it'll be great for publicity and involves a very interesting marketing synergy. The mother's pretty keen on the whole idea.

ANGELO: What? What's going on?

COACH BECK: It's Matilda Grey – Dingo Girl. She attends your school. It will generate huge publicity and, as a result, much-needed revenue for the club.

ANGELO [*yells*]: No way!

COACH BECK [*yells*]: Our way! Don't shout at us, Angelo. You want a run next week or the week after? It's the Dog Girl or you're out, mate. You've got twenty-four hours to decide!

Emo Attack

Performance time: 2 minutes

Cast:

Joshua Yeatman
Fly – strangely dressed
Deaf Emo Girl
Deaf Emo Boy 1
Deaf Emo Boy 2

Place: Flinders Street railway station

[JOSHUA *is standing on Flinders Street station looking nervous.*]

FLY: [*tapping JOSHUA on the shoulder*]: Yanmate?

JOSHUA: Fly? Are you Fly?

FLY: I is da man! [FLY *kisses JOSHUA on the cheek.*] Don't be scared; I can understand you. Bionic ear. [*Points to a butterfly on his T-shirt.*] Butterflies are deaf.

DEAF EMO GIRL. Nice to meet you, Yanmate.

DEAF EMO BOY 1 [*holding out his hand to shake*]: Yeah, dude. Nice to meet.

JOSHUA [*shakes*]: Nice to meet.

DEAF EMO BOY 2 [*Waving a palm in JOSHUA'S face*]: Yo!

[*They all start signing to one another. JOSHUA watches anxiously.*]

FLY: This is deafies' turf. Can you sign?

JOSHUA [*shakes his head. He points to the Hobart Cockatoos badge FLY is wearing*]: I know Angelo Tarano.

FLY [*with enthusiasm*]: No way! Angelo Tarano! [FLY *starts jumping up and down.*] Zoe, he knows Tarano! He knows Tarano!

[JOSHUA *looks horrified.*]

FLY: Sheeeet! Man! I'm, like, looking at someone who knows the Angelo Tarano! [*He grabs JOSHUA by the shoulders.*] I have major fantasies about him. I'm pumped. I've gone to heaven! I'm in heaven!

DEAF EMO BOY 2: Angelo Tarano, get your clothes off!

JOSHUA [*embarrassed*]: Hey, don't yell.

FLY [*looking suddenly serious*]: What?

JOSHUA: Sorry. You know. You were all yelling. It was just a bit loud.

FLY [*angry*]: Who in hell are you to tell me what to do?

JOSHUA: Sorry.

FLY: You can't hack deafies, eh? Scared?

JOSHUA [*shaking his head vigorously*]: No! Not at all.

FLY [*yelling*]: You prejudiced prick!

JOSHUA: Sorry. I just meant ...don't worry about it.

DEAF EMO GIRL: You can't hack deaf faggots, right?

[FLY *and the three EMOS encircle him. One of the guys gives JOSHUA the finger.*
JOSHUA *runs.*]

ABOUT THE WRITER

CHRIS WHEAT

Chris Wheat teaches at the Senior Campus of Sunshine College. He has published five novels for young adults. He has had short stories and poetry published in various anthologies and has also published reviews and articles in *Viewpoint* and *English in Australia*. Chris is an occasional contributor to the Opinion page of *The Age* and a member of the schools' programming committee of the Melbourne Writers' Festival.

On the themes of *Screw Loose*, Chris says: 'There are some underlying purposes to what appears to be an exercise in frivolity: to foreground issues of social justice and equity, like the private school/public school divide, to bring gay characters into the classroom and Australian YA Lit. without the work appearing too earnest, and to challenge notions of a dominant culture in Australia.'

About the book's audience: 'Although I have tried to make the book comfortable to boys, it is in essence a book that girls will more readily respond to – mainly because Chelsea tends to drive the narrative ... Starting the narrative with a boy, Angelo, is very deliberate ...'

Also by Chris Wheat:

Grinders, Hyland House, 2001

My Excellent Lives, Hyland House, 1999

Loose Lips, Hyland House, 1998

The Girl Who Married a Fly in *The Girl Who Married a Fly* AATE publications, (1997?)

Two-stroke Shane, Collins Dove, 1990