



## Space Gum by Tania Roxborough

Dunedin : Longacre Press. 2008

Reviewed by Jo Robson, Albany Junior High in English in Aotearoa Magazine Oct 08

Tania Roxborough (Kelly omitted) has proved, yet again, that it is possible to teach full time, raise a family, have a life, and still find time to write! *Space Gum* is an entertaining, light hearted, easy to read novel.

The cover is appealing; from the funky fonts, and the bright colours, *Space Gum* grabs your eye. The chapter headings and the use of white space inside the book will cater for reluctant readers who tend to flick inside to make sure it's not too long, only 139 pages.

Carl, the male protagonist, is a convincing character, and the relationship between him and his parents is captured perfectly. In fact, Tania's conversations mirror those happening anywhere a pre-teen and a parent are chatting!

Of course, there are obstacles for Carl to overcome, including his Mum and her intolerance for practical jokes, but more seriously the people who wish to secure the secret formula for the toothpaste/toothbrush-free option.

There is a nice reference to 'some boys in Glenfield who can do some really cool stuff', of course acknowledging Brian Falkner's *Henry and the Flea*, *The Real Thing* and *Super Freak*.

Boys will enjoy *Space Gum*; target range Years 5-7, and lover ability readers at Year 8/9 possibly. Humour, excitement, tension, science, practical jokes and suspense – *Space Gum* has all the elements of an enjoyable read.

As Tania is a teacher herself, she has provided a Teachers' Resource Kit, is available for author visits and can be found having her say on English Online.

*Space Gum* is a must for the library and definitely a class set for younger readers.