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MANUSCRIPT SUBMISSION – **SNAPSHOT**

Middle-grade realistic fiction **Word Count - 44,100**

Dear Publisher

My passion is to power hope in children, especially through children's literature.

In 2016, I received an Order of Australia Medal for contribution to the social and emotional well-being of children, mainly through the creation of the BUZ (Build Up Zone) programs for children.

Serenity Press published my first middle-grade novel *Maximus* in March 2018 and trade released through Novella and Lamont in August 2018.

Years of working with ultra-ordinary children struggling with life's assortment of challenges lead to my desire to follow up *Maximus* by writing *Snapshot*.

I want children to understand that grief and challenges affect their emotions, which then affects their self-confidence and social connection.

Some inspiration for writing *Snapshot* came from my grief at the loss of a girl I supported when she was an eleven-year-old, who later suicided when she was fifteen.

The quote below, by a different eleven-year-old inspired me to view life as an allegory of the process of taking and developing photographs.

SNAPSHOT SYNOPSIS - *Hope is more powerful than a wish*

"Life is you taking pictures, some are bad, some are good. Make sure you take shots of the ones that have a good effect on you." – Maria Pineda-Meneses (11)

Strong-willed and witty eleven-year-old Maddy is caught up in the tapestry of pre-adolescent life. What complicates it for her is the grief she experiences four years after her father dies in a car accident, which Maddy blames herself for. The anguish, anxiety, and guilt won't go away.

The story begins on a night where Maddy's mum has the new boyfriend stay at their house. That night Maddy experiences a recurring nightmare, bringing back horrific memories of the accident and losing her father two days later when he doesn't wake from a coma.

Maddy's determination to take one thousand snapshots of significant moments and people in her life lead to an encounter with a Willy Wagtail (Djidi Djidi) that becomes a metaphor for her hope. Maddy learns the virtue of patience as she fails in her many attempts to take a photo of the Willy Wagtail.

Maddy is an ordinary, yet extraordinary, eleven-year-old with friendship and school issues. Her robust relationship with Mitch, a friend since early childhood is tested, and an emerging friendship with Tiana, provides more challenges for Maddy as she comes to grips with the possibility of having a 'BFF' for the first time in her life.

Maddy experiences cyber-bullying by the *Plastic Populars* after being voted vice-captain of her local football team, the Bayside Blues, and her Mum posting a picture of her on Instagram.

Escalating hormones make things even more complicated as Maddy struggles with mood changes and her first period, the morning before a football match in the rain.

As the narrative unfolds and the threads of the subplots resolve, the story presents itself as a fascinating tapestry of life experienced by pre-teens.

Snapshot embraces themes of grief, stereotyping, cyber-bullying, friendships, conflict, puberty, boy-girl relationships, and has a diversity of believable and likeable characters.

While Snapshot's genre is middle-grade realistic fiction, teens and adults would find it an engaging read.

What I imagine for this book

- Snapshot sitting comfortably in the hands of any pre-adolescent, girl or boy.
- An ideal classroom novel for upper primary students.
- Being picked up by Australian Standing Orders
- Snapshot as a strong stand-alone realistic fiction that could easily be made into a movie or mini-series.

When I fossick through the mounds of marvelous middle-grade novels in bookshops to find books to compare to Snapshot, most of the time, I come up void. At a pinch, I could compare Snapshot to Deb Fitzpatrick's *Spencer Gray* books, however about a girl, or Kate McCaffrey's *Destroying Avalon* but for younger readers.

I appreciate the opportunity to submit Snapshot and I look forward to hearing your response.

Smilingly,

Steve Heron OAM



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Diploma of
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