



[Home](#) > Toad Heaven

Toad Heaven

Books Reviewed:

[Toad Heaven](#) [1]

Issue:

[138](#) [2]

Reviewer:

[Valerie Coghlan](#) [3]

~~Editor's Choice:~~

off

Media type:

Book

BfK Rating:

4

Cane toads are just about the lowest form of life in Australia, so to turn one into the hero of a book takes some nerve. That the nerveless author is Gleitzman will no surprise anyone who has read his earlier books. Nor will his readers be surprised to learn that his toad characters are really quite human in their ways of behaving; we empathise with them, warts and all. Toads, it seems, can be altruistic, sensitive, conniving, opportunistic, or they are in the hands of Gleitzman anyway. Limpy, Charm, Goliath, Malcolm and the rest of his toadly characters possess the foregoing attributes and some others as well. Something of a parable, *Toad Heaven* (sequel to *Toad Rage*) centres on the quest for a paradise where all cane toads can live safe from golf clubs, trucks, trains and other human methods of toadly destruction. The scheming Malcolm offers 'new homesites available at low, low discount prices'; he'll even accept flying insects as repayments. The physically disadvantaged Limpy isn't quite a superhero but he is pretty valiant in his efforts to find a national park where cane toads may live unmolested. That things don't quite work out as planned is all part of the fun and excitement in this highly entertaining read. Gleitzman's characters are a mirror to various forms of human behaviour, some of which one wouldn't even wish on a cane toad.

Running Order:

38

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[1] <http://booksforkeeps.co.uk/childrens-books/toad-heaven>

[2] <http://booksforkeeps.co.uk/issue/138>

[3] <http://booksforkeeps.co.uk/member/valerie-coghlan>