



GRIT by Tania Kelly Roxborough
[New House Publishers](#), 63 pages.

Grit, an example, if not a tad exaggerated (I mean running into a virtual forest of marijuana and two heavily armed 'growers' is an exaggeration or our heroine is having real bad day!), of what can happen on our own New Zealand roads.

The story starts off with Sophie Granger, the heroine who is a stubborn yet very determined 12 year old girl. She was visiting Aunty Anna in Manakau, Auckland and due to unforeseen circumstances Sophie had to end her holiday two days early. This, as you can imagine, has put Sophie in a bad mood. Mrs Honey, a kind old lady, offers Sophie a ride back to her home in Titoki which Sophie grudgingly accepts.

However, on the way home something goes horribly wrong... The story goes on to describe survival against all odds, and friendships emerging between two people in the most awkward of circumstances.

What did I think of Grit? Well... parts were exciting. For example:

"Steer!" shouted Sophie.

She heard Mrs Harvey's sharp intake of breath and felt the car swerve.

It wasn't enough, as a sickening thud came from Sophie's side of the car.... She head a shot and then the dog began to bark crazily. "Get the gun," one of the men commanded from near the door.

This story is a captivating easy read, the words were simple enough to understand but were used in a way that kept your attention most of the way through. The storyline kind of died away in a few places, leaving you stranded for information but this rarely lasted more than a chapter when suddenly something unpredictable and wild happens which instantly throws your attention back into the story.

I also believe it contains some important morals well worth learning. Like, if you are determined to succeed your will and friendship is just as important for that success. (4 out of 5)

(Reviewed by Saul Gibney - Young Fiction - [NZ Writers' Website](#))

"What would you do immediately after a car crash? How would you cope? Readers of Grit may ponder these things as they follow Sophie's experiences. Sophie is travelling home to Northland under protest in a car driven by an older acquaintance. At first resentful and sullen, Sophie has to draw on all her reserves of common-sense and courage when the car leaves the road and crashes, and Mrs Harvey is seriously injured. Sophie must get help, and goes through out various dangers to do so, including an encounter with cannabis growers.

This is above all else a good story. There's a simply built satisfying plot which rattles along, and a vividly drawn North Auckland setting. It is a short novel (83 pages) which will not be daunting to teenagers who might balk at something longer. The style is seamless, lively and satisfying to read.

While Sophie is believable (all too believable to some of us on the receiving end of teenage judgement) characters aren't as fully developed as they might have been but this does not diminish enjoyment. The story is the thing here, and it's a well told tale.

This will be a good read for people from Year 7 upwards. There are helpful teachers' notes available on the website <http://www.newhouse.co.nz> aims at Year 9 to Year 11." Heather Hyland, Kaukapakapa. *Magpies New Zealand* No.4 September 1998.
