

Tales from outer suburbia by shaun tan



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

Tales from outer suburbia by Shaun Tan (Short Story): Belonging ' Tales from outer suburbia' by Shaun Tan starts off as a collection of 15 prose short stories with illustrations, but it soon begins to adopt more and more aspects of comics. The pictures stop illustrating the story and quickly become integral to telling the story and several points through the book the prose and the pictures combines splendidly. It's not an illustrated children's book, nor is it a comic. It's somewhere in between.

Shaun Tan draws a mirror to the face of Australia, with lonely people, houses where constant bickering between parents causes the boy to sleep on the lawn, communities where people use the missiles in their yards for practical purposes and an exchange student who lives in a house where little exchange takes place. Each story provokes thought about how we live and entreats the reader to give more serious consideration to our lives and the lives of those around us. The entire idea of the book is pretty much encapsulated by the very first couple of pages.

An everyday suburban scene; man, lawn, street and then a light of fantasy rowing her way through mid-air down the middle of main street. That's everything that " Tales from outer suburbia" is all about. ' Tales from outer suburbia' by Shaun Tan is a short story that may be meant for older children perhaps but, like all the truly great children's literature it can and does work perfectly for any adult lucky enough to read it. Shaun Tan's use of colour and illustrative style is interesting; the apparent grey wastelands of ' Granpa's story' reflect the difficult times, the colour used in the last page is the happy ending.

The frescoes and almost religious paintings of 'No other country' depict the richness of belonging. The suburban malaise is successfully rendered by muted tones and sparse reality in 'Stick figures'. Shaun Tan's stories are so much more than fragments of weirdness, there's a genuine heart and emotion to them all. Tan's Outer Suburbia is somewhere familiar yet alien, where the everyday meets the extraordinary. And we spend a great deal of time reflecting on what precisely the very down to earth reactions we have to some of the wonders that go on around us.